



## 'ABD-AL-QODDŪS B. SOLṬĀN MOḤAMMAD

'ABD-AL-QODDŪS B. SOLṬĀN MOḤAMMAD B. SOLṬĀN PĀYANDA MOḤAMMADZĀY SARDĀR, called ŠAGASĪ, prominent Afghan military and political figure of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. He was born around 1840, a nephew of the Amīr Dūst Moḥammad Khan, and was associated early with 'Abd-al-Raḥmān b. Moḥammad Afzal b. Dūst Moḥammad. In the late 1860s he was governor of Tāšqorġān while Afghan Turkestan was under 'Abd-al-Raḥmān's control. He appears to have been with 'Abd-al-Raḥmān during the latter's exile in Russian Central Asia (1869-80). After 'Abd-al-Raḥmān's accession to the amirate of Afghanistan under British protection, 'Abd-al-Qoddūs was briefly subordinate to the amir's cousin, Moḥammad Eshāq b. Moḥammad A'zam, in Afghan Turkestan. In the 1881 struggle between 'Abd-al-Raḥmān and Moḥammad Ayyūb, son of a previous amir, Šīr 'Alī Khan, for Qandahār, 'Abd-al-Qoddūs was sent by Moḥammad Eshāq to seize Herat on 'Abd-al-Raḥmān's behalf. Herat was Moḥammad Ayyūb's headquarters, but in his absence his supporters surrendered the city to 'Abd-al-Qoddūs in *Ḍu'l-qa'da*, 1298/October, 1881. 'Abd-al-Qoddūs stayed on as governor of the city until 15 *Ḍu'l-qa'da* 1299/28 September 1882. He was repeatedly reprimanded by the amir for what was seen in Kabul as administrative malfeasance. Recalled to Kabul, he was placed under house arrest until *'Īd al-Feṭr* 1304/23 June 1887, when he was rehabilitated and appointed administrator of the *ṣandūq-e 'adālat* (an institution of public welfare by which government disbursements to the indigent were regularized; *Serāḡ al-tawārīk*, p. 437). He



appears to have held this post until Du‘l-qa‘da, 1307/June-July, 1890, when ‘Abd-al-Raḥmān, then in Mazār-e Šarīf, ordered him to lead an expeditionary force into the Hazāraġāt and bring that region under the control of Kabul. In Moḥarram, 1308/August-September, 1890 he was in Bāmīān, where he was ordered to rebuild an ancient Šahr-e Ġolġola as an army base. In the course of excavating, a number of archeological finds were made. Three types of buildings (*se bāb-e kāna*) were unearthed, each measuring thirty *dar‘* in length, ten *dar‘* in width, and ten *dar‘* in height. A 700-year-old document (*qabāla*) was also discovered. It was sent to the amir who gave it to his son, Ḥabīballāh (*Serāġ al-tawārīk*, p. 698).

The subsequent war against the Hazāras, in which ‘Abd-al-Qoddūs was heavily involved, was a long and difficult one with racial, religious, and economic overtones. ‘Abd-al-Qoddūs’ policies from the beginning were ineffective in exploiting the strong support for the Kabul government that had long existed in many areas of the Hazāraġāt. His officials imposed burdensome provisioning requirements on the loyal Hazāra population, and his subordinates treated the people as a conquered population and publicly taunted them as *koffār* for their adherence to Eṭnā-‘ašarī Shi‘ism. Moreover, ‘Abd-al-Qoddūs himself outraged the moral sensibilities of the Hazāras of Orūzgān, the chief city of the Hazāraġāt, by taking Hazāra women into concubinage, a practice that his officers also adopted. He remained in the vicinity of Orūzgān for nearly a year but was then recalled to Kabul in Rabī‘ I, 1310/October, 1892, partly because of his incapacitation as a result of illness and partly as a result of his inept policies which by this time had alienated loyal Hazāras and brought the region into open armed resistance to Kabul.

On his return, ‘Abd-al-Raḥmān appointed him court chamberlain (*išīk āqāsī*, whence apparently the soubriquet Šagasī), in which position he remained for the next decade. After ‘Abd-al-Raḥmān’s death in 1901 and the accession of his son, Ḥabīballāh, ‘Abd-al-Qoddūs became the latter’s closest advisor. In 1905, during the Afghan-Anglo negotiations carried out by Ḥabīballāh Khan and Louis W. Dane, ‘Abd-al-Qoddūs’s influence was crucial in gaining favorable terms for the Afghan side. He maintained an intensely nationalistic posture in all his policy recommendations, including his decisive advocacy of Afghan neutrality during the First World War.

In 1919, after the assassination of the Amīr Ḥabīballāh Khan, ‘Abd-al-Qoddūs was named prime minister (*šadr-e a‘zam*) by his successor, Amīnallāh Khan. In the Anglo-Afghan war of the same year, he commanded the Afghan troops at



Qandahār. And in 1924, although in his mid-eighties, he took part in the suppression of the Mangal uprising in Kūst. He died on March 18, 1928. The title *e'temād-al-dawla*, conferred on him by Ḥabīballāh Khan, was adopted by his descendants, the E'temādī family.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

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For the career of 'Abd-al-Qoddūs to 1892, Fayz Moḥammad Kāteb, *Serāġ al-tawāriġ*, Kabul, 1333/1915, vol. III offers the most information.

After 1901, many references to 'Abd-al-Qoddūs are to be found in British records.

See especially citations in L. Adamec, *Afghanistan's Foreign Affairs to the Mid-Twentieth Century*, Tuscon, 1974.

Idem, *Historical and Political Who's Who of Afghanistan*, Graz, 1975.

See also V. M. Masson and V. A. Romodin, *Istoriya Afganistana*, Moscow, 1965, II, pp. 273, 381, 388.