



EV-OĠLĪ FAMILY

EV-OĠLĪ (or Īv-ōġlī), name of a family that served three Safavid kings (‘Abbās I, Şafī, and ‘Abbās II) as *ešīk-āqāsī-bāšī* (q.v.) of the harem, for a period of twenty-seven years (1026-53/1617-43). They first appear at the court of ‘Abbās I in 1006/1598, shortly after the transfer of the capital from Qazvīn to Isfahan that allowed Shah ‘Abbās I to break the power of the *qezelbāš*. The *ġolāms* were a key element introduced by ‘Abbās I to abate the *qezelbāš*. The *ev-oġlīs* belonged to a category of *ġolāms*, referred to in the *Taḏkerat al-molūk* (tr. Minorsky, p. 57, comm. p. 127) as the *ġolām-e sāda*, i.e., *ġolāms* who had not yet grown beards and so were not eunuchized. Minorsky postulates that the Turkish term *ev-oġlī* (son of the house), often mentioned in the annals of ‘Abbās I’s reign, refers to this category of *ġolāms* educated at court for the shah’s personal service.

The two *Ev-oġlīs* who first appear in the Safavid chronicles (Abu’l-Qāsem Beg in 1006/1598 and Walī Beg in 1009/1601) are *qūrčīs*, the standing corps of troops distinct from the new troops (*tofangčīs* “musketeers” and *ġolāms*) that were introduced by ‘Abbās I (Eskandr Beg, I, pp. 537, 603). The composition of the *qūrčīs* may have been changing as well in this period. The title *qūrčī* in the context of the *ġolāmān-e sāda* may have had a different meaning; perhaps these two *qūrčīs* were the masters of the non-eunuch *ġolāms* of the inner service (*ev-oġlāns*) and held a military function as well.

In 1026/1617 Abu’l-Qāsem Beg was awarded the position of *ešīk-āqāsī-bāšī* of the harem. He now acted as the channel of communication between the harem and the outer court. He held this post for thirteen years and was dismissed in



the midst of Šafī's accession (1038/1629). Since his dismissal coincided with the assassination of Zaynal Khan Šāmlū, the *ešīk-āqāsī-bāšī* of the *dīvān*, a collaboration must have existed between these two officials. Although Zaynal Khan, Abu'l-Qāsem Beg, and Zaynab Begom (aunt of 'Abbās I) supported Šafī's candidacy, Rostam Beg's (*dīvānbeḡī*) faction attempted to eliminate these powerful figures to consolidate power in his hands (Babayan, pp. 105-22). In the age of the *qafas* (cage; a term borrowed from the Ottomans, see Inalcik, p. 98) system (post 1000/1591-92), when the princes were raised in the harem, mothers of princes as well as other members of the household, such as eunuchs and *ḡolāms*—whose function was to maintain the power of the Safavid family, gained in prominence. The post of *ešīk-āqāsī-bāšī* as intermediary between the harem and the outer court was key for any faction to control the political scene in this phase.

Instead of Abu'l-Qāsem Beg, his brother Čelebī Beg was named to that post. He died seven years later (1046/1637). His nephew, Ḥaydar Beg, Abū'l-Qāsem's son, replaced him. It was during Ḥaydar Beg's tenure as *ešīk-āqāsī-bāšī* (1046-53/1636-43) that he collected official correspondences which he later compiled in his *Majma' al-enšā'* and dedicated to Shah Šafī (Storey, I, p. 317). Six years later he withdrew to Qom due to a misunderstanding with the grand vizier, Sārū Taqī, whom he seems to have offended (Walīqolī Šāmlū, fol. 75a; Monajjem Yazdī, fol. 96a). At this point Šafī had died and Sārū Taqī along with 'Abbās II's mother had consolidated their power at court, ending the hegemony of the Rostam Beg cabal of *ḡolāms*. Čelebī Beg must have been a member of that cabal and a client of Šafī's mother. With the waning of the power of Rostam Beg's faction, the Ev-oḡlīs lost their monopoly over the post of *ešīk-āqāsī-bāšī*. Twenty two years later (1075/1665) 'Abbās II took his revenge for Sārū Taqī and killed Čelebī Beg (Walīqolī Šāmlū, fol. 75b)

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