



ALLĀHYĀR KHAN QELĪČĪ

ALLĀHYĀR KHAN QELĪČĪ (b. ca. 1150/1735-36), khan of the Qeliča, a minor Turkish tribe in northern Khorasan, and ruler of Sabzevār at the turn of the 19th century. He rose to power in the late 12th/18th century when supremacy over Khorasan was disputed by the Zands, the Qajars, and the remnants of the Afsharids. Around 1190/1776-77 he provided support for Ḥosayn-qolī Khan Qājār, father of Fath-‘Alī Shah, in his engagements with the Kūklān Torkmans of the northwest (*Rawzat al-ṣafā* IX, pp. 106-07). Though in 1210/1795-96 he acknowledged the sovereignty of Āgā Moḥammad Khan, after Fath-‘Alī Shah’s accession he joined other local tribal leaders in defying direct Qajar rule. Fath-‘Alī Shah’s three successive campaigns (1214-16/1799-1801) to subdue the khans of Khorasan were only partially successful, in spite of the destruction and great hardship for the population. In early 1215/1800, accompanied by more than ten thousand troops, he laid siege to Sabzevār and captured the strategically important fortress of Mazīnān; the siege was eventually lifted when Zamān Shah, the ruler of Kabul, mediated on Allāhyār’s behalf. Zamān’s policy of maintaining northern Khorasan as a buffer zone temporarily consolidated Allāhyār’s position at a time when the newly enthroned Qajar monarch, in spite of British pressure, was willing to show leniency. But in the same year Zamān was overthrown by a pro-Qajar regime; soon the absence of a unified defense resulted in intensified Kūklān encroachments and further weakened Allāhyār. At the same time Fath-‘Alī Shah had eliminated most of his opponents, including Allāhyār’s ally Šādeq Khan Šaqāqī, and was now in a stronger position to deal with the rebellious khans of Khorasan. Allāhyār, who had already lost vital positions around the city and no longer was able to



withstand the Torkmans, reluctantly surrendered to Fath-‘Alī Shah in exchange for an offer of clemency negotiated by the crown prince ‘Abbās Mīrzā. He released the shah’s envoy Mīrzā Asadallāh Nūrī and with him dispatched his daughter ʿArḡān, who had long been promised to the shah as a guarantee of Allāhyār’s loyalty. In 1216/1801-02 he was forced to leave Sabzevār for the capital, where he was granted the *toyūl* of Eštehārd as compensation. He spent the rest of his life peacefully in exile. He was one of the first khans to fall victim to the Qajars’ long-term policy of exercising direct control over Khorasan, a process of assimilation that took more than half a century.

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