



DIMDIM

DIMDIM (Pers. Demdem or Domdom), name of a mountain and a fortress where an important battle between the Kurds and the Safavid army took place in the early 17th century.

Mount Dimdim (elev. ca. 2,000 m) is located between the Bārāndūz river and the tributary Qāsemlū near the shore of Lake Urmia, a few kilometers west of the Urmia-Mahābād road; the nearby village of Bālānīj is about 18 km south of Urmia. According to Kurdish oral tradition (reported by Eskandar Beg, I, p. 792), the fortress on top of the mountain dates from the pre-Islamic period. In about 1609 the ruined structure was rebuilt by Amir Khan Lapzērīn, ruler of Barādūst, who sought to maintain the independence of his expanding principality in the face of both Ottoman and Safavid penetration into the region. In 1609 Eskandar Beg described it as a formidable stronghold consisting of five separate forts with well-protected cisterns and pits for storing ice and snow (pp. 796-97). Today portions of the walls and heaps of building stones and bricks are still visible (Pedrām).

The battle of Dimdim occupies a prominent place in Safavid historiography. [Shah 'Abbās I](#) (996-1038/1588-1626) had recognized Amir Khan's hereditary right to rule over Barādūst and Urmia, but the rebuilding of Dimdim was considered a move toward independence that could threaten Safavid power in the northwest; in fact, neither the Safavids nor the Ottomans had yet gained firm control of Kurdistan, Azarbaijan, and Armenia. Many Kurds, including the rulers of Mokrī (west and south of Lake Urmia), rallied around Amir Khan. After a long and bloody siege led by the Safavid grand vizier Ḥātem Beg, which



lasted from November 1609 to the summer of 1610, Dimdim was captured; all the defenders were massacred. Shah ‘Abbās ordered a general massacre in Barādūst and Mokrī (Eskandar Beg, pp. 809-14; Falsafī, pp. 190-94) and resettled the Turkish Afšār tribe in the region (Adīb-al-Šo‘arā’, pp. 11-73) while deporting many Kurdish tribes to Khorasan. The two principalities did survive, though much weakened, and the amirs of Barādūst fought two more battles against the Safavids at Dimdim (Eskandar Beg, pp. 889-91; Adīb-al-Šo‘arā’, pp. 52-55). In 1142/1729 Ṭahmāsbqolī Sepahsālār (the future Nāder Shah, 1148-60/1736-47) defeated Yūsuf Pasha, the Ottoman governor of Urmia, at Dimdim and ordered the fortress destroyed (Adīb-al-Šo‘arā’, pp. 76-77).

Although Persian historians (e.g. Eskandar Beg and Adīb-al-Šo‘arā’) depicted the first battle of Dimdim as a result of Kurdish mutiny or treason, in Kurdish oral traditions (e.g., *Baytī dimdim*; see [BAYT](#)), literary works (Dzhalilov, pp. 67-72), and histories it was treated as a struggle of the Kurdish people against foreign domination; in fact, *Baytī dimdim* is considered a national epic second only to *Mam ū Zīn* by [Aḥmadī Kānī](#). It is known in both the Kūrmānjī and Sorānī dialects of Kurdish and in Armenian. Most of the collected ballads portray the defenders of Dimdim as martyrs (*šahīd*) in a holy war (*xeza*; see, e.g., Dzhalilov, pp. 81, 97, 98). The earliest literary account is attributed to the poet Faqē Ṭayrān (ca. 1590-1660), and a number of modern writers, poets, playwrights, and historians have devoted works to the revolt.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Mīrzā Rašīd Adīb-al-Šo‘arā’, *Tārīḳ-e Afšār*, ed. P. Šahrīār Afšār and M. Rāmīān, Tabrīz, 1346 Š./1967.

M.-T. Dānešpažūh, ed., “Seh sanad-e tārīḳī wa jōgrāfiā’ī-e dawrān-e šafawī,” *Waḥīd* 8/2 1349 Š./1971, pp. 207-20 (includes two letters on Dimdim).

“Dimdim,” in *Kurdskie epicheskie Pesni-Skazy*, Moscow, 1962, pp. 210-30.

O. Dzh. Dzhalilov, *Kurdskiĭ geroicheskiĭ epos “Zlatorukiĭ Khan”* (The Kurdish



heroic epic “Gold-hand Khan”), Moscow, 1967, pp. 5-26, 37-39, 206 (including ballads with musical notation, short stories, and a facsimile of the work by Faqē Ṭayrān).

N. Falsafī, *Zendagānī-e Šāh ‘Abbās-e Awwal* III, Tehran, 1339 Š./1960, pp. 190-94.

M.-M. Ḥamabor, “Kānī Lapzērīn ū qalāy Dimdim,” *Rošinbīrī nō* 103-04, 1984, pp. 168-227, 105, 1984, pp. 206-42.

‘A.-H. Ḥosaynī, *Baytī Dimdim*, n.p. (Europe), 1981.

J. Jalil, “Dim-dim,” in Q. Mrad and J. Jalil, *A’frānd’inēd Nvīsk’ārēd K’ordēd Armanistānēya Sovētīe*, Yerevan, 1961, pp. 55-72.

Idem, “Amar-ē jalālī,” in J. Jalil, *K’ilāmē č’yā*, Yerevan, 1970, pp. 25-62.

Idem, *Amar-ē jalālī*, Baghdad, 1982 (includes a bibliography of Soviet and Iraqi literature on Dimdim).

Ḥ. Jindī, “The Armenian Variants of the Kurdish Epic Dim-dim,” in “Countries and People of the Near and Middle East” (in Armenian), pp. 174-82.

M.-Ş. Karīm, *Şahīdānī qalāy Dimdim* (story), So-laymānīya, Iraq, 1958; 2nd ed., Baghdad, 1982.

O. Mann, *Die Mundart der Mukri-Kurden* I, Berlin, 1906, pp. 12-24; pt. 1 tr. as *Toḥfa-ye moẓaffariya be zimānī kurdī mukrī*, Baghdad, 1975, pp. 20-69, 201-21.

‘A. Mardūk, “Rēpaṛīnī Dimdim ū qalāčoy Kūrdānī Mokrī,” *Hīwā/Hēvī* (Paris) 1, 1983, pp. 27-44.

M. Pedrām, “Bar farāz-e Demdem,” *Honar o mardom* 151, 1354 Š./1975, pp. 44-48 (with photographs).

A. Šāmīlov, *Dimdim. (Roman)*, Yerevan, 1966; in Roman characters, Stockholm, 1983. Idem, *Dimdim*, Baghdad, 1975.

M. Tawfiq-verdī, *Qalāy Dimdim*, Baghdad, 1961.

M.-A. Zakī, “Amīr Kānī Brādost ū qalāy Dimdim,” *Galāwēž* 1/3, 1940, Baghdad, pp. 23-30; 4, pp. 33-42.

J. A. Zīro, *Şorišā Dimdim*, 1983, Baghdad. Taped recitations of *Baytī dimdim* are



preserved in the ethnomusicological archive at the University of Illinois, Urbana; York University, Toronto, Canada; and the Iraqi Academy-Kurdish Corporation, Baghdad.