



ATĀ'ĪYA ORDER

ATĀ'ĪYA ORDER, a branch of the Yasavīya Sufi brotherhood especially active in K̄vārazm from the 8th/14th century. The Turkish title *Atā* (father) was given to most of the early successors of Aḥmad Yasavī (d. 562/1166), but the Khwarazmian *Atā'īya* stems in particular from Sayyed *Atā*, the second successor (*kalīfa*) of Zangī *Atā*, himself a disciple of the famous Ḥakīm *Atā* (Solaymān Baqerḡanī), who was in turn a *kalīfa* of Aḥmad Yasavī.

Despite the chronological difficulties presented by the Yasavī *selsela*, which places only two shaikhs between Sayyed *Atā* and the 12th-century founder Aḥmad Yasavī, it seems certain that Sayyed *Atā* lived in the last quarter of the 7th/13th and the first quarter of the 8th/14th century. 9th/15th-century Naqšbandī work, *Maqāmāt-e Amīr Kolāl*, places him in Bukhara in 683/1284 (Miklukho-Maklaī, *Opisanie* II, p. 154), and he is said to have been a contemporary of the K̄vāḡagānī shaikh 'Alī Rāmīṭānī (d. 721/1321), with whom he carried on a correspondence, and of the Kobravī shaikh 'Alā'-al-dawla *Semnānī* (d. 736/1336; see Kāšefī, *Rašahāt*, p. 26; *Maqāmāt-e Sayyed Atā'ī*, f. 15b). The anonymous history *Šajarat al-atrāk*, composed in the early 10th/16th century ascribes to Sayyed *Atā* the conversion to Islam of Uzbek Khan, ruler of the Golden Horde (r. 1314-41), in 720/1320, and states that this conversion is described in detail in the *Maqāmāt-e Sayyed Atā* (*Sbornik materialov*, pp. 206, 266). This work has not survived; however, although earlier sources described Uzbek Khan as a Muslim already at the time of his accession to the throne, the Islamization of the Turkic tribes of the Dašt-e Qepčāq was traditionally associated with Sayyed *Atā*. An early 11th/17th-century hagiography mentions



that Sayyed Atā went to “the farthest reaches of the Dašt-e Qepčāq and to the frontiers of the Mangit and Tātār,” and was responsible for converting “most of the Uzbek khans” to Islam (*Maqāmāt-e Sayyed Atā*ʾ, ff. 16a-b).

Since Sayyed Atā’s shaikh, Zangī Atā, lived in Tashkent, and since the Yasavī hagiographies name successors of Sayyed Atā in the same area, it may be assumed that he lived for a while in the Tashkent region before beginning his missionary activity among the steppe nomads, which in turn preceded his settling in K̄vārazm. There he is said to have served as the custodian of the tomb of Ḥakīm Atā in Baqerġan (Zaleman, “Legenda,” pp. 120-21), where he himself was eventually buried. His followers remained in K̄vārazm and maintained relations with the nomads of the Dašt-e Qepčāq. The *Montaqab al-tawārīk*Â² (p. 91) of Moʻīn-al-dīn Naṭanzī (comp. in 817/1414) mentions a follower of Sayyed Atā who in the 760s/1360s induced (albeit temporarily) a certain ‘Azīz Khan, a prince of the eastern half of the Jöchid ulus who ruled briefly from Saray on the lower Volga, to repent of his evil habits and adhere to Islam; the shaikh was given the prince’s daughter in marriage (see also *Sbornik materialov*, pp. 130, 235; cf. Bartol’d, *Sochineniya* V, pp. 142-43). The 13th/19th-century Khivan historian Moʻnes writes that following Uzbek Khan’s conversion, one of the khan’s amirs, Naġdāy of the tribe of Qongrāt, went to K̄vārazm with Sayyed Atā and there served the shaikh (*Ferdaws al-eqbāl*, ff. 95b-96a); Naġdāy, known to earlier sources as Nangdāy, was the father of the first three rulers of the so-called “Qongrāt Sufi” dynasty of K̄vārazm who in the second half of the 8th/14th century repeatedly defied Tīmūr, and it seems likely that the title “Sufi” adopted by these Qongrāt rulers reflected their adherence to Sayyed Atā’s order (cf. Vainberg, “K istorii,” p. 105).

The Khivan khan Abuʾl-Ġāzī (r. 1054-74/1644-63) records in his *Šajāra-ye tork* two examples of the Atā’īya order’s influence both in K̄vārazm and among the steppe nomads. In the first, the leading citizens of the Khwarezmian town of Vazīr, occupied by Persian troops following the defeat of the Uzbek Šaybānī Khan in 916/1510, approached one of Sayyed Atā’s successors, a certain Ḥosām-al-dīn Qatāl, and proposed to him that he become ruler and drive out the Qezelbāš; the shaikh, citing the vagaries of popular support, declined, but proposed instead the Uzbek prince Ilbars, whom the shaikh had met during his travels among the Uzbeks to collect pious offerings. The townsmen sent a delegation to Ilbars, who thereupon became the first khan of the Khwarezmian Uzbek dynasty (Abuʾl-Ġāzī, pp. 196-97, tr. pp. 211-12). In the second instance, Naẓar K̄vāja, another descendant of Sayyed Atā, incited the



Uzbek tribes to revolt against Esfandiār Khan, the ‘Arabšāhī Khan of K̄vārazm, in 1622, telling them that the khan would have them all killed and their wives sold into slavery among the Turkmen (Abu’l-Ġāzī, text pp. 288-89, tr. pp. 309-10).

The tomb of Sayyed Atā in Baqerġan was an important pilgrimage site in K̄vārazm. The Ottoman admiral Saydī ‘Alī Ra’īs visited the tomb around 962/1555 (Vambery, *Travels*, p. 79), and Mo’nes records a special pilgrimage by the Khivan khan Moḡammad Raḡīm (r. 1806-25; *Ferdaws al-eqbāl*, ff. 397a-b). According to recent Soviet sources, a “cult” of Sayyed Atā survives in Khanqah in southern K̄vārazm, where one may find inhabitants who claim to be his descendants (Snesarev, *Relikty*, p. 289).

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