

## **Patrons, Collaborators and the Crowd: Politics, Protest and Violence in the City of Shiraz during the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century**

Moshe Aharonov

This article investigates the political system in Shiraz, the capital of the province of Fars, during the first half of the nineteenth century. It demonstrates how Tehran, the capital of Iran, in spite of the lack of sophisticated bureaucratic apparatus, managed to recruit local patrons and collaborators, especially national patrons like the Qavam al-Mulk family and the *Qashaqa'i* khans living in the city in order to advance its interests in the area. "Politics from above" in Shiraz meant, therefore, continued negotiations and compromise between the national patrons and the state representatives over power and control. On the other hand, "politics from below" in Shiraz was mastered by the common people such as traders, artists, and the poor. They did not stay passive, but exploited the adversary among the men of power in the city, and consciously initiated various measures to secure their own interest and ideas. In difficult times, they even resorted to violent outbursts against their oppressors, demanding justice for themselves. They suffered from lack of organization and leadership, thus enabling the local élite and royal governors to remain in power and maintain the depressive Qajar system in the city.