



BĪGDELĪ

BĪGDELĪ (or Bēgdelī, also Bagdīlū), a former Turkish tribe.

Name and origin. The tribe is mentioned in Maḥmūd Kāšġarī's *Dīwān loġāt al-Tork* as one of the twenty-two Oghuz tribes (ed. Dankoff and Kelly, I, p. 101). Their traditional brand mark was xxx and their totem was the golden eagle. The oldest known form of the name, given by Kāšġarī ca. 465/1072, is Bagtelī (Bāgtīlī), which cannot be clearly identified as Turkish; like several other Turkish tribal names, it is perhaps a remnant from a pre-Turkish substrate. Mobārakšāh (ca. 603/1206) is the first to write the name in the Oghuzified form Bagdelī (Bāgdīlī). Rašīd-al-Dīn (ca. 700/1300) writes Bīgdelī (Bēgdīlī) and quotes a popular etymology in explanation. Finally, in the manuscripts of Eskandar Beg (1025/1616), beside Bīgdelī (thus, e.g., the Tehran ed.) we also find the spelling Bagdīlū (see tr. Savory, pp. 1309, 1385; the suffix *-lū* is obviously analogous to that in numerous Turkish tribal names, e.g., Qazāqlū, Ostājlū). Eskandar Beg describes the tribe as a clan of the powerful Šāmlū tribe. In the 10th/16th century the name Beġdīlī appears in 23 toponyms in the Ottoman tax records—a relatively small number compared with the occurrences of tribal names such as Kayī, Bayāt, Afšār, and others. The region having most of the Beġdīlī toponyms was north central Anatolia. In the gazetteers of modern Turkey (*Meskun yerler kılavuzu*, *Köylerimiz*) only nine places with the name Beydili are listed, most of them in central Anatolia. The Gazetteer of the USSR gives Beydili and Beydilli as the name of two places in the Azarbaijan SSR. The Gökleng Beġdili (also called Čāqū Beġdili) live in Astarābād between the rivers Atrak and Rūd-e Gorgān. Their sub-groups are named Pank, Aman-Ḳōja,



Borān, and Qarešmaz (Sümer, 1972, p. 304). According to Oberling, two small clans named Bīgdelī belong to the Kaškūlī tribe of the Qašqā'ī confederacy in southern Iran.

Early history. Although no precise information from before the 8th/14th century has come down, there are grounds to suppose that Bīgdelī tribesmen played a part in the Saljuq conquest of Iran and Anatolia in the 5th/11th century. Others appear to have fled from the Mongol invasion in the 7th/13th century and to have reached Syria and joined forces with the Mamluks. In the second half of the 8th/14th century they are mentioned as being under the command of the Taškun Oğullarī (Sümer, 1953). From Syria they spread to southern and eastern Anatolia and later to Iran, where they acquired a position of some importance under the Āq Qoyunlū and the Safavids. In the course of time they split into several branches.

The Bīgdelī of Anatolia and Syria. From the 9th/15th to the 11th/17th century a large Beğdili group lived in the region between Aleppo and Diyarbakır (Dīār Bakr) where they occupied the best pastures. In the 11th/17th century this group was estimated to have 12,000 tents and to stand first among the Aleppo Turkmen. Another group moved in the 10th/16th century to the Yeni-İl district between Sivas and Malatya, and some of them later headed southward to the neighborhood of Raqqā. Other branches were the Boz-Ulus, who from the 10th/16th century onward lived in the Diyarbakır district, the Beğdili of Tarsus living among the Varsaq near Adana, and the Begdeli of İçel on the southern coast of Anatolia facing Cyprus.

The Bīgdelī of Iran. In addition to tribes from Anatolia, tribes from northern Syria, collectively known as Šāmlū and consisting mainly of Turkmen, played a part in the establishment of the Safavid state in 907/1501. (The word Turkman had originally meant Oghuz non-Muslims, but from the 8th/14th century onward meant Oghuz nomads.) The Šāmlū, after becoming devotees (*morīds*) of Shaikh Ḥaydar, fought for his son Shah Esmā'īl, founder of the Safavid dynasty. At first the Šāmlū consisted of three tribes, the Bīgdelī, Īnāllū, and Ḳodābandalū, but later some more tribes were attached to them. For a long time the Bīgdelī held a leading position among the Šāmlū. Many of the powerful Qezelbāš commanders belonged to the Bīgdelī, e.g., Barakat Ḳalifa, who supported Shah Ṭahmāsb in the fighting against his rebel son. Bīgdelī amirs were particularly influential in Shah 'Abbās I's reign. One of them, Naqdī Khan, held the office of *īšik-āqāsī-bāšī* (grand marshal of the royal court) and the governorships of Marv and Kūhgīlūya; his son Zaynal Beg (later



Khan) was, according to Eskandar Beg (pp. 951-52, 1084; tr. Savory, pp. 1172, 1309), successively *tūšmāl-bāšī* (master of the royal kitchen), *īšīk-āqāsī-bāšī*, and governor of Ray, and his four brothers Moḥammad Beg, Ḥaydar Beg, Sārū Beg, and Qapān Beg ranked not far below him. Under ‘Abbās II, too, Bīgdēlī amirs held high offices, e.g., Şafīqolī Beg, who was governor of Solţānīya and Zenjān. While Eskandar Beg still places the Šāmlū first among the Turkman tribes and the Bīgdēlī first among the Šāmlū clans (*Taḍkerat al-molūk*, p. 16), and another early 17th-century writer, Don Juan of Persia, similarly refers to their importance and to their tenure of the office of mayordomo mayor in his time (*ibid.*, p. 193); during the 12th/18th century their prestige waned and the primacy passed to other tribes. It was apparently during that century that the Bīgdēlī became sedentary, settling for the most part in Azarbaijan. While the names of other Oghuz tribes such as the *Bayāt* are preserved in a number of Iranian toponyms, the name Bīgdēlī appears to have survived only in personal names, the best known being Āḍar Bīgdēlī (see *āzar bīgdēlī*).

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