



## ATĀBAKĀN-E ĀḌARBĀYJĀN

**ATĀBAKĀN-E ĀḌARBĀYJĀN**, an influential family of military slave origin, also called Ildegozids, ruled parts of Arrān and Azarbaijan from about 530/1135-36 to 622/1225; as “Great Atābaks” (*atābakān-e aʿzam*) of the Saljuq sultans of Persian Iraq (western Iran), they effectively controlled the sultans from 555/1160 to 587/1181; in their third phase they were again local rulers in Arrān and Azarbaijan until the territories which had not already been lost to the Georgians, were seized by Jalāl-al-dīn K̄vārazmšāh in 622/1225.

Šams-al-dīn Īldegoz (ca. 530/1135-36 to 571/1175): On his name see Minorsky, *Studies*, p. 92 n. 2; Bosworth, *EI*<sup>2</sup>III, p. 1111 (Bosworth’s Turkish reconstruction of the name as “Ildeñiz” is hardly correct). The *Ḥabīb al-sīar* (Tehran, II, p. 557) describes his origins as a small, ugly Qepčāq slave who rose in Sultan Masʿūd’s favor, but Ebn al-Aṭīr (XI, pp. 338-89) says that he had been a slave of Kamāl Somayramī, vizier of Sultan Maḥmūd b. Moḥammad (511/1117 to 525/1131), and that on the vizier’s death he passed first to Maḥmūd, then to Sultan Masʿūd (527/1133 to 547/1152) who gave him Arrān as *eqtāʿ*; the *Saljūq-nāma* (p. 160) says that Masʿūd gave him the widow of Sultan ʿŪḡrel b. Moḥammad in marriage. He presumably became *atābak* of his stepson, Arslānšāh b. ʿŪḡrel, although the prince was not always in his care. It seems unlikely that he had control of all the Muslim parts of Arrān in his earliest period, and tradition dates as later his position as the real ruler of the Iraq sultanate. The early Armenian writer Mxiṭʿar Goš (tr. Dowsett, *BSOAS* 21, p. 487) says that Īldegoz was lord of Nakḵjavān before he gained control of Ganja, and he cites a series of Saljuq governors of Arrān and Azarbaijan whose relationship to



Īldegoz is uncertain (compare Minorsky, “Tabrīz,” *EI*<sup>I</sup> IV, p. 585). Sources such as Ḥosaynī’s *Akbār* (p. 181 and *passim*) make it clear that members of the family always considered Naḳjavān their home base, and that is where their building activity seems to have been centered (see below). Īldegoz was always concerned with the defense of the Araxes (Aras)-Akhurean corridor up to Ani and the belt of towns and castles in the Kura (Korr) valley from Baylaqān to Šamḳor (Šamkūr) against the Georgians, who were expanding southward in this period. He also sought to secure his position on the edges of the declining Saljuq empire by gaining control over parts of Azarbaijan; he probably gained clear control over it only after the death of Mas‘ūd’s last favorite, Qāṣṣ Beg Arslān b. Palangarī in 548/1153, who had been given a position in that area as well. His situation in Azarbaijan seems to have been regularized by a peace which he and Āq Sonqor II of Marāḡa concluded in 549/1154-55 with his enemy, Sultan Moḡammad b. Maḡmūd (Bondārī, *Zobda*, p. 243, Minorsky, “Marāgha,” *EI*<sup>I</sup> III, p. 263).

Even before 548/1153, Īldegoz was involved in intrigues resulting from the succession struggle after the death of Mas‘ūd in 547/1152. He was in the coalition which supported Solaymānšāh b. Moḡammad against Sultan Moḡammad b. Maḡmūd, and when that failed, he continued to work against Moḡammad, perhaps indicating his alienation from the sultan by striking coins only in the name of the supreme sultan Sanjar (Kouymjian, *Numismatic History*, p. 300). He gained, or perhaps regained, custody of his stepson Arslānšāh in late 549/1154 or early 550/1155, and he may have put the title of *atābak* on his coins at this time (Kouymjian, *Numismatic History*, pp. 298-300). However, he continued to work against Moḡammad through other members of the Saljuq family besides Arslānšāh. Caliphal support of another coalition for Solaymānšāh did not prevent his defeat at Naḳjavān by Sultan Moḡammad in 551/1156, and the subsequent reconciliation effected there did not keep Īldegoz from again intriguing with the caliph’s vizier, Ebn Hobayra, in an attempt to supplant Moḡammad with his brother, Malekšāh, while the sultan was besieging Baghdad; he abandoned the attempt when Moḡammad lifted the siege and started back to Hamadān.

His ambitions were finally realized when, after the death (possibly on his orders) of Solaymānšāh who ruled briefly after the death of Moḡammad (555/1160), a group of amirs invited him to bring Arslānšāh to Hamadān and install him as sultan; he was probably proclaimed great *atābak* then (555/1160), thus becoming the holder of a new office, that of *atābak* of a



reigning sultan, exercising state power in the sultan's name. With control over the Iraq sultanate came variously strong allegiances owed the Iraq sultan by the rulers of Fārs, Kermān, Kūzestān, Kelāṭ (Aqlāṭ), and Šervān. He faced two revolts (556/1161 and 561/1165) led by Ḥosām-al-dīn Īnānĵ of Ray, who the second time was aided by the K̄vārazmšāh Īl-Arslān, and ended the danger from this quarter by pressuring Īnānĵ's own vizier into having his master assassinated. Ray went to Īldegoz's son, Moḥammad Pahlavān, as did Ardabīl on the death of another amir, and he obtained the position of *amīr-e ḥāĵeb* at the sultan's court. His other son, Qezel Arslān 'Oṭmān, who seems to have been responsible for the home territories in the northwest, became *amīr-e esfahsālār*. The resources available to him through his control of the Iraq sultanate helped him beat back the attacks of the thriving Georgian monarchy for most of his rule; when they attacked in 556/1161, taking Ani and sacking Dabīl (Dvin), he was able to defeat them with the aid of the Shah Arman of K̄elāṭ and others. He restored Ani to the traditional Muslim ruling family, the Shaddadids, in 559/1164 (Minorsky, *Studies*, pp. 90-101).

As far as the adjoining territories are concerned, the *atābak* Zangī of Fārs submitted formally in ceremonies held in 560/1165 (Ḥosaynī, *Akbār*, pp. 153-56). In 565/1169-70 an army was sent to assist Malek Arslān of Kermān (Kermānī, *Badā'e'*, pp. 43-48). Kūzestān was apparently involved through a Saljuq prince, a son of Malekšāh, its real ruler, being his *atābak* Šomla (Ebn al-Aṭīr, XI, pp. 328f.). The Khorasani amir, Mo'ayyed Ay Aba, read the *koṭba* for Arslānšāh for four years but dropped it in 562/1167 when Īldegoz decided not to challenge the K̄vārazmšāh for control of Khorasan (Luther, "End of Saljuq Dominion"). Māzandarān was not under his control, nor was Marāġa in Azarbaijan itself. The ruler of Marāġa, Noṣrat-al-dīn Āq Sonqor II, (see [Atābakān-e Marāġa](#)), twice made moves which Īldegoz considered threatening (556/1160-61 and 563/1167-68) and twice defeated his son Moḥammad when he was sent against him. Noṣrat-al-dīn's successor lost Tabrīz to the Ildegozids, apparently in 570/1174-75, although the sequence of events around Īldegoz's death is not clear (Ebn al-Aṭīr, XI, p. 388f.; Kouymjian, *Numismatic History*, p. 291; Luther, *Sultanate*, p. 201; Minorsky, *Studies*, p. 99). Ḥosaynī (*Akbār*, p. 172) indicates that Mosul and "Armīniya" gave the *koṭba* for the Iraq sultan, thus implying a relationship with the *atābaks*. In most cases, the precise nature of these relationships with neighboring territories is not known, but they were probably quite loose and mostly a matter of convenience. The Šervānšāhs for example took care to keep on good terms with both the sultanate and the Georgian monarchy, and the Ildegozids themselves were interested in trade



and commercial relations with their Christian subjects and neighbors (Kouymjian, *Numismatic History*, pp. 425-27).

Not long before his death in 571/1175 Īldegoz lost Ani to the Georgians, although it was apparently later restored to the family's control and to their vassals, the Shaddadids (Minorsky, *Studies*, pp. 100f.). Arslānšāh tried to throw off Ildegozid control after the *atābak*'s death, but he died before his attempt was really underway, possibly poisoned by the new *atābak*, Moḥammad b. Īldegoz (Ravandī, *Rāḥat al-ṣodūr*, pp. 248-352; Houtsma, "Remarks," pp. 140-42; Luther, *Sultanate*, pp. 203f.), who installed his ward ʿOḡrel b. Arslānšāh as sultan and maintained the essential elements of the system intact until his death in 582/1186. His brother Qezel Arslān held a subordinate position as ruler of the northwest.

Noṣrat-al-dīn Moḥammad b. Īldegoz (571/1175 to 582/1186): The inscription recorded from the Tower of the Atābaks (see below) refers to him as al-Malek al-Ālem al-Ādel A'zam Atābak Abū Ja'far Moḥammad b. Atābak Īldegoz. In the written sources he is often referred to as Moḥammad Jahān-pahlavān, which also appears on some of his coins (Kouymjian, *Numismatic History*, p. 323). The sources give almost no chronology for his decade, even though a recent *enšā'* discovery (Afšār, "Ahd-nāma" and *Moḳtārāt*) has added to our information about him. He disposed of the attempts of the Saljuq Moḥammad, brother of Arslānšāh, to overthrow him, and may have had a campaign against the Georgians soon after he took control (Luther, *Sultanate*, pp. 206-210). The acquisition of Tabrīz (see above) may have occurred early in his period. He dealt with a revolt of the Salghurid Daklā (Tekla) of Fārs about the middle of the period (see [Atābakān-e Fārs](#)) and around 572/1176-77 or the following year was prepared to assist the Georgian Liparit against the Georgian King Giorgi II, though this proved unnecessary. It is not known whether it was he or his son Abū Bakr who restored Ani to the Muslims, but he did succeed in resisting the Ayyubid Ṣalāḥ-al-dīn's claim to Keleḡ in 581/1185-86. An attempt to intervene in Kermān was abandoned because of his death. Several sources from the period (Luther, "Rāvandī's Report") attribute western Iran's subsequent troubles to Moḥammad's placing his own mamluks in all the governorships under his control and to the way in which he parceled out his domains among his sons, hoping, according to Rāvandī (*Rāḥat al-ṣodūr*, p. 335), that the mamluks would respect these arrangements after his death. Abū Bakr was assigned the northwest under Qezel Arslān's tutelage. Uzbek was to have Hamadān, and Moḥammad's two stepsons, the sons of Īnānġ Kātūn (daughter



of Īnānġ Sonqor of Ray, also called Qatība [?], see Ebn Esfandiār, II, p. 152) who are usually referred to in the sources as Qotloġ Īnānġ and Amīr-e Amīrān ‘Omar, were to have other parts of Jebāl.

Moẓaffar-al-dīn Qezel Arslān ‘Otmān (582/1186 to 587/1191): He used the title al-Malek al-Mo‘azzam on a coin struck after he proclaimed Sanġar b. Solaymānšāh sultan (Kouymjian, *Numismatic History*, p. 328). When Moġammad b. Īldegoz died, the mamluks split into factions, some supporting his brother Qezel Arslān, others supporting Moġammad’s widow, Īnānġ Kātūn’s efforts on behalf of her two sons. Sultan Toġrel fled and resisted the new *atābak* until he was captured in 586/1190. Qezel Arslān then attempted to revive the old arrangement by proclaiming as sultan the infant Sanġar b. Solaymānšāh. Then he proclaimed himself sultan but was assassinated shortly after, apparently on the initiative of Īnānġ Kātūn (Ebn Esfandiār, II, p. 154).

Noşrat-al-dīn Abū Bakr b. Moġammad (587/1191 to 607/1210): He used the titles Jahān-pahlavān (p. 336) and al-Soltān al-Mo‘azzam/A‘zam, Šāhanšāh al-A‘zam/Mo‘azzam (Kouymjian, *Numismatic History*, p. 343). Abū Bakr set out immediately on Qezel Arslān’s death and took control of the home territories in the northwest, while Qotloġ Īnānġ fought with Toġrel over Jebāl. Defeated by the sultan, he and his brother Amīr-e Amīrān challenged Abū Bakr and were defeated in 589/1193. Qotloġ Īnānġ fled back to Jebāl, there to finally ensure the end of Toġrel by calling in the K̄vārazmšāh ‘Alā’-al-dīn Tekeš, whose troops killed the sultan during their second incursion in 591/1194. He received territory from the K̄vārazmšāh (Ebn al-A‘īr, XII, p. 108), but according to Ebn Esfandiār (II, p. 154) he was killed sometime later by the Khwarazmian general, Mīājoq. Amīr-e Amīrān challenged Abū Bakr again with help from the Šervānšāh and the Georgian Queen Tamar, and defeated him near Ganġa, although Abū Bakr was able to escape back to Naġjavān with his life, after seeing his army destroyed. Amīr-e Amīrān died before he could take advantage of his victory. Ganġa submitted once again to Abū Bakr (Ĥosaynī, *Akbār*, pp. 185-90; Brosset, *Histoire*, pp. 436ff.; Abū Ĥāmed, *Dayl*, p. 191). Having survived these assaults, Abū Bakr, who had made at least one foray into Jebāl (Ebn Esfandiār, II, p. 162), not only had to see his family’s influence in that province reduced to almost nothing under Uzbek, who was nominally in charge in Hamadān, he also faced relentless pressure from the Georgians. Ani fell in 595-596/1199 (dated in Christian sources). The *atābak* apparently sought to counter this pressure first by helping Giorgi Bogolyubskii in 596-597/1200 (Christian sources) in his attempt to return to Georgia, then by



moving on Šervān, but he was decisively defeated according to the Georgian/Armenian sources (Limper, *Mongolen*, pp. 52-54). Šamkor and Ganja had to acknowledge Georgian overlordship. Abū Bakr's marriage to a daughter of the king of Georgia did not prevent the loss of Dvin in 599/1202-03 (Ebn al-Aṭīr, XII, p. 242; Limper, *Mongolen*, p. 52). Before his death incursions by the Georgians had reached disastrous proportions, including the capture and sack of Ardabīl in 606-07/1210 and a raid down through Tabrīz and all the way across northern Iran as far as Gorgān (Brosset, *Histoire*, pp. 468-72). The *atābak* had compensated himself by taking Marāḡa in 604/1207-08 after it was left to a minor of the Aḡmadīlī (Atābakān-e Marāḡa) line. He had earlier been able to forestall an attack by the rulers of Marāḡa and Erbel by calling on the mamluk Aydoḡmeš (Aytoḡmeš), actual ruler of Jebāl (600/1203-04 to 608/1211-12), who acknowledged old ties of loyalty and turned the attackers back (Ebn al-Aṭīr, XII, pp. 236f.).

Moẓaffar-al-dīn Uzbek (607/1210 to 622/1225): His titles are not known; Jovaynī (e.g., III, p. 245) has only Moẓaffar-al-dīn. He seems to have spent his time in Naḡjavān and Tabrīz, although Kouymjian (*Numismatic History*, p. 294) argues that Ardabīl was his capital, since that is the only known mint. But there was a ruler in Ardabīl whose attack on Ani caused the Georgian sack of Ardabīl mentioned above (assuming this was not a Safavid: Minorsky, *Studies*, p. 103). In general, the amirs were more and more on their own, since Uzbek took little interest in the affairs of his kingdom. Minorsky ("Caucasica II," pp. 868-75) and Kouymjian (*Numismatic History*, pp. 369-410) provide us with information on the vassal Maleks of Ahar, or Bishkinids and Kouymjian (pp. 411-18) has turned up an unknown vassal who minted coins in the Kura valley or Moḡān. Uzbek is accused by his contemporaries of shameful inaction in the face of the Georgian incursions (e.g., Ebn al-Aṭīr, XII, p. 435). He lost all of Arrān save Naḡjavān, accepted the overlordship of the K̄vārazmšāh in 614/1217-18, and paid tribute to the Georgians. He saved Tabrīz from the Mongol assaults of 617/1220-21 and 618/1221-22 by buying them off, although they ravaged many of the other towns in his territories. He finally left both Tabrīz and his wife, the daughter of Sultan Ṭoḡrel, to Jalāl-al-dīn K̄vārazmšāh in 622/1225 and died, we are told, on hearing that Jalāl-al-dīn had married her (Jovaynī, II, p. 157; anecdote in Nasavī, *Sīra*, Ar., p. 207, Pers, p. 149). He was in the ancestral stronghold of Alenjaq. His son, Qezel Arslān-e Kāmūš, so-called because he was a deaf-mute, married an Aḡmadīlī princess, and according to one interpretation of the evidence (Jovaynī, I, p. 116, II, p. 248; tr. Boyle, I, p. 148 n. 29; Nasavī, *Sīra*, Ar. pp. 223-24, Pers. pp. 161-62) entered Jalāl-al-dīn's service.



*Literature, learning, and architecture.* All of the İldegozids were patrons of literature and learning, even though the later ones were apparently more drunken than devout. They were patrons of many of the well-known poets of the period and were closely associated with some of them. Moĵir-al-dīn Baylaqānī seems to have been closer to İldegoz and Moĵammad whereas Atīr-al-dīn Aḳsikatī was nearer to Qezel Arslān (*Dīvān-e Atīr*, introd. Homāyūn Farroḳ, pp. 75-77; Rypka, *Hist. Iran. Lit.*, p. 208). Ṣahīr-al-dīn Fāryābī is especially associated with Abū Bakr (*Dīvān*, introd. Bīneš, pp. 86-92). Šaraf-al-dīn Šafarva Ešfahānī may have belonged to Moĵammad’s entourage (‘Awfī, *Lobāb*, p. 615). Other poets connected with the family are: ‘Emādī Šahrīārī (‘Awfī, p. 724; Šafā, *Adabīyāt* II, p. 745); Jamāl-al-dīn Moĵammad ‘Abd-al-Razzāq Ešfahānī (Šafā, II, p. 732); Rokn-al-dīn Da’vidār (Šafā, III/1, p. 347); Atīr-al-dīn Awmānī (Šafā, III/1, p. 395); Qewāmī Moṭarrezī, Yūsuf Fożūlī (Dawlatšāh, ed. Browne, p. 117); Jamāl Ašharī (‘Awfī, p. 406); Jamāl Ḳoĵandī (Ebn Esfandīār, II, p. 152). Ḳāqānī wrote poems in praise of Qezel Arslān (*Dīvān*, introd. ‘Abbāsī, p. 26) and also wrote a long letter to that *atābak* (*Monša’āt*, pp. 148-63). Neẓāmī Ganĵavī certainly dedicated his *Ḳosrow o Šīrīn* to members of the family, first to Moĵammad, then to Qezel Arslān, along with Sultan Ṭoĝrel, according to Šafā (II, p. 803). As far as Neẓāmī’s *Eqbāl-nāma* is concerned, there is a difference of opinion (Nafīsī, *Neẓāmī*, pp. 115-16; Minorsky, “Caucasica II,” pp. 872-74; Šafā, II, pp. 704-06) as to whether or not it was dedicated to an İldegozid. It does seem to be true that the only meeting Neẓāmī had with any ruler was with Qezel Arslān (Nafīsī, *Neẓāmī*, pp. 86-93). Uzbek’s vizier, [Abu’l-Qāsem Hārūn](#) was a well-known patron of learning in Tabrīz.

As far as architecture is concerned, according to Rāvandī (*Rāḥat al-šodūr*, pp. 300-01). İldegoz and his wife built and endowed a *madrasa* in Hamadān in which they are buried; there are two mausoleums from the period still extant at Naĵjavān, one dedicated to a local figure (*Repretoire* IX, pp. 30f.), the other with inscriptions which link it to the family (*ibid*, pp. 150-52; *Survey of Persian Art* IV, p. 1788. Sarre, *Denkmäler*, pp. 8-15 and plates; Jacobsthal, “Backsteinbauten,” pp. 549-51 [with inscriptions done by Hartmann]; Khanikoff, “Inscription,” pp. 113-16; *Historical Monuments*, pls. 119-21). This latter structure is a splendid example of the early use of colored tile; it bears the partially effaced name of one of the *atābaks*, assumed to be that of İldegoz by Hartmann, Sarre, and Minorsky (*ET*<sup>1</sup>III, p. 840), and the name Mo’mena Ḳātūn, assumed to be the name of İldegoz’s wife; it had a gate which bore the name of Moĵammad b. İldegoz, and is dated 582/1186-87. A problem is created in assuming any of the three to have been buried there by the explicit



statement of Rāvandī (above) and the statement by Ebn Esfandiār (II, p. 152) that Moḥammad b. Īldegoz was also buried at the *madrasa* in Hamadān. An older photograph, reproduced by Jacobsthal (p. 513, remarks p. 515), shows the ruins of a mosque of the period no longer there when he visited the tomb, but which may also have been built by the İldegozids.

See also [Atābakān-e Marāḡa](#).

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