



## NEZĀM-AL-SALTĀNA, ḤOSAYNQOLI KHAN

NEZĀM-AL-SALTĀNA, ḤOSAYNQOLI KHAN (1832-1908, [Figure 1](#)), official, governor, and prime minister in the Qajar era. Ḥosaynqoli Khan was born in 1832 to the family of Šarif Khan Māfi, a high-ranking military commander and a minor governor during the reigns of the Qajar monarchs [Fath-‘Ali Shah](#) (1797-1834) and [Moḥammad Shah](#) (1834-48). According to the manuscript of Solṭān-‘Ali Khan Māfi’s *Tadkerāt al-ābā’* (*Kāṭerāt*, I, p. 13; Eqbāl Āštiāni, p. 31), prior to the [Safavid](#) era (1501-1722), the Māfi clan, originally from [Kermānšāhān](#), had settled in [Lorestān](#), forming a sub-branch of the [Bayrānavand](#). During the Safavid period, the Māfis were relocated to [Fārs](#) province, later forging close ties with the [Zand dynasty](#) (1751-94). Following the defeat of the last Zand ruler, Loṭf-‘Ali Khan, in 1794 by [Āgā Moḥammad Khan Qajar](#), who gradually established his own dynastic control over Persian territories, the Māfis were moved from Fārs to Qazvin and adjacent territories, as a means of containing their power base.

Ḥosaynqoli Khan’s mother, Šāḥeb-Jān Khānom, was the second wife of Šarif Khan Māfi, with their other children being Ḥaydarqoli Khan, who pursued a military career, and Moḥammad-Ḥasan Khan, who entered the Qajar bureaucracy. Ḥosaynqoli Khan also had siblings from his father’s first marriage, and would marry two wives himself. Only two of his children survived into adulthood: a daughter by the name of Batul, who would marry Shaikh [Kaz‘al](#) of Moḥammara ([KHORRAMSHAHR](#)), and a son named Ḥosayn



(*Kāṭerāt*, I, pp. 12, 13-14, 15, 31; Eqbāl Āštiāni, p. 51).

Ḥosaynqoli Khan completed his formal education at the age of twenty-two, after which he was engaged in family business for nearly four years before embarking on his career in the Qajar bureaucracy in 1858 at the age of twenty-six. His bureaucratic career followed the usual vicissitudes of all high-ranking Persian government officials of the period, of which he provided numerous examples in his posthumously published memoirs and letters (*Kāṭerāt va asnād-e Ḥosaynqoli Khan Nezām-al-Saltāna Māfi*). Senior government positions were generally secured only after much maneuvering, bargaining, and even bribery; with fully competent officials frequently dismissed from their posts after a brief tenure, either due to rival influences or in keeping with the Qajar state's strategy of preventing officials from gaining too much popularity and leverage. The state's practice of auctioning senior government posts and the accompanying rampant nepotism, along with the uncertainty of one's tenure, undermined stability and continuity in government administration and, often, also resulted in officials' financial ruin, public disgrace, bitter resentment, and subsequent scheming against their rivals — as Ḥosaynqoli Khan personally experienced. Ḥosaynqoli Khan, his brother Moḥammad-Ḥasan Khan, and their nephew Rezāqoli Khan (Ḥaydarqoli Khan's oldest son) worked together closely to advance their respective administrative careers and safeguard their family's interests.

In 1858, Ḥosaynqoli Khan was employed as private secretary, or steward/administrator (*piškār*), by Prince Solṭān Morād Mirzā Ḥosām-al-Saltāna, the governor of Fārs. Ḥosaynqoli Khan continued to serve Ḥosām-al-Saltāna in the same capacity when the latter became the governor of Khorasan in 1861 and was tasked with pacifying the marauding Turkmen tribes. They remained in Khorasan until Ḥosām-al-Saltāna was recalled to Tehran in late 1864 (*Kāṭerāt*, I, pp. 32-39; Bāmdād, I, pp. 292-94; Afzal-al-Molk, pp. 244-46; E'temād-al-Saltāna, p. 856; Eqbāl Āštiāni, p. 35). In 1865, Ḥosām-al-Saltāna was reappointed as governor of Fārs, with Ḥosaynqoli Khan again serving as his secretary for the next three years, followed by another nearly two years in the service of Ḥosām-al-Saltāna in Yazd. In 1870, Ḥosaynqoli Khan was engaged as private secretary by Ḥosām-al-Saltāna's son, Abu'l-Fatḥ Mirzā, who took over the governorship of Yazd as his father's deputy. Ḥosaynqoli Khan continued serving Abu'l-Fatḥ Mirzā when the latter was delegated by his father to the governorship of Isfahan in 1871.

In April 1874, Ḥosaynqoli Khan achieved his first significant career



advancement. He was appointed the governor of Yazd and granted the title of Sa'd-al-Molk (*Kāṭerāt*, I, pp. 45-47, 48-49, 50-58, 67-73). From 1876 to 1879, he was engaged as minister, or chief administrator (vizier), by the governor of Fārs province, Mirzā Yaḥyā Khan Mo'tamad-al-Molk; briefly also serving the latter's successor [Farḥād Mirzā Mo'tamad-al-Dawla](#). From 1879 to 1881, Ḥosaynqoli Khan supervised the state granaries countrywide. In recognition of his administrative efficiency and reliability, he was put in charge in 1882 of overseeing the Persian Gulf ports, islands, and customs (*Kāṭerāt*, I, p. 73-87). In this role, he was instrumental in extensively enforcing direct state control over the ports and islands (*Voṭuqi*, pp. 112-17).

In 1885, Ḥosaynqoli Khan was appointed the governor of Ḳamsa (present day Zanjān), with his tenure earning a commendation from Nāṣer-al-Din Shah (*Kāṭerāt*, I, pp. 112-18). The shah also approved of Ḥosaynqoli Khan's proposed scheme for selling the province's *kāleša* (state-owned agricultural lands; see [KĀṢṢA](#)) as a means of both more efficiently managing these lands under private ownership and resolving the intricacies of converting taxed produce from the lands into treasury funds (*Kāṭerāt*, I, pp. 117-18). In 1888 Ḥosaynqoli Khan was assigned the governorship of 'Arabestān province (present day Ḳuzestān), as well as [Čahār-Maḥāl and Baḳtiāri](#) territories. Given the many inter-ethnic and intra-tribal rivalries throughout these districts, and periodic rebellions against the central government, this was a posting fraught with major predicaments. Lacking an alternative, he accepted the post reluctantly. Along with this appointment, he was granted the newly-coined title of Neẓām-al-Saltāna; his former title was transferred to his brother Moḥammad-Ḥasan Khan, who was appointed administrator of the Persian Gulf ports and islands (*Kāṭerāt*, I, pp. 120-23; *E'temād-al-Saltāna*, p. 562). Immediately after arriving at his new post, Ḥosaynqoli Khan successfully suppressed a rebellion by a Baḳtiāri tribal leader, Emāmqoli Khan Ḥāji Ilkāni (*Kāṭerāt*, I, pp. 124-37). Ḥosaynqoli Khan's most important duties as governor were the imposition of central authority, preservation of regional stability by means of cajoling or force, and the collection of taxes, which was rendered difficult by regular evasions, periodic rebellions, and recurrent inter- and intra-ethnic strife among the mostly Arab, Lor, and Baḳtiāri local population. Previously, the central government had had little direct control over 'Arabestān. The collection of taxes in the province had been difficult and erratic at best, with payments often in arrears. On occasion, Ḥosaynqoli Khan resorted to military force for levying taxes (*Kāṭerāt*, I, pp. 144, 148-49). In his memoirs, he also recounted that as a means of reinforcing loyalty to the Qajar state among the



local population, he twice arranged for lavish public celebrations of the shah's birthday in Moḥammara, even importing fireworks from Bombay for the festivities (*Kāṭerāt*, I, pp. 147, 161).

Ḥosaynqoli Khan's duties in 'Arabestān required frequent travel through harsh terrain, often in the company of a sizable armed force for intimidating or pacifying mutinous local shaikhs (Arab tribal rulers). On one occasion this led to a misunderstanding with the powerful Shaikh Moz'el of Moḥammara, who fled the city after mistakenly assuming that Ḥosaynqoli Khan's reported approach towards the city signaled a punitive mission (*Kāṭerāt*, I, pp. 143-47). Ḥosaynqoli Khan also initiated some public works and other construction and repair projects, such as bridges in Moḥammara and *Ahvāz*, or a dam near Šuštār, as well as undertaking the conservation of the remains of the ancient Salāsel citadel (*Kāṭerāt*, I, pp. 140-41, 150-51, 156-57). He arranged for the extension of the telegraph line from *Dezful* to Moḥammara and the construction of a new port in *Ahvāz*, named *Nāšeri* in honor of the shah. He was supportive of efforts by Iranian merchants to organize a company (also called *Nāšeri*) for the navigation of the *Kārun* river above the Moḥammara dam, beyond the range navigated by the British company of Messrs. Lynch in the lower *Kārun* after 1888 (*Kāṭerāt*, I, pp. 154, 155, 158-59). In 1882, the authorities in Tehran had sent the prominent *Dār al-fonun* statistician, astronomer, and engineer Mirzā 'Abd-al-Ġaffār Najm-al-Molk to oversee the construction of a dam in *Ahvāz*; but he had been unsuccessful (Najm-al-Molk, pp. 49-55). In 1890, Najm-al-Molk was dispatched once again to supervise the building of the dam. Ḥosaynqoli Khan, however, objected to the project; cautioning the government that the plan was an exorbitant undertaking, while such a dam would also drain the streams feeding surrounding agricultural lands, which, in turn, would result in a major loss of taxable produce. Moreover, he was adamant that Persia lacked the necessary domestic expertise and material for constructing a durable dam of such wide expanse and height (*Kāṭerāt*, I, pp. 153-55).

In 1891, the former governor of Māzandarān, Šahāb-al-Molk, assumed the governorship of 'Arabestān, and Ḥosaynqoli Khan was appointed the governor of *Bušeher* as well as the administrator of ports and islands of the Persian Gulf — the latter post hitherto held by his brother Moḥammad-Ḥasan Khan Sa'd-al-Molk, who had requested to be relieved of his duties after the recent death of his wife. The new posting once again afforded Ḥosaynqoli Khan the opportunity to visit some remote islands and inland coastal regions of the



Persian Gulf, which he described in detail in his memoirs, ranging from their social conditions to flora and fauna (*Kāṭerāt*, I, pp. 163-67, 339-45).

Nāṣer-al-Din Shah's rising confidence in Ḥosaynqoli Khan's abilities and opinion, appears to have been the underlying cause of worsening relations between the chief minister (*ṣadr-e a'zam*) Amin-al-Solṭān and Ḥosaynqoli Khan, after an initially warm rapport between the two men. Moreover, Amin-al-Solṭān, who exercised great leverage over governmental appointments and whose first tenure in office lasted from 1885 to 1896, wished to consolidate his own support base by securing top official posts for those loyal to him (*Kāṭerāt*, I, pp. 120-23, 174, 175-76, 177, 196-200, 204-6; E'temād-al-Salṭana, p. 995). In 1892, the shah appointed Ḥosaynqoli Khan the governor of Fārs, one of the highest gubernatorial posts in the country, with Ḥosaynqoli Khan having paid a considerable sum of money for the appointment (*Kāṭerāt*, I, p. 200; 'Ayn-al-Salṭana, I, pp. 519, 578). Other than widespread economic and financial crises in the province, a major source of consternation was inter-tribal rivalry and periodic clashes between the chief of the Qašqā'i, Ṣawlat-al-Dawla, and the head of the Kamsa confederacy, Moḥammad-Rezā Qawām-al-Molk (Oberling, pp. 73-76). Prior to Ḥosaynqoli Khan's arrival at his new post, Qawām-al-Molk had been expelled from the provincial capital Shiraz by the previous governor, Prince Rokn-al-Dawla. Ḥosaynqoli Khan allowed Qawām-al-Molk to return to the city, despite widespread popular opposition to this move, which soon erupted into a rebellion. Eventually, Ḥosaynqoli Khan was forced to once again exile Qawām-al-Molk after some protesters were killed (*Kāṭerāt*, I, pp. 182-92; 'Ayn-al-Salṭana, I, pp. 530, 540). Amin-al-Solṭān, who earlier had disapproved of Ḥosaynqoli Khan's assignment to Fārs, now joined forces with Rokn-al-Dawla for the latter's reappointment as the governor of the province, by seizing upon the disturbances in Shiraz as the pretext for Ḥosaynqoli Khan's dismissal. Ḥosaynqoli Khan was recalled within almost a year after arriving in Shiraz (*Kāṭerāt*, I, pp. 177-180, 193-94; E'temād-al-Salṭana, p. 938).

In 1895, Ḥosaynqoli Khan was again granted the governorship of 'Arabestān and Baḳtiāri, as well as Lorestān on this occasion. He delegated the affairs of Lorestān to his brother and nephew, Moḥammad-Ḥasan Khan Sa'd-al-Molk and Rezāqoli Khan (now titled Mojir-al-Salṭana; *Kāṭerāt*, I, pp. 203-4, 206-7; Afzal-al-Molk, p. 77). Ḥosaynqoli Khan was still in 'Arabestān and Baḳtiāri when Nāṣer-al-Din Shah was assassinated on 1 May 1896 and was succeeded by the crown prince Moẓaffar-al-Din. A few weeks after the shah's death, Ḥosaynqoli Khan, his brother, and his nephew were recalled to Tehran



(*Kāṭerāt*, I, pp. 212-13, 220-21; Afzal-al-Molk, p. 82). His second tenure as governor of ‘Arabestān ended abruptly in the summer of 1896 due a dispute with the British consul in Kerman, Sir [Percy Sykes](#). In Sykes’ version of events, Ḥosaynqoli Khan had initially refused to formally acknowledge Sykes as a British representative when Sykes arrived in ‘Arabestān to seek an indemnity for the recent attacks by Iranians against two British citizens in the province (a vicious attack on an agent of Messrs. Lynch company by his Iranian servant in Šuštār and the injury caused by an Iranian soldier to another agent of Messrs. Lynch in Ahvāz). Sykes additionally accused Ḥosaynqoli Khan of refusal to consider any indemnity to victims of these attacks, after Ḥosaynqoli Khan had finally followed due diplomatic protocol in greeting Sykes. In reaction, Sykes lodged a complaint with the prime minister Amin-al-Solṭān, who ordered Ḥosaynqoli Khan to cooperate with Sykes and, shortly after, terminated the latter’s appointment (Sykes, pp. 247, 252-53, 255). Ḥosaynqoli Khan’s account of the meeting with Sykes maintains the governor received Sykes in accordance with official protocol after learning Sykes’ identity, and that, rather than an unqualified rejection of restitution to British victims of recent assaults, Ḥosaynqoli Khan had merely indicated he would require Tehran’s prior authorization before indemnifying foreign nationals. With much exaggeration, Ḥosaynqoli Khan would ultimately attribute his dismissal to his patriotism in opposition to rapidly expanding British hegemony in the region, and to collusion between the British consular service and Amin-al-Solṭān (*Kāṭerāt*, I, pp. 213-18, 220, 248-49).

Following this episode, Ḥosaynqoli Khan joined a plot to unseat the prime minister, with the latter increasingly loathed by the conservative clergy for his allegedly blasphemous lifestyle, and widely blamed by various groups for unpopular concessions granted by the Persian government to British and Russian subjects during the reign of the former shah. Amin-al-Solṭān was also opposed by the influential circle in the royal court of Prince ‘[Abd-al-Ḥosayn Mirzā Farmānfarmā](#), the war minister and commander-in-chief of the army (Malek-al-Mo’arreḳin, I, p. 383; Amin-al-Dawla, pp. 216-21; *Kāṭerāt*, I, pp. 221, 228-32). For a few weeks following Amin-al-Solṭān’s dismissal in late November of 1896, a cabinet without a prime minister was in charge of government affairs (with the war minister Farmānfarmā at the helm), until in March 1897 Mirzā ‘Ali Khan Amin-al-Dawla became the prime minister (Amin-al-Dawla, p. 221-25; *Kāṭerāt*, I, pp. 239-40). Amin-al-Dawla, an opponent of Amin-al-Solṭān and considered a reformist politician, appointed Ḥosaynqoli Khan to both ministries of Justice and Commerce, with Ḥosaynqoli Khan’s



brother, Sa'd-al-Molk, later put in charge of customs of southern ports (*Kāṭerāt*, I, pp. 240, 246, 249; Afzal-al-Molk, pp. 232, 241-42; Amin-al-Dawla, p. 236). In September, the new prime minister convinced the shah to dismiss Farmānfarmā, who extensively interfered with government affairs, with Ḥosaynqoli Khan also counseling the shah on this matter (*Kāṭerāt*, I, pp. 240-42; Amin-al-Dawla, p. 229, 239-40).

Persia's finances were in disarray and the treasury lacked sufficient funds for governmental expenditures (Kazemzadeh, pp. 302-10). Amin-al-Dawla, who enjoyed British diplomatic endorsement, was dismissed from office in 1898 after failing to secure a desperately-needed foreign loan from various parties, including from the British-owned Imperial Bank of Persia, even after the prime minister lowered the sum of the loan requested from the Imperial Bank from £400,000 to £250,000. The shah appointed Ḥosaynqoli Khan as minister of finance and recalled Amin-al-Solṭān from exile, tasking him with the formation a new government (*Kāṭerāt*, I, pp. 250-51, 254-55; Kazemzadeh, pp. 312-19). At the urging of Amin-al-Solṭān, following his return to Tehran, the shah dismissed Ḥosaynqoli Khan from the ministry, instead appointing him the administrator (*piškār*) of Azarbaijan in the service of the crown prince Moḥammad 'Ali. Ḥosaynqoli Khan accepted this post reluctantly, given the crown prince's antipathy toward him (*Kāṭerāt*, I, pp. 256-58, 261-62, 278; Malek-al-Mo'arrekin, I, p. 324-25; Afzal-al-Molk, p. 354).

When Moẓaffar-al-Din Shah passed through Azarbaijan on both legs of his first trip to Europe in 1900, the responsibility of overseeing the lodging and provisions for the monarch and his vast entourage in the provincial capital, Tabriz, and surrounding areas rested with Ḥosaynqoli Khan. Even by the shah's extravagant expectations, Ḥosaynqoli Khan fulfilled this duty splendidly (Moẓaffar-al-Din Shah, pp. 27, 29, 40-43, 253-57, 261; *Kāṭerāt*, I, pp. 272). Ḥosaynqoli Khan, on the other hand, was highly critical of the shah's trip, particularly its timing while the country was undergoing major financial crisis and Azarbaijan was experiencing a serious food shortage. In his memoirs, he recounted the difficulty of procuring suitable accommodation and food supplies for the shah's travel party and for their transport animals (*Kāṭerāt*, I, pp. 270-72, 273-74, 278; Malek-al-Mo'arrekin, I, p. 493). On the shah's return trip, Hosaynqoli Khan had to organize a state dinner on 26 October 1900 on the Persian side of the Aras river frontier with Russia, welcoming the shah, the monarch's close companions, and a large group of Russian dignitaries accompanying them across the border. During the dinner, heavy rain began



seeping through the reception tent. Hosaynqoli Khan appears to have been overly perturbed by this incident. Whereas the shah's account of the event indicates the situation was soon brought under control, Hosaynqoli Khan recounted that he unsuccessfully offered to resign his post, fearing the shah's rage at the incident and weary of service to the crown prince (Moẓaffar-al-Din Shah, pp. 254-55; *Kāṭerāt*, I, pp. 277-78). In April 1901, however, Hosaynqoli Khan was dismissed from his post, due to mounting mutual aversion of the crown prince toward him, exacerbated by the crown prince's ultimately abortive efforts to obstruct Hosaynqoli Khan's reclamation of a substantial personal debt the latter had incurred for governmental expenditures during his Azarbaijan tenure (*Kāṭerāt*, I, pp. 281-84, 287-91). After a brief stay in Tehran, Hosaynqoli Khan retired to his estate in Kamsa and tended to his several landed properties there (*Kāṭerāt*, I, pp. 300-305).

Ḥosaynqoli Khan's next official posting in 1905 coincided with major economic and political upheavals, which would eventually culminate in the outbreak of the [Constitutional Revolution](#) in the summer of 1906. With the shah setting out on his third European journey in May 1905, and the crown prince taking charge of affairs in Tehran during the shah's absence, Ḥosaynqoli Khan was reappointed as the administrator of Azarbaijan (*Kāṭerāt*, III, pp. 374-76; Nāẓem-al-Eslām, I, p. 130; Malek-al-Mo'arrekin, II, p. 762). He continued in this capacity after the shah's return to Tehran in early October 1905, not long after which the first signs of popular unrest appeared in the Persian capital. Tabriz, with its own set of local conflicts, was not immune to these broader popular disturbances (Kasravi, pp. 127-58; *Kāṭerāt*, III, p. 382). Following the outbreak of the Constitutional Revolution in 1906, Ḥosaynqoli Khan, who at the time was averse to a constitutional system of government, grew even more alarmed at the rapid radicalization of some constitutionalist factions, particularly in Tabriz in the aftermath of the ailing Moẓaffar-al-Din Shah's proclamation of a constitutional monarchy on 5 August 1906. Ironically, the crown prince relieved Ḥosaynqoli Khan of his duties in Azarbaijan in late October 1906, blaming him for spurring the constitutionalist disturbances in Tabriz (*Kāṭerāt*, III, pp. 399, 400-404, 406, 407-8). Ḥosaynqoli Khan subsequently served two very brief stints as governors of Isfahan and Fars, before being appointed prime minister (*ra'īs al-wozarā'*) in December 1907 by no other than the former crown prince, Moḥammad-'Ali, who had ascended the throne in January 1907 (*Kāṭerāt*, III, pp. 445-47, 450-52).

Ḥosaynqoli Khan's appointment as prime minister followed the mass



resignation of the moderate-reformist prime minister Nāṣer-al-Molk and his entire cabinet in objection to the shah's antagonism toward the Majles (parliament), which had convened in October 1906. Remaining in office until May 1908, Ḥosaynqoli Khan was increasingly overwhelmed by the rapidly escalating hostilities between the Majles and the overtly anti-constitutionalist Moḥammad-'Ali Shah, who now counted on Russian support. The standoff between the shah and the Majles reached a breaking point following the attempted assassination of the shah by radical constitutionalists in February 1908. Ḥosaynqoli Khan was caught between courtiers wishing to unseat him (Moḡiṭ-al-Saltāna, p. 211) and the more radical Majles deputies and revolutionary councils (*anjomans*), who considered him a reactionary (*Kāṭerāt* III, pp. 452-53). Within weeks after his resignation in May, the Majles was bombarded by the Russian-officered Persian Cossack forces loyal to the shah (23 June 1908), and the country was soon plunged into a civil war, lasting until the following summer when the shah was ousted and succeeded by his teen-age son Ahmad. Ḥosaynqoli Khan died in August 1908, just as the civil war was getting underway; the last year of his life was also marred by the loss of his only son, Mirzā Ḥosayn Khan (Moḡiṭ-al-Saltāna, p. 200; Eqbāl Āštiāni, p. 44).

*Memoirs.* Ḥosaynqoli Khan's memoirs cover the years 1858 to 1903. These have been published along with his correspondence with his nephew Rezāqoli Khan (from 1884 to 1908), to which are also appended a few letters by other relatives and by Yusuf Moḡiṭ-al-Saltāna, an aide-de-camp of Rezāqoli Khan. This collection is an invaluable source of information on political and social conditions during the reigns of the three Qajar monarchs whom Ḥosaynqoli Khan served. He was not an admirer of Nāṣer-al-Din Shah, but they maintained a cordial relationship, despite Ḥosaynqoli Khan's concealed disdain of Amin-al-Soltān's influence over the shah's court and of the prime minister's handling of governmental affairs and his flagrant nepotism. Ḥosaynqoli Khan also disapproved of Nāṣer-al-Din Shah's endorsement of some of the concessions Amin-al-Soltān granted to foreign investors (*Kāṭerāt*, I, p. 216; *Kāṭerāt* III, 418-20). Ḥosaynqoli Khan considered Moẓaffar-al-Din Shah an irresolute monarch and far inferior to his father in intellect and demeanor. The shah was faulted for his coarse mannerisms and overfamiliar and vulgar interaction with his attendants and other common folk, and for treating officials and courtiers in condescending or capricious manner (*Kāṭerāt*, I, pp. 233-35, 273-74). These characteristics of the shah are also attested by other contemporaries (Amin-al-Dawla, p. 221-24; Nāẓem-al-Eslām, I, p. 131).



Ḥosaynqoli Khan's attitude toward Moḥammad-'Ali Shah was even more scornful, having initially served that shah while the latter was crown prince and in charge of Azarbaijan province. When Ḥosaynqoli Khan was reappointed as the administrator of Azarbaijan in 1905, he wrote to his nephew that he would rather be shackled than work for such a "rogue" again; even though Ḥosaynqoli Khan ultimately accepted the appointment (*Kāṭerāt*, III, p. 352).

Spanning six decades, Ḥosaynqoli Khan's memoirs and letters provide detailed descriptions and personal impressions of social, economic, infrastructural, and political conditions in various parts of Persia where he served, and of broader developments in general. He commented on the alliances and rivalries between various officials and/or courtiers, including Ḥosaynqoli Khan's own involvement in a plot to unseat Amin-al-Solṭān. In addition, the memoirs and letters provide ample details of the terrain, scenery, and population of those parts of the country through which he traveled, the inter-tribal or inter-ethnic relations in different regions, various modes of transportation, local produce, trade routes, local customs, local construction styles, historical sites and monuments, as well as the expanding presence of British, Russian, and other foreign commercial interests in various parts of the country, among other range of topics.

These sources also provide valuable insight into Ḥosaynqoli Khan's own character over time. According to many other contemporary sources, too, including E'temād-al-Saltāna, who was highly critical of most officials, Ḥosaynqoli Khan was an ambitious, diligent, and honest administrator (E'temād-al-Saltāna, p. 856; Afzal-al-Molk, pp. 242-49). He was a fervent patriot and a devout Muslim, with a firm belief in the divine plan. He adhered to conservative social values and, along with his brother Moḥammad-Ḥasan Khan, disapproved of the emergent trend among many of their social cohorts for imitating all things European (*Kāṭerāt*, I, pp. 212-13, 214, 221). He was well-versed in Persian classical literature and history, with his letters often punctuated by verses of poetry and aphorisms, and he was a patron of the poets [Iraj Mirzā](#) and [Forṣat Širāzi](#) (*Kāṭerāt*, III, pp. 226, 371; Afzal-al-Molk, p. 242; Eqbāl Āštiāni, pp. 49-50). Ḥosaynqoli Khan general outlook on life was pragmatic and he had a wry sense of humor, both of which are reflected in his account of a visit to the ruins of the Sasanian city of [Madā'en](#) in Ottoman Iraq. Alluding to the well-known verse by the twelfth-century poet [Kāqāni](#), in which the spectator at the ruins of Madā'en is advised to take heed of changing



fortunes and ravages of time, Ḥosaynqoli Khan wrote: “I beheld Madā’en, but took no heed” (*Kāṭerāt*, I, p. 108).

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