



ATĀBAKĀN-E YAZD

ATĀBAKĀN-E YAZD, a dynasty which governed Yazd in the 6th/12th century. Most of them were tributaries to the Saljuqs and Il-khans, and linked by marriage to the last [Kakuyids](#) of Yazd.

The dynasty originated with the appointment by the Saljuq sultan Arslān b. Ṭoġrel (556/1116-571/1176) of Rokn-al-dīn Sām b. Langar, a commander of the Yazd garrison, as *atābak* for the two daughters of the last Kakuyid prince of Yazd, Farāmarz b. ‘Alā’-al-dawla ‘Alī, who had died at the battle of Qaṭvān in 536/1141 without a male heir (Aḥmad b. Ḥosayn Kāteb, *Tārīk-ejadīd-e Yazd*, p. 65). The local histories of Yazd described Atābak Sām as virtuous but incapable of ruling, and Bāfqī (*Jāme’-e mofīdī*, p. 84) described him as ineffective in his later years against gangs of ruffians that freely plundered the countryside. He died in 590/1193-94, but Aḥmad b. Ḥosayn (op. cit., p. 67) relates that he was replaced at the age of ninety with his younger brother ‘Ezz-al-dīn Langar, who ruled until 604/1207-08. ‘Ezz-al-dīn, who had governed Isfahan and Shiraz for the Saljuqs, reestablished order and built much in Yazd (forts, mosques, *ḥammāms*, gardens, *qanāts*, caravansarais); Bāfqī (op. cit., p. 86) describes his establishment of the prosperous and well-watered village of ‘Ezzābād outside Yazd.

Little is mentioned about ‘Ezz-al-dīn’s successor, his son Vardānrūz, who reigned from 604/1207-08 to 615/1218-19, and the history of the next several years is even more obscure. There is mention of a son of Atābak Sām, ‘Alā’-al-dawla Atā Khan, referred to as the lord of Yazd (Nasavī, *Sīrat-e Jalāl-al-dīn*, p. 127), who died in the service of Sultan Jalāl-al-dīn K̲v̲ārazmšāh fighting the



Mongols near Isfahan in 625/1228, and of two other sons of ‘Ezz-al-dīn, Mo‘ezz-al-dīn Kaykā’ūs and Moḥyī-al-dīn, but it is not indicated whether any of these was actually *atābak*. Bāfqī describes Moḥyī-al-dīn as reclusive and “dervish-like in disposition” (op. cit., p. 85).

At some point, either directly after Vardānrūz’s death (Aḥmad b. Ḥosayn, op. cit., p. 69) or after the death of Moḥyī-al-dīn (Ja‘farī, op. cit., p. 41), the succession went to the fourth son of ‘Ezz-al-dīn Langar, Esfahsālār Abū Maṣṣūr, known as Qoṭb-al-dīn. The local histories describe his construction of villages, *qanāts*, mausoleums, a bazaar, a polo *maydān*, and, according to Ja‘farī (ibid.), a pilgrimage center at the *qadamgāh* of the eighth imam, ‘Alī al-Rezā, in Mašhad, as well as his reputation as an avid hunter and polo player. Qoṭb-al-dīn attempted to ensure good relations with the new Qarā Ketāy sultanate of Kermān by arranging the marriage of his son, Maḥmūd Shah, to Yāqūt Torkān, daughter of the founder of the Qarā Ketāy dynasty there, Borāq Ḥājeb Qotloḡ solṭān; another daughter, Maryam Torkān, had already been married to Moḥyī-al-dīn (Wazīrī Kermānī, *Tārīk-eKermān*, p. 346). Despite his marriage, Maḥmūd Shah clearly lacked equality to the Qarā-Ketāy rulers after he succeeded his father in 626/1228-29. The *Tārīk-ešāhī-e Qarā-Ketā’ān* (p. 98) describes his humiliation in the presence of Borāq Ḥājeb “like a child before his father” after attempting to usurp his wife’s dowry. Some years later during Maḥmūd’s reign Yazd served as a staging base for Borāq’s son Rokn-al-dīn Abu’l-Moẓaffar Qotloḡ solṭān (Ḳvāja Jūq) to gain the sultanate in Kermān (Nāṣer-al-dīn Monšī Kermānī, *Semṭ al-‘olā*, p. 28).

Aḥmad b. Ḥosayn (op. cit., p. 72) states that Maḥmūd Shah ruled for thirteen years, which would be until 639/1241-42 (although Ja‘farī places his death in 637/1239-40), and names as his successor his son Salḡor Shah (not mentioned by Ja‘farī). The Great Khan Ögedei, to whom Salḡor Shah had sent gifts, authorized his investiture by sending a diploma and robe of honor (Aḥmad b. Ḥosayn, ibid.). Salḡor Shah was succeeded by his son, Ṭaḡā Shah, whom Aḥmad b. Ḥosayn remembers for his construction of gardens, wind towers, and *qanāts* in Yazd during his long reign until 670/1271-72 (op. cit., p. 73). Ṭaḡā Shah’s son ‘Alā’-al-dawla ruled until his death in 673/1274-75 from an illness contracted from heavy spring floods that caused much damage to the city of Yazd (ibid., p. 74).

Ja‘farī, Aḥmad b. Ḥosayn, and Bāfqī agree in naming Yūsuf Shah, brother of ‘Alā’-al-dawla, as the last *atābak* of Yazd, and in their narration of his disobedience against the il-khan, Ġāzān. According to them he angered



Ġāzān's amirs by not sending them presents although he had sent gifts to Ġāzān. He refused to comply when Ġāzān sent one of the amirs, Yasūdor, to collect three years of *karāj* due from Yazd and to summon him to the throne to be confirmed as governor of Yazd. After refusing Yasūdor and his men entry into Yazd, Yūsuf Shah attacked them at their camp, killing Yasūdor and most of his men and taking his wife and sons captive. When Ġāzān sent another amir, Moḥammad Īdāji, with 30,000 horsemen from Isfahan, Yūsuf Shah fled with Yasūdor's wife and children to Sistān, where he remained beyond Ġāzān's reach. Īdāji spared the population of Yazd, which came under direct Il-khanid administration of a *dārūga* appointed by Ġāzān. Mo'īnī (*Montakab al-tawāriḳ*, pp. 33-34), however, has a different version of Yūsuf Shah's final days, in which he was captured in Khorasan and taken to Ġāzān at Tabrīz, where he was eventually pardoned. However, Ġāzān later had him executed for refusing to accompany him on a campaign to Syria. Mo'īnī adds that Yūsuf Shah had two sons, 'Alā'-al-dawla and Salḡor Shah, who eventually died in disgrace in Yazd during the period of Il-khanid control. Some of the descendants of the *atābaks* of Yazd were still to be found in Mo'īnī's own day (he wrote in 817/1414-15) "occupied as dervishes and cultivators along with the multitudes of subjects" (op. cit., p. 34).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

I. Primary sources. The only comprehensive accounts of the dynasty are those of the local histories of Yazd, though they are sketchy and chronologically confusing.

The earliest of these, Ja'far b. Moḥammad Ja'farī's *Tārīḳ-e Yazd*, ed. Ī. Afšār (Tehran, 1343 Š./1964, pp. 38-46) is the basis for Aḡmad b. Ḥosayn Kāteb's *Tārīḳ-ejadīd e Yazd*, ed. Ī. Afšār (Tehran, 1345 Š./ 1966, pp. 64-79) and Moḥammad Mofīd Mostawfī Bāfqī's *Jāme'-e mofīdī*, ed. Ī. Afšār (Tehran, 1342 Š./1963, pp. 83-92), which repeat Ja'farī but have some additional information.

These works are noteworthy for their information on architectural monuments commissioned by the *atābaks*.



As noted above, Moʿīn-al-dīn Naṭanzī's *Montaqab al-tawārīk-e Moʿīnī*

Some additional information can be gleaned from scattered references in three local histories of Kermān: Nāṣer-al-dīn Monšī Kermānī's *Semṭ al-ʿolā le'l-ḥazra al-ʿolyā*, ed.

ʿA. Eqbāl (Tehran, 1328 Š./1950), the anonymous *Tārīk-ešāhī-e Qarā-keṭāʿiān*, ed. M. E. Bāstānī Pārīzī (Tehran, 2535 = 1355 Š./1976) and Aḥmad-ʿAlī Khan Wazīrī Kermānī's *Tārīk-eKermān (Sālārīya)*, ed. M. E. Bāstānī Pārīzī (Tehran, 1340 Š./1961).

Šehāb-al-dīn Moḥammad Ḳorandezī Nasavī, *Sīrat-e Jalāl-al-dīn Mīnkbernī*, ed. M. Mīnovī, Tehran, 1344 Š./1965, pp. 171 n. 3, 402.

2. Secondary sources. For background on the Kakuyids and the changeover to *atābak* rule in Yazd, see C. E. Bosworth, "Dailamīs in Central Iran: The Kākūyids of Jibāl and Yazd," *Iran* 8, 1970, pp. 73-95, and idem, "Kakuyids," in *EI*²IV, pp. 465-67.

ʿA. Eqbāl, *Tārīk-emofaṣṣal-e Īrān az estīlā-ye moḡol tā e'lān-e mašrūṭīyat I: Az ḥamla-ye Čengīz ta taškīl-e dawlat-e tīmūrī*, 2nd ed., Tehran, 1341 Š./1962, pp. 401-03.

Search terms:

اتابکان یزد atabakan e yazd ataabakaan e yazd