

= Abu 'I @-@ Aswar Shavur ibn Fadl =

Abu 'I @-@ Aswar or Abu 'I @-@ Asvar Shavur ibn Fadl ibn Muhammad ibn Shaddad was a member of the Shaddadid dynasty . Between 1049 and 1067 he was the eighth Shaddadid ruler of Arran (today in western Azerbaijan) from Ganja . Prior to that , he ruled the city of Dvin (in what is now Armenia and northeastern Turkey) from 1022 as an autonomous lord . A capable warrior , and a wise and cunning ruler , Abu 'I @-@ Aswar was engaged in several conflicts with most of his neighbours . During his rule over Dvin , he was mostly involved in the affairs of the Armenian principalities . He collaborated with the Byzantine Empire in its conquest of the last remnants of Bagratid Armenia in 1045 , but when the Byzantines later turned on him , he survived three successive offensives that sought to take Ganja . In 1049 , a revolt in Ganja overthrew his infant great @-@ great @-@ nephew , Anurshirvan . The rebels invited him to take up the family 's emirate , and he moved from Dvin to Ganja . Under his rule , the Shaddadid dynasty reached its zenith . He undertook successful campaigns into Georgia and Shirvan , although the limits of Shaddadid power were exposed by his failure to take over the Emirate of Tiflis and by devastating raids by the Alans . At the same time , his reign witnessed the rapid rise of the Seljuk Empire and the extension of its control over the Transcaucasian principalities . Abu 'I @-@ Aswar became a Seljuk vassal in 1054 / 5 . Although he gained control over the former Armenian capital of Ani through Seljuk patronage in 1065 , this association also paved the way for the dynasty 's decline after his death in November 1067 .

= = Biography = =

= = = Origin = = =

The main historical source on the Shaddadids is the work of the Ottoman historian Münejjim Bashi (died 1702) . Münejjim Bashi considered the family to be of Kurdish origin , a view widely accepted by modern scholars . The family 's founder , Muhammad ibn Shaddad , briefly seized control of Dvin in the early 950s . The family then moved to Ganja , the main Muslim town of Arran , which was seized by Muhammad 's sons Lashkari (I) , Marzuban , and Fadl (I) c . 970 . The brothers successively ruled the city as emirs after that . Abu 'I @-@ Aswar Shavur was the second son of the youngest of the three brothers , and fourth Shaddadid ruler , Fadl . In his long reign (985 ? 1031) , Fadl expanded the family 's control over much of Arran as well as parts of Armenia , capturing Syunik . Fadl was succeeded as emir at Ganja by his eldest son Musa (r . 1031 ? 1034) who was in turn murdered by his own son Abu 'I @-@ Hasan Lashkari (II) (r . 1034 ? 1049) . Abu 'I @-@ Aswar Shavur 's name is an Arabic ? Persian hybrid : " Shavur " is the old Persian name " Shapur " , while his kunya contains the Arabicized form of the Iranian (possibly Daylamite) name " Asvar " (cognate with savar , " horseman , knight ") .

= = = Lord of Dvin (1022 ? 49) = = =

Münejjim Bashi records that at the time of his death in 1067 , Abu 'I @-@ Aswar 's total reign , both in Ganja and before that " over some territories " , had lasted 46 years . " Some territories " clearly refers to his rule over Dvin , known from other sources , meaning that he became ruler of the city in c . 1022 . The city , although part of the Bagratid Kingdom of Armenia , had been left defenceless after the death of Gagik I of Armenia in 1020 and the dispute of his sons over their inheritance , and suffered a devastating Daylamite raid in 1021 which effectively cut it off from the remainder of the Armenian kingdom . In the aftermath , the city appears to have sought the protection of the Shaddadids , and Abu 'I @-@ Aswar became its ruler . From this base , he pursued a virtually independent course from his brother , and later his nephew , in Ganja , focused more on Armenia than Arran . Abu 'I @-@ Aswar was intimately connected with the Armenian princely houses , having married a sister of David I Anhoghin , King of Tashir . His second son even bore the typically

Armenian name of Ashot . Due to his focus on the affairs of his domain , he is not mentioned by Münejjim Bashi until his takeover of the main family seat at Ganja in 1049 . For his activities in the period 1022 ? 49 , the main sources derive from his opponents , the Armenians and the Byzantines .

Abu 'l @-@ Aswar is first recorded by the history of Matthew of Edessa in 1040 , when the Armenian nobleman Abirat , who had become embroiled in the dispute between Gagik I 's sons Ashot IV and Hovhannes @-@ Smbat III , came to Dvin . Fearful of the latter 's displeasure , Abirat with 12 @,@ 000 horsemen sought Abu 'l @-@ Aswar 's protection . Abu 'l @-@ Aswar initially welcomed Abirat and gave him a high position , but soon came to mistrust him , and had him killed , whereupon Abirat 's lieutenant Sare departed for Ani with Abirat 's supporters . Despite their kinship , at about the same time Abu 'l @-@ Aswar attacked David of Tashir . The Shaddadid army , numbering an impossible 150 @,@ 000 according to Matthew of Edessa , captured much of Tashir , but David was able to assemble a broad alliance against Abu 'l @-@ Aswar . David himself fielded 10 @,@ 000 troops , Hovhannes @-@ Smbat III of Ani sent 3 @,@ 000 men , the King of Kapan sent 2 @,@ 000 , and even the King of Georgia sent 4 @,@ 000 , while David also secured the public backing of the Catholicos of Albania . As a result , Abu 'l @-@ Aswar was defeated and evicted from Tashir .

Ashot IV and Hovhannes @-@ Smbat III died at almost the same time (c . 1040 / 41) , and Ashot 's son Gagik II (r . 1042 ? 1045) succeeded them both and began consolidating his position . The chief danger to his throne was the Byzantine Empire , which throughout the early 11th century had been encroaching on the Armenian principalities . Hovhannes @-@ Smbat had even bequeathed his kingdom to the Empire , and after his death , Emperor Michael IV the Paphlagonian (r . 1034 ? 1041) sent troops to capture Ani . Gagik managed to repel the attack , and political turmoil in Constantinople gained him a couple of years of reprieve after that , but in 1042 a new emperor , Constantine IX Monomachos (r . 1042 ? 1055) , came to the throne determined to secure Byzantine claims in Armenia .

To this end , he contacted Abu 'l @-@ Aswar and called upon him to attack the Armenians from the rear . Abu 'l @-@ Aswar agreed , in exchange for guarantees that he would retain his conquests , a request granted in an imperial chrysobull . Faced with a two @-@ pronged assault , Gagik was forced to visit Constantinople . There he was kept hostage and Ani was surrendered to the Byzantines in 1045 . Notwithstanding his previous promises , immediately after taking possession of Ani , the emperor requested that Abu 'l @-@ Aswar vacate the fortresses he had conquered . When the latter refused , a large army under Michael Iasites and the magistros Constantine the Alan , containing numerous Armenians , marched against Dvin . Abu 'l @-@ Aswar let them approach , and then opened the irrigation canals and flooded the plain around the city . Stuck in the mud , the besiegers were easy prey for the Shaddadid archers , who inflicted huge casualties on the Byzantine force . Constantine IX responded by placing Katakalon Kekaumenos and the parakoimomenos Constantine in charge of Armenia . Instead of attacking Dvin , however , the new Byzantine leadership concentrated its efforts on recovering the forts captured by Abu 'l @-@ Aswar . Surmari , Anberd , and Khor Virap fell to the Byzantine army , but Chelidonion (modern Yerevan) resisted until September 1047 , when the outbreak of a rebellion led by Leo Tornikios forced the army 's recall to Constantinople . A peace treaty was hastily concluded , whereby Abu 'l @-@ Aswar agreed not to raid Byzantine territory and to recognize the authority of the emperor .

The successful resistance of Dvin put an end to the Byzantine advance in Armenia , helping preserve the independence of the smaller Armenian realms of Syunik , Tashir and Khachen . Soon after , the regional balance of power was permanently altered with the first large @-@ scale raid of the Seljuk Turks under Qutlumush ibn Arslan Isra 'il and Ibrahim Inal into Byzantine Armenia in 1048 . While the Shaddadids may have been tempted to see in them welcome allies against the Byzantines , they were equally likely to be a threat , as demonstrated by the attack on Ganja by Qutlumush in 1046 / 47 .

Shortly after , in late 1048 or early 1049 ? although some authors have suggested a later date , c . 1050 (A.F. Gfrörer and M.H. Yinanç) or even c . 1055 / 56 (E. Honigmann) ? the Byzantines launched another offensive against Dvin under the rhaiktor Nikephoros . According to the

contemporary Byzantine historian John Skylitzes , this was because Abu 'l @-@ Aswar (" Aplesphares " , as the Byzantines called him) had violated the previous agreement and raided Byzantine lands . The Shaddadid ruler remained ensconced in Dvin , while the Byzantines devastated its environs " as far as the Iron Bridge and Ganja " , forcing Abu 'l @-@ Aswar to renew his previous oath of subservience and hand over his great @-@ nephew Ardashir , the son of Abu 'l @-@ Hasan Lashkari , as a hostage .

= = = Emir of Ganja (1049 ? 67) = = =

In 1049 , Abu 'l @-@ Aswar 's nephew Lashkari , the emir of Ganja , died , after a troubled reign of 15 years . He was succeeded by his infant son Anushirvan , but actual power was in the hands of his chamberlain (hajib) , Abu Mansur . After barely two months , a group of elders opposed to the new regime 's policies deposed Abu Mansur while he was at Shamkur and called upon Abu 'l @-@ Aswar to assume control of Ganja as well . Abu 'l @-@ Aswar agreed and abandoned Dvin , which had become too exposed to the Byzantines . The city was left in the hands of a series of governors until 1053 , when he appointed his son Abu Nasr Iskandar as ruler of the city and the surrounding regions . The Shaddadid ruler first set things in order in Shamkur , and then entered Ganja , taking possession " all the lands of Arran and its fortresses " .

At this point in his career , Abu 'l @-@ Aswar had achieved a considerable reputation as a ruler and a warrior ; the Ziyarid prince Keikavus (r . 1050 ? 1087) , who later wrote a well @-@ known mirror for princes , the Qabusnameh , even came to Ganja and spent several years at the Shaddadid court to participate in the jihad against the Christians , after having spent eight years at the court of Maw 'dud of Ghazni . According to Keikavus , his host was " a great king , a man firm and clever , [...] just , courageous , eloquent dialectician , of pure faith and far @-@ sighted " . This estimate was shared by the Byzantines , for Skylitzes likewise calls him " as clever a strategist as anybody else , capable of thwarting the enemies ' tactics and policies " , while Münejjim Bashi writes that after his takeover of Ganja , " Abu 'l @-@ Aswar [...] restored the name of the dynasty to life after it had nearly died out . He became strong and the situation of the subjects and the army became orderly . "

According to Münejjim Bashi , in 1053 , Abu 'l @-@ Aswar seized the (unidentified) fortress of Basra from the Georgians , and refortified and garrisoned it with many men . In 1054 / 5 , along with many of the neighbouring rulers , he became a vassal of the Seljuk Sultan Toghrul Beg (r . 1037 ? 1063) , although at least initially the impact of Seljuk overlordship seems to have been light , as neither Toghrul nor his successor Alp Arslan (r . 1063 ? 1072) appeared on Shaddadid coinage at this time . In 1062 , Abu 'l @-@ Aswar received a delegation from the Emirate of Tiflis , an isolated Muslim stronghold within the Christian Georgian kingdoms . Following the death of Emir Ja 'far ibn Ali , the locals had evicted his quarrelling sons , and now asked Abu 'l @-@ Aswar to assume control of the city . The Shaddadid ruler was inclined to accept , but his vizier , Bakhtiyar ibn Salman , dissuaded him by warning that such an action would disperse his limited forces . After Abu 'l @-@ Aswar 's refusal , Tiflis was occupied by the Georgians , until they were evicted by Alp Arslan in 1068 . This event highlighted the limitations of Shaddadid power , which was further demonstrated by an Alan invasion through the Darial Pass in the same year : more than 20 @,@ 000 inhabitants of Arran were carried off as slaves according to Münejjim Bashi 's account . In response to the Alan threat , Abu 'l @-@ Aswar built a wall and moat around the suburb (rabad) of his capital Ganja . The gates installed by Abu 'l @-@ Aswar for this new fortification were carried off by the Georgians under Demetrius I in 1139 , and are still preserved at the Gelati Monastery in modern Georgia . In 2012 ? 14 , replicas of the original gates were installed in Ganja 's Museum of Archaeology and Ethnography .

At the same time , Abu 'l @-@ Aswar 's relations with his neighbour , Shirvanshah Fariburz I (r . 1063 ? 1069) , abruptly deteriorated . The two dynasties were linked by family ties ? Fariburz 's predecessor , Sallar (r . 1050 ? 1063) , had even been married to a daughter of Abu 'l @-@ Aswar ? but now the Shaddadid ruler launched a series of invasions against Shirvan . In spring 1063 , Abu 'l @-@ Aswar captured the Quylamiyan castle , marched on to the capital of Shirvan , Shamakhi ,

defeated the Shirvanshah 's forces in battle , plundered their camp , and captured his own daughter , her treasure and retinue . He then withdrew to Arran , but in July returned to Shirvan to raid it . In the next year , he again invaded Shirvan and captured a number of fortresses , while the local Kurdish tribes went over to him . After his return to Ganja , a peace treaty was signed with the Shirvanshah in June / July 1064 , whereby Abu 'l @-@ Aswar returned Quylamiyan in exchange for 40 @,@ 000 gold dinars .

In 1064 , the Seljuk sultan Alp Arslan invaded Byzantine Armenia and took Ani . Abu 'l @-@ Aswar himself led raids into the area , capturing the unidentified fortress of Wyjyn (" one of the best in Armenia " according to Münejjim Bashi) . Münejjim Bashi further records that Alp Arslan handed over control of Ani to him ; Ibn al @-@ Athir reports the transfer to an unnamed emir , while Vardan Areveltsi records that the fortress was granted only to Abu 'l @-@ Aswar 's son and successor , Fadl . Immediately after his return to Ganja and the dispersal of his army , however , the Alans again crossed the Darial Pass in October 1065 , and , allied with the inhabitants of Shakki , raided Arran . At Shamkur they killed more than 200 volunteers for the jihad , and raided even to the very gates of Ganja itself , before moving on to raid the environs of Barda 'a . Abu 'l @-@ Aswar and his troops preferred to remain within the protection of the walled cities rather than face the raiders in the field , and the Alans reached all the way to the Araxes before turning back north , along with the prisoners they had taken .

Abu 'l @-@ Aswar died on 19 November 1067 , and was buried at the main mosque of Ganja . He was succeeded by his eldest son , Fadl II , whom he had already announced as his heir , and to whom the oath of allegiance (bay 'ah) had been taken by the Shaddadid family , the army and the people of Arran . Apart from Fadl , Abu 'l @-@ Aswar had four more sons ? Ashot , Iskandar , Manuchihr , and Marzuban ? as well as an unnamed daughter , wife of the Shirvanshah Sallar .

Abu 'l @-@ Aswar 's reign represented the zenith of the Shaddadid dynasty , but their fall began almost immediately after his death : the Seljuks strengthened their grip on Arran and the other principalities of the region , and Alp Arslan visited Ganja in person to extract an enormous tribute . Fadl II 's reign was troubled ? at one point he was captured and held by the Georgians for eight months ? but he managed to capture Derbent . Fadl II was overthrown by his son Fadlun (Fadl III) in 1073 , who was in turn deposed in 1075 by the Turkish ghulam Sav Tegin , to whom the Seljuks had assigned control of Arran and Derbent . This ended the family 's rule over Arran , but a junior line , led by Abu 'l @-@ Aswar 's third son Manuchihr , continued to govern Ani as emirs , initially as Seljuk , and later as Georgian , vassals . This last branch of the Shaddadids maintained a precarious independence until the end of their dynasty in c . 1200 .