

ABU SA'ID, THE RULER OF ILKHANATE AND AMIR CHUPAN*

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ABSTRACT

After the death of Olcaytu Khan, A'bu Said who became the throne at a very young age, was ineffective in the affairs of the state and the administration of the state was left to the viziers. This situation increased the environment of turmoil among the administrators and caused the state to be ineffective in domestic and foreign affairs. Amir Chupan, who was the military commander responsible for military affairs, exerted pressure on A'bu Said and eliminated the rulers. Amir Chupan, who removed the obstacles one by one, took power and ruled the state for ten years. The misconduct of the sons of Amir Chupan and the desire of A'bu Said to marry the married daughter of Amir Chupan led to the separation of the two. Both political and personal issues will result in the murder of Amir Chupan. The killing of Amir Chupan, who had experience after the elimination of the rulers before, will put the state in a difficult position. Neither the political nor the military sense of the power and power of the Ilkhanate State after this period by entering the process of dissolution was completely destroyed.

Keywords: Ilkhanate Ruler, A'bu Said, Amir Chupan, Power

ÖZET

Olcaytu Han'ın ölümünden sonra çok küçük yaşta tahta çıkan Ebû Said, yaşı itibariyle devlet işlerinde etkisiz kalmış, devletin idaresi vezirlere bırakılmıştır. Bu durum yöneticiler arasındaki kargaşa ortamını artırarak, devletin iç ve dış meselelerde etkisiz kalmasına neden olmuştur. Askeri işlerden sorumlu ordu komutanı vazifesini yürüten, itibar sahibi Emir Çoban, Ebû Said üzerinde baskı kurarak yöneticileri bertaraf etmiştir. Önündeki engelleri birer birer kaldıran Emir Çoban iktidarı ele alarak devleti on yıl süre ile yönetmiştir. Emir Çoban'ın oğullarının hatalı hareket etmesi ve Ebû Said'in Emir Çoban'ın evli kızı ile evlenmek istemesi ikilinin arasının açılmasına sebep olmuştur. Hem siyasi hem de şahsi meseleler Emir Çoban'ın öldürülmesi ile sonuçlanacaktır. Daha önce bertaraf edilen yöneticilerin ardından tecrübe sahibi Emir Çoban'ın da öldürülmesi devleti zor duruma sokacaktır. Ne siyasi anlamda ne de askeri anlamda etkinliği ve gücü kalmayan İlhanlı Devleti bu dönemden sonra dağılma sürecine girerek tamamen yok olmuştur.

Anahtar Kelimeler: İlhanlı Hükümdarı, Ebû Said, Emir Çoban, İktidar

1. INTRODUCTION

In 1251, Möngke Khan decided in an assembly to grant the Iran Khanate to his younger brother Hulagu. Hulagu first annihilated the two religious forces in Iran, namely the Ismailis and the Abbasi Caliphate which he considered were the two major obstacles to his ambitions, and then went on to conquer Syria and dominate Iran. With nothing now to hold him back, Hulagu established the Ilkhanate State¹. When Hulagu died in 1265 after the foundation of the state, his son Abaqa Khan took over and ruled the state until 1282. Then his son Tekudar Ahmed ruled until 1284, followed by Abaqa's son Arghun until 1291, after that Arghun's brother Gaykhatu until 1295, then Gaykhatu's

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¹ Rene Grousset, *Stepler İmparatorluğu: Attilâ, Cengiz Han, Timur*, p. 356.

brother Baydu for a short time, and then Argun Khan's son Mahmud Ghazan took over in 1295 and ruled until 1304. After Mahmud Ghazan, his brother Olcayto ruled the Ilkhanate State until 1316². When Olcayto died on 16 December 1316, his son Abu Sa'id came to rule in 1317, when he was merely twelve years old³.

2. THE ORGANIZATION OF THE ILKHANATE STATE AND THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ABU SA'ID BAHADUR KHAN AND AMIR CHUPAN

Abu Sa'id was born in Ujan in June 1305. In 1313 he was assigned as governor to Khorasan by his father Olcayto, under the supervision of Amir Sevinch. He was young in age but here he gained experience on statecraft. The first years of Abu Sa'id's reign were constantly full of feudal conflicts due to his young age⁴. The Chagatai Prince Yasa'ur took advantage of Abu Sa'id's inexperience and invaded Khorasan in 1317. The following year, he went on to invade Mazandaran, but then he was forced to withdraw when he faced the Ilkhanate troops under Amir Husain's command⁵.

In this period, two people were leading the vizier's office; one was Rashid-al-Din,⁶ and the other Taj-al-Din Ali Shah⁷. The conflict between these two viziers was getting greater but one of the two was needed for state management affairs - which would soon bring clashes that would go so far as to hinder state affairs. Taj-al-Din and his supporters wanted to get rid of Rashid-al-Din as quickly as possible, therefore they constantly plotted against him. As part of this plot, they accused Rashid-al-Din of killing Olcayto. This was then reported to Abu Sa'id, who then sentenced Rashid-al-Din to death. Rashid-al-Din was executed on 17 July 1318⁸. Therefore Taj-al-Din consolidated power and became the only vizier of the state⁹. So, Rashid-al-Din, a most valuable statesman with immense wisdom, vast knowledge on science, also a man of letters, author and historian, come to the end of his life. Vizier Taj-al-Din took hold of the state and annihilated whoever stood in his way¹⁰.

During the first years of Abu Sa'id's rule, Amir Chupan, responsible for military affairs and a person of vast political influence, had under his control all military affairs of the state. Amir Chupan's ancestors had been loyally serving Genghis Khan and his descendants since the very beginning. This was known to Abu Sa'id, so he never doubted Amir Chupan. This was also a source of great reputation for Amir Chupan and Abu Sa'id's trust in him paved the way for him to rule the state for 10 years between 1317 and 1327¹¹. When Uzbek Khan, the ruler of the Golden Horde, invaded Shirwan in 1319, he then faced the Ilkhanate troops under Amir Chupan's command, whom he could not resist and he then returned to Dasht-i Qipchaq¹². Amir Chupan severely punished the Mongolian governors and Qurumshi, who attempted to escape from battle when fighting against Uzbek Khan, and even had some of them executed because they converted. Some Mongolian governors, such as Qurumshi and Nasiruddin joined together against the Mongolian Ruler Amir Chupan to annihilate him; despite the fact that they had asked Abu Sa'id to execute Amir Chupan. Vizier Taj-al-Din's requested that the sultan reject this appeal and side with Amir Chupan¹³. Upset by the fact that Amir Chupan was reinstated to his job, Mongolian governors took arms against Abu Sa'id. This led up to a battle, which Abu Sa'id personally fought in, and where rebellious Mongolian governors were beaten on 20 June 1319.¹⁴ Abu Sa'id was titled "*Bahadur*" (Brave) due to his heroic actions in this battle¹⁵.

² Zeki Velidi Togan, *Umumi Türk Tarihi'ne Giriş*, p. 222.

³ Bertold Spuler, *İran Moğolları Siyaset, İdare ve Kültür İlhanlılar Devri, 1220-1350*, p. 135.

⁴ Yılmaz Öztuna, *Devletler ve Hanedanlar*, p. 562-563.

⁵ Abdülkadir Yuvalı, "*Abu Sa'id Bahadır Han*", *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*, Cilt 10, p. 218.

⁶ Rashid-al-Din Fadlullah Hamadani, Ilkhanate statesman, physician, scholar and historian. He was born in Hamadan. Various sources cite his date of birth as 1247, 1248 and 1250. He was the son of a Jewish family engaged in medicine. It is believed that he converted to Islam in his 30s. He was appointed vizier during Ghazan Khan's era. See Osman Gazi Özgüdenli, "*Reşidüddin Fazlullâh-ı Hemedâni*", *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*, Vol 35, p. 19-20.

⁷ Yuvalı, "*Abu Sa'id Bahadır Han*", p. 218.

⁸ Özgüdenli, "*Reşidüddin Fazlullâh-ı Hemedâni*", p. 20; Spuler, *İran Moğolları*, p. 135.

⁹ Spuler, *İran Moğolları*, p. 135.

¹⁰ Yuvalı, "*İlhanlılar*", p. 104.

¹¹ Grousset, *Stepler İmparatorluğu*, p. 386.

¹² Yuvalı, "*Abu Sa'id Bahadır Han*", p. 219.

¹³ Spuler, *İran Moğolları*, p. 135-136.

¹⁴ Spuler, *İran Moğolları*, p. 136; Yuvalı, "*Abu Sa'id Bahadır Han*", p. 219.

¹⁵ Yuvalı, "*Abu Sa'id Bahadır Han*", p. 219.

In 1321 internal conflicts arose in Georgia, which then ceased after Abu Sa'id sent commander Bulud Kaya to the location. In the era of Timurtash, Amir Chupan's son who was governor in Anatolia, Ilkhanate's rule in Anatolia became very strong. Timurtash increased the number of his troops and established dominion over the feudal states established after the Seljuks in Anatolia. Then Timurtash rebelled in 1322 with the aim of establishing an independent state in Anatolia, but Amir Chupan convinced his son not to do this and sent him to appear before Abu Sa'id. Abu Sa'id pardoned Timurtash, and allowed him to go back to his rule in Anatolia¹⁶. Vizier Taj-al-Din Ali Shah died at the beginning of 1324. This marked the first time in the state's history when a vizier died of natural causes. This is because all viziers before had been executed¹⁷. Amir Chupan then extended his troops all the way to Terek in 1325, winning a crucial battle against the Kipchak Khanate. In 1326 Amir Chupan's son Husein beat Tarmashirin, who was invading Khorasan, forcing him to retreat. However, Abu Sa'id was unhappy with acting under Amir Chupan's rule, which he then decided to reject¹⁸.

Abu Sa'id intended to marry Amir Chupan's daughter Baghdad Hatun, who had already been married to Amir Hasan b. Husein. This put Amir Chupan in a predicament. However, when Abu Sa'id could not achieve his desire, an even bigger conflict was started between Abu Sa'id and Amir Chupan. When the Chagatai Khanate attacked Khorasan Amir Chupan asked permission from Abu Sa'id to go to war on Khorasan. Indeed this request was Amir Chupan's scheme because he both wanted to clear the predicament he fell into due to his daughter and also eliminate his opponents in the palace. His excuse was the attack on Khorasan by Tarmashirin, who was then a prince to the Chagatai Khanate. So he took with him into battle, the rulers who were against him and therefore would plot against him in his absence, and had them under his control¹⁹. When finally there was peace, Abu Sa'id's mother, Dunya Khatun, came to him and complained. "Amir Chupan's son Demasq Kaja exceeded his limits and tried to ruin our honor! He spent the night before with Togay Khatun, who is in your father's harem! He sent word that he would spend tonight with me! Find a solution to this! We can't do much else about this! Send word to your commanders and troops, gather them! When that ignoble gets to the castle you can capture him! Then God will know what to do with him and his father!" What Dunya Khatun told him deeply upset Abu Sa'id and he felt humiliated. Meanwhile Amir Chupan was in Khorasan. So Abu Sa'id took necessary measures and precautions. When he learned that Demasq Kaja entered the castle he ordered his troops to capture him. At dawn, Demasq Kaja and Hadji Misri, accompanying him, were seen near the castle's gates. However the gates were chained close. Hadji Misri, accompanying Demasq Kaja, broke these chains using his sword. When they entered the castle they were surrounded by the troops, and then the troops killed Demasq Kaja²⁰. Abu Sa'id ordered that Amir Chupan's relatives be immediately executed wherever captured²¹. When Amir Chupan heard about this, he took flight together with his sons. Meanwhile there were Tatar soldiers under Amir Chupan's rule. When the soldiers under Amir Chupan's and Abu Sa'id's rule faced each other, those under Amir Chupan's rule switched sides. This prompted Amir Chupan to withdraw and run to hide²². Amir Chupan then took refuge alongside Ghiyas al-Din- for whom Emir Çoban did many favors in the past. The governor of Herat was under Ilkhanate rule. But this was a mistake. The wise move for him would have been to take refuge in the Chagatai Khanate, which was an enemy to the Ilkhanate State, but Amir Chupan made the ultimate fatal mistake to take refuge in Herat, which was an Ilkhanate district. In a few days Amir Ghiyas al-Din was ordered by Abu Sa'id to behead Amir Chupan and his son, who was with him, in November 1327 and send the heads to the sultan, with which he complied²³. What this meant was Abu Sa'id was freed of living under Amir Chupan's control, and gained independence in his activities.

¹⁶ Spuler, *İran Moğolları*, p. 136-137.

¹⁷ Spuler, *İran Moğolları*, p. 139.

¹⁸ Grousset, *Stepler İmparatorluğu*, p. 386.

¹⁹ Spuler, *İran Moğolları*, p. 138-139.

²⁰ İbn Battûta, *İbn Battûta Seyahatnamesi*, p. 323.

²¹ Doğan Avcıoğlu, *Türklerin Tarihi*, p. 2163; Spuler, *İran Moğolları*, p. 139.

²² İbn Battûta, *Seyahatname*, I, p. 323.

²³ Yuvalı, "*Abu Sa'id Bahadır Han*", p. 219.

Amir Chupan's remaining sons' fates were also made clear. His eldest son Hassan had already died in war in Harizm²⁴. His other sons, Hasan and Talis went to Mohamad Uzbek. Uzbek Khan made a pleasant home for these siblings, but then their reprobate ways led to their execution²⁵. Timurtash took refuge in a castle in Anatolia and he was in discussion with Melik Nasir, Egypt's sultan. Some time later, when he heard that the Egyptian sultan would accept him, he went to him. When Timurtash was favorable towards those who served the sultan of Egypt, the sultan was upset and thought that Timurtash would compete against him so he had him confined in custody. Abu Sa'id requested of the sultan of Egypt that Timurtash be executed, which the sultan arranged. So Timurtash was executed in August 1328²⁶.

After Amir Chupan was killed and those who would oppose him and be a threat to him were eliminated, Abu Sa'id was in complete control of the state. Abu Sa'id, who was deeply in love with Baghdad Khatun, the daughter of Amir Chupan, arranged to marry her. Baghdad Khatun was then married to Hasan, Abu Sa'id's aunt's son. Abu Sa'id put pressure on Hasan to divorce Baghdad Khatun. Then the sultan married Baghdad Khatun and valued her more than his other wives. Baghdad Khatun influenced Abu Sa'id and eliminated all the other wives²⁷. However, Abu Sa'id later fell in love with his niece²⁸, Dilshad Khatun, and married her too. Baghdad Khatun felt deserted and ignored, so she arranged for Abu Sa'id to be poisoned in Qarabagh on 30 November 1335²⁹.

The execution of the venerable vizier Rashid-al-Din, together with the execution of Amir Chupan, an important and powerful statesman, were very unsettling events for the Ilkhanate State. A few years later Abu Sa'id died too, and there was nothing to keep the Ilkhanate State up and running. The Ilkhanate State never recovered and started slowly falling apart³⁰ due to internal conflicts. Arpa Khan, who was of Genghis Khan's lineage was given the rule of the state. However he could not establish the necessary influence and failed to rally major commanders, so his rule was rather short. Dilshad Khatun was pregnant with Abu Sa'id's child and it was believed to be a male so he would be the next ruler, but Dilshad Khatun gave birth to a girl. This prompted the major commanders and statesmen into a vicious struggle to gain the rule of the state, overshadowed by the princes from Genghis Khan's lineage, sent to rule the country³¹. Ilkhanate State was now far less powerful both militarily and politically, which led to its final demise³².

3. CONCLUSION

Olcayto took over the rule of the Ilkhanate State in 1304, which he held until 1316. When Olcayto died his son Abu Sa'id came to rule in 1317, when he was merely twelve years old. But his young age did not prevent feudal conflicts from happening, even for a few years into his rule. During the first years of Abu Sa'id's rule, Amir Chupan, responsible for military affairs and a person of vast political influence, had under his control all military affairs of the state. As a renowned individual he served Ghengis Khan and his descendants and eliminated Abu Sa'id's governors by exerting pressure on them.

In the era of Timurtash, Amir Chupan's son who was governor in Anatolia, Ilkhanate's rule in Anatolia became very strong. Timurtash increased the number of his troops and established dominion over the feudal states established after the Seljuks in Anatolia. Then Timurtash rebelled in 1322 with the aim of establishing an independent state in Anatolia, but Amir Chupan convinced his son not to do this and sent him to appear before Abu Sa'id. Abu Sa'id pardoned Timurtash, and allowed him to go back to his rule in Anatolia. Abu Sa'id intended to marry Amir Chupan's daughter Baghdad Hatun, who had already been married to Amir Hasan b. Husein. This put Amir Chupan in a predicament.

²⁴ Spuler, *İran Moğolları*, p. 141.

²⁵ İbn Battûta, *Seyahatname*, I, p. 324.

²⁶ Spuler, *İran Moğolları*, p. 141; Avcioğlu, *Türklerin Tarihi*, V, p. 2163.

²⁷ İbn Battûta, *Seyahatname*, I, p. 324-325.

²⁸ Spuler, *İran Moğolları*, p. 143.

²⁹ İbn Battûta, *Seyahatname*, I, p. 325.

³⁰ Şemsettin Günaltay, *İslam Tarihinin Kaynakları*, p. 321.

³¹ Avcioğlu, *Türklerin Tarihi*, V, p. 2165.

³² Grousset, *Stepler İmparatorluğu*, p. 386.

However, when Abu Sa'id could not achieve his desire, an even bigger conflict was started between Abu Sa'id and Amir Chupan.

When peace gradually started to prevail, Abu Sa'id's mother Dunya Khatun went to him, telling him "Amir Chupan's son Demasq Kaja exceeded his limits and tried to ruin our honor, get this sorted out!" which then deeply upset Abu Sa'id and prompted him to kill Demasq Kaja. Abu Sa'id ordered that Amir Chupan's relatives be immediately executed wherever captured. When Amir Chupan heard about this, he took flight together with his sons. Meanwhile there were Tatar soldiers under Amir Chupan's rule. When the soldiers under Amir Chupan's and Abu Sa'id's rule faced each other, those under Amir Chupan's rule switched sides. Seeing this, Amir Chupan had to retreat; he then took refuge with Ghiyas al-Din, Governor of Herat, which was under Ilkhanate rule. This would be the end of him, by his own hand. Within a few days Amir Ghiyas al-Din was ordered by Abu Sa'id to behead Emir Çoban and his son, who was with him, in November 1327 and send the heads to the sultan, with which he complied. After Amir Chupan was killed and those who would oppose him and be a threat to him were eliminated, Abu Sa'id was in complete control of the state. After Emir Çoban's death Abu Sa'id married his daughter Baghdad Hatun, but then fell in love with Dilshad Hatun and married her too. Baghdad Khatun felt deserted and ignored, so she arranged to have Abu Sa'id poisoned in Qarabagh.

The execution of the venerable vizier Rashid-al-Din, together with the execution of Amir Chupan, an important and powerful statesman, were very unsettling events for the Ilkhanate State. The state never recovered and started to slowly fall apart after Abu Sa'id's death. This prompted a vicious struggle amongst the statesmen to gain the rule of the state, which was overshadowed by the princes from Genghis Khan's lineage, sent to rule the country. The Ilkhanate State was now far less powerful both militarily and politically, which led to its final demise.

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