



# ẒAHIR-AL-DAWLA, EBRĀHIM KHAN

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**ẒAHIR-AL-DAWLA, EBRĀHIM KHAN** (d. Tehran, 1240/1824), military leader and governor of Kermān under Fath-‘Ali Shah Qajar (r. 1797-1834). A cousin, stepson, and son-in-law of Fath-‘Ali Shah, Ebrāhim Khan was an important patron of architecture, particularly famous for the Ebrāhim Khan Complex in the old bazaar of Kermān. Entrusted with the governorship of Kermān, he undertook the reconstruction of the city after the devastating siege of Āgā Moḥammad Khan Qajar (r. 1794-97). He favored and supported the Shaikhis (Šayḳis) of Kermān.

*Youth.* Ebrāhim Khan was from the Qawānlu branch of the Qajar tribe (‘Azod-al-Dawla, p. 110; Vaziri, 2006, p. 759, footnote). His father, Mehdi-Qoli Khan, was the brother of Āgā Moḥammad Khan Qajar and a paternal uncle of Fath-‘Ali Shah, while his mother, Āsia Kānom, was the daughter of Moḥammad Khan Qawānlu. There are no references to Ebrāhim Khan’s birth date, but we know that his father died early, during the siege of Astarābād by Karim Khan Zand when Ebrāhim Khan was a child. After this event, Āgā Moḥammad Khan married Ebrāhim Khan’s mother to Fath-‘Ali Shah, and raised and nurtured Ebrāhim Khan as his own son, together with his other nephews, Fath-‘Ali Shah and his brother Ḥosayn-Qoli Khan (‘Azod-al-Dawla, pp. 301, 348; Vaziri, 2006, p. 759 footnote; Hedāyat, 1957, p. 76). Fath-‘Ali Shah also highly revered Ebrāhim Khan and honored him with the appellation of Ẓahir-al-Dawla and Ebrāhim Khan-e ‘Amu (‘Azod-al-Dawla, p. 78; Vaziri, 2006, p. 85). In 1206/1791,



Fatḥ-ʿAli Shah married his first offspring and first daughter Homāyun Solṭān (Ḳānom Ḳānomān, Ḳān Bāji) to Ebrāhim Khan (ʿAzod-al-Dawla, pp. 27, 28, 316; Hedāyat, 1971, p. 250; Vaziri, 2006, p. 762; Eʿtemād-al-Salṭana, p. 1417).

*Ebrāhim Khan as a military leader.* Ebrāhim Khan was an important military leader and companion of Fatḥ-ʿAli Shah. With his numerous campaigns in different regions, Ebrāhim Khan helped the new king establish and stabilize his dominion over the territories conquered by Āgā Moḥammad Khan. Before being appointed governor of Kermān, he was commissioned to pacify and suppress the insurgents in the regions of Isfahan, Fārs and Iraq, in 1798 (ʿAzod-al-Dawla, p. 195; Eʿtemād-al-Salṭana, p. 1450; Donboli, pp. 49-50), Gilān in 1800 (Eʿtemād-al-Salṭana, p. 1458; Donboli, p. 69), and Khorasan in 1800-02 (ʿAzod-al-Dawla, p. 195; Hedāyat, 1971, pp. 375-76, 362, 367; Eʿtemād-al-Salṭana, pp. 1456-8, 1462; Donboli, pp. 69, 71, 79, 87). A consistent source of insurgency and instability lay in the southeastern regions of Kermān and Baluchistan. Once entrusted with the governorship of Kermān, he became specifically responsible for maintaining the security of these troublesome regions. For the rest of his career, he fought frequently with the local khans of Kermān, Bam, Narmāšir, Baluchistan, and Sistān, and gained a strong hold over these regions (Hedāyat, 1971, pp. 387, 403; Vaziri, 2006, pp. 734, 759, 760, footnote; Donboli, pp. 124-5).

*Ebrāhim Khan as governor of Kermān.* In the wake of Āgā Moḥammad Khan’s crushing siege of Kermān in 1794, the city was left moribund and without a governor. The rulers of Yazd were able to exert some control over Kermān, but they were constantly in conflict with the local khans. After Fatḥ-ʿAli Shah had ascended to the throne and consolidated his power in the northern and central regions of Iran, he turned his attention to the southeastern parts of the country, which were on the verge of political disintegration and had lost their economic infrastructure and were no longer operating under the hegemony of the central government. In order to regain control, Fatḥ-ʿAli Shah appointed Ebrāhim Khan as governor of Kermān. During his tenure as governor, which lasted 22 years (1218-40/1803-24), Ebrāhim Khan undertook a comprehensive restoration plan and was remarkably successful in reconstructing socio-economic infrastructure and maintaining the political stability of Kermān and its surrounding regions (Hedāyat, 1971, p. 387; Vaziri, 2006, pp. 82, 85, 757, footnote; idem, 1974, p. 116; Eʿtemād-al-Salṭana, p. 1468; Bāstāni Pārizi, 1965, pp. 3-5). He asked the king for a tax-exemption for the city to be able to invest in the economic reconstruction of the city (Pur Aḥmad, p. 241). With his strong



hold over and constant suppression of the local khans, Ebrāhim Khan improved the security of the region so that trade, which was essential to the economy, could be resumed. The economic restoration of the region demanded a large labor force, which was difficult to amass, given the dramatic depopulation of the region in the face of severe political and economic problems. Ebrāhim Khan persuaded people from neighboring regions, and of various professions, to resettle in Kermān, and to benefit from the emerging economic possibilities in the region (Vaziri, 1974, p. 193; Bāstāni Pārizi, 1965, p. 13).

The physical restoration of the city was also crucial to his plans. He restored and expanded its governmental center, the *arg* ('citadel'), and added new administrative and military sectors. The high-ranking officials of the city also built new elaborate residences there. Ebrāhim Khan also equipped this enlarged complex with the city's fifth gate, which was named *Darvāza-ye arg* ('the citadel gate'; Vaziri, 1974, pp. 105, 118). He also repaired many qanats in the city and suburbs of Kermān and restored fields and gardens. His most famous building project is a multi-functional complex, now part of the old bazaar of Kermān, named after him, *Majmu'a-ye Ebrāhim Khan* ('the Ebrāhim Khan complex'). The complex consists of a bazaar, now known as *Bāzār-e zargari*, ('the goldsmiths bazaar'), a religious school with a library, as well as a bath (Vaziri, 1974, pp. 110, 112, footnote; Bāstāni Pārizi, 1965, p. 12; idem, 1974, p. 9). Ebrāhim Khan sought not only to rejuvenate the labor force, but also to restore the cultural life and religious affairs of the city. According to the sources, he patronized religious schools and invited clerics from Arabestān, Fārs, and Khorasan, such as Shaikh Ne'mat-Allāh Baḥrayni, Shaikh 'Abd-al-Ḥosayn Aḥsā'i, Mollā 'Ali A'mā, and Sayyed Kāzem Rašti, a leader of the Shaikhis (Bāstāni Pārizi, 1965, p. 3). He also liked poetry and supported poets, having himself composed some poems under the pen name of Toḡrol (Hedāyat, 1957, p. 76).

*Death.* In 1824, Ebrāhim Khan went to capital, Tehran, for an event in which some other governors also participated. Before his departure, he appointed his elder son 'Abbās-Qoli Mirzā as his deputy in Kermān and his other son Rostam Khan as his deputy in Bam (Vaziri, 2006, p. 765, footnote). While in Tehran, he succumbed to a fatal ailment (Hedāyat, 1971, pp. 635-6; E'temād-al-Salṭana, p. 1567). As his date of birth is not recorded, his exact age at the time of death is not known. However, we can assume that he was not very old, given the fact that at the time of the siege of Astarābād (1783) he was a child, and that he



married his first wife in 1791. Moreover, on the occasion of his death, the author of *Ma'āter-e solṭāniya* remembers him as a young, good-humored, kind person (Donboli, p. 392).

*Descendants.* As a member of the royal family, Ebrāhim Khan was presumably wealthy and powerful even before he became governor of Kermān. However, during his long reign over the vast regions of the southeast, and in the course of many restoration and reconstruction projects, Ebrāhim Khan and his family accumulated even more property and wealth and therefore gained outstanding status and power in the city of Kermān and in neighboring regions (Bāstāni Pārizi, 1965, p. 3). Thus, the descendants of Ebrāhim Khan have exercised remarkable influence in the political, cultural, and religious history of Kermān and neighboring cities to the present day (Vaziri, 2006, pp. 85-7). The large and influential Ebrāhimi and Amir-Ebrāhimi families of Kermān trace their lineage back to Ebrāhim Khan (ʿAzod-al-Dawla, p. 195; Vaziri, 1974, p. 139).

Ebrāhim Khan had 21 daughters, the most famous of whom was Galin Kānom, who married Šoʿāʿ-al-Salṭana, the 35th son of Faṭḥ-ʿAli Shah (ʿAzod-al-Dawla, pp. 193-4). The number of his sons has been recorded differently. He probably had 21 sons, whose names have been recorded in historical sources. ʿAbbās-Qoli was his eldest son from his first wife, the daughter of Faṭḥ-ʿAli Shah. Appointed Ebrāhim Khan's deputy during his father's last trip to Tehran, Abbās-Qoli Khan was officially named his successor by Faṭḥ-ʿAli Shah. Nevertheless, he revolted against the king and was defeated, but escaped a severe punishment due to his relation to the king (ʿAzod-al-Dawla, p. 110; Hedāyat, 1971, pp. 695-7; Eʿtemād-al-Salṭana, p. 1567; Bāstāni Pārizi, 1965, pp. 5, 13, 14). His full brothers were Qahhār-Qoli Khan and Abu'l-Faṭḥ Khan. Another son of Ebrāhim Khan was Rostam Khan, who married Šāh Gowhar Kānom, a daughter of Faṭḥ-ʿAli Shah (ʿAzod-al-Dawla, p. 319), and who was appointed by Ebrāhim Khan as governor of Bam, but was defeated by his rebellious stepbrother, ʿAbbās-Qoli Khan, in 1827 (Vaziri, 2006, pp. 744-5, footnote). The remaining brothers were Šāhroḡ Khan, who married Šāh Gowhar Kānom after the death of Rostam Khan (ʿAzod-al-Dawla, p. 34), Asad-Allāh Khan, Ġolām-Ḥosayn Khan, Moḥammad Ḥasan Khan; Naṣr-Allāh Khan, ʿAli-Qoli Khan, Ḳosrow Khan, Musā Khan, Esmāʿil Khan, ʿIsa Khan, ʿAli-Moḥammad Khan, Bahrām Khan, Moḥammad Šādeq Khan, Ġolām-ʿAli Khan, Moḥammad-Taqi Khan, ʿAbd-al-Raḥim Khan, and Moḥammad Karim Khan, who was the most famous of Ebrāhim Khan's sons and the head of the



Shaikhis in Kermān (‘Azod-al-Dawla, p. 319; Vaziri, 2006, p. 762).

*Ebrāhim Khan and the Shaikhis.* In a pilgrimage to Karbala, Ebrāhim Khan met Sayyed Kāẓem Rašti and was highly influenced by him. Ebrāhim Khan’s son, Moḥammad Karim Khan, pursued religious studies under the supervision of Sayyed Kāẓem and was then appointed by him as the head of the Shaikhis in Kerman. As a result of the support of Ebrāhim Khan and his family, Shaikhism was promoted and strengthened in Kermān, which became the seat of the Shaikhis of Iran. The Ebrāhim Khan School and its library were devoted to the study and promotion of Shaikhism. After Moḥammad Karim Khan died, his son Moḥammad Khan took over his position (‘Azod-al-Dawla, p. 195; Hermann and Rezai, pp. 92-4).

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