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KERMAN VII. HISTORY IN THE SAFAVID PERIOD

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vii. HISTORY IN THE SAFAVID PERIOD

For the history of the town and region of Kerman during the Safavid period we have an unusual array of source material. Since Kerman was situated away from the route that connected Bandar ʿAbbās with Isfahan via Shiraz, few European travelers visited the town. We therefore lack the vivid eyewitness descriptions that exist for many other regions and urban centers. On the other hand, Kerman is one of the few places in Iran that had long generated local Persian-language chronicles, and the 17th century is no exception (Bāstāni Pārizi, 1990, introd., pp. 39-40). Two that have come to light, the *Tāriḵ-e Ṣafawiya-ye Kermān* and the *Ṣaḥifat al-eršād*, are exceedingly rich in political information about the last half century of Safavid rule. Waziri Kermāni's two works, the *Tāriḵ-e Kermān* and the *Joḡrāfiā-ye Kermān*, though written much later, complement these sources with detailed, reliable information about the city and its administrators in the Safavid period. From the 1660s onward, Kerman was also the residence of agents of the Dutch and English East India Companies (VOC and EIC, respectively), who arranged the sale and distribution of the region's famous goat's wool. Their lengthy reports offer detailed and often day-to-day information about events in town and are especially informative about the growing pressure put on the region by

Baluchi and Afghan tribesmen.

Kerman was located on a branch of the overland route to India, though not the main one, which ran from Isfahan to Qandahar via Ṭabas. In the mid-17th century, passing caravans were taxed at a rate of 2 percent (Mašizi, p. 222). The region was connected to the Persian Gulf coast via Bardsir (Mašiz) and Sirjān, but it is not clear how heavily traveled this route was. Kerman in Safavid times was a commercial and manufacturing center, mostly known for the manufacture of fine goat's hair fleece (*kork*), the best of which was produced in the surrounding area, as well as for the small quantities of regionally produced silk. Goat's wool went into the manufacture of belts and shawls, as well as the fine felts that occasionally were commissioned by the court in Isfahan (OIOC, G/36/87, 16 March 1674, fol. 133; E/3/36/4136, 22 Nov. 1675; NA, VOC 1798, 1 Aug. 1710, fol. 6). Kerman was also known for its (limited) carpet production and its faience and chinaware, which scholars currently are subjecting to petrographic analysis (Crowe; Mason). Du Mans insisted that it was difficult to distinguish Kerman pottery from Chinese specimens (Richard, II, pp. 153, 345). Yet since the quality was deemed inferior to Chinese wares, ceramics from Kerman proved uncompetitive in the long run. The Dutch began to export small quantities of these ceramics to Batavia in the East Indies in 1652 but gave up on them in the early 1680s (Volker, pp. 113-16).

KERMAN IN THE 16TH CENTURY

Kerman passed from Aq Qoyunlu to Safavid control in 908/1502. In the early part of Shah Esmāʿil's reign (r. 1501-24), the region was administered by the Ostājlu tribe, beginning with Moḥammad Khan Ostājlu. Moḥammad Khan was killed in the battle of Čālderān in 1514 and was succeeded by Aḥmad-Solṭān Ṣufi Oğlān Ostājlu (Waziri Kermāni, 1985, II, pp. 598-99). Under Shah Ṭahmāsb (r. 1524-76), Ostājlu lost control over the region, and Kerman fell to a succession of officials affiliated with the Afšār tribe, who essentially turned all of Kerman into their *toyul* (see EQṬAʿ). A large contingent of Afšār tribesmen led by Bayrām (Bahrām) Beg had settled in the area as early as 916/1510. This original migration took place in connection with Uzbeg raids into the region (ʿAbdi Beg Širāzi, pp. 49, 87; Afušta'i Naṭanzi, pp. 325-26; Waziri Kermāni, 1985, II, pp. 597-98; Moḥammad-Mo'men Kermāni, introd., pp. 26-27). The first Afšār governor of Kerman, Šāhqoli-Solṭān, was appointed either in 933/1526-27, or in 943/1536-37 (ʿAbdi Beg Širāzi, p. 87; Waziri Kermāni, 1985, II, p. 600). Šāhqoli-Solṭān participated in the expedition against ʿObayd-Allāh Khan Uzbek. Yaʿqub

Beg Afšār, who ruled Kerman in the later reign of Shah Ṭahmāsb, is associated with a punitive expedition against the warm zones (*garmsirāt*) of Jarun in 977/1569 designed to end the oppression that the local population were suffering from the rulers of Hormuz (Rumlu, pp. 571-72; Waliqoli Šāmlu, p. 89; Matthee, 2013). Shah Ṭahmāsb died in 984/1576 and his successor, Shah Esmāʿil II (r. 1576-78), appointed Maḥmud-Solṭān Afšār governor of Kerman, which he ruled until 986/1578-79, when he was succeeded by Wali Khan Afšār (Waziri Kermāni, 1985, II, pp. 602-3).

Kerman is said to have prospered under Wali Khan's rule and that of his son, Bektāš (Beygtāš) Khan, who took over in 997/1589, the second year of the reign of Shah ʿAbbās I (r. 996-1038/1588-1629), when his father was appointed the head of tribal guards (*qurči-bāši*; Eskandar Beg, I, p. 402, tr., II, p. 579; Waziri Kermāni, 1985, II, pp. 605-9). The father had taken advantage of the weakness of the central government under Shah Moḥammad Ḵodābanda (r. 985-96/1578-88) to establish his independence in Kerman, and the son continued this quest, bringing Yazd under his rule as well. Bektāš Khan amassed fabulous wealth in the process and grew arrogant to the point of not showing up at the court to offer submission and fealty to the shah (Afušta'i Naṭanzi, pp. 326-27; Matthee, 2013, pp. 191 ff.). His hubris, further expressed in his desire to extend his rule to Fārs, led to his downfall. In the fall of 998/1589, Shah ʿAbbās encouraged Yaʿqub Khan, the Ḏu'l-Qadr ruler of Shiraz, to organize an expedition against Bektāš Khan. The latter was defeated and killed in the ensuing confrontation. His nephew Yusof Khan, who had collaborated with Yaʿqub Khan, succeeded him as governor of Kerman (Jonābādi, p. 712; Jalāl-al-Din Monajjem, pp. 81-84; Afušta'i Naṭanzi, pp. 327-31). Having used Yaʿqub Khan to bring down Bektāš Khan, Shah ʿAbbās next decided to rid himself of Yaʿqub Khan as well (Matthee, 2013, pp. 194-96). Fārs and Kerman were brought under Safavid control; Kerman was divided, half of it went to Wali Khan, the other half to Esmāʿil Khan (Jalāl-al-Din Monajjem, p. 105). The Afšār took a beating in the process. They were dislodged from Kerman and Yazd and one of their branches, the Aršāh, was uprooted from Isfahan (Jonābādi, pp. 712-13). Kerman, meanwhile, was offered to Ganj-ʿAli Khan, a Kurd, and one of Shah ʿAbbas's favorites.

KERMAN IN THE 17TH CENTURY

Ganj-ʿAli Khan ruled Kerman from 1005/1596 until 1034/1624. Loyal to the shah, he and his Kurdish troops participated in numerous royal campaigns, including an expedition against the Uzbeks in 1007/1598 and the march

against the Ottomans that led to the capture of Erevan and Naḵjavān in 1013/1604-5 (Eskandar Beg, I, p. 564 ff., II, pp. 843 ff., tr., pp. 748 ff., II, pp. 843 ff.; Jonābādi, p. 303). He also conquered the fortress of Ben Fahl in Makran (Wāleh Eṣfahāni, p. 162; Eskandar Beg, II, p. 852, tr., II, p. 1062). At the height of his power, Ganj-ʿAli Khan's territory stretched from Fars to the borders of Qandahar and included Baluchistan, Qāyen, and Sistan (Bāstāni Pārizi, 1989, p. 40). Kerman is said to have flourished and clearly reached its heyday under Ganj-ʿAli Khan, who is best known for his building activities. He thus oversaw the construction of the central *maydān*, a square of 50 x 100 m modeled after the royal square of Isfahan. He also had mosques, caravanserais and gardens built, as well as a bathhouse that is named after him. A number of pious foundations (*awqāf*) are also listed under his name (Bāstāni Pārizi, 1989, pp. 56-82; Waziri Kermāni, 1985, II, pp. 618-22). An incident involving the Zoroastrian community of Kerman reveals something about their conditions at the time. The local clergy agitated against them, and Ganj-ʿAli Khan himself was accused of expropriating and demolishing their homes to make room for his building projects. Complaints about this prompted Shah ʿAbbās to conduct an investigation and ultimately to travel to Kerman incognito himself in 1015/1606, where he learned that Ganj-ʿAli Khan was not the culprit. Upon returning to Isfahan, the shah issued an edict ordering protection for the Zoroastrians, an occasion that the local community came to name "Ḵayrāt-e Šāh ʿAbbās" (Falsafi, II, pp. 378-80; Bāstāni Pārizi, 1989, pp. 293-301).

In 1031/1622, Shah ʿAbbās ordered Ganj-ʿAli Khan to move against Qandahar. Upon the city's conquest, he was appointed its governor. Kerman at that point was offered to Ṭahmāsbqoli Khan (Waziri Kermāni, 1985, II, pp. 626-28). Ganj-ʿAli Khan died in 1033/1623 while in Qandahar, and was succeeded by his son ʿAli-Mardān Khan (Eskandar Beg, II, p. 1041, tr., II, pp. 1261-62). Upon Ṭahmāsbqoli Khan's death in 1035/1626, Kerman was given to Amir Khan, the son of Rostam-Solṭān Suklen Ḏu'l-Qadr, who kept the post until Shah ʿAbbās's death in 1629 (Eskandar Beg, II, p. 1058, tr., II, pp. 1281-82; Waziri Kermāni, 1985, II, 633). Subsequent governors include Jāni Beg Khan Bigdeli Šāmlu, who became governor at the same time that he was appointed *qurči-bāši* in 1637, a combination that remained customary until the end of Safavid rule. His rule, which lasted until his death by execution in 1645, is said to have been good for Kerman. Given his important function at the court, he was mostly an absentee governor, though, letting himself be represented by his brother Ologʰ Khan (Waziri Kermāni, 1985, II, pp. 635-37, 642). With Jāni Beg's execution, all his landed possessions in Kerman province fell to the crown. The governorship

went to the new *qurči-bāši*, Mortažāqoli Khan Begdeli Šāmlu (Mašizi, p. 211; NA, VOC 1152, Daghregister Bastincq, fol. 248; Waziri Kermāni, 1985, II, p. 638).

In this period Kerman began to show signs of political mismanagement leading to social unrest and, eventually, economic decline. Bāstāni Pārizi, who traces these problems all the way to the period following the rule of Bektāš Khan and the shah's confiscation of his property and that of his relatives, claims that, from the early reign of Shah ʿAbbās II (r. 1052-77/1642-66), Isfahan no longer sent competent khans to Kerman. He further mentions the financial stress of the state and its need for revenue to finance the war over Qandahar, leading to growing exactions on Kerman in the form of increased taxes on items such as oil and cereals, with the revenue going to the war. He specifically points out that all of the revenue of the copper and silver deposits in Kerman province were siphoned off by Isfahan. He also notes that after the region was converted to crown domain, Kerman's governors possessed fewer financial and judicial powers than their predecessors. What is more, he attributes the problems to an influx of alien elements in the form of Kurdish officials lacking knowledge about local affairs and bringing their Sunni convictions to a largely Shiʿite environment. He points to an increase in clerical influence, leading to increased meddling in local affairs by religious officials such as the *šayḵ-al-Eslām*, and growing intolerance vis-à-vis minorities, especially the Zoroastrians. He finally refers to the growing pressure coming from the east in the form of Baluchi and Afghan tribesmen staging raids into Kerman province with growing frequency (Mašizi, introd., pp. 20 ff.).

These trends are unmistakable in the long term, although the notion that all governors after Ganj-ʿAli Khan were of second caliber and out for personal gain is belied by a governor like ʿAbbāsqoli Khan Qājār, who sought to enhance the city's well-being rather than to line his pockets. Appointed in 1063/1653, this magistrate built and managed underground irrigation canals (*qanāt, kāriz*) and constructed caravanserais. During his tenure, many people flocked to the town of Kerman and numerous houses were built, so that long after his death he was remembered for his benevolent rule (Mašizi, pp. 224-25, 234, 276-77, 332-33). Another exception is Ṣafiqoli Beg, the vizier who in 1076/1666 took the side of the people and refused to obey Isfahan's demand for provisioning food supplies (*soyursāt*; Mašizi, pp. 91-92).

Unmitigated decline is gainsaid by other developments as well. One is that several caravanserais were constructed in Kerman in the mid-17th century

(Mašizi, p. 248). Another is that Kerman pottery saw an increase in mass production as of about 1660, fulfilling growing local demand (Golombek, pp. 253-54). A third is that Kerman became a focus of outside commercial attention in the same period. The VOC and EIC, looking to expand their business in Iran, in the mid-17th century entered the trade in Kerman goat's hair fleece (*kork*), which was produced in the region of Rāyen and locally used for the manufacture of precious shawls. In 1066/1656, a Dutch private merchant sought to invest the profit he had made selling cloth to buy "wool from Kerman" (NA, VOC 1217, 27 Aug. 1656, fol. 416). A year or two later, the VOC decided to enter the *kork* trade and sent an assistant merchant to Kerman. The English joined the Dutch in their involvement in the trade in about 1660. Locally, the VOC and EIC were usually represented by Armenian brokers. Purchasing and handling *kork* presented the Europeans with many problems involving price and quality; yet, with intervals, they stayed on doing business in Kerman long after the end of Safavid rule (for details, see Matthee, 1993).

Kerman's worsening conditions, meanwhile, are primarily linked to the region's conversion to *ḵāṣṣa* land in 1068-69/1659 (Röhrborn, pp. 37, 122). This change appears related to the need to marshal resources for a pending conflict over Qandahar, for the governor appointed in this year, Masʿud Ṣafiqoli Beg, was sent to Kerman with the task of arranging provision of food supplies (*soyursāt*), and there are also mentions of Zoroastrians complaining about taxes imposed on them (Mašizi, pp. 230-31, 251-52, 279-80). Having confiscated the goods and properties of governors including Ganj-ʿAli Khan, ʿAli-Mardān Khan, and Jāni Beg, the central state took control in Kerman while it lacked expert knowledge about local conditions, and especially about the fragile underground irrigation-canal system. The absence of responsible landowners made the agricultural yield go down. Ultimately, all this disturbed the fragile equilibrium of an environment that was inherently precarious, and in which frequent periods of drought, such as those of 1652, 1666, and 1677-78, could only be overcome with the careful management of resources (Mašizi, introd., p. 68).

All this became even more pronounced with the appointment of the Kurdish Shaikh ʿAli Khan as grand vizier in 1079/1669. His centralizing policies and his vigorous efforts to fill the empty royal treasury had serious repercussions for Kerman. As of 1082/1671, the position of governor (*ḥākem*) was downgraded to that of vizier, presumably to diminish the autonomous tendencies of the

region. Shaikh ʿAli Khan began to interfere in not just the choice of the city's vizier, but in the appointment of other local functionaries as well, from the *kalāntar* (community leader) to the *dārugā* (governor, police chief) and the *mostawfi* (financial administrator). Under his vizierate Kerman also became flooded with Kurdish officials, men who were obviously unfamiliar with the city and its ways. In 1086/1675 Khan Aḥmad Beg, the son of Kalb-ʿAli Khan, *beglerbeg* of Kordestān-e Ardalān, was appointed *dārugā* of Kerman. The following year the post went to Manṣur Beg, the son of Manučehr (Mašizi, pp. 433, 442). He founded Šaftābād and settled most of the borough with his own kin. Other settlements created by him are Fatḥābād, Mehrabāni, and Solaymāna. Shaikh ʿAli Khan also put increased fiscal pressure on the city, confiscating land and goods and imposing taxes. In 1100/1689, for instance, the crippling sum of approximately 50,000 tomans was imposed on the inhabitants (Mašizi, pp. 98, 545).

The Kurds who came to dominate Kerman were not only unfamiliar with the area's conditions, including its fragile agricultural system, but also introduced their own ethnic identity and, what is more, brought their Sunni faith to a region that was overwhelmingly Shiʿite. All this caused conflict between the various constituent groups, between Kurds and ethnic Kermanis, between Shiʿites and Sunnis, and between Muslims and Christians (Mašizi, introd., pp. 51-52). Rising tensions were exacerbated by a deteriorating economy. In 1677, for instance, when a drought brought misery to the region, a conflict pitted Dutch wool buyers against local weavers and city officials, over the steep rise in prices for scarce wool (Matthee, 1993, p. 360). Under the governorship of Mirzā Ḥātem Beg, urban unrest broke out, worsening to the point where in 1684 people organized their own security guards in the face of the thieves and robbers who roamed freely around the city (Mašizi, pp. 515, 570).

The local Zoroastrian community suffered as well in this period. Their number was estimated at 10,000 by Tavernier, one of the few European travelers who visited Kerman, spending three months in the city in 1654 (Tavernier, I, p. 431). Mašizi recounts how, in 1084/1673, Shaikh ʿAli Khan had excessive financial pressure put on them, appointing a convert as collector of arrears in poll-tax (*jezya*), as part of an overall attempt to collect back taxes. When their certificate showing that they had already paid was rejected as fake and when Ḥātem Beg, the city official, sided with the tax official, many Zoroastrians fled the city and some ended up living in caves (Mašizi, pp. 78, 577-78). At an unspecified point during Shah Solaymān's reign (r. 1077-1105/1666-94), the

ulema of Kerman made the authorities order the local Zoroastrians to leave the center of the city so as not to get mixed up with Muslim inhabitants. The Zoroastrians moved to a suburb north of the city center near the Darvāza-ye Gabri, building new homes as well as a fire temple; they were still residing there in the early 20th century (Waziri Kermāni, 1974, p. 28; Sykes, p. 193).

This period also saw the eruption of conflicts involving corruption and greed between local authorities, including religious officials such as the *šayḵ–al-Eslām*, the second most important official after the vizier, and a local magistrate with landholdings in Bam. Mirzā Moẓaffar-al-Din Ḥosayn, who had inherited his post as *šayḵ-al-Eslām* from his father, ʿAbd-al-ʿAli Dāwud, was a venal type who enriched himself at the expense of the common people. The habitual conflict between the *šayḵ-al-Eslām* and city officials such as the vizier and the *kalāntar* only made matters worse. Thus in 1086/1676, the *šayḵ-al-Eslām* became embroiled in a conflict with the vizier, Ḥātem Beg, leading to a slander campaign against the latter. Moẓaffar-al-Din also schemed against the Ṣadr-al-Mamālek, who was married to an aunt of Shah Solaymān, associating him with a portrait in which the shah was depicted as a donkey. He was found out and exiled to Shiraz, but he managed to stage a comeback with the assistance of Shaikh ʿAli Khan, as a result of which Kerman's vizier was put under arrest and his goods confiscated, while the *šayḵ-al-Eslām* was rehabilitated (Mašizi, pp. 40-41, 355-57).

The single most important factor contributing to growing turmoil and the creeping impoverishment of the region was Kerman's position as the last major urban center on Iran's eastern border, on the road to the contested city of Qandahar. Kerman served as a springboard for repeated Safavid campaigns against the Mughals or against the Baluchis of the outlying regions of Kich-Makrān. Each time that military preparations were made for war against the Mughals or the tribesmen, the region was summoned to provision troops and supply resources in the form of cereals, lead, and gun powder (Mašizi, pp. 230-31; Manucci, I, p. 38; Speelman, p. 249).

In the final years of Shah Solaymān's reign, the long-term repercussions of these developments became even more apparent. Roads became unsafe. Not just moving caravans but also villages and oases became the object of plunder by highway robbers and roaming bands of Baluchi tribesmen (Mašizi, pp. 86-87, 568, 583). In 1689 the region experienced its first major Baluchi attack, targeting the town of Ḵabiṣ, east of Kerman (Mašizi, pp. 98, 546). A year later the Afghans staged their first raids into the area, robbing a caravan coming

from Isfahan (Mašizi, p. 583). In October 1691, the Baluchis first attacked Kuhbanān and then Zarand. More than 200 people were killed in various skirmishes. In 1692 Pordel Khan, a Baluchi chief, assaulted Rudbār in the southern part of the province and threatened to move and lay siege to Kerman city itself. Only negotiations initiated by the *kalāntar* of Rāyen prevented this from happening (Mašizi, pp. 102-3, 617). This nomadic pressure may have been caused, or at least was exacerbated, by a prolonged period of drought driving the tribesmen into settled territory. The weakening of regional alliances did not help either. Thus the oppressive behavior of Kerman's *dārugā*, Manṣur Beg, alienated the rulers of Bam, which was vital for the defense of the eastern hinterland, and made it harder to maintain stability in Baluchistan (Mašizi, pp. 94-95, 460-61).

The government in Isfahan is said to have given little serious attention to these growing threats. After Shaikh ʿAli Khan's death in Moḥarram 1101/October 1686, it took one and a half years before Mirzā Ṭāher Qazvini was appointed as the new grand vizier. His accession was soon followed by an order to investigate the accounting of Kerman. Yet the appointment of a new provincial governor, too, was delayed by the power vacuum that followed the death of Shaikh ʿAli Khan. Šāhverdi Khan's name was one of five suggested at the court as candidates for the position, but the administrative paralysis prevailing in Isfahan combined with a desire to save money prevented a quick appointment. The resulting lack of authority caused a loss of administrative order and growing unrest in the city (Mašizi, p. 563). Matters turned so dire that the officials of the vizier no longer dared to go to the bazaar and the city's side alleys (Mašizi, p. 636). The shah, apprised about the conditions, thereupon consulted with Mirzā Ṭāher, so that finally, after four years of pleading and bribery, the appointment of Šāhverdi Khan as khan of Kerman was approved in Ramāżān 1104/May 1693 (Mašizi, pp. 537-38).

Like several of his predecessors, Šāhverdi Khan was charged with the task of ending Baluchi marauding. To that effect, he organized various armed expeditions to Ḳabiṣ, Rāvar and Kuhbanān, areas where the Baluchis were concentrated (Naṣiri, pp. 68-69, 72-74; Matthee, 1993, p. 358). Yet the central government, prevented from acting effectively for lack of money as well as hampered by prevailing court factionalism, made no concerted effort to counter the tribesmen. Meanwhile, Ḥātem Beg, the vizier of Kerman, hushed up his lame response to the attack of 1689, blamed the vizier of Sistan for the events (Mašizi, 99, 557-58). They wrote a letter falsely claiming that Pordel

Khan and his son had written a letter stating that if the Safavid government were to confirm their positions, they would take on the security of the area (Mašizi, pp. 101, 607). The vizier was replaced with Moḥammad-ʿAli Khan.

Some five years into the reign of Shah Solṭān-Ḥosayn (r. 1694-1722), faced with continuing Baluchi and Afghan raiding, Isfahan mounted a more forceful military response. In 1111/1699 the shah appointed Gorgin Khan, the former viceroy (*wāli*) of the Georgian region of Kartli, as commander-in-chief (*sepahsālār*). He was renamed Šāhnavāz Khan and given control over Kerman as well as a huge area stretching east all the way to Kabul, and charged with the task of putting an end to the Baluchi incursions that now ravaged the country as far as Yazd (Naṣiri, p. 277; Brosset, II/2, p. 16; Krusinski, I, pp. 151-52). Gorgin Khan first dispatched his brother Levan (Leon, Kayvān Mirzā), renamed Šāhqoli Khan, with a contingent of troops to the region in November 1699, before himself moving to Kerman in 1702. Meanwhile, the city's defensive facilities had been upgraded; in 1112/1700-1701 a new square was constructed to accommodate fresh troops numbering 30,000 soldiers (Moḥammad-Moʾmen, pp. 337, 346-47). With his Georgian troops, Gorgin Khan routed the numerically stronger Baluchis in several confrontations (Brosset, II/2, pp. 16-20; Lockhart, p. 46). In Qandahar, his rule was harsh to the point of antagonizing the Afghan population and turning Mir Ways, their leader, into a mortal enemy, but in Kerman his administration is said to have ushered in a brief period of prosperity (Moḥammad-Moʾmen, pp. 351-54). This proved to be the lull before the storm, though.

Gorgin Khan was killed fighting Mir Ways in 1709. A short while later the shah sent Gorgin's nephew, Kayḵosrow, former *dārugā* of Isfahan and just installed as *divānbegi*, against the Afghans, appointing him *sepahsālār* and governor of Kerman. He, too, suffered defeat, having received a risible 7,000 tomans for an army totaling 3,000 soldiers (NA, VOC 1798, 4 Sept. 1709, fols. 218-19; Hedāyat, pp. 494-95). Tadeusz Krusinski attributes the failure of this expedition in part to the obstructionism of the anti-Georgian faction at court. Their scheming caused the campaign to be poorly coordinated. They also made sure that some of the funds earmarked for the war effort were misappropriated or that payment was delayed (Krusinski, I, pp. 100-101, 190-92, 194). The next five years saw the succession of governors, all charged with the task of fighting the Baluchis who continued to plunder towns and villages in the area between Kerman and Yazd. Yet the resources allocated proved insufficient. Yaʿqub Khan, for instance, who succeeded Ṣafiqoli Khan, in early 1714 left Kerman

accompanied by no more than 300 men (NA, VOC 1856, 27 Feb. 1714, fol. 672). In late 1714, Kalb-ʿAli Khan Qājār, too, is said to have defeated the Baluchis, killing many of them (NA, VOC 1870, 6 Feb. 1715, fol. 579).

THE FINAL YEARS, 1716-26

In early 1716 Kerman was tranquil, judging by a contemporary account that speaks of stability, an abundance of victuals, and their reasonable prices (Moḥammad-Moʾmen, pp. 86-87). Yet the same year saw the beginning of problems that would lead to the demise of Safavid rule. A severe drought killed many goats, and excessive food prices soon created a famine. Popular unrest soon broke out. The governor proved unable to pay his troops, prompting many soldiers to sell their weapons (Moḥammad-Moʾmen, p. 88). The same period saw the return of the Afšār, who had never left the region, having been relegated to an area around Zarand and Rāvar for defensive purposes. The Safavids, woefully short on manpower, came to rely heavily on Afšār troops in their confrontation with the Baluchis and the Afghans, and their military leaders, Esmāʿil Khan, his son Šāhroḵ Khan, and his brother-in-law ʿAbd-al-Rašid Khan, who figure prominently in the *Ṣaḥifat al-eršād* of Moḥammad-Moʾmen. One Afšār chieftain, Mortažāqoli Khan, was even appointed as the city's governor in 1128/1716, most probably to help withstand the Turkmen and Afghans who in that year engaged in massive raiding into Khorasan. Being a drunkard and neglecting his duties, he lasted about four and-a-half months and was replaced by Ebrāhim Khan Qaraguzlu (Moḥammad-Moʾmen, pp. 445, 447, 449).

The Baluchis, driven to despair by the same drought, at this point invaded the area and encircled the city. Ebrāhim Khan led his troops, numbering 2,000, outside the city, but suffered defeat. Wounded, he fled the battlefield with his men and took refuge in the city, leaving the spoils to the Baluchis. After destroying surrounding villages, the Baluchis next laid siege to Kerman and, taking the suburbs, proceeded to plunder the area. Ebrāhim Khan capitulated and only managed to spare the city greater damage and save his own life by paying 1,700 tomans, part of which he extracted from the agents of the maritime companies (NA, VOC 1886, 27 Feb. 1716, fols. 451-52; VOC 1897, 4 Oct. 1716, fol. 293; ibid., 30 Nov. 1716, fols. 26-28; ibid., 2 Jan. 1717, fols. 359-65). The Baluchis carried most of the cattle with them and killed the rest. Kerman was left in a state of famine and anarchy. Soldiers engaged in plunder, breaking into people's homes, and murder became common (NA, VOC 1897, 2 Jan. 1717, fols. 361-63).

Following a popular rebellion in town, Ebrāhim Khan was recalled to Isfahan in early 1717, to be succeeded by Rostam Mirzā, *qollar-aqāsi* (NA, VOC 1897, 22 Jan. 1717, fol. 271; Lang 1952, p. 536; Bushev, p. 182). Retaining the latter post, Rostam Mirzā let himself be represented by his brother Moḥammadqoli Mirzā, a boy no older than thirteen or fourteen. Because of his young age, Moḥammadqoli Mirzā in turn was represented by a *ḡolām* named Moḥammad-Jaʿfar Beg, who proved to be an effective governor. He immediately set out to mete out justice regardless of rank or reputation. The new administration made itself popular as well by announcing a year-long tax exemption for the city (NA, VOC 1913, 8 April. 1717, fol. 183; ibid., 11 May 1717, fol. 186; ibid., 14 Aug. 1717, fol. 197). Isfahan, meanwhile, extended a hand to the Baluchis by sending another Georgian named Gorgin Beg carrying six *ḵelʿat*s for as many Baluchi chieftains and the promise that their former tribute would be restored if they were willing to resubmit to the shah's authority (Moḥammad-Moʾmen, pp. 90-91; NA VOC 1913, 25 March 1717, fols. 164-76 and 207-8; ibid., 8 April 1717, fols. 180-83).

Two years of relative calm came to an end when in the summer of 1719 the news broke that the Afghan commander Maḥmud Ḡilzay, the son of Mir Ways, had left Qandahar and was approaching with some 2,000 warriors. This caused panic in the city and prompted Moḥammadqoli Mirzā and his second in command, Ḥosayn Khan, to strengthen its defensive works by fortifying the walls and building new ones, mobilizing corvée labor from the inhabitants. These efforts had little effect, however (NA, VOC 1947, 3 Nov. 1719, fols. 130-31; ibid., 19 and 24 Oct. 1719, fols. 130-35; VOC 1937, 25 Nov. 1719, fols. 2153v-54). Isfahan ordered the authorities in Bandar ʿAbbās to collect a military force and also mobilized troops from Isfahan and Shiraz. Thousands of soldiers ended up moving to Kerman, yet the campaign, possibly undermined by court eunuchs unwilling to allow army officers to claim credit for success, failed and the assembled soldiers never met the enemy in battle (Krusinski, I, pp. 223-25). Faced with the imminent arrival of the Afghans, Moḥammadqoli Mirzā and his Georgian soldiers fled the city in October, and with him went most of the merchants and many inhabitants. Of the originally 28,000 to 30,000 people in Kerman, only 3,000, most of them old and disabled, are said to have stayed behind. The 200 Safavid troops in the city took to plundering (NA, VOC, 3 Dec. 1719, fols. 301-6; VOC 1947, 3rd fasc., 5 Jan. 1720, fols. 293, 308; ibid., 29 Feb. 1720, fol. 223).

The Afghans next stormed and captured Kerman, aided by the Zoroastrian

population who "looked upon the invaders as liberators rather than invaders." (Krusinski, I, p. 220; Lockhart, p. 73). Dutch reports confirm this, referring to the collaboration of part of Kerman's Zoroastrian community with the occupying forces. A number of Zoroastrians converted to Islam, and those who enlisted with Afghans appear to have engaged in revenge killings of local Muslims. The Afghan general Daruršāh entered the city on November 4 with some 7,000 to 8,000 soldiers, to be followed a day later by Maḥmud Ḡilzay and Asad-Allāh Khan, accompanied by three elephants and artillery (NA, VOC 1947, 3 Dec. 1719, fol. 304). At first, the invaders treated ordinary inhabitants quite well, even as they extorted large sums from wealthy people; they, however, incarcerated and in some cases killed those who resisted and sought to convert people to Sunni Islam. The local Indian Hindus (Banyans) who had stayed behind seem to have been the particular target of maltreatment. The Afghans chased them out of the city and forced the wealthy ones to disclose the whereabouts of their fortune, and killed a number under torture (NA, VOC 1964, various missives, early 1720, fols. 305-12; NA 1947, 5 Jan. 1720, fols. 307-8).

The Afghan troops stayed in Kerman for less than six months, during which time they carried a large amount of property to Qandahar. They also used the city as a base to conduct punitive expeditions to the surrounding countryside and as far as Yazd, to which they sent a 4,000 strong contingent. Many of its inhabitants were driven out of the city, settled in the Bāḡ-e Naẓar, and forced to defray the expenses of the occupying force. Before the Afghans left in the spring of 1720, they destroyed large parts of the city, including caravanserais and bazaars, as well as the Zoroastrian quarter. Most houses had been burned, the bazaar was strewn with corpses, and no merchants were to be found in the city (NA, VOC 1964, 8 April 1720, fols. 306-10; Floor, pp. 43 ff.).

Yet, in a remarkable demonstration of resilience, life quickly returned to the city after the Afghan retreat, and soon food prices stabilized. The VOC and EIC wool buyers returned to Kerman in June 1720, to be followed by most merchants and inhabitants. Isfahan next sent a new governor, Sobḥānverdi Khan, who quickly made himself popular by strengthening of the city's defenses with the assistance of a royal architect (*meʿmār-bāši*). The inhabitants of Yazd had a 4,000-toman contribution to this project imposed on them (NA, VOC 1964, 18 July 1720, fol. 299). The optimism did not last long, however, for in late 1720 armed conflict erupted between the governor and the *kalāntar* of Kerman, leading to great turmoil in the city and a change in government.

Rostam-Moḥammad Khan became the new governor (NA, VOC 1964, 17 Oct. 1720, fols. 269-71, 316-18; Marʿaši, pp. 55-56; Floor, pp. 51-53). The following spring a new Afghan threat loomed. Moving in from Bam, Maḥmud advanced with 9,000 men and, again aided by local Zoroastrians, captured the suburbs in September (NA, VOC 1983, 2 Feb. 1722, fols. 530-32; Krusinski, II, p. 14). Most of the city's inhabitants sought shelter in the citadel. A three-month long siege of the citadel ended in gruesome scenes of starvation, decimating the population. The Dutch representative was forced to pay a ransom of 1,700 tomans to escape extradition to the Afghans. When the Afghans left in August 1721, presumably to quell a revolt that had broken out in Qandahar, the city lay in ruins, the surrounding countryside had been devastated, and the roads were infested with bandits (for this episode, see Lispensier's report in NA, VOC 1999, fols. 352-56; the devastation is also emphasized in Marʿaši, p. 45; Tehrāni, pp. 160-61).

The Afghans soon returned to Kerman. Maḥmud and his troops reached the outskirts of the city in October 1721, occupying the Zoroastrian quarter, and attacking the city on October 29. In Kerman there was much confusion about the authorities in charge. Rostam-Moḥammad Khan was dismissed and a new government was appointed, but popular protest forced Isfahan to reinstate him. The Afghans next laid siege to the citadel. They took a mosque, killing many of the refugees inside and destroying the building. The citadel, where thousands of people were holed up, endured daily fire at the cost of large numbers of casualties, yet proved more resistant. Unable to breach its fortifications, the Afghans ultimately offered to leave in exchange for a large sum of money. Having collected what they could from the impoverished populace, they left in February 1722 (NA, VOC 1983, 9 Nov. 1721, fols. 247-49; ibid., 21 and 28 Feb. 1722, fols. 288-89, 532-42; Marʿaši, pp. 55-56; Floor, pp. 55-62). The Afghans continued to threaten Kerman yet failed to take it, and in the next four years, as various armies roamed the region, the city would remain under nominal Safavid control in the form of Ṭahmāsb II, the son of Shah Solṭān-Ḥosayn, until in January 1726 it fell to Sayyed Aḥmad Khan, the only claimant to the throne of sound Safavid descent (Marʿaši, pp. 68-69; Lockhart, p. 300, genealogy in Appendix I; Floor, pp. 263 ff.). Although he died in 1140/1728 at the hands of Ašraf Ḡilzay, the latter's defeat by Nāderqolī Bēg Afšār (the future Nāder Shah) and death in 1142/1730 ensured re-establishment of Persian control of the province.

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