



ḲOJANDIS OF ISFAHAN

ḲOJANDIS OF ISFAHAN, a prominent family of Šāfe'i ulema, who were settled in *Isfahan* by the Saljuq grand vizier *Nezām-al-Molk*. They turned into the most important family and political actor in that city during the Saljuq period and continued to play a significant role up to the *Mongol* invasion. From the end of the 11th century, they controlled the local *Nezāmiya madrasa* and the position of the *ra'is* (an official title granted by the king to leaders of urban communities) with the honorific title of *Şadr-al-Din*. They were based in the *Dardašt* quarter (northwestern part of the city), where the *Nezāmiya* was located. In the 12th century, they become essential partners of the sultans, who could not control *Isfahan* without their cooperation (see *Isfahan vi. Medieval Period*). On the other hand, they also developed direct relations with the 'Abbasid caliphs, and tactical alliances with various Turkish lords to ensure the durability of their local influence. Their political role eventually overshadowed their reputation as *faqih* (see *FEQH*). They were also the main benefactors of the city under the rule of the Saljuqs of *Iraq* (see also 'Erāq-e 'Ajam), and their court attracted poets (e.g., *Zahir Fāryābi*, *Kāqāni*, *Aṭir Aḳsikati*) and men of letters (e.g., *Najm-al-Din Qomi*). Many member of the family were themselves reputed as poets, and samples of their poetry are included in the anthologies of *Sadid-al-Din Moḥammad 'Awfi* and *Jamāl Širvāni*.

The *Ḳojandis* were staunch *Shafi'ites* (the dominant *madhab* in *Isfahan* until at least the end of the 12th century), but they also held good relation with the *Shi'ites*. On the other hand their local influence was limited by the



strengthening of the **Hanafite** community, who enjoyed the steady support of Turkish rulers. At the end of the Saljuq rule, the Kojandis lost their supremacy in Isfahan to a Hanafi family, the Šā'ed, and their attempts to regain it by force were short-lived. Apparently they did not survive the capture of the city by the Mongols in 633/1235-36.

The bulk of our information on the Kojandis is provided by 'Emād-al-Din Kāteb Eşfahāni and Abu Sa'id Sam'āni, who both had direct contact with them. Documents, mainly letters, written by or for the Kojandis are also preserved in the *Moqtārāt men al-rasā'el*, an *enšā'* collection compiled in the **Il-khanid** period. Eighteen members of the family, spread over eight generations, are known (see genealogical tree in Durand-Guédy, 2010, p. 314; idem, 2011).

(1) Jamāl-al-Eslām Abu Bakr Moḥammad I b. Tābet, (d. Isfahan, Du'l-qa'da 483/December 1090-January 1091; 482/1090 according to Šafadi, II, p. 281). He studied jurisprudence (*feqh*) in Khorasan with his father and a local traditionist (Sobki, IV, p. 124; Asnawi, I, p. 229). The vizier K'āja Nežām-al-Molk met him in Marv, at the time the capital of Saljuq leader **Čāgri Beg Dāwud**. Around 457/1064-5, Nežām-al-Molk invited him to the new Saljuq capital, Isfahan, and entrusted him with the direction of the Šāfe'i *madrasa* he had founded ('Emād-al-Din, I, p. 241; Ebn al-Aṭir, X, pp. 366-67; Sobki, IV, p. 124; Durand-Guédy, 2010, pp. 125-26). Many of his students later became judges (see Durand-Guédy, 2011, table 1). He is the author of two books of *feqh* (Sobki, IV, pp. 124-25; Ḥājji Kalifa, I, p. 932). Authors favorable to the Kojandis ('Emād-al-Din, I, p. 241; Qomi, p. 249) linked him with the Arab general Mohallab b. Abi Šofra (d. 83/702), but this genealogical attribution, repeated by later authors (e.g., Ebn al-'Emād, VI, p. 270), is hypothetical. We know four of his children (see below nos. 2, 3, 4, and 5).

(2) Abu Sa'd Aḥmad b. Abu Bakr Moḥammad I (d. Isfahan, 1 Rabi' II 531/26 December 1136). He was born in 443/1051-2 (Ebn al-Jawzi, X, p. 70) in Khorasan. As an expert in *feqh*, he should have succeeded his father as the head of the *madrasa* but was forced ultimately to give way to "somebody else" (Asnawi, I, p. 478), probably his brother, Abu'l-Qāsem (Durand-Guédy, 2011, p. 190). He directed on several occasions the Nežāmiya *madrasa* in **Baghdad**, the last time in 531/1136 (Ebn al-Jawzi, X, pp. 68, 70; Ebn Kaṭir, XII, p. 263). The famous traditionist and author Abu Sa'id Sam'āni attended his lessons (Sobki, VI, p. 51).

(3) Malek-al-'Olamā' Abu'l-Qāsem Mas'ud b. Abu Bakr Moḥammad I, *ra'is* of



Isfahan (d. between 500 and 511/1107 and 1118). Ebn Fowaṭi's information (V, p. 493) is incorrect regarding his patronymic (*konya*) and death date. Malek-al-'Olamā' played a key role in the struggle against the Isma'ili leader [Aḥmad b. 'Aṭṭāš](#). It was probably he who, in 492/1099, rallied the pro-Saljuq networks of Isfahan behind the Saljuq Moḥammad b. Malekšāh in his bid for the sultanate when he rebelled against his brother Berk Yaruq (Ebn al-Aṭir, X, p. 288; Durand-Guédy, 2010, p. 164). In 494/1100-1, he organized a witch hunt against the Isma'ilis in Isfahan (Ebn al-Aṭir, X, pp. 314-15). In 500/1106-7, along with the Qāzi 'Obaydallāh Kaṭibi, he orchestrated the downfall of the vizier Sa'd-al-Molk, so that no negotiated settlement with Ebn 'Aṭṭāš could take place (Zahir-al-Din Nišāpuri, p. 49; Rāvandi, pp. 158-61; Durand-Guédy, 2010, pp. 178-81). He was probably made *ra'is* of Isfahan after the death of the *ra'is* Qāsem b. Faḏl Ṭaqafi in 489/1096 (Durand-Guédy, 2010, p. 197).

(4) Ṣadr-al-Din 'Abd-al-Laṭif I b. Abu Bakr Moḥammad I (d. Isfahan, 523/1128-9), the *ra'is* of Isfahan. He was killed by the Isma'ilis in 523/1128-9, despite the fact that he kept permanent armed guards (Ebn al-Aṭir, X, pp. 659-60; Sobki, VI, p. 133). Ebn Ṣābuni (p. 184) considers him the last member of the family to have been a significant traditionist. He had two sons (below nos. 6 and 7).

(5) Abu'l-Moḏaffar b. Abu Bakr Moḥammad I (d. Ray, 496/1102-3). He taught in the Neẓāmiya of Isfahan (Ebn al-Jawzi, IX, p. 137). He was assassinated by an 'Alid at the end of a sermon while he was trying to calm a conflict between the Shi'ites and Sunnites in Ray (Sebṭ b. Jawzi, IX, p. 137; Ebn al-Aṭir, X, p. 366). [Ḥamdallāh Mostawfi](#) (p. 690) speaks of him (mistakenly) as the "first of the Kojandis in Isfahan," and Ebn al-Fowaṭi (V, p. 493) apparently mistakes him with Mas'ud Kojandi (no. 7).

(6) Malek-al-'Olamā' Ṣadr-al-Din Abu Bakr Moḥammad b. 'Abd-al-Laṭif I (b. after 502/1108-9, d. near Hamadān, 22 Ṣawwal 552/27 November 1157). He studied [Hadith](#) in Isfahan and Baghdad (Sobki, VI, p. 133) and succeeded his father as *ra'is* of Isfahan. He took advantage of the crisis of the Saljuq state to reinforce the grip of the Kojandis on Isfahan, sometimes in direct opposition to the sultans. In 527/1133, to avenge the execution of 'Aziz-al-Din Mostawfi by the vizier Abu'l-Qāsem [Dargazini](#), he opposed sultan Ṭoḡrel b. Moḥammad (Durand-Guédy, 2010, pp. 257-58). In 542/1147, he sided with the emir of [Fars](#), Buzāba, and his protégé Moḥammad b. Maḥmud in their unsuccessful bid against Sultan Mas'ud; he apparently became vizier of Moḥammad; he was exiled in Iraq as a punishment but was recalled to Isfahan after one year



(Durand-Guédy 2015, p. 174, 182). In 549/1154-5, Sultan Moḥammad b. Maḥmud threw him in prison (Bondāri, pp. 220-21, 243). In 551/1156-7, he refused to help the same sultan during the siege of Baghdad (Bondāri, p. 252). He died the following year while returning to Isfahan (Sobki, VI, p. 134). He was buried in the district of Sonbalān (Asnawi, I, p. 235, no. 444), and his death was followed by a violent crisis in Isfahan (Ebn al-Aṭir, XI, p. 228). ‘Emād-al-Din (I, p. 242) praises his qualities, and Ebn al-Jawzi (X, p. 179), his talent as an orator. According to Sam‘āni, “he looked more like a vizier than like an ulema” (Sobki, VI, p. 133). His verses are quoted by ‘Emād-al-Din (I, pp. 153, 242-45) Bondāri (p. 221), Sobki (VI, p. 134), and Āvi’s translation of Māfarruḳi (p. 104). We know of two of his sons (below ns. 8 and 9).

(7) Jamāl-al-Din Maḥmud b. ‘Abd-al-Laṭif I (d. after 549/1154-55), brother of the preceding (no. 6). He went into exile with his brother in 542/1147-8. In 549/1154-5, he was sent to Kerman by sultan Moḥammad b. Maḥmud to arrange an alliance with the Saljuqs of [Kerman](#) (Bondāri, p. 244). We know of two of his sons (below no. 10 and 11).

(8) Rokn-al-Eslām Ṣadr-al-Din Abu’l-Qāsem ‘Abd-al-Laṭif II, son of Abu Bakr Moḥammad II (b. Rajab 535/February 1141, d. Rabi’ I or II 580/1184). He was *ra’is* of Isfahan. Dawlatšāh (p. 112) mistakenly calls him chief judge (*qāzi’l-ḳoḳāt*). He was taught by his father Abu Bakr Moḥammad II and several other traditionists (Sobki, VII, p. 186). In 552/1157, aged fifteen, he succeeded his father as *ra’is*. In 553/1158-59, he resisted a raid launched by the prince Malekšāh b. Moḥammad on Isfahan (Ebn al-Aṭir, id., XI, p. 237). In Ṣafar 560/December 1164-January 1165, a violent disturbance broke out between his followers and the Hanafites (Ebn al-Aṭir, XI, p. 319). In 580/1184, he went on pilgrimage to Mecca and delivered a sermon in Medina (Ebn Jobayr, p. 201). He died on the way back (Ebn al-Aṭir, XI, pp. 509-10; Asnawi, I, p. 235). He was a celebrated patron (‘Awfi, I, p. 265), a poet, and an esteemed man of letters (see samples of his Arabic verses in ‘Emād-al-Din, pp. 245-49 and Ebn al-Aṭir, XI, pp. 509-10, and his Persian verses in ‘Awfi, I, pp. 265-66, and Širvāni, *passim*).

(9) Kamāl-al-Eslām ‘Obaydallāh b. Abu Bakr Moḥammad II (d. after 581/1184-5), brother of Rokn-al-Eslām Abu’l-Qāsem, mentioned above (‘Emād-al-Din, I, p. 247). Some of his Arabic verses are quoted by ‘Emād-al-Din (I, pp. 247, 249-50). He is probably the ‘Abdallāh b. Abu Bakr Moḥammad II, Abu Moḥammad Adib Ḳojandi, mentioned by [Ebn Fowaṭi](#) (IV, p. 165), and also the Kamāl-al-Eslām ‘Abdallāh mentioned in some documents of the *Mokṭarāt*.



(10) Kamāl-al-Eslām Abu'l-Faṭḥ Moḥammad III b. Maḥmud, father of Kamāl-al-Din Aḥmad, no. 13 (Ebn Fowaṭi, IV, p. 117).

(11) Kamāl-al-Eslām Mas'ud b. Maḥmud, who was famous for his sermons and his taste for the belles letters (Ebn Fowaṭi, IV, p. 260). He was held against his will at the court of the [Atabak of Azarbaijan](#), Pahlavān Moḥammad b. Ildegoz (*Moktārāt*, pp. 118-20, 177-78). He may be the Jamāl-al-Din Mas'ud [Kojandi] mentioned by several authors of the 12th century but whose identity is not clear (according to Rafī'i, IV, p. 88, he was alive in 581/1185-6 and was or had been *qāzi* of Hamadan; cf. Rāvandi, pp. 339-40, speaking of an alliance between Jamāl-al-Din Mas'ud and the Saljuq Toğrel b. Arslān against the atabaks (atabegs) of Azarbaijan around 582/1186-7; see Durand-Guédy, 2010, pp. 275-76). Some of his Arabic verses are noted by Ebn Fowaṭi (IV, p. 260).

(12) Ṣadr-al-Din Abu Bakr Moḥammad IV b. 'Abd-al-Laṭif II, *ra'is* of Isfahan (d. Isfahan, Jomādā I 592/May 1196). He succeeded his father in 580/1184, probably at a young age (Sobki, VI, p. 134). In 582/1186-7, he, as the head of the Shafi'ites, became involved in a deadly conflict with the Hanafite *qāzi* of Isfahan, who was supported by the atabaks of Azarbaijan (Ebn al-Aṭir, XI, pp. 525-26). In 583/1187, the people of Isfahan rose against the emirs of the Atabak Qezel Arslān and expelled them from the city (Rāvandi, pp. 344-45). The Kojandis, led by Ṣadr-al-Din Moḥammad IV, were without doubt behind this initiative (Durand-Guédy, 2010, pp. 2276-77), and it was probably he that Sultan Toğrel b. Arslān rewarded with functions of preacher (*katib*) and judge (*qāzi*; Rāvandi, p. 421). For the first time, the same person (or at least the same family) controlled the two key municipal functions. He then fell out with the sultan and was forced into exile in Baghdad in 588/1192-3. There he accompanied the 'Abbasid vizier Ebn al-Qaṣṣāb in his campaign in Khuzestan (Sobki, VI, p. 134). He returned to Isfahan, which was then under the control of the Hanafi family of the Ṣā'ed, who were allied with the K'ārazmians (see [Chorasmia ii. In Islamic times](#)). He regained his position in Isfahan with the help of the 'Abbasid army, but was eventually beheaded by the local governor and military leader (*šeḥna*) sent from Baghdad (Rāvandi, p. 381; Ebn al-Aṭir, XII, pp. 117, 124, with a wrong *nesba*; Sobki, VI, p. 135; Asnawi, I, p. 236; Abu Ṣāma, p. 12; Ebn Kaṭir, XII, p. 16; Durand-Guédy, 2010, pp. 283-84). Ṣadr-al-Din patronized the historian Najm-al-Din Qomi (Qomi, p. 212), as well as the poet [Zahir-al-Din Fāryābi](#) (Zahir-al-Din Fāryābi, pp. 280-313; see also Yazdegerdi's critics of the anecdotes reported by Dawlatšāh, pp. 112-13).

(13) Kamāl al-Din Abu Maṣṣur Aḥmad Mostawfi, son of Abu'l-Faṭḥ Moḥammad



III (no. 10). He worked in Saljuq government offices (*divān*; Ebn Fowaṭi, IV, p. 117).

(14) ‘Abd-al-Şamad b. Moḥammad IV, probably *ra’is* of Isfahan. He is the only known member of the sixth generation of Kojandis in Isfahan.

(15) Şadr-al-Din ‘Omar, *ra’is* of Isfahan (d. before 633/1235-6). He is probably the Şadr-al-Din Kojandi who, in the years 618-19/1221-23, allied himself with a K̅ārazmian emir to plunder the Hanafi quarter of Jubāra in Isfahan and then resisted the attack of another K̅ārazmian emir (Nasavi, pp. 70-71, 75; Pers. tr., pp. 94, 100; Durand-Guédy, 2010, pp. 287-88). After the establishment of a strong K̅ārazmian authority in western Iran in 621/1224, he had to accept an imposed truce with his Hanafi rivals (Kamāl-al-Din Eşfahāni, p. 274; see also Glünz, pp. 191-92). His funeral oration was written by the poet [Kamāl-al-Din Eşfahāni](#) (pp. 422-26).

(16) ‘Emād-al-Eslām ‘Azod-al-Din Ḥasan b. ‘Abd-al-Şamad, brother of the above (no. 15; Kamāl-al-Din Eşfahāni, pp. 307-9). He is probably the Abu Moḥammad ‘Azod-al-Din Tābet b. ‘Abd-al-Şamad mentioned by Ebn Fowaṭi (I, pp. 406-7).

(17) Şehāb-al-Din b. ‘Omar, *ra’is* of Isfahan. He succeeded his father at an early age (Kamāl al-Din Eşfahāni, p. 425, vv. 7336-37). He might have initiated the embassy of Shafi’ite leaders of Isfahan to the Mongol camp in 633/1235-36 to get rid of the Hanafites of Isfahan (Ebn Abi’l-Ḥadid, III, p. 81; Durand-Guédy, 2010, pp. 296-97). He and the rest of the family were probably exterminated by the Mongols after their conquest of the city. In later periods, sources mention individuals bearing the *nesba* Kojandi in Isfahan, but they have no connection with this family.

The history of the Kojandi family of Isfahan has been investigated (although often in a very incomplete and not always reliable way) by Moḥammad Qazvini (appendix to ‘Awfi, I, pp. 354-56); Moḥammad Şadr-Hāşemi; Jalāl-al-Din Homā’i (pp. 133-40); Moşleḥ-al-Din Maḥdawi (1969, pp. 22-24; 2005, pp. 63-65; 2006, pp. 64-71); Ḥosayn Baḥr-al-‘Olumi (Introd. to Kamāl-al-Din Eşfahāni, pp. xlii-xlvi); Heinz Halm (p. 147); Akram Bahrāmi; ‘Ali Āl-e Dāwud; R. Kāṭun; François De Blois (pp. 401-5); the most detailed study is in Durand-Guédy (2010; 2011).



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