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AZARBAIJAN IV. ISLAMIC HISTORY TO 1941

Azarbaijan

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Background. Azarbaijan formed a separate province of the early Islamic caliphate, but its precise borders varied in different periods. In the north, the Aras or Araxes river formed a clear natural boundary between Azarbaijan and Arrān or Caucasian Albania, whilst the low-lying region of Mūḡān/Mūqān (Moḡān), lying between the lower reaches of the Aras-Kor river system and the western shore of the Caspian Sea was usually considered administratively as part of Azarbaijan. In the south, the Safīd-rūd formed in general the boundary with the province of Jebāl, with the northwestern continuation of the Alburz (Alborz) chain separating Azarbaijan from Gīlān and the Caspian coastlands. The western boundary was less determinate, but the northern extension of the Zagros mountains running up through Kurdistan and the modern Turkish *welāyat*s of Hakārī and Van, separating the basins of lakes Urmia and Van, was generally held to be the boundary. But Azarbaijan and the tributary but often in practice largely independent province of Armenia were often taken as one vast province—their configuration, as the term given to them of *reḥāb* “the upland plains, plateaux” shows, being essentially similar—and placed under a single governor; the geographer Moqaddasī, pp. 373-74, includes under the *eqlīm al-Reḥāb* Azarbaijan, Arrān, and Armenia, cf. A. Miquel, *Aḥsan al-*

taqāsīm fī maʿrefat al-aqālīm (*La meilleure répartition pour la connaissance des provinces*), Damascus, 1963, p. 318. However, at times, Azarbaijan might be linked also with Jebāl or with the provinces of Mosul and Jazīra, demonstrating the fluidity of administrative arrangements in the first two or three centuries of Islam. It should further be noted that the classical Arabic and Persian geographers of the 3rd/9th and 4th/10th centuries often distinguish an eastern and a western administrative division of Azarbaijan: the eastern one with Marāḡa as its center, and the western one administered from Ardabīl, which was considered to be the capital of Azarbaijan in general.

The Arabic geographers and historians noted too that the broken nature of the terrain, whose plateaus and mountains gave the province a notoriously harsh climate (the geographers placed it partly in the fourth and partly in the fifth clime), was reflected in a heterogeneity in linguistic, ethnic, social, and religious matters. We need not take seriously Moqaddasī's assertion (p. 375) that Azarbaijan had seventy languages, a state of affairs more correctly applicable to the Caucasus region to the north; but the basically Iranian population spoke an aberrant, dialectical form of Persian (called by Masʿūdī *al-āḏarīya*) as well as standard Persian, and the geographers state that the former was difficult to understand. North of the Aras, the distinct, presumably Iranian, speech of Arrān long survived, called by Ebn Ḥawqal (p. 349, tr. Kramers, p. 342) *al-rānīya*, and in the northeastern districts of Azarbaijan Armenian was of course found. In the west of the province, around Lake Urmia, Kurdish must have been known, for the Kurds are frequently mentioned as an ethnic component of Azarbaijan and were to play a significant political role there from the time of the Rawwadids onwards (see below). As Arabic settlement increased, Arabic became well-known, at least as an urban speech. Ebn Ḥawqal (loc. cit.) states that most Persian speakers could also understand Arabic (an assertion doubtlessly only valid for town dwellers) and that the merchants and landowning classes spoke it excellently; such social classes would, of course, require a knowledge of Arabic for their commercial contacts and for their political links with the Arab military and official classes. It was only the ethnic Turkicization of Azarbaijan, from the 5th/11th century onwards, which made Turkish the major language of Azarbaijan, as it is today (see below).

Concerning the religious pattern of Azarbaijan, Zoroastrianism had held a pre-eminent position in pre-Islamic times, and the Arabic sources frequently report that the province was Zoroaster's birthplace; Balāḏorī and Ebn

Ḵordāḏbeh both, for instance, specify Urmia for this, and Yāqūt and Qazvīnī mention Šīz. The formerly numerous fire temples of Azarbaijan led many Arabic authorities to explain the name of the province itself as meaning something like “fire temple” (e.g., Yāqūt [Beirut], I, p. 128: “fire-keeper” > “fire temple”). The great shrine at Šīz (q.v.) (perhaps to be located at Taḵt-e Solaymān, to the southeast of Lake Urmia), was the local spiritual center of Zoroastrianism at the time of the Arab conquest, and the rights of the Zoroastrian community, as *ahl al-ḏemma*, to the free exercise of their religion were secured at that juncture (see below). The 4th/10th-century traveler Abū Dolaf speaks of the fire temple as being still in existence then, with the detail that “on the summit of its cupola there is a silver crescent which forms its talisman. Both amirs and usurpers wished to remove it, but did not succeed;” but Minorsky was probably right to doubt the truth of this account and to suggest that only the ruins were visible by then (*Second Resāla = Abū-Dulaf Misʿar Ibn Muhalhil’s Travels in Iran (circa A.D. 950)*, Cairo, 1955, text par. 5, tr. pp. 31-32, comm. pp. 67-68; see also A. Godard, “Les monuments du feu,” *Āṯhār-é Īrān* 3, 1938, pp. 45ff., and B. M. Tirmidhi, “Zoroastrians and their Fire-temples in Iran and Adjoining Countries,” *Islamic Culture* 24, 1950, pp. 271-84). If Zoroastrianism disappeared as a distinct faith in Azarbaijan, its former adherents, and those of Mazdakism (the latter known to be a numerous element in later Sasanian Azarbaijan), very probably contributed to the strongly heterodox flavor of Azarbaijan and Arrān in the early Islamic centuries, seen in the strength there of socio-religious protest movements and revolutionary upheavals, above all, in that of Bābak and the Ḵorramīya (see below).

Whilst Zoroastrianism clearly declined, Christianity was for long vital and flourishing, as is attested by the frequent mention of bishops of Azarbaijan in Syriac sources and by the apparent presence of monastic institutions and of hermits; the *ʿahd* “agreement” between the incoming Arabs and the people of Azarbaijan (see below) mentions the exclusion from payment of the *jezya* or poll-tax of, amongst others, “the pious devotee and anchorite, who has no possessions” (Ṭabarī, I, p. 2662). When the Jacobite Maphrian or head of the church in the Persian lands, the celebrated Barhebraeus, died at Marāḡa in 1286, local Nestorians, Melkites, and Armenians joined with the Jacobites in mourning him. In the Mongol period, indeed, the Christian communities enjoyed at the outset a comparative florescence and toleration; in the time of the Great Khan Güyük (r.1246-49), the influence within the Mongol horde of the Syrian monk Simeon Rabban Ata secured the building of churches in

strongly Muslim towns like Tabrīz and Nakhchevan (Naḵjavān), until the conversion to Islam of Ḡāzān (r. 694-703/1295-1304) brought about a reversal of this favor (see Spuler, *Mongolen*, pp. 203ff.). Thereafter, Christianity in Azarbaijan declined to the point of extinction, with the exception of the vestigial Nestorian or Assyrian Christian Neo-Syriac-speaking communities of the Lake Urmia region which have survived till today. As for the Jews, these are virtually unmentioned in the early centuries, though they may well have formed part of the urban communities.

From the Arab conquest to the Saljuqs. The Arab conquest of Azarbaijan took place in ʿOmar's caliphate at a date variously given as between 18/639 and 22/643, after battles such as Nehāvand and Jalūlā had opened up the possibility of invading Jebāl from Iraq, and it was undertaken essentially by troops from the newly-founded *meṣr* of Kūfa in central Iraq. The Armenian historian Sebeos states that the Espahbaḏ of Atrpatakan of Azarbaijan in the last years of the Sasanian monarchy was Farroḵ-Hormezd (d. 630), whose sons Rostam and Farroḵzād or Ḵorrazād then led resistance to the Arabs (see Markwart, *Ērānšahr*, pp. 112-14). Of the Arabic sources, we have the fullest accounts from Balāḏorī, citing the shaikhs of the capital Ardabīl and Madāʾenī (*Fotūḥ* [Cairo], pp. 321-26) and from Ṭabarī citing Sayf b. ʿOmar (I, pp. 2647-50, 2660-62). The Arabs seem to have attached considerable importance to the over-running of Azarbaijan. A saying attributed to the *dehqān* Hormozān, consulted by the caliph ʿOmar, describes Azarbaijan as being, with Fārs, one of the two wings on each side of the key point, the head, of Isfahan, all three of them being interconnected (Masʿūdī, *Morūj* IV, p. 230, ed. Pellat, par. 1563). Once the base of Hamadān had been secured during the governorship in Kūfa of Moḡīra b. Šoʿba, the whole of northern Persia was laid open to attack. Balāḏorī's account makes Ḥoḏayfa b. Yamān the first commander of the expedition into Azarbaijan. Ḥoḏayfa was opposed by the *marzbān* of Azarbaijan at Ardabīl, supported by the men of Bājarvān, Mīmaḏ, Sarāt or Sarāb, Šīz, Mayānaj, etc., but triumphed militarily, and made a peace agreement on the basis of an annual tribute of 800,000 derhams in return for the preservation of the people's lives; no enslavement; respect for the sanctity of the fire temples (in particular, the people of Šīz were to continue freely to hold their festivals); and protection for the population against the predatory Kurds of Balāsajān, Sabalān, and Šātrūḏān (Balāḏorī, *Fotūḥ*, p. 321). Ḥoḏayfa was subsequently replaced by ʿOtba b. Farqad Solamī, who had to subdue the countryside of Azarbaijan, whilst the new governor appointed by the caliph ʿOṯmān, his kinsman Walīd b. ʿOtba b. Abī Moʿayṭ, had further to quell a

rebellion in 25/645-46 and re-impose the *ʿahd* of Ḥoḏayfa. Ṭabarī's account attributes the preliminary stages of the conquest, made in the face of strenuous opposition from the Espahbaḏ Rostam's brother Esfandīār and then from Bahrām b. Farroḵzād, to the efforts of Arab generals like Bokayr b. ʿAbdallāh before ʿOtba b. Farqad arrived, and after Bokayr was despatched northwards against Arrān and Bāb al-Abwāb or Darband. The text of the *ʿahd* document, made when a general peace was established in Azarbaijan, is given verbatim by Ṭabarī; it provided for payment of the *jezya* in return for *amān*, i.e., liberty of property, laws and faith (Ṭabarī, I, pp. 2661-62).

From ʿOṯmān's reign onwards, Arab warriors began to settle in the towns of Azarbaijan, with Ardabīl as their administrative center. Settlers from Kūfa and Baṣra and from Syria purchased land from the indigenous population, and received the voluntary submission of many villages in return for protection (*ḥemāya, taljeʾa*). The Islamization of the province must now have got under way, too. Some details are given by Balāḏorī of the pattern of Arab settlement in the towns over the first two centuries or so of Arab domination. Arab colonists were settled in Ardabīl, where a mosque was built by the chief of Kenda, Ašʿaṯ b. Qays, the governor of Azarbaijan for the caliph ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭāleb (Balāḏorī, *Fotūḥ*, p. 329). Warṯān on the Aras river was developed by the Omayyad prince Marwān b. Moḥammad b. ʿAbd-al-Malek (eventually the last Omayyad caliph, Marwān al-Ḥemār, 127-32/744-50), who also held property at Marāḡa; his Warṯān estates passed after the ʿAbbasid revolution ultimately to the caliph al-Mahdī's daughter Omm Jaʿfar Zobayda, wife of Hārūn al-Rašīd (Yāqūt, IV, pp. 919-20). Marand was settled, probably in early ʿAbbasid times, by an Arab colony under the grandfather of Moḥammad b. Baʿīṯ Rabīʿī; under this last, a rebellion of this town against the caliph al-Motawakkel's authority is mentioned (Balāḏorī, *Fotūḥ*, pp. 325-26). Urmia was subdued by Ṣadaqa b. ʿAli, a *mawlā* of the tribe of Azd. Tribesmen of Hamdān were settled at Mayānaj and Ḵalbāṭā early in al-Manṣūr's reign by the governor of Azarbaijan Yazīd b. Ḥātem Mohallabī. Men of Kenda from the following of Ašʿaṯ b. Qays took over Sarāt or Sarāb. Tabrīz was a place of little importance at this time, having been largely destroyed in the Armeno-Persian wars of the fourth century (see V. Minorsky, "Tabrīz," in *EI*[1] IV). Its revival was the work of another Azdī, Rawwād b. Moṯannā and his son Wajnāʾ, who were granted by Yazīd b. Ḥātem the lands stretching from Tabrīz to Baḏḏ and who rebuilt the citadel, town walls, etc. of Tabrīz (Balāḏorī, *Fotūḥ*, p. 326; Yaʿqūbī, II, p. 13).

During the Omayyad period, Azarbaijan was only thinly settled by the Arabs

and was very much a frontier zone. In particular, it formed a base for the Arab governors to mount their operations against the Caucasian peoples and into the Cis-Caucasian steppe lands, the lure here being above all the hope of tapping the plentiful reservoirs of slaves in the Caucasus region and the Khazar steppes. Although Darband had early been reached (see above), for more than two centuries the Arabs' way was blocked by the indigenous mountaineers of the Caucasus, such as the Alans, and beyond, them, by the Turkish Khazars of south Russia. The swaying fortunes of war in these regions meant that Armenia, Arrān, and Azarbaijan at times suffered invasion and devastation by these more northerly peoples. There were Khazar raids in the caliphates of Yazīd I (60-64/680-83) and ʿAbd-al-malek (65-86/685-705), and particularly violent incursion took place in 112/730 when the Khazars poured down through the Alan Gate, overran Armenia and Azarbaijan, killed Hešām's governor Jarrāḥ b. ʿAbdallāh Ḥakamī Maḏḥejī at Ardabīl, and penetrated as far as Dīārbakr and Jazīra (D. M. Dunlop, *History of the Jewish Khazars*, New York, 1967, pp. 69-73, 76).

Under the early ʿAbbasids, northern Azarbaijan was the epicentre of the prolonged and dangerous rebellion against the caliphate led by Bābak Ḵorramī, which affected much of northwestern Persia and which lasted over twenty years, from ca. 201/816-17 till the sack of his capital Baḏḏ, just to the south of the Aras and in the modern Qarāja-dāḡ, in 222/837. The rebellion certainly had a religious basis (see below), but there may also have been social and economic factors at work, such as local discontent at the prospecting and mining activities in these highland districts by Arabs from Jazīra under Ṣadaqa b. ʿAlī Azdī and his son Zorayq, in the suggestion of H. Kennedy, *The Early Abbasid Caliphate, a Political History*, London, 1981, pp. 170-74, citing Azdī's *Taʾrīḵ Mawṣel*. Bābak's uprising was favored at the outset by the rebelliousness of the local Arab governor, Ḥātem b. Harṯama b. Aʿyan (d. 203/818-19), and in 217/832 Bābak had the active support of the governor ʿAlī b. Hešām, but he was clearly also able to utilize a great deal of Iranian, anti-Arab feeling in Azarbaijan. Strongly anti-Islamic elements in the Ḵorramīya, perhaps going back to Mazdakism, demonstrate that Islam had by no means completely overlaid the older faiths of northwestern Iran, and for a long time after the suppression of Bābak's movement by Moʿtaṣem's generals, and certainly until the 5th/11th century, remnants of the Ḵorramīya who venerated the memory of Bābak and who expected his return as a promised Mahdī, survived there (see Gh. H. Sadighi, *Les mouvements religieux iraniens au II^e^ et au III^e^ siècle de l'hégire*, Paris, 1938, pp. 229-80; B. S. Amoretti, in *Camb.*

Hist. Iran IV, pp. 503-09).

An episode like Bābak's uprising showed the continuing strength in Azarbaijan of ancestral Iranian local feelings. There was also internal dissent in the Muslim community there, seen for instance in a rising at Ardabīl in 251/865 in favor of a Talebid claimant from the Caspian region, ʿAlī b. ʿAbdallāh Maṛʿašī (cf. Ṭabarī, III, p. 1584), and in Kharejite activity spilling over from Jazīra at times. There were the ambitions of Arab governors and of Arab tribal groups settled in the towns of Azarbaijan, and an upsurge in the attempts of neighboring Kurdish and Daylami chiefs to extend their authority over the fringes of the province. All these factors combined to abstract Azarbaijan from direct caliphal control once the personal power of the Baghdad rulers started to decline, as it did in the later 3rd/9th century. The province was still a frontier zone, liable to attack from the Caucasus direction and to harassment by the independent-minded, though nominal vassals of the Muslims, Bagratid princes of Armenia. In ca. 279/892 the caliph Moʿtažed appointed one of his generals, Moḥammad b. Abi'l-Sāj, an Iranian from Central Asia, as governor of Azarbaijan and Armenia, and the family of the Sajids (q.v.) took their place as one of the virtually autonomous lines of provincial governors, headed by the earlier Taherid governors in Khorasan, who rose to prominence during the period of the decline of the central power in Baghdad. For nearly forty years, until the killing of Fatḥ b. Moḥammad b. Abi'l-Sāj in 317/929, members of the family ruled Azarbaijan and Armenia first from Marāḡa and Barḏaʿa and then from Ardabīl. They reduced refractory Armenian princes to submission, but themselves sporadically withheld allegiance to Baghdad and suspended the payment of tribute; after the end of the Sajids, direct caliphal control was never restored in northwestern Iran (see W. Madelung, in *Camb. Hist. Iran* IV, pp. 228-32).

For the next century or so, until the coming of the Saljuq Turks, the history of Azarbaijan is a component of the so-called "Daylami interlude" of Iranian history, when hitherto submerged peoples like the Daylamis, the Kurds, the Baluch, etc., rose momentarily to the surface and often assumed political control in different parts of Iran.

In the years immediately after the end of the Sajids, a Kurdish chief, Daysam b. Ebrāhīm b. Šāḏlūya, mentioned as having Kharejite sympathies, tried to establish his authority in Azarbaijan, but had to yield in 330/941-42 to the Mosaferid or Sallarid ruler of Ṭārom in the mountains of Daylam, Marzobān b. Moḥammad b. Mosāfer. Marzobān extended his military power as far as Dvin

in Armenia, finally capturing and jailing Daysam just before his own death in 346/957, and he fought off attempts by the Arab Hamdanids of Mosul to invade Azarbaijan. It was during Marzobān's reign that the Rūs (mixed Scandinavian and Slav adventurers?), who had already harried the coasts of Ṭabarestān and Gīlān from the Caspian Sea, appeared in Arrān and Azarbaijan (332/943-44). They sailed up the Kor, defeated Marzobān's forces, and sacked and occupied Barḏaʿa; it is unclear whether Ardabīl also suffered, although this seems probable (Meskawayh, *Tajāreb* II, pp. 62-67, tr. V, pp. 67-74, the most detailed source; Masʿūdī, *Morūj* II, pp. 20-21, ed. Pellat, par. 459; Ebn al-Aṯīr (repr.), VIII, pp. 412-15; D. S. Margoliouth, "The Russian seizure of Bardhaʿah in 943 A.D.," *BSOAS* 3, 1918, pp. 82-95). Marzobān's brother and successor Vahsūdān had to struggle against the ambitions for power of his nephews Jostān and Ebrāhīm b. Marzobān; in the course of these disputes, much of Azarbaijan was devastated, and by Vahsūdān's death in 373/983, Mosaferid control over Azarbaijan was clearly weakening (see Madelung, op. cit., pp. 232-36; and on the Mosaferids in general, Cl. Huart, "Les Mosâfirides de l'Adherbaïdjân," in *ʿAjab-náma, a Volume of Oriental Studies Presented to E. G. Browne . . .*, Cambridge, 1922, pp. 228-56; S. A. Kasrawī, *Šahrīārān-e gomnām*[2], Tehran, 1335 Š./1956, I, pp. 52-120; Bosworth, *The Islamic Dynasties*, pp. 86-87).

After then, authority in the province passed largely to the rival power of the Rawwadids of Tabrīz, descendants of the Azdī Arabs who had been allotted Tabrīz in early ʿAbbasid times (see above), but by now apparently largely Kurdicized, doubtless through the process of intermarriage. Abu'l-Hayjāʾ Ḥosayn b. Moḥammad (d. 378/988-89) and his son Mamlān or Moḥammad (d. 393/1001) and their descendants pushed the Mosaferids back into their original homeland of Daylam, and ruled the whole of Azarbaijan from Tabrīz, thus bringing that town into prominence for the first time in Islam. Much of their time was spent combatting the resurgent forces of the Christian rulers of Armenia and Georgia, until in the reign of Abū Manṣūr Vahsūdān b. Mamlān (416-51/1025-59) a new element appeared in the politics of Azarbaijan which was to mark a decisive change in the ethnic complexion of the province, namely the Oḡuz or Ḡuzz Turks (see Madelung, op. cit., pp. 236-37; Kasrawī, op. cit., pp. 130-45; V. Minorsky, *Studies in Caucasian History*, London, 1953, pp. 114-16; Bosworth, op. cit., pp. 88-89).

The Arabic geographers give useful accounts of Azarbaijan and its towns during the 4th/10th century. The position of the province on the trade routes running north from Hamdān and Zanjān to Arrān and the Caucasus, and

running westwards to Mosul and Āmed, gave it a commercial importance. The transit traffic in slaves (Greek, Armenian, Pecheneg, Khazar, and Ṣaqlābī, i.e., Slav and Ugrian ones, according to the *Ḥodūd al-ʿālam*, par. 35, tr. Minorsky, p. 142) was naturally significant, as was the trade in carpets and textiles (especially silks dyed with the crimson tincture of the *qermez* insect) and the production of salted fish (*šūr-māhī*) from the rivers and lakes. Ardabīl is described as the largest town of the province, in Moqaddasī's phrase, "the *qaṣaba* of Azarbaijan and the *meṣr* of the region," although this same author is scathing about the avarice, fecklessness and treachery of its people, the paucity of scholars there, and the filthiness of the whole place ("one of the latrines of the world," pp. 377-78). Moreover, Ebn Ḥawqal, writing a generation before Moqaddasī, states that Ardabīl's prosperity had been shattered by the warfare of Daysam and Marzobān, when the town's walls had been destroyed, so that "it is at this time like a sick person in comparison with its former prosperity" (p. 334, tr. Kramers, pp. 326-27; cf. also Le Strange, *Lands*, pp. 59-71, 184; Schwarz, *Iran*, pp. 959-1388).

Under the Saljuqs. It was during the Rawwadid Vahsūdān's reign that there arrived in Azarbaijan the first waves of the Oḡuz Turkmen, the so-called "ʿErāqī ones (from ʿErāq ʿAjamī, i.e., western Persia), formerly the followers of Arslān Esrāʾīl b. Saljūq, expelled from Khorasan in 419/1028 by the Ghaznavid Sultan Maḥmūd. The first group appeared in 420/1029, and the Turkman mounted archers were taken into Vahsūdān's service as auxiliaries for use against the Christians of Armenia and Georgia and against the rival Muslim family of the Kurdish Shaddadids of Ganja in Arrān and of Dvin. But their indiscipline made them uncontrollable, and the depredations of their flocks disturbed the agrarian system of Azarbaijan, so that shortly after the Oḡuz had sacked Marāḡa in 429/1038, Vahsūdān allied with Abu'l-Hayjāʾ b. Rabīb-al-dawla of the Haḏbānī Kurds and slew many of them. Some of these "ʿErāqī" Turkmen eventually moved on to Mosul and Jazīra, but increasing waves of new arrivals meant that independent bands of marauders were gradually becoming established in Azarbaijan. In 446/1054 Vahsūdān and then in 454/1062 his son and successor Mamlān II were forced to acknowledge the suzerainty of Ṭoḡrel Beg when the Saljuq leader arrived to assert his authority in Azarbaijan and Arrān. On his return from the Anatolian campaign and the Mantzikert victory, Alp Arslān deposed Mamlān (463/1071), but a later member of the family, Aḥmadīl b. Ebrāhīm b. Vahsūdān, held Marāḡa as a fief of the Saljuqs, and his name was perpetuated after his death in 510/1116 by the Aḥmadīlī atabegs there (Madelung, op. cit., pp. 237-39; Bosworth, in *Camb.*

Hist. Iran V, pp. 32-34). Alp Arslān's assertion of authority at this time in northwestern Iran also proved fatal to the senior line of the Shaddadids in Arrān (although a junior branch was to survive as Saljuq vassal in Ānī), for in 460/1068 and then in 468/1075 under Malekšāh, the slave commander Savtigin penetrated to Arrān and on the second occasion incorporated the territories there of the Shaddadid Fażlūn III into the Saljuq empire (Minorsky, *Studies in Caucasian History* I: *New Light on the Shaddadids of Ganja (A.D. 951-1075)*, pp. 1-77).

The personal concern of the Great Saljuq sultans was in the main to secure the rich Iranian heartlands of Khorasan, Jebāl, and Fārs, and then to extend their power into Iraq. Azarbaijan and the lands towards the Caucasus tended to be left to their slave commanders or to bands of Turkman adventurers who could carry on raids against the Christians of Anatolia and Transcaucasia. Much of Azarbaijan was parceled out as *eqṭāʿ*s among the Saljuq military commanders, and in the later 6th/12th century, was generally controlled by Turkish atabegs, the guardians of youthful Saljuq princes. The period of Great Saljuq decline, with internecine warfare between various contenders for the throne, meant that Azarbaijan and its resources were frequently controlled by Saljuq claimants at odds with the supreme sultans in Baghdad or Hamadān. Thus under Maḥmūd b. Moḥammad (511-25/1118-31), Maḥmūd's brother Ṭoḡrel held Qazvīn, Daylam, Gīlān, and Arrān, whilst another brother, Masʿūd (subsequently sultan 529-47/1134-52), was *malek* of Azarbaijan, Mosul, and Jazīra. Also, after Maḥmūd's death in 525/1131, his young son Dāwūd was proclaimed sultan at Hamadān, but was able to establish his power in Azarbaijan only against the superior might of his uncle Masʿūd, sultan in Iraq and Jebāl; from this base, however, Dāwūd secured the support there of the deposed ʿAbbasid caliph Rāšed in 530/1136, and maintained himself in Azarbaijan for the rest of his life, i.e., until 538/1143-44. Thenceforth, the substance of power in Azarbaijan until the advent of the Ḵʷārazmšāhs was shared by the two atabeg lines of the Aḥmadīlīs of Marāḡa, the family of Aq Sonqor, atabeg to the Rawwadid Aḥmadīl b. Ebrāhīm of Tabrīz, and, more importantly, that of the Ildegozids (Eldigüzids or Ildenizids; q.v.), who controlled most of Azarbaijan, Arrān, and Jebāl. Šams-al-dīn Eldigüz was originally atabeg for the Saljuq prince Arslān b. Ṭoḡrel (r. 556-71/1161-76). In the Saljuq family disputes, the Aḥmadīlīs generally supported the claims of Malek Moḥammad b. Maḥmūd b. Moḥammad, but in 605/1208-09 almost all their lands fell to the Ildegozid Noṣrat-al-dīn Abū Bakr b. Pahlavān; the Aḥmadīlī atabeg ʿAlāʾ-al-dīn Qara Sonqor is nevertheless significant as a patron

of the poet Neẓāmī. The Ildegozids reached a position of great influence in northwestern Iran as defenders of the Muslim cause against the expanding Georgian monarchy, and at one point, Moẓaffar-al-dīn Qezel Arslān (581-87/1186-91) laid claim to the whole sultanate of Persia and Iraq for himself against the last Saljuq sultan Ṭoḡrel III b. Arslān b. Ṭoḡrel II. Various members of the line were patrons of great poets like Ḵāqānī and Neẓāmī, and the petty courts of Azarbaijan were thus at this time considerable centers of culture and focuses of intellectual activity (see Bosworth, op. cit., pp. 176ff.).

Under the Mongols. All the local rulers of Azarbaijan and adjacent lands were engulfed when first the Ḵᵛārazmšāhs and then the Mongols swept into northwestern Iran. It was the Ildegozid Qotloḡ Inaṇč who, involved in an internal dynastic dispute, summoned in the Ḵᵛārazmšāh Tekeš, and it was eventually Sultan Jalāl-al-dīn who gave the coup de grace to the dynasty by capturing Tabrīz in 622/1225 and deposing Moẓaffar-al-dīn Özbeg. After 617/1220-21 the Mongols turned northwards from Hamadān and in 618/1222 sacked Marāḡa, slaughtering the males and enslaving the women, and there was a further siege in 628/1231. The Ildegozid Özbeg bought off the Mongols from Tabrīz in 617/1220-21. Jalāl-al-dīn then defended it, but after his departure for Anatolia in 628/1231, the whole of Azarbaijan passed under the control of the Great Khan Ögedey (1227-41), and from the time of Güyük onwards (1246-49), Azarbaijan and Arrān were governed by Malek Ṣadr-al-dīn, according to Jovaynī (tr. Boyle, II, p. 518).

After the conquest of Baghdad in 656/1258, Hülegü made Marāḡa the capital of the Il-Khanid dominions in Persia and Iraq. He built a fortress for his accumulated treasures and spoils on the nearby island of Šāhī in Lake Urmia, where he was in fact to be buried (the Gūr Qaḷʿa), and ordered the construction of the famous observatory of Marāḡa to the plans of the philosopher and scientist Ḵᵛāja Naṣīr-al-dīn Ṭūsī (q.v.). The fertility of the Marāḡa district and its eminence now as a place of learning doubtless explain why, in the 8th/14th century, the traveler Ebn Baṭṭūṭa (I, p. 171, tr. Gibb, I, p. 108) was to describe it as the “Little Damascus” of ʿErāq ʿAjamī. Then under Hülegü’s successor Abaqā (663-80/1265-82), the capital was moved to Tabrīz. Tabrīz suffered a severe earthquake in 671/1273 (see C. Melville, “Historical Monuments and Earthquakes in Tabriz,” *Iran* 19, 1981, pp. 162-63), but thereafter the khans set about beautifying the town and erecting splendid buildings, such as the mosques and *madrasa*s and the mausoleum built by Ḡāzān for himself. In this period of the religiously tolerant early Mongols, Christianity enjoyed a period

of revival and florescence in Azarbaijan, and the khan Arḡūn had his son baptized in the church at Marāḡa. But under the Muslim convert Ḡāzān, disfavor fell upon all non-Muslim groups; in 705/1306 Öljeytü permanently re-imposed the *jezya* on the *ḏemmī*s, and from this time, there begins the decline and eventual near-disappearance of Christianity from Azarbaijan. It was likewise Öljeytü (703-17/1304-17) who began construction of a new summer capital called Solṭānīya at a spot lying between Zanjān and Abhar, in a region of rich pasture, and this was completed in 713/1313 with many fine buildings, including the khan's own tomb. Solṭānīya was still the capital under his successor Abū Saʿīd, but thereafter, Tabrīz re-asserted itself as the natural capital of the region. Thus it was at Tabrīz that the Turkman chief Ḥasan Bozorg Jalāyer in 736/1336 established his candidate for the Il-khanid throne, Moḥammad, and there that Ḥasan Kūček Čūpānī in 740/1340 placed in power his own candidate Solaymān. We now have numerous descriptions of Tabrīz by both European and Islamic travelers and writers; the Spaniard Clavijo states that in 1403 it had 200,000 households or families, i.e., approaching one million inhabitants, but this must be a great exaggeration.

During this later medieval period, the gradual Turkicization of Azarbaijan was favored by the Il-khanids' policy of allotting to their leading commanders land grants (*eqṭāʿ*s, *soyurḡāl*s) (cf. I. P. Petrushevsky, in *Camb. Hist. Iran* V, pp. 518ff.); by the presence of the khans themselves and their entourages in these favored regions of upland pasture, and then of their Turkman epigoni, beginning with the Jalayerids; and finally, by the incoming of fresh waves of Central Asian nomads accompanying Tīmūr on his campaigns to the west. The Jalayerids seem to have achieved among the population of Azarbaijan a measure of support; there was, for instance, public rejoicing when in 809/1406-07 Aḥmad Jalāyer regained power in Tabrīz, for Azarbaijan had suffered considerably from such events as the invasion through the Caucasus of Tīmūr's rival, the Golden Horde khan Toqtamiš, in 787/1385 and the unbridled excesses of Tīmūr's debauched son Mīrānšāh when he was governor in Tabrīz (among other things, he exhumed the corpse of the great vizier of the Il-khanids Rašīd-al-dīn). But after four years, Aḥmad was defeated in battle and executed by the Qara Qoyunlū leader Qara Yūsof, and Tabrīz now became the capital of the Black Sheep Turkmen; under Jahānšāh b. Qara Yūsof (841-72/1438-67), Tabrīz became the capital of a kingdom stretching from Anatolia to Herat, and was enriched by such splendid buildings as the Blue Mosque. Then after 873/1468 Azarbaijan passed to the rival Āq Qoyunlū leader Uzun Ḥasan and his successors, for whose reigns we possess important

accounts of the beauties of Tabrīz from Venetian envoys anxious to forge an alliance with the White Sheep Turkmen against the Ottomans.

Under the Safavids. Azarbaijan was necessarily of importance in the early Safavid period which now followed, for Shaikh Ṣafī-al-din Esḥāq, founder of the Ṣafawīya Sufi order, was a native of Ardabīl, and his shrine there was subsequently to be developed under the Safavid shahs into a superb complex of richly-endowed religious and charitable buildings, as the accounts of Western travelers attest (see Ardabīl). The Safavid Esmāʿīl I successfully overthrew the Šervānšāhs and then marched on Tabrīz in 906/1501, after routing in battle the Āq Qoyunlū Alvand Mīrzā; there he was proclaimed shah in 907/1501-02 (see R. M. Savory, "The Struggle for Supremacy in Persia after the Death of Tīmūr," *Der Islam* 40, 1964, pp. 63-64). Jaʿfarī Shiʿism was forcibly imposed on the inhabitants of Tabrīz, and Tabrīz became the Safavid capital until its exposure to attack from the Safavids' enemies the Ottomans (it was temporarily occupied by Sultan Selīm's forces after the Ottoman victory at Čālderān in northwestern Azarbaijan in 920/1514) led Shah Ṭahmāsp I to transfer the capital to Qazvīn in 962/1555, after a further Ottoman occupation of Tabrīz.

In the 10th/116th century, Azarbaijan was ruled by a governor (*beglarbegī*) who normally combined control of this strategically-vital province with the highest military rank of *sepahsālār*. Both Azarbaijan and the province of Qarabāḡ, i.e., the region between the Aras and the Kor, medieval Arrān, to the north (this last province later found as a separate governorate, with its capital at Ganja, see *Tadhkirat al-Mulūk, a Manual of Ṣafavid Administration*, tr. Minorsky, London, 1943, p. 44, comm. pp. 166-67) were still further settled by Turkman elements belonging to such tribes as the Afšār, the Īnāllū, and Šāmlū, etc., making up the Safavids' early backing of the Qezelbāš (q.v.). Financial administration in Azarbaijan was regulated by a vizier, who was in the 10th/16th century responsible for all the northwestern provinces; thus in 966/1559 Mīrzā ʿAṭāʾallāh Ḵūzānī Eṣfahānī had the oversight of Azarbaijan, Georgia, Šervān, and Šakkī (see K. M. Röhrborn, *Provinzen und Zentralgewalt Persiens im 16. und 17. Jahrhundert*, Berlin, 1966, p. 104).

During the two centuries or more of Safavid rule, Azarbaijan was on several occasions plundered by invading Ottoman forces, and during the years 993-1012/1585-1603 Tabrīz and the western half of Azarbaijan was permanently occupied by them, becoming a province (*īālat*) of the Ottoman empire during those years (cf. A. Birken, *Die Provinzen des osmanischen*

Reiches, Wiesbaden, 1976, p. 172); only the eastern part remained in Persian hands, being ruled from Ardabīl. According to the Ottoman-Persian agreement of the Year of the Hare 1000/1591-92, Shah ʿAbbās I had to cede to the Ottomans their conquests in Transcaucasia, Qarabāḡ and western Azarbaijan, the frontier being fixed at the village of Areštanāb twelve farsakhs to the southeast of Tabrīz (Röhrborn, op. cit., pp. 6-9; on this place see Razmārā, *Farhang* IV, p. 15). Tabrīz and western Azarbaijan were returned to Shah ʿAbbās by the treaty of 1022/1613, but further Ottoman incursions took place all through the century. In the reign of Shah Ṣafī I, Sultan Morād IV occupied and devastated Tabrīz (1045/1635-36), although it was extensively rebuilt later in the century, as the accounts of Western diplomatic envoys and travelers confirm. There were nevertheless periods of peace, and the province developed commercially as a result of its position on the Trebizond-Tabrīz-central Persia communications and trade route.

The confusion within Persia caused in the early 12th/18th century by the loss of control by the Safavids and the consequent invasions of the Afghans gave the Ottomans fresh opportunities (cf. L. Lockhart, *The Fall of the Ṣafavī Dynasty and the Afghan Occupation of Persia*, Cambridge, 1958, pp. 212ff.). In 1135-36/1723-24 the desperate Ṭahmāsp II was compelled, in return for promised Turkish and Russian support in enforcing his claims to the throne, to cede Šervān and the eastern Caucasian provinces to Peter the Great; the Ottomans occupied Qarabāḡ and western Azarbaijan yet again, with ʿAbdallāh Köprülü Pasha taking Tabrīz. By an agreement of 1140/1727-28 with the Afghan chief Ašraf, the Ottomans were awarded northwestern Persia as far as Solṭānīya and Abhar, and by 1142/1730 they had occupied Georgia, Armenia, Azarbaijan, Persian Kurdistan, and ʿErāq-e ʿAjamī, and had divided Šervān and Dāḡestān with Russia. Azarbaijan was regained by Persia when Nāder Shah Afšār vanquished the Afghans and in 1146/1734 regained the province from the Ottomans (Lockhart, *Nadir Shah, a Critical Study*, London, 1938, pp. 80ff.); Nāder then entrusted Azarbaijan to his brother Moḥammad Ebrāhīm Khan (ibid., pp. 169ff.).

Under the Qajars. The history of Azarbaijan in the ensuing Zand period is obscure, with Zand control there disputed by Afghan and Qajar Turkman chiefs and by local potentates such as the Domboli Kurdish chiefs of Ḵoy. In 1205/1790-91 Āḡā Moḥammad Khan, founder of the Qajar dynasty, asserted his power there, but during his reign and the early part of that of his nephew Fatḥ-ʿAlī Shah, this power was disputed by the Dombolis, who on several

occasions held Tabrīz itself. There now began the practice, adopted in view of the province's strategic importance vis-à-vis the Ottomans and Russians, of entrusting the governorship of Azarbaijan to the heir-apparent to the throne, e.g., in 1213/1799 to Fatḥ-ʿAlī's son ʿAbbās Mīrzā, and in the second quarter of the nineteenth century, to Moḥammad Shah's son Nāṣer-al-dīn.

In the early nineteenth century, intense pressure—military, diplomatic, and economic—began to be exerted on Azarbaijan by Russia. The frontier there with Russia was finally fixed by the Treaty of Torkamāṇčāy (q.v.) of 1828, confirming the arrangements of the Golestān Treaty of 1813, so that Persia was forced reluctantly to abandon her eastern Caucasian provinces for ever. Russia also exacted under the terms of the treaty fiscal and commercial privileges on a "most favored nation" basis, so that Russian economic penetration of northern Persia via Azarbaijan now had free rein. The reports of the Russian commercial adviser in Tabrīz for the years 1833-47 show how disastrous for Persia was her balance of trade with Russia: Russian imports were estimated at 250 million paper roubles during these fifteen years, with Persian exports only at 90 million (see Minorsky, *BSO(A)S* II, 1946, pp. 878-80). Also, ʿAbbās Mīrzā, the local governor, was willy-nilly susceptible to Russian pressure whilst ever the war indemnity stipulated in the treaty as payable to Russia remained not fully paid, as was generally the case. Until the accession of Moḥammad Shah in 1250/1834, Tabrīz was the normal seat of the Russian and British diplomatic missions to Persia, and their transfer to Tehran thereafter marked the latter city's definite assumption of the status of political capital. Nevertheless, Tabrīz remained the commercial center and entrepôt for Persia, especially as southern Persia had not yet fully recovered from the devastations of the Zand and early Qajar periods and was comparatively neglected by the northern-based Qajar government.

It further remained the second city of Persia as the seat of the *walīʿahd* or heir to the throne, with his own court circle, and was always more open than other centers to European and outside influences and ideas. Hence it is not surprising that Tabrīz played a leading role in the period of storm and stress inaugurated by the constitutional movement of 1906 when Moẓaffar-al-dīn Shah was compelled to grant a constitution. It was a focus too for Persian national feeling and resentment against outside pressures, fanned by the settlement in Azarbaijan of many *mohājerīn*, Muslims who had emigrated in the course of the nineteenth century from the Russian-occupied Caucasus and Caspian provinces (cf. P. Avery, *Modern Iran*, London, 1967, pp. 135-37). Hence

when Moḥammad-ʿAlī Shah and his Cossack Brigade, encouraged by Russian support, closed the Majles in 1908, rebellion broke out in Tabrīz, leading to the Russian military occupation of 1909. From then onwards, and despite the "second constitutional period" of 1909-11, during which the Russians continued to support the intrigues of the deposed despot Moḥammad-ʿAlī Shah, Russian influence was paramount in Azarbaijan, with nationalist and democratic leaders arrested and executed in Tabrīz (for the constitutional period and the ensuing years in Azarbaijan, see Kasravī, *Āḏarbāyjān*, Tehran, 1318-19 Š./1939-40).

Only the entry of Ottoman Turkey into World War I on the side of the Central Powers in November, 1914, compelled the withdrawal of Russian forces from Azarbaijan at the end of 1914 under the threat of invasion by Ottoman-backed Kurdish irregular troops, although they returned early in 1915. The outbreak of the Russian Revolution in 1917 led to a withdrawal of Russian troops at the opening of 1918, and the Bolsheviks proclaimed that the new Russia no longer had any political or territorial ambitions in Persia. The Russian military departure enabled the Ottoman army to advance into Azarbaijan and to occupy Tabrīz in summer 1918. Meanwhile, a democratic party under Shaikh Moḥammad Ḵīābānī (q.v.) had arisen in Tabrīz, and after the end of the war, disputed control of Azarbaijan with the central government of Woṯūq-al-dawla in Tehran. Early in 1920 Ḵīābānī proclaimed Azarbaijan to be Āzādīstān "Land of the free", but his movement was suppressed militarily in September, 1920, and the control of Tehran re-asserted there, only momentarily to be challenged in February, 1922, by the brief revolt of the gendarmerie officer Abu'l-Qāsem Lāhūtī against the commander in chief Reżā Khan (later Reżā Shah), suppressed by the latter.

Shortly before the abdication under Allied pressure of Reżā Shah Pahlavī in September, 1941, during World War II, British and Russian forces, later joined by American ones, occupied Persia, with Russia controlling the northern provinces, including Azarbaijan. Already, earlier in the century, there had been signs of a stirring of Azarbaijani self-consciousness and feelings of distinctness. The Ottomans in 1918 had encouraged pan-Turkish cultural and linguistic feelings there, and there was a feeling in Azarbaijan to kinship with the Turkish and Muslim peoples of the eastern Caucasus, which in some cases entailed political sympathies with the communist regime now dominant there. Under the sixteen years' rule of Reżā Shah, Azarbaijan felt comparatively neglected, and use of the local language, Azeri Turkish, was forbidden for

official purposes in favor of Persian. Now, with the Russians controlling northern Persia, the old feelings which has broken out after World War I in the shape of the Gīlān and Azarbaijan movements re-emerged. Under the veteran Persian communist leader Jaʿfar Pīšavarī (q.v.), who had been an old ʿAdālat Party member in Baku in 1918 and commissar for internal affairs in the Bolshevik republic of Gīlān 1920-21, a coup by the pro-Soviet Democrat Party of Azarbaijan (Ferqa-ye Demokrāt-e Āḏarbāyjān), to which the local Tūda Party speedily affiliated itself, took place in Ābān, 1324 Š./November, 1945, against the central government in Tehran (see Azarbaijan v). The Russians prevented the Persian government troops from advancing beyond Qazvīn, and in the next month, a Russian-protected autonomous republic of Azarbaijan was proclaimed. Simultaneously, an autonomous Kurdish republic was proclaimed at Mahābād in southwestern Azarbaijan under Qāżī Moḥammad, and in April, 1946, it concluded a treaty of alliance and support with the Tabrīz régime.

Under a 1942 agreement of the Allies, all foreign troops were to be withdrawn from Iranian soil by six months after the end of the War. In fact, by March, 1946, the troops of the Western Allies were withdrawn, but the Russian ones did not leave till May. By November-December, 1946, the central government army was able to move into Azarbaijan; the Provincial Assembly abandoned resistance, and Pīšavarī fled to the USSR, where he later allegedly died in an accident. The Mahābād Kurdish régime collapsed early in 1947 (G. Lenczowski; *Russia and the West in Iran 1918-1948*, pp. 286ff.; R. Rossow, “The Battle of Azarbaijan, 1946,” *Middle East Journal* 10, 1956, pp. 17-32). The authority of the central government in Tehran was reestablished, and in the ensuing years, signs of recrudescent Azarbaijani secessionist feeling were closely watched and the use of Azeri was once more discouraged.

Bibliography : Given in the text.

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