The Political history of the Samanid state

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ABSTRACT

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The Samanids (204/819-395/1005) were the last Iranian dynasty to rule Eastern Iran before the advent of the Turkish Muslim states which dominated the central Islamic lands during the medieval period. The Samanid state was the largest and most prosperous of the 'Abbasid successor states and one of the most vigorous culturally. Yet like all successor states, the Samanids were beset by a high level of political instability which led finally to the dismemberment of the state between two Turkish dynasties, the Qarakhanid steppe rulers and the Ghaznavids, former vassals of the Samanids. This thesis explores the causes of this instability and attempts to account for the fall of the state, using the works of V.V. Barthold and R.N. Frye as points of reference. Barthold's hypothesis, which concludes that the Samanids and their bureaucrats were overwhelmed by an alliance of military and scholarly interests before the arrival of the Qarakhanids, is rejected. Instead the fatal weakness in the state structure is sought in the institution of patronage which controlled appointments to provincial governorships.

Chapter one presents a survey of the sources with particular reference to the chronicle literature and the geographers, Ištakhrī, Ibn Ḥawqal and Muqaddasī; the unpublished works of the chronicler Ibn Ẓāfir al-Azdī (d. 613/1216) and Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-Jalīl al-Samarqandī's 12th century biographical dictionary of Transoxanian scholars are also analysed. Chapter two comprises an overview of the physical and human geography of the 10th century mashriq. The following six chapters form a narrative of the political history of the dynasty from the obscure pre-monarchical period to 395/1005. Chapters five and six are devoted to the reign of Naṣr ibn Āḥmad, a watershed in the Samanid period during which the earliest works of Persian literature were composed and many senior courtiers converted to Ismaʿīlism. Chapter nine examines the Samanids' sources of revenue, the state apparatus, the nature of Samanid politics and the ways in which rulers sought to legitimize their authority and Chapter ten summarizes my conclusions regarding Barthold's interpretation of the fall of the dynasty. The appendices include prosopographical studies of members of the state elite, notes on the Ismaʿīlī rebellion of 295/907, the history of the Khwārazmshāhs and an edition of Ibn Ẓāfir al-Azdī's chapter on Samanid history.
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Preface

The initial idea behind this thesis was to address a twofold task; my intention was to write a narrative of the political history of the Sāmānid state, based on a re-examination of the sources used by Barthold in his *Turkestan down to the Mongol invasion* and then to compare the Sāmānid model with other successor dynasties, with a view to elaborating some general rules concerning the process of state formation among the states which emerged from the 'Abbāsid caliphal empire. However it soon became clear that it would be impossible to go beyond the first stage of this project. For a start, examination of Sāmānid historiography yielded some surprisingly rich veins of new material, both in published primary and secondary sources and in recently-discovered manuscripts. In addition, the secondary sources for the history of other successor dynasties proved too uneven to provide a workable basis for comparison with the Sāmānid state. I therefore decided to concentrate on the political history of the Sāmānid state and to confine my discussion of wider issues to the concluding chapters.

I wish to acknowledge the generous assistance given me by many scholars over the past four years. Above all, I would like to thank my supervisor, Dr Patricia Crone, without whose unflagging commitment, this thesis would
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no time or effort in giving help when it was needed. I
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Among others, Professor Wilferd Madelung helped with
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responsibility alone; indeed, some of them might have been avoided had I more frequently taken to heart the advice of teachers and colleagues.

I would also like to acknowledge the financial support of the British Academy which awarded me a major state studentship; the British Institute of Persian Studies which supported me for one year; the World of Islam Festival Trust which gave me a grant to enable me to complete the thesis; St John's College, Oxford, which has provided both financial assistance and surroundings conducive to study.

Finally a heartfelt word of thanks to my family whose stoical support and material assistance carried me through difficult times.
Chapter one

THE SOURCES
In his *Istoriya Turkestana* Barthold noted that "our evidence for the life of Turkestan in the Sāmānid era is...exceptionally rich, not only by comparison with the preceding era, but also the succeeding eras" (1). This assessment remains accurate to this day.

The primary sources for the history of the Sāmānids cover a wide range of literary genres, including chronicles, local, regional and city histories, one Mirror for Princes, several biographical dictionaries of scholars and notables, as well as geographies and anthologies of poetry and anecdotal material. Whereas the history of Umayyad and 'Abbāsid rule in the *mashriq* was largely recorded by historians who were not natives of the region, the Sāmānids presided over an intellectual renaissance which produced a profusion of native historians and scholars.

Yet Barthold's enthusiastic appraisal should not be taken to mean that the Sāmānid historian is particularly well served, for the sources share all the characteristics common to classical Muslim historiography. That is to say that they are narrative rather than analytical and legitimatory rather than factual; they tell us a good deal about relations

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between people but have little to say about
institutions; they are strikingly lacking in portrayals
of individuals and their motives, poor on causal
relationships and highly unreliable in their
presentation of statistics. They cover the main events
of Sāmānīd political history, the succession of rulers
and their relationship with foreign powers well enough.
But they leave the actors faceless and offer only the
barest outline of the socio-political world of which
they formed a part; like most Muslim sources, they lend
themselves best to the study of high cultural ideas.
Analyses of Sāmānīd history thus tend to suffer from a
schematizing tendency, to which I must plead guilty too;
relevant facts are so few and all the chance elements
involved in human behaviour so poorly documented, that
one is inclined to use every recorded incidence as an
illustration of a trend. Thus one mention of dihqaņs in
a possibly quite accidental context determines whether
the Sāmānīds owed their power to dihqaņs or not; one
revolt triggered for possibly wholly unknown reasons
becomes symptomatic of a general grievance. Aware though
one is of the shortcomings of this method, it is not
easy to see how one can avoid it.

The sources for the Sāmānīds are also on a par with
those for Islamic history at large in that they never
stopped being written. The distinction between primary
and secondary sources is a problematic one in a
traditionist culture; there is in principle no reason
why information of contemporary origin should not be
preserved in a chronicle compiled a thousand years after the event (2). But in practice my aim has been to collate all the published sources up to, and including, the major works of Timurid historiography, such as Mīrkhwānd and Khwāndamīr's chronicles. The main sources in question are the following.

The early chroniclers: Al-Sallāmī (d. circa 350/961) (3)

Abū 'Alī Ḥusayn ibn Ṭāhā al-Sallāmī (4) wrote a history entitled Taʿrīkh wulāt khurāsān, which came to an end towards the middle of the 10th century. This work has not survived but it was used by many later authors, including the two major chroniclers of the first half-century of Sāmānīd rule, Gardīzī and Ibn al-Athīr (5),

2 As P. Crone says with reference to the first centuries of Islamic history; "in theory one ought to read the entire corpus of Muslim literature on the period before venturing an opinion on what it was about" (id, Slaves on horses; the evolution of the Islamic polity, Cambridge, 1980, p. 11). The same is true of later periods; see for example C.E. Bosworth's use of the 19th century history Tārīkh-i kirmān (= Tārīkh-i salāriyya) by Ahmad 'Alī Khan Vazīrī in his study of the Ilīyāsid dynasty of Kirmān (id, "The Banū Ilyas of Kirmān", Iran and Islam, ed. Bosworth, Edinburgh, 1971, p. 112).


5 See below, p. 13.
as well as by Yāfi‘ī (6), Juwaynī (7), ‘Awfī (8), Ibn Khallikān (9), Yaqūt (10), Nizāmī ‘Arūḍī (11) and Manīnī, the author of the Ottoman period who wrote a commentary on ‘Utbi’s Kitāb al-yanīnī (12).

The only information we possess about Sallāmī’s life concerns the identity of his patrons, the Muḥtājīd amirs of Șaghāniyān, Abu Bakr Muḥammad ibn Muẓaffar ibn Muḥtāj al-Șaghānī and his son, Abū ‘Alī ʿAbdallah ibn Muḥammad (13). It appears that loyalty to his Muḥtājīd patrons and their Samānīd sovereigns resulted in his writing a rather partisan account of Samānīd history; one illustration of this is his account of Abū ‘Alī Ibn al-ʿAṭībī’s Șaghānī’s revolt against Nuh ibn Naṣr (14); another is the fact that he makes no mention of the Qarmatī scandal at Naṣr ibn Ahmad’s court (15).

7 Cf. Barthold, Turkestan, p. 10, note 5.
11 Cf. Chaṭar maqāle, tr. Browne, p. 27.
12 Manīnī quotes Sallāmī on the pre-monarchical history of the dynasty and notes that his history (Ta‘rīkh al-wulāt) was used by an earlier commentator on ‘Utbi’s history, Șadr al-Afāḍil (Al-fath al-wahbī ‘alā ta‘rīkh abī naṣr al-‘utbī, vol. i, Cairo, 1869, pp. 348 and 165).
13 Tha‘ālibī, Yatīmat al-dahr, vol. ii, section 4, Cairo, 1934, p. 90. For the Muḥtājīds, see appendix; the Samānīd state elite, s.v. "Muḥammad ibn Muẓaffar".
14 See below, chapter 7, pp. 213ff for a comparison of Sallāmī and Miskawayh’s accounts of the rebellion.
15 See below, chapter 6, note 56.
We know nothing for certain about Sallāmī’s sources for the Sāmānids (16), though it is possible that he either shared a common source with Narshakhpī or copied from his work (17). Nor do we know whether his work was divided by regnal period or arranged annalistically.

**Al-‘Utbī (350/961-427/1036 or 431/1040)**

Abū Naṣr Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd al-Jabbār al-‘Utbī’s *Kitāb al-yāmīnī* (18) is a history of the reign of Yāmīn al-Dawla wa Aḥmūd ibn Sebuktégīn al-Ghaznawī which begins with an account of the last years of Sāmānīd rule in Khurāsān. Just as Sallāmī’s history of the early Sāmānīd period formed the basis of the

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16 But cf. Barthold’s suggestion that he obtained some of his information on the Saffārids from ‘Amm r ibn Layth’s wazir, Abī Rabi’a, via Ibrāhīm ibn Muḥammad Bayhaqī (Barthold, "Zur Geschichte der Saffariden", p. 175). It is likely that he also relied on eyewitness reports for much of his history of the Sāmānīds.

17 The similarities between the two histories are not pronounced but they deserve mention. Many of them occur in the pre-monarchical history of the dynasty, cf. Ghassān ibn ‘Abbād’s appointment of the sons of Asad to governorships—both our sources mention the locations of only Nūh and Abīd’s governorships although they differ as to the details of the latter (Narshakhpī, *ibid*, p. 105 = p. 76; Sallāmī in Manīnī, *Al-fath al-wahbī*, vol. i, p. 348); Abī ‘Abdallāh ibn Abī Hafṣ’ appeal to Naṣr ibn Ahmad for a governor to rule Bukhārā (Narshakhpī, *Tārikh-i bukhārā*, p. 108 = p. 79; Sallāmī in al-Manīnī, *Fath*, vol. i, p. 348); Naṣr’s appointment of Ismā’īl as his khālīfa (Narshakhpī, *ibid*, p. 118 = p. 86; Sallāmī in Manīnī, *Fath*, *ibid*). One example of such correspondence in the dynastic period is the story of the lion which guarded the tent of Abīd ibn Ismā’īl (Narshakhpī, *ibid*, p. 128f. = p. 94; Ibn al-’Athīr [from Sallāmī], *Kāmil*, vol. viii, p. 77; Gardīzī [from Sallāmī], *Zayn al-akhbār*, ed. Ḥabībī, Tehran, 1347, p. 150).

18 The text I have used is printed on the margin of Manīnī’s commentary (see above, note 12).
accounts of later chroniclers, so too 'Utbi's history was extensively copied by the later writers including Gardizi, Ibn al-Athir, Hamdallāh Qazvini, Mīrkhwān and Khwāndamīr.

'Utbi tells us that he wrote the history because he wanted the people of Iraq to know about the glorious deeds of his Ghaznavid patrons (19). He compares his book with another dynastic history, the *Kitāb al-tājī* by Abū Ishaq Ibrāhīm ibn Hilāl al-Ṣābi', written in Baghdad for the Būyid 'Adud al-Dawla (20). Unlike al-Ṣābi, however, he chose to write his history in the elaborate and ornate style of Arabic *saj*, which would be admired by udabā' throughout the Islamic world. His target audience was undoubtedly the caliphal court at Baghdad, where Mahmūd was celebrated as the caliph's principal ally in his struggle against the Būyid rulers of Iraq.

'Utbi portrays Mahmud and his father, Sebuktegīn, as pious Muslim monarchs who secured Eastern Iran for the 'Abbasid caliph against the threat of the invading Qarākhānīd Turks. In his introduction, 'Utbi defines the role of the sultān as the "deputy of Allāh on earth" (21) and presents his patrons' credentials as legitimate Muslim rulers; these comprised a proper respect for Islam and the ability to fight for its defence both

19 He makes the point that in his time the Persian panegyrist at the Ghaznavid court were writing verses in praise of their patrons, but that these verses were unknown beyond the borders of the *masīrīq* (ibid, p. 52f).
20 ibid, p. 48.
21 Cf. ibid, in Manini, *Fath*, vol. i, p. 28: ..al-sultān khālīfat allāh fī ardihi 'alā khaliqihi wa aminuhu 'alā rī'āyyat haqqihi bi-mā qalladahu min sayfihi wa makkana la-hu fī ardihi.
within and without its domains (22). 'Utbi naturally takes pains to stress that the Ghaznavids came to power through a ḍarb- al-ṭarīq transfer of dynastic authority from the Sāmānids. Yet the fact of the matter was that Mahmūd himself defeated a Sāmānīd army in battle and took Khurāsān by force from the Sāmānīd 'Abdalmalik ibn Nūḥ, just as the Sīmjūrid governor of Khurāsān, Abū 'Alī Muẓaffar ibn Muḥammad, had tried to do before him (23).

'Utbi glosses over this fact, telling us that Mahmūd attacked 'Abdalmalik because he felt compelled to avenge the unlawful deposition and blinding of 'Abdalmalik's predecessor, Mansūr ibn Nūḥ, by 'Abdalmalik’s Turkish mentors, Fā’iq and Bektūzūn (24). He says that the Sāmānīd dynasty had all but come to an end when Mansūr was deposed and that 'Abdalmalik was simply the creature of his Turkish advisers (25). Now while there is evidence to suggest that the mamlūk servants of the Sāmānids, the Sīmjūrids and Fā’iq in particular, were largely responsible for the collapse of the dynasty, it is also apparent that 'Utbi ignores the strategic imperatives which prompted Mahmūd’s father, Sebuktegin, to intervene in Khurāsān. The Ghaznavids were no doubt intent on

22 The young Mahmūd is said to have spent his childhood learning the Qurān and the use of the sword (ibid, p. 33).
23 See below, chapter 8, p. 262.
24 ibid, p. 300: note that Mahmūd is depicted as the instrument of Allāh’s wrath; fa-ābā Allāh illā an yantaqim minhum bi-sayf sayf al-dawla jaza’an ‘an fi’lihim al-fazī’. 
25 'Utbi says that the Sāmānids were dominated by envious and hostile advisers (ibid, p. 291). He describes 'Abdalmalik as a decoy (milwāh) whom the Turks used to entrap the goodwill of those around them (ibid, p. 301).
preventing the imminent emergence of an independent Simjurid state which would have threatened their western flank; indeed the Ghurid historian, Jūzjānī, reports that Sebuktegin had already sent an army against Fā'iq in Balkh before Nūh ibn Mansūr called on him to come to his aid against the rebels (26). While we have no other sources with which to compare *Utbī’s account, it is important to bear in mind that his version of events was essentially designed to present the Ghaznavids in the best possible light and to cast their enemies as the architects of the Sāmānids’ downfall (27).

It should be noted that Jurbādhqānī’s Persian translation of the Kitāb al-yamīnī contains some additional information which does not appear in the original work (28).

The later chroniclers: Ibn al-Athīr and Gardīzī

The two most complete sources for the political history of the Sāmānids are the Zayn al-akhbār by ‘Abbād al-Ḥayy ibn al-Dāḥḵāk Gardīzī, a contemporary of the Ghaznavid sultan ‘Abbād al-Rashīd (440/1049-444/1053) (29) and Al—

26 See below, chapter 8, p. 254.
27 *Utbī may have had personal reasons for wanting to blacken the Simjurids’ name; after all it was the Simjurid Abū’l-Hasan Simjūrī who ordered the assassination of his relative, the Sāmānid wazir Abū’l-Husayn *Utbī (d. 981/371) (See below, chapter 8, p. 245).
kāmil fī‘l-ta‘rīkh by the 13th century historian, ‘Izz al-Dīn ‘Alī ibn Muḥammad Ibn al-Athīr (555/1160-630/1233). Their accounts are similar; this similarity on occasion extends to very close correspondence, suggesting dependence on a common source. For the early history of the Sāmānids, up to the end of Nūḥ ibn Naṣr’s reign, the common source is Sallāmī’s Ta‘rīkh wulāt Khurāsān. Some of Gardīzī’s passages are duplicated in Ibn Khallikān’s Wafayāt al-a‘yān, where they are explicitly attributed to Sallāmī (30); and a passage in Ibn al-Athīr’s Kāmil is also to be found in Manīnī’s commentary on ‘Utbī’s history, where Manīnī names Sallāmī as his source (31).

However the two works do differ in some respects. Gardīzī’s Zayn al-akhbār is a concise Persian general history written in Persian and organized by the reigns of the amirs, whereas Ibn al-Athīr’s Kāmil is a universal chronicle composed in Arabic and organized annalistically. The latter thus presents each year’s events separately, though he does occasionally exceed his brief where the continuity of his narrative demands it. Gardīzī’s account is sometimes the more detailed. For example, he offers fuller biographies than does Ibn al-Athīr of local worthies such as Ahmad ibn Sahl al-Kāmkārī (32).

30 Barthold, Turkestan, p. 21.
32 See appendix: the Sāmānīd state elite, s.v. "Ahmad ibn Sahl".
and Abū 'Abdallāh al-Jayhānī (33), whose exploits were no doubt of greater interest to Gardīzī's Iranian audience than to Ibn al-Athīr's readers, and he also mentions a false prophet in Șaghāniyān unknown to the latter (34). But on the whole it is Ibn al-Athīr's account which is the fuller of the two. His canvas is wider: he is writing about the Sāmānids and all their territories, including Țabaristān and Transoxania, and is concerned to a greater degree with the minutiae of political events, whereas Gardīzī devotes his attention mainly to events in Khurāsān and Sughd. As a universal historian, Ibn al-Athīr also used a wider range of sources than did Gardīzī; thus he drew on Țabarī and Miskawayh in addition to Sallāmī (35).

From the reign of 'Abdalmalik, the concordance between the two authors breaks down. Ibn al-Athīr has little to say about either 'Abdalmalik, for whose reign he used Miskawayh as one of his sources, or his successor, Mansūr, except to give an account of the troubles in Sīstān and Kirmān in the latter's reign (36). In his

33 See appendix, ibid, s.v. "Muḥammad ibn Ahmad".
34 Gardīzī, Zayn, p. 158.
35 It was from Țabarī that Ibn al-Athīr took his information on the Sāmānīd victories against the Turks around the turn of the century (compare Țabarī, Ta'rikh al-rusul wa'l-mulūk, ser. iii, pp. 2138 and 2249 with Ibn al-Athīr, Kāmil, vol. vii, pp. 464f and 533) and much of his data on the reign of Ismā'īl ibn Ahmad. For an example of Ibn al-Athīr's borrowing from Miskawayh, see above, note 14.
coverage of the period, Gardīzī continues in the same style in which he treated the earlier Sāmānids. For the reigns of Nūh ibn Mānsūr and his successors, both Ibn al-Athīr and Gardīzī make use of 'Utbī's account.

**Ibn Zāfir (d. 613/1216)**

A recently-discovered section of Jamāl al-Dīn 'Alī ibn Zāfir al-Azdī's Arabic chronicle, known as Akhbār al-duwal al-īslāmiyya (37), contains a chapter on the Sāmānids (38). Much of the material in this chapter is already known to us from earlier sources, but it does include a unique passage which describes the events leading to the murder of Ahmad ibn Ismā'īl (d. 914) and the accession of Nasr ibn Ahmad.

Ibn Zāfir does not disclose his immediate source for this passage, but there are grounds for believing that it was the history of Thābit ibn Sinān al-Šābi'. Ibn Zāfir twice states that he is quoting from Ghars al-Nī'ma's history, once in his chapter on the Sāmānids (39) and once in the chapter on the Būyids (40), but neither quotation could actually have come from that

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Saффārid in the reign of Mānsūr ibn Nūh is not to be found in Miskawayh.
37 This chronicle is identical with the Akhbār al-duwal al-mungatī'a by the same author (cf. W. Madelung, "The identity of two Yemenite historical manuscripts", *JNES*, vol. xxxii, 1973, p. 175); see appendix; The history of the Sāmānids in Ibn Zāfir's Akhbār al-duwal al-īslāmiyya.
38 For details of the manuscript, Codex arab. G6 of the Ambrosiana Library, Milan, see W. Madelung, ibid, pp. 175-179.
39 Ibn Zāfir, *Duwal*, fol. 120b.
40 Madelung, ibid, p. 178, note 13.
work since Ghars al-Ni'ma did not write of events in the 10th century (41). Now Ghars al-Ni'ma's history formed part of what one might call the "Sabean trilogy", of which the first volume was written by Thābit ibn Sinān, the second by his nephew Hilāl ibn Muḥassan and the third by the latter's son, Ghars al-Ni'ma. When Ibn Zāfir says he is citing Ghars al-Ni'ma in the Būyid chapter, he is probably quoting from Hilāl ibn Muḥassan (42): it is therefore logical to assume that in referring to the same historian in the Sāmānīd chapter he is in fact citing Thābit ibn Sinān, whose history covered the relevant period. Both errors can be explained if we assume that Ibn Zāfir had access to all three volumes of the Sabean history which he knew collectively as the work of Ghars al-Ni'ma.

Though it is not in connection with Ahmad's murder that Ibn Zāfir cites Thābit ibn Sinān alias Ghars al-Ni'ma his account of it could certainly have come from there, for Thābit's history is said to have begun in 295/908 (43). However, the indirect source for Ibn Zāfir's account is probably Sallāmī. That Ibn Zāfir used a source based on Sallāmī is clear from similarities, amounting in two passages to verbatim correspondence, between his account and that of Sallāmī as preserved by Gardīzī (44), Yaqūt

41 Cf. EI², s.v. "Ṣabī".
42 Madelung, ibid.
43 M.S. Khan, Studies in Miskawayh's contemporary history, Chicago, 1980, p. 149.
44 Ibn Zāfir's account of the warning given to 'Amr ibn Layth the Saffārid by his generals after their first defeat by Ismā'il ibn Ahmad is similar to Sallāmī's account as copied by Gardīzī (cf. id, Duwal, fol. 116b: Gardīzī, Zayn, p. 145).
(45) and Manînî (46). Similarly, in the passage describing the succession of Naṣr ibn Āḥmad, one line of Ibn Ẓâfir's account corresponds exactly with that of Ibn al-Āthîr (47).

However some of Ibn Ẓâfir's information comes from two other sources which he names as the Kitâb akhbâr khurâsân by al-Wazîr al-Maghribî and the history of Farghânî (48). The first author is Abû'l-Qâsim Husayn ibn 'Alî al-wazîr al-Maghribî, an Iranian nobleman by origin (49) and an exile from Fâtimid Egypt, who came to Iraq where he frequented the courts of the Bu'yid rulers Bahâ' al-Dawla, Sulṭân al-Dawla and Musharraf al-Dawla (50). Ibn Ẓâfir refers twice to his work in a way that suggests that he was using it as a supplementary source, but there is no way of being certain that he did not use it more extensively. The second author is undoubtedly one of the continuators of Tabârî's Ta'rîkh al-rusul wa'l-mulûk, Abû Muḥammad 'Abdallâh ibn Ahmad ibn Ja'far...
al-Farghānī (282/895-6 – 362/972-3), author of the Šilat (var. Mudhayyal) ta’rikh al-Tabarī, or his son Abū Mansūr Ahmad (d. 398/1007), author of a further continuation known as Šilat al-Šila (51). The likelihood is that it is the father’s work which Ibn Ṣāfir used, since the events in question occur at the beginning of the period of history which he covered (52).

Ibn Khaldūn (732/1332-808/1406)

‘Abd al-Rahmān ibn Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad ibn Khaldūn’s Kitāb al-‘ībar contains a condensed version of Ibn al-Athīr’s account of the Sāmānīds which provides additional information on the dynasty, some of which is erroneous (53).

The later Persian chroniclers: Jūzjānī, Hamdallāh Oazvīnī, Mīrkhwānd and Khwāndamīr

The later Persian chronicles provide a fair amount of additional information to the earlier sources, usually in the form of short passages which occur within longer accounts that are based on material familiar from the

51 Cf. EI² s.v. "Farghānī".
52 It appears that Ibn Ṣāfir drew his information regarding Nasr ibn Ahmad’s age at his accession from Farghānī. In contrast to Sallāmī, who said that he was 8 years old at the time (cf. Yaqūb, Ṭāhād, vol. 4, p. 293), Ibn Ṣāfir says he was 12 (ibid, fol. 123a) and attributes this information to Farghānī (ibid, fol. 125b).
53 E.g. his identification of the Sāmānid mamlūk Bughrā as Bughrākhān the Qarākhānīd (see below, appendix; the Sāmānid state elite, s.v. "Bughrā").
earlier chronicles. The problem with all these later authors is that it is frequently impossible to identify the sources from which they drew information unique to their histories or to pin-point instances where they have simply elaborated upon the sources at their disposal. The policy followed in this thesis has been to include all such information while clearly indicating its provenance; the reliability of such information can only be tested by means of further research on the historiography of the later period.

Abū 'Umar 'Uthmān ibn Muḥammad Jūzjānī (b. 589/1193) wrote the universal history Ṭabaqāt-i nāṣirī (54). His chapter on the Sāmānids is short but does offer some snippets of information not found elsewhere, such as the causes of Aḥmad ibn Ismā‘īl’s assassination (55) and the accusations of Ismā‘īlīsm levelled against high officials in ‘Abdalmalik ibn Nūh’s reign (56). He used neither Ibn Ṭabīṣ nor Gardīzī, but rather other works dependent on Sallāmī including Al-tārīkh al-thānī of Ibn Hayṣam (57).

Hamdallāh Mustawfī Qazvīnī was an official of the Mongol Ilkhanid government who was patronized by Rashīd al-Dīn, the wazir of Ghāzān Khan (58). He wrote his history, the Tarīkh-i guzīde, in 730/1329-30. He quotes

55 See below, chapter 4, p. 142.
56 See below, appendix; the Sāmānīd state elite, s.v. "Bakr ibn Mālik".
58 Cf. Storey, ibid, vol. i, pp. 82ff.
a wide range of sources, including some of the 
chronicles noted above (59). His account of the early 
history of the Sāmānids contains legendary elements, 
including numerous details not to be found elsewhere; 
his account of the later history of the dynasty is based 
squarely on 'Utbi's work.

Mīrkhwānd, Muḥammad ibn Sayyid Burhān al-Dīn Khwānd-
shāh (837/1433-938/1498) (60), the Timūrid historian, 
has a full account of the Sāmānid period which is very 
close to Ibn al-Athīr's history. He also used Hamdallāh 
Qazvīnī's chapter on the Sāmānids and the Waṣāyā of 
Nizām al-mulk. He compares these two authors' differing 
accounts of 'Amr ibn Layth's fate after his capture by 
Īsmā'īl ibn Ahmad, and comes down in favour of Nizām al-
mulk's story; this is one of the rare instances in which 
an author writing on the Sāmānids reveals an interest in 
source criticism (61).

Khwāndamīr, Ghiyāth al-Dīn ibn Humām (b. circa 
880/1475-6) (62), a grandson of Mīrkhwānd on his 
mother's side, wrote the chronicle Habīb al-siyar. His 
account of Sāmānīd history is very similar to 
Mīrkhwānd's, although he made greater use of Hamdallāh 
Qazvīnī's Tarīkh-i guzīde than did his grandfather.

59 See The Tarīkh-i guzīde, vol. ii, tr. E.G. Browne, 
pp. 1f. for a list of his sources which include Ibn al-
Athīr's Kāmil and Jurbādqānī's translation of the Kitāb 
al-yamīnī.
60 Cf. Storey, ibid, pp. 92-101.
61 Mīrkhwānd, Rawdat al-ṣafā, ed. N. Sabuhi, vol. iv, 
Tehran, 1338-39, p. 33.
The local histories

The three local histories of Bukhārā, Tabaristān and Sīstān present a useful regional perspective on the Sāmānīds which complements the chronicles' accounts of the core area of the state. All three histories are characterised by a generally positive assessment of the dynasty. In the case of Abū Bakr Muḥammad ibn Jaʻfar al-Narshakhī's Taʾrīkh bukhārā, this is hardly surprising, since he presented his work to the Sāmānīd Nūh ibn Naṣr in 332/943-4 (63). Narshakhī’s work survives today only in a Persian translation of an abridgement of his original Arabic text which contains a number of interpolations by later redactors (64).

The anonymous Taʾrīkh-i Sīstān was composed in about 452/1062 (65). It is a strongly partisan account of the history of the province which is unstinting in its praise of local Sīstānī heroes. It covers the history of the 10th century Șaffārid rulers of the province and their relations with the Sāmānīds.

Ibn Isfandiyār’s Taʾrīkh-i Tabaristān was written in 612-13/1216 (66). It covers the Sāmānīds’ involvement in
the province from the beginning of the 10th century to the reign of Naşr ibn Aḥmad.

Another local history which provides valuable information on the Sāmānīd governors of Herāt is Muʿīn al-dīn Isfīzārī’s Rawḍat al-jannāt fī awṣāf-i madīnāt-i Herāt, written in 897/1491-2 (67). It contains the only complete list of Sāmānīd governors of a major city in the 10th century.

Niẓām al-Mulk’s Siyar al-mulūk

The Seljuq wazir Niẓām al-Mulk’s (c. 408/1018-485/1092) Siyar al-mulūk (or Siyāsat Nāme) provides valuable information on the training of mamlūks at the Sāmānīd court and on Ismāʿīlīsm in the Sāmānīd period. While its value as a historical document has been called into question by modern historians, we can be fairly certain, on the basis of corroborating evidence to be found in Samarqandī’s Muntakhab al-qand fī taʿrīkh Samarqand (see below) and other works, that its account of Ismāʿīlī activity at the end of Naşr ibn Aḥmad’s reign is not simply an invention of its author’s (68). In the light of this evidence, it is reasonable to assume that its accounts of the other Qarmaṭī uprisings in the Sāmānīd period also contain a kernel of historical truth.

68 See below, chapter 6.
Biographical dictionaries

There are a number of biographical dictionaries of 'ulamā' which are of importance for the history of the mashriq in the 10th century. Abu Sa'd 'Abd al-Karīm ibn Muḥammad al-Samānī's (d. 562/1166) *Kitāb al-ansāb* is a source well known to students of the period and has many entries of relevance to this study (69).

'Abd al-Wahhāb ibn 'Alī al-Subkī's (d. 771/1370) *Tabaqāt al-shāfi'iyya al-kubrā* (70) has some information on the Shāfi'i 'ulamā' at the Sāmānid court. Some of this material is probably derived from earlier sources such as Sallāmī; many of its biographies of the scholars of the period are however not to be found in earlier sources.

Two other important dictionaries are still in manuscript. Muḥammad ibn 'Abdallāh al-Ḥākim al-Bayyī's (d. 405/1014) *Ta'rīkh naysābūr* survives in a very condensed version, known as the *Kitāb ahvāl-i nīshāpūr*, along with part of its continuation, the *Kitāb al-siyāq li-ta'rīkh naysābūr* by 'Abd al-Ghāfir ibn Ismā'īl al-Fārisī (d. 529/1134) and an epitome of Fārisī's work by Ibrāhīm ibn Muḥammad al-Sarīfīnī (d. 641/1243); these three manuscripts have been published in a facsimile edition by R.N. Frye (71). The first of these works provides some details on Sāmānid relations with the notables of Naysābūr but its value is restricted by the fact that most of the substance of Bayyī's original work

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70 Cf. ibid, Cairo, 1906.
is missing from it. Fārisī's continuation is largely irrelevant to the present study since most of the scholars mentioned therein lived after the 10th century.

The most useful biographical dictionary for our purposes is Abū Ḥafs Najm al-Dīn ʿUmar ibn Muḥammad al-Nasafī's (d. 537/1142-3) Kitāb al-qand fī maʿrifat ʿulamāʾ samargand. This work survives in a defective manuscript in the Kütüphanesi Süleymaniye, Istanbul (72) as well as in a partial version of its epitome, the Muntakhab al-qand fī taʿrīkh samargand, written in the same year that Nasafī died, by his pupil, Muhammad ibn ʿAbd al-Jalīl al-Samarqandī (73).

Samarqandī's epitome is arranged on a pattern similar to other works of its kind. The information presented under every entry follows a set formula. The genealogy of the scholar concerned is given, sometimes reaching back over as many as ten generations; the names of those from whom, and to whom, he transmitted his knowledge are noted; and a Prophetic hadīth, in the isnād of which his name appears, is quoted at the end of the entry. Further

72 I have not been able to consult this manuscript which Weinberger identifies as MS. Turhan Valide Sultan, Istanbul 70 (J. Weinberger, "The authorship of two twelfth century Transoxanian biographical dictionaries", Arabica, vol. xxxiii, 1986, ibid., p. 369). Although defective at its beginning and end, the manuscript is almost three times as long as the Paris manuscript of Samarqandī's epitome (see following note) and thus constitutes an important, and as yet unstudied, source on the history of the 'ulamā' of 10th century Transoxania.

73 The manuscript in which this work survives is Bibliothèque Nationale (Paris) MS arabe no. 6284. The authorship of this manuscript has only recently been confirmed by Weinberger (ibid). In the same article Weinberger refutes Barthold's hypothesis that there exists a Persian translation of the Muntakhab entitled the Qandiyya (cf. id, p. 379).
details concerning domicile and occupation are supplied under some entries.

The *Muntakhab* has proved to be an invaluable source for this study, but a word of caution should be introduced as regards the reliability of its information on the IsmāʿĪlī scandal at the court of Naṣr ibn Aḥmad (74). While it appears to be a source which is independent of the others consulted in this thesis, it should be borne in mind that Nasafī’s original work, on which it is based, was composed at a time when Sunnī Muslims were pre-occupied with the Nizārī IsmāʿĪlī threat; in fact only shortly after Nizām al-mulk’s (d. 1092) *Siyar al-mulūk*. It is too early as yet to pass judgment on the question of whether Samarqandī’s account of the wazir Muḥabī’s activities on behalf of the IsmāʿĪlīs can be trusted (75); examination of the copious literature of scholarly biographies, in particular the original text of Nasafī’s work, may provide the answer to this question.

The **geographies**

The Sāmānīds captured the attention of the three great Arab geographers of the 10th century, Iṣṭakhrī, Ibn Ḥawqal and Muqaddasī. Their geographies are rich in information on climate, natural resources, trade and social history. But they present formidable problems for the student of the political history of the Sāmānīds. The first is that the geographers did not give dates for

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74 See below, chapter 6.
75 See below, ibid, pp. 195f.
the events they reported. This was a natural corollary of the nature of the work they undertook; they were studying a human and geographical landscape synchronically, as it appeared to them at the time they observed it, rather than the process of history as it unfolded diachronically, the latter being the brief of the chroniclers. For this reason, in spite of the colour and range of their portrayal, the picture they paint is static; it is impossible to gauge any sense of progress or regress within their narrative as regards the fate of human agents and social institutions.

More seriously, the geographers were great plagiarists, often copying whole chapters out of the work of their predecessors without acknowledging their source, a habit they engaged in even when they had visited the areas concerned in person. Thus the *Kitāb al-masālik wa'l-mamālik*, composed in about 950 by Iṣṭakhrī, who probably visited Transoxania (76), is based on the geographical work of Balkhī (d. circa 934) (77). It was used in turn by Ibn Hawqal, who also visited Khurāsān and Transoxania (in about 358/969) (78), and whose reliance on it was such that in Kramers' view "the manuscripts of Iṣṭakhrī and Ibn Hawqal represent one single standard original text, which was

76 Barthold says that Iṣṭakhrī must have been in person to Zaranj because his description of the town is so detailed ("Zur Geschichte der Saffariden", p. 176). Furthermore Iṣṭakhrī is known to have met Ibn Hawqal in Sind (cf. *EI*², s.v. "Ibn Hawkal").
77 See *EI*² s.v. "al-Iṣṭakhrī".
78 *EI*² s.v. "Ibn Hawkal".
revised and corrected several times" (79). İstakhrī’s work was also used by Muqaddasī (c. 336/946 – c.390/1000) (80), for all that he criticized it (81). Under such circumstances, chronological precision is clearly impossible.

Beyond these caveats lies the problem of understanding the relation of the geographer with the ruling authorities of the regions which he describes. This issue is of crucial importance for Eastern Iran, since without exception, our three geographers are more fulsome in their praise of the personal and social attributes of the inhabitants of the region and of the efficiency and humanity of its rulers, than they are for any other region within the Muslim umma. Indeed none of them devotes the same attention to any other part of the Muslim world.

İstakhrī, the earliest of the three geographers, who wrote towards the end of the first half of the tenth century (82), begins his chapter on Transoxania with a long passage in praise of the land and its inhabitants (83). He extols the fertility of the land and its produce, the virtues of the people, including their generosity, their readiness to undertake acts of public welfare and their piety, their bravery in the ceaseless jihād with the Turks, their constancy in making the ḥajj and their obedience to their rulers. Interspersed among

79 Kramers, Analecta, p. 196, cited with approval by Miguel in EI², s.v. "al-İstakhrī".
80 Cf. EI¹, s.v. "Al-Muḥaddasī".
81 Cf. Miguel, ibid.
82 Cf. EI², s.v. "İstakhrī".
83 İstakhrī, Masālik, pp. 287-295.
these remarks are observations on the abundance of running water in the towns and cities, the great numbers of armed men available to the armies of the sultan and the efficiency of the armed forces. The passage culminates in a eulogy addressed to the rulers (mulûk) of the region, the Sāmānids, whose territories are said to be the best protected, the best equipped and the most perfectly appointed in the whole of the Islamic world. At the conclusion of this eulogy, Ištakhrī writes of the beauty of the city of Bukhārā and its surrounding countryside, a subject which leads him away from his reflections on the human geography of the region, back to the physical geography which is the main concern of his work.

This passage is unparalleled in Ištakhrī, who displays no such enthusiasm for any other province, not even for his native Fārs, let alone Khūzistān or Sīstān, though the chapters on these three regions are almost as detailed as that on Transoxania, or any other dynasty. Indeed the only dynasts apart from the Sāmānids to receive more than cursory mention are the Ṣaffārids, of whom one might have expected Ištakhrī to disapprove. But though he does applaud Ismāʿīl ibn Ahmad the Sāmānīd for ridding the caliphate of the Ṣaffārid menace (84), he does not otherwise pass judgment on them; outside Transoxania, he does not seem to be interested in the moral evaluation of rulers. It is also notable that he does not supply information about heresies in, or

84 ibid, p. 143.
associated with, Transoxania, as he does in connection with Fārs for example (85). In his passage on heretical groups in Fārs, he explicitly tells us that all aspects of social behaviour, whether flattering or unflattering, were fit for inclusion in his work, on the grounds that omission of unfavourable aspects would amount to a display of bias (86). But biased he clearly is when he gets to Transoxania. How is this then to be explained?

It is unlikely that Ḩistakhrl copied the passage in question from Balkhī on whose geography he based his own work, since Balkhī appears not to have been particularly well disposed towards the Sāmānids (87). On the other hand, there clearly existed a tradition in the geographical literature before Ḩistakhrl in which "Easterners" were discussed as a special group to which characteristics of fearlessness and bravery were attributed (88). This tradition was presumably formed in the wake of the Ḥabbāsid revolution, which was conducted by Khurāsānīs and brought to power the caliphal dynasty under which our geographers were writing. By Ḩistakhrl’s time, however, the frontier had shifted eastwards and Transoxania, previously subsumed under the label of

85 ibid, pp. 148f.
86 ibid, p. 148.
87 Cf. the story about Balkhī’s refusal to go to Bukhārā when summoned there by the Sāmānid amir (Yaqt, Irshād, vol. i, p. 152): Muqaddasī takes this anecdote to mean that Balkhī never set foot across the Oxus (Ahsan altagāsīm fī ma‘arifat al-aqālīm, ed. M.J. de Goeje, Lugduni Batavorum, 1906, p. 4). Furthermore, Balkhī’s geography is said to have consisted of maps with only short explanatory texts (cf. Muqaddasī, ibid); a long eulogy would seem out of place in such a work.
"Khurāsān", had acquired an identity of its own. The image of the fearless Khurāsānī fighting on behalf of the 'Abbāsid dynasty was accordingly giving way to that of the Transoxanian mujāhid whose martial qualities now protected the Islamic lands from the hordes of Gog and Magog (89).

This image must have appealed to Iṣṭakhrī because he was clearly preoccupied with the Turkish threat. He vents his dislike of the Turks in his chapter on Fārs, by presenting Bahram Chubīn, the alleged ancestor of the Sāmānids, as a champion of the Iranians against the Turks and by making the victories of the Sāmānids against the Turks the centre-piece of his account of the former in the same chapter (90). He does not seem to have been overly fond of the Turks inside the Muslim domains either, for elsewhere in his chapter on Fārs he acclaims the Arab clan of Banū Ḥanẓala for their eviction of some tyrannical Turkish amirs who had been granted caliphal iqtās in the province (91). Apparently, he saw the Turks contributing to dissolution from both within and without.

This would do something to explain why the Sāmānids impressed him so favourably: here, as not in the central Muslim lands, both army and administration appeared to be in working order and the Turks, both inside and outside the state, to be kept under control. Having

89 Istakhrī, Masālik, p. 290: wa ammā ba’suhum wa shawkatuhum fa-‘innahu laysa fī’l-islām nāhiya akbar hazzan fī’l-jihād minhum...
90 Istakhrī, ibid, p. 143.
91 ibid, pp. 142f.
responded by idealizing the Šāmānids' achievement, he
used his image of it as a standard by which to criticize
the rest of the Islamic world. Thus the enthusiasm with
which the wealthy men of Transoxania devoted their
resources to the construction of ribāts, roads and
bridges is contrasted with the greed of wealthy men
elsewhere, who spent their money on their own
entertainment and other frivolous pursuits: and the
hospitality afforded by Transoxanians to passers-by is
noted as another instance of the same spirit of altruism
which is lacking in other regions (92). That there is a
strong element of hyperbole in all this is beyond doubt.

Ibn Hawqal's Kitāb sûrat al-ard, the first version of
which was completed at the end of the 960's, contains
the same passage almost verbatim without acknowledgement
of its authorship. Ibn Hawqal slightly expands the
passage, adding to it new information concerning
taxation and payment of Šāmānid officials in the reign
of Mansūr ibn Nūh (93). This includes a long list of
salaries of provincial ašhāb al-barīd which is unlikely
to have been transmitted orally to the author. It is
possible that he found it in the records of some dīwān
or other, perhaps one to which he was given access by
his putative patron, Ja'far ibn Sahl (94). Or it may be
that he obtained the information from Jayhānī's
geography which was completed at least 25 years before

92 ibid, p. 290.
Kramers, Lugduni Batavorum, 1939, pp. 469f.
94 Cf. Barthold's preface to Hudūd al-ʿālam, pp. 6f.
he wrote (95) and might have been expected, given its author's familiarity with the Samanid bureaucracy, to have contained just such information (96).

The latest of the trio of geographers, Muqaddasi, does not include the passage in his work, although he was familiar with Iṣṭakhrī's work and acknowledges his debt to Abū Zayd al-Balkhi's geography. He nevertheless writes just as fulsomely as his predecessors about the mashriq, the region comprising both Samanid Transoxania and Khurāsān, and of the Samanids as its rulers. The introduction to his chapter reads as follows:

"... it is the greatest of the aqālīm, the most numerous in (terms of) great men and scholars, a mine of goodness, the repository of knowledge, sturdy pillar of Islam and its greatest fortification. Its king is the most elevated of kings and its warriors the best of warriors, a people of great courage and right-mindedness, of widespread repute and great wealth, with horses, manpower, conquests and victory (to their name); a people who, as it was written to 'Umar, are clothed in iron, whose food is dried meat and whose drink is frozen ice. In it are to be seen great districts and numerous villages, burgeoning trees and flowing rivers and visible bounties and extensive regions, upright religion

95 Cf. appendix; the Samanid state elite, s.v. "Muḥammad ibn Ahmad".
96 It is also possible that this information came originally from Balkhi's geography which Muqaddasi notes as being an informative source on the dīwāns of Khurāsān (Ahsan, p. 307): however this would not fit with the general description of Balkhi's work as being little more than short commentaries appended to his maps (see above, note 87).
and justice established permanently in a dynasty (dawla) supported by divine aid and a kingdom (mamlaka) which God has bequeathed to them in perpetuity. In it fuqahā' attain the station of kings, whereas in other kingdoms authority is held by those who are (by origin) mamlūks. It is a barrier against the Turks and a shield against the Ghuzz, the scourge of Rūm and the pride of Muslims, the mine of the firmly established, the succour of the haramayn, and lord of the two sides. Although the Jazīrat al-'arab is more extensive than it in area, it is more densely populated and has more inhabited districts, more wealth and provinces." (97)

As may be seen from the above, Muqaddasī adds new elements to the virtues of the east recorded by his predecessors, the most important of which is the patronage of scholars by the rulers and the high office attained by scholars. This confirms what the chronicles of the period have to say; the Sāmānids were known for their reliance on the scholarly class in matters other than questions of religious law (98). In a second passage devoted to the Sāmānids, Muqaddasī says that the scholars were exempted from performing the taqbīl, the customary form of obeisance to the ruler, and that their advice was sought on many matters, even on occasion the appointment of provincial governors (99).

97 Muqaddasī, Ahsan, p. 260.
98 See below, chapter 7, p. 238 for the career of Nūh's wazir the faqīh al-Hākim al-jalīl Abū'1-Fadl Muḥammad al-Ṣulamī.
99 Id, Ahsan, p. 339.
Such close co-operation between ruler and 'ālim was certainly one of the most laudable attributes which a pious Muslim observer might hope to find in a contemporary secular court. The painful dislocation of religious authority and temporal power recorded in the long history of the degradation of the 'Abbāsid caliphs in Baghdad by *mamlūk* and Daylamī amirs had shattered the ideal of a single Islamic institution which could encompass both kinds of authority. It might be surmised that in making his remark about *mamālīk* and *fuqahā'*, Muqaddasī was implicitly contrasting Sāmānid Bukhārā with Baghdad, where the Būyids and Turks held the caliph in thrall.

Furthermore the Sāmānids had no real rivals, even at the end of the tenth century, for the title to the most powerful Islamic state, except for the Būyids. Muqaddasī notes that although the Būyids had conquered Kirmān, they were still paying tribute to the Sāmānids in his day, as they had been for many decades (100). He clearly had little regard for the Būyids and fails to mention their presence in the provinces they controlled. In his distaste for Daylamīs, Muqaddasī seems to have been reflecting a generally held attitude in the *mashriq*; the Daylamīs were tainted by their recent pagan past and by their failure to prosecute the *jihād* (101).

100 id, *Ahsan*, p. 472. The tribute of 200,000 *dirāḥīm* per annum paid by the Būyids is most likely a reference to the revenues of Rayy which they paid intermittently to the Sāmānids from 342/953.
101 See below, chapter 7, p. 227f, for the Khurāsānī ghāzīs' attack on Būyid Rayy in 355; the Būyids are said to have been reluctant to provide funds for the
Yet the disparity between the ideal which the Samanids represented for the geographers and the reality which must have confronted them when they came to the mashriq was even more pronounced at the end of the 10th century, when Muqaddasī wrote, than in previous decades. In his time the Samanid state was dominated by the mamālīk whose absence from the politics of the mashriq he applauds. In the last decade of the century the Simjurid mamlūks had established a virtually independent state in Khurasān (102). Muqaddasī fails to acknowledge this fact explicitly, although he does talk about the current disorder in Khurasān and the adverse consequences of the dismissal of its governor (103). It seems as though Muqaddasī was blinded by his admiration for the positive elements of Samanid rule and remained a willing advocate of the traditional admiration for Easterners shown by his predecessors.

Anthologies of poetry

The most important anthology of Arabic poetry written in the Samanid period is the Yatīmat al-dahr of Abū Mansūr 'Abdalmalik ibn Muḥammad al-Tha'ālibī (d. 429 or 430/1037-9). The fourth section of this work is devoted to the poets of Transoxania and Khurasān who flourished in Samanid Bukhārā and found employment in the Samanid prosecution of the jihād and the ghāzīs are said to have tried to kill every Daylamī Ṣafīḏī they could find. 102 See below, chapter 8, p. 252. 103 id, Ahsan, pp. 315f; cf. his reference to 'azl al-amīr (presumably the governor).
court and the bureaucracy. The poetry itself is of little relevance to the political history of the period, but the value of the book is enhanced by the numerous anecdotes it contains concerning the lives and careers of the poets. Its counterpart in the field of Persian poetry is 'Awfī's *Lubab al-albāb* (104), which however supplies little biographical information about its subjects.

The use of numismatics as a historical source

Sāmanid coins have survived in large numbers and constitute a rich source of data for the historian who is prepared to undertake the arduous task of studying them. The extant coinage consists largely of silver dirhams; copper and gold coins have also survived, although in far fewer numbers. The majority of the silver dirham hoards have been discovered in Sweden, Eastern Europe and European Russia (105). Very few hoards have been discovered in either the Middle East or Central Asia (106).

There are two broadly-defined uses to which a historian of medieval Islam may put the evidence of the coinage. The first, which has been the traditional concern of Islamic numismatists ever since the earliest coin catalogues were written, is to make use of the information contained in the inscriptions on the

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105 See below, chapter 2, notes 27ff.
106 See below, ibid, note 30.
coinage. These inscriptions are rich in historical data, which includes, apart from the mint name and date (and occasionally the name of the mint master), the names of the sovereign in whose state the coin was minted and that of the ruling caliph (107) and occasionally the name of the governor of the province in which the mint is located. The coinage can thus be used to shed light on governorships, on the relations of the dynast with the caliph and the identification of rebels.

The second use to which the coinage may be put is statistical. For example, a study of the output of a single mint over a number of decades would reveal fluctuations in production; this data can then be compared with similar data from other mints, and thus a picture built up of the proportion of coins within a given corpus produced by different mints. Alternatively, data may be assembled by regnal era, and an impression formed of the differing output under successive rulers (108). Analysis of hoard location and dating of coinage within individual hoards may also reveal the main trade routes along which the coinage travelled before it was buried.

In this thesis, I have not undertaken a systematic study of Samanid silver coinage, nor have I been able to apply either of the two approaches described above to any part of the coinage. This is because, first, many

107 The name of the caliph appears on the coinage of all successor states with the exception of the Aghlabids (cf. M. al-*Ush, Monnaies aghlabides, Damascus, 1982, p. 18).
hoards have not yet been properly catalogued and until this has been done, Sâmâni coinage remains the domain of the numismatist rather than the historian. Secondly, even if adequate catalogues did exist, the corpus of Sâmâni dirhams is far too large to be handled as a whole and would require monograph treatment in its own right (109). I have however made use of the main works on Sâmâni coinage for prosopographical purposes. As for the copper coinage, a much smaller corpus, I have made use of most of the articles published by Russian scholars on the subject. This copper coinage is particularly valuable for what it reveals about the pre-monarchical history of the dynasty, where the literary sources are very meagre.

109 Professor T. Noonan estimates the number of extant Sâmâni dirhams alone at 200,000 or more (verbal communication in March 1990).
Chapter two

GEOGRAPHICAL INTRODUCTION
Physical geography and natural resources

The Sāmānid state in its heyday covered a huge area from Central Iran to the border with Central Asia on the Jaxartes river (1). A traveller setting out from Sāmānid Rayy, in the first decade of the 10th century, and making for Üzkand, the easternmost town of Farghāna, could not hope to complete his journey in less than nine weeks, even if he were to ride continuously without stoppages, and would probably spend closer to three or four months on the road (2). On leaving Rayy, he would make his way eastwards along the southern rim of the Elburz mountains, through the district of Qūmis to Khurāsān, passing through the regional capital Nāysābūr and the old Arab garrison-city of Marv, before striking out northwestwards into the desert on the highway leading to Āmul, the main crossing-point of the Oxus river (Amū Daryā). Here he stood on the historical fault-line which divided the world of classical Iran

1 The Sāmānids made an incursion beyond the Jaxartes in 280/893, capturing the Turkish city of Ṭarāz/Talas (see below, chapter 3, p. 91), but there is no evidence that they maintained a presence in the city thereafter.
2 Rayy to Asadābādh, 2 weeks (Istakhrī, Masālik, pp. 215f); Asadābādh to Mazaniyan, 1 or two days (journey time not given by Istakhrī); Mazaniyan to Nāysābūr, 5 days (Istakhrī, ibid, p. 284). From Nāysābūr to Āmul, the main crossing point on the Oxus was a further 17 stages (Istakhrī, ibid, p. 282). From Farabr, on the opposite bank of the Oxus facing Āmul, to Üzkand, was a journey of 23 stages (Istakhrī, ibid, pp. 334f).
from Turan. Once over the river he would quickly pass from the Oxine flatlands into the Zarafshān valley which led him within a day to Bukhārā and then on to Samargand. After another fortnight’s journey along the line of the foothills of the Pamir mountains, through Khujanda and Akhsīkath on the head-waters of the Jaxartes (Syr Daryā), he would finally come to Üzkand, the last outpost of the Dār al-islām before the wastes of the Turkish steppe.

In the course of his 1200 mile journey (3), our traveller would have passed through many different physical environments. From the mountainous Caspian littoral, to the damp hills of Jurjān, from the Qara Qum desert to the Zarafshān river valley, he would have passed by two of the largest conurbations in the Muslim world, Naysābūr and Samargand, and half a dozen major cities, in all of which, had he stopped to recuperate, he would have heard the name of the Šāmānid amir recited in the Friday khutba. To the north of his route lay the province of Khwārazm, the northernmost district of Šāmānid Transoxania, over a week’s travelling time away from Bukhārā (4), and to the south, Sīstān, the only district in the Šāmānid realm with a temperate climate (5), which was at least four weeks distant from Bukhārā (6).

4 İstəkhri, ibid, p. 338.
5 İstəkhri, ibid, p. 241.
6 İstəkhri, ibid, p. 282.
The Sāmānīd state was much more extensive than other Ābbāsid successor states. Aghlabid Ifrīqiyya, Tulūnid and Fātimid Egypt and Tāhirid Khurāsān, all covered substantially smaller areas; only the Būyid state was of comparable size (7). It is no wonder that the Arab geographers who travelled the length of the mashriq admired the sheer scale of the Sāmānīds' achievement. The Sāmānīds had also set an historical precedent by uniting Khurāsān and Transoxania (8): as the geographers were well aware, no dynasty, either Islamic or pre-Islamic, had ever achieved this, and the feat was not to be repeated until the coming of the Mongols in the 13th century.

The mashriq as a whole, and more particularly Transoxania, was blessed with a superabundance of natural resources. The most precious of these was water; in Khurāsān and Transoxania, sophisticated irrigation systems, those in Transoxania dating from the first to the second century A.D. (9), supported large areas of intensively cultivated arable land. Two of the most fertile of these irrigated districts, in Northern Khurāsān on the Murghāb river, and south of the

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7 Aghlabid Ifrīqiyya measured some 300 miles by 250 miles; Tubnā, capital of the Zāb, to Qayrawān was about 275 miles; Tūnis to Kābis 200 miles (Brice, Historical Atlas, p. 40). The territories ruled by the Tulūnid dynasty were temporarily extended by their occupation of the eastern littoral of the Mediterranean, but not for long. The Būyid state was the largest after the Sāmānīds; Baghdad to Kirmān was approx. 800 miles and Ray to Shīrāz 400 miles (Brice, Atlas, p. 17).

8 Istakhrī, ibid, p. 143.

Zarafshan valley in the environs of Samarqand, were located in the heart of the core area of the Samanid state (10).

According to the geographers, nearly every district in the mashriq had its own speciality - the best horses were bred in Khuttal and Balkh (11), the best camels in the region of Balkh (12), precious metals were mined in Ilaq, Farghana and Wakhkhan, as well as in the famous Khurasan mine of Panjhir (13), while precious stones were mined in Badakhshan, Farghana and in the environs of Naysabur (14). Foodstuffs were available in plenty everywhere (15), both in the irrigated lowlands of the Zarafshan and in the mountain regions, where fruit was in such plentiful supply that it was fed to animals as fodder (16). Many of the great cities were surrounded by a fertile hinterland which produced food for their

10 Both in Waraghsar, a village north of Samarqand, (Ibn Hawqal, Sirat al-ARD, vol. ii, 2nd ed, p. 497) and on the Murghab (Muqaddasi, Ahsan, p. 330), between the two Marvs, the irrigation network was manned by large teams of labourers - 10,000 men in the case of the Murghab.
11 Istakhri, ibid, pp. 279 and 282.
12 Istakhri, ibid, p. 280.
13 For Ilaq's gold and silver mines see Istakhri (ibid, p. 333) and Muqaddasi (ibid, p. 326): for the silver mines of Farwan and Panjhir, see Muqaddasi (ibid); for the silver mines of Wakhkhân, see Istakhri (ibid, p. 297). Farghana produced lead, iron and copper, as well as gold and silver (Istakhri, ibid, p. 334).
14 Garnets and lapis lazuli came from Badakhshan (Istakhri, ibid, p. 279). Turquoise was produced in Farghana (Istakhri, ibid, p. 334) and in the mountains surrounding Naysabur and Tus (Istakhri, ibid, p. 258).
15 Meat and dairy produce came from the Turkish tribesmen living in the region (Istakhri, ibid, p. 288), and fruits and vegetables were grown in abundance in many fertile districts.
16 Istakhri, ibid, p. 288.
inhabitants (17). In contrast to the tired lands of Central Iraq, which had been exploited by human societies since the beginning of Sumerian civilization, the mashriq was truly a Muslim New World.

The Sāmānid territories were almost entirely landlocked. They did abut two inland seas, the Caspian and the Aral, on their northern flank, but they lacked an outlet onto any of the major oceans which surround the Middle East. Nor were they all that well provided with inland waterways, though they did have the two great rivers of Transoxania, the Oxus and the Jaxartes, which acted as conduits for the passage of goods through the state, much as the Tigris and Euphrates did for goods from the Far East which arrived in the Gulf port of Baṣra. The many converging tributaries which made up the head-waters of both of these rivers (in the region of Shāsh and İlāq for the Jaxartes, and Ṭukhāristān and points east for the Oxus) also facilitated communications in those regions. But there were no rivers of a similar size running from east to west; the Zarafshān river was too small to support a regular traffic in rivercraft (18).

17 İstakhrī describes the environs of Bukhārā ("greenery extending as far as the eye could see") as the most pleasant in the Islamic world (ibid, p. 293).
18 Muqaddasī says that the only navigable rivers in Transoxania were the Oxus and the Jaxartes (Ahsan, p. 323, noted by Barthold, Turkestan, p. 83, note 5). But İstakhrī points out that the Barsh and Barmish rivers, tributaries of the Zarafshān river, were both navigable (ibid, p. 320): however Barthold doubts that they would have been suitable for large vessels (Turkestan, p. 83). But Nūh ibn Nasr did flee from Bukhārā to Samarqand by boat in 945 (Khwāndamīr, Ḥabīb al-siyar, vol. ii, p. 361).
It may be argued that modern historians have been too fixated on the dynamics of the classical Mediterranean world in thinking that access to waterways was a vital factor in facilitating communications in the agrarian age. Admittedly water-borne transport was the quickest and cheapest form of transportation in the pre-modern world. But in the Sāmānīd case, good communications were facilitated by both land and water routes. Land routes connected the mashriq with India, Tibet, the Turkish steppe and the west. Iṣṭakhrī makes the telling remark that famine in Transoxania was said to be a rare occurrence and that when it did strike, there was always allegedly a surplus in neighbouring provinces which could be transported to the afflicted region (19). He also notes that bulk foodstuffs were transported to Bukhārā, presumably by land, from other districts in Transoxania (20). As for land-borne means of communication, horses, donkeys, mules and camels were widely used (21), but we lack detailed information about the construction and maintenance of roads (22).

The real significance of being a landlocked region was that extensive land frontiers made the state vulnerable

19 Iṣṭakhrī, ibid, p. 287. But famines did occur in Transoxania (see Narshakhl, Tārīkh-i bukhārā, p. 114 = p. 83 for the famine of 272H: see also Tha‘ālibī’s reference to "the year of dearth" in Bukhārā (Yatīmat al-dahr, vol. ii, part 4, p. 111).

(Ibn al-Athīr, Kamil, vol. viii, p. 312)

20 Iṣṭakhrī, ibid, p. 312.

21 Iṣṭakhrī, ibid, p. 288.

22 Iṣṭakhrī mentions road building as one of the charitable acts undertaken by wealthy private individuals in Transoxania (See above, chapter 1, p. 31).
to attack. The encircling steppe provided enemies of the Sāmānids with the opportunity to mount offensives from any point they chose to arrive at: hence the priority of strong defences along the steppe border (23).

Trade

As well as commenting on the abundance of local resources, the geographers were impressed by the quality and volume of goods imported from beyond its borders. Foremost among them were slaves, most of them Turks, and some Slavs (24), who were sold into captivity from the steppe and filled the slave markets of Samarqand, where they were bought by dealers, often to be resold elsewhere in the Islamic world (25). The traffic in slaves was so valuable that the Sāmānids levied duty on their export at the crossing point on the Oxus (26). Other imported goods included items such as furs, wax, honey and falcons from the northern entrepots of the Volga basin: furs were a luxury item commanding high

23 In the province of Isbījāb alone (sc. Isfiyāb) Muqaddasī says that he had heard that there were 1700 ribāts (Ahsan, p. 273). Istakhri reports that he had been told that there were 10,000 ribāts in Transoxania (Masālik, p. 290). Ribāts were not however constructed solely for defensive purposes; cf. the ribāt in Farabr which Nasr ibn Ahmad built for the abnā' al-sabīl (Muqaddasī, Ahsan, p. 291).
24 For Slavonic slaves imported into Khwārazm, see Muqaddasī, Ahsan, p. 325.
25 Samarqand was the largest slave market in the region (Iṣṭakhrī, ibid, p. 318). For Mu'taṣim's annual purchase of slaves from Samarqand, see below, chapter 3, p. 79. Slaves were also imported from Wakhkhan, to the east of Khuttal (Iṣṭakhrī, ibid, p. 297).
prices, being much in demand at the 'Abbāsid and other courts and only second in value to slaves.

Foreign trade was an important source of prosperity of the mashriq. The most important trade route out of the mashriq, and certainly the one about which we are best informed, was the route which ran via Khwārazm northwards to Khazaria and the Volga basin. The huge volume of commerce generated between the mashriq and these emporia can be gauged from the numerous hoards of Sāmānid dirhams which have been unearthed in European Russia, Eastern Europe and Scandinavia. The earliest of these coins date from the end of the 9th century and early 10th century (27). This flow of dirhams probably peaked shortly before the middle of the century (28), began to decline in the 970’s and had virtually ceased by the end of the 980’s (29).

27 See below, chapter 3, p. 91, for the earliest (281/894-5) Sāmānid "export" dirhams (as opposed to the local debased silver coins) found in Scandinavian hoards. The most prolific Sāmānid mints in the early decades of the 10th century were Shāsh and Samargand (T. Noonan, "Pre-970 dirham hoards from Estonia and Latvia, iv; an analysis of the hoards buried between 900 and 970", Journal of Baltic Studies, vol. ix/ii, 1978, p. 108).

28 Cf. Noonan’s summary of the Estonian and Latvian hoards (ibid, p. 104). It is impossible to be precise about this point, since our secondary sources consist of regional studies of hoard finds whose data have not yet been collated.

29 Noonan makes the point that scholars once dated the fall-off in the dirham flow to the 960’s and suggested that it was caused by the conquest of Khazaria by the Rūs; but this theory has been disproved by the recent publication of large numbers of dirhams dated between 970 - 990 (T.S. Noonan, "The impact of the silver crisis in Islam upon Novgorod’s trade with the Baltic", Oldenburg-Wolin-Staraja Ladoga-Novgorod-Kiev, handel und Handelsverbindungen im südlichen und östlichen Ostseeraum während des frühen Mittelalters (Internationale Fachkonferenz der Deutschen Forschungsgemeinschaft vom 5.-9. Oktober 1987 in Kiel),
It should not be forgotten however that this was only one aspect of Samanid trade, albeit the only one for which we have direct evidence in the form of large numbers of hoards (30). Trade was certainly conducted with the steppe tribes to the east, from whom the prized slaves were purchased, and with Tibet and India (31). Trade was also conducted with the Muslim west where some of the products of the east gained an impressive reputation: many luxury goods and textiles found their way westwards (32). Whether bulk goods, such as

pp. 413 and 418). Noonan notes that as more hoards are published, the date of the fall-off in Samanid dirham exports might be put back as late as the 990’s (Noonan, ibid, p. 415).


31 Ghazna is mentioned as the main entrepot for the trade in Indian and Tibetan goods (Ḫudūd al-ʿalam, p. 111). Goods manufactured in the mashriq, mostly textiles, were exported to non-Muslim lands; silk cloth (ibrīsam) was exported from Naysābūr to the biḥād al-shirk (Iṣṭakhrī, ibid, p. 255); cotton from Shāsh was exported to the Turks in the steppe east of Transoxania, as was silk brocade (dībāj) produced in Samarqand (Muqaddasī, Ahsan, p. 325).

32 Iṣṭakhrī lists as luxury items exported to the west, pelts of sable, grey squirrel and fox, as well as manufactured metal-work, rhinoceros horn (khūṭū), falcons (ibid, pp. 288f.) and cotton and silk cloth from Naysābūr (ibid, p. 255). Muqaddasī’s long list of goods produced in Khurasān and Transoxania (Ahsan, pp. 323-6, first noted by Barthold, Turkestan, p. 235) does not for the most part specify whether these items were traded locally or exported beyond the borders of the mashriq; however some of them were certainly exported to the western Islamic lands, including Wadhārī cloth. Some idea of those commodities which had the highest value in the west may be had from the presents which the Samanids
foodstuffs, were regularly exported is not known, although there is evidence of a trade in grain with Yangikent (33).

One part of the non-Muslim world with which Sāmānid merchants apparently did not trade was China. The "silk route" appears to have fallen into decline from the 9th century, at least as a conduit for direct trade with China (34); Muslim merchants did however operate in the Turkish trading emporia in the steppe (35) where they may have purchased Chinese goods.

**Human geography**

According to archaeological research carried out by Soviet scholars, the populations of the great mashriqī cities, Bukhārā and Samarqand in Transoxania, and Naysābūr in Khurāsān, increased substantially during the Sāmānid period (36). This is confirmed by the literary sources; Bukhārā for example, was so over-populated by the middle of the 10th century, that it was unable to feed itself on the produce of its own hinterland and food had to be transported to the city from elsewhere in

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34 Negmatov holds the view that the silk route was still operating, but presents no evidence to back his assertion. He cites only one case of a mashriqī merchant travelling to the Far East; this was a Samarqandī who went by sea from Basra to India (*id, Gosudarstvo Samanidov*, p. 85, citing Masʿūdī, *Les Prairies d’or*, ed. and tr. de Meynard, pp. 307-312).
Transoxania (37). Barthold estimated the population of Samargand, the most populous city in Sughd, at more than half a million inhabitants (38).

As for the physical environment of the cities, we know that the wide streets of Bukhārā were paved in stone (39) and that fresh water was provided by numerous irrigation channels which ran off the Zarafshān river and flowed through the city. In spite of these advantages however, Bukhārā was described as a crowded (40) and squalid city (41).

As for archaeological remains in Sughd, the best known surviving Sāmānid monument is the dynastic mausoleum of Bukhārā (42). S. Blair conjectures that the mausoleum

37 See above, note 20. İstakhrī also notes that land was so scarce that a farmer would often have only a single jarib from which to make his living (ibid, p. 312).
38 Barthold, Turkestan, p. 88. As for Bukhārā, Frye gives a tentative estimate of its population as over 100,000 but certainly not as high as half a million (Frye, Bukhara: the medieval achievement, p. 94).
39 Negmatov, Gosudarstvo Samanidov, Dushanbe, 1977, p. 34.
40 Muqaddasī, Ahsan, p. 281.
41 See for example the following lines by Abū’l-Ṭayyib al-Ṭāhirī on Bukhārā:

_{bukhārā min kharā la shakk fīhi ya’izz bi-rab’ihā al-shay’ al-naṣīfu fa-in qult al-amīr bi-ha muqīm fa-dhā min fakhr muftakhir da’īfu idhā kāna’l-amīr kharā fa-qul lī a-laysa’l-khar’ mawdi’ahu al-kanīfū (Tha’ālibī, Yatīma, ibid, p. 67).}
42 The date of the construction of the mausoleum is still the subject of debate: while popular tradition refers to it as the tomb of Ismā‘īl ibn Ahmad (d. 295/907), Soviet and American scholars concur that it was most likely constructed by his grandson, Naṣr ibn Ahmad (Cf. S. Blair, "Tomb of the Samanids at Bukhara", The monumental inscriptions of Iran and Transoxiana [forthcoming]). The literary sources seem to confirm this view: Ibn al-Ṭāhir tells us that Naṣr was buried with his father (Ibn al-Ṭāhir, Kāmil, vol. viii, p. 403) and Yaqūt reports that Naṣr had built his own "grave" (qabr) 20 years before his death (Yaqūt, Mu’jam al-Buldān, vol. iii, pp. 451f). For other surviving
was constructed in imitation of the recently built 'Abbāsid dynastic mausoleum in the Rusāfa district of Baghdad: she points out that the 'Abbāsids only began to construct such tombs for their own rulers in the reign of Muqtadir in order to counteract the growing popularity of the 'Alid tombs which began to appear in the last decades of the 9th century (43). But there are no solid grounds for postulating an 'Abbāsid model for the Sāmanid building; the argument relies too heavily on the largely unsubstantiated assumption that the Sāmanids were dependent on 'Abbāsid architectural and procedural models (44).

By the tenth century, the mashriq had in cultural terms acquired a homogeneity unprecedented in the history of the region. The Sāmanids accomplished the final pacification of the region in the 9th century, thereby taking Islam into districts where previously other faiths like Zoroastrianism, Buddhism and Manichaeanism had flourished: the only region which remained solidly non-Muslim until well towards the end of the 10th century was the mountainous province of Ghūr

buildings from the Sāmanid period, including the mausoleums of Arabat and Alamdar (mausoleum of the last Sāmanid amir Ismā'īl Muntasir) and several ruined mosques, see Negmatov, Gosudarstvo Samanidov, pp. 146f. 43 Cf. S. Blair, ibid, pp. 7ff.
44 Muqtadir's tomb was probably built only just before (possibly after) the Sāmanid tomb. The dimensions of the Sāmanid tomb are much less grand than the 'Abbāsid mausoleum in Rusāfa which Yaqūt describes as "stupendous in construction" (T. Allen, "The tombs of the 'Abbāsid caliphs in Baghdad", BSOAS, vol. xlvi, 1983, p. 421); the architecture of the tomb cannot be said to have been derived from an Iraqi model (cf. Frye, Bukhara; the medieval achievement, p. 79).
in Central Khurāsān (45). This was an accomplishment of major importance - a single world view shared by the majority of the population, albeit in a very nominal form in the case of many new converts, must have accelerated the process of political unification which took place under the Sāmānids.

On the other hand Islam in Sāmānīd Transoxania accommodated itself to the pre-existing customs of the land, many of which had their origins in the religions which the new faith was rapidly replacing. Thus the Persian festivals of Mīhrajān and Nawrūz (46), as well as local Soghdian festival of Rāmush āghām and Sāda, the festival of the winter solstice, were all celebrated in Sāmānīd Bukhārā (47). Mashriqī Muslims were tolerant of members of older religions, particularly those of the ahl al-kitāb. Jewish (48) and Christian communities (49)

45 Hudūd al-ʿālam, p. 110.
46 Cf. the poems written on the occasion of Nawrūz and Mīhrajān (Thaʿālibī, Yatīma, ibid, pp. 67 and 110).
47 Cf. Thaʿālibī, Yatīma, ibid, p. 69: here the poet Abūʾl-ʿṬayyib al-Tahirī celebrates the "day of al-Ram". This may be the Magian festival of Rāmush āghām which Birūnī tells us was celebrated in the fire-temple of Rāmush (see below, note 51), (Birūnī, The chronology of ancient nations, tr. C.E. Sachau, London, 1879, p. 221).
48 Muqaddasī notes that there were many Jews and few Christians in the mashriq (Ahsan, p. 323). Negmatov states, without giving his source, that there were Jewish communities in Balkh, Yahūdiyya (Jūzjān) and elsewhere in Jūzjān (Gosudarstvo Samanidov, p. 140).
49 A Christian official of high standing, Fadl ibn Mūsā, the wakīl of the 'Abbāsid wazir Ibn Furāt, lived in Khwārazm in the early part of the century, but was not a member of the Sāmānīd court (Ibn Faṭlān, Ibn Faḍlān’s
survived in the 10th century mashriq, although Islam did make gains at the expense of Christianity; Christian churches were known to have been converted into mosques, at times, forcibly, and at others probably because they had fallen into disuse (50). Zoroastrians were allowed to practice their religion openly: fire-temples existed in Rāmūsh, a village near Bukhārā, (51) and near Herāt (52): there were also Zoroastrian buildings near Zaranj in Sīstān (53). As with the Christians, so too Islam was making gains at the expense of Zoroastrianism; according to a Zoroastrian tradition, it was in the early tenth century that a group of Zoroastrians from Sanjān in southwestern Khurāsān fled their Muslim persecutors and made their way to Gujerat in India where they founded what is today known as the Parsi community (54): however


51 Narshakhī, *Tārīkh-i bukharā*, p. 23 = p. 17. Narshakhī implies that there were also fire-temples in Bukhārā itself (ibid).

52 Istakhri describes it as a bayt nār (fire temple) (*Masālīk*, p. 265).

53 The *Tārīkh-i sīstān* describes it as a saray-i gabrī (a hostel rather than a place of worship?) (*Tārīkh-i sīstān*, p. 299 = p. 242). It was here that the Sāmānīd governor of Sīstān, Manṣūr ibn Ishāq, took refuge during a rebellion (cf. below, chapter 4, p. 115).

54 M. Boyce, *Zoroastrians, their beliefs and practices*, London, 1979, p. 157. The Zoroastrians are said to have arrived in Gujerat in 936/324-5 after spending 19 years on the island of Div where they had fled from Hormuzd.
other accounts of the emigration give it a much earlier date (55). While members of these minority communities did not commonly achieve high office in the Sāmānid state, we do have one example of a wazir who was probably a recent convert from Zoroastrianism (56).

Other communities survived in Transoxania which were not considered to belong to the ahl al-kitāb. Buddhism appears to have been tolerated; in the village of Rāmitīn, near Bukhārā, there was a temple of "idol-worshippers"; this temple may even have been enlarged in 943 by the addition of a new shrine (57). The Sāmānids also condoned the activities of the biannual fair in the Mākh-rūz bazaar of Bukhārā in which idols, probably

Thus the date of their departure from Sanjān should be put at 917/304-5. As for the location of Sanjān: two villages of that name are mentioned by Yāqūt, one near Marv and the other near Nāysābūr (Mu'jam al-buldān, vol. iii, p. 160): the latter is the more southerly location. According to J. Hinnells, the date of 936 for the Parsis' arrival in India comes from the early 17th century Parsi work The tale of sanjan (id, Zoroastrianism and the Parsis, 1981, pp. 23f).

55 Cf. the account noted by A.V.W. Jackson, Zoroastrian studies, New York, 1928, p. 182. This account dates the emigration less than 100 years after the Arab conquests; note that it identifies Sanjān as the Zoroastrians' landing-place on the Gujarati coast.

56 See below, appendix: the Sāmānid state elite, s.v. "Muhammad ibn Ahmad".

57 Barthold, Turkestan, p. 116, note 5, referring to Narshakhī's history in C. Schefer (ed.), Description de Boukhara, p. 6 = Ṭārīkh-i bukhārā, p. 10. The passage reads va chūn dukhtar-i malik-i chīn-rā be-bukhārā 'arūs āvurdand andar jihāz-i u butkhāne-yi āvurdand az chīn va in butkhāne-rā be-ramitīn nēhādand. The princess in question may have been the bride of Nūh ibn Naṣr (see below, chapter 5, p. 167); Abu Dulaf's account of his visit to Sandābil, the capital city of Nūh's bride's father, includes a description of its main place of worship in which he saw "statues, pictures, idols and a Buddha (budd)" (Mu'jam al-buldān, vol. iii, p. 451). Barthold refers to the village as Ramitan, a variant which also occurs in one of the MSS consulted by R.N. Frye in his edition of Narshakhī's history (cf. id, History of Bukhara, p. 16).
Buddhist figures according to Barthold, were sold openly (58).

Manichaean communities survived in Sughd and Īlāq (59). Ibn al-Nadīm reports that the "ruler of Khurāsān", probably Naṣr ibn Aḥmad, intended to put the Manichaean community in Samargand to the sword, but was dissuaded from this by the King of "Ṣīn" who threatened to retaliate by arresting Muslims in his own territories (60). In any event, the Manichaean community in Samargand survived into the late 10th century (61).

Another heretical sect, the Sapīd-ǰāmagān (wearers of white raiments), originally followers of the pseudo-prophet Muqanna', survived in rural Transoxania (62) and rose in revolt with the Ismāʿīlīs of Tāliqān during the reign of Mansūr ibn Nūḥ (63). In general, uprisings of non-Muslim heretics were confined to rural regions (64).

58 Narshakhi, Tārīkh-i bukhārā, p. 29 = p. 20; Barthold, Turkestan, p. 107.
59 Manichaens lived in the district of Samargand (rustaq samargand), in Sughd and Nūnkath (=Tūnkath; capital of Īlāq) (Cf. Ibn al-Nadīm, Fihrist, p. 337). The Manichaean leadership is said to have left Iraq for Samargand during Ibn al-Nadīm's lifetime (Fihrist, p. 338). Note Muqaddasi’s remark that there were different groups of majūs in the mashriq (Muqaddasī, Aḥsan, p. 323).
60 Spuler gives the date of the incident as 920 and identifies the "king of China" as the khan of a Uighur state (Iran in Früh-Islamischer Zeit, p. 208).
61 The anonymous Hudūd al-ʿālam notes that there was a Manichaean khānādah in Samargand (ibid, p. 113).
62 Muqaddasī calls them bayd al-thiyāb (Aḥsan, p. 323); the Hudūd al-ʿālam says that the people of Īlāq "profess mostly the creed of those in white raiment" (ibid, p. 117). The same information is given by Baghdādī, who adds that they were not maltreated by the Muslims (Kitāb al-farq baynaʾl-firaq, Cairo, 1910, p. 245).
64 See for example the false prophet of Saghāniyān. The date of his activity is given as 322/933 by Gardīzī (Zayn, p. 158); but the passage appears in Gardīzī’s chapter on the reign of Nūḥ ibn Naṣr (943-54). Note also
In spite of the generally tolerant attitude displayed by Muslims towards members of other faiths, there was one Muslim sect, the Karrāmiyya, which actively proselytized among the non-Muslim populations and won many converts for Islam, especially in the regions of Naysābūr, Herāt, Ghūr and Gharchistān, where there was a high concentration of both non-Muslims and Ismāʿīlī heretics (65). Karrāmi missionaries were also active in the Turkish steppe, but here they were less successful than in Khurāsān (66).

As for Muslim sectarians, Khārijī communities were to be found in Karūkh near Herāt and in Sīstān (67). In the early years of the century a Khārijī, Muḥammad ibn Hurmuz, known as Mawlā (al-) Sandalī, was a member of the Sāmānī amir’s ḥashm (retinue) (68). Imāmī (later Twelver) Shīʿīs were also active in the mashriq. Unfortunately we have virtually no information about Imāmī communities in the 10th century, although it is clear that they existed in Sughd from the 9th century and probably earlier (69). In the first decades of the

that the Bihāfarīdiyya were still active in Khurāsān in the 10th century, two hundred years after the death of their founder (Bīrūnī, Chronology, p. 194).

65 Madelung notes that "many of Ibn Karrām’s followers were new converts to Islam" (Religious trends in early Islamic Iran, Columbia, 1988, p. 44). Muqaddasī notes the existence of Karrāmī khāngahs in Samarqand, Farghāna, Khuttal, Jūzjān, Marw al-rūdh and Naysābūr (Aḥsan, p. 323).

66 Madelung, ibid.
67 Iṣṭakhrī, Masālik, p. 266; Muqaddasī, Aḥsan, p. 323.
68 See below, chapter 4, p. 115.
69 Imāmī biographers like Najāshī do not generally give dates for their entries and further research on internal dating criteria in these works is needed before a precise chronology of their subjects can be established (id, Rijāl al-najāshī, Qumm, 1407).
10th century, the prominent ʿImāmī scholar, Muḥammad ibn Masʿūd ibn ʿAyyāsh al-ʿAyyāshī al-Sulamī, spent his considerable inheritance supporting the ʿImāmī community of Samarqand (70). An influential ʿImāmī community lived near the shrine of the eighth imam, ʿAlī al-Ridā, which was a pilgrimage site for their sect (71). Ismāʿīlīs were also well represented in the mashriq from the beginning of the 10th century (72).

As the mashriq became culturally homogeneous, so the differences between people of different ethnic backgrounds and origins became attenuated to some degree. This was reflected in the gradual decline of the various indigenous dialects, such as Soghdian, which were by replaced by Persian. Differences remained however, primarily between Turkish and Persian speakers (73). Turks were well represented in the mashriq, particularly in Transoxania, where they had formed sedentary and semi-sedentary communities from long before the advent of the Samanids (74). While both Turks

70 Najāshī describes his house as being like a masjid, so crowded was it with Shiʿī scholars (ibid, pp. 350-3). He was a prolific author whose works provide evidence of the practical concerns of the ʿImāmī community in which he lived; viz. his books Kitāb nikāḥ al-mamālīk, K. qatāl al-mushrikīn. Cf. also EI², s.v. "al-Kashshā".


72 See below, chapter 6, passim.

73 Turkish was the language spoken by the Turkish mamlūks to their own kind (cf. Ibn Ṣāfīr, Duwal, fol. 121b).

74 Turkish communities were located in Transoxania - in Saḥāniyān near Tirmidh (Muqaddasī, Aḥsan, p. 283); Wāshgird (Yaqūt, Buldān, p. 292); Munk near Balkh, (ibid, p. 290); Ghit, on the lower Oxus near Khwārazm
and Iranians held positions of authority at the Samanid court and army, it is unlikely that there was very much assimilation between the two. Similarly some degree of apartness probably still attached itself to those naturalized Iranians who claimed to be of Arab descent (75): one or two Arab enclaves survived, notably in the village of Wadhar near Samarkand (76), and the two districts of Khulm and Siminjan near Balkh which were inhabited by members of the Banu Azd and the Banu Tamim respectively (77). Not much is known about relations between the inhabitants of these Arab enclaves and native Iranians, but Ibn al-Athir notes an outbreak of inter-ethnic fighting between Arab and 'Ajam in Marv in the late 9th century (78). On the other hand, one senior figure in the Samanid administration who was descended from early Arab settlers in the mashriq was certainly not an ethnic chauvinist (79).

(75) Cf. Narshakhâ's remark that when Isma'il ibn Ahmad entered Bukhara in 874, he was greeted by "notables, both Arabs and 'Ajam" (Târikh-i bukhârâ, p. 108 = p. 79).
76 Barthold, Turkestan, pp. 94f: I斯塔khri, Masâlik, pp. 322f.
77 Muqaddasî, Ahsan, p. 303.
79 Cf. Abu'l-Fadl al-Bal'ami who was descended from a Tamimí warrior who took part in Qutayba ibn Muslim's conquest of Marv (See appendix; the Samanid state elite, s.v. "Muhammad ibn 'Ubaydallah").
In addition to the established communities of the *mashriq* large numbers of immigrants entered the region during the century. In his section on Sāmānid poets, Thaʿalibī has notices of men who came from as far away as Baghdad and the *maghrib* (80). The chronicles and geographies tell of Rūmīs, Indians and Andalusians who gained high office under the Sāmānids (81); Chinese craftsmen may have worked for the Sāmānid court (82). As for the large-scale immigration of foreigners, there were undoubtedly large numbers of ghāzīs who came to the

80 See below, chapter 5, note 129.
81 Ibn Ẓafir mentions Ẓākin, a Rūmī slave who was an associate of Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad, the governor of Bukhārā in 301/914 (Ibn Ẓafir, Duwal, fol. 120b). The only member of the Sāmānid court with a Greek name was Aristōlīs (Aristotle): in circa 993, Nūh ibn Mansūr sent a messenger by this name to negotiate with Abū ʿAlī ʿAmīr, governor of Khurāsān (ʿUtbi, Yāmīnī, in Manīnī, Fath, vol. i, p. 174). Aristotle was not a common given name in Byzantium in this period (verbal communication from Dr J. Herrin, summer 1989); it may have been a nickname given to him by his master, Nūh. Muqaddasī says that Nūh ibn Naṣr’s first ḥājib before Ṭāχtro was called Rashīq al-Hindī (Aḥsan, p. 337). Fāʿiq, the most powerful mamluq at the Sāmānid court in the last quarter of the tenth century, bore the nisbas "al-Rūmī" and "al-Andalusi" (see appendix; the Sāmānid state elite, s.v. "Fāʿeq ibn ʿAbdallāh").
82 Chinese illustrators are said to have illustrated Rūdakī’s poem of *Kalīla wa Dimna* (Minorsky, "The Older Preface to the Shahname", Studi Orientalistici in Onore di Georgio della Vida, vol. ii, Rome, 1956, p. 168). Minorsky is uncertain about this reference; he gives chandān as a variant reading for chīnīyān. But he also notes that in a second manuscript which he had to hand, the reference was clearly to Chinese illustrators (ibid). There is no evidence to support the hypothesis that Chinese painters came to Bukhārā in the entourage of the "Chinese" princess who was betrothed to Nūh ibn Naṣr in 943 (cf. J. Raby, "Between Sogdiana and the Mamluks: a note on the earliest illustrations to *Kalīla wa Dimna*," Oriental Art, vol. xxxiii, no. 4., 1987-88, p. 397, note 27, citing Yaqūt, *Muʾjam al-buldān*, vol. iii, p. 446): Yaqūt’s account of the arrival of the entourage makes no reference to such painters, and furthermore, the "Chinese" princess was of Turkish origin (see below, chapter 5, p. 167).
East from all over the Muslim world to take part in the war against the Turks, such as the ghāzīs of Fārs and Khūzistān who took part in the repression of the Ismāʿīlīs in Manṣūr ibn Nūh’s reign (83). Muqaddasī reports that he had heard that there were 10,000 Iṣfahānīs in Shiljī, the district in the Talas valley in which were located the rich silver mines of that name (84); it has been suggested by the Soviet scholar Mokrunin that these Iṣfahānīs were miners who emigrated to Shiljī to find work after silver production in Isfahān had declined in the 9th century (85).

Urban factionalism

It is evident from the foregoing discussion that the Sāmānid mashriq was an ethnically and religiously pluralist society. It was moreover a society in transition which experienced population movements from rural areas to urban and a considerable influx of immigrants from outside its borders. Such conditions might have been expected to generate tensions between sections of the urban populations where these changes were most keenly felt – and indeed they did. The

84 Muqaddasī, Ahsan, p. 275. For the mines of Shiljī, see M.A. Bubnova, "Serebro Shelji", Voprosy Istorii, no. 4, 1975, pp. 211-215. Their location was identified by V. Barthold in the present-day ruins of Sadir-Kurgan in the east of the Talas valley. According to Bubnova there is evidence that the mines began to be worked in the 9th century and continued to produce silver until the 12th century (ibid, p. 212).
85 Bubnova is sceptical about Mokrunin’s hypothesis (ibid, pp. 215f).
geographer Muqaddasī brings to our attention the widespread phenomenon of 'asabiyya or factionalism, evidence of which he gathered on his travels in the region (86). According to him, factional disputes affected most of the larger cities of Khurasān (87) and the three Transoxanian cities of Samarqand, Binkath (capital of Shāsh), and Nasaf (88). Now although Muqaddasī was writing at the end of the 10th century, the information he supplies about Naysābūr does suggest that civil unrest was a long-standing problem in the city (89); furthermore, Ibn al-Athīr and the Tārīkh-i Sīstān give examples from the end of the 9th/beginning of the 10th centuries of factional disputes which arose in Marv and Sīstān respectively (90). There is therefore some justification for regarding factionalism as endemic in the mashriq throughout the century, even though it was probably at its most virulent towards the end of the century.

The causes of these factional disputes are not always clear from the brief accounts we have, but it is obvious

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86 That 'asabiyya commonly meant factionalism in this period is undisputed: however the term was also used by Ibn Hawqal in the positive sense of "group loyalty" (Sūrat al-ard, pp. 46f, 2nd ed., vol. 1, p. 69).
87 Naysābūr, Sarakhs, Herāt, Zaranj, Marv, Nāsā, Abīward and Balkh (Muqaddasī, Aḥsan, pp. 336f).
88 Samarqand, (Muqaddasī, Aḥsan, p. 337), Binkath (ibid, p. 276) and Nasaf (ibid, p. 283). Nasaf was destroyed in 379/989; the city was attacked by the 'āyyār Ḥasan al-Panāfghānī in a fitna and all its buildings and markets were burnt (Samarqandī, Muntakhab, fols. 5b, 59b and 74b, especially the latter).
89 Muqaddasī says that 'asabiyya in Naysābūr had in the past been based on residential divisions, whereas in his time it was the Shī'a and the Karrāmiyya who fought against each other (Aḥsan, p. 336).
90 For Marv, see above, note 78; for Sīstān, see Tārīkh-i Sīstān, p. 276 = p. 220.
that they were not confined to inter-madhhab rivalry as they were to become in the following century. Among them we note inter-ethnic conflict in Marv (91), disputes between city quarters in Naysăbûr, Marv, Nasă and Abîward, and other unspecific causes in Balkh and Samargand, which had nothing to do with quarrels between madhâhabs (92). Those cities in which factions were delineated by allegiance to madhhab were Zaranj and Sarakhs; in Naysăbûr and Herât, sectarian disputes were common (93).

Factionalism was by no means confined to the mashriq in the 10th century. Baghdad, for example, suffered from factional violence which followed in the wake of the disruption caused by the continuous wars in central Iraq and the exacerbation of tensions between Sunnî and Shî‘î which resulted from the Bûyid support of the latter (94). In the Hijâz civil disturbances of this kind had broken out in the 9th century (95). In 358/969 the Bûyids intervened to quell fighting between madhâhib in

91 See above, ibid.
92 Muqaddasi, Ahsan, p. 336.
93 In Naysăbûr factionalism arose between Shî‘a and Karrâmiyya, in Sarakhs between Hanafîs (‘Arûsiyya) and Shâfi‘î (Ahliyya), in Zaranj between Hanafî (Samakiyya) and Shâfi‘î (Sadaqiyya), in Herât between ‘Amaliyya and Karramiyya (Muqaddasi, Ahsan, p. 336).
95 In Mecca fighting broke out between "butchers" and "taylors" during the hajj season in 262/875-6 (Ibn al-Athîr, Kamil, vol. vii, p. 306); note the existence of a "butchers" faction in early 11th century Dinawar (Mottahedeh, Loyalty and Leadership, p. 116). In Medina, the ‘Alawiyîn and the Ja‘fariyya fought each other in 266/879-80 (Ibn al-Athîr, ibid, p. 335). Elsewhere in the Hijâz fighting broke out between the Hasaniyyîn, the Musayniyyîn and the Ja‘fariyya in 269/882-3 (ibid, p. 397).
Qazwīn and imposed a heavy fine on its inhabitants (96): Rukn al-Dawla also intervened in the dispute, probably between Shi‘ī and Sunnī, which set the inhabitants of Qumm and Isfahān against each other in 345/956-7 (97). In these examples we see a similar mix of motivations behind the disputes as in the mashriq.

Yet the geographers say that factionalism was more widespread in the mashriq than elsewhere. Some of reasons why this should have been so have been given above. As in all societies located in close proximity to a hostile frontier, the majority of the male population bore arms and the factional leaders were no doubt able to enlist their support against their rivals. The high mobility of urban populations, the influx of ghāzīs and the growth in numbers of city dwellers in this period must have exacerbated latent tensions between city quarters: the conversion of large numbers of non-Muslims by the Karrāmiyya could have led to an influx of peasant converts into cities like Naysābūr, where they would have had to compete for resources with established Muslim communities. As for the factionalism between sects and madhāhib; two of the groups involved, the Shāfi‘īs and the Karrāmiyya, were relative newcomers to the mashriq (98) and their emergence may have provoked a

98 Shāfi‘ism was introduced to Naysābūr by Muhammad ibn Nasr al-Marwāzī and Muhammad ibn Ishāq ibn Khuza‘yma (d. 311/923) (Madelung, Religious trends in early Islamic Iran, p. 26): the Karrāmiyya sect became active in Khurāsān after the death of its founder, Muhammad ibn Karrām (d. 255/869) (ibid, p. 39).
hostile response from their longer-established rivals. As the dominant Hanafīs began to feel the pressure of Shāfi‘ī competition, long-standing tensions between established communities, such as the indigenous Arab tribes of Sīstān, now crystalised into disputes between madhāhib (99). While there is no evidence that rivalries between professional groups broke out into conflict, we do know that one such group in Bukhārā did on one occasion organise itself into a militia detachment which fought on the side of the city authorities (100). In general however, there is little evidence that such disputes elicited a response from the Samanid central authorities as they did in the case of the Būyids.

99 See above, note 90.
100 Abu Ya'qūb Ishaq ibn Ibrāhīm, known as ʿustād-ḥa (al-bālah) fi ṣīlah, with 1000 apprentices under his command (the implication is that they fought under his orders, although this is not directly stated by Ibn Ẓāfir) fought for the governor of Bukhārā against the mamlūk regicides in 914 (Ibn Ẓāfir, Duwal, fol. 121a; see below, chapter 4, p. 140f).
Chapter three

THE RISE OF THE SĀMĀNĪDS
The Samanids before their appointment to government

The history of the Samanids prior to 820 is known only in its barest outlines. Samankhuda, the eponymous ancestor of the dynasty, escapes mention in Sallami's Ta'rikh wulat khurasan and his conversion to Islam is noted in only three sources. The first is Narshakhī's Tarīkh-i bukhārā (1). According to this work, Samankhuda was the ruler of Balkh. He fled from Balkh to seek the protection of Asad ibn 'Abdallāh al-Qushayrī (sic. al-Qasrī), the Umayyad governor of Khurasan in the reign of the caliph Hishām (105/724-125/743). Asad helped him against his enemies and allegedly returned Balkh to his control; Samankhuda subsequently converted to Islam at his hands and named his son Asad in honour of his new patron. This account may well be substantially correct, given that conversion at the hands of Arab governors was a well known method of entry to the Muslim oecumene for Easterners. But it was probably the village of Samān rather than the city of Balkh that Asad restored to Samankhuda. No other sources mention him as ruler of Balkh, and he would hardly have been known as Samankhuda

1 Narshakhī, Tarīkh-i bukhārā, p. 81 = p. 59.
if this had been his position; besides, Balkh is unlikely to have had a local ruler at all under Asad, since the latter chose to make it his own capital during his second tenure of governorship (2).

The second source is Gardizî, according to whom Sāmānkhudā converted at the hands of the caliph Ma‘mūn (3). This cannot be correct. The conversion could only have taken place while Ma‘mūn was resident in Khurāsān, which would mean that his four grandsons were appointed to Transoxanian governorships only seven years later. If the Sāmānids were recent converts, on a par with Faḍl ibn Sahl (4) and other men employed by Ma‘mūn (5), the story of the conversion at Ma‘mūn’s hands would surely have been about the four grandsons, or perhaps their father, but not their grandfather, who is unlikely to have been alive at the time. Given that the story is about Sāmānkhudā, Narshakhī’s dating is the more plausible.

The third source is the anonymous Nāsabnāme, a history of the sayyids of Tirmidh which has been examined by the Soviet scholar Semenov (6). According to this work,

3 Gardizî, Zayn, p. 146.
4 Tabarî, ser. iii, p. 709, sub anno 190/805-6; wa-fīha aslama al-faḍl ibn sahl ‘alā yad al-ma‘mūn.
Samankhuda built the village of Sāmān near Tirmidh on the Oxus in order to accommodate the family of his 'Alid patron, Hasan al-Amīr, from whom he received religious instruction and at whose hands he converted to Islam (7). Yet it is hard to believe that sayyids were active in Tukhāristān in the late Umayyad period and that names such as Hasan al-Amīr were current at the time; the Nasabnāme is in general too marked by inconsistencies and legendary accretions to be trustworthy. But though its account of Samankhuda’s conversion must be wrong, it does provide some intriguing details about him.

To begin with, it gives us the whereabouts of the village of Sāmān. The Nasabnāme tells us that it was a settlement near Tirmidh; this location was confirmed by the 19th century French scholar Guillaume Capus who visited a village north of Tirmidh known as Shahr-i Sāmān in the 1880’s (8). The fact that Tirmidh was situated in the same Tukhārī province as Balkh may account for Narshakhī’s impression that Samankhuda was ruler of that city; the Nasabnāme also gives the impression that Samankhuda had some measure of authority over the Balkhīs (9). In any event, Capus discovered a large mausoleum in Shahr-i Sāmān dedicated to a certain Amīr Husayn, possibly to be identified with the sayyid Hasan al-Amīr. The mausoleum is undated, and Amīr Husayn is unlikely to have lived earlier than the tenth

7 Semenov, ibid, pp. 3f.
8 Semenov, ibid, p. 5f, citing Capus, A travers le royaume de Tamerlan, Paris, 1892, pp. 151-159, 165, 167 and 171.
9 Samankhuda is said to have ordered the Balkhīs to help his patron’s family make Tirmidh habitable (ibid).
century, in which period sayyids and ashraf (in the sense of descendants of the Prophet) began to proliferate (10); but by the tenth century the Samanids may well have patronized a leading sayyid of their ancestral settlement, thereby giving rise to the story of Samankhuda's conversion, for they are known to have bestowed favours on 'Alids. Thus for example Isma'Il ibn Ahmad, a great-grandson of Samankhuda, who is said to have inclined towards Shi'ism in his youth (11), bought the village of Barkad near Bukhara and endowed it as a waqf for the 'Alids and Ja'farids (12); and some thirty years later Isma'Il's grandson, Nasr ibn Ahmad, was the first amir to give an pension to an 'Alid (13).

The Nasabnâme also informs us that Samankhuda was a native of Farghana with the given name of Arqaq (14). The theory that the Samanids originated from Farghana is interesting, considering that it was the first Samanid governor of that province, Ahmad ibn Asad (15), who was able to manoeuvre his sons into positions of authority throughout Transoxania at the expense of the descendants

10 Cf. Crone, Slaves on horses, p. 86 and the references thereto.
11 Samarqandî has a story to the effect that Isma'Il ibn Ahmad was attracted to tashayyu' in his youth and that he later repented of this inclination as the result of a dream in which he was warned of its dangers by the caliph Abu Bakr (Muntakhab, fol. 65a).
12 For the waqf endowment of Barkad, see Narshakhî, Târikh-i bukhârâ, p. 22 = p. 16.
13 See below, chapter 5, p. 152.
14 Semenov somewhat implausibly suggests that Arqaq is an Arabized version of the Greco-Parthian name Arkathias or Arkhathios, or perhaps an abbreviation of the word arkaika, meaning "little king" (ibid, p. 3, cf. note 3 thereto).
15 See below, p. 78.
of his brothers, so that by the time of his death, the whole region was under their control. The sources give no explanation for the rapid ascent of his sons; it may be that their claim to precedence over their cousins was somehow linked to their possession of the family’s home territory within the province and some measure of control which they exerted over the neighbouring steppe (16).

The reference to their Farghānān origin may also provide a clue to the Sāmānids’ alleged Turkish ancestry. According to the Jāmiʿ al-tawārīkh of Rashīd al-Dīn, the wazir of the Mongol Īlkhāns, the Sāmānids were of Oghuz stock (17). Now the commonly attested genealogy of the Samanids traces their descent from an Iranian forebear, Bahram Chūbīn, the Sasanian general who won important victories against the Turks of the steppe and tried to usurp the Sasanian throne (18). Iranian genealogies were a common phenomenon among the dynasties of this period, and can be attested for all the major dynasties which ruled in Iran in the 9th and 10th centuries (19). The political function of these

16 Note that according to Jūzjānī, during the pre-dynastic period Ahmad ibn Asad’s authority extended as far as Kashgār, Turkistan and "Chīn" (Jūzjānī, Tabaqāt-i nāsirī, vol. i, p. 203).
17 Rashīd al-Dīn quotes from the Tarīkh-i ughuz of Pesar-i Dīb Yaʿqūbī (Jāmiʿ al-tawārīkh, tarīkh-i sultān yambil al-dawla, ed. Atesh, Tehran, 1342, p. 3). A similar genealogy is to be found in the 15th century universal history of Muhammad Lārī (cf. R.N. Frye, "Samanids", Cambridge History of Iran, vol. iv, p. 136) — I have not been able to obtain a copy of this manuscript.
18 See below, chapter 9, note 66.
19 Dynasties such as the Saffārids, Tāhirids, Būyids, Ziyārids, Ghaznavids (cf C.E. Bosworth, "The heritage of rulership in early Islamic Iran and the search for
genealogies, which were no doubt seen by percipient observers to be legitimatory charters rather than statements of physical descent, was to provide the necessary credentials for rulers who operated in an Iranian cultural environment. In some cases like the Būyids, their credibility was openly contested by contemporary observers who scoffed at the clumsy attempts of parvenu dynasts to disguise their humble origins with fantastic claims to noble descent (20). In other cases, such as that of the Sāmānids, the claim was widely accepted, no doubt because they fulfilled some of the common expectations of Iranian dynasts and because they were in fact of Iranian descent. It is odd, then, to find them credited with a Turkish genealogy as well. Perhaps it is an echo of the otherwise forgotten fact of their origin in a province which lay on the borders of the steppe and was inhabited by a large numbers of Turkish tribesmen, among whom the Oghuz may have been represented.

As regards Sāmānkhudā’s social standing, the Timūrid historian Ḥamdallāh Qazvīnī has a story to the effect that his family had fallen on hard times and Sāmānkhudā’s father had been forced to earn his living as a camel driver: in an effort to improve his lot, he turned to banditry (‘ayyāra), and was so successful that he managed to

20 Cf. Biruni’s comment on the illegitimacy of the Būyids’ claim and that of Ibn ‘Abd al-razzaq al-Tūsī (The chronology of ancient nations, ed. and tr. E. Sachau, p. 45; see appendix; the Sāmānīd state elite, s.v. “Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd al-razzaq”).
conquer the province of "Ashnās", or Shāsh, as Khwāndamīr has it (21). The story is spurious: the verses which are said to have inspired Sāmānkhudā to turn bandit were composed by Hanzala of Badghīs, a contemporary of the Tāhirids (22); the story itself is repeated in the Chahār maqāle where Ahmad ibn 'Abdallāh al-Khujustānī (23) takes the place of Sāmānkhudā. Frye, the only western scholar to broach the subject of Sāmānkhudā's social background, assumes that he was a dihqān, in the sense of local prince (24). The sources do not describe him as such and moreover the term is used so loosely in this period that it could mean anything from a member of the landed gentry to the ruler of a province (25); however it is reasonable to assume that a man who founded a village and came to be known as its lord was of some social standing among his peers. But a village lord was a far less significant figure than the Bukhārkudā, with whom Narshakhi compares him (26), in the mistaken belief that he was the ruler of Balkh. The Arab historians of Umayyad rule in Eastern Iran would certainly have had more to say about him if

22 Cf. Tārīkh-i guzide, ibid, note.
23 Chahar maqale, ed. E.G. Browne, p. 27f; for Khujustānī, see below, note 88.
24 Frye, Bukhara: the medieval achievement, Oklahoma, 1965, p. 35.
25 Cf. EI² s.v. "dihkān". The term was also increasingly used of Turkish, as well as Iranian, provincial governors in the 10th century; see below, chapter 10, notes 2 and 3.
26 Narshakhi, Tārīkh-i bukhārā, p. 81 = p. 59.
he had played a significant part in the history of the region under Umayyad rule.

Very little is known of the fate of the Samanid family between the time of Samankhuda's conversion and the assumption of the governorship of Transoxania by his grandsons. Hamdallah Qazvini says that Asad ibn Samankhuda found favour at Ma'mun's court and Narshakhii notes laconically that from Asad's time, "the power of the Samanids increased every day until it attained what it did" (27). However there are hitherto neglected references in the works of Tabari, Ibn Abi Tahir Tayfur and Miskawayh, which may shed some light on this dark period.

Tabari tells us that a certain Abu'l-Asad, mawla of Asad ibn 'Abdallah al-Qasri, took part in the latter's raid on Khuttal in 119/737 (28) and escorted Badrurkhân, a prisoner captured by the Umayyad forces, to the camp of the campaign general, Mus'ab ibn 'Amr al-Khuzâ'i. It is tempting to identify this Abu'l-Asad as

27 Tarikh-i quzâdâq, ed. Nawa'i, Tehran, 1339, p. 377; Narshakhii, Tarikh-i bukhârâ, p. 82 = p. 59.
28 Tabari, ser. ii, pp. 1630f. This raid on Khuttal was probably not carried out in 120 as Gibb suggests (Early Muslim conquests in Central Asia, p. 83). It was more likely the raid of 119 during which the regent of Khuttal called on the khâqân of the Turks for aid against the Arabs. Tabari gives two separate accounts of al-Qasri's activity in Khuttal on the authority of the same transmitters. The second account, in which Asad the mawla of al-Qasri is mentioned, cannot have been a reference to a second raid on Khuttal in 120, since al-Qasri died at the beginning of this year. It is therefore most likely a description of al-Qasri's successes in Khuttal during his first raid, before the arrival of the khâqân forced him to retreat to Balkh; this account has become detached from that of al-Qasri's retreat from Khuttal and his eventual defeat of the khâqân.
Sāmānkhudā with whom he shared the same kunya and patron. He was entrusted with an important task by his patron, which could only be carried out by a loyal dependent; Sāmānkhudā’s personal attachment to Asad, at whose hands he converted to Islam, would have been beyond doubt. Moreover as a resident of Ţukhāristān, his knowledge of the region would have made him a valuable asset to the expedition.

It is possibly also Sāmānkhudā who appears in Tabarī’s chronicle as Abū’l-Asad, mawla of Khālid ibn ‘Abdallāh al-Qasrī (29). Tabarī notes that in 126 Abū’l-Asad took part in the murder of the Umayyad caliph Walīd II in Syria. He is said to have ripped a piece of skin off the corpse of the dead caliph and taken it to Yazīd ibn Khālid ibn ‘Abdallāh al-Qasrī, who had been imprisoned by Walīd and was only released after he had been murdered. Asad ibn ‘Abdallāh, Abū’l-Asad’s first patron, had died in 120, immediately after the expedition to Khuttal, and it is quite possible that he had transferred his allegiance to the latter’s brother. Abū’l-Asad reappears, once more as the mawla of Khālid, in 127, when Yazīd ibn Khālid ordered him to assassinate Yusuf ibn ‘Umar al-Thaqafī, who had been responsible for the murder of Yazīd’s father, Khālid, in 126 (30).

On the question of his identification with Sāmānkhudā, it must be said that this theory can only be proposed with significant reservations. The first is

29 Tabarī, ser. ii, p. 1807.
30 Tabarī, ser. ii, pp. 1841f and 1878. For Khālid’s death, see Crone, Slaves, p. 102.
that Abū'1-Asad was clearly possessed of a fanatical devotion to his masters which suggests that he was a freedman rather than an Iranian nobleman such as Sāmānkhuḍā who retained a powerbase in the mashriq. Furthermore it needs to be explained why he had left the mashriq to fight for his patrons in Syria and Iraq. Could it be that he had been recruited into the service of the Qasrī family on a par with the Afshīn and other Transoxanian converts who were brought to the west by the 'Abbāsids to put to use their proven military skills on behalf of their patrons?

Nothing further is known of Abū'1-Asad’s life or how he fared under the 'Abbāsids. But members of the Qasrī family did find favour under the new regime. Muhammad, the brother of Yazīd ibn Khālid, declared for the da’wa and was appointed governor of Mecca by Mansūr (31); Yazīd’s uncle Ismā‘il governed Mosul and became one of Mansūr’s saḥāba (32). It is therefore probable that if he survived the revolution, Abū'1-Asad would also have become a supporter of the 'Abbāsids.

Turning now to Sāmānkhuḍā’s son, Asad, there are two references to a certain Asad ibn Abī’1-Asad with whom he might be identified, both of them dated after the assumption of the caliphate by Ma’mūn. In the first of these, Asad ibn Abī’1-Asad appears as an ‘āmil of Hasan ibn Sahl who was expelled from Baghdad in 201/816-7 by a population rioting against the policies of the

31 Tabarī, ser. iii, pp. 18f.
32 ibid, ser. iii, p. 402. References for this and the preceding note were first noted by Crone (Slaves, pp. 102f).
Banū Sahl (33). In the second passage we see Asad ibn Abī’l-Asad accompanying Tāhir ibn Ḥusayn back to Khurāsān when Tāhir took up the governorship of the province in 205/821 (34). On his arrival in Marv, Tāhir sent an expedition to Khwārazm and Bukhārā, in which Asad took part. During the expedition Asad voiced a grievance, ostensibly about pay, and incited his fellow expeditionaries to support his cause, thereby putting the future of the expedition in jeopardy. His commanding officer upbraided him for causing trouble and eventually had him executed. During his confrontation with Asad, he made reference to Asad’s earlier sojourn in Baghdad; the implication is that after being well rewarded during his career in Baghdad, Asad was dissatisfied with the conditions of service offered to him on the Transoxanian expedition.

The only other reference we have to Asad’s death is a short notice in Khwandamīr’s Ḥabīb al-siyar in which we are told that he came to Marv while the caliph Ma’mūn was there and that he died just as Ma’mūn was planning to leave Marv for Baghdad (35). This is the sum total of references to Abū’l-Asad and Asad ibn Abī’l-Asad to be found in the above sources.

33 Tabarī, ser. iii, p. 998; Miskawayh, Fragmenta Historicum Arabicorum, vol. ii, ed. de Goeje, p. 429.
34 Ibn Abī Tāhir Tayfur, Kitāb baghdād, ed. Keller, Leipzig, 1908, p. 120.
The appointment of Asad's sons to governorships

While Ma'mūn was resident in Marv, Transoxania was governed in succession by two amirs of Iranian origin. The first was Yahyā ibn Mu'ādh (195-199) (36), a former deputy governor of Khurasan on behalf of Faḍl ibn Yahyā al-Barmakī (177-78) (37) and a close confidant of Ma'mūn's (38). While we do not know the reason for his dismissal, it seems that he was not a popular governor (39). His replacement was Bānījūr, a long-standing ally of the 'Abbāsids (40), of either Iranian or Turkish origin, from the ruling family of Khuttal (41); he was the forebear of the Bānījūrid dynasty which ruled in Khuttal, Badakhshan and Tuhkāristān from the middle of the 9th century (42) and in the 10th century became vassals of the Sāmānids (43). The appointment of

36 Gardīzī, Zayn, p. 133. Yahyā's father was a native of Khuttal or Rayy who had settled in Baghdad and had served in the 'Abbāsid armies against Muqanna' and the Alids at Fakhkh (cf. Crone, Slaves, pp. 183f).
37 Gardīzī, Zayn al-akhbār, p. 130.
38 He is said to have been offered and to have declined the position subsequently taken up by Faḍl ibn Sahl (Crone, ibid., p. 184).
40 Cf. EI² supplement, s.v. "Banijdjūrids"; Gardīzī, Zayn, p. 133.
42 It was to Ḥāshim ibn Bānījūr, ruler of Wakhsh and Halwird, that Haydr the Afshin fled when he was forced to leave Ushrusana before he converted to Islam and led an 'Abbāsid army against his father in 207 (Balādhurī, Kitāb futūḥ al-buldān, ed. M.J. de Goeje, Leiden, 1866, p. 430); Barthold calls Ḥāshim "the local representative of the Arab government" (Turkestan, p. 211). 'Abbās ibn Bānījūr served the 'Abbāsids in Egypt in 211/826-7 (Va'gubī, Historiae, vol. ii, p. 561, noted in Vasmer, ibid., p. 53) at around the same time as Ilyās ibn Aṣad the Sāmānīd was governor of Alexandria (see below, note 62) and another son, Dā'ūd, was governor of Bāṣra, Yamāma and Bahrayn (Tabarī, ser. iii, p. 1044, noted in Vasmer, ibid., p. 53).
43 See below, chapter 4, pp. 108f and 110f.
Banijur, the progenitor of a dynasty which exercised authority over an extensive region from Balkh to Wakhsh and Halwird in the east, may have been the first sign that Ma'mun was already contemplating vassal rule in Transoxania, before the appointment of the Samanids. There was probably an interval between Banijur's dismissal from the governorship of Transoxania and the appointment of the Samanids; Gardizi tells us that Layth ibn Sa'd held the governorship of Samarqand immediately before Nuh was appointed (44).

Asad's sons were appointed to governorships in Transoxania by Ghassan ibn 'Abbad, Ma'mun's governor of Khurasan (202-205), two years before the death of Asad ibn Abi'l-Abbas. The appointment was made on the instructions of the caliph Ma'mun himself, who, according to NarshakhI, wanted to reward them for the help they had given the 'Abbasids in the suppression of the revolt of Rafi' ibn Layth in Samarqand some ten years earlier (45).

Asad's sons had very likely either had previous experience of local conditions in Samarqand and/or had

44 Gardizi, Zayn, p. 132.  
45 NarshakhI, Tarikh-i bukhara, p. 105 = p. 76. Rafi', grandson of Nasr ibn Sayyar, the last Umayyad governor of Khurasan, had raised a rebellion in Samarqand towards the end of Harun's caliphate and many regions in Transoxania had joined his cause (Tabari, ser. iii, pp. 707f: Ya'qubi, Historiae, vol. ii, p. 528). Harun himself had come east in order to deal with him, but died at Tus in 193/809. It was left to Ma'mun to complete the task of restoring Transoxania to order, which he did with the help of the sons of Asad ibn Samankhuda. NarshakhI notes that Rafi's capitulation was a source of great relief to the caliph, who had at one time feared that he would take over the whole of Khurasan.
known Rafi before he turned against the 'Abbasids, since they had been able to persuade him to come to terms with Ma'mun (46). It is possible that Sahlid patronage also played a role in the elevation of Asad's sons, for Ghassān ibn 'Abbād was a cousin of Hasan ibn Sahl, Asad ibn Abī'1-Asad's superior in Iraq. The descendants of the Banū Sahl remained in favour with the Samānid house in the early 10th century; Abū'1-'Abbās, the son of Fadl ibn Sahl, was associated with the Samānid court in Ahmad ibn Ismā'īl's reign (47).

Little is known for certain about their careers prior to the appointment, though it seems that Nūh was resident in Samarqand and on good terms with Ma'mun (48). With one exception, the sources agree that Ghassān appointed all four sons of Asad to governorships in Transoxania and Khurāsān. Although the later sources specify the locations of their governorships (49), both

46 Narshakhī, ibid, p. 105 = p. 76. If Frye's translation of musāhara as "marriage alliance" is correct, this would suggest that the Samanids had had contact with Rafi before 194. It may be that the musāhara is better translated as "a pact of mutual protection" (Lane, Arabic-English Lexicon, s.v. s-h-r [3rd form]). No other sources mention the part played by the Samanids in Rafi's surrender: Tabarī says only that Rafi was encouraged to come to terms by Ma'mun's generous treatment of other local notables in Khurāsān and Transoxania (Tabarī, ser. iii, p. 777). Gardīzī knows nothing of a peace treaty with Rafi; according to his version, Harthama ibn A'yan occupied Samarqand and killed Rafi (Gardīzī, Zayn, p. 133).
47 Ibn Isfandiyar, Tarīkh-i tabaristān, p. 266.
48 Ibn Khallikān says that Nūh ibn Asad "āmil bukhārā" gave the mamluk Tulūn to Ma'mun in 200/815-16 (id, Wafayāt al-a'yan, vol. i, p. 173). The designation "āmil bukhārā" is almost certainly erroneous; Ibn Khallikān probably only used it because he knew the later Samanids as governors of the city.
49 Ibn al-Athīr, Ḑamīl, vol. vii, p. 279 (anno 204/819-20); Gardīzī, Zayn, p. 146. The one divergent account is that of Hamza Isfahānī who says that Nūh accompanied
our early sources, Narshakhī and Sallāmī, are more reticent in that they only give the locations of Nūḥ and Ahmad’s appointments. While both agree on Nūḥ’s appointment to Samargand, they differ as to the location of Ahmad’s governorship, the former saying that it was Marv and the latter that it was Herāt (50). But however this may be, Ahmad was eventually appointed to Farghana, which he governed until Nūḥ’s death. This province, which was the easternmost region of Transoxania, and nearest to the Dār al-harb, was still in an unsettled state during the first half of the ninth century. Two expeditions were sent to it during the period of his governorship; the first of these restored Ahmad’s rule after he had temporarily lost control of the province (51).

Among the four brothers, Nūḥ, with his capital at Samargand, assumed the role of senior amir. He seems to have been a loyal servant of the caliph and his Tahirid overlords. In 212/827-28 Ṭalḥa ibn Ṭahir visited the Sāmanid capital (52); and in 225/840 Nūḥ carried out ‘Abdallāh ibn Ṭahir’s instructions to arrest the governor of Ushrusana, Ḥasan ibn Ḥaydar, son of the

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Ma’mūn to Iraq and that he stayed at his court for a number of years before returning to govern Transoxania on behalf of the Tahirids (Ta’rikh sinī al-mulūk, ed. I.M.E. Gottwald, Petropolis, 1844, p. 237).


52 Samargandī, Muntakhab, fol. 53b: fa’staqdā ‘umar ibn ābī muqātil hādha ba’da qudūm talha ibn ṭahir samargand bi-ayyāmīhi wa dhālika sanata ithnatay ‘ashra wa mi’atayn...
Afšīn Haydar who was at the time being tried for treason in Baghdad (53).

As for their relations with the caliphate, the early S̄āmānīds paid a regular annual tribute to Baghdad from the land revenues of Transoxania (54); this practice was probably only discontinued after the S̄āmānīds had been appointed governors of Khurāsān. Nūḥ also had direct relations with the caliph in Baghdad: Yaʿqūbī reports that he supplied slaves to the caliph Muʿtasim on an annual basis (55). The same caliph grudgingly distributed some caliphal largesse in the region on the advice of his chief qādī Ibn Abī Daʿūd, assigning one million dirhams towards the digging of a canal in Shāsh (56). Muʿtasim's initial reluctance to make a contribution towards the welfare of such a remote corner of the umma is perhaps an indication that Transoxania did not hold the same importance for him as the central Islamic lands. Nevertheless, the 'Abbāsids did possess some properties in Sughd from which they drew revenue:

53 Tabarī, ser. iii, p. 1307. For his release, see below, note 65.
54 Narshakhī tells of the revenue sent annually by Ismāʿīl from Bukhara to his brother Nasr in Šamargand, who forwarded it to Baghdad (Tarīkh-i bukhāra, p. 15 = p. 11). Muqtadīr (295–320), the caliph named in this passage, acceded to the caliphate some 16 years after the death of Naṣr ibn Ahmad: the caliph concerned was more likely Muʿtaṣid (279/892–289/902). A notable feature of this passage is that the S̄āmānīds sent the tribute directly to Baghdad; prior to the collapse of Tāḥīrid power in 874, the S̄āmānīds probably sent their tribute to the Tāḥīrid governor of Naysābūr. 55 Yaʿqūbī, Kitāb al-buldān, pp. 255f.
56 Tabarī, ser. iii, p. 1326, first noted by Barthold, Turkestan, p. 212.
two such districts were Ishtīkhan near Samarqand and Iskijkath near Bukhārā (57).

The Samānids' primary task throughout the 9th century was to subdue those provinces within Transoxania which had either not yet been conquered or else had not been permanently settled by the Muslims and to prosecute the war against the heathen Turks of the steppe. Among Nūḥ's accomplishments in this field was his conquest of Isfiyāb in 224/839 (58); he may also have had a hand in the final subjugation of Farghāna (59). His nephew Naṣr ibn Ahmad led a ghāzī raid against western Shāwghar on the Jaxartes (60). The Tāhirids also contributed to the drive to expand into the steppe; ʿAbbālāh ibn Tāhir (213-230) sent his son Tāhir on campaign into the Oghuz steppe (61).

Our sources provide some information about the governorships of Nūḥ's brothers, Ilyās and Yahyā. Ilyās's career was exceptional in that he was the only one of the four brothers to serve the Tāhirids directly, as governor of Herāt and for short spells as governor of

57 Barthold, Turkestan, p. 99.
59 Cf. Barthold, Turkestan, p. 211. Balādhurī says that this expedition was carried out in the reign of the caliph Muntasir (247-8). Either the name is a mistake for Muʿtasim (who died in the same year as Nūḥ), or else the expedition took place after Nūḥ's death.
61 Balādhurī, Futūḥ al-buldān, p. 431.
Sīstān and Alexandria in Egypt (62). After his death in 242/856-7 his descendants remained in Herāt and two of his sons continued in the service of the Tāhirids (63). As for Yahyā ibn Asad, his appointment to Shāsh and Ushrusana is problematic. The numismatic evidence indicates that he was governor of Shāsh, but does not allow us to specify the dates of his tenure of this post; however it is likely that he only assumed the governorship after the death of his brother Nūh in 227/842 (64). But it is doubtful that he was ever governor of Ushrusana, since for most of the 9th century


63 For Ilyās’s descendants in Herāt, see Bayhaqī, Tarīkh-i bayhaq, ed. Husaynī, Hyderabad, 1966, p. 117. Ibn Athīr says that his son, Abū Ishāq Muḥammad, took over the governorship of Herāt when he died (Kāmil, vol. vii, p. 280). Ibrāhīm ibn Ilyās was commander of the Tāhirid army who attempted without success to raise the siege of Herāt by the Saffarīd Ya‘qūb ibn Layth in 253 (Tarīkh-i Sīstān, p. 208 = p. 166). Six years later, after Ya‘qūb had taken Nāysābūr, Ibrāhīm was one of the Tāhirid generals who pledged allegiance to him (Tarīkh-i Sīstān, p. 225 = p. 178).

64 Two 9th century coins minted in Binkath, the mint of Shāsh, bear different names, Nūh ibn Asad and Yahyā ibn Asad respectively. The date on the first coin is only partly legible and reads bismi‘llāhi duriba hadha’l-fils bi-binkath s...ta (sic.= sanata ) a... wa mi’atayn. Davidovich surmises from the single alif at the beginning of the date, that the coin must have been minted at some time between 211/826-7 and 224/838-9, as Nūh died in 227/841-2 (Davidovich, E.A., "Vtoraya mon eta Samanida Nuha ibn Asada", Epigrafika vostoka, vol. ix., 1954, pp. 38f). For the date of Nūh’s death cf. Sam’ānī, Ansāb, vol. vii, p. 26. Yahyā’s coin bears no date but the Rtveladzes, working from the evidence of the first coin, assume that it must have been struck after the death of Nūh, thus dating it between 227 and 241. (Rtveladze, E.V. and L.L. "Pervyi fel’s Iakhilia ibn Asada", Epigrafika Vostoka, vol. xxi, 1972, pp. 30f). Yahyā died in Rabī‘ II 241/ Sep 855 (Sam’ānī, Ansāb, vol. ii, p. 26).
Ushrusana was ruled by the local Afšin dynasty (65). It may be that he acted as Nūh’s representative in negotiations with the Afšīns on occasion: that Nūh’s authority was recognized by the Afšīns in matters relating to property rights and land tenure in Ushrusana is suggested by the complaints lodged against him by Hasan ibn Ḥaydar the Afšīn to the Tāhīrid governor of Khurāsān (66).

Sāmānid rule from 227/842 to 250/864

After Nūh’s death in 227/842, Sallāmī reports that Tāhir ibn Ḥusayn confirmed his brothers Ahmad, Yahyā and Ilyās in their governorships (67). If the date of Nūh’s death is correct, the Tāhīrid concerned must have been ‘Abdallāh ibn Tāhir (213/828-230/845). Yet according to Ibn al-Athīr, it was Tāhir ibn ‘Abdallāh (230/845-248/862) who endorsed the continuation of their rule in Transoxania, so there may have been a hiatus of three

65 Hasan ibn Ḥaydar’s arrest (see above, note 53) does not seem to have signalled the end of the Afšīn dynasty of Ushrusana: he was released from prison in 250/864 (Tabarī, ser. iii, p. 1533). The numismatic evidence indicates that the Afšīns retained the governorship of Ushrusana right up to the end of the 9th century; Markov records a coin struck by the last Afšīn of Ushrusana, Sayr ibn ‘Abdallāh, in 279/892-3 and another struck by Isma‘īl ibn Ahmad in the province in the following year (A. Markov, Inventarny Katalog musulmanskkh monet Imperatorskago Ermitazha, St. Petersburg, 1896-4, pp. 112 [no. 1] and 114 [no. 38]; first noted by Barthold, Turkestan, p. 211, note 2). Yahyā’s presence in the province was not noted when Ushrusana was conquered by ‘Abbasid forces in 207/822-3, (Tabarī, ser. iii, p. 1066; Balādhrī, Futūh al-buldān, p. 430). Neither is he mentioned in the story of Nūh’s arrest of Hasan ibn Ḥaydar in 225/840.

66 Tabarī, ser. iii, p. 1308.

years or more between Nūh’s death and the completion of
the Tāhirids’ formal investiture of his brothers (68).

When Nūh died, the governorship of Samarqand passed to
his brother Ahmad. Narshakhī says that Nūh had appointed
Ahmad as his deputy, and he also has it that Ahmad lived
in Samarqand until he died, which suggests that he moved
there on Nūh’s death (69). Sallāmī, on the other hand,
says that Ahmad’s son Naṣr governed Samarqand on his
father’s behalf, thus confirming the succession
arrangement, but implying that Ahmad continued to reside
in Faraghāna (70). However this may be, coins were minted
in Ahmad’s name in both Samarqand (A.H. 244 and 245) and
Faraghāna (A.H. 247) (71). When he died in 250/864, his
son and deputy, Naṣr, took over as senior amir (72).

Sāmānīd rule from 250 to 287

The chronicles tell us nothing about the first decade of
Naṣr’s reign (73) and the Sāmānīds only re-emerge into

69 Narshakhī, Tarīkh-i bukhāra, p. 105f = pp. 76f.
71 For the two fils minted in Samarqand in 244 and 245
   see Tiesenhausen, "O samanidskykh monetakh", Trudy
   Vostochnago Otdeleniya Imp. Russkogo Arkh. Obshchestva
   1855, p. 84). For the Farghana fils of 247 see
   Yakubovski, "Ob odnom rannesamanidskom felse", KSIIMK,
   vol. xii, 1946, p. 105).
72 Narshakhī, Tarīkh-i bukhāra, p. 106 = p. 77.
73 However the coinage suggests that Naṣr ibn Ahmad re-
   established direct control over Shash early in his
   reign; a copper coin minted in Shash in 254 bears his
   name (cf. Davidovich, E.A., Klady drevnykh i
   srednevekovykh monet Tadzhikistana, Moscow, 1979, p.
   126). The previous ruler of the province, Yahyā ibn
   Asad, had died in 241/855. By the time of the civil war
   in 272, the province was governed by Naṣr’s brother, Abū
   Yūsuf Ya’qub ibn Ahmad (see below, note 94).
the light of history in 260/873-4. On 12th Ramadān 260/1st July 874 the Šāmānids occupied Bukhārā in the wake of the turmoil which had ensued in Eastern Iran after the Saffārīds’ victory over the Tāhīrids (74). A year before this, Ya‘qūb ibn Layth, who had long been making inroads into Tāhīrid territories in Khurāsān, had sealed his triumph by conquering Nāyṣābūr and taking Muhammad ibn Tāhīr prisoner (75). The Tāhīrids counter-attacked quickly, sending Husayn ibn Tāhīr, brother of the deposed governor of Khurāsān, to regain their lost territories. Husayn took advantage of Ya‘qūb’s temporary absence in the Caspian provinces in 260/873-4 and campaigned with his Khwārāzmī allies on the western fringes of Transoxania, occupying Bukhārā in Rabī‘ II/Jan–Feb 874 of that year (76).

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75 Ibn al-Aṭhīr, Kāmil, vol. vii, pp. 261f. Ya‘qūb had already been acknowledged as governor of Sīstān, Fārs, Kirmān and Kābul by Muhammad ibn Tāhīr in 253/867 (Tarīkh-i sīstān, p. 209 = p. 166). In 258/872-3 after sending valuable presents to the caliph, including the gold and silver idols which he had captured in Kābul, he was appointed governor of Balkh, Tukhāristān, Fars, Kirmān, Sīstān, and Sind. He subsequently occupied Balkh and Herāt before attacking Nāyṣābūr (Tarīkh-i sīstān, p. 216f. = p. 172).

76 Narshakī, Tarīkh-i bukhārā, p. 106f = pp. 77f. After Ismā‘īl had forestalled his designs on Bukhārā, Husayn continued his campaign to restore Tāhīrid power in Khurāsān, occupying Nāyṣābūr for a time before being expelled from the city in 263/876-7 (Ibn al-Aṭhīr, Kāmil, vol. vii, p. 310). Hamza Isfahānī tells us that while in Nāyṣābūr, Husayn (ibn Tāhīr ibn ‘Abdallāh) sent a messenger to ask Nasr ibn Ahmad for assistance but Nasr refused his request and Husayn subsequently left the city (Hamza Isfahānī, Ta’rīkh sinī mulūk al-ard, pp. 234f).
The occupying forces wrought havoc in the city, burning and looting, and their presence ignited a series of internecine feuds among the inhabitants. To add to the chaos, Sāmānīd troops who had originally been dispatched to guard the Oxus crossing against the Saffārids, killed their commander and returned to Bukhārā where they expelled Naṣr’s deputy (77) and elected three men in quick succession as their commanders (78), until finally they remained leaderless. In an effort to restore peace to their city, the Bukhārans, represented by one of their leading scholars, Abū ‘Abdallāh ibn Abī Hafs, asked Naṣr ibn Ahmad to send them a governor. Naṣr dispatched his brother Abū Ibrāhīm Ismā‘īl ibn Ahmad and he was welcomed by the inhabitants with great ceremony in Ramadan 260/July 874 (79). He had some trouble consolidating his rule in Bukhārā however; he had to fend off a further attack by Husayn ibn Tāhir

77 Ibn al-Āthīr, Kāmil, vol. vii, p. 280f. While the Tāhirids were in power in Khurāsān, Bukhārā was governed by a Tāhirid appointee; cf. Khalīd ibn Ahmad al-Dhuḥlī, governor of Bukhārā on their behalf who quarreled with Bukhārī (d. 256/870), author of the Sahīh (Subkī, Tabagāt al-shāfi‘iyya, vol. ii, p. 14). What role the Sāmānīd na‘īb (deputy) played in Bukhārā is not clear.

78 The first choice of the troops as commander was a grandson of Rāfī’ ibn Layth, the leader of the anti-‘Abbāsid rebellion in Samarqand which the Sāmānīds had helped to suppress (see above, note 45). The second was Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Layth, who was later to be made chief of police in Bukhārā by Ismā‘īl ibn Ahmad (Narshakhi, Tarīkh-i bukhārā, p. 15 = pp. 11f).

79 Narshakhi, Tarīkh-i bukhārā, p. 108 = p. 79.
(80) and overcome the powerful local nobility of the city, before he could secure his authority (81).

In the following year the caliph Mu'tamid sent a document of investiture to Nasr ibn Ahmad, appointing him as ruler of Transoxania in his own right (82). Mu'tamid's initiative was part of a scheme to unite all the local rulers of Eastern Iran against Ya'qūb the Saffārid, whose actions against the Tāhirids he strongly condemned (83). As rulers of one of the most extensive local amirates in the region, the Sāmānids were set to play an important part in this strategy. Already before this date, they had given notice of their opposition to the Saffārids; in 258/872 Naṣr ibn Ahmad gave refuge to Dā'ūd ibn 'Abbās, the Bānījūrid ruler of Balkh, after he had been expelled from his city by Ya'qūb (84).

Over the following three decades the 'Abbāsids maintained cordial relations with the Sāmānids while their relations with the Saffārids fluctuated between hostility and grudging acceptance of their rule. While for the most part the caliphs made no secret of their disapproval of the Saffārids, on at least three

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80 ibid, p. 111f. = p. 81.
81 ibid, p. 112f. = p. 82. One of these local notables was the descendant of the Bukhārkhudā, former ruler of the city.
83 Tabarî, ser. iii, p. 1887. Tabarî reports that the caliph Mu'tamid assembled Khurāsānī pilgrims and informed them that he had not assigned the governorship of Khurāsān to Ya'qūb ibn Layth. Ibn Khallikān reports that in 261 Mu'tamid endorsed the authority of all the ashab al-mamālik and dhawī al-jāḥ wa'l-'udad in Khurāsān, no doubt in an attempt to prevent Ya'qūb's agents from securing control of the province (Ibn Khallikān, Wafayāt al-a'yān, vol. vi, Beirut, p. 413).
84 EI² supplement, s.v. "Bānījūrids".
occasions they reversed their hostile stance and endorsed Ṣaffārid authority in the mashriq. These changes in 'Abbasid policy were probably dictated by their need to secure regular tribute from the Ṣaffārids who were the only power in Khurāsān capable of remitting large sums to Baghdad (85).

The first time the Ṣaffārids secured caliphal endorsement was shortly after 'Amr ibn Layth had succeeded his brother Ya'qūb in 265/879; 'Amr received the patent of investiture from Mu'tamid for all the territories formerly ruled by the Tahirids (86). According to the Tārīkh-i Sīstān, Transoxania was included among these territories (87), but there is no evidence that 'Amr took any steps towards enforcing Ṣāmānid recognition of his sovereignty. Meanwhile the caliph continued to offer covert support to the local amirs who contested 'Amr's rule in Khurāsān. One such amir was Ahmad ibn 'Abdallāh al-Khujustānī who had occupied Naysābūr in 262/875-6 during Ya'qūb's reign; Khujustānī proceeded to impede Ṣaffārid efforts to regain control of central Khurāsān until his death in 268/881, when his army pledged allegiance to his lieutenant Rāfi' ibn

85 The Tārīkh-i Sīstān mentions a number of occasions when the Ṣaffārids agreed to send tribute to the caliph. 'Amr sent a huge amount of tribute to Baghdad when his succession was confirmed by Mu'tamid in 265/879 (Tārīkh-i Sīstān, p. 236 = p. 187). In 266/880 'Amr is said to have negotiated the payment of one million dirhams annually from Sīstān to the caliphate; but he was unable to make this payment owing to Khujustānī's opposition in Naysābūr which prevented him from securing his rule in the region. (ibid, p. 236 = p. 187). In 275/888 'Amr agreed to send an annual sum of 10 million dirhams to Baghdad (ibid, p. 246 = p. 195).
86 Tabari, ser. iii, p. 1932.
87 Tārīkh-i Sīstān, p. 234 = p. 185.
Harthama, who continued Khujustānī’s campaign against ‘Amr (88).

In 271/884, three years after Rāfī’ had come to power, the ‘Abbāsids declared openly for him against ‘Amr and announced ‘Amr’s replacement as governor by Muḥammad ibn Tāhir, the last Tāhirid to govern Khurāsān. The latter appointed Rāfī’ as his lieutenant in the province, and confirmed Sāmānīd authority in Transoxania (89). During this period, the Sāmānīds began to intervene directly for the first time in Khurāsānī affairs on the side of the Saffārids’ enemies. In 270 or 271 Ismā’īl lent military assistance to Abū Ṭalha ibn Sharkub, governor of Marv, in his attempt to retake the city after he had been driven out of it by ‘Amr (90).

After the caliphal endorsement of Rāfī’ s governorship, Ismā’īl himself led his troops in support of Rāfī’ s offensive against the same Abū Ṭalha ibn Sharkub who had meanwhile allied himself with his former Saffārid enemy (91).

Despite the successful outcome of Ismā’īl’s foreign adventure, it was to have damaging repercussions on the internal stability of Transoxania. When Ismā’īl returned to Bukhārā with his treasury depleted by the expenses of campaigning, he was unable to send the customary 500,000 dirhams in annual tribute to his brother Nasr in

Samarqand (92). Relations were further strained when Nasr began to suspect Isma‘īl’s motives for forming a treaty of mutual assistance with Rafi‘ and the brothers finally went to war with each other in 747/1346 (93): the conflict was to last for three years.

From its outset, Nasr, as senior amir, had the majority of forces in Transoxania at his command. He summoned his brothers, Abū Yūsuf Ya‘qūb ibn Ahmad and Abū‘l-Ash‘ath Asad ibn Ahmad, governors of Shāsh and Farghana respectively, and the Turks of Isfīyāb, to come to his aid (94). Isma‘īl had only his new ally Rafi‘ to call on for help: the latter, no doubt grateful for Isma‘īl’s assistance in Khurasan, came north to join him and they marched on Samarqand together (95). But before the opposing armies were committed to battle, Isma‘īl’s commander in chief, Ḥamūya ibn ‘Alī, persuaded Rafi‘ to negotiate a truce between the brothers, since he feared that the Samānids might lose Transoxania if they exhausted themselves in battle (96).

92 Narshakhi, Tarīkh-i bukhārā, p. 113 = p. 82.
94 Abū Yūsuf Ya‘qūb ibn Ahmad must have taken over the governorship of Shāsh after the death of his uncle Yahyā ibn Asad in 241; see the coin of Shāsh dated 265, bearing his name (Yakubovskiy, "Ob odnom rannesamanidskom felse", KSII MK, vol. xii, Moscow-Leningrad, 1946, p. 104). Abū‘l-Ash‘ath Asad took over Farghana after the death of his father Ahmad in 250; for two fils minted in Farghana in 264 and 269 bearing his name, see Dobrovolskij, "Felsi Samanida Asada ibn Akhmada", Trudy Gosudarstvennykh Ermitazei, "Numizmatika", vol. ix, 1967, p. 87; Davidovich, "Mon ety Ferghan yi istochnik dlya kharakteristik instituta feodalnykh pozhalovani; za sluzhbu v Srednei Azii X v.", Pismennye pamyatniki Vostoka, , 1969, p. 141.
95 Narshakhi, Tarikhi bukharā, p. 114 = p. 83.
According to the terms of this treaty, Isma‘Il ceded the governorship of Bukhārā to his elder brother, Ishaq (97), whilst retaining responsibility for revenue collection (98). The treaty held for only a short time; fifteen months later, Isma‘Il once again failed to send the required revenue to Samarqand and Naṣr summoned his allies and marched on Bukhārā. This time however battle was joined and Naṣr was defeated. Yet instead of capitalizing on his success on the battlefield, Isma‘Il chose to ask forgiveness for his act of rebellion. He restored Naṣr to the senior amirate and sent him back to Samarqand, promising to serve him loyally thenceforth. Naṣr for his part re-appointed Isma‘Il as governor of Bukhārā and designated him his deputy, forcing his own son and another brother, probably Ishaq, to accept his decision (99).

Shortly before his death in Jamah-i 1271, Naṣr appointed Ishaq governor of Farghana in place of Ahmad ibn Asad ibn Ahmad (100). Davidovich, who assumes that the appointment was made on Isma‘Il’s recommendation, suggests that it was a reward for his support for Isma‘Il in the civil war, but since Naṣr was still alive

98 Narshakhī, Tarīkh-i bukhārā, p. 115 = p. 84. 99 ibid, p. 118 = p. 86. 100 Cf. the Farghana coins of 277/890-1 bearing the name of Ahmad ibn Asad (ibn Ahmad), son of the governor of Farghana who had fought for Naṣr in the civil war, and that of the following year bearing the name of Ishaq (Bikov, "Redki Samanidski Pels", Epigrafika Vostoka, vol. xx, 1971, p. 72f).
in this year, it is quite possible that Ishāq was given Farghana in order to compensate him for having been passed over as deputy ruler in favour of Ismāʿīl. As the 10th century history of the dynasty shows, Ishāq was to make two bids for the throne during the reigns of Ismāʿīl’s successors (101); this suggests that he may have been given to understand by Naṣr that he would succeed Ismāʿīl on the latter’s death.

Ismāʿīl’s early reign

Naṣr lived for four years after the end of the civil war and died in the same year as the caliph Muʿtamid. The latter’s successor, Muʿtaḍid, reaffirmed his predecessor’s endorsement of Sāmānīd rule in Transoxania, sending the ‘ahd to Ismāʿīl ibn Ahmad in 280/893. In 281/894-5 the first ‘Abbāsid-type dirhams bearing the name of the Sāmānīd amir were struck in Shāsh and Samarqand (102), a sign that the caliph now regarded the Sāmānīds as independent vassals of the caliphate. When he had received the ‘ahd, Ismāʿīl embarked on a campaign against the steppe Turks, leading a huge expedition against the Turkish town of Tarāz/Talas, which he subjugated after a long battle. He took the wife of the Turkish Qarluq khan prisoner (103)

101 See below, chapter 4, pp. 140-145.
102 Cf. Corpus nummorum saeculorum ix-xi qui in Suecis reperti sunt, i; Gotland, 3 - Dalhem -Etelhem, ed. Malmer, p. 111; and many other references. The latest ‘Abbāsid dirham minted in Sāmānīd territory is dated 280/893-4.
and returned to Bukhārā with a large amount of booty (104).

Four years later his attention was once again drawn to Khurāsān where 'Amr ibn Layth had finally managed to establish Saffārid rule after the death of Rafī' ibn Harthama in Shawwāl 283/November-December 896 (105). When 'Amr had sent Rafī's head to Baghdad he accompanied it with a request for a patent for the whole of eastern Iran, including Transoxania. The caliph was plainly reluctant to accede to his request and prevaricated over his response. 'Amr did eventually receive the patent, but Mu'tadid's attitude remained ambivalent: while he took no measures to revoke the patent, he secretly communicated his continuing support to Ismā'īl ibn Ahmad and encouraged him to resist 'Amr's advance on Transoxania (106).

'Amr made efforts to resolve his differences with Ismā'īl by diplomatic means, but the growing tension between the rival dynasties soon developed into open conflict (107). The first area of dispute was Khwārazm. After Rafī's death, Muḥammad ibn 'Amr al-Khwārazmī, the

104 Narshakhī, Tārīkh-i bukhārā, p. 119 = p. 87; Tabariī, ser. iii, p. 2138; Mas'ūdī, Prairies d'or, vol. viii, p. 144; Yāqūt, Mu'jam al-buldān, vol. i, p. 841.

105 Rafī' died in Khwārazm, killed by the deputy of the amir of Khwārazm who sent his head to 'Amr (Ibn Khallikān, Wafayāt, vol. vi, p. 425).

106 Ibn Khallikān says that 'Amr received the 'ahd for Transoxania not from Mu'tadid, but from Muktafī, Mu'tadid's heir apparent, who was resident in Rayy at the time (Ibn Khallikān, ibid, vol. vi, p. 425). The Tārīkh-i sīstān however says that it was the caliph who grudgingly sent the diploma to 'Amr whilst assuring Ismā'īl that he nevertheless continued to support his cause against the Saffārid (Tārīkh-i sīstān, p. 255 = p. 202: see also Ibn Ṣafir, Duwal, fol. 116a).

Saffārid governor of the province, travelled to Naysābūr to receive a commendation from 'Amr (108). But before he was able to return to Khwārazm to resume his post, Ismā'īl installed 'Iraq ibn Mansūr, the Khwārazmshāh, as governor in his stead (109). How Ismā'īl had managed to exert his influence in the province at such an early date is not known: Mīrkhwānd simply notes that he had asked Rāfi' for the province and that Rāfi' had handed it over to him (110). When 'Amr dispatched an army to enforce the appointment of his own governor, Ismā'īl defeated it, killing 'Amr's hājib and taking prisoner his general, 'Alī ibn Sharvīn (111). The survivors of the battle returned to warn 'Amr of the Sāmānids' formidable military capability (112).

'Amr now decided to confront Ismā'īl directly. But he could do little to counter the rising fortunes of the Sāmānids; his own presence at the head of the army was not enough to deter his wazir and many of his commanders from deserting (113). According to Ibn Abī Tāhir, whose

109 Tārīkh-i sīstān, ibid; where he is not given the title of Khwārazmshāh. For his biography see appendix "The Khwārazmshāhs in the 10th century".
110 Mīrkhwānd, Rawdat al-safā', vol. iv, p. 31.
111 Narshakhī, ibid, p. 119f. = pp. 88f. The Tārīkh-i Sīstān gives the date of this battle as the end of Shawwāl 285/November 898, whereas Ibn Khallikān gives it as Shawwāl of the following year (Tārīkh-i sīstān, p. 254 = p. 202; Ibn Khallikān, Wafayāt, vol. vi, p. 426).
113 Ibn Abī Rabī’ā, his kāṭib and one of his generals were the principal defectors before the battle of Balkh (Ibn Khallikān, Wafayāt, vol. vi, p. 428, citing Ibn Abī Tāhir). The ruler of Marv, ‘Alī ibn Ḥusayn, had also thrown his lot in with Ismā'īl before the battle of Balkh (Ibn al-Athīr, Kāmil, vol. vii, p. 369; Narshakhī, ibid, p. 119 = p. 87; see appendix: The Su'lūkīds), as had Ahmad ibn Sahl, former Saffārid governor of Marv (Ibn al-Athīr, Kāmil, vol. viii, p. 118: for his career
account of the Saffarid defeat was used by Ibn Khallikān, it was news of these desertions which prompted 'Amr to take flight before the outcome of the battle had been decided. 'Amr was swiftly captured and taken prisoner to Transoxania.

Overview: the 9th century state

Between 294/907-20 and 297/910 the Sāmānid state extended its territories to include the whole of Transoxania while the descendants of Ahmad ibn Asad secured the reins of power in their hands. The most significant addition was Bukhārā in 874. As the history of the civil wars shows, the emergence of Bukhārā as the second Sāmānid powerbase in Sughd was initially a disruptive factor. When Ismā'īl became amir and transferred the capital to Bukhārā the problem was inverted; Samarqand became a centre of resistance to Bukhāran hegemony of the state and the rivalry between the two cities, encouraged no doubt by competing local, as well as dynastic, interests, continued on into the second decade of the reign of Ismā'īl’s grandson, Nasr.

The consolidation of Sāmānid authority in Transoxania in the last quarter of the century was no doubt assisted by the fact that neither the rulers of Khurāsān nor the caliphs were able to impose themselves on the region. 'Amr ibn Layth was preoccupied with his efforts to

under the Sāmānids see below, chapters 4 and 5). According to the Tārīkh-i sīstān, many of 'Amr's commanders deserted him before battle was joined (Tārīkh-i sīstān, p. 258 = pp. 204f).
consolidate Ya'qūb ibn Layth's dramatic achievements in Khurāsān. The caliph for his part was beleaguered in Iraq where he had to face the twin menaces of the Zanj revolt and the Isma'īlī rebellions, while his authority was effectively being reduced by the unruly Turkish amirs who formed the mainstay of his army.

But the growth of the Sāmānid state was hardly the consequence of the impotence of these two parties alone. Sāmānid policies vis-a-vis the native population of Transoxania must also have played their part. All our evidence on this issue, other than that relating to scholars, pertains to the civil war and the war with the Saffārīds. In both these wars, we are told, large numbers of Turks from the eastern provinces, Isfīyāb, "Turkistan" and Farghāna took part on the side of the ruling Sāmānid amir (114). In both cases it seems that the Turks constituted an independent force and were not part of the regular armies raised by the governors of the eastern provinces; this suggests that the Sāmānids had a workable alliance with the eastern Turks.

The dahāqīn and tunnā' of Transoxania also took a leading role in the battle against 'Amr the Saffārid (115). Exactly what is meant by these terms is not clear; in addition to its traditional meaning of "small to middle-sized landowner" dihqān could also mean a petty princeling or local governor; since the word tunnā' means "landowners", the phrase certainly conveys

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114 Cf. Narshakhī, ibid, pp. 113 and 122 = pp. 83 and 89f.
115 Tabarī, ser. iii, pp. 2194f.
the meaning of middle-ranking landed gentry, if not local princelings and governors as well. Their presence in the Sāmānid army in 287 has been taken to indicate that they had supported the dynasty throughout the century; as well they may have, given that the Sāmānids seem to have been members of the dihqān class themselves (116). But it is important to bear in mind that the dāhāqīn rallied to Ismā‘īl’s side in response to the threat of an imminent Saffārid invasion in 900; their behaviour in this instance does not tell us much about their customary attitude to the Sāmānid amirs. Such evidence as we have of Sāmānid relations with the local Sughdī nobility at other times does not add up to a clear pattern (117).

Finally, the army which opposed the Saffārids included large numbers of ill-equipped irregular troops drawn from the peasantry and artisanal classes and perhaps from the ghāzī volunteers who normally manned the frontier posts on the steppe border (118). From Narshakhi’s account, it appears that Ismā‘īl mobilized

116 Frye, Medieval achievement, p. 43.
117 The Sāmānids behaved generously towards the descendants of Ghūrak, lord of Samarqand; they respected their property rights and employed them in their administration — see appendix: the Sāmānid state elite, s.v. "Al-Marzubānī". But the descendants of the Bukhārkhuda did not fare so well — when he first came to Bukhārā, Ismā‘īl ibn Ahmad deported Abū Muhammad Bukhārkhuda to Samarqand (Narshakhi, ibid, pp. 112f = p. 82). He also dispossessed Abū Ishaq Ibrahīm ibn Khālid ibn Bunyat (Abu Muhammad’s son?) of his estates in Bukhārā, although he did pay him compensation (Narshakhi, ibid, pp. 15f. = pp. 11f).
118 They are referred to as mardān-i kārī (Tārīkh-i sīstān, p. 255 = p. 203). "He gave rations to the capable and the unfit, even to scoundrels; he gave rations to all" (Narshakhi, ibid, p. 122 = p. 89).
these troops and armed them as a first line of defence before the arrival of regular troops (119). Such practice was clearly not the norm; Ismā'īl's decision to do so was greeted with dismay by his subjects who feared that these troops would be unable to withstand the Ṣaffārīds, and by jubilation on the part of the latter, who considered victory over such a rabble an easy task.

Ismā'īl's deployment of peasant troops has excited the attention of Soviet scholars who have seen it as the key to the rise of the Ṣāmānīds. In his summary of Soviet scholarship on the dynasty, N.N. Negmatov casts the Ṣāmānīds as leaders of a citizen army (120) and postulates that "the early Ṣāmānīds enjoyed the sympathy and support of the working classes (sic) among their population" (121). But while the Ṣāmānīds may indeed have enjoyed popular support, particularly on account of their role as leaders of the jihād against the steppe Turks, it does not follow that this support was instrumental in bringing them to, or maintaining them in, power. Indeed it would be quite remarkable if this had been the case, since in the agrarian age peasants and non-literate urban dwellers did not normally have the capacity to organize themselves sufficiently to play an enduring role in the political process (122). The passage refers to an emergency situation; the large number of peasants and irregular troops in the army is

119 Narshakhī, Tārīkh-i bukhārā, p. 122 = p. 89.
120 Negmatov, Gosudarstvo samanidov, Dushanbe, 1977, p. 27.
121 Negmatov, ibid.
an indication of the extent to which Isma'il perceived his dynasty to be under threat, rather than a sign of the depth of popular support for him.

This brings us to the relationship between the Samanids and the scholars. The Samanids required the approval and co-operation of the scholarly community as a means of publicizing their status as legitimate Muslim rulers; without it, caliphal endorsement would have carried little weight. The scholars also functioned as spokesmen of local communities, as is demonstrated by Ibn Abī Hafs' appeal to Nasr ibn Ahmad in 297/909 to send a governor to Bukhārā (123), and played a prominent role in the holy war against the infidel steppe Turks, leading volunteer militias in the raids against the Dār al-harb (124), and donating funds to the war effort against the western infidels (125).

123 See above, p. 85.
124 The frequent occurrence of the nisba al-muttawwi'I among the entries in al-Hākim al-Bayyī's dictionary of the learned men of Naysābūr is evidence of their role in the war with the steppe Turk. For an informative (if somewhat legendary) account of a scholar warrior's involvement in the battle with the steppe Turks, see the military adventures of the faqīh Abu Bakr ibn al-Azhar al-Bukhārī in Ibn Zāfir's account of the Samanid counter-attack against the Turkish invasion of Transoxania in 297/909-109 (Ibn Zāfir, Duwal, 118a: see below, chapter 4, p. 133).

Scholarly involvement in the war against Rūm continued in the second half of the 10th century (see below, chapter 10, note 25).
What did Samanid patronage of the 'ulama' amount to?

Both Hanafi and Shafi'i scholars were honoured at the Samanid court (126); their special status was marked by their exemption from the obligation of kissing the ground before the royal throne (127). The Samanids also participated in the communal life of the scholarly community. Thus we have evidence that three generations of Samanid rulers, Ahmad ibn Asad, his son Isma'il and grandson Ahmad, led the prayers at the funerals of eminent 'alims (128). The early Samanid amirs and members of their court were avid students of hadith scholarship (129); and the scholars for their part indulged the amirs' enthusiasm for religious studies.

126 Samarqandi tells us that Isma'il did not favour one madhhab above another; (isma'il ibn ahmad) la yamliu ila farig duna farig (Muntakhab, fol. 65a). Isma'il ibn Ahmad patronized the famous Shafi'i scholars Ibn Khuzayma and Muhammad ibn Nasr al-Marwazi (Madelung, Religious trends, p. 26). He also commissioned the writing of the Hanafi creed Al-sawad al-a'zan (see below, note 132).

127 Muqaddasi, Ahsan, p. 338f.

128 Ahmad ibn Asad led the prayers at the funeral of the qadi of Samarqand, Abu Hafṣ 'Umar ibn Ya'qub al-'Amiri who died in 240 (Samarqandi, Muntakhab, fol. 55a; Sam'anî, Ansāb, vol. vii, s.v. "Sanjadīzakî"): Isma'il ibn Ahmad prayed over lshaq ibn Isma'il al-Babkissî (d. 259), who had undertaken the building of the ribat al-murabba'a in Samarqand (Sam'anî, Ansāb, vol. ii, p. 7): in 258 Ahmad ibn Isma'il performed the same function at the funeral of Abu Layth 'Abdallāh ibn Surayj al-Bukhārî (Samarqandi, Muntakhab, fol. 49b).

129 While on pilgrimage, Ahmad ibn Asad heard hadiths from leading scholars of the holy cities (Samarqandi, Muntakhab, fol. 8a for Ahmad's sojourn in Medina). His sons Isma'il, Nasr and lshaq were all noted as hadith scholars who related from their father among others (Sam'anî, Ansāb, vol. vii, p. 25). Isma'il related hadith to his kätib, 'Isa ibn Muhammad ibn 'Īsa (Samarqandi, Muntakhab, fol. 64b.) Sam'anî says that Isma'il "wrote and related hadiths on the subjects of ghazw, justice and respect for scholars (Sam'anî, ibid). Ahmad ibn Isma'il (907-914) was noted for his close association with the scholarly class (see below, chapter 4, p. 142).
without always taking their scholarship very seriously (130). More importantly, the Šāmānids brought some of their most favoured scholarly proteges into the political process by soliciting their advice on affairs of state (131). Ismā‘īl himself commissioned the writing of the Hanafī creed *al-sawād al-a‘zam* by the Samargandī qādī Abū‘l-Qāsim Ishāq ibn Muhammad (132) for the purpose of countering heresies in Transoxania.

**The image of Ismā‘īl ibn Ahmad**

One notable feature of early Šāmānīd history is that, by contrast with later Šāmānīd rulers about whose personal characteristics we know next to nothing, Ismā‘īl ibn Ahmad is the subject of numerous stories which illustrate his personal virtues. These stories appear in

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130 Subkī relates an amusing anecdote which illustrates the extent of scholarly deference towards the royal muhaddithūn: during an audience with Ismā‘īl ibn Ahmad, Muḥammad ibn Ishāq ibn Khuzayma (see above, note 126) corrected the isnād with which Ismā‘īl had prefaced a hadith which he related on his father’s authority. After the majlis, Abū Dharr, the qādī of Bukhārā, remarked to Ibn Khuzayma that he had known for twenty years that the isnād was defective, but had never felt that it was appropriate to point this out to the amir (Subkī, *Tabaqāt al-shafī‘iyya*, vol. ii, p. 131).

131 See Muqaddasī, above, chapter 1, pp. 33.

132 Cf. Encyclopaedia Iranica, s.v. "Abū Qāsem". Given the evidence for the composition of the original version of the *Sawād al-a‘zam* in Isma‘īl’s reign, I can see no reason to favour Mirzayef’s theory that the work was composed under Nūh ibn Naṣr (943-54) (cf. *Al-sawād al-a‘zam*, pp. 18f; Mirzayef, Abū ‘abdallāh rūdākī ve āthār-i manzūm-i rūdākī, Stalinabad, 1958, p. 57). Furthermore there is little in the Persian translation of the creed to support the view that it was written as a refutation of Isma‘īlism except possibly for the mention of the rāfidiyyān (Sawād, p. 41; pace Richter-Bernberg, "Linguistic Shu‘ubiyya", *JAOS*, vol. xciv, 1974, p. 56 and Mirzayef, Abū ‘abdallāh rūdākī ve āthār-i manzūm-i rūdākī, p. 204).
the form of anecdotes which are presented separately from the main narrative of the dynasty and have obviously been subject to elaboration by later authors to an extent that the narrative has not. Yet whatever later accretions there may be in this anecdotal tradition, some of the stories at least are contemporaneous with Ismāʿīl and should be interpreted as a reflection of the popular perception of his reign (133).

What are we told about Ismāʿīl? The commonest theme in these anecdotes is his concern for the provision of justice to his subjects. Thus we hear that he regularly presided over the mazālim court in the main square of Bukhārā, even in bad weather when few plaintiffs came forward (134). In the Caspian region he was particularly concerned to administer justice to the erstwhile subjects of the Zaydi imāms. When Ismāʿīl came to Tabaristān in 901 to attack Muhammad b. Hārūn, Ibn Isfandiyār tells us that he administered such justice as was unknown there and restored to the nobles and gentry the property of which they had been robbed by the (Zaydi) sayyids. He also restored the possessions of the poor and reduced their taxes (135). Another story tells us that he once sent an official to Rayy to investigate charges that illegal weights were being used in the markets of that city (136).

133 Many of these stories were recorded by Sallāmī (d. circa 350/961) and copied by later authors like ‘Awfī and Ibn al-Athīr (See above, chapter 1, notes 8 and 31).
134 Nizām al-Mulk, Siyar al-mulūk, p. 28f = p. 21f.
135 Ibn Isfandiyār, Tarīkh-i tabaristān, p. 259. This is also mentioned by Mīrkhwānd (Rawda, vol. iv, p. 35).
136 Mīrkhwānd, Rawda, vol. iv, p. 36.
Ismāʿīl was also a man of great personal probity; we see him compensating the owner of a pasture onto whose land his camel had strayed and punishing one of his soldiers for taking food without paying for it. Likewise, after capturing the Ṣaffārid ʿAmr ibn Layth, he refused to take the money which he offered him, pointing out that the Ṣaffārids had robbed and killed to come by their wealth (137).

He was also a merciful king; after his victory over ʿAmr the Ṣaffārid, he forgave those of his supporters who had earlier defected to ʿAmr and spared the life of the rebel general, Muhammad ibn Hārūn. This last account is of interest because it is explicitly contradicted by the chronicles which record Muḥammad’s death in Bukhāra (138); it seems that this was one folk-tale about Ismāʿīl that had little basis in fact.

He was also noted for his deference towards others; even when he had emerged as ruler of the mashriq, we are told, he continued to address his courtiers and vassals, as well as scholars, in respectful terms, as he had beforehand (139). All in all, Ismāʿīl emerges from these stories as the ideal king: deeply religious, concerned for the welfare of his subjects, full of the human qualities of mercy and forbearance.

137 Nizam al-Din, Introduction to the Jawamiʿuʾl-hikayat, no. 442 (camel story); Mirkhwand, Rawdat asafā; vol. iv, p. 33 (ʿAmr’s money).
138 Story in ʿAwfi, Jawamiʿ al-hikayat, part ii of section 2, p. 444; for Muḥammad ibn Hārūn’s death, see chapter 4, note 82.
This idealized picture of Isma'īl must be seen in context: he was the noble king and muḥaddith who defeated the Saffārids, who were seen at best as the representatives of a divisive regional interest, at worst as the base-born enemy of the caliphate. He was also the ghāzī king who kept the Turks at bay and a vanquisher of heretics (140). He presided over the heyday of the state when it was rapidly expanding at the expense of its eastern and western neighbours. Yet once in control of the mashriq, the Samānids soon lost the aura of sanctity which hovered around the personality of the founder of their dynasty. They became simply another set of mulūk, many of them minors, embroiled in the dirty politics of their time. Some of this disillusion may have sprung from the fact that Isma'īl’s successors did not indeed share his laudable personal qualities (141). But the virtual absence of stories illustrating the good characteristics of his successors suggests that people did not seek to idealize the Samānīd house because the kingdom they ruled was far from ideal.

140 See below, chapter 6, p. 187f, for Isma'īl’s suppression of the revolt of Abu Bilāl the Isma'īlī. 141 Mīrkhwān notes that Ahmad ibn Isma'īl was headstrong and of bad character (Rawdat al-safa, vol. iv, p. 39); Nasr ibn Ahmad was noted for his short temper (Abu’l-Fadl Bayhaqī, Tarīkh-i bayhaqī, p. 106f).
Chapter four

THE SĀMĀNID STATE 287/900 - 301/914
Introduction

Mu'tadid's investiture of Isma'il in 900 marked the transition to what will be referred to henceforth as the monarchical state, that is the succession of Samanid amirs who ruled singly rather than jointly, who had charge of all the eastern provinces as opposed to merely Transoxania, and whose capital was Bukhara rather than Samarqand.

Mu'tadid's patent hugely magnified the territorial extent of the Samanid state. Isma'il received all the eastern provinces previously held by *Amr (1); and Mu'tadid's successor Muktafi not only confirmed Isma'il in these possessions on his accession in 289/902, but added Rayy and other northern provinces in 290/903 (2), so that by this date the Sairanids found themselves in possession of the entire area from Hulwan (3) to Central Asia. They were formally in charge of Fars (4), Kirman.

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1 Ibn al-Athir, Kamil, vol. vii, p. 502. *Amr had also been invested with Mecca, Medina and Baghdad in 265/879 (Tarikh-i sistan, p. 234 = p. 185), but none of our sources credit the Samanids with even nominal overlordship of these areas.
2 Muqaddasi, Absan, p. 337; Gardizi, Zayn, p. 147.
3 Hulwan is specified as the western border of the Samanid state by Narshakh (Tarikh-i bukhara, p. 127 = p. 93) and Muqaddasi (above, note 2).
4 Thus one manuscript of Narshakh (Frye, tr., The history of Bukhara, p. 93, note). Similarly Mirkhwand, Rawda, vol. iv, p. 35 (Isfahan). Fars had been part of *Amr's domains (Tarikh-i sistan, p. 234 = p. 185) and remained under Saffarid control for the first decade of the century (see below, p. 116).
(5), Sīstān (6) and Khurāsān, including Herāt (7), Ghūr and Gharjīstān in what is now Afghanistan (8), the Jībāl (9), Rayy, Qazwīn and Zanjān (10), TabarISTān/Māzandarān (11), Jurjān (12), and the whole of Transoxania, including Khwārazm which had been acquired by Ismā’īl before 900 (13), the old Sāmanīd provinces of Bukhārā, Samarqand, Shāsh and Farghānā, and more recent acquisitions in southern Transoxania, such as Saghāniyān (14). Ismā’īl also ruled TurkISTān according to Narshakhī (15); his authority extended as far as Kāshgār according to Bayhaqī (16). From ‘Amr he also inherited

5 Muqaddasī, Ahsan, p. 337 and 472. In the first of these references Muqaddasī says that Mu’tadid (279/892-289/902) allocated Kirmān to Ismā’īl; in the second he gives the caliph’s name as Mu’tamīd (256/870-279/892) and the date as 290/903. This too had been part of ‘Amr’s domain (Tārīkh-i sīstān, p. 234).

6 Ibn al-Athīr, Kamil, vol. vii, p. 509; Mirkhwānd, Rawda, vol. iv, p. 35. This is also implicit in the statement that Ismā’īl received all ‘Amr’s territories.

7 For the Saffārid occupation of Herāt, see above, chapter 3, note 75.

8 Cf. EI’, s.vv. "Ghūr" and "Gharjīstān".

9 Muqaddasī, Ahsan, p. 337.

10 See above, note 2. None of these cities had been governed by the Saffārids. Hamdallah Qazvīnī tells us that Qazwīn was governed by Ilyās ibn Ahmad, Ismā’īl’s brother (=Ilyās ibn Ishaq ibn Ahmad, his nephew?) from 287/900. It was returned to caliphal rule in 294/906-7 (Tārīkh-i guzīde, p. 794).

11 One manuscript of Narshakhī mentions Tabaristan (Frye, The History of Bukhara, p. 93, note); Mirkhwānd, Rawda, vol. iv, p. 35, has the Sāmanīd rule Khurāsān to (tā), clearly including, Māzandarān. Tabaristan had been part of ‘Amr’s domains.

12 Narshakī, Tārīkh-i bukhārā, p. 127 = p. 93; Muqaddasī, Ahsan, p. 337. This province too had been part of ‘Amr’s domains.

13 Khwārazm had been acquired by Ismā’īl shortly before ‘Amr’s defeat (see chapter 3, note 110).

14 Neither Saghāniyān nor any of the other provinces on the headwaters of the Oxus are mentioned in the pre-dynastic period of Sāmanīd history.


16 Abu’l-Fadl Bayhaqī says Ismā’īl’s rule extended from Kashgār to Rayy (Tārīkh-i bayhaq, p. 118).
Sind and Hind, or in other words such possessions as the Muslims had in India (17). To what extent and how, then, did he and his successor actually rule these massive territories?

**Provincial government**

The fact that the Sāmānid territories were immense, ecologically diverse, partly mountainous, and almost wholly landlocked, meant that a uniform system of government was most unlikely to emerge. Some degree of devolution of authority was inevitable, at least on the periphery, and in fact some areas escaped Sāmānid control altogether. Thus Sind and Hind, which had only been under nominal Šaffārid control, were likewise purely nominal additions to the Sāmānid domains and eventually they ceased to be even that; the ruler of Manṣūra acknowledged the Büyids as sovereigns in the second half of the tenth century, and the ruler of Multān converted to Ismāʿīlism some time before 348/959-60 and had the khutba read in the name of the Fāṭimids (18). As regards Sāmānid control of Turkistan to Kāshgār, it could be that Ismāʿīl's victory over the Qarākhānids in 280/893 had resulted in an extension of Sāmānid power in the steppe. But Kāshgār was the second

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17 Naršakhī enumerates Hind and Sind among the provinces granted to the Sāmānisds (*Tarīkh-i bukhārā*, p. 127 = p. 93); Hind and Sind were among the provinces which had been granted to ʿAmr in 265 (*Tarīkh-i sīstān*, p. 234 = p. 185).

18 *EI*², s.v. "Manṣūra"; *EI*¹, s.v."Multān"; Muqaddasī, *Ahsan*, p. 485 (khutba).
capital of the western Qarākhānids, who were never vassals of the Sāmānids and there is no reason to believe that the Sāmānid amirs ever had direct or indirect control of the region. Sīstān and its Saffārid dependencies remained under Saffārid control during the first decade of the 10th century (19). But that still left the Sāmānids with an area stretching from Shāsh and Farghāna to the east of the Jaxartes to Hulwān on the road to Iraq.

Transoxania

The Sāmānid core provinces of Bukhārā, Samarqand, Shāsh and Farghāna remained under the control of members of the Sāmānid family as they had been in the 9th century. Ismā'īl and his successor Ahmad resided in Bukhārā, as did all the later rulers of the Sāmānid state. Farghāna was ruled from the beginning of the century by Ishāq ibn Ahmad, the brother of Ismā'īl who had sided with the latter in the second civil war against Nasr ibn Ahmad in 275/888 (20). His son Muḥammad succeeded him as governor during Ismā'īl's reign (21), probably when Ishāq was

19 See below, section on Sīstān.
21 Cf. the copper coins minted in Farghāna in 294/906-7 and 299/911-12 bearing Muḥammad's name (Davidovich, "Moneti Farghana, p. 141).
appointed to Samarqand, where we find him as governor in 295 on the death of Ismāʿīl (22). Shāsh on the other hand remained under the control of the same line of Samanid governors who had governed it before the civil war: Abū’l-Fadl ibn Yaʿqūb ibn Ahmad was governor of the province in the early years of the reign of Ismāʿīl’s grandson, Nasr ibn Ahmad, and had most likely held this position from the beginning of the century (23).

The northern province of Khwarazm, as already mentioned, was governed by the Samanid vassal, ʿIraq ibn Mansūr (24). Biruni counted him as a member of the Afrīghid Khwarazmshāh dynasty which had ruled the province in pre-Islamic times and which had continued to exercise nominal authority there after the conquest of Qutayba ibn Muslim (25). It is unknown whether ʿIraq was indeed physically descended from the Afrīghids or merely claimed descent from them.

Vassal rulers also controlled the provinces bordering the upper course of the Oxus river. Khuttal continued to be ruled by the Banījūrid dynasty which had governed the province in the 9th century. Hārith ibn Asad Banījūrī was governor of Khuttal in circa 272/885-6 (26) and remained so at least until 293/906-7 (27). The neighbouring

22 See below, note 177.
23 See below, chapter 5, note 7.
24 See chapter 3, note 109.
25 Biruni, Chronology, tr. E. Sachau, London, 1897, p. 42; for a critical view of Biruni’s reliability as a genealogist of the dynasty see EI2 s.v. “Khwarazmshāhs”. However, as far as the 10th century is concerned, Biruni’s list of rulers is entirely borne out by our sources (see appendix: “The Khwarazmshāhs in the 10th century”).
26 Vasmer says that the part of Ibn Khurdādhbih’s geography in which Hārith is mentioned as ruler of
provinces of Wakhsh and Halwird, to the east of Khuttal on the headwaters of the Oxus, were governed during the 9th century by Ḥāshim ibn Bānījūr, a member of the same dynasty (28), and probably continued to be ruled by his descendants during the 10th century. To the west, the province of Saghāniyān was governed by the Muḥtajdīd amirs who soon achieved prominence as commanders in the Ṣamānid army and as provincial governors (29); their ethnic origins are not known, nor is the precise date of their assumption of rule in Saghāniyān (30). Within these Oxine provinces lived large numbers of Turkish tribesmen of the Kumījī and "K.njina" tribes (31) who owed allegiance to their Muḥtajdīd and Bānījūrid overlords. The latter no doubt permitted the tribesmen a considerable measure of self-determination as did the rulers of neighbouring Kirmān to the Qufs and Balūchī.

Khuttal, was written in about 272/885-6 and certainly before 274 ("Beitrage zur muhammedanischen Munzkunde" Wiener Numism. Zeitschrift, vol. lviii, 1925, p. 54). 27 Cf. EI² s.v. "Banidjūrids", which points out that the latest extant coins of Harith were minted in this year. But note that Vasmer was doubtful whether Hārith's family was descended from Bānījūr (Vasmer, ibid, p. 53). 28 See chapter 3, note 42. 29 See appendix; the Ṣamānid state elite, s.v. "Muḥammad ibn Muzaffar". 30 C.E. Bosworth suggests that the Muḥtajdīds were either descendants of the Iranian Chaghānkhudās or the Iranized descendants of an Arab Khurāsānī family (Bosworth, "The Rules of Chaghāniyān in Early Islamic Times", Iran, vol. xix, 1981, p. 3). Either way, by the time they come into prominence in the 10th century, they had established strong roots in the province as is shown by the fact that Muḥtajdīds who died abroad were taken back there to be buried. In a story in Ḵwāīf's Ḵwāīf wa ḥikāyat, Muḥtajdī is said to have been present in Nāysābūr during the lifetime of Abū 'Abdallāh al-Khūjestānī; the latter's brutality caused the death of Muḥtajdī's son Muzaffar (Ḵwāīf al-ḥikāyat wa lawāmī al-riwayāt, part II of section 3, pp. 410-412). 31 Ḥudūd al-ʿĀlam, p. 120.
tribesmen who lived within their borders. On one occasion, these tribesmen emerged into the political limelight, fighting for their masters against the Sāmānids themselves; otherwise they do not play a significant role in the political narrative of the 10th century.

Khurāsān

The history of the Sāmānid occupation of Khurāsān is obscure. In 287/900, the same year in which the caliphal patent of investiture was sent to Bukhārā, Naysābūr and Herāt were occupied by the Sāmānid general, Husayn ibn 'Alī al-Marwazī (32). For the remainder of the century, apart from those intervals when they were in the hands of rebels, both cities continued to be governed by officials appointed from Bukhārā (33).

Balkh continued to be ruled in the early 10th century by the Bānījūrid Abū Da'ūd Muhammad ibn Ahmad (34) who had been in charge of the city since 260/873-4 (35), even though he had aligned himself with 'Amr ibn Layth

32 For Husayn's biography, see appendix: the Su'ūlūkids. For his occupation of Naysābūr, see Ahmad Fasīh, Mujma-li fasīhī, p. 383; for Herāt, see Isfizarī, Rawdat al-jannāt fī awsāf-i madīnāt-i Herāt, ed. Musa Kazim Imam, Tehran, 1959-60, p. 384.
33 In the case of Naysābūr we do not know the names of the governors of the city (with the exception of Mansūr ibn Ishaq, nephew of Isma'īl ibn Ahmad, who was appointed at the end of the reign of Ahmad ibn Isma'īl – see below, chapter 5, p. 148f); for the governors of Herāt, cf. Isfizarī, Herāt, pp. 384ff.
34 For a dirham minted in his name, Muhammad ibn Ahmad, in Badakhshān in 293/905-6, see S. Lane-Poole "Fasti Arabici", Numismatic Chronicle, 1886, ser. iii, vol. vi, p. 229.
35 Cf. EI2 supp. "Banījūrids".
shortly before 287 (36). Abū Dā‘ūd must have come to terms with Ismā‘īl after the latter’s victory over ‘Amr. Similarly Jūzjān continued to be ruled in the 10th century by members of the Farīghūnīd dynasty which had governed it in the 9th century (37), even though, like the Bānījūrīds of Balkh, they had aligned themselves with the Šaffārids in 287 (38). The native rulers of the neighbouring provinces of Gharchistān and Ghūr paid allegiance to the Farīghūnīd amīr and some of the minor rulers of the region paid tribute to him (39).

By contrast, ‘Alī ibn Husayn, governor of Marv, made common cause with Ismā‘īl before 287 (40). As a result of his foresight, his descendants prospered under the early Šāmānīds; one son, Ḥusayn, led the Šāmānīd forces which occupied Khurāsān after ‘Amr’s defeat (41); another, Muḥammad, inherited the governorship of Marv from his father (42) and acted as Šāmānīd governor in the Caspian provinces.

36 Narshakhi refers to him simply as Abū Dā‘ūd, amīr of Balkh (Tarīkh-i bukharā, p. 119 = p. 87).

37 Minorsky points out that while the Farīghūnīds probably did not have any connection with the Gūzgānkhūdah mentioned by Ibn Khurdādbhūn and Tabarī (1st to 3rd centuries A.H.) they were probably rulers of Jūzjān in the 9th century (Hudūd al-‘ālam, p. 175).

38 Narshakhi, Tarīkh-i bukharā, p. 119 = p. 87.

39 Hudūd al-‘ālam, p. 106.

40 Narshakhi, ibid, p. 119 = p. 87. Note that ‘Alī ibn Husayn had not been governor of the city for long before 900: before his tenure, the city had been governed by the Šaffārid appointees, Ahmad ibn Sahl (cf. appendix; the Šāmānīd state elite, s.v. "Ahmad ibn Sahl") and Abū Talha ibn Sharkub (cf., chapter 3, note 90).

41 See above, note 32.

42 Muḥammad was governor of Marv in 301/914 (Ibn Zāfīr, Duwal, fol. 119b). Cf. appendix : the Šu‘lūkīdīs, for Muḥammad ibn ‘Alī’s parentage.
After 'Amr had been taken prisoner at Balkh, the Saffārid army retreated to Sīstān where its generals pledged allegiance to his young grandson Tahir ibn Muḥammad ibn 'Amr (43). His elevation to the throne in place of 'Amr was the work of the Saffārid generals who had deserted 'Amr at Balkh and had no desire to have him back in charge. 'Amr's desperate messages to his grandson requesting that he pay the ransom stipulated for his release went unanswered (44) and he remained in Sāmānid captivity, while Tāhir and his brother Ya'qūb, whom he had appointed as his deputy in Sīstān (45), ruled the Saffārid territories.

Among the provinces formerly ruled by the Saffārids, Sīstān, Fārs, Kirmān and Makrān remained under their control in the first decade of the 10th century (46). Even though Ismā'īl was ordered to attack Sīstān by the caliph Mu'taḍid (47), he did not do so; he was no doubt

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43 Tārīkh-i Sīstān, p. 257 = pp. 203f. Tāhir (born 269/883, ibid, p. 240 = p. 190) was 17 years old at this time.
44 Tārīkh-i Sīstān, p. 258 = pp. 204f. Furthermore, during the first months of Tāhir's reign, the young amir's weak grasp on the reins of power encouraged factional infighting among 'Amr's generals and bureaucrats and little attention was paid to the collection of revenue so that funds were in short supply. It does seem however that Tāhir was about to send the required ransom when 'Amr was sent to Baghdād (Tārīkh-i Sīstān, p. 260 = p. 207).
45 ibid, p. 258 = p. 205.
46 Cf. Tārīkh-i Sīstān (p. 274 = p. 218) where Tāhir is credited with possession of Kirmān, Makrān, Sīstān and Khurāsān. For the history of Kirmān and Fārs under the Saffārids, see below.
47 Mas'ūdī reports that after 'Amr's arrival in Baghdad, Mu'taḍid sent money and gifts to Ismā'īl with which to
preoccupied with other more immediate concerns such as the conquest of the Caspian provinces and the war with the steppe Turks. There is also evidence to suggest that he preferred to play the role of power-broker between Baghdad and Zaranj rather than commit himself to a costly and dangerous invasion. Ibn al-Jawzī says that Tāhir ibn Muhammad sent Ismā‘īl handsome presents and in return asked him to request the caliph that he be allowed to rule Sīstān as a governor of the Sāmānids (48). The caliph granted Tāhir’s request, noting that he would be happy if every caliphal ‘āmil remitted such a substantial tribute as Tāhir had to Ismā‘īl. The caliph evidently had by now forgone any hopes he might have had in the previous century of benefiting directly from the revenues of Sīstān (49).

However by the middle of Ahmad ibn Ismā‘īl’s reign, the Saffārid regime was in trouble and the province lay open to attack. Tāhir and Ya‘qūb were regarded by their subjects as incompetent profligates and their administration was beset by factional infighting (50). In 296/909 they were deposed by a kinsman and former supporter of theirs, Layth ibn ‘Alī ibn Layth, nephew of ‘Amr ibn Layth (51). Tāhir and Ya‘qūb fled to Fārs where

pay his troops to fight his successor Tāhir in Sīstān (Murūj al-dhahab, vol. viii, pp. 201f).
49 See above, chapter 3, note 85.
50 Tarīkh-i sīstān, p. 276 = pp. 220f.
they were seized by their governor, Subkarī, who sent them to Baghdad (52): in reward for this act of treachery, the caliph appointed Subkarī independent governor of Fārs (53). Subkarī used his new found authority to turn on Layth ibn 'Alī and, assisted by an 'Abbāsid army, captured him in Kirmān and sent him to Baghdad (54). Muḥammad ibn 'Alī, Layth's brother, now seized control of Sīstān (55).

At this point Muqtadīr instructed Ahmad ibn Ismā'īl to invade Sīstān, promising him the governorship of the province as a reward (56). Ahmad came to Herāt, the Khurāsānī city which lay nearest to the Sīstānī border, and directed the invasion campaign in person (57). After a lengthy siege of the Ṣaffārid capital, the defenders capitulated in late 298/early 911 and the Ṣaffārid governor was escorted to Bukhārā as a prisoner (58).

The Sāmānīd colonization of Sīstān was not a success. Although the amir Ahmad is highly praised in the Tārīkh-i sīstān for his piety and his compassionate treatment of the inhabitants of Bust, the first Sāmānīd governor of Zaranj, his cousin, Mansūr ibn Ishaq, made many mistakes: his harsh taxation policy and his failure to prevent his troops from harassing the inhabitants of the

53 Ibn al-Athīr, ibid.
56 Narshakhl says that Ahmad had been assigned the governorship of Sīstān during his father's reign (Tārīkh-i bukhārā, p. 128 = p. 94); perhaps Ahmad was promised the province when Mu'tadīd instructed Ismā'īl to invade the province.
57 Gardīzī, Zayn, p. 148.
58 Tārīkh-i sīstān, p. 294 = p. 238.
capital provoked unrest among the Sīstānīs (59). A rebellion was raised by Mawlā Sandalī, an obscure figure who is said by the Tārikh-i Sīstān to have been a mawlā of Muḥammad ibn 'Amr the Saffārid (60) and by other sources to have been in Ahmad ibn Ismāʿīl's hashm (61); he came to Sīstān where he raised a force of ayārūn and expelled the Ṣamānid governor. The Sīstānīs appointed a Saffārid figurehead, Abū Hafṣ 'Amr, the young son of Yaʿqūb ibn Muḥammad ibn 'Amr ibn Layth, as leader of the revolt (62). A second army was sent from Bukhārā to occupy Sīstān in Shawwal 300/May-June 913 and Ṣamānid authority was temporarily restored (63). But in the very next year the province once again rose in revolt in response to the turmoil created by Ahmad’s murder (64): the Ṣamānīds never again re-established direct rule in Sīstān.

Kirmān

Kirmān had been part of 'Amr’s domains and is explicitly mentioned by Muqaddasī among the provinces granted by

60 ibid, p. 297.
61 Gardizi and Ibn al-Athīr describe him as a Sīstānī khārijī who bore a grudge against the Ṣamānīd army paymaster ('ārid) and went to Sīstān to stir up trouble (Zayn, p. 149; Kāmil, vol. viii, pp. 69f). It is unclear whether the term Khariji here refers to a member of the Khariji sect or merely a rebel (one who "comes out" - kharaja - against his sovereign). In view of the fact that the term is used of Mawlā Sandalī before his part in the Sīstānī revolt is mentioned, it seems that the first meaning is the more likely. If so, he was the only Khariji known to have served the Ṣamānīds.
63 Tārikh-i Sīstān, pp. 300f = p. 243.
64 See below, pp. 138-145.
Mu'tadid to Isma'īl in 287 (65). But it remained under
the control of its Saffārid governor until 246 (66). For
three years thereafter its history is unknown; however
when Ahmad ibn Isma'īl asked the caliph to recompense
him for his successful repulsion of a Turkish attack in
301/913, the caliph appointed him governor of the
province (67). At all events, it was only at the
beginning of Naṣr ibn Ahmad's rule that Kirmān was
incorporated in the Šāmānid domains (68).

Fārs

There is no evidence that Isma'īl attempted to occupy
Fārs. It was occupied by Tāhir the Saffārid in 289/901-2
(69) and again in 290, the second time with the
caliph's approval, which had probably been secured by
Isma'īl himself, as part of the agreement under which
Tāhir was to accept the status of a Šāmānid vassal (70).

Notwithstanding Narshakhī's report (71), there is no

65 Cf. above, note 5.
66 See above, note 46.
67 'Arīb, Silat ta'rīkh al-tabarī, p. 43.
68 Narshakhī says that the khutba in Kirmān (and Fārs)
was delivered in the name of Naṣr Šāmānī after the death
of Mansūr ibn Ishāq, governor of Naysābūr (Tārīkh-i
bukhārā, p. 130 = p. 95; for Mansūr ibn Ishāq, see
below, chapter 5, p. 148f). Ibn Hawqal says that Kirmān
paid 500,000 dinars in annual tribute to Naṣr ibn Ahmad
But the 'Abbāsid s still retained some authority in the
province during Naṣr's reign (cf. Ibn al-Athīr, Kāmil,
vol. viii, pp. 80, 106, 160, 179, 223, 242 for evidence
of 'Abbāsid officials in Kirmān in Naṣr's reign).
69 Tārīkh-i sīstān, p. 273 = p. 218 (where the date
is given as 289/901f); Ibn al-Athīr, Kāmil, vol. vii, p.
509 (where the date is given as 288).
70 Ibn al-Athīr, Kāmil, vol. vii, p. 528; Tāhir paid a
large sum in tribute to the caliph for Fārs.
71 See above, note 68.
evidence that the Samanids occupied any part of Fars until 339/950 and 344/955, when they took temporary possession of Isfahan (72).

Caspian provinces

In 247 the Caspian provinces were ruled by the Zaydī imāms who had come to prominence in the region after leading a popular revolt against the Tāhirid governor of Tabaristan in 864 and had retained their hold on the region in spite of Tāhirid and Saffārid attempts to evict them. When the Zaydī imām Muhammad ibn Zayd heard of the defeat of ‘Amr ibn Layth, he decided to make a bid for Khurāsān (73). According to one late source, Jūzjanī’s Tabaqāt-i nāsirī, Ismā’īl ibn Ahmad was instructed by the caliph Mu’tadid to rid Jurjān and Tabaristan of their Zaydī rulers (74). Whether or not this was so, the Zaydī incursion posed a direct threat to Samānīd rule in Khurāsān and Ismā’īl accordingly mobilized his army to block the Zaydī advance. He

73 Dr B. Hoven of the Stockholm museum has recently unearthed some numismatic evidence indicating pro-Zaydī sentiment in Khurāsān in the late 9th century, in the form of a Naysābury coin of 262/875-6, bearing the name of Hasan ibn Zayd and the same inscription as other coins minted by this Zaydī ruler in Āmul and Jurjān (Letter from Dr Hoven to Professor W. Madelung of Oxford University dated 28/3/90, describing an unedited coin in the coin room of the Stockholm museum). This suggests that Zaydī rule had briefly been acknowledged in Naysābury when Saffārid control of the city was being contested by Ahmad ibn ‘Abdallāh al-Khujustānī.
74 Jūzjanī, Tabaqāt-i nāsirī, vol. i, p. 206; Habibi has "Tukharistan" which must be a mistake for Tabaristan.
appointed as its commander Muhammad ibn Hārūn, a general with experience of the Caspian region who had formerly been in the employ of Rāfi' ibn Harthama and had entered Sāmānīd service after Rāfi's death (75). The two armies met at Bāb Jurjān and the Zaydīs suffered a crushing defeat in the field: Muhammad ibn Zayd was killed and his son and other members of his family were taken prisoner to Bukhārā (76). The victorious Sāmānīd general was appointed governor of Tabaristān and set up his headquarters in Āmul, the provincial capital (77). The survivors of the Zaydī defeat retreated to Daylam where they continued to proselytize and recruit supporters to their cause and occasionally harassed Sāmānī strongholds in Tabaristān (78).

Two years later, Sāmānīd authority was extended westwards from Tabaristān to Rayy, as a consequence of a dispute with Muhammad ibn Hārūn. When the latter was dismissed from his post, he made for Rayy where he joined a popular revolt against the tyrannical 'Abbāsid-appointed Turkish governor, Iltutmish (?), whom he defeated in battle and replaced as governor in Rajab 289/June-July 902 (79). But he was not long in Rayy before his Sāmānī pursuers, by now in possession of the

75 See appendix: the Sāmānī state elite, s.v. "Muhammad ibn Hārūn".
77 Ibn Isfandiyār, Tarīkh-i tabaristān, p. 259.
78 Mirḵhwānd, Rawda, p. 38.
79 Tabari, ser. iii, pp. 2208f (Ukratmish). Ibn al-Athīr gives his name as al-Datmish (Kāmil, vol. vii, p. 517); Ibn Zāfir has Uqratmish (Duwal, fol. 117a). Spuler has Iltutmish (id, Iran in Früh-Islamischer Zeit, Wiesbaden, 1952, p. 82).
caliphal patent of investiture for Rayy, forced him to abandon the city and flee to Daylam territory where he made common cause with his old adversaries, the Zaydis (80). In the next couple of years the new allies mounted two unsuccessful attacks on the Sāmānid forces in the region (81). In the second battle in Sha‘bān 290/July 903, Muḥammad ibn Ḥārūn was finally run to ground and sent to Buhārā where he died in prison (82).

Rayy and Tabaristān remained under Sāmānid control during the remainder of Ismā‘īl’s reign and provided a base for further expeditions against the Daylamīs (83), but relations between Buhārā and the provincial governors did not improve after Muḥammad ibn Ḥārūn’s revolt. Soon after ʿAlī had come to the throne, the ḥājib Bāris, governor of Jurjān under his father, Ismā‘īl, fearing that Ahmad would seek revenge on him for a slight he had suffered during his father’s reign, withheld the revenues of Jurjān, Tabaristān and Rayy and decided to seek refuge at the ‘Abbāsid court (84). Baris wrote to the caliph Muktafi (d. Dhu’l-Qa‘da 295/August 908) and secured his permission to go to

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80 Ibn Isfandiyār, Tarīkh-i tabaristān, p. 259.
82 Ibn al-Athīr. Kāmil, vol. vii, p. 527. Gardizi writes Rajab 289/June 902, but this date is too early since Muḥammad ibn Ḥarūn only reached Rayy in that month (Zayn, p. 147).
Baghdad, but did not arrive in the city until after Ibn al-Mu’tazz’s attempt to seize the caliphate from Muktāfū’s successor, Muqtadir, in Rabī’ I 296/December 908 (85). Ahmad lodged a complaint with the ‘Abbāsids for giving amān to the rebel, but was dissuaded from pursuing the matter by the ‘Abbāsid wazir Ibn al-Furāt (86). The ‘Abbāsid regime, now in the middle of a war with the Qarāmīṭa, no doubt welcomed the arrival of additional manpower and such wealth as Bāris brought with him and could ill afford to accede to Ahmad’s request for the return of his wayward governor (87).

In 297/909–Ahmad dismissed the governor of Tabaristān, his cousin Abū’l-‘Abbās ‘Abdallāh ibn Muhammad ibn Nūh; he too had fallen foul of Ahmad when the latter was involved in the administration of the Caspian region as heir apparent. Ahmad replaced him with Sallām, a Turkish ghulām. Ibn Isfandiyār reports that when the news of Ibn Nūh’s dismissal became known to the other governors of the region, their disapproval was such that they planned to renounce allegiance to Ahmad and make Ibn Nūh amir in his stead (88). They were however dissuaded from this

85 Miskawayh gives the year of his arrival in Baghdad (Eclipse, vol. i, p. 16).
86 Miskawayh, ibid.
88 Ibn Isfandiyār says that after his dismissal, Ibn Nūh made his way to Bāris in Jurjān (Tārīkh-i tabaristan, p. 265). But Bāris had already arrived in Baghdad in 296, so either Ibn Isfandiyār’s date for Ibn Nūh’s dismissal is two years too late, or the governor of Jurjān was Bāris’s replacement.
course of action by certain native Tabarī rulers and Ibn Nūh was quickly re-instated after Sallām's heavy-handed behaviour had incited the people of Āmul to revolt and expel him from the city (89). In the same year Ibn Nūh repelled an attack on Ābaskūn by the Rūs and another the following year on Sārī (90). Ibn Nūh died in 845/1442 and was replaced by Muḥammad ibn 'Alī al-Su'luḳī (91).

Central government

The great increase in the territorial expanse of the Sāmānīd state in 287/900 necessitated the establishment of an elaborate administrative and military apparatus of government through which these territories could be governed from Bukhārā. The geographers give an informative synchronic description of these institutions of government, but the chronicles have little to say about their development through time and are particularly reticent about their function during the reigns of Ismā'īl and Ahmad.

As for the central bureaucracy, it appears that at this early stage, it had not yet grown into the relatively autonomous institution that it was to become in Naṣr ibn Ahmad's reign. Let us begin with the only direct reference we have to the emergence of the wazirate. According to Ibn Ṣafir, Abū 'Abdallāh Muḥammad ibn Ahmad Jayhānī, who took office at the beginning of

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89 Tārīkh-i tabaristān, p. 266.
90 Tārīkh-i tabaristān, ibid.
91 ibid. See appendix; the Su'luḳids.
Nasr’s reign, was the first Samanid wazir (92). Ibn al-Athîr says that the hashm appointed him to administer the government and Gardîzî confirms that he exercised great authority, particularly in the early part of the reign when his sovereign was a minor (93). It was Jayhânî who received the caliphal emissary, Ibn Fadlıân, who visited Bukhârâ en route to the Volga basin; Ibn Fadlıân knew him by the titles of kâtib and 'amîd (94).

Yet both Tha‘âlibî and Khwandamîr say that Jayhânî had held the wazirate under Nasr’s father, Ahmad (95). According to Tha‘âlibî, the institution of the wazirate had existed from the beginning of Ahmad’s reign; he tells us that before Jayhânî became wazir to Ahmad, the office was held by one Abû Bakr ibn Hamîd, who had earlier acted as kâtib to Ismâ‘îl ibn Ahmad. Samargandi supplies us with further biographical information about Abû Bakr; he was a Marwâzî nobleman by the name of Abû Bakr Muhammad ibn Hamîd ibn Nu‘aym al-Ishtadamî (96) who had begun his career as the wazir of Ismâ‘îl ibn Ahmad; Samargandi claims that he

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92 Ibn Zâfîr, Duwal, fol. 125b; wazîruhu abû ‘abdallâh muhammad ibn aḥmad al-jayhânî wa huwa awwal wazîr al sâmân.
93 Gardîzî calls him şâhib-i tadbîr (Zayn, p. 150); Ibn al-Athîr has wa‘a ttafaqâ huwa wa ḥashm nāsr ibn aḥmad ‘alâ tadbîr al-‘amr fa-aḥkamîhu (Kâmil, vol. viii, p. 78).
95 Tha‘âlibî states that Jayhânî was wazir to Ahmad ibn Ismâ‘îl towards the end of his reign (Yatîmat al-dahr, vol. ii, part 4, p. 62), as does Khwandamîr (Dastûr al-vuzrā’, p. 108).
96 Samargandi, Muntakhab, fol. 71af; Tha‘âlibî, Yatîmat al-dahr, vol. ii, part 4, pp. 61f. See appendix: the Samanid state elite, s.v. "Muhammad ibn Hamîd".
was wazir to Ahmad throughout the latter's reign and omits to mention Jayhānī's role.

Two other persons are also said to have held the wazirate before Naṣr’s reign. One of them was Jayhānī's successor as wazir to Naṣr, Abū’l-Fadl Balʿamī, whom various sources say was wazir to both Ismāʿīl and Ahmad (97). Yet Ibn Ẓāfir tells us that before Naṣr’s reign he was in charge of the taxation department (98) and says nothing about him being wazir. Unless he had been demoted from the wazirate to the head of the taxation department, which is improbable, it is unlikely that he had held the wazirate before Naṣr’s reign. Secondly, Ibn Isfandiyār tells us that Abū’l-Hasan Naṣr ibn Ishaq, the instigator of the assassination of Ahmad ibn Ismāʿīl, and commonly referred to as his kāțib, was a wazir of Ahmad’s (99). It should be noted however that Ibn Isfandiyār is the only source to make this claim for Abū’l-Hasan and that the other sources imply that he was merely his secretary.

What do we make of the above? Ibn Ẓāfir’s statement about Jayhānī should probably not be taken in its literal sense; the weight of evidence for the existence of the office of the wazirate before Naṣr’s reign is overwhelming. What Ibn Ẓāfir must have meant is that

98 Ibn Ẓāfir, Duwal, fol. 126a.
99 Tārīkh-i tabaristān, pp. 270f. See Gardīzī for his full name (Zayn, p. 150).
Jayhanī was the first person to exercise the full powers of a wazir and dominate the bureaucracy; this is consistent with the fact that Nasr was a minor who had no say in affairs of state. As for the discrepancies between the accounts of Thaʿālibī and Samarqandī; the former appears to be the more credible, since it is more detailed and distinguishes between the offices of kātib (secretary) and wazir (head of the bureaucratic establishment). On the other hand, Ibn Fadlān's eyewitness account suggests that even as head of the bureaucracy, Jayhanī was known as kātib; perhaps "wazir" was a term unknown in early Samānīd usage, which was used by observers more familiar with the 'Abbāsid, and other Muslim states, to designate the head of the bureaucracy (100). On the other hand, it seems to have come into use later on; the term was certainly familiar to the Samānīd poets.

There does seem to have been an upgrading of the status of the chief bureaucrat under Ahmad; Thaʿālibī distinguishes between Abū Bakr's position under Ismāʿīl (kātib) and his position under Ahmad (wazir). This would fit with the idea that the bureaucracy was closely supervised by the monarch himself in Ismāʿīl's reign. He was said to have relied heavily on the advice of a few close confidants who did not, as far as is known, hold positions in the bureaucracy (101). There is moreover no

100 The term is not used by Gardīzī and Ibn al-Athīr of the early bureaucrats.
101 Mīrkhwānd says that Ismāʿīl always followed Ahmad ibn Sahl's advice in matters of policy (Rawdat al-safā,
mention of the existence of diwan offices in Bukhara in the early period. The great building programme in the Registan, or central square of Bukhara, which provided accommodation for nine government departments was not set in motion until the reign of Nasr ibn Ahmad at the time when Jayhānī became wazir (102).

While the above evidence suggests that in the early years the bureaucracy was still embryonic, the principal ministries probably nevertheless existed from the earliest years of the century. We will now examine them as they are listed by Narshakhi.

At their head stood the diwan-i mustawfi, which Barthold identified as the treasury department, the equivalent of the diwan-i kharaj in Baghdad (103). This department had responsibility for supervising the work of the tax collectors (āmil/bundar/kātib salla) (104), who operated in all provinces of the state, levying the land tax (kharaj) and other forms of tax revenue. The term mustawfi may have been synonymous with khāzin or khāzindār as Barthold claims: however the term khāzin was also applied to officials who supervised monetary

vol. iv, p. 40f; for Ahmad ibn Sahl, see appendix; the Samanid state elite).
103 Barthold, Turkestan, pp. 229f.
104 The terms bundar and kātib salla (salla with the meaning of "basket" or "receptacle", as a metaphor for the treasury?) are used synonymously by Ibn Hawqal:
...kātib salla yuwa'raf bi'īl-bundar yatlib bi'īl-kharaj wa wujūh al-amwāl al-wājiba li'l-sultan (Kitāb surat al-ard, vol. ii, 2nd ed., p. 424). The term āmil, meaning tax official, is used throughout the Yatīmat al-dahr.
matters in other departments of the administration and the court (105).

Other departments with responsibility for the administration of the provinces were the information department (dīwān-i barīd) and the judicial department (dīwān-i qaḍāʾ) (106). The dīwān al-barīd appointed information officers (aṣḥāb al-barīd) to the provinces, both those of the core area of the state and those governed by vassals of the Sāmānids (107). The sāhib al-barīd was an important functionary of central government whose job it was to keep his masters informed of the political situation in his district; he was not subject to the authority of the provincial governor under whom he served, and on occasion informed against that governor (108). Another official who was probably

105 For the Turkish khāzins Qamatkīn and Fatkīn/al-Aftekīn, see Gardīzī, Zayn, pp. 156 and 160; Thaʿalibī, Yatīmat al-dahr, vol. ii, part 4, p. 136. One of the Turkish murderers of the amir Ahmad held the post of khāzin (Ibn Zafir, Duwal, fol. 120a). Note also the qaḍī of Samarkand, Abū 'Abdallāh Ahmad ibn Mūsā al-Yazdādī, who became khāzin to Mansūr ibn Nūh (Samānī, Ansāb, s.v. "Yazdādī").

106 See Frye's note on the dīwān-i barīd, which in the Persian edition is given as the dīwān-i muʿayyid (Frye, tr, The history of Bukhara, p. 26; Tarīkh-i bukhara, p. 36).

107 See Ibn Hawqal's list of stipends paid to civil servants appointed to the provinces: among the areas ruled by vassals included in it are Khuttal, Jūzjān, Saghāniyān, Bust, Khwārazm, Jurjāniyya and Quhistān (Ibn Hawqal, Sūrat al-ārd, vol. ii, 2nd ed., p. 470). The vassal princes also had officials of their own to see to the running of their private affairs and perhaps to assist the central government officials appointed to their districts; viz. the dastūr (minister) of Abū Mansūr Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-razzāq (cf. V. Minorsky, "The older preface to the Shahname", ibid, p. 167) and Abu 'Amr 'Abd al-wahīd ibn Ahmad al-Qurashī who served as the wazir of the Farīghunīds (Samargandī, Muntakhab, fol. 35b).

108 See the example of Abū'l-Hasan Sīmjūr whose decision to revolt against the amir Nūh ibn Mansūr was
attached to the dīwān al-barīd was the sāhib al-sirr who functioned as an intelligence agent in the capital and kept the ruler informed of the conduct of his courtiers (109).

The dīwān al-qāda was responsible for the appointment of qadis. As in the 'Abbāsid state, the chief qādī of a province was a civil servant appointed by central decree. The Sāmānids evidently had as much difficulty as the 'Abbāsids in finding scholars willing to serve in this capacity (110). In one case, the functions of qādī and sāhib al-barīd were combined in one person; the qādī of Herāt, Abū 'Abdallāh Ahmad ibn Mūsā, was appointed sāhib al-barīd of the city because he was considered trustworthy (111). The maṣālim courts (courts of appeal), which were held in the provincial capitals, were mostly presided over by members of the royal house and provincial governors; but it was not unknown for such a court to be administered by a qādī (112).

immediately relayed to Bukhārā by the sāhib al-barīd without his knowledge (cf. *Awfi, Jāmi' al-hikayāt, in Barthold, Turkestan v'epokhu mongolskago nashestviya, vol. i, (texts), p. 92). Note that Ibn Zāfir names this official the sāhib al-khabīr (Duwal, fol. 119b).

109 Tha'alibī, Yatīma, ibid, p. 66.
110 See below, chapter 10, note 41.
111 Sam'anī, Ansāb, s.v. "khāzin" (vol. v, p. 13), "yzdādhī" (vol. xiii, p. 490). He was later qādī of Samargand and then took over the khizāna for Mansūr ibn Nūh.
112 Maṣālim courts in Bukhārā were held by the Sāmānids themselves in the early years; viz. Ishaq ibn Ahmad (Sam'anī, Ansāb, vol. vii, p. 25) and Isma'il ibn Ahmad (Nizām al-mulk, Siyar al-mulūk p. 28f = pp. 21f); in Naysābūr by the governor, viz. Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-razzaq (Gardizī, Zayn, p. 161); the maṣālim court in Balkh was run by one Abū 'Alī al-Masīhī (a recent convert?) (Tha'alibī, Yatīma, vol. ii, part 4, p. 137) who later served as chief qādī of Sīstān.
The geographer Ibn Hawqal applauds the efficiency of the Samanid provincial administration and observes that Samanid officials were fair-minded in their treatment of their subject populations. In addition to the tax collector, the qādī and the šāhib al-barid, he notes the existence of another post, that of the 'āmil al-ma'ūna. This term may best be translated as chief of security: his precise function probably differed from district to district but he most likely played a similar role to that of the shihna in Bukhārā, namely that of military governor (113). However in Khurāsān, ultimate control over the armed forces was lodged in the person of the governor and the shihna can only have been subordinate to him (114).

Second in rank to the treasury was the diwān-i 'amīd al-mulk, the chancery, also known as the diwān al-rasa'īl. Many of the poets whose biographies appear in the Yatīmat al-dahr were employed in this department as secretaries. It is followed in Narshakhī's list by the diwān-i šāhib al-shuraṭ, the army department, in which the 'ārid or inspector general and army paymaster was a high functionary (115). One diwān which is mentioned only in Khwārazmī's Mafātīh al-'ulūm was the diwān al-mā'. Khwārazmī tells us that this diwān was situated in

113 Cf. EI² s.v. "ma'ūna".
114 See for example Abu'l-Hasan Sīmjūr as shihna in Naysābūr under Bakr ibn Malik (Gardīzī, Zayn, p. 159).
115 Thus Barthold, Turkestan, p. 230. One might have expected two departments, diwān-i lashkar (jaysh) (army) and diwān-i šāhib al-shuraṭ (police), but the former is not mentioned by Narshakhī; Barthold's assumption that the functions of both were confined to the second of these ministries is quite reasonable.
Marv and had responsibility for the distribution of water resources on the Murghāb river and the taxation of people who owned water-rights (116).

The rest of the diwāns were concerned with the administration of the affairs of the royal court and the capital city. According to Barthold, the mushrif, head of the diwan-i sharf, was in charge of the allowance allotted for the maintenance of the court (117). Also linked to the court were the department of royal lands (diwan-i mamlaka-yi khāssa), corresponding to the diwan al-diyā in ‘Abbāsid Baghdad, and the department of religious endowments (diwan-i awqaf). Both these departments were essentially local government offices, since the available evidence suggests that most of these lands were situated in the environs of Sughd (118). Finally the diwan-i muhtasib was responsible for the maintenance of order at a local level, in the streets and markets of Bukhāra (119).

The central bureaucracy was complemented by a hierarchy of court officials who attended to the welfare of the amir and his entourage. They were headed by the chief chamberlain (hājib al-hujjāb), a Turkish mamlūk who would have worked his way into the job after a long

117 Barthold, Turkestan, p. 231. Frye however translates the term as "chief of protocol" (Frye, tr, The History of Bukhara, p. 26).
118 For evidence of Sāmānīd royal estates in Khurasan, see below, chapter 8, note 31.
119 For the career of a Sāmānīd muhtasib, see Samānī, s.v. "Harbī" and "Muhtasib" (= vol. iv, pp. 111-116 and vol. xii, p. 113f).
career in subordinate offices (120); he was in charge of subordinate court chamberlains (121). Second only to the chief chamberlain was the commander of the guard (ṣāhib al-ḥaras) who, judging from the duties assigned to him in other royal courts, acted as the amir’s bodyguard and commanded a detachment of armed mamlūks who were always in the amir’s presence (122). A number of lesser posts in the court were also held by Turks and included those of the pencase holder (dawātdār/dawātī) (123), the cupbearer (sharābdār) (124), the keeper of the wardrobe (ṣāhib al-kiswa) and others (125).

The army

From the beginning of the tenth century, the Sāmānid army grew in size in order to meet the demands of the monarchical state. Its regular forces included dāhāqīn and ahrār (free-born troops) and mamlūks (126). These regular troops were supplemented by Arab troops (127)

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120 Cf. Nizām al-mulk, Siyar al-mulūk, p. 141 = pp. 103f. for the cursus honorum of the Turkish slave.
121 Viz. the ḥujjāb al-sibā' (chamberlains of wild beasts) (Ibn Zubayr, Kitāb al-dhakhā'ir, p. 145).
122 Barthold, Turkestan, p. 228.
123 Cf. Abu ʿImran Simjunī’s nisba al-dawātī/dawātdar. See below, appendix; the Sāmānid state elite, s.v. "Simjūr".
124 For the sharābdār cf. Gardīzī, Zayn, p. 158.
125 The ṣāhib al-kiswa was one of the assassins of the amir Ahmad ibn Ismā'īl (cf. Ibn Zāfir, Duwal, fol. 120a). Barthold also mentions door-keepers and table-dressers in the Samanid court (ibid, p. 228).
126 Ibn Hawqal, Sūrat al-arḍ, p. 471; the awliyā’ al-ahrār formed the left wing of Nasr ibn Ahmad’s army in 301/914 (Ibn Zāfir, Duwal, fol. 124b).
127 Ibn Zāfir, ibid.
and mercenaries from the Caspian region (128). The Caspian infantrymen were exceptionally hardy soldiers who were able to withstand the rigours of lengthy campaigning better than all others, even the Turks (129). By the mid 10th century we also hear of Kurds who fought for Abu ‘Alî Šaghanî in the siege of Rayy in 944 (130).

But the mainstay of the army were the Turkish troops, who were famous for their prowess as cavalrymen and archers. Both the battle tactics employed by Šamānid commanders and the organisational structure of the army reflect the influence of Turkish military practice (131). The earliest evidence we have for a Šamānid mamlûk army was the expedition against Abu Bilāl al-Qarmatî in 285/997 (132). The main theatre of operations for

128 Cf. the Jîlî general, Shârvin, who took part in the revolt of Naṣr ibn Ahmad’s brothers in 930 (Ibn al-Athîr, Kâmil, vol. viii, p. 209; see below, chapter 5, p. 152ff).
129 In 340/951-2 Mansûr ibn Qarâtegîn, the Šamānid governor of Khurasân, was forced to abandon his campaign against the Bûyids and retreat to Rayy, after his Khurasânî troops complained to him of the lack of provisions and fodder. Ibn al-Athîr contrasts the Khurasânîs’ (i.e. Turks) lack of fortitude with the resilience of the Daylamîs (Ibn al-Athîr, Kâmil, vol. viii, p. 488). Some years later, the Muhtâjid Abu ‘Alî al-Šaghanî’s troops were similarly unable to withstand the harsh winter in the Jîbâl (Ibn al-Athîr, Kâmil, vol. viii, p. 504).
130 Ibn al-Athîr, ibid, p. 443.
131 A strategy often employed by the Šamānid commanders, that of the feigned retreat, followed by a counter-attack against the enemy when he was least prepared to receive it, was a well-known Turkish tactic; E. Mercil calls it the Grey Wolf strategem ("Simcuriler", part 1, Tarih Dergisi, vol. xxxii, 1979, p. 85, note 51). Note also the Šamânids’ use of the title "commander of 1000 horsemen" (more commonly associated with the Mongol army) (Târîkh-i Sîstân, p. 329 = p. 269).
132 Nizâ‘ al-mulk, Siyar al-mulûk, p. 297 = p. 220; see below, chapter 6, p. 187f. In his speech to Tîqîsh, the commander of the mamlûk detachment, Ismâ‘îl explained
the Turkish soldiers was Khurāsān; indeed by the end of the first quarter of the century the term Khurāsāniyya had become synonymous with Atrak (133).

The Śāmanid regular army also saw action on the eastern front in the first decades of the century. After Ismā'īl's capture of Ta'āz in 280/893, the Turks mounted a number of retaliatory expeditions against Transoxania. These armies were led by the dominant Qarluq tribal confederation which had controlled the western Central Asian steppe from the time of the fall of the Uighurs in 225/840, from their bases in Balāsaghūn, Tarāz and Kashgār (134). In their first incursion in 291/904 (135), our sources note with incredulity the size of the Turkish encampments in which seven hundred tents were erected for the chieftains alone. In the face of such large forces, Ismā'īl mobilized both his regular army (al-‘askar) and the volunteer levies (al-muṭṭawwi‘a) and

that his mission was of a different order to the military engagements of the past, such as the battle against the Šaffārid invaders of Transoxania when large numbers of irregular troops had been recruited to face the equally numerous armies of their opponents. This would suggest that the expedition against Abū Bilāl was one of the earliest occasions in which a sizeable mamluk force was deployed.

133 In 310/922, at the battle of Jalāyīn, Ibn Isfandiyār refers to the Śāmanid army as Turks (Ṭārīkh-i tabaristān, p. 284). The "Khurāsānī" troops of the Śāmanid governors were predominantly of Turkish origin: 'Utbī and Ibn Isfandiyār relate the story of Mu‘ayyid al-Dawla the Būyid’s astrologer who advised his master to wait until Mars, the planet associated with the Turks, was in the descendent, before he attacked the Khurāsānī army ('Utbī, Yarnī, in Manini, Fath, vol. i, p. 112; Ibn Isfandiyār, Ṭārīkh-i tabaristān, vol. ii, p. 5 - who refers to them as turkān).


135 Tabarī says that the report of the invasion reached Baghdād in Rajab 291/May-June 904 (ser. iii, p. 2249).
managed by means of surprise attack to defeat them and take many prisoners. Ismā'īl led a counter-attack against the steppe two years later in 293/905-6 (136).

Two further Turkish invasions occurred during Ahmad's reign. The first of these, which took place in 297/909-10, involved some 400,000 warriors, the largest Turkish army ever seen in Transoxania (137). The Turks prepared for their assault by arresting all Muslim merchants in the steppe, a move presumably designed both to intimidate their fellow Muslims in Transoxania and to prevent news of their plans from reaching Bukhārā; they then divided their forces into six divisions, two of which attacked Sughd, and the others, Khwārazm, Isfīyāb, Shāsh and Faryāb. As in Isma'īl's reign, irregular levies played a major role in the defence of Transoxania. Ibn Zāfir's somewhat legendary account of the campaign concentrates exclusively on the adventures of a small band of 600 volunteers under the command of a Bukhāran faqīh, which trapped a 100,000 strong Turkish army in a wooded valley and set light to the trees so that the whole force perished by fire (138). The same detachment of volunteers then went to Khwārazm to liberate the Muslims who had been taken prisoner and, with their help, annihilated a second steppe army. A second Turkish attack was mounted at the very end of Ahmad's reign, but this time against Khurāsān: the

136 Ibn al-Athīr, Kamil, vol. vii, p. 547. This is probably the same raid which Mīrkhwand says took place after Ismā'īl's return to Transoxania from Rayy (Rawdat al-safā', ed. Sabuhi, vol. iv, p. 36).
137 Ibn Zāfir, Duwal, fol. 118a.
138 Ibn Zāfir, Duwal, fol. 118af.
invaders captured many prisoners and a large amount of booty (139).

From the *kitab al-dhakhā'ir wa'l-tuhaf* of Rashīd ibn al-Zubayr we learn that the Sāmānīd volunteer militias were well organized and could be mobilized at short notice (140). The militia troops were allocated plots of land (*iqṭāʿāt*) which they cultivated for their own profit and where they raised horses and manufactured the weapons they needed for battle (141). From this evidence it seems that the Sāmānīd *muṭṭawwiʿa*, a sort of territorial army, was a better organized and more formidable fighting force than its namesake in the western Islamic world. It is possible that the term *muṭṭawwiʿa* refers not to an independent militia, but rather to the ghāzīs who manned the Transoxanian *ribāṭs*; in Sāmānī’s *Ansāb* we come across the collocation *al-ghuzāt al-muṭṭawwiʿa* (142). In addition to the *muṭṭawwiʿa*, the Sāmānīds were able to summon to arms large numbers of ‘*ayyārūn* in emergencies (143). Such

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139 ‘Arīb, *Silat taʿrīkh al-Tabarī*, p. 43. ‘Arīb gives the date of the invasion as 301/913-14, but it probably started in the previous year, since Ahmad died in Jumādā II 301.

140 The militia regiments were drawn from different localities in Transoxania and were commanded by their own officers; cf. the *sāḥib muṭṭawwiʿa bukhārā* in Rashīd ibn al-Zubayr, *Kitāb al-dhakhāʾir*, p. 142.

141 Rashīd ibn al-Zubayr, *ibid*, pp. 143. For further discussion of the Samanid *iqṭāʿ*, see below, chapter 9, p. 273f.

142 Sāmānī, *Ansāb*, vol. iii, p. 81 (see above, chapter 3, note 125).

143 Rashīd ibn al-Zubayr states that in 327/938-9, 1700 ‘*ayyārī* detachments, of between 200 and 1000 men each, were mobilized to impress a hostile Turkish embassy (*ibid*, p. 145; see below, chapter 5, notes 96f).
irregular troops were even on one occasion used against rebel mamlūks (144).

The Sâmānids also benefited from the assistance of the armed forces of their vassals. The rulers of Ṣaghāniyān (145), Khwārazm (146), Jūzjān and Ghūr (147), Sīstān (148) and Jurjān (the Ziyārid Washmīr) (149) are all known to have sent troops to fight for the Sâmānids.

Ibn Hawqal’s remarks on the Sâmānīd army are as fulsome in praise as his chapter on the provincial administration. He contrasts Sâmānīd troops with the disorganized rabble which filled the ranks of other Muslim armies and highlights their ability to regroup after defeat (150). He attributes their efficiency to good organisation, strict discipline (151) and the

144 See below, section "The murder of Ahmad ibn Ismā‘īl".

145 Ibn al-Athīr reports that the Muḥtājīd rulers of Ṣaghāniyān assembled troops from their home province to fight for Nasr ibn Ahmad against his rebellious brothers in 37 (Ibn al-Athīr, Kāmil, vol. viii, p. 210; see below, chapter 5, p. 154ff).

146 The Khwārazm-Shāh probably led an army in 287/900 to defend Transoxania against the Šaffārīds (cf. Frye, tr, The history of Bukhara, note 303, and discussion thereof in appendix: the Khwarazmshahs in the 10th century); Khwārazmī troops saw action in the confrontations with Ishaq ibn Ahmad in 301/914 and Līlī ibn Nu‘mān the Zaydī general in 308/920-21 (Ibn Zāfir, Duwal, fol. 124b: Ibn al-Athīr, Kāmil, vol. viii, p. 125; see below, chapter 5, note 27).

147 The Farīghūnīds of Jūzjān and the Shār of Ghūr fought on Nūh ibn Mansūr’s side against his Turkish governors in the last decade of the century (‘Utbi in Manīnī, Fatḥ, vol. i, pp. 184f).

148 The Šaffārīds fought for Nūh ibn Mansūr as well (Gardīzī, Zayn, p. 170).

149 The Ziyārid Washmīr fought for Mansūr ibn Nūh against Abū Mansūr ‘Abd al-razzāq, the lord of Tūs, at the beginning of Mansūr’s reign (Nizām al-mulk, Siyar al-mulūk, p. 305 = p. 226).

150 ibid, p. 471: wa in tafarraqū fī haditha, tarajja‘ū kulluhum ila makan wahid.

151 ibid: innahum ghudhu min husn al-siyāsa bi-mahd al-riyāsa min al-tafaqqud li-ahwālihim ‘inda al-ghayba
quality of their leadership. He notes the fact that there were always plenty of reserve troops to take the place of soldiers who fell in battle.

Whatever its merits, there were however limitations to the tasks which even such a large and well-trained army could perform. As noted above, the regular standing army was simply not large enough to deal with steppe armies. Even when operating against less numerous opponents, it was vulnerable in remote and mountainous regions where its supply lines were liable to be cut. The surrender of the Sāmānīd army to Abū 'Alī Saghānī in Saghāniyān in 337 is a good case in point; Abū 'Alī, fighting on his home territory, cut off their communications with Bukhārā for three weeks and was able to force the Sāmānīd generals to sue for peace (152). Another remote province where the army was often in difficulties was Sīstān; the second invasion of the province in the reign of Ahmad ibn Ismā'īl took nine months to conquer the capital (153) and towards the middle of the century, the rebellious Saffārid amir Khalaf ibn Ahmad was able to resist a Sāmānīd invasion force for at least three years (154).

The state elite

The majority of the senior provincial appointments in the core area of the state in this period were held by

\[\text{'anhum..in ablā, lam tu'akhkhar mukāfatuhu, wa in ijtarama tuliba li-dhanbihi.}\]

154 See below, chapter 8, note 16.
members of the Sāmānīd royal house. The latter occupied the governorships of the eastern Transoxanian provinces and probably Khurāsān (155); they also held governorships in the Caspian region and Sīstān (156). Free-born Khurāsānī and Transoxanian amirs, some of whom had been active in Khurāsān in the 9th century and had allied themselves with the Sāmānīds after the defeat of the Šaffārīds (157), held positions in the army as well as governorships in the Caspian region and Khurāsān. A few Turkish mamluks also held senior positions.

Shortly before the end of Ahmad's reign, the directly-governed core area of the state included Sīstān and the Caspian provinces, as well as Khurāsān and Transoxania, thus bringing the Sāmānīd state to its greatest territorial extent. Yet no centralized Muslim state had succeeded in establishing direct rule for long in either the Caspian region or Sīstān before the 10th century and the Sāmānīds were not to prove the exception to the rule. In 301/914 a Zaydī campaign launched from Daylam succeeded in ejecting the Sāmānīds from Tabaristān by force of arms. Part of the reason for the Sāmānīd defeat appears to have been the mismanagement of their provincial governors, who treated their subjects harshly and failed to understand that the Daylamīs now had to be wooed, rather than suppressed, as had been the case.

155 See above, sections "Transoxania" and "Khurāsān".
156 See above, sections "Sīstān" and "Caspian provinces".
157 Viz. Husayn ibn 'Alī al-Marwazī, Muḥammad ibn Ḥarūn, and Ahmad ibn Sahl.
under Isma‘īl (158). The same was true of the Samanid occupiers of Sīstān who antagonised their subjects with demands for revenue.

These set-backs on the periphery were however less damaging to the dynasty than the catastrophe which befell the Samanids when Ahmad was murdered. His death provoked a fierce succession struggle, the repercussions of which were to last well into the reign of his successor.

The murder of Ahmad ibn Isma‘īl

The origin of the dispute which led to Ahmad’s death was nothing more remarkable than a domestic squabble between Ahmad and a secretary of his, Abū’l-Hasan Naṣr ibn Ishāq. Ibn Isfandiyār tells us that Abū’l-Hasan was in the habit of soliciting bribes from visitors to the court before he would arrange for them to have an audience with the amir and that Ahmad had cautioned him on this account (159). Ahmad’s rebuke did not have the desired effect; Abū’l-Hasan continued to abuse his authority, even to the point of demanding payment from foreign visitors to the court. One of the victims of his greed was the Ṭabarī prince Ibn Qārin, probably to be identified as Shahriyar ibn Baduspān, the Ispahbādh of Lapūr (160), who came to Bukhārā likely in 356/669.

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159 Ibn Isfandiyār, Tarīkh-i Tabaristān, p. 271.
refuge with Aḥmad (161). After waiting many days without being admitted to the amir's presence, he began to make enquiries as to how he might obtain an audience with him. He was told by a Sāmānīd general that he would first have to pay 6,000 dinars to Abū’l-Hasan (162). He borrowed the sum from some merchants and paid the secretary who then took him to Ahmad. After a fruitful meeting with the Sāmānīd, Ibn Qārin decided to return home and was dispatched with many gifts and honours by his grateful host. There the story might have ended, but for the fact that the Tabarī ruler chanced to tell the Sāmānīd governor of Marv, with whom he stayed on his return journey, about the bribe he had given to Abū’l-Hasan.

This information was immediately relayed to Ahmad by the resident sāhib khabar in Marv. Ahmad summoned Ibn Qārin from Marv to the district of Farabr near Bukhārā, where he was engaged on a lion hunt. Having verified the news from him in person, Ahmad upbraided his secretary for jeopardising relations with an important ally and told him he would pursue the matter when he returned to Bukhārā.

Abū’l-Hasan knew that his court career was doomed and that his life would probably be endangered if the amir

161 Ibn Zāfir, Duwal, fol. 119a.
162 The general in question bore the name Kandākīn/Kundākīn/Kandātekīn/Kandātekīn ibn Kandājūr/Kundajūr al-Daylamī (Ibn Zāfir, Duwal, fol. 119a). While the name is certainly of Turkish origin, the nisba shows that its bearer had some connection with the Caspian region of Daylam (for another Daylamī with a Turkish name, see Kurātekīn, Ibn al-Athīr, Kāmil, vol. viii, p. 374). For a discussion of Turks with Iranian nisbas, see below, chapter 10, note 12.
chose to make an example of him to his other courtiers. So he plotted with some of the Sāmānid ghilmān to murder the amir in his tent, offering them substantial material rewards and the prospect of promotion to high office: he also swore to them that after the assassination he would pay allegiance to Ishāq ibn Ahmad, Ahmad’s uncle, as the next Sāmānid amir (163). The deed was done one night towards the middle of Jumādā II 30/January 914 (164) by two mamlūks from the amir’s household, the master of the wardrobe (ṣāhib al-kiswa) and the royal treasurer (al-khāzin): the master of wardrobe was no doubt a key figure in the secretary’s plot, since he would have had access to the amir’s private quarters.

After the amir had been murdered, Abū’l-Ḥasan and his mamlūk co-conspirators marched on Bukhārā, intending to take control of the city and proclaim their candidate, Ishāq, as Ahmad’s successor. But their plans were frustrated by the quick reactions of the governor of Bukhārā, Muhammad ibn Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Layth (165), who armed the mutṭawwi’a and the ‘ayyarūn and posted them at the city gates. The mamlūks, unprepared for resistance from this quarter, arrived in separate detachments at the perimeter of the city and were disarmed one by one by the waiting militia troops. They were placed under arrest and their goods, families and

163 Ibn Zāfīr, Duwal, fol. 120a.
164 While all our sources agree on the month, there is some disagreement as to the day (cf. Frye, tr, The history of Bukhara, note 319).
165 For the correct identity of this man, see appendix; the Sāmānid state elite, s.v. "Muhammad ibn Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Layth". (= p. 321)
property were seized while the governor and his colleagues from the military and bureaucratic establishments chose a successor to Ahmad. When the notables' choice had fallen on Ahmad's second son, Naṣr, a minor of eight years of age (166), the Turks were asked to pay allegiance to their new amir: at first they prevaricated, but their assent was assured when it was made clear to them that their families would be at risk if they refused to comply (167).

Once the mamlūks had been brought round, Muḥammad ibn Ahmad turned his attention to the threat presented by Ishāq ibn Ahmad. On hearing of his nephew's demise, Ishāq had claimed the throne and marched on Bukhārā with an army led by his son Ilyās, comprising the armed forces of the eastern Transoxanian provinces, as well as his Samarqandī troops (168). Muḥammad fielded an army comprising the recently-defeated mamlūks as well as his Bukhāran troops and reinforcements sent to him by the Khwārazmshāh, and defeated Ishāq ibn Ahmad outside the walls of the city (169). He then marched on Samarqand, took Ishāq prisoner and appointed another Samānīd prince as governor of the city, thus securing Sughd for his new sovereign (170).

166 The notables at first asked the qādīs of the city to choose the new amir but they declined to do so (Ibn Zafir, ibid, fol. 122b. - see below, chapter 10, note 42).
167 ibid, fol. 123b.
168 ibid, fol. 124. Tabarī says the first battle took place 14 days before the end of Shaʿāban (ser. iii, p. 2290); Ibn al-Athīr says that the rebels marched on Bukhārā in Ramadān (id, Kāmil, vol. viii, p. 80).
169 ibid, fols. 124aff.
170 Tabarī, ser. iii, p. 2290 (new Samānīd governor); Samʿānī erroneously states that Ishāq died in Bukhārā
This episode, as summarized above from Ibn Zāfīr’s account, is of interest in several respects. For a start, it shows that Ahmad was very poorly informed about events in his capital and that he was manipulated by corrupt courtiers. This is a salutary antidote to the received image of the early Sāmānīd regime, fostered above all by the Arab geographers, as being somehow immune to the usual skulduggery which plagued the courts of their peers.

Of greater importance is the evidence that Ahmad did not enjoy good relations with his ghilman. According to Jūzjānī, his ghilman were eager to avenge the deaths of several of their colleagues whom he had executed for misconduct (171). More difficult to evaluate is the report of Ḥamdollāh Qazvīnī that the mamlūks turned against him because he spent all his time with members of the scholarly class (172). Scholars did figure prominently at court, as we have seen, and Ahmad’s order that all decrees and legal rulings should be written in Arabic, rather than Darī (173), is perhaps a reflection of their influence. Precisely how this worked to the disadvantage of the mamlūks is not however clear.

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nine days before the end of Ṣafar 301 (Ansāb, vol. vii, p. 25).


172 (Ahmad) ‘alīm parvār va ‘ilm dust būd. mujālasāt-i ū bā ‘ulamā’ būd. bedīn sabab ghulāmān az ū mutanaffir būdand va ū manāshīr va ahkām az zabān-i darī ba ‘arbā’i naqī kard (Hamdollāh Qazvīnī, Tārīkh-i gūzīda, p. 378).

173 Note Muqaddasi’s observation that Darī was the language of the court in which both the king’s correspondence, as well as petitions addressed to him, were written (Ahsan, p. 335).
Whatever grievances the mamlūks may have shared, Ibn Zāfir’s account of the aftermath of the assassination shows that they had different interests in that some joined Abū’l-Hasan and others took the side of Naṣr. The majority of the former were senior members of the court hierarchy (al-ghilmān al-kibār), whereas the latter were mostly younger mamlūks (al-ghilmān al-sīghār) (174). Now the fact that many of the older mamlūks were ex-mamlūks of Ahmad’s father, Ismā’īl (175) is interesting. Perhaps they saw in the introduction of an outside candidate the chance to secure their position over their younger peers; or maybe they had been in favour of Ishāq from the time of Ismā’īl’s death. Whatever the answer, their behaviour illustrates the well-known fact that mamlūks whose original master had died were prone to become a dangerous liability when they passed to a successor, since they were no longer assured of preferential treatment by their new master and had to compete for his favour with the younger mamlūks whom he had purchased (176).

174 Ibn Zāfir, Duwal, fol. 120b; fa taqaddama al-ghilmān al-sīghār alladhīna lam yakūnū fī’l-bay’a wa ajma’ū ‘alā infāḍh rasūl ilā wālidatī Ahmad ibn Ismā’īl yukhbirāhā.
175 Ibn Zāfir says of Fāris al-Turkī, one of the first conspirators to reach Bukhara, wa huwa min kibār mamalīk ismā’īl (Duwal, fol. 121a). One of his companions, Māmirāj, is said to have been one of the most senior of Ismā’īl’s ghilmān (ibid, fol. 123b). Abū ‘Alī al-Sīmjurī (his kunya is given in fol. 123b) was probably a son of Abū ‘Imrān Sīmjurī al-Dawātī, another mamlūk of Ismā’īl’s, who was Ahmad’s governor of Sistān at the time of his murder. For a possible later reference to Abū ‘Alī’s career in Naṣr’s reign, see Ibn Isfandiyār, Tarikh-i tabaristān, p. 283, note 1.
176 For a later example of leaderless mamlūks causing trouble see below, chapter 8, p. 245, where the ghilmān al-sadīdiyya, mamlūks of the father of the reigning amir
The widespread support for Ishaq ibn Ahmad in Samarqand and other Samanid provinces suggests that Ahmad's succession had never received the universal endorsement of the state elite. Ishaq had already made a bid for the throne at the beginning of Ahmad's reign and Ahmad had been forced to go to Samarqand and arrest him (177). He subsequently forgave him his treachery and re-appointed him to the governorship of Samarqand. That Ishaq should have remained a popular candidate for the throne is not surprising, given both the history of the Samanid succession to date and his personal status. In the Samanid system, sons clearly had no exclusive right to succeed their fathers; of the four amirs who had come to the throne since Nuh ibn Asad, two were the brothers of their predecessors. Moreover Ishaq was the only surviving representative of his generation and the elder brother and right-hand man of Isma'il, the founder of the monarchical state. In a career which had included a brief governorship of Bukhara in 272/885-886, then the governorship of Farghana from 275/888-889 and the governorship of Samarqand in Isma'il's reign, he had established firm control over the heartland of Sughd and secured the support of the Samanids who ruled in that region (178).

Nuh ibn Mansur, were involved in the plot to assassinate the wazir Abu'l-Husayn 'Abdallah ibn Ahmad al-'Utbi. 177 Ibn Zafir, Duwal, fol. 117b. Gardizi's brief account corroborates Ibn Zafir's, although Ibn al-Athir erroneously reports that Ahmad summoned his uncle to Bukhara (Zayn, p. 148; Kamil, vol. viii, p. 7). 178 Ibn Zafir says that the Samanids in Samarqand supported him (Duwal, fol. 124a).
The episode thus makes it clear that the pre-monarchical rivalry between Samarqand and Bukhārā had survived the transition from governorate to independent monarchy, in spite of the growing status of Bukhārā as the capital. The alignment of forces in the first battle between Ishāq ibn Ahmad and Naṣr was precisely the same as that which had existed in the civil wars between Ismā'īl and Naṣr. As in the earlier conflict, the governor of Samarqand led the armies of Farghāna and Shāsh, Ushrūsana and Isfīyāb, commanded by his Sāmānid relatives, against the Bukharan army supported by allies from outside the traditional centre of Sāmānid authority in Transoxania (179); and once again victory went, against the odds, to the Bukharan camp. As we shall see in the following chapter, Naṣr ibn Ahmad later took steps to prevent the recurrence of such an alliance among members of the royal house against him - but his first priority was to re-establish control over the provinces which had provided the mainstay of Ishāq’s support.

179 See above, note 168.
Chapter five

THE REIGN OF NASR IBN AHMAD (321/934-333/945) i: POLITICAL HISTORY
The provinces: Transoxania

For some eight years after Ishāq ibn Ahmad’s defeat, the chronicles tell us nothing of events in Transoxania. But in 310/922–3 Ishāq’s son Ilyās, possibly taking advantage of the Sāmānids’ preoccupation with events in Khurāsān (1), raised a revolt from his base in Farghāna (2) and mounted an attack on Samarqand in alliance with a Sāmānid general, Muhammad ibn Ḥusayn ibn Mutt al-Isfīyābī (3) and a huge army of Turks (4). Nasr ibn Aḥmad sent against them the governor of Farghāna, Abū ‘Amr Muḥammad ibn Asad al-Sāmānī (5). The rebels were

1 See below, p. 151, for the Zaydī invasion of Khurāsān, which was repulsed in the previous year.
2 Frye takes 310 as the year in which Ibn al-Athīr writes of his protracted rebellion as the date of the end, rather than the beginning, of Ilyās’s revolt, presumably on the assumption that Ilyās’s uprising would most likely have followed close on the heels of his father’s defeat (Kāmil, vol. viii, pp. 132ff.; Frye, Bukhara: the medieval achievement, p. 51). While this makes good historical sense (it appears that Samarqand was under rebel control in 306/918-19; see below, note 31), it contradicts Ibn al-Athīr’s account.

Ibn Khaldūn has a third date, 316 (‘Ibar, p. 340); if this was indeed the date, there was probably some connection between his uprising and that of Naṣr’s three brothers in Bukhārā in 317. Barthold follows Ibn al-Athīr (Turkestan, p. 241).
3 For Muhammad ibn Ḥusayn’s biography see appendix; the Sāmānī state elite.
4 It is not known whether these were steppe Turks (perhaps members of the Qarākhānīd confederation; see below for Ilyās’s sojourn in Qarākhānīd Kāshgār) or Turkmen from the eastern Transoxanian provinces.
5 His full name was Abū ‘Amr Muhammad ibn Asad ibn Ahmad ibn Asad. He was governor of Farghāna in 303/915.
ambushed as they set up camp outside Samarqand, and routed. Ilyās retired to Farghāna and his companion Ḥusayn ibn Mutt fled, via his home province of Isfiyāb, to Tarāz. There he was killed by the diḥqān of the province whom Naṣr had bribed (6). Ilyās launched a second attack, this time with the aid of Abū'1-Fadl ibn Ya'qūb ibn Ahmad al-Sāmānī, ruler of Shāsh (7). He was again defeated, and Abū'1-Fadl was taken prisoner to Bukhārā, where he died.

Ilyās now retreated into the steppe, to Kāshgār, the second capital of the Western Qarākhānids, where we are told that he married into the family of the diḥqān of Kāshgār, Tughāntegīn (8). Ilyās then tried a third time

minted in that year in Farghāna bears his name ( cf. Davidovich, "Mon ety Ferghany kak istochnik dlya kharakteristik instituta feodalnykh pozhalovanii za sluzhbu v Srednei Azii X v." Pismennye pamyatniki Vostoka, 1969, Moscow, 1972, p. 141). His father Asad and brother Ahmad had governed Farghāna from some time after the death of his grandfather Ahmad ibn Asad ibn Sāmānkhūda (d. 250/864) until the time of the Sāmānid civil wars, when they allied with Naṣr ibn Ahmad against his brother Ismā'īl, and were dismissed from the post by Ismā'īl in favour of Ishāq and his descendants (see above, chapter 3, notes 94 and 100). After Ishāq's unsuccessful bid for the throne at the beginning of Naṣr's reign, his son Muḥammad ibn Ishāq was dismissed from the governorship, which reverted to the descendants of Ṭāhir ibn Asad.

7 Ibn al-Athīr names him Abū'1-Fadl ibn Abī Yūsuf, lord of Shāsh (ibid). Abū Yūsuf was the kunya of Ya'qūb ibn Ahmad, ruler of Shāsh, who had come to the aid of Naṣr I ibn Ahmad al-Sāmānī in the first civil war against Ismā'īl ibn Ahmad al-Sāmānī in 272/885-6, together with Abū'1-Ash'ath Asad ibn Ahmad, ruler of Farghāna (see above, chapter 3, note 94); it was probably either he, or his son Abū'1-Fadl who allied with Ishāq ibn Ahmad against Naṣr ibn Ahmad in 914 (see above, chapter 4, p. 145). The fact that Abū'1-Fadl was still governor of Shāsh at this date suggests that his family had been retained as rulers of Shāsh in Naṣr's reign, in spite of their support for Ishāq ibn Ahmad.
8 No further information on this diḥqān, presumably the amir governing Kāshgār on behalf of the Qarākhānids, is
to attack the Sāmānids, directing his army against Farghāna, now governed by Muḥammad ibn al-Muẓaffar al-Ṣaghānī, the founder of the Muḥtājid family of amirs (9). Again he was defeated and returned to Kāshgār; from there he began negotiations with Muḥammad ibn al-Muẓaffar which led to his being invited to Bukhārā where Naṣr ibn Ahmad pardoned him and gave him a relative of his in marriage (10).

This is the last we hear of Ilyās. In 317/929-30, not long after his defeat, Bukhārā was seized by a rebel faction led by Naṣr’s brother, Abū Zakariyyā Yaḥyā ibn Ahmad. The rebels were quickly expelled from the capital by Naṣr’s army and continued their struggle in Khurāsān where they enjoyed some success in attracting support from among the Khurāsānī governors and generals (11).

Khurāsān

In contrast to Transoxania, Naṣr had the greatest difficulty in establishing his rule in Khurāsān in the immediate aftermath of Ishāq’s revolt. In 302/914-15 the governor of the province, Mansūr ibn Ishāq, who had only

available. Again we should note that the term sāhara may here mean "to conclude an strategic alliance with" rather than "to conclude a marriage alliance with" (cf. chapter 3, note 46).
10 Ibn Khaldūn does not mention Ilyās’s final reconciliation with Naṣr, finishing his account with the statement that Ilyās went to Kāshgār and married the daughter of the Turkish "king" Tughāntegīn (‘Ibar, p. 340).
11 See below, p. 153.
recently taken up the post after leaving Sīstān (12),
joined his father’s revolt (13). He allied himself with Ḥusayn ibn ‘Alī al-Marwāzī, who had already declared his opposition to Naṣr’s accession by heading a revolt in Sīstān against Mansūr ibn Iṣḥāq’s successor, Abū ‘Imrān Sīmjūr al-Dawātī, and occupying Herāt (14). Mansūr soon died, poisoned, according to one source, by order of his ally Ḥusayn (15), and the latter became the leader of the Khurāsānī rebellion. He was in turn joined by the saḥīb shurāt Bukhārā (16), Muḥammad ibn Ahmad ibn Muḥammad (17), the very man who had recently defended Bukhārā against the mamliḵ regicides and ensured Naṣr’s succession.

Naṣr responded by sending an army against the rebels under the command of Ahmad ibn Sahl, governor of Balkh (18), which first defeated Ḥusayn’s brother, Mansūr, in Herāt (19) and then went on to defeat Husayn himself in

12 Cf above, chapter 4, p. 114f.
13 Mīrkhwand says that he put his own name in the khutba (Rawda, p. 40).
14 See below, section: "Sīstān".
17 He is named as Muḥammad ibn Jayd/Hayd by Ibn al-Athīr; Muḥammad ibn Ajhad by Gardīzī; Muḥammad ibn Junayd by Mīrkhwand (Rawda, vol. iv, p. 40). For his part in securing Naṣr’s accession, see above, chapter 4, note 165; the Sāmānid state elite, s.v. "Muḥammad ibn Ahmad ibn Muḥammad". Shortly after Naṣr’s victory over Iṣḥāq, Muḥammad had been sent to Nāysābūr on some unspecified business (perhaps to try and win Mansūr over to the new regime?) but having failed to accomplish his task and fearing Naṣr’s wrath, decided to throw in his lot with Husayn ibn ‘Alī.
18 Ahmad was governor of Balkh in 303/915-16: cf. the Balkh dirham of that date which bears his name (W. Anderson, Der Chalifenmünzfund von Kochtel, Dorpat, 1926, p. 111; cf. also the Sāmānid state elite, s.v. "Ahmad ibn Sahl").
19 Gardīzī, Zayn, p. 151.
Naysābūr in Rabī' 1 306/ Auḫr- Ṣep 918. Ḥusayn was carried off as a prisoner to the capital while his allies sought amān from Ahmad ibn Sahl. But this was not the end of Naṣr’s troubles in Khurasān. In the following year Ahmad ibn Sahl himself raised a revolt, claiming that he had not been adequately rewarded for his services (20). It appears that as in Ḥusayn’s case in Sīstān, Ahmad wanted the governorship of the province as a reward for conquering it; at first he was led to believe that his wish would be granted, but it soon became apparent that Naṣr intended to appoint the Turk Qarātegīn in his place (21).

Ahmad dropped Naṣr’s name from the khutba in Naysābūr and sent a messenger to Baghdad, asking the caliph to appoint him independent governor of Khurasān; according to Mīrkhwand, Muqtadīr sent him the document of investiture (22). He then drove his rival Qarātegīn out of Jurjān and established himself in his native city of Marv, which he fortified against attack. Yet in spite of his military preparations, Ahmad’s challenge to Bukhārah was short-lived; he was defeated in his turn by another army sent from Bukhārah in Rajab 307/November-December 919, under the command of Hamūya ibn ʿAlī (23), and was

21 It seems that for a short time he did act as governor of the city, if not the whole province (Gardīzī, Zayn, p. 152); but the post was finally conferred on the mamlūk Qarātegīn al-Isfīyābī, formerly governor of Jurjān (Ibn Khaldūn, 'Ibar, vol. iv, p. 339). For the hypothesis that Qarātegīn was a mamlūk, see appendix; the Sāmānid state elite, s.v "Qarātegīn".
22 Mīrkhwand, Rawda, p. 41.
23 See appendix; the Sāmānid state elite, s.v. "Ḥamūya ibn ʿAlī".
sent to Bukhārā where he died in the same year (24). Thus twice within five years Khurāsān was plunged into chaos as a result of the Sāmānids’ decision to appoint a mamlūk over the heads of native Iranian princes.

The repercussions of Ahmad’s uprising continued to threaten Sāmānids’ control of Khurāsān even after his defeat in battle. In the following year, the capital Naysābūr was briefly occupied by the Zaydī general, Līlī ibn Nuʿmān, who had occupied Jurjān after Qarātegīn’s expulsion. Līlī had given refuge to Ahmad’s nephew, Abū’l-Qāsim ibn Hafs who encouraged him to invade Khurāsān (25). He did so (26) and made the khutba in the city in the name of the Zaydī imām Hasan ibn Qāsim. Once again Naṣr had to send an army from Bukhārā to retake the province. This army engaged Līlī’s forces at Tūs: the battle went at first in favour of the Zaydīs, but the Sāmānids eventually won the day by means of a ruse and Līlī was killed in the field (27).

While the Zaydī threat to Khurāsān was dealt with, a popular uprising in Naysābūr at around this time may have taken its cue from Līlī’s invasion. From Bayhaqī we learn that the Naysābūrī ‘Alīd Abū’l-Husayn Muhammad claimed the caliphate and that some 10,000 people from

24 Ibn al-Athīr, Kāmil, vol. viii, p. 120.
25 Ibn al-Athīr, ibid, pp. 124f.
26 Spuler says that Qarātegīn was compelled to join Līlī (Iran, p. 87); while Ibn al-Athīr’s account does not explicitly say this, Qarātegīn did turn against Naṣr in 930 (Kāmil, ibid, p. 124; see below, note 39).
27 Ibn al-Athīr, Kāmil, vol. viii, p. 125. Līlī was captured by Bughrā who is probably identical not with the Qarākhānid Bughrā khan (pace Ibn Khaldūn) but with the mamlūk Bughrā al-kabīr; see appendix; the Sāmānids state elite, s.v. "Bughrā al-kabīr".
the environs of Naysābūr paid allegiance to him (28). His name was proclaimed in the khutba in the districts surrounding Naysābūr for some four months before he gave the signal for open rebellion. Just before he did this, however, his brother, whom Samānī identifies as Abū ‘Alī, the shaykh of the Tālibiyya in Khurāsān (29), arrested him and handed him over to Hāmūya ibn ‘Alī’s deputy (30). It could be that Abū’l-Husayn’s uprising was an attempt to usurp his brother’s position as leader of the Khurāsānī ‘Alids. Be that as it may, Abū’l-Husayn was sent to Bukhārā where he was imprisoned for a year or more before Naṣr granted him a pension and allowed him to return to Naysābūr, where he died in 339/950 -I.

The beginning of the 930’s saw yet another major rebellion in the heart of the Samānid state which resulted in the temporary occupation of Bukhārā by the rebels and a further two years, at least, of warfare in

28 Bayhaqī devotes two passages to this Husaynid’s uprising. In the first he identifies him as Abū’l-Husayn Muhammad ibn Abī Ja‘far Ahmad ibn Muhammad al-Zubbāra ibn ‘Abdallāh, the naqīb al-nugabā’ of Naysābūr (Tāriḵ-i bayhaq, pp. 95 and 98); in the second passage, which he takes from al-Ḥakim al-Bayḍī’s Tāriḵ-i nishapūr, he says that Abū’l-Husayn Muhammad ibn Ahmad claimed the caliphate in Naysābūr during the Tāhirid period and that it was his grandson, Abū’l-Husayn Muhammad ibn Abī’l-Muhammad Yahyā ibn Abī’l-Husayn Muhammad, who rose during Naṣr’s reign (ibid, p. 441). Samānī and Ibn ‘Inaba both agree with Bayhaqī’s first version and make no mention of a rising in the Tāhirid period (Samānī, Ansāb, vol. vi, p. 246: Ibn ‘Inaba, ‘Umdat al-talīb, pp. 313f). Further research into this important ‘Alid family (who who were closely associated with the Tāhirids through marriage) is required before the chronology of these events and the identity of the participants can be securely established.

29 Samānī, Ansāb, vol. vi, p. 246.
30 The involvement of Hāmūya ibn ‘Alī, vanquisher of Līlī ibn Nu‘mān, is the only clue to the dating of the uprising.
Khurāsān. The revolt was staged by Naṣr’s three brothers, Abū Zakariyyā Yahyā, Abū Ishaq Ibrāhīm and Abū Sāliḥ Mansūr, all of whom had been imprisoned in the citadel of Buhārā while Naṣr was away in Khurāsān, presumably so as to prevent their agitation during his absence. Yahyā was the ringleader of the conspiracy; he had already held the governorship of Samaqand in 306/918–19, probably as the figurehead of an anti-Samānid uprising (31).

In either late 317/929 or early 318/930 (32) the brothers broke out of prison with the help of their co-conspirators, their gaoler Abū Bakr al-khabbaz (33) and some members of the army. A number of other prisoners were released at the same time, including the Abū Dā‘īḏid/Bānījūrid Jā‘far ibn Abī Ja‘far, former governor of Khuttal (34), a number of Daylamīs, some ‘Alīds (35),

31 Tiesenhausen describes a dirham of 306/918–19 minted in Samaqand which bears the name Yahyā ibn Ahmad, but not that of Naṣr ibn Ahmad (Tiesenhausen, W., "Über Zwei in Russland Genochte Kufische Münzelfunde", Wiener Numismatische Zeitschrift, (= Numismatische Zeitschrift) 1871, p. 186).
32 Ibn al-Athir describes the episode under the year 317, but makes the curious remark that one of his sources says that it took place in the following year, 318, and that he agrees with the dating of this second source (Kāmil, vol. viii, p. 208). Could it be that this was a note inserted by Ibn al-Athīr in an early draft of his history which has remained as part of his final text? Gardīzī gives the date as 317 (Zayn, p. 152).
33 Ibn al-Athīr says that he bore a grudge against Naṣr (Kāmil, ibid). Gardīzī describes Abū Bakr as "an ignorant fellow" (ablāh qūnaw).
34 Ibn al-Athīr says that Jā‘far ibn Abī Ja‘far ibn Abī Dā‘ūd, appointed governor of Khuttal by the Samānids, had been imprisoned after he had given cause for Naṣr to suspect his loyalty (Kāmil, vol. viii, p. 222). He minted in Khuttal in 310, 312 and 313 under the name Jā‘far ibn Ahmad (cf. Mitchener, The Multiple Dirhems of Medieval Afghanistan, p. 29). After his release from prison Yahyā sent him to raise forces in Khuttal, but he
and 'ayyārūn. The brothers’ escape from the citadel brought chaos to Bukhārā; Naṣr’s palaces and treasuries were plundered and Yahyā minted a second time in his own name (36). The rebels quickly dispatched an army under the command of their liberator, Abū Bakr, to guard the Oxus crossing against Naṣr’s return (37).

Naṣr ibn Āḥmad set out at once for Bukhārā which he retook without much difficulty. The rebel army stationed on the Oxus was disarmed without a fight: the Šamānid wazir, Abū’l-Fadl Bal’ami, made contact with one of the rebel generals, the son of Ḥusayn ibn ‘Alī al-Marwazi, and persuaded him to arrest his commander and hand him over to the loyalists (38). Two of Naṣr’s brothers, Ibrāhīm and Mansūr, soon saw that the game was up and sought Naṣr’s forgiveness, but the third, Yahyā, left Bukhārā to carry on the fight elsewhere.

After a long journey taking in Samarqand, Saghāniyān and Tirmidh, Yahyā came to Balkh whose governor, Qarātegīn, former governor of Khurāsān, he recruited to

made his peace with Naṣr ibn Āḥmad in the following year.

35 Ibn al-Athīr, Kāmil, vol. viii, p. 209. The 'Alids, including one Abū Ja’far, were among those who had been sent as prisoners to Bukhārā by Asfār when he killed the Zaydī leader Ḥasan ibn Qāsim (see below, note 68; cf. Kāmil, ibid, p. 190). Could Abū Ja’far be identical with Ismā’īl ibn Ḥasan, the son of the dā‘Ī, Ḥasan ibn Qāsim, who took part in Abū ‘Alī Šaghānī’s revolt in Nūh ibn Naṣr’s reign? (see below, chapter 7, note 34).


his cause (39). But Naysābūr remained loyal to Naṣr and Yahyā and Qarāteğīn went southwards and occupied Herāt (40). Yahyā was forced to abandon Khurāsān for Transoxania when Naṣr marched against him from Bukhārā; finding refuge in neither Bukhārā nor Samarqand, he came a second time to Naysābūr which was by then in the hands of his ally, Muḥammad ibn Ilyās (41), a former Sāmānīd general and future founder of the Ilyāsid dynasty of Kirmān. This time the Khurāsānī capital declared for Yahyā and Muḥammad made the khutba in his name. However when Naṣr approached once again, Yahyā was forced to flee to Bust with Qarāteğīn. Naṣr occupied Naysābūr in 320/932 and offered Yahyā a pardon which he accepted; however, according to Ibn al-Athīr, he and his brother Mansūr died in Naysābūr soon after the reconciliation with their brother (42). Their deaths prompted the surviving brother and future pretender to the Sāmānīd throne, Ibrāhīm, to flee Khurāsān for Iraq and then Mosul (43). Khurāsān was then placed in the safe hands

39 Qarāteğīn’s motives for joining the rebellion are not known. It may be that he begrudged his dismissal from the governorship of Khurasan which he had held for a few years after the defeat of Ahmad ibn Sahl in 907: the identity of his successor is not certain, but it was probably Hamuya ibn ‘Alī (see appendix; the Sāmānīd state elite, s.v. "Hamuya ibn ‘Alī").

40 Isfizarī, Herāt, p. 385.
41 Muḥammad ibn Ilyās had taken over the city from the Sāmānīd governor shortly beforehand (Ibn al-Athīr, Kamil, vol. viii, p. 211; see appendix; the Sāmānīd state elite, s.v. "Muḥammad ibn Ilyās").
42 Ibn al-Athīr’s account does not say whether the brothers were killed by Naṣr (the term used madā li sabīlihi suggests death by natural causes) (Kāmil, vol. viii, p. 212). Gardīzī reports that Yahyā died in Baghdad (Zayn, p. 153).
43 Ibn al-Athīr, Kamil, vol. viii, p. 212; see appendix; the Sāmānīd state elite, s.v. "Ibrāhīm ibn Ahmad".
of the Muhtājīd family who governed the province for the rest of Naṣr’s reign.

The brothers’ revolt was a prolonged affair which probably encouraged unrest in other regions of the state, particularly in the Caspian provinces (44). There is [ḥ] evidence to support Barthold’s hypothesis that this was a "Shi‘ī" revolt (45). While it is true that a number of Zaydīs escaped from the citadel in company with the brothers and that the son of the Ismā‘īlī dā‘ī, Husayn ibn ‘Alī al-Marwāzī, took part in it, there is nothing to suggest that they played a major role in it. The uprising resulted in the establishment of two new Šāmānīd vassaldoms, both of them governed by members of the state elite who had taken Yahyā’s side. Bust, the Sīstānī city which had been taken over by Qarātegīn and Yahyā, remained in the possession of Qarātegīn’s mamlūks after Qarātegīn himself died in 320/932 (46). His mamlūks retained control of the city and surrounding district until the 970’s when it was taken over from them by Sebuktegīn the Ghaznavid (47). The Šāmānids made no attempt to reconquer it in the intervening period. Kirman was the other vassaldom born out of this rebellion; unlike Bust, its Ilyāsīd governor had to struggle hard to wrest it from Šāmānīd control, but when

44 See below (p. 161) for the troubled relations between the Šāmānids and Asfār, governor of the Caspian region during these years.
45 Barthold, Turkestan, p. 242.
46 Naṣr offered Qarātegīn the governorship of Balkh in 320/932, but Qarātegīn died soon after the conclusion of hostilities.
47 Ibn al-Athīr, vol. viii, p. 685. For the relations between the mamlūks of Bust and Bukhārā, see below, chapter 9, note 10.
he had done so, he too established a modus vivendi with the Sāmānids and accepted vassal status (48).

Sīstān

After Ahmad’s murder, the Sāmānids’ mamlūk governor of Sīstān, Abū ’Imrān Sīmjūr al-Dawatī, was faced by an insurrection led by a rival general, Ḥusayn ibn ‘Alī al-Marwazī (49). Ḥusayn was perhaps the pre-eminent Sāmānid general of the early 10th century; he had occupied Khurasān for the Sāmānids in 287/900 (50) and twice conquered Sīstān. In spite of these accomplishments, he had never been rewarded with a senior governorship and when Abū ’Imrān Sīmjūrī was appointed to Sīstān, a post which he had coveted, he turned against the regime (51). Many of the senior Sāmānid generals in the province, including the Muhtājid Muhammad ibn al-Muẓaffar, joined him and Sīmjūr found himself abandoned by all but his immediate retinue (52). The Sīstānīs themselves rejected Naṣr’s claim to the throne (53) and Sīmjūr was forced to withdraw to Quhistān in Ramadān 301/April 914, the same month in which Išāq ibn Ahmad attacked Bukhārā. The province was then assigned by the caliph Muqtadir to his governor of Fārs, Badr al-kabīr, who instructed his agents, Fadl ibn Ḥamīd and Khālid ibn Muḥammad al-

48 See below, section "Kirmān".
49 For Ḥusayn’s subsequent revolt against Naṣr in Khurasān, see above, pp. 149f.
50 See above, chapter 4, note 32.
51 Gardīzī, Zayn, p. 151.
52 Tarikh-i sīstān, p. 302 = 245.
Marwazī, to take it over (54). They expelled Naṣr’s governor of Bust and Rukkhaj, ‘Ubaydallāh ibn Ahmad al-Jayhānī (55), and his governor of Ghazna, Sa’d al-Ṭāliqānī, and secured the region for Badr. For ten years, the province was fought over by a succession of ‘Abbasid governors turned rebels, and remained outside the orbit of Sāmānīd influence.

In 311/9234 the Saffārid, Abū Ja‘far Ahmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Khalaf ibn Layth, son of the close confidant of ‘Amr ibn Layth’s grandson, Ya‘qūb ibn Muḥammad, was brought to the throne as a young man of 17 (56), with the approval of his Sāmānīd sovereign (57). With Abū Ja‘far’s accession, Sīstān once again became a Sāmānīd vassal province and was to remain so until the end of the century.

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54 Ibn al-Athīr, Kamīl, vol. viii, ibid. The Tārīkh-i Sīstān has a slightly different version of events which does not mention the role of Badr al-kabīr (p. 302ff. = 245f.).
55 For his biography, see appendix; the Sāmānīd state elite.
56 For Abū Ja‘far’s parentage, cf. Tārīkh-i Sīstān, p. 275 = p. 219; for the year of his birth (293/904-5) cf. ibid, p. 222. Given his date of birth, it cannot have been he who was responsible for securing the accession of Naṣr ibn Ahmad (pace J. Walker, "The coinage of the second Saffārid dynasty of Sistan", Numismatic Notes and Monographs, no. 72, 1936, p. 14).
57 Legend had it that Naṣr ibn Ahmad saw Ahmad working in a garden in Herāt one day and recognized the farr emanating from his forehead; he subsequently married him to one of his relatives and appointed him to Sīstān (Hamdallāh Qazvīnī, Tārīkh-i guzīdāh, p. 380). The Tārīkh-i Sīstān says that it was the commoners of the province who brought him to power (ibid, p. 310 = p. 252).
Kirman

Muhammad ibn Ilyas (58), a former ally of Abu Zakariyya Yahya, took advantage of the increasingly tenuous hold exerted by the 'Abbasids and Samanids over Kirman (59) and occupied the province in circa 318/930. The first five years of his rule in the province were very turbulent: from 322-4/934-6 the province was occupied by Samanid forces and Muhammad was initially forced to flee before returning to wage an inconclusive war with the Samanid general Simjur (60). In 324 the province was conquered by the Buyid Mu'izz al-Dawla who held it for a couple of years before his elder brother 'Imad al-Dawla recalled him and dispatched him to Khuzistan (61). Muhammad then regained the province and ruled there for some three decades.

Rayy and the Caspian provinces

In 301/914 Muhammad ibn Zayd's successor as the imam of the Caspian Zaydis, Nasir al-Utrush, succeeded in

58 See appendix; the Samanid state elite, s.v. "Muhammad ibn Ilyas".
60 Ibn al-Athir, Kamil, ibid, p. 324.
ejecting the Sāmānids from Tabaristān (62). For the next 15 years Tabaristān and, for the most part, Jurjān (63), remained under Zaydi rule, but throughout this period, the Zaydi regime was wracked by interminable disputes over the succession to Nāsir al-Uṭrūsh (d. 304/917) (64) in which Daylamī and Jīlī mercenaries, hired by the various candidates for the throne, played an important role. Finally in 316/928 the Daylamī captain, Asfār ibn Shīrūya, gained control of the region with the assistance of Sāmānid forces and proclaimed his allegiance to the Sāmānid Nasr ibn Ahmad.

The history of Rayy prior to 316 was similarly turbulent. After his defeat by al-Uṭrūsh, the Sāmānids’ governor, Muḥammad ibn ‘Alī al-Ṣu‘lukī, retook Rayy, but was unable to withstand the attacks of a renegade ‘Abbasid general, Yūsuf ibn Abī‘l-Saj; in 307/919 Muḥammad ibn ‘Alī fled the city for Khurāsān (65). Thereafter the city reverted to ‘Abbasid control (66) until 314/926 when the Sāmānids retook it on the orders of the caliph; Muḥammad ibn ‘Alī was once again installed as governor and remained in office for two years until his death in 316/928 when the city was

62 See above, chapter 4, p. 137.
63 After Līlī ibn Nu‘mān’s defeat (see above, note 27), the Sāmānids temporarily reasserted control of Jurjān and Tabaristān for a few months, but lost the provinces to the Zaydis after the withdrawal of their army (Ibn al-Athīr, Kāmil, vol. viii, pp. 131f).
64 Ibn Isfandiyar, Ṭārīkh-i tabaristān, p. 274-281.
65 For the story of his struggle to defend Rayy against Yūsuf ibn Abī‘l-Saj, see appendix: the Su‘lukīs.
66 See appendix, ibid, for an account of the governorship of Muḥammad’s brother, Ahmad ibn ‘Alī, (307-311) who gave allegiance not to the Sāmānids, but to the caliph.
briefly occupied by the Zaydı imam Hasan ibn Qāsim (67). However the Zaydıs were unable to withstand the emergent power of Asfār the Daylam; from his new base in Rayy, Hasan ibn Qāsim attacked Asfār in Ťabaristān, but his army was defeated and he was killed in battle (68). Rayy fell to Asfār. This defeat marked the end of Zaydı involvement in the Jibāl, Ťabaristān and Jurjān.

Asfār (316/928-319/931) was the first of two Caspian mercenaries who took advantage of the decline of Zaydı authority and ruled the region for six years before the advent of the Ḫūydids; the second was his lieutenant and successor, Mardawīj the Jīlī (319/931-323/935). These two soldiers of fortune had remarkably similar careers. In 315/927 Asfār left Zaydı service after quarrelling with his superiors and found a new patron in the Sāmānid governor of Khurāsān, Bakr ibn Muhammad ibn Alīsa’ (69); he re-entered the Caspian region with Sāmānid support and soon took Jurjān, Ťabaristān and Rayy from the Zaydıs (70). But he proved to be a fickle vassal of the Sāmānids and at one point had to be dissuaded by his wazir from launching an attack on them (71). He also adopted a hostile attitude towards the caliph and once engaged a caliphal army near Qazwīn (72). Asfār’s uneasy

67 See appendix; the Su‘lūkid.s.
68 The cause of Hasan’s defeat was linked with his unpopularity with his generals. Soon after the defeat of Līlī (see above, note 27) he had undertaken a purge of his generals whom he suspected of plotting to depose him (Ibn al-Athīr, Kamil, vol. viii, pp. 189f). He also forbade his commanders to drink wine and plunder the lands they fought over.
69 Ibn al-Athīr, ibid, p. 175.
70 Ibn al-Athīr, ibid, p. 176.
71 Ibn al-Athīr, ibid, p. 192.
72 Ibn al-Athīr, ibid.
relationship with his Sunni overlords was not the result of political opportunism on his part, but rather the outcome of a consciously pursued policy to establish himself as an independent ruler outside the mainstream tradition of Muslim sovereignty. According to Mas'udi and Sulay, Asfar did not believe in Islam (73) and intended to destroy the caliphate (74). In pursuit of his aims, he adopted imperial Iranian regalia (75). His conversion to Isma'iliism was most likely connected with his political ambitions since it re-enforced his aversion to the prevailing Sunni orthodoxy (76). He gave notice of his disdain for the symbols of orthodox Islam when he was taking reprisals against the inhabitants of Qazvin for the help they had given to his 'Abbasi enemies, by ordering that a mu'adhhdhin be thrown to his death from his minaret (77).

His successor, Mardawi, adopted a similar programme; he too proclaimed his intention of restoring the Persian empire (78), adopted the regalia of an independent Persian monarch (79), sympathised with the Isma'ili (80), oppressed his Muslim subjects (81), attacked

73 Mas'udi, Muruj, ed. de Meynard, vol. ix, p. 9.
74 Sulay, Akhbar al-radid billah wa'l-muttaqi billah, ed. Heyworth Dunne, p. 20.
75 Asfar publicized his intention of ruling as an independent sovereign, building a gold throne for himself in Rayy and wearing a crown on his head at court (Ibn al-Athir, Kamil, vol. viii, p. 192).
76 Stern, Early Isma'ilism, p. 227, citing Maqrizi.
77 Ibn al-Athir, Kamil, ibid, pp. 193.
78 He planned to rebuild Ctesiphon and be named Shahanshah (Ibn al-Athir, Kamil, vol. viii, p. 302).
79 He wore a "Khusraw's" crown and built himself a golden throne as Asfar had done (Ibn al-Athir, ibid).
80 Stern, Early Isma'ilism, p. 227, citing Maqrizi.
81 Cf. Mas'udi's report that he imposed the jizya on Muslims (Prairies, vol. ix, p. 14f).
caliphal territories (82) and had to be dissuaded by his advisers from attacking the Sāmānids to whom he acknowledged allegiance (83).

In the event, neither of these mercenary captains was able to retain control of his regime for more than three years. Their downfall was caused by their political ineptitude and particularly by the brutal treatment of their soldiers (84); both met their deaths at the hands of their own troops (85). For all their grandiose ambitions, they remained backwoodsmen unschooled in the ways of winning men's hearts, rough peasants who had an eye only for their own enrichment and glorification (86) and thus aroused the animosity of their supporters.

Mardāwīj was succeeded by his brother Washmgīr who, although a more astute politician, was faced with a new and intractable problem in the form of the emergent power of the Buyids. In seeking support for his struggle

83 Ibn al-Athīr, ibid, p. 263.
84 Mardāwīj was especially brutal to his Turkish troops, who fled the Caspian after his death, some of them to seek service with the Buyids (Ibn al-Athīr, ibid, p. 303). Mardāwīj used to describe his Turks as "mutinous devils" (ibid, p. 298).
85 For the causes of Asfār’s murder, see Ibn al-Athīr, Kāmil, vol. viii, p. 195. For Mardāwīj’s murder see ibid, pp. 298-303.
86 The narrow horizons of the communities from which these Caspian mercenaries originated is delightfully illustrated by Ibn al-Athīr’s description of Washmgīr’s reception of Mardāwīj’s ambassador who brought him the message that his brother had invited him to join him. Washmgīr, clad in peasant’s rags and standing up to his knees in mud in a rice-field, at first scorned his brother’s invitation (darata fī lihyat akhī-hi) and derided him as a turncoat who had collaborated with the "blackshirts" (i.e. the ‘Abbāsids/Sāmānids). Eventually of course, Washmgīr and the Buyids were to prove that even illiterate peasants could run large states (kāmil, vol. viii, pp. 246f).
against the Būyids, Washmāgīr unwisely chose to ally himself with the Daylamī mercenary Mākān ibn Kākī, a former Samānīd general turned rebel (87), and thus brought himself into conflict with the army of Khurāsān led by its governor, the Muḥtājīd, Abū ʿAlī Muḥammad ibn Muẓaffar. Abū ʿAlī besieged Washmāgīr in Rayy with the assistance of Washmāgīr’s Būyid enemies (88) and drove Washmāgīr out of the city. The Būyids took advantage of Washmāgīr’s defeat to gain control of Rayy which they then controlled for most of the remainder of the century. Washmāgīr was forced to submit to the Samānīds and in the coming years repeatedly sought their help to regain his lost territories.

Relations with the steppe

Relations with the steppe Turks began to improve during Naṣr’s reign. There is no explicit record of any hostilities between Transoxania and the steppe during the greater part of his reign (89), although steppe

87 Ibn al-Athīr, ibid, p. 327.
88 Ibn al-Athīr, Kāmil, vol. viii, pp. 361 and 369. This was the beginning of the association between the Būyids and Abū ʿAlī which was to have such deleterious consequences for the Samānīds during the reign of Nūh ibn Naṣr (see below, chapter 7, p. 213–223).
89 But Nizām al-mulk puts these words into Alptegīn’s mouth in c.35o "I defeated several of the khāns of Turkistan who attacked their (Samānīd) territory" (Siyar al-mulūk, p. 147 = p. 108). Alptegīn had been purchased as a young mamlūk by Ahmad ibn Isma‘īl towards the end of the latter’s life (see appendix; the Samānīd state elite), so his confrontations with the Turks must have taken place during the reigns of Ahmad’s three successors. Nizām al-mulk’s report is not substantiated by the chronicles which mention no steppe attacks on Transoxania after Ahmad’s reign.
Turks did provide refuge for the Sāmānids’ enemies (90), as they were to continue to do in the reign of Nasr’s successor (91). Towards the end of Nasr’s life we have evidence that an expedition was being prepared in Bukhārā against the "heathen" Turks who had recently occupied the steppe city of Balāsāghūn (92). The presence of the son of the "king of the Turks" as a hostage at the Sāmānīd court at the beginning of Nūh’s reign (93), suggests that the Sāmānīd army had recently beforehand been active in the steppe (94).

Two little studied sources provide further evidence of Nasr’s relations with the Turks. The first of these, Rashīd ibn Zubayr’s Kitāb al-dhakā‘ir wa ’l-tuhaf, has a legendary cast to it and is not easily evaluated as a historical source, but the central theme of the story, if not all its details, is unlikely to have been invented. Ibn Zubayr tells us that in 327/938-9 the malik al-Šīn, or king of the Turks (95), sent a message to Nasr demanding the payment in arrears of kharāj from Transoxania for the past 27 years and the public proclamation of his suzerainty in Nasr’s territories.

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90 Cf. Ilyās’s sojourn in Kāshgār (see above, note 8).
91 See below, chapter 7, p. 211.
93 See below, chapter 7, p. 211.
95 For the meaning of malik al-Šīn in Muslim sources of the 9th and 10th centuries, see A. von Rohr-Sauer, Der Abu Dulaf Bericht über seine Reise nach Turkestan, China und Indien..., Bonn, 1939, pp. 40f.
(96). He threatened to invade Transoxania and then to destroy the caliphate if Naṣr did not comply with his demands. Naṣr reacted quickly and arranged that the king’s emissaries should be accompanied on their way to Bukhārā by a huge contingent of his irregular militia so that they should realise that Transoxania was well defended. His plan worked; the ambassadors were so overawed by the military might of the Sāmānid army that they returned to their king and dissuaded him from pursuing his claims against Naṣr (97). As in the case of the Turks who invaded Balāsāghūn, it is impossible to identify the king of the Turks in this incident: he may have been the Qarakhanid leader or some other steppe chieftan. Whatever his true identity, the story suggests that Naṣr, or possibly his predecessor Ahmad (98), had long beforehand been forced to conclude a humiliating treaty with the Turks in return for a guarantee that they would not attack them.

The second source, which Barthold unjustly held to be of no historical value (99), is the first Risāla of Abū...
Dulaf ibn Muhalhil. Abū Dulaf reports that he
accompanied Sāmānid emissaries who went to the city of
Sandābīl shortly before the death of Naṣr ibn Ahmad, to
provide an escort for the daughter of the Turkish king
(malik al-Sīn) (100), Qālīn ibn Shakhīr. She was to
travel to Bukhārā to be married to Naṣr’s son Nūh,
according to an agreement reached between Naṣr and the
Turkish king (101). From the Mashhad manuscript of the
first Risāla we learn that Naṣr had died before the
princess arrived in Bukhārā but that Nūh duly married
his bride, who bore him a son, ‘Abdalmalik (102).
Narshakhī tells us that ‘Abdalmalik succeeded his father
Nūh in 343/954 at the age of 10 (103): he must therefore
have been born in the second year of Nūh’s reign, soon
after his parents had married. The fact of ‘Abdalmalik’s
Turkish parentage and the closer links which it might be
assumed to have encouraged between Bukhārā and the
steppe, may have had some bearing on the conversion of
large numbers of steppe Turks during his reign (104).

As with Rashīd ibn al-Zubayr’s account, so too in Abū
dulaf’s, the main problem is the identification of the
Turkish king. Marquart believed that Sandābīl was the
name given to Kansu, the capital of the western Uighurs

100 Abū Dulaf’s account is reproduced almost to the
letter by Yāqūt (Mu‘jam al-buldān, vol. iii, pp. 445–
458).
101 Yāqūt, Mu‘jam, ibid, names him malik al-Sīn.
102 Cf. V. Minorsky, ed. and tr., Abū Dulaf Mis‘ar ibn
Muhalhil’s travels in Iran, Cairo, 1955, p. 5.
103 Narshakhī, Tarikh-i bukhārā, p. 134 = p. 98.
104 See below, chapter 7, p. 233.
(105). If Marquart’s hypothesis is correct, we are left with a number of problems. The Uighurs had adopted Manichaeanism in the middle of the 8th century (106). Now Nasr ibn Ahmad had already quarrelled with a Manichaean steppe dynast earlier in his reign; Spuler identifies the latter as a Uighur khan (107). Nasr’s marriage alliance might have been an attempt to improve relations after this initial set-back. But Abū Dulaf’s description of the main place of worship in Sandābīl suggests that it was a Buddhist temple (108); it is also possible that Nūh’s bride brought a Buddhist shrine to Transoxania (109). While it is quite possible that the Uighur khan in question was indeed a Buddhist, as Manichaeanism never established itself as the sole religion of the Uighurs, the problem of the identity of Qālīn ibn Shakhīr remains unresolved; as does the question of his connection, if any, with the Turkish king who threatened Nasr in 327.

The changing face of the state elite

Ilyās ibn Ishāq’s protracted campaign against Nasr ibn Ahmad attracted the support of many members of the Samanid ruling house as had his father’s campaign to seize the Samanid throne. It was probably due to the

fact that the rebels had enjoyed such popularity among collateral branches of the dynasty that after Ilyās’s defeat, Naṣr discontinued the policy of appointing Samanid family members to the top provincial governorships in eastern Transoxania and Khurāsān. While we do not know whom Naṣr appointed governor of Shāsh to replace Ilyās’s ally Abū’l-Faḍl ibn Ya‘qūb, it is significant that the new, albeit temporary (110), governor of Farghāna, was the Muhtājid Abū Bakr Muḥammad ibn Muḥaffar al-Ṣaghāni, the Samanid general and ruler of Ṣaghāniyan (111). Likewise in Khurāsān and the Caspian region, no governorships were assigned to the sovereign’s relatives during Naṣr’s reign. Henceforth, the only position of authority which they are known to have held was the governorship of Bukhārā (112).

In Naṣr’s reign, the senior governorships were held by both freeborn amirs and mamlūks. The former held the

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110 Abū Bakr was appointed governor of Khurāsān in 318 (see below, note 92), so cannot have remained governor of Farghāna for long.

111 The governorship of Farghāna reverted to a Samanid under Naṣr’s successors (see below, chapter 7, notes 96ff).

112 i. Abū’l-‘Abbās Ahmad ibn Yahyā ibn Asad, son of the first Samanid governor of Shāsh (?), appears twice as governor of Bukhārā, in 306/918 and 317/929 (Narshakhī, Tarīkh-i bukhārā, p. 130 = p. 96; Ibn al-Athīr, Kāmil, vol. viii, p. 209). If this man is really to be identified as the son of the first Samanid governor of Shāsh, he would have reached a very advanced age by Naṣr’s reign. It is just possible that he was also governor of the city under Naṣr’s grandfather, Ismā’īl, in 260/874: Narshakhī identifies this governor as Ismā’īl’s "nephew", Abu Zakariyyā Yahyā ibn Ahmad ibn Asad. Narshakhī, or a later redactor, has confused this governor with Ismā’īl’s grandson Abū Zakariyyā Yahyā ibn Ahmad ibn Ismā’īl; ii. Naṣr’s son Ismā’īl was governor of the city towards the end of the reign (Ibn al-Athīr, Kāmil, vol. viii, p. 403).
governorship of Khurasan (113); more junior posts, such as the governorship of Herat, were shared between freeborn amirs and mamluks (114).

**Developments at the centre**

During Nasr's reign the cultural and religious orientations of the state elite underwent a transformation which was to have a marked effect on the future of the Samanid polity. These changes coincided with the rise to power of members of the secretarial class who supervised the accession of the young amir Nasr and enjoyed a measure of authority which their predecessors had lacked. Nasr's first wazir, Abū 'Abdallāh Jayhānī (301-310), is credited with the suppression of the numerous revolts which broke out during the first turbulent decade of his reign. Gardīzī tells us that Jayhānī was a reforming wazir who, once in office, set about obtaining information about the

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113 After Qarātegīn's tenure, Khurasan was governed by freeborn amirs. The first was probably Hamūya ibn 'Ali who is named sāhib jaysh by Ibn 'Inaba and Muqaddasī (Ibn 'Inaba, 'Umdat al-tālib, p. 313; Muqaddasī, Ahsan, p. 337). The second was Bakr ibn Muhammad ibn Allāṣa (c. 925) died 305 (see appendix; the Samanid state elite, s.v. "Bakr ibn Muhammad"). Within two years of Bakr's death, the Muhtajīd, Abu Bakr Muhammad ibn Muẓaffar al-Saghānī, formerly governor of Farghana, was appointed - he is first mentioned as sāhib jaysh khurasan in 318 (Ibn al-Athīr, Kamil, vol. viii, p. 210). After the disruption of the brothers' revolt, when Naysabur was first governed by Abū Bakr's deputy, the Daylāmī Makan ibn Kākī, and later temporarily came under rebel control, Abū Bakr was re-appointed in 321 (Ibn al-Athīr, Kamil, vol. viii, p. 264). In 327 he was succeeded by his son Abū 'Alī who remained governor until the end of Nasr's reign (ibid, p. 356).

114 See Isfīzarī, Herāt, p. 384f.
working practices of foreign courts and bureaucracies as far afield as Sind, India, Byzantium, Turkistān, "China" (115), the western Islamic lands, East Africa (116), Kābul and Zabul (117). He studied the reports he received from these countries and introduced such practices as met with his approval into his administration. By doing so, he was establishing an innovatory principle - namely, that Samanid administrative practice was no longer to be bound by the limitations of local and 'Abbasid precedent (118). The new-found importance of the bureaucracy which he headed was symbolized by the magnificent buildings erected by Nasr to accommodate it - in the very centre of the capital, opposite the gates of the royal palace (119).

Both Jayhani and his successor Bal'amī presided over significant changes in the cultural environment of the Samanid capital. Just as administrative practice was altered under Jayhani's influence, so too throughout the three decades of Naṣr's reign, the Samanid court began to shed the parochialism of past years when learning and leisure had been virtually monopolised by the scholarly

115 Chin may refer to the Turkish steppe (see above, note 95, for the meaning of malik al-Sīn/Chīn in this period); or perhaps to China proper, if Turkistan means the Turkish steppe.
116 See Ḥudūd al-ʿalām, s.v. "Zangistan".
117 Gardīzī, Zayn, p. 150.
118 The degree to which 'Abbasid practice had acted as a formative influence on the Samanid bureaucracy is difficult to evaluate given that we know so little about the way the Samanid bureaucracy worked; but judging from the evidence of Khwarazmi's Mafātīh al-ʿulūm it does seem that the Samanids did at least borrow some of their administrative terminology from Baghdad (Cf. Bosworth, "Abū 'Abdallāh Khwarazmi on the technical terms of the secretary's art", JESHO, vol. xii, 1969, pp. 115f).
119 Narshakhī, Tarīkh-i bukhara, p. 36 = pp. 25f.
class (120). Bukhārā became a centre of secular Arabic learning and literature (121) while the court, led by Nasr’s example, began to exploit the local Iranian cultural environment through its patronage of Persian literature, particularly poetry. The contrast between Nasr’s cultural bias and that of his father, Ahmad, is striking; whereas Ahmad was always to be found in the company of scholars, Naṣr is remembered as the patron of poets and noblemen (122).

Although Persian had always been the spoken language of the mashriq, it was only in Naṣr’s reign that it emerged as a language of literature. At least three of the Persian poets who gained fame in his reign, Rūdakī, the philosopher Shahīd of Balkh and Abu ‘Abdallāh Farālāvī, were born in the last third of the 9th century (123) and had thus reached adulthood by the early 10th century: yet by most accounts, these men only achieved

120 See above, chapter 3, pp. 99f.
121 Muhammad ibn Ahmad Jayhani wrote the geography Al-masālik wa’l-mamālik during Nasr’s reign (see appendix; the Samānid state elite, s.v. "Muhammad ibn Ahmad al-Jayhani"). Members of the Samānid court and Samānid vassals patronized scholars and polymaths. Ahmad ibn Sahl al-Kamkāri supported Abu Zayd al-Balkhī (d. 322/934) who wrote the geography on which ʾIṣṭakhrī based his Kitab al-masālik wa’l-mamālik and composed many other works on philosophical and religious subjects; he was also patronized by Abu ʿAlī Jayhani, Ḥusayn ibn ʿAlī and his brother Muhammad Su’lūk (see appendix; the Su’lūkīs). One of his treatises listed by Yaquṭ is a reply to the founder of the Muḥtājīd dynasty, Abu Bakr Muḥammad ibn Muẓaffar, on the question of the limitations of philosophy (Irshād, vol. i, p. 143). Narshakhī and Sallamī wrote their histories during the reign of Nasr’s successor, Nūḥ.
122 See Ahmad Rāzī, Haft iqālīm, in Schefer, Description de Boukhara, p. 250.
123 For the birthdates of the latter two poets, see Lazard, Les premiers poètes persans, Paris, 1964, pp. 20ff.
prominence as court poets in the reign of Naṣr (124). Judging from the entries in Thaʿālibī’s anthology, Arabic poetry had long been written by poets in Bukhārā; but it too seems to have flourished particularly during Naṣr’s reign (125). Prose compositions were also written during his reign, yet the bulk of surviving prose literature dates from subsequent reigns. At least one translation of an Arabic book into Persian, that of Kalīla wa Dimna, was carried out in Naṣr’s reign; translations of other works were undertaken in later years.

R.N. Frye addresses the issue of the Sāmanīd literary "renaissance" with the statement; "It is essential...to remember that the literature, and especially poetry, under the Sāmanīds was one literature in two languages,

124 There is some evidence that Rūdakī was patronized by earlier Sāmanīds; the Tajik scholar A. Tagirjanov believes that Rūdakī (born between 850 and 860) was active in the court of Naṣr (I) ibn Ahmad ibn Asad (Tagirjanov, "Ba’ze mas’alahoi tarjimai holi Rudaki, Sharqi surkh, 1966/1, pp. 126-130, cited in J. Rypka, History of Iranian literature, Dordrecht, 1968, p. 167). I am not in a position to comment on Tagirjanov’s hypothesis since I have been unable to obtain the article in question. Sa’id Nafisi suggests, on the basis of a daring emendation of one of Rudaki’s verses, that he wrote a panegyric to Ahmad ibn Ismā’īl (Nafisi, Muhīt zendegī va āhvāl va ash‘ār-i rūdakī, Tehran, 1341, p. 303); he adduces another verse as evidence that he was a member of the Sāmanīd court when a young man (ibid, p. 304). Yet even if Rūdakī was active during the first decades of the 10th century, it was only under Naṣr that he became Bukhārā’s poet laureate.

125 Thaʿālibī probably collected most of the material for the Yatīma when he visited Bukhārā in 382/992 (Barthold, Turkestan, p. 9) - this may explain why it is that he has few examples of poetry written in the early decades of the century. For a rare example of a lampoon written before the reign of Naṣr, cf. Abū ’l-Tayyib al-Tāhiri’s lampoon of al-Shahīd (Ahmad ibn Ismā’īl) (Yatīma, vol. ii, part 4, p. 67).
Arabic and Persian" (126). However a cursory examination of the two literatures throws doubt on the accuracy of this statement.

One important point, which Frye places much weight on, but does not develop, is the role of the bilingual poets who composed in both languages (127). If it could be proved that these poets formed a significant part of the creative movement and that their poems in both languages were similar in style and content, this might be taken as a point in favour of Frye's statement. But it does not seem that this was the case; none of the poets can be described as a major figure in either tradition, and moreover, judging from their few surviving works, every one of them was first and foremost either an Arabic or a Persian poet who also wrote poetry in a second language (128).

From Tha'ālibī's anthology we learn that Arabic poetry was largely written by immigrants to Transoxania from the lands to the west of the Oxus river, most of them from Khurāsān and Iraq, some from further afield (129). These poets came to Bukhārā to find employment at the court and in the administration, mainly in the chancery

126 id, Bukhara; medieval achievement, p. 60. 127 Frye, ibid, p. 61. 128 The major bilingual poets include Abū Husayn Muhammad ibn Muhammad al-Murādī (Tha‘ālibī, ibid, pp. 71ff); Abū’l-Tayyib Muhammad ibn Hātim al-Mus‘ābī (Tha‘ālibī, ibid, pp. 75f); Shahīd al-Balḫī (Lazard, ibid, pp. 21f; ‘Awfī, Lubāb al-albāb, vol. ii, pp. 3ff); Abū’l-Hasan Aghājī (Rypka, History of Iranian literature, p. 144). 129 They included emigres from the ‘Abbasid court (Yatīma, p. 115), a Tahirīd (ibid, p. 66) and a large number of northern Khurāsānīs. One of the Arabic poets of the Sāmānīd court bears the ṇisba al-Ifriqī (ibid, p. 146).
and taxation departments where their clerical skills were most in demand. Their poetry was based on western models, much of their style and subject matter being drawn from the poetry of the 'Abbāsid court (130). There were correspondingly few native Transoxianians who excelled in the writing of Arabic poetry (131).

As might be expected of a corpus of work produced by a largely expatriate community, one of its predominant themes is a nostalgic yearning for a lost homeland, coupled with a distaste for a new and still alien domicile which many poets regarded as a backwater and a land of ignorance (132). Their writing is pervaded by

130 Cf. Tha‘alibī, ibid, pp. 62.
131 Note al-Sahib (Ibn ‘Abbād)’s comment when he read the diwān of the Shāshī poet Hasan ibn ‘Alī al-Matrānī, who lived at the Sāmanid court: ma’zantu anna mā wara‘l-nahr yuḥrijum ithlāhu (Yatima, vol. ii, part 4, p. 108). Tha‘alibī notes that there was only one other Transoxanian poet who wrote poetry of comparable quality to al-Matrānī (ibid, p. 108).
132 Cf. Cf. the qit’ā of Abū Ahmad ibn Abī Bakr Hamīd, (see appendix; the Sāmanid state elite, s.v. “Muḥammad ibn Hamīd ibn Nu‘aym”):

\[
lā ta‘juban min ‘iraqī ra‘ayta la-hu
wa-a‘jab li-man bi-bilad al-jahl manshū’u hu
in kāna yafrugu bayna‘l-ra’s wa‘l-dhanabi
\]

Abū Ahmad wrote poetry in the Iraqi style, in imitation of, among others, Ibn Bassam, a Baghdadi poet who died in 302 or 303/914-16 (ibid). It is ironic that Abū Ahmad’s father, Abū Bakr Muḥammad ibn Hamīd, wazir of Abū Ahmad ibn Isma‘īl came from a village near the Transoxanian town of Nasa‘f, though he claimed descent from the marzuban of Marv (see appendix; the Sāmanid state, s.v. “Muḥammad ibn Hamīd”). Quite where Abū Ahmad placed the frontier between the bilād al-jahl and the civilized world is open to question. Some Arabic poets, none of whom are mentioned in Tha‘alibī’s section on the poets of the mashrig, did compose works in praise of the mashrig (the following citations are from Mirzayef, Rudaki, p. 39); cf. Abū’l-Fath ‘Alī ibn Muḥammad al-Bustī’s (360/971-401/1010) description of Samargand as "paradise on earth" (Zand, M., "Antikhalifatskie i sotsialno-oblichitel’nye motivy v tajikskoi poezii x v.", Trudy A.N. Tajikskoi SSR, vol. xxvii, pp. 193f,
criticism of their new environment. One popular genre in this corpus was hijāʾ (satire); the targets of the writers' lampoons were wazirs, generals and scribes, who were charged with arrogance and a lack of consideration for their subordinates. These lampoons do not always give the impression of being written entirely in earnest; some of them were accepted by their victims in good heart and could even bring them a measure of renown (133). They also served as a form of self advertisement; a poet who wrote pithy caricatures of his superiors was thereby displaying the skills which might earn him promotion in the administration.

Lampoons were also written about the Samanid family and their capital; the latter is described in terms which reflect the real discomforts of life in an overcrowded and unsanitary medieval urban environment (134), discomforts which the visiting Arab geographers were either unaware of, or chose not to dwell on. Satires on members of the ruling house were not so common: yet even if the Samanids were not ridiculed with the savagery reserved for the poets' peers (135), they

_133_ See for example the story of the man who asked a poet to write a lampoon of himself (Yatima, vol. ii, part 4, p. 99).

_134_ The tradition of maligning Bukhara was started by Abū’l-Tayyib al-Tahirī, a descendant of the Tahirids of Khurāsān, who came to Bukhara in the 10th century. For a representative example of this type of lampoon see above, chapter 2, note 41.

_135_ See above, note 125, for Abū’l-Tayyib al-Tahirī’s lampoon of Ahmad. The amir is depicted as a ghāzi, leading a campaign against ducks: perhaps a reference to...
were on occasion driven to take action against their tormentors, in one case to the point of expelling a poet from Bukhārā (136). For the most part however, the audience for these satirical pieces were members of the administrative and military establishment.

As the obverse of hijāʾ we also find examples of panegyric (madḥ) addressed to high officials of state, including the Sāmānīd amirs (137). More commonly, panegyrics were addressed to wazirs and generals and frequently to lesser members of the administration from whom poets sought material reward.

By contrast contemporary Persian poetry comprises more examples of royal panegyric and far fewer satires (138). Its practitioners were, as might be expected, natives of the mashriq; but the poems which enjoyed most popularity at court, were written by the Sughdī, Rūdakī and his successor, Daqīqī (139). The Persian tradition represents an overwhelmingly patriotic

his preference for hunting game rather than steppe Turks.

136 Thaʿālibī, Yatīma, pp. 67 and 107.
137 Cf. for examples, Thaʿālibī, ibid, pp. 71f, 121f.
138 It should be borne in mind however that comparisons of genre content in the two traditions are tentative because they are based on very meagre evidence - the bulk of the Persian poetry of this period has not survived and most of the corpus of the lesser poets is almost entirely lost. In addition to Rūdakī and Daqīqī, Persian panegyrist of the Sāmānīds include Abuʾl-Hasan ʿAlī ibn Muhammad al-Lawkārī (ʿAwfī, Lubāb, vol. ii, p. 15), al-Rābinjānī (ibid, pp. 9f), Shahīd al-Balḵī (ibid, p. 3) and Abuʾ ʿAbdallah Muhammad ibn al-Ḥasan al-Maʿrūfī (ibid, p. 16). For an example of Persian satire, see the poet, Manjīḵ, at the Muḥtaḏīd court of Saghāniyān (Rypka, History of Iranian literature, p. 146).
139 Daqīqīʾs birthplace is variously given as Tūs, Balkh, Bukhārā and Samarqand (Lazard, Les premiers poetes persans, p. 32).
poetic corpus which drew on the physical and historical imagery of the region and celebrated its natural beauties (140). These poets were favourites of the Ṣāmānid court (141), who composed for the entertainment of their patrons; their poetry was composed to be declaimed in public and some of their work was sung to the accompaniment of musical instruments (142). This was a public tradition of recited poetry, a performed art which relied for its effect on its ability to touch the emotions of its Transoxanian audience.

From the above sketch it is apparent that the differences between the two traditions are marked. Arabic poetry was by and large a cultural import, one which was self-contained within a small segment of the state elite, written mainly by kuttab for kuttab. Whereas Persian poetry was a product of the express patronage of the court and the nobility and qualifies overwhelmingly as a patriotic tradition. Unlike the Arabic, it was an innovation of startling significance. Though some Persian poetry had been composed in earlier times (143), the Ṣāmānids were the first rulers to

140 Cf. Ṣūdakī's famous ode commemorating the royal estates in the Juy-i Mulyān quarter of Bukhārā (Chahar maqale, p. 34ff).
143 Persian poetry had been written in the 9th century in the 'Abbāsid, Tahirid and Saaffarid periods (cf. Lazard, Premiers poètes, pp. 17ff); see also the 9th century poetry of 'Abbās ibn Tarkhan (= 'Abbās al-Marwāzī) and Muhammad ibn Ba'ith (cf. Barthold "To the question of early Persian poetry", BSOS, vol. ii, p. 837).
sponsor its production in the public domain (144); unlike the Tahirid and Saffarid rulers of Eastern Iran, the Samanids wanted to be known as patrons of Persian poetry. The Samanid example was imitated by many neighbouring dynasts, both in their own region and further afield (145).

How can we explain the rise of Persian poetry at the Samanid court? It is unlikely that the patronage of Persian poets was simply a result of the monarch's personal predilection for their poetry, although Nasr's enthusiasm did encourage others to follow his lead. To understand the political significance of the phenomenon we have to look at the change in status of the Persian language which the emergence of the Persian poetical tradition brought about.

Whereas in the central and western Islamic lands, Arabic had become the colloquial, official and scholarly lingua franca soon after the Arab conquests, in the mashriq, Arabic was reserved for works of scholarship and probably never acquired a complete monopoly as the language of government, while verbal communication was

144 Cf. Qazvini's remark to the effect that before Rudaki, 'ajami poets wrote in Arabic (Tarikh-i guzid, p. 732).
145 Much the same interest as was shown in Bukhara for Rudaki's work, was shown in Bujid Rayy for the poetry of Mantiqi, Junaydi and Khusraw of Sarakhs (also a panegyrist of the Ziyarid Qabus ibn Washmgir), Persian poets in the entourage of al-Sahib ibn 'Abbad (Lazard, Les premiers poetes persans, p. 15). The earliest Persian poet, 'Abd al-razzaq's Shahname, was composed at the court of the ruler of Tus, Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-razzaq. The latter is said to have been inspired to commission the epic by the example of Rudaki's Persian versification of Kalila wa Dimna (Minorsky, "The Older Preface, to the Shahname", p. 168).
conducted in various Persian dialects. By the beginning of the Sāmānīd era, this situation remained basically unchanged, except for the fact that local Iranian dialects such as Sughdian, which had flourished earlier, were now giving way to Dari. Persian was used in some official contexts, such as the writing of petitions and decrees (146) but, as Qazvīnī tells us, there was considerable pressure on the part of the scholarly class to replace it with Arabic; as has been noted above, the scholars prevailed on Ahmad ibn Ismā‘īl to do just this. Given that Ahmad’s death was followed by the emergence of Persian poetry and the subsequent gradual encroachment of Persian in literary fields which had previously been dominated by Arabic, it is tempting to postulate that the use of Persian as a language of poetry, albeit in a secular courtly setting, represented a conscious decision to ignore the scholarly censure of the previous reign, and perhaps even to reverse Ahmad’s ruling. While this can only be a matter for speculation, the history of Persian prose literature under the later Sāmānīds shows that the scholarly class was soon compelled to accept the use of Persian in the discipline closest to their hearts, that of religious scholarship.

Persian prose compositions, both translations from the Arabic and original works, began to appear in Naṣr’s reign and continued to be written in greater numbers in subsequent years; most of them, like the court poetry,
were sponsored by members of the state elite (147). Abu 'Ali Bal'ami, the son of Abū'1-Fadl, undertook the translation of Ṭabarī’s history, on the orders of Mansūr ibn Nūh, grandson of Naṣr (148); the latter also commissioned the translation of Ṭabarī’s exegesis (149). His son, Nūh ibn Mansūr, commissioned the translation of the Ḥanafī creed, al-sawād al-a'zam (150). Original compositions in Persian included Ahmad ibn Zakariyyā al-Kayyāl’s "Qurān" (151) and the commentary on the philosophical treatise of the Ismā'īlī Jurjānī (152), Ibn 'Abd al-razzaq’s Shahnāme (153), a work on pharmacology known as the Kitāb al-anbiyā ‘an haqā‘iq al-advīyā, by Abū Mansūr al-Haravī, who probably dedicated his book to Mansūr ibn Nūh (154), the medical

147 Translations were made mostly from the Arabic. One exception was the translation of the Pahlavi Sindbād-nāme which was probably commissioned by Nūh ibn Naṣr. He is said to have ordered his ‘amīd (wazīr? - note that Ibn Fadlan addressed the wazīr Jayhānī by this title, cf. chapter 4, note 94) to translate it from Pahlavi to Dari in 339/950. Muḥammad ibn 'Alī al-Samarqandī says; amīr-i ajall-i 'ālam-i 'adil naṣīr al-dīn abū muhammad nūh ibn mansūr (=Abū Muḥammad Nūh ibn Naṣr) ... farmān dād khwāja 'amīd abū'1-fawāris faḥāruzzī-rā (unidentified) tā be-zaban-i farsi tarjumat konad (Sindbād-nāme, ed. A. Atesh, Istanbul, 1948, p. 25); Rypka reads the nisba as qanārizī (History of Iranian literature, p. 223).

149 Lazard, ibid, pp. 41-45.
150 Cf. Al-sawād al-a'zam, p. 22.
152 Lazard, ibid, p. 54f.
153 Lazard, ibid, pp. 36f.
154 Cf. Lazard, ibid, pp. 45f. As for the unresolved question of the identity of Haravī’s patron, it should be noted that Mansūr ibn Nūh was known by one of the epithets by which al-Haravī addresses his patron; al-sadīd (=al-musā‘addad) (although it is said to have been a posthumous epithet); Mīrkhwānd says that al-mu‘ayyad was
treatise *Hidayat al-muta'allimīn*, by Abū Bakr al-
Akhavaynī al-Bukhārī, written in the 3rd quarter of 10th
century (155) and the anonymous geography *Hudūd al-
'alām*, written for the Farīghūnīd amīr of Jūzjān (156).

What was the impulse behind the translation movement
and what was the relation between it and the composition
of original works in Persian? It appears that the
translators were seeking a larger audience for these
works by putting them in a language that was more widely
understood than Arabic, both at court and beyond (157).
This does not however imply a decline in the general
level of knowledge of Arabic at the time. On the
contrary, several members of the state elite, including
Nūh ibn Nasr and his wazīr Abū ‘Alī Bal'amī, were highly
proficient in Arabic (158). Furthermore, historical,
geographical and theological works, including Jayhānī’s
geography and Narshākhī’s *Tārīkh-i bukhārā*, continued to
be written in Arabic during this period as they had been
beforehand (159).

also an epithet of Mansūr’s (cf. Tiesenhausen, "O
samanidskykh monetakh", *Trudy Vostochnago Otделения
Imp. Russkogo Arkh. Obshchestvi* 1855, p. 214; but
Tiesenhausen notes that it appears on the coinage as the
epithet of 'Abdalmalik ibn Nūh).  
155 Lazard, ibid, p. 48ff.  
156 Lazard, ibid, pp. 53ff.  
157 Richter-Bernberg, "Linguistic Shu‘ubiyya", *JAOS*,
vol. xciv, 1974, p. 56.  
158 Nūh and the wazīr Bal'amī corresponded with the
Baghdādi scholar Abū Sa‘īd al-Sayrāfī in 340/951. Nūh is
said to have put to him more than 400 questions on
Arabic usage, most of which concerned hurūf (modes of
expression, peculiar to the Arabs; cf. Lane, *Arabic-
English Lexicon* (*Tawhīdī, Kitāb al-imtā‘ wa’l-mu‘ānasa*,
ed. A. Amin and A. al-Zayn, Cairo, 1953, p. 130).  
159 Cf. also Abū Zayd Balkhī’s geography; Bukhārī’s (d.
312/924) history of Bukhārā (Barthold, *Turkestana*, p.
13); the Ismā‘īlī dā‘ī al-Nasafī’s *Kitāb al-mahṣul.*
If there was no decline in Arabic literacy, why was Persian now beginning to be accepted as a language of scholarship? There may be a clue in the chronology of the works translated. Taking them in order of date of composition, it can be no coincidence that an anthology of wisdom literature (Kalīla wa Dimna) was translated before Tabarī's works and the Hanafi creed. The Kalīla wa Dimna translation had the same audience as the Persian court poetry; that is, the Samanid court. As already mentioned, none of the original compositions in Persian were works of religious scholarship either. The subject matter of all these books was unlikely to have provoked the censure of the scholars.

But the translations of Tabarī's history and exegesis and the Hanafi creed al-sawād al-a'zam mark a watershed. Here we enter the realm of religious scholarship which was the preserve of the scholarly class; indeed the latter two translations were actually carried out by scholars appointed by the Samanid amir (160). These translations marked a shift in the scholarly attitude towards Persian which they now acknowledged as a language in which works of religious scholarship could be read, although significantly not one in which such original works were composed (161). One wonders whether scholarly resistance to this use of

160 Al-sawād al-a'zam, p. 22; Lazard, La langue des plus anciens monuments de la prose persane, p. 42.
161 Cf. Biruni's opinion that Persian was a language fit only for fables and epics (Richter-Bernberg, "Linguistic Shu'ubiyya", JAOS, vol. xciv, 1974, p. 59, note 47).
Persian was partly broken down by the court's sanction of Persian poetry and fable.

Bal'amī's translation of Ṭabarī's history is more difficult to categorize, since it is at once both a historical and a religious work. What is interesting about it is that it was more or less an original work in its own right, based only loosely on Ṭabarī's history. Bal'amī both "Persianized" the text, adding new chapters on Iranian history (162), and removed the paraphernalia of the isnād, which had grounded Ṭabarī's work in an early Islamic, and predominantly Arab, environment; this excision freed the text from its Arabocentrism and made it more accessible to its new audience. At the same time, Bal'amī curiously omitted most of Ṭabarī's references to the history of 9th and 10th century dynasties of Eastern Iran, including the Sāmānids, and concentrated exclusively on the history of the caliphate. The same tendency towards simplification of the original work is also evident in the translation of Ṭabarī's tafsīr.

The causes of the sudden surge of patronage of Persian literature in Naṣr's reign remain a matter for speculation. The broadening of the cultural horizons of the court was certainly a factor in encouraging a diversification of forms of cultural expression. However it was not simply a case of the interests of the secretarial class and the pro-Persian nobility overcoming those of the scholars. Two notables who are 162 Cf. the chapter on Bahram Chubīn (cf. below, chapter 9, note 66).
known to have harboured an "anti-Arab" animus, Ahmad ibn Sahl (163) and Abū 'Abdallāh Jayhānī (164), were patrons of Arabic scholarship (165). Neither was the pursuit of religious scholarship incompatible with patronage of Persian literature; Abū'1-Fadl Bal'amī, the translator of *Kalīla wa Dimna*, was a noted muhaddith of the Shāfi'ī madhhab (166). But the impression that the orthodox scholarly community had to some extent become estranged from the court by the end of Naṣr's reign (167) is supported by evidence of the conversion to the Ismā'īlī heresy of the amir Naṣr, his wazir and many of his officials. The subject of Ismā'īlī activity in the Sāmanid period is complex and requires independent treatment; it is to this that we now turn.

163 Ahmad ibn Sahl, whom Gardīzī describes as az asīlān-i 'ajam, led 1000 men to seek revenge for the death of his brothers who were killed in fighting between Arabs and 'Ajamīs (Ibn al-Athīr, Kamil, vol. viii, p. 118; Gardīzī, Zayn, p. 151).

164 Abū 'Abdallāh was probably the Jayhānī whom Tawhīdī berates for holding outspoken views about the superiority of Persians over Arabs (see appendix; the Sāmanid state elite, s.v. "Muhammad ibn Ahmad").

165 See above, note 121.

166 See appendix; the Sāmanid state elite, s.v. "Muhammad ibn 'Ubaydallāh".

167 Scholars were not excluded from the court, even if their influence was reduced. Note the scholar who is described as the mushīr al-mamlaka in Naṣr's reign (Ibn Zubayr, *Kitāb al-dhakhā'ir*, p. 140); and the fact that the ustādh, 'Abdallāh ibn Muhammad al-Kalābādhī (who is described as ustādh of Ismā'īl ibn Ahmad (Sam'ānī, *Ansāb*, vol. i, p. 196) lived on into Naṣr's reign where he held the title of faqīh dār al-sultan al-sa'id (i.e. Naṣr) (Sam'ānī, ibid, vol. vii, p. 58).
Chapter six

THE REIGN OF NASR IBN AHMAD : ii THE ISMĀ‘ILĪ INTERLUDE
The beginning of the da'wa

Ismāʿīlī missionaries were active in Khūrāsān and Transoxania long before the outbreak of the Ismāʿīlī scandal at Nasr's court at the end of his reign. The first notice that the da'wa was known about in the mashriq occurs during the 250's: the Imāmī scholar al-Faḍl ibn Shādhān of Nāysābūr (d. 260/873-4) is said to have written a book entitled Al-radd ʿalāʾl-garāmīta (1). But given that the Ismāʿīlīs did not begin to agitate in Iraq, the scene of their earliest activities according to received scholarly opinion (2), until the early 260's (3), it is unlikely that Ibn Shādhān was writing about the Ismāʿīlī movement in Khūrāsān or Transoxania; he may conceivably have been basing his information on the da'wa in Rayy which was established well before the beginning of the 10th century (4). The traditional date for the beginning of Ismāʿīlīsm in the mashriq is the last decade of the 9th/the beginning of the 10th century, when it appears that a mission was set up in Ṭālīqān, a town in Ṭukhāristān, by a branch of the family of first Fatimid caliph-to-be, when the latter

1 cf. EI² s.v. "Karmatī".
2 cf. ibid.
3 Stern, Studies in early Isma'īlism, p. 292.
4 See below, note 93.
moved from Iraq to Syria (5); this was also the period when the first da‘ī, Abū ‘Abdallāh al-Khādim, is said to have come to Khurāsān (6).

Abū Bilāl

According to Nizām al-Mulk, the first Ismā‘īlī uprising under the Sāmānids, led by one Abū Bilāl, took place in Ghur and Gharchistān in 295/907, the final year of Ismā‘īl ibn Ahmad’s reign (7). Evidence supporting the date and location of the revolt as given by Nizām al-mulk is to be found in Isfizārī’s history of Hīrāt (8); there is also some, probably misleading, evidence to suggest that Abū Bilāl was a former Khārijī sectarian who may have received the support of both Ismā‘īlīs and Khawārij in his revolt (9).

Abū Bilāl won more than 10,000 converts to his cause in the foothills surrounding Hīrāt, mostly from the rural population, although he did attract support from the cities as well (10). The content of his message is unknown to us: but he is said to have named his headquarters the dār al-‘adl, which suggests that he

5 W. Madelung, Religious trends in early Islamic Iran, Columbia, 1988, p. 93. A relative of ‘Ubaydallāh, the first Fatimid caliph, is said to have lived there (cf. EI2 s.v. "Karmatī").
8 According to Nizām al-Mulk, news of the revolt was sent to Bukhara by Muhammad ibn Harthama, the governor of Hīrāt (Siyar al-mulūk, ibid). Isfizārī confirms that Muhammad ibn Harthama was the last governor of the city in Ismā‘īl’s reign (Hīrāt, p. 384).
9 See appendix 3; Al-w Bī‘līk revolt.
promised some measure of social justice to his followers (11). While Nizām al-Mulk makes no reference to any connection between his uprising and the Ismāʿīlī mission in Khurāsān, his activities may possibly have triggered, or been inspired by, similar agitations in Transoxania (12). In any case, his revolt was quickly crushed; Ismāʿīl ibn ʿAhmad sent a mamlūk army from Bukhārā and the rebel leaders were taken prisoner and subsequently imprisoned and hanged in various cities in Khurāsān and Transoxania (13).

Nasafi’s mission at the court of Naṣr ibn ʿAhmad

From the time of Abū Bilāl’s revolt, the Ismāʿīlīs of the mashriq began to make conversions among the political elite of the Sāmānīd and neighbouring states (14). At some time between his assumption of the governorship of Rayy in 307 and his death in 311, ʿAhmad ibn ʿAlī, brother of the future leader of the Khurāsānī mission, Ḥusayn ibn ʿAlī al-Marwazī (15), was converted in Rayy by the missionary Abū Hātim al-Rāzī, the

11 Nizām al-mulk, ibid. The Timūrid history Mujmal-i Fasihī gives a synopsis of Nizām al-Mulk’s account in which he names this building the Dar al-ʿidhāb (Mujmal, vol. i, p. 394).
12 Note the “appearance” of the gnostic ex-Ismāʿīlī missionary al-Kayyal in the same year (see below, note 32).
13 Apart from Abū Bilāl, two other leaders of the revolt, Hamdān and Tuzkarā/ Abu Zakā’ (= Abu Zakariyyā’?), are mentioned by name.
14 The Khurāsānī mission does appear to have proselytized in rural areas as well; the Qufs tribe of Kirman were converted, presumably by missionaries from Khurāsān, at the beginning of the 10th century (El2 s.v. "Karmati").
15 See appendix; the Suʿlūkīds.
lieutenant of Ghiyāth, the missionary who converted Husayn (16). If his conversion in some way provoked the dispute with the caliph which led to his death in battle with an 'Abbāsid army in 311, the sources give no indication of the fact. Abū Hātim continued to win converts among the governors of Rayy after Āhmad’s death; notably the two Daylamī leaders, Asfār and Mardāwīj (17).

Likewise in Khurāsān, Abū 'Abdallāh al-Khādim’s successor, al-Sha‘rānī, is said to have found converts among the high-ranking military officers of the Ṣāmānid army (18). His successor, Ḥusayn ibn 'Alī, whose political career is already known to us, had converted to Ismā‘īlism in the last years of the 9th century (19). As in the case of his brother Āhmad, there is no evidence that the revolt he raised at the beginning of Naṣr’s reign was connected with his conversion to Ismā‘īlism (20). After this revolt had been crushed, he was imprisoned, but later released on the intercession

17 Cf. above, chapter 5, p. 162.  
19 Stern, ibid, p. 217. For his career, see chapters 4 and 5. After adopting the new religion, Husayn converted a number of people in areas where he exercised influence such as Tāligān, Maymana, Fāryāb, Gharchistān and Ghur (Nizām al-mulk, *Siyar al-mulūk*, p. 285 = p. 210). Stern adds Herāt to this list (id, *Studies in early Isma‘ilism*, p. 195) It is not known whether he was involved in Abū Bilāl’s revolt. Tāligān remained a centre of Ismā‘īlī activity throughout the century; cf. the Ismā‘īlī uprising in Tāligān in Mansūr ibn Nuh’s reign (see below, p. 202).  
20 See above, chapter 5, p. 149.
of Abū’l-Fadl Bal‘amī (21). It was presumably after his release that he succeeded to the leadership of the Khurāsānī mission: this took place at some time between 318 and 327, the dates between which his predecessor Sha‘rānī is said to have died (22).

Husayn ibn ‘Alī continued his predecessor’s policy of concentrating on the conversion of the political elite and instructed Nasafī to carry on the task when he handed the mission over to him shortly before his death (23). As a one-time army commander and the son of the former ruler of Marv and ally of Ismā‘īl ibn Ahmad, Husayn would have had access to the top echelon of the Sāmānīd court, many of whom were later to succumb to Nasafī’s preaching (24).

22 Stern notes that Sha‘rānī died in Nayṣābūr during the governorship of Abū Bakr Muhammad the Muḥtajīd (ibid, p. 217, citing ‘Abd al-Qahir al-Baghdādī’s Kitāb al-farg). The latter is first mentioned as governor of Khurāsān in 318, rather than 321, as Stern has it (cf. appendix; the Sāmānīd state elite, s.v. "Muḥammad ibn Muẓaffar", pace Stern, ibid).
24 We do not know the names of any of those whom he converted but Thā'alībī records some lines of poetry in which he professes his disdain for Sunnī orthodoxy. Cf. his poem which begins ala isqini min zabīb shamsī...

"Come, give me to drink (wine made) from the raisins of the sun, the enemy of my cares and the beloved of my soul/ (which is) more refined than the religion of Taim, and ‘Adī and ‘Abd Shams./ Drink to the memory of one who undertook/ to build glory by destroying a prison." (Thā'alībī, Yatīma, vol. ii, part 4, p. 81). Husayn’s assertion of the superiority of wine over the religion of the first three Caliphs of Islam, Abū Bakr al-Taymī, 'Umar al-'Adī and 'Uthmān of 'Abd Shams, is a scandalous slur on Sunnī orthodoxy which has no direct parallel in any other Sāmānīd poem recorded by Thā'alībī. The last two lines are probably a tribute to the wazir who negotiated his release from prison (see above, note 21).
According to Nizām al-mulk, when Nasafī came to Transoxania to carry on the work of his predecessor, the first converts he made were Bakr Nakhshabī (=Nasafī), one of Naṣr’s nadīms and a relative of his by marriage, Aḥṣāth who was Naṣr’s dabīr-i khāṣṣ (private secretary), Abū Mansūr Chaghānī who was the ‘ārid (army inspector general) (25) and Aytāsh, the hājib-i khāṣṣ (court chamberlain). The Siyar al-mulūk states that these men converted before Nasafī himself came to Bukhārā from Nasaf and that they helped him gain access to court circles when he arrived in the capital (26).

On his arrival in Bukhārā, Nasafī initially preached Shī‘ī (i.e. non-Isma‘īlī=Imāmī?) doctrines and ordered his converts to keep their conversion secret by practising righteous dissimulation (taqiyya) (27). In doing so, al-Nasafī was following the same modus operandi adopted by an earlier Khurāsānī da‘ī (28).

As for the Sāmānīd amirs’ attraction for Shī‘ism, even their founding father, Isma‘īl ibn Ahmad, is said to

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25 Abū Mansūr Chaghānī (= Šaghānī), who died in the persecution of Isma‘īlīs which followed Naṣr’s abdication (Siyar al-mulūk, p. 295 = p. 218), may have been a relative of Abū ‘Alī Šaghānī, the governor of Khurāsān (see below, chapter 7, pp. 212f). But he is not identical with Abū ‘Alī’s son who bore the same kunya; the latter was appointed governor of Šaghāniyān in Nūḥ’s reign (Zayn, p. 158).


have inclined towards *tashayyu* in his youth (29). More to the point, in the early years of his reign, Naṣr ibn Ahmad himself had behaved magnanimously towards the Ḥusaynid Abū’l-Husayn Muhammad, who had been proclaimed caliph by the inhabitants of Naysābūr (30). Whether Abū’l-Husayn saw himself as a Zaydī or an Imāmī or whatever, the prevalent philo-'Alidism of the *mashriq* in which the Samānīds shared, appears to have inclined them to behave generously towards even politically active 'Alīs. It is thus likely that Naṣr would have been well-disposed towards a Shi‘I preacher such as Nasafī initially claimed to be.

Whatever the significance of Nasafī’s original preaching of Shi‘I doctrine, it appears that the Samānīd court was at this time not only receptive to, but actively promoted the propagation of, ideas which bore a strong resemblance to the gnostic elements of the Ismā‘īlī doctrine which was first expounded at length by Nasafī himself. Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad al-Jayḥānī (wazir 326/938-circa 330/941-2) is said to have patronized the missionary, Ahmad ibn Zakariyyā al-Kayyāl, said by one source to have been an ex-Ismā‘īlī da‘ī (31) and to have

29 See above chapter 3, note 11.

*Tashayyu* is probably to be understood in the sense of Shi‘ism, rather than philo-'Alidism, since in Samarqandi’s account, Ismā‘īl is said to have reverted to orthodoxy after his dream; but he went on to prove his philo-'Alidism in later life (see above, chapter 3, p. 67).

30 See above, chapter 5, p. 151f.

31 While he notes that al-Kayyāl was still alive when Abū ‘Alī Jayhanī was in office (938-41/2) and could thus have benefited from his patronage, Madelung wonders whether al-Kayyāl’s patron may not have been Abū ‘Alī’s famous father, Abū ‘Abdallāh Muḥammad ibn Ahmad (wazir
sent him to cities in Transoxania and Khurāsān to find new converts for his cause (32).

To resume Nizām al-mulk’s account: after Nasafī had begun to preach Ismā’īlism, he continued to make converts among the highest echelon of Samānīd officials as well as eminent merchants and townspeople (33). Among these later converts were the ra’īs of Bukhārā, the chief inspector of taxes (sāhib-i kharāj), Hasan-i Malik governor of Ilāq (34), and ‘Alī Zarrād the wakīl-i khāṣṣ (35) and the amir Naṣr himself. According to Samānī’s Ansāb, at least one ‘ālim, the qādī ‘Umar ibn ‘Abd al-Wahīd al-Munkadīrī, qādī of Shāsh and later wazir of the Farīghūnids of Jūzjān (36), was accused of holding Ismā’īlī beliefs (37): although he denied the charge, the fact that it could be brought

from 301/914-922), who was dismissed from the wazirate on suspicion of zandaqa or Manicheanism (EI² s.v. “al-Kayyāl”).
32 Al-Kayyāl is said by Shahrastānī to have “appeared” in 295/907-9, the same year as Abū Bilāl’s revolt; he composed a book in Persian which he called his Qur’ān. Jayhānī first sent him to Kish to preach. After failing to gain adherents there he went to Marv when he had more success (cf. F. Daftary, The Isma’īlis; their history and doctrine, Cambridge, 1990, pp. 12ff; EI² s.v. “al-Kayyāl”; Abū’l-Ma‘ālī, Bayān al-adyan, ed. Hashim Rida, Tehran, 1964, pp. 67ff).
33 Siyar al-muluk, p. 288 = p. 213.
34 Hasan-i Malik may have been the brother of Bakr ibn Mālik, the governor of Khurāsān in the early years of ‘Abdalmalik’s reign who was himself suspected of harbouring Ismā’īlī sympathies (see appendix: the Samānīd state elite, s.v. “Bakr ibn Malik”). Note that the amir of Ilāq joined the revolt of Abu ‘Alī Saghānī in Nūh’s reign (see below, chapter 7, p. 212).
35 ‘Alī al-Zarrād survived the persecution of the Qarmātīs at the end of Naṣr’s reign (see below, note 41).
36 Cf. Samarqandī, Muntakhab, fol. 35b.
37 Samānī, Ansāb, vol. xii, p. 465.
against him, shows that even Sunnī scholars were not above suspicion (38).

In spite of the large number of converts he gained among Naṣr’s inner circle, Nasafī’s fall was swift when it came. Niẓām al-mulk relates that opposition to the spread of heresy within the court came both from the ‘ulamā’ and the Turkish soldiery. Certain ‘ālīms went to the sipahsālār (army commander) and asked him to restore orthodoxy in Bukhāra. The army chief petitioned Naṣr on the matter, but to no avail. After consulting with his subordinates, it was agreed that they should kill Naṣr and make their commander amir in his place (39).

Before the Turks could carry out their plot however, Naṣr’s son, Nūh, became aware of their intentions and pre-empted their action by persuading his father to abdicate (40). The ringleaders were rounded up and executed and there followed a massacre of Ismāʿīlīs throughout the Sāmānid territories, after which they

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38 His reply to his accuser reveals just how destructive imputations of heresy could be; he told him that as a rich Taymī of Medinan descent, he expected people to be envious of his position in society and to try and blacken his name (Sam‘ānī, ibid, citing al-Ḥakīm al-Bayyī).

39 The identity of this sipahsālār is not known. The term is most commonly used of the Sāmānid governor of Khurāsān, who was at this time Abū ‘Alī Saḥānī. But Abū ‘Alī was in the Jibal fighting Washmgīr from 329 until shortly after the death of Naṣr (cf. chapter 5, p 164), so could not have taken part in the plot which was fomented by the army in Bukhāra. Moreover the sipahsālār in question was beheaded by Naṣr’s slaves before the Turkish soldiery found out that their plot had been uncovered.

40 For the evidence that Nūh was not formally installed as Naṣr’s successor until the latter’s death, see below, note 54.
were no longer able to declare their beliefs openly (41).

No modern author seems to attach much importance to the Isma'ili interlude at the end of Naṣr's reign. Darke is sceptical about its historicity (42), while Frye considers Naṣr's conversion to have been a personal affair which did not impinge on the public policy of his regime (43). However evidence has recently come to light in Samarqandi's Muntakhab which suggests that the issue was, on the contrary, a matter of great public significance. Samarqandi tells us that a Nasafī 'ālim, Abū Ya'la 'Abd al-Mu'min ibn Khalaf al-Tamīmī al-'Ammī, led the call for the restoration of orthodoxy in Nasaf, the city in which Nasafī had begun his mission in Transoxania (44). During the evening of 27th of Ramadān, 'Abd al-Mu'min gave a recitation of the Qur'ān in his mosque after which he addressed his congregation and called for the extirpation of the Isma'īlīs and the release of Abū 'Uthmān Sa'id ibn Ibrāhīm, a scholar who

41 At least one of the courtly converts appears to have survived this persecution. 'Alī al-Zarrād (see above, note 35) was sent to Baghdad by Nūh ibn Naṣr in 334 to negotiate the tribute promised to the Samānid by 'Imād al-Dawla at the beginning of Abū 'Alī al-Saghānī's revolt (Miskawayh in Eclipse, vol. ii, p. 101 = vol. v, p. 105 - Miskawayh gives his name as 'Alī ibn Mūsā al-Zarrār).
43 Frye, Bukhara: the medieval achievement, p. 55.
44 Samarqandi, Muntakhab, fols. 43af. Abū Ya'la was probably in Nasaf and not Bukhara when he called for the persecution of the Qarmātīs; this may be deduced from the phrase fa-lam ya'tī illa layālin ma'dūda hatta warada 'l-khabar bi-anna 'l-ḥashm qatalu 'l-Mus'ābī (see below). The phrase warada 'l-khabr suggests that the news came to him from some distance.
had recently been summoned to the Samanid court by the wazir Abū'l-Tayyib al-Muṣ'abī (45), in connection with Ismāʿīlī "fanaticism" (46). Quite what the wazir's purpose was in demanding Abū 'Uthmān's presence is not clear, but there is a suggestion that he was trying to institute a miḥna, or public examination, to secure the conversion of orthodox 'ulamā'like Abū 'Uthmān (47).

'Abd al-mu'min charged Mus'abī with being a zindiq and a heretic and called for him to be put to death. A few days later news arrived that the ḥashm had killed Mus'abī, that Abū 'Uthmān had been released, and that the Qaramita were being persecuted.

Mus'abī himself is clearly the villain of the piece in the eyes of Samarqandi's informant. 'Abdallāh ibn 'Umar al-Balkhī tells us that he was himself an Ismāʿīlī (48). But there is no direct evidence for his conversion to Ismāʿīlism. Apart from Samarqandi's story, his name is linked with Ismāʿīlism in only two other accounts. Yaqūt tells us that he commissioned the famous traditionist, Abū Hātim Muḥammad ibn Hibbān al-Bustī (49), to write a book on the Qaramita for him. As a reward for writing

45 For his biography, see appendix: the Sāmānīd state elite, s.v. "Muḥammad ibn Ḥātim".
46 kāna abū'l-tayyib al-muṣ'abī wazir al-sultan qad ashkhasa aba 'uthman sa'īd ibn ibrāhīm ilā'l-hadra bi-sabab ta'assub al-qaramīta (Muntakhab, fol. 43a).
47 In the same passage we read: da'ā ( 'abd al-mu'min) li-abi 'uthman sa'īd ibn ibrāhīm bi'l-ikhlas min al-miḥna. Miḥna here is probably to be understood in the sense of a public trial, such as was established by the caliph Ma'mūn for very different purposes; alternatively, it may simply mean "trial" in the sense of "(personal) ordeal".
48 See appendix: the Sāmānīd state elite, s.v. "Muḥammad ibn Ḥātim".
49 Cf EI², s.v. "Ibn Hibbān", where his kunya is incorrectly given as Abu Bakr.
48a Mus'abī was accused by the author of the commentary on Juvainī's Ismāʿīlī treatise of distorting Juvainī's teachings (see below, note 48).
the book, we are told, Muṣʿabī appointed him qāḍī of Samarqand but the Samarqandīs resented his connection with the wazir and tried to kill him (50). The problem with this account is twofold; first it is a story told by one of Ibn Hibbān's detractors, who, as Yaqūt's source al-Ḥakīm al-Bayyī notes, envied his pre-eminent status and sought to undermine his reputation. His unpopularity with the Samarqandīs may in fact have sprung from entirely different causes than that given in this story (51). Secondly, although, given Muṣʿabī's alleged conversion to Ismāʿīlīsm, we might expect the book to have treated sympathetically of the Qaramīta, it is highly unlikely that a traditionist of Ibn Hibbān's stature would have written anything but a denunciation of the sect.

If it was the case that Muṣʿabī commissioned an anti-Ismāʿīlī tract from Ibn Hibbān, then it may be that he was quite unjustly accused of holding Ismāʿīlī beliefs and that he was, on the contrary, taking steps to counter Nasafī's successes at court. If this was so, then we might further surmise that Samarqandī's story ascribes quite the wrong motives to Muṣʿabī's summoning of Saʿīd ibn Ibrāhīm; Muṣʿabī may in fact have have summoned him to the court to take charge of the mihna against the Ismāʿīlīs (52). This hypothesis does fly in

50 Yaqūt, Muʾjam, vol. i, p. 619f.
51 Viz. his unorthodox views on prophecy (Sezgin, Geschichte des arabischen Schrifttums, vol. i, p. 189).
52 If this was indeed the case, there may be some connection between this mihna and Ibn al-Nādīm's account of the public debate arranged by Nūh between Nasafī and the orthodox 'ulamā' (Stern, ibid, p. 224).
the face of Samarqandi’s account, but such a misrepresentation of the facts on the part of Samarqandi’s informant is not beyond the bounds of possibility. The question cannot be resolved in the light of the available sources, but whatever Mus‘abī’s role may have amounted to, Samarqandi’s story does corroborate the main feature of Nizām al-mulk’s account, which is that the Ismā‘īlīs were indeed perceived as a real threat to the established orthodoxy in Bukhārā.

By collating Samarqandi’s account with the other sources to hand, the sequence of events in the last year of Naṣr’s life may be tentatively reconstructed as follows. Samarqandi does not say in which year Ābu Ya‘lā called for the persecution of the Ismā‘īlīs. However Nūḥ ibn Naṣr came to the throne on 1st of Shawwāl 331/10th April 943, his father Naṣr having died a few days beforehand, on 27th Rajab/6 April (53). Thus Ābu Ya‘lā must have spoken to his congregation in Ramadān of the preceding year, 330/May–June 942.

In early Ramadān 330 the Turkish soldiers’ plot to murder Naṣr was discovered and Naṣr was forced to abdicate: possibly in favour of his eldest son and heir

53 Nūḥ’s accession date is given in Narshakhī, Tārīkh-i Bukhārā, p. 132 = p. 97; Gardīzī, Zayn, p. 154 and Ibn al-Athīr, Kāmil, vol. viii, p. 403. It should be noted that Hamdallāh Ḥaẓīnī, among other later historians, gives an earlier date for Naṣr’s death — 12th Ramadān 330/May 31st 942 (id., Tārīkh-ī Guzīd, (trans. Gantin), ca. page 36. Barthold believes that this earlier date was that of Naṣr’s abdication (Turkestan, p. 243). Barthold follows Nizām al-Mulk’s report that Nūḥ succeeded his father immediately upon the latter’s abdication.
apparent, Isma‘īl (54). At the end of the same month, or the beginning of the next, the wazir Mus‘abī was killed by members of Nūh’s retinue and his death was followed by the persecution of the Isma‘īlis. The interval between Nasr’s abdication and the removal of Mus‘abī is probably to be explained by a continuing struggle between the Isma‘īlis and their enemies which lasted for some weeks after Nasr had renounced the throne; it may also conceivably be connected with a contest for the throne between Isma‘īl and his younger brother, Nūh (55). According to Ibn al-Athīr, Nūh was responsible for the execution and crucifixion of Nasafi during the year 331 (56).

After his abdication Nasr lived for a further ten months. There are different reports concerning the manner of his death: Niẓām al-mulk says that he was poisoned by Nūh (57), Ḥamdallāh Qazvīnī that he was

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54 Isma‘īl was Nasr’s eldest son and heir apparent (Gardīzī, Zayn, p. 154). Sūlī tells us Nasr put Isma‘īl to death before he died and replaced him with Nūh after the brothers had quarrelled over the succession; the implication is that Isma‘īl was killed shortly before Nasr died (Sūlī, Akhbar al-rādi billāh wa‘l-muttaqī billāh, ed. Heyworth Dunne, Cairo, 1935, p. 237).
55 See preceding note.
56 Ibn al-Athīr mentions that Nūh executed Muḥammad ibn Ahmad al-Nasafi al-Bardahī (sic. = al-Bazdawi, see Stern, ibid, p. 219) who had slandered him in his presence (wa kāna qad ta‘na fihi ‘indahu) (Kāmil, vol. viii, p. 404). This is Ibn al-Athīr’s sole reference to Nasafi’s presence in Bukhāra. It is unlikely that he obtained this information from Sallāmī; the passage occurs in the catalogue of miscellaneous events which occurred in 331, rather than in the section in the same chapter which is devoted to Nūh ibn Nasr, which was in all likelihood derived from Sallāmī (cf. ibid, pp. 403f).
57 Niẓām al-Mulk says that Nūh poisoned his father “so that the officers of the army were completely rid of him.” (Siyar al-mulūk, p. 299 = p. 221).
killed by his ghilman (58) and Ibn al-Athīr that he succumbed to tuberculosis (59). During the last months of his life he adopted an ascetic lifestyle and prayed regularly in a chamber in his palace which he had constructed specially for this purpose (60). According to the majority of our sources, it was only after his death that Nūh formally acceded to the amirate (61).

The Ismāʿīlī uprising in the reign of Mansur ibn Nūh

Before exploring the significance of the Ismāʿīlī uprising at Nasr’s court at greater length, we should look at Nizām al-mulk’s account of the third and final Ismāʿīlī uprising in the Samanid period. His account is

58 Barthold, Turkestan, p. 244, note 3.
59 Ibn al-Athīr says that he had been ill with tuberculosis for thirteen months before he died (Kāmil, vol. viii, p. 401).
60 It is interesting that Ibn al-Athīr notes that during this final period of his life, Nasr avoided "reprehensible actions and sins" (Kāmil, vol. viii, p. 403: wa yamshi ilayhi (bayt al-ʿibāda) hafiyan wa yuṣallī fīhi wa yadʿu wa yataḍarrʿu wa yajtaniʿu ʿl-munkarat wa ʿl-āthām ilā an māta wa dufina ʿinda wālidihi). Perhaps this is an oblique reference on the part of Sallāmī, Ibn al-Athīr’s source, to the scandal of his conversion about which he otherwise keeps entirely silent.
61 A strange account of the last day of Nasr’s life appears in Yaqt’s Muʾjam al-buldān (vol. iii, pp. 451f). Yaqt tells us that the date and cause of his death had been foretold at the time of his birth. On the appointed day he left Bukhara attended by a large entourage consisting of his sons, court attendants, ghilman, slave girls and troops, followed by the populace of Bukhara, all in a state of deep mourning for his impending demise. Once outside the city he produced a scroll which he ordered the qadis, fuqahaʾ and secretaries to sign; having done this, he ordered his son Nūḥ to act according to its contents. He then went to the grave, which had been prepared twenty years beforehand, entered it and died there. Yaqt’s source for the anecdote, Abū Dulaf Misʿar the traveller, is doubtful about the veracity of the account.
as follows: fifteen years into the reign of Mansūr ibn Nuḥ, ʾIsmaʿīlī missionaries became active once again in Khurāsān and Bukhārā. The majority of their converts were once again from court circles and included Mansūr’s chief ḥājib, Mansūr ibn Bāʾiqrā (62), Abū Saʿīd Malik (63), Abūʾl-ʿAbbās Jarrah (64) two Turkish (probably mamlūk) amirs, Takinak and Khumārtegīn (65), a member of the Jayhānī family, and probably a future wazir (66), and an unidentified figure by the name of Jaʿfar. Most of the new converts are said to have been related to men who had lost their lives "because of this religion" (67), most likely a reference to the earlier uprising under Naṣr. The movement gathered pace slowly as the ʾIsmaʿīlīs began to place their fellow sectaries in positions of power throughout the state.

62 Muqaddasī gives his name as Abū Mansūr Bāqarā/Bāqarī (Ahsan, p. 338); Gardīzī identifies him as the man chosen to take the ʿaḥd and liwā’ to the governor of Khurāsān, Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-razzaq, in 349 (Zayn, p. 160).
63 He may have been related to Ḥasan Malik, governor of Ḥīqāt, who had converted to ʾIsmaʿīlism in Naṣr’s reign (see above, note 34). Ḥasan Malik had survived his involvement in the uprising and was a member of Mansūr’s court (Siyar al-mulūk, p. 299 = p. 222).
64 He may be identical with Abūʾl-ʿAbbās ibn Muḥammad Jarrah who was appointed governor of Herāt shortly after the revolt of Naṣr’s brothers (cf. Isfīzārī, Herāt, p. 385).
65 Khumārtegīn was the name of the Šāmānid sāhib jaysh (probably at the end of Naṣr ibn Ahmad’s reign) (see the Šāmānid state elite, s.v. "Muḥammad ibn ʿUbaydallāh al-Balʿamī").
66 He is named Abū ʿAbdallāh Jayhānī by Nizām al-mulk (Siyar al-mulūk, p. 299 = p. 222). He is presumably identical with Abū ʿAbdallāh Ahmad ibn Muḥammad al-Jayhānī who became wazir in the last year of Mansūr’s reign (Gardīzī, Zayn, p. 164: Ibn Zāfir, Duwal, fol. 128a; see the Šāmānid state elite, s.v. "Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad").
67 Siyar al-mulūk, p. 299 = p. 221.
The Isma‘īlīs at the court in Bukhāra prevailed upon Mansūr to imprison his wazir Abū ‘Alī Bal‘amī (68) and the captain of the ghilman, Bektuzūn (69). Alptegīn, the governor of Khurāsān sent a message to Mansūr, warning him of the Isma‘īlī threat, but his advice was ignored. Eventually the chief qādī of Bukhāra, Abū Ahmad Marghazī (70), persuaded Mansūr that he was being duped by the Isma‘īlīs and Mansūr released his two prisoners. He then took measures to deal with the revolts of the sapīd jāmagān (Khurramiyya) of Farghāna (71) and the Isma‘īlīs of Tāliqān who had agreed at this time that they should collaborate to overthrow the Samanids. A public debate was convened at court which was attended by Isma‘īlīs and orthodox scholars and resulted in the denunciation of the former. Shortly afterwards armies were sent to suppress the revolts in Tāliqān and Farghāna and Abū Mansūr ‘Abd al-razzaq, the rebel amir in Khurāsān, was attacked and killed by Abū’l-Hasan Simjūrī and the Samanid vassal Washmīrī. There followed a general persecution of Qarmatīs in which ghāzīs from Khūzistān and Fārs took part (72).

The main problem with this account is its chronology. The uprising is said to have occurred during the fifteenth year of Mansūr’s reign, which would place it

68 See appendix: the Samānīd state elite, s.v. "Muhammad ibn Muhammad".
69 For his future career under the last three Samānīds, see below, chapter 8, pp. 247, 260ff.
70 He may be identical with the Abū Ahmad, qādī of Bukhāra, who related hadīth to Abū’l-Hasan ‘Ali ibn Husayn al-Kasbawī (Samargandī, Muntakhab, fol. 3b).
71 See chapter 2, p. 54, for communities of sapīd jāmagān in rural Transoxania.
in the last year of his life (73); but Alptegīn had been dead for some 14 years by this time (74). Nizām al-mulk’s account of the later Sāmānīds is defective in other ways; he omits to mention altogether the reign of Mansūr’s predecessor, ‘Abdalmalik (954-961), and states that Alptegīn was Mansūr’s governor of for at least six years before his enemies at the Sāmānīd court persuaded Mansūr to dismiss him (75). However Gardīzī, among other sources, states that Alptegīn left Naysābūr for the last time in Dhū‘l-Qa‘da 350/December 961-January 962, two months after the death of ‘Abdalmalik (76): a year after he had conquered Ghazna, he was dead. Gardīzī’s early date for his departure for Ghazna is quite consistent with the cause of his dismissal from the governorship of Khurāsān: after Alptegīn had declared his support for the unsuccessful candidate for the Sāmānīd succession, it was only to be expected that Mansūr and his guardian Fa‘iq would seek to rid themselves of him as quickly as possible (77). Thus if Alptegīn did play a part in warning Mansūr about the Ismā‘īlī threat, it must have happened in the first year of his reign; this early date

73 Nizām al-mulk, Siyar al-mulūk, p. 299 = p. 221.
75 Siyar al-mulūk, p. 146 = p. 107.
76 Gardīzī, Zayn, p. 162.
77 Nizām al-mulk and those later historians who followed his account identify Alptegīn’s candidate as the brother of the recently deceased Sāmānīd amir, Nūh ibn Naṣr, and his rival as Nūh’s son, Mansūr (Siyar al-mulūk, p. 144 = p. 106). Whereas the chronicle tradition correctly identifies Alptegīn’s candidate as the young son of ‘Abdalmalik.
for the uprising is supported by the fact of Abū Mansūr ibn 'Abd al-razzāq's (d. 350/961) involvement.

The question then arises as to why Alpteqīn appears in this account at all. It is possible that he had previously been connected with the suppression of Ismāʿīlī activities in the reign of 'Abd al-Malik: Jūzjānī tells us that Bakr ibn Mālik and the wazir Ibn 'Uzayr, both of whom fell victim to Alpteqīn's ambition, were accused of being Ismāʿīlīs (78). He might conceivably have considered himself to be the guardian of the anti-Ismāʿīlī policy instituted by his former master, Nūh ibn Nasr (79) and thus felt compelled to warn Nūh's son, Mansūr, of the dangers posed by the heretics. On the other hand, Nizām al-mulk may have exaggerated or even invented Alpteqīn's role in order to boost his reputation as a loyal servant of the Sāmānids, a reputation whose preservation was essential for the good name of the Ghaznavid dynasty which Nizām al-Mulk so admired.

Alpteqīn's role apart, Nizām al-mulk's account is quite plausible. All the protagonists whose identity can be established did indeed live during Mansūr's reign and the conversion of high-ranking members of the court had a clear precedent in the scandal of Naṣr's reign. Independent evidence of an Ismāʿīlī uprising in Herāt early in Mansūr's reign in 354/965 is supplied by Isfizarī; it may be that this uprising was connected

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78 See below, appendix: the Sāmānīd state elite, s.v. "Bakr ibn Mālik".
79 For Alpteqīn's early career, see appendix; the Sāmānīd state elite, s.v. "Alpteqīn".
with the Isma'īlī revolt in Tāliqān described by Nizām al-mulk (80). As for the alliance between Isma'īlīs and sapīd jamāgan; this is much more plausible than that between Isma'īlīs and Kharijīs, which, according to Schefer's edition of Ṣawīrat Nāmē, took place under Abū Bilāl's leadership (81).

The significance of Nasafī's mission at the Samanid court

One important question surrounding Nasafī's mission is whether he was acting on behalf of the Fātimid caliph, or whether he was a representative of the non-Fātimid, or Qarmatī, version of Isma'īlism (82). Ibn al-Nadīm was in no doubt that the Khurāsānī mission was a branch of the Fātimid da'wa; he states that both Sha'rānī and Nasafī were sent to the mashriq by the Fātimid caliph (83). He says that Nasafī was sent to the east by the Fātimid al-Qā'im (322-34) and that he compelled Nasr to pay a fine of over 100,000 dinars to the Fātimid for having imprisoned his predecessor, Husayn ibn 'Alī. Another source which appears to confirm Ibn al-Nadīm's view is 'Abd al-Jabbār's Tathbīt dala'īl al-

80 Its leader was one Abū'l-Hasan Dā'ūdī (Isfīzārī, Herāt, p. 386). Note Juzjānī's account of Ismā'īlī activity in Tāliqān and the suppression of their movement by Sebuktegīn the Ghaznavīd (Tabaqāt-i nāsirī, vol. 1, p. 213).
81 See appendix; Abū Bilāl. For evidence of Khurramiyya who joined the Ismā'īlī da'wa in the middle of the 6th/12th century, see Madelung, Trends, pp. 9-12.
82 For the history of the original dispute between Fātimids and Qarmatīs, see EI2 "Karmatī".
nubuwwa (84) which says that Nasafī told Naṣr about the appearance in the *maghrib* of the *mahdī* who could bring the dead to life; a possible reference to al-Qāʾīm who, while still heir apparent, had been acclaimed as the *mahdī* by his father ‘Ubaydallāh (85).

Contemporary observers of Naṣr’s conversion did have grounds for seeing the hand of the Fātimids behind Nasafī’s successes. Their *daʿwa* was a well organised and far-reaching missionary enterprise which claimed success in a region on the very edge of the Sāmānid state; by the middle of the century Fātimid *dāʿīs* had converted the ruler of Multān (86). But the evidence of Nasafī’s own writings proves that Ibn al-Nadīm’s suspicions were unfounded. For Nasafī reaffirmed the imamate of Muḥammad ibn Ismāʿīl, rather than that of the reigning Fātimid; this indicates that he was an advocate of the dissident Ismāʿīlī, or Qarmatī, view (87). Nasafī’s case apart however, it should not be assumed that there was no contact at all between the Qarmatīs of Khurasan and the Fātimids during the course of the century; the Khurasānī *daʿwa* did adopt the Fātimid line under the leadership of

85 For ‘Ubaydallāh’s announcement of al-Qāʾīm’s messianic status, see El2, s.v. “al-Qāʾīm.” Note the reference to the "dawn in the west" in a poem probably composed by Abū’l-Tayyib al-Tahirī (Thā’alibī, Ṭatīma, part 4, vol. ii, p. 69); alternatively, these lines might conceivably have been written by Hasan (sic= Husayn) ibn ‘Alī al-Marwarrūdī (=al-Marwazī), who is noted as the author of the preceding poem in this section (cf. ibid, p. 68).
86 See above, chapter 4, note 18; the *khutba* in Multān was made in the name of the Fātimid caliph in 348/959 CE. 87 El2, s.v. “Karmatī”. 
Nasafī’s successor, Abū Ya‘qūb Sijistānī (88). It is moreover clear that there were differences of opinion among the Ismā‘īlīs of the mashriq on the interpretation of the basic tenets of their religion, as might be expected of a sect that had only appeared on the scene at the beginning of the century (89). As the fortunes of the Fātimids continued to wax in North Africa, even the most committed Qarmatīs might have been expected to cast an approving eye towards the maghrib.

Why was Nasafī so successful in bringing about a wholesale change in the hearts of his highly-placed converts? And how did he do it so quickly (90)? First, as mentioned above, his predecessors had begun the task before him. Secondly, Nasafī’s message was one which was guaranteed to make a deep impression on contemporary minds. He taught the coming of the mahdī and the end of the physical world (91). This was an apocalyptic message which was likely to strike a chord among his audience, particularly at a time when the ruling institutions were

89 Cf. the criticism of Rūdakī, Shahīd Balkhī and Mus‘abī in the commentary on Jurjānī’s treatise (Lazard, Premiers poètes, p. 24).
90 His predecessor Ḥusayn ibn ‘Alī became chief da‘ī in 318/930 at the earliest (see above, note 22). Assuming that he lived for at least two years, Nasafī could not have taken over from him until 932. We are told that Nasafī preached for some years in Khurasan, went to Bukhara (Siyar al-muluk, p. 288 = p. 212), found that he could make no headway there, left for Nasaf where he made his first converts among the state elite of Transoxania, and returned to Bukhara to convert Nasr and his close circle. It is unlikely that he spent more than two or three years in Bukhārā at the most during his second visit.
in crisis, as they had been during much of Nasr's reign. On a more immediate level, the spate of natural disasters which befell the mashriq, and Bukhara in particular, late in Nasr's reign, may have been taken as a portent by his subjects that the present order was coming to an end (92). These factors could well have produced a reaction in the collective mind of the court which caused individuals to seek refuge in a doctrine of personal salvation. Yet such ideas were surely easier to convey to uneducated peasants than to educated men; what remains to be explained is why it was that so many members of the state elite responded readily to Nasafi's call. It is a possibility that the state elite had more worldly, political motives for adopting Isma'īlism.

An example of two earlier rulers who may have adopted Isma'īlism for political motives is to be found in the biographies of the Daylamī Asfar and the Jillī Mardawīj. Now the da'wa had been established in Rayy some two decades before it reached Khurāsān and had already claimed converts among the notables of the town, including the city governor Ahmad ibn 'Alī (307-311) (93). It was therefore in a strong position to influence the Caspian mercenaries when they came to power. What is interesting about these mercenaries is that they

92 In 323/934 severe famine struck Khurāsān (see above, chapter 2, note 19); fire twice ravaged Bukhara, first in 314/926 and again in 325/937 "when the fire burned two days and nights...they were never able to restore the buildings of Bukhara as they had been previously" (Narshakhī, Tarikh-i bukhara, p. 130f = p. 96).
93 The da'wa was probably established in Rayy well before the beginning of the 10th century (Stern, Studies in early Isma'ilism, p. 190).
declared their intention to do away with the caliphate and recreate the Persian empire in its place (94). The majority of our sources do not posit a direct connection between their conversion to Isma'īlīsm and their political ambitions. However Sūlī reports that Mardawīj was planning to collaborate with the Qarmatīs of Bahrayn in the overthrow of the 'Abbāsid caliphate towards the end of his life. Now even though Stern has cast doubt on the veracity of the report by pointing out that Mardawīj had carried out a savage persecution of the sect shortly before his death (95), the fact that Isma'īlis aimed at the overthrow of orthodox Islam, as did Mardawīj himself, means that such a connection was entirely plausible, whether or not Mardawīj ever put it into practice (96).

It is legitimate to speculate that the Sāmānid Isma'īlis were following the same path. There were good reasons why the Sāmānids might have decided to abandon their policy of allegiance to the caliphate at this time. In the 930's the 'Abbāsid caliphate went into

94 Cf. chapter 5, p. 162.
96 Already before Mardawīj's time, Isma'īlī missionaries had embraced Persian nationalist sentiments to win the hearts of new converts; Abu Sa'id al-Jannabī played on the latent anti-Arabism of the Persians to whom he preached and told them that God hated the Arabs for killing Husayn and loved the subjects of Khusraw and their successors who alone had espoused the cause of the rights of the imāms to the caliphate (M.J. de Goeje, Mémoire sur les Carmathes du Bahrain et les Fatimides, Leiden, 1886, p. 33, citing de Sacy, Introduction, p. 136f; cited by Spuler, Iran in Früh-Islamischer Zeit, p. 235, note 8). Note also the Isfahānī mahdī of Bahrayn who in 319/931 claimed descent from the Persian kings and attempted to restore the "Persian religion" (Madelung, Trends, p. 97).
severe decline, its sanctity damaged by the Turkish soldiery's take over of Baghdad and the successes of the Iraqi Qarmatis (97). For the Samanid court, well-informed as it was about events in the west by the Khurasani pilgrim caravans and the Samanid agent at the 'Abbasid court, it may have seemed as if it were only a matter of time before Asfar's dream came true and the caliphate was destroyed altogether. The Samanids' adoption of the Isma'ili heresy may have been an attempt to find a new legitimatory formula at a time when the authority/caliphal legitimation was becoming debased.

The efflorescence of Persian poetry at Nasr's court is a sign that the court had already begun to draw on its local environment for its cultural symbols which had hitherto been drawn exclusively from a "pan-Islamic" inventory fostered by the caliph. While it would be unwise to argue from our imperfect understanding of Nasr's reign at present that the literary "renaissance" and the spread of Isma'iliism were causally connected, it cannot have been a coincidence that the two developments emerged during the same reign (98).

97 In 317/930 the Bahrayni Qarmatis removed the Black Stone from the Ka'ba, thus making a nonsense of the caliph's claim to be the defender of the Holy Cities. Two years later Muqtadir was murdered by his mamlük Mu'nis and the way was opened for the assumption of supreme power in Baghdad by the Turkish amir al-'umara' Ibn Ra'iq in 936. Thereafter Baghdad became a pawn in the power struggle between successive Turkish commanders while the caliph remained a prisoner in his palace.

98 Given the evidence for the Isma'ili sympathies of Rudaki and some of his patrons, it is possible that the literary "renaissance" was more closely connected with the emergence of Isma'iliism in Bukhara from the start ( Cf. Mirzayef, Abū 'abdalläh rudakī ve athar-i manzūm-i rudakī, Stalinabad, 1958, pp. 307-316).
Chapter seven

THE LATER SAMANIDS (331/943-475/966) THE REIGNS OF NUH, 'ABDALMALIK AND MANSÜR
Provincial affairs: Transoxania

In 332/943-44, soon after his accession, Nūh ibn Nasr had to deal with a revolt in Khwārazm, led by a rebel named 'Abdallāh ibn Ashkām (1). Nūh sent Ibrāhīm ibn Bāris (2) against him, but he died en route to Khwārazm. Faced with the threat of Samānid military retaliation, 'Abdallāh ibn Ashkām sought the protection of "the king of the Turks", but Nūh persuaded the latter not to respond to Ibn Ashkām's appeal and offered in exchange to release the Turkish ruler's son who was at that time a hostage in the Samānid capital. Thereupon Ibn Ashkām ended his revolt and came to Bukhārā; he was forgiven his misdeeds and well treated.

Transoxania did not remain quiet for long after Ibn Ashkām's capture. In 335/946-7 Nūh's uncle, Ibrāhīm ibn Ahmad, occupied Bukhārā and was briefly acknowledged as amir (3). Peace did not come quickly after his capitulation: his ally Abū 'Alī Saghanī continued to

1 Ibn al-Athīr, Kāmil, vol. viii, p. 415. Although Jūzjānī would have us believe that Ibn Ashkām was a Khwārazmshāh, no member of the dynasty bearing this name is known in any other source (Jūzjānī, Tabaqāt-i naṣirī, vol. i, p. 209 - where his father's name is given as Ashkān); furthermore, it is highly unlikely that the Khwārazmshāh at this time would have a non-Muslim father.

2 Ibrāhīm may have been the son of Bāris the ghulām who fled to Baghdad at the beginning of Nūh's reign (see above, chapter 4, p. 119f); or perhaps Abū Ishaq Ibrāhīm ibn Fāris al-Kunduri who had been appointed governor of Herāt in 320 (Isfīzārī, Herāt, p. 384).

3 See below, p. 216.
hold out against the Ṣāmānids for 3 years, campaigning in the vicinity of his home province, Saghāniyān, and the neighbouring province of Tukhāristān. In 336/947-8 Abū ‘Alī won to his cause the amir of Khuttal (4), and in the following year, the amir of Zhāsht (=Rāsht) (5) Ja'far ibn Shumā Yanqu‘ā (?), some Kumījī Turks (6), and the amir of Ilāq, in other words, most of the rulers of the region bordering the upper Oxus. With the help of these allies, Abū ‘Alī was able to force the Ṣāmānids to accept a truce. From the time of end of his first revolt in 337 to the end of the reign of Nūh’s son Mansūr, the narrative history of the Transoxanian provinces remains shrouded in silence (7).

Khurāsān and the Caspian provinces (8)

Nūh’s reign was dominated by the revolt of the Muḥtajid Abū ‘Alī Ṣaghānī, who had been appointed governor of

4 Gardīzī names him Ahmad ibn Ja’far (Zayn, p. 157). It is not known if he was related to the Banījurid Ja’far ibn Abī Ja’far who joined the rebellion of Abū Zakariyyā Yahyā ibn Ahmad in 317/929 (cf. chapter 5, p. 153).
5 Hudūd al-‘Ālam, p. 120; “Zhāsht, a district...lying between Buttāman and Khuttalān...the chiefs of this district are called Dihqān-i Zāsht.”
6 See Hudūd al-‘Ālam, p. 120 and pp. 361ff. “Each tribe (of the Kumejis) lives under the orders of the amir of its district, and the amirs of Khuttalān and Chaghāniyān, when they have need, solicit their help” (p. 120).
7 Although Abū ‘Alī was to withdraw his allegiance from the Ṣāmānids a second time at the end of Nūh’s reign, his activities during this second revolt were confined to Khurāsān (see following section).
8 Our sources on the history of the western provinces for this period are very poor; Sallāmī’s chronicle appears to have come to an end in Nūh’s reign. The period is dominated by the threat of Buyīd attack from the west which had a destabilizing influence on Khurāsān and the Caspian provinces alike. For these reasons the two regions will be treated together below.
Khurasan by Nasr. Relations between Abū ʿAlī and Nūh began to turn sour as soon as Nūh came to power. In 333/944 Nūh took unprecedented steps to curtail Abū ʿAlī's authority over his army as he was preparing for his second expedition to Rayy since Nūh's accession, having already mounted an unsuccessful attack on the Buyid city in the previous year (9); Nūh appointed both an 'ārid to oversee military matters and an official with wide-ranging powers to take charge of the "affairs of the (military) diwan" (10). In Ramadan 333/April-May 944, the same month that Abū ʿAlī drove Rukn al-Dawla out of Rayy and occupied the city, he learned that he had been dismissed from his post as governor of Khurasan in favour of Abū Ishaq Ibrāhīm Simjūrī (11). Abū ʿAlī reacted by sending his brother Abū ʿl-ʿAbbas Fadl to take over the cities of Hamadān, Nihawand and Dīnawar (12). Within twelve months Abū ʿAlī was heading back towards Khurasan, intent on overthrowing Nūh and replacing him with the Samanid pretender Ibrāhīm ibn Ahmad.

Our sources give different versions of the events which led to Abū ʿAlī's decision to turn rebel. Ibn al-Athīr's main text, /drawn from Sallāmī, who was himself a / probably protege of the Muḥtājīds (13),/portrays Abū ʿAlī as the / or an intermediate source, loyal servant of the Samanid state, forced into

10 Ibn al-Athīr, Kāmil, vol. viii, p. 458. The overseer of the diwan was invested with the powers of al-hall wa al-'aqd wa al-itlaq (the powers of loosening and binding and payment of soldiers).
12 It is not clear whether these cities had previously been under Abbāsid or Samanid control; either way, it is clear that Abū ʿAlī was disobeying instructions.
13 Cf. above, chapter 1, p. 8.
rebellion by his soldiers who resented the actions taken against them by the newly-appointed ‘ārid; according to Sallamī he only accepted their proposal to summon Ibrahīm ibn Āḥmad from Mosul after they had threatened to seize him.

Yet other sources ascribe a much more active role to Abū ‘Alī at the outset of the revolt. Khwandamīr says that he turned against Nūh because he objected to the actions of Nūh’s new wazir, Abū’l-Fadl Muḥammad ibn Āḥmad al-Sulamī (14), who had ordered the appointment of the ‘ārid (15). A third and independent account, that of the Iraqi historian, Miskawayh, which Ibn al-Athīr summarizes (16), portrays the whole incident as the result of a carefully executed Buṭyid plot to throw the Sāmānids into disarray, which was condoned by the Hamdānid amir, Nāsir al-Dawla (17). From its inception, ‘Īmād al-Dawla, the eldest of the three Buṭyid brothers and the chief of the Buṭyid confederation, was in communication with both Abū ‘Alī and Nūh, feeding them conflicting information. He first sent a message to Nūh, informing him that Abū ‘Alī was plotting mischief. He proposed to help Nūh to arrest Abū ‘Alī and, as an incentive, offered to pay an additional sum of 100,000 dinars per annum over and above the tribute which Abū ‘Alī was due to send from Rayy. Nūh accepted the offer.

14 Khwandamīr, Habīb al-siyar, vol. ii, p. 360. For Sulamī’s tenure of the wazirate, see below, p. 238.
15 Ibn al-Athīr, that Nūh’s troops believed that it was the wazir’s actions which had forced Abū ‘Alī to revolt (ibid, p. 459).
and sent a messenger to ratify his agreement with the Buyid. Meanwhile ‘Imād al-Dawla wrote to Abū ‘Alī, who had already in 329 been the beneficiary of military aid from his brother, Rukn al-Dawla (18), promising him reinforcements in the coming battle against Nūh, whose hostile intentions were by now known to him. In this way the Buyids managed to set in train the chain of events which led to the occupation of Bukhārā by the Šāmānīd pretender, Ibrahīm. The Buyid stratagem to make a bid for the mashriq might be seen as an attempt on their part to capitalize on their success in occupying the ‘Abbāsid capital Baghdād in the same year.

When he heard that Abū ‘Alī and Ibrahīm had joined forces in Rayy, Nūh ibn Naṣr went to Marv to organize his defences. Here he encountered serious problems with his own soldiers who, like Abū ‘Alī, were dissatisfied with his wazir, Sulamī, and demanded that he be handed over to them before they would give battle to the rebels (19). Nūh reluctantly acceded to their wishes and his soldiers executed the wazir in spectacular fashion in Jumādā I 335/ Nov - Dec 946 (20).

Abū ‘Alī reached Nāysābūr in Muhārram 335/ Aug - Sep 946 where he came into contact with Ibrahīm ibn Simjur

18 Cf. above, chapter 5, p. 164.
19 Mercil says that the soldiers thought Sulamī was secretly in alliance with Abū ‘Alī. Furthermore he had deliberately withheld their salaries ("Simcuriler (ii): İbrahim b. Simcur", Tarih Enstitusu Dergisi, p. 95). Yet Gardızı says that he had squandered 60 million dirhams on the hashm (Gardızı, Zayn, p. 155).
20 Ibn al-Athīr, Kāmil, vol. viii, p. 459. For the manner of his death (his arms and legs were tied to the top branches of two young cypresses which had been pulled down to ground level and then released), see Khwāndamīr, Dastūr al-vuẓarā‘, p. 109.
and Mansūr ibn Qarāṭegīn who were still in the city at this time. All three of our sources give different versions of their response to the arrival of the rebels (21). In Rabī' I 335/ Sep–Oct 946 Abū ‘Alī began marching northwards and two months later occupied Marv which had shortly beforehand been abandoned by Nūh. Although he had consented to their execution of Sulamī, many of Nūh’s troops now defected to the rebels who continued on their way to Bukhārā, forcing Nūh to retreat further eastwards to Samarqand. In Jumāda II 335/December 946–January 947 Abū ‘Alī occupied the Samanid capital and made the khutba there for Ibrāhīm ibn Ahmad: the Bukharans, willingly or otherwise, paid allegiance to their new amir (22). In the same year Ibrāhīm minted coins in his name and received the document of investiture from the caliph Muṭī, who was acting under instructions from the Buyids (23). Muṭī’s endorsement of Ibrāhīm’s rule led directly to a breakdown in relations between the Samanids and the caliph; from 335 until early in ‘Abdalmalik’s reign,

21 Ibn al-Athīr says that they defected to the rebels and that Mansūr later provoked Abū ‘Alī’s anger and was seized by him (Kāmil, vol. viii, p. 459). Gardīzī says that Mansūr and Ibrāhīm abandoned Naysābur when Abū ‘Alī occupied the city (Zayn, p. 155): if so, they must have joined the rebels at a later date since they were involved in the events which led to the break-up of the rebel faction (see below). Miskawayh says that Sīmjūr and Mansūr were taken prisoner by Abū ‘Alī on his arrival in Naysābur (Eclipse, vol. ii, p. 102).


23 Ibn Zafir, Duwal, fol. 126b. For Ibrāhīm’s coin, see Tornberg, Numi Cufici Regii Numophylacii Holmiensis quos in terra Sueciae repertos, p. 227, no. 501. The coin was minted in Samarqand (335 A.H.) which suggests that in this year the rebels had control of both Bukhārā and Samarqand.
Muti’s name was omitted from the Samanids’ coinage and replaced by that of the former caliph, Mustakfi (333/944-334/946) (24).

After an initial flush of success, the rebel camp was soon split by dissension. Ibrahîm suspected that Abû ‘Alî was planning to renounce his cause in favour of Nûh (25) and Abû ‘Alî withdrew from Bukhârâ (26). Realising that he could no longer hope to maintain his position without Abû ‘Alî’s army, Ibrahîm announced to his supporters that he would renounce his claim to the amirate and submit to Nûh (27). Together they attacked Abû ‘Alî but without success; Abû ‘Alî at first


25 Ibn Zafîr, Duwal, fol. 126b. Gardîzî only mentions that the people of Bukhârâ planned to seize Abu ‘Alî (Zayn, p. 156).


27 Ibn al-Athîr, ibid: Ibn Zafîr, Duwal, fol. 126b; Miskawayh, Eclipse, vol. ii, p. 103. Miskawayh says that Ibrahîm persuaded Mansûr ibn Qarategîn and Ibrahîm ibn Simjûr to back him against Abu ‘Alî; according to him, it was these two generals who won the troops over to Ibrahîm’s plan.
threatened to put Bukhārā to the torch, but the Bukhārān mashāyikhs pleaded with him to spare the city. Abū ‘Alī then looked to another member of the Samanid family, Nūh’s brother, Abū Ja’far Muḥammad ibn Nasr ibn Ahmad, to fill the role of pretender (28). However the quarrel with Ibrāhīm had clearly unsettled Abū ‘Alī’s troops, some of whom turned against him; consequently he decided to leave Sughd (29). Nūh pardoned Ibrāhīm and Abū Ja’far Muḥammad but later blinded them (30).

The loyalist counter-attack now got under way. One army under the command of Mansūr ibn Qarātegin retook Marv from Abū ‘Alī’s governor (31) and then Naysabūr, which was abandoned by its governor, Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd al-razzaq, lord of Ţūs (32), who sought refuge with the Buṭrid Rukn al-Dawla in Rayy. A second army led by Abū’l-‘Abbās Fadl al-Ṣaghānī, Abū ‘Alī’s brother, who had

28 Ibn al-Athīr, Kāmil, vol. viii, p. 460. It is not known whether Abū Ja’far had any formal claim to the throne i.e. whether his father Nasr had proclaimed him next-in-line to the throne after his brother Nūh; cf. Nūh’s multiple succession arrangement (see below, p. 236).

29 Ibn al-Athīr (ibid) says that Abū ‘Alī made his way to "Turkistan". Given that Abū ‘Alī’s later area of operations was the district Balkh and its environs, "Turkistan" is probably a mistake for "Tukharistān".

30 Also blinded by Nūh was Ahmad, another brother of his, whose role in the rebellion is not recorded (Ibn al-Athīr, ibid, p. 461). At the same time Nūh killed Tūghan al-hājib (Gardīzī, Zayn, p. 155); he may be the same person as Abū Bakr Tūghar (=Tughān?) the hājib, mawla of Abū Ibrāhīm (Ismā‘īl ibn Ahmad), twice governor of Herāt (Isfizarī, Tarikh-i herāt, p. 384).

31 This governor was Abū Ahmad Muḥammad ibn ‘Alī al-Qazvīnī; Gardīzī has Ahmad ibn Muḥammad ibn ‘Alī al-Qazvīnī (Zayn, p. 156).

32 Ibn al-Athīr, Kāmil, vol. viii, p. 470. Ibn ‘Abd al-Razzāq had probably been appointed governor of Naysabūr when Abū ‘Alī left the city for Bukhārā in 335/946-7. In the same year he fended off an attack on Naysabūr by Abū’l-‘Abbās Fadl, brother of Abū ‘Alī, who had defected from the rebel cause.
defected to Nuḥ's camp, was sent against Abu 'Alī himself. Abu 'Alī was ready to make peace with Nuḥ but the plan was rejected by some of his supporters (33). The loyalists were victorious in Jumādā I 336/ Nov-Dec 47 in a battle fought near Balkh (34). Abu 'Alī again retreated to Saghāniyān, where he summoned help from the neighbouring amir of Khuttal (35) and once again headed for Jūzjān (36).

He then returned to Saghāniyān on hearing of an impending Samanid attack and suffered a second defeat near his home province in Rabī' I 337/ September-October 948 (37) after which the victorious Samanid army pillaged the provincial capital. But suddenly the balance of power in the region swung in Abu 'Alī's favour; he and his allies from Khuttal, Zhāst (=Rāsht),

34 Gardîzî, Zayn, p. 156f. After this battle some of Abu 'Alī's supporters were taken prisoner by the Samanids, including Ismā'īl ibn Hasan al-dā'i (thus Ibn al-Athîr, Kāmil, vol. viii, p. 462; Gardîzî has Ismā'īl ibn Abī'l-Hasan [Zayn, p. 156]). He was probably a son of Hasan ibn Qāsim, the Zaydī dā'i of Tabaristan (for Hasan ibn Qāsim, see chapter 5, p. 161; Ibn 'Inaba mentions that Hasan had 8 sons, but he only mentions the name of one of them, Abu 'Abdallāh Muḥammad [id, 'Umdat al-tālib, p. 61]). Gardîzî also mentions a number of Daylamīs among Abu 'Alī's supporters who sought pardon from Nuḥ's generals after the battle. Ibn Zāfir's account of this period is confused (Ibn Zāfir, Duwal, fol. 126b); he omits to mention the two battles fought between Abu 'Alī and the Samanids after the departure of the former from Bukhara, the peace concluded between them and his re-appointment to the post of the governorship of Khurāsān, and goes directly to the description of his final confrontation with the Samanids.
35 See above, p. 212.
Ilaq and the Kumiji Turks trapped their opponents and forced them to conclude a truce in Jumada II 337/Dec 948-Jan 949...

During Abu 'AlI's rebellion, the Buyids had taken advantage of the turmoil in Khurasan to establish themselves in Rayy at the expense of Washmgir the Ziyarid. This was bound to alarm the Samanids who had until now been able to maintain a tenuous control over the city through their Daylam and Jili proxies. Thus even while the war with Abu 'AlI was still raging, Nuh appointed Mansur ibn Qarategin governor of Khurasan and ordered him to retake the Caspian provinces and restore them to Washmgir. Mansur marched on Jurjan in 337 in company with Washmgir but the two leaders quarrelled and Mansur was troubled by news which reached him from Bukhara; Jurjan was retaken for Washmgir, but Mansur withdrew to Naysabur without having claimed the major prize of Rayy (38).

In Safar 338/Aug 949 Mansur ibn Qarategin again set off for Rayy on Nuh's orders and this time took the city

38 Ibn al-Athir gives a curious reason for Mansur's decision to abandon Jurjan (Kamil, vol. viii, p. 478). Nuh had recently taken in marriage the daughter of Khatkin, the lord of Bust and Rukhkhaj and mawl of Qarategin, having already married one of Mansur's daughters to a mawl of his, Fatkin. Mansur's cause for concern is not clear; did he fear that Nuh was showing greater favour to the Turks of Bust (who were closely associated with Mansur's father Qarategin) by giving their amir a blood relation of his in marriage, than he had to Mansur whose daughter had been married to a mere mawl of the Samanids? Was he anxious that the Samanids were thereby trying to undermine the existing links between the Qarategin family and their Turkish mawali by exerting their own direct patronage over these mawali?
from Rukn al-Dawla's deputy (39). From there he launched an attack on Rukn al-Dawla; Ibn Athîr tells us that he could have destroyed his opponent if he had attacked him immediately, but chose instead the more cautious tactic of occupying Isfahan prior to engaging the Buyid army (40). This gave Rukn al-Dawla time to overcome the problems he was having with his troops and engage Mansûr's army. Eventually Mansûr retreated to Rayy because his own troops were beginning to complain of the lack of provisions (41).

In Rabî‘ I 340/ 951 Mansûr died, having apparently lost control of the Khurasânî army which returned to Naysâbûr in the same year (42). Shortly before his death Mansûr ibn Qarâteqîn had asked Nûh to relieve him of the governorship of Khurasan because he was unable to control his soldiers who were causing much damage to the countryside around Naysâbûr. Nûh asked Abû ‘Alî to resume his old post; he arrived in Naysâbûr in Dhû’l-Hijja 340 (43). Two years later, in Rabî‘ I 342/ 953, he was instructed to attack Rayy again and restore Jurjân to Washmîr who had recently been expelled from the province (44). But he was unable to break through the city's defences before the onset of

41 Ibn al-Athîr, ibid, p. 488.
42 Ibn al-Athîr, ibid, p. 493.
43 Ibn al-Athîr, ibid, p. 493.
44 Ibn al-Athîr, ibid, p. 499.
winter and was forced to sue for peace with Rukn al-Dawla (45). The terms of the treaty concluded with the Buyid were that he would retain control of Rayy in return for the payment of an annual sum of 200,000 dinars to the Samanids (46).

Once again the loser in this Samanid-Buyid rapprochement was the Ziyarid WashmgTr who had been driven back to Isfara'in by Rukn al-Dawla after the conclusion of the treaty. He complained to Nūh that Ābū 'Alī had failed to carry out his orders and had accepted the Buyid terms too readily. Nūh, who had no doubt long been suspicious of Ābū 'Alī’s contacts with the Buyids, dismissed Ābū 'Alī for the second time and replaced him with Ābū Sa'id Bakr ibn Malik al-Farghani (47).

A group of Naysabūr notables pleaded Ābū 'Alī’s case before Nūh, but to no avail. Ābū 'Alī subsequently made the khutba in Naysabur for himself, but later fled to Rayy when he realised that this time he could not muster the necessary support to oppose Nūh (48). He made one last effort to regain Naysabur with Buyid help, entering the city and making the khutba for the caliph Mutī'ī, the

45 Ibn al-Athīr, ibid, p. 504.
46 This was probably the same amount which 'Imād al-Dawla had promised to Nūh in 334/945-6 (see above, p. 214). The caliph sent emissaries to Khurāsān to oversee the concluding of the treaty. Ibn al-Athīr says that they were attacked by Kurds in Hulwān and taken prisoner (Kāmil, vol. viii, p. 506).
47 See appendix: the Samanid state elite, s.v. "Bakr ibn Malik". According to Mar'ashī, Rukn al-Dawla’s response to Ābū 'Alī’s dismissal was to withdraw Nūh’s name from the khutba in Rayy (Mar‘ashī, Tarikh-i tabaristan ū ruyān ū mazandaran, ed. Tashihi, Tehran, 1345, p. 77); Mar'ashī is the only source to suggest that the terms of the treaty included Buyid acknowledgement of Samanid sovereignty.
first time the latter had been acknowledged there (49). A Buṭid army was dispatched to help him secure his position but failed to reach the city before Abū ʿAlī was forced to abandon it in Shaʿbān 343/December 954 in the face of an attack from Bakr ibn Mālik (50), two months after the death of Nūh. Abū ʿAlī fled back to Rayy, helping Rukn al-Dawla to eject Washmīr from Jurjān en route (51); in 344/955-6 he died in an epidemic of plague (52).

Having retaken Nāṣabūr for the Sāmānids, Bakr ibn Mālik took the offensive against the Buṭids, seeking retribution for their support for Abū ʿAlī Sagḥānī. While he set off towards Rayy, his deputy commander occupied Buṭid Isfahān (53) for a few months before being driven out by a Buṭid army in Rabīʿ I 344/June-July 955 (54). The Sāmānīd thrust had the intended effect of showing Rukn al-Dawla that the new Sāmānīd regime was not going to be easily overcome and he subsequently made peace with 'Abdalmalik, agreeing to resume the annual tribute of 200,000 dinars from Rayy (55). The Buṭids now set the seal on their

49 Ibn al-Athīr, ibid, p. 507.
50 Ibn Zāfir says that this army left Baghdad in early Jumada II 343/ October 954, two months after Nūh’s death (Duwal, fol. 126bf.)
51 Ibn al-Athīr, Kāmil, vol. viii, p. 509. Thus by the end of Nūh’s reign, Washmīr had thrice lost (336/947-8 and 341/952-3 and 343/954-5) and twice regained possession of Jurjān.
52 Ibn al-Athīr, ibid, p. 512.
53 Ibn al-Athīr, ibid, p. 511.
54 Gardīzī, Zayn, p. 159.
55 Ibn Zāfir, Duwal, fol. 127a; Ibn al-Athīr, Kāmil, vol. viii, p. 512. The caliph Mutī‘ agreed to the payment of a similar amount from Rayy every year (Ibn Zā fir, ibid, fol. 127b). However Gardīzī says that Mutī‘ expressed his dissatisfaction with the treaty in private
reconciliation with the ʿSamānids by instructing the caliph to send the khila and the liwāʾ to ʿAbdalmalik (56).

Over the next five years, the governorship of Khurasān changed hands frequently. In Ramadān 345/Dec 956-Jan 957 Bakr ibn Mālik was assassinated in Bukhāra (57) and the chief ḫājib Alpteqīn (58) appointed Bakr’s deputy, Abūʾl-Ḥasan Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm ibn Sīmjūr, in his place (59). Three and a half years later, in Jumādā ʿA 349/Jul-Aug 960, Abūʾl-Ḥasan was dismissed and accused of abusing his office (60). His replacement was Abū Mansūr Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-razzaq, who had returned from his sojourn with the Ṣuṭayyids to Ṭūs in 338/950-51 and had been pardoned by the Ṣuṭayyid amir for his part in

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56 Miskawayh says that Bakr ibn Malik’s nephew came to Baghdad in company with a representative of Rukn al-Dawla’s, bearing a message from ʿAbdalmalik, requesting the khila and liwāʾ for Khurasān in ʿAbdalmalik’s name. Mutīʾ complied with the Ṣuṭayyid’s request and added the robes of a naḍīm as a sign of special favour to ʿAbdalmalik (Eclipse, vol. v, p. 172 = vol. ii, p. 161). The restoration of amicable relations between the caliphate and the ʿSamānids is confirmed by the return of the caliph’s title, absent since the beginning of Nūh’s reign, to Ṣuṭayyid coinage in 346 (see above, note 18).

57 Gardīzī, Zayn, p. 160. See appendix; the Ṣuṭayyid state elite, s.v. "Bakr ibn Mālik".

58 See below, appendix; the Ṣuṭayyid state elite, s.v. "Alpteqīn".

59 Gardīzī, Zayn, p. 160. Ibn Zāfīr says that the command of the army was first offered to Abū Yahyā Ash’ath ibn Muḥammad al-Ṣuṭayyid. But Ash’ath was away on pilgrimage and Abūʾl-Ḥasan the Sīmjūrid was appointed instead; no doubt the disturbed situation in Khurasān after Bakr’s murder demanded swift action (Duwal, fol. 127b).

60 Gardīzī, Zayn, p. 160: abūʾl-ḥasan... setamhā-yi besyar kard...
Abū 'Alī’s rebellion in 336 (61). Abū Mansūr performed his tasks as governor ably and conscientiously but was himself replaced as sipahsālar of Khurāsān by Alptegin on 20 Dhū‘l-Hijja 349/11 February 961. Ibn 'Abd al-razzāq had recently re-established amicable relations with his old ally, Rukn al-Dawla, who invaded Jurjān in the same year (62) and this may have caused ‘Abdalmalik to doubt his loyalty; moreover, ‘Abdalmalik wanted to remove Alptegin from the capital and the governorship of Khurāsān was the only post which Alptegin would accept (63). In the same year that Alptegin was appointed, ‘Abdalmalik executed the senior (Turkish) amir, Najtakin; his death caused much unrest in the province (64).

Alptegin’s period of tenure did not exceed those of his immediate predecessors. When ‘Abdalmalik died in a riding accident in 350, the choice of his successor once again fell to the state elite; the wazir Abū ‘Alī Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad Bal‘amī wrote to Alptegin to ask

63 Before agreeing to his assumption of the governorship of Khurāsān, ‘Abdalmalik had tried to appoint Alptegin to the governorship of Balkh, a post which Alptegin refused, as he considered it beneath his dignity as a former hājib al-hujjāb (Gardīzī, Zayn, p. 161). However the coinage does indicate that Alptegin was at one time governor of Tukhārīstān; a dirham struck at Andarāba in 347/958 bears his name (cf. M. Mitchiner, The multiple dirhems of medieval Afghanistan, p. 28).
him whom he would nominate for the throne (65). Alptegīn recommended that one of ‘Abdalmalik’s sons, probably Nasr, should succeed. In the meantime, however, the Bukharan hashm had kept to the succession arrangement established by Nūh ibn Naṣr and decided to appoint ‘Abdalmalik’s brother, Mansūr (66). Mansūr duly claimed the throne, after deposing Naṣr ibn ‘Abdalmalik who, it is said, had been king for a day. As soon as he came to the throne, Mansūr dismissed Alptegīn from his post and re-appointed his predecessor, Abū Mansūr ibn ‘Abd al-Razzāq, instructing him to arrest Alptegīn. In Dhu’l-Qa’dā 350/December 961-January 962 Alptegīn left Naysābūr, pursued by Ibn ‘Abd al-Razzāq’s army (67).

66 Mansūr may have been a regnal title rather than a given name. Gardīzī says that the four sons to whom Nūh ibn Naṣr had bequeathed the throne in succession were ‘Abdalmalik, Ahmad, Naṣr and ‘Abd al-‘Azīz (Zayn, p. 159; see below, p. 236). The Naṣr referred to here is probably a mistake for Naṣr ibn ‘Abdalmalik, Nūh’s grandson. Of the remaining three, ‘Abdalmalik and ‘Abd al-‘Azīz (see below, chapter 8, p. 253f) can be accounted for, but Ahmad is a puzzle. Given that he is listed after his brother ‘Abdalmalik, it would be logical to assume that it was he whom Nūh intended should assume the throne after ‘Abdalmalik. Now Narshakhī has a reference to an Ahmad ibn Nūh ibn Naṣr ibn Ahmad (Tārikh-i bukharā, p. 25 = p. 18); from the context it appears that this Ahmad was a ruling Samanid amir. Could this Ahmad be identical with Mansūr ibn Nūh, the name Mansūr being a regnal title adopted by him at the beginning of his reign just as the same title was adopted by the second ‘Abbāsid caliph? That he was known as Mansur from the beginning of his reign is evident from the eulogy addressed to him on his accession by the poet al-Hazimi (cf. Thā’alibī, Yatīma, vol. ii, part 4, p. 121f).
67 Gardīzī, Zayn, p. 162. Narshakhī says that Ash‘ath ibn Muhammad was sent in pursuit of Alptegīn, drove him out of Balkh, which he had seized and made the headquarters of his rebellion, and pursued him to Ghazna, evicting him from that town and forcing him to return to Balkh (Tārikh-i bukharā, p. 135 = p. 99). Neither the sequence of events, nor Ash‘ath’s part in them, is corroborated by other sources.
Alptegin won the ensuing conflict against all the odds and made his way to Ghazna where he expelled the local governor, taking with him at least one, and probably more, of the senior amirs in Sāmanid service (68).

Abū Mansūr realised that he would be punished for failing to apprehend Alptegin and turned to his old allies, the Būyids, for help; but before it arrived, he died in battle against a Sāmanid army (69). In Dhū'l-Hijja 350/Jan-Feb 962 Abū’l-Hasan Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm Sīmjūrī was once again appointed governor of Khurāsān.

He remained governor of Naysabūr for the next 21 years. Within five years of his arrival there, we hear of renewed activity against the Būyids of Rayy. In Ramadan 355/August-Sep 966, six years after the conversion of large numbers of steppe Turks to Islam (70), 20,000 Khurāsānī ghāzīs, acting with the tacit encouragement of the Sāmanids, came close to taking Rayy.

68 Alptegin’s withdrawal and his speech to his generals on the occasion of his decision to secede from the Sāmanid state is recounted in detail by Niẓām al-mulk (Siyar al-mulūk, pp. 146ff = pp. 108ff). With him to Ghazna went Bilkategin, perhaps to be identified with the former governor of Balkh (see Bakh coins dated 320/932, 323-6/935-38 bearing the name Bilkategin in Mitchiner, The Multiple Dirhems of Medieval Afghanistan, p. 27), Andarāba (Andarāba coins dated 323-4 cf. ibid, p. 28) and Farwan (Farwan coins dated 320 and 323, cf. ibid, p. 30) for the Sāmanids.

69 Gardizi says that Washmgīr paid Yuhannah, Ibn ‘Abd al-razzāq’s doctor, to poison him and that he was killed in battle against Abū’l-Hasan Simjūrī while in a weakened state from the effects of this poison (Zayn, p. 162). Washmgīr was presumably hostile to Abū Mansūr because the latter had condoned the recent Būyid occupation of Jurjān (see above, note 62).

70 See below, p. 233.
from the Buyids (71). They swarmed into the city on the way to the Byzantine front, claiming the kharāj of the district in payment for their expedition and calling for a Buyid army to accompany them. As the Buyid authorities prevaricated over their response, they engaged the few Daylamī troops in the city and plundered the wazir's house. At the last moment Rukn al-Dawla managed to persuade his outnumbered troops to resist the ghāzīs by tricking them into believing that reinforcements were on the way; the Buyid forces drove the ghāzīs out of their territory.

Two years after the ghāzi assault on Rayy, Abūl-Hasan Simjur led an abortive Samanid attack on the city (72). As had often been the case in the past, so too now the Samanids were dragged into conflict with the Buyids by their vassals. In 356/967 the Ilyāsid Abu 'Alī Muḥammad ibn Ilyās fled Kirman for Bukhara after quarrelling with his son and successor Alī za' (73); he persuaded Mansūr to attack Rayy, telling him that his generals and deputies were failing to maintain Samanid interests in the region and were accepting bribes from the Buyids. Abū 'Alī's recommendation was supported by Washmūr who was ever eager to enlist Samanid support for his campaign to retake Tabaristan and Jurjān. Mansūr ordered Abūl-Hasan Simjur to lead his army against Rayy under the overall command of Washmūr. Washmūr however died

71 Ibn al-Athīr, Kāmil, vol. viii, pp. 569ff; Miskawayh, in Eclipse, vol. ii, p. 223, noted in Mottahedeh, Loyalty and leadership, p. 34.
in a hunting accident en route to Rayy in 357, and the campaign foundered (74).

Abū’l-Hasan’s problems were compounded when Bīsūtūn, son and successor to Washmqir defected to the Buyids. It seems that Abū’l-Hasan had backed Bīsūtūn’s brother, Qābus, as his father’s successor (75); there is also evidence that the Khurāsānī army commanders, with Mansūr’s agreement, were planning to seize funds from Bīsūtūn. When the latter got wind of the Samānids’ intentions, he pledged allegiance to Rukn al-Dawla and in return received a document of investiture from the caliph Mutī’ confirming his rule over Tabaristān, Jurjān, Shālūs and Ruyān (76).

In 361/9714 Abū’l-Hasan redeemed his past mistakes by arranging a third treaty between Mansūr and Rukn al-Dawla and his son, ʿAdud al-Dawla, which stipulated payment of 150,000/200,000 dinars per annum by the Buyids to the Samānids (77); judging from the sum

74 Gardīzī says that his body was taken to Jurjān in Dhū’l-Hijja 356/Nov-Dec 967, while Miskawayh says he died on 1 Muharram 357 (Zayn, p. 163; Eclipse, vol. ii, p. 233).
76 Gardīzī, Zayn, p. 163.
77 Ibn al-Athīr gives the date of the treaty and says the amount specified was 150,000 dinars per annum (Kāmil, vol. viii, p. 626); Narshakhī gives the amount as 150,000 Nāyshābūrī dirhams (Tarīkh-i bukhārā, p. 135 = p. 99). Gardīzī mentions the sum of 200,000 dinars per annum and says that the wazirs (Abū Ja’far) ʿUtbī and Abū’l-Faḍl ibn al-ʿAmīd, wazir of Rukn al-Dawla, were the architects of the treaty (Zayn, p. 164). Ibn al-ʿAmīd died in 360, so the preparatory peace negotiations must have taken place in the late 960’s. M. Kabir mistakenly claims that the Buyids were not required to pay tribute by the terms of the treaty, citing a letter written by Ibrāhīm ibn Hilāl al-Sābī, on behalf of ʿIzz al-Dawla’s wazir, Abū’l-Faḍl ʿAbbas ibn Husayn al-Shīrāzī, to ʿAdud al-Dawla (The Buwayhid ‘dynasty of Baghdad, p. 46; Shakib Arslan al-Lubnānī, Al-mukhtar min
involved, this was a re-instatement of the earlier treaty concluded at the beginning of 'Abdalmalik's reign, which had presumably fallen into abeyance when the Būyids had resumed their incursions into Ṭabaristān and Jurjān. At the same time arrangements were made for the marriage of 'Adud al-Dawla's daughter to a Šāmānid prince, probably Nūh ibn Mansūr, the son and successor of Mansūr.

Sīstān

In Sīstān, the Šaffārid Abū Ja'far Ahmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Khalaf overcame an attempt to seize the Šaffārid throne in c. 341/952 by another scion of the Šaffārid family, Abū’l-'Abbās ibn Tāhir ibn Muḥammad ibn 'Amr ibn Layth with the help of the Turks of Bust (78). Abū Ja'far continued to rule Sīstān

_rasa‘il Abi Ishaq Ibrahim ibn Hilal...al-Sabi, Ba‘abda, 1898, pp. 92–95_. However this letter was written to congratulate 'Adud al-Dawla on his diplomatic triumph and says nothing about the terms of the treaty. Jūzjānī says that 'Adud al-Dawla made an agreement with Mansūr that the Būyids should retain control of the territories of 'Iraq, Rayy, Jurjān and Ṭabaristān in return for the payment of 1000 dinars a day (Ṭabaqāt-i naṣirī, vol. i, p. 211). Jūzjānī says that 'Adud al-Dawla concluded this agreement with Mansūr after his capture of Baghdād which took place in 366/977, a year after the death of Mansūr. Either the date is too late, or the agreement was made with Nūh ibn Mansūr. Muqaddāsī says that the Būyids were still paying 200,000 dinars per annum to the Šāmānids in his time (Ahsan, p. 472).

78 Abū’l-'Abbās, son of the ruler of Sīstān to 296/909, claimed that he had a better right to the throne because he was descended from the Šaffārid ruling house through his father, whereas Abū Ja'far could only claim Šaffārid descent through the maternal line (Tarīkh-i sīstān, p. 325 = p. 266).
until his assassination by some of his slaves in 352/963 (79).

He was succeeded by his son Khalaf in Jumādā I 352/May-June 963, after the latter had deposed Abū Hafs ibn Muhammad ibn 'Amr (80), the candidate for the throne put forward by his father’s murderers. In Jumādā I 353/May-June 964 (81), Khalaf went on pilgrimage, leaving the province in the hands of a relative, Tāhir ibn Muhammad, who had assisted him in rounding up his father’s assassins (82). During his journey to Mecca he visited the caliphal court at the invitation of Mu'izz al-Dawla, and received the 'ahd and liwa’ for Sīstān (83). When Khalaf returned to Sīstān in the following year, he found that Tāhir had seized power and refused him entry to the capital. Khalaf applied for aid from

80 Tarīkh-i sīstān, ibid: he may have been identical with Abū Hafs 'Amr ibn Ya'qūb ibn Muhammad ibn 'Amr who had been put on the Saffārid throne as a boy during Mawla Sandali’s rebellion (see above, chapter 4, p. 115).
81 Tarīkh-i sīstān, p. 328 = p. 269.
82 Cf. Tarīkh-i sīstān, p. 327 = p. 268, where he is named Tāhir-i Abī 'Alī, a maternal relative of Khalaf (Tāhir’s mother was the daughter of Muhammad ibn Abū’l-Husayn ibn 'Alī ibn Layth). He is identical with Abū’l-Husayn Tahir ibn Muhammad ibn Muhammad who had held the governorships of Bust (ibid, p. 325 = p. 266) and Farāh (ibid, p. 333 = p. 272) under Khalaf’s father. The latter appointment was made on the recommendation of the Sāmanid ruler. Ibn al-Athīr names him Tāhir ibn Husayn (Kamil, vol. viii, p. 563).
83 Miskawayh, Eclipse, vol. ii, p. 209. It is unlikely that he received the laqab of Walī al-Dawla at this time, as Busse implies (see my article, "A fractional gold coin of Khalaf ibn Ahmad of Sistan", Newsletter of the Oriental Numismatic Society, September 1988.) Evidence for the assertion made in this article that coins minted by Khalaf before 382/992 did not bear the title Walī al-Dawla is to be found in two dinars, one of 366 A.H. and the other of 375 A.H., neither of which bear this title (cf. Lane-Poole, Catalogue of Oriental Coins, vol. iii, p. 16f, no. 36; p. 18, no. 40).
the Sāmānids to regain his rightful position as ruler of Sīstān and was granted it; after many years of fighting, during which the Sāmānids sent two armies to assist him (84), he finally re-established permanent control of the province in 357/968 (85); the defeated rebel, Ḥusayn ibn Ṭāhir, who had taken his father's place on the latter's death in 359/969-70 (85), was invited to Bukhārā to put his case before Mansūr ibn Nūh. Nothing further is heard of him until he returned to Sīstān in 369/979 (86).

Kirmān

In 357, the year in which an unsuccessful Sāmānīd campaign was mounted against Rayy at the instigation of the Ilyāsid Abu 'Alī, Rukn al-Dawla ordered his son, 'Adud al-Dawla, who was in Fārs, to attack Kirmān in an attempt to divert the Sāmānids' attention from the Caspian provinces. 'Adud al-Dawla established a permanent Buyid presence in the province, thus bringing to an end the rule of the Ilyāsid dynasty which had governed Kirmān from 320/930 (87).

84 Miskawayh tells us that in 357/968, Khalaf ibn Ahmad paid allegiance to Sharaf al-Dawla, son of 'Adud al-Dawla, the Buyid conqueror of Kirmān (Miskawayh, Eclipse, vol. ii, p. 253; Ibn al-Athīr, Kāmil, vol. viii, p. 587; cf. below, this page, for the Buyid conquest of Kirmān). What effect, if any, this had on the Sāmānids' willingness to assist him in regaining Sīstān, is not known.
86 See below, chapter 8, p. 244.
Relations with the steppe

The Samanids did not engage the armies of the steppe Turks during this period, although, as the affair of Ibn Ashkam indicates, they still thought it prudent to take precautions against the Turkish threat. Miskawayh, Ibn al-Athir and Ibn Zafir report that in 349/960-' the last year of 'Abdalmalik’s reign, 200,000 Turkish "tents" converted to Islam (88). While Barthold assumes that the conversions marked a watershed in the spread of Islam among the Qarakhanids at large, Pritsak suggests that the conversions took place among the eastern Qarakhanid tribes which were coming under pressure from the western Qarakhanids, who had already adopted Islam (89). The identity of the missionaries who brought about these conversions is still a matter of dispute among scholars. While Barthold and Pritsak believe that Sufis and Shiihs played a major role, Madelung’s counter-argument is persuasive; he says that the Turks were more likely converted by orthodox Hanafis, particularly those of the Maturidi school of Samarqand (90).

The cessation of hostilities on the eastern frontier resulted in a decline in the number of defensive outposts (91) and the re-direction of ghāzī energies to other theatres of operation, notably the Byzantine and Indian frontiers (92). Frye believes that the demilitarization of the steppe frontier led to an "exodus" of ghāzīs which left the Samānīd military establishment free to impose its will on the state (93). This is probably an overstatement, although there is little evidence to prove the case either way, since our sources do not explicitly mention the role of the ghāzīs either before or after 310. What we can say is that there is evidence of a ghāzī presence in the mashriq after 348 (94) and that on at least one occasion, ghāzī out that of the two named persons known to have visited the Turkish steppe in the 10th century, one was a kalām theologian, and the other a Shāfi‘ī (ibid, p. 120, note 32). Neither was known to have made converts among their Turkish hosts. Madelung's main point is this; since the majority of the Turks who arrived in the Muslim world in the 11th century were strict Hanafīs, it is likely that they had been converted by Hanafī missionaries in Central Asia.

91 See for example Muqaddasī's passage... wa barūkat kabira wa hiya wa balāj thughra‘īn 'ala‘l-turkmāniyyīn alladhina qad aslamu ruhbātan, qad khariba hiṣnahu (id, Ahsan, p. 274).

92 For the ghāzī expedition to Byzantium via Rayy, see above, p. 227f. Three years beforehand, in 352/963, 600 Khurāsānī ghāzīs had been observed in Mosul (Ibn Taghribirdī, Annales, Leiden, 1855, vol. ii, p. 365, first noted in Mottahedeh, Loyalty and Leadership, p. 33). In 353/964, 5000 Khurāsānī ghāzīs took part in the Hamdānīd Sayf al-Dawla's campaign on the Byzantine frontier (Ibn al-Athīr, Kāmil, vol. viii, 552). As for ghāzīs who went eastwards, Alptegīn is said to have waited in Balkh for a month on his way to Ghazna "to allow all intending holy-warriors to come together from Transoxania, Khuttalān, Tukhāristān and the neighbourhood of Balkh" (Nizām al-mulk, Siyar al-mulūk, p. 150 = p. 110).

93 Frye, Bukhara; the medieval achievement, p. 150.

94 The office of sālār-i ghāziān is attested for the reign of Nūh ibn Mansūr (Gardīzī, Zayn, p. 165).
forces even fought for the Samanids, not against the infidel in the Dar al-harb, but against their old enemies, the Buyids of Rayy (95).

The state elite

In this period members of the Samanid family seem to have made something of a come-back in government circles after the debacle of Nasr’s reign. At least one, if not two, members of the royal house held the governorship of Farghana. During 'Abdalmalik’s reign, the town of Qubā in Farghana, was governed by Abu Yahya Ash’ath ibn Muhammad al-Samānī (96). For at least part of Mansūr’s reign Ash’ath was also governor of the whole province (97). Ahmad ibn Mansūr, possibly the son of Mansūr ibn Nūh, was governor of Akhsikath in Farghana in 358/968-9 (98).

95 See above, p. 227f.
96 A copper coin minted in Qubā in 349 during the reign of 'Abdalmalik bears his name on the reverse marginal legend (E.A. Davidovich, "Samanidskie Monety Kuby", Sov etskaya Arkheologiya, 1960, no. 2, pp. 254-257). For his biography, see appendix; the Samanid state elite.
97 Cf. Siyar al-muluk, p. 299 = p. 221, where he is named Abu Yahya ibn Ash’ath. He is also named as governor of Farghana in Mansūr’s reign on the colophon of a manuscript of Farabi’s Diwan al-adab (W.W. Wright, The Palaeographical Society: facsimiles of manuscripts and inscriptions, 1875-83, plate lx; note that the editor has corrected the date on the manuscript to 363/973-4).
98 Cf. Lane-Poole, Catalogue of oriental coins, vol. ii, p. 111, no. 411; files of Farghana dated 358. On the reverse margin is mimma amara bihi al-amīr ahmad ibn mansūr mawla amīr al-mu’minīn. On the reverse field is the lagab of Mansūr b. Nūh, al-malik al-muzaffar. An amīr by the name of Ahmad also governed Samarqand in 356, 366 and 368 (Mitchiner, ibid, p. 34).
But it was the mamlūks who now occupied the most senior positions, both at the court and in the core area of the state. The seeds of the mamlūk rise to prominence in metropolitan politics had been planted by Nūh ibn Naṣr when he consigned his three sons to the care of mamlūk guardians (99). It seems that Nūh intended that these mamlūk guardians should act as guarantors of the succession arrangements which he made during his reign, according to the terms of which, all his three sons were to succeed each other in turn. It was probably these mamlūk guardians who brought ʿAbdalmalik to the throne in 343 (100). It was certainly Mansūr’s guardian, Fāʾiq, who brought him to the throne in 350 after deposing Mansūr’s nephew, Naṣr ibn ʿAbdalmalik, who had seized the throne on his father’s death (101).

Both ʿAbdalmalik and Mansūr’s reigns were dominated by mamlūks. In the case of the former, it was not his guardian, Najāh (102), but his chief hājib, Alptegin, who assumed control of affairs in the capital after he had murdered the governor of Khurasan, Bakr ibn Malik...

99 Muqaddasi’s laconic statement is: wa qad adāfa (nūh) thalātha min banīhi ilā thalātha min al-khadam ‘abd al-malik ilā najāh wa mansūran ilā fāʾiq wa nasran ilā zarīf (Ahsan, p. 337). This calls to mind the Saljuq system of putting tutors (atabegs) in charge of their princes.

100 ...fa ajlasū ʿabd al-malik... (Muqaddasi, Ahsan, p. 337).

101 Muqaddasi reports that Naṣr ruled for one day before being deposed by Fāʾiq; fa-ajlasu ibnahu nasran yawman wāhidan (Ahsan, p. 338).

102 Najāh does not figure at all in the chronicle tradition and it must be assumed that, if he was indeed behind ʿAbdalmalik’s accession, he did not retain his influence thereafter. See above, note 64, for the death of Najtakin in 349/960-1 (Ibn al-Athīr, Kāmil, vol. viii, p. 532). Could "Najtakin" be a corruption of "Najāh"?
(103). In Mansūr’s reign, the kingmaker Fā’iq assumed great authority in Transoxania, being favoured with important governorships throughout the reign, including those of Samarqand, Shāsh and Bukhāra (104). Other unidentified figures, probably all of them mamlūks, held governorships in Transoxania (105). Only a few freeborn amirs held governorships in this period (106).

Just as mamlūks controlled Transoxania, so too they controlled Khurāsān where the Simjurids began their lengthy domination of the province in ’Abdalmalik’s reign. It would be misleading to assume however that the senior mamlūks acted in concert to take over the state. Competition between the leading mamlūks was fierce and none of them was able to dominate both Bukhāra and Naysābūr at the same time. This was clearly what Alptegin was planning to do at the end of ’Abdalmalik’s reign – once he arrived in Naysābūr, he attempted to retain his authority in the central administration by manipulating the wazir, Abū ʿAlī Muhammad ibn Muḥammad ibn Nuh.

103 See above, p. 224.
104 Samarqand coins were minted in his name in 353-356/964-7, 359/969-70, 364/971-5 (Mitchiner, The Multiple Dirhems of Medieval Afghanistan, London, 1973, p. 34); Shāsh coins in 355-78/965-88 (ibid, p. 33); Bukhāra in 358, 368 and 377 (ibid, p. 32). It will be noted that his name was in certain years placed on coins from more than one of these mints i.e. 355, 356, 359, 364 (Samarqand and Shāsh), 358 (Bukhāra and Shāsh). 105 Bukhāra 347 and 348 – Fatkīn (murderer of Bakr ibn Mālik in Bukhāra in 345?; see appendix; the Samanid state elite, s.v. "Bakr ibn Mālik") (Mitchiner, ibid, p. 32); Samarqand 353 – Bughrā (ibid, p. 34); Bukhāra 351-6 –Bughrā Bek (ibid, p. 32); Qubā (Farghana) 356 – Mansūr ibn Baigrā (E.A. Davidovich, "Samanidskie Money Kuby", p. 256; fils of Qubā bearing the name of Mansūr b. Nuh. The reverse marginal legend has: mimma amara bihi al-amir mansūr b. ba‘iqra al-ḥājib...).
106 Cf. Ibn ‘Abd al-razzāq (see above, p. 224f).
Bal’amī, whom he had put into office and who, so Gardīzī tells us, took no initiatives without first consulting Alptegīn (107).

The wazirs of this period lacked the authority of their predecessors in Nasr’s reign and their biographies are almost entirely unknown. The exception was Nūh’s first wazir, Abū’l-Fadl Muhammad ibn Ahmad al-Sulamī. He was appointed to the post soon after Nūh’s accession, probably as the leader of an orthodox reaction to the Isma’īlī conversions of Nasr’s reign. Sulamī was remarkable in that he was the only faqīh to hold the wazirate in Samanid history. He was a former Hanafi qaḍī of Bukhārā who had taught fiqh to Nūh (108). Sulamī’s tenure of office was a disaster: unlike the kuttāb who had filled the post before him, he was not trained for it and furthermore appears to have been disinclined to give up his religious studies in order to devote himself to the mundanities of state administration (109). Like many earlier fellow-scholars who had influence at court, he was unpopular with Nūh’s soldiers who demanded that he be handed over to them before they would fight against the pretender Ibrāhīm ibn Ahmad (110). He was probably succeeded as wazir by Abū ‘Alī Bal’amī (111).

109 Cf. Thā’alibī, Yatīma, vol. iv, p. 86 for the lines written about him by Abū ‘Abdallāh al-Sulamī (a relative?); the poet clearly regarded him with affection but considered him a hopelessly inadequate wazir.
110 See above, p. 215.
111 See above, chapter 5, note 158, for evidence that Abū ‘Alī acted as Nūh’s wazir.
The wazirate changed hands frequently, as the mamlūks dismissed and appointed wazirs at will. In 'Abdalmalik's reign, four officials occupied the post (112); for most of Mansūr's reign, the office was shared between two kuttab, Abū 'Alī Balʿamī and Abū Jaʿfar 'Utbī, who had briefly held office under 'Abdalmalik (113). In 363-4/974 Yusuf ibn Ishaq was wazir for five months; he was succeeded by Abū 'Abdallāh Ahmad ibn Muhammad al-Jayhānī in 365/975-6 (114).

112 For the wazirs Ibn 'Uzayr, Abū Jaʿfar Ahmad ibn Husayn al-ʿUtbī, Abu Mansūr Yusuf ibn Ishaq, Abū 'Alī Muhammad ibn Muhammad al-Balʿamī, see Gardīzī, Zayn, pp. 159ff.
113 See appendix; the Sāmānid state elite, s.vv. "Muhammad ibn Muhammad", "Ahmad ibn Husayn".
114 For Jayhānī, see appendix; the Sāmānid state elite, s.v. "Ahmad ibn Muhammad".
Chapter eight

THE DECLINE OF THE SAMANIDS (365/976–395/1005)
Introduction

The amirs who ruled in Bukhara during the final quarter century before the Qarakhanid invasion of 339 all came to the throne as minors. Nūh ibn Mansūr (324/936–347/457) was probably never truly the master of his own destiny; his mother acted as princess regent during his minority (1) and thereafter the government was in the hands of the mamlūk grandees. Nūh's two sons, Mansūr and 'Abdalmalik, were also minors (2).

The main players in this last episode of Samanid rule were the Samanid mamlūks who had consolidated their authority in the state during the previous two reigns and now presided over its disintegration. Foremost among them were the Simjūrid Abū'1-Hasan Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm, governor of Khurāsān for the past fifteen years, and his son Abū 'Alī al-Muzaffar ibn Muḥammad, who succeeded him after his death in 378/988–9.Fā'iq, the right-hand man of the late amir Mansūr ibn Nūh, dominated affairs in the capital; for the first decade of Nūh's reign the ḥājjib Tāsh also exercised authority in Bukhara and Naysābūr.

These mamlūk protagonists jockeyed for power in an

1 Ibn al-Athīr, Kamil, vol. ix, p. 28.
2 Ibn Zafir, Duwal, fol. 131a; Gardīzī, Zayn, p. 171 (Mansūr); Ibn al-Athīr, Kamil, vol. ix, p. 145 ('Abdalmalik).
endless round of shifting allegiances, betrayals and renewed alliances.

The organization of this chapter will not follow that of preceding chapters where provincial and metropolitan affairs were accorded separate treatment. This is a reflection of the changed state of affairs in the mashriq; although Bukhārā was still the capital, real power had shifted to Naysābur. There was now no longer a Bukhāran centre surrounded by provinces; Khurasān was the prize which the mamluks fought over, using their connections in Bukhārā and such other alliances as they could establish with others, notably the Buyids and the steppe Turks.

The reign of Nūh ibn Mansūr

The inauguration of his reign was signalled by the distribution of large amounts of money from the royal treasury (3) and the granting of hitherto unheard-of privileges to the leading members of the state elite; a sign that the dynasty was anxious to retain the allegiance of its increasingly independently-minded supporters (4). New imperial titles, formerly in the

3 That the sums distributed amounted to more than the customary mal-i bay'ā, is said by 'Utbī's remark that much of the accumulated wealth of the Samanid treasury was squandered in this spending spree ('Utbī, Yamīnī, in Manīnī, Fath, vol. i, p. 89); tabaddada shaml al-amwāl allati kana wuzara' al-sāmaniyya min qabl yakkahuna la-hā wa yad'abūnāli-jam'iha.

4 Perhaps such generosity was also intended to secure the beneficiaries' pledge not to support rival claimants to the throne such as Nūh ibn Mansūr's uncle, 'Abd al-'azīz ibn Nūh ibn Nasr, (for his claim to the throne,
gift of the caliph alone, were dispensed by Nūh; significantly enough, the first recipient of such a title was Abū’l-Hasan Simjūrī who was granted the laqab of Nāsir al-Dawla (Helper of the State) in Rajab 366/February-March 977 (5). Abū’l-Hasan was also the greatest beneficiary of Nūh’s material largesse; he was confirmed as sipahsālar of Khurāsān and was granted a number of territories and tax privileges in Khurāsān (6). In addition marriage alliances were concluded with the Simjurīd family and the Farīghūnids of Jūzjān (7).

Five years after Nūh’s accession, however, Abū’l-Hasan Simjūrī was dismissed from his post. His dismissal was ordered in 371/981-2 by the recently-installed wazir, Abū’l-Husayn al-’Utbī, on charges that he was misgoverning the province and was only interested in confiscating property and exacting taxes (8). The wazir had borne a grudge against Abū’l-Hasan ever since the

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5 Gardīzī, Zayn, p. 165.
6 Gardīzī, ibid. Nūh granted him the ‘amal-i ma‘unat ve ahdāth-i nīshāpur ve harāt ve quhistan. ‘Amal-i ma‘unat is probably the office of chief of security. ‘Amal-i ahdāth is a puzzling title; it may mean the office for the collection of occasional taxes (cf. Barthold, Turkestan, p. 221, note 1). These were most likely honorary titles, confirming the status quo, since Abū’l-Hasan was probably already in charge of such offices. This is the first reference we have to a Samanid granting the Simjurīds privileges within their own domain of Quhistan. Jūzjānī tells us that Nūh added Tus to Abū’l-Hasan’s territories (Tabaqāt-i nāsirī, vol. i, p. 212).
7 Ibn Zafir, Duwal, fol. 128b.
8 Gardīzī, Zayn, p. 165. ‘Utbī may have suspected Abū’l-Hasan’s links with the Buyid Mu‘ayyid al-Dawla who appears to have tried to intercede on his behalf with the Samanids (Abu Shuja‘ Rudhrāwārī, in Eclipse of the ‘Abbasid caliphate, vol. iii, pp. 26f. = vol. vi., pp. 21f.)
latter had opposed his appointment to the wazirate in 367/977-8 on the grounds that he was too young to occupy such a senior post. The manner in which ‘Utbī relayed his order for the dismissal, a public notice which was read out in the presence of Abū’l-Hasan’s courtiers, was doubtless calculated to insult his enemy. Abū’l-Hasan made preparations for war against Bukhāra, but quickly relented and went into exile in Quhistan. His replacement as sipahsālār was ‘Utbī’s own protege, Abū ’-‘Abbās Tāsh, the hājib, who was given the laqab of Husam al-Dawla (Sword of the State) and sent to Naysābūr in Sha’ban 371/February 982. Soon after his arrival in Naysābūr, like so many of his predecessors, Tāsh became enmeshed in the vortex of Caspian politics; he was ordered by Nūh to help Qābus ibn Washmagīr and ‘Alī ibn Ḥasan ibn Būya Fakhr al-Dawla to retake the province of Jurjān from which they had been expelled by Fakhr al-Dawla’s brother, Mu’ayyid al-Dawla, the ruler of Rayy (9). Their combined expedition against Jurjān in 372/982-3 was defeated by a superior Būyid army and Tāsh was forced to return empty-handed to Naysābūr (10).

Meanwhile the disgraced Simjūrīds intervened in Sīstān where the Saffārid vassal Khalaf ibn Ahmad had risen in

9 Gardīzī, Zayn, p. 166.
10 Gardīzī says that ‘Adud al-Dawla sent 7000 troops to reinforce Mu’ayyid al-Dawla’s army and that these extra forces ensured Tāsh’s defeat. He also notes that the Būyid army pursued Tāsh into Khurasan and that, but for the death of ‘Adud al-Dawla (d. 372/983) and the retreat of his army, they would have "destroyed Tāsh and Khurasan" (Zayn, p. 166). Ibn al-Athīr says that Fā’iq had been bribed by Mu’ayyid al-Dawla not to offer resistance on the battlefield (Kāmil, vol. ix, p. 12).
rebellion against Nūh. Shortly after Nūh’s accession, Khalaf had withheld the required tribute from Bukhārā (11) and Nūh had equipped Khalaf’s old rival Husayn ibn Tahir (12) with an army and sent him to conquer the province. In 369/979-80 (13), after a furious battle, Khalaf retreated to the citadel of Zaranj which he defended resolutely for two years. In an effort to break the military stalemate, Nūh ordered Abū’l-Hasan, then resident in Quhistan, to send reinforcements to Sistan. Abū’l-Hasan dispatched his son Abū ‘Alī who won a battle against Khalaf but was unable to defeat him outright (14). Eventually Abū’l-Hasan himself went to the province but chose not to prosecute the war against his old ally Khalaf; instead he advised him to vacate the citadel and wait until the Samanid army had withdrawn from Sistan before renewing his attack on Husayn’s depleted forces. Khalaf consequently abandoned his fortress in Sha‘ban 371/Sept. 980-81 and resumed the war with Husayn at the end of the year (15); within six months, with the help of his Ghaznavid allies, he had forced

11 Ibn al-Athir, Kāmil, vol. viii, p. 563f. Khalaf withheld from Bukhārā khila‘ (robes of honour), khadam (eunuchs) and money which he had agreed to pay the Samanids regularly. The marginal legend which appears on Khalaf’s coinage from the 980’s, wa man yūqa shuhha nafshi fa-ulā’ika hum al-muflihun (Q.lix, 9; lxiv, 16; "And those who are saved from their own covetousness shall be prosperous") may conceivably be an oblique reference to Samanid insistence on Khalaf’s payment of this tribute (see my article "A fractional gold coin of Khalaf ibn Ahmad of Sistan", Newsletter of the Oriental Numismatic Society, September 1988).
12 See above, chapter 7, page 232.
13 Date given in Tarikh-i sīstān, p. 336f = p. 275.
14 Gardīzī, Zayn, p. 166; ’Utbi, Yamini, in Manini, Fatḥ, p. 126.
15 Tarikh-i sīstān, p. 337 = p. 276.
Husayn to sue for peace and regained control of the whole province (16).

Abū'1-Hasan’s fortunes continued to prosper after he had left Sīstān. Shortly after Tāsh’s defeat in Jurjān, Nūh had given command of the army to the wazir Abū'1-
Husayn al-'Utbī in recognition of his efforts at rallying the dispersed Khurāsānī forces (17). This was the first time in Samanid history that the highest civilian and military posts had been held by the same man and it was bound to alarm 'Utbī’s opponents. Abū'1-
Hasan took prompt action to forestall 'Utbī’s growing authority; he plotted with the third member of the mamlūk triumvirate, Fā‘iq, to assassinate the wazir.

Fā‘iq accordingly bribed a group of Sadīdiyya mamlūks, that is mamlūks who had been servants of the former amir Mansūr ibn Nūh al-Sadīd, and they murdered 'Utbī in broad daylight in the streets of the capital in 372 (18).

Tāsh was immediately ordered to return to Bukhārā in order to seek out and punish 'Utbī’s assassins. The Sīmjūrīds were quick to take advantage of his absence from Khurāsān and Abū 'Alī Sīmjūrī, with Fā‘iq’s approval, set about confiscating the revenue which had

16 Tārīkh-i sīstān, p. 339f = p. 277. Ibn 'Athīr says that Husayn maintained the siege against Khalaf for seven years (Kāmil, vol. viii, p. 564); but the Tārīkh-i Sīstān says only 3 years, which corresponds with the dates which it gives for Husayn’s return to Sīstān and Khalaf’s final victory.
17 'Utbī, Yamīnī, ibid, p. 121.
18 Gardizi, Zayn, p. 166f.
been collected by his tax agents (19). Tāsha was compelled to leave Bukhārā to negotiate with his rivals; the three met at Āmul where they decided on a tripartite partition of Khurāsān; Herāt would go to Abū ‘Alī, Naysābūr to Tāsha and Balkh to Fā’iq (20).

But Tāsha was unable to hold on to Khurāsān for long. Once he had left Bukhārā, the wazir whom he had appointed, Abū Muhammad ‘Abd al-rahmān b. Ahmad al-Farisi, was dismissed in favour of ‘Abdallāh ibn Muhammad ibn ‘Uzayr, who was an enemy of the ‘Utbī family and thus by extension, hostile to Tāsha. In 376/986-7 Ibn ‘Uzayr stripped Tāsha of his title and dismissed him from the sipahsalarīyya; the post was reassigned to Abū’l-Hasan Simjuri and Tāsha was appointed governor of Nasa and Abīward (21).

Tāsha refused to comply with Ibn ‘Uzayr’s orders. Once again rival Būyid factions took advantage of the turmoil in Khurāsān; Tāsha received the grateful support of his old ally Fakhr al-Dawla, now the ruler of Rayy, and Abū’l-Hasan secured military reinforcements from ‘Aqūd al-Dawla’s son, Sharaf al-Dawla, the governor of Fārs (22). The assistance of the Būyid ruler of Rayy, as so often in the past, was not sufficient to enable his ally to retain Khurāsān. After briefly occupying Naysābūr,

19 ‘Utbī, Yamīnī, ibid, p. 126; Gardīzī says that Tāsha unwisely consented to Abū ‘Alī’s appointment to the governorship of Khurāsān at this time (Zayn, p. 167).
20 ‘Utbī, Yamīnī, ibid, p. 127. Gardīzī adds that Badghīs, Kānj Rustāq and Quhistān were assigned to Abū’l-Hasan Simjūrī (Gardīzī, Zayn, p. 167).
21 ‘Utbī, Yamīnī, ibid, p. 128; Gardīzī, Zayn, p. 167.
22 ‘Utbī, Yamīnī, ibid, pp. 130ff: Fakhr al-Dawla had been invited to take over Rayy by al-Sāhib Ismā’īl ibn ‘Abbad after the death of Mu’ayyid al-Dawla.
Tāsh was forced to flee to Jurjān in Shābān 377/Nov-Dec 987, where he died of the plague (23).

Abū‘l-Ḥasan himself died in the following year (24) and was succeeded as head of the Simjūrid house by his son, Abū ‘Alī (25). With the elimination of Tāsh, Nūh had lost his counterbalance to Simjūrid influence in the province. He now turned to Fa‘iq and appointed him commander of the army of Khurasān instead of Abū ‘Alī, to whom he had promised the post. But Abū ‘Alī sent an army to drive Fa‘iq out of the province and Nūh was reluctantly compelled to appoint him in Fa‘iq’s place; in addition he assigned him Herāt and Quhistan (26) and bestowed on him the title ‘Īmād al-Dawla (Pillar of the State) (27). Fa‘iq did not take Abū ‘Alī’s elevation graciously; in Rabi‘ I 380/June 990 he marched on Bukhārā in protest (28), but was driven back beyond the Oxus to Tirmidh by Nūh’s forces, led by the Turks Ānj and Bektūzūn (29).

23 ‘Utbi, Yamīnī, ibid, pp. 149.
24 ‘Utbi tells us that he died in flagrante delicto with a Turkish slavegirl; a curiously intimate detail for the Kitāb al-yamīnī (Yamīnī, ibid, p. 153).
25 See appendix; the Sāmānid state elite, s.v. "al-Muẓaffar ibn Muhammad". Ibn Zafir gives Abū‘l-Ḥasan’s death date as 381/991-2 whereas all other sources say he died in 378 (Ibn Zafir, Duwal, fol. 129b). Ibn Zafir’s date is evidently erroneous since he notes in the same passage that his son Abū ‘Alī took over Khurasān after his father’s death in 380/990-1.
26 ‘Utbi, Yamīnī, pp. 153ff. It is not clear why Nūh assigned additional districts within Khurasān to Abū ‘Alī when as governor of Naysābur his authority presumably already extended to Herāt. Perhaps what is meant is that the revenues of Herāt and Quhistan were allocated for his personal use.
27 ‘Utbi, Yamīnī, p. 155; Ibn Zafir, Duwal, fol. 129b.
28 Ibn Zafir, Duwal, fol 129b.
29 This is date given in the majority of our sources: Ibn Zafir gives Rabi‘ II (Duwal, fol. 129b).
It is clear that Nūh ibn Mansūr had little control over events at this stage. Although still able to defend his capital, he lacked the means to dislodge Abū ‘Alī from Khurāsān. Even his vassals were powerless to help him; the Farīghūnīd ruler of Jūzjān whom he called upon for assistance against Fā‘iq was unable to make any impression on Fā‘iq’s forces (30). Moreover Abū ‘Alī refused to send financial aid to Nūh when he requested it and appropriated for himself all the revenues of Khurāsān, even those of the royal estates (diyā‘-i sultānī) (31). At the same time Abū ‘Alī conferred upon himself the prestigious title of al-amīr al-mu‘ayyad min al-sa‘āda (32) and his court began to attract famous poets who came to acclaim his success (33).


31 ‘Utbi, ibid, p. 163; Gardizī, Zayn, p. 168.
32 Gardizī, ibid. Ibn Zafir gives Abū ‘Alī’s titles as sayyid al-umara‘ and amīr-i jihān and dates his assumption of them after 382 (Duwal, fol. 130a). Soon after he was appointed governor of Khurasan, Abū ‘Alī extracted a further title from Nūh, Sanad al-umma (Support of the community). This is the only appearance of the "umma" suffix in Sāmānid entitulation; it was probably prompted by recent Būyid precedent (cf. the Marv coin of 383/993 in Tiesenhausen, "Melanges de
Even more ominous for Nuh was the fact that many amirs, both declared rebels and ostensibly loyal subjects, now began to look beyond the frontiers of the state for allies. This time it was not the embattled Buyid rulers who attracted their attention, but the Qarakhânid Bughrâkhan Abû Mûsâ Harûn ibn Ïlak. The first parties to correspond with him were certain dihqâns of Transoxania (34). 'Utbi's explanation of the dihqâns' intentions is not very illuminating; he says that they had had enough of the Sâmanîs and wanted a new dawla (35). Perhaps they were alarmed by the breakdown of law and order in Transoxania, where the destruction of the city of Nasaf in 379/989 by a group of *ayyârûn* may have been taken as a sign of the Sâmanîs' incapacity to govern (36). Or perhaps they really believed that the Sâmanîs' time had come after the breakdown of relations with Sîmjûrid

33 See the eulogies of Abû Bakr Khwarazmî and Badi' al-Zaman al-Hamadhânî (‘Utbi, ibid, pp. 155-162). In ‘Utbi’s excerpts from their panegyric poems, there is no mention of Abû ‘Alî’s sovereign status: he is praised for his descent from a family of great amirs, for his great generosity and for his success in battle. Perhaps the poets were not entirely sure that the Sîmjûrîds would prevail at this stage.
34 ‘Utbi, ibid, pp. 163f; *wa qa[d] kâna tâ'îfa min dahâqîn mawarâ'în-nahr qad amalathum ayyîm tilka'î-dawla...fa-wasalû bughrâkhan bi-kutubihim fi tawarrud dhâlika 'izâharîm*. The identity of these dihqâns is not given, but it is likely that they were governors of the eastern provinces of Transoxania. Jurbâdghânî (in Nikbî’s recension) renders the term dahâqîn as jam'-î ma'ârîf-i mawarâ'î-nahr (a group of Transoxanian notables) (cf. C. Schefer, ed., Description de Boukhou, Amsterdam, 1975, p. 155).
35 ‘Utbi, ibid, p. 163.
36 Samargandî, Muntakhab, fols. 5b. 59b and 74b.
Khurāsān. They would certainly have had cause to fear an independent Simjurid Khurāsān quite as much as the collapse of Samanid control of Transoxania. We know that contacts between Bukhārā and the steppe had been established before this time; one disgruntled Samanid courtier had already defected to the Qarakhanid court where he is said to have gained the confidence of the khan and encouraged him to depose the enfeebled Samanid regime (37).

Abū 'Alī Simjurī and Fā'iq soon followed suit and opened negotiations with the Qarakhanid (38). Abū 'Alī secretly urged him to attack Bukhārā and bring Nuh’s reign to an end. His plan was that he and the Qarakhanid should then divide the Samanid state between them; Bughrākhan was to retain Transoxania, while he continued

37 Abū Muḥammad 'Abdallāh ibn 'Uthmān al-Wathiqī, a descendant of the Caliph al-Wathiq (227/842-232/847), fled to Bughrākhan after failing to find advancement at the Samanid court, and encouraged him to invade Bukhārā. He accompanied him to Bukhārā in 382/992, where he had himself proclaimed caliph and assigned the lands of Khurāsān and Transoxania to the Qarakhanid (Thā'alībī, Yatīma, vol. ii, part 4, p. 180). Another 'Abbasid who lived in Bukhārā, Abū Talib al-Ma’mūnī, a descendant of the caliph Ma’mūn, planned to march on Baghdad in 382 but died in the following year (Thā'alībī, ibid, pp. 159f). For earlier contacts between Bukharans and the steppe leaders, note Ilyās ibn Ishaq’s sojourn in Kāshqār (see above, chapter 5, p. 147f) and the heretic dāhri who incited the "King of the Turks" to invade Transoxania at the end of Nasr II ibn Ahmad’s reign (see above, chapter 5, note 97). See also Jamāl Qaršī’s (beginning 14th century A.D.) Mulḥaqāt al-surāh in which "Naṣr ibn Mansūr Samānī" is said to have fled from his brother, the Samanid ruler, to Kāshqār where he was made governor of Artūj; the only Samanid prince whom the chronicles know to have made an alliance with the ruler of Kāshqār was Ilyās ibn Ishaq (see above) (Barthold, Turkestan, pp. 51f, 257; id, Turkestan i epokhu mongolskogo nashestviya, vol. i: texts, pp. 128-52).

38 'Utbi, ibid, p. 163 (Abū 'Alī); ibid, p. 166 (Fā'iq).
to rule Khurāsān (39). *Utbi says nothing about the
timing of Abū ‘Alī and Fā’iq’s approaches to the khan
but it is likely that they had already learnt of the
dihqāns’ correspondence with Bughrākhan and now acted to
prevent the formation of an alliance between them and
the Qarakhanids.

Bughrākhan began to make inroads into the outlying
provinces of Transoxania, starting with the provinces of
Isfīyāb and Farghāna (40). The Qarakhanid advance was
slow and cautious; the Turkish chief had to be coaxed
into entering Transoxania, as *Utbi says, "like a hawk
whose hood is gradually loosened" (41). When he reached
Isfīyāb, Nūh dispatched an army under the command of his
hājib Ānj, but the Qarakhanids defeated it and took Ānj
prisoner along with many of his soldiers (42). In
desperation Nūh turned again to Fā’iq, presumably in the
full knowledge of his treacherous alliance with the
Qarakhanid, and summoned him to Bukhārā; when they met,
he forgave him his treachery and sent him to defend
Samarqand (43). Once there however, Fā’iq declined to
give battle to the Turks and retreated westwards (44).

39 *Utbi, ibid, p. 163.
40 The earliest Qarakhanid coin minted in Farghāna is
dated 390/502 (T.S. Noonan, "The impact of the silver
crisis in Islam upon Novgorod’s trade with the Baltic"
Oldenburg-Wolin-Staraja Ladoga-Novgorod-Kiev, handel und
Handelsverbindungen im südlichen und ostlichen
Ostseeraum während des frühen Mittelalters, p. 433, note
28, citing S. Ishankhanov and B. Kochnev, "Drevneishie
Karakhanidiskie monety", Istoriia material’noi kul’tury
41 *Utbi, ibid, p. 164.
42 *Utbi, ibid.
43 *Utbi, ibid, p. 168.
44 ibid, p. 168. *Utbi says that certain sources suggest
that Fā’iq had already agreed with Bughrākhan not to
engage his army.
Nūh went into hiding and then fled Bukhārā for Āmul, where he received help from his Khwārazmī vassals, the Khwārazmshāh Abū Abdullāh Muḥammad and the Maʿmūnid governor of Jurjāniyya, Maʿmūn ibn Muḥammad (45).

Faʿiq was waiting in Bukhārā to welcome the Qarākhānidīs when they arrived there in Rabīʿ I 382/May-June 992 (46). Bughrākhān sent him to take over the city of Balkh in his name, thereby openly reneging on his agreement with Abū ʿAlī Simjūrī. Meanwhile, the exiled Nūh vainly called on Abū ʿAlī once again, this time relinquishing any claim to the revenue of Khurasān, thereby effectively acknowledging the secession of the province. Abū ʿAlī used the opportunity to extract from Nūh a promise to address him in future as mawla amīr al-muʾminīn (47); he did begin to make preparations to march to Transoxania, but deliberately delayed his

45 Nūh later rewarded these amirs, granting Abīward to the former and Nasā to the latter; Abū ʿAlī Simjūrī denied the former possession of his new territory, claiming that the present governor, his brother Abū Ibrahīm Simjūrī, could not be dismissed unless another governorship could be found for him (ʿUtbī, ibid, pp. 183f).

46 ʿUtbī, ibid, p. 169. Date in Gardīzī, Zayn, p. 168: Abī’l-Fadl Bayhaqī gives the year as 380 (Tārīkh-i bayhaqī, p. 199). Ibn ʿAthīr’s account differs from that of the latter two authors: he says that after the khan had defeated the Sāmānid army (presumably a reference to Anj’s unsuccessful defence of the eastern provinces) in 382/992, Nūh himself led his troops against the Turks and drove them back to Balāsaghun (ibid, vol. ix, p. 95), from where they returned in the following year to conquer Bukhārā (ibid, vol. ix, p. 98). Ibn Zāfīr says that the khan entered Bukhārā twice, the second time in Rabīʿ I 382 (Duwal, fol. 129b).

47 ʿUtbī makes the point that the Simjurid walaʾ was to the Sāmānids and not to the caliph (ʿUtbī, ibid, p. 174). Perhaps Ṭubīʾs remark is intended to underscore the Simjurids’ mamlūk status.
efforts in order to allow for the Qarakhānids to take control of Transoxania.

In the event, Nūh had no need of Abū ‘Alī’s assistance to remove the steppe chieftain, who quickly fell ill, unaccustomed as he was to the climate and food of Transoxania. He left Bukhārā some three months after his arrival, in search of the pure air of the steppe and a cure for haemorrhoids brought on from over-indulging in the renowned fruits of Sughd. Considerations of a less personal nature must also have influenced his decision to withdraw: the khān’s regime in Sughd had evidently been unpopular with the Bukhārans who attacked his forces as they retreated (48). Ibn al-Athīr tells us that the Ghuzz Turks joined them in harassing the Qarakhānids (49). The sick khān did take the opportunity to leave a memorial to his brief sojourn in the Sāmānīd capital in the form of the earliest Qarakhānīd coins minted there (50). He also left Nūh’s uncle, ‘Abd al-‘Azīz ibn Nūh ibn Naṣr, as his deputy in Transoxania (51); this ‘Abd al-‘Azīz had been promised the throne by his father half a century beforehand and presumably now saw an opportunity to wrest it from Nūh ibn Mansūr, who

48 'Utbī, ibid, p. 176.
49 Ibn al-Athīr, ibid, vol. ix, p. 100. Jūzjānī says that Nūh obtained the help of the Turks (=Ghuzz?) in his pursuit of the retreating Qarakhānids, but that they were defeated near Samarqand by the Qarakhanids (Tabaqāt-i nāsirī, vol. i, p. 213).
50 For the Qarakhānīd coins minted in Bukhārā in 342/952-3 see T.S. Noonan, "The impact of the silver crisis in Islam upon Novgorod’s trade with the Baltic", p. 433.
51 Gardizi, Zayn, p. 168; Ibn Zāfīr, Duwal, fol. 129b. Cf. above, note 4, for his claim to the throne.
had usurped his right (52). Yet his moment of glory was brief; it was probably in August 992 (53) that Nūh returned to the capital, to the delight of the city's inhabitants (54). Once there, he seized his uncle and blinded him.

In spite of the acclaim of his subjects, the restoration of Nūh's authority in Bukhārā was never going to amount to much as long as Khurāsān remained beyond his grasp. Indeed immediately after the Qarākhānid withdrawal his position worsened as the two former rivals, Faʿīq and Abū ʿAlī Simjūri, sank their differences and concluded an alliance against Bukhārā. The initiative for this move seems to have come from Abū ʿAlī, who induced Faʿīq to make peace with the offer of gifts which he had originally set aside for Nūh. With the two rebels now acting in concert, Nūh needed a new ally; he turned to his vassal, Sebuktegin the Ghaznavid (55). According to Jūzjanī, Sebuktegin had already led an army to northern Khurāsān before Nūh summoned him to Transoxania. The people of Balkh, who were suffering from Faʿīq's oppressive governorship, realised that the Samanid amir was too weak to restrain him and had called on Sebuktegin to come to their aid (56). He came to Balkh with his army and it was there that he received

52 Abūʾl-Fadl Bayhaqī says that Bughrākhān himself believed that 'Abd al-ʿazīz's right to the succession had been usurped (Tarīkh-i bayhaqī, p. 199).
53 Barthold gives the date with reference to "Bayhaki, p. 234" (Turkestan, p. 260, note 7); but cf. Abūʾl-Fadl Bayhaqī, Tarīkh-i bayhaqī, ed. Ghani and Fayyad, p. 200, where the date is Jumada II 380.
55 ʿUtbi, ibid., p. 180f.
56 Tabaqat-i nāsirī, p. 213.
the Samanid emissary who invited him to Transoxania for discussions with Nūḥ.

The Ghaznavids had been loyal vassals of the Samanids from the time of Alptegin's occupation of Ghazna, notwithstanding a few disputes with Bukhāra (57), but until now had been preoccupied with raiding in Northern India and maintaining their authority in their own territories. It is also possible that Sebuktegin had come to an arrangement with the Simjurid Abū’l-Hasan not to interfere in Khurāsanī affairs (58). But Simjurid

57 Cf. C. E. Bosworth for the early history of Ghaznavid relations with their Samanid sovereigns (The Ghaznavids, their empire in Afghanistan and eastern Iran, Edinburgh, 1963, pp. 38, 41 and 44). Jūzjānī reports that after the conquest of Ghazna, Alptegin (d. 352/963) obtained a document of investiture from Mansūr ibn Nūḥ, thus legitimizing his position as a Samanid vassal (Jūzjānī, Tabaqat-i nasiri, vol. 1, p. 211). However Nizām al-mulk says that an army was sent against him from Bukhāra, so it appears that the Samanids' attitude towards him was at best ambivalent (Siyar al-mulk, p. 155 = p. 114).

Alptegin’s successors all maintained good relations with their sovereigns. His son and heir, Abu Ishaq (352/963-355/966), not only received Samanid endorsement of his rule, but also military assistance against Lawik, the deposed ruler of Ghazna, who managed to retake the city briefly in 353-4/964-5. From Abu Ishaq’s time, the coinage of the Ghaznavids began to bear the name of the Samanid sovereign as well as that of the Ghaznavid amir. Muhammad ibn ‘Ali Shabānkara’ī, author of Majma’ al-ansāb fī’l-tawarīkh reports that Abu Ishaq’s successor, Biltegin (355/966-364/975), was attacked by a Samanid army dispatched against him by Fā’iq, who was no doubt fearful of just such an alliance between his sovereign and the Ghaznavids as was concluded by Nūḥ ibn Mansūr in 992; however, like his predecessors, Biltegin regarded himself as governor on behalf of the Samanids. According to Isfizarī, it was during his reign, in 360, that the Samanids appointed Sebuktegin the Ghaznavid to the governorship of Herāt (see Isfizarī, Herāt, p. 386). Biltegin’s successors, Boritegin (364/975-366/977) and Sebuktegin (d. 387/997), maintained the same policy vis-à-vis Bukhāra; the title on Sebuktegin’s tombstone, al-hājjib al-ajall, provides further evidence that he had no aspirations towards independent rule.

complicity in the Qarākhānid invasion of Transoxania had, it seems, persuaded Sebukteqīn to think again; he now came north to pledge allegiance to Nūh at the Transoxanian town of Kish and undertook to rally his Khurāsānī vassals to his cause (59). He was joined by the Farīghūnid ruler of Jūzjān and the Shār of Gharchistān (60).

Abū 'Alī and Fa‘iq once again played the Buyid card and began negotiations with their erstwhile enemy, Fakhr al-Dawla, ruler of Rayy (61). But they failed to overcome the Samanid-Ghaznavid coalition in the following years; from the outset, Abū 'Alī made efforts to come to terms with his opponents, but his efforts were frustrated by the indiscipline of his soldiers who disobeyed orders and harassed the Ghaznavid forces, thus provoking them to retaliate. After their first defeat by the Ghaznavids in Ramadan 383/ October-November 993 (62), Nūh granted the laqabs of Nasir al-Dawla to Sebukteqīn, and Sayf al-Dawla to Maḥmūd (63) and appointed the latter commander of the Khurāsānī army.

59 'Utbī, ibid, p. 181.
60 'Utbī, ibid, pp. 184f.
61 'Utbī, ibid, p. 183.
62 'Utbī, ibid, p. 188f.
63 Jūzjānī says that Sebukteqīn received this laqab (the same as had been held by Abū'l-Hasan Sīmūr at the beginning of the reign; perhaps it was expressly chosen by Nūh in order to signal the transfer of his trust from the Sīmūrids to the Ghaznavids) as a reward for the suppression of the Qaramīt ā and the mulāhīda in Tāliqān (sometimes spelt Tāyqān) (see above, chapter 6, pp. 186 and 202). In the same passage Jūzjānī tells us that Abu 'Alī Sīmūrī became a Qaramīt ā and built a mosque in Nāysābur where the khutba was said in the name of the Fatimid Mustansīr.
(64) and governor of Naysābūr, while Abū 'Alī and Fa‘iq withdrew to the safety of Buŷid Jurjān. From Jurjān they mounted a second attack on Khurāsān and expelled Mahmūd from Naysābūr in Rabi‘ I 385/ Aḥ-ruz 995 (65). But the Ghaznavids regrouped and, with the aid of Khalāf ibn Ahmad of Sīstān and the Farīghūnīd ruler of Jūzjān, inflicted a second and decisive defeat on the rebels near Tūs three months later (66). Abū ‘Alī and Fa‘iq made their way to Āmul from where they sent their wazirs to Bukhārā to plead for clemency from Nūh (67).

Fa‘iq quickly realised that he could expect no mercy from Nūh who made his intentions towards him known by arresting his wazir when he arrived in Bukhārā. Fa‘iq consequently offered his services to Īlak Khān, Bughrākhān’s successor as leader of the Qarakhānīd confederation (68). The Qarakhānīd restored him to all the provinces of which Nūh had stripped him (69). Abū ‘Alī’s wazir received better treatment in Bukhārā; he

64 *Utbi, ibid, p. 193. Nūh’s relations with the Ghaznavids were not as amicable as they might have been; *Utbi reports that Nūh’s wazir, Ibn ‘Uzayr, warned him that they were plotting against him because of a dispute that had arisen between them over “money and territories”. Nūh fled to Tūs, to seek refuge with Ibn ‘Uzayr but Mahmūd quickly followed in his footsteps to reassure him of the Ghaznavids’ loyalty (*Utbi, ibid, p. 198).
65 *Utbi, ibid, p. 205ff.
66 *Utbi, ibid, p. 213.
67 Abū ‘Alī was already corresponding with Sebukteğīn, asking him to intercede on his behalf with Nūh, before the last battle with the Ghaznavids (*Utbi, ibid, p. 208). Gardizī says that Abū ‘Alī fled to Fakhr al-Dawla at this point and later returned to Khurāsān where he was captured, but this passage must refer to the later adventures of Abū ‘Alī’s son, Abū’l-Hasan (Zayn, p. 170f; for Abū’l-Hasan’s adventures, cf. *Utbi, ibid, p. 251f).
68 *Utbi, ibid, p. 218.
69 *Utbi, ibid, p. 219.
was instructed to tell his master that he should go to Jurjāniyya until his case was settled. Abū 'Alī set off northwards but was arrested en route and detained by his old enemy, the Khwārazmshāh (70), in Ramadan 386/September–October 996. When the amir of Jurjāniyya, Ma‘mūn ibn Muhammad, learnt of his predicament, he led an army against Kāth, the Khwārazmian capital, released Abū ‘Alī and took him to Jurjāniyya, along with Khwārazmshāh who was killed there on his orders (71). A few months later, on the instructions of Nūh ibn Mansūr, Ma‘mūn dispatched Abū ‘Alī to Bukhārā, where he was imprisoned with other members of his family; he was subsequently sent to Gardīz, on the orders of Sebuktegīn, where he was killed in the following year (72). With his death, the power of the Sīmjūrids was broken forever (73).

After securing Khwārasān in the wake of the rebels’ capitulation, Sebuktegīn marched north with his allies, the amirs of Jūzjān, Khuttal and Saghāniyān (74), to defend his sovereign against the Turks who were once again advancing westwards from the steppe (75). Īlak

70 The Khwārazmshāh had come into conflict with Abū ‘Alī over the issue of the assignation of Abīward (see above, note 45).
71 'Utbi, ibid, p. 226f.
72 Abū ‘Alī was suspected of plotting with the Sāmānid wazir Ibn ‘Uzayr against Ghaznavid interests in Bukhāra (‘Utbi, Yamīnī, p. 239f; Gardīzī, Zayn, p. 171).
73 Abū ‘Alī’s brother, Abū Qāsim, did play a role in Khwārasānī politics in the last years of the century and took part in the battle between the Sāmānid ‘Abdalmalik ibn Nūh and Mahmūd the Ghaznavid on the side of the former (see below, p. 262); he also joined the last Sāmānid Ismā‘īl Muntasir in his attack on Rayy (see below, p. 264). But he never re-established Sīmjūrid hegemony in Khwāsān (Cf. ‘Utbi, ibid, pp. 245-251, 282-290, 310, 327).
74 ‘Utbi, ibid, p. 232.
75 ‘Utbi, ibid, p. 231.
Khan clearly regarded Sebuktegin as a greater threat than any of his mamlûk predecessors, for he wrote to him, reminding him that the Ghaznavids and Qarâkhânîds were partners in the holy war against the Turks and Hind (76). He claimed that for this reason they had a better right to the revenues of Transoxania and Khurâsân than the Sâmanîd Nûh who remained inactive in Bukhârâ.

Whether or not he saw the point of this argument, Sebuktegin decided that his interests would be best served by remaining loyal to the Sâmanîds; he refused the offer of co-operation with the Qarâkhânîd and reiterated his loyalty to Nûh.

But the Ghaznavids' patience with the increasingly helpless Nûh soon began to wear thin. While the two Turks were negotiating on the eastern borders of Transoxania, Nûh’s wazir, Ibn ‘Uzayr, had advised his master not to respond to Sebuktegin’s call for him to join him in the eastern provinces, claiming that his small army would be put to shame by the Ghaznavid forces. This angered Sebuktegin who ordered his son, Mahmûd, and uncle, Bughrâjaq, to march on Bukhârâ and depose Ibn ‘Uzayr (77); they did so, replacing him with the former wazir, Abû Nasr Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Abî Zayd (78). This amounted to no less than a de facto takeover of the Sâmanîd administration by the Ghaznavids. Sebuktegin then concluded a treaty with İlak, specifying that he should not allow his forces to

76 ‘Utbi, ibid, p. 233.
77 ‘Utbi, ibid, p. 237.
78 For his earlier tenure of the wazirate, cf. ‘Utbi, ibid, p. 153.
advance westwards of the Qatwān steppe (79). Īlak agreed to these terms but demanded in return that Fā'iq should be made governor of Samarqand (80).

Īlak Khan did not keep to the terms of the agreement for long. Soon after the death of Nūh ibn Mansūr in Rajab 387/997 and the accession of his young son Mansūr, the deposed wazir of the Samānids, ‘Abdallāh ibn ‘Uzayr and Mansūr ibn Muḥammad ibn Ḥusayn ibn Mutt (81) urged him to come to Bukhārā. When Īlak Khan arrived in Samarqand, he imprisoned these two men and put Fā'iq in charge of the army which he directed against Bukhārā (82).

This might well have been the end of Mansūr ibn Nūh who fled Bukhārā, but for the inexplicable fact that when Fā'iq arrived there, he sent the Bukharan mashāyikh to ask Mansūr to return to his capital (83). After taking an oath of loyalty from Fā'iq, Mansūr took advantage of the Ghaznavids' preoccupation with the issue of the succession to Sebuktegīn (d. 387/997) to extend his authority once again into Khurasan. He appointed his ḥājib Bektūzūn as sipahsālār of Khurasan,

79 ‘Utbī, ibid, p. 240. See Barthold for the location of this steppe between Samarqand and Khojand (Turkestan, p. 165).
80 ‘Utbī, ibid, p. 240f.
81 Gardizī, Zayn, p 172. The full name of this man is given as Abū Mansūr Muḥammad ibn Ḥusayn ibn Mutt. This is unlikely to be the same Muḥammad ibn Ḥusayn ibn Mutt who had been involved in the revolt of Ilyās ibn Ishaq the Samānīd in 310 since he would by now be at least 100 years old (see above, chapter 5, pp. 146f). It may have been a son of his, called Mansūr. ‘Utbī names him Abū Mansūr Muḥammad ibn Ḥusayn al-Iṣbījābī (ibid, p. 269).
82 Gardizī, Zayn, p. 172.
83 ‘Utbī, ibid, p. 270f.
in place of Mahmūd the Ghaznavid and gave him the laqab of Sinān al-Dawla (Spearhead of the state).

Mansūr was however thwarted by Fa‘iq’s overweening ambition in his efforts to take advantage of the Ghaznavids’ temporary disarray in Khurāsān. Fa‘iq now dispatched his ally, Abū Qāsim Simjuri, to contest Bektūzūn’s authority in Nayṣābūr (84) and picked a quarrel with Mansūr’s wazir, Abū Muḥaffar al-Burghushī, who had succeeded to the wazirate on the death of Abū Nasr ibn Abī Zayd (85). Mansūr reprimanded Fa‘iq when he demanded to see the wazir who had sought refuge in the amir’s palace. Peace was only restored between Mansūr and Fa‘iq through the intervention of the mashayikhs of Bukhāra; but Fa‘iq eventually had his way, as Burghushī was exiled to Jūzjān and replaced by Abū‘l-Qāsim al-‘Abbas ibn Muḥammad al-Barmakī (86).

Meanwhile Mahmūd returned to Balkh, having quashed his brother’s bid for the Ghaznavid throne. Mansūr granted him Balkh, Tirmidh, Bust and Herāt but refused to make him governor of Nayṣābūr in place of Bektūzūn. Mahmūd, who still regarded Khurāsān as his province since he had been assigned it by Nuh, sent a messenger, Abū‘l-Husayn al-Hamuli, to Bukhāra to assure Mansūr of his good intentions. Mansūr appointed Hamuli to the wazirate which had fallen vacant after the death of Barmakī, but

84 Fa‘iq had borne a grudge against Bektūzūn ever since the latter had attacked him in 380/990 (See above, p. 247). Bektūzūn was forced to concede to Abū Qāsim the right to raise revenue from Bushanj in return for an annual tribute (‘Utbi, ibid, p. 285).
85 For Abū Naṣr ibn Abī Zayd, see above, p. 259.
86 ‘Utbi, ibid, p. 288f.
he was unable to change Mansūr’s mind regarding the
governorship of Naysābūr. Mahmūd finally decided to take
the city by force (87) and Mansūr marched south to
confront him.

Before battle was joined, Fā'iq and Bektūzūn, who
suspected Mansūr of inclining towards Mahmūd (88),
deposed and blinded him in Safar 389/Jan-Feb 999. They
then raised Mansūr’s younger brother, ‘Abdalmalik, to
the throne. Mahmūd at first made peace with the new amir
on the terms which he had refused from Mansūr; he was
have Balkh and Herat and their revenues (89). But
hostilities soon flared between the two armies, when a
group of Sāmanīd mamlūks attacked Mahmūd’s baggage
train. Bektūzūn and Fā’iq were defeated but managed to
make their way back to Bukhārā with ‘Abdalmalik. Mahmūd
summoned all his Khurasanī vassals and held a
celebration in honour of his assumption of rule in
Khurasan and the caliph’s bestowal on him of the laqab,
Yamin al-Dawla wa Amin al-Milla (90).

In Bukhārā, the last days of Sāmanīd rule were
signalled by the death of Fā’iq in Sha’bān 389/July-Aug 999 after

87 ‘Utbī says that Mahmūd took the decision to attack
Naysābūr because he realised that "envious parties" in
Bukhārā were blocking his appointment (ibid, p. 291) and
that the Sāmanīd regime was by now incapable of making
policy decisions due to the conflicting opinions of the
Sāmanīd mamlūks (ibid, p. 293).
88 ‘Utbī only says that Bektūzūn felt he had been
slighted by Mansūr (ibid, p. 296). Abu’l-Fadl Bayhaqī
says that Fā’iq and Bektūzūn believed that Mansur was in
league with Mahmūd (Tarīkh-i bayhaqī, p. 640).
89 Gardīzī, Zayn, p. 173.
90 ‘Utbī, Yaminī, p. 314. For the text of Mahmūd’s
fathname to the caliph after his victory over the
Sāmanīd army, see Hilāl al-Sābi’, Kitāb al-Wuzara, ed.
which, as *Utbī puts it, "their plans went awry" (91). Ilak Khan led his Qarakhanid forces towards Bukhara in Dhū‘l-Qa‘da 389/Oct-Nov 999; as the steppe army approached, the Samānids’ khātibs called on the population to take up arms against the invader, but their plea fell on deaf ears (92). The Bukharans sought an opinion from their faqīhs as to how they should respond to this appeal; the faqīhs replied that they should not take up arms against Muslims and the steppe Turks marched in unopposed. When they had occupied the city, the Turks arrested all the Samānids and sent them off to Üzkand in Farghana.

This was however not quite the end of the dynasty. A brother of *Abdalmalik’s, Abu Ibrahim Ismā‘īl ibn Nuḥ al-Muntasir, managed to escape house arrest and go into hiding in Bukhara, before fleeing to Khwarazm (93). For the next five years he led a peripatetic existence, forever on the move between Transoxania and Khurasan, trying to rally the Samānids’ former subjects behind his campaign to restore the Samānid state (94). His five-year campaign suggests that there was a considerable residue of pro-Samānid sentiment in Transoxania and Khurasan.

On escaping from Bukhara, Muntasir first made his way to Jurjāniyya (95), where he was joined by remnants of

91 ‘Utbī, ibid, p. 319.
92 Hilāl al-Sābi, Wuzara‘, p. 402.
93 ‘Utbī, ibid, p. 320.
95 Ibn Zafir, Duwal, fol. 132a.
the Samanid army of Khurasan. He returned to attack Bukhara, drove the Qarakhanids back beyond Samarkand and defeated a second Qarakhanid army. He then returned to Bukhara whose inhabitants welcomed him warmly (96). But he did not savour his victory for long; Ṭilak Khan made preparations to counter-attack and Isma'īl retreated over the river to Amul.

In Khurasan he faced the hostile might of the Ghaznavids. Although he was able to briefly occupy Naysabur in early 391/1000-1 (97), he quickly withdrew before Mahmud's advancing army to Isfarā'īn and thence to Jurjān in Jumādā I 391/April 1001 (98). There he found support from the Ziyarid, Qābus ibn Washmgir, who advised him to attack Buyid Rayy which was at the time poorly defended. Isma'īl besieged the city with the assistance of a Ziyarid force but failed to penetrate its defences. The Buyid defenders bribed two of Isma'īl's generals, Abū Qasim Simjuri and Arslān Bālū, to persuade Muntasir to raise the siege (99). He did so and returned to Naysabur in Shawwal of the same year, only to be driven off once again by the Ghaznavids in Dhū'l-Qa'da (100).

Again he marched northwards, passing through Jurjān and Jurjāniyya where he formed an alliance with the

96 'Utbī, ibid, p. 323.
97 'Utbī says that he fought Nasr ibn Sebuktegin, the governor of Naysabur, at the end of Rabī' I 391 before entering the city (ibid, p. 324).
98 Ibn Zāfīr, Duwal, fol. 132a.
99 'Utbī, ibid, p. 326.
100 Ibn Zafīr, Duwal, fol. 132a.
Ghuzz Turks (101). The Ghuzz, under the leadership of Isrā'īl ibn Saljūq, renewed their allegiance to the Ṣamanids (102), and fought for Ismāʿīl in his next campaign against Ḥilak Khān; although he won a battle against the Qarakhanid, the Ghuzz later betrayed him and handed over the prisoners they had taken to Ḥilak in an effort to gain his favour.

Muntasir fled southwards over the river again. In 394/1003-4 he came to Ablward where he received the help of the "sultan" of that city (103); the governor of Nasā also made the khutba in his name. He was attacked by the Khwārazmshāh (104) and later by the Farīghūnid amir, who had pledged allegiance to the Ghaznavids (105); Ismāʿīl fled north again. In Sughd he received help from the raʿīs al-fītyān of Samargand, the Samargandi mashāyikh and the Ghuzz; with their assistance he engaged the khān's forces and defeated them in Shaʿbān 394/May-June 1004. The khān retreated to the steppe, regrouped and

101 Ibn Zāfīr, Duwal, fol. 132a. This time the Kurds in the army of Qābus ibn Washmīr repelled him from Jurjān. He arrived in Jurjāniyya in Jumāda II 392/April-May 1002 which is where, so Ibn Zāfīr implies, he met the Ghuzz Turks.

102 Ibn Zāfīr says that the leader of the Ghuzz Turks was Yaḥyā Arslān, Isrāʿīl ibn Saljuq (Duwal, fol. 132a). He converted to Islam at Muntasir's hands and gave him a daughter of his in marriage (pace Pritsak who believes that this Yaḥyā was the ruler of Yengikent and Jand [cf. Bosworth, Ghaznavids, p. 221f]).

103 'Utbi, ibid, p. 338.

104 The Khwārazmshāh's identity is not clear. Ismāʿīl Muntasir twice travelled to Jurjāniyya, the Maʿmūnid capital (see above); yet Ibn al-Athīr tells us that the Maʿmūnīd Maʿmūn ibn Muhammad died in 387 and that his son 'Alī contracted an alliance with Mahmūd ibn Sebuktegīn (Kāmil, vol. ix, 132).

105 In 394 "Farīghūn" ibn Muhammad was sent against Muntasir from Balkh by Mahmūd (ʿUtbi, ibid, p. 343, cited in Hudūd al-ʿĀlam, p. 177).
attacked Ushrūsana. By now the end of Muntasir’s adventurous exploits was nigh. One of his supporters, Hasan ibn Taq, defected to the Qarakhanids with 5000 men and Muntasir returned to Khurasan; there he was harried by the Ghaznavids and Qabus ibn Washmīr, with whom he had been at odds since his abandonment of the siege of Rayy. The final days of his life saw his own soldiers recrossing the river to offer allegiance to the Qarakhanids. Muntasir fled to an Arab encampment in Rabī’ II 395/January–Feb 1005 and was murdered there one night by a Bedouin chief who had no idea who he was (106). Mahmūd savagely avenged Muntasir’s death, putting his assassins to death and destroying their settlement, thus proclaiming to the world the magnitude of their crime (107).

106 His murderer was Khālid ibn Nuhayb (Bayhaqī, Tarikh-i bayhaq, p. 120)/ Ibn Bahīj (‘Utbi, ibid, p. 345) of the Ḥanū‘Ijl, one of the bedouin of Sarakhs.  
107 ‘Utbi, ibid, p. 347.
Chapter nine

THE NATURE OF THE SĀMĀNID STATE
Sāmānid revenue

The most important source of revenue for the Sāmānids was the land tax (kharāj), which, so Ibn Hawqal tells us, provided them with an annual income of about 40 million dirhams (1). This was supplemented by additional taxes on trade (2), and gifts from their vassals, but neither of these was as substantial a source of revenue as the land tax.

According to Ibn Hawqal, the land tax was relatively light (3). Other sources contradict him by presenting high taxation as a cause of protest in Sīstān and Tabaristan in the first decades of the 10th century (4). There is also evidence that the later Sāmānids imposed an inheritance tax on the province of Bayhaq which was regarded as unjust by its inhabitants (5). But Muqaddasī

2 Muqaddasī says that customs duties were levied on the export of slaves across the Oxus (see above, chapter 2, note 26). A toll was also levied by the villagers of Dar-i Tubbat in Wakhkhān, presumably on the trade with Tibet (*Hudūd al-ʿālam*, p. 120).
4 Cf. the Tabarī Abū Ahmad Zanrāshan who complained of high taxation to the governor of Tabaristan (Ibn Isfandiyār, *Tārīkh-i tabaristan*, p. 266). Mansūr ibn Ishāq, governor of Sīstān in the reign of Ahmad ibn Ismāʿīl, faced complaints about the harsh taxation he imposed on his subjects (see above, chapter 4, p. 114f).
is probably correct in saying that the Samanids did not tax trade heavily (6). This policy contrasts strongly with that pursued by the Buyids who imposed ruinous taxes on merchants; as a consequence it was not unknown for Iraqi merchants to abandon Iraq for other regions, including Samanid Khurasan (7).

Most of the kharāj was probably raised in the directly-ruled core area of the state, although on this point the testimonia of Ibn Hawqal and Muqaddasī are hard to reconcile. Ibn Hawqal tells us that tax officials were appointed to the provinces, both those in the core area of the state and some vassal provinces, among them Khuttal, Jūzjān, Saghāniyān, Bust, Khwārazm and Quhīstān (8). He enlarges on this point in his section on Sīsṭān: "As for the revenue from the taxation (irtīfā') of these districts which I have described from among the districts neighbouring Sīsṭān... these districts vary one from another in terms of the conditions obtaining in them and the functionaries ('ummaāl) (operating in them). Every one of them has a katib salla, who is known as the bundār, who seeks the kharāj and (other) types of monies due to the sultan. Most of these monies belong to the Lord of Khurasan (i.e. the Samanid ruler). That which does not go to him of these monies and taxes, belongs to those who acknowledge him and belong to his dawla. This is a tū'ma (allowance) for him (the vassal). In return for it, he

6 Id, Ahsan, p. 340.
7 Busse, Chalif und Grosskönig; die Buyiden im Iraq, p. 399.
8 See above, chapter 4, note 107.
is obliged to render certain contributions or to send presents (to the Sāmānid)." (9)

By contrast Muqaddasī tells us that most vassal states were exempted from paying kharāj, while others were allowed to retain a substantial portion of such taxation for their own use; thus the amirs of Sīstān, Khwārazm, Gharjistān, Jūzjān and Khuttal sent no taxes to Bukhārā, but only presents (10), while the Muḥtājid amir of Ṣaghāniyān sent only a very small amount annually (11) and the province of Isfīyab only paid a token tribute of four dānīgs and a broom (12).

It is possible that these conflicting testimonia reflect a real change in the situation which obtained at the time when the two geographers wrote. The final version of Ibn Ḥawqal’s work was completed by 378/988, presumably on the basis of evidence collected a good deal earlier, while Muqaddasī wrote sometime thereafter; by Muqaddasī’s time it may have been the case that the provinces were indeed less constrained to remit taxes to the centre. But the interval between the two geographers

10 Muqaddasī, Ahsan, p. 337. Khwārazm poses a problem however, since it is also included by Muqaddasī in a list of provinces which did send kharāj to Bukhārā (Ahsan, p. 340). This confusion may arise from the fact that there were two centres of authority in Khwārazm, the Khwārazmshāh’s capital at Kath, and the Maʿmūnid governor’s seat at Jurjāniyya; it might be surmised that the Maʿmūnid, who was probably only recognized by Sāmanids during the course of the century, paid kharāj, while the long-established Khorāzmshah did not. In the same passage Muqaddasī also includes the amirs of Bust and Ghaznayn (=Ghazna), meaning the mamlūks of Qarāteğin and the Ghaznavids respectively; see below, p. 271 for the financial arrangements the Ghaznavids and the Ilyasids of Kirmān made with the Sāmanids.
12 Muqaddasī, ibid.
is uncomfortably short. Alternatively, it may be the case that Ibn Hawqal describes as taxes what Muqaddasī describes as gifts. That these gifts could be of considerable value is in fact clear from other sources (13). But Ibn Hawqal does make the point that he is talking of monies collected by tax officials, and what is more, he refers to gifts as well. This interpretation does therefore seem rather unlikely, unless we assume that Ibn Hawqal was describing an ideal arrangement whereby in principle the Sāmānids sent out tax collectors who collected taxes from all provinces and dispatched them to Bukhārā, leaving only a fraction of these monies as a ṭu'uma for the local vassal, who had to provide certain services in return, including some gifts; whereas Muqaddasī was describing the practice whereby local tax collectors collected all the revenue for their local master, who only forwarded a fraction of it to Bukhārā, and then only under the rubric of gifts.

In view of the tendencies of the geographers to idealize the Sāmānids, the latter, less flattering, version is more likely to be correct.

Ibn Hawqal also tells us that some provinces provided military assistance to the Sāmānids in return for tax concessions. This is confirmed by the chronicles which tell us that the rulers of Khwārazm, Jūzjān, Ghūr, Sīstān and Jurjān provided military aid for their sovereigns (14). Yet other provinces had different arrangements altogether, which did not include the

13 See above, chapter 8, note 11.
14 See above, chapter 4, p. 135.
provision of any services, either military or financial, and entailed only the acknowledgement of Sāmānīd sovereignty by the vassal; Ibn Hawqal places Ghazna (under Alptegin) and Kirman (under the Banū Ilyās) in this category (15), both of which were provinces which had seceded from the Sāmānīd state through force of arms.

Ibn Hawqal tells us that the Sāmānīds spent half of the 40 million dirhams which they collected annually from the land tax on the salaries of their courtiers, bureaucrats and army commanders (16). We do not know whether these payments included those made to soldiers below the rank of officer and to junior court and government officials. We do know however that the Sāmānīds spent all their taxation revenue in the mashriq. In the pre-monarchical period they had sent regular tribute to Baghdad (17), and in the early days of the monarchical period, they also frequently sent presents of considerable value, both on receipt of the caliphal document of investiture and on the accession of a new caliph, and after they had won victories against the Turks (18); but unlike their Tāhirid predecessors,

15 Ibn Hawqal says of these provinces: "He (the lord of Khurāsān) is humbled (emending the word idlālan to idhlālan, p. 424, line 12) by his vassals in respect of what he demands of them in the way of expenses and the charges and provisions they are obliged to pay him. Yet (at the same time these vassals) acknowledge the lord of Khurāsān."
16 Ibn Hawqal, ibid, p. 469.
17 See above, chapter 3, p. 79.
18 Our sources disagree as the value of the gifts which Ismā'īl sent to Baghdad after receiving the caliphal patent in 287/900; Mirkhwand gives the sum of 700,000 dirhams (Rawda, vol. iv, p. 35), whereas the later, and probably less reliable, Mujmal-i Fasīḥī says 10 million
they did not send regular tribute to Baghdad in the 10th century. It is not known whether the caliphs ever demanded regular tribute and, if so, how the Samanids managed to evade their demands. It should be noted that the Samanids were the first governors of the mashriq to forego the dispatch of regular tribute: even the Saffarids had frequently negotiated the amount of annual tribute with Baghdad (19).

The Samanids do not seem to have been greatly afflicted by fiscal problems. They were sometimes in financial straits at the beginning of a reign when huge sums were handed out as mal-i bay'a (20). On occasion funds were apparently squandered through mismanagement, as when the wazir Sulami emptied the treasury by handing out large sums to the hashm, but it may be that Sulami's extravagance was also occasioned by the accession of Nuh ibn Nasr (21). At times the treasury was plundered by rebels, as was the case in the revolt of Abu Zakariyya Yahya, brother of Nasr ibn Ahmad (22). On one occasion the Samanids were sufficiently hard pressed for funds to

dirhams - a quarter of the value of the state's annual income according to Ibn Hawqal (Mujmal-i Fasihi, ed. Mahmud Farrukh, vol. i, Mashhad, 1341, p. 381). Isma'il sent presents and gold to Baghdad along with the captive 'Amr ibn Layth (Kitab al-'uyun wa'l-hada'iq, p. 100). In 289/902 Isma'il sent 300,000 dirhams and many presents in return for Muktafi's patent (Gardizi, Zayn, p. 147). In 298/910 Ahmad ibn Isma'il sent to Baghdad 120 ghilmān fully equipped for battle, cloth, 50 man of musk, falcons, sable and "many wondrous things never before seen" ('Arīb, Sīla, p. 35).

19 See above, chapter 3, note 85.
20 See above, chapter 8, p. 241.
21 See above, chapter 7, note 19.
22 Ibn al-Athīr, Kāmil, vol. viii, p. 210: Barthold says that the treasury was also broken into in 942 (id, Turkestan, p. 246).
have to raise annual taxes in the form of a loan before they were due (23) and their subjects obviously sometimes had trouble meeting their demands (24).

But unlike the Buyids, the Samanids were not as a rule forced to pay their soldiery by allowing them to collect the taxes at source. As Nizam al-mulk says, the "padishahs of old" did not grant iqṭā's, but instead paid their troops four times a year in cash (25). However this was not entirely true, for great military families, such as the Simjurids and the family of Bakr ibn Mālik, held lands which virtually amounted to hereditary franchises (26). If Ibn al-Zubayr is to be believed, the volunteer militia (al-muttawwi'a), a very substantial force numbering many thousands of troops, were also muqṭa's (27); but, as suggested above, this militia may have been synonymous with the ghāzī troops (28), who were not members of the regular army.

References to the term iqṭā' are scarce and the majority

23 Barthold, Turkestan, pp. 246f, citing Muqaddasī, Aḥsan, p. 340. Barthold must have been using the first edition of Muqaddasī's geography; the second edition of 1906 does not have this reference on p. 340.
24 See the poet Abū Ahmad ibn Hamīd's lines concerning the collection of baqāyā (tax arrears) (Barthold, Turkestan, p. 247, citing Thaʿālibī, Yatima, vol. ii, part 4, pp. 63f).

26 The phrase is Bosworth's (cf. ibid, p. 117). Cf. appendix; the Sāmānid state elite; s.v. "Bakr ibn Mālik" and below, note 29.
27 See following note.
28 See above, Chapter 4, p. 134.
of them occur in later sources (29). It is not even clear from these references exactly what the term implies. All that can be said is that grants of territory were made in which it seems that the revenue of the land assigned was made over to the beneficiary.

There is no firm evidence to support the notion that the Samanid treasury was progressively depleted throughout the century. At times the Samanids may have been unable to pay their troops; thus it could be that 'Abdalmalik ibn Nuh was in need of funds when he refused

29 In chronological order the references are; i. Ahmad ibn 'Ali, brother of Su'lük was given Rayy as an iqta' by the caliph Muqtadir in 307 (Ibn al-Athir, Kamil, vol. viii, p. 144) ii. Rashid ibn al-Zubayr in his account of the volunteer militia which Nasr ibn Ahmad mobilized in 327/938-9 to greet the emissaries of the "King of China" (see above, chapter 5, p. 166), reports that the sahib jaysh al-muttawwi'a told the ambassadors that his troops were assigned estates (iqta'ât) (Kitab al-dakhâ'ir wa'l-tuhaf, p. 143; translation in C.E. Bosworth, "An alleged embassy from the Emperor of China to the amir Nasr ibn Ahmad - a contribution to Samanid military history", Yadname-ye Irani-ye Minorsky, ed. M. Minovi and I. Afshar, Tehran, 1969, pp. 17-29). iii. The Timurid historian Khwandamir describes the Simjurid territory of Qhistan as an iqta' (Dastur al-vuzara', p. 112); Munejjimbashi says that Qhistan was the permanent appanage of the Simjurids (Sahâ'if al-akhbâr, Turkish translation, Istanbul, 1258, vol. ii, p. 273, quoted by Mercil, "Simjuriler, II, Ibrahim b. Simjur", Tarih Enstitusu Dergisi, vols. x-xi, Istanbul, 1981, p. 96). Sam'ani merely says that in Ibrahim Simjurî's time, Qhistan remained bi-rasmihî (id, Ansab, s.v. "Simjurî"). iv. Abu 'Ali Sahani gave an iqta' to his brother Abu'l-Fadl in 333/944 (Mirkhwand, Rawda, vol. iv, p. 46). v. When Nuh ibn Nasr re-appointed Abu 'Ali Sahani to the governorship of Khurâsan in 339/950 (see above, chapter 7), he granted him the city of Rayy as his iqta' (Ibn al-Athir, ibid, vol. viii, p. 493). vi. Abu'l-Hasan Bayhaqi says that in 358 Abu'l-Hasan Muhammad ibn Ibrahim Simjurî gave Bayhaq as an iqta' to Salar ibn Shirdhil (id, Tarikh-i bayhaq, p. 231). vii. In 376 the wazir Muzani bribed Abu'l-Hasan Simjurî to return to Qhistan by offering him the iqta's of Badghis and Kanj Rustaq (Mirkhwand, Rawda, p. 55). 'Utbi, writing of the same incident says that Muzani ja'ala badghis wa kanj rustaq (bi-'smihi) wa rasmihî (Yamini, in Manini, Path, vol. i, p. 126).
to send the money requested by Bakr ibn Mālik for his war against Abū 'Alī Saghānī and his Buṭyid allies in 334/945-6 (30), but there it is by no means certain that his successor, Mansūr ibn Nūh, was short of funds when he refused to pay for the expedition against Rayy in 357/968 (31); he may simply have believed that the Ziyārids should pay for the expedition, the main aim of which was to restore their authority in the Caspian region.

Yet in the last two decades of the century, the Sāmanids must have suffered from shortage of revenue to some extent. The question is when this shortage became critical and for what reasons. It is clear that after Abū 'Alī Simjūrī's refusal to send the annual tribute to Bukhārā in circa 380/990-1, the Sāmanids were thenceforth unable to collect revenue from Khurasān (32); it is moreover likely, that from the time of the dismissal of his father, Abū'l-Hasan, in 371/981-2, the disruption of Khurāsānī politics had made the collection of revenue from the province problematic. It also appears that political turmoil in both Khurāsān and Transoxania during these two decades prevented the Sāmanids from maintaining access to the rich silver mines in the Panjhlīr valley and the province of Īlāq; this could well be the explanation for the decline in trade between the Sāmanid state and the northern lands, which is to be inferred from the marked fall-off in the northward flow

30 Gardīzī, Zayn, p. 159.
31 See above, chapter 7, p. 228.
32 See above, chapter 8, p. 248.
of Ṣamānīd dirhams from the 370’s (33). Yet, according to Ḥusayn b. Ẓafīr, when the Qarākhānids invaded Bukhāra they found large reserves in the Ṣamānīd treasury which they seized (34). The paucity of our data prevents us from giving a clear answer to the question of the decline of revenue; what we can say however, is that shortfall in revenue appears to have been a symptom, rather than a cause, of the collapse of the political authority of the dynasty.

The state apparatus

Ṣamānīd revenues were expended on the maintenance of the state apparatus, which performed certain services within the state. Like all Muslim rulers, the Ṣamānīds were expected to engage in warfare against external enemies.

33 The numismatic data, as they presently exist, suggest an earlier date, by five or more years, for the fall-off in dirham exports (marked decline in 970’s; virtual cessation by the end of the 980’s) than can be readily explained by either the disruption of relations between Bukhāra and Simjūrid Khurasan or the Qarākhānī incursions into the eastern Transoxanian provinces. But cf. T. Noonan’s comment that as more of the later 10th century/11th century hoards are published, so the date of the decline in dirham exports might be put back as late as the 990’s (see above, chapter 2, note 29). The exhaustion of these same silver mines was once thought to be the cause of the cessation of dirham exports to the north, but this is disproved by the existence of the coinages of the Muslim dynasties which succeeded the Ṣamānids, the Ghaznavids and the Qarākhānīs (Cf. R. P. Blake, "The circulation of silver in the Moslem East down to the Mongol epoch", Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies, vol. ii, 1937, pp. 291-328; A.E. Lieber, "Did a 'silver crisis' in Central Asia affect the flow of Islamic coins into Scandinavia and Eastern Europe?", Commentationes de nummis saeculorum IX-XI, [Proceedings of the Sigtuna Symposium on Viking-Age coinage 1-4 June 1989], ed. K. Jonsson and B. Malmberg, pp. 207f). 34 Abū'l-Fadl Bayḥāqī, Tarikh-i bayḥāqī, p. 199; Ibn Ẓafīr, Duwal, fol. 129b.
both defensive and offensive, to maintain internal order and uphold Islamic law and suppress heretics (35). For these purposes they had an army and a bureaucracy, which absorbed at least half of the state’s annual income, and possibly considerably more (36). But the question of exactly which services this administration provided and how it organized its provision of these services is not easily answered.

The Samanids' obligation to maintain Islam did engender a certain amount of formal organization; the diwan al-qada’ and the diwan al-ḥisba were broadly responsible for the administration of justice and the supervision of thought and morality (37). Their obligation to fight the jihad and maintain internal order also stimulated some degree of formal organisation; the muṭṭawwi'a were clearly so organized as to be capable of responding quickly to emergencies; castration centres for (war) horses were administered by government officials (38); arms factories were set up which employed large numbers of workers (39); and the court maintained a spy system (40).

But there is no evidence of a government programme for the construction and maintenance of the roads, bridges and frontier outposts which were required to deal with

36 See above, p. 271.
37 Cf. chapter 4, pp. 127 and 129.
39 Cf. 'uttak . . . . 'amal al-silāh (see above, chapter 2, note 100).
40 Cf. above, chapter 4, p. 127 (sāhib al-sirr).
the Turkish threat in the first half of the century. As far as we can tell, much of the latter construction work was carried out by wealthy Muslim individuals, who engaged in such projects in order to win religious merit and advertise their wealth and status to their compatriots (41).

As in other Muslim states, so too in the Sāmānid mashriq, it was individual Muslims, including the rulers themselves, rather than the state, who provided for public welfare. Thus the construction of educational and medical facilities, including madrasas (43), mosques (44), libraries (45), and the organisation

41 Cf. İstakhrī, chapter 1, p. 31 (road building). For the construction of ribāts, cf. Qarateqīn's ribāt in Isfīyāb (Muqaddasī, Ahsan, p. 273); Fā‘īq's ribāt in Mīrūkī on the Jaxartes (Muqaddasī, ibid, p. 275). The Sāmānids also constructed ribāts (cf. Ibn al-Jawzī, Muntazām, vol. vi, p. 77); Narshakī says that Ismā‘īl ibn Ahmad purchased the village of Shargh to endow a ribāt in Bukhara (Tarikh-i bukhārā, p. 21 = p. 15); Sūlī tells of Naṣr ibn Ahmad’s death-bed bequest of a_ thousand horses or mules to be sent to the thughur (Akhbār al-rādī billah wa‘l-muttaqī billah, ed. Heyworth Dunne, Cairo, 1935, p. 237).

43 Note the Farjak madrasa in Bukhārā; it is not known who built it (Narshakī, Tarikh-i bukhārā, p. 131 = p. 96). Qarateqīn built a madrasa in Naysābur (Bayhaqī, Tarikh-i bayhaq, p. 178). Cf. the Sīmjarīds’ construction of a madrasa for Ibn Fūrah (Bulliet, Patricians, p. 63).
44 Cf. Abū ‘Abdallāh Muhammad ibn Ahmad Jayhānī’s minaret for the congregational mosque in Bukhara (Tarikh-i bukhārā, p. 69 = p. 50); Fā‘īq’s mosque near ‘Alī al-Riḍā’s tomb in Tūs, said by Muqaddasī to have been the most beautiful mosque in Khurāsān (Muqaddasī, Ahsan, p. 333); the mosque endowed by Ismā‘īl ibn Ahmad (ibid, p. 40 = p. 28 and p. 71 = p. 52); the mosque constructed with funds supplied by Naṣr ibn Ahmad’s courtiers (p. 69 = p. 50); Nūḥ ibn Naṣr’s mosque (ibid, p. 71 = p. 52).
of poor relief and welfare provision for the descendants of the Prophet (46), were all undertaken by individuals.

The data to hand does not permit us to come to any firm conclusions about the extent of the services provided by the state, but it does appear that the Samanid state provided fewer services, for example, than did the Buyids under 'Adud al-Dawla (47). This may be of course be a trick of the sources, which are more detailed for 'Adud al-Dawla's reign than for that of any Samanid ruler. But the similarity between Buyids and Samanids on this issue lies in the fact that formal organization was generally avoided in both states wherever private initiative and personal networks sufficed to do the job.

The nature of Samanid politics

The relative absence of formal organization within the state meant that personal relations were of overriding

45 Note Ibn Sīnā's description of the Siwān al-hikma library in Bukhārā (EI2, s.v. "Ibn Sīnā").
46 See Muqaddasi, Ahsan, p. 273 for a sug the revenues of which were made into a waqf for the provision of the poor; see above, chapter 3, p. 67 for waqf endowments made by the Samanids for 'Alids; see above, chapter 1, p. 27 for Istakhrī's comments on the liberality of wealthy Transoxanians.
47 For a summary of 'Adud al-Dawla's provision of state services, including a courier service, espionage system, internal security system, construction and maintenance of irrigation works, reconstruction of urban infrastructure, land reclamation and agricultural improvements, patronage of learning, construction of hospitals and libraries, poor relief, see Mez, The renaissance of Islam, tr. S. Khuda Bakhsh and D.S. Margoliouth, Patna, 1937, pp. 24-27. Note the fact that 'Adud al-Dawla's services were dispensed state-wide; Iraq, Fars, Arabia, Kirman all benefited from his attentions.
importance in maintaining the machinery of government. For each and every member of the state elite, politics was the business of keeping his peers on his side, inducing them to act for him and persuading them of common interests. In these circumstances we would expect to find an elaborate patronage system in place; this system is not however very well attested in our sources. We do know that new reigns were generally inaugurated by the distribution of largesse to the *khāṣṣa* in the form of the *mal al-bay'a*. But there is not much evidence of patronage thereafter, except in the case of the *mamlūks* who were the amir's personal servants (48). An example of how important patronage could be for the survival of the ruler is to be found in the incident of Ishaq ibn Ahmad's attempted *coup d'état* at the beginning of Ahmad ibn Isma'il's reign; Ibn Žafir tells us that Ahmad was warned of Ishaq's plan to seize him by one of Ishaq's servants who was indebted to him on account of favours which he had received from him (49).

A *mustana* of the ruler was induced to remain loyal to his master through fear of contravening the moral injunction of *kufran ni'ma* (lit. ingratitude for benefit) (50). To betray a patron was regarded as morally reprehensible and a transgression of the tenets of Islam; such a betrayal was a highly public event which, in theory, would disqualify the perpetrator from enjoying the confidence of his peers. On one famous

48 See below, chapter 10, pp. 294f.
49 Ibn Žafir, *Duwal*, fol. 117b.
50 See Mottahedeh, *Loyalty and leadership*, p. 76.
occasion, the secession of Alptegīn, the fear of being perceived as an ingrate is said to have dissuaded the would-be rebel from taking steps to overthrow the dynasty and claim the throne for himself (51). Yet this moral sanction does not generally seem to have carried much weight in practice, even if observers liked to explain the downfall of men who rebelled against their sovereign as a consequence of their ingratitude (52).

For the most part, as the record of numerous rebellions against the dynasty proves, the sovereign’s trust could be betrayed with impunity, so long as the rebel did not attempt the ultimate crime of unseating the dynasty.

The sources are singularly devoid of comment on the frequent outbreak of dissent and rebellion against the ruler. There is no sense that observers were shocked by rebellion, nor do they seem to have had any expectation that loyalty to the ruler was inviolable. The Sāmānids’ task was thus to ensure that at all times, it suited a sufficient number of people to support them; they accordingly adopted a policy of "divide and rule" by means of which they attempted, with considerable success, to prevent the formation of large coalitions against them. The Sāmānids’ reaction to rebellion was, of necessity, highly pragmatic; when they could, they punished rebels, but when unable to impose their will by force, as was often the case, they were often remarkably

lenient to rebels, even to those who had committed high treason. Although some rebels were killed (53) or mutilated (54), others were merely imprisoned for a time, sometimes to be released and accepted back into court (55); and in a number of cases, rebels were re-instated in their former offices after they had been pardoned (56). In numerous cases, the re-instated rebel rebelled against his sovereign a second time.

The point of greatest vulnerability for the dynasty was the beginning of a new reign, when the new monarch had to ensure the transfer of allegiances from his predecessor to himself. Both Ahmad ibn Ismā‘īl and his son Naṣr came close to losing their thrones to Ishaq ibn Ahmad soon after their accession. Abū 'Alī al-Saghānī’s revolt began soon after Nūḥ ibn Naṣr had come to the throne and lasted for much of his reign. Narshakhtī’s laconic account makes it clear that Nūḥ’s successors

53 Muḥammad ibn Ḥarūn, Abū Ḥasan al-Katib, Ahmad ibn Sahl al-Kamkārī, the Samānids Abū Zakariyya Yahyā and his brother and Abū’l-Faḍl ibn Ya‘qūb, all met their deaths as a result of their quarrels with the Samānids (see above, chapters 4 and 5). Muḥammad ibn Ḥarūn and Ahmad ibn Sahl were among those killed on the field of battle.

54 The Samānīd pretenders Ibrāhīm ibn Ahmad and Abū Ja’far Muḥammad were blinded by Nūḥ ibn Naṣr (see above, chapter 7, p. 218).

55 Cf. the fates of Husayn ibn ‘Alī, Ilyās ibn Ishaq and ‘Abdallāh ibn Ashkām (see chapters 5 and 6).

56 Cf. Abū’l-‘Abbās ‘Abdallāh ibn Muḥammad ibn Nūḥ the Samānīd (see chapter 4, p. 120f), Ishaq ibn Ahmad (chapter 4, p. 144), the mamlūk regicides (chapter 4, p. 141), Qarāteqīn (chapter 5, note 46), Ibn ‘Abd al-razzāq (see chapter 7, pp. 224f), Abū ‘Alī Saghānī (chapter 7, p. 221), Muḥammad ibn Ilyās (see appendix; the Samānīd state elite), Fā’iq (see chapter 8, pp. 251 and 260).
were similarly hard pressed to gain control of the provinces (57).

The Samanids were conscious of the dangers inherent in the transfer of power to a new ruler and tried to ensure the accession of their successors by appointing them heirs apparent (58). On at least one occasion caliphal endorsement was sought for the choice of heir apparent, but this strategy did little to secure the throne for the chosen successor (59). Nuh ibn Nasr went further than this and appointed all his sons as successors in turn (60) and delegated the responsibility for ensuring the implementation of his succession arrangements to trusted mamluks (61). His aim was probably to save the state from the painful experience of minority rule, such as it had undergone in the reign of his father Nasr, and in the case of the accession of his son, Mansur, his plan worked (62). But as had already been proved by the

57 Narshakhī, Tarikh-i bukhārā, pp. 134-137 = pp. 97-100.
58 Evidence of the appointment of heirs apparent appears in the following works; i. Abū’l-Hasan Bayhaqī says that Isma‘īl ibn Ahmad was the heir apparent of Naṣr I ibn Ahmad (Tarikh-i bayhaq, p. 117); ii. Ahmad ibn Isma‘īl was appointed heir apparent by his father (Gardīzī, Zayn, p. 148); iii. Gardīzī reports that Isma‘īl ibn Naṣr was Naṣr ibn Ahmad’s heir apparent (Zayn, p. 154); iv. For Nūh ibn Naṣr’s succession arrangements, see below, same page; v. Mansur ibn Nūh appointed Nūh ibn Mansur his heir apparent (Ibn Zafir, Duwal, fol. 128b); vi. Both Abū’l-Fadl Bayhaqī and Jūzjānī say that Nūh ibn Mansur appointed his son Mansur heir apparent (Tarikh-i bayhaqī, p. 640; Tabagāt-i nāsirī, p. 214).
59 Isma‘īl ibn Ahmad obtained caliphal endorsement for Ahmad’s heir apparent but this did not deter Ahmad’s uncle, Ishaq, from attempting to seize the throne on Isma‘īl’s death (Gardīzī, Zayn, p. 147).
60 Gardīzī, Zayn, p. 159.
61 See above, chapter 7, p. 236.
62 Cf. Fā’iq’s speedy deposition of Naṣr ibn ‘Abdalmalik in favour of Mansur in 350 (see above, chapter 7, ibid).
failure of 'Abbāsid attempts at multiple succession arrangements, the system created problems of its own, in that the heirs apparent provided a ready-made focus for dissent against the incumbent regime (63). In one case, the question of the heir apparent posed a severe threat to the stability of the ruling regime: Naṣr ibn Ahmad is said to have killed his eldest son and heir apparent, Ismā‘īl, after the latter had quarrelled with his brother, Nūḥ, who eventually succeeded his father (64).

Legitimacy

The Șāmānids did not rule solely by virtue of their control of the resources of the state and the patronage system; they also had the advantage of being perceived as the legitimate rulers of the mashriq. Alptegin, one of only two amirs, who were not of royal blood, to contemplate usurping the dynasty’s right to rule, in the event decided instead to leave for Ghazna (65). Alptegin was apparently inhibited by his personal relationship with the amir; others were presumably held back by the Șāmānids’ public credentials.

63 During the reign of 'Abdalmalik, Bakr ibn Mālik was accused of supporting Mansūr’s candidacy for the throne (see appendix; the Șāmānids state elite, s.v. "Bakr ibn Mālik"); cf. 'Abd al-Azīz ibn Nūh’s claim to the throne (see above, chapter 8, p. 253f).
64 See above, chapter 6, note 54.
65 See above, p. 281. The only other amir who is said to have planned to seize the throne in his own name was the commander of the Șāmānids army at the time of the Ismā‘īlī conversions at Naṣr’s court (Nizām al-mulk, Siyar al-şuluk, p. 291 = p. 215).
The Sāmānīd amir had the twin distinctions of being the descendant of Bahram Chubín and the representative of the caliph, of which the latter was undoubtedly the more important. Many contemporary rulers, both dynasts and local rulers, claimed descent from pre-Islamic Iranian heroes (66), but to secure public acknowledgement as a vassal of the caliph’s was a much harder task which yielded correspondingly greater political benefits. In general it might be said that, in contrast to the Būyids, the Sāmānīds did not make great

66 See above, chapter 3, p. 68f. For the Sāmānīd genealogy, cf. Gardīzī, whose version goes back beyond Bahram Chubín, to Kayūmarth, the first king on earth (Zayn, pp. 145f); Ibn al-Athīr (Kāmil, vol. vii, p. 279); Ibn Zafīr (Duwal, fol. 115b); Samargandī (Muntakhab, fol. 64b); Hamdallāh Mustawfī Qazvīnī (Tarīkh-i guzide, p. 376); Ibn Hawqāl, (Surat al-ard, vol. ii, pp. 344f); Sam‘ānī (Ansāb, vol. vii, p. 25).

The political significance of the Sāmānīd claim to descent from Bahram Chubín is an intriguing issue which however cannot be satisfactorily examined, since we have no idea whether the genealogy was expressly fashioned with specific political goals in view, as was that of the Būyids, or whether it was a popular eastern Iranian tradition which was adopted by the Sāmānīds as a concession to eastern Iranian patriotism. Bahram Chubín was a celebrated anti-Turkish champion who also ruled the Sasanian empire for a short while after plotting the deposition of the Sasanian monarch. The Sāmānīd claim to be of his lineage may have been a means of giving formal sanction to the popular perception of the dynasty as the ghāzī defenders of the umma. Bahram Chubín was also, by many accounts, not of Sasanian blood. This fact may reflect the Sāmānīds’ reluctance to claim descent from a truly imperial predecessor; instead they chose a figure who was a march-lord, a prince who occupied the same subordinate position vis-a-vis his monarch as the Sāmānīds did in relation to the caliph. Further study of our sources for the life of Bahram is required before such issues can be properly addressed (cf. E. Daniel’s comments on the lack of a critical edition of Bal‘āmī’s translation of Tabari’s history, which contains a chapter on Bahram ["Manuscripts and editions of Bal‘āmī’s Tarjamah-i Tarikh-i Tabari", Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, 1990, pp. 282-321]).
efforts to establish a link between their own rulership and the imperial Iranian past (67).

On the other hand, the Samanids took their role as caliphal vassals very seriously indeed. Even before the creation of the monarchical state, caliphal endorsement had been a central pillar of their foreign policy and throughout the monarchical period, they were to retain the name of the caliph, though not always that of the ruling caliph (68), on their coinage and in the khutba. This endorsement authorized them to administer the judicial system and to lead the jihad, and at the same time linked their rulership to the Muslim world at large. As members of this world, the Samanids sent annual gifts for the poor of Mecca and Medina (69).

67 The Samanid court poets did ascribe imperial titles to their sovereigns; in the qasida by Rudaki quoted above, the poet addresses Nasr as shāh-i mulk-i jahān, and shāh-i jahān; he also addressed him as Khusraw, probably using the term as a generic term meaning simply "Iranian king" (Tarikh-i sistan, p. 319 = p. 260). Poets also drew parallels with the Kayanid emperors (Cf. Daqiqi's reference to Dara [E.G. Browne, Literary history of Persia, vol. i, p. 461]). In contrast to the Buyids, the Samanids did not make much use of the term shahanshah. One of the earliest appearances of the term "King of Kings" was on the coinage of Rukn al-Dawla, who as ruler of Rayy was the Buyid with whom the Samanids were most closely involved (Cf. the Pahlavi legend on Rukn al-Dawla's silver medallion minted in Rayy in 351/962 [H. Busse, "The revival of Persian kingship under the Buyids", Islamic civilisation, 950-1150, Oxford, 1973, p. 57]; note the appearance of the term shahanshah on the coinage of Fakhr al-Dawla in Rayy in 374, [Miles, Numismatic history of Rayy, p. 170f]). When the Samanids did adopt the title, in the reign of Nūr ibn Mansūr they probably did so as a counterclaim to the Buyid appropriation of the title (Nizām al-mulk, Siyar al-mulk, p. 210 = p. 156).

68 See below, p. 289.

Both parties derived practical benefits from the accord. The 'Abbasids on occasion supplied aid, including money and treasure for Samanid armies which were sent against caliphal rebels (70) and possibly a subsidy for the war against the steppe Turk (71).

'Abbasid wazirs appear to have visited the mashriq in the early years of the century but the reasons for these visits are not given (72). In return the Samanids obeyed instructions to attack the enemies of the caliph (73); in the early years of the century they also kept the caliph informed of the progress of these and other campaigns and sent captured caliphal rebels to

70 For Mu'tadid's subsidy for the intended Samanid invasion of Sistan, cf. above, chapter 4, note 47.
71 Abu Shuja'Rudhrawarî, in Eclipse, vol. iii, pp. 98f = vol. vi, p. 102, sub anno 374/984. Although Busse understands the money to have been a subsidy for the war against the steppe Turks, the sum in question appears to have been the Buyid tribute from Rayy.
72 Cf. the visit of the caliph's wazir, 'Alî ibn 'Isa, to Iraq-i 'Ajam and Khurasan in 295/907-8 (Mujmal-i Fasîhi, p. 395). There is also the curious phenomenon of the dirhams of Shâsh and Andarâba of 291/903, the Andarâba dirham (Lane-Poole, British Museum Catalogue of Oriental Coins, vol. ii, p. 81, no. 266; U.S. Linder Welin, "Ein Grosser Fund Arabischer Münzen aus Stora Velinge; Gotland, Nordisk Numismatisk Aarskrift, 1941, p. 116, no. 1801) has the title Walî al-Dawla on the obverse and the names al-Muktafî and Isma'îl on the reverse. The Shâsh dirham bears the same title (Linder Welin, ibid, p. 117, nos. 1950-53). Tiesenhausen deduced that the title refers to Abu'l-Husayn al-Qasim ibn 'Ubaydallâh, wazir of Muktafî from 288-91/901-4. This is the only known occurrence of the title of an 'Abbasid wazir on Samanid coins and it is a strange co-incidence that it should appear in the very year in which the Samanids repelled a Turkish invasion of Transoxania (see above, chapter 4, p. 132). Did the wazir perhaps come in person to Transoxania to lead the 'Abbasid war effort against the Turks?
73 Viz. the invasion of Zaydi Tabaristan in 900 (see above, chapter 4, p. 117) and Sistan in 910 (see above, ibid, p. 112).
Baghdad (74). Unlike the Tahirids however, they did not pay tribute to Baghdad (75) and unlike them, they were not involved in metropolitan politics, although they did maintain a representative at the ‘Abbāsid court in the early years (76). The second Sāmānīd ruler of the monarchical state, Ṭḥamad ibn Ismā‘īl, did request the shurṭa of Baghdad as a reward for repelling a Turkish attack, but the caliph did not appoint him to the post (77).

Yet even in the early years, when ties were close and contact between the two capitals frequent, relations were far from being entirely amicable. On a number of occasions, the caliph, or rather his ministers, acted against Sāmānīd interests, providing refuge for the renegade general, Bāris (78), endorsing the claims to the governorship of Khurāsān put forward by a Sāmānīd rebel (79) and possibly sanctioning the expulsion of Sāmānīd governors from Sīstān (80).

But only on one occasion before the Buʿayd occupation of Baghdad, towards the end of Naṣr’s reign (324/935) were the Sāmānīds, along with other contemporary

74 Viz. ‘Amr ibn Layth, Subkarī, Muḥammad ibn ‘Alī (Ṣaffārid) (see above, chapter 4); Mākān ibn Ḫākī (Gardīzī, Zayn, p. 153f).
75 See above, p. 271f.
76 For the role of Marzubānī as Ismā‘īl ibn Ahmad’s representative at the caliph’s court, see Ibn al-ʿAthīr, Kāmil, vol. vii, p. 502 (where he is referred to as nā‘ībuḥu (i.e. Ismā‘īl) bi‘l-hadra; he was still the Sāmānīd representative in Ahmad’s reign (cf. Miskawayh, Eclipse, vol. i, p. 20). For the history of the Marzubānī family see appendix; the Sāmānīd state elite, s.v. “al-Marzubānī”.
77 ‘Arīb, Silat ta‘rīkh al-ṭabarī, p. 43.
78 See above, chapter 4, p. 119f.
79 See above, chapter 5, p. 150.
80 See above, chapter 5, pp. 157f.
dynasts, said to have withdrawn their allegiance from the caliph (81); this was in 324 when the caliph surrendered his powers to the new lord of Baghdad, the amīr al-umārāʾ Ibn Řāʿiq. However the numismatic evidence indicates that the Samanids did not discontinue formal acknowledgement of the caliph during the latter part of Nasr’s reign (82).

During the second half of the century, relations with Baghdad were complicated by the fact that the caliph was a virtual prisoner of the Buyids. On two occasions, when under pressure from the Buyid-dominated caliph, the Samanids did go so far as to withdraw their allegiance; between 335-346 and 361-369, they dropped the name of the reigning caliph from the coinage and substituted that of one of his predecessors (83). While the Buyids apparently made little attempt to make political capital out of the disrupted relations between Bukhara and Baghdad (84), Mahmud ibn Sebuktegin the Ghaznavid did not hesitate to do so at the end of the century. In the fathnāme which he sent to the caliph Qādir after his

83 They substituted the name of the caliph Mustakfi for that of the ruling caliph Mutiʿ on their coins from 945-955 (see above, chapter 7, note 24). They did not acknowledge Qādir (381/991-422/1031), instead retaining the name of his predecessor Taʿi; cf. Naysabur AR 384 A.H. and 383 A.H. (Lane-Poole, Catalogue of the Oriental Coins in the British Museum, vol. ii, p. 114, no. 418; id, ibid, vol. ix, no. 417c).
84 While we have no evidence that the Buyids took steps to declare the Samanids rebels against the caliph, Abu Shujaʿ (sub anno 373/983-4) does mention a Buyid demand that the Samanids submit to the caliph; however the context of this Buyid initiative is not clear (Eclipse, vol. iii, p. 98 = vol. vi, p. 101).
victory over 'Abdalmalik ibn Nūh in 389, he claimed that he took action against his former sovereigns because they had "withdrawn their necks from the loop of (caliphal) obedience" (85). Mahmūd's pretext for rebellion has a hollow ring to it: Ghaznavid coins minted before 390/1000 show that the Ghaznavids had followed the Ṣamanids' lead in refusing to acknowledge Qādir (86). Mahmūd's claim to be acting on the caliph's behalf was a means of securing caliphal sanction for his act of treachery against the Ṣamanids and thereby obtaining the same position as caliphal vassal which the Ṣamanids had previously enjoyed. Yet up to the 380's, the relationship between Bukhārā and Baghdad had yielded major benefits for both parties; the caliph saw his name acknowledged throughout the mashriq, while caliphal endorsement endowed the Ṣamanids with the status of kings and thereby made them the most powerful players in the politics of the region.

86 Busse points out that the earliest surviving Ghaznavid coin bearing Qādir's name, is dated 390/1000 (id, Chalif und Grosskönig, p. 70, note 2, citing C.E. Bosworth, "The imperial policy of the early Ghaznavids", Islamic Studies, vol. iii, 1962, p. 60).
Chapter ten

THE FALL OF THE SAMANID STATE
The role of the civilian and military elites

The clearest hypothesis regarding the collapse of the Sāmānids is Barthold's; "the administrative tendencies of the Sāmānids were resisted by the dihqāns and the Turkish guard. In the struggle between the military aristocracy and the throne the clergy sided with the former. The opposition of these classes facilitated the conquest of the country by the Turks." (1)

Barthold seems to envisage the Sāmānids as systematic supporters of a bureaucratic civilian elite to the point that they alienated the military, be it in the form of gentry or mamlūks; and for the same reason, one assumes, the scholars eventually also sided against them. To what extent is this hypothesis borne out by our sources?

Let us begin with the dihqāns. Is it true to say that they suffered a gradual loss of wealth and status under the Sāmānids, and if so, who were the main agents of their decline? Barthold seems to believe that it was the Sāmānids and their bureaucrats who were responsible for their decline, whereas Frye suggests that it was the mamlūks who ousted them and took over their properties and functions.

1 id, Turkestan, p. xxx. By "administrative tendencies" Barthold is presumably alluding to the efforts made by the Sāmānids to construct an effective centralized system of government.
It has to be said that there is little evidence to support either interpretation. The ancestor of the Samanids was a member of the Iranian gentry class; dihqãns, presumably in the same sense, fought for the Samanids in 287 and appear as regular members of the Samanid army in the time of Ibn Hawqal. But neither the dihqãn of Tarâz, who killed the rebel Husayn ibn Mutt (2), nor the dihqãn of Kashgar, with whom Ilyâs ibn Ishâq established an alliance (3), were dihqãns in the sense of Iranian gentry; the latter was certainly a Turk as was, in all likelihood, the former. Hereditary rulers of Iranian origin, such as the Farîghûnids and the Khwârazmshâhs, did fare well under the Samanids, as did several men of noble descent, such as Ahmad ibn Sahl and Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-razzaq, who held high office in the period 300-350. The latter are not however commonly referred to as dihqãns (4) and we know nothing about the source of their wealth and authority. In Samarqandî's Muntakhab, we come across a dihqãn whose drunken revels were interrupted by the stern hand of the local men of God (5); this is one perception of the dihqãn squire.

2 See above, chapter 5, p. 147. Note also the dahâqin of Tarâz, probably Turks, who accepted Islam in 280/893-4 from Ismâ'îl ibn Ahmad (Narshakhî, Tarîkh-i bukhâra, p. 119 = p. 87).
3 See above, ibid, p. 147.
4 The exception was Ahmad ibn Sahl who was descended from a Marwâzî dihqãn (see appendix; the Samanid state elite, s.v. "Ahmad ibn Sahl").
5 Samarqandî, Muntakhab, fol. 45a. In this anecdote, Samarqandî tells us of the dihqãn al-balad (of Nasaf?), presumably a senior figure in his quarter, if not the chief representative of his class in the city, who was holding a party in a house adjacent to a mosque. When some scholars in the mosque were disturbed by the sound of music coming from his house, they marched into the
which no doubt lingered on in the Šāmānid period and was reinforced by such behaviour as Samarqandī describes. But it does not contribute to our understanding of the gentry’s standing under the Šāmānids. The last, and most revealing reference to dihḡāns, in the sense of local gentry (6), shows them betraying the Šāmānids to the Qarākhānids.

These few references do not amount to a clearly discernible trend. There is no evidence of antagonism on the part of the dāhāqīn towards bureaucrats, so Barthold’s thesis is difficult to accept. Neither is there much evidence of rivalry with the mamlūks, although mamlūks certainly did become more prominent as the dihḡāns declined and probably took over their estates (7). Where the Iranian nobility do seem to have lost out from the beginning of the second half of the 10th century, was in appointments to the top administrative posts. The Šāmānids did retain Iranian noblemen in power as vassal rulers of the peripheral provinces, but replaced them in the core area of the state with their personal dependents, presumably because they wanted to prevent them forming strong regional power bases which would have represented a threat to their own authority (8).

building and emptied all the drinking vessels they could find while the shamefaced revellers hid themselves. 6 Cf. Jurbādhḏganī’s gloss of dāhāqīn in this context as maʿārif (see above, chapter 8, note 34).
7 R.N. Frye, Bukhara; the medieval achievement, pp. 90, 156 (dihḡan decline); p. 125 (Turkish takeover of their estates).
8 Viz. Ahmad ibn Sahl and Ḥusayn ibn ʿAlī al-Marwazī (see above, chapter 5, pp. 150f).
Yet there is little evidence to suggest that even at the centre they were members of a losing class. Although they probably did suffer from mamlūk competition, as Frye says, this does not adequately explain their betrayal of the Šāmānīds. Neither do the dihqāns appear to have betrayed the Šāmānīds in concert with the mamlūks. Barthold’s theory would at least have the merit of explaining such an alliance, but ‘Utbi’s account, uninformative though it is, does not lend itself to this interpretation (9).

Turning now to the mamlūks; some mamlūks were already prominent from the beginning of the monarchical state (10). But the Šīmjūrīds apart, mamlūks only really began to dominate the state when Nūh appointed mamlūk guardians to his sons (11), and continued to dominate it thereafter. Most mamlūks were probably steppe Turks, although there is evidence to suggest that some of the most senior mamlūks of the earlier period, including the Šīmjūrīds, may have been indigenous Turks from Transoxania (12). Turkish ethnicity was not however a

9 See above, chapter 8, pp. 249ff.
10 See above, chapter 4, pp. 119f (Sallām and Bāris); cf. appendix; the Šāmānīd state elite, s.vv. "Šīmjūr" and "Bughrā".
11 See above, chapter 7, p. 236.
12 Some Šāmānīd mamlūks bore Eastern Iranian nisbas; cf. Qaratṭegīn al-Isfīyābī (for the evidence that he was a mamlūk, pace Barthold, Turkestan, passim, see appendix: the Šāmānīd state elite, s.v. "Qaratṭegīn al-Isfīyābī"), Abū 'Imrān Šīmjūr al-Khwārazmī (cf. appendix, ibid; "Šīmjūr"), Kandākīn al-Daylamī (cf. above, chapter 4, note 162). There is no way of knowing however whether these nisbas refer to their original domicile or to their former masters who may have sold them to the Šāmānīds. If it was the case that they were indigenous Turks, the question then arises as to whether they were indeed mamlūks, or whether they were freeborn Turks whom contemporary observers assumed to be mamlūks. There is
prerequisite for *mamlūks*; the eunuch Fa‘iq was a Greek (Rūmī), or possibly a Spaniard (Andalusī) (13). Eunuchs like Fa‘iq do not in fact appear to have been very numerous. Many *mamlūks* had families; their sons inherited their positions, like freeborn amirs, and some of them founded veritable dynasties. *Mamlūks* were also granted lands, which passed to their sons as did their titles. Manumission of *mamlūks* was not unknown, but there is no evidence to suggest that it was common practice (14).

In short, no attempt was made to prevent them from putting down local roots. They were thus free to form an aristocracy of their own, marked out by their Turkish ethnicity, their continued use of Turkish and their close ties with the Sāmānid house (15). Turkish ethnicity was to some extent a defining characteristic of the *mamlūks*; a *mamlūk* of western origin, like Fa‘iq, was distrusted by his peers on account of his alien

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some evidence that the Saffārids had employed *mamlūks* of indigenous Transoxanian origin: cf. Bosworth’s discussion of the origins of the Saffārid *mamlūk*, Subkārī, a member of the Khalaj tribe, who was captured in either Zamindawar or Zabulistan (cf. A. Bivar, "The history of eastern Iran", Cambridge history of Iran, vol. iii/i, 1983, p. 213; C.E. Bosworth, "The armies of the Saffārids", BSOAS, vol. xxxi, 1968, p. 545; see the *Hudud al-‘ālam*, p. 111 for the areas inhabited by the Khalaj).

13 See appendix; the Sāmānid state elite, s.v. "Fa‘iq".
15 The Sāmānids intermarried with some *mamlūk* families; see above, chapter 7, note 38 and chapter 8, p. 242.
origin (16). They also participated in Muslim cultural life through their patronage of learning (17).

Did they resent Sāmānid sponsorship of the bureaucracy, as Barthold implies? There was certainly friction between the mamlūks and administrators on occasion; indeed the incident which prompted the Simjurids to turn rebel arose from an apparent resurgence of the authority of the bureaucracy under Abū’l-Ḥusayn ‘Utbi, the wazir who ordered Abū’l-Hasan’s dismissal. From the middle of the century onwards, mamlūks had occasionally attempted to control the bureaucracy and put their own candidates in charge of it (18). But it does not seem that they were preoccupied with the increasing power of the bureaucrats as Barthold’s thesis would imply. Neither was it really the case that the Sāmānids tried to promote the bureaucracy at their expense.

Therefore there seems to be little justification for postulating protracted opposition to the Sāmānids and their bureaucrats on the part of either dihqāns or mamlūks as the main reason for the fall of the dynasty. Rather it seems that the crucial flaw in the Sāmānid system of government lay in the fact that the Sāmānids were never able to implement a system whereby they could ensure the rotation of governors to the provinces in the

17 See Samānī, Ansāb, vol. vii, pp. 351f (Simjurids); Qarātegīn built a madrasa in Naysābur (see above, chapter 9, note 43).
18 Cf. Alptegīn and the wazir Abū ‘Alī Bal’amī (see above, chapter 7, pp. 237f).
core area of the state. As the history of the Samanid provinces shows, it was the senior provincial governors who most frequently rose in rebellion against the dynasty. This problem affected all provinces alike, but was of particular importance in Khurasan, which was the base from which the most serious challenges to the dynasty were mounted, including the eventual secession of the province under the Simjurids. The unique power of the governor of Khurasan lay in the fact that unlike more junior governors, he was both a civilian and a military official since he had command of the Khurasani army, probably the most powerful force in the state. In seeking to explain the decline and fall of the dynasty, we must therefore address the question of why the dynasty was only rarely able to effect the dismissal and appointment of its senior provincial governor without resort to force and consequently why it lost control of the Khurasani army.

The Sāmānids' loss of control of the army

The Sāmānids encountered difficulties with the military governors of Khurāsān almost from the inception of the monarchical state. After a brief period of harmony under Ismāʿīl ibn Ahmad, relations with Khurāsānī governors began to deteriorate. The Sāmānids' problems were no doubt exacerbated by the creation of a Khurāsānī standing army which was required to deal with the Caspian and Sīstānī rebels. From this time onwards, the
military arm of the state was effectively divided in two, with garrisons in both Bukhārā and Naysābūr.

Throughout the century, the Šāmānids adopted different solutions to the problem of controlling Khurasān. Ismā‘īl and Ahmad opted for a dual approach; they appointed both Šāmānid family members and freeborn amirs to the governorship (19). But it soon became apparent that the province could not be ruled by the traditional methods which had worked for Transoxania. The policy was revised under Naṣr ibn Ahmad after a coalition of freeborn amirs and members of the Šāmānid family fought to prevent his accession. Thenceforth, family rule was restricted to Transoxania and freeborn Iranian amirs loyal to Naṣr took over (20).

The ascendancy of the freeborn Iranian amirs did not last beyond the reign of Naṣr’s son, Nūh. The first decade of Naṣr ibn Ahmad’s reign provided ample evidence of their unreliability as Husayn ibn ‘Alī’s revolt was followed soon after by that of Ahmad ibn Sahl (21). Nevertheless Naṣr ibn Ahmad continued to rely on freeborn amirs, in particular on the Muḥtājīd rulers of Saghāniyān who held the governorship of Khurasān throughout the second half of his reign. But both the Muḥtājīds and Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd al-razzaq, the lord of Tūs, proved a liability as they turned for support against the Šāmānids to the Būyids, and crucially in the

19 See above, chapter 4, pp. 136f.
20 See above, chapter 5, p. 169.
21 See above, chapter 5, p. 149ff.
case of the Muhtājids, to neighbouring Transoxanian rulers (22).

Thus by the end of Nūh’s reign the Sāmānīds needed to find a new solution to the problem. They accordingly turned to their personal dependents, the mamluks. A new approach was made all the more necessary because the balance of power in the state had been affected by the closing down of the eastern frontier. From the beginning of the pre-monarchical state to the end of Naṣr ibn Ahmad’s reign, the eastern border had absorbed a great deal of the Sāmānīds’ military energies as they fought to keep the Turks back beyond the Jaxartes. Once this frontier had been secured militarily, and especially after the conversion of large numbers of steppe Turks to Islam during the reign of ‘Abdalmalik ibn Nūh (23), there was no longer a need to deploy a large number of regular troops in Transoxania. At roughly the same time, the western frontier, which had always been manned by a powerful army based in Naysābūr and commanded by the governor of that city (24), acquired a new strategic importance as a buffer against Būyid expansionism.

This transfer of activity from east to west had two major consequences; first, the Sāmānīds were no longer...

22 See above, chapter 7, p. 212.
23 See above chapter 7, p. 233.
24 The governor of Naysābūr (usually synonymous with the governor of Khurasān) was most commonly known by the military title of sipahsālār or sāhib al-jaysh. Hamūya ibn ‘Alī (see appendix; the Sāmānīd state elite) is given the title of sāhib al-jaysh. Abū Bakr Muhammad ibn Muṣafar is sāhib juyush khurasān (Ibn al-Athīr, Kāmil, vol. viii, p. 264). Gardīzī says that Bakr ibn Mālīk was appointed to the sipahsālārī (Zayn, p. 159). Note that Ibn al-Athīr refers to Abū’l-Ḥasan Simjūrī as sāhib juyush khurasān (vol. viii, p. 626).
able to enjoy the kudos of being ghāzi monarchs, however hard their supporters tried to maintain the fiction that they were (25); this loss of ghāzi status was to be a factor in the Ṣamānids' final collapse (26).

The second consequence was that henceforth, the Ṣamānīd monarch remained in Bukhārā while the greater part of his (by now mainly mamlük) army was garrisoned in Naysābūr, some two weeks' journey to the west. One way of lessening the damaging consequences of their estrangement from the military establishment might have been to establish a subsidiary court in Naysābūr, or even to opt for a federated system such as had been adopted by the Buyids. But the Ṣamānids did not do this; the dangers of appointing family members to positions of authority had already become obvious in the debacle of Naṣr ibn Ahmad's struggle for the throne. Once the Ṣamānids had forsworn such a solution, however, they were likely to encounter problems with their mamlük generals, as the 'Abbāsid experience had proved (27). We

25 Note Muqaddasī's remark that the Ṣamānids were the "scourge of Rum" (see above, chapter 1, p. 33). Cf. also the poem by the Shāfi'i 'Alīm Abu Bakr al-Qaffāl (Subkī, Tabaqāt al-shafi'īyya, vol. ii, pp. 181-4). It is said to have been written in the 'āmm al-nafīr, probably 355/966, when the Khurāsānī ghāzīs nearly took over Buyid Rayy (see above, chapter 7, p. 227f); al-Qaffāl took part in this expedition (see Ibn al-Athīr, Kāmil, vol. viii, p. 570). Qaffāl's poem is said to have been written in response to a poem composed by the Byzantine emperor Nicephorus who had taunted the Muslims about the humiliations they were suffering at his hands. Qaffāl praises Mansūr ibn Nuh for bringing Islam to "Hind, Sind, Sin and the Turks (Subkī, ibid, p. 183). Note how Qaffāl incorporates a jibe at the Buyids by remarking that while Mansūr was the great ghāzi champion, Baghdad had become "a slave to the Daylamī slaves" (ibid).
26 See above, chapter 8, p. 259.
27 Crone, Slaves on horses, p. 83.
are thus left with the question: what was it about the mamlûk institution in the Samanid state, and other medieval Islamic states, which prevented it from acting as a stable institution of government?

Why did the Samanid mamlûk experiment fail?

P. Crone's thesis about the failure of the 'Abbāsid dynasty views the main agents of its collapse as its mamlûk soldiers. In her view, mamlûks were a double-edged sword for all dynasts who made them the mainstay of their armies. While on the one hand, they were superb soldiers, they became a liability once the personal ties which bound them to their patron became eroded (28). The same features which worked to ensure their pliability as instruments of the ruler's will, their cultural dissociation and their lack of ties with the land, made them into dangerously volatile rebels once that personal dependence had been removed. Once their ruler relinquished command over them and became a distant figure, so the mamlûks were increasingly commanded by generals, most commonly mamlûks themselves, and lost uniform direction. Since they had no local interests to protect, they ran riot and looted and plundered.

This theory does not however serve to explain the role of the Samanid mamlûks who did have local interests and were integrated into their social environment to a considerable extent. In fact they were not very

28 ibid, p. 79.
different from their fellow Iranian aristocrats in these respects; as for their allegiance to the dynasty, the record of Abu’l-Hasan Simjuri’s lengthy governorship of Khurasan shows that a mamluk governor was capable of governing a major province for a long period without major incident. Nevertheless the disaffection of the Simjurids in the early 370s signals the beginning of the collapse of the Samanid state and it needs to be explained.

The problem with the governorship of Khurasan, under both freeborn amirs and mamluks was basically the same. It was this; that the relationship between the ruler and the governor was based purely and simply on a private contract of loyalty in which the two parties engaged. The governor’s appointment does not appear to have been ratified by the bureaucracy, neither does it seem to have been endorsed by an act passed by a legislative assembly. Private loyalties were crucial; we see this in Ibn al-Athir’s anecdote about the circumstances under which Naṣr ibn Ahmad appointed the Muḥtajid Abū Bakr Muḥammad ibn Muẓaffar the Muḥtajid to Khurasan (29).

29 Ibn al-Athir, Kāmil, vol. viii, p. 264. Abū Bakr is said to have been having an audience with Naṣr ibn Ahmad when he was stung repeatedly by a scorpion which had dropped into his boot. He made no attempt to remove the scorpion until after he had left the palace. Naṣr came to hear of his fortitude soon afterwards and asked him why he had endured the pain without protest. Abū Bakr replied "If I could not endure the sting of a scorpion in your presence how should I then endure the point of the enemy’s sword when I was far from you?" This answer delighted Naṣr who consequently appointed him to Khurasan. While the story may well be apocryphal, it does illustrate the importance of the personal ties which bound men to the Samanid dynasty.
But private loyalties provided no real protection for either side in the contract. For his part, the ruler could not dismiss the governor without resort to force because dismissal was tantamount to a breach of faith. If the governor had been a servant of the state, rather than of the ruler, he could have been removed by order of the bureaucracy, but he was not. Equally, the governor himself did not have any guarantee that he would be retained in his position. Once away from Bukhara, he no longer had the opportunity to constantly reaffirm his loyalty in person to the ruler, who was meanwhile surrounded by other amirs, eager to usurp his position and enjoy the benefits which he had secured. Thus governors were often dismissed on charges of profligacy or incompetence manufactured by their enemies, which they had no means to refute.

Mamluks were always going to be an attractive option for the Samanids because they were their personal dependents and because they had few allies whom they could summon against the Samanids in the event of a dispute. They had their mamluk troops but no local allies, unlike the freeborn Iranian amirs (30). It seems that they did establish links with the Buyids, but they refrained from calling for their assistance until some years after they had lost control of Khurasan (31).

30 The Simjurids did establish cordial relations with the Ma'munid governor of Jurjaniyya and the Saffarids (see above, chapter 8, pp. 258 and 244); but neither of them offered active support in their campaigns against the Samanids.
31 See above, chapter 8, note 8.
Abū'1-Hasan Simjūrī appears to have overcome the perennial problem of insecurity of tenure which had beset his predecessors in the post and, significantly, his governorship survived the accession of two rulers. By the beginning of Nūḥ ibn Mansūr’s reign, the Simjūrid governors of Khurāsān had become virtual partners of the Sāmanids in ruling the state. According to an anecdote related by ‘Awfī, the reason for the Sāmanids’ fall was that Nūḥ ibn Mansūr ignored Abū'1-Hasan Simjūrī’s advice on the matter of the wazir Abū’1-Husayn ’Utbī’s appointment, whereas in the past, as he says, "it was the custom of the Sāmanids to consult their Khurāsānī governors on every matter" (32).

As ‘Awfī’s anecdote indicates, Abū'1-Hasan Simjūrī’s very success in retaining the governorship of Khurāsān for so long, led to him assume that the position belonged to his family by right. When ’Utbī ordered his dismissal in 371/981-2 Abū’1-Hasan had been governor of Khurāsān for some twenty years and clearly did not expect to be removed from the post (33). As is shown by Abū Nasr ’Utbī’s enumeration of the privileges and titles which Nūḥ bestowed on him, Abū’1-Hasan had in effect become a de facto vassal ruler, with many of the benefits enjoyed by established vassals like the Farīghūnids, including the right of hereditary succession, tax privileges and honorific titles. But the

33 Cf. Abū’1-Hasan’s reaction to ’Utbī’s order; valī-yi khurāsān manam ve sipahsalar abu ‘alī ast pesar-i man (Gardizi, Zayn, p. 165).
The problem with the Simjurids was thus the obverse of the problem with their freeborn predecessors. Whereas beforehand, the governor’s tenure had always been under threat as his rivals tried to undermine his ties with the dynasty, the Simjurids maintained these ties unimpaired. But once the threat of dismissal had receded, the Simjurids exploited the Samanids’ indebtedness to ensure that their status was raised above that of a mere appointed official and attempted to extract the rights due to an autonomous vassal; in other words, they sought to exploit their private loyalties to the dynast to the utmost. It was precisely because the relationship between governor and ruler was based on the informal ties of private allegiance, and not bound by constitutional limitations, that the Samanids, willingly or otherwise, were able to make such fateful concessions to the Simjurids.

Abū ’Alī Simjurī faced little opposition initially when he seceded from the Samanid state. Unlike in 247, when Isma‘īl ibn Ahmad had the Turks of the eastern provinces and the dihqa.ns on his side against the Saffarids, Nūh ibn Mansūr had lost the support of the dihqa.ns and faced a much more powerful adversary than ‘Amr ibn Layth. In earlier years, the Samanids had
always been able to call on rival forces to oppose rebel governors. By 3800, the sheer longevity of the dynasty must have lessened the chances of its survival. Similarly the minority of the Samanid amirs must have detracted from their capacity to control their state; five out the seven rulers who had come to the throne after Ahmad ibn Isma’Il (d. 914) were minors at their accession.

The fall of the Samanid dynasty was thus not due to major changes within Samanid society, nor was it due to financial or economic problems (34). The fall of the dynasty inevitably brought about the dissolution of the state which it had controlled. There was no question that the state could survive a change of dynasty, since it lacked the enduring institutions which might have been carried forward under a new dynasty. It had no church, such as existed in Byzantium, and no army recruited from, and tied to, the land, such as the feudal armies of Europe. In their place were the pan-Islamic ‘ulama’, who were neither very highly organized, nor integrated into the state system, and an army of slave soldiers, recruited from beyond the boundaries of the sedentary settlements of the mashriq. The Samanid state possessed no parliament and no court organization tied to the state. Thus all the enduring social and political institutions were either local or pan-Islamic, not "nation-wide"; local organization was basically separate from that of the state and survived without it.

34 See above, chapter 9, p. 276.
In this respect the Ṣāmānīd state was not so different from any other pre-modern Muslim state; indeed the only pre-modern Muslim state to have survived a change of dynasty, leaving aside that of the Mamlūks, which was not properly dynastic, was the caliphate.

The Qarākhānīd conquest

The one clearly discernible long-term trend in Ṣāmānīd history is the process of islamization, both within the Ṣāmānīd territories and beyond them, in the steppe. Islamization of the steppe Turks caused the frontier with the Dār al-harb, which the Ṣāmānīds had pushed eastwards from the Oxus to the Jaxartes, to shift further eastwards and eventually changed the status of the Qarākhānīds from infidels to potential allies of Ṣāmānīd rebels.

The Qarākhānīd Turks who overthrew the Ṣāmānīd dynasty in 389 were reluctant conquerors. Their gradual encroachment on the eastern provinces of Transoxania and tentative attacks on Bukhārā bear none of the hallmarks of the steppe invasion in Ahmad ibn Ismā‘īl’s reign, when six huge armies launched simultaneous attacks on the largest cities of Transoxania. Once in possession of the capital, the Qarākhānīds displayed the same unwillingness to unseat the old order as had former Muslim rebels against the Ṣāmānīds. Thus on abandoning Bukhārā in 392, they turned the city over to a Ṣāmānīd pretender, just as Abū ‘Alī Saghānī had done half a
century before them (35). When they came a second time to the city, they did not come as conquerors, but chose instead to masquerade as allies of 'Abdalmalik against his Ghaznavid enemies (36).

In short, the Qarakhanid conquerors behaved in the same way as participants within the Samanid state. This must have had something to do with their status as Muslims, for unlike their forebears, let alone the 13th century Mongols, they came as Muslim conquerors. It was suggested above that the conversion of large numbers of steppe Turks in 'Abdalmalik's reign was a factor in the cessation of hostilities with the steppe. It is not unreasonable to assume that the Islamization of the steppe continued to act as a restraining influence on the territorial ambitions of the steppe Turks during the latter half of the century.

But why then did the Qarakhânids abandon their policy of non-aggression against the Samanids from the 330's onwards? We can only speculate on this issue. It may be that they needed the resources of Transoxania in order to prosecute the war against their pagan steppe rivals. According to Pritsak, the Qarakhânids of Kâshgâr were still pursuing the jihad against their non-Muslim neighbours in Khotan as late as 361 (37); Ïlak khân's perception of himself as a Muslim ghâzi (38) would suggest that the Qarakhânids were still waging jihad in

35 See above, chapter 7, p. 218.
38 See above, chapter 8, note 76.
the final years of the century. Or perhaps, like the dihqāns of the eastern provinces who urged them to attack Bukhārā, they too realised that the Šamānid state was in terminal decline and decided to pre-empt a possible Simjūrid takeover of Transoxania. In the event, Iḥṣāk Khan’s occupation of Bukhārā in 389 was made considerably easier by the indifference of the Bukhārans themselves, who, although once so loyal to the Šamāṇids, took the advice of their scholars to lay down their arms and allowed the Qarakhānids to march in unopposed.

The role of the scholars

The decision of the Bukhāran fugahā’ to prohibit warfare against the Muslim Qarakhānids (39) effectively deprived the Šamāṇids of their last line of defence after the dihqāns and mamlūks had turned against them. Why did the scholars abandon the Šamāṇids?

Scholars had benefited considerably from the patronage of the early Šamāṇids until the end of Ahmad ibn Ismā‘īl’s reign, when it seems that their growing influence over the amir had alienated the royal mamlūks. Thereafter there is little explicit evidence of scholars actively being excluded from the Šamāṇid court, neither is there much evidence of antagonism between scholars and mamlūks or kuttāb. We do have Tawhīdī’s account of Jayhānī’s shu‘ubī rantings (40), but there is no sign of

39 See above, chapter 8, p. 263.
40 See appendix; the Šamānid state elite, s.v. "Muhammad ibn Ahmad al-Jayhānī".
a scholarly response in the form of a denunciation of kuttab as cultivators of kalām and the foreign sciences, at least not in the mashriq.

However under Naṣr ibn Ḥamd, there was a noticeable change of tone in the Sāmānid court; scholars did not occupy as prominent a position as they had under Ḥamd and courtly patronage was channelled into new areas such as the production of Persian literature. Moreover, the Sāmānid court does appear to have converted almost wholesale to Ismā‘īlism at the end of Naṣr’s reign. According to Nizām al-mulk, the scholars collaborated with the army in opposition to the Ismā‘īlīs on this occasion. Barthold makes much of this point, which appears to be the basis of his contention that the scholars were opposed to the Sāmānids. But it is as well to remember that the alliance was formed under extraordinary circumstances. If the Ismā‘īlīs did indeed pose as much of a threat as they appear to have done at the end of Naṣr’s reign, what was at stake was nothing less than the disestablishment of Sunnī orthodoxy; the scholars might thus have been expected to have sought help in whatever quarter they could find it. However there is no evidence that their collaboration provided the basis for a partnership between scholars and the military thereafter.

The scholars do not appear to have rediscovered their former intimacy with the Sāmānids in the remaining years of the century. Nūh ibn Naṣr did appoint the qādī of Bukhārā as his wazir, but this was an ill-fated
experiment which was not repeated by his successors. Scholars in the mashriq appear to have held much the same attitude towards the state as did 'ulamāʾ the world over; while there is surprisingly little evidence of an aversion on their part to suḥbat al-sultan, they generally fought shy of taking up positions within the diwan al-qādāʾ (41) and, in spite of their favoured position in the early Sāmānīd court, they appear to have been averse to participation in political affairs (42).

But Barthold seems to be overstating the case in claiming that the scholars threw in their lot with the military establishment against the dynasty. It does not appear that the scholars played an actively anti-Sāmānīd role in 389 by calling in the tribesmen against the dynasty, as Ernest Gellner would have us believe Muslim scholars were prone to do (43). Their aim was simply to prevent the shedding of Muslim blood. We may ask ourselves why they had not expressed these same scruples

41 Thus for example, when Ḥanafī scholar Muḥammad ibn Ziyād al-Bazdīghzī al-Naysābūrī heard that the Shāfiʿī Ibn Khuzayma was considering him for the post of chief qādī of Naysābūr in the reign of Ismāʿīl ibn Ahmad, is said to have pleaded tearfully to the former that he withdraw his candidacy (Ibn Abī’l-Wafāʾ, Al-jawāhir al-mudiyya fi tabaqāt al-ḥanāfīyya, Hyderabad, 1332, vol. ii, p. 55). In another early example, Abū’l-Fadl Balʿamī had to remind the reluctant Shāfiʿī scholar, Muḥammad ibn Shuʿayb al-Bayhaqī, that it was his duty to act as qādī (Subkī, ibid, vol. ii, p. 164).

42 Ibn Zāfīr tells us that the mashayikh al-balad and the ahl al-ʿilm agreed in principle with Muḥammad ibn Ahmad, the governor of Bukhārā, that a successor to Ahmad ibn Ismāʿīl should be chosen forthwith in order to prevent the chaos which would ensue should the state remain leaderless, but when asked to choose the successor themselves, they declined the honour and only consented to ratify Muḥammad’s choice (Ibn Zāfīr, Duwal, fol. 122bf; see above, chapter 4, note 166).

43 Gellner, Muslim society, pp. 32 and 45.
in earlier years. Presumably the answer lies in the fact that until the end of the century, the dynasty was fulfilling its function of providing protection for its subjects, whereas now it was unable to do so; the scholars may have felt that there was no point in fighting for a lost cause. Once the Qarâkhânids had become Muslims, the Sâmânids would have needed special merits to be worth fighting for; these merits they simply did not possess.
Appendix one

The Samanid state elite

Ahmad ibn Husayn, Abu Ja'far al-'Utbi

He probably took part in Abu 'Ali Saghani's rebellion during Nuh's reign: Gardizi says Ahmad ibn al-Hasan (sic) al-'Utbi was captured by Nuh's forces in 335/946-7, punished and imprisoned and only released after a long time (Gardizi, Zayn, pp. 156f). He was wazir from 347/958-349/960, appointed not by 'Abdalmalik but by his hājib Alptegin (Gardizi, Zayn, p. 160, where he is called Abū Ja'far ibn Muhammād al-Husayn, but see Tha'alibī, Yatīma, p. 99 for his correct name). It is noteworthy that the association of the 'Utbi family with Alptegin at this early stage foreshadowed a long period of patronage by the Ghaznavids which was to culminate in Abū Naṣr 'Utbi's panegyric history of the dynasty, the Kitāb al-yamānī. He was dismissed in 960, accused of overspending on building projects. During the reign of Mansūr ibn Nūh he shared the wazirate with Abū 'Alī Bal'āmī (Gardizi, Zayn, pp. 89 and 161). Khwāndamīr says that the amir Muẓaffar-i Mūhtāj (= Abū'l-Muẓaffar Muhammad ibn Ahmad, Muhtājid governor of Šaghāniyān? - see chapter 8, note 30) was responsible for causing his death (Dastūr al-vuzara', p. 110).

Ahmad ibn Muhammad, Abū 'Abdallāh al-Jayhani

He came to the wazirate in 365/975-6, the year of Mansūr ibn Nūh's death (Zayn, p. 164). Son of Abū 'Alī Muhammad ibn Muhammad (q.v.). He is said to have converted to Ismā'īlism during the reign of Mansūr ibn Nūh (see above, chapter 6, note 66). At the beginning of Nuh ibn Mansūr's reign he was dismissed in favour of Abū'l-Husayn 'Utbi (Yaqtū, Irshād, vol. ii, p. 60).

Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Muẓaffar ibn Muḥtāj, Abū 'Alī, al-Saghānī, the Muhtājid

He succeeded his father as governor of Khurāsān in 327/938-9 (Ibn al-Athīr, Kamil, vol. viii, p. 356). He was active in the Caspian provinces in the last years of Naṣr ibn Ahmad's reign (see chapter 5, p. 164); rose in revolt against Nūh ibn Naṣr and finally defected to the Būyids (see chapter 7). Died in Rayy in 344/955-6 (Ibn al-Athīr, ibid, p. 512).

Ahmad ibn Sahl ibn Hashim al-Kamkārī al-Marwāzī

For his biography see Ibn al-Athīr, Kamil, vol. viii, pp. 118f; Gardizi, Zayn, pp. 151f. Governor of Anārābā from 304-307 (Cf. Fraehn, Recensio, pp. 75, 77, 79, 81) and Balkh in 303/915-16 (see above, chapter 5, note 18). He was descended from a dhīqān from the district of Marv and claimed descent from Yazdāqird ibn Shahrār. Both he and his brother, Muhammad, were governors of Marv under 'Amr the Ṣaffarid (Ibn al-Athīr, Kamil, vol. vii, p. 368; ibid, vol. viii, p. 118). Ahmad ibn Sahl defected
to Isma'il before 287/900 and was appointed to govern Rayy briefly by the latter (Gardīzī, Zayn, p. 147). He was the first governor of Herāt appointed by Nasr ibn Ahmad (Isfizarī, Herāt, p. 384). For his rebellion in Khurāsān early in Nasr ibn Ahmad’s reign, see above, chapter 5, p. 150f.

Alptegin
Bought as a slave by Ahmad ibn Isma'il towards the end of his life, then served Naṣr and Nūh; during the latter’s reign he became commander of the Khurāsānī army (Nizam al-mulk, Siyar al-mulūk, p. 145 = p. 107); Hamdallāh Mustawfī says he was a ghulām of Ahmad ibn Isma'il and commanded the army in Nūh ibn Naṣr’s reign (Tārīkh-i gūzīdāh, pp. 379 and 381); Muqaddasī says he was chief hājib at the end of Nūh’s reign (Ahsan, p. 337). His appointment as army commander (or chief hājib) most likely took place during the confused train of events between 945 and 947 when Abū ʿAlī Saghani was in rebellion against the Sāmānīds. Nizam al-mulk also tells us that Alptegin played a major part in defend the Sāmānīds from the attacks of the Khans of Turkestan (Siyar al-mulūk, p. 146 = 108). For his career under ‘Abdalmalik and Mansūr and his flight to Ghazna, see above, chapter 7.

Abū Yahyā Ash’ath ibn (Abī Ja’far?) Muḥammad (ibn Naṣr ibn Ahmad?) al-Sāmānī
Abū Ja’far Muḥammad ibn Naṣr was the Sāmānī raised to the throne by Abū ʿAlī al-Saghānī after the latter’s alliance with the pretender Ibrāhīm ibn Ahmad al-Sāmānī had collapsed (see above, chapter 5, p. 218). Ibn Hawqal and Isfizarī report that Abū Yahyā Ash’ath overcame a revolt in Herāt (Sūrat al-Ard, vol. ii, 2nd ed., p. 437; Tārīkh-i herāt, p. 386, where he is called Abū Yahya As’ad ibn Muhammad al-Sāmānī and the date is given as 341/952-3). Nasrshākhī notes that Ash’ath ibn Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad was sent to Khurasan by ‘Abdalmalik ibn Nūh, and that "he had to fight many times in Herāt and Isfahān" (Tārīkh-i bukhāra, p. 134 = p. 98). Nasrshākhī also says that at the beginning of Mansūr ibn Nūh’s reign he was sent to fight Alptegin (ibid, p. 135 = p. 99). He was governor of Farghana at the end of Mansūr’s reign (see above, chapter 7, p. 235).

Bakr ibn Malik ibn Sunkurtegin(?), Abū Sa’īd al-Farghānī
Governor of Khurāsān 343-345. His family were appointed governors of Naṣrābād in Farghana, a city founded by the Sāmānīs and the birthplace of Naṣr ibn Ahmad ibn Asad (d. 279/892), from 336/947-8 (cf. E.A. Davidovich, "Vladeteli Naṣrābada", KSIMK, lvi, 1956, pp. 107-113). His father Malik is named as the sahib Farghāna in 327/938-9 (Rashīd ibn al-Zubayr, Kitab al-dhakhā’ir wa ’l-tuhaf, p. 141) and commander-in-chief of a Sāmānī expedition to Jurjān in 333/944-5 (Ibn al-Athīr, Kamil, vol. viii, p. 443).

Davidovich believes that the family were appointed as muqta’ās of Naṣrābād as a reward for services rendered to the Sāmānīs. As evidence for this
hypothesis, she points to the inscriptions on their copper coinage, which bear the names of Bakr and his father, but not those of the Samanid amirs. From this she deduces that they were independent rulers of the town, beneficiaries of the "feudal" system of government in operation under the Samanids. The latest coin in this series is dated 344/955-6, so their rule in Nasrabad appears to have come to an end with Bakr’s death.

During his short tenure of office as governor of Khurasan, Bakr began the construction of a walled city in Khusrawjird, a locality in Bayhaq where he had possessions (amlak), but was compelled to return to Naysabur before completing the project (Bayhaqi, Tarikh-i bayhaq, p. 233).

He was murdered in Bukhara by the Turks Alptegin and the khazindar Fatkin in Ramadān 345 (Zayn, p. 160). Gardisi does not give the causes of his assassination, but Ibn Zafir notes that his enemies put it about that he favoured the appointment of ‘Abdalmalik’s brother, Mansur, in his place (Duwal, fol. 127b); Juzjani claims that he was suspected of inclining towards the Buyids, as had his predecessor, Abū ‘Alī Saghānī, and that both he and the wazir Ibn ‘Uzayr were converts to Isma’īlism (Juzjānī, Tabaqat-i nasirī, p. 210). Note that the Banū Mālik were still in evidence at the end of the century: they were among Tāsh’s retinue when he was appointed sipahsālār of Khurasan in 371 (‘Utbi, Yāmīnī, in Manīnī, Fath, vol. i, p. 105).

Bakr ibn Muhammad ibn Alīṣa
Son of the Samanid general Muhammad ibn Alīṣa who pledged allegiance to Naṣr ibn Ahmad on the first day of the latter’s reign (Ibn Zafir, Duwal, fol. 123a) and defeated Ilyas ibn Ishāq’s second attack on Transoxania (Ibn Athīr, Kamil, vol. viii, p. 133). Bakr was governor of Naysābūr 313/925-315/927 (id, Kamil, vol. viii, p. 175f).

Balʿamsī, see Abu’l-Fadl Muhammad ibn ‘Ubaydallāh, Abū ‘Alī Muhammad ibn Muhammad.

Bughrā al-kabīr
One of the mamlūks who took part in the attempted coup after the assassination of Ahmad ibn Isma’īl (Ibn Zafir, Duwal, fol. 122b) and was then forgiven by Naṣr and led his mamlūks in the battle with Ishāq ibn Ahmad (ibid, fol. 124b). He later served Naṣr as an army commander in Herāt and Jurjān (Isfizārī, Herat, p. 384: Ibn al-Athīr, Kāmil, vol. viii, p. 132). Fought against Līlī ibn Nu’mān and captured him (see above, chapter 5, p. 151). Ibn Khaldūn, extrapolating from his source Ibn al-Athīr, and following him, Pritsak, erroneously identify the Bughrā who captured Līlī with Bughrā Khan the Qarakhānīd (Ibn Khaldūn, Kitāb al-‘ībar, vol. iv, Bulq, pp. 339f: Pritsak, “Von den Karluk zu den Karachaniden”, ZDMG, 1952, pp. 292f). But this is far too early a date for Qarakhānīd involvement in Samanid affairs; if the Bughrā in question had been the Qarakhānīd leader, our sources would certainly have commented on the fact.

His father was a (recently-converted?) Muslim but he was a eunuch (Ibn al-Athir, Kamīl, vol. ix, p. 149). He was appointed guardian of Mansūr ibn Nūh by his father Nūh and brought his charge to the throne in 350 (see above, chapter 7, p. 236). For his subsequent career see chapters 7 and 8.

Hamūya ibn 'Alī

He made peace between Ismā'īl and Naṣr during the first civil war in 272/885 (cf. chapter 3, p. 89). He was one of the first amirs to pledge allegiance to the young amīr Naṣr (Ibn Zafīr, Duwāl, fol. 123a) whom he served as army commander (sāhib jaysh), according to Mughaddasi (Aḥsan, p. 337); Mirkhwand gives him the title ḥakim-i nishapur (Rawḍa, fol. iv, p. 42). His daughter married the son of the Zaydi imām Muhammad ibn Zayd (d. 287) (Ibn Isfandiyar, Tarikh-i tabaristan, p. 257). Victor over Ahmad ibn Sahl and Līlī ibn Nu'man. His son, Abu'l-'Abbās Ahmad ibn Hamūya, continued in Samanid service, serving as righthand-man (sāhib-i tadbīr) to the heir apparent Ismā'īl ibn Naṣr ibn Ahmad (see above, chapter 6, note 54) (Gardīzī, Zayn, p. 154), and was executed in the reign of Nūh ibn Naṣr on the orders of the latter (Gardīzī, Zayn, p. 155).

Husayn ibn 'Alī al-Marwazi (see appendix; the Ṣu'lūkīdūn).

Ibrāhīm ibn Ahmad ibn Ismā'īl al-Samānī

He rebelled against his brother Naṣr ibn Ahmad in 317/929 and subsequently fled to the west. Before he got to Baghdad, Ibrāhīm entered the service of Abū l-Husayn al-Baridī, a member of the tax-farming dynasty of Wāsit, and was involved in Abūl-Husayn's attack on Baghdad in 942. During this campaign he deserted to the Hamdanid forces which were protecting Baghdad and thus came into the service of Naṣr al-Dawla the Hamdanid (Ibn Miskawayh, Eclipse, vol. ii, p. 29 = vol. v, p. 31). Ibn Zafīr says that Ibrāhīm joined Bajka kirmān before transferring his services to the Hamdanid (Duwāl, fol. 126a). For his attempt to seize the Samanid throne from his nephew, Nūh ibn Naṣr, see above, chapter 7.

Abū Ishaq Ibrāhīm ibn Sīmjūr

Governor of Bukhara more than once and of Marv, Nāysābūr and Herāt (Sam'ānī, Ansāb, vol. vii, p. 351f). He fought against Muhammad ibn Ilyās in Kirman on behalf of the Samānids (Ibn al-Athir, Kamīl, vol. viii, p. 324). Governor of Jurjān in 328 on behalf of Abu 'Alī Sīmjūr (Ibn al-Athir, Kamīl, vol. viii, pp. 359 and 369). Nūh ibn Naṣr appointed him governor of Nāysābūr in place of Abū 'Alī Sīmjūr in Ramadan 333/April-May 944 (Ibn al-

Ilyās ibn Muhammad ibn Alīsā al-Sughdī (for nisba see Ibn Isfandiyār, ibid, p. 271).

Brother of Bakr ibn Muhammad (q.v.). See Ibn Isfandiyār, Tārīkh-i ṭabaristan, pp. 271f and 281 for Ilyas ibn Alīsā (= Ilyās ibn Muḥammad ibn Alīsā'). See also Abū Ḥasan ʻĪbrāhīm ibn Ḥilāl al-Ṣabī', who says he was killed in battle with the Zaydis of Tabaristan between 306-8 (Kitāb al-Taǧī, in Madelung, Arabic texts concerning the history of the Zaydi imams, p. 33).

Jayhānī, see Abū ʻAbdallāh Muḥammad ibn Ahmad, Abū Mansūr ʻUbaydallāh ibn Ahmad, Abū ʻAlī Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad, Abū ʻAbdallāh Ahmad ibn Muḥammad.

Mansūr ibn Qarāṭeqīn


Al Marzūbānī
For Marzūbānī, Samānīd representative at the caliphal court under Ismaʻīl ibn Ahmad and Ahmad ibn Ismaʻīl, see chapter 9, note 76. He may have been related to (perhaps he was the son of?) al-Marzūbānī ibn Turkṣafī? (Marqūbī).

who was one of the Sughdīs who served the caliphate (Iṣṭakhri, Masālik, p. 292); cf. also Ibn al-ʿAthīr and Tabari (cited by Barthold, Turkestan, p. 95), where he is called Marzūban ibn Turgash, ruler of Marzban, a district north of Samarqand. This Marzūban claimed descent from Ghurak, the ruler of Samarqand in the jāhiliyya; this is indicated by Samarqandi's genealogy of his son, Abū-Ḥusayn ʻUbaydallāh ibn al-Marzūbānī ibn Turksh ibn Baqlī ibn Kushīr ibn Banāyijūr ibn Ghurak (d. 298/310) (Samārqandi, Muntakhab, fol. 50a); ʻUbaydallāh was granted an estate by the Samānīd Naṣr ibn Ahmad ibn Asad (id, fol. 8a). Samarqandi says that ʻUbaydallāh's nephew, Abū Ahmad ʻAbd al-ʿAzīz ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Marzūbānī related hadīth from his uncle ʻUbaydallāh, among others. Note that in ʻAbd al-ʿAzīz's genealogy "Banāyijūr" is replaced by "kanādarang" (cf. Muḥammad ibn ʻAbd al-rażẓāq's [q.v.] claimed descent from the "kanārāng"). ʻAbd al-ʿAzīz's son, Abū Sāliḥ Ahmad (d. 386/996) was deputy governor of Samarqand for Bektash in 352/962-3 (Samārānī, Ansāb, vol. xii, p. 188; cf. also his entry in Samarqandi, Muntakhab, fol. 70a.).

Muḥammad ibn ʻAbd al-Raẓẓāq al-Tūṣī
He claimed descent from the kanārāng (lord of the [east] march) (Minorsky, "The older preface to the Shahname", pp. 163f and 175f; for Biruni's view that this genealogy was spurious, see above, chapter 3, note 20). Joined Abū ʻAlī al-Saghānī's revolt. Defected to the Buyids on two
Muhammad ibn Ahmad, Abū 'Abdallāh al-Jayhānī
One of the first men to pledge allegiance to Naṣr ibn Ahmad in 301/914, therefore he must have had considerable status in the previous administration. Wazir of Naṣr ibn Ahmad when he was dismissed, possibly on charges of heresy (cf. Ibn al-Nadīm, Fihrist, p. 338 where Muhammad ibn Ahmad al-Jabhānī (sic) is said to have been a zindiq). It is probable that he was a recent, possibly Zoroastrian, convert to Islam, and this may have made his religious views suspect in the eyes of his fellow Muslims. Yāqūt records a lampoon of Jayhānī by Abū'l-Tayyib al-Tahiri which begins:

ma fihi min hasanin nuthnī 'alayhi bihi
illa 'l-tasannu'u bi'l-wiswaś li'l-nās,
li-yuhimu shaghafan bi'l-tuhri minka fa-lā
tu'adda fi-man yu'addi jizyata 'l-ra's
(Irshād al-arīb ila ma'rifat al-adīb, ed. D.S. Margoliouth, vol. vi, London, 1923-31, pp. 293f). These verses suggest that Jayhānī had been born a non-Muslim (who would be required to pay the jizya). His obsession with personal cleanliness, to which Yāqūt refers earlier in his biography, may have been a ploy intended to convince fellow Muslims of his wholehearted adoption of Islam. Also noteworthy in this context is his exaggerated aversion to dogs (Ibn Zāfīr, Duwal, fol. 125b; Yāqūt, Irshād, ibid, has dā bba for kalb); it was not unknown for converts to Islam in this period to manifest an antipathy towards dogs for the purpose of proving their credentials as Muslims (M. Boyce, Zoroastrians: their religious beliefs and practices, London, 1979, p. 158).

Gardīzī says that Muhammad ibn Ahmad sought information on administrative practices from many countries, both Muslim and non-Muslim, and adopted those foreign customs which he saw fit (Gardīzī, Zayn, p. 150). He was the sole author of the geography Kitāb al-masālik wa'l-mamalik (pace Pellat, EJ2 supplement, s.v. "Djayhānī", and Mirzayef, Abū ‘abdallāh rudakī ve athar-i manzūm-i rudakī, p. 75). This can be demonstrated by examining the sources which mention the geography in order of the date of their composition. The earliest of them, Mas'ūdī's Tanbīh (written before 346/957-8) says he wrote a geography (id, Tanbīh, ed. de Goeje, Lugduni-Bat, 1894, p. 75). The second, Ibn al-Nadīm's Fihrist (written 377/987-8) names the author of the Kitāb al-masālik wa'l-mamalik as Abū 'Abdallāh Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Naṣr, wazir of the sahib khurāsān (Fihrist, ed. Flugel, p. 138). It seems that Ibn al-Nadīm made two mistakes in this passage; he inverted Jayhānī's name and that of his father (hence the confusion with Muhammad ibn Ahmad's grandson, Abū 'Abdallāh Ahmad ibn Muhammad [q.v.]) and misplaced the name of his sovereign, Naṣr, before, rather than after, the word "wazir". This confusion was later repeated by Yāqūt in his entry on
Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Nasr al-Jayhani; the last lines of this biography do indeed refer to Muhammad ibn Ahmad’s grandson; but the rest of the biography, which includes a reference to its subject as the author of the Kitab al-masalik wa’l-mamalik, is evidently that of Muhammad ibn Ahmad himself; this is proved by the lampoon of Jayhani written by Ahmad (sic=Abu Ahmad) ibn Abi Bakr who was a fierce critic of Muhammad ibn Ahmad (Irshad, vol. ii, p. 59; see below "Muhammad ibn Hamid"). Furthermore Narshakhi’s reference to a book with the title Masalik wa mamalik is most likely Jayhani’s work (Tarikh-i bukhara, p. 26 = p. 19).

If, as seems probable, Muhammad ibn Ahmad was the Jayhani referred to in Tawhidi’s Kitab al-imta’ wa’l-mu’anasa, he was a fierce proponent of the superiority of the Persians over the Arabs. Tawhidi does not specify which of the Jayhanis he is referring to in this passage, mentioning only that he was the author of the book in which he recorded these reprehensible views; Muhammad ibn Ahmad was however the only member of the family who is acknowledged to have been an adīb (see above for the authorship of the Kitab al-masalik wa’l-mamalik and other works; see also Yaqut’s reference to other books by him [Mu’jam al-buldan, vol. ii, p. 181]). Tawhidi admonishes Jayhani for his violently pro-Iranian ‘asabiyya and his disparagement of Arabs as ill-educated, quarrelsome and dissolute "lizard-eaters", who live in a barren land completely bereft of the natural advantages of Iran (Kitab al-imta’ wa’l-mu’anasa, vol. i, Cairo, pp. 78-90). It is impossible to judge whether these views contributed to Jayhani’s unpopularity in Bukhara (when he died, the Bukharans are said to have stoned his coffin and refused to pray over him, cf. Ibn Zafir, Duwal, fol. 126a); or whether they were simply an extreme expression of the growing interest in local Iranian culture fostered by the amir Nasr and his courtiers. He was also accused of being inimical to Muslims (cf. Abū’l-Tayyib al-Tahirī’s verses, in Yaqüt, Irshād, vol. vi, p. 293). The debate about the relative merits of Arabs and Persians was a current topic in this period and one which Abu Zayd Balkhi tried to avoid (Yaqüt, ibid, vol. i, p. 148).

Although there is no evidence that he held Qarmatī beliefs, he is described as a zindiq by Ibn al-Nadīm (Fihrist, p. 338), the same term used in Samarqandi’s Muntakhab of the Samanid wazir who is said to have converted to Isma‘īlism, Abū’l-Tayyib Muhammad ibn Hatim al-Mus‘abī (q.v.). Both his son, Muhammad ibn Muhammad (q.v.) and grandson Ahmad ibn Muhammad (q.v.), were accused of being respectively, the patron of an ex-Isma‘īli da‘ī and a Qarmatī.

that he was universally liked by the Samanids, their generals and subjects. His son Abu Ahmad was a well-known satirical poet of Naṣr’s reign, who channelled his resentment at being passed over for his father’s position in favour of Muhammad ibn Ahmad Jayhānī and Muhammad ibn ‘Ubaydallāh Bal‘amī, into vitriolic satires written against the two wazirs (Tha‘ālibī, Ṭatima, vol. ii, p. 62). Abu Ahmad did hold administrative posts; he was an āmil in Herāt, Bushanj and Badghis and Naysabur (Tha‘ālibī, Ṭatima, p. 63). He eventually relinquished his official positions and died by his own hand in Bukhārā, impoverished and bitter.

Muhammad ibn Ḥārūn al-Sarakhšī (nisba given in Ibn Zafīr, Duwal, fol. 117a). A tailor by profession who gathered together a group of ruffians and lived by banditry in the desert around Sarakhs in the last quarter of the 9th century (Ibn al-Athīr, Kamīl, vol. vii, p. 527). Sought aman from Rāfi’ ibn Harthama (see above, chapter 3) and served as his deputy in Shālus in 275 during a campaign against Muhammad ibn Zayd (Ibn al-Athīr, ibid., p. 434). Transferred to Samanid service after Rāfi’s death and led the advance guard of Isma‘īl’s army against ‘Amr the Saffarid. See chapter 4, pp. 118 for his victory over Muḥammad ibn Zayd and his subsequent rebellion against Isma‘īl.

Muhammad ibn Ḥātim, Abū’l-Tayyib al-Muṣṭābī Nadīm of Naṣr ibn Ahmad (Tha‘ālibī, Yatīma, vol. iv., part 4, p. 75) and head of chancellery during his reign (Bayhaqī, Tarīkh-i bayhaqī, ed. Ghani, p. 107). Associated with some of the most vehement critics of the Sāmanid regime among the poets whose work is recorded by Tha‘ālibī, e.g. Abu Ahmad ibn Abī Bakr al-Kātib, and himself composed poetry in Arabic and Persian (Tha‘ālibī, ibid). He probably took over the wazirate after Abū ‘Alī Jayhānī’s death in the last year of Naṣr’s reign. He was wazir at the time of the Isma‘īlī scandal at Naṣr’s court (Samarqandī, Muntakhab, fols. 43af). Balkhī names him as one of the asḥāb al-qaramita (Pādā’il-i balkh, p. 293f); and he was accused of being a zindīq and a heretic by the ‘ālim Abu Ya’la ‘Abd al-Mu‘min ibn Khalaf al-Nasafī (Samarqandī, ibid). Rashīd al-Dīn refers to the wazir Abū Muhammad ibn Musā al-Balkhī in Naṣr’s reign as strengthening the da‘wa in Khurāsān (Stern, Studies in early Isma‘īlism, p. 228) – could this be an erroneous reference to Muṣṭābī? He organized the miḥna at the time of the Isma‘īlī scandal (see chapter 6, p. 196). He died at the hands of the hashm in the repression of the Qarmatis which followed the abdication of the amir Naṣr.

Muhammad ibn Ḥusayn ibn Mutt An ally of Ilyās ibn Ishaq in his revolt against Naṣr ibn Ahmad in 310/922 (see above, chapter 5, p. 146). His grandfather Mutt ibn ʿAbd had been Naṣr I ibn Ahmad’s lieutenant (Samarqandī, Muntakhab, fol.16b). Muḥammad
was probably one of the generals who took part in the first Samanid invasion of Sistan (cf. Ibn Zafir, Duwal, fol. 104b for activities of Abū Ja‘far ibn Husayn ibn Mutt al-Istishābī [=al-Isfīyābī] in Sistan).

Tiesenhausen suggests that a filūs minted in Samargand in 303/915—bearing the name Muhammad on its obverse, might have been struck by Muhammad ibn Husayn ibn Mutt when he was governor of the city ("O Samanidskýkh Mon etakh", Trudy Vostochnago Otdeleniya Imp. Russkogo Arkh. Obshchestvya, 1855, p. 141f).

Abū‘l-Hasan Muhammad ibn Ibrāhīm Sīmūrī
He was appointed deputy governor of Naysābūr by Bakr ibn Malik (q.v.) in 344/955–6 (Gardīzī, Zayn, p. 159).

Governor of Khurāsān 345–349, 350–71 (see above, chapters 7 and 8). He was dismissed in 371 by order of his enemy, the wazir Abū‘l-Husayn ‘Utbi. Resolved the problem of governorship of Sīstān in favour of his ally, Khalaf ibn Ahmad the Saffārid (see above, chapter 8, p. 244). He resumed the governorship of Khurāsān in 376 when his rival Tāsh was dismissed by the Sāmanīd wazir. Died 378. He was succeeded by his son Abū ‘Alī al-Mużaffar ibn Muhammad (q.v.).

Muhammad ibn Ilyās, Abū ‘Alī
A Sāmanīd general of Soqhdian origin and founder of the Ilyāsid dynasty of Kirmān (cf. C.E. Bosworth, "The Banū Ilyās of Kirmān", Iran and Islam, ed. C.E. Bosworth, Edinburgh, 1971, p. 110). Nafisi, on the basis of very slender evidence, suggests that he may have been the son of the Sāmanīd Ilyās ibn Ishaq ibn Ahmad (Lubāb al-albāb, ed. Nafisi, Tehran, 1333, pp. 32f and 482f, cited by Bosworth, ibid, note 43). He may have been the son of Ilyās ibn Muhammad ibn Alīsā’ al-Sughdī, the brother of the Sāmanīd governor of Khurāsān, Bakr ibn Muhammad (q.v.); note that Muhammad ibn Ilyās named one of his own sons Alīsā’ (Ibn al-Athīr, Kāmil, vol. viii, p. 585) and that the name of his grandfather is given as Alīsā’ in two sources (Kitāb al-‘uyūn wa’l-hadā‘iq, ed. Sa‘īdi, p. 271; Ibn al-Athīr, Kāmil, vol. viii, p. 324).

He was imprisoned by the Sāmanīds for unknown misdemeanours but released on the intercession of Abū‘l-Fadl al-Bal‘āmi (Ibn al-Athīr, Kāmil, vol. viii, p. 278). Jointed the revolt of Yahyā ibn Ahmad in 317. After it had failed, he founded the Ilyāsid dynasty of Kirmān which ruled the province for 30 years (see above, chapter 5, p. 159).

Muhammad ibn Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Layth, Abū ‘Abdallāh (Known as Ibn Junayd?)
Chief of police in Būkhārā at the end of Ahmad ibn Iṣmā‘īl’s reign; he secured the throne for Ṣār ibn Ahmad (see above, chapter 4, p. 140f) but soon rebelled against him (see chapter 5, p. 149).

There is a great deal of confusion surrounding his identity in our sources. In the accounts of his role in securing the throne for Ṣār, Ibn Zafir names him as Ibn Aḥyād/Ajyād (=Ahmad?) (Duwal, fol. 120b); but Ibn al-Athīr names him Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Layth (Kāmil,
vol. viii, p. 78). Now Ibn al-Athīr identifies Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Layth as one of the commanders whom the Sāmānid soldiers who occupied Bukhārā in 260 chose as their leader (Kāmil, vol. vii, p. 281; see above, chapter 3, note 78); Narshakhi adds that he was Ismā‘īl ibn Ahmad’s chief of police in Bukhārā (Narshakhi, Tarīkh-i bukhrārā, p. 15 = pp. 11f). In Ibn al-Athīr’s passage he is named as the father of "Abū ‘Abdallāh ibn Junayd (variants; HMD/HYD) (Kāmil, ibid, p. 281). How Ahmad could be the father of a man who was the son of Junayd is difficult to understand unless Ibn Junayd was a patronymic used by both father and son; or perhaps Junayd is a mistake for Ahmad (from the variant HMD). For want of a better solution to the problem, it has here been assumed that that the man who ensured Naṣr’s succession and then rebelled against him was Abū ‘Abdallāh Muhammad ibn Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Layth, known by his father’s patronymic of Ibn Junayd.

Muhammad ibn Muhammad, Abū ‘Alī al-Bal‘amī
Probably wazir to Nuh ibn Naṣr (see ch. 5, note 158). Appointed wazir by Alptegin in the reign of ‘Abdalmalik. Son of Abū’l-Faḍl Bal‘amī (q.v.). When ‘Abdalmalik died in 350 it was Abū ‘Alī who wrote to Alptegin, then governor of Khurasān, asking him who he should appoint to succeed the dead amir. It was probably on account of his close association with Alptegin, who fled to Ghazna after his appointee had been rejected by the holders of power in Bukhārā in favour of Mansūr ibn Nūh, that Abū ‘Alī soon lost the wazirate to Abū Ja‘far al-‘Utbi. He regained the post twice during Mansūr’s reign before his death in 363/974. He undertook the translation of Tābarī’s Tafsīr and his Tarīkh.

Muhammad ibn Muhammad, Abū ‘Alī al-Jayhani

Muhammad ibn 'Ubaydallāh, Abū'l-Fadl al-Bal'amī.

For his genealogy, see Sam'ānī, vol. ii, pp. 313f. Of Arab descent. Before becoming wazir, he was in charge of the Diwan al-kharāj (Ibn Zāfir, fol. 126a). He took over the wazirate from Jayhānī in 310/922. Unlike Jayhānī, Bal'amī had strong contacts with the scholarly class and a reputation as a muhaddith. Subkī writes: kāna al-shaykh abū'l-fadl al-bal'amī yantaḥilu madhhab al-hadith, qāla ibn al-salāḥ idha atlaqū ḥadha hunaka, insarafa ilā madhhab al-shāfī'ī (Subkī, Tabaqat al-shāfī'iyya, vol. ii, p. 170f). He was noted for his association with eminent Shāfī'īs at the Sāmānīd court, including Muhammad ibn Nasr al-Marwāzī (d. 294/906-7), one of the first scholars to introduce Shāfī'ism in Transoxania (Madelung, Religious trends in early Islamic Iran, p. 26), and for his fondness for religious disputations; in 317/929 he convened a majlis in which the Shāfī'ī scholar of Nāyshābur, Abū Sahl Muhammad ibn Sulaymān and the Su'lūkī family of Nāyshābur took part (Sam'ānī, Ansāb, vol. vii, p. 306).

Both before and during his wazirate, Bal'amī took part in military campaigns, including the battle with Līlī ibn Nu'mān in 309, accompanying the mamlūk Simjur to Jurjān in 310 , negotiating the surrender of the rebel forces guarding the Oxus in 930 (Kāmil, vol. viii, p. 125 [Līlī ibn Nu'mān]; Kāmil, vol. viii, p. 132 [Jurjān]; see above, ch. 5, p. 154 [Oxus]). His wazirate lasted until five years before the end of Naṣr's reign. His dismissal in 326 in favour of his predecessor's son, Abū 'Alī Jayhānī, was connected with some unspecified disturbance in the capital (Gardizī, Zayn, p. 154). Khwandāmīr says that Nūh (ibn Naṣr), (during his regency at the end of his father's reign?) sent his army commander, Khumarṭeqin, to kill Bal'amī (cf. Dastūr al-Vuzarā', ed. Said Nafisi, Tehran, p. 108). Died 329/940 -I.

Muḥtājīds, see Abū Bakr Muhammad ibn Muẓaffar, Abū 'Alī Ahmad ibn Muḥammad.

al-Muẓaffar ibn Muhammad, Abū 'Alī Simjūrī

Succeeded his father Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm (q.v.) in 380 (Ibn Zāfir, Duwal, fol. 129b). He effectively established independent rule in Khurāsān, refusing to send revenue to Bukhārā or military aid (see chapter 8, p. 248). Invited the Qarakhānīds to take over Transoxania (ibid, p. 250). Allied with Fā'iq and fought the Sāmānīds and their Ghaznavīd allies until he was taken prisoner to Bukhārā; subsequently died in Gardīz at the hands of his Ghaznavīd enemies (see ibid, p. 258).

Qaratīqīn al-Isfīyābī

Mawlā of the Sāmānīds (cf. Ibn Khaldūn, 'Ibar, vol. iv, p. 339). Barthold thought that Qaratīqīn and his son Mansūr were members of the "ruling family" of the province of Isfīyāb (Turkestan, p. 228). This is nowhere
explicitly stated in the sources: Barthold probably makes this assumption on the evidence of their nisba, their local connections with the province (Qarategin built a ribat there - Muqaddasi, Ahsan, p. 273), the majority of whose inhabitants were Turks, and the fact that after their deaths, both father and son were taken back to Isfihab for burial. A provincial nisba was however no guarantee that the bearer’s family had been long established in a particular province, as is indicated by the attribution of the nisba al-Khwarazmi to the mamluk Simjurids (see this appendix; s.v. "Simjur, Abu 'Imran"). Furthermore Abu Mansur Qarategin, possibly to be identified as Qarategin al-Isfihab, took a leading part in the mamluk putsch of 301 (Ibn Zafir, Duwal, fol. 123b). While it is quite possible that a native prince of Turkish origin might have allied with the mamluk regicides, the fact that he led the negotiations with the Bukhara notables on behalf of the mamluks suggests that he too was a mamluk. C.E. Bosworth alludes to Qarategin’s mamluk status ("The Rules of Chaghaniyan in Early Islamic Times", Iran, xii, 1981, p. 4); Miskawayh calls his son Mansur (q.v.) the ghulam of the Samanids. But Abu'l-Hasan Bayhaqi, curiously, refers to him as qaratekin isfahbadi pedar-i mansur-i qaratekin (Tarikh-i bayhaq, p. 178).

Governor of Naysabur. Then governor of Balkh (Mitchener, p. 27: coins with his name minted A.H. 314, 317, 318, 319). He joined Abu Zakariyya Yahya ibn Ahmad’s revolt. He seceded to Bust where his ghilman remained after Yahya was defeated. His son Mansur became governor of Naysabur during Abu ‘Ali’s revolt.

Saghani, see Muhtajids

Simjur, Abu ‘Imran al-dawati/dawatdar.


'Ubaydallah/'Abdallāh ibn Ahmad, Abū'1-Husayn/Hasan al-
 'Utbī

He became wazir as a young man in Rabi' II 367/977.
(Gardīzī, Zayn, p. 165). Son of Abū Ja'far Ahmad ibn
Husayn (q.v.). His appointment was opposed by Abū'1-
Hasan Simjūrī. Appointed his protegé the mamlūk Tash to
the governorship of Khurāsān in place of Abū'1-Hasan
Simjūrī in 371/981 (Gardīzī, ibid, p. 166). Murdered by
ghilmān in the pay of his enemy Abū'1-Hasan Simjūrī in
372 (Gardīzī, Zayn, pp. 166f).

'Ubaydallah ibn Ahmad, Abū Mansūr al-Jayhānī

Brother of Muhammad ibn Ahmad (q.v.). He was Ahmad ibn
Ismā'īl's 'āmil in Bust, expelled from the city by the
caliph's agent after the expulsion of the Samānid
governor of Sistān in 914 (see above, chapter 5, p.
158). Some five years later, during his brother's
wazirate, he reappears as 'āmil of Herāt (Isfizarī,
Tarīkh-i Herāt, p. 384). He died after a year in office
and was replaced by his brother Hasan.

'Utbī, see Abū Ja'far Ahmad ibn Husayn, Abū'1-Husayn

'Ubaydallah ibn Ahmad.
Appendix two

The Su'lükids

In the reign of Isma'il ibn Ahmad we hear of a certain *Ali ibn Husayn al-Marwarrudhi who was amir of Marv and who allied himself with Isma'il and Rafi' ibn Harthama against Abu Talha ibn Sharkub in 272/885-6 (Ibn al-Athir, Kamīl, vol. vii, p. 369) and with Isma'il against 'Amr the Saffarid some time before 287/900 (cf. above, chapter 3, note 113; Narshakhi, Tarikh-i bukhāra, p. 119 = p. 87; Tarikh-i sīstān, p. 250 = p. 199 for his nisba). This man was presumably the father of Husayn ibn *Ali ibn Husayn al-Marwarrudhi or al-Marwazi, the famous general of the Sāmanids who conquered Sīstān in the reign of Ahmad ibn Isma'il, rebelled in the reign of his successor Nasr (914-43) and converted to Isma'ilism some time between 302 and 306 to become dā'i of Khurāsān (cf. above, chapters 4 and 5 [for his career], chapter 6, p. 189 [Isma'ilism]; The Tarikh-i sīstān, p. 291 = p. 233 for his grandfather's name and his nisba al-Marwarrudhi, presumably a reference to his place of birth; he was also known by the nisba al-Marwazi, presumably a reference to the city of which his father was governor, cf. Gardīzī, Zayn, 148). This Husayn had a brother by the name of Mansūr who governed Herāt on Husayn's behalf during the latter's revolt against Nasr ibn Ahmad (Ibn al-Athir, Kamīl, vol. viii, p. 88) and may have been re-appointed governor of the city later on during Nasr ibn Ahmad's reign (Isfizari, Herāt, p. 385 where he is given the kunya Abū Bakr). According to Ibn al-Nadhīm (Fihrist, ed. Fluegel, p. 138), Husayn ibn *Ali also had a brother known as Su'lük; according to Ibn Zāfir he even went by the name of Akhū Su'lük (Duwal, fol. 104b).

Several sources are familiar with a Muhammad ibn *Ali Su'lük/al-Su'lūkī whom we have encountered many times already (above, chapters 4 and 5). He is also presumably to be identified as the brother of Ahmad ibn *Ali "brother of Su'lük", another convert to Isma'ilism (see below, p. 328; cf. above, chapter 6, note 16) and governor of Rayy between 307 and 311 on behalf of the caliph. Husayn ibn *Ali, Mansūr ibn *Ali, Muhammad ibn *Ali and Ahmad ibn *Ali were thus most likely all four sons of *Ali ibn Husayn, the amir of Marv (this is also the opinion of de Goeje, cf. id, "Die Istakhri-Balkhi Frage", ZDMG, vol. xxv, p. 54, note 1).

The sources on Husayn and Mansūr ibn *Ali are straightforward and their careers need not be recapitulated here, but there is great confusion as regards the other two brothers.

Ibn Zāfir has the career of Muhammad ibn *Ali begin in 226 when he was allegedly sent to quell a revolt in Tabaristān, and gives him the kunya of Abū'1-'Abbās on this occasion (Duwal, fol. 112a). But the man who was sent to quell the revolt was 'Abdallāh ibn Muhammad ibn Nūh al-Sāmānī (cf. above, chapter 4, p. 120), whose kunya was indeed Abū'1-'Abbās, not Muhammad ibn *Ali

Apart from a cryptic reference by Gardīzī to his successful appeal to ‘Amr ibn Layth the Saffarid for the release from captivity of Ahmad ibn Sahl (see biography of Ahmad ibn Sahl in appendix; the Sāmānid state elite) in the 9th century (Gardīzī, Zayn, p. 152, where he is referred to as Abū Ja‘far Su‘lūk), the first confirmed reference to Muhammad ibn ‘Alī comes in 296/908, when the amīr Ahmad ibn Ismā‘īl appointed him to Rayy (Gardīzī, Zayn, p. 148). Two years afterwards he was transferred to the governorship of Tabaristān (Ibn Isfand骊yar, Tārīkh-tabaristān, p. 266; Ibn al-Athīr, Kāmil, vol. viii, p. 82, where he is named both Abū’l-‘Abbās Muhammad ibn Ibrāhīm [sic] Su‘lūk and Ibn Su‘lūk; Gardīzī, Zayn, p. 83 where he is named Abū’l-‘Abbās Su‘lūk). Here he remained until he was defeated by Nāsir al-Uṭrūsh the Zaydī in 301 (Ibn Isfand骊yar, Tārīkh-i tabaristān, p. 269; Gardīzī, Zayn, p. 149). It appears that after he had been appointed to Rayy and Tabaristān he retained the governorship of Marv where his father had been governor in Saffarid times; Ibn Zāfīr identifies him as governor of the city in 301/914 (fol. 119b).

According to ‘Arīb, who here mistakes him for his brother Ahmad, Muḥammad ibn ‘Alī fled to Rayy in 302/915 after his defeat by al-Uṭrūsh and asked the caliph to appoint him governor of that city, along with Qazwīn, Tabaristān and Jurjān (apparently he took the Zaydī conquest of these cities to mean that their title-deeds had reverted to the caliph); he received Rayy (‘Arīb, Siṭa, p. 51; Ibn al-Athīr, Kāmil, viii, p. 82, says simply that he fled to Baghdad via Rayy and makes no mention of his negotiations with the caliph; but note dinars minted in Rayy in 302/915 bearing his name and that of the caliph [Miles, Numismatic history of Rayy, p. 135f]). Here he remained until 304/917f when he was ousted by the rebel ‘Abbāsid general Yūsuf ibn Abī’l-Saj. It was then that he fled to Khurāsān (Ibn al-Athīr, Kāmil, viii, p. 100), or else it was then that he invoked the help of the caliph: Miskawayh has him come to Baghdad in that year demanding protection (against Ibn Abī’l-Saj?) and a robe of honour (Miskawayh, Eclipse, vol. i, p. 39 = vol. iv, p. 43, where he is Muḥammad ibn ‘Alī ibn Su‘lūk). Miskawayh describes him as ibn ‘amm sāḥib Khurāsān, presumably confusing him with Abū’l-‘Abbās Abdallāh ibn Muḥammad ibn Nūh al-Sāmānī, but it must nonetheless have been he rather than the Sāmānīd who came to ask protection since the latter had died in Ahmad’s reign. At some time in the following
three years Muhammad ibn 'Alī must have temporarily regained control of Rayy, which was otherwise governed by a succession of governors appointed by the caliph (Ibn al-Athīr, Kamīl, viii, pp. 100-103), since Ibn Isfandiyār reports that the son of Nasir al-Utrush made an alliance with him against Nasir's successor, Ḥasan ibn Qāsim, in 306/919 (Ibn Isfandiyār, Tarīkh-i tabaristān, p. 276). However this may be, by 309 he was back in Khurāsān, for he was amongst the Sāmānid troops who defeated Līlī ibn Nu'man at Tūs in that year (Ibn al-Athīr, Kamīl, vol. viii, p. 125, where he is named Abū Ja'far Su'lūk); and he was apparently appointed to Ḥerāt in circa 310, for he is said to have sent a deputy there at about that time (Isfizarī, Herāt, p. 384, where he is named Abū Ja'far Su'lūk). In 314/926 when the Sāmānids retook Rayy, he was re-appointed governor of the city and remained there until he died in 316/928, after allegedly handing the city over to the Zaydīs (Ibn al-Athīr, Kamīl, vol. viii, pp. 166f; but cf. Ibn Isfandiyār, Tarīkh-i tabaristān, p. 292 who says that the Zaydī forces expelled him from Rayy; note the Sāmānid coins minted in Rayy in 314ff [cf. Miles, Numismatic history of Rayy, p. 143f]).

Ahmad ibn 'Alī is first mentioned by 'Arīb as having governed Rayy in the reign of Ahmad ibn Ismā'īl and as having resumed this governorship in 302/915, shortly after the accession of Naṣr ibn Ahmad ('Arīb, Sīla, p. 51). But this rests on the confusion between the two brothers (cf. above, p. 327). This confusion is repeated in the index to de Goeje's edition of Tabārī's history, presumably because de Goeje was working on the basis of 'Arīb's account (cf. index, s.v. Su'lūk and the reference given there). Ahmad did not become governor of Rayy until 307/920, when he moved from Qumm, where he had been appointed governor by the caliph, and seized the city against the orders of the caliph (Ibn al-Athīr, Kamīl, vol. viii, p. 103, where he is called Ahmad ibn 'Alī ibn Su'lūk, but note that Ibn al-Athīr calls him the "brother of Su'lūk, ibid, p. 101; note dinars of 308-311 minted in Rayy bearing his name [cf. Miles, Numismatic history of Rayy, pp. 137-140]. It was during his tenure of Rayy that he was converted to Ismā'īlīsm by Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī (Nizām al-Mulk, Sīyar al-mulūk, p. 286 = p. 211), a conversion which may have provoked his quarrel with the caliph in 309/922 (Miskawayh, 'Eclipse , vol. i, p. 116 = vol. iv, p. 129), though it did not prevent him from allying himself with Mākān ibn Kākī, the general of the Zaydīs (Ibn al-Athīr, Kamīl, vol. vii, p. 144; Ibn Khaldūn, 'Ibar, vol. iv, p. 340). The Caliph sent Ibn Abī'1-Saj against him and he was killed in 311/924 (Miskawayh, 'Eclipse , vol. i, p. 117 = vol. iv, p. 131; Ibn al-Athīr, Kamīl, vol. viii, p. 144).

Why Musḥahib al-Ḥāfīz came to be known as Su'lūk/Su'lukī is not known. There was a famous family of Shāfi'ī 'ulama' by the name of Su'lūkī in 10th century Nāysābūr, but they do not seem to have been related to the sons of 'Alī ibn Husayn al-Marwarrūdhī (Samʿānī, Ansāb, s.v. "Su'lūkī"; Bulliet, Patricians of Nishapur, p. 36).
Appendix three
Abū Bilāl’s revolt (295/907)

The two editions of Nizām al-Mulk’s work by H. Darke and C. Schefer differ in what they say about the composition of Abu Bilal’s following. Darke’s edition admits only of the Isma’ili colouring of the uprising (be-kūhpayha-yi herāt khāriji fāmad ast va madhhab-i qaramita ashkāra karde [Siyar al-mulūk, p. 298]); while Schefer’s alludes to both Qarmatī and Khāriji participation (be-kūhpayi-yi herāt khwārijī padīd āmadand va madhhab-i khwārijī va garamita ashkāra kardand [Sīyāsat nāme, p. 194]).

In Schefer’s edition of the Siyāsat nāme, Abū Bilāl himself appears as a Khāriji, a former boon companion of the Šaffārid Ya’qūb ibn Layth who was said to have preached the da’wa on his behalf: miguyand ke nadim ya’qūb-i layth u bud va dar madhhab-i khwārij da’wat be-niyābat-i ū mikonad (Sīyāsat nāme, p. 194). In the corresponding passage in Darke’s edition of the Siyār al-mulūk, there is no mention that Abū Bilāl was a Khāriji, but there does appear to be a lacuna in the text where the word khwāriji appears in Schefer’s edition: miguyand in abu bilāl an ast ke nadimī ya’qūb-i layth kardi va dar madhhab (lacuna?) da’wat be-niyābat-i ū mikonad (Siyar al-mulük, p. 297 = p. 220). Darke’s edition does however give Abū Bilāl the nisba “Khāriji” in a subsequent passage (ibid, p. 298).

The Tārīkh-i Sīstān identifies a certain Abū Bilāl al-Khāriji who pledged allegiance to Ya’qūb ibn Layth in 874 and was subsequently invited to return to Sīstān with the Šaffārid leader (Tārīkh-i sīstān, p. 225 = p. 178). This Abū Bilāl may be identical with the man by the same name who raised the revolt in 907, although he would have been an old man by the latter date.

The question is whether Nizām al-mulk was correct in identifying Abū Bilāl as a former Khāriji who began his career in the service of Ya’qūb ibn Layth and who later became an Isma’ili. Given Nizām al-mulk’s propensity to impute heretical beliefs of all kinds to his villains, notably to Ya’qub himself, it seems implausible. For a start, it is highly unlikely that Ya’qūb ibn Layth was a Khāriji, since he came to prominence by organising resistance to the Khwārijī among his compatriots. Barthold does list several references which portray the Šaffārids as khārijis: Ya’qūb is said to have used a Khāriji battle-cry (Barthold, “Zur Geschichte der Šaffāriden”, Orientalische Studien, Theodor Nöldeke, zum siebzigsten Geburtstag, vol. i, Gieszen, 1906, p. 184, citing ‘Awfi); he and his brother ‘Amr are described as Khārijis in their early careers by Ištākhrī (ibid); Ibn Khallikān describes him as a Khāriji (ibid). But this does not constitute strong evidence for the Šaffārids’ adoption of Khārijism. For one thing, Barthold believes that, in the two latter passages, the epithet khāriji should be taken to mean “rebel” (one who came out
against established authority); for another, the sources are not reliable - Istakhri was no historian, and both "Awfī and Ibn Khallikan are late sources, the former a collector of anecdote, and the latter an anthologist, rather than a critical historian. However Barthold does not entirely discount the possibility that the Saffārids may have collaborated with their former enemies; his conclusion is that all rebels against the established order, whether they were Shi‘is or Kharijís, were attracted to the Saffārid cause in spite of their sectarian differences.

But Nizām al-mulk’s reliability on the question of Ya‘qūb’s association with heretics is seriously called into question in an earlier passage in the Siyar al-mulūk where he accuses Ya‘qūb of being an Isma‘īli (Siyar al-mulūk, p. 20 = p. 14). This is a charge which surely has no historical basis, given the fact that the Isma‘īlís were hardly active by this time; even if they had been, it would require a considerable stretch of historical imagination to believe that Ya‘qūb was one of their number. Much more likely is the suggestion that Nizām al-mulk is here simply equating anti-caliphal agitation (Ya‘qūb’s march on Baghdad is the context in which Nizām al-mulk levels the charge at him) with Isma‘īlism, the worst kind of heresy in his eyes.

Where does this leave us in regard to Nizām al-mulk’s account of the nature of Abu Bilal’s support? It may be that what we are dealing with here is a case of interpolation on the part of a later copyist of the manuscript of his work. In the earlier Nakhshivānī manuscript, upon which Darke based his translation, we hear of a khārijī (probably in the sense of "rebel"), who leads a Qarmātī revolt in 907. It appears that a later copyist, (relying on evidence of Kharijīs who were invited to Ya‘qūb’s court?) has taken the reference to the khārijī in the sectarian sense (compare be-kūh pāyihā- yi herat kharijīlamade ast [Darke, ibid] with be- kūhpāyih- yi herat khawarij padīd amadand [Schefer, ibid]) and having become such, the khārijī naturally had Khawārīj as well as Qarāmīta among his supporters (ve madhhab-ī khawarij ve qaramita āshkārā kardand). Thus it is quite possible that Nizām al-mulk, for all his bias against Ya‘qūb, was not himself responsible for positing Khārijī-Qarmātī collaboration in Abu Bilal’s revolt.
Appendix four

The Khwārazmshāhs in the 10th century

The identity of the Afrīghid Khwārazmshāhs who ruled as vassals of the Samanids has been only tentatively established by modern historians. In his Encyclopaedia of Islam article "Khwārazm-shahs", C. E. Bosworth draws attention to the unreliability of Biruni, our source for the genealogy of the dynasty, pointing out that some of the names which appear on pre-10th century Khwārazmīan coins bear no resemblance with those in his list (EI², s.v. "Khwārazm-shahs"). While Bosworth's reservations may be justified in respect of Biruni's list of pre-tenth century Khwārazmshāhs, Sachau demonstrated that all four of the 10th century Khwārazmshāhs whom Biruni identifies did in fact rule in sequence (Sachau, "Zur Geschichte und Chronologie von Khwarezm", Sitzungberichte der K. Akademie der Wissenschaft (Phil-Hist Classe), vol. lxxiii, 1873, pp. 499-503). The following remarks are intended as a supplement to the articles of Sachau and Bosworth.

The four rulers in question were 'Irāq ibn Mansūr, Muhammad ibn 'Irāq, Ahmad ibn Muḥammad and Muḥammad ibn Ahmad (Biruni, Chronology of nations, tr. E. Sachau, London, 1897, p. 42). 'Irāq ibn Mansūr was appointed governor of Khwārazm by Isma'īl ibn Ahmad shortly before 287/900 (cf chapter 3, p. 93). He may have come to support his sovereign against 'Amr ibn Layth in 287 (cf. Frye, tr., The history of Bukhara, p. 89, note 303, where he is named Mansūr (var: 'Irāq) Qarāteğin). The same man, described as "lord of Khwārazm", certainly came to the aid of Isma'īl's grandson, Nasr ibn Ahmad, against his uncle Ishaq in 301 (cf chapter 4, p. 141).

'Irāq died at some time in the next five years and was succeeded by his son Muḥammad Khwārazmshāh who received the caliphal emissary Ibn Fadlān in Kāth in 309/921 (Ibn Fadlān, Ibn Fadlan's Reisebericht, ed. and tr. A. Z. V. Togan, Liechtenstein, 1966, p. 10). According to Juzjānī (Ṭabaqāt-i nāsirī, p. 209) the Khwārazmīan rebel, Abdallāh ibn Ashkām, who revolted against the Samānids at the beginning of the reign of Nūh ibn Naṣr in 332/943-4, was a Khwārazmshāh, but Juzjānī was probably mistaken; for one thing Ibn al-Athīr, in his brief notice of the revolt, does not attribute the title to him (Ibn al-Athīr, Kamil, vol. viii, p. 415) and for another, it is extremely unlikely that a Khwārazmshāh of this period should have had a non-Muslim father.

In 340 Khwārazm was without a ruler (shaghira) (Ibn al-Athīr, Kamil, vol. viii, p. 493): this may have been the result of a succession struggle on the death of Muḥammad. Muḥammad was succeeded by his son Ābud Saʿīd Ahmad who was ruler of Khwārazm in the middle of the tenth century (A. K. Markov, Inventarny katalog musulmanskykh mon et imperatorskogo Ermitazha, St. Petersburg, 1896, pp. 295 and 975; describes coins of
his minted in 348/959-60 and 366/976-7). Ahmad’s son Abū 'Abdallāh Muhammad was the last Afrīghid Khwārazmshāh at the close of the century: he was killed by Ma’mūn, ruler of Gurgān in 385/995 (see above, chapter 8, p. 258; Biruni, *The chronology of ancient nations*, p. 42, where he is given the title of al-shahīd).

The Khwārazmshāhs were generally loyal to the Sāmānīds and occasionally sent military aid to them (see above, chapter 4, p. 135) but relations with the Sāmānīds were not always amicable; Biruni mentions that Abū Sa‘īd Ahmad was imprisoned in Bukhārā for a while (*Chronology*, p. 229; see also the anecdote in *Afwī, Jawāmi‘ al-hikāyāt*, part i of section 2, p. 201).

As for the Ma‘mūnid governors of Jurjāniyya, no further evidence of the circumstances of their emergence as rivals to the Afrīghids has been forthcoming. Ibn Zāfir’s statement that Abū ‘Alī Sīmjūrī appointed Ma‘mūn governor of Jurjāniyya (Gurgān) and Nasā in the last decade of the century is contradicted by *Utbi* who says that Nūh ibn Mansūr granted Nasā to Ma‘mūn, here entitled sahib al-jurjāniyya, as a reward for help he had given him during his exile from Bukhārā (*Duwal*, fol 130a; Yāmīnī, in Manīnī, *Fath*, vol. i, pp. 183f).
Appendix five

The history of the Samanids in Ibn Zafir's Akhbar al-duwal al-islamiyya

This edition of Ibn Zafir's chapter on the Samanids is based on a microfilm of the unique manuscript, Codex Arab G6 of the Ambrosiana library, Milan, kindly lent to me by Professor W. Madelung. For details of the manuscript, see W. Madelung "The identity of two Yemenite historical manuscripts", JNES, vol. xxxii, 1973, pp. 175-180.

Orthography of the manuscript

The manuscript is written in a legible nasḵhī style. The hamza is ignored in the manuscript in all its positions. In some cases both the hamza and its bearer are left out. The long alif is omitted in proper names (e.g. Ismaʿīl for Ismaʿīl) and numerals. There is no vowelling and no tashdīd. Diacritical marks are supplied, but are quite commonly left off the letters jīm, bā, yā, tā: the tā marbūta is always undotted.

The edited text

In this edition, punctuation has been added and diacritical marks have been inserted where absent in the manuscript and corrected when misplaced. Hamzas have been supplied with their bearers. Tashdīd and vowelling have been supplied only where the understanding of the sentence requires them. Some corrections of grammar and orthography have been made, particularly in the case of numerals; with the exception of corrections to numerals and the insertion of hamza, the manuscript version has been noted in the footnotes.

The text was typeset at Oxford University Computing Service.
لم أدخل الأمون خراسان، وجد بها أسد بن سمان خضاء، وهو من ولد يهام جور شورين. ذكر غرس النعمة أنه وجد نسبهم في بعض الكتب، أسد بن سمان خضاء ابن جبیان بن طبان بن نشور بن يهام شورين بن يهام حسین بن منزاد خسرو بن نرسی بن يهام بن الامیر بن سبوئ بن يژدیر. قدامه عمدته أبیه، وقدمه وولي أولاده، وكأن له أربعة أولاد، نوح بن أسد، أحمد بن أسد، بحث بن أسد، إلياس بن أسد. ولم قدم الأمون العراق، وولى خراسان لنفس بن غسان بن عباد، أوصاه بهم، فولى غسان في ستة أربعين ومائتين نوح بن أسد سمرقد، وأحمد بن أسد فرغانة، وبحث بن أسد الشاش وأشروستان، إلياس بن أسد هريرة. ولما ولي طاهر بن الحسين خراسان أقرهم، ثم ولي عبد الله بن طاهر فأقرهم. وكان نوح أكبر الخوذة، فات في ستة إحدى وثلاثين ومائتين، في آخر خلافة الإمام الفقید بالله في ولاية طاهر بن عبد الله بن طاهر، فكانت ولايته سبعاً وعشرين سنة. فأمر أخاه أحمد بن أسد على عمله، وكان كرماً وفيه قيل:

ْنَوَى ثَلَاثِينَ حُوَالَةً في وَلَايَةٍ فَجَاعِ يَمْتُرُ فِي قَبْرِ حَسْمَةٍ
وَأَمَامَ أَحْمَدٍ إِلَى أَنْ يَقْرِبَ فِي شَهْرِ رَمَضَانٍ سِنَةٌ إِحْدَى وَسِتِينَ مَائَاتٍ، فَكَانَتُ
وَلَايَةٌ ثَلَاثِينَ سِنَةٌ، وَكَانَتِ وَفَاتُهُ فِي أَيْامِ المَنْتَمِدٍ (fol.116a) عَلَى اللَّهِ. وَقَدْ كَانَ
اِسْتَخْلِفَ وَلَدُهُ نَصِرًا عَلَى سَمَرَقَنْدِ وَسَائِرِ أَعْلَمَا، فَأَقْرَهُ المَنْتَمِدَ وَأَصَرَّهُ عَلَيْهِ عِدَّةً فِي
شَهْرِ رَمَضَانٍ سِنَةٌ إِحْدَى وَسِتِينَ، فَقَبِلَ عَلَى الأَنْفُل طُلُوْ بَلَدَ الْعَاجَرَةَ. وَكَانَ
أَخُوه إِسْمَاعِيْلَ بِنْ أَحْمَدٍ ثَلَاثِينَ سِنَةَ عَنْهُ بِصَارَا، فَقَعُ بِنَبِيَّةٍ مَشَاهِدَةَ أَتَّدُ إِلَى مَحَرَّةٍ،
فَذَةَبَنَّا فَهُمِ إِسْمَاعِيْلَ نَصِرَاً وَأَسَرَّهُ، فَلَمْ يَا أَسَرَاً، تَرِجَلُ لَهُ وَقُلِّبَ بَدْهُ، وَأَعَاذَهُ
إِلَى سَمَرَقَنْدِ، فَأَقَامَ وَالِيَّاً عَلَى سَائِرِ بَلَادِ الْمَرْبَدِ مَا وَرَاهُ الْهَرُ، إِلَى أَنْ يَقْرِبَ، فَوَلِيَّاً إِسْمَاعِيْلَ
بِنْ أَحْمَدٍ.

ذكر سبب ملك إسمايل خراسان وأسره عمرو بن الليث الصفار
لما استقرت يد عمرو الصفار على خراسان، حملت نفسه على مئذنة إسمايل على
ما وراء الهر، فكتب إلى الإمام المتنبئ يطلب منه التوبة، فأجابه، وكتب إلى
إسمايل سراً، بأمره بتبتذله وينوي لدى محاربه. وَلَا حُصْلَةَ الإجابة، فعَرَ
عمرو حاجبه محمد بن بشر في جيش كيف لقبت إسمايل بن أحمد، ولما الخبر
إسمايل، فكتب إلى عمرو: إنك وليت الدنيا وعاءة، وإنا في يدي ما وراء
النهر وهو ثغر الشرق، فإنعقوم بما في ذلك، وأُرقيري رداً له بهذا النهر. فلم يجهب عمرو إلى ذلك. فأعاد الكتاب إليه يسمل أن لا يلعر بالمسلمين في تعدد النهر. فأعاد الجواب: إن له أشياء أن أسكره باليد والأموال وأعبر العساكر عليه لغمله. فإذا علم إسنايل أنه لا بد له من مشاركته، جمع عساكره وعبر النهر إلى خراسان، وليخوم بن بشر، فهزم ولم يقعن فيه المعركة مع أكثر جيشه، ثم عاد إلى ما وراء النهر. فالأمر، فرجع المفلون إلى عمرو، وأخذ في تفعيل ولهم على الانتقام، قال له بعض الأجانب: أبا الأمير إن إسنايل قد طبخ في ما وراء النهر قدرًا كبيرة، وإنما غرف لنا منها مفرقة، والباقي بحال، فئى شتت أن تدفق فمؤمنًا. فسكت عنه وجهر الصفار، وخرج بنفسه قاصداً تال إسنايل، وبلغه الخبر فسار إليه وعاد النهر كما فعل في الكرة الأولى، فنزل الصفار على بلغ، وزل إسنايل إزائه، وقطع المرة عنه، ومنه النفوذ إلى ناحية من النواحي. فصار الصفار كالخاصر، راغب على ما فعل، وطلب الجزاء، فأبى إسنايل، فلزم على الحرب. فلم يكن بيئته كثير قال حتى أنهم الصفار، ومر على وجهه هاربًا، فر بائسه، قبل له إبنا أقرب الطرق. فأخذه في حاصيه وأمر بابي العسكر بالرجوع في الطريق الجادة، فصدًا. أن ينفع إسنايل الطريق الجادة، فتصور ما سار في الأمة إلا يسيراً حتى وصل دابته، فلم يكن له في نفسه حيلة، وهرم من معه ولم يلوا عليه، فأدركه الساكنون من أصحاب إسنايل فأسروه، وجرى له ما ذكرناه في أخباره، وملك إسنايل خراسان.

الامام إسنايل بن أحمد

ملك إسنايل خراسان مضافًا إلى ما وراء النهر في سنة سبع وثمانين، وغلب على جرجان وطبرستان بمقتل محمد بن زيد الداعي، (fol.117a) خمس ليل خلون من .. منها. وولاها محمد بن هرون السرخسي، ثم عزه وولي صلوك، فافق عليه محمد بن هرون، وصار للناصر للحق الخالص، كأذكروا، فرق بينها صلوك بحيلة، فضى محمد بن هرون إلى بلاد الري، فهزم أرقتهم التميمي والياء وقته، واستمر بها، وذلك في سنة تسع وثمانين. فسار إليه صلوك، ولقيه على باب الري، وكان محمد بن هرون في مماثة آلاف، فانه وقفل صلوك أكثر أصحابه، ونسل الري، ودخل السرخسي إلى نحو بلاد الفيلم، وبعث المكتبي لله.

إلى إسنايل في سنة تسعين عهدًا على الرزي إجابة لسواه.

وعلى أبام إسنايل في سنة إحدى وتسعين وثمانين، خرج ملك الترك في جيش عظم، ذكر أنه كان فيه سبع مائة قبب، ولا يكون ذلك إلا للعظماء. فوجه إليه إسنايل بعض قواده في خلق من العسكرية والطروحة، فأفادهم، وهم عارون مع الصبح، فاستباحهم قلقًا وأسرًا. وتوفي بخباراً، وهي كرمي مملكة وملكة بنه، لأربع عشرة سنة خلت من صفر سنة خمس وتسعين.
فكان أن نية ولادة خراسان وما وراء النهر من أن نسي من أي شخص، وأيضخية ولادة خراسان في ملوكهم الساسانيين أن لا يقتيم إلا بعد الوفاة. وكان إسحاق كبير اللب، عنيفًا عليه، أبيض اللون، وكان يربى في العلماء حليماً كريماً، يعمل الأحبار كل يوم للتمتع، وأرى الحديث، ويجلسهم على المائدة، فإذا انتهوا على كل مائدة، فيجلس عليه ويأكل معه. فكان إذا جلس على مائدة جدد طعامها، فيما سألوه أهل الموائد الاوين أن يجلس عندهم إجلالًا منهم على خليه وكرمه.

أحمد بن إسحاق الشهيد

وكنيته أبو نصر، وله مات وأخذه إسحاق، ببيع له بيعان. وكان عمه إسماعيل بن أحمد بن مسعود، فسولت له نفسه أخذ الملكة بعد أخيه، مما حصل به. فألا توفي، بادر أحمد بالسرير إليه في جيش قوي من يومه، فبنى الحر، ولم يشعر إلا بأحمد قد وصل ودخل عليه القصر، فلما رأى بادر إليه فرحه أحمد الحب، فشكك على أخيه، وأقام عليه العزة ثلاثة أيام. وعزم على القبض على أحمد، ورتب له جاعة على باب قاعة من القصر، أعدها له، وأمر أن أحمد إذا جاء في اليوم الرابع ليدخل عليه، يقول له إنه في تلك القاعة، فإذا دخلوا، بادر إلى القبض عليه. فصبيه بعضهم من كان لأحمد عنه صبيه، وأخبره الخبر ووصف له القاعة المذكورة. ويذكر أنه، وقد اعتد في خاصته، فلا دخل القصر، بادر إليه الغلامان (118a) وأخبروه أن عمة في تلك القاعة. فأبهدوا، ثم إلى قاعة الجلس، ووجد عمه به، وهو ينظر وصول الشاردة بتقيده. فلما رأى، أليس فقد بم أحمد، وأمر غلنته بالقبض عليه وعلي الغلاين وإحضاره قبرة المدة له، فأحضرت من تلك القاعة، فقيده بها وقيد الغلاين. ورمى على سرد، ثم عاد إلى بخاراء، فخس عمه بها مدة، ثم رضي عنه، وأخذ عليه البيعة ورد إلى سرد.

وعلى أيامه في سنة سبع وسبعين ومائتين، خرجت التركة له لجورة التي لم يكن قبلها، ولا بعدها؛ تُنظر لها. وذلك أنهم يجمعوا في أربعين ألف، وصدوا بلاد المسلمين، ووقعوا أربع فرق، فصى مائة ألف إلى محاور، مائة ألف أخرى إلى خوارزم، وهما ألف إلى سرد، وخمسين ألفا إلى إسفاح، وخمسين ألفا إلى الشام، وخمسين ألفا إلى فاراب، وقضوا على التجار الذين كانوا في بلادهم، واسترقوهم. وله بنائه ذلك، تجمعت المشايخ العسكري والمطعمة ودخلوا عليه، فجدهو باباً، فأدخلوا في سبيله. فقال: والله ما بويج جزءاً من الموت، ولكن على المسلمين الأولى وأسرى واسترقوه، بعد أن كانوا منظفين. ثم نظر إلى صاحب جيش المطعمة، وهو عبد الله بن عبد الصادق، وقال له: كنرك بك تقول إن هذا يحتاج إلى الخل، والناس مستورون، وليس لهم عدة، فأحضر الرجال
وُلِّد الأموال والخيل والعدد. فخرج وجمع الناس، وکَنِّي الله الأمَر بعد ذلك على يد الفتنه أي بكر بن الأزهر البخلي، وكان يعد بائناً، فخرج في أربعة فاس، من غرب في ذهاب المسلمين بالفمه، وغزال راجل، على سبيل الكشف لأحبار الترك. فيسر الله عليهم إحرار العسكر القائد إلى مازار، وذلك أمه نُقْلوا وأدعيت في بيد الغفام، وله بُشر مسافات إثام، جميعها متصلة ببشر الغفاء، زُوقت السري على ف맥 الله، وهم قد اجتمعوا في وادي (fol.118b)، قد تَقَتَّل علَيهم أشياء، فأمر القادة بإطلاق النار، فأحاطته بهم، وسلط الله عليه الرباح العذاب، فلم يسلم منهم أحد، وكان هذا مما يتمعبه منه.

وأما قادوا خوارزم، فإنهم حصل لهم من أهلها أسرى لا يخضعهم العدد كثرة، فعادوا بهم. فإن فرغت السرية من العسكر القائد إلى مازار، عزموا على الرجوع، فَأَشَار عليهم أحد شيوخ المظلة، وهو أبو أحمد نعمان، بأن يقتدوا العسكر القائد إلى خوارزم، وخشوا أن يكون له، فإن زيارة العسكر قد نازعت من خوارزم بالأسرى، ومار ثلاث أيام لم ينزل، ثم نزل، فساروا إليه، وکمنوا عن نوره، فخرج ابن الأزهر وعبد، ودخل عامر الترك، وقضاء جميع الأسرى، وفقم فيها، وکلاهم. فانتهى الأستر، فأجبروا أنعب من أهل بخارى، وعرامها مكان السرية، وأطلقوا منهم رجالة. وأجد بعضهم يحل بعضًا، ورسنهم ابن الأزهر أن ينوروا على الابد، وسلطنهم إبراهيم إلى السرية، وفرقوا أربع فرق، وضرب الطول، فما نبه الترك إلا أصولهم في مكان الأمن، وترفعت عليهم أهل خوارزم بكرتهم، فلم يخرج أحد إلا القليل، فلم يخرج أحد إلا القليل، فلم يخرج أحد إلا القليل.

وفي هذه السنة ملك أحمد سجستان، وخرج على أحمد محمد بن هرمز الصناعي، وكان (fol.119a) خارج المهبه، فخطب يومًا أبا الحسن على بن عبيد الراعي، بسبب أرزاق. فقال له: يجب للملك في سلك أن نلزم رباطًا، تعد الله فيه. فاغاظ ذلك، فسار إلى سجستان وخرج مبا، وشبت العسكر إليه، فقال لهم يومًا: لم تَرْدُون رجلاً، لا يصلح إلا الملازم رباط وغلم في فتحه، ولم ينظر به.

وخرج عليه أبو زيد خالد بن محمد الرؤوي بيست ورغدة، فيبعث إليه أحمد دك، أده البكلي، وهو نجح نجح الطولوي. فاتحت جزئ خالد منه، فقال له بعض أصحابه: لا تخاف منه، فإنه لا يضرك. قال: من أين لك ذلك؟ فقال: من قول الله تعالى، لا تخاف دركا ولا تشكي. فهزمها خالد، ثم ظفر به سيمجر الديواني الفارسي، والدب السيمجري، وكان وليًا على سجستان، وأسره جربة، نفتحت رأسه إلى بدليس، وصلت جثمته بخارى، وغشته بالغفران.

وكان سبب مقتل أحمد بن إسحاق أن ابن قان، صاحب جبل دبندون، قد استأمن إليه، فأقام ياباه بأيام كبيرة، لم يوصل إليه. فشكا ذلك إلى كندانكين
من كنداكور الدليمي، أحمد قواد أحمد، فقال له: هل حملت إلى مشابخ الباب؟ فقال: لا. قال: فما السبب؟ فقال: أنني أدخل إلى أبي الحسن الكاتب، وانصرف منه كيف السبب إلى الوصول. ومنذ فنظر عليه، وسألت عن ذلك، فقال الكاتب: لا يوجد في سنة آلاف دينار، برضي بها مشابخ الباب. فقضلت إلى ابن قارن وأخبرته، فأتمها توزع من الثحاج سنة آلاف دينار، وسألهذا، كنداكور (ع)، وأ🌍صيها إلى أبي الحسن، فأدركد وأوصله إلى أحمد في اليوم الثالث، فأذكر أحمد، ورده وأسله، ثم بقيت. ثم قال: أعلمه: تعرف منه، فهاد عوده إلى بلاده أخذ إليه، أمر بقاءه لمدننة. فسأله أبو الحسن عن ذلك، فذكر الوصول إلى بلاده، فحفل عليه أحمد خلماً تصلح للملك، وجلس في بديه عشرة، وقادة بين بديه عشرة أفراد مهارك حل، ورد إلى بلدة، وركع عليه حتى يخرج من أغلاه أحمد، وكتب إلى أمراء الأعيال بإزالتهم وإكرامهم وصرفه شاكرًا. قال وصل مور، وكان وعليه محمد بن علي المعلم بمستو، المعلم الذي في هذا الكتاب، أدرك عليه، وسأله صعلم: كيف رأيت الأمير السيد؟ قال: أما رؤيته، فذكرت بها سنة آلاف دينار. قال: من؟ قال: من أبي الحسن الكاتب. فذكر صاحب الخذار بذلك وقع، وارد قارن لا يشعر. إذ ورد الكتاب إلى أحمد، كتب من سمعته يرد ابن قارن حيث ما أدرك، وأدرك كل ما معه، وistrib إلى بلاده، ويرجع مع خمسة غليان. ثم

رحد ابن قارن بعد ذلك ليسد سبم كان يؤدي الناس على شاطيء يحيون.

فذكر الرسول ابن قارن يمر، فرجم به إلى أحمد ابن إساعيل، وهو في الصيد. قال عليه، قال له أحمد: يا ابن مصورة، رددناك وشغناك قليلا. ثم قال: ظاهك عليه رأسي. فوضعها، فقال: إنما تذكر بالله الذي أدرك أحمد بن إساعيل، وببئس يبصرف عامه،، والان في بلاده طمع، جاء إليها بنفسه وأغدها لنا الدنيا الخطرة، يعلم معه ما فهله كأنما نذكر جهلك إله ودعائك تعاني سنة دراهم، أنلك بهذه إذا عداها إلى بجايا. ثم اتفق صيد السبع الذي كان يخرج لأجلها على PROVIDE A LEXICON.

أليك ما يفهله كأنما نذكر جهلك إله ودعائك تعاني سنة دراهم، أنلك بهذه إذا عداها إلى بجايا. ثم اتفق صيد السبع الذي كان يخرج لأجلها على PROVIDE A LEXICON.

فيه ما بيته كل ليلة، فلا يمكن أحد أن يقدر به، وأنه يتنافل تلك الليلة.
فلم يرضها على باب القبة، فقتله، وكان قتله في سنة إحدى والثامنة. فكانت مدة مملكته سبع سنين، وكان من أجمل الناس صورة، وأحسنه ميرة، وما قتل، لئن بالمسلم. أولاده، الأكبر أبو العباس الفضل، وأبو الحسن نصر، وأبو زكريا يحيى، وأبو إسحاق إبراهيم، وأبو صالح منصور.

أبو الحسن نصر بن أحمد بن إسحاق

لقبه أصحابه في حياة الموتى، وبعد وفاته السعيد. ذكر ذلك غرس النعمة في تأريخه.

ولا فرغ الغلاب منقتل أحمد، بادروا إلى أبي الحسن وأعلمهم، جاهز وقبض

على الخزائن، وأعطى الغلاب الكبير الذين أشاروا قتل أحمد، ما كان قريلا من

أموهم بالزكوب والسير إلى بخارا. وقال لهم: إسرعوا وإسقوا الخير وإملكو

الجهنمز ودار الإمارة وبوت الأموال، لبلا بلغ المير إلى أحمد بن أحمد. يوفي

نائب أحمد بن إسحاق على مدينة بخارا، فلا يعلم ما هو. فساروا

مسرين، وأعيد محولا في قارة مع الأئمة، فقد الغلاب الصفار الذين لم

يكونوا في البصرة، وأجمعوا على إنفاق رسول إلى والدة أحمد بن إسحاق،

يثيرها، فبعثوا رسولا من أحبها الحرير، فبعثه إلى محمد بن أحمد وساكن

الخندو الرومي، وكان من المناصرين للمواجنة.

فإن وقف محمد بن أحمد على الحب، بإدر بالزكوب، ورجاء إلى باب الفهذنمز،

ونستغن منه واسترك المساحة، وكل من آلف رجل بدار الإمارة وبيت المال،

وأحر الزوار بين السلاح، وأخرج البندور وخرج بهم، فنفعت في مكان، يقال

له الشهيلة، ويبعث جاسوسا، يعلم له الحر، فجاء وأخبر بقرينه، يفي الغلن. فأمر

أن يضرب مليشيا الطاعة والبارزين من باب الساحة إلى باب الشهيلة، ففعل

ذلك. وأكبر الغلاب، يركعون ويشتمنون محمد بن أحمد، وقيد باب الساحة

منهم نحو ألف مملوك. فلم نظروا إلى أهل البلد والطاعة (fol.120a) والبارزين

عليهم السلاح، صاحوا عليهم وقاموا: ما لكم والجح، فترفوا فإن الأمير السيد

إسحاق بن إبراهيم، شيخ البلد وعسكره في العمل السلاح، وله في البلد أكثر من ألف تمييز، فصاح عليه قارس التركي، وهو من

كبار مالكي إسحاق ولد أحمد، وقال: يا يا يعقوب، من كان لأهل بخارا عادة

في الخروج على الملوكة؟ أو لم يكن رجل شيخ، لأنك بك ما أنت أهل. فصاح

إسحاق على غلبه: خذوا عبد السوء القاتل مولاكم، فخشوا أصحابه. ورفع يده

فصب رأس قارس بديوس كان مع، فكفتته نكس أصحابه الذين كانوا

معه. وركب المطولة دوابهم وolisوا سلاحهم، وكسوهم بأجسامهم، وحصوه

في دار الحطب. وأقاموا النافذين فوق حيطاتها، وروجوا لهم أنهم إذا تحركوا أو

نطنوا، فإضروا عليهم نارًا.
وفيق الناس على حافهم، وإذا بطائفة أخرى من الالمتاك قد وصلت، ففعل بها مثل الأولى، حتى حبوا أربعة آلاف مملوك في دار الخبط، ومن وراءهم لا يعلن بما كان منهم. ثم وافق أبو الحسن الكاتب في نحو الذي غلام وعورات الأمير أحمد وجثامين بين بديه، وعجل لأس أحمد، وعلى رأسه الفلسفة النمسية، فأcamel محمد بن أحمد موفقة أبو الحسن الكاتب، (fol.121b) قال صاحب جيش المطوعة: يا باب، محمد، أخرج من السهلة مع جاية من النفنان، وقف خارج الباب بين النفنان، حتى يدخل فين آتي مع الملك، فإذا دخل إلينا وصل هو إليك، فلا يفعل، فإنه صاحب الفعلة، وإن سمحت حركة من عندنا، فلا تنته إلي، فإنه ملك الأمر.

فخرج صاحب الجيش، ومعه أربعة آلاف فارس وألفا راجل، وضرب المصاح من بين النفنان، فقا وألف الغلام، ورأوا جميع المطوعة، أنكرها أمرهم. وكان على المقدمة سيمجور اللونا ويبندا، وكان من أبي الملوك واحضرهما رأياً. فأحس سيمجور بالشقر، فقال لبيدان والخلان: تقدموا فإني وافق في مالكي مع صاحب الجبه، إذا كان لنا، فهو ما يحب، وإن كان علينا، كفتيكم أمراً. فقلوا: نعم الرأى. فأنقر ووقفت مع صاحب الجيش وقال له: يا محمد، أرى شكرًا من ضمومنا. قال: ما كل ما ترى إلا فرحًا بالأمر. قال سيمجور: على أن لي دمه الله ورسوله أنا وأهلي وملالي. قال صاحب الجيش: إن كان الأمر كاز تعزم، فمر مالك بالترجل وغير السلاح، وإذنه إلى أصحابه وأثرب كل مملوك منهم اعتبار سلاحه وفهمه، لبرده إلينا. فأجاب سيمجور إلى ذلك، وكان معه من مالكي خمسة مائة مملوك. وكان قريباً منظراً على مذهب الشافعي رحمه الله.

وقوف سيمجور مكانه وآلياً بين دينه غلامان، كافراً مر قائد من الالمتاك، قال له بالتركة: تقدم، فإنه أتكف هذه، يعني صاحب الجيش. فتقدم فيه كشنة المطوعة بين باب السهلة والفهدنة، وهم هناك مع محمد بن أحمد، ثم يفينهون في دار الخبط، هو وغالبة (fol.122a) وأقبل أبو الحسن الكاتب، وعليه الفلسفة، قاما صار بين النفنان، وحذى صاحب الجيش، قال: السلام عليك يا محمد. فقال صاحب الجيش: لا سلم الله عليك يا عدوه. وغلافه بالديس، فوقع الصفة، وصاح الغلام الذين وراءه، وأمره، فائر إليه المطوعة، وتبسو عن داهية، وطرحوا جملًا في تثمة، وعدوا به، وترقب الجيش في طلب من تأخر من الغلام، فأخذهوا عن آخرهم، وحبسوا.

فكاتب محمد بن أحمد بدورهم، وبثق من ساعته الجزاءات صحبة تابوت تحمل الأمير الشهيد أحمد بن إسماعيل. وصل أبو الحسن الكاتب على سور الفهدنة، ساحة من النبار، ثم أرسل وحبس. وكان يطلب كل يوم مدة أربعين يومًا، ساعتين من النبار، وكذلك الغلامان القائلان، ثم قتلوه، وصلحوا وتركوا سبع سنين، حتى فرح الصاضون في أجواهم.

وأما وصل الرمل بجحذة الأمير، أنهز بها دار الإمارة، وغست وفت، وحمل نفسه ليصل عليه. وخرج الفراد الأحبار حفاء، يكون، وخرجت الملالي، وأطلقوا للصلاة عليه. فأتى وضع التوابع في المصل، قام محمد بن أحمد وقال:
أبية المسلمين والأولى، عندي لكم راي أن ذاكره قبل الصلاة على هذا البيت.

والفراض الناس من هذا الحذل، فإن كان صواباً، ساعدوا عليه، إن لم يكن عدكم صواباً تلتم غيره. ثم استدعى صاحب الحزن سراً، وقال له: إني إلى البلد وخذ الطمعة، وكل بكل ناحية من البلد شيخًا، وإجمع نساء الأجانب والمالك المكلف بهم، وغيرهم كلهم في مكان واحد، وخذ خيولهم وأسلحتهم، فأعطوا للمطعمة، ورتب واجلبهم على القنهد (fol.122b).

وفرماهم بين السهله وبينه، وأتبت حتي يأتيك أمري. فامثال ذلك.


قال لهم محمد بن أحمد: ما لكم صممتم وأتمن أرباب الملكة؟ قال بغرا الكبير: صدقت أبا الأمير، ولكن لو صلبتا على هذا البيت ودفتاه، ثم رجعنا إلى البلد وتشاورنا، كان أولى. قال محمد: لا يجوز أن ينصرف الناس إلى منازم إلا بعد مبايعة. قال بغرا: هو إذن، أنت الحاكم على المسلمين والمتصوف في أمرهم إلى أن يتفقوا على من يوليهم أمرهم. وكان محمد بن أحمد يداري الأئمة، ويبلغهم حتي يرد رسول أبي محمد، صاحب جيش المطعمة، بالقبض على عيالهم وخيولهم، وأتوب أهل البلد لهم.

ثم قال لقائي البلدة: وهو أبو ذر، وأبي سهل، شيخها، اختاروا عشرة من مشايخ الفقهاء وعشرة من مشايخ الحديثين، وامضوا بنا إلى البلد، لتنظر من نابيعهم من أولاد الأمير. ففعلوا ووضوا بأجمعهم إلى القنهد، واستخلف محمد بن أحمد (fol.123a) على الجنازة بعض أصحابه.

ثم مضوا إلى دار الإمارة ودخلوا على ولاد الشهيد أحمد، وقال لهم محمد بن أحمد: أحضري أولادك. وكان الأمير أبو الفضل العباس عياً، لا يرجم، فانتقو من محونه فيدي جدته. وحمله محمد بن أحمد على عاقبة، وقال له ليصفه: إلى أين ي، يردن قتلتمي كما قتلت أني؟ فكفي ابن أحمد وقال: بل تمكعن، يا سيدي، أميراً، واتبي به إلى الجنازة، وأجسحه أمام النعش، وبیده سيف مصلت.

وإلي: يا معاشر المسلمين إن لأمERAKX الشهيد خمسة بنين، أكبرهم العباس، وهو عجل، لا يرجم، فلم يقترع مبايعته، وقد بيعت الأمير نصير بن أحمد، وهو ابن إبن عشرة سنة، صريح العقل، حافظ كتاب الله، عازر بالفراض، حسن الأدب فأجابه أهل البلد والمشايخ والأولى الأحرار بالطاعة.
и. اسماء وسماء. وقال الأراك: إن هؤلاء موالين، ولنا في أمرهم نظر حتى نشاور
سيدتنا، يعني وفاة الأمير الشهيد. فقال محمد بن أحمد: إنما بابته الأمير
أباه الحسن مولى أمير المؤمنين، لا من كان غازيا على البيعة، فقلت: فهل من
بابه، أبو الحسن علي بن عبد الصمد العارض، ثم الأمير حموده على، ثم
محمد بن أحمد بن جهان، ثم محمد بن أبى سبع، ثم باب الناس أجمع، إلا
الراك، ومحمد علي الحسن الكاتب القائل، أحضر الجنازة ليحضر، وأخذنا
بدوراً لأنفسهم ليرجعوا بلا يبعة، لأن هواهم مع المقرب إسحاق بن أحمد
بن أسد، وهو إذ ذلك أمير تمرقند، وعندك أهله وبنو حمله، وانجادة متفرقون.
(foil.123b) فقال القاضي لـسليمان الجوارزمي: يا باي علي، من أهل العلم،
وما ينبغي لك أن تختلف عن هذه البيعة، لأن الله من عليك بأصلاح هذا
الأمر، وهاك على أبدتيم إلى الإسلام، وجعلك بهم من ذوي الأمر، فصاح
عليه بما الكبر: إنك شيخ قد خفتم ما لله والأئمة: عليك أصحابك،
ودعنا حتى نشاور فينا كما نشاورتم. وصاح الأراك وارتدت الصفة، فقال
محمد بن أحمد لصاح بخيش المطرقة: إظهرا ما رتب لك. فأحفر جامعه من
أولاد الأراك ونسائهم، وأوفدها فوق الفناء. وخرجت كتائب المطرقة وأهل
البلد، ونادي مداد، أمر الأمير محمد بن أحمد أن يقتل من أسر الأراك من
غير مبايعة، ولن تقف ملاها، ففاته الأراك الجند، وساعوا بجمعهم كارهين، بعد
النصر، وصلوا على الشهيد أحمد إسحاق الشمس ودفنه عند المرب، وأمر ابن
أحمد بأن لا ترد للأراك دواهم، ولا سلاحهم، إلى ثلاثة أيام، إلى أن يخلقو
بيتا أخرى.
ثم كتب من ليلته كتاباً إلى صرقود، في حضرة إسحاق بن أحمد، عم الشهيد،
وبعث الكتاب من الغند، وأحضر الأراك وأمرهم يأتموا. فقام فيهم ماراج، وهو
من أجل غليان إصابع الماض، فقال: آباأنا الأراك، إنكم لم تقموا من يوم
مولاكنا، واليوم لا أعرف لخلطكم عن وثني ونجا. إنها لنا مبر، فيدروا المطر وورق
الشجر، حتى يخيلوا أولاكم وأمهمكم. فحفروا، وعملت البيعة، وضع محمد بن أحمد المال، واجتمع بعد ذلك أبو منصور فلانين، وبلغت وكراي
الكبر وغيرهم (foil.124a) وحلف بعضهم بعض أنهم يكونون بدأ واحدة. ثم
قال فلانين محمد بن أحمد: أباأنا الأمير إنك ما ظفرتنا إلا بمساعدات أهل
بيئاً، وكذلك نريد أن نفاعدون في حرب من إيحان، فإنكم طرحتم، في أمر
الله خلصت منه. فقال أبو سهل الشيخ البلد: على الرجال وعليكم الأمور، إن
قيلت عشرة آلاف فعلي مثلها. فنفبنت نفس الأراك وقاموا بأجمعهم، فسلمو
على نصر بن أحمد بالراحة، وقبلوا الأرض.
ولا وصل الكتيب إلى الأمير إسحاق بن أحمد، نزع السواء وبوس بطانة التغيرة
ثلاثة أيام. ثم عزم على طلب الأمر لكانه من السك والتدب، وابشر عليه مشابك
صرقود بذلك، وبايعوه بأجمعهم، وكذلك من كان في جملته من آل سامان.

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وأجاب محمد بن أحمد يجميل وتأمره أن يقيم الدعوة له، ويرجى على خيارا وكأنه في أيام الشهيد. وكتب الأفراد إلى سائر أمراء خراسان وما وراء النهر، فأجاب الجمع إسحاق بن أحمد وأتقوا له الدعوة، وردوا دعوة ناصر بن أحمد. وبعث كل منها كتابًا إلى الأئمة المنتقد بالله، يطلب العمل لنفسه، فعلم الإمام أنه لم يعد من حرب يفعل بهما، وصار ليستنكر على من تكون الدائرة.

ولا رأى محمد بن أحمد ما كان من مصارعة الناس إلى دعوة إسحاق بن أحمد، فوض من أهل بخارى أربعة آلاف فارس وستانة آلاف راغل. واتصل الحرب بإسحاق، فكتب إلى فرغانة وإشترحة وإبناشة وإيسيفو، فأقبل إليه مقدموها، ومعهم أربعة عشر ألف عنان، وجمع من شرد والسفاد وغيرها.

جميلة وفترة، وسار إسحاق (fol.124b) بن أحمد، ومعه زهاء سمعة وثلاثون ألف فارس، حتى نزل بابا بخارا. ورحب محمد بن أحمد إلى عراق بن منصور، صاحب خوارزم، فبعث إليه أربعة ألاف وثلاثين راغل، وصول إسحاق، وبرز محمد بن أحمد في سبعة عشر ألفًا، وذلك يوم الاثنين من شهر رمضان. ووحد الحمال بينهم يوم الخميس، ولا يملك واحد منها جيشه، فجعل محمد بن أحمد على الأولاية الأحمر حموه بن علي، وعلى الأركاء بقا كبير، وجعلهم بمنتهى العسكر، ومعهم جيش خوارزم. وجعل على المسرة حموه بن علي وغيره، ووقف بنفسه في القلب، ومعه العلب وغيرهم من الأولاء وعامة جيش خوارزم.

وزحف إسحاق بن أحمد، وعلى سمعه جيش الشاش وإسقياف، وعلى مسيرته جيش فرغانة وأشترحة، وضع في القلب ابنه إلياس والحسن، ومعه جيش سفرانة والثغد. فرحل جيش فرغانة وأشترحة، وهي مسرة إسحاق، على الأركاء ورجاله خوارزم، وهو ميمنة عسكر ناصر. فانهزم الأركاء من غير حرب، وقتت رجاله خوارزم عن آخرهم. وتمت المسرة فرقاً في مصارعات جيش بخارا، ونزلت طاقة مضرب محمد بن أحمد، ونزلت أخرى في مصارعات خوارزم، وتهوا الجام، وحمل جيش الشاش وجيشه إسقياف على مسرة جيش نصر، وفيها حموه بن علي ومن ذكرنا. فلم يبتسم حموه بن علي عن موضعه. فلما أروا إبناه، رجعوا فحمل عليهم حموه، ووافق ذلك حمله محمد بن أحمد على جيش سفرد، وهو قلب جيش إسحاق، فانهزموا. (fol.125a) وقتل من جيش نصر بضعة عشر آلاف، وقتل من جيش إسحاق ثلاثة آلاف رجل. ورجع إسحاق بن أحمد منهما إلى سفرد، ورجع جيش بخارا إلى ممكنهم، وسار الجمجمة تابعًا لإسحاق إلى سفرد، فصحبوا بها، واسعد أهلها، وخرجوا بأجمعهم لدفع الجمجمة عنها. وأمر بقتل أبوب المدينة حتى لم يجدوا سبيلًا إلى الانتقام. فهزمهم محمد بن أحمد هزيًا، قتل فيها من أهل سفرد نحو مائة ألف. وشلّهم القتل والهرج حتى خرج الناس إلى محمد بن أحمد، وقالوا له: خذ طلبتك عنا ودلوا على مكان إسحاق بن أحمد، فأخذوه وحمله إلى بخارا.
واستقام الأمر لنصر بن أحمد، وأتاه العهد من الخليفة، وولي الولايات، وفوضت
الأمر إلى محمد بن جهان وجعل وزيراً.
وخرج على نصر إخوته أبو زكريا ناجي، وأبو صلاح منصور، وأبو إسحاق
إبراهيم، وكان قد اعتقلهم، فاحتال لهم خبر، يقال له أبو بكر الأصباغ،
وكان جريتهم، وهو في الاعتقال، نيجر عليه، فأعتقل جماعة من العسكر
بيخارا على إخراجهم، وكان نصر غالبًا. فأخرجوا، ولم يتم لهم أمر، وأخذ الحياز،
وشرب بيخارا وبين يديه المحتون، ثم ضرب بالسياط، وألقى في تنورة الذي كان
يحسن فيه. وفي أيامه خرج عليه أحمد بن سهل المزوي، فسفر إليه حموية بن
علي إلى مرو الروذ، وكان حموية في أربعة آلاف مليك، وكان مع أحمد بن
ساهل أربعين ألف رجل وفارس، ومعه نفسه ألف مملك، وكان القاؤتهم بمكان
يقال له دستورة، وهو مفازة بين الزم ومورو الروذ. ولما اجتمع الجيشه،
أوصى حموية بن علي أصحابه وقال: أريد منكم أن تثبتوا ولا
تقاتلونهم إلا ربياً تزودهم عنكم. فعل جمالهم عليهم أحمد بن سهل بنفسه
ثلاث وأربعين حملة، وكان شجاعًا لا يهله شيء. فصلى وارجع وقال: أنا
أحمد بن سهل. ثم قال لجاسوسه: أريد حموية بن علي حتى أقسمه، فإما علي
وإما لا. فإنهم قد تمسوا في الأرض، ما أحد يتحرك منهم. وكان تكونه الطويل
أحد ماليك إسلام بن أحمد بن صبر، فأوصل في سلاسله، حموية بن علي،
فأومأ الجاسوس إليه وقال هو صاحب البيضة المذهبة. فحمل أحمد بن سهل
على تكين، قومه تكين، وهو حامل بسهم، فأصاب صدر النرس، وغاص فيه
إلى الرش، فنظره، نفجل تكين، وأخذه بذلك بعد العصر، وبعثه حموية بن
علي إلى بيخراء.
وكانت هذه الوقفة في سنة عشر وثلاثمائة، وتوبي نصر بالسل في سنة إحدى
وثمانين. فكانت ملكه ثلاثين سنة، وكان عبوده، كما ذكرته الفراغي، يوم وفي
الثاني عشرة سنة. وقال الوزير أبو القاسم الغربي: كان عبوده ثماني سنين. زوجه
أبو عبد الله محمد بن أحمد الجبائي، وهو أول وزير سامان. وكان به
مذهب فاضح، لم يبطر في رحيل كله، فتأقمن، فأبرز به من كم إلى أن نزل
داره، فأصاب عليها بأربع ماء، وفيه يقول أبو الطيب الطاهري:
أنت إذا كنت طول دهرك بسيط، عما سواه تشغف
فأجب نلفك للحوائج أم في اليوم بيلك العمل
(1264) وكان مكونه عند جميع قواد آل سامان، وأقام وزираً إلى أن توفي
في جاذية الآخرة سنة ثلاث عشرة وثلاثمائة. فقد كانت مرة وارثه الثالث عشرة
سنة، وقيل إن أهل بيخارا رجعوا تابويه، ولم يصله عليه أحد منهم، وتوبي
الوزارة بعده أبو ألفضل البلمي، وكان قبل ذلك يولي الخراج.

نوح بن نصر
لته أصحابه في حياته بالزهد، وبعد وفاته بالحميد. وما توفي السعد نصر
وفي ولده نوح، وكان ذلك في السنة الثالثة من خلافة الإمام الملك الله، وهو سنة إحدى وثلاثين وتسعمائة. وكان النبي محمد بن ركن الدولة بن بوبه، فلما رأى ذلك، نقل عن ما أوجب استكمال عقدة قريش، فنزل الله بسمه عليه السلام: "إِنَّ الْإِسْبَحَارَةَ لِإِبْرَاهِيمَ بْنِ سَمِيْعُوٰ بْنِ مَالِكٰثٰرٰتٰ،巴西. ـ 126b
فأصابهم القضاء بعد ذلك، ودخل ابن محتج وإبراهيم بخان، وجلس مجلس الملك بها، وذلك في السنة خمس وثلاثين. وتوسطت بينه وبينه أم الرسول الإيمام الطيب، فبعث إلى إبراهيم بالخلع والهد. وأخذ نوح في الاختلاف، ومسى السماة بين إبراهيم وبين ابن محتج، وقيل له: إنه يريد أن يفعل مكلاً كما فعل على ابن محتج. فاصطغىpins، إبراهيم بسمنيلو ونصب عائش، وذكروا له تمنياً عليه، وأخذوا في عقدة قريش، واستشع عباد ابن محتج من ذلك وتمكن المذاكر من استدلال الأئمة الأكبر الهديد، فأنا أن فأنا إلى القضاء بعدها، وتقدم ابن محتج من إبراهيم، فلقيه الملك، فأصر وجعل عليه، وحل سابحة من أهل بنيه، وملك بخان. ودام الفساد بينه وبين ابن محتج، وهو بالدماغ، وتوفير بين ركن الدولة بن بوبه الديلمي وبينة صلح، فسار كل واحد منها إلى الآخر، فالتقى على وراء القرب من طبض، واتفقت على أن يأخذ ابن محتج عقدة قريش، ويجمع حبيباً على إزالة آل ساسان منها. ورجع ابن محتج مع ركن الدولة إلى نيسابور، واستدعى بكر بن مالك، صاحب جيش الملك، لتقال ابن محتج. ووافق العهد والخلع إلى أبي على من قبل الخليفة على يد أبي بكر عبد الواحد بن عثمان، وأي عبد الله بن بخيص، وصحيحه جيش من عند معز الدولة الدبلوماسي لنصر ابن محتج. وكان خروجه من بغداد ثلاث مرات من جنود آخره سنة ثلاث وأربعين وثلاثمائة. وانتقد وفاية المحتم في شهر ربيع الآخر سنة ثلاث وأربعين وثلاثمائة، فكانت مدة ملكه الثاني عشرة سنة وثلاثية أشهر. أولاده أبو الفنوس عبد الملك، أبو صالح منصور، إسفهانية جورش أبو علي أحمد بن محتج، الأمير منصور بن قرانين، الأمير أبو عبد بكر بن مالك.

أبو الفنوس عبد الملك بن نوح

لب في حياة بالوفق، وبعد وفاته بالرشيد وبدالة. أنهى بكر بن مالك على الجيش، وبعث إلى أبي علي بن محتج، وهو نيسابوري، فسار بكر بن مالك.
أبو صالح منصور بن نوح

لقب في حياته بالنظر، وبعد وفاته بالسديد. ولد أبوه منصور بن نوح بن نصر بن أحمد بن إسحاق بن أحمد بن أحمد بن سامان. فلما ولي، تحرك البكين لتجديده عهد بخدمه، من نسأله إلى خيارا، واستخلف محمد بن عبد الرزاق. فكتب محمد بن خيارا بصفه ومانبتته، لأنه كان أشار بأن بولي بعض أولاد الرشد، وكره ولاية السديد. وجدت ولاية الجمجل لابن عبد الرزاق، تحرك إلى البكين وصده. فتوجه إلى 귀نة، وأقامه بما توفر على غزو الحفد إلى أن أدرك أجهله، ورجع عسكره إلى خيارا. ووزرأه أبو علي البلعي ورير أخاه، وهو الذي قبل فيه:

وتعاظم بكر وتكبر، فلما رجع صورته عند الرشد بغير صورته، وأخبروه أنه يريد أن ينصب أخاه منصوراً في المملكة. فحضر الدار ليُلَحُظ على وعلى قواده، فثنا هو يننظر الحلف إذ أخذته السيف، وقبض على الوزير أبي منصور محمد بن عزيز. وكتب أبو أيش أحمد بن محمد الساماني، وكان قد خرج تلك السنة حاجاً، بالعود لويليه الجمجل. ثم بدأ لهم، فقدموا أبا الحسن محمد بن إبراهيم بن سليمان، لاطلاق بكر كان في تفريثه، وشركه أيام حياته. ووصل محمد هذا إلى بخارا لإصلاح حايل عند الرشد، وأنذل البكين من نسأله إلى الرشد هداها كثيرة، من جملته خيول، فرضت عليه، وهو في البلدان، فجعل يركب فرسًا ويركبه، ثم ينقله عنها إلى غيرها إلى أن أدرك أجهله، فنزل تحته، فحمل، مينًا لبسط خلون من شوال سنة خمسين وثلاثمائة. فكانت سنة مملكة سبع سنين. وعلى أبيه سنة تسع وأربعين وثلاثمائة أسلم (fol.128a) من الأركا ماثي ألف خركاه.
إن ذا البلعمي في العين غير
 وهو عيب على الزمان وشي...

أبو عبد الله أحمد بن محمد الجبائي، استورزه في السنة التي توفي فيها وله
يقول:</p> <p>لا نسأل لا بابا لا عبارة
قد قيلتلك ولكن أين آثار الوزارة

إصفهانسيرة الجيوش، ألبكين الحاجب إلى أن عزل بأبي منصور عبد الرزاق، ثم
بأبي الحسن محمد بن إبراهيم بن سيمجور إلى أن توفي السيدة. أولاده أبو القاسم
نوح، أبو زكريا، أبو سليمان، أبو صالح الغازى.

الرضي أبو القاسم نوح بن منصور

ولي المملكة بعد أبيه بولاية عهده، وهو صغير، غير بالغ. وجلس الطاعب في يوم
السبت السادس جهادًا آخرة سنة سبع وستين، وولاه، حملت إليه الكلع
واللواص، وكاه بأبا القاسم. وبادر مع الكلع خادم من خدم الحلفان. ولما ولي
تزوج بنتي أبي الحسن بن إبراهيم بن سيمجور وأبي الحارث محمد بن أحمد،
مستحراً بها. وأسند أمره إلى فائق الحلفان، وولى الحاجب بأبي العباس ناش،
وعقد الإصفهانسيرة لأبي الحسن السيمجوري، ولقبه ناصر الدولة، وذلك في
رجب سنة سبع وستين وثلاثمائة. وولى الوزارة لأبي الحسن عبد الله بن أحمد
المتكي. وكان السيمجوري نهى عنه، وقال هو حديث غر، فإطعنه عليها،
واحشته وأوحش فأقام. ثم صرفة عن الإصفهانسيرة وتولاها أبى العباس ناش. فلا
وصل الكتاب إلى محمد بن إبراهيم، كأشف بأن قال ولاية خرسان في، وسياسة
جدها لأبي علي، إبنه. ثم بات له رأيه، فاظهر السمع والطاعة من غد. وفي
نارا الإصفهانسيرة، ولقب بخساد الدولة، وصار إلى نيسابور وعنده حلوه بها،
وصل إليه فخر الدولة بن يوحان وشمس المعلى قويس بن وشمير، مستمررين
بالرضي نوح على مؤدي الدوله، ودعه الدوله ابنه يوهان، وشمير. ولهما النواحي، دخل
نارا نيسابور ليلة، وكتب بهم الوقفية إلى بخارا، وكتب نيسيح
(fol.129a)
أبو الحسن السيمجوري، وهو بقين رواة، فائق الحلافة، يشكيله تحمل العبي
الوزير. فأستور عهده بأبي مالاً رضي به الأثراء بخاراً، ففعل. فاحتعوا منه
على العبي، وهجموا هجوم عظيمة. فاستمر العبي، ثم كتب في وقت، ثم أن
أمره فيه بتحدي، وقصد دار الإمارة، فقتله الأثراء، فنكروا به، فات بعد ثلاثة
أيام. ونشه الأثراء بعد دمه لينهى، ووثقته.

وقد كان محمد بن إبراهيم سلم عسكره وخزائه لولده أبي علي، فخطب أبو علي
إلى نارا خلافته على نيسابور، تفعجب ناش من تظاهراته لذلك، وكانت مكيدة
مه. فلا وليها، قرب الأمر به، وبين تماه، وهو بطوس، قرب، وسارداء
بطنبا بخاطر النحريشب على فضي. وقد كان الوزارة بعد العتيبي ولعب لابي الحسن محمد بن محمد الزني، فأحس تاش بميله إليها، فاجه بالصرف، فات غضاً.
وول مكانة كانه أياب محمد عبد الرحمن بن أحمد، وتحرك لقاء أبي علي وفاق. فسفر السفارة بينها على أن تناش نسأبر، وفاق بلغ، ولو إبى علي رثاة، وليا الحسن محمد بن إبراهيم بوشنج وفهستان وغيرها. ثم نقلت الاصطفاها إلى أياب الحسن محمد بن إبراهيم بن سليمان في سنة ست وسبعين وثلاثمائة، فشجرت الحرب بين ويبن تاش، فاستنجد تاش فاخر الدولة بن بوبى، واستنجذ محمد بن إبراهيم شرف الدولة بن عبد الدولة، فأتباها. وأنتقا، قانون تاش في سنة سبع وسبعين إلى جرمان، فضمها إبى فاخر الدولة، وأقام بها أن توفي في سنة (fol.129a) ثماني وثلاثمائة. وأقام أبو الحسن في الإصلاحيتة إلى أن مات في سنة إحدى وثمانين وثلاثمائة، فكتم موتاه، واستنذ أولاده للمقافرة عن نعمة. وأطاع أبو القاسم منهم أبا علي الأكبر، واضطر الرضي إلى تولية أبي علي جمع ما كان إلى أبيه، وتلقى عاد الدولة، وذلك في شعبان سنة ثمانيين. وول فائقة رهبة، فدعاه أبو علي عنها، وهو غار، فوافق إلى بخارات مشاقا، فخرج الريفي إلى في غباه، وحاربه، قنون في شهر ربيع الآخر، سنة ثمانيين، إلى ترميد. وافتق خرج الحنكن، وهو أبو موسي هرون بن إليك، وأصبر، بصابة مملكة الرسية، فاستنذن فائق إلى وسار معه إلى بخارات. فعثر الريفي وزوجته البليعي، وسار إليه فائق، فجمه الريفي، فعثر إلى أبي علي واستناد به، وسار تابعاً به، ودخل الحان بخارات في شهر ربيع الأول سنة ثمانيين وثمانين كرية ثانية. وعصر الريفي إلى آل إلما أيضاً، فصادف بها أبا محمد عبد الله بن عيزر الوزير متفيناً، يفاضلوا. وأفاد الحان بخارات أمالاًً عظيمة وفرص فرسان، فاعتبر العيد إلى بلدا الأثر، وقال: لا دواء في العدل والصبر، فذع أبا عبد العزيز بن نوح بن نصر، وسلم إليه الولادة وسار مات في بعض الطريق وفيه قيل:

(8) يا قاهرًا لملوك الأرض من قهرك
وياء عاد جميع الحق من قبرك
عنيين من أطاعه وله

(8a) حتى سن من تراب القبر وما سترك

(8b) يعنى الزمن ما قره الحان وكان (130a) أبو علي قد زاد بسطه وكيهج، حتى أنه كان يسمى الريفي ولي بخارات، وكان يخاطب مرة بسيد الأمراء، مرة بولياء...، مرة بأميرة الجلالة، معها أمير الدنيا، وحين رأى الريفي اختاره لسعته، وختان Еه إياه، حين دمهم أمر الحان، استنجد بسيكتين الغازى أبي منصور، وكان قد تغلب على غزنة، ويت بتالحق بعد أهلتها الحراح. فسار إليه سيبتكر، واجتمع معه، وسار الريفي صحبته، فعفتر أبو علي إلى نسأبر، فدخلوا في رجب سنة أربع وثمانين، ولقيهم في شهر رمضان منها. فانتبه وأخذ جميع عسكره، وقلب الريفي سيبتكر.
باصر الدولة وابنه محمد سيف الدولة. وعدل الريض إلى طوس وكتب إليه سكينه، في بقاعا شرطاً يشرعتهما عليه. فنقل إليها عن الوزير ابن عزيز سوء خصر، فأспеш ابنه محمد إلى الأرض مظلاً للخدمة، مضماً للقبض عليه ابن عزيز. فهرب ابن عزيز وأفرد سكينه، ولده محمد بن بوليا نسيابور. خرج إليه أبو علي وقتى من جرحه، فنهضه وإيحا بعض فتيله، وذلك في سنة خمس وثمانين والثمانية. ثم كر محمد فهمها نحو طرس زهيداً فاضحة، فأفذ أثناها إليه ببناية بالإعدار. ثم قبض، فسار أبو علي إلى نحو خوارزم، فقبض عليهم، و להם في شهر رمضان سنة وثمانين. وكان أبو علي قد ولي أمون كورة نسا والجنانية، فسأله منها إلى خوارزم، وقائل صاحبه، وملكها بعد حصار أربعين (f.130b) يوماً، وقبض على خوارزم، وأطلق أبا علي، وسلمه إليه، فتعلّه. ورسالته حينئذى الرشيد، فسار إليه إلى ببناية، فقبض عليه لما دخل الدار، وذلك في سنة ست وثمانين. ثم سلم هو وقلمه إلى سكينه. فكان آخر العهد بهما. وكانت وفاة الرضي في رجب سنة سبع وثمانين والثمانية، ومدة ملكته إحدى وعشرين سنة وتسعة أشهر. أزدهر أبو الحارث منصور بن نوح، أبو الفوارس عبد الملك، أبو إسماعيل المتنص، أبو يعقوب، ووزع أهله أبو عبد الله أحمد بن محمد الجبائي، وزير وله. ثم عزله وولي أبو الحسن عبد الله العتيبي، فأقام إلى أن قتله، وولى أبو الحسن محمد بن محمد الهرموي، ثم عزل فات غضماً، وولي أبو محمد عبد الرحمن بن أحمد، ثم عزل وولي أبو علي العماماغاني، ثم قبض عليه، وولي أبو نصر أحمد بن محمد بن أبي زيد، سنة تامين وثلاثمائة. ثم استور أبا محمد عبد الله بن محمد بن عزيز، ثم هرب من سكينه، فولى سكينه الوزارة أن يقرر أن محمد بن أبي زيد دفعة ثانية، فاغتاله غلامان له، فقتله، وقرر أبا المظفر محمد بن إسماعيل، إسحاق الجيروم. أبو الحسن محمد بن إسماعيل بن عمرو إلى أن عزل بأبي العباس تاش الحاجب، ثم عزل تاش به في سنة ست وسبعين وثلاثمائة، فأقام إلى أن مات سنة الفجأة، و هي سنة ثلاث وسبعين وثلاثمائة. فولى وله أبو علي الاصفهانلي، فأقام إلى أن ولي الرضي (f.131a) جهينة للفتاهم، وسكون في سنة سبع وثمانين وثمانين، ثم زمل سكينه والياً، هو وله محمد، إلى أن توفي الرضي وتوبي بعده سكينه بيدة بسيرة.

أبو الحارث منصور بن الرضي نوح

وفي بعد ابنه يتوليه عهده، فأبيا المظفر محمد بن إسماعيل على الوزارة، وكتب فائق الحاصلة، وهو غير مدرك. وكان عند الحاصلة، فعمره في عصر مقدمهم لما علموا وفاة نوح الرضي، فجاء إلى ببناية، فأصرف أبو الحارث عنه، فأدرك ذلك، ونزل على الباب، وتبرع عليه، فأجاب أبو الحارث ورضي عنه. وكان سكينه، لا توفي، تغلب وله إسحاح على غزاة وسائر أموله وخراتته، فسار إليه محمد، واستقبل بطل مملكة أبيه، فولى الحارث الأصفهانلي.
لملوكه بكتوزون، وأصلح بينه وبين فائق. واستخفلك كل واحد منها لصاحبه،
وصر أبو المطرز، واستخفلك على الوزارة العباس بن أحمد البرومكي، قتل في
الخلافة بها. فاستورز أبو الفضل معلم أحمد الحنتشي، وخانته قربا من قرى
بخارا، وصبر فهمه من أمر أبيه إبراهيم، وصحبته له مملكة أبيه، سار إلى
بلغ، عازماً على طلب خراسان. فاستدعى بكتوزون أبا الحارث ليقابه به. فسار
الله من بخارا، تلقاه بكتوزون، وقبل له الأرض ثلاث مرات، فلم يرفع له
رأساً. فاخرذ ذلك، واتتقى هو وفاعل على خلبه، ورحل، وقبض عليه برسخ
فاسلته سبعة ثلاث حائلين: أن لا يستلمه، فإن الأعمى لا ينفع
بالدبيب، وأن لا يصادر والده، فإنها لا ترجع إلى ديار، وأن لا يقل عنه
غلامه نخونين، فإنه ترى معه، فلم يفض له واحدة منها... ورحل وتملى في
صغر سنة ثمماينين، فكانت مدة مملكته سنة ونصفاً. وارزة أبو المطرز معلم
بن إبراهيم، وزير والده، ثم عزله، واستخفلك على الوزارة العباس البرومكي,
فقتل، واستورز أبا الفضل معلم بن أحمد الحنتشي، وله خانته الوزارة
بخارا. إضهاره الجيوش مملوكه بكتوزون.

أبو الفوصر عبد الملك بن الرضي

وأما خلع أبو الحارث، فليأخذه، فأظهر معلم الغضب للخليع، ورحف إلى
بكتوزون طالباً بثأره. فعالوه على كور خراسان قاطرة بلغ واهرة. وانصرف
عليهم، فأتمعوا غدرانين، ومعهم زكريا بن قايوس بن شمكار، فخطر عليهم أبو
المطرز نصر بن سبيكتين، فلمهم هزيمة فاضحة. فكانت هذه الهزيمة مطلبة لآل
سامان. ومات في شعبان سنة ستة وثمانين، ووصلى أبو الحسن أرسلان أبيك،
وهو نصري إلى آخر الحان، بخاراً في ذي القعدة سنة ستة وثمانين وتلاهما.
وكان يذكر بأبي الفوصر وبيكتوزون وبيكتكين الفاثمي، وأظهر أنه حضر لمعتمه،
ثم قبض على جميعهم، واستولي على بخارا. وحمل عبد الملك إلى أوركند، قامت
بهما، وقبض على أبي الحارث المخلع وعلى إبراهيم (132a) الممتاز، وعلى أبي
يعقوب إخوة أبي الفوصر، على أعيامهم. وكان القبض على أبي الفوصر في
ذي القعدة سنة ستة وثمانين، فلم تتجاوز مدة مملكته السنة.

المنتصر أبو إبراهيم إسحاق بن الرضي

قد ذكروا أن أرسلان أبلق قبض عليه في جملة القبض عليه من السامانة.
فافت عليه أن ليس حلقة جارية خرج من محبه وسار إلى الجرجانية، وجمع إليه
الجند السامانية، فسار به، وعلي الأركاء الحنانية، فاتهموه على بخارا. ودخلها
المتصر، ثم رجعت الحنانية عليه، فلموه إلى أمل الشوط. ثم سار غارية نصر بن
سبيكتين بنيسابور، قاتله نصر واستسلم أبى المتصر، فسار نحوه محمود بن
سبيكتين، فهو إلى الجرجان في جذاب الأولى سنة إحدى وثمانين، فحمل إليه
قايوس بن شمكار مبارزة كبرى. ثم رجع إلى نباصور في شمال سنة إحدى
وتسنين، فقُطع نصر بن سبيكتين في ذي القعدة منها. فعاد إلى الجرجان ورام
الطلب عليها. فدفعه أكراد قانونين عنها وقسعه نصر بن سككنة، فسار إلى الجرجانية في شهر جمادى الآخرة سنة إثنتين و奴تن. ووقع إلى الأراك الغزية، ومقدمهم بينما أرسلان، وهو إسرائيل بن سلجوق، فأكرمهم وعظمهم، وأسلم بيعوا على يده، ونوجه (fol.132b) ابتها وقتي بهم أمره. قامو أبلق الحاكم، وزعزع أمه، ثم كثر تقلبه في البلاد، وواصل محمود بن سككنة تبدل له النظام، وقبل ما رسم له. فأكرم محمود رسوله، وحمل إليه مالاً جزيلاً، ووافقه الحاكم في إتمام ذلك، فذهب، وقطع عنه أصحابه. ويضيع محمود وأخوه نصر لطلب، فتحر في أمره وعزم على إحراق البلاد، فعاجله الحاكم بوقعة أخرى، لم يبق معه إلا ثمانية نفر. فسار ابن بيج العرب بفازة مرو، وغادر به فبرا، فقتل في شهر ربيع الآخر سنة خمس وثمين وثلاثمائة. وورد محمود، فاجتاح الحلقة إمتعاضاً، لافتنعت الدولة السامانية بهم. فقد عده ولاة السامانية ثلاثة، وجمعوا الولاية منهم خمسة وعده الملوك بما وراء النهر وخارسان عشرة ملوك. أوقفهم إسبايل بن أحمد الماضي، وآخرهم المتصرف وجميع مملكتهم، دون مدة ولايتهم، مائة سنة وستة أشهر وعشرة أيام. وكان لهم من البلاد في أكثر الأوقات، خراسان وما وراء النهر ومسجستان. غزونه ومست والخجن وكرمان وجرجان وطبرستان والري وقومس. وفيهم يقول أبو الطيب الطاهري:

أودي ملوك بني ساسان قاطردوا وأصبح الحيل ما ينقلك ينتقض أضحت أمارتهم فيهم وجوهرها عبدهم وهم في عرضها عرض فليلك من كان فيهم باكيًا فأما لما فاتهم من ملكهم عوض

وأما أحسن ما وصف دونتهم بعض البلاغاء، قال: كانت الدولة السامانية كالدولة الساسانية طول مدة وقلة كفاة، وما أشبهها إلا بالسماء التي رفعها الله بغير عمدة.
1. This genealogy, although clearly defective, has been left as in the MS, with the omission of
dissociative marks in those names for which parallel
are attached in Ibn al-Atir’s history.

2. و
3. نرح
4. فتال
5. لمن
6. الامام
7. سِرٍّ
8. دختر
9. استناب
10. تُرُبِّ
11. وارد
12. سنة
13. لا حنة
14. كُرِّامٍ
15. كُرِّامٍ
16. هكذا
17. البِع
18. بِنْ عَزَّ (altemate reading) ثَرُبٍ
19. وموره
20. ياتر
21. خيل
22. من متارا
23. ثم نال النافذ البلد
24. اهدير.......
25. داخلا
26. فرت
27. مِّمْ تُمْ مِّلْ مَثْلٍ ُ_column:1
28. ابرالقمٍ من المشرين
29. اندورن

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