



‘ARABŠĀHĪ

‘**ARABŠĀHĪ**, a dynasty of Chingisid origin that ruled in K̅vārazm from the beginning of the 10th/16th century. The name, accepted by some modern scholars as a matter of convenience (though apparently not found in Eastern sources), comes from one of the ancestors of the dynasty, ‘Arabšāh b. Fūlād, a descendant of Šīban (Sīban), the fifth son of Joči. Another son of Fūlād, Ebrāhīm Oġlān, was, through his grandson **Abu’l-Ḳayr Khan**, the ancestor of Šaybānī Khan (q.v.), the conqueror of Transoxiana. In scholarly literature these two branches of the Chingisids, who ruled over Turkic tribes that became known as Uzbeks, have been sometimes called “Shaybanids” (cf. W. Barthold in *EI*^{IV}, s.v.).

By the end of the 9th/15th century the ‘Arabšāhī clan was headed by four sons of Yādegār Khan: Burākā (or Bürgā, not Berke, as in some modern works), Abulāk, Amināk, and Abāk; they and their Uzbek subjects did not participate in the conquest of Transoxiana led by Šaybānī Khan. After the defeat of Šaybānī and the occupation of K̅vārazm by Shah Esmā’īl in 916/1510, two sons of Burākā, Ilbārs Solṭān and Bālbārs Solṭān, responded to the call of the inhabitants of Vazīr (in the northwest of K̅vārazm) and seized this town after a massacre of its qizilbāš garrison. Soon afterward Ilbārs captured Urganč, the most important town of the region, where he was proclaimed khan in 917/1511 (Abu’l-Ġāzī, I, p. 197, erroneously gives 911/1505; cf. W. Barthold in *EI*^{II}, p. 976). Other members of the clan promptly joined the two brothers with the Uzbek tribes that had remained in the steppe till then. They conquered the whole of K̅vārazm, subjugated the Turkmen tribes west and south of K̅vārazm,



and, after the death of Shah Esmā‘īl (930/1523), occupied the oases of northern Khorasan, along the Kopet Dāg mountains.

Throughout their rule the ‘Arabšāhīs maintained steppe political traditions. Every male member (sultan) of the ruling clan was entitled to a share of common patrimony. The power was transferred within the clan according to seniority. The supreme ruler, who alone bore the title khan, was supposed to be (and in most cases actually was) the eldest member of the clan and was elected by an assembly (*qurultay*) of the sultans. The seat of the first khans (till ca. 924/1518) was Vazīr, then, for almost a century, Urganč (with the exception of Aqatay Khan, 956-64/1549-57, who resided in Vazīr). Dōst Moḥammad Khan (964-65/1557-58) was the first supreme ruler who resided in Kīva. Ḥājī Moḥammad (Ḥājīm) Khan moved to Kīva by the end of his rule, in 1009/1600, and his son and heir ‘Arab Moḥammad Khan (1011-31 / 1603-22), who began his rule in Urganč, later abandoned it and moved to Kīva, which thereafter remained the capital of the khanate. (About the changes in geographical conditions that led to this transfer of political center, see K̄vārazm). The sultans received as appanages various towns, with their districts, and Turkmen tribes in the steppe; an appanage often included certain regions both in K̄vārazm (which was called Su Boyu “the side of the water”) and in the northern rim of Khorasan (called Taḡ Boyu “the side of the mountains”). It seems that during the first century of ‘Arabšāhī rule, at least a partial redistribution of appanages occurred upon the accession of each new khan, but from the very beginning various branches of the ruling clan showed a clear tendency to entrench in their appanages and to turn them into hereditary possessions.

These appanages remained quite autonomous in both their internal affairs and foreign relations; until the beginning of the 11th/17th century the whole khanate was very much like a confederation of practically independent principalities, where the power of the khan depended on his personal resources and prestige, the strength of the Uzbek tribes who supported him in his own domain, and the degree of solidarity among the members of the royal clan. Displays of an overall solidarity were very rare, occurring only in cases of great common danger (such as during the invasions of the Šaybānī Uzbeks from Bukhara under ‘Obaydallāh Khan and ‘Abdallāh Khan). The history of the dynasty was marred by feuds between various branches of the ruling clan; in the resulting civil wars, four branches were eliminated (those of Abulāk, about 930/1524; Burākā, 944-45/1538; and Bujuḡa and Sufyān, sons of Amināk, in



964-65/1556-58), until the title of khan finally remained in the family of Ḥāǰī Moḥammad (Ḥāǰīm) Khan b. Aqatay b. Amināk. Most of the male members of the ‘Arabšāhī clan were killed during these disturbances and foreign invasions (e.g., in 1002/1594 ‘Abdallāh Khan put to death more than twenty princes taken prisoner) or fled to other countries, and from the time of Abu’l-Ġāzī Khan, there remained no serious contenders for supreme power, which began to pass from father to son.

Until the middle of the 11th/17th century the ‘Arabšāhī rulers remained typical nomadic leaders very little interested in sedentary culture. The towns were for them only winter residences and fortified refuges in case of danger. They spent the summer—most of the year—in tents in the steppe, especially on the hanks of the Amū Daryā (see, for instance, Abu’l-Ġāzī, I, pp. 273-74; for a description of the nomadic encampment of Tīmūr Solṭān b. Ḥāǰīm Khan in 965/1558 by Anthony Jenkinson, see S. Purchas, *Hakluytus Posthumus or Purchas His Pilgrimes* XII, repr. Glasgow, 1906, p. 12). Almost nothing is known about the building activity of the ‘Arabšāhīs; the only two buildings that remain in Kīva from this period are a small mosque and the baths of Anūša Khan built in 1068/1657 during the reign of his father, Abu’l-Ġāzī. More important for the development of sedentary culture were several irrigation canals built by order of the khans, especially in the 11th/17th century (see V. V. Barthold, *Sochineniya* III, Moscow, 1965, pp. 177-79; Y. Gulyamov, *Istoriya orosheniya Khorezma*, Tashkent, 1957, pp. 199-203). The cultural level of the ‘Arabšāhīs and of the country under their rule was low, even against the background of Central Asia’s general cultural decline in the Uzbek period. No literature worth mentioning survives from the time of the ‘Arabšāhīs, except three Chaghatay historical works: *Tārīk-e Dōst Solṭān* (a semi-epic history of the Chingisids) by Ötemiš Ḥāǰī (see H. F. Hofman, *Turkish Literature*, sec. 3, pt. 1, vol. VI, Utrecht, 1969, p. 72) and two works by Abu’l-Ġāzī Khan (1053-74/1643-63), *Šajāra-ye Turk* (a history of the Mongols and the Turks down to the ‘Arabšāhīs) and *Šajāra-ye Tarākema* (an adaptation of Turkmen genealogical and historical traditions, not “the history of the Mongols,” as in *EI*² IV, p. 1064b). Abu’l-Ġāzī complains that before him no history of his dynasty had ever been written because of the indifference (*bī parwāliq*) of his ancestors and the ignorance (*bī wuqūfliq*) of the people of K̲v̲ārazm, and he could find nobody able to write such a work. Abu’l-Ġāzī owed his own literary education mainly to his ten years’ captivity in Isfahan.

The Uzbek tribes that came to K̲v̲ārazm with the ‘Arabšāhīs remained



predominantly nomadic throughout their reign. They formed a military estate in the khanate, while the old sedentary population of K̄vārazm, the Sarts, constituted the class of taxpayers. The role of the Uzbek tribal nobility increased toward the end of the 11th/17th century; especially important was the position of *ataliḡ* (see *EI*², supp. I, s.v.), the khan’s guardian and counselor. After a period of consolidation of power of the khans during the reigns of Abu’l-Ġāzī and Anūša, a rapid decline set in, and the Uzbek tribal nobility, first the *ataliḡs* and later the *inaqs* (see *EI*², supp. I, s.v.) came to the fore. The rule of the ‘Arabšāhīs came to an end in the last years of the 11th/17th or in the first half of the 12th/18th century. Anuša’s son Moḡammad Arang (or Arnäk?; d. ca. 1106/1694-95) is often regarded as the last khan of this dynasty, but Mu’nis, the historian of K̄iva, names his nine successors, eight of whom were allegedly descendants of Ḥājī Moḡammad Khan, and one (Šīr Ġāzī, d. 1139/ 1726-27) a descendant of Solṭān Ġāzī, son of Ilbārs Khan. Mu’nis does not give the exact affiliation of all these khans and sometimes mentions that there is contradictory evidence as to their origin; there is evidence, for example, that Shah Nīāz Khan (1109-14/1697-1703) was an Uzbek of the Qaṭaḡan tribe and official (*ešik-āqā-bāšī*) of Sobḡhān-qolī Khan of Bukhara (see Moḡammad Yūsof Monšī, *Tadkera-ye moqīmḡānī*, Russian tr. A. A. Semenov, Tashkent, 1956, p. 153; cf. *Materialy po istorii Uzbekskoī, Tadzhikskoī i Turkmenskoī SSR I*, Leningrad, 1932, p.267, where Shah Nīāz in his letter to Russia calls Sobḡhān-qolī Khan his uncle; “Iskhak Aga” in the old Russian translation should be amended to “Ešik Aqa”). Thus, the exact date of the end of ‘Arabšāhī rule cannot yet be established, but it certainly falls within the period between 1106/1694 and 1140/ 1727.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

The main source for the history of the ‘Arabšāhīs is Abu’l-Ġāzī Khan, *Šaḡara-ye Torḡ*, written in the 1600s and finished for his son Anūša in 1076/1665-66 (see Abu’l-Ġāzī; Desmaisons’s French translation is sometimes not very accurate).

For the 10th/16th century Abu’l-Ġāzī drew his information entirely from oral tradition, and his chronology (especially of the first ‘Arabšāhīs) is very vague.



In some cases his data can be corrected and supplemented from contemporary Persian sources: *Nosaḳ-e jahānārā*, *Maǧma' al-tawārīḳ*, *Aḥsan al-tawārīḳ*, *Afzal al-tawārīḳ*, *Ḳolāṣat al-tawārīḳ*, and *Tārīḳ-e 'ālamārā-ye 'abbāsī* (see Storey-Bregel, nos. 273 (2), 285, 723, 730, 725, 734); for the period up to 946/1539 these sources have been studied by M. B. Dickson in an unpublished doctoral dissertation, *Shāh Tahmāsb and the Uzbeks*, Princeton, 1958, appendix I. *Ferdaws al-eqbāl* by Mu'nīs Ḳvārazmī, written in Chaghatay in Ḳīva in the early 19th century (MS of the Leningrad Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR C-571, fols. 49b-77b; on other MSS see F. T. Hofman, *Turkish Literature IV*, pp. 203-04) contains only some minor additions for the period up to Abu'l-Ġāzī, but it adds important details for the latter's reign and is the main source for the last 'Arabšāhīs.

For this period Mu'nīs apparently had only oral sources, and his chronology is vague or completely absent. Some chronological details can be found in the documents concerning the relations between Ḳīva and Russia (*Materialy po istorii Uzbekskoi, Tadzhikskoi i Turkmenskoi SSR*). The only existing survey of the history of the dynasty is given by N. Veselovskii, *Ocherk istoriko-geograficheskikh svedeniĭ o Khivinskom khanstve ot drevneishikh vremyon do nastoyashchego*, St. Petersburg, 1877, pp. 89-182 (based on Abu'l-Ġāzī and Russian sources; Mu'nīs and most Persian sources are ignored).

On certain questions more material is found in A. Karryev, V. G. Moshkova, et al., *Ocherki iz istorii turkmenskogo naroda i Turkmenistana v VIII-XIX vv.*, Ashkhabad, 1954, pp. 173-237.

On the general history of the khanate of Ḳīva under the 'Arabšāhīs, see Ḳvārazm .

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