



Making and Remaking Empire in Early Qajar Iran

In 1722, the Safavid Empire collapsed. An empire that ruled for over two centuries, in its heyday it spanned parts of Central Asia, the Caucasus, and present-day Iran. The decades following its fall were ones of unrest and discord, and it was only with the rise of the Qajars in the 1780s that a level of stability was restored. Assef Ashraf devotes this book to an analysis of the making of the Qajar Empire. It adopts a socially oriented approach to political history – an approach that examines the discourse and political practices, and the centers and peripheries, of empire. Each chapter focuses on a particular practice that was at the heart of Qajar governance – land administration, gift-giving, marriage, political correspondence, provincial diplomacy, and territorial conquest and tribal relations. By situating the formation of Qajar Iran in its early nineteenth-century context, Ashraf highlights the overarching themes of transition and change.

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Cambridge University Press & Assessment
978-1-009-36154-5 — Making and Remaking Empire in Early Qajar Iran
Assef Ashraf
Frontmatter
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CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Shaftesbury Road, Cambridge CB2 8EA, United Kingdom
One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA
477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia
314–321, 3rd Floor, Plot 3, Splendor Forum, Jasola District Centre, New Delhi – 110025, India
103 Penang Road, #05–06/07, Visioncrest Commercial, Singapore 238467

Cambridge University Press is part of Cambridge University Press & Assessment,
a department of the University of Cambridge.

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www.cambridge.org
Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781009361545
DOI: 10.1017/9781009361538

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First published 2024
First paperback edition 2025

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication data

Names: Ashraf, Assef, author.

Title: Making and remaking empire in early Qajar Iran / Assef Ashraf,
University of Cambridge

Description: Cambridge ; New York : Cambridge University Press, 2024. |

Includes bibliographical references and index.

Identifiers: LCCN 2023041806 | ISBN 9781009361552 (hardback) |

ISBN 9781009361538 (ebook)

Subjects: LCSH: Iran – History – Qajar dynasty, 1794–1925. | Iran – Politics
and government – 19th century. | Imperialism – Iran – History – 19th century. |
Tribes – Iran – History – 19th century.

Classification: LCC DS298 .A84 2024 | DDC 955/.04–dc23/eng/20230927

LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2023041806>

ISBN 978-1-009-36155-2 Hardback

ISBN 978-1-009-36154-5 Paperback

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Acknowledgments

In researching and writing this book, I have incurred a deep debt to a long list of individuals and institutions. The book began as a dissertation in the Department of History at Yale University, and Abbas Amanat guided me from the very beginning with his advice, his love for and knowledge of Iranian history, and his encouragement and support. His ability to raise important questions, gently correct my errors, and share useful sources, all the while giving me the space to find my own way, have shown me what the art of teaching and supervising students should look like. I am profoundly grateful to him. Alan Mikhail went beyond the call of duty and listened to and shared advice with me on more things than I can possibly recall: from big, historical questions, to the best coffee in town. From the current state of the academic job market, to reading drafts of my writing. He has always been encouraging with his words and genuine with his support – and for all these things I thank him. Paul Bushkovitch shaped my thinking from the first time I sat in his seminar on Russian history. He taught me not only about early modern Russia, but also the power of simple questions that cut to the heart of the matter. I am also deeply grateful to many others who are or were at Yale and shaped my intellectual development during my time there: Paola Bertucci, John Demos, Marcy Kaufman, Ivan Marcus, Peter Perdue, Steve Pincus, Kishwar Rizvi, Maryam Sanjabi, James Scott, Kalyanakrishnan (Shivi) Sivaramakrishnan, Francesca Trivellato, and Keith Wrightson. A generous grant from the Roshan Cultural Heritage Institute enabled me to complete the writing of the dissertation on which this book is based.

In Cambridge, I have found a new home. Paul Anderson, Amira Bennison, Farida El-Keiy, Khaled Fahmy, Mahbod Ghaffari, Aaron Hornkohl, Saussan Khalil, Geoffrey Khan, Aishwarj Kumar, Andrew Marsham, James Montgomery, Charis Olszok, Yaron Peleg, Michael Rand, Christine van Ruymbeke, and Vincenzo Vergiani have all made it a pleasure to teach and work in the Faculty of Asian and Middle

Eastern Studies. I could not have asked for better or more supportive colleagues. I am especially grateful for the seminars run by Khaled and Andrew, as well as the Middle East History seminar in the Faculty of History, for providing critical but constructive spaces for colleagues from across the Cambridge ecosystem who work on the Middle East to come together and share their research. My students at Cambridge helped me see familiar things in new ways, and new things for the first time. Others at Cambridge who have shaped this project in one way or another include Andrew Arsan, Arthur Asseraf, Lorenzo Bondioli, Hazem Kandil, Evaleila Pesaran, Helen Pfeifer, and Hana Sleiman. The master, fellows, and staff of Pembroke have made the college a wonderful place to be, and I wish to thank them for welcoming me into their fold, for the many engaging conversations over lunch and dinner, and for their support.

I wish to thank the faculty in the Department of History at Central Connecticut State University, especially Katherine Hermes and Mark Jones, for their help and support, and for taking a very green teacher and breaking him in. To the Department of History at Bryn Mawr College, particularly Madhavi Kale, Elly Truitt, Stephen Vider, and Alicia Walker, thank you for making my two years there so enjoyable.

Numerous colleagues and friends have given their time, listened to me speak about this project, read drafts, and offered me advice along the way: Necati Alkan, Mehrdad Amanat, Megan Asaka, Oliver Bast, Chris Bonner, Mara Caden, Camille Cole, Sasha Dehghani, Armin Eschraghi, Kevin Fogg, Omid Ghaemmaghani, Kioumars Ghereghlou, Kevin Gledhill, Matthew Goldman, John Gurney, James Gustafson, Kevan Harris, Hadi Jorati, Andrea Karlsson, Ranin Kazemi, Arash Khazeni, Kevin Ko, Nathan Kurz, Tyler Kynn, Tanya Lawrence, Antoine Lentacker, Mordechai Levy-Eichel, Matthew Melvin-Koushki, David Minto, Moojan Momen, Dave Petruccelli, Sholeh Quinn, Erfan Sabeti, Saghar Sadeghian, Cyrus Schayegh, Max Scholz, Lior Sternfeld, Nazanin Yvonne Sullivan, Heidi Walcher, Mina Yazdani, and Waleed Ziad. I have always appreciated Joanna de Groot's sharp, critical, but unfailingly helpful questions. Dominic Parviz Brookshaw and Farzin Vejdani have managed to simultaneously be mentors, colleagues, and dear friends to me – I thank them for all of that and more.

I am grateful to numerous libraries and archives which made the research for this project possible. The staff at the Majlis Library and

Acknowledgments

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the National Archives in Tehran made some of their archival and manuscript sources available to me despite my not being able to travel to Iran. In Saint Petersburg, the staff at the National Library and the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts eased my transition into research in Russia. Youli Ioannesyan, in particular, helped me navigate both life and research in Russia. In Moscow, the staff at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Archive were very patient with me. In Istanbul, the archivists and librarians at the Başbakanlık Ottoman Archives, the Süleymaniye Library, and the Beyazıt Library all helped me find the documents I was looking for, and helped me attain copies. Antony Greenwood and Gülden Güneri made my stay at the American Research Institute in Turkey in Arnavutköy a pleasant one. The staff in the British Library and the National Archives in London made my time in those two institutions among my most productive. In Paris, the staff at the Archives diplomatiques in La Courneuve were exceedingly helpful.

Maria Marsh at Cambridge University Press has been a wonderful editor. Thank you to her, and to others at CUP, for shepherding this book through the production process. I am grateful to the four anonymous reviewers who read the entire draft and made this book stronger with their comments. Some of the research that found its way into this book was published in different form in *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, the *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, and the *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*. I thank the editors of these journals and the numerous anonymous readers who provided me with their comments and suggestions. This book also benefited from the questions, suggestions, and critiques of audiences at Bryn Mawr College, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Princeton University, and Yale University. Presentations at the annual Middle East Studies Association conferences, the Iranian Studies conferences, and the Association for the Study of Persianate Studies conference in Sarajevo also refined and strengthened my thinking.

My deepest debt is to my family. My uncles, aunts, and cousins around the globe have always made me feel at home. And my family in Iran have taught me all the things about Iranian history and culture that books and archives cannot. To my brothers, Samir and Nima, sisters-in-law, Melody and Shaadee, and niece and nephews, Paloma, Anis, and Taraz – thank you for always supporting me. I wish we were not scattered across three continents and multiple time zones, and that

we saw each other more often. To my parents, Mashiyat and Taraneh, who left their homeland and their families behind under extremely difficult circumstances and yet have surrounded their children and grandchildren with love, laughter, and unyielding support – I owe everything. And to Michelle, who has made my life infinitely more joyful, and to Elias, who came into the world just as I was finishing this book and made my life immeasurably more meaningful – what else is there to say, really, but thank you.

Note on Transliteration and Terms

This book follows the transliteration system prescribed by the *International Journal of Middle East Studies* (IJMES).

In general, I have tried to avoid too many diacritic marks and have reserved them for when transliterating a Persian word or phrase found in the sources, or for the titles of Persian-language books and manuscripts.

Arabic words that appear in a Persian construct or sentence have been transliterated according to Persian usage; similarly, Arabic words that are used as part of an Arabic sentence – like, for example, a verse from the Qur'an – have been transliterated along Arabic transliteration guidelines. The Persian *izāfih* is rendered as *-i* (*-yi* for words ending in vowels) but omitted in personal names.

The words for 'royal decree' in Persian include, depending on the person who issued them, *farman*, *raqam*, and *manshūr*. Following the conventions of IJMES, this book refers to them as firmans (and sometimes as *raqam*).

Common era dates are preferred whenever possible, even if the original source uses the Islamic *hijri* calendar or the Iranian *shamsi* one, except in those cases where it is unclear what the common era date would be. In those cases, both the original and the common era dates are provided. For example, a firman dated Ramadan AH 1233 could be from July or August 1818, depending on the day it was written, so it is cited as Ramadan AH 1233/July–August 1818. Following the AP style, the acronym for *anno hegirae* (AH) is written before the year.

Chronology of Key Dates

- 1722 siege of Isfahan and collapse of Safavid Empire
- 1726 execution of Shah Sultan Husayn, last Safavid shah, by order of Ashraf Hotaki
- 1736 coronation of Nadir Shah
- 1747 assassination of Nadir Shah
- 1750 regency of Karim Khan Zand begins
- 1773 death of Isma‘il III, the last Safavid puppet shah
- 1779 death of Karim Khan Zand, escape of Agha Muhammad Shah from captivity
- 1785 conquest of much of north and northwestern Iran completed by Agha Muhammad Khan
- 1794 conquest of Fars and Kirman by Agha Muhammad Khan, death of Lutf-‘Ali Khan Zand
- 1797 Agha Muhammad Khan conquers Georgia and Khurasan and subsequently proclaims himself shah. He is assassinated in June.
- 1798 coronation of Fath-‘Ali Shah
- 1799 John Malcolm dispatched from India to the Qajar court
- 1801 Anglo-Persian Treaty
- 1804 outbreak of first war between the Qajar and Russian empires
- 1807 Treaty of Finkenstein with France
- 1809 Treaty of Alliance with Britain
- 1813 Treaty of Gulistan and conclusion of first Russo-Persian war
- 1814 Definitive Treaty with Britain
- 1826 outbreak of second war between the Qajar and Russian empires
- 1828 Treaty of Turkmanchay and conclusion of second Russo-Persian war
- 1833 death of ‘Abbas Mirza, the Qajar crown prince
- 1834 death of Fath-‘Ali Shah