



BOLOĠĀN KĀTŪN

BOLOĠĀN (Būlūgān) **KĀTŪN**, the name of three of the royal wives of the Mongol Il-khans in Iran. Of Mongol origin, the word Boloġān, variously spelled in the Persian sources, means “sable” (see Moḥammad-Mahdī Khan fol. 141v; Doerfer, I, p. 215). In accordance with the custom noted with distaste by William of Rubruck (tr. Rockhill, p. 78), all three wives were passed down from one ruler to his successor and had considerable influence at court; their names arise particularly in the context of intercessions for the life of rebels facing execution.

1. Boloġān Kātūn “Bozorg,” a relative of Būqāy Yārgūčī (the judge), was Abaqa Khan’s (q.v.) ninth wife and was favored by him above Mertay Kātūn the Qūnqūrāt and Despīna Kātūn (daughter of Michael Palaeologus). She was the mother of Abaqa’s daughter Maleka and raised his grandson Ġāzān as her own son. On Abaqa’s death in 680/1282, she was taken as a wife by his son [Argūn Khan](#). In Jomādā II, 681/September, 1282, she was instrumental in securing the pardon of the vizier K^vāja Wajīh-al-Dīn Faryūmadī for his part in an alleged plot against Argūn. Argūn’s conspicuous reliance on her support and counsel in his struggle with [Aḥmad Takūdār](#) (Tegüder) in 683/1284 was such that the amir Būqā had to restrain him from pausing to confer with Boloġān at the critical moment of his release from Aḥmad’s custody. Aḥmad Takūdār also treated her with respect (Rašīd-al-Dīn, ed. Jahn, 1957, pp. 54-55; Waṣṣāf, pp. 130-33). She died on 23 Šafar 685/20 April 1286 by the Kor river and her coffin was taken to Sajās, southwest of Solṭānīya, one of the alleged burial places of Argūn himself (see Zipoli, 1978). Some of her valuables were



kept by Arġūn, and the rest, including the lavish tokens of Abaqa's affection for her, were given to Ġāzān. Arġūn later replaced her by another woman of the same name (see 2 below).

Boloġān Kātūn was esteemed as much by Arġūn as by his father, and her prominent position is indicated by the story that she wished to be succeeded as Arġūn's wife only by a lady of her own family. Arġūn accordingly sent to China to fetch someone suitable. The great khan sent Kūkāčīn back in the company of Marco Polo, but by this time Arġūn was already dead, and Kūkāčīn was married to Ġāzān, who gave her Doqūz Kātūn's former *ordū*. Kūkāčīn died in Ša'bān, 695/June, 1296 (see Rašīd-al-Dīn, ed. Jahn, 1940, pp. 39-40; Marco Polo, p. 38; Banākatī, p. 411).

2. Boloġān Kātūn "Mo'azzama," daughter of Ūtmān the son of Ūbetāy Nūyān the Qūnqūrāt was married by Arġūn on 9 Rabī' I 689/22 March 1290, i.e., at Nowrūz and installed in the former *ordū* of Boloġān Kātūn "Bozorg." Arġūn had a daughter by her, called Delānjī, who died in childhood. After Arġūn's death in 690/1291, his uncle Geykātū in turn married this Boloġān Kātūn on his return from Alātāg in Ša'bān, 691/July-August, 1292, and had a son by her called Čīnk Pūlād (also called Tīrī, according to Banākatī, p. 447). According to Rašīd-al-Dīn (ed. Jahn, 1940, p. 12), this marriage was against her wishes.

Boloġān Kātūn "Mo'azzama" played a prominent part in the civil war between Ġāzān and Bāydū, during which Bāydū attempted to use her to restrain Ġāzān but came to find her something of an embarrassment, since her loyalties and those of her supporters clearly lay with the latter (Rašīd-al-Dīn, ed. Jahn, 1940, pp. 62-64, 81; Banākatī, p. 455). On the successful outcome of this struggle one of Ġāzān's first acts was to "remarry" his father Arġūn's widow Boloġān Kātūn in a Muslim ceremony near Tabrīz in Du'l-ḥejja, 694/October, 1295, since they had both now adopted Islam. Ġāzān had by her a son Oljū, who died in infancy, and a daughter, Oljāy Qotloġ (also called Ūljākī), who married her nephew Beštām (Kāšānī, p. 82) and later his younger brother Abū Sa'īd on (or before) his accession to the throne in 717/1317, becoming his chief and most beloved wife (Banākatī, p. 478; Samarqandī, p. 20).

Kāšānī (pp. 89-90) draws attention to her clemency, her association with imams and shaikhs, and her protection of Muslims from oppression. Boloġān was able to intercede successfully with Ġāzān Khan for the lives of the vizier Šadr-al-Dīn Zanġānī in 695/1296 and the Šayk-al-mašā'eḳ Maḥmūd Dīnavārī (described as a relative of hers) in 701/1301 (Rašīd-al-Dīn, ed. Jahn, 1940, pp.



81, 100, 135; Waṣṣāf, p. 420; Banākatī, p. 464). Ġāzān's devotion to her, again attested by Kāšānī (loc. cit.), is seen in the way she accompanied his hunting trips and saw him off on his third expedition to Syria in 702/1303; it also possibly explains his chastity when on campaign (Rašīd-al-Dīn, ed. Jahn, 1940, pp. 137, 144-45, 175; Waṣṣāf, p. 408). For her part, Boloġān continued to visit Ġāzān's tomb after his death and was held in honor by his brother and successor, Ūljāytū (Öljeytü). This alone is enough to refute the implausible story found in certain Mamluk sources that she was responsible for poisoning Ġāzān (e.g., Ebn al-Dawādārī, *Kanz al-dorar wa jāme' al-ġorar* IX, ed. H. R. Roemer, Cairo, 1960, p. 111; Mofaẓẓal b. Abu'l-Faẓā'el, *al-Nahj al-sadīd wa'l-dorar al-farīd*, ed. and tr. E. Blochet, *Patrologia Orientalis* 20, Paris, 1928, p. 93). She remained active in affairs of state until her death on 2 Ša'bān 709/5 January 1310 at a residence in Baghdad (Spuler, *Mongolen*⁴, p. 177, suggests 708/1309 on the grounds of the weekday given, but Kāšānī's dating is frequently inaccurate in this respect); her bier was taken to Tabrīz, where she was buried alongside her last husband in the Šām-e Ġāzān (Kāšānī, pp. 49, 73, 89).

3. Boloġān Kātūn "Korāsānī," daughter of Amir Tesūy (whose mother was Menglī Tegen, the daughter of Argūn Āqā) was first married to Ġāzān Khan before his accession; Rašīd-al-Dīn records her giving birth to a stillborn child near Fīrzkūh in 690/early 1291, and she accompanied Ġāzān part of the way on his second decisive advance against Bāydū in 694/1295. She gave shelter to her kinsman, a young son of Nowrūz, on the fall of his family in 696/1297, and her name is linked with another less successful mediation (Rašīd-al-Dīn, ed. Jahn, 1940, pp. 31, 83, 86, 111).

After Ġāzān's death, she became the seventh wife of Öljeytü on 8 Du'l-qa'da (or possibly Du'l-ḥejja) 704/2 June (July) 1305. This third Boloġān died on 5 Šafar 708/25 July 1308, perhaps in Baghdad, where she is said to have constructed a town (*šahr*) called after her Korāsān. The endowments (*waqf*) of the *kānāqāh* that she built there were then entrusted to Rašīd-al-Dīn (Kāšānī, pp. 44, 82).



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