



GERĀYLĪ

GERĀYLĪ, a Turkic tribe of Khorasan, Gorgān, and Māzandarān. According to E'temād-al-Saltāna (pp. 157-58), the Gerāylī are descendents of the once powerful Kereit of Mongolia, whose leader, Wang Khan, was defeated by Čengīz Khan (q.v.) in 1203. But there is no solid evidence to support this claim. Nor is there any way to substantiate E'temād-al-Saltāna's conjecture that the Gerāylī accompanied Čengīz Khan or Hülegü (Holākū) Khan to northeastern Persia. What is known is that the Gerāylī, after their arrival in Persia, occupied a large area stretching from Gorgān to Kalāt-e nāderī, midway between Darragaz (Moḥammadābād), and Saraḵs (Napier, p. 100). We also know that in Safavid times there was a close association between the Gerāylī and Chaghatay tribes, for Eskandar Beg described three different Gerāylī chiefs as amirs of the Chaghatay, namely Mīrzā 'Alī Khan Gerāylī, who in 938/1531-32 helped the governor of Dāmḡān defeat the Uzbeks; Mīrzā 'Alī Ḳalīfa, who headed the Gerāylī tribe in 984/1576-77; and 'Alyār ('Alī-yār) Khan Gerāylī, who headed the Gerāylī tribe in 1038/1628-29 (Eskandar Beg, pp. 59, 141, 1087, tr. Savory, pp. 97, 227, 1314).

In 1004/1595-96, the Gerāylī chief, 'Alī Khan, rebelled against Shah 'Abbās I. Two years later, he was apprehended and executed (Eskandar Beg, pp. 510, 533, 541-42, tr. Savory, pp. 686, 712, 721-22). It was also during the reign of Shah 'Abbās I that the Gerāylī lost many of their grazing lands in Khorasan to the Kurdish tribes that were transplanted from northwestern Persia to that province (Napier, p. 87). A Gerāylī chief by the name of Raḥīm Khan is mentioned among the ranking generals of Nāder Shah Afšār (1148-60 /1736-47)



in his wars against the Afghans and the Ottoman Turks (Marvī, pp. 64, 90, 153, 180, 188, 192, 276-78). Rabino (p. 164) refers to him as the governor of Gorgān. Allāhyār Beg Gerāylī, a warrior in the Persian army, is credited with the killing of the Ottoman general Tūpāl 'Oṭmān Pasha and the bringing of his head to Nāder (Estrābādī, p. 341; Marvī, I, pp. 331-32). Later, Āqā Moḥammad Khan Qājār (r. 1779-97) moved many Gerāylī from the Kālpūš region, between Gorgān and Bojnūrd, to the districts of Qarāṭaqān, MĪāndorūd and Andarūd, northeast, east, and southeast of Sārī, in eastern Māzandarān (Rabino, p. 12).

During the 19th century, the Gerāylī gradually settled down in villages and towns throughout their former territories, and they lost their cohesiveness as a tribe. As a result, they have been increasingly rarely mentioned in the literature on northeastern Persia. We learn that some of them settled down in Ašraf (Behšahr, q.v.), where there was even a Gerāylī quarter (*maḥalla*), and that some 1,000 families of them settled down in six or seven villages, including Now Dehak and Čāla Pol, in the vicinity of Nekā, on the Sārī-Ašraf road (Abbott, p. 9; Melgunof, p. 161; Rabino, pp. 64, 160). We also learn that in the early 1900s, the eastern districts of the province of Gorgān were inhabited chiefly by Gerāylī (Rabino, pp. 78, 82), and that in 1874 there were approximately 1,000 families of them in the town in Šīrvān, between Bojnurd and Qūčān (Napier, p. 100).

According to the British Naval Intelligence (p. 388), there were in the 1940s some five thousand families of Gerāylī in the Jājarm, Jovayn and Sabzavār regions of Khorasan, as well as on the plain east of Gorgān. According to Afšār Sīstānī, the Gerāylī speak Turki and are Shi'ite (p. 1011).

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