

*Naofumi Abe. Najafqoli Khān Donboli's Lineage in 18-19th Centuries Tabriz from the Viewpoint of the Property and the Inheritance*

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- 1 Although most scholars have argued for a remarkable continuity in elite families in premodern Iranian society, few have attempted to show how these families successfully transferred property to their descendants despite the equal-inheritance principle enshrined in Islamic law. Light is shed on this through the case of a patrician family in Azerbaijan, Najafqoli Khān Donboli and his descendants, who settled in Tabriz in the late 18th century where they were influential till the 20th century. An analysis of different archival documents concerning the family's immovables concludes that, in accordance with Islamic law, the family's property was divided among heirs since family members did not fully agree on transferring the whole estate to the eldest son. This did not imply, however, that the size of this estate diminished, because it was augmented by new lands acquired by the next generation. In other words, the family estate was constantly reorganized. Abe emphasizes that the continuity in elite families did not necessarily entail their possession of a given patrimony over the generations.

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