



SHADDADIDS

SHADDADIDS (Šaddādiya), Caucasian dynasty of Kurdish origin reigning from about 950 until 1200, first in Dvin and Ganja, later in Ani.

The study of Shaddadid history is hindered by the paucity of primary sources. The only work specifically devoted to this dynasty is the anonymous *Ta'riḳ Bāb al-abwāb*, passages of which were cited by the Ottoman historian Monejjem-bāši (d. 1702) in his Arabic chronicle *Jāme' al-dowal* (Minorsky, p. 4). This abridgment only covered the period up to the collapse of the dynasty's branch in [Ganja](#) in 1075, leaving us ill-informed about the fate of their successors in Ani (q.v.). It is, moreover, unclear how precisely Monejjem-bāši followed his source, because elsewhere in the *Jāme' al-dowal* he inserted dates of his own calculation in keeping with his chronological treatment of each dynasty (cf. his treatment of the Rawwadids, q.v.).

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i. The Shaddadids of Dvin and Ganja

It appears to be Monejjem-bāši rather than his source who asserts that the Shaddadids were of Kurdish origin, and yet, as Vladimir Minorsky (pp. 5, 33-34) argues, this is very probably correct. They may have claimed descent from “a Kurdish man known as Šaddād,” whom Ebn al-Aṭir (VII, p. 466 *sub*



anno 281/894) mentioned as living in Ḥasaniya, in the Jazira. His army comprised 10,000 men, and he possessed a castle which was destroyed by the ‘Abbasid caliph al-Mo‘tazed (r. 892-902). However, the founder of the dynasty is generally thought to have been Moḥammad b. Šaddād, who first appears in the mid-10th century, as the power of the Mosaferid (Sallerid) rulers of western [Iran and Caucasus](#) was weakening. The failure of Marzobān b. Moḥammad b. Mosāfer’s campaign against the [Buyids](#) led to his capture and imprisonment in 948, and to chaos in his territories. Moḥammad b. Šaddād took advantage of Mosaferid decline to establish himself in [Dvin](#) in Armenia (see [ARMENIA AND IRAN vi. Islamic period](#)), in about 951, accompanied by “a small group of his family, tribe and followers” (Minorsky, pp. 8-9). With the townsmen’s assistance, he was able to build outside the city a strong fortress which allowed him to repel the repeated attempts of the Mosaferids and their Armenian allies to retake the town (Ter-Ghewondyan, pp. 94-95). Doubtless the substantial Kurdish population in the region of Dvin (Minorsky, pp. 124-29) assisted Moḥammad’s takeover. However, it seems that a Mosaferid garrison remained in control of the citadel of Dvin, apparently acquiescing in Moḥammad b. Šaddād’s supremacy in the town itself and surrounding area. In 954, Marzobān attempted to reclaim the lands lost during his imprisonment, and a Mosaferid army, assisted by the Daylamite (see [DEYLAMITES, GILĀN](#)) garrison and a portion of the townsmen, succeeded in ousting Moḥammad, who was forced to flee with his family to Vaspurakan in the Lake Van region, where he was offered refuge by the local Armenian king. He died in 955.

Despite the loss of Dvin, Moḥammad b. Šaddād’s son Laškari seems to have been granted territories in the mountainous Armenian province of Siunik’ by the famous Pahlavuni prince Grigor Magistros (Thomson, 1989, p. 194; Minorsky, pp. 12, 72). Another son, Fażl (also mentioned in the sources by the colloquial form Fażlun), went south to Diyarbakir to serve the Hamdanid dynasty, but on his dismissal in 967 he refused to join his brother in the employ of a Christian master. He ended up in Ganja, the main Muslim town of the south Caucasian province of [Arrān](#), where he was called upon by the local Mosaferid governor, ‘Ali al-Tāzi, to help defend the town against attack from various Caucasian peoples. Laškari then joined Fażl in Ganja, and in 969 or 970, with the support of the local populace, the brothers expelled the Mosaferid governor and Laškari became emir (Ar. *amir*, cf. Minorsky, pp. 15, 25).



Laškari ruled in Ganja for eight years, and was succeeded in 978 by his brother Marzobān, despite his own preference that Fażl should inherit the emirate. However, Marzobān's incompetent rule gave Fażl popular support to overthrow him. After murdering Marzobān and imprisoning his son, Fażl I established himself as emir in 985. During his long reign of 47 years, he expanded the Shaddadid domains in Arrān, seizing Barda'a and Baylaqān in 993. He also captured territory in Siunik' from the Pahlavunis, and re-established Shaddadid rule in Dvin, imposing, in the words of the Armenian historian Vardan, "a tribute of 300,000 dram" on Armenia (Thomson, 1989, p. 194; Minorsky, pp. 17, 40-41). Assertion of Shaddadid hegemony in the east Georgian territories of Kakheti and Hereti provoked a Georgian expedition led by King Bagrat IV, which besieged the city of Šamkur in Arrān around 990. According to the Georgian account, the siege concluded with Fażl I's submission and acceptance of Bagrat's suzerainty (Thomson, 1996, pp. 279-80), while the *Ta'riḳ Bāb al-abwāb* claims that Bagrat lost 10,000 men and was "put to flight" by Fażl (Minorsky, pp. 17, 44). Another clash with the Georgians, occurring probably around 1027 (for the alternative date 1030, see Ebn al-Atīr, IX, p. 409), ended in a crushing defeat for Fażl I (Thomson, 1996, pp. 288-89; Minorsky, pp. 43-44; cf. Kasravi, p. 233). At the very end of his reign in 1030, the Caucasus witnessed a dramatic invasion by the Rus, who had sailed in 38 boats up to Shirvan (q.v.), where they inflicted a heavy defeat on the Shirvanshah Manučehr. At this point, Fażl I was facing a rebellion by his son 'Askuya in Baylaqān. However, his remaining loyal son Musā paid the Rus to help him recover Baylaqān. This mission having been successfully achieved, and 'Askuya killed and executed, the Rus departed for Byzantium (Minorsky, pp. 17, 76-77; Monajjem-bāši, 1958, pp. 31-32, 114-15).

We know very little of the reign of Fażl I's successor, his son Musā, from 1031 until 1034, except that he was obliged to fight off another Rus attack, this time near [Baku](#), although the Shirvanshahs may deserve the credit for defeating the invaders (Minorsky, p. 17; Monajjem-bāši, 1958, pp. 47, 115-16). The *Ta'riḳ Bāb al-abwāb* is deeply hostile to his son and murderer, Abu'l-Ḥasan Laškari 'Ali b. Musā, who reigned for 15 years during which the first Ghuzz (*Ġozz*) attacks on Arrān are recorded. Fortunately, more details can be gleaned from the *Divān* of Qaṭrān-e Tabrizi, who dedicated a number of panegyric poems to Abu'l-Ḥasan Laškari. He continued campaigning against the Georgians and Armenians in revenge for the defeats inflicted on his grandfather Fażl I (Kasravi, pp. 234-35), and was allied with the emir Abu Ja'far, ruler of Tbilisi, whose daughter Abu'l-Ḥasan married (Kasravi, pp. 236-37). Abu'l-Ḥasan also



seems to have had hostile relations with the Rawwadid Vahsudān, apparently because of the latter's sympathetic attitude towards the Ghuzz (Kasravi, pp. 159-60). Later, however, Vahsudān came in person to Ganja to make peace with the Shaddadid (Kasravi, pp. 176-78), presumably in the aftermath of his break with the Ghuzz in 1040 (Ebn al-Aṭir, IX, pp. 384-85). This is probably why Qaṭrān depicts Abu'l-Ḥasan as avenging the Rawwadid Mamlān's defeat as well as Faḏl's (Kasravi, p. 235). This new alliance did not prevent the Ghuzz, this time led by the Saljuq chief Qotlomoš, from besieging Ganja in 1047-48, although they were forced to retreat after 18 months ('Azimi, p. 6). The effectiveness of Abu'l-Ḥasan's Georgian campaigns is also thrown into doubt by the decision of his son and successor Anušervān, who ruled for 2 months in 1049, to surrender a number of important frontier fortresses to the Kakhetians, the Georgians, and the Byzantines (Minorsky, pp. 18, 27-31, 49).

Even during Abu'l-Ḥasan's reign, his power was not absolute. Dvin was under the control of his uncle Abu'l-Aswār Šāvor b. Faḏl b. Moḥammad, who had ruled the city since 1022 (Minorsky, p. 22). Around 1040 Abu'l-Aswār had attempted to assert his power by attacking his Armenian neighbor and brother-in-law David Anhoghin of Tashir, albeit unsuccessfully (Matthew, p. 63; Ter-Ghewondyan, pp. 120-21; cf. Minorsky, pp. 52-53). Abu'l-Aswār seems to have had little contact with Ganja in this period, but rather became enmeshed in the complex and still obscure events in Armenia as the Byzantine empire expanded to the east. The Shaddadid involvement in Armenia was encouraged by Byzantium, which hoped that Abu'l-Aswār's advance would encourage the surrender of Ani, which eventually fell into Byzantine hands in 1044 (Shepard, pp. 290, 292). However, the Byzantines were not minded to make good on their promise that Abu'l-Aswār should keep all the fortresses he captured from Gagik, and decided to press on and attack Dvin itself, probably in 1045 (Shepard, pp. 297-98). This attack ended in a disaster for the imperial armies, and further Byzantine attempts to reduce Shaddadid castles in the region around Dvin in 1046-47 also came to naught (Shepard, pp. 300, 303). The chronology of these events is uncertain, and the main Byzantine advance on Dvin has been put as late as 1049 (Minorsky, pp. 59-64). It seems clear, however, that they took place before Abu'l-Aswār usurped power in Ganja from Anušervān in 1049 (Minorsky, p. 19; 'Azimi, p. 7).

Abu'l-Aswār "restored the name of the dynasty to life after it had nearly died out" by reinstating law and order and with some successes against the Georgians (Minorsky, p. 9). The Ziyarid prince [Kaykāvus b. Eskandar](#) (see



ZIYARIDS) records in his *Qābus-nāma* how in his youth, when he lived for several years in Ganja to fight the Holy War (*ḡazā, jehād*; see [ISLAM IN IRAN xi. Jihad](#)) against the Byzantines, he found Abu'l-Aswār to be “a great king” (Kaykāvus, p. 41). Shortly after Abu'l-Aswār captured Ganja in 1054, he, along with the Rawwadids and other local rulers, was obliged to recognize the sovereignty of the Saljuq sultan Ṭoḡrel (Ebn al-Aṭir, IX, p. 598). However, this may have had little real impact on Ganja, and no mention of Ṭoḡrel or his successor [Alp Arslān](#) was made on Abu'l-Aswār's coins (Lebedev, p. 59). Yet, the Shaddadid position apparently remained too weak for Abu'l-Aswār to accept a request for aid from the people of Tbilisi, the main Muslim stronghold remaining in Georgia. Alan invasions from the north forced him to fortify Ganja, but in 1063 and 1064, he was able to launch a series of major expeditions against Shirvan (Minorsky, pp. 20-21; Monajjem-bāši, 1958, pp. 34-35). By the end of Abu'l-Aswār's reign, Turkish dominance in Caucasia was becoming more concrete. In 1064, Alp Arslān launched a major campaign which resulted in the capture of Ani (Canard, pp. 239-59). Saljuq policy did not, however, aim to maintain permanent control over conquered fortresses and towns in Caucasia. According to Monajjem-bāši (Minorsky, p. 22) Alp Arslān turned Ani over to Abu'l-Aswār, although Ebn al-Aṭir (X, p. 41) merely indicates that an unspecified emir was installed, and Vardan (Thomson, 1989, p. 195) states that Abu'l-Aswār's successor Fażl was granted the city. However, Shaddadid attention was again diverted east with the Alan raid of 1064 that ravaged Arrān.

Abu'l-Aswār died in Ganja in 1067, and his son Fażl II succeeded in his place. A visit in person to Ganja by Alp Arslān and his vizier Neẓām-al-Molk served to reinforce Saljuq supremacy, which had by now become all too tangible, as details of the enormous tribute Fażl was forced to pay indicate: 1,000 camels, 50 horses, finely decorated robes, and a mysterious “garden” (*bostān*) that had trees of gold and blossoms of precious stones weighing 100,000 *metqāls*. This might have been a worthwhile investment if Alp Arslān's promised expedition against the [Alans](#) had materialized, but it was prevented by snow (Sebṭ, p. 136). Fażl II's reign was interrupted briefly when he was captured by the Georgians and replaced by his brother Ašoṭ. Fażl II was restored after eight months, during which Arrān was ravaged by Turks and the rulers of Shirvan. Ašoṭ was, however in power long enough to strike coins in his own name, alongside that of Alp Arslān, indicating he saw himself as more than a regent (Akopyan, pp. 5-6). After his return to power (Minorsky, p. 24, Monajjem-bāši, 1958, p. 54), Fażl II captured the region of Darband ([Bāb al-abwāb](#), see



DAĠESTĀN).

However, Shaddadid rule in Ganja was coming to an end, although the exact circumstances of the dynasty's fall are obscure. The last of the line to reign in Arrān was Fażlun b. Fażl (Fażl III), who usurped the emirate from his father in 1073. According to the anonymous *Ta'riḳ Bāb al-abwāb*, Alp Arslān had assigned al-Bāb and Arrān as *eqtā'* to his slave Sav Tegin, who seized the region by force from Fażlun in 1075, ending the dynasty's reign. Fażlun was confined to the fortress of Kāarak, where he himself had imprisoned his father. However, Alp Arslān would have been dead by this point, and Ebn al-Aṭir's account (X, p. 287; cf. Thomson, 1989, p. 197) should perhaps be preferred: The Saljuq sultan Malekšāh assigned the lands to Sav Tegin, while Fażlun was granted *Astarābād* as *eqtā'* in compensation. Fażlun rebelled, was defeated, and died in poverty in Baghdad in 1091. Minorsky believes that this passage refers to Fażlun's father Fażl II, but Fażlun b. Abi'l-Aswār—as Ebn al-Aṭir calls him—could equally well be a mistake for Fażlun b. Fażl b. Abi'l-Aswār. A completely different version is found in the *Aḳbār al-dawla al-saljuqiya* (Ḥosayni, p. 42), which relates that Fażlun, the “governor (*wāli*) of Ganja,” had accompanied Neẓām-al-Molk back to the Saljuq court. He was assigned the province of Fārs, but later rebelled. The rebellion of a Fażlun in Fārs against Alp Arslān is confirmed by Ebn al-Aṭir (X, pp. 71-72), but the reference to Fārs is probably due to a confusion with the Šabānkāra Kurdish leader *Fażluya* who revolted in similar circumstances (Ebn al-Balḳi, p. 121).

We know very little about how the Shaddadid state operated. The emir often appointed his sons to administer important towns, but their activities rarely obtrude into the Ganja-centered narrative of the *Ta'riḳ Bāb al-abwāb*. Abu'l-Aswār seems to have run Dvin entirely independently from Ganja, but whether Dvin's independence persisted, when he appointed his son Abu Naşr Eskandar over it, is unknown (Minorsky, p. 19). Certainly, as the example of 'Askuya's rebellion against his father indicates, these appointments could offer sons a powerbase to assert their interests, and the prevalence of murder and usurpation among the Shaddadid family is striking even by the standards of the Islamic Middle Ages. Another important political player was the tribe. Despite the loss of Dvin, Laşkari was still responsible for administering the affairs of his tribe for 24 years, while his government of Ganja and its dependencies lasted eight years (Minorsky, pp. 12, 16). The role of the Shaddadid rulers in tribal affairs was not, therefore, bound to their possession of urban centers. Even in the last years of the dynasty, Abu'l-Aswār retained



the sympathy of the Kurdish tribes (Minorsky, p. 21).

The Shaddadids aspired to a more illustrious origin than that of Kurdish tribesmen. The names of Abu'l-Ḥasan Laškari's sons—Manučehr, [Anušervān](#), [Gudarz](#) (Gōdarz), and Ardašir (q.v.)—indicate an interest in linking themselves to the pre-Islamic Iranian past, an interest the Shaddadids had in common with many dynasties of the period. Indeed, Qaṭrān even praises the Shaddadids as descendants of the Sasanians (Kasravi, p. 237). We know, however, very little of any cultural achievements to which the Shaddadids contributed, in contrast to other dynasties who sought to legitimize themselves as heirs to pre-Islamic Iranian traditions. Qaṭrān mentions a palace, built by Abu'l-Ḥasan Laškari and known as Laškari-ābād. The same emir patronized the poet, as did a number of his officials such as the army commander (*sepahdār*) Abu'l-Yosr. Faḏlun too seems to have been one of Qaṭrān's patrons, although the Faḏlun mentioned might have been Faḏl II b. Abi'l-Aswār (Kasravi, pp. 239-44, 258-61). However, alongside Iranian traditions, the influence of the Shaddadids' Armenian neighbors and relatives was strong, hence the appearance of typically Armenian names such as Ašoṭ among members of the dynasty. Indeed, Qaṭrān even underlines the dynasty's Armenian ancestry, calling Faḏlun “the glory of the Bagratid family” (Kasravi, p. 261).

ii. The Shaddadids of Ani

Although the *Ta'riḳ Bāb al-abwāb* dates the establishment of Shaddadid rule in Ani to 1064, according to Vardan (Thomson, 1989, p. 195), Faḏlun received the town from Alp Arslān and gave it to his grandson Manučehr b. Abi'l-Aswār. This is either a chronological or a genealogical impossibility, depending on whether one believes Faḏlun to be Faḏl I or Faḏl II. Fortunately, the Shaddadid's name and titles are known from inscriptions at Ani as Šojā'-al-Dawla Abu Šojā' Manučehr b. Šāvor. The Manučehr of the inscriptions was thus perhaps a son of Abu'l-Aswār, since Šāvor is a variant of Aswār. In one inscription the Saljuq sultan Malekšāh is mentioned as Manučehr's suzerain (Khachatryan, pp. 53-54; cf. Minorsky, pp. 81-82). Little is known of Manučehr's rule. In 1103 the Saljuq sultan Moḥammad, defeated in battle by [Barkiāroq](#), briefly took refuge with him in Ani (Minorsky, p. 82; Ebn al-Aṭir, X, p. 361). Ani was subject to famine and further Saljuq attacks during his reign, and Manučehr's brother was killed fighting against the Saljuq chief Qezel.



Since Qezel had also attempted to seize Dvin, it seems that the latter city was still at least sometimes under Shaddadid control (Thomson, 1989, pp. 198, 201). A good deal of building activity was carried out in Ani under Manučehr, including a mosque, restorations to the fortifications, a large *hammām* (see [BATHHOUSES](#)) and a [caravansary](#) (Thomson, 1989, pp. 195-96; cf. Kırzioğlu, pp. 54-60). Manučehr was also a patron of the poet [Asadi Tusi](#).

Manučehr was succeeded around 1118 by his son Abu'l-Aswār II, whom Vardan (Thomson, 1989, p. 202) accuses of having persecuted the Christians and of attempting to sell Ani to the emir of Kars. In 1124 Ani surrendered without a struggle to the Georgian King David II Aghmashenebeli, and Abu'l-Aswār II ended his days in Georgian captivity (Thomson, 1996, p. 337). However, the rule of the Georgian governor Abuleti Orbeliani was shortlived, and in 1126 Abu'l-Aswār II's son Fażlun IV—also sometimes counted as Fażlun III, but this should more correctly describe Fażlun b. Fażl, the last of the Ganja dynasty (Minorsky, pp. 67, 84 no. 4)—retook the city, promising to observe the rights of its Christian population. He even managed to capture Dvin and Ganja, if we are to believe Vardan (Thomson, 1989, p. 203), but could not hold them. However, he clearly achieved a degree of importance, for he was able to marry his daughter Fażluniya to the Marwanid ruler of Diyarbakir, Naşr-al-Dawla (Fāreqi, pp. 121, 169). Fażlun was murdered by “traitors” following the fall of Dvin to the Turkish emir Qurti around 1030 (Vardan, p. 204; cf. Minorsky, pp. 85-86), and two of his brothers became ruler in quick succession, until the line eventually passed to the sons of Fażlun's brother Maḥmud.

Little is known of the later Shaddadids. Faḫr-al-Din Šaddād b. Maḥmud continued his uncle's search for alliances abroad, in 1154 seeking to marry into the Saltoqid house that controlled [Erzurum](#), and even trying to sell them Ani on the basis that he could no longer defend it against the Georgians. However, Faḫr-al-Din Šaddād betrayed the Saltoqid emir to the Georgian king Dimitri, and somehow the Shaddadids remained in control of Ani despite their precarious position, probably as Georgian vassals. A revolt in Ani forced Faḫr-al-Din Šaddād to seek exile in Syria with the Ayyubid (see [Ayyubids](#)) Asad-al-Din Širkuh, whose father was himself a Kurd from the Dvin region. This move suggests that links between the Shaddadids and the tribal Kurdish population remained important. Faḫr-al-Din lived until at least 1153 (1188 as given by Minorsky is likely to be a misprint), firstly in Mayyāfāreqin, secondly in Surmāri, near Ani, without, as far as we can tell, regaining power. In 1161, the



Georgian king Giorgi retook Ani from Faḡr-al-Din Šaddād's successor Fażlun V (counted as Fażlun IV by Minorsky, pp. 86-89). The Georgians managed to fend off a collation of Muslim forces, including Saltoqids and Artoqids, only two months after capturing the city. However, in the following decade, Muslim coalitions in which the Saljuq atabeg (Turk. *atabāk*) Ildegoz often played a leading role, had greater success in stemming the Georgian advance, and Ani changed hands more than once (Minorsky, pp. 91-95; Thomson, 1989, p. 206; cf. Peacock, pp. 130-33). The Shaddadids are not recorded to have played any role in these struggles, but when Ildegoz (see [ATĀBAKĀN-e ĀḌARBĀYJĀN](#)) recaptured Ani in 1164, he handed the city over to Šāhanšāh, a brother of both Faḡr-al-Din Šaddād and Fażlun, who lost it again to the Georgians in 1174 and himself died in exile (Minorsky, p. 96; Thomson, 1989, p. 207).

The lands across the [Araxes river](#) were in the hands of another member of the Shaddadid dynasty, Solṭān b. Maḡmud b. Šāvor, who left an inscription dated Šafar 570/September 1174 in the citadel at the village of Dashtadem near Talin in modern Armenia (Khachatryan, p. 46). At some unknown point, this individual revived Shaddadid rule in Ani, where another inscription, dated 595/1198-9, gives his name in full as Solṭān b. Maḡmud b. Šāvor b. Manučehr al-Šaddādi (Minorsky, pp. 100-101). Minorsky believes Solṭān b. Maḡmud to be the Šāhanšāh of the literary sources, though he could equally well be another, otherwise unattested, member of the dynasty. Solṭān's inscription at Ani is the last we hear of the Shaddadids, and by 1200 the Georgian queen Tamar had handed the city over to the Christian Mkhargrdeli family

Despite the famed wealth of Ani, this branch of the Shaddadid family never seems to have reached the sophistication of their predecessors in Ganja. Only under the first ruler Manučehr were any [coins](#) issued. These copper coins (Ar. sing. *fals*) were simply inscribed with the names of Manučehr and Malekšāh to highlight Shaddadid subservience to the Saljuqs (Lebedev, p. 110; cf. Kırzioğlu, p. 55), and are in stark contrast to the silver coins (*dirham*) struck in Ganja under Fażl I, Abu'l-Aswār I, and others (Lebedev, pp. 17-70). With the exception of Asadi Ṭusi, no evidence has emerged of the patronage of literature under the later Shaddadids. According to Borhān-al-Din Anavi, who grew up in Shaddadid Ani and wrote Persian poetry, the "city of a thousand churches" remained a cosmopolitan place under Shaddadid rule and he himself learned language and script of each religious group (Ar. *mella*). Borhān-al-Din also mentions that his Turkish father had held the ranks of *sepahsālār* and *laškarkaš* (Borhān-al-Din, fol. 3b; cf. Köprülü, pp. 464-65),



indicating the continued existence of these ranks under the Shaddadids of Ani.

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