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AQ QOYUNLŪ

AQ QOYUNLŪ or WHITE SHEEP, a confederation of Turkman tribes who ruled in eastern Anatolia and western Iran until the Safavid conquest in 907-08/1501-03. The confederation (*īl* or *ūlūs*) was led by members of the Bayandor (Bāyandor) clan, who traced their lineage to Bayandor Khan, the eponymous founder of one of the twenty-four Oḡuz tribes and grandson of the legendary Oḡuz Khan. (On the vocalization Bayandor/Bayındır, see J. E. Woods, *The Aqquyunlu: Clan, Confederation, Empire. A Study in 15th/9th Century Turko-Iranian Politics*, Minneapolis and Chicago, 1976, p. 39, n. 5.) The name Āq Qoyunlū is first mentioned in late 8th/14th century sources, and, like that of the rival Qara Qoyunlū (Black Sheep), is of uncertain significance. It has been suggested that these names refer to old totemic symbols, but according to the historian Ḵᵛāǰa Rašīd-al-dīn Faẓlallāh (d. 718/1318), the Turks were forbidden to eat the flesh of their totem-animals; given the importance of mutton in the diet of pastoral nomads, it is hardly possible that the tribes observed this taboo. Another hypothesis is that the names refer to the predominant color of their respective flocks (H. R. Roemer, “Das turkmenische Intermezzo: Persische Geschichte zwischen Mongolen und Safawiden,” *AMI*, N.S. 9, 1976, pp. 263-97).

The origin of the Āq Qoyunlū tribes likewise remains obscure. Certain groups may have migrated from Central Asia to Anatolia in the 5th/11th century under Saljuq leadership and others in the wake of the 7th/13th-century Mongol invasion. By the end of the Il-khanid period in the mid-8th/14th century, the Āq Qoyunlū were migrating between summer pastures (*yeylāq*) in

Armenia around Sinir, east of Bayburt, and winter pastures (*qešlāq*) around Kiḡi, Palu, and Ergani in Dīār Bakr.

Their political organization was loose. The highest decision-making authority was a council (*kengač*) of amirs and tribal chiefs (*boy ḳānları*) who determined military matters and the recurrent issue of succession to the sultanate; the council's decisions were binding on the sultan. Military and political control of the adjacent villages and towns, necessary for the safety of the pasturage, was maintained by the army, which consisted largely of tribal levies supporting themselves through their own lands and booty. In addition, the sultan maintained a force of paid personal guards (*ḳawāṣṣ*) who were recruited from several different nomadic and semi-nomadic groups. The revenue of the Āq Qoyunlū came from taxes and dues levied on the sedentary population of Armenians, Kurds, and Arabs, as well as tolls collected along the main trade routes through eastern Anatolia.

Their territory bordered on lands occupied by other Turkman confederation, namely the Qara Qoyunlū area north of Lake Van, the steppe grazed by the Döḡer east of the middle Euphrates around Rohā (Orfa), and the Ḏu'l-Qadr region west of the river. The Ḏu'l-Qadr confederation had submitted to the suzerainty of the Egyptian Mamluks, whose empire thus stretched up to Malaṭya. Further west lay the Qaramān principality and, north of it, the Eretna principality centered on Kayseri and Sīvās, the strongest of the small states formed in Central Anatolia after the collapse of the Il-khanid Empire. To the north of the Āq Qoyunlū were the Christian kingdoms of Trebizond and Georgia.

In the decade 740-50/1339-49 there were frequent armed clashes between the forces of Trebizond and those of Ṭūr-ʿAlī b. Pahlavān, the first Āq Qoyunlū leader mentioned in mutually independent sources. Peace was arranged in 753/1352 through the marriage of Maria Komnene, a sister of the ruler of Trebizond, Alexios III (1349-90), to Ṭūr-ʿAlī's son Faḵr-al-dīn Quṭlu. Renewed matrimonial links in later generations maintained the peace, and Trebizond was free from Āq Qoyunlū attacks until it fell to the Ottomans in 865/1461. Ṭūr-ʿAlī died some time between 753/1352 and 764/1363. Under his successor Quṭlu, the Āq Qoyunlū began to intervene in the internal conflicts of the Eretna state. They became its nominal vassals in 783/1381 but supported rebellious military chiefs at Arzanǰān (Erzincan) when Qāżī Borhān-al-dīn (also a prominent poet in Turkish) made himself sultan at Sīvās. When Quṭlu died in 791/1389, the leadership first passed to his son Aḥmad, but Aḥmad's reckless wavering in

the struggles between Sīvās and Arzanǰān finally led to his replacement by his brother Qara Yoluz (or Yülük) ʿOṯmān Beg (on this name, see Roemer, “Das turkmenische Intermezzo,” p. 271, n. 26). In 800/1398 Qara ʿOṯmān revolted against Qāżī Borhān-al-dīn and killed him in battle.

Disorders in northern Syria following the deaths of Qāżī Borhān-al-dīn and the Mamluk sultan Barqūq (r. 784-801/1382-99) gave occasion for conflict between the expanding Ottoman power and the westward-moving conqueror Tīmūr. Voluntarily joining Tīmūr in 802/1399-1400, Qara ʿOṯmān led the vanguard in Tīmūr’s campaigns against Sīvās, whose defenders received Ottoman support (802-03/1402), and against the Mamluk dependencies; he also participated in the battle of Ankara (804/1402), which ended in a crushing defeat for the Ottomans. In recompense, Tīmūr granted him the rank of amir, confirmed his leadership of the Āq Qoyunlū confederation, and made the Bayandor family custodians of the fortress city of Āmed (Dīār Bakr) which before 796/1394 had been held by the Artuqids, a clan of the Döḡer tribe. This is apparently how the Āq Qoyunlū first came into possession of Āmed, which was to be their capital for almost seventy years.

After Tīmūr’s death in 807/1405, Qara ʿOṯmān maintained good relations with his successors. By contrast, the Qara Qoyunlū who had been forcibly subdued by Tīmūr, shook off Timurid suzerainty. Under Qara Yūsof, their leader from 792/1390 to 823/1420, they expelled Tīmūr’s grandson Abū Bakr and killed the latter’s father, Mīrānšāh, the governor of Azarbaijan; they then defeated the Jalayerids to gain control of Baghdad and ʿErāq-e ʿArab (Mesopotamia), conquered parts of Georgia, and penetrated deeper into Iran. The Timurid sultan Šāhroḵ was obliged to launch three campaigns (823-24/1420-21, 832/1429, and 838-39/1434-35) to check their expansion and reimpose his suzerainty. Šāhroḵ’s interventions, together with conflicts among the sons of Qara Yūsof, who had died at the time of the first campaign, weakened the position of the Qara Qoyunlū. In the following years they lost large areas in the west to the Āq Qoyunlū.

Between 823/1420 and Qara ʿOṯmān’s death in 839/1435, the Āq Qoyunlū established their authority in Armenia and Dīār Bakr and moved into Dīār Możar and the western part of Dīār Rabīʿa, an expansion which brought them in conflict with the formerly friendly Egyptian Mamluk sultanate. Accordingly, the Qara Qoyunlū allied themselves with Egypt while the Āq Qoyunlū joined with the Timurids, who were then contesting Egyptian hegemony in the Red Sea; Qara ʿOṯmān also provided support for Šāhroḵ’s expeditions into

Azarbaijan. During the third campaign, the aging Āq Qoyunlū leader, at Šāhroḵ's behest, challenged Qara Yūsof's son Eskandar to battle near Erzurum, but suffered a severe defeat; he was put to death in Ṣafar, 839/August-September, 1435, and his head was sent by Eskandar to the Mamluk sultan Barsbay (r. 825-41/1422-38) in Cairo.

Qara ʿOṯmān was the real founder of the Āq Qoyunlū state. Under his rule, the confederation not only acquired more territory but also gained support through additional tribes drawn to him by his successes. There are indications that the mainly Christian sedentary inhabitants were not totally excluded from the economic, political, and social activities of the Āq Qoyunlū state and that Qara ʿOṯmān had at his command at least a rudimentary bureaucratic apparatus of the Iranian-Islamic type. Even so, the Turkman military elite clearly remained dominant. From 827/1424 onward, in the hope of counteracting the centrifugal tendencies inherent in a tribal confederation and making the principality more cohesive, Qara ʿOṯmān assigned newly conquered territories to his sons rather than to tribal chefs, but this policy did not produce the expected results (Wood, *The Aqquyunlu*, pp. 66-70).

Qara ʿOṯmān's death was followed by prolonged succession struggles in which not only the Mamluks, who had gained temporary recognition from some of the Āq Qoyunlū chiefs, but also the Ottomans, intervened. Qara ʿOṯmān's designated successor, ʿAlī, could not hold his ground against the claims of his brothers, uncles, and cousins, and in 841/1438-39 he abdicated and went into voluntary exile in Egypt. His brother Ḥamza was then the most powerful Āq Qoyunlū chief, but he died in 848/1444 before he had been able to eliminate all rivals. The struggle for leadership resumed between Shaikh Ḥasan, a son of Qara ʿOṯmān, and ʿAlī's son Jahāngīr. The situation in eastern Anatolia became critical when Šāhroḵ, the Āq Qoyunlū's protector and the Qara Qoyunlū's nominal suzerain, died in 850/1447. Succession disputes in Herat gave the Qara Qoyunlū chief, Jahānšāh b. Qara Yūsof, the chance to secede from the Timurid empire and proclaim himself sovereign. With support from certain Āq Qoyunlū tribal chiefs, he set out on a campaign against Jahāngīr in 854/1450 and, after conquering large parts of Armenia, besieged him in Āmed. Jahāngīr surrendered in the spring of 856/1452 and acknowledged Jahānšāh's suzerainty. The peace treaty was concluded without the knowledge of Jahāngīr's younger brother Ḥasan, known as Uzun Ḥasan (Long Ḥasan), who considered it a betrayal. Uzun Ḥasan successfully resumed the war with the Qara Qoyunlū and in the autumn of 856/1452 seized Āmed in a bloodless coup

while Jahāngīr was away on a military expedition in Kurdistan (Woods, *The Aqquyunlu*, p. 91). Repudiating the Qara Qoyunlū suzerainty that his brother had recognized, he sent the keys of the fortress as a token of vassaldom to Cairo and received in return a diploma of appointment to the governorship of Āmed. Jahāngīr made several attempts to recapture Āmed; despite reinforcements from Jahānšāh's army, he was finally defeated in 861/1457.

Reunited under Uzun Ḥasan's leadership, the Āq Qoyunlū began to regain strength. His attitude toward their Christian neighbors in the north was ambivalent: From 862/1458 onward his raids into Georgia brought him prestige as a *ḡāzī* (fighter for the faith) together with human and material spoils, but at the same time, he renewed his family's friendship with the ruling house of Trebizond, now in danger of imminent Ottoman invasion; he treated its people as *ḏemmī*s, married the Komnenian princess Theodora, and joined with them in an anti-Ottoman alliance. The decisive clash with the Ottomans was postponed when Sultan Mehmed II (r. 855-86/1451-81) led an army equipped with artillery into Trebizond in 865/1461, and Uzun Ḥasan refrained from a military response on account of Ottoman superiority in weapons. During the subsequent interlude, Uzun Ḥasan was able to make big military gains on other fronts. In 866/1462 he conquered Ḥeṣn Kayfā, the last Ayyubid principality, and in 869-70/l465, the fortress of Ḵarpūt, which had belonged to the Ḏu'l-Qadr state. Jahānšāh Qara Qoyunlū, who had meanwhile extended his rule over ʿErāq-e ʿAǰam, Fārs, and Kermān at the expense of the Timurids, at first avoided conflict with the Āq Qoyunlū despite some provocation from their side. Among his preoccupations was the revolt of his son Pīr Būdāq in Baghdad; only when this had been crushed did he set out in 871/1467 for war with Uzun Ḥasan. Obliged by the premature onset of winter to send most of his troops back to their winter quarters, he was routed when Uzun Ḥasan attacked his camp. He and his son Moḥammad lost their lives during the retreat, and two other sons perished a short time later. With no leaders remaining, the Qara Qoyunlū confederation ceased to be politically operative, and Uzun Ḥasan was able to take over Azarbaijan in the summer of 873/1468.

The Timurid Abū Saʿīd, ruling in Herat since 855/1451, saw the Qara Qoyunlū chief's death as a good occasion for recovery of the Iranian provinces that had been lost to the Turkmans. Hastily advancing from Khorasan, he overran ʿErāq-e ʿAǰam but lacked adequate reinforcements and had to seek shelter in winter quarters in Qarabāḡ, where the Āq Qoyunlū besieged him. He was taken prisoner in an attempted breakout in Raǰab, 873/January, 1469, and put

to death soon afterward. With his last rival for hegemony over western Iran eliminated, Uzun Ḥasan immediately annexed the Iranian provinces up to the borders of Khorasan and moved his government from Āmed to Tabrīz, the traditional seat of authority that had been the capital of not only the Qara Qoyunlū and the Jalayerids but also the Il-khans. Although Uzun Ḥasan had still seen fit in mid-873/early 1469 to send the keys of the newly acquired cities of Azarbaijan, together with a request for formal confirmation of his authority, to the Mamluk sultan in Cairo, he used the language of a sovereign ruler and indeed of a renewer of the might of Islam when he sent Abū Saʿīd's severed head and the triumphant report of his victory to the sultan, Qāʾet Bey (r. 872-901/1468-96). Uzun Ḥasan also attempted to assert suzerainty over the Timurids of Khorasan, but without success; Prince Yādgār Moḥammad, whom he enthroned at Herat, could not hold out for long against the local notables, who supported another Timurid prince, Ḥosayn Bāyqarā (r. 875-912/1470-1506). An Ottoman intervention in the Qaramān principality in late 875/early 1471 alarmed Uzun Ḥasan so much that he moved his garrison from Khorasan to the western frontier; relations between Tabrīz and Herat subsequently took a friendly turn, to their mutual benefit.

In Qaramān, Ottoman and Mamluk interests clashed with those of Uzun Ḥasan. The principality blocked the way to the Mediterranean and Cyprus, then virtually a protectorate of the Venetians, allies of the Āq Qoyunlū against the Ottomans since 868-69/1464. After his victory over the Qara Qoyunlū and Abū Saʿīd, Uzun Ḥasan promised the Signoria in 875/1470 that in the event of a Venetian attack on Ottoman-controlled territories from the sea, he would undertake a support operation on land. For this purpose he asked the Venetians to supply firearms; these were shipped in the spring of 877-78/1473 but were to reach him too late. Expecting Venetian support, the Āq Qoyunlū invaded the Ottoman dominions in the late summer of 877/1472; they ravaged Ṭoqat and thrust past Sīvās and Kayseri into Qaramān but were pushed back by Ottoman troops. An incursion into the Mamluk dependencies for the purpose of exacting recognition of Uzun Ḥasan's sovereignty was also repulsed. Two years later, in Rabīʿa I, 878/August, 1473, Uzun Ḥasan was soundly defeated in a pitched battle near the village of Baškent (Başköy) on the Otluqbeli, where Sultan Mehmed the Conqueror was able to bring artillery and muskets into action with decisive effect (Woods, *The Aqquyunlu*, pp. 131-37). Although the Āq Qoyunlū escaped with only minor territorial losses, and despite intensified Venetian pressure in the following years for joint anti-Ottoman action, Uzun Ḥasan made no further attempt to extend his sway

westward beyond the Euphrates. During the last years of his reign he had to deal with the repeated insubordination of his son Oḡurlū Moḥammad, the governor of Shiraz, who received support from his half-brother Maqṣūd in Baghdad and his uncle Oways in Rohā. Oḡurlū was killed in battle in the winter of 881/1476-77 by the faction supporting his brother Ḵalīl, Uzun Ḥasan's designated successor. The sultan himself, his already ailing health impaired by a successful campaign against the Georgians, died on the eve of Šawwāl, 882/5-6 January 1478.

The Āq Qoyunlū empire reached its zenith under Uzun Ḥasan. He was the first of their rulers to declare himself an independent sultan, and as a token of this status, he began to send a splendid *maḥmel* (brocade-covered litter) with the annual pilgrim caravan to Mecca. While he patronized the urban religious establishment with grants or confirmations of endowments and tax privileges and persecuted extreme Shiʿite and antinomian sects, he also maintained contact with representatives of popular dervish orders that were generally inclined toward Shiʿism. He married one of his daughters to his nephew Ḥaydar, the contemporary head of the Ṣafawīya order at Ardabīl. The argument that there was a clear-cut contrast between the Sunnism of the Āq Qoyunlū and the Shiʿism of the Qara Qoyunlū and the Ṣafawīya rests mainly on later Safavid sources and must be considered doubtful.

With the conquest of Iran, not only did the Āq Qoyunlū center of power shift eastward, but Iranian influences were soon brought to bear on their method of government and their culture. In the Iranian provinces, Uzun Ḥasan maintained the preexisting administrative system along with its officials, whose families had in some cases served under different dynasties for several generations (see J. Aubin, "Ētudes Safavides I: Šāh Ismāʿīl et les notables de l'Iraq Persan," *JESHO* 2, 1959, pp. 37-81). The sources mention only four top civil posts, all held by Iranians, in Uzun Ḥasan's time: those of the vizier, who headed the great council (*dīvān*); the *mostawfī al-mamālek*, who was in charge of the financial administration; the *mohrdār*, who affixed the state seal, and the *mīrāḵor* (stablemaster), who looked after the royal court. The post of *ṣadr* (head of the religious dignitaries) is only attested to from the reign of his son Yaʿqūb but may have existed under Uzun Ḥasan. Yaʿqūb's *ṣadr* was also empowered to act as his *wakīl* or proxy (W. Hinz, *Irans Aufstieg zum Nationalstaat im 15. Jahrhundert*, Berlin and Leipzig, 1936, pp. 101f). The responsibilities of the various offices are hard to define, especially because there is no known manual of statecraft from the Āq Qoyunlū period.

Uzun Ḥasan appreciated the worth of the rural as well as the urban population, or at least showed awareness that there were limits to the productive capacity of the peasantry. With the aim of preventing arbitrary exploitation, he caused the statutes—probably existing regulations for the most part—to be codified in a digest called the *Qānūn-nāma-ye Ḥasan Pādšāh*, which remained in force long after his time. Large parts of his tax and trade laws are recorded in Ottoman sources (Ö. L. Barkan, "Osmanlı devrinde hükümdarı Uzun Ḥasan beye ait kanunlar," *Tarih Vesikları* 1, 1941, pp. 91-106, 184-97; W. Hinz, "Das Steuerwesen Ostanatoliens im 15. und 16. Jahrhundert," *ZDMG* 100, 1950, pp. 177-204), but none of his civil and penal legislation has been preserved.

Although the urban elite gained increasing influence from their monopoly of administrative skills, they continued to be debarred from military functions. The gap between nomadic warriors and sedentary residents, which was also an ethnic barrier between Turkmans and Iranians, remained unbridgeable. After the defeat and collapse of the Qara Qoyunlū confederation, many of its former constituent tribes joined the Āq Qoyunlū and so added to the strength of Uzun Ḥasan's army. According to an eyewitness account of a military review held by Ḵalīl b. Uzun Ḥasan, the governor of Fārs, in 881/1476, this governor alone commanded a standing force of 25,000 cavalry and 10,000 infantry plus auxiliaries. The total strength of Uzun Ḥasan's army, including all the provincial contingents, may well have exceeded 100,000 men; its strike capacity was derived mainly from the cavalry, while its great weakness was its lack of firearms (V. Minorsky, "A Civil and Military Review in Fārs in 881/1476," *BSOAS* 10, 1939, pp. 141-78; Jalāl-al-dīn Davānī, "ʿArż-e sepāh-e Uzun Ḥasan," ed. Ī. Afšār, *MDAT* 3, 1335 Š./1956).

Uzun Ḥasan's successor Ḵalīl went in for a policy of tighter centralization of power in the suftan's hands but he was soon killed, in Rabīʿa II, 883/July, 1478, in a fight near Ḵoy with rebellious partisans of his fourteen-year-old brother Yaʿqūb; among them were many Āq Qoyunlū tribesmen from Anatolia aggrieved by the decline of their influence since the removal of the central authority of Iran.

Yaʿqūb's twelve-year reign was a spell of relative calm. He and his advisors prudently won over Ḵalīl's former supporters by letting them stay at their posts. Revolts in Kermān (884/1479) and Hamadān (886/1481) presented no serious danger and were soon quelled, while external threats were virtually nonexistent. The Ottoman annexation of a small district north of Bayburt in

the spring of 884/1479 was an isolated incident, and a Mamluk attack on Rohā in 885/1480 was repulsed. The one grave danger to the dynasty, if not to Yaʿqūb himself, lay in religiously motivated stirrings. Yaʿqūb, unlike his father, took no interest in popular religious feelings and practices and alienated large sections of the people, especially Turkmans. Whole groups of the latter were drawn into the Ṣafawīya order, which had been transformed by its leader Shaikh Ḥaydar into a militant organization with an extremist Shiʿite ideology. Yaʿqūb initially sent Shaikh Ḥaydar and his followers to fight a holy war against the Circassians but soon grew wary of their military might. On the occasion of a foray into Georgia, Ḥaydar sought to avenge the death of his father, Shaikh Jonayd (killed in 864/1460), by attacking the Šervānšāh, who was one of Yaʿqūb's vassals; Yaʿqūb sent troops who defeated and killed Ḥaydar and captured his three sons. This event only strengthened the pro-Safavid feeling among the Turkmans of Azarbaijan and Anatolia. Equally fruitless was Yaʿqūb's attempt in the same year to destroy the power of the Mošaʿšaʿ clan, who were also extremist Shiʿites; he only succeeded in driving them back from southern Mesopotamia into Ḵūzestān, where they maintained their long-established rule.

Yaʿqūb also made enemies among the official religious dignitaries with a tax reform that significantly impaired their material position. The reform, instigated by Qāżī Ṣāʾen-al-dīn ʿĪsā Sāvaǰī, his tutor and then *wakīl*, was intended to make possible a centralized monarchy but failed to achieve its purpose. A lasting weakness of the central government lay in the land grant system practiced since Saljuq times or earlier, whereby amirs did not receive salaries from the ruler but were rewarded with de facto heritable grants of seigneurial rights over designated areas. The grant, known since Jalayerid times by the Mongol term *suyūrḡāl* (benefice) but in fact a development of the original institution of the *eqṭāʿ*, included not only free disposal of the area's revenues but also exemption from tax liability and, in the case of a large *suyūrḡāl* that might cover a whole province, administrative autonomy and judicial immunity. Small and medium-sized *suyūrḡāl*s were often granted to *ʿolamāʾ* without any requirement of reciprocal service. Since the big beneficiaries were too powerful, Qāżī ʿĪsā began by canceling small and medium-sized *suyūrḡāl*s; his pretext was the un-Islamic origin of the benefice system, but paradoxically, his action injured religious dignitaries. He likewise pleaded the desirability of replacing Mongol law (*yasa*) with Islamic law (*šarīʿa*) when he abolished the *tamḡā* (excise on merchandise); this had largely gone into the coffers of the big *suyūrḡāl*-holders, who collected it in cities or as

a toll on road traffic in their areas (B. Fragner, “Economic and Trade Affairs from the Mid-Fourteenth Century to the End of the Safavids,”*Camb. Hist. Iran* VI (forthcoming); V. Minorsky, “The Aq Qoyunlu and Land Reform,” *BSOAS* 17, 1955, pp. 449-62). These reforms did not outlast the reign of Yaʿqūb, who died mysteriously—from the effects of either plague or poison—on 11 Ṣafar 896/24 December 1490. A few weeks later Qāżī ʿĪsā was put to death by rebellious amirs.

After Yaʿqūb’s death, the Āq Qoyunlū engaged in ceaseless power struggles. The chiefs of the strongest tribes used princes, often of minor age, as tools for their own aggrandizement. Yaʿqūb’s eight-year-old son Bāysonḡor was enthroned in 896/1491 under the tutelage of Ṣūfī Ḵalīl Beg Mawṣellū and ejected from Tabrīz in Raǰab, 897/May, 1492 by his cousin Rostam b. Maqṣūd b. Uzun Ḥasan, who had the backing of the Pornāk and Qajar tribes under the leadership of Ebrāhīm b. Dānā Ḵalīl Bayandor (known as Ayba Solṭān). Bāysonḡor made several unsuccessful attempts to return before he was killed in 898/1493. Rostam, anxious to conciliate both the religious establishment and the popular Sufi orders, promptly allowed the sons of Shaikh Ḥaydar Ṣafawī to return to Ardabīl in 897/1492. Two years later Ayba Solṭān ordered their rearrest because their movement was again threatening, but the youngest son, Esmāʿīl, then aged seven, escaped and was kept in hiding by supporters at Lāhīǰān. In 902/1497 Rostam was overthrown by his cousin Gövde (” dwarf”) Aḥmad b. Oḡurlū Moḥammad, who had returned from exile in Ottoman territory. Aḥmad immediately reimposed centralizing measures, which provoked a revolt of the amirs led by Ayba Solṭān, and he was defeated and killed near Isfahan in Rabīʿa II, 903/December, 1497.

After Aḥmad’s death, the Āq Qoyunlū empire underwent further disintegration. None of the tribal factions could secure more than provincial recognition of its favored throne-claimant, with the result that three sultans reigned concurrently: Alvand b. Yūsof b. Uzun Ḥasan in the west, Uzun Ḥasan’s nephew Qāsem b. Jahāngīr in an enclave in Dīār Bakr, and Alvand’s brother Moḥammadī in Fārs and ʿErāq-e ʿAǰam (until his violent death in the summer of 905/1500, when he was followed by Morād b. Yaʿqūb). The collapse of Āq Qoyunlū rule in Iran began in the autumn of 907/1501 with their defeat by Esmāʿīl Ṣafawī, who had left Lāhīǰān two years earlier and used his charisma to rally a large following of Turkman warriors. He conquered ʿErāq-e ʿAǰam, Fārs, and Kermān in the summer of 908/1503, Dīār Bakr in 913-14/1507-08, and Mesopotamia in the autumn of 914/1508. The last Āq

Qoyunlū sultan, Morād, who hoped to regain the throne with the help of Ottoman troops, was defeated and killed at his last stronghold, Rohā, by Esmāʿīl's Qizilbāš fighters. The Safavid conquest did not wholly blot out the posterity of Qara ʿOṯmān Bayandor, for branches of the family are known to have lived on at Yazd and Bayburt. The surviving Āq Qoyunlū tribes and groups were absorbed, in some cases years later, into the Qizilbāš tribes; in this process, the Afšār retained their tribal identity while others, such as the Ḥājjīlū, Döğer, Mawṣellū, and Pornāk, were merged into a new tribe called Turkman.

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