



## AḤMAD TAKŪDĀR

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**AḤMAD TAKŪDĀR**, third il-khan of Iran (r. 680-83/1282-84), seventh son of Hülegü (Hülāgū), by Qūtūī Kātūn. The year of his birth is not specified by Persian sources, but since Ebn ‘Abd-al-Ẓāher (*Tašrīf al-ayyām wa’l-‘oṣūr fi sīrat al-malek al-Manṣūr*, ed. M. Kāmel, Cairo, 1961, p. 271) gives his age at his death as thirty-seven, he must have been born around 645/1247. He was given the Mongol name Tegüder (“perfect”); his Muslim name dates only from his conversion, prior to which, according to Hayton (*Recueil des historiens des croisades. Documents arméniens* II, Paris, 1906, p. 185), he was a Christian. Upon the death of his elder brother, the il-khan Abāqā, in ʿDu’l-ḥejja, 680/April, 1282, Aḥmad came from Kurdistan for the funeral obsequies at Jaḡātū. Since he was Hülegü’s eldest surviving son, he was favored by the majority of the amirs for the succession in preference to the late sovereign’s son Arḡūn. He was duly elected as ruler on 26 Moḥarram 681/6 May 1282 and enthroned at Ala Tāḡ (Ālā Dāḡ), east of lake Van in what is now Turkey, on 13 Rabī’ I/21 June, assuming the title Solṭān Aḥmad.

At the very beginning of Aḥmad’s reign the historian ‘Alā’-al-dīn Jovaynī, who had been on his way to stand trial at Hamadān when Abāqā died, was cleared of the charges against him and reinstated as governor of Baghdad, while his accuser Maǰd-al-molk was in turn condemned and put to death. ‘Alā’-al-dīn’s brother, the *ṣāḥeb-dīvān* Šams al-dīn Jovaynī, was similarly restored to favor and enjoyed great influence under the new il-khan. According to Rašīd-al-dīn, the business of government was left, initially at least, in the hands of Aḥmad’s mother Qūtūī Kātūn and the amir Asīq, but it appears to have been Šams-al-



dīn and a close confidant of the il-khan's, Shaikh Kamāl-al-dīn 'Abd-al-Raḥmān, who were primarily responsible for the overtures toward Mongol Iran's principal enemies to the west, the Mamluks of Egypt. In an attempt to place relations with them on a new footing, Aḥmad sent an embassy to Cairo in Jomādā I, 681/August, 1282. The response of the Mamluk sultan, Qalā'ūn, was lukewarm; in his reply he expressed pleasure that the throne of Hülegü was now occupied by a Muslim, but showed no readiness to negotiate an agreement and in fact detained a second mission from Aḥmad at Damascus, where its leader, Shaikh Kamāl-al-dīn, died. The exact relationship between Aḥmad's volte-face in foreign policy and the internal opposition he encountered is problematical. The il-khan himself admitted to Qalā'ūn that the greater number of the Mongol princes favored continuing the war with Egypt, but there is no doubt that the seeds of disaffection were already present from the moment of his accession.

Aḥmad's brief reign is dominated by his steadily worsening relations with Arġūn, who had been persuaded to stand down in his uncle's favor but who resented the fact that the enthronement had taken place in his absence and in addition suspected Aḥmad's protégés, the brothers Jovaynī, of having poisoned his father. He seems to have reached an understanding with Hülegü's ninth son, Qongūrtāi; the il-khan sought to placate the latter by appointing him as viceroy of Rūm (Anatolia) in Rabī' II, 681/July, 1282. Arġūn himself early retired to Khorasan, where he had been viceroy during his father's last years, but spent the winter of 681/1282-83 in Baghdad, reviving the charges against 'Alā'-al-dīn Jovaynī in a series of proceedings which caused that statesman to suffer a fatal stroke when he heard the news. In the following spring Arġūn headed back towards Khorasan. At Ray, where his nominee as *malek* had been arrested and tortured on the il-khan's orders, he seized Aḥmad's own lieutenant (*šeḥna*) in turn and defiantly sent him back to his uncle mounted on an ass. Then he set about attempting to win the allegiance of subordinate amirs in the east. Qongūrtāi subsequently came under suspicion of conspiring with Arġūn to seize the il-khan, and was arrested on 26 Šawwāl 682/17 January 1284 and executed in Qarābāġ the next day. Aḥmad then dispatched his son-in-law, the Georgian general Alīnāq, against Arġūn, following in person with his main army from Pilsavār in the Mūġān steppe on 8 Šafar 683/26 April. Although victorious over Alīnāq's forces at Āq-K'āja near Qazvīn on 16 Šafar/4 May, Arġūn nevertheless saw fit to retreat eastwards. Pursued by Aḥmad's own troops, he endeavored to make peace with his uncle, but Aḥmad was by now adopting an uncompromising position. When Arġūn was prevailed upon



to send his brother, the future il-khan Gaiḳātū, as a hostage in token of his submission, the il-khan broke the terms of the truce by continuing to advance. Arḡūn at first took refuge in the fortress of Kalāt (now Kalāt-e Nāderī, north of Mašhad), but following the loss of his chief wife's baggage-train he surrendered to Alīnāq and was brought before his uncle on 14 Rabī' II 683/30 June 1284. The il-khan left his rival in Alīnāq's custody, rejecting the latter's urgings to put Arḡūn to death, and himself moved to Kālpūš to enjoy the company of his favorite wife. But a former supporter of Arḡūn's, the amir Būqā, who had recently quarreled with the il-khan over his breach of the truce and had been dismissed from his command, now freed the prince and slew Alīnāq along with Aḥmad's remaining supporters. On receiving this news, Aḥmad fled west in order to take refuge in the territory of the Golden Horde, but was arrested en route and handed over to his nephew. Arḡūn was personally disposed towards clemency, but the report of a rebellion by the princes Hūlečū (Hūlājū) and Jöškeb (Jūškāb) in Hamadān rendered it necessary at least to eliminate this rival of longer standing. Aḥmad was handed over to Qoṅgūrtāi's family and executed in the same manner as his former victim, by having his back broken to avoid the shedding of royal blood, on 26 Jomādā I 683/10 August 1284.

Aḥmad's Moslem faith does not appear to have given rise to an anti-Christian policy; Bar Hebraeus (p. 467) testifies to his extraordinary liberality towards the Christian churches. The persecution of which Rabban Ṣauma's biographer speaks seems to have been directed rather at those suspected of favoring Arḡūn (*Histoire de Mar Jabalaha III*, tr. J. B. Chabot, Paris, 1895, pp. 45ff.). However, the il-khan was accused by his successor of having transgressed Mongol law through his commitment to Islam (Bar Hebraeus, p. 474). Ultimately, the upheavals of the reign must be attributed not to religion but to Aḥmad's own lack of vigor on his accession and his failure to guard himself by stern measures against potential rivals such as his brother and nephew.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

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