



ARPA KHAN

ARPA KHAN (also Arpā Ka'on or Gāvon, representing Mongol *ke'ün*, "son," in the sense of "prince of the blood"), 10th Il-khan of Iran (r. 736/1335-36). He was descended not from Hülegü (Hülāgu) but from the latter's younger brother Ariḡ Böke (Arīq Būkā), this branch of the family having entered Iran from Central Asia in the person of prince Mingqān in 708/1308 (Kāšānī, *Tārīk-e'Uljāytū*, ed. M. Hambly, Tehran, 1348 Š./1969, p. 82). On the death of the Il-khan Abū Sa'īd (q.v.), it was given out by the vizier Gīāt-al-dīn Moḥammad b. Rašīd-al-dīn that Arpā had been designated as his successor, and he was duly enthroned in the plain of Qarābāḡ five days later, on 18 Rabī' II 736/5 December 1335, taking the style of Sultan Mo'ezz al-donyā wa'l-dīn Maḥmūd. The hasty enthronement was in view of the threat from Özbek, khan of the Golden Horde, who, however, withdrew at the approach of the new Il-khan.

Upon his triumphant return, Arpā married his predecessor's sister, Sātī Beg (q.v.), and further attempted to consolidate his position by wooing those who had fallen into disfavor during Abū Sa'īd's last years. Sheikh Ḥasan was restored to the dignity of *amīr-e olūs* and a number of other amirs were released from prison. But his reign was characterized chiefly by a series of executions, beginning with the late sovereign's principal wife, Baḡdād Kātūn, who was suspected of poisoning her husband and of correspondence with the Golden Horde, and culminating with the distinguished amir Maḥmūd Šāh Īnjū in mid-Raḡab, 736/March, 1336.

From the very outset Arpā's sovereignty had rested on insecure foundations, since his predecessor's young wife Delšād Kātūn was pregnant, though



destined in the event to give birth to a daughter. His succession had been opposed also by Abū Saʿīd's mother, Ḥājjī Kātūn who incited against him her brother the Oirat leader 'Alī Pādšāh in Dīārbakr, whose family had an old blood feud with Ariḡ Böke's line. When Delšād Kātūn fled to him for refuge 'Alī Pādšāh became the focus of opposition to the Il-khan. He proclaimed as ruler Mūsā, a grandson of the Il-khan Baidū, and secured the neutrality of Sheikh Ḥasan before advancing against Arpā. The Il-khan, deserted by numerous commanders, including those he had released from jail, was defeated in an engagement on the Jāgātū (the present Zarrīna-rūd) on a date which varies in the sources but which is most likely to have been 27 Ramažān 736/9 May 1336, as given by Ḥāfeẓ-e Abrū (*Dayl*, p. 194). He was captured in Solṭāniya and brought to Ūjān, where the victors handed him over to the son of Maḥmūdšāh Īnjū. Arpā was put to death on 3 Šawwāl 736/15 May 1336.

An anonymous Armenian chronicler states that Arpā was a Christian and that he was killed for that reason (A. G. Galstyan, *Armyanskie istochniki o Mongolakh*, Moscow, 1962, p. 81); but this is confirmed by no other source. Aharī depicts him as a Mongol of the old school, who observed the Mongol law and paid no heed to the edicts of his predecessors Öljeitü and Abū Saʿīd. The same author's assertion that Arpā "used to give all the taxes (*māl*) there were to the army (*čerīg*)" (*Tārīk-eŠayk Ovays*, text p. 158) is apparently intended as an instance of the reaction against the reforming tendencies of the preceding reigns. What is more certain is that Arpā was the last Il-khan to display energy and to enjoy personal rule, since the sovereigns who followed were all mere ciphers, real power being vested in the rival [Jalayerid](#) and [Chobanid](#) factions.

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