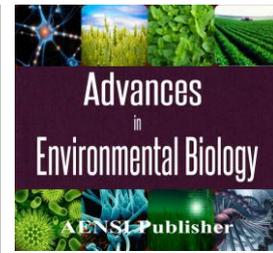




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Donboli, the Ruling Tribe in Khoy

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ABSTRACT

An Important part of Iranian culture and history, in Islamic era, owes the local ruling families and tribes. Donboli tribe is one of them. This family is from among famous Eilat of Iran that has migrated to Iran from Shamat at the west of today's Turkey and from the coasts of Van Lake. Some of them settled at the North West Azarbaijan, and some others settled other areas of Iran including Central part, north east, Kashan, and Khorasan. The Donboli had tribal life and their tribes have been migrating always; but through migration to Iran and settling different parts of the country such as Azarbaijan, majority of them turned to sedentarization, farming and agriculture. The Domboli took the ruling of some parts of Azarbaijan, and they specially governed the city of Khoy and its surrounding parts for a long time. Nowadays a significant impact of their ruling era remains. This paper is to investigate and discuss the historical and religious background of this family, and their cultural and religious influence in Khoy.

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INTRODUCTION

Ancestry and background of family and religion:

There is great disagreement about the ancestry of Donboli family. Some have attributed them to Barmakids and by mentioning the ancestry hierarchy has connected the root of Donboli family to Balkh. Some, like Badlisi, have connected them to Kurdish families and has brought hierarchy of Kurdish ancestry for them. Others have attributed them to Arabs, to someone called Jesus from Syria Arabs, as well as Amryeh Island and sometimes attributed them to the province of Bakhti.

Maybe it is possible to collect their ancestry to the Barmakids and Kurds. When Harun al-Rashid's opinion was bowled over Barmakids and chase and rigor got common on this family, some individuals from Barmakids family took refuge into tribes of Kurds in Syria to avoid the rigor from the Caliphate, according to the fact that one of the sons of Yahya Barmakids named Mohammad has had governance in this area, and became a famous family under their support and over time.

As their historical background, the religious background of the Donboli is also ambiguous. It's been said that the Donboli tribe first had Yazidi religion and were followers of Sheikh Uday bin Musafer from the followers of Marvanyeh. Donboli family has lived in areas like Sanjar mountain at the west of Mosul or around Mosul, and also in Syria and Amryeh Island according to Badlisi. On the other hand, these areas were living and preaching location for Yazidi religion; therefore, it seems that the gradual orientation of the Donboli to Yazidi religion has been paved due to their settlement beside Yazidi tribe. According to Badlisi, when they migrated to Iran and settled in the area of Sokman Abad in the city of Khoy, they were on the Yazidi religion.

Changes appeared in beliefs and religious attitudes of The Donboli over time and with the changes of social and political conditions. The Donboli family had orientation into Sunni religion due to the dominance of the majority of Sunnis in Iran and Azerbaijan at that time. There is also a report about the relationship between this family and Bektashyah sect. It's been told that the elders of Donboli had an important role in expanding Bektashi doctrine.

The relationship between The Donboli and Bektashi and how it has been created is controversial. Since Mosul and its surroundings are one of the leading centers of accumulation of Bektashi Alavian, and Donboli family has also been living in the same areas the other hand, it seems that these orientations emerged from there and strengthened gradually, especially when Nader mirza called them a Shiite sect without reference to a specific time period.

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With the advent of the Safavids and recognizing the Shiism as the official religion of Iran, the Donboli became among the advocates and proponents Shiism due to the earlier closeness between the Bektashi and Safavid, and Donboli rulers like Ahmed Khan, Hossein Qoli Khan, Ja'far Qoli Khan, ... had put great care on holy sites in Najaf and Samarra, and paid tangible help in reconstruction of holy places and shrines and even made family tombs special for Donboli family.

The entrance of the Donboli into Azerbaijan and Khoy:

Information regarding the time of Donboli Family's arrival into Iran and their position before the Safavids is limited to Sharafuddin Badlisi book that was written in 1005 AH.

There is no valid document prior to this era to clear and identify the exact time in which they entered Iran and settled in Khoy region. As mentioned, the Donboli tribe came from Damascus and Amryeh Island to Khoy and Sokman Abad when they were dominated by the Ayyubids at the late Kharazmshahiyan era, and maybe this tribe entered Azerbaijan along with the Ayyubids campaign. Badlisi also notes that "the past Sultans were bestowed Sokman Abad via Ujaqleeq to Jesus (Isa) Donboli." Nesvi also says that Malik Ashraf Ayoubi placed Sokman Abad district as the thiol to the Donboli. This occurred in the early seventh century, and from that time Donboli tribe was responsible for these areas. Later in the period of Aghkoyunlular, Hakkari province was given to the family of Donboli, and the province was long dominated by the Donboli. Some historians have listed an older history for the Donboli, and believe that they had sovereignty over the region of Kurdistan and Azerbaijan from fourth century AH until the era of Sheikh Haydar Safavi. Despite the sparse documents, the history of Donboli tribe and their deployment at the areas of Khoy is unclear.

Before the Safavid period, Donboli family didn't have much position and political influence, and lost the city of Hakkari which had been given to them by Aghkoyunlular in the Civil War with the city's residents and merchants, so they migrate to the neighboring areas of khoy inevitably.

There is no information available on the status of the Donboli concurrent to the rise of the Safavids and their possible reactions to this fresh pair of power, and the silence of the sources can affirm the subjugation of not very powerful force of them against the Safavids. Especially in Chalderan War at the days of Shah Ismail Safavi, which occurred near Khoy, there is no knowledge available about the Donboli and their activities. The first Interaction between the Safavid and this Kurd origin tribe goes back to the reign of Safavid Shah Tahmasb and the first one from the leaders of this tribe whose name have come at Chronicles, is Haji Bey bin Bahlol Bey who got the title of Sultan, and "Alka of Khoy" in exchange for his services to the king, and also the protection of the border between Iran and Ottoman was ceded to him.

The Donboli family had their simple and tribal temperament on their arrival to the city of Khoy and according to the same temperament, they did actions that was surprising and ridiculous to local people of Khoy. Political and social upheavals of Donboli family at this stage, was strongly influenced by events of the central government of Iran. During the succession of Shah Tahmasp to the rise of Shah Abbas, Azerbaijan and areas of Donboli were constantly subjected to attacks and small and large armies of the Ottoman state.

Sultan Ali Bey was another ruling man of Donboli family who had the position of "Ghourchi Bashi" in the state and at the reign of Sultan Mohammad Khodabandeh, the Emirate of Sokman Abad district, Solomon Saray, and a part of Abgha was handed to him. ☒ Badlisi believes that his reign in the region of Khoy, is the beginning of the Donboli Emirate at this region. Although Sultan Ali Bey was in the service of the Safavid Shah, but his sons Nazar Bey and Ghelich Bey went toward Ottoman court and received the government of these areas from them.

At the period of Shah Abbas I, rulers and characters of Donboli had more roles in the events of this period and it was the golden era of their political power to consolidate their governance and authority in Khoy and its suburbs.

Salman Bey the son of Shahverdi Bey, was a descendant of Hadji Bey I, whose twenty year period of government in the era of Shah Abbas I was so prominent that some have known the formation and beginning of the Donboli family Emirate from his era. He had the title of Sultan Soubashy and the emirate of ereas from Chors to Salmas, chose the city of Chors as his government headquarter, and showed great courage of himself in the establishment of peace and security in the region under his governance.

The construction, development and importance of Chors that had been started by Salman Khan, was continued by Ayub Khan and his son Murtaza Quli Khan. The centrality of Chors continued to the collapse of the Safavid government.

Another ruling man of Donboli family that can be named from in the Safavid period is Morteza Quli Khan who did many services in the welfare of his people and repairing the provinces under his command. He had the envy and enmity of the Donboli royalty for his abundant wealth and property, so they took his complaints to Safavid Shah. Shah Soleiman Safavid summoned him to Isfahan to investigate the complaints, but Morteza Quli Khan died in the midst of the way to Isfahan. The Kashan branch Donbolies are descendants of the same Morteza Quli Khan.

Shahbaz Khan was also another famous ruling man of Donboli who was the ruler of Salmas and Chors areas after Morteza Quli Khan, later he was deposed from the Emirate by the conspiracy of Ayub Khan, but he again assumed the affairs of Khoy city with the Ottomans invasion to Khoy, at the request of the people of Khoy and prevented the Ottomans advancements and the destruction of the city and was killed in the battle.

Donboli rulers government continued in Khoy and adjoining areas to late government of the Safavid rulers and was terminated with Ottoman forces attack to Azerbaijani and Khoy areas in the time of Shah Sultan Hossein Safavid.

The era of Afshariye and Zandiyen:

The emergence and power of Donboli dynasty is clearer in the era of Afshariye and Zandian, and great and powerful rulers with lasting and prolong Emirate ruled which suggests that from the fall of the Safavids until the emergence of Qajar, Khoy region and Donboli rulers have enjoyed some kind of political stability.

The governance of the Donboli family in this period has been entitled as "Half King". Although the rulers of Donboli were under the authority and command of the central government, but they had such an authority that the central government such as Zandieh could not easily be involved in their affairs. The prominence of their government in this period was so much that some has blacked out their emirate before then.

Nader Shah Afshar, appointed his son Morteza Quli Khan as the ruler of the tribe of Donboli and surrounding areas after Shahbaz Khan. He participated in the coronation ceremony of Nadir Shah in the year 1148 AH, and was in Shah Afshar's stirrups along with the riders of Donboli in his wars. He also was present in the war of Nader Shah with Abdullah Pasha, the Ottoman commander, and also in the armies to Caucasus, as a commander and military adviser. The people of Khoy rebelled coincides with the end of the reign of Nadir Shah in 1156 AH, due to heavy tax and Morteza Quli Khan, who was appointed as tax collector, himself objected. Nadir Shah sent an army against him to Azerbaijan; the Donboli commander was defeated in this war despite the complicity with the forces of the Ottoman Empire and their help.

Opinions about the death of Morteza Quli Khan are different, some talked about his death in 1157 AH in the tent of Nadir in Yerevan and some others believe that he was murdered by conspiracy of Nadir Shah.

After Morteza Quli Khan, the governance of Khoy and the surrounding areas was transferred to Shahbaz Khan Donboli in 1159 AH, by Nadir Shah. After the death of Nadir Shah, his commanders each took a city or region under his authority and took part in the invasions and wars with each other. Azerbaijan Region was no exception. Shahbaz Khan joined to them considering his best interest and benefit. For example, he joined Muhammad Ali Rafsanjani known as the Fake Sam Mirza, and returned again to his governance with the suppression of Sam Mirza's rebellion, and then he came to serve Ibrahim, nephew of Nadir Shah, who had declared independence in Azerbaijan and Caucasus. But he was defeated in the war with his brother and went to Qom along with Shahbaz Khan.

Azad Khan Afghan invaded Azerbaijan in the year 1165 AH and occupied the castle of Khoy. This time, Shahbaz Khan along with Fath Ali Khan Afshar joined him, but Mohammad Hassan Khan who had gone to Azerbaijan in 1170 AH to suppress the uprising of Azad Khan, could stop Shahbaz Khan to work with Azad Khan with some correspondence. Shahbaz Khan's religious affiliation has been mentioned as the cause of his rejection from Azad Khan, and Mohammad Hassan Khan was able to disrupt their alliance relying on them.

Mohammad Hassan Khan attached Tabriz to Khoy and delegated it to Shahbaz Khan to thank his activities. He joined Fath Ali Khan Qajar after the death of Mohammad Hassan Khan, and in the year 1176 AH they fought with Karim Khan Zand but they failed and Shahbaz Khan was captured. Zand Conqueror gave the governance of the areas of Khoy and salmas to him by forgiving him and appointed Ahmed Bey, his brother, the Bey of the tribe of Donboli. In the year 1177 AH, he gave Ahmed Bey the emirate of Khoy and gave him the title of Khan. Zand Khan took Shahbaz Khan and his sons and some of the sons of leaders of Donboli as a hostage to Shiraz. He spent the last ten years of his life in Shiraz and died in 1187 AH because of polydipsia disease.

Najaf Quli Khan, son of Shahbaz Khan, was at the service of Nadir Shah Afshar from the age of eighteen and was present in all battles of India and Roman. He was appointed as the Bey of all Beys (the governor) of Tabriz by Karim Khan in the year 1177 AH.

The great thing about the reign of Najaf Quli Khan was friendly political relations between him and three kings of Iran called Nader Shah Afshar, Mohammad Hassan Khan Qajar and Karim Khan Zand and he had earned his emirate by their approval.

Najaf Quli Khan died in 1199 AH while bathing and his dead body was buried in holy Najaf city.

Ahmad Khan was the greatest and the most famous Amir among the Donboli. He was a man with good qualities and a strong ruler who was in charge of attorney position of Azerbaijan appointed by Karim Khan. He was a man of perspicacity and competency and came to the scene with the authority after the death of Karim Khan, who established the autonomy of the rulers of cities in Azerbaijan, when the rulers of the cities of Azerbaijan wanted them to be independent.

Ahmad Khan had not only significant political relations in Iran but also his relations in the field of foreign policy with neighboring states, including Russia, France, and even the Ottoman Empire was along with the perspicacity and political wisdom, and this can be seen from his correspondence with the heads of these mentioned government which has come down to us through documents.

Ahmad Khan was killed with conspiracy of the sons of Shahbaz Khan in 1200 AH who had released from hostages after the death of Karim Khan and come to Khoy. According to historical records, Agha Mohammad Khan Qajar contributed in the conspiracy and incitement of the Donboli against Ahmad Khan.

On the day of the incident of killing the Donboli Salman Khan's sons and brother were murdered in addition to Ahmed Khan. But Ja'far Quli Khan, Ahmad Khan's son, fled and attacked Khoy with Muhammad Quli Khan Afshar's help, the ruler of Urmia and killed Shahbaz Khan's sons, who were the perpetrators of the murder, and ended the intrigue.

In addition to the aforementioned commanders, there were other great men from the family of Donboli who had prominent role, including Salman Khan, younger brother of Ahmed Khan, who received the Charter of emirate of salmas from Karim Khan in the year 1176 AH. And also Ali Khan, cousin of Najaf Quli Khan, and Khodadad Khan, the son of Najaf Quli Khan, who was the Bey of Beys (governor) of Tabriz for six years in the year 1196 AH.

One of the most outstanding commanders of the Donboli family in Qajar period was Husain Quli Khan Donboli. Ja'far Quli Khan went to the Caucasus after consolidating power in Khoy and eliminating enemies and conspirators and his older brother Husayn Quli Khan received the regions of Tabriz, Khoy and salmas from Qamhmdkhan Qajar in 1205 AH.

He was a just and polite Amir (commander), and his time was filled with wars and unrest among the rulers and chiefs of the tribes. Hussain Quli Khan welcomed the arrival of Suleiman Khan Qajar, the representative of the central government, to Azerbaijan to strengthen his relationship with Agha Mohammad Khan in 1207 AH. Hussein Quli Khan, who was the governor of Khoy region, had disputes with his brother Ja'far Quli Khan, and conspiracies and provocations of Ja'far Quli Khan against Hossein qoli Khan near Agha Mohammad Khan Qajar, eventually led to the dismissal of Hossein Quli Khan, his imprisonment in Tehran and transference of the government of Azerbaijan and Khoy to Ja'far Quli Khan Donboli. The government of Ja'far Quli Khan has continued till the death of Agha Mohammad Khan.

In the period of Fath Ali Shah, Ja'far Quli Khan's conspiracy against Shah caused Hussein Quli Khan's chance to come back again. During this period, two important events occurred in connection with the family of the Donboli and the central government; one was the freedom of Hussain Quli Khan from prison and his re-appointment to the government of Khoy and the surrounding areas, and the second one was the removal of Ja'far Quli Khan and his escape to the Ottoman realm.

Hussain Quli Khan died at the age of 35 in 1213 AH in 1213 AH. He brought peace to his seat of government through obeying Qajar kings. Ja'far Quli Khan, son of Ahmed Khan Donboli, had contradictory actions that caused scholars and historians not to have good vision about him. Some have known him as the cause of dissatisfaction of leaders of the city of Shaki and even gone far beyond and considered him as one of the causes of the war between Iran and Russia. In addition, his undesirable behaviors led the central government to send troops to suppress him. In this regard in 1213 AH Ibrahim Khan Qajar moved to Azerbaijan with an army behalf of Fath Ali Shah.

At the late reign of the Donboli ruling, Abbas Mirza, Fath Ali Shah's viceroy, was deployed in Azerbaijan; and according to historians, one of the goals of Abbas Mirza's arrival to Tabriz was to decide about Donboli family, to counter the insurgency and movements of Ja'far Quli Khan Donboli, and to consolidate the central government.

In the year 1214 AH, in Moghanjuq war that occurred between the central government army commanded by Abbas Mirza and Ja'far Quli Khan, the Donboli Khan was defeated and fled to the Ottoman territory.

After the war of Moghanjuq, Mahmoud Khan Donboli, grandson of Shahbaz Khan, undertook the responsibility of the government of Khoy regions, but he was deposed after a year.

Ja'far Quli Khan's failure in the battle with the central force was in fact, an end to the semi-autonomous government of Donboli family in Azerbaijan and Khoy. The ruling period of the Donboli had been ended, however some great figures from them had positions in Qajar central government and its military and even in the governance of cities, and Amir Aslan Khan Donboli can be named in this regard. He participated in the war between Iran and Russia and was an Iranian commander in the surrounding of the fortress of Ak-Saray.

Mohammad Sadiq Khan was the commander of ushers. Sulaiman Khan, son of Husain Quli Khan, was appointed as the governor of Shahrood and Bastam in the year 1262 AH, and also was appointed as the governor of Torbat Heidarieh in Khorasan in 1260 AH. Hatam Khan who was Salman Khan's son and Ahmad Khan Donboli's brother, participated in the Russo-Iranian wars.

The Donboli Monuments and buildings:

Donboli family made a lot of effort in the development and prosperity of Khoy, and Ahmad Khan Donboli has started the basis of this present city. Among important buildings is the castle of Khoy which has been built in the form of Iranian-style castles in the year 1171 AH by Ahmad Khan Donboli with the help of Mohammad Hassan Khan Qajar. This castle had four gates and traces of the south gate called the street gate still remains. Ahmad Khan developed the city from west and created lots of neighborhoods outside the city.

The building of old market and Khan's caravanserai, which is attached to it, is also among Ahmed Khan Donboli's. Delgosha Garden at the south of the city of Khoy, which later became known as the Daghlar Badhi, is also one of the mementos of Ahmed Khan Donboli that was built in four floors in 1191 AH.

In addition to the above listed buildings, Ahmad Khan also repaired Khatun Bridge that is placed three kilometers south of holy and repaired holy Shiite Harams in Samarra in Iraq several times.

Khan Mosque and Khan School were established by Hossein qoli Khan Donboli in 1207 and 1208.

Salman Khan Mosque is also of the buildings remaining from Salman Khan, Aslan Khan's son and the grandson of Ahmad Khan the Donboli.

The seven-story garden of Firooragh that is placed six kilometers west of the city of Khoy, was built by Mohammed Bey, the grandson of Shahbaz Khan II.

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