



BAHĀRLŪ

BAHĀRLŪ, a Turkic tribe of Azarbaijan, Khorasan, Kermān, and Fārs. According to J. Malcolm, it was originally a branch of the Šāmlūs (q.v.), “who were brought into Persia from Syria by Timur” (*The History of Persia*, London, 1829, I, p. 237). Also of this opinion was A. Houtum-Schindler, who added that “in Fārs, they are generally known as Arabs, probably on account of their having come from Syria” (*Eastern Persian Irak*, London, 1896, p. 48). But neither of these authorities provided any documentary evidence to back up the claim, and it could be argued that if the Bahārlūs of Fārs are often called Arabs it is because of their association with the Arab tribe in the **Kamsa** tribal confederacy. On the other hand, a close connection does exist between the Bahārlū tribe and the Qarāgozlū (q.v.) tribe, which is known to have been a branch of the Šāmlū tribe (see F. Sümer, “Qarā Gözlü,” in *EI*² IV, pp. 577-78). There is a village by the name of Qarāgozlū 25 km northwest of Mīāndoāb (Razmārā, *Farhang* IV, p. 365), which is very near the area inhabited by Bahārlūs, northwest of Marāḡa; there are villages by the name of Bahārlū and Qarāgozlū west of Hamadān (*ibid.*, V, pp. 60 and 321); and there is a clan of the Bahārlūs of Fārs by the name of Qarāgozlū (personal interviews with Ebrāhīm Khan Bahārlū and Amīr Āqā Khan Bahārlū, Shiraz, 1957).

V. Minorsky believed that Bahārlū was another name for the Barānī (or Bārānlū) tribe, which was the tribe of the Qara Qoyunlū ruling dynasty, and that the tribe was an offshoot of the Īvā (q.v.) tribe, which was one of the basic Oghuz divisions (“The Clan of the Qara-Qoyunlu Rulers,” in *Mélanges Fuad Köprülü*, Istanbul, 1955, p. 391; *idem*, “Bahārlū,” in *EI*² I, p. 919). However, F.



Sümer has shown that there is no concrete evidence to substantiate the claim that the names Bahārlū and Barānī refer to the same tribe (*Kara Koyunlular I*, Ankara, 1967, pp. 23-24). At the time of the Qara Qoyunlūs, the Bahārlūs lived in the vicinity of Hamadān, a fact which prompted Minorsky to suggest that the name was derived from that of the fortress of Bahār, 14 km northwest of that city (“The Clan,” p. 392; “Bahārlū,” p. 919). But the fact that in the eighteenth century there was a tribe by the name of Bahārlū in central Anatolia (C. Niebuhr, *Reisenbeschreibung nach Arabien und andern umliegenden Ländern*, Copenhagen, 1774, II, p. 415) suggests that part of the tribe stayed behind when the ancestors of the Bahārlūs of Iran moved to the Hamadān region and that the name existed already before that event took place.

From all the information available, it appears that the Bahārlū tribe joined the Qara Qoyunlū tribal confederacy only after the latter had already been formed, most probably following the conquest of Hamadān by Qarā Yūsuf in 1408. In any case, it was not until the reign of Jahānšāh (r. 841-72/1438-67) that the Bahārlū leaders reached any degree of prominence. During that period, the chief of the tribe was ‘Alī Šakar Beg, of the Balāl, or Būlālū, clan. According to ‘Abd-al-Bāqī Nehāvandī, he was one of the ablest of the Qara Qoyunlū commanders and was responsible for the conquest of most of western and southwestern Iran in 861/1457 (*Ma’āter-e raḥīmī*, Calcutta, 1924, I, pp. 46-49). ‘Alī Šakar Beg established marital ties with the Qara Qoyunlū ruling family, but their exact nature is still debated. According to Bābor, Jahānšāh married ‘Alī Šakar Beg’s daughter, Pāšā Begom (A. S. Beveridge, *The Bābur-nāma in English*, London, 1969, p. 49). But according to Fażl-Allāh b. Rūzbehān, it was Jahānšāh’s son, Moḥammad Mīrzā, who married her (V. Minorsky, *Persia in A.D. 1478-1490*, London, 1957, p. 42).

‘Alī Šakar Beg’s son, Pīr-‘Alī Beg (who is also sometimes called Šīr-‘Alī Beg), succeeded him as chief of the Bahārlū tribe. He was one of Jahānšāh’s officers, and when that ruler was defeated by Uzun Ḥasan Āq Qoyunlū (q.v.) in 872/1467, he took refuge with the Timurids in Khorasan, along with Ebrāhīm Beg, Jahānšāh’s grandson, and four or five thousand families of Bahārlūs. There, the exiled leaders entered the service of Abū Sa’īd (q.v.), the last Timurid ruler who tried to restore Tīmūr’s empire from Kāšgar to Transcaucasia (*Bābur-nāma*, p. 49). When Abū Sa’īd was, in turn, defeated by Uzun Ḥasan in 1469, Pīr-‘Alī Beg and Ebrāhīm Beg joined Sultan Ḥosayn Bāyqarā, the Timurid ruler of Khorasan (875-912/1470-1506). Uzun Ḥasan



repeatedly wrote to Ḥosayn Bāyqarā, demanding the extradition of the exiled leaders (one of these messages has been preserved in Istanbul (Nuruosmaniye Kütüphanesi 4031, no. 51, münşeât mecmuası 3b-7b). When he received no answer, he dispatched no less than three armies to Khorasan (Mirkvānd, *Rawzat al-ṣafā'*, Lucknow, 1874, VII, pp. 16-17; John E. Woods, *The Ayqoyunlu: Clan, Confederation, Empire*, Minneapolis, 1976, p. 125). Later, Pīr-'Alī Beg broke with Ḥosayn Bāyqarā and entered the service of Sultan Maḥmūd, Abū Sa'īd's third son, who had established himself in Ḥeṣār-e Šādmān (in today's Tajikistan). There, Pāšā Begom, who had become widowed and had followed her brother, Pīr-'Alī Beg, into exile, was married to Sultan Maḥmūd (*Bāburnāma*, p. 49; Minorsky, *Persia*, p. 42).

When Uzun Ḥasan died in 882/1472, Pīr-'Alī Beg attempted to recapture his former power base in Iran. Together with his brother Bayrām Beg and a brother of Sultan Maḥmūd by the name of Abū Bakr, he led a combined force of Bahārlūs and Čağatays into Kermān province by way of Sistān and Bam. This tribal army seized both Kermān and Sīrjān, which were poorly defended, and then headed for Fārs. But it was routed by an expeditionary force dispatched by the new Āq Qoyunlū ruler, Sultan Ya'qūb (r. 883-96/1478-90; q.v.). Pīr-'Alī Beg, Bayrām Beg, and Abū Bakr, abandoning their families in Sīrjān, fled to Gorgān. There, a force sent by Ḥosayn Bāyqarā attacked them. Abū Bakr was killed and the Bahārlū leaders were captured. Pīr-'Alī Beg was then blinded and Bayrām Beg was executed (Minorsky, *Persia*, pp. 42-43).

Pīr-'Alī Beg's successor as chief of the Bahārlūs of Khorasan was his son Jān-'Alī Beg (who was erroneously called Yār-'Alī by Bābor). He settled down in Badaḳšān and, by the late 900s/1490s, had entered the service of Bābor (*Bāburnāma*, p. 91). While fighting for Bābor in the Andījān area in 1499, he received such a blow on the head that it had to be trepanned (*ibid.*, p. 109). However, in spite of these injuries, he continued to serve Bābor, following him to Kabul and then to India (*ibid.*, p. 546).

Jān-'Alī Beg's son, Sayf-'Alī Beg, also served Bābor. When Bābor died, he entered the service of Homāyūn (937-63/1530-56) and, at the time of his own death, was governor of Ġaznī. Sayf-'Alī Beg's son, Bayrām Khan (d. 968/1561), became a famous statesman of Mughal India. He was Akbar's *kānbābā* (guardian) and first *kān-e kānān* (chief minister). He was also a distinguished scholar, poet, and patron of the arts (A. S. Bazmee Ansari, "Bayrām Khan," in *ET*² I, pp. 1135-37).



Soltānqolī Qoṭb-al-Molk, the Turkic adventurer who founded the Qoṭbšāhī dynasty at Golconda, in the Deccan, in 901/1496 was also a Bahārlū (Moḥammad Qāsem Hendūšāh Astarābādī, *Tārīk-eFerešta*, Cawnpore, 1884, p. 167). During its rule of nearly two centuries (901-1098/1496-1687), this dynasty produced a distinctive Indo-Muslim culture (R. M. Eaton, “Qoṭb Shāhī,” in *EI*² V, pp. 549-50).

During the period following the collapse of the Qara Qoyunlū empire, the Bahārlūs who had remained in Western Iran gradually settled down in Azarbaijan, together with several other Qara Qoyunlū tribes. These seem to have collaborated with the Āq Qoyunlūs, for we hear of a certain Ḥasan Beg Šakaroghlū who was an ally of the Āq Qoyunlū ruler Alvand b. Yūsof when the latter was attacked by Shah Esmā’īl Šafawī at Naḵjavān in 907/1501-02 (Ḥasan Rūmlū, II, pp. 25-26; *Ḥabīb al-sīar* IV, p. 463).

The Bahārlūs did not play an important role during the Safavid period. Although Malcolm claims that the Bahārlū tribe was one of the seven tribes which constituted the mainstay of the early Safavid rulers (*History of Persia I*, p. 326), this is not confirmed by any reliable source. Ḥasan Rūmlū (pp. 78, 202) mentions only two Bahārlūs of note during that period, namely Moḥammad Bahārlū, who was commander of the fortress at Balḵ in 922/ 1516, and Walī Beg Bahārlū who, along with many other Qezelbāš leaders, supported Esmā’īl Mīrzā in his quest for the throne following the death of Shah Ṭahmāsp in 984/1576. Moreover, Monajjembāšī’s list of the eight principal Qezelbāš tribes does not include the Bahārlūs (*Taḍkeratal-molūk*, p. 194).

Today, there are traces or fragments of the Bahārlū tribe in Turkey, the USSR, and Iran. There is a village by the name of Bahārlū in the province (*vilayet*) of Dīārbakr in eastern Anatolia (*Gazetteer No. 46: Turkey*, Washington, D.C., 1960, p. 69). There are Bahārlūs in the districts of Shusha and Zengezur in Russian Azarbaijan (M. H. Valili Baharlu, *Azerbaycan, coğrafi, tabii, etnografi ve iktisadi mülâhazât*, Baku, 1921, p. 61). There are also three villages by the name of Bahārlū in Russian Azarbaijan (*Gazetteer No. 42: U.S.S.R.*, 2nd ed., Washington, D.C., 1970, I, p. 283). Another group of Bahārlūs is to be found in Iranian Azarbaijan. While visiting the province in 1906, the French scholar, Eugène Aubin, found the plain of the Dīzajrūd, northeast of Marāğa, inhabited by Bahārlūs (*La Perse d’aujourd’hui*, Paris, 1908, p. 101). It must be the group which M. L. Sheil had earlier estimated at 2,000 families (*Glimpses of Life and Manners in Persia*, London, 1856, p. 396). Today, these Bahārlūs have lost their tribal identity and are included in no current list of the tribes of Azarbaijan.



But the area in which they dwell nevertheless contains villages with highly suggestive names, e.g., Būlāllū, the name of the principal Bahārlū clan during the 9th/15th and 10th/16th centuries, and Āgač Erī, the name of another Qara Qoyunlū tribe. Nearby are villages by the names of Ālpāvot and Bārānlū, two more Qara Qoyunlū tribes (Razmārā, *Farhang* IV, pp. 37, 41, 72, 99). Further south, there is the aforementioned village by the name of Bahārlū in the Sanandaj region (Razmārā, *Farhang* V, p. 60).

To the east, some Bahārlūs live in the village of Bahārmaz, 12 km south of Darmiān, near the Afghan border, in southern Khorasan. There is also a village by the name of Balāl, 3 km northwest of Bošrūya, in the same province (Razmārā, *Farhang* IX, pp. 60, 65). Then, according to Ḥasan Fasāʿī (II, p. 310), there is a tribe by the name of Bahārlū in K̄vārazm (K̄iva).

In Kermān province, there is a small tribe by the name of Bar-e Bahārlū. It dwells between Rābor and Bezenjān and, in late Qajar times, consisted of about forty families (H. Field, *Contributions to the Anthropology of Iran*, Chicago, 1939, p. 235).

Finally, there is a Bahārlū tribe in Fārs. According to tribal tradition, these Bahārlūs came from northwestern Iran (personal interviews with Ebrāhīm Khan Bahārlū and Amīr Āqā Khan Bahārlū, Shiraz, 1957). But the fact that one of their *tīras* (clans) is called Mašhadlū suggests that they were among those Bahārlūs who fled to Khorasan following the collapse of the Qara Qoyunlū state. Field claims that they settled in Fārs in the 12th/18th and 13th/19th centuries (*ibid.*, p. 216). But this could not be the case if they came from Khorasan. One is tempted to believe that both the Bar-e Bahārlūs of Kermān and the Bahārlūs of Fārs are descendants of the Bahārlūs who were abandoned in Sīrjān when Pīr-ʿAlī Beg and his brother Bayrām Beg were defeated by Sultan Yaʿqūb Āq Qoyunlū in 1478, for the Bar-e Bahārlūs have settled down in Sīrjān and the Bahārlūs of Fārs have established themselves in an area immediately to the southwest of that region.

Until the 1280s/1860s, the Bahārlūs of Fārs were fully nomadic. Their summer quarters were in the districts of Rāmjerd, Marvdašt, and Kamīn, north of Shiraz, and their winter quarters were around Dārāb and Īzadk̄vāst, in southeastern Fārs (Fasāʿī, II, p. 310). M. L. Sheil estimated their number at 1,230 families in 1849 (*Glimpses*, p. 399); K. E. Abbott at 2,000 families in 1850 (“Notes Taken on a Journey Eastwards from Shirāz . . . in 1850,” *JRGS* 27, 1857, p. 153). Their last important leader was Mollā Aḥmad Khan Bozorgī of the



Aḥmadlū clan, who ruled between 1268/1851-52 and 1275/1858-59 (Fasā'ī, II, pp. 310-11). Upon his death, a fierce struggle for power ensued. Massacre followed massacre. So great were the losses in human life that the tribe was never again able to recover its former strength and the tribesmen decided that they were no longer numerous enough to participate in the lengthy seasonal migrations to which they were accustomed. The remaining Bahārlūs settled down in their winter quarters and eked out a living from a mixture of agriculture and pastoralism, as well as from the proceeds of banditry. L. Pelly, who visited them in the early 1860s, wrote that they “are very mischievous and a set of robbers, who by killing each other have put an end to themselves and their ketkhodas, and all that remains of them are some horsemen, who wander about plundering everyone that comes in their way” (“Brief Account of the Province of Fārs,” *Transactions of the Bombay Geographical Society* 17, 1963, p. 183). Similar observations were made by H. B. Vaughan (“A Journey Through Persia, 1887-88,” *Royal Geographical Society; Supplementary Papers* III/2, 1892, p. 97), A. T. Wilson (*South West Persia . . . 1907-1914*, London, 1941, p. 47), G. Demorgny (“Les réformes administratives en Perse,” pt. 1, *RMM* 12, March, 1913, p. 103), P. M. Sykes (*A History of Persia*, 3rd ed., London, 1951, II, p. 479), and others. Their exploits as bandits are also described in *Waqāye'-e ettefāqīya*.

In 1278/1861-62, the tribe was absorbed into the Ḳamsa tribal confederacy, which was formed by the governor-general of Fārs, Solṭān Morād Mīrzā, in an endeavor to check the growing influence of the Qaşqā'ī tribal confederacy (P. Oberling, *The Qaşqā'ī Nomads of Fārs*, The Hague, 1974, p. 65).

In 1311 Š./1933 the Bahārlū tribe of Fārs comprised 8,000 families forming twenty *tīras*: Ebrāhīmḳānī, Aḥmadlū, Esmā'īlḳānī, Būrbūr, Bakla, Jāmbozorgī, Jarga, Jūqa, Ḥājītarlū, Ḥājī'aṭṭārlū, Ḥaydarlū, Rasūlḳānī, Saqqez, Şafīḳānī, 'Īsābīglū, Karīmlū, Kolāhpūstī, Maşhadlū, Nāşerbīglū, Waraṭa (Kayhān, *Joḡrāfiā* II. p. 86).

Since World War II, the Bahārlūs have become completely sedentary, living the year round in the *dehestāns* (subdistricts) of Fasārūd, Ḳosūya and Qariāt-al-Ḳayr in the *baḳš* (district) of Dārāb (Razmārā, *Farhang* VII, pp. 88, 165, 171). O. Garrod, a British physician who visited Fārs toward the end of the war, noted that the Bahārlūs were “fast losing their tribal organization and characteristics” (“The Nomadic Tribes of Persia To-Day,” *Journal of the Central Asian Society* 33, 1946, p. 44) and concluded: “The Baharlus, once the foremost horsemen and more feared warriors and bandits of Eastern Fārs, have sadly



degenerated from the effects of Malaria and the diseases bred in the cumulative filth of their settlements” (ibid.).

By 1336 Š./1957, the tribe’s population had dwindled to a mere 4,000 individuals (personal interview with Amīr Āqā Khan Bahārlū).

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