



ḤASAN GĀNGU

ḤASAN GĀNGU (Kāngu or Kānku), 'ALĀ 'AL-DIN ḤASAN BAHMANŠĀH (r. 748-59/1347-57), a Khorasani adventurer at the court of Delhi, who claimed descent from the Sasanian Bahrām Gōr (Ferešta, I, p. 277) and founded the Bahmanid sultanate of the Decca. He was the son of a certain Keykāvus, whose full name, according to 'Ali Ṭabāṭabā (pp. 11-12), was Keykāvus Moḥammad b. 'Ali b. Ḥasan. His uncle, Malek Hožabr-al-Din Ḥafar Khan, was a noble at the court of Sultan 'Alā'-al-Din Ḳalji and the governor of Multān and the Punjab (Ferešta, I, p. 138).

Little is known about Ḥasan's early life before he entered the services of Ġiāt-al-Din Toḡloq Shah. Historians give different, sometimes contradictory, accounts of his origin. According to a legend reported by Ferešta (I, pp. 273-74), Ḥasan was in the service of a court astrologer, Gāngu Bahman, who had given him a piece of land to live on. One day, Ḥasan's plow hit a pot of gold, which he took to his master untouched. Bahman Gāngu reported Ḥasan's honesty to the then prince Moḥammad b. Toḡloq, who in turn introduced him to his father, Sultan Ġiāt-al-Din, who raised Ḥasan to the post of a centurion (*amir-e sada*). The astrologer, having perceived Ḥasan's bright future in his horoscope, asked him to add Gāngu Bahman to his name so that he would also be always remembered.

According to 'Abd-al-Malek 'Ešāmi (p. 463), Ḥasan was originally from Ġazni, entering the services of Moḥammad b. Toḡloq together with his brothers 'Ali, Aḥmad, and Moḥammad ('Ešāmi, p. 463), who were all given small fiefs in the Deccan. Ḥasan was sent to the small town of Kunji, but later was made



governor of the district of Gulbarga (q.v.) with the honorary title of Ẓafar Khan.

During the revolt of a number of Muslim nobles against Moḥammad b. Toḡloq, 'Alī, the eldest brother, conspired with his brothers against the sultan and proclaimed himself Sultan 'Alā'-al-Dīn 'Alī Malekšāh (Barni, p. 480; Eṣāmi, p. 463; Ferešta, I, 138-39). He was, however, defeated and was taken with Aḥmad and Moḥammad to Moḥammad b. Toḡloq, who sent them into exile at Ġazni and eventually put them to death. Ẓafar Khan, who had remained in the Deccan, joined forces with Malek Moḡ Afḡān, the leader of the revolt. The rebels were defeated at the battle of Daulatabad, and Malek Moḡ Afḡān, who had proclaimed himself sultan, was killed (Barni, pp. 514-15). Ẓafar Khan retreated to the fort of Gulbarga, where, on 24 Rabī' II 748/3 August 1347, he was proclaimed king, taking the title of 'Alā'-al-Dīn Ḥasan Bahman Shah. Moḥammad b. Toḡloq, immersed in troubles, never returned to the Deccan and died soon afterwards during a campaign to Thata (Sind).

'Alā'-al-Dīn Ḥasan expanded his kingdom towards the east up to the River Godavari and towards the west as far as Goa and the Arabian Sea (Ṭabāṭabā, p. 29). He died on 1 Rabī' I 759/11 February 1357 at the age of sixty-seven and was buried in Gulbarga.

'Alā'-al-Dīn founded the powerful Bahmanid dynasty, which lasted for two centuries. He made Gulbarga the capital of the Deccan and a flourishing center of Persian culture. The capital was later moved by Šehāb-a-Dīn Aḥmad I (r. 825-39/1422-36) to Moḥammadābād/Bidar. The tombs of 'Alā'-al-Dīn and some of his successors, built as domed chambers, are still standing along an avenue in a necropolis now known as Haft Gonbad, just outside the perimeter of old town walls. The concept of a royal necropolis, comparable to that of the Achaemenids, is unusual in India as well as anywhere else in the Islamic world. The buildings feature a curious device of a pair of outspread wings cradling the crescent moon within which is a disc or rosette and which, similar to the Sasanian royal emblem, crowns the arches of these tombs and other early Bahmanid buildings, indicating that 'Alā'-al-Dīn and his immediate successors had a close knowledge of the pre-Islamic culture and architecture of Persia. They also invented court protocols that alluded to those of the kings in the *Šāh-nāma* and the 'Abbasid caliphs. For example, the symbols of royalty included a black parasol and royal curtain (*čāṭr wa sarāparda-ye siāh*). The throne of Moḥammad b. 'Alā'-al-Dīn, known as the *taḡt-e firuza*, was, according to Ferešta (I, pp. 282, 288), treated like the royal standard of the Sasanians



(Derafš-e Kāviān, q.v.). It was studded with jewels added to it by each sultan, to the extent that in later dates its original turquoise enamel over gold casing on ebony could no longer be seen. From the reign of Tāj-al-Din Firuz Shah (r. 800-25/1397-1422), the sultans wore a gold crown in the shape of a turban adorned with jewels. The various rumors about Ḥasan Gāngu's origins may have been partly responsible for the Bahmanid sultans' insistence on publicizing their claim to Sasanian lineage by every means at their disposal.

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