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Kār Kiyā dynasty

Kār Kiyā (or simply Kiyā) **dynasty** (Pers., Āl-i Kiyā) was a local dynasty founded by a Zaydī family of *sayyids* (those claiming descent from the Prophet). The dynasty dominated Biya Pīsh (East Gīlān) and Daylamistān from the second half of the 770s/1370s until 1000/1592, when Shah ‘Abbās I (r. 995–1038/1587–1629) annexed the provinces along the southern Caspian coast. The family gained political power along with the increasing influence of *sayyids* and dervishes in post-Īlkhānid (r. 654–736/1256–1335) Iranian society, which led to the rise of the Šafavids (r. 907–1135/1501–1722). The most successful Kār Kiyā ruler, Sulṭān ‘Alī Mīrzā (r. 883–910/1478–1504–5), took in Ismā‘īl I Šafavī (r. 907–30/1501–24) after his exile from the Ak Koyunlu (Aq Qoyunlu, Aq Quyūnlū), thus contributing to the establishment of the Šafavid dynasty.

1. THE RISE OF THE KĀR KIYĀ
DYNASTY

After the death of the (de facto) last Īlkhānid ruler, Abū Sa‘īd (d. 736/1335), the territory was divided politically amongst

local dynasties and rulers. While most, such as the Jalāyrids (r. 740–813/1340–1410) in Iraq and Azerbaijan and the Muẓaffarids (r. 713–95/1314–93) in Fars, were successor dynasties to the Īlkhānids, new ones emerged amidst the confessional ambiguity of the post-Mongol period: the Sarbadārīds (r. 737–83/1337–81) in Khurāsān were allied with Šūfī *shaykhs*, and Sayyid Qavām al-Dīn Mar‘ashī (d. 781/1379), the founder of the Mar‘ashī dynasty (r. between 760/1358–9 and c. 1004/1595–6) in Māzandarān, was both *sayyid* and Šūfī *shaykh*. In Gīlān, a major expedition in 706/1307 by the eighth Īlkhān, Uljāytū (r. 703–16/1304–16), apparently did little damage to the social order, and the province remained under the control of its local *amīrs*. Because the opening of the first major chronicle of the dynasty, *Tārīkh-i Gīlān va Daylamistān* (“History of Gīlān and Daylamistān”) is lost, the family genealogy is unclear. In 773/1371–2, the first head of the family, Amīr Kiyā (d. 774/1372–3?), studied at a *madrassa* in Malāt, a village near Lāhījān. He nursed an ambition to assume secular power and began to compete with the Sunnī rulers of Biya Pas (West Gīlān). As

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