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Naderid Iran's Statehood, Territoriality, Status, and Diplomatic Capacity on Ottoman Scale: 1723-1748

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Abstract

This article explores Naderid Iran's nature of statehood, position in international balance of power, and evolving diplomatic practice. It argues that from 1723 to 1747, the sovereign establishment in Iran remained fundamentally dynastic without giving way to territoriality, continued to acknowledge Ottoman superiority in hierarchy as well as power relations as a principle, and gradually began to adopt, for the first time, early modern specialized phenomena in diplomatic conduct. The study bases itself on the documentation produced by Iranian-Ottoman diplomacy from the Afghan overthrow in 1722 until the aftermath of Nāder Shah's murder in 1747, contextualizes these records in comparison to those of earlier centuries, and treats the Hotaki regime, the Safavid rump state, and Nāder's monarchy in Iran as a whole.

Keywords: Iran; Nader; diplomacy; early modern; state; dynasticism

This article examines the continuities and changes in Iranian statehood, dynastic sovereignty, territorial identity, and diplomatic status during the time of Nāder Qerqlu-Afshar, chronologically spanning the years of Nāder's lead as strongman (1726–1732), rule by regency (1732–1736), and reign (1736–1747). Geographically it treats Iran as a whole, comprising not only Nāder's reign and the Nāder-led Safavid restoration under Tahmāsp II as well as 'Abbās III but also the short-lived revolutionary/usurper kingdom of the Afghan Hotakis.¹ To measure the extent of persistence and transformation of the above-stated dynamics in the Naderid period, the study utilizes Iran's diplomacy with the Ottoman Empire during the earlier centuries as the basis of comparison.

What makes this examination feasible is the existence of the Ottoman Empire as Iran's constant and principal neighbor throughout early modernity, as successive Iranian polities rise and fall, and the relative richness of the extant Ottoman records on Iranian affairs.² Therefore, this study draws primarily on the Ottomans' documentation of relations with Iranian polities, which includes not only Ottoman-produced records but also the Ottoman verbatim copies of incoming Iranian documents. The diplomatic nature of the topic

¹ The protagonist was known by several successive different names throughout his life. For information on his different names, see Parsa, "Identity," 110–11; Axworthy, *Sword*, 18, 70, 291; and Lockhart, *Nadir Shah*, 18, 26, 103. To avoid tiring the reader, I refrain from use of the chronologically applicable name among the three successive names of our protagonist, who started out as Nadr-qoli, rose to power as Tahmāsp-qoli, and reached his zenith as Nāder. For the sake of simplicity, I use Nāder notwithstanding which name was valid at the time of a given event.

² Rudi Matthee too notes the contrast between the eighteenth-century trajectories of Iran and the Ottoman Empire; "Historiographical Reflections," 21–22.

necessitates a demarcation and filtering to determine which source material to use and which to reject. In this respect, the study mostly excludes literary records such as chronicles and histories, which feature self-portrayal, propaganda, or third-party observations.³ It likewise disregards intragovernmental documents such as decrees, writs, coinage, and inscriptions. These genres, by definition, present self-proclaimed assertions produced mainly for domestic addresses. The self-identifications that they feature, especially the ones concerning interstate hierarchy and power relations with the outside world, are not verifiable by their acknowledgment or rejection by foreign addresses, and so are not taken into consideration. This study does not evaluate the claims that were advanced by one side but failed to attain acknowledgment by an opposite party in foreign affairs. What count for the task at hand are negotiation protocols, pacts, diplomatic letters, treaties, and mission reports, and within these, exclusively the parts that were asserted by one party and also acknowledged by the other side, that is, the mutually recognized or otherwise agreed-upon clauses.⁴

The present work demonstrates that, first, throughout the Naderid period, the state in Iran remained exclusively dynastic with regard to its diplomatic engagements; Iranian statehood did not become more territorial and less dynastic than it had been during the earlier centuries. The territory may have possessed a limited legal personality, but this was valid only concerning the borders and subjecthood, not statehood. This article likewise explores the continuity in Iran's hierarchical relationship with its western neighbor. Throughout the Naderid era, as it had done earlier, the Iranian polity acknowledged, officially and consistently, the primacy of the Ottoman monarchy, did not challenge this established principle, and strived to have the Sublime Porte recognize the Iranian polity's right to monarchy within this framework of official inequality of the two states. With respect to diplomatic practice and chancery activity, this work diagnoses the relative change and increased receptivity in Naderid Iran in contrast to the preceding era. It shows how treaty-like pacts gained ground in Iranian–Ottoman diplomacy against the more conventional genre of monarchic letters functioning as interstate agreements, and how the Iranian chancery, in the accreditation of missions, began to draw up documents like those of the Sublime Porte that clearly defined the capacity and rank of a given mission, as opposed to the indirect and implicit definitions of earlier diplomatic accreditations. This article also reveals a novelty of the Naderid era in Iranian–Ottoman diplomacy; that both parties repeatedly agreed, in official writing, to set up permanent missions in each other's capitals, and that, notwithstanding failed actualization, this formally promulgated decision heralded a major break with the tradition of exclusively ad hoc conduct in diplomacy.

Findings

Recognition or nonrecognition of a polity's right to sovereign statehood by major foreign powers is arguably the most critical factor in that polity's viability as an international entity.⁵ Particularly for the early modern Middle Eastern state, the inversely correlative degrees of dynasticism (that the ruling house is the *raison d'être*) and territoriality (that the corporate territory is the *raison d'être*) in a state's constitution were essential to its

³ The rare use of these genres in the present study comprises only quotations from negotiation reports recounted in these larger works, and does not base an argument on the literary text's own assertions.

⁴ Otherwise, in scaling the international weight of Naderid Iran, one could be misled by Iranian documents drafted, for example, after Nader's 1740 order for his chancery to employ supreme imperial *intitulatio* for him; see Floor, *Rise and Fall*, 89. This was unilaterally claimed in the Iranian version of the 1746 Protocol of Kordān (Osmanlı Arşivi [hereafter BOA], Name-i Hümayun Defterleri, vol. 8, ent. 169). In the case of the Safavids, one could similarly be misled by chronicles and governmental writs inscribing the shah as "God's shadow," "shahen-shah," "supreme monarch," etc., in diplomacy or discussion of the balance of power between sovereign entities; such self-assertions were void. Only the entitlements that were also acknowledged by the opposite party in a relationship were considered valid.

⁵ For Nader's strategy to gain legitimacy by tradition-building and military conquest, see Tucker's seminal book, *Nadir Shah's Quest for Legitimacy in Post-Safavid Iran*.

diplomatic conduct and foreign relations. Until Nāder's rise to power, principal actors in early modern Iranian–Ottoman affairs had been dynastic states.⁶ In official dealings, parties to bilateral relations had been the respective sovereign dynasties (monarchic ruling houses) and not the realms (the legal personality of a corporate territory).⁷ Therefore it is only natural that in diplomacy between the Ottoman Empire and Safavid Iran there had not been a state called “Iran” or “Rum” (literally Rome; i.e., Roman Empire; i.e., Byzantine Empire; therefore Ottoman Empire), which would have been the case only if parties to relations had been territorial entities with a ruling house as one of the constituents—and not as the fundamental constituent—of the realm (as in early modern European polities where, contrary to our case, territorial continuity prevailed over dynastic rupture in statehood). Interstate contacts, pacts, agreements, and written exchanges had concerned exclusively the dynastic institution, without a legal link to the territorial entity associated with these sovereign houses. If not for the dynastic legal personality of these states, there would remain no formal relationship between Iran and the empire, and the status quo in force would be invalidated. Once sovereign dynasties were out of the picture, the states in question would expire, as would all international deals to which they had been parties. Accordingly, it should not surprise us that when the Ottomans moved in to occupy the Iranian west following the Hotaki Afghans' overthrow of the House of Safi in 1722, the Sublime Porte was not breaking its treaty with Iran. With the old dynasty out of the picture, the legal entity, that is, the state that had officially dealt with the Ottomans for more than two centuries, had ceased to exist. A state or government or corporate body of Iran had never been party to these relations. After the Safavid's downfall, the Ottomans, in legal terms, stepped into terra nullius, that is, nobody's land.⁸ This had nothing to do with the well-known fact that pacts were made between rulers, not institutions. As of the early eighteenth century, the institutionalization of dynasties had already given way to pact-making between states, that is, official pledges that were binding for not only the reigning monarch but also his successors. Shah Hosayn's downfall resulted in this rupture not because of the change of the reigning monarch, but because of the change of the ruling dynasty. Otherwise, the current pacts could seamlessly be resumed by succeeding monarchs from the same line.

Tahmāsp II, son of the overthrown Safavid ruler Hosayn, made a diplomatic initiative in October 1723 to have the Ottomans acknowledge him as shah.⁹ He, via emissary Barkhordār Xān, and his acting prime minister 'Abdolkarim Xān, via emissary Murtazā-qoli Beyg, sent

⁶ Although it is true that Shah Ismail, by way of conquest, resurrected old Iran as a unified realm and the Sassanian notion of Iranian rulership, this reanimated Iran was not a “Persian State,” contrary to Roger Savory's argument in “Emergence,” in *Studies*, section 7. Although not the focus of the work, the distinction between the state and territorial political identity is accurately described in Mitchell, *Practice*, 69. For a discussion on Iran and the state during Safavid rule, see Newman, *Safavid Iran*, 6–8.

⁷ Dawlat Othmāniyya, the “Ottoman State” and Dawlat Safawiyya, the “Safavid State,” as opposed to the realms of Irān/'Ajam and Rum (Eastern Roman/Byzantine Empire). In this regard, also see Fragner, “Historische Wurzeln,” 82. It is important for those engaged with the post-World War I history of Iran to not mistake the word dawlat for its distorted use in contemporary Iran, which has come to denote the executive government or cabinet in the European sense and administration in the American. According to Savory, it was first during Shah 'Abbās I's reign, around the early 1600s, that the Iranian literati began to employ dawlat to mean the monarchic House of Safi (the state), rather than the God-given turn to a dynasty for sovereignty; “Safavid State and Polity,” in *Studies*, section 9. On the other hand, in Islamdom, since as early as the tenth or eleventh century, the term dawlat had the postclassical meaning of the established monarchy of a ruling house; Davutoğlu, “Devlet,” 234–40. Early modern Iranians may not have been unaware of this well-established semantic shift with a six-century tradition, because Iran was in the center of the geography where dawlat had evolved into “state.” Therefore Savory's argument must be approached with caution.

⁸ This analysis is derived from raw information found in BOA, Cevdet—Askeriye, 35128; BOA, İbnülemin—Hariciye, 969; BOA, Name-i Hümayun Defterleri, vol. 5, ent. 126; Rami Mehmed, *Münşeât*, 21a–21b; Ahmed b. Mahmud, *Defter*, 300b–303b; Raşid Mehmed and Çelebizade, *Tarih*, 1287–88; Mustafa Öksüz, “Şem'danizade Fındıklılı Süleyman,” 355; Aktepe, 1720–1724, 1–31; Roemer, “Safavid Period,” 189, 228, 232, 249, 332; and Fragner, “Historische Wurzeln,” 88–91.

⁹ For the Sublime Porte's rationale in choosing between overthrown Shah Hosayn's son Tahmāsp and the usurper Mahmud Hotak as the legitimate claimant to the Iranian throne, see Saçmalı, “Sunni Caliph,” 281–85; and Saçmalı, “Political Relations,” 135–89.

separate letters to Istanbul to initiate this recognition.¹⁰ In response, the Sublime Porte wrote back to the latter, justifying the impossibility of acknowledging Tahmāsp as the rightful owner of the Isfahan-based throne: “the Safavid state has perished.”¹¹ Istanbul reckoned the House of Safi to have been overthrown, not defeated, shrunk, or otherwise resisting under a new ruler. In the 1724 Treaty of Partition of Iran, the Ottoman Empire and Russia likewise declared, “the Safavid State has vanished,” and they designated the sovereign-less realm at stake as the “domains of Iran.”¹² They recognized the territorial identity of the contested land, despite its current division between a triumphant usurper and a rump-state remnant of the ousted monarchy. Tasmāsp II subscribed to this again in his letter of 1728 to Istanbul brought by ambassador Vali-Mohammad Xān Begdili-Shamlu, calling the territory in question the “domains of Iran.” Furthermore, he remarked that his ambassador had “hereditarily” served “the state,” which had recently been ruptured. In this way, the Safavid dynast too upheld the distinction between the state and the territory, and referred to the House of Safi as the source of statehood, whose counterpart he declared to be the “Ottoman State.”¹³ In the same vein, Tahmāsp’s ambassador plenipotentiary Mohammad Rezā-Qoli Xān Shamlu was accredited to the Sublime Porte in 1730 as the “*qurchi-bashi* from among the statesmen of the Safavids,” not of Iran.¹⁴ When Nāder later dethroned Tahmāsp II and enthroned ‘Abbās III, the Ottomans officially noted that Nāder had “turned the Safavid State into children’s play.”¹⁵ But they did not pass a similar judgment on the affairs of the territory of Iran, which was then doing well in comparison to the immediately preceding decade. The polity over which Tahmāsp II and ‘Abbās III reigned but Nāder ruled was a reanimated, or, more accurately, a puppet “Safavid State.”¹⁶

Nāder’s subsequent elimination of the House of Safi and assumption of the throne made this distinction between the state and the realm even clearer. Although a state had gone extinct, the realm was politically thriving, at least as seen from the outside. In 1736, Nāder’s embassy (led by ‘Abdolbāqi Xān Zanganeh the governor of Kirmānshāh, Mirzā Abulqāsem the chief judge, and Mollā ‘Ali Akbar the chief-clergy of Khorāsān) convened with the Ottoman committee (led by Kastamonulu Ismail Efendi the state secretary, Tavukçubaşı Mustafa Efendi the overseer of the Imperial Council chancelleries, and [Koca] Mehmed Ragıb Efendi the poll-tax accountant) in Istanbul.¹⁷ During this meeting, host negotiators referred to all three historical stages of the Ottoman polity—the principality, the royal, and the imperial ages—as one single Ottoman State. In contrast, the successive dynastic establishments in Iran that had been the Ottomans’ contemporaries were categorized, explicitly and tellingly, as the “Iranian states.” In the pact resulting from this conference, the “Safavid dynasty” was cited “among the [bygone] states that are counted towards Iran.”¹⁸ During these talks following Nāder’s coronation, both parties brought up, orally and in diplomatic documents, the issue of naming the present state in Iran. The ambiguity

¹⁰ To distinguish the Safavids’ (and by extension the post-Safavid Iranians’) devaluated use of the appellation *khan* from its true meaning of *king*, I transcribe the [post-]Safavid devaluation as *xān*, and I transcribe the original, kingly attribution as *khan*.

¹¹ *Devlet-i Safeviye karin-i zeval olmağla* (note the Turkish-specific meaning of *zawāl*); Raşid Mehmed and Çelebizade, *Tarih*, 1336.

¹² *Devlet-i Safeviye muzmahill olmak . . . Memalik-i İnan*; Raşid Mehmed and Çelebizade, *Tarih*, 1371, 1374, 1379–83.

¹³ BOA, Name-i Hümayun Defterleri, vol. 7, ent. 128, 130, 132.

¹⁴ Subhî Mehmed, *Subhî Târihi*, 119–20, 140. It is noteworthy that as early as 1730, Tahmāsp II/Nāder’s mission to the Sublime Porte and the subsequent flow of news from Iran to Istanbul were helping Nāder build up his personal legitimacy across Europe; Matthee, “Wrath,” 4.

¹⁵ *Devlet-i Safeviye’yi mel’abe-i sibyanı döndürüp*; Subhî Mehmed, *Subhî Târihi*, 189.

¹⁶ Râgıb Mehmed, *Tahkik ve Tefvik*, 22.

¹⁷ For an evaluation of these negotiations, see Tucker, *Nadir Shah’s Quest*, 45–57; M. Habib Saçmalı, “Political Relations,” 442–74; and Tucker, “Peace Negotiations,” 16–37.

¹⁸ Râgıb Mehmed, *Tahkik ve Tefvik*, 67, 121–22. Contrary to what Metin Kunt asserts in “Ottomans and Safavids,” 194, it was not that “the Safavi dynasty took over an existing state.” The Safavids had founded a new state by taking, not taking over but taking by conquest, a territory.

did not last long. The fundamental fact that the dynasty and the state were the same entity and that this entity was separate from a territorial identity had survived the coup d'état. Nāder's 1738 letter conveyed by ambassador Muhammad Rahim Xān Sa'dlu made official, simply and for his contemporaries self-evidently, that "pacification was realized between the Ottoman State and the Naderid State."¹⁹

The actual status was thereby formalized. Thereafter, until Nāder's death, every reference in diplomatic writings designated the parties as the "Ottoman State" and the "Naderid State," not as Iran and Rum.²⁰ The prominent examples are the letter from the Ottoman grand vizier to Nāder's son and prime minister Mortazā Nasrollah Xān, Nasrollah Xān's 1741 letter to grand vizier Shahla Ahmed Pasha (conveyed by ambassador Hāji Xān Khorāsāni), the grand vizier's letter in reply to the prime minister, Nāder Shah's letter on another occasion to Sultan Mahmud Khan I (conveyed with the returning envoy Nazif Mustafa Efendi who had succeed the Naderid ambassador Fath'Ali Xān Torkmān), Shāhrokh Mirzā's letter to the grand vizier (conveyed by Nazif Mustafa Efendi), the Iranian version of the Kordān protocol handed over to the Ottoman side, the subsequent Ottoman-issued pact (forwarded with ambassador Kesriyeli Ahmed Pasha), and the monarchic letter accompanying this pact.²¹ In all of these diplomatic and legally binding documents, the Ottomans' contracting partner was the Naderid State, not Iran.

In addition to the dynastic nature of statehood in diplomacy, the territory, as mentioned above, had its own limited area of validity in foreign affairs. Just as the Ottoman, the Safavid, and the Naderid states were parties to international relations, so were the realms of Iran/Ajam and Rum with regard to geography,²² territory,²³ borders,²⁴ and subjecthood.²⁵ In these limited contexts, there was a continuity of the realm, territoriality, and even the abstract notions of crown and throne, in a way that transcended the current dynastic state. But these concepts were used only within the said limits; they did not play a part in statehood or in the constitution of sovereignty. For this very reason, Iran and Rum were never the states that were parties to treaties, accords, diplomacy, or the status quos.²⁶ This is also documented by Nāder's 1736 letter to grand vizier Silāhdār Dimetokali

¹⁹ *Devlet-i . . . Osmāniye ile . . . Devlet-i Nādire beyninde musālahā tahakkuk bularak*. BOA, Name-i Hümayun Defterleri, vol. 3, ent. 15. That the Naderid-Iranian polity identified itself in diplomacy as the Naderid State and not as the Iranian State, I first presented in Vienna at the Nader Shah Revisited conference in 2016. The late Michael Axworthy, who was among the participants, briefly recalls this in *Crisis, Collapse*, 7 (n. 5).

²⁰ Dawlat Nādiriyā, rather than Dawlat Nādira, was the more frequently used form.

²¹ BOA, Name-i Hümayun Defterleri, vol. 3, ent. 19, 22, 26,47,49; vol. 8, ent. 169, 171-2.

²² Both Roemer and Fragner employ "Iran" and "state" accurately, in the terms of their source material, not as mumpsimus, and thereby observe the distinction between the state and the realm. Roemer remarks that the Safavid establishment was itself the state and the Turkoman or Turkish dynasties that succeeded the Safavids in Iran were separate states; "Safavid Period," 189, 228, 232, 249, 332. Likewise, Fragner treats Iran as territory and realm, not as state, which he identifies with the sovereign house; "Historische Wurzeln," 87-88, 90-91.

²³ *Mamālek-i Irān* (domains of Iran).

²⁴ "*Hudud ve sınır . . . Sultan Murad Han-ı Rabi . . . zamanlarında olduğu vechile temyiz ve tahdid olunup*" (The boundary and the border shall be delineated and demarcated as they had been in the age of Sultan Murad Khan the Fourth). "*Ānchēh az ahl-e Irān ba Rum o az Rum ba Irān āyand*" (Those from the inhabitants of Iran that come to Rum and from [the inhabitants of Rum that come] to Iran)." BOA, Name-i Hümayun Defterleri, vol. 8, ent. 168-69.

²⁵ "*Miyane-i Rum ve Irān'da*" (Between Rum and Iran [with reference to inhabitants and mobilized forces]). "*Devlet-i Safeviye'nin ibtida-yi zuhurundan beri ahali-yi Rum ve Irān beyninde bais-i adavet . . . olan bida-i muhteraa*" (The invented innovations that caused animosity between the inhabitants of Rum and Iran since the beginning of the advent of the Safavid State). "*Hüccac-ı Rum*" (pilgrims of Rum); "*ahali-yi Irān*" (inhabitants of Iran); "*huccac-ı Irān*" (Iranian pilgrims). BOA, Name-i Hümayun Defterleri, vol. 3, ent. 25, 32; vol. 8, ent. 168-69, 171.

²⁶ "*İşbu iki devletin ittifak ve ittihadı*" (The alliance and the union of these two states). "*Devlet-i Aliyye'nin vülat ve hükkamı*" (Governors and the magistrates of the Sublime [Ottoman] State). "*Resm-i ittihad der miyane-i devleteyn*" (Rites of union between both states). "*Dowlat-e Naderiyeh . . . Dowlat-e Osmāniyeh, . . . dowlatayn-e 'aliyyatayn rā mottahed mi dānim, . . . dusti ve mahabbat dar meyāneh-i do dowlat*" (The Naderid State . . . the Ottoman State, . . . We consider the two Sublime States as united, . . . the friendship and the affection between the two states). "*Janāb-e Nazif [Mustafa] Efendi ke az jāneb-e Dowlat-e . . . Osmāniyeh āmādeh bud*" (His excellency Nazif [Mustafa] Efendi who had come from the

Mehmed Pasha (conveyed with ambassador ‘Abdolbāqi Xān Zanganeh), Mahmud I’s 1746 letter to Nāder (conveyed with envoy Münif Mustafa Efendi), and again the imperial letter sent in response to Nāder’s reply to the former correspondence.²⁷ The state (the sovereign dynasty) was connected to the territory by virtue of possessing, ruling, and reigning over it.²⁸ Otherwise, the state and the territory were two separate entities.

In the age of Nāder, this dynastic essence of statehood and the relative insignificance of territoriality in diplomacy remained as fundamental as they had been before. For this reason, the Ottoman embassy of 1747, to exercise caution in the ongoing chaos in the wake of Nāder’s assassination, declared:

Peace is made with the states, and [diplomatic] gifts . . . are sent from a state to a state. If a king deceases, these are taken to the king who [belongs to the same dynasty and] replaces him, and are put to that state’s treasury. . . . As our mission is to the shah of Iran, we are under orders to convey and deliver the letter and the gifts to whomever [from Nāder’s line] the shah of Iran is in any case. . . . If Nāder Shah is alive, or if one of his sons have become shah, we will deliver the letter and the gifts.²⁹

Yet, they could not do so, because rumors had spread that not only Nāder but also every prince from his house had been slain.³⁰ This, if true, would have entailed the end, literally the decapitation, of the Naderid State, the exclusive party to the ongoing diplomacy with the Ottoman Porte.³¹ The shahdom of Iran in the quoted diplomatic statement above meant strictly the Naderid Shahdom in Iran. Succession within the dynasty rendered the state a continuous institution. But if somebody from outside the reigning dynasty removed this dynasty permanently from the throne and became the new monarch of the realm, this continuity was cut off. The existing state would expire and a new state would be established. The status quo and the deals in force would become annulled.

Another dynamic of statehood in the diplomatic sphere and in the regional balance of powers is interstate hierarchy. In premodern systems of states, the existence of an established hierarchy was the norm, contrary to the modern concept of the equality of sovereign polities. Particularly in early modern Islamdom, this hierarchic order reflected real power relations, and therefore adapted to changes; it was not the frozen remnant of an antiquated protocol. Post-medieval relations between the Ottoman Empire and Iranian polities had been shaped by a mutually acknowledged Ottoman superiority. This nonegalitarianism had regulated the essence and the conduct in all affairs between the two sides. Corresponding dignitaries of the parties—rulers, premiers, chancellors, viceroys, governors, and diplomats—had been each other’s addressees and counterparts, but not hierarchic equals. In line with the formal nonegalitarianism defining Iranian–Ottoman interactions, Ottoman dynasts and

Ottoman State). *İşbu muhabbet ve dostluk bu iki devlet-i uzma ve hanvade-i kübranın ve ahlaf ve akabalarının beynlerinde muhalled ve ber-karar ola*” (This affection and friendship shall be perpetuated and established between the two supreme states and [between] the successors and descendants of [these two] greatest Houses). BOA, Name-i Hümayun Defterleri, vol. 8, ent. 168–69, 171; vol. 3, ent. 47.

²⁷ BOA, Name-i Hümayun Defterleri, vol. 3, ent. 2., 25, 32. Likewise, see Nāder’s letter to Mahmud I (conveyed with the returning envoy Nazif Mustafa Efendi) in *Ibid.*, ent. 47; the Ottoman-issued version of the Kordān protocol in Name-i Hümayun Defterleri, vol. 8, ent. 168; and the Ottoman pact to Nāder in vol. 8, 171.

²⁸ “*Kevkeb-i . . . Devlet-i . . . Nadiyiye pertev-endaz-ı . . . kulub-i İraniyan oldukda*” (When the star of the Naderid State cast rays upon the hearts of Iranians), with reference to the Iranians’ changing subjecthood from the Safavid to the Naderid state.

²⁹ *Musalahalar devletler iledir ve . . . hedaya devletten devlete irsal olunur; bir melik fevt olsa yerine melik olan melike götürülür ve ol devlet hazinesine vaz olunur . . . Bizler, madem ki İran Şahı’na mebuslarız, beher hal İran Şahı her kim olursa name ve hedayı ona götürüp teslim memurlarız. . . . Nadir Şah sağ ise, veyahut oğullarından biri şah olmuş ise, name ve hedayı teslim ederiz.*

³⁰ Ebusahl Nûman, *Tedbirât*, 183, 192–93.

³¹ “Nāder Shah’s state was . . . decapitated (by his murder),” a perfectly fitting description for the occasion by Giorgio Rota, “League,” 222.

statesmen had ranked higher than their Iranian opposite numbers. This principle had determined the structure of diplomatic correspondence, titulature, hierarchical gradation, ceremonial code, status quo, and the balance of power. Exchanges between rulers had been the highest and most binding level of Ottoman diplomacy with Iranian polities. On this platform, the mutually recognized disparity manifested itself unmistakably. The Ottoman sovereign's title had been "supreme imperial" and the Iranian shah, depending on current political circumstances, was in principle "royal" and exceptionally "lesser imperial," as substantiated by diplomatic documents that not only the Ottomans but also (and especially) the Safavids had drawn up.³²

This groundwork enables us to evaluate Naderid Iran's hierarchical standing on the international platform. In his 1727-28 letter, Tahmāsp II requested that Ahmed III, who was the "crown-bestowing shahenshah" and politically an "uncle," recognize the inferior Tahmāsp's "shahship."³³ The immediate sequel of this correspondence, namely Tahmāsp's letter to grand vizier Nevşehirli Dāmād Ibrāhim Pasha and Nāder's letter to the grand vizier (conveyed with ambassador Vali-Mohammad Xān Begdili-Shamlu in 1728-9), attests to the same fact.³⁴ Tahmāsp II therefore presented himself to the Ottomans in a much humbler standing and capacity than he propagandized within Iran, prioritizing the Ottomans' legitimate acknowledgment of his kingship and upholding the pre-1722 tradition of his dynastic predecessors.³⁵ Beginning with this round and including all following official missives between the Sublime Porte and successive Iranian governments during the reigns of Tahmāsp II, 'Abbās III, and Nāder, Ottoman sovereigns were titled with the imperial *inscriptio* and superlative designations, and the Iranian shahs alternated between (most often) royal, and rarely imperial but nonsuperlative titles.³⁶ This established convention based on Ottoman primacy was duly continued and formally recorded in correspondence between the Iranian and the Ottoman grand viziers, as seen in the letters and pacts that the Sublime Porte and Naderid Iran's monarchs exchanged.³⁷ This unequal hierarchical standing of the early modern Iranian monarchies and the Ottoman Empire during the Naderid period constituted a direct continuation of the preceding era. Nāder Shah's compliance with the principle of Ottoman superiority, which he maintained even after his bedazzling subjugation of Mughal India, is telling with regard to the self-acknowledged boundaries of Nāder's claim to imperial dignity.

Following Safavid practice, Nāder took seriously securing Ottoman recognition of his—the Iranian sovereign's—hierarchical rank. From 1722 to 1730 the Sublime Porte did not recognize Tahmāsp's shahdom and instead treated him as prince and territorial lord: this caused major disruptions in Tahmāsp's quest for restoration. In 1723, the Sublime Porte, declaring

³² This synthesis is extracted from a cross-reading of Iranian-Ottoman diplomatic correspondence recorded in BOA, Name-i Hümayun Defterleri, vol. 5, ent. 65-69, 137-41, 153-65, 232-51, 280-89, 294-95, 298-313, 326-36, 342-45, 425-46, 510-13, 650-63; BOA, Name-i Hümayun Defterleri, vol. 6, ent. 110-17, 127-35, 220-24, 352-66, 405-8, 443-45, 455-63; Sarı Abdullah, *Düstürü'l-İnşā*; Evoghli, *Majma' al-Enshā*; Nazmizāde, *Münşeat-ı Nazmizāde*, ff. 30b-38b, 39b-40a, 43b-46b; *Mecmua-yı Mükkātebāt*, ff. 20b-21a, 21b-22a, 31b-32a; *Mecmua-i Mekātīb*, ff. 1b, 2b, 3b-4a, 68b-70a; *Münşeat Mecmuası*, ff. 5a-6b, 9a-15b; 20b-25b; Rami Mehmed, *Münşeat*, ff. 9a-17b, 19a-23a, 133a-134b, 136a-136b; *Münşeat 1050-1140*, ff. 149b-151a; *Asnād o Mokātabāt-e Seyāsi-ye Irān az Sāl-e 1038 tā 1105*, 203-11, 250-64, 271-81; *Asnād o Mokātabāt-e Seyāsi-ye Irān az Sāl-e 1105 tā 1135*, 82-86, 117-20, 122-26, 127-30, 136-51, 157-61, 165-76; Şevik, "Şah Tasmasb; Feridun Bey, *Münşeatü's-Selâtin*; and *Asnād o Mokātabāt-e Tārikhi-ye Irān*.

³³ BOA, Name-i Hümayun Defterleri, vol. 7, ent. 128.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, ent. 130, 132.

³⁵ Parsa, "Identity," 84.

³⁶ Tucker similarly observes the Naderid-Iranian recognition of Ottoman supremacy in caliphal terms; *Nadir Shah's Quest*, 48-49, 55, 91; Tucker, "Nader Shah's Idea," 9-25. This Iranian acknowledgment of Ottoman primacy continued even after the triumph over Mughal India and Nāder's subsequent assumption of the title *shāhanshāh* vis-à-vis the subjugated Mughals (see *Nadir Shah's Quest*, 14, 63), a title he was not able to assert to the Ottomans.

³⁷ Via the embassies of 'Abdolbāqi Xān Zanganeh, Karamehmedpaşazāde Mustafa Pasha, and Muhammad Rahim Xān Sa'dlu. See BOA, Name-i Hümayun Defterleri, vol. 3, ent. 2-15, although the examples are not limited to these cases.

that the Safavid State had expired, perceived Tahmāsp's attempt to establish contact (via the Barkhordār Xān mission) as follows:

Prince Tahmāsp, being situated around Qazvin, and claiming shahdom, [sent a mission] to confirm and stress the peace concluded between the Ottoman State and the [former] shahs of 'Ajam, with the fancy of claiming independence in Azerbaijan and [with the fancy] that the turn in shahdom has been transferred to him.³⁸

During the 1724 negotiations and treaty of partition of Iran with Russia, the Sublime Porte officially announced that Tahmāsp was not shah, and that in Iran there was a dethroned and living shah (Hosayn) whose state had been destroyed; Tahmāsp was, so to speak, neither fish nor fowl, and his shahdom would be recognized only if he consented to the articles of the partition.³⁹ Eventually, with the downfall of the Afghan Hotaki monarchy in central Iran, the 1730 Istanbul negotiations between the Sublime Porte and Tahmāsp's ambassador Mohammad Rezâ-qoli Xān Shamlu resulted in the Ottomans beginning to recognize Tahmāsp as shah, even though the deal did not produce a pact.⁴⁰

Similarly, when the Ottomans later acknowledged Nāder with due titles such as shah in the 1736 pact and the letters accompanying it (conveyed by ambassador Karamehmedpaşazāde Mustafa Pasha), Nāder immediately drew on this recognition to legitimize his coup d'état.⁴¹ He sent out verbatim copies of these texts to neighboring rulers to show that the Ottomans employed shah *inscriptio* for Nāder in diplomatic documents. Aware how crucial this was, his nephew 'Ali-qoli Xān ['Ādil Shah] also requested, in the wake of Nader's murder, that the Ottomans recognize his succession by addressing him likewise with shah *inscriptio* in a congratulatory diplomatic letter. 'Ali-qoli Xān/'Ādil Shah sent a mission to secure this written acknowledgement. When this emissary arrived in Baghdad, the Ottoman ambassador (Kesriyeli Ahmed Pasha) to Nāder, whose mission was aborted due to the assassination of the shah, was also there, on his way back to Istanbul. In addition to these two, the Ottoman ambassador's Iranian counterpart, Nāder's ambassador (Mustafa Xān Shamlu) to the Sublime Porte, whose mission was aborted for the same reason, was also in Baghdad. Nāder's ambassador knew well that receiving an Ottoman diplomatic document addressing 'Ali-qoli Xān/'Ādil Shah with royal titulature would provide this claimant with legitimacy, distinction, and advantage over rivals. Therefore, the latter ambassador of Nāder spoke of the slain shah's nephew in a discrediting manner:

If this mad [emissary 'Abdolkarim] takes [from the Sublime Porte] a letter of congratulation with shahly titles, this 'Ali-qoli Xān . . . will bother the Sublime [Ottoman] State and other states that are around Iran by dispatching them, like his uncle, verbatim copies of that letter, attaining arrogance and notability.⁴²

To prevent this, the Iranian ambassador tried to have the judge of the Ottoman embassy (Ebusehl Nu'mān Efendi) urgently lobby for the Sublime Porte not to address 'Ali-qoli Xān with shah titulature. By presenting arguments that apparently sounded reasonable to his addressees, Nāder's ambassador succeeded in making the Ottoman embassy judge accept the task of convincing the Sublime Porte to withhold recognition from 'Ali-qoli Xān, and

³⁸ Kazvin taraflarında bulunmakla şahlık iddiasına düşen Şehzade Tahmasb . . . Azerbaycan'da dava-yı istiklal ve Devlet-i . . . Osmanîye ile şahân-ı Acem miyanında münakid olan sulhü nevbet-i şahî kendisine intikal etmek zu'muyla teyit ve tekit için; Raşid Mehmed and Çelebizade, *Tarih*, 1336.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 1370–71, 1374, 1379–83.

⁴⁰ See the titulature used in Subhî Mehmed, *Subhî Târihi*, 119, 120, 140.

⁴¹ See BOA, Name-i Hümayun Defterleri, vol. 3, ent. 4; Ragıb Mehmed, *Tahkik ve Tefvik*, 40–43, 67.

⁴² *Bu deli [elçi Abdülkerim], Ali-kulu Han'a şahlık ünvanı ile bir tebrikname alırsa, bu Ali-kulu Han . . . etraf-ı İran'da olan sair düvele o namenin suretlerini ammisi gibi irsal ve tekebbür ve taayyün istihsal birle, onlara ve Devlet-i Aliyye'ye çok zahmetler verir.*

emphasized, “Do whatever you [need to] do and ensure that a letter with shah titles not be given to him.”⁴³ In the Naderid age, the Iranian polity continued to perceive the recognition of its monarchic capacity by the Sublime Porte crucial not only for legitimacy and prestige abroad but also for the domestic well-being of the regime.

Diplomatics (the lore of documents) also serve to situate the Naderid period within the longer span of Iran’s early modern diplomacy with the Ottoman Empire. This is especially the case because not only the content but also the formalities of live events written down as textual prescriptions are the only gateways through which we gain insight into the actual conduct of diplomacy. During the preceding Safavid era, war-ending pacifications (*musālahā*) had been promulgated as Ottoman monarchic letters (*sulh-nāmeḥ-i homāyūn*) if the agreement had been negotiated and finalized at the Ottoman court, and as unilateral pacts (*ahd-nāmeḥ*) if plenipotentiaries had concluded the peace by striking a deal and signing a protocol (*tamassuk*) on the front.⁴⁴ In times of peace, monarchic letters, including letters sent to congratulate accessions, had reconfirmed or modified the international status quo, serving the function of a pact. Unlike a pact, however, a monarchic letter had not enumerated all current clauses of the status quo. Instead, keyword references to the valid accord and any new amendments to it had sufficed.⁴⁵

In diplomatics, or chancery production, Naderid Iran diverged from the above-described continuity with the past and featured a novelty in the tradition of drafting diplomatic documents. As an unprecedented act in Iranian–Ottoman relations, the Sublime Porte issued for the new shah of Iran an Ottoman pact instead of a monarchic letter as the product of negotiations conducted in Istanbul.⁴⁶ This accord, reached at the 1736 congress concerning the principles of neighborhood with the new Naderid State, was remarkably drawn up as an Ottoman pact.⁴⁷ This document, despite being a unilateral writ, carried the implication of bilateral agreement. In addition, the intensive correspondence between the Naderids and the Sublime Porte throughout the next eleven years, including congratulatory letters, reflected anything but formality. Naderid Iran, by way of negotiation conferences and treaty-like pacts, was slowly integrating itself into an alternative world of Ottoman diplomacy, differing from that of Safavid Iran, although concurrently the status quo continued

⁴³ *Her ne edersen edip, ona [Ali-kulu Han’a] şahlık ünvanı ile name verdirmemeğe say eyle.* Ebusehl Numan, *Tedbirat*, 245–47. For the aftermath of this episode, see Tucker, “Iran and the Ottomans,” 61–69.

⁴⁴ The Protocol of Serav (1618–19) was ratified by an exchange of *ahd-nāmeḥs* (the Ottoman-issued pact included *intitulatio* but its oath formula was more vague than what was conventional for this genre); Küpeli, *Osmanlı-Safevi Münāsebetleri*, 117–20. The Pacification of Istanbul (1590) and the Pacification of Nasuḥpaşa (1612), contrary to Bekir Kütükoğlu’s designations in *Osmanlı-İran Siyāsî Münāsebetleri* (197, 208), were not *ahd-nāmeḥs* but peace instruments in the form of imperial letters (*nāmeḥ-i homāyūn*), of the peace letter (*solh-nāmeḥ[-i homāyūn]*) subtype. The well-known Pacification of Amasya (1555), which is usually called a treaty or an imperial decree, was also an Ottoman monarchic letter of peace.

⁴⁵ This synthesis is extracted from a cross-reading of Iranian–Ottoman diplomatic correspondence recorded in BOA, Name-i Hümayun Defterleri, vol. 5, ent. 65–69, 137–41, 153–65, 232–51, 280–89, 294–95, 298–313, 326–36, 342–45, 425–46, 510–13, 650–63; vol. 6, ent. 110–17, 127–35, 220–24, 352–66, 405–08, 443–45, 455–63; Sarı Abdullah, *Düstürü’l-İnşâ*; Evoghli, *Majma’ al-Enshā*; Hüseyin Murtazâ b. Seyyid Ali el-Bağdadi Nazmizâde, *Münşeat-ı Nazmizâde*, Süleymaniye Yazma Eser Kütüphanesi, Esad Efendi no. 3322, ff. 30b–38b, 39b–40a, 43b–46b; *Mecmua-yı Mükâtebât*, ff. 20b–21a, 21b–22a, 31b–32a; *Mecmua-i Mekâtib*, ff. 1b, 2b, 3b–4a, 68b–70a; *Münşeat Mecmuası*, ff. 5a–6b, 9a–15b; 20b–25b; Rami Mehmed, *Münşeat*, ff. 9a–17b, 19a–23a, 133a–134b, 136a–136b; *Münşeat 1050–1140*, ff. 149b–151a; *Asnâd o Mokâtabât 1038–1105*, 203–11, 250–64, 271–81; *Asnâd o Mokâtabât 1105–1135*, 82–86, 117–20, 122–26, 127–30, 136–51, 157–61, 165–76; Şevik, “Şah Tasmaşb (1524–1576) ile Osmanlı Sarayı Arasında Teati Edilen Mektuplar;” and Feridun Bey, *Münşeatı’s-Selâtin*; and *Asnâd o Mokâtabât-e Târikhi-ye Irân az Timur tâ Shâh Esmâ’îl*.

⁴⁶ The pact genre also proved its currency in Iranian relations with the promulgation of the 1727 Ottoman pact ratifying the Protocol of Hamadan signed with the Afghans (see BOA, Name-i Hümayun Defterleri, vol. 7, ent. 93) and the promulgation of the 1747 Ottoman pact (which omits *intitulatio*) ratifying the 1746 Protocol of Kordân signed with the Naderids (see BOA, Name-i Hümayun Defterleri, vol. 8, ent. 171). The 1747 pact was conveyed by Ottoman ambassador Kesriyeli Ahmed Pasha. See also the accompanying imperial letter in *ibid.*, ent. 172.

⁴⁷ Ragıb Mehmed, *Tahkik ve Tefvik*, 113–23 (the Ottoman pact omits the *intitulatio*).

to be occasionally reconfirmed or amended by monarchic and grand vizierial letters as in the past.⁴⁸

The ranking of ad hoc missions, which were subject to a hierarchy different from that of the states and statesmen who represented these missions, is another indicator that diplomatically situates the early modern Middle Eastern state within the world around it. It also showcases Iran's increased receptivity to diplomatic conduct during the Naderid period. Before the Afghan overthrow and the rise of Nāder, the Ottomans had long established their precise designations for each type of diplomatic mission.⁴⁹ In contrast, Safavid terminology had not specialized so far as to exactly reflect various capacities of representation. The Safavids had not shared the Sublime Porte's punctiliousness for precision in designating the ranks of emissaries, but instead employed a rudimentary distinction between mission capacities as their own way of formulating credentials. The Ottomans, likely having concerns for compatibility with the Isfahan chancery, had toned down their level of precision in diplomatic engagements with the Iranians, and favored a generic term applying to both "ambassadors" and "envoys."⁵⁰ The rank-denoting terms ambassador and envoy, current in the Porte's diplomacy with European states, did not feature in pre-Naderid Iranian-Ottoman diplomacy.⁵¹ This lack of terminology, however, did not mean that the denoted offices did not exist, as these posts were referred to with indirect descriptions.⁵²

During the Naderid period, however, the Iranian chancery gradually began to adopt the Ottomans' specialized terminology. For instance, plenipotentiaries (*murakhhkas*) and their plenipotentiary credentials (*rokhsat-nāmeḥ* or credentials deed; *rokhsat-e kāmeleh* or plenipotentiary powers) assumed their precise designations in Iranian-Ottoman diplomacy for the first time during the Naderid era, as attested by the plenipotentiary credentials of an Ottoman envoy to Nāder Shah (Nazif Mustafa Efendi).⁵³ Previously, despite the Ottomans' available nomenclature for this specific concept, plenipotentiaries and their credentials had been described by terminology borrowed from other document genres.⁵⁴ In his quest

⁴⁸ See the relevant documents in the entries at BOA, Name-i Hümayun Defterleri, volumes 3, 7 and 8. Most of the documents referred to in this paper from BOA, Name-i Hümayun Defterleri, vol. 3, are published in *I. Mahmud-Nādir Şah Mektuplaşmaları*.

⁴⁹ Ambassador-plenipotentiary (*murakhhkas elçi*); ambassador-extraordinary ([*fevkalade*] *büyükelçi*, *safir[-i kabir]*); envoy-extraordinary/minister-plenipotentiary (*ortaelçi*, *rasul*); envoy-resident (*mukim elçi*); minister-resident (*kapı kethudası*); diplomatic-agent (*küçükkelçi/nameber/nameresan*); charge d'affairs (*maslahat-güzar*). Ambassadors led embassies (*büyükelçilik/safarat*) and envoys led legations (*ortaelçilik/risalat*).

⁵⁰ *İlçi*, but also *safir* and *rasul*.

⁵¹ There was only one exception, and it came at the very end of Safavid era: with his temporary grade of second-bookkeeper (*daftardār-e sheqq-e sāni*), Dürrî Ahmed Efendi, the last Ottoman emissary to the pre-1723 Safavid State, functioned in 1720-21 not only as actual but also as de jure envoy (*ortaelçi*). See Aktepe, 1720-1724, 3-5; Talay, "Dürrî Ahmed Efendi," 34-35; and Kırzioğlu, "Kaa'ime," 121.

⁵² *Safir* could mean *ambassador* and *rasul* could mean *envoy*, but only if certain criteria were met. Otherwise, they were used liberally and interchangeably to denote both ambassadors and envoys. It is possible to infer the diplomatic rank of the mission from the credentials component of the accompanying letter, the phrases preceding the emissary's titles and the definition immediately adjoining the *salutatio* following the personal name, which included formulations indicating whether the mission was from an embassy (*safarat*) or a legation (*risalat*). Note that the use of these words outside the credentials section did not designate rank. Additionally, the credentials of ambassadors explicitly registered their exclusive authorization to orally report matters that were not mentioned in the delivered letter. Moreover, because the domestically held posts of ad hoc emissaries also featured consistency, the inferred diplomatic rank can be confirmed by looking at the title and post that the head of mission possessed in his home state. Beyond these two grades, there was also *nāmabar* (*küçükilçi*), or diplomatic herald. See Güngörürler, "Diplomacy," 38-41; and Güngörürler, *Ottoman Empire*.

⁵³ See *I. Mahmud*, 174, 176, 192. The first post-Safavid mention is even earlier, in a protocol signed with Shah Ashraf Hotaki. BOA, Name-i Hümayun Defterleri, vol. 7, ent. 93.

⁵⁴ An example is the case of peace talks of 1639 on the front line at Zuhab. The Ottomans' specific terminology for plenipotentiary credentials, plenipotentiary powers, and plenipotentiary representatives were not used for this event. The regular definition of the Ottoman grand vizierial office as the monarch's "absolute deputy" (*wakil mutlaq*), the derived "plenary deputyship" (*wakālat āmma*), the additional capacity of "absolute regency" (*niyābat mutlaqa*), and the ad hoc authorization of "particular regency" (*niyābat khāssa*) were used to designate the grand vizier's

for international acknowledgment, Nāder was apparently keener than his predecessors about adopting outside practices to conduct diplomatic business.

The same also was true for mission ranks, which Naderid Iran was more receptive to adopting. The first initiative in this regard came from the Ottomans toward Iran, when the Sublime Porte began employing its specialized terminology in its affairs with Iranian partners: “ambassador” (*büyükilçi*) and “plenipotentiary” were first introduced in Iranian diplomacy by the Protocol of Hamadān exchanged in 1727 between the Ottoman commander-general (Eyublu Ahmed Pasha) and Shah Ashraf Hotek’s plenipotentiary (Mollā Nosrat).⁵⁵ Ambassador would feature again in the 1747 Ottoman pact issued to Nāder Shah and in the monarchic letter accompanying this pact.⁵⁶ The Iranians’ conventional use of generic terms and indirect inferable references to various mission types continued, such as implying, without stating, the embassy rank and supporting this implication by references to the emissary’s additional (and ambassador-specific) “oral commission” in the diplomatic letters of Tahmāsp II and his premier in 1728 (delivered to the Ottomans in 1729 by Vali-Mohammad Xān Begdili-Shamlu, an emissary in word but an ambassador in deed).⁵⁷ The Naderid State eventually picked up the established convention: in its own Persian version of the 1746 Protocol of Kordān, the Iranian side employed the term ambassador, half-borrowed and half-translated from the Ottomans’ chancery Turkish.⁵⁸ The early modern specialization in Iran’s diplomatic terminology and mission rankings began over the course of Nāder’s rule.

Another novelty in Iran’s diplomatic conduct during Nāder’s time was the introduction of simultaneous interchange, that is, the physical swap of missions at the border point, even though this phenomenon continued to be practiced at the same time as the traditional sequenced exchanges of receiving an incoming mission first and sending a responsive mission afterward. The first agreement on simultaneous mission interchange in Iranian–Ottoman diplomacy came with the Hotaki–Ottoman Protocol of Hamadān in 1727: “When ambassadors are brought out and arrive at the border point, they, in their going and coming, [along] with their men of specified quantity, shall be customarily[!] interchanged via the frontier officers of both sides.”⁵⁹ And the first ceremony of a “uniform and equal” interchange on the border was performed by the Naderid ambassador (Mustafa Xān Shamlu) and the Ottoman ambassador (Kesriyeli Ahmed Pasha) reciprocally carrying the ratifications of the peace of Kordān in 1747, at the spot named Sarmil, the border post between Baghdad and Kirmānshāh.⁶⁰

To top it all, Iran officially entertained the idea of establishing mutual permanent missions with the Sublime Porte for the first time during the Naderid period. After centuries of ad hoc interstate diplomacy, an Iranian state and the Sublime Porte placed on the official agenda the appointment of consuls at each other’s capitals for the first time in the 1727 protocol.⁶¹ When Nāder became shah, this decision taken earlier under the reign of the Hotaki

plenipotentiary mandate. The Iranian plenipotentiary was introduced as “accredited deputy” (*wakil mu’tamad*). See BOA, *İbnülemin—Hariciye* 18; Torkman, *Zayl-e Tārikh-e ‘Ālam-ārā-ye ‘Abbāsi*, 223–27; and Khājagi Esfāhāni, *Kholāseh al-Siyar*, 271–75.

⁵⁵ BOA, *Name-i Hümayun Defterleri*, vol. 7, ent. 93.

⁵⁶ BOA, *Name-i Hümayun Defterleri*, vol. 8, ent. 171–172.

⁵⁷ BOA, *Name-i Hümayun Defterleri*, vol. 7, ent. 128, 130, 132.

⁵⁸ The Ottomans’ version refers to “*tarafeynden . . . rütbeleri birbirlerine müsavi büyük-ilçiler*” (equal-ranking ambassadors from both sides), which was reproduced in Naderid Iran’s Persian version as “*az tarafayn ilç-iye bozorgi ke dar martaba-e mosāvi bāshand*.” See BOA, *Name-i Hümayun Defterleri*, vol. 8, ent. 168 and 169.

⁵⁹ *Büyükelçiler ihrac olunup sınır başına vardıklarında tarafeynin serhat zabitleri marifetiyle malümü’l-mikdar adamlarıyla gidışlerinde ve gelişlerinde mutad üzere mübadele olunup*; BOA, *Name-i Hümayun Defterleri*, vol. 7, ent. 93.

⁶⁰ See Kırımlı Mustafa Rahmi Efendi, *İran Sefāretnāmesi*, transcribed in Toğaç, “Kırımlı Mustafa Rahmi Efendi’nin,” 31a–35b; and Abusehl Numan, *Tedbirat*, 160–65, for a description of the preparation and the performance.

⁶¹ “*Ticaret umurunu takib için İsfahan ve İstanbul’da şehbender ikameti caiz ola*”; BOA, *Name-i Hümayun Defterleri*, vol. 7, ent. 93. It should be noted that in the seventeenth-century there had been a sort of consul from Iran in Bursa, charged with regulating the affairs of Iranian merchants who passed away there; Gerber, *Economy*, 116–18.

Afghans did not end, but rather increased in scope. The Ottoman–Naderid conference of 1736 yielded a consensus on the mutual appointment of permanent resident ministers, even though this promulgated decision failed to materialize. Later on, hinting at an exchange of permanent envoys or ambassadors, the 1747 Ottoman pact issued for the Naderid State made these projected mutual permanent missions politically more relevant by replacing the definitions of commercial consuls and resident ministers with those of “a person from the Sublime State to be in Iran for each three years and also a person from Iran to be at the Sublime Court to confirm the friendship and disseminate the union of these two states.”⁶² None of these officially announced decisions materialized due to recurrent upheavals in Iran and the resultant invalidation of the circumstances that had facilitated these decisions. Nevertheless, the fact that in the Naderid period the Iranians and the Ottomans agreed, officially and on three distinct occasions, to set up permanent missions at each other’s capitals is revolutionary on its own.

Conclusion

In its foreign relations, especially with regard to its diplomacy with the Ottoman Empire, the polity of Nāder Shah Afshar was fully dynastic, literally the “Naderid” State, and not an Iranian territorial state. The sovereignty and the legal personality of this polity rested upon the ruling house, not on Iran as a defined territory. Therefore, Naderid Iran presented a continuity with the Safavid past with regard to the nature of statehood on the diplomatic stage. This ascendancy of dynasticism over territoriality was not a purely theoretical construct; it determined the real conditions under which foreign affairs proceeded. The interstate hierarchy that applied to Iran’s relations with the Ottoman Empire during the Naderid period likewise remained the same as in the preceding Safavid centuries; the state in Iran continued to acknowledge Ottoman primacy. Again, this junior-senior relationship was not merely lip service; it reflected and affected real power relations. On the other hand, although these above-mentioned fundamentals remained much the same, conduct and practices evolved remarkably. Naderid Iran adopted from the Ottomans certain diplomatic novelties with respect to the pre-Naderid early modern centuries, in that it took on new chancery genres in documenting treaties and new specialized terminology in accrediting diplomatic missions. Although this change was partly attributable to a post-1719 Ottoman initiative to introduce its diplomatic conventions and chancery practices into its Iranian affairs, there also was Iranian receptivity from the Sublime Porte by the Hotaki Afghans, Tasmāsp II, and Nāder himself, due to the international legitimacy that relations with the Ottomans bestowed upon the opposite party.

The research underlying this study stops with the death of Nāder Shah and the consequent dissolution of the Afsharid rule over Iran as a whole. Although it is not feasible to extend this examination into the immediate post-Naderid and pre-Qajarid years of a fragmented Iran, the relatively stable and integral spell of the rule of Karīm Xān Zand, continuing through the middle decades of the second half of the eighteenth century, may offer somewhat favorable grounds for further research on what could be a final case study of Iran’s early modern foreign relations, before the ascendancy of diplomatic modernity under the Qajars and its array of new developments.

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