



'ABD-AL-RAḤMĀN B. SOYŪNJ

'ABD-AL-RAḤMĀN B. SOYŪNJ, an Uzbek amir of the Ūšūn (or Oyšūn) tribe (*olūs*) and a major military-administrative figure in Balk in the first half of the 11th/17th century. The record of his career, which spans more than three decades, begins with his participation in a campaign in Badakšān. The Toghay-timurid (Janid) ruler of Bokhara, Valī-Moḥammad Khan, had sent his nephew, Naḍr-Moḥammad b. Dīn-Moḥammad, to suppress the “Chaḡatāy *mīrza*,” Mīrzā Ḥasan, apparently in 1014/1605. 'Abd-al-Raḥmān was at this time one of Naḍr-Moḥammad's amirs, and when the latter was appanaged at Balk the following year, 'Abd-al-Raḥmān accompanied him. Between 1015/1606 and 1019/1610 he was active in the military operations against two Safavid-supported Shaibanid claimants of the khanate of Bokhara and Balk, Jahāngīr Solṭān and Moḥammad-Salīm Solṭān. Sometime about 1020/1611, 'Abd-al-Raḥmān was appointed governor (*ḥākem*) of Andkūd, a strategic garrison town in the western marches of Balk. His prime responsibility was to defend the Balk region against Safavid/Qezelbāš interference in Toghay-timurid politics. He was instrumental in foiling the Safavid-supported attempts of Rostam Solṭān b. Valī-Moḥammad Khan to regain Bokhara and Balk which his father had lost to Emām-qolī and his half-brother Naḍr-Moḥammad in 1019/1610.

In the early 1030s/1620s, 'Abd-al-Raḥmān was removed as governor of Andkūd by Naḍr-Moḥammad and named guardian (*atālīq*) to the latter's eldest son, 'Abd-al-'Azīz (b. 1023/1614). The latter was then appanaged at Kātlan, the administration of which was generally in 'Abd-al-Raḥmān's hands. His administration there was noted principally for his putting an end to Qerghiz



raids in Ḳatlān and his pursuit of the Qerghiz to their lands “near Kāšġar.”

In 1037/1628, following the death of the Mughal emperor, Jahāngīr, ‘Abd-al-Raḥmān and prince ‘Abd-al-‘Azīz launched an abortive campaign against Kabul. The author of the *Baḥr al-asrār* asserts that it was merely to protect Kabul from a rumored Qezelbāš plan to annex the city from Qandahār, which the Safavid-Qezelbāš forces had taken from the Mughal six years earlier. ‘Abd-al-‘Azīz and his *atālīq* were unable to take Kabul and returned to Ḳatlān.

Three years later, the pair were recalled by Naḍr-Moḥammad to Balk, and ‘Abd-al-‘Azīz was reappanaged at Maymana. In 1041/1632, a campaign into Safavid Khorasan was launched from Maymana. Again ‘Abd-al-Raḥmān played a leading role in the assaults on Morgāb, Mārūčāq and Panjdeh, all of which were under Šāmlū control. In 1044/1634 in the face of Naḍr-Moḥammad’s express prohibition, ‘Abd-al-‘Azīz and ‘Abd-al-Raḥmān again opened a campaign into Khorasan. ‘Abd-al-Raḥmān, leading his own force, raided Bādġīs, crossed the river Morgāb and, skirting Herat to the north, headed towards Ḳvāf and Bākarz. But Qezelbāš resistance forced him to turn south towards Herat. He raided up to Gāzorgāh and then returned to Jījaktū, part of the territory of Maymana. For his and ‘Abd-al-‘Azīz’s disobedience the two were summoned to Balk, where they tendered apologies. Both men then went to the supreme Khan, Emām-qolī, in Bokhara, and again sought forgiveness. ‘Abd-al-Raḥmān, unable to exert a restraining influence on ‘Abd-al-‘Azīz, was replaced as *atālīq-e solṭānī* in 1045/1635 by Orāz Bī of the Ming *olūs*. The government of Qondož was conferred on ‘Abd-al-Raḥmān, and he continued as governor there at least until 1050/1640-41, after which time information about him ceases. While governor at Qondož, he assisted the Bokharan Khan in 1048/1638 against a Qazāq problem east of Samarqand. And in early 1049/early summer 1639, he led a reconnaissance patrol into the Hindu Kush to investigate reports that Shah Jahān was preparing a military force at Kabul for a campaign against Balk. He is said to have had very close relations with the intelligentsia at Qondož.



BIBLIOGRAPHY

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