



KONDORI, MOḤAMMAD B. MANŞUR

KONDORI, Moḥammad b. Manşur, 'Amid al-Molk Abu Naşr (b. ca. 1024; d. 29 November 1064), vizier to ʿOğrel Beg (r. 1040-63), the first sultan of the Great Saljuqs, and, briefly, to ʿOğrel's successor Alp Arslān (r. 1063-72). The *nesba* may refer to the profession of selling frankincense (Pers. *kondor* frankincense) or to a place. There are two villages with the name Kondor, and Şadr-al-Din Ḥosayni (fl. 1180-1225) states explicitly that the one in Khorasan, near ʿOreytī, is Kondori's most probable birthplace (p. 23; cf. Sam'āni, XI, pp. 157-58).

During the 1040s, when Şāḥeb Abu 'Abdallāh Ḥosayn b. 'Ali b. Mikā'il was one of ʿOğrel's first viziers, Kondori's skill in Arabic composition (Ar. *enşā'*) appears to have brought him to a career as secretary (Ar. *ra'īs al-ro'asā'*) in the sultan's chancery (Bowen, pp. 107-108, 110). Toward the end of 1054 or in 1055, Kondori himself became ʿOğrel's vizier, and Ḍahabi (1274-1348) reports that at the time of the appointment Kondori was 31 (Bowen, p. 110; cf. Ebn al-Atīr, IX, p. 526), which in turn suggests a date of birth around 1024. In December 1055, when the Saljuqs entered Baghdad, Kondori certainly was ʿOğrel's vizier. According to Ebn Kallekān (1211-82; V, p. 141, and tr., III, p. 293), the sultan sent his vizier early in his reign on the mission to arrange a marriage with a Khwarazmshah princess. After Kondori had shown the temerity to marry the woman himself, he exonerated himself in ʿOğrel's presence by shaving off his beard and castrating himself (Bondāri, p. 30; cf.



Ebn al-Jowzi, VIII, p. 239; Huseyni, p. 24; Ebn al-Aṭir, X, pp. 32-33; for the improbable placement of this event during Kondori's brief vizierate for Alp Arslān, see Ebn Kallekān, V, p. 141-42, and tr., III, pp. 293-94, and the discussion below).

Kondori was by nature an intriguer. He compromised himself through his ambiguous attitude, when in 1059 Ṭoġrel's half-brother Ebrāhim Ināl led a rebellion in Iraq and western Persia (Maqdisi, 1963, pp. 106-108; Bosworth, p. 44). Yet Kondori managed to regain his master's confidence when he sided with Ṭoġrel in Baghdad in the struggle against Arslān Basāsiri, a local contender. Kondori now became involved in the protracted and tortuous negotiations with the unwilling Abbasid caliph Qā'em (r. 1031-75) to secure for Ṭoġrel one of his daughters in marriage. According to Ebn al-Jowzi (d. 1201), Kondori himself was the first to put the idea into the sultan's head, perceiving it as the counterpart of the marriage already contracted between the caliph and Ṭoġrel's niece Arslān Kātun (VIII, p. 218). Marriage with an Abbasid princess became something of an obsession of Ṭoġrel's later years, possibly because the sultan hoped that one of his descendants might succeed to the caliphate in Baghdad. Despite ostensibly friendly relations, Kondori's own relations with the caliph and his servants were strained, and in May 1061 Kondori opposed the appointment of *Ebn Dārost Majd al-Wozarā'* (1046-93) as the caliph's vizier (Bondāri, pp. 22-23). At first, Kondori negotiated at Ray with Abu Moḥammad Tamimi, a Ḥanbali jurist (Ar. *faqih*) who served as the caliph's envoy, and between May and June 1061 Kondori brought Arslān Kātun to Baghdad because Qā'em was demanding her presence. Prolonged and often acrimonious negotiations followed, and at one point Kondori even threatened to sequester the caliph's estates (Ar. *eqṭā*). Between February and March 1062, Qā'em finally agreed, on remunerative financial terms, to let the sultan marry his daughter, though he stipulated that she should not leave the caliphal palace. But Kondori did not observe the clause that Ṭoġrel could only visit his wife in her father's palace because the princess was transferred to the sultan's residence in Baghdad. The marriage of six months and twenty-three days had nonetheless remained nominally, when it was abruptly terminated by Ṭoġrel's death on 4 September 1063 (Ebn al-Jowzi, VIII, p. 231).

Kondori now endeavored to play the role of the kingmaker, because Ṭoġrel did not have any direct descendants. He promoted Solaymān b. Čaġri Beg Dāwud, the sultan's nephew and his heir apparent (Ar. *wali al-'ahd*), even though he was in fact a nonentity, by proclaiming him sultan at Ray. But Alp Arslān, the



other and much more able son of Čağrı Beg Dāwud (d. 1060), had the support of his skilful vizier Neẓām al-Molk (d. 1092) and had behind him a powerful army in Khorasan. In Baghdad, the caliph, mindful of Kondori's hostility toward him, recognized Alp Arslān as sultan, and the new ruler succeeded at defeating his second rival Qotalmeš b. Arslān Esrā'īl to gain thus control of the united Saljuq dominions. At first Alp Arslān retained Kondori as his vizier. But Neẓām al-Molk was to take his position, and the sultan soon had Kondori arrested and imprisoned. In 1064, after the vast wealth that he had accumulated as vizier had been taken from him, Kondori was executed and his sister buried his decapitated trunk at Kondor (Ebn al-Jowzi, VIII, p. 239; Ebn al-Aṭir, X, p. 31). Ebn al-Aṭir (1160-1233) mentioned that his age at death was "forty odd."

Kondori's opportunistic policies and devious ways thus resulted in disappointment and death for him, in contrast to the much more successful career of Neẓām al-Molk under his masters Alp Arslān and Malekšāh (r. 1073-92). As a leading figure in the Saljuq state, Kondori was much eulogized by contemporary poets, such as his protégé 'Ali b. Ḥasan Bākarzi (fl. 11th century) whom he had employed as secretary in his administration (*divān*). Ebn Kallekān (V, pp. 139-40, and tr., III, p. 292) quotes *in extenso* from a panegyric by Abu Manşur Aḥmad b. Ḥasan, called Şorr Dorr (d. between 1072 and 1073). Kondori himself also wrote Arabic poetry (for a sample of his verses, see Ebn al-Aṭir, X, p. 32).

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