



TOĠA TIMUR

TOĠA TIMUR (TOĠA TEMÛR), the last of the Mongol [Il-Khans](#) of Iran (736-754/1336-1353); his name is often given as Taġāy Timur, but the final ‘y’ never appears on his coins (Album, 1984, p. 94). Descended in the sixth generation from Joči Qasar, a younger brother of [Čengiz Khan](#), he emerged from obscurity in the upheavals after the death of the Il-Khan [Abu Sa‘id Bahādor Khan](#) in 736/1335. The notables of Khorasan, witnessing the chaos in Iraq and Azarbaijan and wishing to elect a khan of their own who would enforce his domination there, gathered in an assembly (which Faryumadi calls a *qureltāy*) at Solṭān Maydān, north of Nishapur, convened by Šayḵ ‘Ali Qušči, the governor of the province. Since they had no prince of Čengiz Khan’s progeny to hand, they summoned Toġa Timur from Saraḵs, his family’s residence, proclaimed him khan, and enthroned him in Māzandarān in the winter of 737/1336-7 (Faryumadi, pp. 306-8). Following Toġa Timur’s first campaign in Iraq later that year (below), he was taken into custody by the amir Arġun Šāh, the leader of the Jā’un-e Qorbān, who had Šayḵ ‘Ali Qušči put to death. Arġun Šāh, however, subsequently rallied to Toġa Timur and enthroned him a second time at Nishapur early in 739/the summer of 1338 (Faryumadi, pp. 309-10).

In order to fulfill his ambition of reuniting the fragmented Il-Khanate under his own rule, Toġa Timur had to overcome Šayḵ Ḥasan-e Bozorg, the future founder of the [Jalayerid](#) dynasty, who was the power behind the shadow-Il-Khans in Iraq. Advancing westwards in Ša‘bān 737/March 1337, his troops forced Šayḵ Ḥasan to withdraw into [Arrān](#), overran much of Iraq, and even



gained the alliance of Šayk̄ Ḥasan's puppet khan, Musā. But when the two khans together confronted Šayk̄ Ḥasan's army at a locality which Ahri (p. 163) names as Soğurloq, in mid Du'l-qa'da 737/mid-June, Toġa Timur unaccountably took flight without striking a blow; his aim was possibly to engineer the removal of Musā, whom Šayk̄ Ḥasan defeated and executed. In Rajab 739/February-March 1339, Šayk̄ Ḥasan, seeking an ally against his rival, the [Chobanid](#) Ḥasan-e Kuček, in turn offered his support to Toġa Timur, who again moved west as far as 'Erāq-e 'Ajam. Ḥasan-e Kuček, however, kindled Šayk̄ Ḥasan-e Bozorg's distrust of Toġa Timur by divulging a letter in which the khan expressed his readiness to marry the Chobanids' candidate, [Sati Bik](#) (Sati Beg), so that Toġa Timur, with both Ḥasans ranged against him, was obliged to withdraw in the summer (Ḥāfez-e Abru, *Dayl*, pp. 206-7). This was his last attempt to obtain recognition in the western regions of the Il-Khanate, even though Šayk̄ Ḥasan-e Bozorg, after briefly experimenting with another candidate, [Jahān Timur](#), struck coins in Toġa Timur's name in Iraq and Kuzestān from 741/1340 until 743/1342-3 (Album, 1984, pp. 95, 97-98). Otherwise, for the rest of his reign the khan's authority was restricted to Khorasan and Māzandarān, with [Astarābād](#) as his power-base.

In the east a very different and far more dangerous enemy had arisen (736/1336) in the shape of the [Sarbedārs](#), a popular movement in all likelihood provoked by years of heavy taxation of the province, which had been further exacerbated by Toġa Timur's own military adventures. Initially they acknowledged Toġa Timur's sovereignty, but they subsequently aroused his enmity by attacking his ally Arġun Šāh. The khan repeatedly moved against them; on one occasion, in an engagement near [Bayhaq](#), probably in 742/1341-2, his army was routed, and his brother, 'Ali Kā'un (Ke'un), was killed. Over the next few years the Sarbedārs, after transferring their nominal allegiance for a time to Ḥasan-e Kuček and his puppet khan [Solaymān](#), suffered a number of defeats and periodically recognized Toġa Timur. On the other hand, the khan suffered the defection of Mo'ezz al-Din Ḥosayn, the Kartid ruler of [Herat](#), and of the Jā'un-e Qorbān; but although his authority was thereby greatly circumscribed, he still presided over a force totaling 50,000 Turco-Mongol horsemen, according to [Ebn Baṭṭuṭa](#) (III, p. 70; tr. Gibb, III, p. 578). He thus remained a threat to the Sarbedārs, whose leader, Yaḥyā Karāwi, resolved to eliminate him. In Du'l-qa'da 754/November-December 1353, at the head of a band of 300 men, Karāwi arrived in the khan's camp as if to renew his allegiance and gained access to Toġa Timur's tent with just three of his followers. The khan was treacherously struck down, and his [amirs](#)

and troops slaughtered by the rest of Karāwi's force (Faryumadi, pp. 328-9; Ḥāfez-e Abru, *Cinq opuscules*, pp. 6-8).

A contemporary poet dismisses Toġa Timur as stupid (Aubin, 1991, p. 191). Faryumadi's more favorable verdict (p. 327) is that, despite the turbulence that characterized his reign even in Khorasan and his failure to establish himself in the west, he was a just monarch and one worthy to rule as a successor of Čengiz Khan and that in his time the people of Māzandarān, at least, enjoyed comfort and ease. It is uncertain how easily this can be reconciled with his alleged desire to restore the observance of Mongol law (Naṭanzi, p. 145). Although no further members of the dynasty would be recognized as Il-Khan, Toġa Timur's son Loqmān, who had escaped death at the hands of the Sarbedārs, later sought the aid of Timur-e Lang and was by him appointed governor of Astarābād in 786/1384.

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