



KERMAN V. HISTORY FROM THE ISLAMIC CONQUEST TO THE COMING OF THE MONGOLS

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The Armenian geography written in the second half of the 8th century and traditionally attributed to Moses of Khoren (see [MOVSĒS XORENAC'Ī](#)) places Kerman in the southern quarter of the Sasanian empire (Markwart, pp. 30-31). Its chief town in the author's time was Sirjān, as it had been in Sasanian times, and which continued to be its capital till the 4th/10th century (see below). Early Muslim geographers considered the greater part of Kerman province, that is, the regions adjoining the Persian Gulf and the Arabian Sea, and the inland parts towards the Sistan and Dašt-e Lut desert, to be in the *garmsir* or hot climatic zone; but they regarded the mountainous interior, home of predatory peoples like the Kufeč (or Kofejān; see [QOFŠ](#)) "mountain folk" or Pārečān/Bārezān "inhabitants of the Jabal Bārez" (see below) as coming within the *sardsir* or cold zone (*Ḥodud al-'ālam*, pp. 126-28, tr., pp. 123-25, comm., pp.



373-76; Eṣṭakri, pp. 158-60; Ebn Ḥawqal, pp. 305-7, tr., II, pp. 301-2; Waziri Kermāni, pp. 113-14; see Afzal-al-Din Kermāni, 1932, pp. 51 ff., on the excellences and specialties [*faẓā'e*] of Kerman). In Afzal-al-Din Kermāni's time (d. ca. 1218), the desert zone seems to have been a smaller part of the province as a whole than in more recent times, with areas that had been forested; Ḥamd-Allāh Mostawfi (p. 140; tr., p. 139) mentions that predatory beasts roamed the forests at the site of what became the essentially Arab creation of Jiroft (see JIROFT i. GEOGRAPHY) in the first decades of Islam. Regarding administrative divisions, the later 4th/10th century Moqaddasi, a near-contemporary of the unknown author of the *Ḥodud al-'ālam*, divides the province into five districts (*kura*), each named after its chief town: Bardsir (or Bardasir/Bardašir), Sirjān, Bam, Narmāsir (Narmāšir), and Jiroft (pp. 460-66); however, Ebn Rosta (p. 106) has given this list with the additional district of **Hormuz** (cf. Le Strange, pp. 299-300; Barthold, 1984, pp. 136-42, on the cities of Kerman in this early period). **Makrān**, to the east of Kerman (the southern part of modern **Baluchistan**), was generally considered as a separate province.

At the time of the first Arab raids into Kerman during 'Omar's caliphate (r. 13-23/634-44), Kerman was governed by a *marzbān* whose name is not recorded (Balāḍori, pp. 315, 391; cf. Markwart, p. 31). There may have been some penetration of nomadic Arabs into Kerman in pre-Islamic times, if the report that the Sasanian ruler Šāpur II Ḍu'l-Aktāf settled Arab tribesmen in Ahvāz, Tawwaj, and Kerman is accurate (Ṭabari, I, p. 845, tr., V, p. 65). During the caliphate of 'Omar, Abu Musā Aš'ari, the governor of Basra, sent Rabī' b. Ziād against Kerman. He conquered Sirjān and made a peace treaty with the people of **Bam**, while, at the same time, the governor of Bahrain, 'Oṭmān b. Abī'l-Āṣ Ṭaqafi, mounted another attack and killed the *marzbān* of Kerman on the island **Abarkāvān** (present-day Qešm) in the Persian Gulf. Shortly afterwards, in 29/649-50, the last Sasanian king, Yazdegerd III, fled through Kerman, pursued by an Arab army that perished in the snows of the mountains, allowing the king to reach Khorasan, where, however, he was eventually killed (Balāḍori, pp. 315-16, 391; Ṭabari, I, pp. 2863, tr., XV, p. 69).

The details of these first Arab probes into Kerman are unclear; Ya'qubi (p. 296, tr. Wiet, p. 99) records one by 'Abd-al-Raḥmān b. **Samora** during 'Oṭmān's caliphate, which led to the local ruler offering an annual tribute of two million **dirhams** plus 2,000 slaves. The difficult terrain clearly made the conquest an arduous one, and the process of conversion to Islam of the province's population a protracted one. A Zoroastrian community persisted in the town



of Bardsir (Kerman), although in decreasing numbers, until the 19th century (Lambton, p. 157). Many of those clinging to their ancestral Zoroastrian faith fled for refuge in the early Islamic centuries to the mountain areas like the Jabal Bārez (cf. Eṣṭakri, p. 164; Ebn Ḥawqal, p. 310, tr., p. 305).

The province likewise provided asylum for the rebel against the Omayyads, ‘Abd-al-Raḥmān b. Aṣ‘at, after he fled towards Sistan and Zābolestān after his defeat in Iraq in 82/701 (Ṭabari, II, pp. 1101-102; tr., XXIII, p. 49), but above all it became a center for the extremist Kharijite group of the Azāreqa (see KHARIJITES IN PERSIA). Their leader, Qaṭari b. Fojā’a, was pursued eastwards from Iraq and Ahvāz by Mohallab b. Abi Ṣofra, but he held out for a long time in Kerman, with his center at Jiroft (where in 75/694 he minted dirhams, styling himself *amir al-mo’menin*; see Gaube, pp. 72-73, 106; Dinavari, pp. 275, 277, 304; Ṭabari, II, pp. 1003, 1017-18, tr., XXII, pp. 150, 161-62).

The Omayyads regained control of the province and held it until the ‘Abbasid Revolution. Dirhams of Arab-Sasanian pattern were minted at Kerman from the year 62/681-82 (these acknowledging the anti-caliph ‘Abd-Allāh b. Zobayr) onwards. Post-reform dirhams were minted by the Omayyad governors from 90/709 and continued to be issued substantially till 103/721-22 and sporadically later (Walker, I, pp. cxxxviii, 30 ff., II, pp. lxxxvii, 171-73). In 128-29/745-46, the ‘Alid pretender ‘Abd-Allāh b. Mo’awia temporarily achieved power in Fārs and Kerman, but the Omayyad governor Ebn Hobayra’s commander ‘Āmer b. Żobār regained control, and in 131/748-49 an Omayyad army set out from Kerman against the ‘Abbasid general Qaḥṭaba b. Ḥomayd, who was advancing from Khorasan on Ray, but it was defeated near Isfahan (Ṭabari, II, pp. 1947-48; III, pp. 4-5; tr., XXVII, pp. 59, 126-27).

In early ‘Abbasid times, governors were specially appointed for Kerman, but under the *Taherids* (r. 205-59/821-73), Kerman was regarded as an administrative dependency of Khorasan (cf. Ṭabari, III, p. 1698; tr., XXXV, p. 156). In practice, communications across the mountains and deserts separating Kerman from Sistan and Khorasan were difficult, and this meant that Kerman was linked more closely economically and commercially with the province of Fārs to its west. Ebn al-Balki (pp. 170-71) gives the figure 2,600,000 dinars for the total tax revenues of Fārs, Kerman, and Oman in the year 200/815-16; new registers had to be compiled at this time, because the former ones had been destroyed in the civil war between al-Amin and al-Ma’mun (r. 198-201/813-17). However, the greater part of this sum must have appertained to the very rich province of Fārs. Like Khorasan and Sistan, Kerman was much



affected by the prolonged revolt of the Kharijite Ḥamza b. Āḍarak in the east during the caliphates of Hārūn al-Rašid (r. 170-93/786-809) and al-Ma'mun, and it seems that he was able to secure support from older Kharijite groups which had persisted in Kerman since Omayyad times (see Sadighi, pp. 54-56; *Tāriḳ-e Sistān*, pp. 162-69; tr., pp. 128-35; see also KHARIJITES IN PERSIA). There were, in fact, Kharijites in Kerman for at least a century and a half after Ḥamza's time; Moqaddasi (p. 469) mentions that the Kharijites of Bam had a separate congregational mosque of their own, where they kept the community's treasury.

In the mid-3rd/9th century, Kerman and Fārs were incorporated into the vast military empire assembled by the Saffarid Ya'qub b. Layṭ, who in 255/869 expanded westwards from the Sistan heartland into Kerman and Fārs. These became his base for further expansion into Ahvāz and Iraq, and were retained by the Saffarids or their commanders until the time of the fifth Saffarid amir, Moḥammad b. 'Alī b. Layṭ (298/910-11; *Tāriḳ-e Sistān*, pp. 213-14, tr. pp. 169-70; see Bosworth, 1994, pp. 135, 142 ff.). The local historian of Kerman, Afzal-al-Din Kermāni (1932, pp. 65-66), records that Ya'qub quelled a revolt of the people of Jiroft, who had been aided by the Kufeč of the Jabal Bārez. It may have been as a result of Saffarid operations against these Kufeč that this mountain region, long a stronghold of Zoroastrianism, first became Islamized (Bosworth, 1976, p. 12).

Kerman was restored only briefly to caliphate control, for in 320/932 it fell substantially under the authority of a local commander of the Samanids, Moḥammad b. Elyās (see [ĀL-E ELYĀS](#)). At the outset there was a confused period of fighting between him, the Buyid amir Mo'ezz-al-Dawla, who was sent from Fārs by his brother, the later 'Emād-al-Dawla, and the Samanid general Moḥammad b. Simjur, who was attempting to re-assert Samanid suzerainty; he eventually triumphed and reigned for some thirty years. From his capital Bardsir/Govāšir (the modern city of Kerman, henceforth the capital of the province), Moḥammad b. Elyās ruled in effect as an independent ruler, securing confirmation of his authority directly from the 'Abbasid caliph, whilst giving a nominal allegiance to the Samanids. He did much charitable building work within the province, but seems to have derived much of his finances from depredations on caravans crossing Kerman, in a tacit alliance with the predatory mountain peoples of the province, the Kufeč and Baluch (see below). Afzal-al-Din Kermāni (1932, pp. 66-67) flatly describes Moḥammad b. Elyās as a plundering 'ayyār. Only under his weaker, squabbling sons did this



petty amirate collapse (see in general, Bosworth, 1971). The forceful Buyid amir, 'Azod-al-Dawla, invaded Kerman in 357/968 and established there adominion that endured for eighty years, normally as part of the southern Buyid amirate based on Fārs and extending as far as Oman, until the advent of the Saljuqs. 'Azod-al-Dawla followed the example of Ya'qub b. Layṭ a century before him, launching two attacks on the Kufeč and Baluch in 360-61/970-72. He slaughtered many of them, deported the Baluch from the mountains, and settled peasants and cultivators in their place; he also penetrated to the Persian Gulf coast at Tizand Makrān and established Islam there (Ebn al-Aṭir, VIII, pp. 609, 613-14; Bosworth, 1976, pp. 15-16).

Kerman's prosperity in both the Buyid and the succeeding Saljuq periods stemmed from its position across trade routes bringing, among other things, the produce of the Indian Ocean shorelands into the Persian lands and beyond. According to Ebn al-Balkī (p. 172), in 'Azod-al-Dawla's time the tax revenue of Fārs, Kerman, and Oman amounted to 3,346,000 *dinars*, to which Kerman province, the port of Tiz on the Persian Makrān coast, and the coastal districts of Fārs contributed 750,000 *dinars*. Tiz was, in fact, especially important as a port of entry, and Afzal-al-Din Kermāni (1932, pp. 70-71) describes how the rulers of Kerman derived much revenue from port dues and the taxes on merchants, who came from as far afield as *East Africa* and *India*.

Under 'Azod-al-Dawla's disunited and contending successors in Fārs, Buyid control over Kerman became relaxed. Ebn al-Aṭir (IX, pp. 82-84) records that in 382-84/992-94 the last Saffarid amir in Sistan, Kalāfb. Aḥmad, attempted without success to invade Kerman, but this report may be a confusion with later events (see Bosworth, 1994, pp. 319-21). The *Ghaznavids* succeeded to the Saffarid heritage in Sistan, and, in 407/1016-17, Sultan Maḥmud was tempted by the continued weakness of Buyid power in Kerman, involving a dispute between the amir Solṭān-al-Dawla in Fārs and his brother Qawām-al-Dawla, governor of Kerman, to intervene there, but failed to achieve anything ('Oṭbi, tr., pp. 360-62; Nāẓim, pp. 192-93; Bosworth, 1975, p. 176). Maḥmud's son, Sultan Mas'ud, was equally unsuccessful with his ambitions in Kerman. In 424/1033 a Ghaznavid force conquered it from Solṭān-al-Dawla's son 'Emād-al-Din *Abu Kālijār*, but the Ghaznavids' financial exactions made the populace long for return of the Buyids, and in the next year an army under Abu Kālijār's vizier, Bahrām b. Māfenna, ignominiously expelled to Khorasan the Ghaznavid garrison left in Kerman (Bosworth, 1975, p. 189).



The triumph of the Saljuqs and their Turkmens over the Ghaznavids at [Dandānqān](#) in 431/1040 gave the Saljuqs control of Khorasan, and bands of Turkmens speedily extended into Sistan and across the Great Desert into Kerman. The capital Bardsir was in 434/1042-43 attacked by either the Saljuq chief [Ebrāhim Ināl](#) or by Qara Arslān Qāvord b. Čağrı Beg Dāwud but was successfully defended by Abu Kalijār's vizier Mohaddeb-al-Dawla. However, shortly before the Buyid amir's death in 440/1048-49, Kerman passed definitively into Qāvord's hands. There thus began some 140 years of Saljuq rule in Kerman, which became a virtually independent principality within the Great Saljuq empire and that only came to an end with the decline of the Great Saljuqs and the general rise to power in the eastern Persian lands of independent bands of Oghuz tribesmen. The history of these years is recorded in a local history of the province, the *Tāriḳ-e Saljuqiān-e Kermān* that was written in the opening years of the 11th/17th century by Moḥammad b. Ebrāhim. Although separated from the events in question by five or six centuries, he used important earlier sources, including Afzal-al-Din Kermāni's *Eqd al-'olā*, written for the Oghuz amir Malek Dinār (for him, see below) at the end of the period of Saljuq rule in Kerman, and others like this same author's *Badā'e' al-azmān fī waqā'e' Kermān*, once considered lost but now partially reconstructed (see Houtsma, pp. 365-66; Storey, I, pp. 357-58; Storey-Bregel, II, pp. 1055-60); fragments quoted by later authors were collected and published in a volume by [Mehdi Bayāni](#).

Qāvord's just rule in Kerman is praised by Moḥammad b. Ebrāhim. He allotted pasture grounds within the steppes to the Turkmens as their *eqṭā'* but kept them off the agricultural lands. He established a high standard of minting for his coins, erected lofty markers along 140 *farsaks* of the road in the Bam-Fahraj desert region to guide travelers, and constructed caravansaries and cisterns along roads. He led punitive expeditions against the troublesome Kufečs within Kerman and against the Šabānkāra'i Kurds in Fārs, and also launched an attack across the Arabian Sea to Oman and conquered it from the local Kharijites, so that it remained an outpost of Saljuq power for nearly a century (Moḥammad b. Ebrāhim, pp. 4-12; Waziri Kermāni, 1985, I, pp. 346-47; Bosworth, 1968, pp. 58-59). As a senior member of the Saljuq family, Qāvord had, however, ambitions for the Great Saljuq throne and was unable to accept the succession of his nephew Malekšāh in 465/1073. He rebelled, having considerable support among the Turkish commanders, who strongly adhered to the old Turkish idea of succession by seniority, but he was defeated in battle and killed in captivity (Mohammad b. Ebrahim, pp. 12-13; Rāvandi, pp. 126-27;



Ebn al-Atīr, X, pp. 78-79; Bosworth, 1968, pp. 88-89). The new sultan eventually restored Kerman to Qāvord's four sons, the last of whom, Turānšāh (r. 477-90/1085-97), built a government house, *dār al-emāra*, in the suburb of Bardsir and secured the gratitude of the populace by removing the turbulent Turkish troops from the city to quarters outside of it, before dying in 490/1097. His good reputation was such that his tomb later became a place of pilgrimage (Moḥammad b. Ebrāhim, pp. 20-21; Afzal-al-Din Kermāni, 1932, p. 73; Bosworth, 1964, pp. 89-90).

Among notable events during the rule of the Saljuq amirs of Kerman was an alleged attempt by the Isma'ilis (see ISMA'ILISM) to secure a foothold in the province during the reign of Irānšāh b. Turānšāh (r. 490 to 494 or 495/1097-1101), which does not however seem to have had any lasting result. Several of the amirs were patrons of learning and literature. Moḥammad b. Arslānšāh (r. 537-51/1142-56), who himself had a special interest in astronomy, provided bursaries for theologians and religious lawyers who could memorize the great collections of legal texts, and he constructed a library for the Turānšāh congregational mosque in the capital, Bardsir, which had 5,000 books on all the sciences (Moḥammad b. Ebrāhim, pp. 29, 32-33; Waziri Kermāni, 1985, I, pp. 360-62, 367-69). Kerman flourished greatly under the Saljuqs from its commercial role across the transit trade routes, and Moḥammad b. Ebrāhim mentions (p. 49) colonies of Rumi (Greek) and Indian merchants installed in a trading suburb, Qamādin, just outside Jiroft, with many warehouses there.

Eventually Saljuq rule in Kerman was seriously weakened by internecine strife within the ruling family when four sons of ʿŪgrīlšāh b. Moḥammad (r. 551-65/1156-70) started vying for power following the death of their father. Two of them, Bahrāmšāh and Arslānšāh, with their centers of power in Jiroft and Bardsir, respectively, at one point in effect partitioned the sultanate. The various contenders for power invited in outsiders like the Salghurid Atabegs of Fārs (see [ATĀBAKĀN-E FĀRS](#)), the Great Saljuq Sultan Arslān b. ʿŪgrīl, and the Oghuz ruler in Khorasan, Malek Mo'ayyed, and the ensuing warfare reduced the Kerman population to misery and famine. *The coup de grâce* was given to Saljuq power in Kerman by a band of 5,000 Oghuz warriors and their dependents who, having been driven out of the Saraḵs region by the Khwarazmian Solṭānšāh b. Arslān, early in the reign of Turānšāh II (572-ca.579/1177-ca. 1183) invaded Kerman from Khorasan. Their depredations, and the ravages of their herds, caused chaos and economic dislocation in



Kerman; the trading suburb of Bardsir, once an international resort for merchants and caravans, was destroyed, food supplies were interrupted, and famine followed. Kerman now became a base for Oghuz raids as far as Fārs, Isfahan, and Sistan. The last Saljuq of Kerman, Moḥammadšāh, eventually gave up the unequal struggle against the Oghuz and retired to western Persia and then to the service of the Ghurids in Khorasan around 584/1188, abandoning Kerman to the Oghuz leader **Malek Dinār** (Moḥammad b. Ebrāhim, pp. 106-36; Waziri Kermāni, 1985, I, pp. 396-401; Bosworth, 1968, pp. 173-74).

The irruption of these Oghuz initially caused much economic and social distress in Kerman, but Malek Dinār (r. 582-91/1186-95) gradually restored order there, earning much praise from the local historian for his wisdom and statesmanship and his restoration of prosperity to the province. Once firmly in power, he extended his authority southwards to the Arabian Sea coast and Makrān, making the amirs of Hormuz and of the island of Kiš/Qays his tributaries (Moḥammad b. Ebrāhim, pp. 138-64). After his death, however, further confusion ensued in Kerman. In 597/1200 amirs of the Šabānkāra of Fārs briefly seized power in Bardsir, followed by interventions by the Atabeg of Fārs Sa'd b. Zangi (see ATĀBAKĀN-E FĀRS) in 600/1203 and by amirs of the K̄vārazmšāhs (Moḥammad b. Ebrāhim, pp. 173-89; Waziri Kermāni, 1985, I, pp. 417 ff.). Of these last, Mo'ayyed-al-Molk seized power in 610/1213 at Jiroft, Bam, and Bardsir in the name of 'Alā'-al-Din Moḥammad K̄vārazmšāh b. Tekiš (see Bosworth, 1968, pp. 174-75). Finally, in 619/1222, Amir Barāq Ḥājeb, who had originally been in the service of the Qara Khitay and had later, after conversion to Islam, become *atābak* to the shah's son Ġiāt-al-Din Piršāh, established himself in Kerman. He received confirmation of his position from Sultan **Jalāl-al-Din K̄vārazmšāh Mengübirni** and founded the line of Qutlughkhanids, which endured, under Mongol suzerainty, for almost a century till the opening years of the 8th/14th century (Spuler, pp. 31-35, 152-54; Korandezi Nasavi, tr., pp. 40, 126-27).



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