



EBRĀHĪM ḲALĪL KHAN JAVĀNŠĪR

EBRĀHĪM ḲALĪL KHAN JAVĀNŠĪR, Khan of Qarābāg in late 18th century. Born in 1730, he was the son of Panāh Khan of the Javānšīr tribe, which lived in the plains of Qarābāg (Bāmdād, I, p. 10). **Nāder Shah Afšār** had forced the tribe and its khans to submit to him and to accompany him to Khorasan. After Nāder's death, Panāh Khan returned to Qarābāg and managed to penetrate the eastern sector of the Armenian enclave of mountainous Qarābāg (Qarābāgī, pp. 52-59). In the second half of the century, Ebrāhīm Khan built a strong fortress in Šūšī/Šūša which was referred to, during his lifetime, as Panāhābād (idem, p. 72). When Karīm Khan Zand took control of much of Persia, he forced Panāh Khan to come to Shiraz, where he died as a hostage. Ebrāhīm, succeeding his father (1760), not only ruled over most of Qarābāg, but also became one of the major potentates in the Caucasus. Together with King Erekle II of Georgia, he dominated the khanates of **Erevan**, Naḳjavān, and Ganja during much of the last quarter of the 18th century (Bournoutian, p. 7). When Erekle accepted Russian protection under the 1783 Treaty of Georgievsk, Ebrāhīm was tempted by a similar offer. Russian preference for Georgia and the absence of a strong ruler in Persia after the death of Karīm Khan, however, kept Ebrāhīm aloof from the Russians.

By the end of the century Ebrāhīm's hopes for dominating eastern Armenia were shattered when **Āgā Moḥammad Khan Qājār** defeated the remnants of the Afsharids and Zands, and the Qajars became the successors of the Safavids.



In 1794 Āgā Moḥammad Khan ordered the Caucasian khans, as well as Erekle, to Tehran and demanded their submission to him. Erekle, relying on Russian protection, ignored the order. Ebrāhīm refused to obey too, possibly because two years earlier he had also disobeyed a similar summon and had sent his nephew with gifts instead (Qarābāgī, p. 87). The nephew was forced to accompany Āgā Moḥammad Khan on his campaigns against the Zands; he managed to escape, but was caught and executed. Another reason for Ebrāhīm's disobedience might have been his sense that Āgā Moḥammad Khan was just another of the numerous tribal chiefs seeking power in the political vacuum of the time (Atkin, 1980, p. 19).

In 1795 Āgā Moḥammad Khan crossed the [Araxes](#) and entered eastern Armenia. The khans of Erevan, Naḵjavān, and Ganja submitted, but Ebrāhīm Khan attacked. He was defeated and sought refuge in the fortress of Šūšī. The mountainous terrain and Šūšī's splendid fortifications stood in the way of Āgā Moḥammad's plan for total conquest of the region. By a verbal truce Ebrāhīm acknowledged Qajar supremacy and was permitted to continue his tenure as khan of Qarābāg (Qarābāgī, p. 92).

Āgā Moḥammad Khan then proceeded to punish Erekle and capture Tbilisi, which resulted in the bloody conquest of eastern Georgia. On his return to Persia, he was crowned shah, and en route his troops devastated and depopulated parts of Qarābāg (Fasā'ī, tr. Busse, pp. 65-68). Following his return to Persia proper, Catherine the Great ordered her army in 1796 to conquer the Caucasus. Ebrāhīm began negotiating with the Russian commanders and agreed to cooperate with them in exchange for maintaining his rule in Qarābāg (Baddeley, p. 59). Soon afterward Catherine died, emperor Paul abandoned her plans for the region and recalled the Russian troops. In 1797 Āgā Moḥammad Khan, angered by the betrayal of Ebrāhīm and other khans in the Caucasus, attacked Šūšī and captured it. Ebrāhīm fled to his in-laws in Dāğestān. Five days after the conquest of Šūšī, Āgā Moḥammad Khan was assassinated in that city (Sepehr, pp. 83-84; Qarābāgī, pp. 100-01; Hedāyat, *Rawzat al-ṣafā* IX, p. 298).

Ebrāhīm Khan returned to Šūšī and ordered that the shah's body be honorably buried until further instructions from the nephew and heir of Āgā Moḥammad, Bābā Khan, who soon assumed the title of Faṭḥ-'Alī Shah. Ebrāhīm, in order to maintain peaceful relations with Tehran and retain his position as the khan of Qarābāg, gave his daughter Āgā Begom, known as Āgā-bājī, as one of the wives of the new shah (Bāmdād, I, p. 12). Faṭḥ-'Alī Shah



claimed the Caucasus and stationed the Persian forces in Tabrīz. The new Russian offensive in Georgia and Ganja resulted in the exile of the Georgian royal family and the death of the khan of Ganja, his son, and many Muslims. These developments finally convinced Ebrāhīm to come to terms with the Russians. General Tsitsianov, the Russian commander and governor of the conquered regions, promised that Russia would recognize him as khan and agreed that Ebrāhīm's elder son would succeed his father. Tsitsianov then occupied Šūšī and left a Russian garrison there in 1805 (Qarābāgī, p. 116). The Russians' and Muslims' mutual mistrust and the death of Ebrāhīm's elder son did not help matters. Tsitsianov's death in 1806 and the breakup of the Russian offensive persuaded Ebrāhīm to switch his allegiance and to ask the shah's aid in ousting the Russian garrison. A Persian army approached Šūšī, and Ebrāhīm Khan left the fortress and camped outside. On 2 June 1806 the Russians, instigated by Ebrāhīm's grandson and fearful of their own vulnerability, attacked the camp and killed Ebrāhīm, one of his wives, a daughter, and his youngest son (Atkin, 1979, pp. 79-98). The Persian army withdrew, and Qarābāg remained in Russian hands.

To attract the much-needed support from the local Muslims, General Gudovich, the new commander of the Caucasus, appointed Mahdīqolī Khan, the remaining son of Ebrāhīm, as khan of Qarābāg. Mahdīqolī served the Russians until 1822; then, fearing Russia's wrath for the overtures he had made to the Persian government, he fled to Persia. Russia then incorporated the khanate into her empire. In 1836 Mahdīqolī returned to Qarābāg to claim his family property and lived the rest of his life as a Russian pensioner (Atkin, 1979, pp. 99-100).

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