



KANDAHAR IV. FROM THE MONGOL INVASION THROUGH THE SAFAVID ERA

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In 1221 Kandahar was besieged by a Mongol (Tātār) contingent, which was defeated by [Sultan Jalāl-al-Din K̄vārazmšāh Menguberni](#) (Nasavi, ed. Ḥamidi, p. 133; ed. Minovi, pp. 92-93). The presence of the contingent is reported only by Nasavi. It could, therefore, have been considered too insignificant to be recorded in other contemporary sources (Barthold, p. 438). On his accession in 1251, Möngke conferred many parts of Afghanistan on Malek Šams-al-Din Moḥammad Kart. Sayfi includes Tegenābād (or Kandahar) among his fiefs given on the occasion (Jovayni, II, p. 255; Sayfi, p. 169). In 1260-61, however, Kandahar was controlled by Qotloḡ Timur, a vassal of the Chaghatayid prince, Baraq, while in the environs of the city, a Jochid detachment led by Negüder (later known as Negüderi) was stationed (Sayfi, pp. 266-67; Aubin, p. 82). In 1281, Šams-al-Din II of the Kart dynasty conquered Kandahar (Sayfi, pp. 369-73; Jackson, p. 121). At the end of the 13th century, the city was, possibly, included in the control of Qotloḡ K̄vāja, son of the Chaghatayid khan, Du'a, who was appointed to command the Negüderis and led a massive incursion into Delhi in 1301-02 (Jackson, pp. 217-18).



In 1318, a Chaghatayid prince, Yasāwur, who had been expelled as a result of discord in the Chaghatayid *ulus*, raised an army from Kandahar against Malek Nāṣer-al-Din, the Il-khanid vassal in Sistān (Sayfī, p. 680). In 1383, Timur captured Kandahar in the course of the conquest of Sistān (Naṭanzi, pp. 319, 324; Šāmi, I, p. 94; Faṣiḥ, I, pp. 121-23). In 1390, he entrusted the governorship of the city to Pir Moḥammad, son of Jahāngir Mirzā (Yazdi, fols. 223b-24a). Kandahar was the departure point of the grandson of Timur, who led a detachment preceding Timur's advance into India. He crossed the Indus in 1397 to conquer Moltān in the following year. In 1409, Šāhroḳ bestowed the governorship of Kandahar and Kabul on Qaydu, son of Pir-Moḥammad (Faṣiḥ, I, p. 195; Mirḳvānd, p. 1143). In 1418, Kandahar, together with Kabul and Ġaznin, was given to Mirzā Soyurġatmiš, son of Šāhroḳ (Ḳvāndamir, III, pp. 600-602).

According to Asfezāri, from the death of Šāhroḳ in 1447 up to the reign of [Soltan Ḥosayn Bayqarā](#) (1469-1506), the region of Kandahar, including [Ġur](#), Garmsir, and [Farāh](#) was distressed with assaults by the Hazāras and the Negüderis. One of the leading generals of Sultan Ḥosayn Bāyqarā, Du'l-Nun Arġun, was posted in Kandahar in 1479 and restored order in the area (Asfezāri, I, pp. 343-45; Ḳvāndamir, IV, pp. 170-71). His administration seems to have promoted the growth of Kandahar as an entrepôt. Writing in late 15th-century Herat, Asfezāri (I, p. 341) notes a close commercial connection between his city and Kandahar. Bābor, when he occupied Kabul in 1504, observed the role of entrepôt played by Kandahar, as well as Kabul, on the land route between Khorasan and India (Bābor, pp. 202-3).

In 1504, Du'l-Nun's younger son, Moḥammad Moqim, who had captured Kabul in the previous year while taking advantage of conflict among the amirs stationed there, had to move out of the city to Kandahar due to Bābor's attack (Bābor, pp. 193-98, 223; Ḳvāndamir, IV, pp. 292-93, 308). In 1507, Bābor defeated Moḥammad-Moqim and his elder brother, Šāh Beg. He captured Kandahar and entrusted the city to his brother, Nāṣer Mirzā, who, later in the same year, defended it against the encroachment by Šaybāni Khan. Shortly thereafter, Šāh Beg and Moḥammad-Moqim recaptured the city, and Nāṣer Mirzā had to evacuate retreating to Kabul (Bābor, pp. 325-34, 336-37; Ḳvāndamir, IV, pp. 389-90; Ḥaydar Mirzā, p. 332). In 1511 the Qezelbash marched on the city; unable to take it on account of the strength of its fortress, they made peace with its governor, Šojā' Beg (Abdi Beg, p. 54; Ġaffāri, p. 276).

Bābor's attempt to recapture Kandahar from 1520 to 1521 met with an



intervention of the Safavids led by Šāh Beg. Hence Bābor was compelled to abandon the siege to return to Kabul (Riazul Islam, 1970, pp. 16-17). Kandahar was finally brought under Bābor's control in 1522. Šāh Beg evacuated the city and retired into the province of Sind, where he and then his son, Šāh Ḥosayn, retained an independent government (K̄vāndamir, iv, pp. 590-91; Ḥaydar Mirzā, p. 518; Sām Mirzā, p. 30; Rumlu, pp. 169-70).

When Homāyun succeeded Bābor in Agra in 1530, Kandahar became a part of the domain of the emperor's younger brother, Kāmṛān, under whose authority K̄vāja Kalān, a leading figure of Bābor's nobility, was stationed there. In 1535-36, the Safavid prince Sām Mirzā besieged Kandahar, an event which marked the opening of intermittent conflict between the Safavids and the Mughals that would continue until the mid-17th century. K̄vāja Kalān defended Kandahar against the Safavid forces for eight months until Kāmṛān's reinforcement from Lahore dispersed it (Ḥaydar Mirzā, pp. 672-73; Abu'l-Faẓl, I, p. 135). The failure of Sām Mirzā was followed by another attempt to capture Kandahar by his elder brother, Ṭahmāsb, in 1537, to whom K̄vāja Kalān surrendered the city without any significant resistance. Kāmṛān again marched to Kandahar and expelled the Safavid army. But tension on the western frontier of Iran and troubles in Azarbaijan prevented Ṭahmāsb from marching to Kandahar again (Ḥaydar Mirzā, p. 673; Abu'l-Faẓl, I, pp. 135-36; see also Riazul Islam, 1970, pp. 23-24).

In 1543, Homāyun, who had suffered severe defeats by Šēr Šāh Sur and consequent troubles among his brothers, attempted to make his way to Kandahar. But his younger brother, 'Askari, its governor under the influence of Kāmṛān, advanced from there to attack him. As a result, the emperor in exile had to force his way to Safavid Iran, while the prince, Akbar, fell into the custody of 'Askari in Kandahar (Qandahāri, p. 20; Jawhar, fols. 62b-64a; Golbadan Bēgom, pp. 65-66; Abu'l-Faẓl, I, pp. 188-94). On his way back from Iran in 1545, Homāyun, with the assistance of the Safavid force, captured Kandahar from 'Askari. With the march to Kabul just ahead, tension was growing between the Safavid and the Mughal armies. Subsequently, with a surprise attack, Homāyun expelled the Safavid reinforcement from Kandahar. Bayrām Khan, the future regent of the early Akbar regime, was appointed to govern the city (Riazul Islam, 1970, pp. 40-45, 198-99).

When Homāyun died in Delhi in 1556, the Safavid Shah Ṭahmāsb took advantage of conflict among the Mughal governors of Kandahar and Zamindāvar. A Safavid contingent, invited by the governor of Zamindāvar,



made an incursion into Kandahar. Ṭahmāsb appointed his cousin, Solṭān-Ḥosayn Mirzā, as its governor. The newly acceding government of Akbar could not cope with this situation in the empire's westernmost province. It was only in the 1590s that the Mughals were in a position to react. In 1591 they dispatched an expeditionary force under the leadership of 'Abd-al-Raḥim Kān-e Kānān. This force changed its target, heading for the province of Ṭatta, and never reached the intended destination. The following year, another force led by Prince Dāniāl was dispatched (Abu'l-Faẓl, *Ā'in-e akbari* III, pp. 584-85, 601, 603, 616).

In 1593, quarrels between two of the sons of Solṭān-Ḥosayn Mirzā, Moẓaffar-Ḥosayn Mirzā, who had been appointed in Kandahar, and his brother Rostam Mirzā in Zamindāvar, led to the latter's exile to Mughal territory. The Safavid prince was granted a rank (*manṣab*) of commander of 5,000 men and received Moltān as his *jāgir* (a form of land assignment). He continued to serve the Mughal empire until his death in 1638-39 in Agra (Abu'l-Faẓl, *Ā'in-e akbari* III, pp. 644-46; Neẓām-al-Din Aḥmad, II, p. 423; Bakkāri, I, pp. 99-100). In 1595, at the advance of a Mughal army, Moẓaffar-Ḥosayn Mirzā surrendered Kandahar. He was sent to the court of Akbar to be granted the rank (*manṣab*) of 5,000. He died during the reign of Akbar, and his daughter was married with the Mughal prince, Ḳorram (later Shah Jahān) in 1610 in the reign of [Jahāngir](#) (Abu'l-Faẓl, *Akbar-nāma* III, pp. 668, 670; Badā'uni, II, p. 402; Jahāngir, p. 103). The *Ā'in-e akbari*, compiled in 1595 or 1596, includes the recently regained city and its dependencies as a district (*sarkār*) of the province (*ṣuba*) of Kabul, together with the districts of Kashmir, Kabul, Sowād, and so on (Abu'l-Faẓl, *Ā'in-e akbari* I, pp. 586-90).

On the accession of Jahāngir and the subsequent rebellion of his son, Ḳosrow, the Safavid governor of Herat, Ḥosayn Khan, besieged Kandahar in 1606. The stout defense by its governor, Šāh Beg Khan, and the arrival of reinforcements in the next year compelled the Safavids to retreat, however. [Shah 'Abbās I](#) dispatched an envoy to Jahāngir to confirm an amicable relationship. He was well received at the Mughal court (Jahāngir, pp. 41-42, 50-51). Although the diplomatic language continued to speak in terms of friendship, the issue of Kandahar seems to have created ongoing tension between the two states. An English traveler, Richard Steel, observed the presence of “a Garrison maintained by the Mogoll, of twelve or fifteen thousand Horsemen, in regard of the Persians neighborhood to the North” (Purchas, IV, pp. 272-73).

In 1031/1622, Shah 'Abbās moved against Kandahar. Upon taking the city after



a siege of five to six weeks, he appointed Ganj-‘Ali Khan, the governor of Kerman, who had joined the royal army with a force from Kerman, its governor (Waziri, pp. 626-28). Ganj-‘Ali Khan died in 1033/1623, while in Kandahar, and was succeeded as its governor by his son, ‘Ali-Mardān Khan, with the approval of Shah ‘Abbās. Jahāngir, faced with a refusal of Prince Shah Jahān to obey a royal order to set out to Kandahar and thwarted by the subsequent rebellious operations of the same prince, was not in a position to mount an effective response (Eskandar Beg, pp. 970-78, 1041; Jahāngir, pp. 391-94; see also Riazul Islam, 1970, p. 82).

‘Ali-Mardān Khan meanwhile reigned in grand style, amassing a fortune and creating jealousy among the courtiers, who incited Shah Šafi against him. Faced with a grand vizier, Moḥammad Mirzā Sāru Taqi Khan, who demanded large payments from him and who was clearly intent on having him dismissed, he rebelled and proceeded to offer Kandahar to the Mughals. Seeking refuge in India, ‘Ali-Mardān Khan entered the service of the Mughals, who granted him a *manṣab* of 5,000 footsoldiers (*dāt*) and 5,000 cavalry (*savār*) together with the governorship of the province of Kashmir. He was later promoted to the position of *amir-al-omarā’* (Waḥid Qazvini, pp. 286 ff.; Lāhawri, II, pp. 24-40; Šāhnavāz Khan, II, pp. 795-803; Krusinski, I, pp. 139-40; Riazul Islam, 1970, pp. 102-4).

Transit mart. It is only in the 17th century that (foreign) sources yield some information on Kandahar’s position on the main trade route connecting Persia and Mughal India. Aside from cloth and cotton textiles in myriad varieties, India exported large amounts of indigo to Iran via the Kandahar route. Sugar from Agra was an important part of the goods as well. A number of warhorses from Persia and Central Asia were imported into India via Kandahar as well as Kabul and other northwestern trade centers (NA, VOC 1135, 12 February 1641, fol. 672v; IOR, G/36/104, 24 February 1666; Abu’l-Faẓl, *Ā’in-e akbari* I, p. 162; Bernier, I, pp. 274-75). The Kandahar trade was important and lively, and interruptions occurred only at times of turmoil and war. Generally, it seems to have been less costly to carry goods via this route than via the maritime route between Persia and western India in the Persian Gulf and the Arabian Sea (Warnerus, letter 22 February 1663, in Heeringa, II, pp. 163-64). Whenever the sea route was blocked, the Kandahar route became particularly important. In fact, something of a seesaw relationship seems to have existed between the two routes. Thus in the first decade of the 17th century, when the ruler of Shiraz, a “vassal of the Persians,” disturbed Hormuz and banned caravans



coming from the coast going to Iran, the overland connection is said to have carried a far greater volume of goods than the maritime route (De Gouvea, p. 57). This must have changed before 1618, for in that year the English noted that formerly, that is, before the fall of Hormuz to the Safavids and the closure of the port, only some 3,000 camels would travel between Lahore and Isfahan, but that at present the number had gone up to 12,000 to 14,000 (in Purchas, III, p. 268).

Travelers such as the German Heinrich von Poser and the Central Asian Maḥmud b. Amir Wali commented on the vibrant trade converging on Kandahar. The former in 1621 spoke of caravans consisting of thousands of camels; the latter, passing through Kandahar in 1631, observed the frequency of caravans, saying that “none of (its) places are free from the caravans of Hind and Khurasan” (Von Poser, p. 45; Maḥmud b. Amir Wali, tr. p. 16). The Dutch in 1639 estimated that 25,000 to 30,000 camels laden with Indian cloth each year traveled overland, destined for Iran, the Ottoman empire, and Arabia (Coolhaas, II, pp. 32-33; also see Steensgaard, pp. 65-71; Dale, pp. 46-49; Floor, pp. 200-210). In 1644, Isfahan experienced a glut of Indian cloth, with 5,000 to 6,000 camels carrying textiles having arrived from Agra within a period of eight months (NA, VOC 1146, 24 May 1644, fol. 928v). Although Jean-Baptiste Tavernier claimed that the Kandahar trade had fallen off by the 1650s compared with previous times, the volume of bullion carried to India via the land route continued to be very large (Tavernier, I, p. 771; Chardin, II, pp. 47-49; 347-49; Steensgaard). In 1667 a large Isfahan-Kandahar caravan was robbed, resulting in the reported loss of 40,000 tumans worth of gold (NA, VOC 1265, 8 July 1667, fol. 955v; VOC 1255, 6 August 1667, fols. 904-5; Chardin, X, p. 68). Six years later, the regular August caravan was robbed of its coin on its way to India and lost the reported (and surely exaggerated) sum of between 150,000 and 300,000 tumans (NA, VOC 1291, 21 March 1674, fol. 558; VOC 1304, 24 May 1674, fol. 437; Chardin, II, p. 349).

In 1641 Shah Şafi, apparently more galled by the loss of Kandahar than that of Baghdad in 1638, was ready to mount an expedition against the Mughals, but until the late summer of that year it remained unclear whether the Ottomans would ratify the Peace of Zohāb (Saksena, p. 219). When the news confirming Ottoman agreement arrived in September, Shah Şafi, having been apprised of a number of anti-Mughal rebellions in India, immediately proceeded to launch a campaign. The troops left in early 1642, with Shah Şafi to follow a few months later, but Shah Şafi died in May. By that time the Mughals had sent



their own army to Kandahar, and Shah ‘Abbas II, who succeeded Shah Šafi on 15 May, dispatched troops as well, but the momentum for Iran’s thrust was lost in the change of power (Mirost, pp. 230-31, n.).

Only in late 1645, when ‘Abbas II finally took control, were the Safavids ready to resume their drive to retake Kandahar, with its fortress that was generally known as the strongest in Persia (Razawiān, pp. 5-6; Waḥid Qazvini, pp. 496-99; Marašī, p. 10; Tavernier, I, p. 695). The Safavid military received some of its back pay, an army was mobilized, and provisions in the form of wheat, lead, and gunpowder were secured in the eastern provinces and transported to Kandahar (Waliqoli Šāmlu, pp. 327-28; Wāleh Ešfahāni, p. 455; Mašizi, pp. 230-31; Inayat Khan, p. 412; more details in Matthee, chap. 5). The Mughals sought to obtain Safavid neutrality with regard to Shah Jahān’s venture to regain the ancestral lands of the Mughals in Central Asia. In early 1647, an Indian embassy dispatched for this purpose reached Isfahan. ‘Abbas II agreed to remain neutral, yet in effect decided to proceed with his advance against Kandahar, taking advantage of the disastrous defeat Shah Jahān had just suffered in Badaḡšān (Riazul Islam, 1970, pp. 107-10; idem, 1979-82, I, pp. 297-98). In the summer of 1648, Shah ‘Abbās II himself led an army numbering 40,000 from Isfahan (Andersen and Iversen, p. 154). After taking Bost, near present-day Laškargāh, in January 1649, he marched on Kandahar and after a brief siege took the city on 22 February (Waḥid Qazvini, pp. 440ff; Andersen and Iversen, pp. 155-56; Saksena, p. 225). During the siege, the Iranians suffered great losses, and as many as 6,000 *kezelbāš* soldiers are said to have defected to the enemy, due to the demoralizing effect of oppressive commanders, lack of pay, and substandard accommodation (Foster, pp. 266-67, 270; De Chinon, p. 73; Speelman, pp. 211-12). The Georgian *golām* Mehrā Khan, governor of *Estrābād/Astarābād* and former governor (*ḥākem*) of Bost, was appointed governor of Kandahar. When he died later that year, he was succeeded by Autar Khan, another Georgian *golām*, who continued to restore and strengthen the fortress of Kandahar (Waḥid Qazvini, p. 495; Luft, pp. 136-37).

There are various reasons why, despite the manifest weaknesses of the Safavid army, Kandahar surrendered to the Safavids. The Dutch noted the superiority of the Iranian artillery, enhanced with the assistance of Europeans artillery experts (NA, VOC 1178, 16 October 1649, fol. 627v.). The Iranians may have owed their victory above all to the disarray in the Mughal command structure, which was torn by factional fighting between Shah Jahān’s sons *Dārā Šokōh*



and Awrangzēb (Nicoll, p. 225).

The Mughals sought to retake the city several times in the next few years, yet these attempts all failed. In 1651 and again in 1652 they encircled the city, but in both cases they had to lift the siege, forced by the onset of the cold season the first year and sidelined by invading Uzbeks the next. In 1653 Dārā Šokōh made one last effort to march against Kandahar, prompting Shah ‘Abbās II to mobilize an army while seeking assistance from the governors of Kerman and Sistān in the form of cereals, lead, and gunpowder (Manucci, I, p. 38; Speelman, p. 249; Mašizi, pp. 230-31; Raverty, pp. 22 ff.; Riazul Islam, 1970, pp. 111-13). Awrangzēb is said to have contemplated a new effort to retake the city but to have been dissuaded from this plan by his sister with the argument that reconquering Kandahar would not be easy, that failing to do so would be a huge blemish on the sultan’s reputation, and that success would bring small gain (Krusinski, I, pp. 143-44). The main problem for the Mughals seems to have been their medium-size guns of limited range, with which it was impossible to sustain a siege (Alam Khan, p. 27, n. 98). Nicolas Sanson (p. 162), playing upon age-old stereotype about Indian pusillanimity, also argued that the Iranians held an inherent advantage over the Indians because their soldiers were better, more disciplined fighters. Yet in the end, the reason that the city remained in Safavid hands until the Afghan revolt of 1709 likely owed as much to Indian ineptitude caused by internal rivalries as to Iranian military prowess and efficiency.

Autar Khan, renamed Du’l-Faqār Khan, remained governor general (*beglerbeg*) of the city and the province until his death in 1072/1662 (Waḥid Qazvini, p. 545). He was succeeded by his brother Garjasb Beg Baratashvili, Maṣur Khan (Waḥid Qazvini, p. 742; Mašizi, p. 323). His successor, Jamšid Khan, the *qollar-āqāsi*, a favorite of the shah and very cunning, became known for his tyrannical behavior. He almost provoked a new war with the Mughals by fostering rumors about an impending Indian attack. He also provoked Baluchi unrest by demanding a girl in marriage from an unnamed local Baluchi ruler and killing him when he refused (NA, VOC 1264, 9 April 1667, fol. 665; Chardin, X, pp. 31 ff., 41 ff., 100 ff.). His successor, Zāl Khan, another Georgian, was brought to Isfahan a year after his appointment in 1082/1673, accused of being an accomplice in a major caravan robbery (Chardin, II, pp. 347-50, III, p. 155).

We know little more than the names of Kandahar’s subsequent rulers until the appointment in 1115/1704 of Šahnavāz Khan, better known as [Gorgin Khan](#) (Giorgi, XI), as *beglerbeg* of the province (the names of the intervening officers



appear in Naşiri, p. 257). Gorgin Khan, already governor of Kerman at this point, was sent east to confront the growing threat of Baluchi raids (Lockhart, 1958, p. 84). Once established in Kandahar, he met his match in the person of Mir Wais, the head of the Hōtaki tribe of the Afghan tribe, the *Ġilzis*, who was also mayor (*kalāntar*) of the city; what is more, he held the lucrative position of peripheral watchman in the service of the Safavids, patrolling and overseeing the caravan traffic between Iran and India. Mir Wais at first cooperated with Gorgin Khan. However, the relationship between the two quickly soured. Mir Wais must have been livid when in 1706 he was relieved of his supervisory post. Gorgin Khan's behavior in Kandahar only exacerbated the situation, as his harsh rule antagonized the Sunni Afghans, turning Mir Wais into a mortal enemy (Mo'men Kermāni, pp. 351-54, 361-62). His soldiers misbehaved toward the local population; he sequestered goods, commandeered Afghan girls and women, and raised taxes. Gorgin Khan is said to have partied on 8 June 1709/ 9 Rabi II, the day of the murder of the caliph 'Omar (Mo'men Kermāni, pp. 368-69). There are also stories of how the (nominally) Shi'ite Georgians would bring pigs into mosques and drink inside, how they would abuse underage girls and nine- to ten-year-old boys to the point of killing them, and then would dump the bodies at their parents' homes (Tehrāni, pp. 108-9).

The resentful Afghans sent several complaints to Isfahan, but these were intercepted by Gorgin Khan's men at court and thus never reached the shah. In the end, the Afghans acted on their own by rebelling against their Georgian overlords. This gave Gorgin Khan an excuse to arrest Mir Wais and to send him to Isfahan, urging the shah to get rid of him or at least never to allow him to return to Kandahar (Krusinski, I, p. 154; Brosset 1854-57, II/2, p. 26; Lockhart, 1958, pp. 84-85). While in Isfahan, Mir Wais through skillful flattery and substantial bribes managed to rehabilitate himself and to persuade the shah that Gorgin Khan was untrustworthy and intended to turn Kandahar into an autonomous region ruled by himself, and that Persia was threatened by an impending coalition between the Russians and the Georgians (Krusinski, I, pp. 179-81; Tardy, pp. 323-33, Lockhart, 1958, pp. 86-87). Sent back to Kandahar to serve as a shadow administrator, Mir Wais rallied his people against the Georgians. Matters came to a head when Gorgin Khan demanded Mir Wais's own daughter. Gorgin Khan met his death at the hands of the Afghans in 1709, either killed in his tent, after which the Afghans took Kandahar and massacred the city's Georgian garrison, or hacked down after the Afghans invited him and his entourage to a banquet (the different versions are summed up in



Lockhart, 1958, pp. 87-88). Upon Gorgin Khan's death, Kaykosrow (Kosrow Khan) was appointed *sepahsālār* and *wāli* of Georgia, and he was sent to Kandahar to avenge his uncle's death. Kaykosrow's campaign suffered from a severe lack of funds and a great deal of obstructionism by his rivals in Isfahan. Yet after two years of fighting interrupted by a truce, Kosrow Khan managed to lay siege to Kandahar. After two months the Afghans were forced to sue for peace. The Iranian demand for unconditional surrender made the Ghilzais resolve to keep fighting, however. The Georgians, exhausted by the summer heat, a lack of provisions, and disease, and harassed by Baluchi forces who had thrown in their lot with the Afghans, in October 1711 were forced to retreat. In the ensuing pursuit by the defenders Kaykosrow and many of his soldiers were killed, and all their military equipment fell to the Afghans (NA, VOC 1753, 23 June 1709, fol. 293v; Mostawfi, pp. 116, 168; Lockhart, 1958, pp. 89-91).

Following Kaykosrow's death, Moḥammad-Zamān Khan *qurči-bāši*, in late 1712, was appointed commander (*sardār*) and khan of Kerman and ordered to move against the Afghans while collecting soldiers on the way. His campaign, hampered by a lack of resources and his own illness, was a slow affair and fizzled when he died near Herat in the spring of 1712. As a result of this feeble Safavid response, Mir Wais managed to expand his territory until his death in 1715, taking the province of Zamindāvar (Helmand), located four days from Kandahar in 1713. The following year he handed Kandahar to the Mughals, after which he was appointed *beglerbeg* of the city (NA, VOC 1843, 11 May 1713, fols. 153-54; *ibid.* 30 May 1713, fol. 61; VOC 1865, Isfahan to Gamron, 13 June 1713, fol. 273. *ibid.*, Isfahan to Gamron, 13 June 1714, fol. 798; Lockhart, 1958, pp. 90-91). Upon his death in 1715, his son, Maḥmud, took his father's position after a short tenure of his uncle, 'Abd-al-'Aziz.

The Afghans took Isfahan in 1722 and ruled until 1729, when Maḥmud's successor, Ašraf, and his tribesmen were expelled from Isfahan after a series of defeats at the advance of Ṭahmāsbqoli Khan (later Nāder Shah Afšār; Lockhart, 1958, pp. 328-40). In 1737, Nāder Shah's army besieged Kandahar. Two miles to the southeast he had a new city built, named Nāderābād after him (see above, i). When the Ġilzi chief of Kandahar surrendered in 1738 after a siege of more than one year, Nāder Shah made 'Abd-al-Ġani Khan, the Abdāli chief, governor of the province and ordered the immigration of the Abdālis, who had been subjugated to Nāder Shah and had settled in Mashad and elsewhere in Khorasan, to Kandahar to replace the Ġilzis (Lockhart, 1938, pp.



112-21; Perry, p. 209; Abe, pp. 30-35).

Immediately after the assassination of Nāder Shah in 1747, Aḥmad Khan, the Abdāli leader, now calling himself Aḥmad Shah with the title of Dorr-e Dorrān, founded the independent government in Kandahar. The Abdālis henceforth came to be known as Dorrānis after his title. Kandahar served as the capital of Aḥmad Shah's empire, which came to extend into Khorasan, Kashmir, Sind, and Punjab as a result of his military ventures. In early 1756 (Elphinstone places the date in 1753 or 1754), Aḥmad Shah ordered the building of a new city of Kandahar to replace Nāderābād, which had been deserted (Fischer, p. 147 see above, i). He also had an irrigation channel dug from the Arḡandāb river to Kandahar, naming it Ašraf-al-Belād-e Aḥmadšāhi. Aḥmad Shah died in 1772 and was buried in the city, where his tomb had become an object of veneration when Mountstuart Elphinstone visited there in 1809. In 1775 under the reign of Timur Shah, son of Aḥmad Shah, the capital was transferred from Kandahar to Kabul (Maḥmud Ḥosayni, fols. 267a-72a; Elphinstone, II, pp. 129-34).

See also [AFGHANISTAN x. POLITICAL HISTORY](#).

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