



AĠĀĈ ERĪ

AĠĀĈ ERĪ, a tribe of mixed ethnic origin living in eastern Kūzestān. The name Aġāĉ Erī (“People of the Forest” in Turkic) is very ancient (cf. Rašīd-al-dīn, *Jāme’ al-tawārīk*, ed. A. A. Ali-Zade, Moscow, 1965, I/1, p. 35; V. Minorsky, “Ājnallu/Inallu,” *RO* 18, 1953, p. 4; *Nozhat al-qolūb*, p. 81; Jordanes, *The Origin and Deeds of the Goths*, Princeton, 1908, p. 11; G. Nemeth, *A honfolgaló magyarság kialakulása*, Budapest, 1930, pp. 32, 138, 168; J. Marquart, *Osteuropäische und ostasiatische Streifzüge*, Leipzig, 1903, pp. 40-41; G. Moravcsik, *Byzantino-turcica*, Budapest, 1943, II, p. 65). Z. V. Togan writes that in A.D. 460 a branch of the Kāzars, or a closely related group by the name of Aġāĉ Erī, came to southern Caucasia (“Azerbaijan,” *ĪA* II, p. 98). Later, we find a tribe by that name in the Maras mountains, in eastern Anatolia, living alongside a group of Afšārs and a group of Bayāts. In 1246, these tribesmen fought against Bayĉu Noyan (*ibid*). Yet another group of Aġāĉ Erīs was for many years a ruling tribe in the district of Kalkāl in eastern Azarbaijan, where they were neighbors of the Daylamīs. This group is said to have been with Holāgū Khan when that ruler captured Alamūt (*ibid*). Finally, there were tribes by the name of Aġāĉ Erī in the Qarā Qoyunlū and Āq Qoyunlū tribal confederacies (F. Sümer, “Kvārazm-Koyunlular,” *ĪA* VI, p. 293; M. H. Yınanc, “Ak-Koyunlular,” *ĪA* I, p. 253). Togan believed that the name Qājār is a variation of the name Aġāĉ Erī (“Azerbaijan etnoġrafisine dair,” *Azerbaijan yurt bilgisi* 2/15, March, 1913, p. 101), but this is very unlikely. The present-day Aġāĉ Erīs, especially those who are not Turkophone, believe that the name of their tribe comes from the Persianized word *āġā/āqā* (“gentleman”) and *jarī* (“bold”). So firmly ingrained is this notion that they usually misspell, and



mispronounce, the name in such a way that it comes out Āqā Jarī; hence also the names of towns such as Āgā-ĵārī (q.v.).

Minorsky classified the Aġāč Erī tribe of southwestern Iran as a branch of the Kohgīlūya Lurs, but he pointed out that it was of composite character and that four of its clans (*tīras*) are Turkic: the Afšārs, Jaġatā'īs, Begdelīs, and Qarabāġīs ("Lur," *EI*¹ III, p. 42). Both Fasā'ī (II, p. 270) and G. Demorgny ("Les réformes administratives en Perse," *RMM* 22, 1913, pp. 111-12) described the Aġāč Erīs of Kohgīlūya as an amalgamation of Turkic, Tajik (Iranian), and Lur elements. In any case, it seems that at least some of the Aġāč Erī clans (especially the Afšār clan) are remnants of the once powerful Kohgīlūya branch of the Afšārs of Kūzestān, most of whom were dispersed by Shah 'Abbās I after the rebellion of 1005/1596-97 (Eskandar Beg, pp. 524-25). It also appears that there is a connection between the Aġāč Erīs and the Kaškūlī Bozorg tribe of the Qašqā'ī tribal confederacy which inhabits western Fārs, for both contain clans by the names of Begdelī and Jāma Bozorgī.

Around 1820, most of the Aġāč Erī clans were forced to settle down in the neighborhood of Behbahān to protect that town from the incursions of the Bakhtīārīs,

Boir Aġmadīs, and other predatory nomads (P. Oberling, "The Turkic Tribes of Southwestern Persia," *Ural-Altäische Jahrbücher* 35, 1963, p. 174). The Aġāč Erīs who remained nomadic were later absorbed by the Boir Aġmadī tribal confederacy and are today known by the name of Āqā'ī (for details on this Boir Aġmadī tribe, see M. Żarrābī in *FIZ* 9, 1962, p. 284). In 1913, Demorgny estimated the number of Aġāč Erīs in the Behbahān area at 2,000 families (op. cit., p. 112). In the 1950s, they still numbered well over 1,000 families. Their clans were: Jāma Bozorgī, Tīlekū, Jaġatā'ī, Begdelī, Afšār, Lor Zabān, Še'rī, Aqbāġī, Bašīrī, Daylamī, Gaštīl, and Dāvūdī. Some of the tribesmen still spoke Turkic, but most spoke Persian and Lori. Many of the Aġāč Erīs have moved to Ābādān, Bandar Ma'sūr, and Āqāĵārī, where they are employed by the National Iranian Oil Company and the Consortium (Oberling, op. cit., pp. 175-79).



BIBLIOGRAPHY

See also G. Doerfer, *Türkische und mongolische Elemente im Neupersischen II*, Wiesbaden, 1965, pp. 73-74.

J. Qā'em-maqāmī, "Āgājarī," *Dāneš-nāma*, fasc. 1, pp. 105-06 (with additional bibliog.).