



KERMAN IX. HISTORY IN THE QAJAR PERIOD

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Kerman, despite its geographical position on the periphery of Qajar Iran (1795-1925), was at the center of numerous significant developments in this important transitional period in Iran's history. Politically, Kerman was never well-integrated into the Qajar empire. Locally-rooted elite households dominated the provincial administration, tax collection, landholdings, trade, and religious institutions, while monopolizing access to Qajar appointees there. Economically, however, Kerman was on the front lines of changes connected to Iran's absorption into global economic structures. Kermani elites greatly intensified their community's connections to foreign trade, particularly through investments in commercial agriculture and carpet manufacturing. These economic changes, along with the expansion of landholdings and administrative control over rural areas by urban elites, helped consolidate an integrated regional economy around Kerman city. By the 1890s and 1900s, Kerman became a hotbed of radical nationalist and constitutionalist agitation, with Kermani intellectuals and activists playing critical roles in bringing together a revolutionary coalition against Qajar despotism in the buildup to the [Constitutional Revolution](#) of 1323-29/1905-11. This movement against the patriarchal rule of the Qajars grew in part through strong connections to



prominent local households, and the constitutional movement itself faltered in Kerman once revolutionary institutions began to challenge the patriarchal authority of these families in the local administration. By World War I, Kerman was firmly in the British sphere of influence in the growing Anglo-Russian Great Game in Central Asia and Iran, and it was subsequently occupied during the war by the [South Persia Rifles](#).

Political history. Kerman experienced the beginning of the Qajar period violently and traumatically. In March 1794, as [Āgā Moḥammad Khan Qājār](#), the founder of the Qajar dynasty, was consolidating his power over the Iranian plateau, the Zand prince Loṭf-‘Ali Khan entered Kerman in an attempt to advance his own claims to the throne. He found support here among Sistani and Afghani forces and nomadic tribesmen recruited from Lurestan, Bušehr, and Jupār (Moḥammad-Rezā Širāzi, pp. 381-83; Waziri Kermāni, 1985, II, pp. 734-35). A local merchant and landowner named Āqā ‘Ali Šamā‘i Karrāni, according to his great-grandson Aḥmad-‘Ali Khan Waziri Kermāni, emerged at the head of a group of Qajar loyalists among the city’s elite who resisted the Zand prince. Āqā ‘Ali appealed to Āgā Moḥammad Khan directly after his property was confiscated, encouraging him to conquer the city (Waziri Kermāni, 1985, II, pp. 736-37; Moḥammad-Rezā Širāzi, pp. 386-87). A prolonged siege of Kerman (then called Gavāšir) ensued in which famine claimed perhaps one-third of the population of the city. On 29 Rabi‘ I 1209 (24 October, 1794), a group of Jupāri riflemen responsible for guarding a section of the wall opened a gate to allow the Qajar forces to enter. In the aftermath of the Qajar conquest, much of the city was destroyed, thousands of men were massacred or blinded, and countless women and children were carried off as slaves (Waziri Kermāni, 1985, II, pp. 744-48 and n. 53; Moḥammad-Rezā Širāzi, pp. 386-89; Hedāyat, IX, pp. 256-58; Fasā‘i, I, p. 658; E‘temād-al-Salṭana, III, pp. 1424-25). In 1810, John Malcolm (p. 198) reported meeting these blind Kermani beggars in his travels all throughout Iran. The only survivors from within the city were said to be some ten to twelve thousand individuals who took refuge in houses owned by the new Qajar favorite Āqā ‘Ali Šamā‘i, whose son was subsequently appointed to watch over the rubble as the first Qajar governor of the city (Waziri Kermāni, 1985, II, p. 748). Loṭf-‘Ali Khan briefly fled to the city Bam before he was betrayed by his host, arrested, blinded, and eventually executed by Āgā Moḥammad Khan, who also celebrated his victory by decapitating several hundred of prisoners and erecting a pyramid of their skulls in Bam (Fasā‘i, I, p. 659; Waziri Kermāni, 1985, II, pp. 752-55; Moḥammad-Rezā Širāzi, pp. 389-92; Hedāyat, IX, pp. 254-61; E‘temād-al-



Salṭana, III, p. 1425; Sykes, 1958, II, p. 288).

Curiously, this act of brutality initiated a long period of political stability in Iran for the first time since the fall of the Safavid dynasty. In 1804, [Fath-ʿAli Shah](#) appointed his uncle, Ebrāhim Khan Ṣāḥir-al-Dawla, as prince-governor of Kerman, who quickly took to reconstructing the city, regularizing the provincial administration, subjugating powerful tribal chiefs on the Baluchistan frontier, and reviving commerce by securing transportation and trade routes (Waziri Kermāni, 1985, II, pp. 758-62; Aḥmadi, 1975, p. 12). The centerpiece of his reconstruction project in Kerman city was the Ebrāhimiya Complex, centered on a *madrasa*, bathhouse, and bazaar (Waziri Kermāni, 1974, p. 30). Ṣāḥir-al-Dawla is known to have had twenty sons and twenty-one daughters (Bāmdād, I, p. 21), many of whom remained as part of the elite community in Kerman, with wealth and prestige built around the Ebrāhimiya complex, its endowments, and extensive landholdings in Rafsanjān. Ṣāḥir-al-Dawla's eldest son, Hājj Moḥammad-Karim Khan, studied in the *ʿatabāt* as a disciple of [Sayyed Kāẓem Raṣṭi](#), the chief disciple of [Shaikh Aḥmad Aḥsā'i](#), and returned to found a Kermani branch of the Shaikhi (Šayḳi) theosophical movement that remained closely tied to the Ebrāhimi family and its fortunes (Hermann and Rezai, pp. 87-88).

Kerman's overall political integration into the Qajar state was limited. The Qajars administered provincial territories through a system built on interpersonal relationships and a careful negotiation of power between a centrally appointed governor and local elites (Martin, p. 1). Ṣāḥir-al-Dawla was the first in a series of Qajar prince-governors to rule Kerman over the course of the 19th century in this way. These governors acted nearly autonomously from the Qajar state, in concert with members of prominent local households like the Ebrāhimis (descendants of Ebrāhim Khan Ṣāḥir-al-Dawla), the Waziris (descendants of Āqā ʿAli Šamā'i through his son, Mirzā Ḥosayn Wazir), and the Kalāntaris (the hereditary *kalāntars* "leaders" of Kerman city). At periodic low tides of central power, Kerman also experienced outright revolts against central authority. Most notably, the Ismaʿili Nezāri imam [Āqā Khan Maḥallāti](#), appointed governor in 1836, was dismissed from his post in 1838 after building up an independent military following among the ʿAṭāʾ-Allāhi tribes, and popular support through ties to the Neʿmat-Allāhi Sufi order based in Mahān, which elicited suspicion from Moḥammad Shah Qājār (r. 1834-48). After a period of house arrest in Maḥallāt, Āqā Khan forged appointment papers and assumed the governorship of Kerman briefly in 1840 and procured



support from the urban elite for his rule. Upon the arrival of a sizeable military force from Tehran, Āqā Khan fled via Bam to India, where the Ismaʿili Imamate has remained since (Waziri Kermāni, 1985, II, pp. 782-88; Eʿtemād-al-Saltāna, III, pp. 1649-51; Hedāyat, X, pp. 250-53; Algar, p. 71; Daftary, pp. 71-72).

Between 1859 and 1878, Moḥammad-Esmāʿil Khan Nuri Wakil-al-Molk (governor or de facto governor, 1859-68), and his son Mortaḏāqoli Khan Wakil-al-Molk (governor, 1869-78) dominated provincial politics. Moḥammad-Esmāʿil Khan was not a member of the Qajar royal family, but a skilled administrator who served first as the manager (*piškār*) under Kayumarṭ Mirzā ʿAmid-al-Dawla, but in recognition of his abilities was made governor in his own right shortly after and given the royal title Wakil-al-Molk (Eʿtemād-al-Saltāna, III, p. 1826; Waziri Kermāni, 1985, II, pp. 807-8). His tenure in Kerman, along with that of his son, was a period of political stability and economic growth. In 1862, he subordinated tribal groups in Baluchistan in a campaign along the frontiers and reinforced his relationship with leading tribal chiefs through intermarriage (Waziri Kermāni, 1974, p. 43; idem, 1985, II, p. 808). Both he and his son Mortaḏāqoli Khan Wakil-al-Molk also engaged in a massive building campaign throughout the province that was praised by contemporary Kermani and European observers alike. In Kerman city, these two governors are credited with the construction of the Wakili Mosque, two new caravansaries, a pair of public bath houses, and repairs to the citadel complex along with the addition of a new administrative office (*divān-kāna*; Waziri Kermāni, 1974, pp. 27, 29, 31, 32, 37; Schindler, p. 830). A system of caravansaries was constructed along Kerman's two major trade routes connected to the Persian Gulf port of Bandar ʿAbbās, one connecting to Rafsanjān and Yazd and the other further east, connecting to Khorasan via Bam (Waziri Kermāni, 1974, pp. 111, 135, 182, 185, 187). In the villages surrounding Kerman city, they also built numerous bathhouses, mosques, water reservoirs, bazaars, and gardens (Waziri Kermāni, 1974, pp. 86, 94-95, 111, 117, 123-24, 188). Sir Oliver Beauchamp Coventry St. John, a member of the Perso-Kalat Boundary Commission, credited the two Wakil-al-Molks with having "raised Karman from the desolation it had been plunged in, since the siege, to its present position of the most orderly and one of the most prosperous divisions of the kingdom" (St. John, p. 100). Even during the devastating famine of 1870-71, and the outbreak of cholera that followed, Kerman was almost entirely spared the consequences when Mortaḏāqoli Khan Wakil-al-Molk enacted measures to control grain prices, prevent hoarding, and stop unauthorized exports (Okazaki, p. 191).



From the 1880s to World War I, Kerman's governorship passed through the hands of several Qajar princes from the *Farmānfarmā* family. After a factional riot associated with a grain shortage in 1878, Mortazāqoli Khan Wakil-al-Molk was replaced by *Firuz Mirzā Farmānfarmā* (who had briefly governed the province thirty years earlier in 1837-39), followed by his sons 'Abd-al-Ḥamid Mirzā Nāṣer-al-Dawla Farmānfarmā (governor of Kerman 1881-91), and 'Abd-al-Ḥosayn Mirzā Noṣrat-al-Dawla Farmānfarmā (governor of Kerman 1891-93, 1894-95, and 1905). 'Abd-al-Ḥosayn Mirzā developed a close personal relationship with the first British consul in Kerman, *Percy Sykes*, who arrived in the city in 1894 (Waziri Kermāni, 1985, II, pp. 815-25; Wynn, pp. 20-22). Kerman was already considered part of a British sphere of influence in the context of the Great Game. This claim was advanced with the establishment of a consulate (matched temporarily by a Russian mission), and formalized during the Constitutional Revolution in the *1907 Anglo-Russian Convention*. The spheres of influence arrangement became spheres of military occupation during World War I, with Sykes' South Persia Rifles central in organizing a British military presence there during the war (Sykes, 1958, II, pp. 456-59).

Economy. As with other Iranian provincial communities, the activities of merchants and locally rooted elites intensified Kerman's connections to global economic structures, introducing important structural changes to the regional economy and social framework. Kerman's regional economy was more tightly integrated around the central hub of the city of Kerman by the end of the Qajar period with a considerable expansion of landholdings in the hands of urban elites, the commercialization of agriculture, and the remarkable growth of the export markets for Kerman's famous down wool (*kork*) and woolen products like carpets and shawls (de Groot, p. 357; Gustafson, 2010, pp. 191-227). While Kerman's overall volume of trade dramatically increased over the Qajar period, the composition of that trade (largely raw materials) conforms to a widespread pattern of marginalization or dependent development in Asian economic history. These transformations were led by Kermani elites themselves, acting on economic opportunities presented in the rapidly changing global economy, and not simply global forces or European intervention.

Agriculture, which depended on underground irrigation canals (*kāriz*) due to the aridity of the climate, formed the basis of Kerman's economy throughout the Qajar period. The districts of Sirjān and Rafsanjān were the major agricultural zones, producing large quantities of wheat, barley, and millet



along with a wide variety of fruits (notably melons, pomegranates, and dates) and nuts (including widely hailed pistachios, as well as almonds and walnuts [Waziri Kermāni, 1974, pp. 151-60, 168-74]). Both of these districts possessed a central hub that acted as the seat of prominent families who owned substantial land in the district and collected taxes as agents (*‘ommāl*). Sa‘idābād in the Sirjān district (currently known simply as the city of Sirjān) was constructed in the 1790s by the head of the Kalāntari family and grew by the late 19th century into a thriving mercantile center. Bahrāmābād in Rafsanjān, which was dominated by the Ebrāhimi (descendants of Ebrāhim Khan Ṣāḥir-al-Dawla) and Aḥmadi families through much of the 19th century, similarly developed into a prosperous town attracting artisans and tradesmen from throughout Iran (Firuz Mirzā Farmānfarmā, p. 84). The agricultural surplus flowed from rural districts through these regional hubs and either into the city of Kerman or overland to other Qajar communities (mainly Yazd and Khorasan), including to the Persian Gulf port of Bandar ‘Abbās for export.

Kerman’s trade in down wool, notable since at least the Safavid era, remained significant through the Qajar period as well. Pastoral tribes, nomadic as well as semi-nomadic, produced down and other fine wool principally in Jiroft, Jebāl Bārez, and Zarand (Waziri Kermāni, 1974, pp. 85, 120, 178). This fed a thriving handicraft shawl and carpet sector among Kermani tribes and by master weavers in Ravār and the city of Kerman (Dillon, pp. 288-89). The Afšār tribe, in particular, was so well-known for their quality, designs, and workmanship that by the 20th century many tribal carpets became simply known as “Afshars,” regardless of the tribe producing them (Stöber, pp. 252-59). Although these items were largely produced for local consumption until late in the 19th century, raw down and coarse shawls were nonetheless Kerman’s primary non-food export items until the commercialization of these industries. In the early 1850s, the British consul Keith Abbott concluded that “the little importance this town possesses is derived from its shawls and other woollen fabrics.” He estimated that some 2,200 to 2,400 looms produced £40,000 to 45,000 worth of shawls and other woollen fabrics annually and employed 4,500 men and boys (Abbott, pp. 83, 151).

Abbott described the Kerman of the early 1850s as “not a place of much commercial consequence” (Abbott, p. 151), but this situation began to change by the end of the decade. Waziri Kermāni notes that, already in the 1840s, demand for cotton and madder in India and grains throughout Iran, had already begun to drive up the price of land, and that, by the 1870s, “the



landlords of Kerman's villages and towns have become powerful and wealthy" (Waziri Kermāni, 1974, p. 158). The subjugation of Kerman's pastoral nomadic tribes and the building campaign led by Moḥammad-Esmā'il Khan Wakil-al-Molk and Mortazāqoli Khan Wakil-al-Molk after 1859 enabled Kermani landowners to find markets for their agricultural surplus more easily. These local infrastructural improvements coincided with the opening of steamer service on the Persian Gulf in the 1860s and the first telegraph line reaching the province in 1879 (Aḥmadi, 2007, pp. 321-25). This encouraged a rapid commercialization of Kerman's agriculture, with steady growth in the cash cropping of cotton, henna, and opium in particular. Walter Baring estimated in his 1881 report on Iran's opium trade that Kerman produced about 4,500 maunds of opium in 1879-80 (Baring, p. 48). This figure nearly tripled to 12,000 maunds in 1896 (Sykes, 1896, pp. 12, 14). This same year, three-quarters of the opium crop made its way to Yazd for local consumption or re-export via Bandar 'Abbās. A much larger yield of henna (280,000 maunds) also made its way to facilities in Yazd, while cotton (200,000 maunds) was largely exported directly to India through Bandar 'Abbās (Sykes, 1896, p. 14).

Iranian merchants were critical in transforming Kerman's longstanding connections to the wider Indian Ocean region in a search for new markets for agricultural surplus. There was a decisive shift towards maritime trade for international transactions with the longstanding overland route east through Baluchistan and Sistan slowing considerably during the later decades of Qajar rule, and failing to revive even when British administrators tried to re-open the Quetta route in the 1890s ("Sykes to Salisbury," FO 60/621). Waziri Kermāni noted at least forty Kermani merchants in the mid-1870s with international connections, particularly to Bombay (Waziri Kermāni, 1974, pp. 78-79, 100, 172). A group of Šekarpuri merchants (diaspora Indian merchants) present in the city of Kerman established their dominance over international trade by the first decade of the 20th century, acting also as moneylenders and bankers (Gleadowe-Newcomen, p. 49). The activities of Šekarpuri merchants, as well as those of the local Zoroastrian community, were encouraged and protected by the presence of a British consulate established in Kerman city by Sir Percy Sykes in 1894 (Sykes, 1902, pp. 176-86).

The commercialization of agriculture had wider social, political, and economic effects. The price of land increased in major agricultural districts such that farmers in Sirjān became "wealthier than former owners of towns," and in Rafsanjān "the farmers mostly [became] *ḥājīs*" (Waziri Kermāni, 1974, p. 158,



169). Prominent urban households invested heavily in land throughout the province, consolidating control over the regional economy through their household networks. This process accelerated after Nāṣer-al-Dīn Shah's decree in 1889-90 ordering the sale of crown lands (*kāleṣa*) in the provinces to private individuals to increase productivity and build up the central treasury (Šahidi, p. 65; Lambton, 1960, pp. 151-53). The Kalāntaris dominated Sirjān, and the Aḥmadi and Ebrāhimi families expanded their landholdings in Rafsanjān. Likewise, the newly formed Behzādi military household in Bam leveraged their position patrolling the frontier in Baluchistan to control lucrative henna producing lands in Narmāšir (ʿAbd-al-Ḥosayn Mirzā Farmānfarmā, pp. 62-101). This was matched by the disappearance of many longstanding rural households like the "Āqāyān-e Anār" and "Āqāyān-e Rafsanjān" who had, until the late 19th century, operated as socially powerful elements in outlying rural districts. The expansion of urban families' landholdings, combined as they were with administrative control and tax collection, served to integrate rural areas around the city of Kerman through the networks of elite households and consolidate Kerman's regional economy (Gustafson, 2014).

Kerman's carpet boom in the 1890s was a further step towards the integration of the regional economy. Tabrizi merchants, responding to foreign demand for Persian carpets after their introduction to European upper and middle class consumers in a series of exhibitions after 1873, bought up most of the rugs and carpets available on the open market in Kerman (Helfgott, pp. 15-16). After 1894, many of Kerman's elites began investing money made in cash cropping and other ventures into commercial weaving operations (Ittig). Whereas John Preece notes only about 100 carpet manufactories in Kerman city in 1894, Percy Sykes, detailing the meteoric rise of this industry just two years later, estimates a ten-fold increase in their numbers, exporting some £120,000 worth of fine carpets in 1895-96, as compared to just £3,000 in 1894-95 (-Preece; Sykes, 1896). Local historians Shaikh Yaḥyā Aḥmadi and Aḥmad-ʿAlī Khan Waziri Kermāni, writing in 1904 and 1907 respectively, both noted that this expansion of the carpet trade in Kerman was primarily a local initiative, "every capable person here with 10 tomans, from the elite classes (*a'yān*, khans, and *bozorgān*) to the common people and the lower classes, etc., opened a weaving shop or acted to benefit from it" (Aḥmadi, 1975, pp. 156-68, Waziri Kermāni, 1974, pp. 33-34). These urban workshops employed large numbers of dislocated workers from the rural hinterland as well as large numbers of children working in contemptible conditions (Browne, p. 483; Euan Smith, p. 186). Carpets remained Kerman's primary export item into the



late 20th century, with periodic booms and busts, including a severe downturn in 1904-5. Despite the local initiative in responding to foreign demand in transforming Kerman's carpet industry, it appears that much of the profit went to middlemen like the Tabrizi merchants who dominated the transit trade, while the flood of textile imports accompanying Kerman's greater integration into the global economy decimated much of the local handicraft sector, particularly shawls (Gleadowe-Newcomen, p. 51). Thus, as with other aspects of Kerman's economic reorientation, local initiatives were the most important factor in transforming productive relations, to the benefit of some and the detriment of others.

Social change. The Qajar period in Kerman was a period of significant social change, with the transformation of productive relations, the advance of regional economic integration, and the growing engagement of Kermani elites with global intellectual trends and political movements. Yet some of the most remarkable aspects of the complex of changes that mark the history of Kerman during the Qajar period (1779-1924) are the considerable underlying continuities. The patrilineal elite household as the organizing principle of elite society not only survived, but also thrived in the context of the growing engagement with the wider world, a process dominated by them as the primary intermediaries. Normative aspects of elite society remained tied to land ownership, assumption of stipendiary administrative posts, and connections to local religious institutions, with monetary wealth and commercial activities themselves carrying little social prestige. In fact, some of the most significant figures in Kerman, emerging through connections to the global economy, quickly established themselves among the local elite. Ḥājī Āqā 'Alī Tājer Kermāni, for example, made a fortune in the cotton trade in the 1840s. His family, the Aḥmadis (known after his eldest son, Āqā Aḥmad) became central figures among the landholding elite in Rafsanjān and went on to produce Kerman's leading clerics (*mojtahed*) for the next three generations (Aḥmadi, 1975, pp. 125-27, 134-35).

Rural and/or tribal populations remained subject to exactions by these elite families, even as the circumstances and means of those exactions evolved with the economic reorientation of the province towards cash cropping and carpet exports. There is unfortunately little information on social conditions for Kermani peasants in the Qajar period, but it is notable that they were routinely compared favorably with the lower classes in India by British administrators arriving from the India Office (e.g., Sykes, 1896, pp. 2-3;



Gleadowe-Newcomen, p. 6). The process of tribal integration into provincial politics was advanced during the Qajar period through the sanctioning of tribal authorities by the state. This aided tribal heads in consolidating their political position within the tribe and control over taxation and other forms of extraction.

Travelers to Kerman routinely comment on the relatively “liberal” atmosphere in Kerman and its high degree of diversity. Nicolas de Khanikoff (1819-78) noted that even in the graffiti he found etched into postal stations throughout the province, there were lengthy discourses on wine and beautiful women, rather than the characteristic Qur’ānic verses, philosophical statements, or complaints against local rulers (Khanikoff, p. 197). Kerman did indeed remain a diverse place through the 19th and early 20th centuries. The elite community in the city of Kerman was divided between two large factions of Shaikhis and *motašarre’* Shi’ites (mainstream Shiites). The Ne’mat-Allāhi Sufi brotherhood centered in Māhān also had a significant following among urban and rural communities alike. The city of Kerman also possessed a sizeable Zoroastrian population in a quarter located outside the city walls, which was well connected to the large Zoroastrian community in Yazd. Waziri Kermāni notes a wide variety of Turkic-speaking tribes of Central Asian origin in the province, the most numerous being 9,300 Afšār tribesmen organized in at least thirteen sub-tribal groups (Waziri Ker-māni, 1974, p. 145). Branches of various Baluchi tribes, primarily Sunni, were also present in large numbers on the province’s eastern frontiers. The mountainous zones also possessed small pockets of isolated Arabic speaking communities, Isma’ili ‘Atā-Allāhi tribes, and what the urban elite viewed as heterodox groups, like the ‘Ali-Allāhi, or [Ahl-e Ḥaqq](#), who were rumored to worship Imam ‘Ali b. Abi Ṭāleb.

The late 19th century in particular was marked by periodic outbreaks of severe factional conflict between Kerman’s elite households and their networks of supporters. Given the diversity of Kerman’s population, this factional conflict often manifested as “sectarian” violence, although even the elites themselves likened it to a new version of the [Ḥaydari-Ne’mati](#) factionalism of past centuries (Aḥmadi, 1975, p. 123). Recurring violence between the Shaikhi and *motašarre’* Shi’ite communities, mobilized by powerful elements of Kerman’s highly factionalized elite, marked the later decades of the 19th century. The close association of Shaikhism with the Ebrāhimi family (descendants of governor Ebrāhim Khan Ṣāḥir-al-Dawla), who became the founders and dynasty of spiritual leaders of the Kermāni



branch of the order, was at the heart of this factionalism. Recurring famine between 1877 and 1878, caused in part by grain hoarding on the part of Kermani elites, turned into a widespread violence, which was only eased by sending the headmen of the Ebrāhimi, Kalantāri, and Aḥmadi families to Tehran (Aḥmadi, 1975, pp. 123-26).

Kerman also became a center of radical intellectuals and political activists in the last quarter of the 19th century and into the constitutional period. The towering figure among them was [Mirzā ‘Abd-al-Ḥosayn Āqā Khan Kermāni](#) (1854-96) of Mašiz (Bardsir). He was tutored by a diverse array of people in Kerman as a young man, and developed particularly close ties with members of the Aḥmadi family. He was forced to flee the province after a conflict in 1883 with the provincial governor Nāṣer-al-Dawla Farmānfarmā and never returned to the province. His most productive years were spent in Istanbul, where he established a close relationship with the famous ideologue and political activist [Jamāl-al-Din Afḡāni](#). He was extradited to Iran and executed in Tabriz in July 1896 after being implicated in planning the assassination of Nāṣer-al-Din Shah, carried out by fellow radical Mirzā Reżā Kermāni (Nāẓem-al-Eslām, I, p. 15). Kerman produced a generation of prominent constitutionalists, again around the Aḥmadi family, in the years after Mirzā Āqā Khan’s departure. These included Mirzā Moḥammad Nāẓem-al-Eslām Kermāni (1863-1918), author of the *Tāriḳ-e bidāri-e Irāniān* chronicling Iran’s constitutional movement, and his close childhood friend Shaikh Yaḥyā Aḥmadi, who became a member of the first Majles and produced two detailed studies of Kerman’s local history.

Nāẓem-al-Eslām credits an incident in Kerman in 1905 with consolidating the modernist-ulema alliance that was critical in the success of the Constitutional Revolution of 1906-11 (Nāẓem-al-Eslām, I, pp. 320-22). After Kerman’s new governor, Rokn-al-Dawla, sold the office of vizierto a member of the Shaikhi Ebrāhimi household, he began removing longstanding *motašarre’* administrative families like the Wakil-al-Molkis from their posts in favor of his own relatives. This quickly developed into a conflict between the Shaikhi and *motašarre’* communities after Shaikh Moḥammad-Šādeq, the cousin of Kerman’s leading *motašarre’* jurispudent, Mirzā Moḥammad-Reżā Mojtahed, led a crowd into the center of the city of Kerman to seize and occupy the Shaikhis’ Bāzār-e Šāh mosque (Scarcia, p. 228; Nāẓem-al-Eslām, I, p. 312). Throngs of urban poor, affected by the 1904-5 downturn in the carpet industry, were swept up in the conflict, which spread rapidly into a major



disturbance (Mirzā Reżā Mohandes, p. 139; Nāẓem-al-Eslām, I, pp. 315-16). In order to quell the violence, the provincial government eventually arrested Mirzā Moḥammad-Reżā and inflicted the bastinado on him, a rare act of violence carried out on a prominent member of the ulema. Nāẓem-al-Eslām cites the outrage surrounding this event as a major factor in securing the support of prominent clerics like Āqā Sayyed ‘Abd-Allāh Behbāhāni for the constitutional movement (Nāẓem-al-Eslām, I, p. 324). Despite the centrality of Aḥmadi support for the development of the constitutional movement, it was also the Aḥmadi family that actually led the way in curtailing the reach of its reforms when the new provincial council (*anjoman*) was established in Kerman, again cutting into the administrative prerogative of local patrimonial families. Once again, the intermediary position of the local patrimonial elite was a critical factor in shaping, and curtailing, social change.

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