



ABU'L-ḲAYR KHAN

ABU'L-ḲAYR KHAN B. DAWLAT SHAIKH OĠLĀN, of the descendants of Šiban (the younger son of Joči), the ruler of the Uzbek nomadic state in Dašt-e Qipčaq in the 15th century A.D. He was born in 1412 (the year of the dragon), when the former *ulus* of Šiban was divided in a number of separate nomadic principalities. In the mid-1420s Abu'l-Ḳayr, as well as some other Shaibanid princes, was subordinate to Jumaduq Khan, a member of the same clan. In 1427 the latter was killed in battle with his rebellious amirs; Abu'l-Ḳayr, who was in command of his left wing, was taken prisoner, but later was set free (*Tārīḳ-e Abu'l-Ḳayr Ḳānī*, MS of the Institute of Oriental Studies, Leningrad, C-480, fol. 311b). Next year, 1428 (the year of the monkey), Abu'l-Ḳayr, supported by the leaders of the main Uzbek tribes and the head of the *ulus* of Mangit Waqqās Biy (q.v.), was proclaimed khan in western Siberia, in the town of Tura (W. Barthold in *EI*² I, p. 135) or Tara (on the river Irtiš, see A. A. Semenov, *K voprosu o proiskhozhdenii*, p. 24; cf. *Tārīḳ-e Abu'l-Ḳayr Ḳānī*, fols. 312b-13a) or Čingī-Tura, that is, Tumen (thus *Tawārīḳ-e gozīda-ye nošrat-nāma*, p. 266; V. P. Yudin, in *Materialy po istorii kazakhsikh khanstv*, p. 138). This town remained his capital, or rather, his summer camp, till 1446. During the next four years Abu'l-Ḳayr established his authority over almost the whole *ulus* of Šiban; Abu'l-Ġāzī (text, p. 190, cf. tr., p. 203) says that there were none of his relations who had not been hit by the Khan's arrow or who had not felt the weight of his hand.

In winter, 834/1430-31 Abu'l-Ḳayr invaded Ḳvārazm. Apparently, he occupied only the northern part of the country with its capital Urgenj, which after the



Mongol conquest was considered a part of the *ulus* of Joči. According to *Baḥr al-asrār* (cited by Akhmedov, *Gosudarstvo*, p. 49), he claimed that Urgenĵ should belong to the descendants of Joči when he demanded surrender from the Timurid governor of Ḳvārazm, the amir Ebrāhīm, son of the famous amir Shah Malek. Amir Ebrāhīm retreated to the southern part of Ḳvārazm, and Urgenĵ was captured and pillaged by the Uzbeks (V. V. Bartol'd, *Sochineniya* II/2, Moscow, 1964, p. 116). According to *Tārīk-e Abu'l-Ḳayr Ḳānī* (fol. 320a), during this occupation of Urgenĵ the famous Kobrawī Shaikh Kamāl-al-dīn Ḥosayn Ḳvārazmī dedicated and presented to the khan his Turkish work *Kašf al-hodā* (commentary on the *Borda* of Būšīrī. A unique ms. exists in Berlin; see M. Hartmann in *MSOS*, As. VII/2, 1904, p. 8, no. 69. Cf. Storey, I, p. 177; see also A. A. Semenov in *Sovetskoe vostokovedenie*, 1956, no. 3, p. 52, where this event is erroneously related to the second occupation of Ḳvārazm by Abu'l-Ḳayr). In the summer of the same year the Uzbeks had to abandon Ḳvārazm: according to *Tārīk-e Abu'l-Ḳayr Ḳānī* (fols. 320b-21a), the retreat was a result of the great heat and the plague which began in this region. Another reason may have been a threat from two Jochid rulers of Astrakhan, Aḥmad Khan and Maḥmūd Khan. Abu'l-Ḳayr defeated them in a battle somewhere in the western part of Dašt-e Qīpčaq, and captured their *ordū-bāzār* (*Tārīk-e Abu'l-Ḳayr Ḳānī*, fols. 321a-23b). In 839/1435-36 Abu'l-Ḳayr invaded and plundered Ḳvārazm for the second time. In 844/1440-41 the Uzbeks raided Astarābād (ʿAbd-al-Razzāq Samarqandī in *Sbornik materialov otnosyashchikhsya k istorii Zolotoï Ordy* II, p. 258). ʿAbd-al-Razzāq describes them as “a group of the Uzbek army who became Qazaqs,” which makes one suppose that they separated from Abu'l-Ḳayr. The following years Sultan Šāhroḳ Mīrzā had to keep considerable troops to defend Gorgān and Astarābād from the raids of the Uzbeks. In 1446 Abu'l-Ḳayr captured the regions in the lower and middle course of the Sīr Daryā, with the towns of Siġnaq, Suzaq, Arquq, Uzgand, and Aq-qurgān (*Tārīk-e Abu'l-Ḳayr Ḳānī*, fols. 325b-26a; Barthold, *EI*² II, p. 135; on the towns cf. Bartol'd, *Sochineniya* III, Moscow, 1965, pp. 227-30), which were important centers of trade between Transoxania and Dašt-e Qīpčaq. Siġnaq then became his capital, and the border between the Uzbeks and the empire of the Timurids passed to the north of Yasī (Turkestan).

After the death of Šāhroḳ (850/1447) Abu'l-Ḳayr took advantage of Ulūg Beg's being engaged in the struggle for Herat with other Timurids, and raided Transoxania; the Uzbek troops reached Samarqand, but they were not able to capture the city and retreated, having plundered the region (see Bartol'd, *Sochineniya* II/2, pp. 154-55). In summer, 855/1451 the Timurid prince Abū



Sa'īd (q.v.), who rose against 'Abdallāh Mīrzā, the son of Ulūg Beg, and captured Yesī, asked Abu'l-Ḳayr for help. According to the *Baḥr al-asrār* of Maḥmūd b. Walī (cited by Akhmedov, *Gosudarstvo*, p. 86), Abū Sa'īd came to the camp of Abu'l-Ḳayr on the advice of the well-known Naqšbandī Shaikh **Ḳvāja Aḥrār**. The Uzbek troops marched on Samarqand (according to 'Abd-al-Razzāq, because of great heat in the steppe of Jizaq, between Tashkent and Samarqand, the Uzbek sorcerers had to use the rain-stone *yada* to cause rain); in a battle about fifteen miles north of Samarqand the Uzbeks and Abū Sa'īd defeated the more numerous army of 'Abdallāh, who was killed. Abū Sa'īd managed to deceive the Uzbeks, enter Samarqand without them, and close the city gates before his allies. Abu'l-Ḳayr and his troops were compensated with rich presents; Rābe'a Solṭān Begom, Ulūg Beg's daughter, was given in marriage to the khan; and the Uzbeks returned to Dašt-e Qīpčaq ('Abd-al-Razzāq Samarqandī, in *Sbornik materialov* II, pp. 259-60; *Ḥabīb al-sīar* [Tehran] IV, p. 50; *Tārīk-e Abu'l-Ḳayr Ḳānī*, fols. 328b-36a; Bartol'd, *Sochineniya* II/2, pp. 163-66). Abu'l-Ḳayr interfered once more in the internal strife of the Timurids in 864/1460, when he sent a detachment of Uzbeks under Burge Solṭān and Biškit (or Biškede) Oḡlān to help Moḥammad Jūkī Mīrzā (Ulūg Beg's grandson), who rose against Abū Sa'īd. The Uzbeks, having plundered Transoxania, abandoned Moḥammad Jūkī, and he had to submit to Abū Sa'īd in 867/1462 (Bartol'd, *Sochineniya* II/2, pp. 170-71; *Tārīk-e Abu'l-Ḳayr Ḳānī*, fols. 342bf.; Akhmedov, *Gosudarstvo*, pp. 89-92).

Several years earlier (probably, about 861/1457, see Barthold, *EI*² I, p. 135) a severe blow to Abu'l-Ḳayr was inflicted by the Qalmaqs under Uz Tāmūr (or Az Tāmūr?) Tayši (cf. P. Pelliot, *Notes critiques d'histoire Kalmouk*, Paris, 1960, p. 17), who invaded Dašt-e Qīpčaq from the Ču valley. After total defeat near Kōk Kašane (about 5 miles to the south from Siḡnaq), Abu'l-Ḳayr had to retreat to Siḡnaq, while the Qalmaqs plundered his subjects, as well as the northern districts of the Timurid possessions (*Tārīk-e Abu'l-Ḳayr Ḳānī*, fols. 336b-39a). About 870/1465-66 two sultans from the descendants of Orda (the eldest son of Joči), Kerai and Jānībek, fled with a number of dependents from Abu'l-Ḳayr to Mongolia; after the death of Abu'l-Ḳayr a large part of his former nomadic subjects joined these sultans, forming a new tribal union of Qazaqs (*A History of the Moghuls of Central Asia being the Tarikh-i-Rashidi of Mirza Muhammad Haidar . . .*, tr. E. D. Ross, London, 1895, pp. 82, 272-73). In 872/1468 Abu'l-Ḳayr received in his camp the Timurid prince Sultan Ḥosayn Bāyqarā, who asked his help against Abū Sa'īd and was treated amicably, especially when he demonstrated his ability to drink wine without becoming drunk (Mīrkvānd,



Rawzat al-ṣafā' VII, pp. 32-34; *Ḥabīb al-sīar* [Tehran] IV, pp. 131-33; Bartol'd, *Sochineniya* II/2, pp. 220-21). According to *Ḳvāndamīr*, Abu'l-Ḳayr assembled troops to send with Sultan Ḥosayn; but the khan was already seriously ill, and he had died before the army set out; the illness is described as *marāz-e fāleḷ*, paralysis (thus in modern editions of *Rawzat al-ṣafā'* and *Ḥabīb al-sīar*, as well as in the Bombay lithographic edition of the latter; however, V. Minorsky reads *marāz-e qābeḥ* "a hideous illness," without a reference to any particular edition; see Barthold, *Four Studies on the History of Central Asia* III, Leiden, 1962, p. 25, n. 5). According to the 17th century historian Maḥmūd b. Walī, shortly before his death Abu'l-Ḳayr moved in winter with numerous troops against the Moghuls, but in the locality Aq-qīšlaq (probably somewhere in the region of modern Alma-Ata) he died (*Baḥr al-asrār*, Russian tr. in *Materialy po istorii kazakhskikh khanstv*, pp. 358-61; Akhmedov, *Gosudarstvo*, p. 59). Yet another version of Abu'l-Ḳayr's death is given by Abu'l-Ġāzī (text, p. 190, tr. p. 203), who claims that he was killed by his rebellious relatives. The date of his death is given by *Tārīḳ-e Abu'l-Ḳayr Ḳānī*, which does not mention in this connection either any military campaign or a rebellion, as 874/1469-70 (fol. 346b), though the year of the mouse is given as the year of the cycle, which should correspond to 872/1468 (cf. Barthold, *ET*²); his age at his death is given as fifty-seven.

After the death of Abu'l-Ḳayr his nomadic empire disintegrated, but his grandson Moḥammad Šaybānī Khan (q.v.) united under his power a large part of the Uzbek tribes and conquered Transoxania at the beginning of the 16th century.

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855, 869, 872; see the text published in *Sbornik materialov ontosyashchikhsya k istorii Zolotoï Ordy II. Izvlecheniya iz persidskikh sochineniï, sobrannye V. G. Tizengauzenom . . .*, Moscow and Leningrad, 1941, pp. 258-61).

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