



TEKIŠ B. IL ARSLĀN

TEKIŠ B. IL ARSLĀN, ‘Alā’-al-Donyā wa’l-Din Abu’l-Moẓaffar (r. 1172-1200; for his full name, see Ebn al-Aṭīr XI, p. 377; for the meaning of *tekiš* Turk. “he who strikes in battle,” see Bayur), a ruler of the branch of Khwarazmshahs who descended from the Great Saljuq slave commander (*ḡolām*) [Anuštigin Ġarča’i](#) (r. ca. 1077-97) and ruled in Khwarazm (see [CHORASMIA](#)).

Tekiš was the eldest son of Il Arslān (r. 1156-72), and, in accordance with Khwarazmshah customs, held the office of the governor of [Jand](#). After the death of Il Arslan in March 1172 both Tekiš and his younger brother Solṭān Šāh, who was the favorite of their mother Terken Kātun, claimed the throne. Tekiš was able to succeed in the capital Gorgānj, though only with help from the Qara Khitay, the suzerains of the Khwarazmshahs (Ebn al-Aṭīr, XI, pp. 377-78; Jovayni, pp. 289-91, 357; cf. “Kara [Khitay](#),” in *EI*² IV, p. 581). Solṭān Šāh fled southwards to Marv and the northern fringes of Khorasan, where he was to prove a thorn in his brother’s flesh. In 1187 Tekiš appointed his eldest son Malek Šāh governor of Nishapur, and wrested thus the city’s control from Solṭān Šāh who nevertheless kept his hold over towns such as Marv, Saraḡs, and Ṭus until his death in 1193.

Although Tekiš owed his throne to the Qara Khitay, he soon challenged their control and defied the excessive demands of their tax collectors. When the stipulated tribute fell into arrears, the Qara Khitay *ḡūr-kān* Fu-ma, at the instigation of Solṭān Šāh, invaded Khwarazm in 1172 or 1173 to place the latter on the throne, but was repulsed (Ebn al-Aṭīr, XI, p. 378; Jovayni, pp. 292-93). The following year, Tekiš took the offensive and temporarily occupied



Bukhara.

Like other Khwarazmshah rulers, Tekiš could mobilize considerable numbers of Turkish fighters from the steppes for his armies, although the non-Muslim Turks beyond the borders of Khwarazm were often refractory. But his wife Terken Kātun was a Qangli or Qipčaq princess, and she provided him with access to the tribes on the Dašt-e Qipčaq to the north of Khwarazm (Juzjāni, I, pp. 240-41). In the winter of 1195, Tekiš led an expedition to Siġnaq on the lower Jaxartes against Qayir Buqu Khan and his people (Jovayni, I, pp. 304-05). Apart from holding his northern frontiers, much of Tekiš's reign was occupied with fighting his brother Solṭān Šāh as well as the Qara Khitay and the Ghurids along the Oxus and in northern Khorasan.

The Ghurids were endeavoring to expand their power through Khorasan into northern Iran and so al-Nāṣer (r. 1180-1225), after his accession to the caliphate in 1180, supported Tekiš out of fear of a Ghurid advance into central Iran. After the death of Solṭān Šāh, the Ghurid sultan Ġiāt-al-Din Moḥammad (r. 1173-1203) remained Tekiš's main rival in Khorasan and the upper Oxus region (Jovayni, pp. 292-98). Conversely, Tekiš never had sufficient strength to break free from the overlordship of the Qara Khitay, and in 1194, he even had to appeal to the Qara Khitay for help to expel the Ghurids from Balkh. Only after Tekiš's death in June 1200 did the Khwarazmshahs get the upper hand over the Ghurids.

In the last decade of his life, when the Great Saljuq sultanate neared its end, Tekiš embarked on a policy of expanding his power into northern and western Iran. With the approval of al-Nāṣer, who opposed the Great Saljuqs in Iraq, the forces of the Khwarazmshahs advanced in 1192 as far as Rayy, and in 1194 the last Great Saljuq sultan, Toġrīl III b. Arslān (r. 1176-94), was killed in battle at Rayy (Nišāburi, pp. 161-64; Ebn al-Aṭir, XII, pp. 106-08; Juzjāni, I, pp. 242-43; Jovayni, pp. 302-03). The subsequent occupation of western Iran reached as far as Hamadan, giving Tekiš control over 'Abbasid territory in Iraq, and so the caliph was compelled to invest the shah with western Iran in addition to his Central Asian territories and Khorasan (Ebn al-Aṭir, XII, pp. 152-53). Relations, however, always remained uneasy. When Tekiš died, the hatred for his troops led to a general massacre in western Iran (*ibid.*, p. 157), and under his successor, his second son 'Alā'-al-Din Moḥammad (r. 1200-20), the confrontation continued for over several years.



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