



BĀBĀN

BĀBĀN (or Baban) name of a Kurdish princely family who from their center at Solaymānīya ruled over an area in Iraqi Kurdistan and western Iran (early 11th/17th—mid-13th/19th century) and was actively involved in the Perso-Ottoman struggles. The name occurs in Western travel accounts of the early nineteenth century variously as Bebah, Bebbeh, or Bebe. Modern Kurdish as well as Persian sources refer to them as Bābān or Āl-e Bābān, while the Turkish equivalents are Babanlar or Babanzadeler. The origins of the Bābān are clouded in obscurity. Some information on the relationship of the Bābān and Sorān up to 1005/1596 can be obtained from Šaraf Khan Bedlīsī, *Šaraf-nāma* (various mss., see Storey, I, pp. 367; recent editions: Arabic, Cairo, 1958; Persian, Tehran, 1343 Š./1964; Russian, Moscow, 1967-76; Turkish, Istanbul, 1975). The authorities are unanimous in their recognition of Aḥmad Faqīh (Kurdish Faqī Aḥmad) as the first known ancestor of the last of several successive dynasties of Bābān rulers originating from the region around Pišdār. However, there is no agreement on the dynastic chronology or on their family relationship (for a detailed discussion of the sources for the history of the Bābān see Nebez, pp. 10-35). The real founder of the fortunes of the Bābān emirate was Solaymān Beg in the last quarter of the seventeenth century. Somewhat earlier, the Bābān had established their headquarters at Qaḷ'a-ye Čolān in the Šahrazūr region, where it remained until Maḥmūd Pasha Bābān founded Solaymānīya in 1195/1781. Though the exact date of the foundation is disputed, it is generally agreed that Solaymānīya owes its importance as the intellectual center to Bābān initiative. The history of the Bābān emirate from 1163/1750 to 1263/1847 is dominated by the rivalries among the Kurdish



emirates of Bōtān, Sorān, and Bābān on the one side, and their reaction against the centripetal endeavors of the Ottomans and Qajars on the other. At the height of their power, the Bābān possessed all the signs of local autonomy and gave decisive military support to the Ottoman *wālī* of Baghdad in his campaigns against the Qajars. The ferocity accompanying the constant vicissitudes of the frontier warfare and the dynastic intrigues are reflected in the epic poem *Bayt-e 'Abd al-Raḥmān Pāšā Baba* (O. Mann, *Die Mundarten der Mukri-Kurden*, pt. 1, Berlin, 1906, pp. 53-58). Bābān autonomy came to an end with Aḥmad Pasha Bābān's defeat near Koy in 1263/1847, after which the Šahrazūr region became permanently attached to Turkey. His brother 'Abd-Allāh Pasha was put in charge of Solaymānīya, but expressedly as Ottoman *qā'em-maqām*; he, too, was finally dismissed in favor of a Turkish administrator in 1267/1851. Descendants of the Bābān are still to be found in Solaymānīya.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

'A. 'Azzāwī, *'Ašā'er al-'Eraq II*, Baghdad, 1366/1947.

M. van Bruinessen, *Agha, Shaikh and State: On the Social and Political Organization of Kurdistan*, Ph.D. thesis, Utrecht, 1978.

M. Dorra, *al-Qaḏīya al-kordīya*, 2nd ed., Beirut, 1966.

C. J. Edmonds, *Kurds, Turks and Arabs*, London, 1957.

S. H. Longrigg, "Bābān," *El*² I, p. 845.

Idem, *Four Centuries of Modern Iraq*, Oxford, 1925.

H. Ḥoznī Mūkriānī, *Āwarikī pāšawa: tārikī ḥokmdārānī Bābān le Kūrdistānī Šārezūr Erdelanda le 636 tā 1274*, Revandoz, 1349/1931.

J. Nebez, *Der kurdische Fürst Mīr Muhammad-ī Rawāndizī*, Ph.D. thesis, Hamburg, 1970.

C. J. Rich, *Narrative of a Residence in Koordistan*, 2 vols., London, 1836.



Moḥammad Amīn Zakī, *Ta'rīk al-Solaymānīya wa anḥā'ehā*, Baghdad, 1951.