



ATĀBAKĀN-E FĀRS

ATĀBAKĀN-E FĀRS, princes of the Salghurid dynasty who ruled Fārs in the 6th/12th and 7th/13th centuries, initially with the status of *atābak*. They were descended from the chief of a Turkmen clan, the Salgūr or Salūr, who had accompanied the Saljuq sultan ʿOḡrīl on the migration into Khorasan in the mid 5th/11th century. One of his descendants, Sonqor b. Mawdūd, a nephew of the amir Būz Aba, seized power in Fārs in 543-44/1148 but remained tributary to the Saljuqs. His seat of government was at Shiraz. For a long time he was involved in conflicts with Saljuq princes, particularly Malekšāh b. Maḥmūd, and in his resistance to them he owed much to the help of the Saljuqs of the collateral line who ruled Kermān. He was also on friendly terms with the small principality of Lor-e Bozorg. His dealings with Qays (Kīš) island gave him a strong position in Persian Gulf affairs. Time after time, however, he had to contend with Saljuq inroads into Fārs.

Sonqor, who had surrounded himself with the usual array of a princely court, died at the town of Bayzā in 556/1161 and was succeeded by his brother Zangī b. Mawdūd. After defeating several rival members of the family, Zangī adopted the name Moẓaffar-al-dīn and acknowledged Saljuq suzerainty, though his allegiance to the sultans varied with political circumstances. He successfully overcame all opposing forces and repulsed an intervention by the Saljuqs of Kermān. Fārs suffered dreadful damage from all the fighting in these years. Zangī died at the castle of Oškovān near Eṣṭakr in 574/1178-79 (according to some sources, 570/1174-75 or 571/1175-76).

Power then passed to one of Zangī's five sons, by the name Tekla, who had



already been designated as the successor. He had trouble with repeated attacks by the *atābak* Moḥammad Pahlavān of Azarbaijan in 574-75/1179-80 and a revolt by his cousin Qoṭb-al-dīn Toḡrel b. Sonqor in 577/1182-83. The latter temporarily gained possession of parts of the province but was finally captured and executed; he had assumed the titles of king and “heir to the empire of Solomon” (*wāreṭ-e molk-e Solaymān*, see A. S. Melikian-Chirvani, “Le royaume de Salomon. Les inscriptions persanes des sites Achéménides,” *Le Monde Iranien et l’Islam*, Geneva and Paris, 1971, pp. 1-41). (According to some sources, these events took place at the start of Sa’d I’s reign.) There was also some fighting with the Oḡuz for control of Kermān after the collapse of the local Saljuq sultanate in 581-82/1186. The land and people of Fārs again suffered much damage. Tekla died after a reign of some twenty years in 594/1197-98. He is praised in the sources for his just rule, but such praises are often conventional and do not necessarily reflect the truth.

After Tekla’s death, his cousin Toḡrel b. Sonqor (again?) fought for the succession, the other claimant and, eventually, winner being Tekla’s younger brother Mozaḥfar-al-dīn Abū Šoḡā’ Sa’d I b. Zangī b. Mawdūd. While this contest was going on, an epidemic plague ravaged the country. Sa’d proceeded to enlarge his domain of Fārs by conquering part of Kermān province, including Sīrjān. With the help of his vizier *Ḳvāja ‘Amīd-al-dīn Abū Naṣr As’ad Abzarī* he restored some prosperity to Fārs after the war devastation of the preceding years. Tradition affirms that he supported the poet Sa’dī (d. 691/1192) and that the latter chose his pen-name for this reason, though the evidence rather indicates that Sa’dī’s patron was Sa’d II (see below). Sa’d I’s troops occupied Isfahan for a short time in 600/1203-04, but during his absence he temporarily lost his capital Shiraz to the *atābak* Uzbek b. Pahlavān of Azarbaijan and had to hasten home. Later he was occupied for many years in struggles for control of Kermān, warring against local forces, against the Oḡuz, and finally (in 602/1206-605/1209) against the Sultan *Ḳvārazmšāh* Moḥammad II, whose power was on the rise at this time. In 609/1213 the *Ḳvārazmšāh* succeeded in annexing Kermān. In 614/1217-18, when the *Ḳvārazmšāh* was in conflict with the caliph al-Nāṣer, Sa’d I marched northward and occupied Ray, Qazvīn, and Semnān, but was defeated in a battle with Khwarazmian troops near Ray and taken prisoner. He remained in captivity at Hamadān until he undertook to cede the district around Eṣṭaḳr and Oškovān to Moḥammad II and pay one third of the revenue of his domain as tribute. He also had to deliver his eldest son as a hostage, but the latter was released when marriage ties between the two families were arranged. While these events were in progress, Sa’d’s son



Abū Bakr attempted to seize power at Shiraz but was defeated by local troops and imprisoned. Moḥammad II's subsequent embroilment with the Mongols gave Sa'd I the chance to cast off Khwarazmian suzerainty. Sa'd had to battle against Moḥammad II's son Gīāt-al-dīn in 620/1223-24, but fared better in the following year when Gīāt-al-dīn clashed with his brother Jalāl-al-dīn Mangūbardī (Mengüberdi), who had by then returned from India. Jalāl-al-dīn married Sa'd's daughter and forced his brother to cede to him a large piece of territory, including Isfahan, and assigned them to his father-in-law; at the same time Sa'd recognized Jalāl-al-dīn as his overlord. Sa'd I died on 12 Du'l-qa'da 623/5 November 1226 (more probably than in 628/1230-31 as stated in some accounts).

He was succeeded by his son [Abū Bakr b. Sa'd b. Zangī](#), who on account of an attempted revolt (see above) had been kept in prison for a long time. With prudent regard for the might of the Mongols, Abū Bakr sent his brother (or nephew?) Tahamtan to the Great Khan Ögedei (Ogdāy, Oktāy) in token of his submission. He received the title Qutluḡ Khan and had to admit into his territory a resident Mongol overseer (*šeḥna*), who did not in fact pay much heed to the workings of the government. Fārs now enjoyed a quite long spell of calm and was able to make good progress, both politically and economically. Abū Bakr, like his father and his successors, surrounded himself with scholars and artists (list in Merçil, *Fars Atabegleri*, pp. 135-43), though none except the poet Sa'dī were of more than local importance. The *atabak* himself pursued scholarly interests. He was well served by the viziers Moḡreb-al-dīn Mofāker Mas'ūd and Amīr Faḡr-al-dīn Abū Bakr, the chief *qāzī* Jamāl-al-dīn Abū Bakr Meşrī, and a carefully picked staff of officials. Several mosques and *madrasas* were built in his reign, and remains of some of them survive today (list in Merçil, op. cit., pp. 135-39; also idem, *Die Bautätigkeit der Salguridenzeit nach historischen Quellen*, Fifth International Congress of Turkish Arts, ed. G. Fehér, Budapest, 1978, pp. 599-604). Strict financial discipline made it possible to cope with the tribute payments to the Mongols. Attempts were made to reform the land tenure usages but in the main had to be abandoned. The army was enlarged and put to good use in the suppression of a prince's revolt and in an expedition in 627/1230 which extended the *atabak's* sway to the island of Qays, thereby facilitating trade with India and bringing new tax and customs revenues to the government. A further advance to the Bahrain islands, which then belonged to the caliphate, led to protracted fighting with the local Arabs; this began in Du'l-ḥejja, 633/August, 1236 and ended in 654/1256-57 with a concession of far-reaching autonomy and a division of authority between



certain Arab amirs.

Meanwhile the Il-khan Hülegü (Hülāgū) had taken steps since 653-54/1256 to assert his authority throughout Iran. Abū Bakr offered allegiance and sent his son Sa'd as a hostage to the Mongol court, then at Baghdad. Before Sa'd's return, Abū Bakr died on 5 Jomādā II 658/18 May 1260. With his death the bright days of the *atābaks* of Fārs were over. His still absent son succeeded him as Sa'd II but died after a reign of only eighteen days before reaching Shiraz. The local mint managed to produce a few coins bearing Sa'd II's name.

The next successor was Sa'd's young son Moḥammad I, who was under the guardianship of his mother Terken (Torkān) Kātūn, a princess of Yazd. She chose a vizier named Neẓām-al-dīn Abū Bakr. Unrestrained oppression and speculation now opened the way to ruin. Moḥammad I died after a reign of two and a half years on 6 Moḥarram 661/20 November 1262. Terken Kātūn then procured the succession of Moḥammad II b. Salḡūr b. Sa'd (I). Despite a record of valor as a warrior on the side of the Mongols, he spent too much of his time as a ruler in revelry. Before long, Terken Kātūn decided to get rid of him, even though he had married her daughter; in Ramaẓān, 661/July, 1263 she arranged his departure for a stay at the Mongol court. A secret approach of Terken Kātūn to the Mamlūk sultan Baybars I at this time evidently had no useful result.

Moḥammad II's brother and successor Saljūqšāh b. Salḡūr proceeded to marry Terken Kātūn, but soon incurred the displeasure of his wife and the amirs. He therefore had Terken Kātūn murdered at a banquet. Next he foolishly sanctioned an attack on the Mongol delegation. The consequences were that Moḥammad II met an early death at the Mongol court and a force of Hülāgū's troops set out for Shiraz, Saljūqšāh escaped and entrenched himself at Kāzerūn, but finally had to surrender and was executed outside that town on 12 Šafar 663/4 December 1264.

The throne of Fārs was then given to the princess Ābeš Kātūn, a daughter of Sa'd II, she and her sister being the only members of the Salghurid family left alive. She was only a child, and in 671/1272 she was married to Mōngke Temür (Mongū Teymūr), a brother of the Il-khan Abāqā. The Mongols were thus in position to exert direct influence. Disorders at Shiraz gave them a pretext to imprison her in or around 683/1284. She died on 12 Du'l-qa'da 685/31 December 1286. The deposition of Ābeš marked the end of the dynasty of the Salghurid *atābaks* of Fārs. The province was then placed under direct Mongol



rule.

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