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The Political history of the Sāmānid state

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## ABSTRACT

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### The Political History of the Sāmānid State

The Sāmānids (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 Sāmānid 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 Qarākhānid steppe rulers and the Ghaznavids, former vassals of the Sāmānids. 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 Sāmānids and their bureaucrats were overwhelmed by an alliance of military and scholarly interests before the arrival of the Qarākhānids, 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with particular reference to the chronicle literature and the geographers, Iṣṭakhrī, Ibn Ḥawqal and Muqaddasī; the unpublished works of the chronicler Ibn Zāfir al-Azdī (d. 613/1216) and Muḥammad ibn `Abd al-Jalīl al-Samarqandī's 12th century biographical dictionary of Transoxanian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 Aḥmad, a watershed in the Sāmānid period during which the earliest works of Persian literature were composed and many senior courtiers converted to Ismā`īlism. Chapter nine examines the Sāmānids' sources of revenue, the state apparatus, the nature of Sāmānid 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 Ismā`īlī rebellion of 295/907, the history of the Khwārazmshāhs and an edition of Ibn Zāfir al-Azdī's chapter on Sāmānid 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 'Abbāsīd caliphā 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

probably never have been undertaken and would certainly not have been completed. She has been a constant source of encouragement and forthright counsel and has spared no time or effort in giving help when it was needed. I am particularly grateful for her assistance in suggesting how to organize my material; it is no exaggeration to say that without the benefit of her clarity of vision, the thesis would altogether lack what coherence it possesses.

Among others, Professor Wilferd Madelung helped with the acquisition and identification of manuscripts, answered queries concerning the history of the Zaydīs of Ṭabaristān, and commented on part of my edition of Ibn Zāfir's chapter on the Sāmānids; Mr Donald Richards also read an early draft of my edition of Ibn Zāfir's chronicle and suggested a number of corrections; Professor Edmund Bosworth and Dr Hugh Kennedy answered queries concerning the early history of the Sāmānids; Mr Peter Avery gave me the benefit of his wide knowledge of medieval Persian historiography; Professor Richard Frye was helpful in the initial stages of my research with bibliographical advice, in particular with his insistence that I should tackle the work of Soviet numismatists; Mrs Helen Brown gave advice on numismatic bibliographies and taught me how to read Sāmānid coins; Professor Michael Bates supplied a record of the American Numismatic Society's holdings of the 10th century coins of Rayy; Professor Thomas Noonan supplied information on research presently being undertaken on

European hoards containing Sāmānid dirhams; Professor Richard Bulliet encouraged me to make use of Samarqandī's *Muntakhab al-qand*; Dr James Weinberger helped with the identification of the Paris manuscript containing the latter work; Professor Everett Rowson advised on matters concerning 'Utbi's *Kitāb al-yamīnī*; Dr Julie Meisami helped with difficulties encountered in Gardīzī's *Zayn al-akhbār*; Mr Muhsin Ashtiany's measured criticisms of the section in the thesis on the "Persian renaissance" made me aware of the problems faced by a political historian who tries to write about literature; Dr Elton Daniel corresponded with me, at short notice, on questions relating to the Sāmānid genealogy; Dr Sheila Blair sent me a draft of her entry on the Sāmānid mausoleum at Bukhārā from her forthcoming book, *The monumental inscriptions of Iran and Transoxiana*; Professor Roy Mottahedeh gave me the opportunity to air some ideas on the Sāmānids at a seminar at Harvard University; Mr Craig Kennedy and Dr Reuven Amitai-Preiss spent frustrating hours, in Harvard and Princeton respectively, searching for Russian journals which were unobtainable in this country; the librarians responsible for Arabic and Persian books in the Oriental Institute, Oxford, and the Bodleian Library, Messrs Martin Minty and Colin Wakefield, were ever ready to answer bibliographical queries; Dr Jeremy Johns offered valued advice on proof-reading, typesetting and printing in the final days before submission. Needless to say, such mistakes and shortcomings as occur in the thesis are my

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 'Abbāsīd 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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1 Barthold, *Istoriya Turkestana*, 1922, pp. 11f, quoted by Negmatov, *Gosudarstvo Samanidov*, Dushanbe, 1977, p. 10.

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 Sāmānid 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 Sāmānid 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 *dihqāns* in a possibly quite accidental context determines whether the Sāmānids owed their power to *dihqāns* 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 Sāmānids 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 Timūrid 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 Aḥmad al-Sallāmī (4) wrote a history entitled *Ta'rīkh 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 Sāmānid rule, Gardīzī and Ibn al-Athīr (5),

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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 Aḥmad 'Alī Khān Vazīrī in his study of the Ilyāsīd dynasty of Kirmān (id, "The Banū Ilyās of Kirmān", *Iran and Islam*, ed. Bosworth, Edinburgh, 1971, p. 112).

3 Date of death given by Sezgin (*Geschichte des arabischen Schrifttums*, vol. i, p. 352). Abū'l-Ḥasan Bayhaqī mistakenly gives the date of death as 300/913 (*Tārīkh-i bayhaq*, p. 268). He also mentions Sallāmī's teacher Ibrāhīm ibn Muḥammad Bayhaqī, a contemporary of the caliph Muqtadir, and his pupil, Abū Bakr Khwārazmī (d. 383/993) (cf. Barthold, "Zur Geschichte der Saffariden", *Orientalische Studien*, Theodor Noldeke, zum siebzigsten Geburtstag, vol. i, Gieszen, 1906, p. 175).

4 Ibn Khallikān mistakenly names him Abū'l-Ḥusayn 'Alī ibn Aḥmad (cf. Barthold, *Turkestan*, p. 10, note 3). Sezgin erroneously opts for the form al-Salāmī (ibid, p. 352).

5 See below, p. 13.

as well as by Yāfi'ī (6), Juwaynī (7), 'Awfī (8), Ibn Khallikān (9), Yāqūt (10), Nizāmī 'Arūdī (11) and Manīnī, <sup>the author of the Ottoman period who wrote</sup> a commentary on 'Utbi's *Kitāb al-yamīnī* (12).

The only information we possess about Sallāmī's life concerns the identity of his patrons, the Muhtājīd amirs of Ṣaghānīyān, Abu Bakr Muḥammad ibn Muẓaffar ibn Muhtāj al-Ṣaghānī and his son, Abū 'Alī Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad (13). It appears that loyalty to his Muhtājīd patrons and their Sāmānīd sovereigns resulted in his writing a rather partisan account of Samanid history; one illustration of this is <sup>h</sup> account of Abū 'Alī <sup>h</sup> Ibn al-Athīr's Ṣaghānī's revolt against Nūḥ ibn Naṣr (14); another is the fact that he makes no mention of the Qarmaṭī scandal at Naṣr ibn Aḥmad's court (15).

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6 Cf. Sezgin, *ibid.* The reference is to 'Alī ibn As'ad al-Yāfi'ī's (b. 698/1298) *Mir'āt al-janān wa 'ibrat al-yaqzān fi ma'rifat ḥawādith al-zamān* (cf. C. Brockelmann, *Geschichte der arabischen Litteratur*, vol. ii, p. 227).

7 Cf. Barthold, *Turkestan*, p. 10, note 5.

8 Cf. Nizam al-din, *Introduction to the Jawami' al-hikayat*, London, 1929, pp. 24, 36 and 45.

9 Cf. Barthold, *ibid.*, note 6.

10 Yāqūt quotes Sallāmī in his biography of Abū 'Abdallāh al-Jayhanī, naming his source as *Ta'rīkh khurāsān* (*Irshād al-arīb ilā ma'rifat al-adīb*, ed. D.S. Margoliouth, vol. vi, London, 1923-31, p. 293).

11 Cf. *Chahar maqale*, 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, Ṣadr al-Afādil (*Al-fath al-wahbī 'alā ta'rīkh abī naṣr al-'utbī*, vol. i, Cairo, 1869, pp. 348 and 165).

13 Tha'alībī, *Yatīmat al-dahr*, vol. ii, section 4, Cairo, 1934, p. 90. For the Muhtājīds, see appendix; the Sāmānīd 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 Narshakhī or copied from his work (17). Nor do we know whether his work was divided by regnal period or arranged annalistically.

Al-'Utbi (350/961-427/1036 or 431/1040)

Abū Naṣr Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Jabbār al-'Utbi's *Kitāb al-yamīnī* (18) is a history of the reign of Yamīn al-Dawla wa Amīn al-Milla Maḥmūd ibn Sebuktegīn al-Ghaznawī which begins with an account of the last years of Sāmānid rule in Khurāsān. Just as Sallāmī's history of the early Sāmānid 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 Ṣaffārīds from 'Amr ibn Layth's wazir, Ahmad ibn Abī Rabī'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 Sāmānids.

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. Ghassan ibn 'Abbad's appointment of the sons of Asad to governorships - both our sources mention the locations of only Nūh and Ahmad's governorships although they differ as to the details of the latter (Narshakhī, *ibid*, p. 105 = p. 76: Sallāmī in *Manīnī*, *Al-fath al-wahbī*, vol. i, p. 348); Abu 'Abdallāh ibn Abī Ḥafṣ' appeal to Naṣr ibn Ahmad for a governor to rule Bukhārā (Narshakhī, *Tārīkh-i bukhārā*, p. 108 = p. 79; Sallāmī in *al-Manīnī*, *Fath*, vol. i, p. 348); Naṣr's appointment of Ismā'il as his *khalīfa* (Narshakhī, *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 Ahmad ibn Ismā'il (Narshakhī, *ibid*, p. 128f. = p. 94; Ibn al-Athīr [from Sallāmī], *Kāmil*, vol. viii, p. 77; Gardīzī [from Sallāmī], *Zayn al-akhbār*, ed. Habibi, 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 Gardīzī, Ibn al-Athīr, Ḥamdallāh Qazvīnī, Mīrkhwānd 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 Ishāq Ibrāhīm ibn Hilāl al-Ṣābi', written in Baghdad for the Būyid 'Aḍud 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 Maḥmūd was celebrated as the caliph's principal ally in his struggle against the Būyid rulers of Iraq.

'Utbi portrays Maḥmūd and his father, Sebuktegīn, as pious Muslim monarchs who secured Eastern Iran for the 'Abbāsīd caliph against the threat of the invading Qarākhānid 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

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19 He makes the point that in his time the Persian panegyrists at the Ghaznavid court were writing verses in praise of their patrons, but that these verses were unknown beyond the borders of the *mashriq* (ibid, p. 52f).

20 ibid, p. 48.

21 Cf. ibid, in Manini, *Fath*, vol. i, p. 28: *..al-sultān khalīfat allāh fī arḍihi 'alā khalqīhi wa amīnuhu 'alā ri'āyyat haqqīhi bi-mā qalladahu min sayfihi wa makkana la-hu fī arḍihi.*

within and without its domains (22). 'Utbī naturally takes pains to stress that the Ghaznavids came to power through a *legitimate* transfer of dynastic authority from the Sāmānids. Yet the fact of the matter was that Maḥmūd himself defeated a Sāmānid army in battle and took Khurāsān by force from the Sāmānid 'Abdalmalik ibn Nūḥ, just as the Sīmjūrid governor of Khurāsān, Abū 'Alī Muẓaffar ibn Muḥammad, had tried to do before him (23).

'Utbī glosses over this fact, telling us that Maḥmūd attacked 'Abdalmalik because he felt compelled to avenge the unlawful deposition and blinding of 'Abdalmalik's predecessor, Maṣṣūr ibn Nūḥ, by 'Abdalmalik's Turkish mentors, Fā'iq and Bektūzūn (24). He says that the Sāmānid dynasty had all but come to an end when Maṣṣūr 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 'Utbī ignores the strategic imperatives which prompted Maḥmūd's father, Sebuktegīn, to intervene in Khurāsān. The Ghaznavids were no doubt intent on

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22 The young Maḥmūd 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 Maḥmūd is depicted as the instrument of Allāh's wrath; *fa-abā Allāh illā an yantaqim minhum bi-sayf sayf al-dawla jaza'an 'an fi'lihim al-fazī'*.

25 'Utbī says that the Sāmānids were dominated by envious and hostile advisers (ibid, p. 291). He describes 'Abdalmalik as a decoy (*milwāḥ*) whom the Turks used to entrap the goodwill of those around them (ibid, p. 301).

preventing the imminent emergence of an independent Sīmjurid state which would have threatened their western flank; indeed the Ghūrid historian, Jūzjānī, reports that Sebuktegīn had already sent an army against Fā'iq in Balkh before Nūḥ 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 'Abd al-Ḥayy ibn al-Ḍaḥḥāk Gardīzī, a contemporary of the Ghaznavid sultan 'Abd al-Rashīd (440/1049-444/1053) (29) and *Al-*

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26 See below, chapter 8, p. 254.

27 'Utbī may have had personal reasons for wanting to blacken the Sīmjurids' name; after all it was the Sīmjurid Abū'l-Ḥasan Sīmjurī who ordered the assassination of his relative, the Sāmānid wazir Abū'l-Ḥusayn 'Utbī (d. 981/371) (See below, chapter 8, p. 245).

28 Cf. Nikbī's recension of Jurbādhqānī's translation, in C. Schefer ed., *Description topographique et historique de Boukhara*, reprinted Amsterdam, 1975, pp. 111-229; see for example chapter 10, note 16.

29 Cf. C.A. Storey, *Persian literature: a bibliographical survey*, London, 1927-39, vol. i, p. 85.

*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 'Utbi'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 Iranian 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 Aḥmad ibn Sahl al-Kāmkārī (32)

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30 Barthold, *Turkestan*, p. 21.

31 Cf. O.B. Frolova, "K voprosu ob istochnike svedenii Ibn al-Asira o pravlenii Samanidov (10 v.) v Srednei Azii", *À la mémoire de l'academicien I.J. Krackovskij, Recueil d'articles, Éditions de l'Université de Leningrad*, 1958, pp. 36-43. The texts cited by Frolova are Manīnī, *Fath*, vol. i, p. 348 and Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, vol. vii, pp. 279f.

32 See appendix: the Sāmānid state elite, s.v. "Aḥmad 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 Ṣaghāniyān 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 Ṭabaristān 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 Suḡhd. As a universal historian, Ibn al-Athīr also used a wider range of sources than did Gardīzī; thus he drew on Ṭabarī 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

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33 See appendix, *ibid*, s.v. "Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad".

34 Gardīzī, *Zayn*, p. 158.

35 It was from Ṭabarī that Ibn al-Athīr took his information on the Sāmānid victories against the Turks around the turn of the century (compare Ṭabarī, *Ta'riḫ 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 Aḥmad. For an example of Ibn al-Athīr's borrowing from Miskawayh, see above, note 14.

36 Ibn al-Athīr's note about 'Abdalmalik's execution of the amir "Najtakīn", (var. Bukhtakīn) (*Kāmil*, vol. viii, p. 532) is taken from Miskawayh (*The eclipse of the Abbāsīd Caliphate, original chronicles...*, D.S. Margoliouth and H.F. Amedroz, ed. and tr., vol. v, Oxford, 1920-21, p. 191 = vol. ii, p. 177). But his account of the rebellion of Khalaf ibn Aḥmad the

coverage of the period, Gardīzī continues in the same style in which he treated the earlier Sāmānids. For the reigns of Nūh ibn Mansūr and his successors, both Ibn al-Athīr and Gardīzī make use of 'Utbi'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-islāmiyya* (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 Aḥmad ibn Ismā'īl (d. 914) and the accession of Naṣr ibn Aḥmad.

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-Ṣābi'. Ibn Zāfir twice states that he is quoting from Ghars al-Ni'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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Ṣaffārid in the reign of Mansūr ibn Nūh is not to be found in Miskawayh.

37 This chronicle is identical with the *Akhbār al-duwal al-munqaṭi'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-islāmiyya*.

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 Muḥassin 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 Muḥassin (42): it is therefore logical to assume that in referring to the same historian in the Sāmānid 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 Aḥmad'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), Yāqūt

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41 Cf. *EI*<sup>1</sup>, s.v. "Ṣābi".

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 Ṣaffārid by his generals after their first defeat by Ismā'īl ibn Aḥmad is similar to Sallāmī's account as copied by Gardīzī (cf. *id.*, *Duwal*, fol. 116b: Gardīzī, *Zayn*, p. 145).

(45) and Manīnī (46). Similarly, in the passage describing the succession of Naṣr ibn Aḥmad, one line of Ibn Zāfir's account corresponds exactly with that of Ibn al-Athīr (47).

However some of Ibn Zāfir's information comes from two other sources which he names as the *Kitāb akhbār khurāsān* by al-Wazīr al-Maghribī and the history of Farghānī (48). The first author is Abū'l-Qāsim Ḥusayn ibn 'Alī al-wazīr al-Maghribī, an Iranian nobleman by origin (49) and an exile from Fāṭimid Egypt, who came to Iraq where he frequented the courts of the Būyid rulers Bahā' al-Dawla, Sulṭān al-Dawla and Musharraf al-Dawla (50). Ibn Zāfir 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 Ṭabarī's *Ta'rikh al-rusul wa'l-mulūk*, Abū Muḥammad 'Abdallāh ibn Aḥmad ibn Ja'far

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45 Ibn Zāfir's passage concerning Abū 'Abdallāh Muḥammad Jayhānī's obsession with personal hygiene (*Duwal*, fol. 125b) occurs in Yāqūt's biography of Jayhānī with Sallāmī cited as the source (*Irshād*, vol. vi, p. 293).

46 Ibn Zāfir's account of Sāmānid pre-monarchical history is similar to Manīnī's which is taken from Sallāmī (*Duwal*, fol. 115bf; *Fath*, vol. i, p. 348).

47 This is the incident in which Aḥmad's young son, Naṣr, misinterpreted the arrival in his palace of the Bukhāran notables who came to acclaim him as his father's successor and asked them if they intended to kill him as they had done his father (*Duwal*, fol. 123a: *Kāmil*, vol. viii, p. 78).

48 *Duwal*, fols. 120a and 125b.

49 His family claimed descent from Bahrām Jūr (cf. Najāshī, *Rijāl al-najāshī*, Qumm, ed. al-Zanjani, 1408, p. 69, no. 167; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt*, vol. ii, p. 172).

50 Cf. Brockelmann, *GAL*, Sup. i, p. 600: Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt*, vol. ii, pp. 172-177. There is no reference to a history of Khurāsān among his works listed in these sources.

al-Farghānī (282/895-6 - 362/972-3), author of the *Ṣilat* (var. *Mudhayyal*) *ta'rīkh al-Ṭabarī*, or his son Abū Manṣūr Aḥmad (d. 398/1007), author of a further continuation known as *Ṣilat al-Ṣila* (51). The likelihood is that it is the father's work which Ibn Zāfir 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-Raḥmān ibn Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad ibn Khaldūn's *Kitāb al-'ibar* contains a condensed version of Ibn al-Athīr's account of the Sāmānids which provides additional information on the dynasty, some of which is erroneous (53).

The later Persian chroniclers: Jūzjānī, Hamdallāh Qazvīnī, 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

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51 Cf. *EI*<sup>2</sup> s.v. "Farghānī".

52 It appears that Ibn Zāfir drew his information regarding Naṣr ibn Aḥmad's age at his accession from Farghānī. In contrast to Sallāmī, who said that he was 8 years old at the time (cf. *Yaqut, Irshād*, vol. vi, p. 293),

Ibn Zāfir 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 Qarākhānid (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`īlism levelled against high officials in `Abdalmalik ibn Nūḥ's reign (56). He used neither Ibn Athīr 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 Ilkhānid government who was patronized by Rashīd al-Dīn, the wazir of Ghāzān Khān (58). He wrote his history, the *Tārīkh-i guzīde*, in 730/1329-30. He quotes

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54 Cf C.A. Storey, *Persian literature*, London, 1927-39, vol. i, p. 68.

55 See below, chapter 4, p. 142.

56 See below, appendix; the Sāmānid state elite, s.v. "Bakr ibn Mālik".

57 Barthold, "Zur Geschichte der Saffariden", p. 175f. For the problems surrounding the identification of this source, cf. Habibi's notes to his edition of *Ṭabaqāt-i nāṣirī*, pp. 299-305.

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 'Utbī's work.

Mīrkhwānd, Muḥammad ibn Sayyid Burhān al-Dīn Khwāndshāh (837/1433-903/1498) (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 Ḥamdallāh 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 Ismā'īl ibn Aḥmad, 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 *Ḥabīb al-siyar*. His account of Sāmānid history is very similar to Mīrkhwānd's, although he made greater use of Ḥamdallāh Qazvīnī's *Tārīkh-i guzīde* than did his grandfather.

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59 See *The Tārīkh-i guzīde*, vol. ii, tr. E.G. Browne, pp. 1f. for a list of his sources which include Ibn al-Athīr's *Kāmil* and Jurbādhqānī'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.

62 Cf. Storey, *ibid*, pp. 101-109.

### The local histories

The three local histories of Bukhārā, Tabaristān and Sīstān present a useful regional perspective on the Sāmānids 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 Ja'far al-Narshakhī's *Tā rīkh bukhārā*, this is hardly surprising, since he presented his work to the Sāmānid Nūḥ 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 *Tārīkh-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 Ṣaffārid rulers of the province and their relations with the Sāmānids.

Ibn Isfandiyyār's *Tārīkh-i Tabaristān* was written in 612-13/1216 (66). It covers the Sāmānids' involvement in

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63 The texts used are *Tārīkh-i bukhārā*, ed. M. Razavi, Tehran, 1351; *Tārīkh-i bukhārā* in *Description topographique et historique de Boukhara*, ed. C. Schefer, reprinted Amsterdam, 1975, pp. 2-97; R.N. Frye's translation, *The history of Bukhara*, Cambridge, 1954.

64 Thus for example, the last pages of the work, describing the reigns of Nūḥ ibn Naṣr and his successors were added by its Persian translator, Aḥmad al-Qubavī (R.N. Frye, *The history of Bukhara*, p. 98). For a survey of the history of the text and the sources used by its authors, see *ibid*, pp. xii-xiii.

65 The texts used are *Tārīkh-i sīstān*, ed. Baḥār, Tehran, 1935; M. Gold's translation, *The Tarikh-e Sistan*, Rome, 1976.

66 The text used is *Tārīkh-i tabaristān*, ed. 'A. Eqbal, Tehran, 1320. See also E.G. Browne's introduction to his

the province from the beginning of the 10th century to the reign of Naṣr ibn Aḥmad.

Another local history which provides valuable information on the Sāmānid governors of Herāt is Mu'īn al-dīn Isfizārī's *Rawḍat al-jannāt fī awṣāf-i madīnat-i Herāt*, written in 897/1491-2 (67). It contains the only complete list of Sāmānid governors of a major city in the 10th century.

### Nizām al-Mulk's *Siyar al-mulūk*

The Seljuq wazir Nizām al-Mulk's (c. 408/1018-485/1092) *Siyar al-mulūk* (or *Siyāsat Nāme*) provides valuable information on the training of *mamlūks* at the Sāmānid court and on Ismā'īlism in the Sāmānid 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 fi ta'rīkh Samarqand* (see below) and other works, that its account of Ismā'īlī activity at the end of Naṣr 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 Sāmānid period also contain a kernel of historical truth.

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translation, *An abridged translation of the history of Tabaristan*, London, 1905.

67 *Rawḍat al-jannāt fi awṣāf-i madīnat-i herāt*, ed. Musa Kazim Imam, Tehran, 1959-60.

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-Sam'ānī'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) *Ṭabaqāt al-shāfi'iyya al-kubrā* (70) has some information on the Shāfi'ī '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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69 *Kitāb al-ansāb*, ed. 'Abd al-Rahmān al-Yamanī, 13 vols., Hyderabad, 1962-82.

70 Cf. *ibid*, Cairo, 1906.

71 *id*, *The histories of Nishapur*, The Hague, 1965.

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 Ḥafṣ Najm al-Dīn 'Umar ibn Muḥammad al-Nasafī's (d. 537/1142-3) *Kitāb al-qand fī ma'rifat 'ulamā' samarqand*. 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 ta'rīkh samarqand*, written in the same year that Nasafī died, by his pupil, Muḥammad ibn 'Abd 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

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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 Ismā'īlī 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 Ismā'īlī 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 Muṣ'abī's activities on behalf of the Ismā'īlīs 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 Sāmānids 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 Sāmānids. 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 Ḥawqal, 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 Ḥawqal represent one single standard original text, which was

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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 Ḥawqal in Sind (cf. *EI*<sup>2</sup>, s.v. "Ibn Ḥawkal").

77 See *EI*<sup>2</sup> s.v. "al-Iṣṭakhrī".

78 *EI*<sup>2</sup> s.v. "Ibn Ḥawkal".

revised and corrected several times" (79). Iṣṭakhrī'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.

Iṣṭakhrī, 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 *hajj* and their obedience to their rulers. Interspersed among

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79 Kramers, *Analecta*, p. 196, cited with approval by Miguel in *EI*<sup>2</sup>, s.v. "al-Iṣṭakhrī".

80 Cf. *EI*<sup>1</sup>, s.v. "Al-Muqaddasī".

81 Cf. Miguel, *ibid.*

82 Cf. *EI*<sup>2</sup>, s.v. "Iṣṭakhrī".

83 Iṣṭakhrī, *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 (*mulūk*) 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, Iṣṭakhrī 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 Iṣṭakhrī, 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 Ṣaffārīds, of whom one might have expected Iṣṭakhrī to disapprove. But though he does applaud Ismā'īl ibn Aḥmad the Sāmānid for ridding the caliphate of the Ṣaffārīd 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

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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 Iṣṭakhrī 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 Iṣṭakhrī 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 'Abbāsīd revolution, which was conducted by Khurāsānīs and brought to power the caliphal dynasty under which our geographers were writing. By Iṣṭakhrī's time, however, the frontier had shifted eastwards and Transoxania, previously subsumed under the label of

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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 (Yāqūt, *Irshād*, vol. i, p. 152): Muqaddasī takes this anecdote to mean that Balkhī never set foot across the Oxus (*Aḥsan al-taqāsīm fī ma'arifāt 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.

88 See for example Ibn al-Faqīh al-Hamadhānī, *Mukhtaṣar kitāb al-buldān*, ed. de Goeje, Lugduni-Batavorum, 1885, p. 315.

"Khurāsān", had acquired an identity of its own. The image of the fearless Khurāsānī fighting on behalf of the 'Abbāsīd 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 Bahrām Chūbīn, 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 Ḥanzala 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

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89 Iṣṭakhrī, *Masālik*, p. 290: *wa ammā ba'suhum wa shawkatuhum fa-innahu laysa fī'l-islām nāhiya akbar hazzan fī'l-jihād minhum...*

90 Iṣṭakhrī, *ibid*, p. 143.

91 *ibid*, pp. 142f.

responded by idealizing the Sāmānids' 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 sūrat al-arḍ*, 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 Sāmānid officials in the reign of Mansūr ibn Nūh (93). This includes a long list of salaries of provincial *ashāb 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

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92 *ibid*, p. 290.

93 *id*, *Kitāb sūrat al-arḍ*, 2nd ed., vol. ii, ed. J.H. Kramers, Lugduni Batavorum, 1939, pp. 469f.

94 Cf. Barthold's preface to *Hudūd al-'ālam*, pp. 6f.

he wrote (95) and might have been expected, given its author's familiarity with the Sāmānid bureaucracy, to have contained just such information (96).

The latest of the trio of geographers, Muqaddasī, does not include the passage in his work, although he was familiar with Iṣṭakhrī's work and acknowledges his debt to Abū Zayd al-Balkhī's geography. He nevertheless writes just as fulsomely as his predecessors about the *mashriq*, the region comprising both Sāmānid Transoxania and Khurāsān, and of the Sāmānids 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

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95 Cf. appendix; the Sāmānid state elite, s.v. "Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad".

96 It is also possible that this information came originally from Balkhī's geography which Muqaddasī notes as being an informative source on the *dīwāns* of Khurāsān (*Aḥsan*, p. 307): however this would not fit with the general description of Balkhī'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 *ḥaramayn*, 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).

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97 Muqaddasī, *Ahsan*, p. 260.

98 See below, chapter 7, p. 238 for the career of Nūḥ's wazir the *faqīh al-Ḥākim al-jalīl* Abū'l-Faḍl Muḥammad al-Sulamī.

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 'Abbāsīd 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).

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100 id, *Aḥsan*, p. 472. The tribute of 200,000 dinars *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 <sup>the</sup> ideal which the Sāmānids 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 Sāmānid state was dominated by the *mamālīk* whose absence from the politics of the *mashriq* he applauds. In the last decade of the century the Sīmjūrid *mamlūks* had established a virtually independent state in Khurāsān (102). Muqaddasī fails to acknowledge this fact explicitly, although he does talk about the current disorder in Khurāsān 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 Sāmānid 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 Sāmānid 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 Khurāsān who flourished in Sāmānid Bukhārā and found employment in the Sāmānid

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prosecution of the *jihād* and the *ghāzīs* are said to have tried to kill every Daylamī *Rāfiqī* they could find.

102 See below, chapter 8, p. 252.

103 id, *Aḥsan*, 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

Sāmānid 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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104 *Lubab al-albāb*, ed. E.G. Browne and M. Qazvini, London, 1903-6.

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 Sāmānid 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

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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).

108 Cf. T. Noonan "The 1958 dirham hoard from Tartu in Estonia", *ANSMN*, vol. xxii, 1977, pp. 135-159.

hoards have not yet been properly catalogued and until this has been done, Sāmānid coinage remains the domain of the numismatist rather than the historian. Secondly, even if adequate catalogues did exist, the corpus of Sāmānid 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 Sāmānid 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.

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109 Professor T. Noonan estimates the number of extant Sāmānid 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 Ūzkand, 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 Naysābūr 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

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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 (Iṣṭakhrī, *Masālik*, pp. 215f); Asadābādh to Mazaniyan, 1 or two days (journey time not given by Iṣṭakhrī); Mazaniyan to Naysābūr, 5 days (Iṣṭakhrī, *ibid*, p. 284). From Naysābūr to Āmul, the main crossing point on the Oxus was a further 17 stages (Iṣṭakhrī, *ibid*, p. 282). From Farabr, on the opposite bank of the Oxus facing Āmul, to Ūzkand, was a journey of 23 stages (Iṣṭakhrī, *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 Samarqand. 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 Ūzkand, 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 Samarqand, and half a dozen major cities, in all of which, had he stopped to recuperate, he would have heard the name of the Sāmānid amir recited in the Friday *khutba*. To the north of his route lay the province of Khwārazm, the northernmost district of Sāmānid Transoxania, over a week's travelling time away from Bukhārā (4), and to the south, Sīstān, the only district in the Sāmānid realm with a temperate climate (5), which was at least four weeks distant from Bukhārā (6).

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3 *The Times atlas of the world*, vol. ii, London, 1959, plate 43.

4 *Iṣṭakhrī*, *ibid*, p. 338.

5 *Iṣṭakhrī*, *ibid*, p. 241.

6 *Iṣṭakhrī*, *ibid*, p. 282.

The Sāmānid state was much more extensive than other 'Abbāsīd successor states. Aghlabīd Ifrīqiyya, Tulūnid and Fāṭimid Egypt and Tāhirīd 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 Sāmānids' achievement. The Sāmānids 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 Aghlabīd Ifrīqiyya measured some 300 miles by 250 miles; Tubna, capital of the Zāb, to Qayrawān was about 275 miles; Tunis to Kabis 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 Sāmānids; Baghdad to Kirmān was approx. 800 miles and Rayy to Shīrāz 400 miles (Brice, *Atlas*, p. 17).

8 Iṣṭakhrī, *ibid*, p. 143.

9 E.V. Zeimal, "The political history of Transoxania", *Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. iii/i, Cambridge, 1983, p. 250.

Zarafshān valley in the environs of Samarqand, were located in the heart of the core area of the Sāmānid 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 Īlāq, Farghāna and Wakhkhān, as well as in the famous Khurāsānī mine of Panjhīr (13), while precious stones were mined in Badakhshān, Farghāna and in the environs of Naysābūr (14). Foodstuffs were available in plenty everywhere (15), both in the irrigated lowlands of the Zarafshān 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

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10 Both in Waraghsar, a village north of Samarqand, (Ibn Hawqal, *Sūrat al-ard*, vol. ii, 2nd ed, p. 497) and on the Murghāb (Muqaddasī, *Aḥsan*, p. 330), between the two Marvs, the irrigation network was manned by large teams of labourers - 10,000 men in the case of the Murghāb.

11 Iṣṭakhrī, *ibid*, pp. 279 and 282.

12 Iṣṭakhrī, *ibid*, p. 280.

13 For Īlāq's gold and silver mines see Iṣṭakhrī (*ibid*, p. 333) and Muqaddasī (*ibid*, p. 326): for the silver mines of Farwān and Panjhīr, see Muqaddasī (*ibid*); for the silver mines of Wakhkhān, see Iṣṭakhrī (*ibid*, p. 297). Farghāna produced lead, iron and copper, as well as gold and silver (Iṣṭakhrī, *ibid*, p. 334).

14 Garnets and lapis lazuli came from Badakhshān (Iṣṭakhrī, *ibid*, p. 279). Turquoise was produced in Farghāna (Iṣṭakhrī, *ibid*, p. 334) and in the mountains surrounding Naysābūr and Tūs (Iṣṭakhrī, *ibid*, p. 258).

15 Meat and dairy produce came from the Turkish tribesmen living in the region (Iṣṭakhrī, *ibid*, p. 288), and fruits and vegetables were grown in abundance in many fertile districts.

16 Iṣṭakhrī, *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 Īlāq for the Jaxartes, and Tukhāristān 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).

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17 Iṣṭakhrī 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 (*Aḥsan*, p. 323, noted by Barthold, *Turkestan*, p. 83, note 5). But Iṣṭakhrī 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 Nūḥ ibn Naṣr did flee from Bukhārā to Samarqand by boat in 945 (*Khwandamīr, 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 Sāmānid 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

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

(Ibn āl-Aṭṭar, *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

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23 In the province of Isbījāb alone (sc. Isfīyāb) Muqaddasī says that he had heard that there were 1700 *ribāṭs* (*Aḥsan*, p. 273). Iṣṭakhrī reports that he had been told that there were 10,000 *ribāṭs* in Transoxania (*Masālik*, p. 290). *Ribāṭs* were not however constructed solely for defensive purposes; cf. the *ribāṭ* in Farabr which Naṣr ibn Aḥmad built for the *abnā' al-sabīl* (Muqaddasī, *Aḥsan*, p. 291).

24 For Slavonic slaves imported into Khwārazm, see Muqaddasī, *Aḥsan*, 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 Wakhkhān, to the east of Khuttal (Iṣṭakhrī, *ibid*, p. 297).

26 Muqaddasī, *Aḥsan*, p. 340.

prices, being much in demand at the 'Abbāsīd 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).

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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 Samarqand (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 ostlichen 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 Sāmānid 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

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

30 Few Sāmānid dirhams have been discovered in Central Asia which suggests that Sāmānid trade with this region was mainly conducted on the basis of barter. The number of Middle Eastern hoards containing Sāmānid coins is very small (cf. N.M. Lowick, "An early 10th century hoard from Iṣfahān", *Numismatic Chronicle*, ser vii, vol. xv, 1975, pp. 110-154: *id.*, "A hoard of dirhams from Ra's al-Khaimah", *Numismatic Chronicle*, 1968, ser vii, vol. 8, pp. 231-240: H. Mitchell, "A hoard of dirhams from Ardekān", *Numismatic Chronicle*, ser vii, vol. 5, 1965, pp. 209-220: Nakhshabandī, "Kanz khidr ilyās", *Sumer*, vol. x, 1954, pp. 180-196).

31 Ghazna is mentioned as the main entrepot for the trade in Indian and Tibetan goods (*Hudūd al-'ālam*, p. 111). Goods manufactured in the *mashriq*, mostly textiles, were exported to non-Muslim lands; silk cloth (*ibrīsam*) was exported from Naysābūr to the *bilād al-shirk* (Iṣṭakhri, *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, *Aḥsan*, p. 325).

32 Iṣṭakhri lists as luxury items exported to the west, pelts of sable, grey squirrel and fox, as well as manufactured metal-work, rhinoceros horn (*khutū*), falcons (*ibid*, pp. 288f.) and cotton and silk cloth from Naysābūr (*ibid*, p. 255). Muqaddasī's long list of goods produced in Khurāsān and Transoxania (*Aḥsan*, 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 Sāmānids

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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sent to the caliph; in 298/910-11 Aḥmad ibn Ismā'īl sent slaves, horses, cloth, falcons and sable furs ('Arīb, *Ṣilat ta'rīkh al-ṭabarī*, Leiden, 1897, p. 35).

33 Barthold, *Turkestan*, p. 178.

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 Baṣra to India (id, *Gosudarstvo Samanidov*, p. 85, citing Mas'ūdī, *Les Prairies d'or*, ed. and tr. de Meynard, pp. 307-312).

35 Ibn Zāfir, *Duwal*, fol. 118a.

36 Negmatov, *Gosudarstvo Samanidov*, pp. 107ff.

Transoxania (37). Barthold estimated the population of Samarqand, 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

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37 See above, note 20. Iṣṭakhrī also notes that land was so scarce that a farmer would often have only a single *jarīb* 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, *Aḥsan*, p. 281.

41 See for example the following lines by Abū'l-Tayyib al-Ṭāhirī on Bukhārā:

*bukhārā min kharā la shakk fīhi*  
*ya'izz bi-rab'ihā al-shay' al-naẓīfu*  
*fa-in qult al-amīr bi-hā muqīm*  
*fa-dhā min fakhr muftakhir da'īfu*  
*idhā kāna'l-amīr kharā fa-qul lī*  
*a-laysa'l-khar' mawdi'ahu al-kanīfu*  
 (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'il 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-Athīr tells us that Naṣr was buried with his father (Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, vol. viii, p. 403) and Yāqūt reports that Naṣr had built his own "grave" (*qabr*) 20 years before his death (Yāqūt, *Mu'jam al-Buldān*, vol. iii, pp. 451f). For other surviving

was constructed in imitation of the recently built 'Abbāsīd dynastic mausoleum in the Rusāfa district of Baghdad: she points out that the 'Abbāsīds 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<sup>to</sup> appear in the last decades of the 9th century (43). But there are no solid grounds for postulating an 'Abbāsīd model for the Sāmānid building; the argument relies too heavily on the largely unsubstantiated assumption that the Sāmānids were dependent on 'Abbāsīd 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 Sāmānids accomplished the final pacification of the region in the 9th century, thereby taking Islam into districts where previously other faiths like Zoroastrianism, Buddhism and Manichaeism 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

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buildings from the Sāmānid period, including the mausoleums of Arabat and Alamdar (mausoleum of the last Sāmānid amir Ismā'īl Muntaṣir) 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 Sāmānid tomb. The dimensions of the Sāmānid tomb are much less grand than the 'Abbāsīd mausoleum in Rusāfa which Yāqūt describes as "stupendous in construction" (T. Allen, "The tombs of the 'Abbāsīd caliphs in Baghdad", *BSOAS*, vol. xlvi, 1983, p. 421); the architecture of the tomb cannot be said to have been derived from an Iraqī 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 Sāmānid 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 Mihrajān and Nawrūz (46), as well as local Soghdian festival of Rāmush āghām and Sāda, the festival of the winter solstice, were all celebrated in Sāmānid Bukhārā (47). *Mashriqī* Muslims were tolerant of members of older religions, particularly those of the *ahl al-kitāb*. Jewish (48) and Christian communities (49)

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45 *Hudūd al-‘ālam*, p. 110.

46 Cf. the poems written on the occasion of Nawrūz and Mihrajān (Tha‘ālibī, *Yatīma*, *ibid*, pp. 67 and 110).

47 Cf. Tha‘ālibī, *Yatīma*, *ibid*, p. 69: here the poet Abū‘l-Tayyib al-Tāhirī celebrates the "day of al-Rām". This may be the Magian festival of Rāmush Āghām which Bīrūnī tells us was celebrated in the fire-temple of Rāmush (see below, note 51), (Bīrūnī, *The chronology of ancient nations*, tr. C.E. Sachau, London, 1879, p. 221). For the festival of Sāda held at the time of the winter solstice see G. Lazard, *Les premiers poètes persans*, vol. i, Paris, 1964, p. 26; the poet Abū‘l-‘Abbās al-Rābinjānī composed a panegyric for Naṣr ibn Aḥmad on the occasion of this festival. Tha‘ālibī’s account makes it clear that Naṣr celebrated this festival in every year of his reign (Tha‘ālibī, *Kitāb thimār al-qulūb*, Cairo, 1908, pp. 147f).

48 Muqaddasī notes that there were many Jews and few Christians in the *mashriq* (*Aḥsan*, 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, Faḍl ibn Mūsā, the *wakīl* of the ‘Abbāsīd wazir Ibn Furāt, lived in Khwārazm in the early part of the century, but was not a member of the Sāmānid court (Ibn Fadlān, *Ibn Fadlan’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 Rāmush, 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

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*Reisebericht*, ed. and tr. A.Z.V. Togan, Liechtenstein, 1966, pp. 7ff [German text] and p. 5 [Arabic text]). Iṣṭakhri notes a church near Herāt and a Christian community in the district of Sawdar to the south of Samarqand (*Masālik*, pp. 265 and 321): there Ibn Hawqal met Christians from Iraq who had come to enjoy the seclusion and beauty of its surroundings (*Sūrat al-ard*, 2nd ed., vol. ii, p. 498). Marv was the centre of Melkite Christianity in the east during Bīrūnī's time (id, *Chronology*, p. 283).

50 Muqaddasī, *Aḥsan*, p. 275. When Ismā'īl ibn Ahmad conquered the city of Talas/Tarāz in 280/893 he converted a large church into a mosque (Narshakhī, *Tārīkh-i bukhārā*, p. 118 = p. 87).

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

52 Iṣṭakhri describes it as a *bayt nār* (fire temple) (*Masālik*, 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 Sāmānid 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

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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 Naysābūr (*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 Gujerati coast.

56 See below, appendix: the Sāmānid state elite, s.v. "Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad".

57 Barthold, *Turkestan*, p. 116, note 5, referring to Narshakhī's history in C. Schefer (ed.), *Description de Boukhara*, p. 6 = *Tārīkh-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 īn butkhāne-rā be-ramitin nehādand*. The princess in question may have been the bride of Nūḥ ibn Naṣr (see below, chapter 5, p. 167); Abu Dulaf's account of his visit to Sandābil, the capital city of Nūḥ'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 Rāmītan, 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).

Manichaeans communities survived in Sughd and Īlāq (59). Ibn al-Nadīm reports that the "ruler of Khurāsān", probably Naṣr ibn Aḥmad, intended to put the Manichaeans community in Samarqand 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 Manichaeans community in Samarqand survived into the late 10th century (61). Another heretical sect, the *Sapīd-jāmagān* (wearers of white raiments), originally followers of the pseudo-prophet Muḡanna', survived in rural Transoxania (62) and rose in revolt with the Ismā'īlīs of Tāliqān during the reign of Maṣū' ibn Nūh (63). In general, uprisings of non-Muslim heretics were confined to rural regions (64).

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58 Narshakhī, *Tārīkh-i bukhārā*, p. 29 = p. 20; Barthold, *Turkestan*, p. 107.

59 Manichaeans lived in the district of Samarqand (*rustāq samarqand*), in Sughd and Nūnkath (=Tūnkath; capital of Īlāq) (Cf. Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, p. 337). The Manichaeans leadership is said to have left Iraq for Samarqand during Ibn al-Nadīm's lifetime (*Fihrist*, p. 338). Note Muḡaddasī's remark that there were different groups of *majūs* in the *mashriq* (Muḡaddasī, *Aḥsan*, p. 323).

60 Spuler gives the date of the incident as 920 and identifies the "king of China" as the khān of a Uighur state (*Iran in Früh-Islamischer Zeit*, p. 208).

61 The anonymous *Hudūd al-'ālam* notes that there was a Manichaeans *khānqah* in Samarqand (*ibid*, p. 113).

62 Muḡaddasī calls them *bayḍ al-thiyāb* (*Aḥsan*, p. 323); the *Hudūd al-'ālam* 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 bayna'l-firaq*, Cairo, 1910, p. 245).

63 See below, chapter 6, p. 202.

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 Nūh 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 Ismā'īlī 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-) Ṣandalī, was a member of the Sāmānid amir's *hashm* (retinue) (68). Imāmī (later Twelver) Shī'īs 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

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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 Karrāmi *khanqahs* in Samarqand, Farghāna, Khuttal, Jūzjān, Marw al-rūdh and Naysābūr (*Ahsan*, p. 323).

66 Madelung, *ibid*.

67 Iṣṭakhrī, *Masālik*, p. 266; Muqaddasī, *Ahsan*, 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 Imāmī scholar, Muḥammad ibn Mas'ūd ibn 'Ayyāsh al-'Ayyāshī al-Sulamī, spent his considerable inheritance supporting the Imāmī community of Samarqand (70). An influential Imāmī community lived near the shrine of the eighth imam, 'Alī al-Ridā, which was a pilgrimage site for their sect (71). Ismā'īlīs 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

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70 Najāshī describes his house as being like a *masjid*, so crowded was it with Shī'ī scholars (ibid, pp. 350-3). He was a prolific author whose works provide evidence of the practical concerns of the Imāmī community in which he lived; viz. his books *Kitāb nikāh al-mamālīk*, *K. qatl al-mushrikīn*. Cf. also *EI*<sup>2</sup>, s.v. "al-Kashshī".

71 Cf. E. Kohlberg, "From Imamiyya to Ithna-'ashariyya", *BSOAS*, vol. xxxix, p. 524. These Imāmīs represented a powerful local interest group; in the 370's they managed to prevent the proposed restoration of the nearby tomb of Hārūn al-Rashīd (Cf. R.W. Bulliet, *Patricians of Nishapur*, Harvard, 1972, p. 201).

72 See below, chapter 6, *passim*.

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

74 Turkish communities were located in Transoxania - in Saghāniyān near Tirmidh (Muqaddasī, *Aḥsan*, p. 283); Wāshgird (Yāqūt, *Buldān*, p. 292); Munk near Balkh, (ibid, p. 290); Ghit, on the lower Oxus near Khwārazm

and Iranians held positions of authority at the Sāmānid 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 Wadhār near Samarqand (76), and the two districts of Khulm and Siminjān near Balkh which were inhabited by members of the Banū Azd and the Banū Tamīm respectively (77). Not much is known about relations between the inhabitants of these Arab enclaves and native Iranians, but Ibn al-Athīr 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 Sāmānid administration who was descended from early Arab settlers in the *mashriq* was certainly not an ethnic chauvinist (79).

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(ibid, p. 289); near Ribāt Dihistān (Iṣṭakhrī, *Masālik*, p. 214). In Khurāsān there were Qarluq settlements in Tukhāristān (*Hudūd*, p. 108); Khalaj Turks in the environs of Sīstān and Tukhāristān (Iṣṭakhrī, ibid, p. 245 and 281); in provinces of Balkh, Bust and Jūzjān (*Hudūd al-'ālam*, p. 111). Cf. Frye and Sayılı "Turks in the Middle East before the Seljuqs", *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, vol. lxxiii, 1943, pp. 194-207.

75 Cf. Narshakhī's remark that when Ismā'īl ibn Aḥmad entered Bukhārā in 874, he was greeted by "notables, both Arabs and 'Ajam" (*Tārīkh-i bukhārā*, p. 108 = p. 79).

76 Barthold, *Turkestan*, pp. 94f: Iṣṭakhrī, *Masālik*, pp. 322f.

77 Muqaddasī, *Aḥsan*, p. 303.

78 Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, vol. viii, p. 118.

79 Cf. Abu'l-Faḍl al-Bal'amī who was descended from a Tamīmī warrior who took part in Qutayba ibn Muslim's conquest of Marv (See appendix; the Sāmānid state elite, s.v. "Muḥammad ibn 'Ubaydallāh").

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, Tha'ālībī 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

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80 See below, chapter 5, note 129.

81 Ibn Zāfir mentions Sākin, a Rūmī slave who was an associate of Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad, the governor of Bukhārā in 301/914

(Ibn Zāfir, *Duwal*, fol. 120b). The only member of the Sāmānid court with a Greek name was Aristatālīs (Aristotle): in circa 993, Nūh ibn Mansūr sent a messenger by this name to negotiate with Abū 'Alī Sīmjurī, governor of Khurāsān ('Utībī, *Yamīnī*, 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 *hājib* before Alp̄tegīn was called Rashīq al-Hindī (*Aḥsan*, p. 337). Fā'iq, the most powerful *mamlūk* at the Sāmānid court in the last quarter of the tenth century, bore the *nisbas* "al-Rūmī" and "al-Andalusī" (see appendix; the Sāmānid state elite, s.v. "Fā'iq ibn 'Abdallāh").

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 Giorgio della Vida*, vol. ii, Rome, 1956, p. 168). Minorsky is uncertain about this reference; he gives *chandan* as a variant reading for *chīniyān*. 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 Soghdia 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 Yāqūt, *Mu'jam al-buldān*, vol. iii, p. 446): Yāqūt'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 Ismā'īlīs in Manṣūr ibn Nūḥ'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

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83 Cf. below, chapter 6, p. 202.

84 Muqaddasī, *Aḥsan*, 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 'aṣabiyya 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 Khurāsān (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 'aṣabiyya 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. i, p. 69).

87 Naysābūr, Sarakhs, Herāt, Zaranj, Marv, Nasā, 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 'ayyār 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 'aṣabiyya 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 Naysābūr, Marv, Nasā and Abīward, and other unspecific causes in Balkh and Samarqand, which had nothing to do with quarrels between *madhhabs* (92). Those cities in which factions were delineated by allegiance to *madhhab* were Zaranj and Sarakhs; in Naysābūr and Herāt, 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 Sunnī and Shī'ī which resulted from the Būyid support of the latter (94). In the Hijāz civil disturbances of this kind had broken out in the 9th century (95). In 358/969 the Būyids intervened to quell fighting between *madhāhib* in

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91 See above, *ibid.*

92 Muqaddasī, *Aḥsan*, p. 336.

93 In Naysābūr factionalism arose between Shī'a and Karrāmiyya, in Sarakhs between Hanafīs ('Arūsiyya) and Shāfi'ī (Aḥliyya), in Zaranj between Hanafī (Samakiyya) and Shāfi'ī (Ṣadaqiyya), in Herāt between 'Amaliyya and Karrāmiyya (Muqaddasī, *Aḥsan*, p. 336).

94 Cf. Sabari, *Mouvements populaires à Bagdad à l'époque abbaside, ix-xie siècle*, Paris, 1981, especially pp. 121-126.

95 In Mecca fighting broke out between "butchers" and "taylor" during the ḥajj season in 262/875-6 (Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, vol. vii, p. 306); note the existence of a "butchers" faction in early 11th century Dīnawar (Mottahedeh, *Loyalty and Leadership*, p. 116). In Medina, the 'Alawiyyīn and the Ja'fariyya fought each other in 266/879-80 (Ibn al-Athīr, *ibid.*, p. 335). Elsewhere in the Hijāz fighting broke out between the Ḥasaniyyīn, the Ḥusayniyyīn 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 Shī'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

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96 R. Mottahedeh, "Administration in Buyid Qazwin", *Islamic Civilisation 950-1150*, ed. D.S. Richards, Oxford, 1973, p. 37f.

97 Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, vol. viii, p. 517.

98 Shāfi'ism was introduced to Naysābūr by Muḥammad ibn Naṣr al-Marwazī and Muḥammad ibn Ishāq ibn Khuzayma (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, Muḥammad ibn Karrām (d. 255/869) (*ibid*, p. 39).

hostile response from their longer-established rivals. As the dominant Ḥanafīs 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 Sāmānid central authorities as they did in the case of the Būyids.

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99 See above, note 90.

100 Abu Ya'qūb Iṣḥāq ibn Ibrāhīm, known as *ustādh-ha (al-balad) fī 'amal al-silāh*, with 1000 apprentices under his command (the implication is that they fought under his orders, although this is not directly stated by Ibn Zāfir) fought for the governor of Bukhārā against the *mamlūk* regicides in 914 (Ibn Zāfir, *Duwal*, fol. 121a; see below, chapter 4, p. 140f).

Chapter three

THE RISE OF THE SĀMĀNIDS

The Sāmānids before their appointment to government

The history of the Sāmānids prior to 820 is known only in its barest outlines. Sāmānkhudā, the eponymous ancestor of the dynasty, escapes mention in Sallāmī's *Ta'rikh wulāt khurāsān* and his conversion to Islam is noted in only three sources. The first is Narshakhī's *Tārīkh-i bukhārā* (1). According to this work, Sāmānkhudā 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 Khurāsān in the reign of the caliph Hishām (105/724-125/743). Asad helped him against his enemies and allegedly returned Balkh to his control; Sāmānkhudā 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 Sāmān rather than the city of Balkh that Asad restored to Sāmānkhudā. No other sources mention him as ruler of Balkh, and he would hardly have been known as Sāmānkhudā

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1 Narshakhī, *Tārīkh-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 Gardīzī, 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 *Nasabnāme*, a history of the sayyids of Tirmidh which has been examined by the Soviet scholar Semenov (6). According to this work,

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2 J. Wellhausen, *The Arab kingdom and its fall*, trans. M.G. Weir, Calcutta, 1927, p. 468, cf. p. 456; Gibb, *The Arab conquests in Central Asia*, reprinted New York, 1970, p. 80.

3 Gardīzī, *Zayn*, p. 146.

4 Ṭabarī, ser. iii, p. 709, *sub anno* 190/805-6; *wa-fīha aslama al-faḍl ibn sahl 'alā yad al-ma'mūn*.

5 Cf. Crone, *Slaves on horses*, Cambridge, 1980, note 599.

6 Semenov discovered the *Nasabnāme* on the margin of a 10th/16th century Tirmidhī manuscript containing the biography of a Juybarī shaykh by his pupil "...Ibn Mīr Husayn al-Husayn al-Sarakhsī" (A.A. Semenov, "K voprosu o proiskhozhdenii Samanidov", *Trudy Akademii Nauk Tadzh. SSR*, vol. xxvii, Stalinabad, 1954, pp. 3-11).

Sāmānkhudā built the village of Sāmān near Tirmidh on the Oxus in order to accommodate the family of his 'Alid patron, Ḥasan 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 Ṭukhāristān in the late Umayyad period and that names such as Ḥasan 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 Sāmānkhudā'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 Ṭukhārī province as Balkh may account for Narshakhī's impression that Sāmānkhudā was ruler of that city; the *Nasabnāme* also gives the impression that Sāmānkhudā 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 Ḥusayn, possibly to be identified with the *sayyid* Ḥasan al-Amīr. The mausoleum is undated, and Amīr Ḥusayn is unlikely to have lived earlier than the tenth

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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 Sāmānkhudā is said to have ordered the Balkhīs to help his patron's family make Tirmidh habitable (*ibid*).

century, in which period sayyids and *ashrāf* (in the sense of descendants of the Prophet) began to proliferate (10); but by the tenth century the Sāmānids may well have patronized a leading sayyid of their ancestral settlement, thereby giving rise to the story of Sāmānkhudā's conversion, for they are known to have bestowed favours on 'Alids. Thus for example Ismā'īl ibn Aḥmad, a great-grandson of Sāmānkhudā, who is said to have inclined towards Shī'ism in his youth (11), bought the village of Barkad near Bukhārā and endowed it as a *waqf* for the 'Alids and Ja'farids (12); and some thirty years later Ismā'īl's grandson, Naṣr ibn Aḥmad, was the first amir to give an pension to an 'Alid (13).

The *Nasabnāme* also informs us that Sāmānkhudā was a native of Farghāna with the given name of Arqaq (14). The theory that the Sāmānids originated from Farghāna is interesting, considering that it was the first Sāmānid governor of that province, Aḥmad ibn Asad (15), who was able to manoeuvre his sons into positions of authority throughout Transoxania at the expense of the descendants

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10 Cf. Crone, *Slaves on horses*, p. 86 and the references thereto.

11 Samarqandī has a story to the effect that Ismā'īl ibn Aḥmad 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 Abū Bakr (*Muntakhab*, fol. 65a).

12 For the *waqf* endowment of Barkad, see Narshakhī, *Tārīkh-i bukhārā*, p. 22 = p. 16.

13 See below, chapter 5, p. 152.

14 Semenov somewhat implausibly suggests that Arqaq is an Arabicized 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 Farghānan origin may also provide a clue to the Sāmānids' alleged Turkish ancestry. According to the *Jāmi' 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, Bahrām 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

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16 Note that according to Jūzjānī, during the pre-dynastic period Aḥmad ibn Asad's authority extended as far as Kāshgār, Turkistān and "Chīn" (Jūzjānī, *Ṭabaqāt-i nāsirī*, vol. i, p. 203).

17 Rashīd al-Dīn quotes from the *Tārīkh-i ughuz* of Pesar-i Dīb Yawqawī (*Jāmi' al-tawārīkh, tārikh-i sultān yamīn al-dawla*, ed. Atesh, Tehran, 1342, p. 3). A similar genealogy is to be found in the 15th century universal history of Muḥammad 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 Ṣaffārids, Ṭāhirids, 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 Hamdallāh 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

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dynastic connections with the past," *Iranian Studies*, 1978, vol. xi, pp. 7-35.)

20 Cf. Biruni's comment on the illegitimacy of the Būyids' claim and that of Ibn 'Abd al-razzāq al-Ṭūsī (*The chronology of ancient nations*, ed. and tr. E. Sachau, p. 45; see appendix; the Sāmānid state elite, s.v. "Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-razzāq").

conquer the province of "Ashnās", or Shāsh, as Khwādamīr has it (21). The story is spurious: the verses which are said to have inspired Sāmānkhudā<sub>h</sub> to <sup>L's father</sup> 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<sub>h</sub>. Frye, <sup>L's father</sup> 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 Bukhārkhudā, with whom Narshakhī 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

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21 Hamdallah Qazvīnī, *Tārīkh-i guzīdah* ed. Nawa'i, Tehran, 1339, p. 376; Khwādamīr, *Tārīkh habīb al-siyar*, vol. ii, Tehran, 1955, p. 352.

22 Cf. *Tārīkh-i guzīde*, *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. *EI*<sup>2</sup> s.v. "dihqān". 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 Narshakhī, *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 Sāmānid family between the time of Sāmānkhudā's conversion and the assumption of the governorship of Transoxania by his grandsons. Ḥamdallāh Qazvīnī says that Asad ibn Sāmānkhudā found favour at Ma'mūn's court and Narshakhī notes laconically that from Asad's time, "the power of the Sāmānids increased every day until it attained what it did" (27). However there are hitherto neglected references in the works of Ṭabarī, Ibn Abī Ṭāhir Ṭayfūr and Miskawayh, which may shed some light on this dark period.

Ṭabarī tells us that a certain Abū'l-Asad, *mawlā* of Asad ibn 'Abdallāh al-Qasrī, took part in the latter's raid on Khuttal in 119/737 (28) and escorted Badrtürkhan, a prisoner captured by the Umayyad forces, to the camp of the campaign general, Muṣ'ab ibn 'Amr al-Khuzā'i. It is tempting to identify this Abū'l-Asad as

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27 *Tārīkh-i guzīdah*, ed. Nawa'i, Tehran, 1339, p. 377; Narshakhī, *Tārīkh-i bukhārā*, p. 82 = p. 59.  
 28 Ṭabarī, 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 khāqān of the Turks for aid against the Arabs. Ṭabarī gives two separate accounts of al-Qasrī's activity in Khuttal on the authority of the same transmitters. The second account, in which Asad the *mawlā* of al-Qasrī is mentioned, cannot have been a reference to a second raid on Khuttal in 120, since al-Qasrī died at the beginning of this year. It is therefore most likely a description of al-Qasrī's successes in Khuttal during his first raid, before the arrival of the khāqān forced him to retreat to Balkh; this account has become detached from that of al-Qasrī's retreat from Khuttal and his eventual defeat of the khāqān.

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 Ṭukhāristān, his knowledge of the region would have made him a valuable asset to the expedition.

It is possibly also Sāmānkhudā who appears in Ṭabarī's chronicle as Abū'l-Asad, *mawlā* of Khālid ibn 'Abdallāh al-Qasrī (29). Ṭabarī 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 *mawlā* of Khālid, in 127, when Yazīd ibn Khālid ordered him to assassinate Yūsuf 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

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29 Ṭabarī, ser. ii, p. 1807.

30 Ṭabarī, ser. ii, pp. 1841f and 1878. For Khālid's death, see Crone, *Slaves*, p. 102.

that Abū'l-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 Sāmānkhudā 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'l-Asad's life or how he fared under the 'Abbāsids. But members of the Qasrī family did find favour under the new regime. Muḥammad, the brother of Yazīd ibn Khālid, declared for the *da'wa* and was appointed governor of Mecca by Mansūr (31); Yazīd's uncle Ismā'īl governed Mosul and became one of Mansūr's *ṣaḥāba* (32). It is therefore probable that if he survived the revolution, Abū'l-Asad would also have become a supporter of the 'Abbāsids.

Turning now to Sāmānkhudā's son, Asad, there are two references to a certain Asad ibn Abī'l-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'l-Asad appears as an *'āmil* of Ḥasan ibn Sahl who was expelled from Baghdad in 201/816-7 by a population rioting against the policies of the

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31 Ṭabarī, 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 Khwādamīr'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.

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33 Tabarī, ser. iii, p. 998; Miskawayh, *Fragmenta Historicum Arabicorum*, vol. ii, ed. de Goeje, p. 429.

34 Ibn Abi Tāhir Tayfūr, *Kitāb baghdād*, ed. Keller, Leipzig, 1908, p. 120.

35 Khwandamīr, *Ḥabīb al-siyar*, vol. ii, Tehran, 1955, p. 352.

While Ma'mūn was resident in Marv, Transoxania was governed in succession by two amirs of Iranian origin. The first was Yahyā ibn Mu'adh (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, Badakhshān and Tūkhāristān from the middle of the 9th century (42) and in the 10th century became vassals of the Sāmānids (43). The appointment of

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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 'Abbāsīd armies against Muḡanna' 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).

39 Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, vol. viii, p. 6.

40 Cf. *EI*<sup>2</sup> supplement, s.v. "Bānīdjūrids"; Gardīzī, *Zayn*, p. 133.

41 Cf. M. Esin, *A history of pre-Islamic and early-Islamic Turkish culture*, Istanbul, 1980, p. 266; R. Vasmer, "Beiträge zur muhammedanischen Münzkunde", *Wiener Numism. Zeitschrift*, 1925, pp. 49 and 53.

42 It was to Hāshim ibn Bānījūr, ruler of Wakhs and Halwird, that Ḥaydar the Afshīn fled when he was forced to leave Ushrūsana before he converted to Islam and led an 'Abbāsīd army against his father in 207 (Balādhurī, *Kitāb futūḥ al-buldān*, ed. M.J. de Goeje, Leiden, 1866, p. 430); Barthold calls Hāshim "the local representative of the Arab government" (*Turkestan*, p. 211). 'Abbās ibn Bānījūr served the 'Abbāsīds in Egypt in 211/826-7 (Ya'qūbī, *Historiae*, vol. ii, p. 561, noted in Vasmer, *ibid*, p. 53) at around the same time as Ilyās ibn Asad the Sāmānīd was governor of Alexandria (see below, note 62) and another son, Dā'ūd, was governor of Baṣra, Yamāma and Bahrayn (Ṭabari, ser. iii, p. 1044, noted in Vasmer, *ibid*, p. 53).

43 See below, chapter 4, pp. 108f and 110f.

Bānijūr, 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'mūn was already contemplating vassal rule in Transoxania, before the appointment of the Sāmānids. There was probably an interval between Bānijūr's dismissal from the governorship of Transoxania and the appointment of the Sāmānids; Gardīzī tells us that Layth ibn Sa'd held the governorship of Samarqand immediately before Nūh was appointed (44).

Asad's sons were appointed to governorships in Transoxania by Ghassān ibn 'Abbād, Ma'mūn's governor of Khurāsān (202-205), two years before the death of Asad ibn Abī'l-'Abbās. The appointment was made on the instructions of the caliph Ma'mūn himself, who, according to Narshakhī, wanted to reward them for the help they had given the 'Abbāsids in the suppression of the revolt of Rāfi' 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

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44 Gardīzī, *Zayn*, p. 132.

45 Narshakhī, *Tārīkh-i bukhārā*, p. 105 = p. 76. Rāfi', grandson of Naṣr ibn Sayyār, the last Umayyad governor of Khurāsān, had raised a rebellion in Samarqand towards the end of Hārūn's caliphate and many regions in Transoxania had joined his cause (Tabarī, ser. iii, pp. 707f: Ya'qūbī, *Historiae*, vol. ii, p. 528). Hārūn himself had come east in order to deal with him, but died at Tūs in 193/809. It was left to Ma'mūn to complete the task of restoring Transoxania to order, which he did with the help of the sons of Asad ibn Sāmānkhudā. Narshakhī notes that Rāfi'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 Khurāsān.

known Rāfi' before he turned against the 'Abbāsids, since they had been able to persuade him to come to terms with Ma'mūn (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 Ḥasan ibn Sahl, Asad ibn Abī'l-Asad's superior in Iraq. The descendants of the Banū Sahl remained in favour with the Sāmānid house in the early 10th century; Abū'l-'Abbās, the son of Fadl ibn Sahl, was associated with the Sāmānid court in Ahmad ibn Ismā'il'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'mūn (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

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46 Narshakhī, *ibid*, p. 105 = p. 76. If Frye's translation of *muṣāhara* as "marriage alliance" is correct, this would suggest that the Samanids had had contact with Rāfi' before 194. It may be that the *muṣāhara* 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 Sāmānids in Rāfi's surrender: Ṭabarī says only that Rāfi' was encouraged to come to terms by Ma'mūn's generous treatment of other local notables in Khurāsān and Transoxania (Ṭabarī, ser. iii, p. 777). Gardīzī knows nothing of a peace treaty with Rāfi'; according to his version, Harthama ibn A'yan occupied Samarqand and killed Rāfi' (Gardīzī, *Zayn*, p. 133).

47 Ibn Isfandiyyār, *Tārīkh-i ṭabaristān*, p. 266.

48 Ibn Khallikān says that Nūh ibn Asad "*'āmil bukhārā*" gave the *mamlūk* Tulun to Ma'mūn in 200/815-16 (*id*, *Wafayāt al-a'yān*, vol. i, p. 173). The designation "*'āmil bukhārā*" is almost certainly erroneous; Ibn Khallikān probably only used it because he knew the later Sāmānids as governors of the city.

49 Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, vol. vii, p. 279 (anno 204/819-20): Gardīzī, *Zayn*, p. 146. The one divergent account is that of Ḥamza Isfahānī who says that Nūh accompanied

our early sources, Narshakhī and Sallāmī, are more reticent in that they only give the locations of Nūh and Ahmad's appointments. While both agree on Nūh's appointment to Samarqand, 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 Farghāna, which he governed until Nūh's death. This province, which was the easternmost region of Transoxania, and nearest to the *Dār al-ḥarb*, 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, Nūh, with his capital at Samarqand, assumed the role of senior amir. He seems to have been a loyal servant of the caliph and his Tāhirid overlords. In 212/827-28 Ṭalḥa ibn Ṭāhir visited the Sāmānid capital (52); and in 225/840 Nūh carried out 'Abdallāh ibn Ṭāhir's instructions to arrest the governor of Ushrūsana, 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 Tāhirids (*Ta'rikh sinī al-mulūk*, ed. I.M.E. Gottwald, Petropolis, 1844, p. 237).

50 Narshakhī, *Tarikh-i bukhara*, p. 105 = p. 76: Sallāmī in Manīnī, *Fath*, vol. i, p. 348.

51 Cf. Mirkhwand, *Rawdat al-safā'*, ed. Sabuhi, vol. iv, p. 30. For the second expedition, see below, note 59.  
52 Samarqandī, *Muntakhab*, fol. 53b: *fa'staqda 'umar ibn abi muqatil hadha ba'da qudum talha ibn tahir samarqand bi-ayyamihi wa dhālika sanata ithnatay 'ashra wa mi'atayn...*

Afshīn Haydar who was at the time being tried for treason in Baghdad (53).

As for their relations with the caliphate, the early Sāmānids paid a regular annual tribute to Baghdad from the land revenues of Transoxania (54); this practice was probably only discontinued after the Sāmānids had been appointed governors of Khurāsān. Nūh also had direct relations with the caliph in Baghdad: Ya'qūbī reports that he supplied slaves to the caliph Mu'tasim 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 Dā'ūd, assigning one million dirhams towards the digging of a canal in Shāsh (56). Mu'tasim'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:

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53 Tabarī, ser. iii, p. 1307. For his release, see below, note 65.

54 Narshakhī tells of the revenue sent annually by Ismā'īl from Bukhārā to his brother Naṣr in Samarqand, who forwarded it to Baghdad (*Tārīkh-i bukhārā*, p. 15 = p. 11). Muqtadir (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 Mu'tadid (279/892-289/902). A notable feature of this passage is that the Sāmānids sent the tribute directly to Baghdad; prior to the collapse of Tāhirid power in 874, the Sāmānids probably sent their tribute to the Tāhirid governor of Naysābur.

55 Ya'qūbī, *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 Sāmānids' 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 Nūh'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 Aḥmad led a *ghāzī* raid against western Shāwghar on the Jaxartes (60). The Tāhirids also contributed to the drive to expand into the steppe; 'Abdallāh ibn Tāhir (213-230) sent his son Tāhir on campaign into the Oghuz steppe (61).

Our sources provide some information about the governorships of Nūh'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

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57 Barthold, *Turkestan*, p. 99.

58 Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, vol. vi, p. 509; Sam'ānī, *Ansāb*, vol. vii, p. 26 (where the date is 225). Pritsak believes that Nūh took Isfiyāb from the first "Qarākhānid" ruler, Bilge Kür (Kul) Kādir Khān, (Golden, *The Cambridge History of Early Inner Asia*, ed. D. Sinor, p. 356).

59 Cf. Barthold, *Turkestan*, p. 211. Balādhurī says that this expedition was carried out in the reign of the caliph Muntaṣir (247-8). Either the name is a mistake for Mu'tasim (who died in the same year as Nūh), or else the expedition took place after Nūh's death.

60 Iṣṭakhrī, *Masālik*, p. 291. Cf. Barthold, *Turkestan*, p. 256 for the location of Shāwghar; cf. also id, *Zwolf Vorlesungen*, p. 141.

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 Ushrūsana 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 Ushrūsana, since for most of the 9th century

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62 For Ilyās's governorship of Sīstān cf. *Tārīkh-i Sīstān*, pp. 177f, 183, 187f = pp. 141, 145 and 149. For his governorship of Alexandria to which he was appointed in 212/827, see Ya'qūbī, *Historiae*, vol. ii, p. 561: Kindī, *The governors and judges of Egypt*, ed. R. Guest, Leiden and London, 1912, p. 184.

63 For Ilyās's descendants in Herāt, see Bayhaqī, *Tārīkh-i bayhaq*, ed. Husayni, 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 Ṣaffārid Ya'qūb ibn Layth in 253 (*Tārīkh-i Sīstān*, p. 208 = p. 166). Six years later, after Ya'qūb had taken Naysābur, Ibrāhīm was one of the Tāhirid generals who pledged allegiance to him (*Tārīkh-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 ḍuriba 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 Iakhiia ibn Asada", *Epigrafika Vostoka*, vol. xxi, 1972, pp. 30f). Yahyā died in Rabī' II 241/Sep 855 (Sam'ānī, *Ansāb*, vol. ii, p. 26).

Ushrūsana was ruled by the local Afshīn dynasty (65). It may be that he acted as Nūh's representative in negotiations with the Afshīns on occasion: that Nūh's authority was recognized by the Afshīns in matters relating to property rights and land tenure in Ushrūsana is suggested by the complaints lodged against him by Hasan ibn Haydar the Afshīn to the Tāhirid 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, Yaḥyā and Ilyās in their governorships (67). If the date of Nūh's death is correct, the Tāhirid 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

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

66 Ṭabarī, ser. iii, p. 1308.

67 Sallāmī in Manīnī, *Fath*, vol. i, p. 348.

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

#### Sāmānid rule from 250 to 287

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

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68 Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, vol. vii, p. 279.

69 Narshakhī, *Tārīkh-i bukhārā*, p. 105f = pp. 76f.

70 Sallāmī in Manīnī, *Fath*, vol. i, p. 348.

71 For the two *fiils* minted in Samarqand in 244 and 245 see Tiesenhausen, "O samanidskykh monetakh", *Trudy Vostochnago Otdeleniya Imp. Russkogo Arkh. Obshchestva* 1855, p. 84). For the Farghāna *fiils* of 247 see Yakubovski, "Ob odnom rannesamanidskom felse", *KSIIMK*, vol. xii, 1946, p. 105).

72 Narshakhī, *Tārīkh-i bukhārā*, p. 106 = p. 77.

73 However the coinage suggests that Naṣr ibn Aḥmad re-established direct control over Shāsh early in his reign; a copper coin minted in Shāsh 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'qūb ibn Aḥmad (see below, note 94).

the light of history in 260/873-4. On 12<sup>th</sup> Ramadan 260/ 1<sup>st</sup> July 874 the Sāmānids occupied Bukhārā in the wake of the turmoil which had ensued in Eastern Iran after the Saffārids' victory over the Tāhirids (74). A year before this, Ya'qūb ibn Layth, who had long been making inroads into Tāhirid territories in Khurāsān, had sealed his triumph by conquering Naysābūr and taking Muhammad ibn Tāhir prisoner (75). The Tāhirids counter-attacked quickly, sending Husayn ibn Tāhir, 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 Khwārazmī allies on the western fringes of Transoxania, occupying Bukhārā in Rabī' II/ Jan-Feb 874 of that year (76).

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74 Narshakhī, *Tārīkh-i bukhārā*, p. 108 = p. 80.

75 Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, vol. vii, pp. 261f. Ya'qūb had already been acknowledged as governor of Sīstān, Fārs, Kirmān and Kābul by Muhammad ibn Tāhir in 253/867 (*Tārīkh-i sīstān*, p. 209 = p. 166). In 258/871-2 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, Fārs, Kirmān, Sīstān, and Sind. He subsequently occupied Balkh and Herāt before attacking Naysābūr (*Tārīkh-i sīstān*, p. 216f. = p. 172).

76 Narshakhī, *Tārīkh-i bukhārā*, p. 106f = pp. 77f. After Ismā'īl had forestalled his designs on Bukhārā, Husayn continued his campaign to restore Tāhirid power in Khurāsān, occupying Naysābūr for a time before being expelled from the city in 263/876-7 (Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, vol. vii, p. 310). Hamza Isfahānī tells us that while in Naysābūr, Husayn (ibn Tāhir ibn 'Abdallāh) sent a messenger to ask Naṣr ibn Ahmad for assistance but Naṣr 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, Sāmānid 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 Bukhārāns, 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 Ramadān 260/July 874 (79). He had some trouble consolidating his rule in Bukhārā however; he had to fend off a further attack by Ḥusayn ibn Tāhir

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77 Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, vol. vii, p. 280f. While the Tāhirids were in power in Khurāsān, Bukhārā was governed by a Tāhirid appointee; cf. Khālid ibn Ahmad al-Dhuhlī, governor of Bukhārā on their behalf who quarrelled with Bukhārī (d. 256/870), author of the *Ṣaḥīḥ* (Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt al-shāfi'iyya*, vol. ii, p. 14). What role the Sāmānid *nā'ib* (deputy) played in Bukhārā is not clear.

78 The first choice of the troops as commander was a grandson of Rāfi' ibn Layth, the leader of the anti-'Abbāsīd rebellion in Samarqand which the Sāmānids 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 (Narshakhī, *Tārīkh-i bukhārā*, p. 15 = pp. 11f).

79 Narshakhī, *Tārīkh-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 Naṣr ibn Aḥmad, 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 Ṣaffārid, 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 Ṣaffārids; in 258/872 Naṣr ibn Aḥmad 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 Ṣaffārids fluctuated between hostility and grudging acceptance of their rule. While for the most part the caliphs made no secret of their disapproval of the Ṣaffārids, 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.

82 Tabarī, ser. iii, p. 1889; Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, vol. vii, p. 280.

83 Tabarī, ser. iii, p. 1887. Tabarī 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 *aṣḥāb al-mamālik* and *dhawī al-jāh wa'l-'udād* 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 *EI*<sup>2</sup> supplement, s.v. "Banīdjūrids".

occasions they reversed their hostile stance and endorsed Ṣaffārid authority in the *mashriq*. These changes in 'Abbāsīd 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 Ṭāhirīds (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

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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 Tabarī, ser. iii, p. 1932.

87 *Tārīkh-i Sīstān*, p. 234 = p. 185.

Harthama, who continued Khujustānī's campaign against 'Amr (88).

In 271/884-5, three years after Rāfi' had come to power, the 'Abbāsids declared openly for him against 'Amr and announced 'Amr's replacement as governor by Muḥammad ibn Ṭāhir, the last Ṭāhirid to govern Khurāsān. The latter appointed Rāfi' as his lieutenant in the province, and confirmed Sāmānid authority in Transoxania (89). During this period, the Sāmānids began to intervene directly for the first time in Khurāsānī affairs on the side of the Ṣaffārids' enemies. In 270 or 271 Ismā'īl lent military assistance to Abū Ṭalḥa 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 Rāfi's governorship, Ismā'īl himself led his troops in support of Rāfi's offensive against the same Abū Ṭalḥa ibn Sharkub who had meanwhile allied himself with his former Ṣaffārid 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 Naṣr in

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88 For al-Khujustānī's biography see Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, vol. vii, pp. 296-302. Jūzjānī identifies Rāfi' as the son of Harthama ibn A'yan, the famous 'Abbāsīd general (Jūzjānī, *Ṭabaqāt-i nāsirī*, vol. i, p. 205).  
 89 Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-a'yān*, vol. vi, p. 424.  
 90 Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, vol. vii, p. 368.  
 91 *Tārīkh-i Sīstān*, p. 244 = p. 193f: Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, vol. vii, p. 369.

Samarqand (92). Relations were further strained when Naṣr began to suspect Ismā'īl's motives for forming a treaty of mutual assistance with Rāfi' and the brothers finally went to war with each other in <sup>Dec 885-Jan 886</sup> Rajab 272/ (93): the conflict was to last for three years.

From its outset, Naṣr, 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 Farghāna respectively, and the Turks of Isfiyāb, to come to his aid (94). Ismā'īl had only his new ally Rāfi' to call on for help: the latter, no doubt grateful for Ismā'īl's assistance in Khurāsān, came north to join him and they marched on Samarqand together (95). But before the opposing armies were committed to battle, Ismā'īl's commander in chief, Hamūya ibn 'Alī, persuaded Rāfi' to negotiate a truce between the brothers, since he feared that the Sāmānids might lose Transoxania if they exhausted themselves in battle (96).

92 Narshakhī, *Tārīkh-i bukhārā*, p. 113 = p. 82.

93 Cf. Sallāmī in Manīnī, *Fath*, vol. i, p. 348.

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 (Yakubovsky, "Ob odnom rannesamanidskom felse", *KSIIMK*, vol. xii, Moscow-Leningrad, 1946, p. 104). Abū'l-Ash'ath Asad took over Farghāna after the death of his father Ahmad in 250; for two *fiils* minted in Farghāna in 264 and 269 bearing his name, see Dobrovolsky, "Felsi Samanida Asada ibn Akhmada", *Trudy Gosudarstvennogo Ermitazha, "Numizmatika"*, vol. ix, 1967, p. 87; Davidovich, "Mon ety Ferghany kak istochnik dlya kharakteristiki instituta feodalnykh pozhalovaniy za sluzhbu v Srednei Azii X v.", *Pismennye pamyatniki Vostoka*, 1969, p. 141.

95 Narshakhi, *Tarikh-i bukhara*, p. 114 = p. 83.

96 Ibn al-Athir, *Kamil*, vol. vii, p. 281.

According to the terms of this treaty, Ismā'īl ceded the governorship of Bukhārā to his elder brother, Ishāq (97), whilst retaining responsibility for revenue collection (98). The treaty held for only a short time; fifteen months later, Ismā'īl 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, Ismā'īl 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 Ismā'īl as governor of Bukhārā and designated him his deputy, forcing his own son and another brother, probably Ishāq, to accept his decision (99).

Shortly before his death in *Jumada I 279* Naṣr appointed Ishāq governor of Farghāna in place of Ahmad ibn Asad ibn Ahmad (100). Davidovich, who assumes that the appointment was made on Ismā'īl's recommendation, suggests that it was a reward for his support for Ismā'īl in the civil war, but since Naṣr was still alive

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97 Ishāq was Ismā'īl's elder brother according to 'Awfī (*Jāmi' al-hikāyāt*, part i of section 2, ed. B. and M. Musaffa, Tehran, 1980, p. 21): and Ḥākim al-Bayyī' (*Kitāb aḥvāl-i Nīshāpūr*, fol. 19b, in R.N. Frye, *The histories of Nishapur*, The Hague, 1965).

98 Narshakhī, *Tārīkh-i bukhārā*, p. 115 = p. 84.

99 *ibid*, p. 118 = p. 86.

100 Cf. the Farghāna coins of 277/890-1 bearing the name of Ahmad ibn Asad (ibn Ahmad), son of the governor of Farghāna who had fought for Naṣr in the civil war, and that of the following year bearing the name of Ishāq (Bikov, "Redki Samanidski Fels", *Epigrafika Vostoka*, vol. xx, 1971, p. 72f).

in this year, it is quite possible that Ishāq was given Farghāna in order to compensate him for having been passed over as deputy ruler in favour of Ismā'īl. As the 10th century history of the dynasty shows, Ishāq was to make two bids for the throne during the reigns of Ismā'īl's successors (101); this suggests that he may have been given to understand by Naṣr that he would succeed Ismā'īl on the latter's death.

### Ismā'īl's early reign

Naṣr lived for four years after the end of the civil war and died in the same year as the caliph Mu'tamid. The latter's successor, Mu'tadid, reaffirmed his predecessor's endorsement of Sāmānid rule in Transoxania, sending the 'ahd to Ismā'īl ibn Aḥmad in 280/893. In 281/894-5 the first 'Abbāsīd-type dirhams bearing the name of the Sāmānid amir were struck in Shāsh and Samarqand (102), a sign that the caliph now regarded the Sāmānids as independent vassals of the caliphate. When he had received the 'ahd, Ismā'īl 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 khān prisoner (103)

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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 'Abbāsīd dirham minted in Sāmānid territory is dated 280/893-4.

103 Pritsak, "Von den Karluk zu den Karachaniden", *ZDMG*, vol. ci, 1951, p. 289f.

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 Rāfi' ibn Harthama in Shawwāl 283/November-December 896 (105). When 'Amr had sent Rāfi'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 Rāfi's death, Muḥammad ibn 'Amr al-Khwārazmī, the

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

105 Rāfi' 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 Zāfir, *Duwal*, fol. 116a).

107 Narshakhī, *Tārīkh-i bukhārā*, p. 119f. = pp. 87f.

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 'Irāq 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 ḥājib 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

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108 *Tārīkh-i sīstān*, pp. 253f. = p. 201.

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, *Rawḍat al-ṣafā'*, 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).

112 Ibn Zāfir, *Duwal*, fol. 116b: Gardīzī, *Zayn*, p. 145.

113 Ibn Abī Rabī'a, his *kātib* 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 Husayn, 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 Ṣu'lūkids), as had Ahmad ibn Sahl, former Saffārid governor of Marv (Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, vol. viii, p. 118: for his career

account of the Ṣaffārid 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 204/819-20 and 287/900 the Ṣāmānid 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 Ṣāmānid powerbase in Sughd was initially a disruptive factor. When Ismā'il 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'il's grandson, Naṣr.

The consolidation of Ṣāmānid 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

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under the Ṣāmānids 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 Ismā`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 Saffārids. 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 *dahāqīn* 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 Narshakhī's account, it appears that Ismā'īl mobilized

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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. "Āl-Marzubānī". But the descendants of the Bukhārkhudā did not fare so well - when he first came to Bukhārā, Ismā'īl ibn Ahmad deported Abū Muḥammad Bukhārkhudā to Samarqand (Narshakhī, *ibid*, pp. 112f = p. 82). He also dispossessed Abū Ishāq Ibrāhīm ibn Khālid ibn Bunyat (Abu Muḥammad's son?) of his estates in Bukhārā, although he did pay him compensation (Narshakhī, *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" (Narshakhī, *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 Ṣaffārids, 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 Sāmānids. In his summary of Soviet scholarship on the dynasty, N.N. Negmatov casts the Sāmānids as leaders of a citizen army (120) and postulates that "the early Sāmānids enjoyed the sympathy and support of the working classes (sic) among their population" (121). But while the Sāmānids 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

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119 Narshakhī, *Tārīkh-i bukhārā*, p. 122 = p. 89.

120 Negmatov, *Gosudarstvo samanidov*, Dushanbe, 1977, p. 27.

121 Negmatov, *ibid.*

122 Cf. P. Crone, *Pre-industrial societies*, Oxford, 1989, pp. 41f and 102.

an indication of the extent to which Ismā'īl 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 Sāmānids and the scholars. The Sāmānids 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 Ḥafṣ' appeal to Naṣr ibn Aḥmad in 260/874 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-ḥarb* (124), and donating funds to the war effort against the western infidels (125).

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123 See above, p. 85.

124 The frequent occurrence of the nisba *al-muttawwi'ī* among the entries in al-Hākīm 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* Abū Bakr ibn al-Azhar al-Bukhārī in Ibn Zāfir's account of the Sāmānid counter-attack against the Turkish invasion of Transoxania in 297/909-109 (Ibn Zāfir, *Duwal*, 118a: see below, chapter 4, p. 133).

125 Cf. Ibn al-Jawzī's account of Ḥusayn ibn 'Alī al-Tamīmī's sponsorship of 10 volunteers for the Byzantine front in the *ḥamm al-istifār* (Ibn al-Jawzī, *Muntazam*, vol. vii, p. 128, cited by Busse, *Chalif und Grosskonig*, p. 146, note 5).

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 'ulamā' amount to? Both Hanafī and Shāfi'ī scholars were honoured at the Sāmānid court (126); their special status was marked by their exemption from the obligation of kissing the ground before the royal throne (127). The Sāmānids also participated in the communal life of the scholarly community. Thus we have evidence that three generations of Sāmānid rulers, Aḥmad ibn Asad, his son Ismā'īl and grandson Aḥmad, led the prayers at the funerals of eminent 'ālims (128). The early Sāmānid amirs and members of their court were avid students of *hadīth* scholarship (129); and the scholars for their part indulged the amirs' enthusiasm for religious studies

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126 Samarqandī tells us that Ismā'īl did not favour one *madhhab* above another; (*ismā'īl ibn aḥmad*) *la yamīlu ilā farīq dūna farīq* (*Muntakhab*, fol. 65a). Ismā'īl ibn Aḥmad patronized the famous Shāfi'ī scholars Ibn Khuzayma and Muḥammad ibn Naṣr al-Marwazī (*Madelung, Religious trends*, p. 26. He also commissioned the writing of the Hanafī creed *Al-sawād al-a'zam* (see below, note 132).

127 Muḡaddasī, *Aḥsan*, p. 338f.

128 Aḥmad ibn Asad led the prayers at the funeral of the qādī of Samarqand, Abu Ḥafs 'Umar ibn Ya'qūb al-'Āmirī who died in 240 (*Samarqandī, Muntakhab*, fol. 55a; *Sam'ānī, Ansāb*, vol. vii, s.v. "Sanjadīzakī"): Ismā'īl ibn Aḥmad prayed over Ishāq ibn Ismā'īl al-Bābkissī (d. 259), who had undertaken the building of the *ribāt al-murabba'a* in Samarqand (*Sam'ānī, Ansāb*, vol. ii, p. 7): in 258 Aḥmad ibn Ismā'īl performed the same function at the funeral of Abu Layth 'Abdallāh ibn Surayj al-Bukharī (*Samarqandī, Muntakhab*, fol. 49b).

129 While on pilgrimage, Aḥmad ibn Asad heard *hadīths* from leading scholars of the holy cities (*Samarqandī, Muntakhab*, fol. 8a for Aḥmad's sojourn in Medina). His sons Ismā'īl, Naṣr and Ishāq were all noted as *hadīth* scholars who related from their father among others (*Sam'ānī, Ansāb*, vol. vii, p. 25). Ismā'īl related *hadīth* to his *kātib*, 'Isa ibn Muḥammad ibn 'Īsā (*Samarqandī, Muntakhab*, fol. 64b.) *Sam'ānī* says that Ismā'īl "wrote and related *hadīths* on the subjects of *ghazw*, justice and respect for scholars (*Sam'ānī, ibid*). Aḥmad ibn Ismā'īl (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 Sāmānids brought some of their most favoured scholarly protégés 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 Samarqandī qādī Abū'l-Qāsim Ishāq ibn Muḥammad (132) for the purpose of countering heresies in Transoxania.

### The image of Ismā'īl ibn Aḥmad

One notable feature of early Sāmānid history is that, by contrast with later Sāmānid rulers about whose personal characteristics we know next to nothing, Ismā'īl ibn Aḥmad 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 Aḥmad, Muḥammad ibn Ishāq ibn Khuzayma (see above, note 126) corrected the *isnād* with which Ismā'īl had prefaced a *ḥadīth* 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, *Ṭabaqāt al-shāfi'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 Ismā'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 rūdakī ve āthār-i manzūm-i rūdakī*, 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 Ismā'īlism except possibly for the mention of the *rāfidiyān* (*Sawād*, p. 41; pace Richter-Bernberg, "Linguistic Shu'ubiyya", *JAOS*, vol. xciv, 1974, p. 56 and Mirzayef, *Abū 'abdallāh rūdakī ve āthār-i manzūm-i rūdakī*, 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 Ismā'īl and should be interpreted as a reflection of the popular perception of his reign (133).

What are we told about Ismā'īl? 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 Zaydī imāms. When Ismā'īl 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 (Zaydī) 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).

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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, *Tārīkh-i tabaristān*, p. 259. This is also mentioned by Mīrkhwānd (*Rawda*, vol. iv, p. 35).

136 Mīrkhwānd, *Rawda*, vol. iv, p. 36.

Ismā'īl 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 'Amr 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 'Amr the Ṣaffārid, he forgave those of his supporters who had earlier defected to 'Amr and spared the life of the rebel general, Muḥammad ibn Hārūn. This last account is of interest because it is explicitly contradicted by the chronicles which record Muḥammad's death in Bukhārā (138); it seems that this was one folk-tale about Ismā'īl 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, Ismā'īl 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.

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137 Nizam al-Din, *Introduction to the Jawami'u'l-hikayat*, no. 442 (camel story); Mirkhwand, *Rawdat al-safā*; vol. iv, p. 33 ('Amr's money).

138 Story in 'Awfi, *Jawami' al-hikayat*, part ii of section 2, p. 444; for Muḥammad ibn Hārūn's death, see chapter 4, note 82.

139 Cf Ibn al-Athir, <sup>Kāmil</sup> vol. vii, p. 282 and vol. viii, p. 6f.

This idealized picture of Ismā'īl must be seen in context: he was the noble king and *muhaddith* who defeated the Ṣaffārīds, 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 Ṣāmānīds 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 Ismā'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 Ṣāmānīd house because the kingdom they ruled was far from ideal.

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140 See below, chapter 6, p. 187f, for Ismā'īl's suppression of the revolt of Abu Bilāl the Ismā'īlī.

141 Mīrkhwānd notes that Ahmad ibn Ismā'īl was headstrong and of bad character (*Rawdat al-safā'*, vol. iv, p. 39); Naṣr ibn Ahmad was noted for his short temper (Abu'l-Fadl Bayhaqī, *Tārīkh-i bayhaqī*, p. 106f).

Chapter four

THE SĀMĀNID STATE 287/900 - 301/914

## Introduction

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

Mu'tadid's patent hugely magnified the territorial extent of the Sāmānid state. Ismā'īl received all the eastern provinces previously held by 'Amr (1); and Mu'tadid's successor Muktafī not only confirmed Ismā'īl 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 Sāmānids found themselves in possession of the entire area from Hulwān (3) to Central Asia. They were formally in charge of Fārs (4), Kirmān

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1 Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, vol. vii, p. 502. 'Amr had also been invested with Mecca, Medina and Baghdad in <sup>265/279</sup> (Tārīkh-i sīstān, p. 234 = p. 185), but none of our sources credit the Sāmānids with even nominal overlordship of these areas.

2 Muqaddasī, *Aḥsan*, p. 337; Gardīzī, *Zayn*, p. 147.

3 Hulwān is specified as the western border of the Sāmānid state by Narshakhī (*Tārīkh-i bukhārā*, p. 127 = p. 93) and Muqaddasī (above, note 2).

4 Thus one manuscript of Narshakhī (Frye, tr., *The history of Bukhara*, p. 93, note). Similarly Mirkhwānd, *Rawḍa*, vol. iv, p. 35 (Iṣfahan). Fārs had been part of 'Amr's domains (*Tārīkh-i sīstān*, p. 234 = p. 185) and remained under Saffārid control for the first decade of the century (see below, p. 116).

(5), Sīstān (6) and Khurāsān, including Herāt (7), Ghūr and Gharjistān in what is now Afghanistan (8), the Jibāl (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 Sāmānid provinces of Bukhārā, Samarqand, Shāsh and Farghāna, and more recent acquisitions in southern Transoxania, such as Ṣaghāniyān (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

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5 Muqaddasī, *Aḥsan*, 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'tamid (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, *Kāmil*, vol. vii, p. 509; Mīrkhwānd, *Rawḍa*, vol. iv, p. 35. This is also implicit in the statement that Ismā'īl received all 'Amr's territories.

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

8 Cf. *EI*<sup>2</sup>, s.vv. "Ghūr" and "Ghardjistān".

9 Muqaddasī, *Aḥsan*, p. 337.

10 See above, note 2. None of these cities had been governed by the Ṣaffārids. Hamdallāh Qazvīnī tells us that Qazwīn was governed by Ilyās ibn Aḥmad, Ismā'īl's brother (=Ilyās ibn Ishāq ibn Aḥmad, 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 Tabaristān (Frye, *The History of Bukhara*, p. 93, note); Mīrkhwānd, *Rawḍa*, vol. iv, p. 35, has the Sāmānids rule Khurāsān to (tā), clearly including, Māzandarān. Tabaristān had been part of 'Amr's domains.

12 Narshakhī, *Tārīkh-i bukhārā*, p. 127 = p. 93; Muqaddasī, *Aḥsan*, 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 Ṣaghāniyān nor any of the other provinces on the headwaters of the Oxus are mentioned in the pre-dynastic period of Sāmānid history.

15 Narshakhī, *Tārīkh-i bukhārā*, p. 127 = p. 93.

16 Abū'l-Faḍl Bayhaqī says Ismā'īl's rule extended from Kashgar 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 Ṣaffārid control, were likewise purely nominal additions to the Sāmānid domains and eventually they ceased to be even that; the ruler of Mansūra acknowledged the Būyids as sovereigns in the second half of the tenth century, and the ruler of Multān converted to Ismā'īlism 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 Ismā'īl'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 Narshakhī enumerates Hind and Sind among the provinces granted to the Sāmānids (*Tārīkh-i bukhārā*, p. 127 = p. 93); Hind and Sind were among the provinces which had been granted to 'Amr in 265 (*Tārīkh-i sīstān*, p. 234 = p. 185).

18 *EI*<sup>2</sup>, s.v. "Mansūra"; *EI*<sup>1</sup>, 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 Ṣaffārid dependencies remained under Ṣaffārid 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 Naṣr ibn Ahmad in 275/888 (20). His son Muḥammad succeeded him as governor during Ismā'īl's reign (21), probably when Ishāq was

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19 See below, section on Sīstān.

20 See chapter 3, note 100. Cf. the copper coins, bearing his name, minted in Farghāna dated 278/891-2 (A.A. Bikov, A.A., "Redky Samanidskiy Fel's", *Epigrafika Vostoka*, vol. xx, 1971, pp. 72-74), 284/897 and 290/903 (cf. E.A. Davidovich "Ferghanskies Samanidy po numizmaticheskim dannym", *Epigrafika Vostoka*, vol. xi, 1956, pp. p. 17, 25; id, "Monety Ferghany kak istochnik dlya kharakteristiki instituta feodalnykh pozhalovaniy za sluzhbu v Srednei Azii X v." *Pismennyye pamyatniki Vostoka*, 1969, vol. ii, Moscow, 1972, p. 141).

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 Ismā'īl (22). Shāsh on the other hand remained under the control of the same line of Sāmānid governors who had governed it before the civil war: Abū'l-Fadl ibn Ya'qūb ibn Ahmad was governor of the province in the early years of the reign of Ismā'īl's grandson, Naṣr ibn Ahmad, and had most likely held this position from the beginning of the century (23).

The northern province of Khwārazm, as already mentioned, was governed by the Sāmānid vassal, 'Irāq ibn Mansūr (24). Bīrūnī counted him as a member of the Afrīghid Khwārazmshāh 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 'Irāq 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 Bānījūrid dynasty which had governed the province in the 9th century. Hārith ibn Asad Bānījūrī was governor of Khuttal in circa 272/885-6 (26) and remained so at least until <sup>293/906-7</sup>(27). The neighbouring

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22 See below, note 177.

23 See below, chapter 5, note 7.

24 See chapter 3, note 109.

25 Bīrūnī, *Chronology*, tr. E. Sachau, London, 1897, p. 42; for a critical view of Bīrūnī's reliability as a genealogist of the dynasty see *EI*<sup>2</sup> s.v. "Kh<sup>w</sup>ārazmshāhs". However, as far as the 10th century is concerned, Bīrūnī's list of rulers is entirely borne out by our sources (see appendix; "The Khwārazmshāhs 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 Hāshim 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 Ṣaghāniyān was governed by the Muhtājīd amirs who soon achieved prominence as commanders in the Sāmānid army and as provincial governors (29); their ethnic origins are not known, nor is the precise date of their assumption of rule in Ṣaghāniyān (30). Within these Oxine provinces lived large numbers of Turkish tribesmen of the Kumījī and "K.njina" tribes (31) who owed allegiance to their Muhtājīd 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 Qufṣ 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. *EI*<sup>2</sup> s.v. "Banidjūrids", which points out that the latest extant coins of Hārith 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 Sāmānid state elite, s.v. "Muḥammad ibn Muzaffar".

30 C.E. Bosworth suggests that the Muhtājīds were either descendants of the Iranian Chaghānkhudās or the Iranized descendants of an Arab Khurāsānī family (Bosworth, "The Rulers 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 Muhtājīds who died abroad were taken back there to be buried. In a story in 'Awfī's *Jāmi' al-hikāyāt*, Muhtāj is said to have been present in Naysābūr during the lifetime of Abū 'Abdallāh al-Khujustānī; the latter's brutality caused the death of Muhtāj's son Muzaffar (*Jawāmi' al-hikāyāt wa lawāmi' al-riwāyāt*, part ii of section 3, pp. 410-412).

31 *Hudūd al-'ālam*, 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 Bānijūrid Abū Dā'ūd Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad (34) who had been in charge of the city since 260/873-4 (35), even though he had aligned himself with 'Amr ibn Layth

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32 For Husayn's biography, see appendix: the Su'lūkids. For his occupation of Naysābūr, see Aḥmad Fasīḥ, *Mujmal-i fasīḥī*, p. 383; for Herāt, see Isfizārī, *Rawdat al-jannāt fi awṣāf-i madīnat-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 Ishāq, nephew of Isma'īl ibn Aḥmad, who was appointed at the end of the reign of Aḥmad ibn Isma'īl - see below, chapter 5, p. 148f); for the governors of Herāt, cf. Isfizārī, *Herāt*, pp. 384ff.

34 For a dirham minted in his name, Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad, in Badakhshān in 293/905-6, see S. Lane-Poole "Fasti Arabici", *Numismatic Chronicle*, 1886, ser. iii, vol. vi, p. 229.

35 Cf. *EI*<sup>2</sup> supp. "Banidjūrids".

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 Farīghūnid dynasty which had governed it in the 9th century (37), even though, like the Bānījūrīds of Balkh, they had aligned themselves with the Ṣaffārīds in 287 (38). The native rulers of the neighbouring provinces of Gharchistān and Ghūr paid allegiance to the Farīghūnid amir and some of the minor rulers of the region paid tribute to him (39).

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

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36 Narshakhī refers to him simply as Abū Dā'ūd, amir of Balkh (*Tārīkh-i bukhārā*, p. 119 = p. 87).

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

38 Narshakhī, *Tārīkh-i bukhārā*, p. 119 = p. 87.

39 *Hudūd al-'ālam*, p. 106.

40 Narshakhī, *ibid*, p. 119 = p. 87. Note that 'Alī ibn Ḥusayn had not been governor of the city for long before 900: before his tenure, the city had been governed by the Ṣaffārīd appointees, Aḥmad ibn Sahl (cf. appendix; the Sāmānīd state elite, s.v. "Aḥmad ibn Sahl") and Abū Talḥa ibn Sharkub (cf. chapter 3, note 90).

41 See above, note 32.

42 Muḥammad was governor of Marv in 301/914 (Ibn Zāfir, *Duwal*, fol. 119b). Cf. appendix: the Ṣu'lūkīds, for Muḥammad ibn 'Alī's parentage.

Sīstān

After 'Amr had been taken prisoner at Balkh, the Saffārid army retreated to Sīstān where its generals pledged allegiance to his young grandson Tāhir 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 Baghdad (*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 Saffarids, 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 Ṭāhir ibn Muḥammad 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 Ṭāhir's request, noting that he would be happy if every caliphal 'āmil remitted such a substantial tribute as Ṭāhir 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. Ṭāhir 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). Ṭāhir and Ya'qūb fled to Fārs where

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pay his troops to fight his successor Ṭāhir in Sīstān (*Murūj al-dhahab*, vol. viii, pp. 201f).

48 Ibn al-Jawzī, *Kitāb al-Muntazam*, vol. vi, p. 78.

49 See above, chapter 3, note 85.

50 *Tārīkh-i sīstān*, p. 276 = pp. 220f.

51 *Tārīkh-i sīstān*, p. 282ff = pp. 225ff. Ibn al-Athīr tells us that Layth had originally seized control of Fārs in alliance with 'Amr's general, Subkarī (*Kāmil*, vol. vii, p. 546); but this alliance broke down before Layth's seizure of Sīstān (*Tārīkh-i sīstān*, p. 281 = p. 224).

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 'Abbāsīd 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 Muqtadir instructed Aḥmad ibn Ismā'īl to invade Sīstān, promising him the governorship of the province as a reward (56). Aḥmad 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 Sāmānid colonization of Sīstān was not a success. Although the amir Aḥmad is highly praised in the *Tārīkh-i sīstān* for his piety and his compassionate treatment of the inhabitants of Bust, the first Sāmānid governor of Zaranj, his cousin, Manṣūr ibn Ishāq, made many mistakes: his harsh taxation policy and his failure to prevent his troops from harassing the inhabitants of the

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52 *ibid*, pp. 285f = pp. 228f; Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, vol. viii, p. 54.

53 Ibn al-Athīr, *ibid*.

54 *Tārīkh-i sīstān*, p. 289 = p. 232.

55 *Tārīkh-i sīstān*, p. 290 = p. 233.

56 Narshakhī says that Aḥmad had been assigned the governorship of Sīstān during his father's reign (*Tārīkh-i bukhārā*, p. 128 = p. 94); perhaps Aḥmad was promised the province when Mu'tadid 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 *Tārīkh-i Sīstān* to have been a *mawlā* of Muhammad ibn 'Amr the Saffārid (60) and by other sources to have been in Ahmad ibn Ismā'īl's *hashm* (61); he came to Sīstān where he raised a force of 'ayyārūn and expelled the Sāmānid governor. The Sīstānīs appointed a Saffārid figurehead, Abū Hafṣ 'Amr, the young son of Ya'qūb ibn Muḥammad ibn 'Amr ibn Layth, as leader of the revolt (62). A second army was sent from Bukhārā to occupy Sīstān in Shawwāl 300/May-June 913 and Sāmānid 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 Sāmānids 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

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59 *Tārīkh-i sīstān*, p. 297 = pp. 240f.

60 *ibid.*, p. 297.

61 Gardīzī and Ibn al-Athīr describe him as a Sīstānī *khārijī* who bore a grudge against the Sāmānid army paymaster ('arīd) and went to Sīstān to stir up trouble (*Zayn*, p. 149; *Kāmil*, vol. viii, pp. 69f). It is unclear whether the term *Khārijī* here refers to a member of the *Khārijī* 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 *Khārijī* known to have served the Sāmānids.

62 *Tārīkh-i sīstān*, p. 297 = p. 240.

63 *Tārīkh-i sīstān*, pp. 300f = p. 243.

64 See below, pp. 138-145.

Mu'tadid to Ismā'īl in 287 (65). But it remained under the control of its Saffārid governor until 296 (66). For three years thereafter its history is unknown; however when Ahmad ibn Ismā'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 Sāmānid domains (68).

### Fārs

There is no evidence that Ismā'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 Ismā'īl himself, as part of the agreement under which Tāhir was to accept the status of a Sāmānid vassal (70). Notwithstanding Narshakhī's report (71), there is no

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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 Sāmānī after the death of Mansūr ibn Ishāq, governor of Naysābur (*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 (Ibn Hawqal, *Sūrat al-ard*, 2nd ed., vol. ii, p. 315). But the 'Abbāsids 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 'Abbāsīd 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 Sāmānids occupied any part of Fārs until 339/950 and 344/955, when they took temporary possession of Isfahān (72).

### Caspian provinces

In 287 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 Tabaristān 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, Jūzjānī's *Tabaqāt-i nāsirī*, Ismā'īl ibn Ahmad was instructed by the caliph Mu'tadid to rid Jurjān and Tabaristān of their Zaydī rulers (74). Whether or not this was so, the Zaydī incursion posed a direct threat to Sāmānid rule in Khurāsān and Ismā'īl accordingly mobilized his army to block the Zaydī advance. He

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72 Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, vol. viii, pp. 487f, 511. Jūzjānī says Muktafī gave ( saḡāhān) to Ismā'īl (*Tabaqāt-i nāsirī*, vol. i, p. 206).

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 Naysābūrī 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 Naysābūr when Saffārid control of the city was being contested by Ahmad ibn 'Abdallāh al-Khujastānī.

74 Jūzjānī, *Tabaqāt-i nāsirī*, vol. i, p. 206; Habibi has "Tukhāristān" which must be a mistake for Tabaristān.

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 Sāmānid 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 Sāmānid 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 Sāmānid strongholds in Tabaristān (78).

Two years later, Sāmānid 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 'Abbāsīd-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 Sāmānid pursuers, by now in possession of the

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75 See appendix: the Sāmānid state elite, s.v. "Muhammad ibn Hārūn".

76 Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, vol. vii, p. 504; Ibn Isfandiyār, *Tārīkh-i tabaristān*, vol. i, p. 257.

77 Ibn Isfandiyār, *Tārīkh-i tabaristān*, p. 259.

78 Mīrkhwand, *Rawda*, p. 38.

79 Tabarī, ser. iii, pp. 2208f (Ukratmish). Ibn al-Athīr gives his name as al-Datmish (*Kāmil*, vol. vii, p. 517); Ibn Zāfir has Urqatmish (*Duwal*, fol. 117a). Spuler has Iltutmish (id, *Iran in Fruh-Islamischer Zeit*, Wiesbaden, 1952, p. 82).

caliphal patent of investiture for Rayy, forced him to abandon the city and flee to Daylamī territory where he made common cause with his old adversaries, the Zaydīs (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 Hārūn was finally run to ground and sent to Bukhārā where he died in prison (82).

Rayy and Ṭabaristān 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 Bukhārā and the provincial governors did not improve after Muḥammad ibn Hārūn's revolt. Soon after Aḥmad had come to the throne, the *hājib* Bāris, governor of Jurjān under his father, Ismā'īl, fearing that Aḥmad would seek revenge on him for a slight he had suffered during his father's reign, withheld the revenues of Jurjān, Ṭabaristān and Rayy and decided to seek refuge at the 'Abbāsīd court (84). Bāris wrote to the caliph Muktafi (d. Dhū'l-Qa'da 295/August 908) and secured his permission to go to

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80 Ibn Isfandiyyār, *Tārīkh-i ṭabaristān*, p. 259.

81 W. Madelung, "Abu Ishāq al-Sābi' on the 'Alids of Ṭabaristān and Gīlān", *JNES*, vol. xxvi, 1967, pp. 17-58, clarifies the sequence of events for this period of Sāmānid involvement in the Caspian region. See also for a more general history of the Caspian region in the 10th century id, "The minor dynasties of northern Iran", *Cambridge history of Iran*, vol. iv, pp. 198-250.

82 Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, vol. vii, p. 527. Gardīzī says Rajab 289/ June-July 902, but this date is too early since Muḥammad ibn Harūn only reached Rayy in that month (*Zayn*, p. 147).

83 Cf. Ibn al-Athīr for Ismā'īl's expedition into the *bilād al-daylam* in 293/905-6 (*Kāmil*, vol. vii, p. 547).

84 Gardīzī, *Zayn*, p. 148; Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, vol. viii, p. 7.

Baghdad, but did not arrive in the city until after Ibn al-Mu'tazz's attempt to seize the caliphate from Muktafi's successor, Muqtadir, in Rabi' 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 'Abbāsīd wazir Ibn al-Furāt (86). The 'Abbāsīd 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 Ṭabaristān, 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 *ghulam*. Ibn Isfandiyyār 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

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85 Miskawayh gives the year of his arrival in Baghdad (*Eclipse*, vol. i, p. 16).

86 Miskawayh, *ibid.*

87 Ibn Hawqal describes Bāris's army thus: *wa aḡhara min al-'udda wa'l-'adad wa'l-āla wa'l-kurā' wa'l-silāh wa'l-māl wa'l-sawād mā lam yakun bi-ḡadrati 'l-sultān jaysh mithalu yuwāzihi* (*Sūrat al-arḡ*, vol. ii, 2nd ed., p. 471). Ibn Athīr tells us that he had 4000 cavalymen under his command when he entered Baghdad (*Kāmil*, vol. viii, p. 7).

88 Ibn Isfandiyyār says that after his dismissal, Ibn Nūh made his way to Bāris in Jurjān (*Tārīkh-i ṭabaristān*, p. 265). But Bāris had already arrived in Baghdad in 296, so either Ibn Isfandiyyār'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 Ṭabarī rulers and Ibn Nūḥ 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 Nūḥ repelled an attack on Ābaskūn by the Rūs and another the following year on Sārī (90). Ibn Nūḥ died in *Satur 298/October 910 and* was replaced by Muḥammad ibn 'Alī al-Su'lūkī (91).

### Central government

The great increase in the territorial expanse of the Sāmānid 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 Aḥmad.

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 Aḥmad's reign. Let us begin with the only direct reference we have to the emergence of the wazirate. According to Ibn Zāfir, Abū 'Abdallāh Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad Jayḥānī, who took office at the beginning of

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89 *Tārīkh-i ṭabaristān*, p. 266.

90 *Tārīkh-i ṭabaristān*, *ibid.*

91 *ibid.* See appendix; the Su'lūkids.

Nasr's reign, was the first Sāmānid wazir (92). Ibn al-Athīr says that the *hashm* appointed him to administer the government and Gardīzī confirms that he exercised great authority, particularly in the early part of the reign when his sovereign was a minor (93). It was Jayhānī who received the caliphal emissary, Ibn Fadlān, who visited Bukhārā en route to the Volga basin; Ibn Fadlān knew him by the titles of *kātib* and *'amīd* (94).

Yet both Tha'ālibī and Khwādamīr say that Jayhānī had held the wazirate under Nasr's father, Ahmad (95). According to Tha'ālibī, the institution of the wazirate had existed from the beginning of Ahmad's reign; he tells us that before Jayhānī became wazir to Ahmad, the office was held by one Abū Bakr ibn Hamīd, who had earlier acted as *kātib* to Ismā'īl ibn Ahmad. Samarqandī supplies us with further biographical information about Abū Bakr; he was a Marwazī nobleman by the name of Abū Bakr Muhammad ibn Hamīd ibn Nu'aym al-Īshṭadamī

(96) who had begun his career as the wazir of Ismā'īl ibn Ahmad; Samarqandī claims that he

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92 Ibn Zāfir, *Duwal*, fol. 125b; *wazīruhu abū 'abdallāh muḥammad ibn aḥmad al-jayhānī wa huwa awwal wazīr al sāmān*.

93 Gardīzī calls him *ṣāhib-i tadbir* (Zayn, p. 150); Ibn al-Athīr has *wa' ttafaqa huwa wa hashm naṣr ibn aḥmad 'alā tadbir al-'amr fa-aḥkamuhu* (*Kāmil*, vol. viii, p. 78).

94 A.Z.V. Togan, ed. and tr., *Ibn Fadlan's Reisebericht*, Liechtenstein, 1966, p. 4 (Arabic text).

95 Tha'ālibī states that Jayhānī was wazir to Ahmad ibn Ismā'īl towards the end of his reign (*Yatīmat al-dahr*, vol. ii, part 4, p. 62), as does Khwādamīr (*Dastūr al-vuzarā'*, p. 108).

96 Samarqandī, *Muntakhab*, fol. 71af; Tha'ālibī, *Yatīmat al-dahr*, vol. ii, part 4, pp. 61f. See appendix; the Sāmānid state elite, s.v. "Muḥammad ibn Hamīd".

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-Faḍl Bal'amī, whom various sources say was wazir to both Ismā'īl and Ahmad (97). Yet Ibn Zāfir 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-Ḥasan Naṣr ibn Ishāq, the instigator of the assassination of Ahmad ibn Ismā'īl, and commonly referred to as his *kātib*, 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-Ḥasan and that the other sources imply that he was merely his secretary.

What do we make of the above? Ibn Zāfir'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 Zāfir must have meant is that

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97 Subkī, *Tabaqāt al-shāfi'iyya*, vol. ii, p. 170. Cf. Sam'ānī, "Bal'amī" where he is described as Ismā'īl ibn Ahmad's wazir. Ibn Isfandiyār names him as Ahmad's wazir (*Tārīkh-i tabaristān*, p. 266). The Timūrid author of the *Mujmal-i Fasīhī* says that Abū'l-Faḍl Bal'amī was wazir to Ismā'īl, Ahmad and Naṣr (*Fasīh al-Dīn, Mujmal-i Fasīhī*, vol. i, p. 382).

98 Ibn Zāfir, *Duwal*, fol. 126a.

99 *Tārīkh-i tabaristān*, pp. 270f. See Gardīzī for his full name (*Zayn*, p. 150).

Jayhānī 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 Tha'ālibī 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, Jayhānī was known as *kātib*; perhaps "wazir" was a term unknown in early Sāmānid usage, which was used by observers more familiar with the 'Abbāsīd, 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 Sāmānid poets.

There does seem to have been an upgrading of the status of the chief bureaucrat under Ahmad; Tha'ālibī distinguishes between Abū Bakr's position under Ismā'īl (*kātib*) and his position under Ahmad (*wazir*). This would fit with the idea that the bureaucracy was closely supervised by the monarch himself in Ismā'īl'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

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100 The term is not used by Gardīzī and Ibn al-Athīr of the early bureaucrats.

101 Mīrkhwānd says that Ismā'īl always followed Ahmad ibn Sahl's advice in matters of policy (*Rawdat al-safā*,

mention of the existence of *dīwān* offices in Bukhārā in the early period. The great building programme in the Registān, or central square of Bukhārā, which provided accommodation for nine government departments was not set in motion until the reign of Naṣr ibn Aḥmad 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 Narshakhī.

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

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vol. iv, p. 40f; for Aḥmad ibn Sahl, see appendix; the Sāmānid state elite).

102 Narshakhī, *Tārīkh-i bukhārā*, p. 36 = p. 26.

103 Barthold, *Turkestan*, pp. 229f.

104 The terms *bundār* and *katib salla* (*salla* with the meaning of "basket" or "receptacle", as a metaphor for the treasury?) are used synonymously by Ibn Hawqal ): ...*kātib salla yu'raf bi'l-bundār yaṭlub bi'l-kharāj wa wujūh al-amwāl al-wājiba li'l-sultān* (*Kitāb sūrat 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 qadā'*) (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 *ṣāhib 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

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

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

107 See Ibn Ḥawqal'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 Ḥawqal, *Ṣūrat al-ard*, 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 Muḥammad 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 Farīghūnids (Samarqandī, *Muntakhab*, fol. 35b).

108 See the example of Abū'l-Hasan Sīmjur 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-qadā'* was responsible for the appointment of qadis. As in the 'Abbāsīd state, the chief qādī of a province was a civil servant appointed by central decree. The Sāmānids evidently had as much difficulty as the 'Abbāsīds 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 *mazālim* 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).

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

109 Tha'alībī, *Yatīma*, *ibid*, p. 66.

110 See below, chapter 10, note 41.

111 Sam'anī, *Ansāb*, s.v. "khāzin" (vol. v, p. 13), "Yazdādihī" (vol. xiii, p. 490). He was later qādī of Samargand and then took over the *khizāna* for Mansūr ibn Nuh.

112 *Mazālim* courts in Bukhārā were held by the Sāmānids themselves in the early years; viz. Ishāq 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-razzāq (Gardīzī, *Zayn*, p. 161); the *mazālim* court in Balkh was run by one Abū 'Alī al-Masihī (a recent convert?) (Tha'alībī, *Yatīma*, vol. ii, part 4, p. 137) who later served as chief qādī of Sīstān.

The geographer Ibn Hawqal applauds the efficiency of the Sāmānid provincial administration and observes that Sāmānid officials were fair-minded in their treatment of their subject populations. In addition to the tax collector, the qādī and the *ṣāhib al-barīd*, 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 *dīwān-i 'amīd al-mulk*, the chancery, also known as the *dīwān al-rasā'il*. 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 *dīwān-i ṣāhib al-shurat*, the army department, in which the *'arīd* or inspector general and army paymaster was a high functionary (115). One *dīwān* which is mentioned only in Khwārazmī's *Mafātīh al-'ulūm* was the *dīwān al-mā'*. Khwārazmī tells us that this *dīwān* was situated in

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113 Cf. *EI*<sup>2</sup> s.v. "ma'ūna".

114 See for example Abu'l-Hasan Sīmjur as *shihna* in Naysābūr under Bakr ibn Mālik (Gardīzī, *Zayn*, p. 159).

115 Thus Barthold, *Turkestan*, p. 230. One might have expected two departments, *dīwān-i lashkar* (*jaysh*) (army) and *dīwān-i ṣāhib al-shurat* (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 *dīwāns* were concerned with the administration of the affairs of the royal court and the capital city. According to Barthold, the *mushrif*, head of the *dīwān-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 (*dīwān-i mamlaka-yi khāssa*), corresponding to the *dīwān al-diyā'* in 'Abbāsīd Baghdad, and the department of religious endowments (*dīwān-i awqāf*). 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 *dīwān-i muhtasib* was responsible for the maintenance of order at a local level, in the streets and markets of Bukhārā (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

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116 A. Mez, *Renaissance*, p. 449, citing *Mafātīh*, ed. Van Vloten, p. 68.

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 Sāmānid royal estates in Khurasan, see below, chapter 8, note 31.

119 For the career of a Sāmānid *muhtasib*, see Sam'ānī, s.v. "Ḥarbī" 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 cup-bearer (*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 *dahāqīn* and *ahrār* (free-born troops) and *mamlūks* (126). These regular troops were supplemented by Arab troops (127)

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120 Cf. Niẓām 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. Abū 'Imrān Simjūrī's nisba *al-dawātī/dawātdār*. See below, appendix; the Sāmānid state elite, s.v. "Simjūr".

124 For the *sharābdār* cf. Gardīzī, *Zāyn*, 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 Sāmānid 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 Abū 'Alī Ṣaghānī 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 Sāmānid commanders and the organisational structure of the army reflect the influence of Turkish military practice (131). The earliest evidence we have for a Sāmānid *mamlūk* army was the expedition against Abū Bilāl al-Qarmatī in 295/907 (132). The main theatre of operations for

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128 Cf. the Jīlī general, Sharvīn, who took part in the revolt of Naṣr ibn Aḥmad's brothers in 930 (Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, vol. viii, p. 209; see below, chapter 5, p. 152ff).

129 In 340/951-2 Maṣṣūr ibn Qarātegīn, the Sāmānid governor of Khurāsān, was forced to abandon his campaign against the Būyids and retreat to Rayy, after his Khurāsānī troops complained to him of the lack of provisions and fodder. Ibn al-Athīr contrasts the Khurāsānīs' (i.e. Turks) lack of fortitude with the resilience of the Daylamīs (Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, vol. viii, p. 488). Some years later, the Muḥtājīd Abū 'Alī al-Ṣaghānī's troops were similarly unable to withstand the harsh winter in the Jibāl (Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, vol. viii, p. 504).

130 Ibn al-Athīr, *ibid*, p. 443.

131 A strategy often employed by the Sāmānid 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 Samanids' use of the title "commander of 1000 horsemen" (more commonly associated with the Mongol army) (*Tārīkh-i sīstān*, p. 329 = p. 269).

132 Nizām al-mulḳ, *Siyar al-mulūk*, p. 297 = p. 220; see below, chapter 6, p. 187f. In his speech to Tīqīsh, the commander of the *mamlūk* detachment, Ismā'īl explained

the Turkish soldiers was *Khurāsān*; indeed by the end of the first quarter of the century the term *Khurāsāniyya* had become synonymous with *Atrāk* (133).

The Sāmānid regular army also saw action on the eastern front in the first decades of the century. After Ismā'īl's capture of *Tarāz* 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 *Balāsāghūn*, *Tarāz* and *Kāshgār* (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-ʿaskar*) and the volunteer levies (*al-muṭṭawwi'a*) and

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that his mission was of a different order to the military engagements of the past, such as the battle against the Saffārid 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 *mamlūk* force was deployed.

133 In 310/922, at the battle of *Jalāyīn*, Ibn Isfandiyār refers to the Sāmānid army as Turks (*Tārīkh-i ṭabaristān*, p. 284). The "Khurāsānī" troops of the Sāmānid 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, *Yamīnī*, in Manini, *Fath*, vol. i, p. 112; Ibn Isfandiyār, *Tārīkh-i ṭabaristān*, vol. ii, p. 5 - who refers to them as *turkān*).

134 Pritsak, "Von den Karluk zu den Karachaniden", *ZDMG*, vol. ci, 1951, pp. 277-87.

135 Tabarī says that the report of the invasion reached Baghdad 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 Aḥmad'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 Ismā'il'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 Aḥmad's reign, but this time against Khurāsān: the

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136 Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, 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-ṣafā'*, 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 Sāmānid volunteer militias were well organized and could be mobilized at short notice (140). The militia troops were allocated plots of land (*iqṭā'āt*) 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 Sāmānid *muṭṭawwi'a*, 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 *muṭṭawwi'a* refers not to an independent militia, but rather to the *ghāzīs* who manned the Transoxanian *ribāts*; in Sam'ānī's *Ansāb* we come across the collocation *al-ghuzāt al-muṭṭawwi'a* (142). In addition to the *muṭṭawwi'a*, the Sāmānids were able to summon to arms large numbers of *'ayyārūn* in emergencies (143). Such

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139 'Arīb, *Silat ta'rīkh al-Ṭabarī*, 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 *ṣāhib muṭṭawwi'a bukhārā* in Rashīd ibn al-Zubayr, *Kitāb al-dhakhā'ir*, p. 142.

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

142 Sam'ānī, *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 Sāmānids 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 Washmgīr) (149) are all known to have sent troops to fight for the Sāmānids.

Ibn Hawqal's remarks on the Sāmānid army are as fulsome in praise as his chapter on the provincial administration. He contrasts Sāmānid 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

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144 See below, section "The murder of Aḥmad ibn Ismā'īl".

145 Ibn al-Athīr reports that the Muḥtājīd rulers of Ṣaghāniyān assembled troops from their home province to fight for Naṣr ibn Aḥmad against his rebellious brothers in 317 (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 Ṣaffārids (cf. Frye, tr, *The history of Bukhara*, note 303, and discussion thereof in appendix: the Khwārazmshāhs in the 10th century); Khwārazmī troops saw action in the confrontations with Ishāq ibn Aḥmad 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 ('Utībī in Manīnī, *Fath*, vol. i, pp. 184f).

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

149 The Ziyārid Washmgīr 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 tafarraqu fī ḥāditha, tarajja'u kulluhum ilā makan waḥīd*.

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 Sāmānid army to Abū 'Alī Ṣaghānī in Ṣaghāniyān 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 Sāmānid 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 Aḥmad ibn Ismā'īl took nine months to conquer the capital (153) and towards the middle of the century, the rebellious Ṣaffārid amir Khalaf ibn Aḥmad was able to resist a Sāmānid 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

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'anhum..in ablā, lam tu'akhkhar mukāfatuhu, wa in ijtarama tuliba li-dhanbihi.

152 Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, vol. viii, p. 463.

153 Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, vol. viii, p. 70.

154 See below, chapter 8, note 16.

members of the Sāmānid 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 Sāmānids after the defeat of the Ṣaffārīds (157), held positions in the army as well as governorships in the Caspian region and Khurāsān. A few Turkish *mamlūks* also held senior positions.

Shortly before the end of Aḥmad'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 Sāmānid 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 Sāmānids were not to prove the exception to the rule. In 301/914 a Zaydī campaign launched from Daylam succeeded in ejecting the Sāmānids from Tabaristān by force of arms. Part of the reason for the Sāmānid 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

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155 See above, sections "Transoxania" and "Khurāsān".

156 See above, sections "Sīstān" and "Caspian provinces".

157 Viz. Ḥusayn ibn 'Alī al-Marwazī, Muḥammad ibn Ḥārūn, and Aḥmad ibn Sahl.

under Ismā'īl (158). The same was true of the Sāmānid 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 Sāmānids when Aḥmad 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 Aḥmad ibn Ismā'īl

The origin of the dispute which led to Aḥmad's death was nothing more remarkable than a domestic squabble between Aḥmad and a secretary of his, Abū'l-Ḥasan Naṣr ibn Ishāq. Ibn Isfandiyār tells us that Abū'l-Ḥasan 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 Aḥmad had cautioned him on this account (159). Aḥmad's rebuke did not have the desired effect; Abū'l-Ḥasan 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 Qārīn, probably to be identified as Shahriyār ibn Baduspan, the Ispahbādh of Lapūr (160), who came to Bukhārā, probably in Jumada I 301/ Dec 913

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158 Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, vol. viii, p. 81. Note the Turkish governor Sallām's mistreatment of the Daylamīs.

159 Ibn Isfandiyār, *Tārīkh-i ṭabaristān*, p. 271.

160 W. Madelung, "The identity of two Yemenite historical manuscripts", *JNES*, vol. xxxii, 1973, p. 178.

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 Sāmānid general that he would first have to pay *6000 dinars* to Abū'l-Ḥasan (162). He borrowed the sum *from some* merchants and paid the secretary who then took him to Aḥmad. After a fruitful meeting with the Sāmānid, Ibn Qārīn 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 Ṭabarī ruler chanced to tell the Sāmānid governor of Marv, with whom he stayed on his return journey, about the bribe he had given to Abū'l-Ḥasan.

This information was immediately relayed to Aḥmad by the resident *ṣāhib khabar* in Marv. Aḥmad summoned Ibn Qārīn 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, Aḥmad 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-Ḥasan knew that his court career was doomed and that his life would probably be endangered if the amir

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161 Ibn Zāfir, *Duwal*, fol. 119a.

162 The general in question bore the name Kandākīn/Kundākīn/Kundātekīn/Kandātekīn ibn Kandājūr/Kundājūr 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 Aḥmad, Aḥmad's uncle, as the next Sāmānid amir (163). The deed was done one night towards the middle of Jumādā II 301 / 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 Aḥmad's successor. But their plans were frustrated by the quick reactions of the governor of Bukhārā, Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Layth (165), who armed the *muṭṭawwi'a* and the *'ayyārūn* 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

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163 Ibn Zāfir, *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. "Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Layth". (=p. 321)

property were seized while the governor and his colleagues from the military and bureaucratic establishments chose a successor to Aḥmad. When the notables' choice had fallen on Aḥmad'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 Aḥmad turned his attention to the threat presented by Ishāq ibn Aḥmad. 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 Aḥmad outside the walls of the city (169). He then marched on Samarqand, took Ishāq prisoner and appointed another Sāmānid prince as governor of the city, thus securing Sughd for his new sovereign (170).

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166 The notables at first asked the qādīs of the city to choose the new amir but they declined to do so (Ibn Zāfir, *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 Sha'abān (ser. iii, p. 2290); Ibn al-Athīr says that the rebels marched on Bukhārā in Ramaḍān (*id*, *Kāmil*, vol. viii, p. 80).

169 *ibid*, fols. 124aff.

170 Tabarī, ser. iii, p. 2290 (new Sāmānid governor); Sam'ānī erroneously states that Ishāq died in Bukhārā

This episode, as summarized above from Ibn Zāfir's account, is of interest in several respects. For a start, it shows that Aḥmad 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 Sāmānid 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 Aḥmad did not enjoy good relations with his *ghilmān*. According to Jūzjānī, his *ghilmān* 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 Ḥamdallāh 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 Aḥmad'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).

171 Jūzjānī, *Tabaqāt-i nāṣirī*, vol. i, p. 206.

172 (Aḥmad) 'ālim parvār va 'ilm dūst bud. mujālasāt-i ū bā 'ulamā' būdī. bedīn sabab ghulamān az ū mutanaffir būdand va ū manāshir va aḥkām az zabān-i darī bā 'arabī naql kard (Ḥamdallāh Qazvīnī, *Tārīkh-i gūzīdah*, p. 378).

173 Note Muqaddasī'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 (*Aḥsan*, 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-sighār*) (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).

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174 Ibn Zāfir, *Duwal*, fol. 120b; *fa taqaddama al-ghilmān al-sighār alladhīna lam yakūnū fī'l-bay'a wa ajma'u 'alā infādh rasūl ilā wālidati Ahmad ibn Ismā'īl yukhbirahā.*

175 Ibn Zāfir says of Fāris al-Turkī, one of the first conspirators to reach Bukhārā, *wa huwa min kibār mamālik ismā'īl* (*Duwal*, fol. 121a). One of his companions, Māmīrāj, 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 Sīstān at the time of his murder. For a possible later reference to Abū 'Alī's career in Naṣr's reign, see Ibn Isfandiyyār, *Tārīkh-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 Ishāq ibn Ahmad in Samarqand and other Sāmānid provinces suggests that Ahmad's succession had never received the universal endorsement of the state elite. Ishāq 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 Ishāq should have remained a popular candidate for the throne is not surprising, given both the history of the Sāmānid succession to date and his personal status. In the Sāmānid system, sons clearly had no exclusive right to succeed their fathers; of the four amirs who had come to the throne since Nūh ibn Asad, two were the brothers of their predecessors. Moreover Ishāq was the only surviving representative of his generation

and the elder brother and right-hand man of Ismā'īl, the founder of the monarchical state. In a career which had included a brief governorship of Bukhārā in 272/885-886, then the governorship of Farghāna from 275/888-889 and the governorship of Samarqand in Ismā'īl's reign, he had established firm control over the heartland of Sughd and secured the support of the Sāmānids who ruled in that region (178).

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Nūh ibn Mansūr, were involved in the plot to assassinate the wazir Abū'l-Husayn 'Abdallāh ibn Ahmad al-'Utbi.  
 177 Ibn Zāfir, *Duwal*, fol. 117b. Gardīzī's brief account corroborates Ibn Zāfir's, although Ibn al-Athīr erroneously reports that Ahmad summoned his uncle to Bukhārā (*Zayn*, p. 148; *Kāmil*, vol. viii, p. 7).  
 178 Ibn Zāfir says that the Sāmānids 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 Aḥmad 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 Isfiyāb, commanded by his Sāmānid relatives, against the Bukhāran 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 Bukhāran camp. As we shall see in the following chapter, Naṣr ibn Aḥmad 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.

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179 See above, note 168.

Chapter five

THE REIGN OF NASR IBN AHMAD(321/914-331/943) i: POLITICAL  
HISTORY

The provinces: Transoxania

For some eight years after Ishāq ibn Aḥmad'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, Muḥammad ibn Ḥusayn ibn Mutt al-Isfīyābī (3) and a huge army of Turks (4). Naṣr ibn Aḥmad sent against them the governor of Farghāna, Abū 'Amr Muḥammad ibn Asad al-Sāmānī (5). The rebels were

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1 See below, p. 151, for the Zaydī invasion of Khurāsān, which was repulsed in the previous year.

2 Frye takes 310, 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 Muḥammad ibn Ḥusayn's biography see appendix; the Sāmānid state elite.

4 It is not known whether these were steppe Turks (perhaps members of the Qarākhānid confederation; see below for Ilyās's sojourn in Qarākhānid Kāshgār) or Turkmen from the eastern Transoxanian provinces.

5 His full name was Abū 'Amr Muḥammad ibn Asad ibn Aḥmad ibn Asad. He was governor of Farghāna in 303/915-16; a fils

↳ vol. iv,

ambushed as they set up camp outside Samarqand, and routed. Ilyās retired to Farghāna and his companion Husayn ibn Mutt fled, via his home province of Isfiyāb, to Tarāz. There he was killed by the *dihqān* of the province whom Naṣr had bribed (6). Ilyās launched a second attack, this time with the aid of Abū'l-Faḍl ibn Ya'qūb ibn Aḥmad al-Sāmānī, ruler of Shāsh (7). He was again defeated, and Abū'l-Faḍl 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 *dihqān* of Kāshgār, Tughāntegīn (8). Ilyās then tried a third time

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minted in that year in Farghāna bears his name ( cf. Davidovich, "Mon ety Ferghany kak istochnik dlya kharakteristiki instituta feodalnykh pozhalovaniy za sluzhbu v Srednei Azii X v." *Pismennye pamyatniki Vostoka*, 1969, Moscow, 1972, p. 141). His father Asad and brother Aḥmad had governed Farghāna from some time after the death of his grandfather Aḥmad ibn Asad ibn Sāmānkūda (d. 250/864) until the time of the Sāmānid civil wars, when they allied with Naṣr ibn Aḥmad 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 Aḥmad ibn Asad.

6 Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, vol. viii, p. 133.

7 Ibn al-Athīr names him Abū'l-Faḍl ibn Abī Yūsuf, lord of Shāsh (ibid). Abū Yūsuf was the *kunya* of Ya'qūb ibn Aḥmad, ruler of Shāsh, who had come to the aid of Naṣr I ibn Aḥmad al-Sāmānī in the first civil war against Ismā'īl ibn Aḥmad al-Sāmānī in 272/885<sup>6</sup>, together with Abū'l-Ash'ath Asad ibn Aḥmad, ruler of Farghāna (see above, chapter 3, note 94); it was probably either he, or his son Abū'l-Faḍl who allied with Ishāq ibn Aḥmad against Naṣr ibn Aḥmad in 914 (see above, chapter 4, p. 145). The fact that Abū'l-Faḍl 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 Aḥmad.

8 No further information on this *dihqān*, presumably the amir governing Kāshgār on behalf of the Qarākhānids, is

↳ Asad ibn

to attack the Sāmānids, directing his army against Farghāna, now governed by Muḥammad ibn al-Muzaffar al-Ṣaghānī, the founder of the Muhtājīd family of amirs (9). Again he was defeated and returned to Kāshgār; from there he began negotiations with Muḥammad ibn al-Muzaffar which led to his being invited to Bukhārā where Naṣr ibn Aḥmad pardoned him and gave him a relative of his in marriage (10).

This is the last we hear of Ilyās. In 317/9<sup>24-30</sup>, not long after his defeat, Bukhārā was seized by a rebel faction led by Naṣr's brother, Abū Zakariyyā Yaḥyā ibn Aḥmad. 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

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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).

9 Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, vol. viii, p. 134. For the Muhtājīd rulers of Ṣaghāniyan, see chapter 4, p. 109.

10 Ibn Khaldun does not mention Ilyās's final reconciliation with Naṣr, finishing his account with the statement that Ilyās went to Kashgar 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 Husayn ibn 'Alī al-Marwazī, who had already declared his opposition to Naṣr's accession by heading a revolt in Sīstān against Mansūr ibn *Ishāq's* successor, Abū 'Imrān Sīmjur al-Dawātī, and occupying Herāt (14). Mansūr soon died, poisoned, according to one source, by order of his ally Husayn (15), and the latter became the leader of the Khurāsānī rebellion. He was in turn joined by the *ṣāhib shurāt Bukhārā* (16), Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad (17), the very man who had recently defended Bukhārā against the *mamlūk* regicides and ensured Naṣr's succession.

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

12 Cf above, chapter 4, p. 114f.

13 Mīrkhwānd says that he put his own name in the *khutba* (*Rawḍa*, p. 40).

14 See below, section: "Sīstān".

15 Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, vol. viii, pp 87f.

16 Gardīzī, *Zayn*, p. 151; Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, vol. viii, p. 88.

17 He is named as Muḥammad ibn Jayd/Hayd by Ibn al-Athīr; Muḥammad ibn Ajḥad by Gardīzī; Muḥammad ibn Junayd by Mīrkhwānd (*Rawḍa*, 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 Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad". Shortly after Naṣr's victory over *Ishāq*, Muḥammad had been sent to Naysābur 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. h(A 321)

18 Aḥmad 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. "Aḥmad ibn Sahl"). Appendix:

19 Gardīzī, *Zayn*, p. 151.

Naysābūr in Rabī' I 306/ Aug - Sep 918. Ḥusayn was carried off as a prisoner to the capital while his allies sought *amān* from Aḥmad ibn Sahl. But this was not the end of Naṣr's troubles in Khurāsān. In the following year Aḥmad 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, Aḥmad 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).

Aḥmad dropped Naṣr's name from the *khutba* in Naysābūr and sent a messenger to Baghdad, asking the caliph to appoint him independent governor of Khurāsān; according to Mīrkhwānd, Muqtadir 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, Aḥmad's challenge to Bukhārā was short-lived; he was defeated in his turn by another army sent from Bukhārā in Rajab 307/November-December 919, under the command of Ḥamūya ibn 'Alī (23), and was

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20 Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, vol. viii, p. 119.

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 Mīrkhwānd, *Rawḍa*, p. 41.

23 See appendix; the Sāmānid state elite, s.v. "Ḥamūya ibn 'Alī".

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 Sāmānid 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 Nu'mān, 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 'Alid Abū'l-Husayn Muḥammad claimed the caliphate and that some 10,000 people from

↳ Abū'l-Husayn

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 khān (pace Ibn Khaldūn) but with the *mamlūk* Bughrā al-kabīr; see appendix; the Sāmānid 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 Sam'ānī identifies as Abū 'Alī, the *shaykh* of the *Tālibiyya* in Khurāsān (29), arrested him and handed him over to Hamūya 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 -1.

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

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28 Bayhaqī devotes two passages to this Husaynid's uprising. In the first he identifies him as Abū'l-Husayn Muḥammad ibn Abī Ja'far Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Zubbāra ibn 'Abdallāh, the *naqīb al-nuqabā'* of Naysābūr (*Tārīkh-i bayhaq*, pp. 95 and 98); in the second passage, which he takes from al-Ḥakim al-Bayyī's *Tārīkh-i nīshapur*, he says that Abū'l-Husayn Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad claimed the caliphate in Naysābūr during the Tāhirid period and that it was his grandson, Abū'l-Husayn Muḥammad ibn Abī'l-Muḥammad Yahyā ibn Abī'l-Husayn Muḥammad, who rose during Naṣr's reign (*ibid*, p. 441). Sam'ānī and Ibn 'Inaba both agree with Bayhaqī's first version and make no mention of a rising in the Tāhirid period (Sam'ānī, *Ansāb*, vol. vi, p. 246; Ibn 'Inaba, *Umdat al-tālib*, pp. 313f). Further research into this important 'Alid family (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 Sam'ānī, *Ansāb*, vol. vi, p. 246.

30 The involvement of Hamūya ibn 'Alī, vanquisher of Līlī ibn Nu'mān, is the only clue to the dating of the uprising.

Khurāsān. The revolt was staged by Nasr's three brothers, Abū Zakariyyā Yahyā, Abū Ishāq Ibrāhīm and Abū Sālih Mansūr, all of whom had been imprisoned in the citadel of Bukhārā while Nasr 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 Samarqand in 306/918-19, probably as the figurehead of an anti-Sāmānid 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-khabbāz (33) and some members of the army. A number of other prisoners were released at the same time, including the Abū Dā'ūdīd/Bānījūrīd Ja'far ibn Abī Ja'far, former governor of Khuttal (34), a number of Daylamīs, some 'Alids (35),

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31 Tiesenhausen describes a dirham of 306/918-19 minted in Samarqand which bears the name Yahyā ibn Ahmad, but not that of Nasr ibn Ahmad (Tiesenhausen, W., "Über Zwei in Russland Gemochte Kufische Münzfunde", *Wiener Numismatische Zeitschrift*, (= *Numismatische Zeitschrift*) 1871, p. 186).

32 Ibn al-Athīr 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 Nasr (*Kāmil*, *ibid*). Gardīzī describes Abū Bakr as "an ignorant fellow" (*ablah gūnah*).

34 Ibn al-Athīr says that Ja'far ibn Abī Ja'far ibn Abī Dā'ūd, appointed governor of Khuttal by the Sāmānids, had been imprisoned after he had given cause for Nasr to suspect his loyalty (*Kāmil*, vol. viii, p. 222). He minted in Khuttal in 310, 312 and 313 under the name Ja'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 Aḥmad 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 Sāmānid wazir, Abū'l-Faḍl Bal'amī, made contact with one of the rebel generals, the son of Ḥusayn ibn 'Alī al-Marwazī, 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, Ṣaghāniyān and Tirmidh, Yahyā came to Balkh whose governor, Qarātegin, former governor of Khurāsān, he recruited to

made his peace with Naṣr ibn Aḥmad 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 Asfar when he killed the Zaydī leader Hasan ibn Qāsim (see below, note 68; cf. *Kāmil*, *ibid*, p. 190). Could Abū Ja'far be identical with Ismā'īl ibn Hasan, the son of the dā'ī, Hasan ibn Qāsim, who took part in Abū 'Alī Ṣaghānī's revolt in Nūh ibn Naṣr's reign? (see below, chapter 7, note 34).

36 Tiesenhausen, "O samanidskykh monetakh", *Trudy Vostochnago Otdeleniya Imp. Russkogo Arkh. Obshchestva* 1855, "anno 319", p. 171f (Naysābur); T. Noonan, "Pre-970 dirham hoards from Estonia and Latvia, i: catalog," *Journal of Baltic Studies*, vol. viii, (3), p. 247 (Bukhara).

37 Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, vol. viii, p. 210.

38 Gardīzī, *Zayn*, p. 153.

his cause (39). But Naysābūr remained loyal to Naṣr and Yahyā and Qarāteḡīn 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 Sāmānid general and future founder of the Ilyāsīd dynasty of Kirman. 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 Qarāteḡīn. 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 Sāmānid throne, Ibrāhīm, to flee Khurāsān for Iraq and then Mosul (43). Khurāsān was then placed in the safe hands

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39 Qarāteḡīn's motives for joining the rebellion are not known. It may be that he begrudged his dismissal from the governorship of Khurāsān which he had held for a few years after the defeat of Aḥmad ibn Sahl in 907: the identity of his successor is not certain, but it was probably Hamūya ibn 'Alī (see appendix; the Sāmānid state elite, s.v. "Ḥamūya ibn 'Alī").

40 Isfizārī, *Herāt*, p. 385.

41 Muḥammad ibn Ilyās had taken over the city from the Sāmānid governor shortly beforehand (Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, vol. viii, p. 211; see appendix; the Sāmānid 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, *Kāmil*, vol. viii, p. 212; see appendix; the Sāmānid state elite, s.v. "Ibrāhīm ibn Aḥmad".

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 ~~little~~ evidence to support Barthold's hypothesis that this was a "Shī'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-Marwazī, 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 Sāmānid 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 Sāmānids made no attempt to reconquer it in the intervening period. Kirmān was the other vassaldom born out of this rebellion; unlike Bust, its Ilyāsīd governor had to struggle hard to wrest it from Sāmānid control, but when

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44 See below (p. 161) for the troubled relations between the Sāmānids 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-Dawātī, was faced by an insurrection led by a rival general, Husayn ibn 'Alī al-Marwazī (49). Husayn was perhaps the pre-eminent Sāmānid general of the early 10th century; he had occupied Khurāsān 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 Muḥammad ibn al-Muzaffar, 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 Qūhistān in Ramaḍān 301/April 914, the same month in which Ishāq 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 Hamīd and Khālid ibn Muḥammad al-

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48 See below, section "Kirmān".

49 For Husayn's subsequent revolt against Naṣr in Khurāsān, see above, pp. 149f.

50 See above, chapter 4, note 32.

51 Gardīzī, *Zayn*, p. 151.

52 *Tarikh-i sistān*, p. 302 = 245.

53 Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, vol. viii, p. 79.

Marwazī, to take it over (54). They expelled Naṣr's governor of Bust and Rukhkhaj, 'Ubaydallāh ibn Aḥmad al-Jayhānī (55), and his governor of Ghazna, Sa'd al-Tāliqānī, and secured the region for Badr. For ten years, the province was fought over by a succession of 'Abbāsīd governors turned rebels, and remained outside the orbit of Sāmānīd influence.

In 311/923 the Saffārid, Abū Ja'far Aḥmad 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, *Kāmil*, 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 (293/405-6) cf. *ibid.*, p. 222. Given his date of birth, it cannot have been he who was responsible for securing the accession of Naṣr ibn Aḥmad (pace J. Walker, "The coinage of the second Saffrid dynasty of Sistan", *Numismatic Notes and Monographs*, no. 72, 1936, p. 14).

57 Legend had it that Naṣr ibn Aḥmad saw Aḥmad 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 (Ḥamdallāh Qazvīnī, *Tārīkh-i guzīdah* 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).

## Kirmān

Muḥammad ibn Ilyās (58), a former ally of Abū Zakariyyā Yahyā, took advantage of the increasingly tenuous hold exerted by the 'Abbāsids and Sāmānids over Kirmān (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 Sāmānid forces and Muḥammad was initially forced to flee before returning to wage an inconclusive war with the Sāmānid general Sīmjur (60). In 324 the province was conquered by the Būyid Mu'izz al-Dawla who held it for a couple of years before his elder brother 'Imād al-Dawla recalled him and dispatched him to Khūzistān (61). Muḥammad then regained the province and ruled there for some three decades.

## Rayy and the Caspian provinces

In 301/914 Muḥammad ibn Zayd's successor as the imām of the Caspian Zaydīs, Nāṣir al-Uṭrūsh, succeeded in

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58 See appendix; the Sāmānid state elite, s.v. "Muḥammad ibn Ilyās".

59 Cf. C.E. Bosworth, "The Banū Ilyās of Kirmān", *Iran and Islam*, ed. C.E. Bosworth, Edinburgh, 1971, p. 110. For evidence of Sāmānid influence in the province, see above, chapter 4, notes 67f. Shortly before Muḥammad ibn Ilyās occupied Kirmān, the Saffārid Ahmad ibn Muḥammad had raised a million dirhams in revenue from Kirmān in 317/929-30; perhaps taking advantage of Naṣr's preoccupation with the revolt of his brother Yahyā (*Tārīkh-i sīstān*, p. 313 = p. 255).

60 Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, *ibid*, p. 324.

61 Cf Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, vol. viii, p. 324 and pp. 324ff.; Bosworth, "The Banū Ilyās of Kirmān", pp. 111f.

ejecting the Sāmānids from Tabaristān (62). For the next 15 years Tabaristān and, for the most part, Jurjān (63), remained under Zaydī rule, but throughout this period, the Zaydī 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 Naṣr ibn Aḥmad.

The history of Rayy prior to 316 was similarly turbulent. After his defeat by al-Uṭrūsh, the Sāmānids' governor, Muḥammad ibn 'Alī al-Ṣu'lūkī, retook Rayy, but was unable to withstand the attacks of a renegade 'Abbāsīd general, Yūsuf ibn Abī'l-Sāj; in 307/919 Muḥammad ibn 'Alī fled the city for Khurāsān (65). Thereafter the city reverted to 'Abbāsīd control (66) until 314/926<sup>7</sup>, 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

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62 See above, chapter 4, p. 137.

63 After Līlī ibn Nu'mān's defeat (see above, note 27), the Sāmānids temporarily reassumed control of Jurjān and Tabaristān for a few months, but lost the provinces to the Zaydīs after the withdrawal of their army (Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, vol. viii, pp. 131f).

64 Ibn Isfandiyār, *Tārīkh-i tabaristān*, p. 274-281.

65 For the story of his struggle to defend Rayy against Yūsuf ibn Abī'l-Sāj, see appendix: the Ṣu'lūkids.

66 See appendix, *ibid*, for an account of the governorship of Muḥammad's brother, Aḥmad ibn 'Alī, (307-311) who gave allegiance not to the Sāmānids, but to the caliph.

briefly occupied by the Zaydī imām Ḥasan ibn Qāsim (67). However the Zaydīs were unable to withstand the emergent power of Asfār the Daylamī; from his new base in Rayy, Ḥasan ibn Qāsim attacked Asfār in Tabaristān, but his army was defeated and he was killed in battle (68). Rayy fell to Asfār. This defeat marked the end of Zaydī involvement in the Jibāl, Tabaristān and Jurjān.

Asfār (316/928-319/931) was the first of two Caspian mercenaries who took advantage of the decline of Zaydī authority and ruled the region for six years before the advent of the Būyids; the second was his lieutenant and successor, Mardāwīj the Jīlī (319/931-323/934-5). These two soldiers of fortune had remarkably similar careers. In 315/927 Asfār left Zaydī service after quarrelling with his superiors and found a new patron in the Sāmānid governor of Khurāsān, Bakr ibn Muḥammad ibn Alīsa' (69); he re-entered the Caspian region with Sāmānid support and soon took Jurjān, Tabaristān and Rayy from the Zaydīs (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

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67 See appendix; the Su'lūkids.

68 The cause of Ḥasan'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, *Kāmil*, 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 Sunnī 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'ūdī and Sulī, Asfār 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 Ismā'īlism was most likely connected with his political ambitions since it re-enforced his aversion to the prevailing Sunnī orthodoxy (76). He gave notice of his disdain for the symbols of orthodox Islam when he was taking reprisals against the inhabitants of Qazwīn for the help they had given to his 'Abbāsīd enemies, by ordering that a *mu'adhhdhin* be thrown to his death from his minaret (77).

His successor, Mardāwīj, 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 Ismā'īlīs (80), oppressed his Muslim subjects (81), attacked

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73 Mas'ūdī, *Murūj*, ed. de Meynard, vol. ix, p. 9.

74 Sulī, *Akhbar al-rādī billah wa'l-muttaqī billāh*, ed. Heyworth Dunne, p. 20.

75 Asfār 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-Athīr, *Kāmil*, vol. viii, p. 192).

76 Stern, *Early Ismā'īlism*, p. 227, citing Maqrīzī.

77 Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, *ibid*, pp. 193.

78 He planned to rebuild Ctesiphon and be named Shāhanshāh (Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, vol. viii, p. 302).

79 He wore a "Khusraw's" crown and built himself a golden throne as Asfār had done (Ibn al-Athīr, *ibid*).

80 Stern, *Early Ismā'īlism*, p. 227, citing Maqrīzī.

81 Cf. Mas'ūdī'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 Būyids. In seeking support for his struggle

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82 Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, vol. viii, pp. 227 and 229.

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 Būyids (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 (*darāṭa 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 Būyids were to prove that even illiterate peasants could run large states (*kāmil*, vol. viii, pp. 246f).

against the Būyids, Washmgīr unwisely chose to ally himself with the Daylamī mercenary Mākān ibn Kākī, a former Sāmānid general turned rebel (87), and thus brought himself into conflict with the army of Khurāsān led by its governor, the Muhtājid, Abū 'Alī Muḥammad ibn Muẓaffar. Abū 'Alī besieged Washmgīr in Rayy with the assistance of Washmgīr's Būyid enemies (88) and drove Washmgīr out of the city. The Būyids took advantage of Washmgīr's defeat to gain control of Rayy which they then controlled for most of the remainder of the century. Washmgīr was forced to submit to the Sāmānids 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

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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 'Alī which was to have such deleterious consequences for the Sāmānids 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.350 "I defeated several of the khāns of Turkistān who attacked their (Sāmānid) territory" (*Siyar al-mulūk*, p. 147 = p. 108). Alptegīn had been purchased as a young *mamlūk* by Aḥmad ibn Ismā'īl towards the end of the latter's life (see appendix; the Sāmānid state elite), so his confrontations with the Turks must have taken place during the reigns of Aḥmad's three successors. Nizām al-mulk's report is not substantiated by the chronicles which mention no steppe attacks on Transoxania after Aḥmad's reign.

Turks did provide refuge for the Sāmānids' enemies (90), as they were to continue to do in the reign of Naṣr's successor (91). Towards the end of Naṣr'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 Sāmānid court at the beginning of Nuḥ's reign (93), suggests that the Sāmānid army had recently beforehand been active in the steppe (94).

Two little studied sources provide further evidence of Naṣr's relations with the Turks. The first of these, Rashīd ibn Zubayr's *Kitāb al-dhakḥā'ir wa 'l-tuḥaf*, 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-Ṣīn*, or king of the Turks (95), sent a message to Naṣr demanding the payment in arrears of *kharāj* from Transoxania for the past 27 years and the public proclamation of his suzerainty in Naṣr's territories

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90 Cf. Ilyās's sojourn in Kāshgār (see above, note 8).

91 See below, chapter 7, p. 211.

92 Nizām al-Mulk, *Siyar al-mulūk*, p. 290 = p. 215. The identity of the "heathen" Turks (*kāfir-i turk*) is uncertain. Pritsak believes that Balāsāghūn fell to a Qarākhānid faction (cf. Pritsak, "Von den Karluk zu den Karachaniden", *ZDMG*, vol. ci, 1951, p. 293).

93 See below, chapter 7, p. 211.

94 Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, vol. viii, p. 415, first noted by Barthold, *Turkestan*, p. 256.

95 For the meaning of *malik al-Ṣīn* 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 Qarākhānid leader or some other steppe chieftan. Whatever his true identity, the story suggests that Naṣr, or possibly his predecessor Aḥmad (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

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96 Rashīd ibn al-Zubayr, *Kitāb al-dhakhā'ir*, p. 140. The Turkish king had been advised by a Dahrī heretic who had escaped imprisonment by the Sāmānid religious authorities and fled to his court where he is said to have become his wazir; he told the khān that "Islam was in a feeble condition" and that the Sāmānids were vulnerable to attack.

97 Rashīd ibn al-Zubayr claims that the messengers' lurid description of Sāmānid power induced their king to convert to Islam (*ibid*, p. 150); but this is surely apocryphal.

98 If the king of the Turks demanded 27 years' worth of *kharāj*, this would mean that the original agreement was made in 300/913, the last year of Aḥmad's reign.

99 Barthold is overly harsh in his criticism of Abū Dulaf's claim to have escorted a Sāmānid embassy to "Ṣīn" (see *EI*<sup>1</sup> s.v. "Sandābil"). While the details of his steppe journey are garbled and the identification of

Dulaf ibn Muhalhil. Abū Dulaf reports that he accompanied Sāmānid emissaries who went to the city of Sandābil shortly before the death of Naṣr ibn Aḥmad, to provide an escort for the daughter of the Turkish king (*malik al-Ṣīn*) (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 Sandābil was the name given to Kansu, the capital of the western Uighurs

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his destination suspect, it is unlikely that Abū Dulaf could have invented the story of the Sāmānid mission. 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-Ṣīn*.

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 Manichaeism in the middle of the 8th century (106). Now Naṣr ibn Ahmad had already quarrelled with a Manichaean steppe dynast earlier in his reign; Spuler identifies the latter as a Uighur khān (107). Naṣr'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 khān in question was indeed a Buddhist, as Manichaeism 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 Naṣr in 327.

#### The changing face of the state elite

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

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105 Cf. *EI*<sup>1</sup> s.v. "Sandābil". Barthold expresses his doubts about the accuracy of Marquart's identification.  
 106 C. Mackerras, "The Uighurs" in *The Cambridge history of early Inner Asia*, ed. D. Sinor, p. 330.

107 See above, chapter 2, note 60.

108 See above, chapter 2, note 57.

109 Ibid.

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 Sāmānid 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 Muhtājīd Abū Bakr Muḥammad ibn Muẓaffar al-Saghānī, the Sāmānid general and ruler of Saghāniyān (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 Sāmānid under Naṣr's successors (see below, chapter 7, notes 96ff).

112 i. Abū'l-'Abbās Ahmad ibn Yahyā ibn Asad, son of the first Sāmānid governor of Shāsh (?), appears twice as governor of Bukhārā, in 306/918 and 317/929 (Narshakhī, *Tārīkh-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 Sāmānid 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", Abū 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 Khurāsān (113); more junior posts, such as the governorship of Herāt, were shared between freeborn amirs and *mamlūks* (114).

### Developments at the centre

During Naṣr'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 Sāmānid polity. These changes coincided with the rise to power of members of the secretarial class who supervised the accession of the young amir Naṣr and enjoyed a measure of authority which their predecessors had lacked. Naṣr'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, Khurāsān was governed by freeborn amirs. The first was probably Ḥamūya ibn 'Alī 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 Muḥammad ibn Alīsa' (c. 925) died 315 (see appendix; the Sāmānid state elite, s.v. "Bakr ibn Muḥammad"). Within two years of Bakr's death, the Muḥtājīd, Abū Bakr Muḥammad ibn Muzaffar al-Ṣaghānī, formerly governor of Farghāna, was appointed - he is first mentioned as *sāhib jaysh khurāsān* in 318 (Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, vol. viii, p. 210). After the disruption of the brothers' revolt, when Naysabur was first governed by Abū Bakr's deputy, the Daylamī Makan ibn Kākī, and later temporarily came under rebel control, Abū Bakr was re-appointed in 321 (Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, vol. viii, p. 264). In 327 he was succeeded by his son Abū 'Alī who remained governor until the end of Naṣr's reign (*ibid*, p. 356).

114 See Isfizārī, *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 Zābul (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 Sāmānid administrative practice was no longer to be bound by the limitations of local and 'Abbāsīd precedent (118). The new-found importance of the bureaucracy which he headed was symbolized by the magnificent buildings erected by Naṣr to accommodate it - in the very centre of the capital, opposite the gates of the royal palace (119).

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

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115 *Chīn* may refer to the Turkish steppe (see above, note 95, for the meaning of *malik al-Sin/Chin* in this period); or perhaps to China proper, if Turkistan means the Turkish steppe.

116 See *Hudūd al-'ālam*, s.v. "Zangistan".

117 Gardīzī, *Zayn*, p. 150.

118 The degree to which 'Abbāsīd practice had acted as a formative influence on the Sāmānid bureaucracy is difficult to evaluate given that we know so little about the way the Sāmānid bureaucracy worked; but judging from the evidence of Khwārazmī's *Mafātih al-'ulum* it does seem that the Sāmānids did at least borrow some of their administrative terminology from Baghdad (Cf. Bosworth, "Abū 'Abdallāh Khwārazmī 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 Naṣr's example, began to exploit the local Iranian cultural environment through its patronage of Persian literature, particularly poetry. The contrast between Naṣr's cultural bias and that of his father, Aḥmad, is striking; whereas Aḥmad 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 Abū '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

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120 See above, chapter 3, pp. 99f.

121 Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad Jayhanī wrote the geography *Al-masālik wa'l-mamālik* during Naṣr's reign (see appendix; the Sāmānid state elite, s.v. "Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Jayhanī"). Members of the Sāmānid court and Sāmānid vassals patronized scholars and polymaths. Aḥmad ibn Sahl al-Kamkāri supported Abu Zayd al-Balkhī (d. 322/934) who wrote the geography on which Iṣṭakhrī based his *Kitab al-masālik wa'l-mamālik* and composed many other works on philosophical and religious subjects; he was also patronized by Abū 'Alī Jayhanī, Ḥusayn ibn 'Alī and his brother Muḥammad Ṣu'lūk (see appendix; the Ṣu'lūkids). One of his treatises listed by Yaqut is a reply to the founder of the Muḥtājīd dynasty, Abū Bakr Muḥammad ibn Muẓaffar, on the question of the limitations of philosophy (*Irshād*, vol. i, p. 143). Narshakhī and Sallāmī wrote their histories during the reign of Naṣr's successor, Nuḥ.

122 See Aḥmad Rāzī, *Haft iqlīm*, 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 Tha'ālibī'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 Sāmānid literary "renaissance" with the statement; "It is essential...to remember that the literature, and especially poetry, under the Sāmānids was one literature in two languages,

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124 There is some evidence that Rūdakī was patronized by earlier Sāmānids; 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 Rūdakī's verses, that he wrote a panegyric to Ahmad ibn Ismā'īl (Nafisi, *Muḥīt zendegī va ahvāl va ash'ār-i rūdakī*, Tehran, 1341, p. 303); he adduces another verse as evidence that he was a member of the Sāmānid 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 Tha'ālibī 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'alibī'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

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126 *id*, *Bukhara; medieval achievement*, p. 60.

127 Frye, *ibid*, p. 61.

128 The major bilingual poets include Abū Husayn Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad al-Murādī (Tha'alibī, *ibid*, pp. 71ff); Abū'l-Tayyib Muḥammad ibn Hātim al-Mus'abī (Tha'alibī, *ibid*, pp. 75f); Shahīd al-Balkhī (Lazard, *ibid*, pp. 21f; 'Awfī, *Lubāb al-albāb*, vol. ii, pp. 3ff); Abū'l-Hasan Aghajī (Rypka, *History of Iranian literature*, p. 144).

129 They included emigrés from the 'Abbāsīd court (Yatīma, p. 115), a Tahirid (*ibid*, p. 66) and a large number of northern Khurāsānīs. One of the Arabic poets of the Sāmānīd court bears the *nisba* 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 Transoxanians 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

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130 Cf. Tha'ālibī, *ibid*, pp. 62.

131 Note al-Ṣahib (Ibn 'Abbad)'s comment when he read the *dīwān* of the Shāshī poet Hasan ibn 'Alī al-Matrānī, who lived at the Sāmānid court: *ma zanantu anna mā warā'l-nahr yukhrijumithlahu* (Yatīma, vol. ii, part 4, p. 108). Tha'ālibī 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'a* of Abū Ahmad ibn Abī Bakr Hamīd, (see appendix; the Sāmānid state elite, s.v. "Muhammad ibn Hamīd ibn Nu'aym"):

*lā ta'juban min 'irāqī ra'ayta la-hu  
 bahran min al-'ilm aw kanzan min al-adabi  
 wa-a'jab li-man bi-bilād al-jahl manshū'uhu  
 in kāna yafuruqu bayna'l-ra's wa'l-dhanabi*  
 (Yatīma, vol. ii, part 4, p. 62).

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 Muhammad ibn Hamīd, wazir of Ahmad ibn Isma'il came from a village near the Transoxanian town of Nasaf, though he claimed descent from the marzuban of Marv (see appendix; the Sāmānid state, s.v. "Muhammad 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'ālibī's section on the poets of the *mashriq*, did compose works in praise of the *mashriq* (the following citations are from Mirzayef, *Rudakī*, p. 39); cf. Abū'l-Fath 'Alī ibn Muhammad al-Bustī's (360/971-401/1010) description of Samargand as "paradise on earth" (Zand, M., "Antikhalifatskie i sotsialno-oblichitelnye motivy v tadzhikskoi poezii x v.", *Trudy A.N. Tadzhikskoi SSR*, vol. xxvii, pp. 193f,

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criticism of their new environment. One popular genre in this corpus was *hijā'* (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 Sāmānid 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 Sāmānids were not ridiculed with the savagery reserved for the poets' peers (135), they

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quoting Yāqūt, *Mu'jam*, vol. iii, p. 136); Abū 'Alī Sajā's (first half of 10th century) praise of Marv (Tha'alibī, *Yatīma*, vol. iv, p. 16); Abū'l-Hasan ibn 'Isā al-Karajī's verses on Naysabur (Zand, *ibid*, p. 194, quoting Juwaynī, *Tārīkh-i jahangushā*, vol. i, p. 133).  
 133 See for example the story of the man who asked a poet to write a lampoon of himself (*Yatīma*, vol. ii, part 4, p. 99).

134 The tradition of maligning Bukhārā was started by Abū 'l-Tayyib al-Tāhirī, a descendant of the Tāhirids of Khurāsān, who came to Bukhārā 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-Tāhirī's lampoon of Ahmad. The amir is depicted as a *ghazī*, 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 *hijā'* we also find examples of panegyric (*madh*) addressed to high officials of state, including the Sāmānid 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 Tha'ālibī, *Yatīma*, pp. 67 and 107.

137 Cf. for examples, Tha'ālibī, *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 panegyrists of the Sāmānids include Abu'l-Ḥasan 'Alī ibn Muḥammad al-Lawkarī ('Awfī, *Lubāb*, vol. ii, p. 15), al-Rābinjānī (*ibid*, pp. 9f), Shahīd al-Balkhī (*ibid*, p. 3) and Abū 'Abdallah Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan al-Ma'rūfī (*ibid*, p. 16). For an example of Persian satire, see the poet, Manjīk, at the Muhtājīd court of Saghāniyan (Rypka, *History of Iranian literature*, p. 146).

139 Daqīqī's birthplace is variously given as Tūs, Balkh, Bukhārā and Samarqand (Lazard, *Les premiers poètes 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 Sāmānid 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 *kuttāb* for *kuttāb*. 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 Sāmānids were the first rulers to

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140 Cf. Rūdakī's famous ode commemorating the royal estates in the Jūy-i Mūlyān quarter of Bukhārā (*Chahar maqale*, p. 34ff).

141 Cf. the great wealth amassed by Rūdakī in the form of rewards from his grateful patrons ('Awfī, *Lubab al-albāb*, ed. Browne, vol. ii, p. 7).

142 Cf. *Chahar maqale*, ed. Browne, p. 54.

143 Persian poetry had been written in the 9th century in the 'Abbāsīd, Tāhirīd and Saffārīd periods (cf. Lazard, *Premiers poètes*, pp. 17ff); see also the 9th century poetry of 'Abbās ibn Tarkhān (= 'Abbās al-Marwazī) and Muhammad ibn Bā'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 Tāhirid and Ṣaffārid rulers of Eastern Iran, the Sāmānids wanted to be known as patrons of Persian poetry. The Sāmānid 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 Sāmānid court? It is unlikely that the patronage of Persian poets was simply a result of the monarch's personal predilection for their poetry, although Naṣr'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

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144 Cf. Qazvīnī's remark to the effect that before Rudakī, 'ajamī poets wrote in Arabic (*Tārīkh-i guzīdah*, p. 732).

145 Much the same interest as was shown in Bukhārā for Rūdakī's work, was shown in Būyid Rayy for the poetry of Mantīqī, Junaydī and Khusravī of Sarakhs (also a panegyrist of the Ziyārid Qābus ibn Washmgīr), Persian poets in the entourage of al-Sāhib ibn 'Abbād (Lazard, *Les premiers poètes persans*, p. 15). The earliest Persian prose epic Ibn 'Abd al-razzāq's *Shāhnāme*, was composed at the court of the ruler of Tus, Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al-razzāq. The latter is said to have been inspired to commission the epic by the example of Rudakī's Persian versification of *Kalīla wa Dimna* (Minorsky, "The Older Preface, to the Shahname", p. 168).

conducted in various Persian dialects. By the beginning of the Sāmānid 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 *Darī*. 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 Aḥmad ibn Ismā'īl to do just this. Given that Aḥmad'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 Aḥmad's ruling. While this can only be a matter for speculation, the history of Persian prose literature under the later Sāmānids 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,

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146 See above, chapter 4, note 173.

were sponsored by members of the state elite (147). Abū 'Alī Bal'amī, the son of Abū'l-Faḍl, 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-razzāq's *Shāhnāme* (153), a work on pharmacology known as the *Kitāb al-anbiyā 'an haqā'iq al-adviyā*, by Abū Mansūr al-Haravī, who probably dedicated his book to Mansūr ibn Nūh (154), the medical

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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 Faḍlan addressed the wazīr Jayhānī by this title, cf. chapter 4, note 94) to translate it from Pahlavi to Darī in 339/950. Muḥammad ibn 'Alī al-Samarqandī says; *amīr-i ajall-i 'ālam-i 'ādil naṣir al-dīn abū muḥammad nūh ibn mansūr (=Abū Muḥammad Nūh ibn Naṣr) ... farmān dād khwāja 'amīd abū'l-fawāris fanāruzī-rā* (unidentified) *tā be-zaban-i farsī tarjumat konad* (*Sindbād-nāme*, ed. A. Atesh, Istanbul, 1948, p. 25); Rypka reads the *nisba* as *qanārizī* (*History of Iranian literature*, p. 223).

148 G. Lazard, *La langue des plus anciens monuments de la prose persane*, Paris, 1963, pp. 38-41.

149 Lazard, *ibid*, pp. 41-45.

150 Cf. *Al-sawād al-a'zam*, p. 22.

151 See below, chapter 6, note 31. Heretical tracts had been composed in Persian long before the 10th century, viz. Bīḥāfarīd's sacred book (cf. Bīrūnī, *Chronology*, p. 193).

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-musaddad)* (although it is said to have been a posthumous epithet); Mīrkhwand says that *al-mu'ayyad* was

treatise *Hidāyat 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-'ālam*, written for the Farīghūnid amir 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 Naṣr and his wazir Abū 'Alī Bal'amī, were highly proficient in Arabic (158). Furthermore, historical, geographical and theological works, including Jayhānī's geography and Narshakhī's *Tārīkh-i bukhārā*, continued to be written in Arabic during this period as they had been beforehand (159).

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also an epithet of Mansūr's (cf. Tiesenhausen, "O samanidskykh monetakh", *Trudy Vostochnago Otdeleniya Imp. Russkogo Arkh. Obshchestviya* 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. 53f.

157 Richter-Bernberg, "Linguistic Shu'ubiyya", *JAOS*, vol. xciv, 1974, p. 56.

158 Nūh and the wazir Bal'amī corresponded with the Baghdādī scholar Abū Sa'id al-Sayrafī 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, *Turkestan*, p. 13); the Ismā'īlī dā'ī al-Nasafī's *Kitāb al-mahsul*.

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 Hanafī 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 Hanafī 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 Sāmānid 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

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160 *Al-sawād al-a'zam*, p. 22; Lazard, *La langue des plus anciens monuments de la prose persane*, p. 42.

161 Cf. Bīrūnī'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

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162 Cf. the chapter on Bahrām Chūbīn (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'l-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 Sāmānid period is complex and requires independent treatment; it is to this that we now turn.

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163 Ahmad ibn Sahl, whom Gardīzī describes as *az asīlān-i 'ajām*, led 1000 men to seek revenge for the death of his brothers who were killed in fighting between Arabs and 'Ajāmīs (Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, 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 Sāmānid state elite, s.v. "Muḥammad ibn Ahmad").

165 See above, note 121.

166 See appendix; the Sāmānid state elite, s.v. "Muḥammad 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 Muḥammad al-Kalābādhī (who is described as *ustādh* of Ismā'īl ibn Ahmad (Sam'āni, *Ansāb*, vol. i, p. 196) lived on into Naṣr's reign where he held the title of *faqīh dār al-sultān al-sa'id* (i.e. Naṣr) (Sam'āni, *ibid*, vol. vii, p. 58).

Chapter six

THE REIGN OF NASR IBN AHMAD  
INTERLUDE

: ii THE ISMĀ'ĪLĪ

### The beginning of the da'wa

Ismā'īlī missionaries were active in Khurāsān and Transoxania long before the outbreak of the Ismā'īlī scandal at Naṣr'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 Naysābūr (d. 260/873-4) is said to have written a book entitled *Al-radd 'alā'l-qarāmiṭa* (1). But given that the Ismā'īlīs 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 Ismā'īlī movement in Khurāsān 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 Ismā'īlism 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 Tāliqān, a town in Tukhāristān, by a branch of the family of first Fāṭimid caliph-to-be, when the latter

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1 cf. *EI*<sup>2</sup> s.v. "Karmatī".

2 cf. *ibid.*

3 Stern, *Studies in early Isma'ilism*, p. 292.

4 See below, note 93.

moved from Iraq to Syria (5); this was also the period when the first *dā'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 Ghūr 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 Herāt (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 Herāt, 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

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5 W. Madelung, *Religious trends in early Islamic Iran*, Columbia, 1988, p. 93. A relative of 'Ubaydallāh, the first Fātimid caliph, is said to have lived there (cf. *EI*<sup>2</sup> s.v. "Karmatī").

6 S.M. Stern, *Studies in early Isma'ilism*, Jerusalem, 1983, p. 216.

7 Nizām al-mulk, *Siyar al-mulūk*, p. 297 = p. 220.

8 According to Nizām al-Mulk, news of the revolt was sent to Bukhārā by Muhammad ibn Harthama, the governor of Herāt (*Siyar al-mulūk*, *ibid*). Isfizārī confirms that Muhammad ibn Harthama was the last governor of the city in Ismā'īl's reign (*Herāt*, p. 384).

9 See appendix 3; Abū Bilāl's revolt.

10 Nizām al-mulk, *Siyar al-mulūk*, p. 298 = p. 220.

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 Ismā'īlī 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; Ismā'īl ibn Aḥmad 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 Aḥmad

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

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11 Nizām al-mulk, *ibid.* The Timūrid history *Mujmal-i Fasīḥī* gives a synopsis of Nizām al-Mulk's account in which he names this building the *Dar al-'idhāb* (*Mujmal*, vol. i, p. 394).

12 Note the "appearance" of the gnostic ex-Ismā'īlī missionary al-Kayyāl 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 Qufṣ tribe of Kirman were converted, presumably by missionaries from Khurāsān, at the beginning of the 10th century (*EI*<sup>2</sup> s.v. "Karmatī").

15 See appendix; the Su'lūkids.

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 'Abbāsīd army in 311, the sources give no indication of the fact. Abū Hātim continued to win converts among the governors of Rayy after Ahmad'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 Sāmānid army (18). His successor, Husayn 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 Ahmad, 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

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16 S.M. Stern, *Studies in early Isma'ilism*, p. 196, reference from Nizām al-mulk, *Siyar al-mulūk*, p. 286 = p. 211.

17 Cf. above, chapter 5, p. 162.

18 Cf. Ibn al-Nadīm and Maqrīzī (*Itti'āz al-hunafā'*), cited in Stern, *Studies in early Isma'ilism*, pp. 224 and 226.

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 Tāliqān, Maymana, Fāryāb, Gharchistān and Ghūr (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. Tāliqān remained a centre of Ismā'īlī activity throughout the century; cf. the Ismā'īlī uprising in Tāliqān in Mansūr ibn Nuḥ's reign (see below, p. 202).

20 See above, chapter 5, p. 149.

of Abū'l-Faḍl 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'il ibn Aḥmad, Husayn would have had access to the top echelon of the Sāmānid court, many of whom were later to succumb to Nasafī's preaching (24).

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21 Tha'alībī, *Yatīma*, vol. ii, part 4, p. 81. Ibn al-Athīr says it was Abū 'Abdallah Jayhanī who actually released him (*Kāmil*, vol. viii, p. 88).

22 Stern notes that Sha'rānī died in Naysābūr during the governorship of Abū Bakr Muḥammad the Muḥtājīd (*ibid*, p. 217, citing 'Abd al-Qāhir al-Baghdādī's *Kitāb al-farq*). The latter is first mentioned as governor of Khurāsān in 318, rather than 321, as Stern has it (cf. appendix; the Sāmānid state elite, s.v. "Muḥammad ibn Muẓaffar", *pace* Stern, *ibid*).

23 Nizām al-mulk, *Siyar al-mulūk*, p. 288 = p. 212.

24 We do not know the names of any of those whom he converted but Tha'alībī records some lines of poetry in which he professes his disdain for Sunni orthodoxy. Cf. his poem which begins *ala isqini min zabīb shamsi...*

"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 'Al Taym, and 'Adī and 'Abd Shams./ Drink to the memory of one who undertook/ to build glory by destroying a prison." (Tha'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 Sunni orthodoxy which has no direct parallel in any other Sāmānid poem recorded by Tha'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, Ash'ath who was Naṣr's *dabīr-i khāṣṣ* (private secretary), Abū Mansūr Chaghānī who was the *'arīd* (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'i* (i.e. non-*Ismā'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 dā'i* (28).

As for the *Sāmānid* amirs' attraction for *Shī'ism*, even their founding father, *Ismā'il ibn Ahmad*, is said to

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25 Abū Mansūr Chaghānī (= *Ṣaghānī*), who died in the persecution of *Ismā'īlīs* which followed Naṣr's abdication (*Siyar al-mulūk*, p. 295 = p. 218), may have been a relative of Abū 'Alī *Ṣaghānī*, 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 *Ṣaghāniyān* in *Nūḥ's* reign (*Zayn*, p. 158).

26 Nizām al-mulk, *Siyar al-mulūk*, p. 288 = p. 213.

27 H. Halm notes that *Ismā'īlī* missionaries commonly ordered their initiates to keep their conversion secret (cf. id, "Methoden und Formen der frühesten ismailitischen *da'wa*", *Studien zur Geschichte und Kultur des vorderen Orients (Festschrift für Bertold Spuler zum siebzigsten Geburtstag)*, Leiden, 1981, pp. 123-36).

28 Ibn al-Nadīm tells us that *Sha'rānī* "beguiled certain generals by speaking about *Shī'ism*" (Stern, *ibid*, p. 224). Halm notes that the *Ismā'īlī da'wa* almost always took root in a *Twelver-Shī'i* milieu ("Methoden und Formen", p. 131).

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

Whatever the significance of Nasafī's original preaching of Shī'ī doctrine, it appears that the Sāmānid 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-Jayhānī (wazir 326/938-circa 330/941-2) is said to have patronized the missionary, Aḥmad ibn Zakariyyā al-Kayyāl, said by one source to have been an ex-Ismā'īlī *dā'ī* (31) and to have

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29 See above chapter 3, note 11.

*Tashayyu'* is probably to be understood in the sense of Shī'ism, rather than philo-'Alidism, since in Samarqandī'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 Jayhānī 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 Aḥmad (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 Sāmānid 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 Īlāq (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-Munkadirī, 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 Manichaeism (*EI*<sup>2</sup> s.v. "al-Kayyāl").

32 Al-Kayyāl is said by Shahrastānī to have "appeared" in 295/907<sup>2</sup>, 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'ilis; their history and doctrine*, Cambridge, 1990, pp. 121f; *EI*<sup>2</sup> s.v. "al-Kayyāl"; Abū'l-Ma'ālī, *Bayān al-adyān*, ed. Hashim Riḍa, 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 Sāmānid state elite, s.v. "Bakr ibn Mālik"). Note that the amir of Īlāq joined the revolt of Abū 'Alī Saghānī in Nūh's reign (see below, chapter 7, p. 212).

35 'Alī al-Zarrād survived the persecution of the Qarmatis at the end of Naṣr's reign (see below, note 41).

36 Cf. Samarqandī, *Muntakhab*, fol. 35b.

37 Sam'ānī, *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. Nizām al-mulk relates that opposition to the spread of heresy within the court came both from the 'ulamā' and the Turkish soldiery. Certain 'ālims went to the *sipahsālār* (army commander) and asked him to restore orthodoxy in Bukhārā. 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, Nūḥ, 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 Ismā'īlīs 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-Ḥakim 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 Saḡhānī. But Abū 'Alī was in the Jibāl 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 Bukhārā. 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 Nūḥ 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 Ismā'īlī 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 Samarqandī's *Muntakhab* which suggests that the issue was, on the contrary, a matter of great public significance. Samarqandī tells us that a Nasafī 'ālim, Abū Ya'lā '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 Ramaḍān, '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 Ismā'īlīs and the release of Abū 'Uthmān Sa'īd ibn Ibrāhīm, a scholar who

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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 Sāmānid 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).

42 Cf. *Book of government*, introduction, p. xvi.

43 Frye, *Bukhara: the medieval achievement*, p. 55. Barthold accepted Nizām al-mulk and Ibn al-Nadīm's accounts but made no comment as to their significance (*Turkestan*, pp. 242ff).

44 Samarqandī, *Muntakhab*, fols. 43af. Abū Ya'lā was probably in Nasaf and not Bukhārā when he called for the persecution of the Qarmātīs: this may be deduced from the phrase *fa-lam ya'tī illā layālin ma'dūda hatta warada 'l-khabar bi-anna 'l-hashm qatalū 'l-Mus'abī* (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 Ismā'īlī "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 Muṣ'abī with being a *zindīq* and a heretic and called for him to be put to death. A few days later news arrived that the *ḥashm* had killed Muṣ'abī, that Abū 'Uthmān had been released, and that the Qarāmīta were being persecuted.

Muṣ'abī himself is clearly the villain of the piece in the eyes of Samarqandī's informant. 'Abdallāh ibn 'Umar al-Balkhī tells us that he was himself an Ismā'īlī (48). But there is no direct evidence for his conversion to Ismā'īlism. Apart from Samarqandī's story, his name is linked with Ismā'īlism in only two other accounts<sup>(48a)</sup>. Yāqūt tells us that he commissioned the famous traditionist, Abū Hātim Muḥammad ibn Hibbān al-Bustī (49), to write a book on the Qarāmīta for him. As a reward for writing

45 For his biography, see appendix; the Sāmānid state elite, s.v. "Muḥammad ibn Hātim".

46 *kāna abū'l-tayyib al-muṣ'abī wazir al-sultān qad ashkhaṣa aba 'uthmān sa'id ibn ibrahīm ila'l-ḥadra bi-sabab ta'aṣṣub al-qarāmīta* (Muntakhab, fol. 43a).

47 In the same passage we read: *da'ā ('abd al-mu'min) li-abī 'uthmān sa'id ibn ibrahīm bi'l-ikhlaṣ 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'mun for very different purposes; alternatively, it may simply mean "trial" in the sense of "(personal) ordeal".

48 See appendix: the Sāmānid state elite, s.v. "Muḥammad ibn Hātim".

49 Cf EI<sup>2</sup>, s.v. "Ibn Hibbān", where his kunya is incorrectly given as Abū Bakr.

48a Muṣ'abī was accused by the author of the commentary on Turjānī's Ismā'īlī treatise of distorting Turjānī's teachings (see below, note 89).

the book, we are told, Muṣ'abī appointed him qādī 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 Yaqut's source* al-hākim 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 Muṣ'abī's alleged conversion to Ismā'īlism, we might expect the book to have treated sympathetically of the Qarāmīṭa, 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 Muṣ'abī commissioned an anti-Isma'īlī tract from Ibn Hibbān, then it may be that he was quite unjustly accused of holding Ismā'īlī 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 Muṣ'abī's summoning of Sa'īd ibn Ibrāhīm; Muṣ'abī may in fact have summoned him to the court to take charge of the *miḥna* against the Ismā'īlīs (52). This hypothesis does fly in

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50 Yāqūt, *Mu'jam*, 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 *miḥna* and Ibn al-Nadīm's account of the public debate arranged by Nūh between Nasafī and the orthodox 'ulamā' (Stern, *ibid*, p. 224).

the face of Samarqandī's account, but such a misrepresentation of the facts on the part of Samarqandī's informant is not beyond the bounds of possibility. The question cannot be resolved in the light of the available sources, but whatever Muṣ'abī's role may have amounted to, Samarqandī'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 Samarqandī'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. Samarqandī does not say in which year Abū Ya'lā called for the persecution of the Ismā'īlīs. However Nūḥ ibn Naṣr came to the throne on 1st of Sha'bān 331/10th April 943, his father Naṣr having died a few days beforehand, on 27th Rajab/6 April (53). Thus Abū 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

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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 Ḥamdallāh Qazvīnī, among other later historians, gives an earlier date for Naṣr's death - 12th Ramadān 330/May 31st 942 (id, *Tārīkh-i guzīde*, (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, Ismā'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 Ismā'īlīs. The interval between Nasr's abdication and the removal of Mus'abī is probably to be explained by a continuing struggle between the Ismā'īlīs 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 Ismā'īl and his younger brother, Nūh (55). According to Ibn al-Athīr, Nūh was responsible for the execution and crucifixion of Nasafī 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: Nizām al-mulk says that he was poisoned by Nūh (57), Ḥamdallāh Qazvīnī that he was

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54 Ismā'īl was Nasr's eldest son and heir apparent (Gardīzī, *Zayn*, p. 154). Sūlī tells us (Nasr put Ismā'īl to death before he died and replaced him with Nūh after the brothers had quarrelled over the succession; the implication is that Ismā'īl was killed shortly before Nasr died (Sūlī, *Akhbār 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 Aḥmad al-Nasafī al-Bardahī (sic. = al-Bazdawī, see Stern, *ibid*, p. 219) who had slandered him in his presence (*wa kāna qad ta'na fīhi 'indahū*) (*Kāmil*, vol. viii, p. 404). This is Ibn al-Athīr's sole reference to Nasafī's presence in Bukhārā. 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 Nizām 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).

↳ that

killed by his *ghilmān* (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 Ismā'īlī uprising in the reign of Mansūr ibn Nūh

Before exploring the significance of the Ismā'īlī uprising at Naṣr's court at greater length, we should look at Nizām al-mulk's account of the third and final Ismā'īlī uprising in the Sāmānid period. His account is

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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, Naṣr avoided "reprehensible actions and sins" (*Kāmil*, vol. viii, p. 403: *wa yamshī ilayhi (bayt al-'ibāda) ḥāfiyan wa yuṣallī fihi wa yaḍ'u wa yataḍarr'u wa yajtanibu 'l-munkarāt wa 'l-athām ilā an mata wa dufina 'inda wālidihī*). 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 Naṣr's life appears in Yāqūt's *Mu'jam al-buldān* (vol. iii, pp. 451f). Yāqūt 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 Bukhārā attended by a large entourage consisting of his sons, court attendants, *ghilmān*, slave girls and troops, followed by the populace of Bukhārā, all in a state of deep mourning for his impending demise. Once outside the city he produced a scroll which he ordered the qadis, *fuqahā'* and secretaries to sign; having done this, he ordered his son Nūh to act according to its contents. He then went to the grave, which had been prepared twenty years beforehand, entered it and died there. Yāqūt's source for the anecdote, Abū Dulaf Mis'ar the traveller, is doubtful about the veracity of the account.

as follows: fifteen years into the reign of Mansūr ibn Nūh, Ismā'īlī 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 *hājib*, Mansūr ibn Bā'iqrā (62), Abū Sa'īd Malik (63), Abū'l-'Abbās Jarrāh (64) two Turkish (probably *mamlūk*) amirs, Takinak and Khumārtēgīn (65), a member of the Jayhānī family, and probably a future wazir (66), and an unidentified figure by the name of Ja'far. 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 Ismā'īlīs began to place their fellow sectaries in positions of power throughout the state.

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62 Muqaddasī gives his name as Abū Mansūr Bāqarā/Bāqarī (*Aḥsan*, p. 338); Gardīzī identifies him as the man chosen to take the 'ahd and liwa' to the governor of Khurāsān, Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al-razzāq, in 349 (*Zayn*, p. 160).

63 He may have been related to Ḥasan Malik, governor of Īlāq, who had converted to Ismā'īlism in Naṣr's reign (see above, note 34). Hasan 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 Abū'l-'Abbas ibn Muḥammad Jarrāh who was appointed governor of Herāt shortly after the revolt of Naṣr's brothers (cf. Isfizārī, *Herāt*, p. 385).

65 Khumārtēgīn was the name of the Sāmānid *sāhib jaysh* (probably at the end of Naṣr ibn Aḥmad's reign) (see appendix; the Sāmānid state elite, s.v. "Muḥammad ibn 'Ubaydallāh al-Bal'amī").

66 He is named Abū 'Abdallāh Jayhānī by Nizām al-mulūk (*Siyar al-mulūk*, p. 299 = p. 222). He is presumably identical with Abū 'Abdallah 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 appendix; the Sāmānid state elite, s.v. "Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad").

67 *Siyar al-mulūk*, p. 299 = p. 221.

The Ismā'īlīs at the court in Bukhārā prevailed upon Mansūr to imprison his wazir Abū 'Alī Bal'amī (68) and the captain of the *ghilmān*, Bektūzūn (69). Alptegīn, the governor of Khurāsān sent a message to Mansūr, warning him of the Ismā'īlī threat, but his advice was ignored. Eventually the chief qādī of Bukhārā, Abū Ahmad Marghazī (70), persuaded Mansūr that he was being duped by the Ismā'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 Ismā'īlīs of Tāliqān who had agreed at this time that they should collaborate to overthrow the Sāmānids. A public debate was convened at court which was attended by Ismā'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-razzāq, the rebel amir in Khurāsān, was attacked and killed by Abū'l-Hasan Sīmjurī and the Sāmānid vassal Washmgīr. 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

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68 See appendix: the Sāmānid state elite, s.v. "Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad".

69 For his future career under the last three Sāmānids, see below, chapter 8, pp. 247, 260ff.

70 He may be identical with the Abū Ahmad, qādī of Bukhārā, who related hadīth to Abū'l-Hasan 'Alī ibn Husayn al-Kasbawī (Samarqandī, *Muntakhab*, fol. 3b).

71 See chapter 2, p. 54, for communities of *sapīd jāmagān* in rural Transoxania.

72 Nizām al-mulk, *Siyar al-mulūk*, p. 303 = p. 225.

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 Sāmānids is defective in other ways; he omits to mention altogether the reign of Mansūr's predecessor, 'Abdalmalik (954-961), and states in an earlier passage that Alptegīn was Mansūr's governor of for at least six years before his enemies at the Sāmānid 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 Sāmānid succession, it was only to be expected that Mansūr and his guardian Fā'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

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73 Nizām al-mulk, *Siyar al-mulūk*, p. 299 = p. 221.

74 Alptegīn died in 352/963 (cf. Bosworth, *The Ghaznavids*, p. 38).

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 Sāmānid 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 Alptegīn appears in this account at all. It is possible that he had previously been connected with the suppression of Ismā'īlī activities in the reign of 'Abdalmalik: Jūzjānī tells us that Bakr ibn Mālik and the wazir Ibn 'Uzayr, both of whom fell victim to Alptegīn's ambition, were accused of being Ismā'īlīs (78). He might conceivably have considered himself to be the guardian of the anti-Isma'ili policy instituted by his former master, Nūh ibn Naṣr (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 Alptegīn'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.

Alptegīn'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 Ismā'īlī uprising in Herāt early in Mansūr's reign in 354/965 is supplied by Isfizārī; it may be that this uprising was connected

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78 See below, appendix: the Sāmānid state elite, s.v. "Bakr ibn Mālik".

79 For Alptegīn's early career, see appendix; the Sāmānid state elite, s.v. "Alptegīn".

with the Ismā'īlī revolt in Tāliqān described by Nizām al-mulk (80). As for the alliance between Ismā'īlīs and *sapīd jāmagān*; this is much more plausible than that between Ismā'īlīs and Khārijīs, which, according to Schefer's edition of the *Siyāsat Nāme*, took place under Abū Bilāl's leadership (81).

### The significance of Nasafī's mission at the Sāmānid 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 Ismā'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 Naṣr 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 dalā'il al-*

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80 Its leader was one Abū'l-Hasan Dā'ūdī (Isfizārī, *Herāt*, p. 386). Note Jūzjānī's account of Ismā'īlī activity in Tāliqān and the suppression of their movement by Sebuktegīn the Ghaznavid (*Ṭabaqāt-i nāsirī*, vol. i, 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 EI<sup>2</sup> "Qarmatī".

83 Ibn al-Nadīm, *Kitāb al-fihrist*, ed. Flugel, Leipzig, 1871, p. 188; cf. also Stern, *Studies in early Isma'ilism*, Jerusalem, 1983, p. 224.

*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-Qā'im 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 *da'wa* 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 *dā'īs* 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 Ismā'īl, rather than that of the reigning Fātimid; this indicates that he was an advocate of the dissident Ismā'īlī, 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 Khurāsān and the Fātimids during the course of the century; the Khurāsānī *da'wa* did adopt the Fātimid line under the leadership of

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84 Ibid, vol. ii, ed. 'A. 'Uthman, Beirut, 1966-68, p. 599.

85 For 'Ubaydallāh's announcement of al-Qā'im's messianic status, see *EI*<sup>2</sup>, s.v. "al-Qā'im." Note the reference to the "dawn in the west" in a poem probably composed by Abū'l-Tayyib al-Tāhirī (Tha'alībī, *Yatīma*, part 4, vol. ii, p. 69); alternatively, these lines might conceivably have been written by Ḥasan (sic= Ḥusayn) ibn 'Alī al-Marwarrūdhī (=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 348/959-60.

87 *EI*<sup>2</sup>, s.v. "Qarmatī".

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

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88 W. Madelung, "Abū Ya'qūb al-Sijistānī and metempsychosis", *Acta Iranica*, vol. xvi, Leiden, 1990, pp. 139f.

89 Cf. the criticism of Rūdakī, Shāhīd Balkhī and Muṣ'abī in the commentary on Jurjānī's treatise (Lazard, *Premiers poètes*, p. 24).

90 His predecessor Ḥusayn ibn 'Alī became chief *dā'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 Khurāsān, went to Bukhārā (*Siyar al-mulūk*, 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 Naṣr 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.

91 Madelung, "Abu Ya'qūb al-Sijistānī", p. 132.

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in crisis, as they had been during much of Naṣr's reign. On a more immediate level, the spate of natural disasters which befell the *mashriq*, and Bukhārā in particular, late in Naṣr'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 Nasafī's call. It is a possibility that the state elite had more worldly, political motives for adopting Ismā'īlism.

An example of two earlier rulers who may have adopted Ismā'īlism for political motives is to be found in the biographies of the Daylamī Asfār and the Jīlī Mardāwīj. 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

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92 In 323/934-5 severe famine struck Khurāsān (see above, chapter 2, note 19); fire twice ravaged Bukhara, first in 314/926-7 and again in 325/936-7 "when the fire burned two days and nights...they were never able to restore the buildings of Bukhara as they had been previously" (Narshakhi, *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 Ismā'īlism and their political ambitions. However Ṣūlī reports that Mardāwīj was planning to collaborate with the Qarmaṭīs of Bahrayn in the overthrow of the 'Abbāsīd caliphate towards the end of his life. Now even though Stern has cast doubt on the veracity of the report by pointing out that Mardāwīj had carried out a savage persecution of the sect shortly before his death (95), the fact that Ismā'īlīs aimed at the overthrow of orthodox Islam, as did Mardāwīj himself, means that such a connection was entirely plausible, whether or not Mardāwīj ever put it into practice (96).

It is legitimate to speculate that the Sāmānīd Ismā'īlīs were following the same path. There were good reasons why the Sāmānīds might have decided to abandon their policy of allegiance to the caliphate at this time. In the 930's the 'Abbāsīd caliphate went into

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94 Cf. chapter 5, p. 162.

95 Stern, *ibid*, p. 203: reference from al-Ṣūlī, *Akhbār al-rāḍi wa 'l-muttaqī*, ed. Heyworth Dunne, p. 20.

96 Already before Mardāwīj's time, Ismā'īlī missionaries had embraced Persian nationalist sentiments to win the hearts of new converts; Abu Sa'īd al-Jannābī played on the latent anti-Arabism of the Persians to whom he preached and told them that God hated the Arabs for killing Ḥusayn 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, *Memoire sur les Carmathes du Bahrain et les Fatimides*, Leiden, 1886, p. 33, citing de Sacy, *Introduction*, p. 136f; cited by Spuler, *Iran in Fruh-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 Iraqī Qarmatīs (97). For the Sāmānid court, well-informed as it was about events in the west by the Khurāsānī pilgrim caravans and the Sāmānid agent at the 'Abbāsīd court, it may have seemed as if it were only a matter of time before Asfār's dream came true and the caliphate was destroyed altogether. The Sāmānids' adoption of the Ismā'īlī heresy may have been an attempt to find a new legitimacy formula at a time when the authority<sup>of</sup> caliphal legitimation was becoming debased. The efflorescence of Persian poetry at Naṣr'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 Naṣr's reign at present that the literary "renaissance" and the spread of Ismā'īlism were causally connected, it cannot have been a coincidence that the two developments emerged during the same reign (98).

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97 In 317/930 the Bahrayni Qarmatīs 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 *mamlūk* Mu'nis and the way was opened for the assumption of supreme power in Baghdad by the Turkish *amir al-'umara'* Ibn Rā'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 Ismā'īlī sympathies of Rūdakī and some of his patrons, it is possible that the literary "renaissance" was more closely connected with the emergence of Ismā'īlism in Bukhāra from the start (Cf. Mirzayef, *Abū 'abdallāh rūdakī ve athar-i manzūm-i rūdakī*, Stalinabad, 1958, pp. 307-316).

Chapter seven

THE LATER SĀMĀNIDS (331/443-365/476) THE REIGNS OF NŪH,  
'ABDALMALIK AND MANSŪR

Provincial affairs: Transoxania

In 332/943-44, soon after his accession, Nūh ibn Naṣr had to deal with a revolt in Khwārazm, led by a rebel named 'Abdallāh ibn Ashkāṁ (1). Nūh sent Ibrāhīm ibn Bāris (2) against him, but he died en route to Khwārazm. Faced with the threat of Sāmānid military retaliation, 'Abdallāh ibn Ashkāṁ sought the protection of "the king of the Turks", but Nūh persuaded the latter not to respond to

*Ibn Ashkāṁ's appeal and offered in exchange to release the Turkish ruler's son who was at that time a hostage in the Sāmānid capital. Thereupon Ibn Ashkāṁ ended his revolt and came to Bukhārā where he was forgiven his misdeeds and well treated.*

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

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1 Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, vol. viii, p. 415. Although Jūzjānī would have us believe that Ibn Ashkāṁ was a Khwārazmshāh, no member of the dynasty bearing this name is known in any other source (Jūzjānī, *Tabaqāt-i nāsiri*, 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 *ghulam* who fled to Baghdad at the beginning of Nūh's reign (see above, chapter 4, p. 119f); or perhaps Abū Ishāq Ibrāhīm ibn Fāris al-Kundurī who had been appointed governor of Herāt in 320 (Isfizārī, *Herāt*, p. 384).

3 See below, p. 216.

*he is identical with*

hold out against the Sāmānids for 3 years, campaigning in the vicinity of his home province, Ṣaghāniyān, 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 Īlāq, 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 Sāmānids to accept a truce. From the time of <sup>the</sup> 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 Muhtājīd Abū 'Alī Ṣaghānī, who had been appointed governor of

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4 Gardīzi names him Ahmad ibn Ja'far (Zayn, p. 157). It is not known if he was related to the Banijurīd 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 Buttamān 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 Sāmānids 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 Būyid 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.

Khurāsān by Naṣr. Relations between Abū 'Alī and Nūh began to turn sour as soon as Nūh came to power. In 333/944 Nūh took unprecedented steps to curtail Abū 'Alī'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 Būyid city in the previous year (9); Nūh appointed both an 'arīd to oversee military matters and an official with wide-ranging powers to take charge of the "affairs of the (military) dīwān" (10). In Ramadān 333/April-May 944, the same month that Abū 'Alī drove Rukn al-Dawla out of Rayy and occupied the city, he learned that he had been dismissed from his post as governor of Khurāsān in favour of Abū Ishāq Ibrāhīm Sīmjurī (11). Abū 'Alī reacted by sending his brother Abū'l-'Abbās Fadl to take over the cities of Hamadān, Nihāwand and Dīnawar (12). Within twelve months Abū 'Alī was heading back towards Khurāsān, intent on overthrowing Nūh and replacing him with the Sāmānid pretender Ibrāhīm ibn Ahmad.

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

9 Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, vol. viii, p. 443.

10 Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, vol. viii, p. 458. The overseer of the dīwān was invested with the powers of *al-hall wa al-'aqd wa al-itlaq* (the powers of loosening and binding and payment of soldiers).

11 Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, vol. viii, p. 444.

12 It is not clear whether these cities had previously been under 'Abbāsīd or Sāmānid control; either way, it is clear that Abū 'Alī 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 'ārīd; according to Sallāmī he only accepted their proposal to summon Ibrāhīm ibn Ahmad 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. Khwādamīr says that he turned against Nūh because he objected to the actions of Nūh's new wazir, Abū'l-Faḍl Muḥammad ibn Ahmad al-Sulamī (14), who had ordered the appointment of the 'ārīd (15). A third and independent account, that of the Iraqī historian, Miskawayh, which Ibn al-Athīr summarizes (16), portrays the whole incident as the result of a carefully executed Būyid plot to throw the Sāmānids into disarray, which was condoned by the Hamdānid amir, Nāsir al-Dawla (17). From its inception, 'Imād al-Dawla, the eldest of the three Būyid brothers and the chief of the Būyid 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 a 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

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14 Khwādamīr, *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).

16 Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, vol. viii, pp. 463f; see Miskawayh, *Eclipse*, vol. ii, pp. 100-104.

17 Miskawayh, *Eclipse*, vol. ii, p. 101.

and sent a messenger to ratify his agreement with the Būyid. 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 Nūḥ, whose hostile intentions were by now known to him. In this way the Būyids managed to set in train the chain of events which led to the occupation of Bukhārā by the Sāmānid pretender, Ibrāhīm. The Būyid 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 'Abbāsīd capital Baghdad in the same year.

When he heard that Abū 'Alī and Ibrāhīm had joined forces in Rayy, Nūḥ 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). Nūḥ 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 Naysābūr in Muharram 335/ Aug - Sep 946 where he came into contact with Ibrāhīm ibn Sīmjur

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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): Ibrāhīm b. Simcur", *Tarih Enstitüsü Dergisi*, p. 95). Yet Gardīzī says that he had squandered 60 million dirhams on the *hashm* (Gardīzī, *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 Khwādamīr, *Dastūr al-vuzarā'*, p. 109.

and Mansūr ibn Qarātegīn 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 Jumādā II 335/December 946-January 947 Abū 'Alī occupied the Sāmānid capital and made the *khutba* there for Ibrāhīm ibn Ahmad: the Bukhārāns, 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 Mutī', who was acting under instructions from the Būyids (23). Mutī's endorsement of Ibrāhīm's rule led directly to a breakdown in relations between the Sāmānids and the caliph; from 335 until early in 'Abdalmalik's reign,

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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 Naysābūr 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 Sīmjur and Mansūr were taken prisoner by Abū 'Alī on his arrival in Naysābūr (*Eclipse*, vol. ii, p. 102).

22 Ibn al-Athīr, *ibid*, vol. viii, p. 460.

23 Ibn Zāfir, *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.

Muṭī's name was omitted from the Sāmānids' coinage and replaced by that of the former caliph, Mustakfī (333/944-334/946) (24).

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

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24 See S. Lane-Poole, *Catalogue of the Oriental Coins in the British Museum*, vol. ii, p. 98, no. 359 (AR Bukhārā 335 A.H.), which bears the names of Nūh and Muṭī: in the same year Mustakfī's name appears on Nūh's dirhams (cf. Tornberg, *Numi Cufici*, pp. 227f, nos. 502 and 506). Most dirhams minted after this date during Nūh's reign bear Mustakfī's name: exceptions include Samarqand 336/947 (cf. Tiesenhausen, "Ob Samanidskykh Monetakh", p. 194, sub anno 336) and Balkh 343/954 (cf. Tornberg, *Numi Cufici*, p. 236, no. 553). Mustakfī continued to be recognized on the early coinage of 'Abdalmalik's reign: cf. the dirham of 344/955, (Lane-Poole, *ibid*, p. 104, no. 386). After Mustakfī had died, the caliph's name temporarily disappeared altogether from Sāmānid coinage: cf. Busse, *Chalif und Grosskönig*, Beirut, 1969, p. 28, note 1, citing Zambaur, "Nouvelles contributions à la numismatique Orientale", *Numismatische Zeitschrift*, vol. xxxvii, 1914, p. 125 and A.K. Markov, *Inventarny Katalog musul'manskykh monet Imperatorskago Ermitazha*, St. Petersburg, 1896, no. 884, p. 150. The earliest coin bearing Muṭī's name in 'Abdalmalik's reign was a dirham minted in Bukhārā in 346/957-8, cf. Tornberg, *Numi Cufici* p. 238, no. 563.

25 Ibn Zāfir, *Duwal*, fol. 126b. Gardīzī only mentions that the people of Bukhārā planned to seize Abū 'Alī (*Zayn*, p. 156).

26 Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, vol. viii, p. 460.

27 Ibn al-Athīr, *ibid*: Ibn Zāfir, *Duwal*, fol. 126b; Miskawayh, *Eclipse*, vol. ii, p. 103. Miskawayh says that Ibrāhīm persuaded Mansūr ibn Qarātegin and Ibrāhīm ibn Sīmjur to back him against Abū 'Alī; according to him, it was these two generals who won the troops over to Ibrāhīm's plan.

threatened to put Bukhārā to the torch, but the Bukhāran *mashāyikh* pleaded with him to spare the city. Abū 'Alī then looked to another member of the Sāmānid family, Nūh's brother, Abū Ja'far Muḥammad ibn Naṣr ibn Aḥmad, 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 Naysābūr, which was abandoned by its governor, Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al-razzāq, lord of Tūs (32), who sought refuge with the Būyid Rukn al-Dawla in Rayy. A second army led by Abū'l-'Abbās Faḍl al-Ṣaghānī, Abū 'Alī's brother, who had

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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 Naṣr 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 "Turkistān". Given that Abū 'Alī's later area of operations was the district Balkh and its environs, "Turkistan" is probably a mistake for "Tukhāristān".

30 Also blinded by Nūh was Aḥmad, another brother of his, whose role in the rebellion is not recorded (Ibn al-Athīr, ibid, p. 461). At the same time Nūh killed Ṭughān al-ḥājib (Gardīzī, *Zayn*, p. 155); he may be the same person as Abū Bakr Ṭughār (=Ṭughān?) the ḥājib, *mawla* of Abū Ibrāhīm (Ismā'īl ibn Aḥmad), twice governor of Herāt (Isfizārī, *Tārīkh-i herāt*, p. 384).

31 This governor was Abū Aḥmad Muḥammad ibn 'Alī al-Qazvīnī; Gardīzī has Aḥmad 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 Naysābūr when Abū 'Alī left the city for Bukhārā in 335/946-7. In the same year he fended off an attack on Naysābūr by Abū'l-'Abbās Faḍl, brother of Abū 'Alī, who had defected from the rebel cause.

defected to Nūh's camp, was sent against Abū 'Alī himself. Abū 'Alī was ready to make peace with Nūh but the plan was rejected by some of his supporters (33). The loyalists were victorious in Jumādā I 336/ *Nov-Dec* 947 in a battle fought near Balkh (34). Abū 'Alī again retreated to Ṣaghāniyān, where he summoned help from the neighbouring amir of Khuttal (35) and once again headed for Jūzjān (36).

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

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33 Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, vol. viii, p. 462.

34 Gardīzī, *Zayn*, p. 156f. After this battle some of Abū 'Alī's supporters were taken prisoner by the Sāmānids, including Ismā'īl ibn Ḥasan al-dā'ī (thus Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, vol. viii, p. 462; Gardīzī has Ismā'īl ibn Abī'l-Ḥasan [Zayn, p. 156]). He was probably a son of Ḥasan ibn Qāsim, the Zaydī dā'ī of Ṭabaristan (for Ḥasan ibn Qāsim, see chapter 5, p. 161; Ibn 'Inaba mentions that Ḥasan had 8 sons, but he only mentions the name of one of them, Abū 'Abdallāh Muḥammad [id, *Umdat al-tālib*, p. 61]). Gardīzī also mentions a number of Daylamīs among Abū 'Alī's supporters who sought pardon from Nūh'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 Abū 'Alī and the Sāmānids after the departure of the former from Bukhārā, 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 Sāmānids.

35 See above, p. 212.

36 Gardīzī, *Zayn*, p. 157; Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, vol. viii, p. 463.

37 Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, vol. viii, p. 463. Gardīzī says that the battle took place "2 farsakhs from Chaghāniyān", and mistakenly dates it Rabī' I 336 (Zayn, p. 157).

Īlāq and the Kumījī Turks trapped their opponents and forced them to conclude a truce in Jumādā II

337/ Dec 948 - Jan 949. . . .

During Abū 'Alī's rebellion, the Būyids had taken advantage of the turmoil in Khurāsān to establish themselves in Rayy at the expense of Washmgīr the Ziyārid. This was bound to alarm the Sāmānids who had until now been able to maintain a tenuous control over the city through their Daylamī and Jīlī proxies. Thus even while the war with Abū 'Alī was still raging, Nūh appointed Mansūr ibn Qarātegīn governor of Khurāsān and ordered him to retake the Caspian provinces and restore them to Washmgīr. Mansūr marched on Jurjān in 337 in company with Washmgīr but the two leaders quarrelled and Mansūr was troubled by news which reached him from Bukhārā; Jurjān was retaken for Washmgīr, but Mansūr withdrew to Naysābūr without having claimed the major prize of Rayy (38).

In Šafar 338/~~August~~ 949 Mansūr ibn Qarātegīn again set off for Rayy on Nūh's orders and this time took the city

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38 Ibn al-Athīr gives a curious reason for Mansūr's decision to abandon Jurjān (*Kāmil*, vol. viii, p. 478). Nūh had recently taken in marriage the daughter of Khatkīn, the lord of Bust and Rukhkhaj and *mawlā* of Qarātegīn, having already married one of Mansūr's daughters to a *mawlā* of his, Fatkīn. Mansūr's cause for concern is not clear; did he fear that Nūh was showing greater favour to the Turks of Bust (who were closely associated with Mansūr's father Qarātegīn) by giving their amir a blood relation of his in marriage, than he had to Mansūr whose daughter had been married to a mere *mawlā* of the Sāmānids? Was he anxious that the Sāmānids were thereby trying to undermine the existing links between the Qarātegīn family and their Turkish *mawālī* by exerting their own direct patronage over these *mawālī*?

from Rukn al-Dawla's deputy (39). From there he launched an attack on Rukn al-Dawla; Ibn Athīr tells us that he could have destroyed his opponent if he had attacked him immediately, but chose instead the more cautious tactic of occupying Iṣfahān prior to engaging the Būyid army (40). This gave Rukn al-Dawla time to overcome the problems he was having with his troops and engage Mansūr's army. Eventually Mansūr retreated to Rayy because his own troops were beginning to complain of the lack of provisions (41).

In Rabī' I 340/ *Aug-Sep* 951 Mansūr died, having apparently lost control of the Khurāsānī army which returned to Naysābūr in the same year (42). Shortly before his death Mansūr ibn Qarātegin had asked Nūh to relieve him of the governorship of Khurāsān because he was unable to control his soldiers who were causing much damage to the countryside around Naysābūr. Nūh asked Abū 'Alī to resume his old post; he arrived in Naysābūr in Dhū'l-Hijja 340 (43). Two years later, in Rabī' I 342/ *July-Aug* 953, he was instructed to attack Rayy again and restore Jurjān to Washmgīr who had recently been expelled from the province (44). But he was unable to break through the city's defences before the onset of

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39 Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, vol. viii, 486. Rukn al-Dawla had gone to Fārs immediately after his brother's death in Jumādā II-Rajab 338/December 949 to ensure his own succession to the position of senior amir (Miskawayh, *Eclipse*, vol. ii, p. 137; *Cambridge history of Iran*, vol. iv, p. 262).

40 Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, vol. viii, p. 487.

41 Ibn al-Athīr, *ibid*, p. 488.

42 Ibn al-Athīr, *ibid*, p. 493.

43 Ibn al-Athīr, *ibid*, p. 493.

44 Ibn al-Athīr, *ibid*, p. 499.

winter and was forced to sue for peace with Rukn al-Dawla (45). The terms of the treaty concluded with the Būyid were that he would retain control of Rayy in return for the payment of an annual sum of 200,000 dinars to the Sāmānids (46).

Once again the loser in this Sāmānid-Būyid rapprochement was the Ziyārid Washmgīr who had been driven back to Isfarā'in by Rukn al-Dawla after the conclusion of the treaty. He complained to Nūh that Abū 'Alī had failed to carry out his orders and had accepted the Būyid terms too readily. Nūh, who had no doubt long been suspicious of Abū 'Alī's contacts with the Būyids, dismissed Abū 'Alī for the second time and replaced him with Abū Sa'id Bakr ibn Mālik al-Farghānī (47).

A group of Naysābūrī notables pleaded Abū 'Alī's case before Nūh, but to no avail. Abū 'Alī subsequently made the *khutba* in Naysābūr 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 Naysābūr with Būyid help, entering the city and making the *khutba* for the caliph Muṭī', the

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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 Sāmānid state elite, s.v. "Bakr ibn Mālik". According to Mar'ashī, Rukn al-Dawla's response to Abū 'Alī's dismissal was to withdraw Nūh's name from the *khutba* in Rayy (Mar'ashī, *Tārīkh-i ṭabaristān ū ruyān ū māzandarān*, ed. Tasbihi, Tehran, 1345, p. 77); Mar'ashī is the only source to suggest that the terms of the treaty included Būyid acknowledgement of Sāmānid sovereignty.

48 Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, vol. viii, p. 505.

first time the latter had been acknowledged there (49). A Būyid army was dispatched to help him secure his position but failed to reach the city before Abū 'Alī was forced to abandon it in Sha'bān 343/ December ..... 954 in the face of an attack from Bakr ibn Mālik (50), two months after the death of Nūḥ. Abū 'Alī fled back to Rayy, helping Rukn al-Dawla to eject Washmgīr from Jurjān en route (51); in 344/955-6 he died in an epidemic of plague (52).

Having retaken Naysābūr for the Sāmānids, Bakr ibn Mālik took the offensive against the Būyids, seeking retribution for their support for Abū 'Alī Saḡhānī. While he set off towards Rayy, his deputy commander occupied Būyid Iṣfahān (53) for a few months before being driven out by a Būyid army in Rabī' I 344/June-July 955 (54). The Sāmānid thrust had the intended effect of showing Rukn al-Dawla that the new Sāmānid 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 Būyids now set the seal on their

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49 Ibn al-Athīr, *ibid*, p. 507.

50 Ibn Zāfir says that this army left Baghdad in early Jumāda II 343/ October 954, two months after Nūḥ's death (*Duwal*, fol. 126bf.)

51 Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, vol. viii, p. 509. Thus by the end of Nūḥ's reign, Washmgīr 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 Muṭī' agreed to the payment of a similar amount from Rayy every year (Ibn Zāfir, *ibid*, fol. 127b). However Gardīzī says that Muṭī' expressed his dissatisfaction with the treaty in private

reconciliation with the Sāmānids by instructing the caliph to send the *khila'* and the *liwā'* to 'Abdalmalik (56).

Over the next five years, the governorship of Khurāsān changed hands frequently. In Ramadān 345/Dec 956-Jan 957 Bakr ibn Mālik was assassinated in Bukhārā (57) and the chief *hājib* Alptegīn (58) appointed Bakr's deputy, Abū'l-Hasan Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm ibn Sīmjūr, in his place (59). Three and a half years later, in Jumādā II 349/July-Aug 960, Abū'l-Hasan was dismissed and accused of abusing his office (60). His replacement was Abū Mansūr Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al-razzāq, who had returned from his sojourn with the Būyids to Tūs in 338/449-50 and had been pardoned by the Sāmānid amir for his part in

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to Rukn al-Dawla; *muṭī' nāme-yi nevesht be-ḥasan (ibn) būyā, ve in sulh muwāḍa'at az vey napasandīd ve goft an 'atā-īlashgar-i Khurāsān-ast har sāl az qarār sanne-yi arba' ve arba'in ve thalāthmī'a (Zayn, p. 160).*

56 Miskawayh says that Bakr ibn Mālik's nephew came to Baghdad in company with a representative of Rukn al-Dawla's, bearing a message from 'Abdalmalik, requesting the *khila'* and *liwā'* for Khurāsān in 'Abdalmalik's name. Muṭī' complied with the Sāmānid's request and added the robes of a *nadīm* as a sign of special favour to 'Abdalmalik (*Eclipse*, vol. v, p. 172 = vol. ii, p. 161).

The restoration of amicable relations between the caliphate and the Sāmānids is confirmed by the return of the caliph's title, absent since the beginning of Nuḥ's reign, to Sāmānid coinage in 346 (see above, note 18).

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

58 See below, appendix; the Sāmānid state elite, s.v. "Alptegīn".

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

60 Gardīzī, *Zayn*, p. 160: *abū'l-ḥasan...setamhā-yi besyār kard...*

Abū 'Alī's rebellion in 336 (61). Abū Mansūr performed his tasks as governor ably and conscientiously but was himself replaced as *sipahsālār* of Khurāsān by Alptegīn on 20 Dhū'l-Hijja 349/11 February 961. Ibn 'Abd al-razzaq 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 Alptegīn from the capital and the governorship of Khurāsān was the only post which Alptegīn would accept (63). In the same year that Alptegīn was appointed, 'Abdalmalik executed the senior (Turkish) amir, Najtakīn; his death caused much unrest in the province (64).

Alptegīn'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 Alptegīn to ask

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61 Cf. Minorsky, "The older preface to the "Shah-name", *Studi orientalistici in onore di Giorgio Levi della Vida*, ii, p. 165.

62 Gardīzī, *Zayn*, p. 161. For Ibn 'Abd al-razzaq's renewed relations with the Būyids, see Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, vol. viii, p. 533.

63 Before agreeing to his assumption of the governorship of Khurāsān, 'Abdalmalik had tried to appoint Alptegīn to the governorship of Balkh, a post which Alptegīn refused, as he considered it beneath his dignity as a former *hājib al-hujjāb* (Gardīzī, *Zayn*, p. 161). However the coinage does indicate that Alptegīn was at one time governor of Tukhāristān; a dirham struck at Andarāba in 347/958<sup>9</sup> bears his name (cf. M. Mitchiner, *The multiple dirhems of medieval Afghanistan*, p. 28).

64 Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, vol. viii, p. 532. See below, note 102 for the possible identification of this amir with Najah, 'Abdalmalik's guardian.

him whom he would nominate for the throne (65). Alptegīn recommended that one of 'Abdalmalik's sons, probably Naṣr, should succeed. In the meantime, however, the Bukhāran ḥashm 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 Dhū'l-Qa'da 350/December 961-January 962 Alptegīn left Naysābūr, pursued by Ibn 'Abd al-Razzāq's army (67).

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65 Gardīzī, *Zayn*, p. 161.

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 (*Tārīkh-i bukhāra*, 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 'Abbāsīd caliph? That he was known as Mansūr from the beginning of his reign is evident from the eulogy addressed to him on his accession by the poet al-Hazīmī (cf. Tha'alibi, *Yatīma*, vol. ii, part 4, p. 121f).

67 Gardīzī, *Zayn*, p. 162. Narshakhī says that Ash'ath ibn Muḥammad 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 (*Tārīkh-i bukhāra*, p. 135 = p. 99). Neither the sequence of events, nor Ash'ath's part in them, is corroborated by other sources.

Alptegīn 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 Sāmānid service (68).

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

He remained governor of Naysābūr for the next 21 years. Within five years of his arrival there, we hear of renewed activity against the Būyids of Rayy. In Ramaḍān 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 Sāmānids, came close to taking Rayy

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

69 Gardizī says that Washmgīr paid Yuhannā, Ibn 'Abd al-razzāq's doctor, to poison him and that he was killed in battle against Abū'l-Ḥasan Sīmjurī while in a weakened state from the effects of this poison (*Zayn*, p. 162). Washmgīr was presumably hostile to Abu Mansur because the latter had condoned the recent Būyid occupation of Jurjān (see above, note 62).

70 See below, p. 233.

from the Būyids (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 Būyid army to accompany them. As the Būyid 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 Būyid forces drove the *ghāzīs* out of their territory.

Two years after the *ghāzī* assault on Rayy, Abū'l-Ḥasan Sīmjur led an abortive Sāmānid attack on the city (72). As had often been the case in the past, so too now the Sāmānids were dragged into conflict with the Būyids by their vassals. In 356/967 the Ilyāsīd Abū 'Alī Muhammad ibn Ilyās fled Kirmān for Bukhārā after quarrelling with his son and successor Alī sa' (73); he persuaded Mansūr to attack Rayy, telling him that his generals and deputies were failing to maintain Sāmānid interests in the region and were accepting bribes from the Būyids. Abū 'Alī's recommendation was supported by Washmgīr who was ever eager to enlist Sāmānid support for his campaign to retake Ṭabaristān and Jurjān. Mansūr ordered Abū'l-Ḥasan Sīmjur to lead his army against Rayy under the overall command of Washmgīr. Washmgīr however died

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71 Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, vol. viii, pp. 569ff; Miskawayh, in *Eclipse*, vol. ii, p. 223, noted in Mottahedeh, *Loyalty and leadership*, p. 34.

72 Gardīzī, *Zayn*, p. 162; Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, vol. viii, p. 577.

73 Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, vol. viii, p. 586.

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 Washmgīr defected to the Būyids. It seems that Abū'l-Hasan had backed Bīsūtūn's brother, Qābūs, 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 Sāmānids' 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 361/971<sup>2</sup> Abū'l-Hasan redeemed his past mistakes by arranging a third treaty between Mansūr and Rukn al-Dawla and his son, 'Adud al-Dawla, which stipulated payment of 150,000/200,000 dinars per annum by the Būyids to the Sāmānids (77); judging from the sum

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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 Muḥarram 357 (Zayn, p. 163; *Eclipse*, vol. ii, p. 233).

75 Ibn Isfandiyār, *Tārīkh-i tabaristān*, vol. ii, p. 4.

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 Naysāburī dirhams (*Tārīkh-i bukhārā*, p. 135 = p. 99). Gardīzī mentions the sum of 200,000 dinars per annum and says that the wazirs (Abū Ja'far) 'Utbī and Abū'l-Faḍl ibn al-'Amīd, wazir of Rukn al-Dawla, were the architects of the treaty (Zayn, p. 164). Ibn al-'Amīd died in 360, so the preparatory peace negotiations must have taken place in the late 960's. M. Kabir mistakenly claims that the Būyids were not required to pay tribute by the terms of the treaty, citing a letter written by Ibrāhīm ibn Hilāl al-Sābi', on behalf of 'Izz al-Dawla's wazir, Abū'l-Faḍl 'Abbās ibn Husayn al-Shīrāzī, to 'Adud al-Dawla (*The Buwayhid dynasty of Baghdad*, p. 46; Shakib Arslan al-Lubnani, *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 Tabaristān and Jurjān. At the same time arrangements were made for the marriage of 'Adud al-Dawla's daughter to a Sāmānid prince, probably Nūh ibn Mansūr, the son and successor of Mansūr.

### Sīstān

In Sīstān, the Saffārid Abū Ja'far Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Khalaf overcame an attempt to seize the Saffārid throne in c. 341/952-3 by another scion of the Saffārid family, Abū'l-'Abbās ibn Tāhir ibn Muhammad ibn 'Amr ibn Layth with the help of the Turks of Bust (78). Abū Ja'far continued to rule Sīstān

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*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 Tabaristān in return for the payment of 1000 dinars a day (*Tabaqāt-i nāsiri*, vol. i, p. 211). Jūzjānī says that 'Adud al-Dawla concluded this agreement with Mansūr after his capture of Baghdad 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. Muqaddasī says that the Būyids were still paying 200,000 dinars per annum to the Sāmānids in his time (*Aḥsan*, 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 Saffārid ruling house through his father, whereas Abū Ja'far could only claim Saffārid descent through the maternal line (*Tārīkh-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 Ḥafṣ ibn Muḥammad 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, Ṭāhir ibn Muḥammad, 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 liwā' for Sīstān (83). When Khalaf returned to Sīstān in the following year, he found that Ṭāhir had seized power and refused him entry to the capital. Khalaf applied for aid from

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79 *Tārīkh-i sīstān*, p. 326 = p. 267.

80 *Tārīkh-i sīstān*, *ibid*: he may have been identical with Abū Ḥafṣ 'Amr ibn Ya'qūb ibn Muḥammad ibn 'Amr who had been put on the Ṣaffārid throne as a boy during Mawlā Ṣandālī's rebellion (see above, chapter 4, p. 115).

81 *Tārīkh-i sīstān*, p. 328 = p. 269.

82 Cf. *Tārīkh-i sīstān*, p. 327 = p. 268, where he is named Ṭāhir-i Abī 'Alī, a maternal relative of Khalaf (Ṭāhir's mother was the daughter of Muḥammad ibn Abū'l-Ḥusayn ibn 'Alī ibn Layth). He is identical with Abū'l-Ḥusayn Ṭāhir ibn Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad 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 Ṣāmānid ruler. Ibn al-Athīr names him Ṭāhir ibn Ḥusayn (*Kāmil*, 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 Aḥmad of Sīstān", *Newsletter of the Oriental Numismatic Society*, September 1988.) Evidence for the assertion made in this article that coins minted by Khalaf before 382/992<sup>3</sup> 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 Rabīʿ I 362/Dec 972<sup>Jan 973</sup>; the defeated rebel, Ḥusayn ibn Tāhir, 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 Sāmānid campaign was mounted against Rayy at the instigation of the Ilyāsīd Abū '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 Būyīd presence in the province, thus bringing to an end the rule of the Ilyāsīd dynasty which had governed Kirmān from 320/930 (87).

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

85 *Tārīkh-i sīstān*, p. 334 = p. 273.

86 See below, chapter 8, p. 244.

87 Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, vol. viii, pp. 586f.; C.E. Bosworth, "The Banū Ilyās of Kirmān", *Iran and Islam*, ed. Bosworth, Edinburgh, 1971, *passim*.

### Relations with the steppe

The Sāmānids did not engage the armies of the steppe Turks during this period, although, as the affair of Ibn Ashkān indicates, they still thought it prudent to take precautions against the Turkish threat. Miskawayh, Ibn al-Athīr and Ibn Zāfir 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 Qarākhānids at large, Pritsak suggests that the conversions took place among the eastern Qarākhānid tribes which were coming under pressure from the western Qarākhānids, 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 Sūfīs and Shī'īs played a major role, Madelung's counter-argument is persuasive; he says that the Turks were more likely converted by orthodox Hanafīs, particularly those of the Māturīdī school of Samarqand (90).

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88 Miskawayh, *Eclipse*, vol. ii, p. 181; Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, vol. viii, p. 532; Ibn Zāfir, *Duwal*, fols. 127bf.  
 89 Pritsak, "Von den Karluk zu den Karachaniden", *ZDMG*, vol. ci, 1951, p. 296. Pritsak's hypothesis for the early conversion of the western Qarākhānid khāns is based on the unreliable account of the Kāshgārī writer, Jamāl al-Qarshī (cf. Barthold, *Turkistan*, p. 51f). While there may well be a kernel of historical truth in the latter's garbled account of Satuq's conversion, Pritsak's suggestion that the Qarākhānid Bughrakhan had fought for the Sāmānids against the Zaydī general, Līlī ibn Nu'mān, in 922, is untenable (see appendix; the Sāmānid state elite; s.v. "Bughrā al-kabīr").  
 90 Cf. W. Madelung, "The spread of Māturīdism and the Turks", *Actas do iv congresso de estudos arabes e islamicos*, Leiden, 1971, pp. 119-124. Madelung points

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 Sāmānid 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 349. What we can say is that there is evidence of a *ghāzī* presence in the *mashriq* after ~~that date~~ (94) and that on at least one occasion, *ghāzī*

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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 thughrāni 'alā'l-turkmāniyyīn alladhīna qad aslamū ruḥbatan, qad khariba ḥiṣnuhā* (id, *Aḥsan*, 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 Hamdānid 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-mulūk, *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 Nuḥ ibn Mansūr (Gardīzī, *Zayn*, p. 165).

forces even fought for the Sāmānids, not against the infidel in the *Dār al-harb*, but against their old enemies, the Būyids of Rayy (95).

### The state elite

In this period members of the Sāmānid family seem to have made something of a come-back in government circles after the debacle of Naṣr's reign. At least one, if not two, members of the royal house held the governorship of Farghāna. During 'Abdalmalik's reign, the town of Qubā in Farghāna, was governed by Abū Yahyā Ash'ath ibn Muhammad al-Sāmānī (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 Akhsīkath in Farghāna in 358/968-9 (98).

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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 Kub'y", *Sovetskaya Arkheologiya*, 1960, no. 2, pp. 254-257). For his biography, see appendix; the Sāmānid state elite.

97 Cf. *Siyar al-mulūk*, p. 299 = p. 221, where he is named Abū Yahyā ibn Ash'ath. He is also named as governor of Farghāna in Mansūr's reign on the colophon of a manuscript of Fārābī's *Diwān 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; fils of Farghāna dated 358. On the reverse margin is *mimma amara bihi al-amīr ahmad ibn mansūr mawla amīr al-mu'minin*. On the reverse field is the laqab of Mansūr b. Nūh, *al-malik al-muzaffar*. An amir 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 'Abdalmalik to the throne in 343 (100). It was certainly Mansūr's guardian, Fā'iq, who brought him to the throne in 350 after deposing Mansūr's nephew, Naṣr ibn 'Abdalmalik, who had seized the throne on his father's death (101).

Both 'Abdalmalik 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*, Alptegīn, who assumed control of affairs in the capital after he had murdered the governor of Khurasan, Bakr ibn Mālik

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99 Muqaddasī's laconic statement is: *wa qad adāfa (nūh) thalātha min banihi ilā thalātha min al-khadam 'abd al-malik ilā najāh wa mansūran ilā fā'iq wa nasran ilā zarīf* (Ahsan, p. 337). This calls to mind the Saljuq system of putting tutors (*atābegs*) in charge of their princes.

100 ...*fa ajlasū 'abd al-malik...* (Muqaddasī, Ahsan, p. 337).

101 Muqaddasī reports that Naṣr ruled for one day before being deposed by Fā'iq; *fa-ajlasū 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 'Abdalmalik's accession, he did not retain his influence thereafter. See above, note 64, for the death of Najtakīn in 349/960-1 (Ibn al-Athīr, Kāmil, vol. viii, p. 532). Could "Najtakīn" 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 Bukhārā (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 Sīmjurids began their lengthy domination of the province in 'Abdalmalik's reign. It would <sup>be</sup> 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 Bukhārā 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 'Alī Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad

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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); Bukhārā 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 (Bukhārā and Shāsh).

105 Bukhārā 347 and 348 - Fatkīn (murderer of Bakr ibn Mālik in Bukhārā in 345?; see appendix; the Sāmānid state elite, s.v. "Bakr ibn Mālik") (Mitchiner, *ibid*, p. 32); Samarqand 353 - Bughrā (ibid, p. 34); Bukhārā 351-6 - Bughrā Bek (ibid, p. 32); Qubā (Farghāna) 356 - Mansūr ibn Baiqrā (E.A. Davidovich, "Samanidskie Monety Kuby", p. 256; files of Qubā bearing the name of Mansūr b. Nuḥ. The reverse marginal legend has: *mimma amara bihi al-amir mansur b. ba'iqra al-hajib...*).

106 Cf. Ibn 'Abd al-razzaq (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 Naṣr's reign and their biographies are almost entirely unknown. The exception was Nūh's first wazir, Abū'l-Faḍl Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Sulamī. He was appointed to the post soon after Nūh's accession, probably as *the leader* of an orthodox reaction to the Ismā'īlī conversions of Naṣr's reign. Sulamī was remarkable in that he was the only *faqīh* to hold the wazirate in Sāmānid history. He was a former Hanafī qāḍī 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 Aḥmad (110). He was probably succeeded as wazir by Abū 'Alī Bal'amī (111).

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107 Gardīzī, *Zayn*, p. 161.

108 Laknāwī, *Kitāb al-fawā'id al-bāhiya fi tarājim al-Hanafiyya*, ed. al-Na'sani, Cairo, 1906, p. 185.

109 Cf. Tha'alībī, *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 *kuttāb*, Abū 'Alī Bal'amī and Abū Ja'far 'Utbi, who had briefly held office under 'Abdalmalik (113). In 363-4/974 Yūsuf ibn Ishāq was wazir for five months; he was succeeded by Abū 'Abdallāh Ahmad ibn Muḥammad al-Jayhānī in 365/975-6 (114).

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112 For the wazirs Ibn 'Uzayr, Abū Ja'far Ahmad ibn Husayn al-'Utbi, Abū Mansūr Yūsuf ibn Ishāq, Abū 'Alī Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad al-Bal'amī, see Gardizī, *Zayn*, pp. 159ff.

113 See appendix; the Sāmānid state elite, s.vv.

"Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad", "Ahmad ibn Husayn".

114 For Jayhānī, see appendix; the Sāmānid state elite, s.v. "Ahmad ibn Muḥammad".

Chapter eight

THE DECLINE OF THE SĀMĀNIDS (365/976-395/1005)

## Introduction

The amirs who ruled in Bukhārā during the final quarter century before the Qarākhānid invasion of 389 all came to the throne as minors. Nūh ibn Mansūr (365/976-387/997) 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 Sāmānid rule were the Sāmānid *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 Sīmjurid Abū'l-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. 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 *hājib* Tāsh also exercised authority in Bukhārā and Naysābur. These *mamlūk* protagonists jockeyed for power in an

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1 Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, vol. ix, p. 28.

2 Ibn Zāfir, *Duwal*, fol. 131a; Gardīzī, *Zayn*, p. 171 (Mansūr); Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, 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; Khurāsān was the prize which the *mamlūks* fought over, using their connections in Bukhārā and such other alliances as they could establish with others, notably the Būyids 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

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3 That the sums distributed amounted to more than the customary *māl-i bay'a*, is suggested by 'Utbi's remark that much of the accumulated wealth of the Sāmānid treasury was squandered in this spending spree ('Utbi, *Yamīnī*, in Manīnī, *Fath*, vol. i, p. 89); *tabaddada shaml al-amwāl allati kāna wuzarā' al-sāmāniyya min qabl yakdahūna lahā wa yad'abūn li-jam'ihā*.

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-Ḥasan Sīmjurī who was granted the *laqab* of Nāsir al-Dawla (Helper of the State) in Rajab 366/ February-March 977 (5). Abū'l-Ḥasan was also the greatest beneficiary of Nūh's material largesse; he was confirmed as *sipahsālār* of Khurāsān and was granted a number of territories and tax privileges in Khurāsān (6). In addition marriage alliances were concluded with the Sīmjurid family and the Farīghūnids of Jūzjān (7).

Five years after Nūh's accession, however, Abū'l-Ḥasan Sīmjurī was dismissed from his post. His dismissal was ordered in 371/981-2 by the recently-installed wazir, Abū'l-Ḥusayn 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-Ḥasan ever since the

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see above, chapter 7, note 66; for his brief reign in Bukhārā, see below, p. 253f).

5 Gardīzī, *Zayn*, p. 165.

6 Gardīzī, *ibid.* Nūh granted him the '*amal-i ma'ūnat ve aḥdath-i nīshapur ve harāt ve quhistān*. '*Amal-i ma'ūnat* is probably the office of chief of security. '*Amal-i aḥdath* 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-Ḥasan was probably already in charge of such offices. This is the first reference we have to a Samanid granting the Sīmjurids privileges within their own domain of Quhistān. Jūzjānī tells us that Nūh added Ṭus to Abū'l-Ḥasan's territories (*Tabaqāt-i nāsirī*, vol. i, p. 212).

7 Ibn Zāfir, *Duwal*, fol. 128b.

8 Gardīzī, *Zayn*, p. 165. 'Utbī may have suspected Abū'l-Ḥasan's links with the Buyid Mu'ayyid al-Dawla who appears to have tried to intercede on his behalf with the Samanids (Abu Shujā' Rūdhrawarī, 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 Bukhārā, but quickly relented and went into exile in Qūhistān. His replacement as *sipahsālār* was 'Utbī's own protege, Abū'l-'Abbās Tāsh, the *hājib*, who was given the *laqab* of Husām 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 Qābūs ibn Washmgīr and 'Alī ibn Hasan 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 Sīmjurids intervened in Sīstān where the Saffārid vassal Khalaf ibn Ahmad had risen in

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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 Khurāsān 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 Khurāsān" (*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 Ḥusayn ibn Tāhir (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 Qūhistān, to send reinforcements to Sīstān. 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 Sāmānid army had withdrawn from Sīstān before renewing his attack on Ḥusayn's depleted forces. Khalaf consequently abandoned his fortress in Sha'bān 372 / Jan.-Feb. 983 and resumed the war with Ḥusayn at the end of the year (15); within six months, with the help of his Ghaznavid allies, he had forced

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11 Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, vol. viii, p. 563f. Khalaf withheld from Bukhārā *khila'* (robes of honour), *khadam* (eunuchs) and money which he had agreed to pay the Sāmānids regularly. The marginal legend which appears on Khalaf's coinage from the 980's, *wa man yūqa shuhḥa nafsihi fa-ulā'ika hum al-muflihūn* (Q.lix, 9; lxiv, 16; "And those who are saved from their own covetousness shall be prosperous") may conceivably be an oblique reference to Sāmānid insistence on Khalaf's payment of this tribute (see my article "A fractional gold coin of Khalaf ibn Ahmad of Sīstān", *Newsletter of the Oriental Numismatic Society*, September 1988).

12 See above, chapter 7, page 232.

13 Date given in *Tārīkh-i sīstān*, p. 336f = p. 275.

14 Gardīzī, *Zayn*, p. 166; 'Utbi, *Yamīni*, in *Manīni*, *Fath*, p. 126.

15 *Tārīkh-i sīstān*, p. 337 = p. 276.

Husayn to sue for peace and regained control of the whole province (16).

Abū'l-Ḥasan'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'l-Husayn al-'Utbi in recognition of his efforts at rallying the dispersed Khurāsānī forces (17). This was the first time in Sāmānid history that the highest civilian and military posts had been held by the same man and it was bound to alarm 'Utbi's opponents. Abū'l-Ḥasan took prompt action to forestall 'Utbi'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 'Utbi 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 'Utbi's assassins. The Sīmjurids were quick to take advantage of his absence from Khurāsān and Abū 'Alī Sīmjurī, with Fā'iq's approval, set about confiscating the revenue which had

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16 *Tārīkh-i sīstān*, p. 339f = p. 277. Ibn al-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 'Utbi, *Yamīnī*, *ibid*, p. 121.

18 Gardīzī, *Zayn*, p. 166f.

been collected by his tax agents (19). Tāsh 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 Tāsh and Balkh to Fā'iq (20).

But Tāsh was unable to hold on to Khurāsān for long. Once he had left Bukhārā, the wazir whom he had appointed, Abū Muḥammad 'Abd al-rahmān b. Ahmad al-Fārisī, was dismissed in favour of 'Abdallāh ibn Muḥammad ibn 'Uzayr, who was an enemy of the 'Utbi family and thus by extension, hostile to Tāsh. In 376/986-7 Ibn 'Uzayr stripped Tāsh of his title and dismissed him from the *sipahsālāriyya*; the post was re-assigned to Abū'l-Hasan Sīmjurī and Tāsh was appointed governor of Nasā and Abīward (21).

Tāsh refused to comply with Ibn 'Uzayr's orders. Once again rival Būyid factions took advantage of the turmoil in Khurāsān; Tāsh received the grateful support of his old ally Fakhr al-Dawla, now the ruler of Rayy, and Abū'l-Hasan secured military reinforcements from 'Aḡud 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,

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19 'Utbi, *Yamīnī*, *ibid*, p. 126; Gardīzī says that Tāsh unwisely consented to Abū 'Alī's appointment to the governorship of Khurāsān at this time (*Zayn*, p. 167).

20 'Utbi, *Yamīnī*, *ibid*, p. 127. Gardīzī adds that Badghīs, Kanj Rustāq and Qūhistān were assigned to Abū'l-Hasan Sīmjurī (*Gardīzī*, *Zayn*, p. 167).

21 'Utbi, *Yamīnī*, *ibid*, p. 128; Gardīzī, *Zayn*, p. 167.

22 'Utbi, *Yamīnī*, *ibid*, pp. 130f: Fakhr al-Dawla had been invited to take over Rayy by al-Sāhib Ismā'il ibn 'Abbād after the death of Mu'ayyid al-Dawla.

Tāsh was forced to flee to Jurjān in Sha'bān 377/Nov-Dec 987, where he died of the plague (23).

Abū'l-Hasan himself died in the following year (24) and was succeeded as head of the Sīmjurid house by his son, Abū 'Alī (25). With the elimination of Tāsh, Nūh had lost his counterbalance to Sīmjurid influence in the province. He now turned to Fā'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 Fā'iq out of the province and Nūh was reluctantly compelled to appoint him in Fā'iq's place; in addition he assigned him Herāt and Quhistān (26) and bestowed on him the title 'Imād al-Dawla (Pillar of the State) (27). Fā'iq did not take Abū 'Alī's elevation graciously; in Rabī' 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).

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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-Muzaffar ibn Muḥammad". Ibn Zāfir gives Abū'l-Hasan's death date as 381/991-2 whereas all other sources say he died in 378 (Ibn Zāfir, *Duwal*, fol. 129b). Ibn Zāfir'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 Naysabur his authority presumably already extended to Herāt. Perhaps what is meant is that the revenues of Herāt and Quhistān were allocated for his personal use.

27 'Utbi, Yamīnī, p. 155; Ibn Zāfir, *Duwal*, fol. 129b.

28 Ibn Zāfir, *Duwal*, fol. 129b.

29 This is date given in the majority of our sources: Ibn Zāfir gives Rabī' II (*Duwal*, fol. 129b).

It is clear that Nūḥ 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 Farīghūnid 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 Nūḥ 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-samā'* (32) and his court began to attract famous poets who came to acclaim his success (33).

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30 One incidental consequence of Fā'iq's defeat by Ānj and Bektūzūn was a temporary change of governor in the province of Saghāniyān. The Muhtājid Abū'l-Muzaffar Muḥammad ibn Abū 'Alī Aḥmad, son of the famous Abū 'Alī Saghānī (d. 955) was forced to cede the governorship of the province to his cousin Abū'l-Hasan Tāhir ibn Fadl, Abū 'Alī's nephew, on the orders of Ānj and Bektūzūn (Gardīzī, *Zayn*, p. 168). Abū'l-Muzaffar Muḥammad went to Fā'iq for assistance and was provided with troops. Before he attempted to retake Saghāniyān however, Abū'l-Hasan Tāhir attacked Fā'iq's forces in Balkh and was killed in battle ('Utbi, *Yamīnī*, in Manīnī, *Fath*, vol. i, p. 167). The province reverted to Abū'l-Muzaffar (note his subsequent patronage of Firdawsī, cf. C.E. Bosworth, "The Rulers of Chaghaniyan in early Islamic times", *Iran*, vol. xix, 1981, p. 12). Barthold, basing himself on the Persian translation of 'Utbi, mistakenly identifies Abū'l-Muzaffar Muḥammad as a member of the Farīghūnid dynasty of Jūzjān (Cf. *Hudūd al-'alam*, ed. Minorsky, p. 178).

31 'Utbi, *ibid*, p. 163; Gardīzī, *Zayn*, p. 168.

32 Gardīzī, *ibid*. Ibn Zāfir gives Abū 'Alī's titles as *sayyid al-umarā'* 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 Nūḥ, *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 Tiesenhäusen, "Melanges de

Even more ominous for Nūh 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 Būyid rulers who attracted their attention, but the

Qarākhānid

Bughrākhān Abū

Mūsā Hārūn ibn Īlak. The first parties to correspond with him were certain *dihqāns* of Transoxania (34).

'Utbi's explanation of the *dihqāns*' intentions is not very illuminating; he says that they had had enough of the Sāmānids 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 'ayyārūn may have been taken as a sign of the Sāmānids' incapacity to govern (36). Or perhaps they really believed that the Sāmānids' time had come after the breakdown of relations with Sīmjurid

Numismatique Orientale", *Revue Numismatique Belge*, vol. xxxi, 1875, pp. 189-214, cited in H. Busse, *Chalif und Grosskonig*, p. 164).

33 See the eulogies of Abū Bakr Khwārazmī and Badi' al-Zamān al-Hamadhānī ('Utbi, *ibid*, pp. 155-162). In 'Utbi's excerpts from their panegyric poems, there is no mention of Abū 'Alī'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 Sīmjurids would prevail at this stage.

34 'Utbi, *ibid*, pp. 163f; *wa qad kāna tā'ifa min dahāqīn mā warā'l-nahr qad amalathum ayyām tilka'l-dawla...fa-wasalū bughrākhān bi-kutubihim fī tawarrud dhālika 'l-harīm...*The identity of these *dihqāns* is not given, but it is likely that they were governors of the eastern provinces of Transoxania. Jurbādhqānī (in Nikbī's recension) renders the term *dahāqīn* as *jam'-i ma'ārif-i mā warā'l-nahr* (a group of Transoxanian notables) (cf. C. Schefer, ed., *Description de Boukhara*, Amsterdam, 1975, p. 155).

35 'Utbi, *ibid*, p. 163.

36 Samarqandī, *Muntakhab*, fols. 5b. 59b and 74b.



to rule Khurāsān (39). 'Utbī says nothing about the timing of Abū 'Alī and Fā'iq's approaches to the khān but it is likely that they had already learnt of the *dihqāns'* correspondence with Bughrākhān and now acted to prevent the formation of an alliance between them and the Qarākhānids.

Bughrākhān began to make inroads into the outlying provinces of Transoxania, starting with the provinces of Isfiyāb and Farghāna (40). The Qarākhānid advance was slow and cautious; the Turkish chief had to be coaxed into entering Transoxania, as 'Utbī says, "like a hawk whose hood is gradually loosened" (41). When he reached Isfiyāb, Nūh dispatched an army under the command of his *hājib* Ānj, but the Qarākhānids 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 Qarākhānid, 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).

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39 'Utbī, *ibid*, p. 163.

40 The earliest Qarākhānid coin minted in Farghāna is dated 380/990-1 (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 Uzbekistana*, vol. xv, 1979, p. 145).

41 'Utbī, *ibid*, p. 164.

42 'Utbī, *ibid*.

43 'Utbī, *ibid*, p. 168.

44 *ibid*, p. 168. 'Utbī says that certain sources suggest that Fā'iq had already agreed with Bughrākhān 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 'Abdallāh Muhammad and the Ma'mūnid governor of Jurjāniyya, Ma'mūn ibn Muhammad (45).

Fā'iq was waiting in Bukhārā to welcome the Qarākhānids when they arrived there, in Rabi' I 382/May-June <sup>probably</sup> 992 (46). Bughrākhān sent him to take over the city of Balkh in his name, thereby openly reneging on his agreement with Abū 'Alī Sīmjurī. Meanwhile, the exiled Nūh vainly called on Abū 'Alī once again, this time relinquishing any claim to the revenue of Khurāsān, thereby effectively acknowledging the secession of the province. Abū 'Alī used the opportunity to extract from Nūh a promise to address him in future as *mawlā amīr al-mu'minīn* (47); he did begin to make preparations to march to Transoxania, but deliberately delayed his

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

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

47 'Utbi makes the point that the Sīmjurīd walā' was to the Sāmānids and not to the caliph ('Utbi, *ibid*, p. 174). Perhaps 'Utbi's remark is intended to underscore the Sīmjurīds' *mamlūk* status.

efforts in order to allow for the Qarākhānids 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 Bukhārāns who attacked his forces as they retreated (48). Ibn al-Athīr tells us that the Ghuzz Turks joined them in harassing the Qarākhānids (49). The sick khān did take the opportunity to leave a memorial to his brief sojourn in the Sāmānid capital in the form of the earliest Qarākhānid 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 Maṣṣūr, who

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48 'Utbi, *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 Qarākhānids, but that they were defeated near Samarqand by the Qarākhānids (*Tabaqāt-i nāsiri*, vol. i, p. 213).

50 For the Qarākhānid coins minted in Bukhārā in 382/992-3 see T.S. Noonan, "The impact of the silver crisis in Islam upon Novgorod's trade with the Baltic", p. 433.

51 Gardīzī, *Zayn*, p. 168 ; Ibn Zāfir, *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, Fā'iq and Abū 'Alī Sīmjurī, sank their differences and concluded an alliance against Bukhārā. The initiative for this move seems to have come from Abū 'Alī, who induced Fā'iq 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, Sebuktegīn the Ghaznavid (55). According to Jūzjānī, Sebuktegīn had already led an army to northern Khurāsān before Nūh summoned him to Transoxania. The people of Balkh, who were suffering from Fā'iq's oppressive governorship, realised that the Sāmānid amir was too weak to restrain him and had called on Sebuktegīn to come to their aid (56). He came to Balkh with his army and it was there that he received

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52 Abū'l-Fadl Bayhaqī says that Bughrākhān himself believed that 'Abd al-'azīz's right to the succession had been usurped (*Tārīkh-i bayhaqī*, p. 199).

53 Barthold gives the date with reference to "Bayhaki, p. 234" (*Turkestan*, p. 260, note 7); but cf. Abū'l-Fadl Bayhaqī, *Tārīkh-i bayhaqī*, ed. Ghani and Fayyad, p. 200, where the date is Jumāda II 380.

54 Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, vol. ix, p. 100.

55 'Utbi, *ibid.*, p. 180f.

56 *Tabaqāt-i nasirī*, p. 213.

the Sāmānid emissary who invited him to Transoxania for discussions with Nūh.

The Ghaznavids had been loyal vassals of the Sāmānids from the time of Alptegīn's occupation of Ghazna, notwithstanding a few disputes with Bukhārā (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 Sebuktegīn had come to an arrangement with the Sīmjurid Abū'l-Hasan not to interfere in Khurāsānī affairs (58). But Sīmjurid

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57 Cf. C.E. Bosworth for the early history of Ghaznavid relations with their Sāmānid 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, Alptegīn (d. 352/963) obtained a document of investiture from Mansūr ibn Nūh, thus legitimizing his position as a Sāmānid vassal (Jūzjānī, *Tabaqāt-i naṣirī*, vol. i, p. 211). However Nizām al-mulk says that an army was sent against him from Bukhārā, so it appears that the Sāmānids' attitude towards him was at best ambivalent (*Siyar al-mulūk*, p. 155 = p. 114). Alptegīn's successors all maintained good relations with their sovereigns. His son and heir, Abū Ishāq (352/963-355/966), not only received Sāmānid endorsement of his rule, but also military assistance against Lāwik, the deposed ruler of Ghazna, who managed to retake the city briefly in 353-4/964-5. From Abū Ishāq's time, the coinage of the Ghaznavids began to bear the name of the Sāmānid sovereign as well as that of the Ghaznavid amir. Muḥammad ibn 'Alī Shabānkāra'ī, author of *Majma' al-ansāb fī'l-tawārikh* reports that Abū Ishāq's successor, Biltegīn (355/966-364/975), was attacked by a Sāmānid 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 Nūh ibn Mansūr in 992; however, like his predecessors, Biltegīn regarded himself as governor on behalf of the Sāmānids. According to Isfizārī, it was during his reign, in 360, that the Sāmānids appointed Sebuktegīn the Ghaznavid to the governorship of Herāt (see Isfizārī, *Herāt*, p. 386). Biltegīn's successors, Boritegīn (364/975-366/977) and Sebuktegīn (d. 387/997), maintained the same policy vis-a-vis Bukhārā; the title on Sebuktegīn's tombstone, *al-hājib al-ajall*, provides further evidence that he had no aspirations towards independent rule.

58 Cf. Abū 'Alī Sīmjurī's reference to the friendship between Sebuktegīn and his father, Abū'l-Hasan ('Utbi, *ibid*, p. 185).

complicity in the Qarākhānid invasion of Transoxania had, it seems, persuaded Sebuktegīn 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 Fā'iq once again played the Būyid card and began negotiations with their erstwhile enemy, Fakhr al-Dawla, ruler of Rayy (61). But they failed to overcome the Sāmānid-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 Ramadān 383/ October - November 993 (62), Nūh granted the *laqabs* of Nāsir al-Dawla to Sebuktegīn, and Sayf al-Dawla to Maḥmūd (63) and appointed the latter commander of the Khurāsānī army

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59 'Utbī, *ibid*, p. 181.

60 'Utbī, *ibid*, pp. 184f.

61 'Utbī, *ibid*, p. 183.

62 'Utbī, *ibid*, p. 188f.

63 Jūzjānī says that Sebuktegīn received this *laqab* (the same as had been held by Abū'l-Ḥasan Sīmjur at the beginning of the reign; perhaps it was expressly chosen by Nūh in order to signal the transfer of his trust from the Sīmjurids to the Ghaznavids) as a reward for the suppression of the Qarāmīta and the *mulāḥida* in Tāliqān (sometimes spelt Tāyaqān) (see above, chapter 6, pp. 186 and 202). In the same passage Jūzjānī tells us that Abū 'Alī Sīmjurī became a Qarmatī and built a mosque in Naysabūr where the *khutba* was said in the name of the Fātimid Mustansir.

(64) and governor of Naysābūr, while Abū 'Alī and Fā'iq withdrew to the safety of Būyid Jurjān. From Jurjān they mounted a second attack on Khurāsān and expelled Maḥmūd from Naysābūr in Rabī' I 385/ *April-May* 995 (65). But the Ghaznavids regrouped and, with the aid of Khalaf ibn Aḥmad of Sīstān and the Farīghūnid ruler of Jūzjān, inflicted a second and decisive defeat on the rebels near Tūs three months later (66). Abū 'Alī and Fā'iq made their way to Āmul from where they sent their wazirs to Bukhārā to plead for clemency from Nūh (67).

Fā'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. Fā'iq consequently offered his services to Īlak Khān, Bughrākhān's successor as leader of the Qarākhānid confederation (68). The Qarākhānid restored him to all the provinces of which Nūh had stripped him (69). Abū 'Alī's wazir received better treatment in Bukhārā; he

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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 Maḥmūd 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 Sebuktegīn, asking him to intercede on his behalf with Nūh, before the last battle with the Ghaznavids ('Utbi, *ibid*, p. 208). Gardīzī 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-Ḥasan (Zayn, p. 170f; for Abū'l-Ḥasan'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 Ramadān 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 Sīmjurids was broken forever (73).

After securing Khurāsān 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

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70 The Khwārazmshāh had come into conflict with Abū 'Alī over the issue of the assignation of Abīward (see above, note 45).

71 'Utbī, *ibid*, p. 226f.

72 Abū 'Alī was suspected of plotting with the Sāmānid wazir Ibn 'Uzayr against Ghaznavid interests in Bukhara ('Utbī, *Yamīnī*, p. 239f; Gardīzī, *Zayn*, p. 171).

73 Abū 'Alī's brother, Abū Qāsim, did play a role in Khurāsānī politics in the last years of the century and took part in the battle between the Sāmānid 'Abdalmalik ibn Nūh and Maḥmūd the Ghaznavid on the side of the former (see below, p. 262); he also joined the last Sāmānid Ismā'īl Muntaṣir in his attack on Rayy (see below, p. 264). But he never re-established Sīmjurid hegemony in Khurāsān (Cf. 'Utbī, *ibid*, pp. 245-251, 282-290, 310, 327).

74 'Utbī, *ibid*, p. 232.

75 'Utbī, *ibid*, p. 231.

Khān clearly regarded Sebuktegīn as a greater threat than any of his *mamlūk* predecessors, for he wrote to him, reminding him that the Ghaznavids and Qarākhānids 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 Khurāsān than the Sāmānid Nūh who remained inactive in Bukhārā. Whether or not he saw the point of this argument, Sebuktegīn decided that his interests would be best served by remaining loyal to the Sāmānids; he refused the offer of co-operation with the Qarākhānid and reiterated his loyalty to Nūh.

But the Ghaznavids' patience with the increasingly helpless Nūh soon began to wear thin. While the two Turks were negotiating on the eastern borders of Transoxania, Nūh's wazir, Ibn 'Uzayr, had advised his master not to respond to Sebuktegīn'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 Sebuktegīn who ordered his son, Maḥmūd, and uncle, Bughrājaq, to march on Bukhārā and depose Ibn 'Uzayr (77); they did so, replacing him with the former wazir, Abū Naṣr Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Abī Zayd (78). This amounted to no less than a *de facto* takeover of the Sāmānid administration by the Ghaznavids. Sebuktegīn then concluded a treaty with Īlak, specifying that he should not allow his forces to

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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 Khān did not keep to the terms of the agreement for long. Soon after the death of Nūh ibn Mansūr in Rajab 387 / *July-Aug 997* and the accession of his young son Mansūr, the deposed wazir of the Sāmānids, 'Abdallāh ibn 'Uzayr and Mansūr ibn Muḥammad ibn Ḥusayn ibn Mutt (81) urged him to come to Bukhārā. When Īlak Khān 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 Bukhāran *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 Khurāsān. He appointed his *hājib* Bektūzūn as *sipahsālār* of Khurāsān,

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79 'Utbi, *ibid*, p. 240. See Barthold for the location of this steppe between Samarqand and Khojand (*Turkestan*, p. 165).

80 'Utbi, *ibid*, p. 240f.

81 Gardīzī, *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 Ishāq the Sāmānid 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. 'Utbi names him Abū Mansūr Muḥammad ibn Ḥusayn al-Isbijābī (*ibid*, p. 269).

82 Gardīzī, *Zayn*, p. 172.

83 'Utbi, *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 Fā'iq's overweening ambition in his efforts to take advantage of the Ghaznavids' temporary disarray in Khurāsān. Fā'iq now dispatched his ally, Abū'Qāsim Sīmjurī, to contest Bektūzūn's authority in Naysābur (84) and picked a quarrel with Mansūr's wazir, Abū Muẓaffar al-Burghushī, who had succeeded to the wazirate on the death of Abū Naṣr ibn Abī Zayd (85). Mansūr reprimanded Fā'iq when he demanded to see the wazir who had sought refuge in the amir's palace. Peace was only restored between Mansūr and Fā'iq through the intervention of the *mashāyikh* of Bukhārā; but Fā'iq eventually had his way, as Burghushī was exiled to Jūzjān and replaced by Abū'l-Qāsim al-'Abbās 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 Naysābur in place of Bektūzūn. Mahmūd, who still regarded Khurāsān as his province since he had been assigned it by Nūh, sent a messenger, Abū'l-Ḥusayn al-Ḥamūlī, to Bukhārā to assure Mansūr of his good intentions. Mansūr appointed Hamūlī to the wazirate which had fallen vacant after the death of Barmakī, but

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84 Fā'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. Maḥmūd 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 Maḥmūd (88), deposed and blinded him in Ṣafar 389/*Jan-Feb* 999. They then raised Mansūr's younger brother, 'Abdalmalik, to the throne. Maḥmūd at first made peace with the new amir on the terms which he had refused from Mansūr; he was to have Balkh and Herāt and their revenues (89). But hostilities soon flared between the two armies, when a group of Sāmānid *mamlūks* attacked Maḥmūd's baggage train. Bektūzūn and Fā'iq were defeated but managed to make their way back to Bukhārā with 'Abdalmalik. Maḥmūd summoned all his Khurāsānī vassals and held a celebration in honour of his assumption of rule in Khurāsān and the caliph's bestowal on him of the *laqab*, Yamīn al-Dawla wa Amīn al-Milla (90).

In Bukhārā, the last days of Sāmānid rule were signalled by the death of Fā'iq in Sha'ban 389/*July-Aug* 999 *after*

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87 'Utbi says that Maḥmūd took the decision to attack Naysābūr because he realised that "envious parties" in Bukhārā were blocking his appointment (*ibid*, p. 291) and that the Sāmānid regime was by now incapable of making policy decisions due to the conflicting opinions of the Sāmānid *mamlūks* (*ibid*, p. 293).

88 'Utbi only says that Bektūzun felt he had been slighted by Mansur (*ibid*, p. 296). Abu'l-Fadl Bayhaqī says that Fā'iq and Bektūzun believed that Mansur was in league with Maḥmūd (*Tārīkh-i bayhaqī*, p. 640).

89 Gardīzī, *Zayn*, p. 173.

90 'Utbi, *Yamīnī*, p. 314. For the text of Maḥmūd's *fathname* to the caliph after his victory over the Sāmānid army, see Hilāl al-Ṣābi, *Kitāb al-Wuzarā*, ed. H.F. Amedroz, Beirut, 1904, pp. 372-376.

which, as 'Utbī puts it, "their plans went awry" (91). Ṭlak Khān led his Qarākhānid forces towards Bukhārā in Dhū'l-Qa'da 389/Oct-Nov 999; as the steppe army approached, the Sāmānids' *khātibs* called on the population to take up arms against the invader, but their plea fell on deaf ears (92). The Bukhārāns 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 Sāmānids and sent them off to Ūzkand in Farghāna.

This was however not quite the end of the dynasty. A brother of 'Abdalmalik's, Abū Ibrāhīm Ismā'īl ibn Nūh al-Muntaṣir, managed to escape house arrest and go into hiding in Bukhārā, before fleeing to Khwārazm (93). For the next five years he led a peripatetic existence, for ever on the move between Transoxania and Khurāsān, trying to rally the Sāmānids' former subjects behind his campaign to restore the Sāmānid state (94). His five-year campaign suggests that there was a considerable residue of pro-Sāmānid sentiment in Transoxania and Khurāsān.

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

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91 'Utbī, *ibid*, p. 319.

92 Hilāl al-Sābi, *Wuzarā'*, p. 402.

93 'Utbī, *ibid*, p. 320.

94 Cf. Ahmad Rāzī, *Haft iqlīm*, in Schefer, ed., *Description de Boukhara*, p. 250; 'Awfī, *Lubab al-albāb*, vol. i, p. 23.

95 Ibn Zafir, *Duwal*, fol. 132a.

the Sāmānid army of Khurāsān. He returned to attack Bukhārā, drove the Qarākhānids back beyond Samarqand and defeated a second Qarākhānid army. He then returned to Bukhārā whose inhabitants welcomed him warmly (96). But he did not savour his victory for long; Īlak Khān made preparations to counter-attack and Ismā'īl retreated over the river to Āmul.

In Khurāsān he faced the hostile might of the Ghaznavids. Although he was able to briefly occupy Naysābūr in early 391/1000-(97), he quickly withdrew before Mahmūd's advancing army to Isfarā'in and thence to Jurjān in Jumādā I 391/April 1001 (98). There he found support from the Ziyārid, Qābūs ibn Washmgīr, who advised him to attack Būyid Rayy which was at the time poorly defended. Ismā'īl besieged the city with the assistance of a Ziyārid force but failed to penetrate its defences. The Būyid defenders bribed two of Ismā'īl's generals, Abū Qāsim Sīmjurī and Arslān Bālū, to persuade Muntaṣir to raise the siege (99). He did so and returned to Naysābūr in Shawwāl 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

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96 'Utbī, *ibid*, p. 323.

97 'Utbī says that he fought Nasr ibn Sebuktegīn, the governor of Naysābūr, at the end of Rabī' I 391 before entering the city (*ibid*, p. 324).

98 Ibn Zāfir, *Duwal*, fol. 132a.

99 'Utbī, *ibid*, p. 326.

100 Ibn Zāfir, *Duwal*, fol. 132a.

Ghuzz Turks (101). The Ghuzz, under the leadership of Isrā'īl ibn Saljūq, renewed their allegiance to the Sāmānids (102), and fought for Ismā'īl in his next campaign against Īlak Khān; although he won a battle against the Qarākhānid, the Ghuzz later betrayed him and handed over the prisoners they had taken to Īlak in an effort to gain his favour.

Muntaşir fled southwards over the river again. In 394/1003-4 he came to Abīward where he received the help of the "sultān" 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); Ismā'īl fled north again. In Sughd he received help from the *ra'īs al-fityān* of Samarqand, the Samarqandī *mashāyikh* and the Ghuzz; with their assistance he engaged the khān's forces and defeated them in Sha'bān 394/May-June 1004. The khān retreated to the steppe, regrouped and

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

102 Ibn Zāfir says that the leader of the Ghuzz Turks was Yabghū Arslān, Isrā'īl ibn Saljūq (*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 Yabghū was the ruler of Yengikent and Jand [cf. Bosworth, *Ghaznavids*, p. 221f]).

103 'Utbi, *ibid*, p. 338.

104 The Khwārazmshah's identity is not clear. Ismā'īl Muntasir twice travelled to Jurjāniyya, the Ma'mūnid capital (see above); yet Ibn al-Athīr tells us that the Ma'mūnid Ma'mūn 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 ('Utbi, *ibid*, p. 343, cited in *Hudūd al-'Ālam*, p. 177).

attacked Ushrūsana. By now the end of Muntasir's adventurous exploits was nigh. One of his supporters, Hasan ibn Ṭāq, defected to the Qarākhānids with 5000 men and Muntasir returned to Khurāsān; there he was harried by the Ghaznavids and Qābūs ibn Washmgīr, 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 Qarākhānids. Muntasir fled to an Arab encampment in Rabi' 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).

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106 His murderer was Khālīd ibn Nuḥayb (Bayhaqī, *Tārīkh-i bayhaq*, p. 120)/ Ibn Bahij ('Utbi, *ibid*, p. 345) of the Banū '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 Tabaristān 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

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1 Ibn Hawqal, *Kitāb sūrat al-ard*, 2nd ed., vol. ii, p. 469.

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-'ālam*, p. 120).

3 Ibn Hawqal, *Kitāb sūrat al-ard*, 2nd ed., vol. ii, p. 469: *laysa bi-ard al-mashriq mulk amna' jāniban wa la awfar 'iddatan...min-hum ma' qillat jibayātihim...*

4 Cf. the Tabarī Abū Ahmad Zanrāshan who complained of high taxation to the governor of Tabaristān (Ibn Isfandiyyār, *Tārīkh-i tabaristān*, p. 266). Mansūr ibn Ishāq, governor of Sīstān in the reign of Ahmad ibn Ismā'īl, faced complaints about the harsh taxation he imposed on his subjects (see above, chapter 4, p. 114f).

5 Abū'l-Hasan Bayhaqī, *Tārīkh-i bayhaq*, p. 225f, cited by Barthold, *Turkestan*, p. 259.

is probably correct in saying that the Sāmānids did not tax trade heavily (6). This policy contrasts strongly with that pursued by the Būyids who imposed ruinous taxes on merchants; as a consequence it was not unknown for Iraqī merchants to abandon Iraq for other regions, including Sāmānid Khurāsān (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, Ṣaghāniyān, Bust, Khwārazm and Quhistān (8). He enlarges on this point in his section on Sīstān: "As for the revenue from the taxation (*irtifā'*) of these districts which I have described from among the districts neighbouring Sīstān... these districts vary one from another in terms of the conditions obtaining in them and the functionaries (*'ummāl*) (operating in them). Every one of them has a *kātib salla*, who is known as the *bundār*, who seeks the *kharāj* and (other) types of monies due to the *sultān*. Most of these monies belong to the Lord of Khurāsān (i.e. the Sāmānid 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 *tu'ma* (allowance) for him (the vassal). In return for it, he

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6 *id*, *Aḥsan*, 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, Gharjīstān, Jūzjān and Khuttal sent no taxes to Bukhārā, but only presents (10), while the Muhtājid amir of Ṣaghāniyān sent only a very small amount annually (11) and the province of Isfiyāb only paid a token tribute of four *dāniqs* 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 Hawqal'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

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9 Ibn Hawqal, *Ṣūrat al-ard*, vol. ii, 2nd ed., p. 424.

10 Muqaddasī, *Aḥsan*, 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 (*Aḥsan*, p. 340). This confusion may arise from the fact that there were two centres of authority in Khwārazm, the Khwārazmshāh's capital at Kāth, and the Ma'mūnid governor's seat at Jurjāniyya; it might be surmised that the Ma'mūnid, who was probably only recognized by Sāmānids during the course of the century, paid *kharāj*, while the long-established Khwārazmshāh did not. In the same passage Muqaddasī also includes the amirs of Bust and Ghaznayn (=Ghazna), meaning the *mamlūks* of Qarātegin and the Ghaznavids respectively; see below, p. 271 for the financial arrangements the Ghaznavids and the Ilyāsids of Kirman made with the Sāmānids.

11 Muqaddasī, *Aḥsan*, p. 340.

12 Muqaddasī, *ibid.*

is uncomfortably short. Alternatively, it may be the case that Ibn Ḥawqal 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 Ḥawqal 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 Ḥawqal 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 *tu'ma* 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 Ḥawqal 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

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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 Sāmānid sovereignty by the vassal; Ibn Hawqal places Ghazna (under Alptegīn) and Kirmān (under the Banū Ilyās) in this category (15), both of which were provinces which had seceded from the Sāmānid state through force of arms.

Ibn Hawqal tells us that the Sāmānids 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 Sāmānids 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,

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15 Ibn Hawqal says of these provinces: "He (the lord of Khurāsān) is humbled (emending the word *idhlālan* 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; Mīrkhwānd gives the sum of 700,000 dirhams (*Rawḍa*, vol. iv, p. 35), whereas the later, and probably less reliable, *Mujmal-i Fasīhī* 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 Sāmānids managed to evade their demands. It should be noted that the Sāmānids were the first governors of the *mashriq* to forego the dispatch of regular tribute: even the Saffārids had frequently negotiated the amount of annual tribute with Baghdad (19).

The Sāmānids 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 *māl-i bay'a* (20). On occasion funds were apparently squandered through mismanagement, as when the wazir Sulamī emptied the treasury by handing out large sums to the *hashm*, but it may be that Sulamī's extravagance was also occasioned by the accession of Nūh ibn Naṣr (21). At times the treasury was plundered by rebels, as was the case in the revolt of Abū Zakariyyā Yahyā, brother of Naṣr ibn Aḥmad (22). On one occasion the Sāmānids were sufficiently hard pressed for funds to

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dirhams - a quarter of the value of the state's annual income according to Ibn Hawqal (*Mujmal-i Fasihi*, ed. Maḥmud Farrukh, vol. i, Mashhad, 1341, p. 381). Ismā'īl sent presents and gold to Baghdad along with the captive 'Amr ibn Layth (*Kitāb al-'uyun wa'l-hada'iq*, p. 100). In 289/902 Ismā'īl sent 300,000 dirhams and many presents in return for Muktafī's patent (Gardīzī, *Zayn*, p. 147). In 298/910 Aḥmad ibn Ismā'īl sent to Baghdad 120 *ghilmān* fully equipped for battle, cloth, 50 *man* of musk, falcons, sable and "many wondrous things never before seen" ('Arīb, *Sila*, 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 Būyids, the Sāmānids were not as a rule forced to pay their soldiery by allowing them to collect the taxes at source. As Nizām al-mulk says, the "pādishāhs 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 Sīmjurids 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-muṭṭawwi'a*), a very substantial force numbering many thousands of troops, were also *muṭṭa*'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

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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 Tha'alibī, *Yatīma*, vol. ii, part 4, pp. 63f).

25 id, *Siyar al-mulūk*, p. 134 = p. 99, first noted by C.E. Bosworth, "Abū 'Abdallāh Khwārazmī on the technical terms of the secretary's art", *JESHO*, vol. xii, 1969, p. 116. Ibn Hawqal confirms that this was the case in the Sāmānid state (*Sūrat al-ard*, vol. ii, p. 469).

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 Sāmānid treasury was progressively depleted throughout the century. At times the Sāmānids may have been unable to pay their troops; thus it could be that 'Abdalmalik ibn Nuḥ was in need of funds when he refused

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29 In chronological order the references are; i. Aḥmad ibn 'Alī, brother of Ṣu'lūk was given Rayy as an *iqṭā'* by the caliph Muqtadir in 307 (Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, vol. viii, p. 144) ii. Rashīd ibn al-Zubayr in his account of the volunteer militia which Naṣr ibn Aḥmad mobilized in 327/938-9 to greet the emissaries of the "King of China" (see above, chapter 5, p. 166), reports that the *sāhib jaysh al-muttawwi'a* told the ambassadors that his troops were assigned estates (*iqṭā'āt*) (*Kitāb al-dhakhā'ir wa'l-tuhaf*, p. 143; translation in C.E. Bosworth, "An alleged embassy from the Emperor of China to the amir Naṣr ibn Aḥmad - a contribution to Samanid military history", *Yadname-ye Irānī-ye Minorsky*, ed. M. Minovi and I. Afshar, Tehran, 1969, pp. 17-29). iii. The Timūrid historian Khwādamīr describes the Sīmjurid territory of Qūhistān as an *iqṭā'* (*Dastūr al-vuzarā'*, p. 112); Munejjimbashī says that Qūhistān was the permanent appanage of the Sīmjurids (*Sahā'if al-akhbār*, Turkish translation, Istanbul, 1258, vol. ii, p. 273, quoted by Mercil, "Simcuriler, II, Ibrahim b. Simcur", *Tarih Enstitüsü Dergisi*, vols. x-xi, Istanbul, 1981, p. 96). Sam'ānī merely says that in Ibrāhīm Sīmjurī's time, Qūhistān remained *bi-rasmihi* (*id*, *Ansāb*, s.v. "Sīmjurī"). iv. Abū 'Alī Saḡhanī gave an *iqṭā'* to his brother Abū'l-Faḍl in 333/944 (Mīrkhwānd, *Rawḍa*, vol. iv, p. 46). v. When Nuḥ ibn Naṣr re-appointed Abū 'Alī Saḡhanī to the governorship of Khurāsān in 339/950 (see above, chapter 7), he granted him the city of Rayy as his *iqṭā'* (Ibn al-Athīr, *ibid*, vol. viii, p. 493). vi. Abū'l-Hasan Bayhaqī says that in 358 Abū'l-Hasan Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm Sīmjurī gave Bayhaq as an *iqṭā'* to Sālār ibn Shīrdhīl (*id*, *Tarīkh-i bayhaq*, p. 231). vii. In 376 the wazir Muzanī bribed Abū'l-Hasan Sīmjurī to return to Qūhistān by offering him the *iqṭā'*s of Badghīs and Kanj Rustāq (Mīrkhwānd, *Rawḍa*, p. 55). 'Utbi, writing of the same incident says that Muzanī *ja'ala badghīs wa kanj rustāq (bi-'smihi) wa rasmihi* (*Yamīnī*, in *Manīnī*, *Fath*, vol. i, p. 126).

to send the money requested by Bakr ibn Mālīk for his war against Abū 'Alī Ṣaghānī and his Būyid 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 Ziyārīds 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 Sāmānīds 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 Sīmjūrī's refusal to send the annual tribute to Bukhārā in circa 380/990-1, the Sāmānīds were thenceforth unable to collect revenue from Khurāsān (32); it is moreover likely, that from the time of the dismissal of his father, Abū'l-Ḥasan, 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 Sāmānīds from maintaining access to the rich silver mines in the Panjhīr valley and the province of Īlāq; this could well be the explanation for the decline in trade between the Sāmānīd state and the northern lands, which is to be inferred from the marked fall-off in the northward flow

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30 Gardīzī, *Zayn*, p. 159.

31 See above, chapter 7, p. 228.

32 See above, chapter 8, p. 248.

of Sāmānid dirhams from the 370's (33). Yet, according to Bayhaqī and Ibn Zāfir, when the Qarākhānids invaded Bukhārā they found large reserves in the Sāmānid 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.

h Abu'l-Fadl  
at the beginning  
of the 380's

### The state apparatus

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

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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 Bukhārā and Sīmjurid Khurāsān or the Qarākhānid 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 Sāmānids, the Ghaznavids and the Qarākhānids (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. Malmer, pp. 207f).

34 Abū'l-Fadl Bayhaqī, *Tārīkh-i bayhaqī*, p. 199; Ibn Zāfir, *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 Sāmānids' obligation to maintain Islam did engender a certain amount of formal organization; the *dīwān al-qaḍā'* and the *dīwān al-ḥisba* were broadly responsible for the administration of justice and the supervision of thought and morality (37). Their obligation to fight the *jihād* 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

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35 Goitein, "Minority selfrule and government control in Islam", *Studia Islamica*, 1970, pp. 101-116.

36 See above, p. 271.

37 Cf. chapter 4, pp. 127 and 129.

38 Cf. Abū'l-Ḥasan 'Alī ibn Ḥasan al-Lahhām's complaint about his appointment to the '*amal al-ikhsā'* (Tha'ālibī, *Yatīma*, p. 97).

39 Cf. *ustādāh* ..... '*amal al-silāh*' (see above, chapter 2, note 100).

40 Cf. above, chapter 4, p. 127 (*ṣāhib 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

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41 Cf. Iṣṭakhri, chapter 1, p. 31 (road building). For the construction of *ribāts*, cf. Qarātegin's *ribāt* in Isfīyāb (Muqaddasī, *Aḥsan*, p. 273); Fā'iq's *ribāt* in Mīrakī on the Jaxartes (Muqaddasī, *ibid*, p. 275). The Sāmānids also constructed *ribāts* (cf. Ibn al-Jawzī, *Muntaẓam*, vol. vi, p. 77); Narshakhī says that Ismā'il ibn Aḥmad purchased the village of Shargh to endow a *ribāt* in Bukhārā (*Tārīkh-i bukhārā*, p. 21 = p. 15); Sūlī tells of Naṣr ibn Aḥmad's death-bed bequest of a thousand horses or mules to be sent to the *thughūr* (*Akhbār al-rādī billāh wa'l-muttaqī billāh*, ed. Heyworth Dunne, Cairo, 1935, p. 237).

43 Note the Farjak *madrasa* in Bukhārā; it is not known who built it (Narshakhī, *Tārīkh-i bukhārā*, p. 131 = p. 96). Qarātegin built a *madrasa* in Naysābur (Bayhaqī, *Tārīkh-i bayhaq*, p. 178). Cf. the Simjūrids' construction of a *madrasa* for Ibn Furak (Bulliet, *Patricians*, p. 63).

44 Cf. Abū 'Abdallāh Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad Jayhānī's minaret for the congregational mosque in Bukhārā (*Tārīkh-i bukhārā*, p. 69 = p. 50); Fā'iq's mosque near 'Alī al-Ridā's tomb in Tus, said by Muqaddasī to have been the most beautiful mosque in Khurāsān (Muqaddasī, *Aḥsan*, p. 333); the mosque endowed by Ismā'il ibn Aḥmad (*ibid*, p. 40 = p. 28 and p. 71 = p. 52); the mosque constructed with funds supplied by Naṣr ibn Aḥmad's courtiers (p. 69 = p. 50); Nuḥ 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 Sāmānid state provided fewer services, for example, than did the Būyids 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 Sāmānid ruler. But the similarity between Būyids and Sāmānids 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 Sāmānid politics

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

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45 Note Ibn Sīnā's description of the *Siwān al-ḥikma* library in Bukhārā (*EI*<sup>2</sup> s.v. "Ibn Sina").

46 See Muqaddasī, *Aḥsan*, p. 273 for a *sūq* 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 Sāmānids for 'Alids; see above, chapter 1, p. 27 for Iṣṭakhri'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, Fārs, Arabia, Kirmān 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 *māl 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 Iṣḥāq ibn Aḥmad's attempted *coup d'état* at the beginning of Aḥmad ibn Ismā'il's reign; Ibn Zāfir tells us that Aḥmad was warned of Iṣḥāq's plan to seize him by one of Iṣḥāq'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 *kufrān 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

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48 See below, chapter 10, pp. 294f.

49 Ibn Zāfir, *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

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51 Cf. Nizām al-mulk, *Siyar al-mulūk*, p. 148f = p. 109.

52 See for example Ibn al-Athīr's explanation for Abū 'Alī Sīmjur's downfall; *wa kāna dhālika khātimatu amrihi wa ākhir hāl bayt sīmjur jaz'an li-kufrān ihsān mawlāhum* (*Kāmil*, vol. ix, p. 109).

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 Ishāq ibn Ahmad soon after their accession. Abū 'Alī al-Saghānī's revolt began soon after Nūh ibn Naṣr had come to the throne and lasted for much of his reign. Narshakhī's laconic account makes it clear that Nūh's successors

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53 Muḥammad ibn Hārūn, Abū Ḥasan al-kātib, Ahmad ibn Sahl al-Kāmkārī, the Sāmānids Abū Zakariyya Yaḥyā and his brother and Abū'l-Faḍl ibn Ya'qub, all met their deaths as a result of their quarrels with the Sāmānids (see above, chapters 4 and 5). Muḥammad ibn Hārūn and Ahmad ibn Sahl were among those killed on the field of battle.

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

55 Cf. the fates of Ḥusayn ibn 'Alī, Ilyās ibn Ishāq and 'Abdallāh ibn Ashkām (see chapters 5 and 6).

56 Cf. Abū'l-'Abbās 'Abdallāh ibn Muḥammad ibn Nūh the Sāmānid (see chapter 4, p. 120f), Ishāq ibn Ahmad (chapter 4, p. 144), the *mamlūk* regicides (chapter 4, p. 141), Qarātegīn (chapter 5, note 46), Ibn 'Abd al-razzaq (see chapter 7, pp. 224f), Abū 'Alī Saghānī (chapter 7, p. 221), Muḥammad ibn Ilyās (see appendix; the Sāmānid state elite), Fā'iq (see chapter 8, pp. 251 and 260).

were similarly hard pressed to gain control of the provinces (57).

The Sāmānids 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). Nūḥ ibn Naṣr 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 *mamlūks* (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 Naṣr, and in the case of the accession of his son, Manṣūr, his plan worked (62). But as had already been proved by the

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57 Narshakhī, *Tārīkh-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 Ismā'il ibn Aḥmad was the heir apparent of Naṣr I ibn Aḥmad (*Tārīkh-i bayhaq*, p. 117); ii. Aḥmad ibn Ismā'il was appointed heir apparent by his father (Gardīzī, *Zayn*, p. 148); iii. Gardīzī reports that Ismā'il ibn Naṣr was Naṣr ibn Aḥmad's heir apparent (*Zayn*, p. 154); iv. For Nūḥ ibn Naṣr's succession arrangements, see below, same page; v. Manṣūr ibn Nūḥ appointed Nūḥ ibn Manṣūr his heir apparent (*Ibn Zāfir*, *Duwal*, fol. 128b); vi. Both Abū'l-Faḍl Bayhaqī and Jūzjānī say that Nūḥ ibn Manṣūr appointed his son Manṣūr heir apparent (*Tārīkh-i bayhaqī*, p. 640; *Tabaqāt-i nāsirī*, p. 214).

59 Ismā'il ibn Aḥmad obtained caliphal endorsement for Aḥmad's heir apparency but this did not deter Aḥmad's uncle, Ishaq, from attempting to seize the throne on Ismā'il'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 Manṣūr in 350 (see above, chapter 7, *ibid*).

failure of 'Abbāsīd 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 Aḥmad 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 Sāmānids 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*. Alptegīn, 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). Alptegīn was apparently inhibited by his personal relationship with the amir; others were presumably held back by the Sāmānids' public credentials.

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63 During the reign of 'Abdalmalik, Bakr ibn Mālik was accused of supporting Mansūr's candidacy for the throne (see appendix; the Sāmānīd state elite, s.v. "Bakr ibn Mālik"); cf. 'Abd al-Azīz ibn Nūḥ'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 Sāmānīd army at the time of the Ismā'īlī conversions at Naṣr's court (Nizām al-mulk, *Siyar al-mulūk*, p. 291 = p. 215).

The Sāmānid amir had the twin distinctions of being the descendant of Bahrām Chūbīn 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 Sāmānids did not make great

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66 See above, chapter 3, p. 68f. For the Sāmānid genealogy, cf. Gardīzī, whose version goes back beyond Bahrām Chūbīn, to Kayūmarth, the first king on earth (*Zayn*, pp. 145f); Ibn al-Athīr (*Kāmil*, vol. vii, p. 279); Ibn Zāfir (*Duwal*, fol. 115b); Samarqandī (*Muntakhab*, fol. 64b); Hamdallāh Mustawfī Qazvīnī (*Tārīkh-i guzīde*, p. 376); Ibn Hawqal, (*Sūrat al-ard*, vol. ii, pp. 344f); Sam'ānī (*Ansāb*, vol. vii, p. 25). The political significance of the Sāmānid claim to descent from Bahrām Chūbīn 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 Sāmānids as a concession to eastern Iranian patriotism. Bahrām Chūbīn 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 Sāmānid 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*. Bahrām Chūbīn was also, by many accounts, not of Sasanian blood. This fact may reflect the Sāmānids' 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 Sāmānids did in relation to the caliph. Further study of our sources for the life of Bahrām is required before such issues can be properly addressed (cf. E. Daniel's comments on the lack of a critical edition of Bal'ami's translation of Tabarī's history, which contains a chapter on Bahrām ["Manuscripts and editions of Bal'ami's *Tarjamah-i Tārīkh-i Tabarī*", *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 Sāmānids 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 *jihād*, and at the same time linked their rulership to the Muslim world at large. As members of this world, the Sāmānids sent annual gifts for the poor of Mecca and Medina (69).

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67 The Sāmānid court poets did ascribe imperial titles to their sovereigns; in the *qaṣida* by Rudaki quoted above, the poet addresses Naṣr as *shāh-i mulūk-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 sistān*, p. 319 = p. 260). Poets also drew parallels with the Kayanid emperors (Cf. Daqīqī's reference to Dara [E.G. Browne, *Literary history of Persia*, vol. i, p. 461]). In contrast to the Būyids, the Sāmānids did not make much use of the term *shāhanshāh*. 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 Būyid with whom the Sāmānids 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 *shāhanshāh* on the coinage of Fakhr al-Dawla in Rayy in 374, [Miles, *Numismatic history of Rayy*, p. 170f]). When the Sāmānids did adopt the title, in the reign of Nūḥ ibn Mansūr they probably did so as a counterclaim to the Būyid appropriation of the title (Nizām al-mulūk, *Siyar al-mulūk*, p. 210 = p. 156).

68 See below, p. 289.

69 Cf. Nikbī's recension of Jurbādḥqānī's translation of the *Kitāb-i yamīnī*, in Schefer, *Description de Boukhara*, pp. 113f; Nizām al-Din, *Introduction to the Jawami' al-hikayat*, London, 1929, p. 114, note 3.

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

'Abbāsīd 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 Sāmānids 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

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70 For Mu'taḍid's subsidy for the intended Sāmānid invasion of Sīstān, cf. above, chapter 4, note 47.

71 Abu Shujā' Rūdhrawarī, 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 Būyid tribute from Rayy.

72 Cf. the visit of the caliph's wazir, 'Alī ibn 'Īsā, to Irāq-i 'Ajam and Khurāsān in 295/907-8 (*Mujmal-i Fasiḥi*, p. 395). There is also the curious phenomenon of the dirhams of Shāsh and Andarāba of 291/903-4; the Andarāba 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 Vellinge; Gotland, *Nordisk Numismatisk Aarskrift*, 1941, p. 116, no. 1801) has the title Walī al-Dawla on the obverse and the names al-Muktafī and Ismā'īl on the reverse. The Shāsh dirham bears the same title (Linder Welin, *ibid*, p. 117, nos. 1950-53). Tiesenhausen deduced that the title refers to Abū'l-Ḥusayn al-Qāsim ibn 'Ubaydallāh, wazir of Muktafī from 288-91/901-4. This is the only known occurrence of the title of an 'Abbāsīd wazir on Sāmānid coins and it is a strange co-incidence that it should appear in the very year in which the Sāmānids repelled a Turkish invasion of Transoxania (see above, chapter 4, p. 132). Did the wazir perhaps come in person to Transoxania to lead the 'Abbāsīd war effort against the Turks?

73 Viz. the invasion of Zaydī Tabaristān in 900 (see above, chapter 4, p. 117) and Sīstān in 910 (see above, *ibid*, p. 112).

Baghdad (74). Unlike the Tāhirids 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 'Abbāsīd court in the early years (76). The second Sāmānīd ruler of the monarchical state, Aḥmad 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 Būyīd occupation of Baghdad, towards the end of Naṣr's reign (324/935) were the Sāmānīds, along with other contemporary

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74 Viz. 'Amr ibn Layth, Subkarī, Muḥammad ibn 'Alī (Ṣaffārīd) (see above, chapter 4); Mākān ibn Kākī (Ġardīzī, *Zayn*, p. 153f).

75 See above, p. 271f.

76 For the role of Marzubānī as Ismā'īl ibn Aḥmad's representative at the caliph's court, see Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, vol. vii, p. 502 (where he is referred to as *nā'ibuhu* (i.e. Ismā'īl) *bi'l-ḥadra*; he was still the Sāmānīd representative in Aḥmad's reign (cf. Miskawayh, *Eclipse*, vol. i, p. 20). For the history of the Marzubānī family see appendix; the Sāmānīd state elite, s.v. "āl-Marzubānī".

77 'Arīb, *Silat ta'rīkh al-tabarī*, 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-umarā'* Ibn Rā'iq. However the numismatic evidence indicates that the Sāmānids did not discontinue formal acknowledgement of the caliph during the latter part of Naṣr'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 Būyids. On two occasions, when under pressure from the Būyid-dominated caliph, the Sāmānids did go so far as to withdraw their allegiance; between 335-346 and 381-389 they dropped the name of the reigning caliph from the coinage and substituted that of one of his predecessors (83). While the Būyids apparently made little attempt to make political capital out of the disrupted relations between Bukhārā and Baghdad (84), Mahmūd 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

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81 Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, vol. viii, p. 323f.

82 Cf. Lane-Poole, *Catalogue of the Oriental Coins in the British Museum*, vol. ii, pp. 92ff, nos. 336-345.

83 They substituted the name of the caliph Mustakfī for that of the ruling caliph Muṭī' 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 Tā'i; cf. Naysābur 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. 417<sup>t</sup>).

84 While we have no evidence that the Būyids took steps to declare the Sāmānids rebels against the caliph, Abu Shujā' (*sub\_anno* 373/983-4) does mention a Būyid demand that the Sāmānids submit to the caliph; however the context of this Būyid initiative is not clear (*Eclipse*, vol. iii, p. 98 = vol. vi, p. 101).

victory over 'Abdalmalik ibn Nūh in 329, he claimed that he took action against his former sovereigns because they had "withdrawn their necks from the loop of (caliphal) obedience" (85). Maḥmūd's pretext for rebellion has a hollow ring to it: Ghaznavid coins minted before 390/1000 show that the Ghaznavids had followed the Sāmānids' lead in refusing to acknowledge Qādir (86). Maḥmūd's claim to be acting on the caliph's behalf was a means of securing caliphal sanction for his act of treachery against the Sāmānids and thereby obtaining the same position as caliphal vassal which the Sāmānids had previously enjoyed. Yet up to the 390'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 Sāmānids with the status of kings and thereby made them the most powerful players in the politics of the region.

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85 Hilāl al-Ṣābi', *Kitāb al-Wuzarā'*, ed. Amedroz, 1904, pp. 372f.

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 SĀMĀNĪD 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.

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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 Sāmānids was a member of the Iranian gentry class; *dihqāns*, presumably in the same sense, fought for the Sāmānids in 287 and appear as regular members of the Sāmānid army in the time of Ibn Hawqal. But neither the *dihqān* of Tarāz, who killed the rebel Husayn ibn Mutt (2), nor the *dihqān* of Kāshgār, with whom Ilyās ibn Ishāq established an alliance (3), were *dihqāns* 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 Farīghūnids and the Khwārazmshāhs, did fare well under the Sāmānids, as did several men of noble descent, such as Ahmad ibn Sahl and Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-razzāq, who held high office in the period 300-350. The latter are not however commonly referred to as *dihqāns* (4) and we know nothing about the source of their wealth and authority. In Samarqandī's *Muntakhab*, we come across a *dihqān* whose drunken revels were interrupted by the stern hand of the local men of God (5); this is one perception of the *dihqān* squire

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2 See above, chapter 5, p. 147. Note also the *dahāqīn* of Tarāz, probably Turks, who accepted Islam in 280/893-4 from Ismā'īl ibn Ahmad (Narshakhī, *Tārīkh-i bukhārā*, p. 119 = p. 87).

3 See above, *ibid*, p. 147.

4 The exception was Ahmad ibn Sahl who was descended from a Marwazī *dihqān* (see appendix; the Sāmānid state elite, s.v. "Ahmad ibn Sahl").

5 Samarqandī, *Muntakhab*, fol. 45a. In this anecdote, Samarqandī tells us of the *dihqān 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 Sāmānid 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 Sāmānids. The last, and most revealing reference to *dihqāns*, in the sense of local gentry (6), shows them betraying the Sāmānids 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 *dahāqīn* 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 *dihqāns* 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 Sāmānids 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).

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building and emptied all the drinking vessels they could find while the shamefaced revellers hid themselves.

6 Cf. Jurbādhqānī's gloss of *dahāqīn* in this context as *ma'ārif* (see above, chapter 8, note 34).

7 R.N. Frye, *Bukhara; the medieval achievement*, pp. 90, 156 (*dihqan* decline); p. 125 (Turkish takeover of their estates).

8 Viz. Aḥmad ibn Sahl and Ḥusayn ibn 'Alī 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 Sāmānids. Neither do the *dihqāns* appear to have betrayed the Sāmānids 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 Sīmjurids 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 Sīmjurids, may have been indigenous Turks from Transoxania (12). Turkish ethnicity was not however a

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9 See above, chapter 8, pp. 249ff.

10 See above, chapter 4, pp. 119f (Sallām and Bāris); cf. appendix; the Sāmānid state elite, s.vv. "Sīmjur" and "Bughrā".

11 See above, chapter 7, p. 236.

12 Some Sāmānid *mamlūks* bore Eastern Iranian *nisbas*; cf. Qarātegīn al-Isfīyābī (for the evidence that he was a *mamlūk*, pace Barthold, *Turkestan, passim*, see appendix: the Sāmānid state elite, s.v. "Qarātegīn al-Isfīyābī"), Abū 'Imrān Sīmjur al-Khwārazmī (cf. appendix, *ibid*; "Sīmjur"), 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 Sāmānids. 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 Fā'iq was a Greek (Rūmī), or possibly a Spaniard (Andalusī) (13). Eunuchs like Fā'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 Fā'iq, was distrusted by his peers on account of his alien

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some evidence that the Ṣaffārīds had employed *mamlūks* of indigenous Transoxanian origin: cf. Bosworth's discussion of the origins of the Ṣaffārīd *mamlūk*, Subkarī, a member of the Khalaj tribe, who was captured in either Zamīndawar 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 Ṣaffārīds", *BSOAS*, vol. xxxi, 1968, p. 545; see the *Hudūd al-'alam*, p. 111 for the areas inhabited by the Khalaj).

13 See appendix; the Sāmānid state elite, s.v. "Fā'iq".

14 Ṣulī, *Akhbār al-rādī billāh wa'l-muttaqī billah*, ed. Heyworth Dunne, Cairo, 1935, p. 237.

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 Sīmjurids to turn rebel arose from an apparent resurgence of the authority of the bureaucracy under Abū'l-Husayn '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

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16 Cf. Jurbādhqānī's report of the racial enmity (*mughāyazatī qawmī*) between Fā'iq and the Turk Bektūzūn (cf. Schefer, *Description de Boukhara*, p. 206).

17 See Sam'ānī, *Ansāb*, vol. vii, pp. 351f (Sīmjurids); Qarātegīn built a *madrassa* in Naysabur (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 Khurāsān, which was the base from which the most serious challenges to the dynasty were mounted, including the eventual secession of the province under the Sīmjurids. The unique power of the governor of Khurāsān lay in the fact that unlike more junior governors, he was both a civilian and a military official since he had command of the Khurāsānī 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 Khurāsānī 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 Ismā'il 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 Sāmānids adopted different solutions to the problem of controlling Khurāsān. Ismā'īl and Ahmad opted for a dual approach; they appointed both Sāmānid 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 Sāmānid 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 Ḥusayn 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 Khurāsān throughout the second half of his reign. But both the Muḥtājīds and Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al-razzāq, the lord of Tūs, proved a liability as they turned for support against the Sāmānids to the Būyids, and crucially in the

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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 Sāmānids needed to find a new solution to the problem. They accordingly turned to their personal dependents, the *mamlūks*. 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 Sāmānids' 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 Sāmānids were no longer

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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 Khurāsān) was most commonly known by the military title of *sipahsālār* or *sāhib al-jaysh*. Hamūya ibn 'Alī (see appendix; the Sāmānid state elite) is given the title of *sāhib al-jaysh*. Abū Bakr Muhammad ibn Muẓaffar is *sāhib juyush khurāsān* (Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, vol. viii, p. 264). Gardīzī says that Bakr ibn Mālik was appointed to the *sipahsālārī* (*Zayn*, p. 159). Note that Ibn al-Athīr refers to Abū'l-Hasan Simjūrī as *sāhib juyush khurāsān* (vol. viii, p. 626).

able to enjoy the kudos of being *ghāzī* monarchs, however hard their supporters tried to maintain the fiction that they were (25); this loss of *ghāzī* status was to be a factor in the Sāmānids' final collapse (26).

The second consequence was that henceforth, the Sāmānid monarch remained in Bukhārā while the greater part of his (by now mainly *mamlūk*) 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 Būyids. But the Sāmānids 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 Sāmānids had forsworn such a solution, however, they were likely to encounter problems with their *mamlūk* generals, as the 'Abbāsīd experience had proved (27). We

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25 Note Muqaddasī's remark that the Sāmānids were the "scourge of Rūm" (see above, chapter 1, p. 33). Cf. also the poem by the Shāfi'ī 'ālim Abū Bakr al-Qaffāl (Subkī, *Tabaqāt al-shāfi'iyya*, vol. ii, pp. 181-4). It is said to have been written in the 'amm al-nafīr, probably 355/966, when the Khurāsānī *ghāzīs* nearly took over Būyid 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 Manṣūr ibn Nūh for bringing Islam to "Hind, Sind, Ṣīn and the Turks (Subkī, *ibid*, p. 183). Note how Qaffāl incorporates a jibe at the Būyids by remarking that while Manṣūr was the great *ghāzī* 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 *mamlūk* institution in the Sāmānid state, and other medieval Islamic states, which prevented it from acting as a stable institution of government?

Why did the Samanid mamlūk experiment fail?

P. Crone's thesis about the failure of the 'Abbāsīd dynasty views the main agents of its collapse as its *mamlūk* soldiers. In her view, *mamlūks* 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 *mamlūks* were increasingly commanded by generals, most commonly *mamlūks* 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 Sāmānid *mamlūks* who did have local interests and were integrated into their social environment to a considerable extent. In fact they were not very

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28 *ibid*, p. 79.

different from their fellow Iranian aristocrats in these respects; as for their allegiance to the dynasty, the record of Abū'l-Ḥasan Sīmjurī's lengthy governorship of Khurāsān shows that a *mamlūk* governor was capable of governing a major province for a long period without major incident. Nevertheless the disaffection of the Sīmjurids in the early 370's signals the beginning of the collapse of the Sāmānid state and it needs to be explained.

The problem with the governorship of Khurāsān, under both freeborn amirs and *mamlūks* 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-Athīr's anecdote about the circumstances under which Naṣr ibn Aḥmad appointed the Muḥtājid Abū Bakr Muḥammad ibn Muẓaffar the Muḥtājid to Khurāsān (29).

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29 Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, vol. viii, p. 264. Abū Bakr is said to have been having an audience with Naṣr ibn Aḥmad 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 Khurāsān. While the story may well be apocryphal, it does illustrate the importance of the personal ties which bound men to the Sāmānid 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 Bukhārā, 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.

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

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30 The Sīmjurids 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 Sāmānids.

31 See above, chapter 8, note 8.

Abū'l-Hasan Sīmjurī 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 Nūh ibn Mansūr's reign, the Sīmjurid governors of Khurāsān had become virtual partners of the Sāmānids in ruling the state. According to an anecdote related by 'Awfī, the reason for the Sāmānids' fall was that Nūh ibn Mansūr ignored Abū'l-Hasan Sīmjurī's advice on the matter of the wazir Abū'l-Husayn 'Utbi's appointment, whereas in the past, as he says, "it was the custom of the Sāmānids to consult their Khurāsānī governors on every matter" (32).

As 'Awfī's anecdote indicates, Abū'l-Hasan Sīmjurī'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 'Utbi ordered his dismissal in 371/981-2 Abū'l-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 'Utbi's enumeration of the privileges and titles which Nūh bestowed on him, Abū'l-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

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32 'Awfī, *Jāmi' al-hikāyat*, part ii of section 2, p. 687.

33 Cf. Abū'l-Hasan's reaction to 'Utbi's order; *valī-yi khurāsān manam ve sipahsālār abū 'alī ast pesar-i man* (Gardizī, *Zayn*, p. 165).

Sāmānids could not afford to let Khurāsān become a *de jure* vassal province; Khurāsān was both too valuable a source of revenue and too important strategically for them to contemplate relinquishing direct control over it.

The problem with the Sīmjurids 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 Sīmjurids maintained these ties unimpaired. But once the threat of dismissal had receded, the Sīmjurids exploited the Sāmānids' 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 Sāmānids, willingly or otherwise, were able to make such fateful concessions to the Sīmjurids.

Abū 'Alī Sīmjurī faced little opposition initially when he seceded from the Sāmānid state. Unlike in 287, when Ismā'īl ibn Ahmad had the Turks of the eastern provinces and the *dihqāns* on his side against the Saffārids, Nūh ibn Mansūr had lost the support of the *dihqāns* and faced a much more powerful adversary than 'Amr ibn Layth. In earlier years, the Sāmānids had

always been able to call on rival forces to oppose rebel governors. By 380, the sheer longevity of the dynasty must have lessened the chances of its survival.

Similarly the minority of the Sāmānid 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 Ismā'īl (d. 914) were minors at their accession.

The fall of the Sāmānid dynasty was thus not due to major changes within Sāmānid 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 Sāmānid 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.

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34 See above, chapter 9, p. 276.

In this respect the Sāmānid 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 Qarākhānid conquest

The one clearly discernible long-term trend in Sāmānid history is the process of islamization, both within the Sāmānid territories and beyond them, in the steppe. Islamization of the steppe Turks caused the frontier with the *Dār al-ḥarb*, which the Sāmānids had pushed eastwards from the Oxus to the Jaxartes, to shift further eastwards and eventually changed the status of the Qarākhānids from infidels to potential allies of Sāmānid rebels.

The Qarākhānid Turks who overthrew the Sāmānid dynasty in 339 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 Qarākhānids displayed the same unwillingness to unseat the old order as had former Muslim rebels against the Sāmānids. Thus on abandoning Bukhārā in 382, they turned the city over to a Sāmānid pretender, just as Abū 'Alī Ṣaghānī 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 Qarākhānid conquerors behaved in the same way as participants within the Sāmānid 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 Qarākhānids abandon their policy of non-aggression against the Sāmānids 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 Qarākhānids of Kāshgār were still pursuing the *jihād* against their non-Muslim neighbours in Khotan as late as 361 (37); Īlak khān's perception of himself as a Muslim *ghāzī* (38) would suggest that the Qarākhānids were still waging *jihād* in

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35 See above, chapter 7, p. 218.

36 'Utbi, *Yamīnī*, in Manīnī, *Fath*, vol. i, p. 319.

37 id, "Von den Karluk zu den Karakhaniden", *ZDMG*, vol. ci, 1951, p. 295.

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 Sāmānid state was in terminal decline and decided to pre-empt a possible Sīmjurid takeover of Transoxania. In the event, *ilak Khan's* occupation of Bukhārā in 359 was made considerably easier by the indifference of the Bukhārāns themselves, who, although once so loyal to the Sāmānids, took the advice of their scholars to lay down their arms and allowed the Qarākhānids to march in unopposed.

#### The role of the scholars

The decision of the Bukhārān *fuqahā'* to prohibit warfare against the Muslim Qarākhānids (39) effectively deprived the Sāmānids of their last line of defence after the *dihqāns* and *mamlūks* had turned against them. Why did the scholars abandon the Sāmānids?

Scholars had benefited considerably from the patronage of the early Sāmānids until the end of Ahmad ibn Ismā'il'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 Sāmānid court, neither is there much evidence of antagonism between scholars and *mamlūks* or *kuttāb*. We do have Tawhīdī's account of Jayhānī's *shu'ūbi* rantings (40), but there is no sign of

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39 See above, chapter 8, p. 263.

40 See appendix; the Sāmānid state elite, s.v. "Muḥammad ibn Ahmad al-Jayhānī".

a scholarly response in the form of a denunciation of *kuttāb* as cultivators of *kalām* and the foreign sciences, at least not in the *mashriq*.

However under Naṣr ibn Aḥmad, there was a noticeable change of tone in the Sāmānid court; scholars did not occupy as prominent<sup>^</sup> position as they had under Aḥmad 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. Nūḥ ibn Naṣr did appoint the qāḍī 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 'ulamā' the world over; while there is surprisingly little evidence of an aversion on their part to *suhbat al-sultān*, they generally fought shy of taking up positions within the *dīwān al-qadā'* (41) and, in spite of their favoured position in the early Sāmānid 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-Sāmānid role in 329 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

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41 Thus for example, when <sup>the</sup> Hanafī scholar Muḥammad ibn Ziyād al-Bazdighzī al-Naysābūrī heard that the Shāfi'ī Ibn Khuzayma was considering him for the post of chief qādī of Naysābūr in the reign of Ismā'īl ibn Aḥmad, is said to have pleaded tearfully to the former that he withdraw his candidacy (Ibn Abī'l-Wafā', *Al-jawāhir al-muḍiyya fī ṭabaqāt al-ḥanafīyya*, Hyderabad, 1332, vol. ii, p. 55). In another early example, Abū'l-Faḍl Bal'amī had to remind the reluctant Shāfi'ī scholar, Muḥammad ibn Shu'ayb al-Bayhaqī, that it was his duty to act as qādī (Subkī, *ibid*, vol. ii, p. 164).

42 Ibn Zāfir tells us that the *mashayikh al-balad* and the *ahl al-'ilm* agreed in principle with Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad, the governor of Bukhārā, that a successor to Aḥmad ibn Ismā'īl 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 Zāfir, *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 Qarākhānids had become Muslims, the Sāmānids would have needed special merits to be worth fighting for; these merits they simply did not possess.

Appendix one

The Sāmanid state elite

Ahmad ibn Husayn, Abū Ja'far al-'Utbi

He probably took part in Abū 'Alī Saghānī's rebellion during Nūh's reign: Gardīzī says Ahmad ibn al-Ḥasan (sic) al-'Utbi was captured by Nūh's forces in 335/946-7, punished and imprisoned and only released after a long time (Gardīzī, *Zayn*, pp. 156f). He was wazir from 347/958-349/960, appointed not by 'Abdalmalik but by his ḥājib Alptegin (Gardīzī, *Zayn*, p. 160, where he is called Abū Ja'far ibn Muḥammad al-Ḥusayn, 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-yamīnī*. 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'amī (Gardīzī, *Zayn*, pp. 89 and 164). Khwādamīr says that the amir Muḥaffar-i Muḥtāj (= Abū'l-Muḥaffar Muḥammad ibn Ahmad, Muḥtājīd governor of Saghānīyān? - see chapter 8, note 30) was responsible for causing his death (*Dastūr al-vuzara'*, p. 110 ).

*h vol. iv,*

Ahmad ibn Muhammad, Abū 'Abdallāh al-Jayhānī

He came to the wazirate in 365/975-6, the year of Mansūr ibn Nūh's death (*Zayn*, p. 164). Son of Abū 'Alī Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad (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 Nūh ibn Mansūr's reign he was dismissed in favour of Abū'l-Husayn 'Utbi (Yāqūt, *Irshād*, vol. ii, p. 60).

Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Muḥaffar ibn Muḥtāj, Abū 'Alī, al-Saghānī, the Muḥtājīd

He succeeded his father as governor of Khurāsān in 327/938-9 (Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, 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 Ḥashim al-Kāmkārī al-Marwazī

For his biography see Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, vol. viii, pp. 118f; Gardīzī, *Zayn*, pp. 151f. Governor of Andaraba 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 *dihqān* from the district of Marv and claimed descent from Yazdagird ibn Shahryar. Both he and his brother, Muhammad, were governors of Marv under 'Amr the Ṣaffarīd (Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, vol. vii, p. 368; *ibid*, vol. viii, p. 118). Ahmad ibn Sahl defected

to Ismā'īl 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 (Isfizārī, *Herāt*, p. 384). For his rebellion in Khurāsān early in Nasr ibn Ahmad's reign, see above, chapter 5, p. 150f.

### Alptegīn

Bought as a slave by Ahmad ibn Ismā'īl towards the end of Ahmad's life, then served Nasr and Nūh; during the latter's reign he became commander of the Khurāsānian army (Nizām al-mulk, *Siyar al-mulūk*, p. 145 = p. 107); Hamdallāh Mustawfī says he was a *ghulam* of Ahmad ibn Ismā'īl and commanded the army in Nūh ibn Nasr's reign (*Tārīkh-i guzīdah* pp. 379 and 381); Muqaddasī says he was chief *hājib* at the end of Nūh's reign (*Aḥsan*, 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 'Alī Saghānī was in rebellion against the Sāmānids. Nizām al-mulk also tells us that Alptegīn played a major part in defending the Sāmānids from the attacks of the Khāns 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?) Muhammad (ibn Nasr ibn Ahmad?) al-Sāmānī

Abū Ja'far Muhammad ibn Nasr was the Sāmānid raised to the throne by Abū 'Alī 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 Isfizārī report that Abū Yahyā Ash'ath overcame a revolt in Herāt (*Surat al-Ard*, vol. ii, 2nd ed., p. 437; *Tārīkh-i herāt*, p. 386, where he is called Abū Yahyā As'ad ibn Muhammad al-Sāmānī and the date is given as 341/952-3). Narshakhi notes that Ash'ath ibn Muhammad was sent to Khurāsān by 'Abdalmalik ibn Nūh, and that "he had to fight many times in Herāt and Isfahān" (*Tārīkh-i bukhārā*, p. 134 = p. 98). Narshakhi also says that at the beginning of Mansūr ibn Nūh's reign he was sent to fight Alptegīn (*ibid*, p. 135 = p. 99). He was governor of Farghāna at the end of Mansūr's reign (see above, chapter 7, p. 235).

Bakr ibn Mālik ibn Sunkurtegīn(?), Abū Sa'id al-Farghānī  
Governor of Khurāsān 343-345. His family were appointed governors of Naṣrābād in Farghāna, a city founded by the Sāmānids and the birthplace of Nasr ibn Ahmad ibn Asad (d. 279/892), from 336/947-8 (cf. E.A. Davidovich, "Vladeteli Nasrabada", *KSIIMK*, lvi, 1956, pp. 107-113). His father Mālik is named as the *sahib Farghāna* in 327/938-9 (Rashīd ibn al-Zubayr, *Kitāb al-dhakha'ir wa 'l-tuhaf*, p. 141) and commander-in-chief of a Sāmānid expedition to Jurjān in 333/944-5 (Ibn al-Athīr, *Kamil*, vol. viii, p. 443).

Davidovich believes that the family were appointed as *muqta*'s of Naṣrābād as a reward for services rendered to the Sāmānids. 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 Sāmānid amirs. From this she deduces that they were independent rulers of the town, beneficiaries of the "feudal" system of government in operation under the Sāmānids. 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 Khurāsān, Bakr began the construction of a walled city in Khusrawjird, a locality in Bayhaq where he had possessions (*amlāk*), but was compelled to return to Naysabur before completing the project (Bayhaqī, *Tārīkh-i bayhaq*, p. 233).

He was murdered in Bukhārā by the Turks Alptegīn and the *khāzindār* Fatkīn in Ramaḍān 345 (*Zayn*, p. 160). Gardīzī does not give the causes of his assassination, but Ibn Zāfir notes that his enemies put it about that he favoured the appointment of 'Abdalmalik's brother, Mansūr, in his place (*Duwal*, fol. 127b); Jūzjanī claims that he was suspected of inclining towards the Būyids, as had his predecessor, Abū 'Alī Saghānī, and that both he and the wazīr Ibn 'Uzayr were converts to Ismā'ilism (*Jūzjanī, Tabaqāt-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 Khurāsān in 371 ('Utbi, *Yamīnī*, in Manīnī, *Fath*, vol. i, p. 105).

#### Bakr ibn Muḥammad ibn Alīsa'

Son of the Sāmānid general Muḥammad ibn Alīsa' who pledged allegiance to Naṣr ibn Aḥmad on the first day of the latter's reign (Ibn Zāfir, *Duwal*, fol. 123a) and defeated Ilyās ibn Ishāq's second attack on Transoxania (Ibn Athīr, *Kāmil*, vol. viii, p. 133). Bakr was governor of Naysābur 313/925-315/927 (*id*, *Kāmil*, vol. viii, p. 175f).

Bal'amī, see Abu'l-Fadl Muḥammad ibn 'Ubaydallāh, Abū 'Alī Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad.

#### Bughrā al-kabīr

One of the *mamlūks* who took part in the attempted coup after the assassination of Aḥmad ibn Ismā'il (Ibn Zāfir, *Duwal*, fol. 122b) and was then forgiven by Naṣr and led his *mamlūks* in the battle with Ishāq ibn Aḥmad (*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 Khān the Qarākhānid (Ibn Khaldūn, *Kitāb al-'ibar*, vol. iv, Bulaq, pp. 339f: Pritsak, "Von den Karluk zu den Karachaniden", *ZDMG*, 1951, pp. 292f). But this is far too early a date for Qarākhānid involvement in Sāmānid affairs; if the Bughrā in question had been the Qarākhānid leader, our sources would certainly have commented on the fact.

Fā'iq ibn 'Abdallāh (al-Andalusī?) (nisba in Samargandī, Muntakhab, fol. 4a) al-Rūmī (nisba in Hākīm, fols 47a f) Abu'l-Hasan (kunya in Tarikhname-yi Tābarī, ed. Muhammad Rawshan, Tehran, 1366, p. xix) al-khassa

His father was a (recently-converted?) Muslim but he was a eunuch (Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, vol. ix, p. 149). He was appointed guardian of Mansūr ibn Nuḥ by his father Nuḥ and brought his charge to the throne in 350 (see above, chapter 7, p. 236). For his subsequent career see chapters 7 and 8.

al- / al-Bayyīc  
Kitāb ahvāl-i  
nīshapur

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 amir Naṣr (Ibn Zafīr, *Duwal*, fol. 123a) whom he served as army commander (*ṣahīb jaysh*), according to Muqaddasī (*Aḥsan*, p. 337); Mirkhwand gives him the title *hākīm-i nīshapur* (*Rawḍa*, vol. iv, p. 42). His daughter married the son of the Zaydī imam Muḥammad ibn Zayd (d. 237) (Ibn Isfandiyār, *Tarikh-i tabaristan*, p. 257). Victor over Aḥmad ibn Sahl and Līlī ibn Nu'man. His son, Abū'l-'Abbās Aḥmad ibn Hamūya, continued in Sāmānī service, serving as righthand-man (*ṣahīb-i tadbīr*) to the heir apparent Ismā'īl ibn Naṣr ibn Aḥmad (see above, chapter 6, note 54) (Gardīzī, *Zayn*, p. 154), and was executed in the reign of Nuḥ ibn Naṣr on the orders of the latter (Gardīzī, *Zayn*, p. 155).

Husayn ibn 'Alī al-Marwazī (see appendix; the *Ṣu'lūkids*).

Ibrāhīm ibn Aḥmad ibn Ismā'īl al-Sāmānī

He rebelled against his brother Naṣr ibn Aḥmad in 317/929 and subsequently fled to the west. Before he got to Baghdad, Ibrāhīm entered the service of Abū'l-Husayn al-Barīdī, a member of the tax-farming dynasty of Wāsīt, and was involved in Abū'l-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 Nāṣir al-Dawla the Hamdanid (Ibn Miskawayh, *Eclipse*, vol. ii, p. 29 = vol. v, p. 31). Ibn Zafīr says that Ibrāhīm joined Bajkam before transferring his services to the Hamdanid (*Duwal*, fol. 126a). For his attempt to seize the Sāmānī throne from his nephew, Nuḥ ibn Naṣr, see above, chapter 7.

Abū Ishāq Ibrāhīm ibn Sīmjur

Governor of Bukhara more than once and of Marv, Naysābūr and Herāt (Sam'ānī, *Ansāb*, vol. vii, p. 351f). He fought against Muḥammad ibn Ilyās in Kirman on behalf of the Sāmānids (Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, vol. viii, p. 324). Governor of Jurjān in 328 on behalf of Abū 'Alī Sīmjurī (Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, vol. viii, pp. 359 and 369). Nuḥ ibn Naṣr appointed him governor of Naysābūr in place of Abū 'Alī Sīmjurī in Ramadan 333/April-May 944 (Ibn al-

Athīr, *Kāmil*, vol. viii, p. 444). Died Shawwāl 336/April-May 948 (Sam'ānī, *ibid*).

Ilyās ibn Muḥammad ibn Alīsa' al-Sughdī (for *nisba* see Ibn Isfandiyār, *ibid*, p. 271).

Brother of Bakr ibn Muḥammad (q.v.). See Ibn Isfandiyār, *Tārīkh-i ṭabaristān*, pp. 271f and 281 for Ilyās ibn Alīsa' (=Ilyās ibn Muḥammad ibn Alīsa'). See also Abū Ishāq Ibrāhīm ibn Hilāl al-Sābi', who says he was killed in battle with the Zaydīs of Ṭabaristān between 306-8 (Kitāb al-Tājī, in Madelung, *Arabic texts concerning the history of the Zaydī imams*, p. 33).

Jayhānī, see Abū 'Abdallāh Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad, Abū Mansūr 'Ubaydallāh ibn Aḥmad, Abū 'Alī Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad, Abū 'Abdallāh Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad.

Mansūr ibn Qarātegin

Son of Qarātegin al-Isfiyābī (q.v.). Miskawayh calls him *ghulam ṣāhib khurāsān* (*id*, *Eclipse*, vol. ii, p. 123). Appointed governor of Khurāsān in 335/946-7 and led an attack on the Caspian provinces in 337/948-9 (Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, vol. viii, p. 478). Lost control of the Sāmānid army and died in 340 (Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, vol. viii, p. 493; see above, chapter 7).

Al Marzubānī

For Marzubānī, Sāmānid representative at the caliphal court under Ismā'il ibn Aḥmad and Aḥmad ibn Ismā'il, see chapter 9, note 76. He may have been related to (perhaps he was the son of?) al-Marzubān ibn Turksafī? (تركسفي), who was one of the Sughdīs who served the caliphate (Iṣṭakhri, *Masālik*, p. 292); cf. also Ibn al-Athīr and Ṭabarī (cited by Barthold, *Turkestan*, p. 95), where he is called Marzbān ibn Turgash, ruler of Marzbān, a district north of Samarqand. This Marzubān claimed descent from Ghurak, the ruler of Samarqand in the *jāhiliyya*; this is indicated by Samarqandī's genealogy of his son, Abū'l-Husayn 'Ubaydallāh ibn al-Marzubān ibn Turkash ibn Baqī ibn Kushīr ibn Tarkhun ibn Banāyijūr ibn Ghurak (d. 298/310) (Samarqandī, *Muntakhab*, fol. 50a); 'Ubaydallāh was granted an estate by the Sāmānid Naṣr ibn Aḥmad ibn Asad (*id*, fol. 8a). Samarqandī says that 'Ubaydallāh's nephew, Abū Aḥmad 'Abd al-'Azīz ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Marzubān related *ḥadīth* from his uncle 'Ubaydallāh, among others. Note that in 'Abd al-'Azīz's genealogy "Banāyijūr" is replaced by "kanādarang" (cf. Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al-razzāq's [q.v.] claimed descent from the "kanārang"). 'Abd al-'Azīz's son, Abū Sāliḥ Aḥmad (d. 386/996) was deputy governor of Samarqand for Bektāsh in 352/962-3 (Sam'ānī, *Ansāb*, vol. xii, p. 188; cf. also his entry in Samarqandī, *Muntakhab*, fol. 70a.).

Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al-Razzaq al-Tuṣī

He claimed descent from the *kanārang* (lord of the [east] march) (Minorsky, "The older preface to the *Shahname*", pp. 163f and 175f; for Birunī's view that this genealogy was spurious, see above, chapter 3, note 20). Joined Abū 'Alī al-Saghānī's revolt. Defected to the Buyids on two

occasions. Commissioned the composition of a *Shāhnāme* in 346 (Gardīzī, *Zayn*, p. 160, note 14). Sāmānid governor of Khurāsān (see above, ch. 7).

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 <sup>to 310</sup> when he was dismissed, possibly on charges of heresy (cf Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, p. 338 where Muḥammad ibn Ahmad al-Jayhānī (sic) is said to have been a *zindīq*). 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-Tahīrī which begins:

*mā fihi min ḥasanin nuthnī 'alayhi bihi  
illa 'l-tasannu'u bi'l-wiswās li'l-nās,  
li-yūhimu 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 Zāfir, *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 Muḥammad 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-mamālik* (pace Pellat, *EI<sup>2</sup> supplement*, s.v. "Djayhānī", and Mirzayef, *Abū 'abdallāh rūdakī ve āthar-i manzūm-i rūdakī*, 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-mamālik* as Abū 'Abdallāh Ahmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Naṣr, wazir of the *ṣāhib 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 Muḥammad ibn Ahmad's grandson, Abū 'Abdallāh Ahmad ibn Muḥammad [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

Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Naṣr al-Jayhānī; the last lines of this biography do indeed refer to Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad's grandson; but the rest of the biography, which includes a reference to its subject as the author of the *Kitāb al-masālik wa'l-mamālik*, is evidently that of Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad himself; this is proved by the lampoon of Jayhānī written by Aḥmad (sic=Abū Aḥmad) ibn Abī Bakr who was a fierce critic of Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad (*Irshād*, vol. ii, p. 59; see below "Muḥammad ibn Ḥamīd"). Furthermore Narshakhi's reference to a book with the title *Maṣālik wa mamālik* is most likely Jayhānī's work (*Tārikh-i bukhāra*, p. 26 = p. 19).

If, as seems probable, Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad was the Jayhānī referred to in Tawhīdī's *Kitāb al-imtā' wa 'l-mu'ānasa*, he was a fierce proponent of the superiority of the Persians over the Arabs. Tawhīdī does not specify which of the Jayhānīs he is referring to in this passage, mentioning only that he was the author of the book in which he recorded these reprehensible views; Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad was however the only member of the family who is acknowledged to have been an *adīb* (see above for the authorship of the *Kitāb al-masālik wa'l-mamālik* and other works; see also Yāqūt's reference to other books by him [*Mu'jam al-buldān*, vol. ii, p. 181]). Tawhīdī admonishes Jayhānī for his violently pro-Iranian 'asābiyya 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 (*Kitāb al-imtā' wa 'l-mu'ānasa*, vol. i, Cairo, pp. 78-90). It is impossible to judge whether these views contributed to Jayhānī's unpopularity in Bukhāra (when he died, the Bukhārāns are said to have stoned his coffin and refused to pray over him, cf. Ibn Zāfir, *Duwal*, fol. 126a); or whether they were simply an extreme expression of the growing interest in local Iranian culture fostered by the amir Naṣr and his courtiers. He was also accused of being inimical to Muslims (cf. Abū'l-Tayyib al-Tāhirī's verses, in Yāqūt, *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 Abū Zayd Balkhī tried to avoid (Yāqūt, *ibid*, vol. i, p. 148).

Although there is no evidence that he held Qarmaṭī beliefs, he is described as a *zindīq* by Ibn al-Nadīm (*Fihrist*, p. 338), the same term used in Samarqandī's *Muntakhab* of the Sāmānid wazīr who is said to have converted to Ismā'ilism, Abū'l-Tayyib Muḥammad ibn Ḥatīm al-Muṣ'abī (q.v.). Both his son, Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad (q.v.) and grandson Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad (q.v.), were accused of being respectively, the patron of an ex-Isma'īlī *dā'i* and a Qarmaṭī.

For Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Ḥaytham see below pp. 321 f.  
Muḥammad ibn Ḥamīd ibn Nu'aym ibn al-Fudayl ibn Sahl ibn Farrukhān ibn Māhān ibn Bahrām ibn Mahwayh, Abū Bakr al-kātib al-Ishtadāmī (village near Nasaf)

Claimed descent from the Marzuban of Merv (for his genealogy, cf. Samarqandī, *Muntakhab*, fol. 71a). Died 302/914-15. A high official in the bureaucracy until his death (see above, chapter 4, p. 122f). Samarqandī says

that he was universally liked by the Sāmānids, their generals and subjects. His son Abū Aḥmad 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 Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad Jayhānī and Muḥammad ibn 'Ubaydallāh Bal'amī, into vitriolic satires written against the two wazirs (Tha'alibī, *Yatīma*, vol. ii, p. 62). Abū Aḥmad did hold administrative posts; he was an 'āmil in Herāt, Bushanj and Badghis and Naysabur (Tha'alibī, *Yatīma*, p. 63). He eventually relinquished his official positions and died by his own hand in Bukhārā, impoverished and bitter.

Muḥammad ibn Hārūn al-Sarakhsī (*nisba* given in Ibn Zāfir, *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, *Kāmil*, 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 Muḥammad ibn Zayd (Ibn al-Athīr, *ibid*, p. 434). Transferred to Sāmānid service after Rāfi's death and led the advance guard of Ismā'il's army against 'Amr the Saffārid. See chapter 4, pp. 118 for his victory over Muḥammad ibn Zayd and his subsequent rebellion against Ismā'il.

Muḥammad ibn Hātim, Abū'l-Tayyib al-Muṣ'abī

*Nadīm* of Naṣr ibn Aḥmad (Tha'alibī, *Yatīma*, vol. iv., part 4, p. 75) and head of chancellery during his reign (Bayhaqī, *Tārīkh-i bayhaqī*, ed. Ghani, p. 107). Associated with some of the most vehement critics of the Sāmānid regime among the poets whose work is recorded by Tha'alibī, e.g. Abū Aḥmad ibn Abī Bakr al-kātib, and himself composed poetry in Arabic and Persian (Tha'alibī, *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 Ismā'ilī scandal at Naṣr's court (Samarqandī, *Muntakhab*, fols. 43af). Balkhī names him as one of the *aṣḥāb al-qarāmīta* (*Fadā'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 Muḥammad ibn Mūsā al-Balkhī in Naṣr's reign as strengthening the *da'wa* in Khurasan (Stern, *Studies in early Isma'ilism*, p. 228) - could this be an erroneous reference to Muṣ'abī? He organized the *miḥna* at the time of the Ismā'ilī scandal (see chapter 6, p. 196). He died at the hands of the *hashm* in the repression of the Qarmāṭis which followed the abdication of the amir Naṣr.

Muḥammad ibn Husayn ibn Mutt

An ally of Ilyās ibn Ishāq in his revolt against Naṣr ibn Aḥmad in 310/922 (see above, chapter 5, p. 146). His grandfather Mutt ibn 'Abd had been Naṣr I ibn Aḥmad'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-Istishabi [=al-Isfiyabi] in Sistan).

Tiesenhausen suggests that a *fiis* minted in Samargand in 303/915-16, 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 Samanidskykh Mon etakh", *Trudy Vostochnago Otdeleniya Imp. Russkogo Arkh. Obshchestva*, 1855, p. 141f).

#### Abū'l-Hasan Muhammad ibn Ibrāhīm Sīmjurī

He was appointed deputy governor of Naysabūr by Bakr ibn Mālik (q.v.) in 344/955-6 (Gardizī, *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 'Utbī. 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 Sāmānid wazir. Died 378. He was succeeded by his son Abū 'Alī al-Muzaffar ibn Muhammad (q.v.).

#### Muhammad ibn Ilyās, Abū 'Alī

A Sāmānid general of Soghdian origin and founder of the Ilyāsīd dynasty of Kirman (cf. C.E. Bosworth, "The Banū Ilyās of Kirman", *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 Sāmānid 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 Alīsa' al-Sughdī, the brother of the Sāmānid governor of Khurasan, Bakr ibn Muhammad (q.v.); note that Muhammad ibn Ilyās named one of his own sons Alīsa' (Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, vol. viii, p. 585) and that the name of his grandfather is given as Alīsa' in two sources (*Kitāb al-'uyūn wa'l-hadā'iq*, ed. Sa'idi, p. 271; Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, vol. viii, p. 324).

He was imprisoned by the Sāmānids for unknown misdemeanours but released on the intercession of Abū'l-Fadl al-Bal'amī (Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, vol. viii, p. 278). Joined the revolt of Yahyā ibn Ahmad in 317. After it had failed, he founded the Ilyāsīd dynasty of Kirman 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 Bukhārā at the end of Ahmad ibn Ismā'īl's reign; he secured the throne for Naṣr 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 Naṣr, Ibn Zafir names him as Ibn Ahyad/Ajyad (=Ahmad?) (*Duwal*, fol. 120b); but Ibn al-Athīr names him Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Layth (*Kāmil*,

vol. viii, p. 78). Now Ibn 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); Narshakhī adds that he was Ismā'īl ibn Ahmad's chief of police in Bukhārā (Narshakhī, *Tārīkh-i bukhārā*, 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 Nuḥ ibn Naṣr (see ch. 5, note 158). Appointed wazir by Alptegīn 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 Alptegīn, then governor of Khurāsān, asking him who he should appoint to succeed the dead amir. It was probably on account of his close association with Alptegīn, who fled to Ghazna after his appointee had been rejected by the holders of power in Bukhārā in favour of Mansūr ibn Nuḥ, that Abū 'Alī soon lost the wazirate to Abū Ja'far al-'Utbī. He regained the post twice during Mansūr's reign before his death in 363/974. He undertook the translation of Tabarī's *Tafsīr* and his *Tārīkh*.

Muhammad ibn Muhammad, Abū 'Alī al-Jayhānī

Son of Abū 'Abdallāh Muhammad ibn Ahmad (q.v.). Took over the wazirate from Abū'l-Faḍl Bal'amī in 326/937-8 (Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, vol. viii, p. 378). Jayhānī held the wazirate until 329. Died in 330/941-2 (*ibid*, 393). For his patronage of Kayyāl, the ex-Isma'īli *da'i*, see chapter 6, p. 192f.

Muhammad ibn Muzaḥfar ibn Muhtāj (cf. Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, vol. viii, p. 356), Abū Bakr al-Saghānī, the Muhtājīd

Ruler of Saghāniyān. He took part in Ahmad ibn Ismā'īl's conquest of Sīstān (Gardīzī, *Zayn*, p. 168) and joined the rebel Husayn ibn 'Alī when the latter revolted against Naṣr ibn Ahmad in circa 301/914 (*Tārīkh-i sīstān*, p. 302 = p. 245). Governor of Farghāna in Naṣr ibn Ahmad's reign (see chapter 5, p. 148). Appointed governor of Khurāsān before 320/932 (Gardīzī, *Zayn*, p. 153); he was already commander of the Khurāsānī army (commonly synonymous with governorship of Khurāsān) in 318/930 when Naṣr ibn Ahmad's three brothers revolted (Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, vol. viii, p. 210). Succeeded by his son Abū 'Alī Ahmad ibn Muhammad (q.v.) in 327/938-9 (Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, vol. viii, p. 356).

Muhammad ibn 'Ubaydallāh, Abū'l-Faḍl al-Bal'amī.

For his genealogy, see Sam'anī, vol. ii, pp. 313f. Of Arab descent. Before becoming wazir, he was in charge of the *dīwān 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-faḍl al-bal'amī yantahilu madhhab al-hadīth, qāla ibn al-ṣalāḥ idha atlaqū hādha hunāka, insarafa ilā madhhab al-shāfi'i* (Subkī, *Tabaqāt al-shāfi'iyya*, vol. ii, p. 170f). He was noted for his association with eminent Shāfi'īs at the Sāmānid court, including Muhammad ibn Naṣr al-Marwazī (d. 294/906-7), one of the first scholars to introduce Shāfi'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 Shāfi'i scholar of Naysābur, Abū Saḥl Muḥammad ibn Sulaymān and the Su'lūki family of Naysābur took part (Sam'anī, *Ansāb*, vol. viii, 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* Sīmjur 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). Khwandamīr says that Nuḥ (ibn Naṣr), (during his regency at the end of his father's reign?) sent his army commander, Khumārtegin, to kill Bal'amī (cf. *Dastūr al-Vuzarā'*, ed. Saīd Nafisi, Tehran, p. 108). Died 329/940 -1.

Muhtājids, see Abū Bakr Muḥammad ibn Muzaffar, Abū 'Alī Ahmad ibn Muḥammad.

al-Muzaffar ibn Muḥammad, Abū 'Alī Sīmjurī

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 Bukhara or military aid (see chapter 8, p. 248). Invited the Qarakhanids to take over Transoxania (ibid, p. 250). Allied with Fā'iq and fought the Sāmānids and their Ghaznavid allies until he was taken prisoner to Bukhara; subsequently died in Gardiz at the hands of his Ghaznavid enemies (see ibid, p. 258).

Qarātegin al-Isfiyābī

*Mawlā* of the Sāmānids (cf. Ibn Khaldūn, *Ibar*, vol. iv, p. 339). Barthold thought that Qarātegin and his son Mansūr were members of the "ruling family" of the province of Isfiyāb (*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 (Qarātegin built a *ribāt* there - Muqaddasī, *Aḥsan*, p. 273), the majority of whose inhabitants were Turks, and the fact that after their deaths, both father and son were taken back to Isfīyāb 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-Khwārazmī to the *mamlūk* Sīmjurids (see this appendix; s.v. "Sīmjur, Abū 'Imrān"). Furthermore Abū Mansūr Qarātegin, possibly to be identified as Qarātegin al-Isfīyābī, took a leading part in the *mamlūk* putsch of 301 (Ibn Zāfir, *Duwal*, fol. 123b). While it is quite possible that a native prince of Turkish origin might have allied with the *mamlūk* regicides, the fact that he led the negotiations with the Bukhāran notables on behalf of the *mamlūks* suggests that he too was a *mamlūk*. C.E. Bosworth alludes to Qarātegin's *mamlūk* status ("The Rulers of Chaghāniyān in Early Islamic Times", *Iran*, xix, 1981, p. 4); Miskawayh calls his son Mansūr (q.v.) the *ghulam* of the Sāmānids. But Abū'l-Ḥasan Bayhaqī, curiously, refers to him as *qarātekīn isfahbadī pedar-i mansūr-i qarātekīn* (*Tārīkh-i bayhaq*, p. 178).

Governor of Naysābur. Then governor of Balkh (Mitchener, p. 27: coins with his name minted A.H. 314, 317, 318, 319). He joined Abū Zakariyyā Yahyā ibn Ahmad's revolt. He seceded to Bust where his *ghilman* remained after Yahyā was defeated. His son Mansūr became governor of Naysābur during Abū 'Alī's revolt.

Saghānī, see Muhtājids

Sīmjur, Abū 'Imrān al-dawāṭī/dawātdār.

Founder of the Sīmjurid line of governors. Ibn Zāfir ascribes the *nisba* al-Khwārazmī to Abū 'Imrān (*Duwal*, fol. 119a). Note the Sāmānids' early ties with Khwārazm in predynastic history of the Sāmānids (see above, chapter 3, p. 93). Sīmjur is described as a *ghulam* of the Sāmānids (*Sam'ānī, Ansāb*, vol. vii, p. 351). Heard *hadīth* from Muhammad ibn Ishāq ibn Khuzayma among others (*Sam'ānī, ibid*). Took charge of 'amal-i *kharāj wa diyā'* in Herāt after the appointment of Ḥusayn ibn 'Alī as governor in 287/900 (*Isfizārī, Tārīkh-i Herāt*, p. 384). He twice acted as Ahmad ibn Ismā'īl's governor of Sīstān between 298 and 301 (see Mercil, "Simcuriler, I, Simcur ed-Devati", *Tarih Dergisi*, vol. xxxii, Istanbul, 1979, pp. 71-88). Served Naṣr ibn Ahmad as governor of Rayy briefly in 314/926 and governor of Herāt shortly afterwards (Ibn al-Athir, *Kāmil*, vol. viii, p. 166; *Isfizārī, Herāt*, p. 385, first noted by Mercil, *ibid*, p. 87). Died in the last decade of Naṣr's reign (Mercil, *ibid*, 87f).

Sīmjurids: see Abū 'Imrān Sīmjur, Abū Ishāq Ibrāhīm ibn Sīmjur, Abū'l-Ḥasan Muhammad ibn Ibrāhīm, Abū 'Alī al-Muzaffar ibn Muḥammad.

'Ubaydallāh/'Abdallāh ibn Ahmad, Abū'l-Husayn/Hasan al-Utbi

He became wazir as a young man in Rabi' II 367/<sup>Dec</sup>Nov 977 (Gardizi, Zayn, p. 165). Son of Abū Ja'far Ahmad ibn Husayn (q.v.). His appointment was opposed by Abū'l-Hasan Sīmjurī. Appointed his protégé the mamlūk Tāsh to the governorship of Khurāsān in place of Abū'l-Hasan Sīmjur in 371/981 (Gardizi, ibid, p. 166). Murdered by ghilmān in the pay of his enemy Abū'l-Hasan Sīmjurī in 372 (Gardizi, Zayn, pp. 166f).

'Ubaydallāh ibn Ahmad, Abū Mansūr al-Jayhānī

Brother of Muhammad ibn Ahmad (q.v.). He was Ahmad ibn Ismā'il's 'āmil in Bust, expelled from the city by the caliph's agent after the expulsion of the Sāmānid governor of Sīstān in 914 (see above, chapter 5, p. 158). Some five years later, during his brother's wazirate, he reappears as 'āmil of Herāt (Isfizārī, *Tārīkh-i Herāt*, p. 384). He died after a year in office and was replaced by his brother Hasan.

'Utbi, see Abū Ja'far Ahmad ibn Husayn, Abū'l-Husayn 'Ubaydallāh ibn Ahmad.

Appendix two

The *Ṣu'lūk*ids

In the reign of *Ismā'il* ibn *Aḥmad* we hear of a certain *'Alī* ibn *Husayn al-Marwarrūdhī* who was amir of Marv and who allied himself with *Ismā'il* and *Rafi' ibn Harthama* against *Abū Talḥa ibn Sharkub* in 272/885-6 (*Ibn al-Athīr, Kāmil, vol. vii, p. 369*) and with *Ismā'il* against *'Amr the Ṣaffarīd* some time before 287/900 (cf. above, chapter 3, note 113; *Narshakhi, Tārīkh-i bukhārā, p. 119 = p. 87; Tārīkh-i sīstān, p. 250 = p. 199* for his *nisba*). This man was presumably the father of *Husayn ibn 'Alī ibn Husayn al-Marwarrūdhī* or *al-Marwazī*, the famous general of the *Sāmānids* who conquered *Sīstān* in the reign of *Aḥmad ibn Ismā'il*, rebelled in the reign of his successor *Naṣr* (914-43) and converted to *Ismā'ilism* some time before 302 to become *dā'i* of *Khurāsān* (cf. above, chapters 4 and 5 [for his career], chapter 6, p. 189 [*Ismā'ilism*]; *The Tārīkh-i sīstān, p. 291 = p. 233* for his grandfather's name and his *nisba al-Marwarrūdhī*, presumably a reference to his place of birth; he was also known by the *nisba al-Marwazī*, 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 *Naṣr ibn Aḥmad* (*Ibn al-Athīr, Kāmil, vol. viii, p. 88*) and may have been re-appointed governor of the city later on during *Naṣr ibn Aḥmad's* reign (*Isfizārī, Herāt, p. 385* where he is given the *kunya Abū Bakr*). According to *Ibn al-Nadīm (Fihrist, ed. Fluegel, p. 138)*, *Husayn ibn 'Alī* also had a brother known as *Ṣu'lūk*; according to *Ibn Zāfir* he even went by the name of *Akhū Ṣu'lūk (Duwal, fol. 104b)*.

Several sources are familiar with a *Muḥammad ibn 'Alī Ṣu'lūk/al-Ṣu'lūkī* whom we have encountered many times already (above, chapters 4 and 5). He is also presumably to be identified as the brother of *Aḥmad ibn 'Alī "brother of Ṣu'lūk"*, another convert to *Ismā'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 'Alī, Mansūr ibn 'Alī, Muḥammad ibn 'Alī* and *Aḥmad ibn 'Alī* were thus most likely all four sons of *'Alī 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 'Alī* 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 *Muḥammad ibn 'Alī* begin in 282 when he was allegedly sent to quell a revolt in *Tabaristān*, and gives him the *kunya* of *Abū'l-'Abbās* on this occasion (*Duwal, fol. 112a*). But the man who was sent to quell the revolt was *'Abdallāh ibn Muḥammad ibn Nūḥ al-Sāmānī* (cf. above, chapter 4, p. 120), whose *kunya* was indeed *Abū'l-'Abbās*, not *Muḥammad ibn 'Alī*

Su'lūk, whose kunya was Abū Ja'far (Gardīzī, *Zayn*, p. 148; Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, viii, p. 125; Isfizārī, *Herāt*, p. 384). The mistake goes back to Ibn Zāfir's source, Ibrāhīm ibn Hilāl al-Sābi's *Kitāb al-tājī* (cf. Madelung, "Abu Ishāq al-Sābi' on the 'Alids of Tabaristān and Gīlān", *JNES*, vol. xxvi, 1967, p. 30, note 96), but Su'lūk also appears with the kunya of Abū'l-'Abbās elsewhere, undoubtedly because this was the kunya of his brother Ahmad (cf. *Kitāb al-'uyūn wa'l-hadā'iq fī akhbar al-daqa'iq*, vol. 4, Damascus, 1972-3, p. sub anno 307, p. 201).

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 amir Ahmad ibn Ismā'il appointed him to Rayy (Gardīzī, *Zayn*, p. 148). Two years afterwards he was transferred to the governorship of Tabaristān (Ibn Isfandiyār, *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 Nāṣir al-Utrūsh the Zaydī in 301 (Ibn Isfandiyār, *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 Zāfir identifies him as governor of the city in 301/914 (fol. 119b).

According to 'Arīb, who here mistakes him for his brother Ahmad, Muhammad ibn 'Alī fled to Rayy in 302/915 after his defeat by al-Utrūsh and asked the caliph to appoint him governor of that city, along with Qazwin, Tabaristān and Jurjan (apparently he took the Zaydī conquest of these cities to mean that their title-deeds had reverted to the caliph); he received Rayy ('Arīb, *Sila*, 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 302f 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 Yusuf ibn Abī'l-Sāj. 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-Sāj?) and a robe of honour (Miskawayh, *Eclipse*, vol. i, p. 39 = vol. iv, p. 43, where he is Muhammad ibn 'Alī ibn Su'lūk). Miskawayh describes him as *ibn 'amm sāhib Khurāsān*, presumably confusing him with Abū'l-'Abbās 'Abdallāh ibn Muhammad ibn Nūh al-Sāmānī, but it must nonetheless have been he rather than the Sāmānid who came to ask protection since the latter had died in Ahmad's reign. At some time in the following

three years Muḥammad 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, *Kāmil*, viii, pp. 100-103), since Ibn Isfandiyār reports that the son of Nāṣir al-Utrūsh made an alliance with him against Nāṣir's successor, Ḥasan ibn Qāsim, in 306/919 (Ibn Isfandiyār, *Tārīkh-i ṭabaristān*, 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'mān at Tus in that year (Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, vol. viii, p. 125, where he is named Abū Ja'far Ṣu'lūk); and he was apparently appointed to Herāt in circa 310, for he is said to have sent a deputy there at about that time (Isfizārī, *Herāt*, p. 384, where he is named Abū Ja'far Ṣu'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, *Kāmil*, vol. viii, pp. 166f; but cf. Ibn Isfandiyār, *Tārīkh-i ṭabaristān*, 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. 143ff]).

Aḥmad ibn 'Alī is first mentioned by 'Arīb as having governed Rayy in the reign of Aḥmad ibn Ismā'īl and as having resumed this governorship in 302/915, shortly after the accession of Naṣr ibn Aḥmad ('Arīb, *Sila*, 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 Ṭabarī's history, presumably because de Goeje was working on the basis of 'Arīb's account (cf. index, s.v. Ṣu'lūk and the reference given there). Aḥmad 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, *Kāmil*, vol. viii, p. 103, where he is called Aḥmad ibn 'Alī ibn Ṣu'lūk, but note that Ibn al-Athīr calls him the "brother of Ṣu'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'ilism by Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī (Nizām al-Mulk, *Siyar 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 Makān ibn Kākī, the general of the Zaydīs (Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, vol. viii, p. 144; Ibn Khaldūn, *Ibar*, vol. iv, p. 340). The Caliph sent Ibn Abī'l-Sāj against him and he was killed in 311/924 (Miskawayh, *Eclipse*, vol. i, p. 117 = vol. iv, p. 131; Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, vol. viii, p. 144).

Why Muḥammad 'Alī came to be known as Ṣu'lūk/Ṣu'lūkī is not known. There was a famous family of Shāfi'ī 'ulamā' by the name of Su'lūki in 10th century Naysābūr, but they do not seem to have been related to the sons of 'Alī ibn Husayn al-Marwarrūdhī (Sam'ānī, *Ansāb*, s.v. "Ṣu'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 Abū Bilāl's following. Darke's edition admits only of the Isma'ili colouring of the uprising (*be-kūhpāyihā-yi herāt khārijī āmade ast ve madhhab-i qarāmīta ashkāra karde* [*Siyar al-mulūk*, p. 298]); while Schefer's alludes to both Qarmatī and Khārijī participation (*be-kūhpāyī-yi herāt khawārij padīd āmadand ve madhhab-i khawārij ve qarāmīta ashkāra kardand* [*Siyāsāt nāme*, p. 194]).

h birun

In Schefer's edition of the *Siyāsāt nāme*, Abū Bilāl himself appears as a Khārijī, a former boon companion of the Saffārid Ya'qūb ibn Layth who was said to have preached the da'wa on his behalf: *mīguyand ke nadīm ya'qūb-i layth u būd va dar madhhab-i khawārij da'wat be-niyābat-i ū mikonad* (*Siyāsāt nāme*, p. 194). In the corresponding passage in Darke's edition of the *Siyar al-mulūk*, there is no mention that Abū Bilāl was a Khārijī, but there does appear to be a lacuna in the text where the word *khawārij* appears in Schefer's edition: *mīguyand in abu bilāl an ast ke nadīmi ya'qūb-i layth kardi va dar madhhab (lacuna?) da'wat be-niyābat-i ū mikonad* (*Siyar al-mulūk*, p. 297 = p. 220). Darke's edition does however give Abū Bilāl the nisba "khārijī" in a subsequent passage (*ibid*, p. 298).

The *Tārīkh-i Sīstān* identifies a certain Abū Bilāl al-Khārijī who pledged allegiance to Ya'qūb ibn Layth in 874 and was subsequently invited to return to Sīstān with the Saffārid leader (*Tārīkh-i sīstan*, 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 Khārijī 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'qūb himself, it seems implausible. For a start, it is highly unlikely that Ya'qūb ibn Layth was a Khārijī, since he came to prominence by organising resistance to the Khawārij among his compatriots. Barthold does list several references which portray the Saffārids as *khārijīs*; Ya'qūb is said to have used a Khārijī battle-cry (Barthold, "Zur Geschichte der Saffariden", *Orientalische Studien*, Theodor Nöldeke, zum siebzigsten Geburtstag, vol. i, Gieszen, 1906, p. 184, citing 'Awfi); he and his brother 'Amr are described as Khārijīs in their early careers by Ištakhri (*ibid*); Ibn Khallikān describes him as a Khārijī (*ibid*). But this does not constitute strong evidence for the Saffārids' adoption of Khārijism. For one thing, Barthold believes that, in the two latter passages, the epithet *khārijī* should be taken to mean "rebel" (one who came out

against established authority); for another, the sources are not reliable - Istakhrī was no historian, and both 'Awfī and Ibn Khallikān 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 Kharijis, 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'ili (*Siyar al-mulūk*, p. 20 = p. 14). This is a charge which surely has no historical basis, given the fact that the Isma'ilis 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'ilism, 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 Bilāl'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 *kharijī* (probably in the sense of "rebel"), who leads a Qarmāṭi revolt in 907. It appears that a later copyist, (relying on evidence of Kharijis who were invited to Ya'qūb's court?) has taken the reference to the *kharijī* in the sectarian sense (compare *be-kūh pāyihā-yi herāt kharijī amade ast* [Darke, *ibid*] with *be-kūhpāyī-yi herāt khawārij padīd āmadand* [Schefer, *ibid*]) and having become such, the *kharijī* naturally had Khawārij as well as Qarmāṭa among his supporters (*ve madhhab-i khawārij ve qaramāṭa āshkāra kardand*). Thus it is quite possible that Nizām al-mulk, for all his bias against Ya'qūb, was not himself responsible for positing Kharijī-Qarmāṭi collaboration in Abu Bilāl's revolt.

h birua

Appendix four

The Khwārazmshāhs in the 10th century

The identity of the Afrīghid Khwārazmshāhs who ruled as vassals of the Sāmānids has been only tentatively established by modern historians. In his *Encyclopaedia of Islam* article "Kh<sup>w</sup>ārazm-shāhs", C.E. Bosworth draws attention to the unreliability of Birūnī, our source for the genealogy of the dynasty, pointing out that some of the names which appear on pre-10th century Khwārazmian coins bear no resemblance with those in his list (*EI*<sup>2</sup>, s.v. "Kh<sup>w</sup>ārazm-shāhs"). While Bosworth's reservations may be justified in respect of Birūnī's list of pre-tenth century Khwārazmshāhs, Sachau demonstrated that all four of the 10th century Khwārazmshāhs whom Birūnī identifies did in fact rule in sequence (Sachau, "Zur Geschichte und Chronologie von Khwarezm", *Sitzungsberichte 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 Muhammad ibn Ahmad (Birūnī, *Chronology of nations*, tr. E. Sachau, London, 1897, p. 42). 'Irāq ibn Mansūr was appointed governor of Khwārazm by Ismā'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) Qarātegīn). The same man, described as "lord of Khwārazm", certainly came to the aid of Ismā'īl's grandson, Naṣr ibn Ahmad, against his uncle Ishāq in 301 (cf chapter 4, p. 141). 'Irāq died at some time in the next five years and was succeeded by his son Muhammad 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 Jūzjanī (*Tabaqāt-i nāsirī*, p. 209) the Khwārazmian rebel, 'Abdallāh ibn Ashkān, who revolted against the Sāmānids at the beginning of the reign of Nuḥ ibn Naṣr in 332/943-4, was a Khwārazmshāh, but Jūzjanī 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, *Kāmil*, 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 (*shāghira*) (Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, vol. viii, p. 493): this may have been the result of a succession struggle on the death of Muhammad. Muhammad was succeeded by his son Abu Sa'id Ahmad who was ruler of Khwārazm in the middle of the tenth century (A.K. Markov, *Inventarn y katalog musulmanskikh mon et imperatorskago Ermitazha*, St. Petersburg, 1896, pp. 295 and 975, describes coins of

his minted in 348/959-60 and 366/976-7). Aḥmad's son Abū 'Abdallāh Muḥammad was the last Afrīghid Khwārazmshāh at the close of the century: he was killed by Ma'mūn, ruler of Gurgānj 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 Sāmānids and occasionally sent military aid to them (see above, chapter 4, p. 135) but relations with the Sāmānids were not always amicable; Biruni mentions that Abū Sa'id Aḥmad was imprisoned in Bukhārā for a while (*Chronology*, p. 229: see also the anecdote in 'Awfi, *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 Sīmjurī appointed Ma'mūn governor of Jurjāniyya (Gurgānj) and Nasā in the last decade of the century is contradicted by 'Utbī who says that Nūh ibn Mansūr granted Nasā to Ma'mūn, here entitled *ṣāhib al-jurjāniyya*, as a reward for help he had given him during his exile from Bukhārā (*Duwal*, fol 130a; *Yamīni*, in Manīni, *Fath*, vol. i, pp. 183f).

### Appendix five

#### The history of the Sāmānids in Ibn Zāfir's *Akhbār al-duwal al-islāmiyya*

This edition of Ibn Zāfir's chapter on the Sāmānids 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 *naṣkhī* 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. *Isma`īl* for *Ismā`īl*) 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.

## (fol.115b) الدولة السامانية بخراسان

لما دخل المأمون خراسان، وجد بها أسد بن سامان خداه، وهو من ولد بهرام جور شويين. ذكر غرس النعمة أنه وجد نسبهم في بعض الكتب، أسد بن سامان خداه ابن جسيان بن طعمان بن نوشرد بن بهرام شويين بن بهرام حسيب بن منوزاد خسرو بن نرسی بن بهرام بن الاشير بن سابور بن يزدجرد. فعرف بمقداره بمقدار أبوته، وقدمه وولى أولاده، وكان له أربعة أولاد، نوح بن أسد، أحمد بن أسد، يحيى بن أسد، إلياس بن أسد. ولما قدم المأمون العراق، وولى خراسان لغسان بن عباد، أوصاه بهم، فولى غسان في سنة أربع ومائتين نوح بن أسد سمرقند، وأحمد بن أسد فرغانة، ويحيى بن أسد الشاش وأشروسنة، وإلياس بن أسد هراة. ولما ولي طاهر بن الحسين خراسان أقرهم، ثم ولي عبد الله بن طاهر فأقرهم. وكان نوح أكبر الإخوة، فمات في سنة إحدى وثلاثين ومائتين، في آخر خلافة الإمام الواثق بالله وفي ولاية طاهر بن عبد الله بن طاهر، فكانت ولايته سبعة وعشرين سنة. فأقر أخاه أحمد بن أسد على عمله، وكان كريماً وفيه قيل:

تَوَى ثلاثين حولاً في ولايته فجاج يوم توى في قبره حشمه

وأقام أحمد إلى أن توفي في شهر رمضان سنة إحدى وستين ومائتين، فكانت ولايته ثلاثين سنة، وكانت وفاته في أيام المعتمد (fol.116a) على الله. وقد كان استخلف ولده نصراً على سمرقند وسائر أعماله، فأقره المعتمد وأصدر عليه عهده في شهر رمضان سنة إحدى وستين، فبقي على الأعمال طول أيام الطاهرية. وكان أخوه إسماعيل بن أحمد نائباً عنه ببخارا، فوقع بينهما مشاحنة أدت إلى محاربة، فالتقيا فهزم إسماعيل نصراً وأسر، فلما رآه اسيراً، ترجل له وقبل يده، وأعادته إلى سمرقند، فأقام والياً على سائر بلاد ما وراء النهر إلى أن توفي، فوليا إسماعيل بن أحمد.

ذكر سبب ملك إسماعيل خراسان وأسر عمرو بن الليث الصفار

لما استقرت يد عمرو الصفار على خراسان، حملته نفسه على منازعة إسماعيل على ما وراء النهر، فكتب إلى الإمام المعتضد يطلب منه التولية، فأجابه، وكتب إلى إسماعيل سراً، يأمره بمنابدته وتقوى قلبه على محاربتة. ولما حصلت الإجابة، بعث عمرو حاجبه محمد بن بشر في جيش كثيف لقتال إسماعيل بن أحمد، وبلغ الخبر إسماعيل، فكتب إلى عمرو: إنك وليت دنيا واسعة، وإنما في يدي ما وراء

النهر وهو ثغر الشرق، فأقنع بما في يدك، وأتركني رداً لك بهذا الثغر. فلم يجبه عمرو إلى ذلك. فأعاد الكتاب إليه يسأله أن لا يغرر بالمسلمين في تعدية النهر. فأعاد الجواب: إني لو أشاء أن أسكره بالبدر والأموال وأعبر العساكر عليه لفعلت. فلما علم إسماعيل أنه لا بد له من محاربتة، جمع عساكره وعبر النهر (fol.116b) إلى خراسان، ولقي محمد بن بشر، فهزمه وقتل في المعركة مع أكثر جيشه، ثم عاد إلى ما وراء النهر. فلما رجع المفلولون إلى عمرو، وأخذ في توخيهم ولومهم على الانهزام، قال له بعض الأجناد: أيها الأمير إن إسماعيل قد طبخ في ما وراء النهر قدراً كبيرة، وإنما غرف لنا منها مغرفة، والباقي بحاله، فتي شئت أن تذوق فافعل. فسكت عنه وتجهز الصفار، وخرج بنفسه قاصداً قتال إسماعيل، وبلغه الخبر فسار إليه وعدا النهر كما فعل في الكرة الأولى، فترل الصفار على بلخ، ونزل إسماعيل بإزائه، وقطع الميرة عنه، ومنعه النفوذ إلى ناحية من النواحي. فصار الصفار كالمحاصر، وندم على ما فعل، وطلب المحاجزة، فأبى إسماعيل، فعزم على الحرب. فلم يكن بينهما كثير قتال حتى انهزم الصفار، ومر على وجهه هارباً، فر بأجمة، قيل له إنها أقرب الطرق. فدخلها في خاصته وأمر باقي العسكر بالرجوع في الطريق الجادة، قاصداً أن يتبع عسكر إسماعيل الطريق الجادة، فينجو. فما سار في الأجمة إلا يسيراً حتى وحلت دابته، فلم يكن له في نفسه حيلة، وهرب من معه ولم يلوا عليه، فأدركه السابقون من أصحاب إسماعيل فأسروه، وجرى له ما ذكرناه في أخباره، وملك إسماعيل خراسان.

### الماضي إسماعيل بن أحمد

ملك إسماعيل خراسان مضافاً إلى ما وراء النهر في سنة سبع وثمانين، وغلب على جرجان وطبرستان بمقتل محمد بن زيد الداعي، (fol.117a) لخمس ليال خلون من ...<sup>④</sup> منها. وولاها لمحمد بن هرون السرخسي، ثم عزله وولى صعلوك، فناقق عليه محمد بن هرون، وصار للناصر<sup>⑤</sup> للحق العلوي، كما ذكرناه، ففرق بينهما صعلوك بحيلة، ففضى محمد بن هرون إلى بلاد الري، فهزم أرقتمش التركي واليها وقتله، واستقر بها، وذلك في سنة تسع وثمانين. فسار إليه صعلوك ولقيه على باب الري، وكان محمد بن هرون في ثمانية آلاف، فانهزم وقتل صعلوك أكثر أصحابه، وتسلم الري، ودخل السرخسي إلى نحو بلاد الديلم، وبعث المكتني بالله إلى إسماعيل في سنة تسعين عهده على الري إجابة لسؤاله.

وعلى أيام إسماعيل في سنة إحدى وتسعين ومائتين، خرج ملك الترك في جيش عظيم، ذكر أنه كان فيه سبع مائة قبة، ولا يكون ذلك إلا للعظماء. فوجه إليهم إسماعيل بعض قواده في خلق من العسكرية والمطوعة، فوافاهم، وهم عارون مع الصبح، فاستباحهم قتلاً وأسراً.

وتوفي ببخارا، وهي كرسي مملكته ومملكة بنيه، لأربع عشرة ليلة خلت من صفر سنة خمس وتسعين.

فكانت مدة ولاية خراسان وما وراء النهر ثمان سنين وأشهرًا، حاشى ولايته ما وراء النهر قبل أسر الصفار، ولما توفي لقب بعد وفاته بالماضي، وكذلك عادة أهل خراسان في ملوكهم السامانية أن لا يلقبهم إلا بعد الوفاة. وكان إسماعيل كبير اللحية، عظيم الهامة، أبيض اللون، وكان محباً في العلماء حليماً كريماً، يعمل الأسمطة كل يوم للفقهاء وأرباب الحديث، ويجالسهم على الموائد، فإذا انتظم على كل مائدة أهلها (fol.117b) حمل بين يديه كرسي، يوضع له على كل مائدة، فيجلس عليه ويأكل معهم. فكان إذا جلس على مائدة جُدد طعامها، فرمما سألوه أهل الموائد الباقيون أن يجلس عندهم إِدلالاً منهم على حلمه وكرمه.

### أحمد بن إسماعيل الشهيد

وكنيته أبو نصر، ولما مات والده إسماعيل، بويغ له ببخارا. وكان عمه إسحاق بن أحمد بسمرقند، فسولت له نفسه أخذ المملكة بعد أخيه، لما سمع بموته. فلما توفي، بادر أحمد بالسير إليه في جيش قوي من يومه، فسبق الخبر، ولم يشعر إلا بأحمد قد وصل ودخل عليه القصر، فلما رآه بادر إليه فعرفه أحمد الخبر، فبكى على أخيه، وأقام عليه العزاء ثلاثة أيام. وعزم على القبض على أحمد، ورتب له جماعة على باب قاعة من القصر، أعدها لحبسه، وأمرهم أن أحمد إذا جاء في اليوم الرابع ليدخل عليه، يقولون له إنه في تلك القاعة، فإذا دخلها، بادروا إليه بالثقيد. فمضى بعضهم ممن كان لأحمد عنده صنعة، وأخبره الخبر ووصف له القاعة المذكورة. وبكر أحمد، وقد اعتد في خاصته، فلما دخل القصر، بادر إليه الغلمان الموصفون<sup>٦</sup> وأخبروه أن عمه في تلك القاعة. فأبى دخولها،<sup>٧</sup> وتم إلى قاعة الجلوس، فوجد عمه بها، وهو ينتظر وصول البشارة بتقيده. فلما رآه، ألبس فتقدم إليه أحمد، وأمر غلمانه بالقبض عليه وعلى الغلمان وإحضار القيود المعدة له، فأحضرت من تلك القاعة، فقيده بها وقيد (fol.118a) الغلمان. وولى على سمرقند، ثم عاد إلى بخارا، فحبس عمه بها مدة، ثم رضي عنه، وأخذ عليه البيعة ورده إلى سمرقند.

وعلى أيامه في سنة سبع وتسعين ومائتين، خرجت الترك له بخرجة التي لم يكن قبلها، ولا بعدها، نظير لها. وذلك أنهم تجمعوا في أربعائة ألف، وقصدوا بلاد المسلمين، وتفرقوا أربع فرق، فرقة مائة ألف إلى بخارا، ومائة ألف أخرى إلى خوارزم، وخمسين ألفاً إلى سمرقند، وخمسين ألفاً إلى إسفياب،<sup>٨</sup> وخمسين ألفاً إلى الشاش، وخمسين ألفاً إلى فاراب،<sup>٩</sup> وقبضوا على التجار الذين كانوا في بلادهم، واسترقوهم. ولما بلغه ذلك، تجمعت المشايخ العسكرية والمطوعة ودخلوا عليه، فوجدوه باكباً، فأخذوا في تسليته. فقال: والله ما أبكي جزعاً من الموت، ولكن على المسلمين الذين أسروا واسترقوا، بعد أن كانوا مطلقين. ثم نظر إلى صاحب جيش المطوعة، وهو عبد الله بن عبيد الضبي، وقال له: كأني بك تقول إن هذا يحتاج إلى خلق، والناس مستورون، وليس لهم عدة، فأحضر الرجال،

ولك الأموال والخيول والعدد. فخرج وجمع الناس، وكفى الله الأمر بعد ذلك على يد الفقيه أبي بكر بن الأزهر البخاري، وكان يعد بألف، فخرج في أربعمائة فارس، ممن رغب في فداء المسلمين بنفسه، ومائة راجل، على سبيل الكشف لأخبار الترك. فسر الله عليهم إحراق العسكر القاصد إلى بخارا، وذلك أنهم نزلوا وادياً في بركة الغضا، وهذه بركة مسافة أيام<sup>(١١)</sup>، جميعها ملتفة بشجر الغضا، فوقعت السرية عليهم ليلاً، وهم قد اجتمعوا في واد، (fol.118b) قد تكاثفت عليهم أشجاره، فأمر النفاطين بإطلاق النار، فأحاطت بهم، وسلط الله عليه الرياح العواصف، فلم يسلم منهم أحد، وكان هذا مما يتعجب منه.

وأما قاصدوا خوارزم، فإنهم حصل لهم من أهلها أسرى لا يحصرهم العدد كثرة، فعادوا بهم. فلما فرغت السرية من العسكر القاصد إلى بخارا، عزموا على الرجوع، فأشار عليهم أحد شيوخ المطوعة، وهو أبو أحمد معبد، بأن يقصدوا العسكر القاصد إلى خوارزم، ليتخلصوا الأسرى، ووهب نفسه لله، فوافقه الجماعة، فساروا إليه. فوجدوا العسكر قد عاد عن خوارزم بالأسرى، وسار ثلاثة أيام لم ينزل، ثم نزل، فساروا إليه، وكنوا عن قرب منه، وخرج ابن الأزهر ومعبد، ودخلا عسكر الترك، وقصدوا مجتمع الأسرى، فوقعا فيهم، وكلماهم. فانتبه الأسرى، فأخبراهم أنها من أهل بخارا، وعرفاهم مكان السرية، وأطلقا منهم رجالاً، وأجد بعضهم يحل بعضاً، ورسم لهم ابن الأزهر أن يثوروا على الترك من وسطهم، إذا ضربت السرية الطبول. وخرج ابن الأزهر ومعبد إلى السرية، وفرقها أربع فرق، وضرب الطبول، فما نبه الترك إلا أصواتها في مكان الأمن، وتفرقت عليهم أهل خوارزم بكثرتهم، فلم يخرج أحد إلا قتله، فلم ينج من ذلك القتل إلا اليسير. وأما أهل إسفياب وفاراب والشاش، فإن الله نجاهم بزيادة نهر الشاش، فحال بينهم.

وفي هذه السنة ملك أحمد سجستان، وخرج على أحمد محمد بن هرمز الصندلي، وكان (fol.119a) خارجي المذهب، فخاطب يوماً أبا الحسين علي بن محمد العارض، بسبب أرزاقه. فقال له: يجب لمثلك في سنك أن تلزم رباطاً، تعبد الله فيه. فغاضه ذلك، فسار إلى سجستان وخرج بها، وسيرت العساكر إليه، فقال لهم يوماً: لم تؤذون رجلاً، لا يصلح إلا للملازمة الرباط؟ وتوفي في فنتته، ولم يظفر به.

وخرج عليه أبو يزيد خالد بن محمد المروزي بيست وغزنة، فبعث إليه أحمد درك، أحد المالك، وهو أخو نخج الطولوني. فاشتد جزع خالد منه، فقال له بعض أصحابه: لا تخاف منه، فإنه لا يضرك. فقال: من أين لك ذلك؟ فقال: من قول الله تعالى، لا تخاف دركاً ولا تخشى. فهزمه خالد، ثم ظفر به سيمجور الدواتي الخوارزمي، والد السيمجورية، وكان والياً على سجستان، فأسره جريحاً، فمات فحملت رأسه إلى بغداد، وصلبت جثته ببخارا، وحشيت بالكاغذ.

وكان سبب مقتل أحمد بن إسماعيل أن ابن قارن، صاحب جبل دناوند، قد استأمن إليه، فأقام ببابه أياماً كثيرة، لم يوصل إليه. فشكا ذلك إلى كنداتكين<sup>(١٢)</sup>

بن كنداجور الديلمي، أحد قواد أحمد، فقال له: هل حملت إلى مشايخ الباب شيئاً؟ فقال: لا. قال: هو السبب في عدم إيصالك. قال: فما أصنع؟ فقال كنداتكين: أنا أدخل إلى أبي الحسن الكاتب، واتعرف منه كيف السبب إلى الوصول. ومضى فدخل عليه، وسأله عن ذلك، فقال الكاتب: يحتاج إلى ستة آلاف دينار، يُرضى بها مشايخ الباب. فمضى الديلمي إلى ابن قارن وأخبره. فاقترض من التجار ستة آلاف دينار، وسلمها له، فأخذها (fol.119b) كنداتكين<sup>(١٤)</sup> وأوصلها إلى أبي الحسن، فأخذها وأوصل ابن قارن إلى أحمد في اليوم الثالث، فأكرمه أحمد، وقربه وأنزله، وسر بمقدمه. ثم قال لأبي الحسن: تعرف منه هل عوده إلى بلاده أحب إليه، أم بقاءه بحضرتنا. فسأله أبو الحسن عن ذلك، فاختر العود إلى بلاده. فخلع عليه أحمد خلعاً تصلح للملوك، وحمل بين يديه عشر بدر، وقاد بين يديه عشرة أفراس بمراكب حلي، وورده إلى بلده، ووكل عليه حتى يخرج من أعمال أحمد. وكتب إلى أمراء الأعمال بإنزاله وإكرامه وصرفه شاكرًا. فلما وصل مرو، وكان واليها محمد بن علي المعروف بصعلوك، المقدم الذكر في هذا الكتاب، أنزله عنده، وسأله صعلوك: كيف رأيت الأمير السيد؟ قال: أما رؤيته، فاشتريتها بستة آلاف دينار. قال: ممن؟ قال: من أبي الحسن الكاتب. فكتب صاحب الخبر بذلك لوقته، وابن قارن لا يشعر. فلما ورد الكتاب على أحمد، كتب من ساعته أن يرد ابن قارن حيث ما أدرك، وأن يترك كل ما معه، ويُمضى إلى بلاده، ويرجع مع خمسة غلمان. ثم ركب أحمد بعد ذلك لصيد سبع كان يؤذي الناس على شاطئ جيحون. فأدرك الرسول ابن قارن بمرو، فرجع به إلى أحمد بن إسماعيل، وهو في الصيد. فلما لقيه، قال له أحمد: يا ببا منصور، رددناك وشغلنا قلبك. ثم قال: ضع يدك على رأسي. فوضعها، فقال: إقسم بها كم غرمت على بابي؟ فقال: ستة آلاف دينار، ولو وصلت إليك بأولادي، كانت قليلاً. فقال: ومن أخذها منك؟ فقال: أبو الحسن الكاتب. فجدد له (fol.120a) أحمد صلة أخرى، واستدعى أبا الحسن، وقال له: رجل غريب ترك نعمته من غير خوف، ولا لنا في بلاده طمع، جاء إلينا بنفسه وأهدى لنا الهدايا الخطيرة، يُفعل معه ما فعلت كأنك ما تذكر مجيئك إليّ ودراعتك ما تساوي ستة دراهم، أنالك بهذه إذا عدنا إلى بخارا. ثم اتفق صيد السبع الذي كان خرج لأجله على ضيعة يقال لها فرير، فبات بها، وعلم أبو الحسن أنه إن أصبح، ودخل بخارا، أناله بعقوبة، فعمل على قتله. وأجابه إلى ذلك الغلمان، بعد أن وعدهم وحلف لهم أنه يبيع لإسحاق بن أحمد، عم أحمد بن إسماعيل، ويزيدهم في أرزاقهم، وبصير كل واحد من قوادهم أميراً على بلد. وأمر الخازن وصاحب الكسوة بقتله، وضمن لها مالاً جزيلاً، فدخلا عليه في قبه وذبحاه فيها. ذكر الوزير أبو القاسم المغربي، في كتاب أخبار خراسان، أنه كان لأحمد أسدان داجنان، يريضان على باب البيت الذي فيه مبيته كل ليلة، فلا يتمكن أحد أن يُلمّ به، وأنه تغافل تلك الليلة،

فلم يربضها على باب القبة، فقتله، وكان قتله في سنة إحدى وثلاثمائة. فكانت مدة مملكته سبع سنين، وكان من أجمل الناس صورة، وأحسنهم سيرة، ولما قتل، لقب بالشهيد. أولاده، الأكبر أبو العباس الفضل، وأبو الحسن نصر، وأبو زكريا يحيى، وأبو إسحاق إبراهيم، وأبو صالح منصور.

### أبو الحسن نصر بن أحمد بن إسماعيل

(fol.120b) لقبه أصحابه في حياته المؤيد، وبعد وفاته السعيد. ذكر ذلك غرس النعمة في تاريخه.

ولما فرغ الغلمان من قتل أحمد، بادروا إلى أبي الحسن وأعلموه، فجاء وقبض على الخزانة، وأعطى الغلمان الكبار والذين باشروا قتل أحمد، ما كان قرر لهم، وأمرهم بالركوب والمسير إلى بخارا. وقال لهم: إسرعوا وإسبقوا الخبر وإملكوا القهندز ودار الإمارة وبيوت الأموال، لثلا يبلغ الخبر إلى محمد بن أحمد،<sup>(١٥)</sup> يعني نائب أحمد بن إسماعيل على مدينة بخارا، فلا يعلم ما يكون منه. فساروا مسرعين، وأحمد محمولاً في عمارة مع الأثقال، فتقدم الغلمان الصغار الذين لم يكونوا في البيعة، وأجمعوا على إنفاذ رسول إلى والدته أحمد بن إسماعيل، يخبرها. فبعثوا رسولاً منهم فأخبرها الخبر، فبعثته إلى محمد بن أحمد وساكن الخادم الرومي، وكان من الناصحين لمواليه.

فلما وقف محمد بن أحمد على الخبر، بادر بالركوب، وجاء إلى باب القهندز، واستوثق منه واستركب المطوعة، ووكل منهم ألف رجل بدار الإمارة وبيت المال، وأمر العيارين بلبس السلاح، وأخرج البنود وخرج بهم، فوقف في مكان، يقال له السهلة، وبعث جاسوساً، يعلم له الخبر. فجاء وأخبر بقربهم، يعني الغلمان. فأمر أن يضرب مصاف المطوعة والعيارين من باب السهلة إلى باب القهندز، ففعل ذلك. وأقبل الغلمان، يركضون ويشتمون محمد بن أحمد، وقصد باب السهلة منهم نحو ألف مملوك. فلما نظروا إلى أهل البلد والمطوعة (fol.121a) والعيارين عليهم السلاح، صاحوا عليهم وقالوا: ما لكم والجمع؟<sup>(١٦)</sup> تفرقوا فإن الأمير السيد إن وافي، وأتم على هذا الحال، نالكم منه ما تكرهون. فقال الناس لهم: تقدموا إلى المشايخ، فإن أمرونا بالرجوع، رجعنا. فتقدموا إليهم، فإذا الخيل مصفوفة، والبنود منشورة، والمشايخ وقوف على خيولهم، كل واحد مع أصحابه. فبلغوا إلى أحدهم، وهو أبو يعقوب إسحاق بن إبراهيم، شيخ البلد وأستاذها في عمل السلاح، وله في البلد أكثر من ألف تلميذ، فصاح عليه فارس التركي، وهو من كبار ممالك إسماعيل والد أحمد، وقال: يابا يعقوب، متى كان لأهل بخارا عادة في الخروج على الملوكة؟ لو لا إنك رجل شيخ، لأنزلت بك ما أنت أهله. فصاح إسحاق على غلمانه: خذوا عبد السوء القاتل مولاه وخذوا أصحابه. ورفع يده فضرب رأس فارس بدبوس كان معه، فنكسه ونكس أصحابه الغلمان الذين كانوا معه. وركب المطوعة دوابهم ولبسوا سلاحهم، وكشفوهم بأجمعهم، وحبسوهم في دار الخطب. وأقاموا النفاطين فوق حيطانها، ورسوموا لهم أنهم إذا تحركوا أو نطقوا، فإضربوا عليهم ناراً.

ووقف الناس على حالهم، وإذا بطائفة أخرى من المالك قد وصلت، ففعل بها مثل الأولى، حتى حبسوا أربعة آلاف مملوك في دار الخطب، ومن وراءهم لا يعلم بما كان منهم. ثم وافى أبو الحسن الكاتب في نحو ألني غلام وعماريات الأمير أحمد وجناييه بين يديه، وعليه لباس أحمد، وعلى رأسه القلنسوة السمور الإسماعيلية، فلما بلغ محمد بن أحمد موافاة أبي الحسن الكاتب، (fol.121b) قال لصاحب جيش المطوعة: يابا محمد، أخرج من السهلة مع جماعة من الفتيان، وقف خارج الباب بين النهرين، حتى يدخل فيمن آتى مع الملك، فإذا دخل إلينا ووصل هو إليك، فلا يفوتك، فإنه صاحب الفعلة، وإن سمعت حركة من عندنا، فلا تلفت إليها، فبأخذه ملاك الأمر.

فخرج صاحب الجيش، ومعه أربعة آلاف فارس وألفا راجل، وضرب المصاف ما بين النهرين، فلما وافى الغلمان، ورأوا تجمع المطوعة، أنكروا أمرهم. وكان على المقدمة سيمجور الدواتي وبندار، وكان من أعقل المالك وأحزمهم رأياً. فأحس سيمجور بالشر، فقال لبندار والغلمان: تقدموا فإني واقف في ممالككم مع صاحب الجيش، فإن كان لنا، فهو ما يُحب، وإن كان علينا، كفتكم أمره. فقالوا له: نعم الرأي. فتأخر ووقف مع صاحب الجيش وقال له: يابا محمد، أرى شركاً منصوباً. فقال: ما كل ما ترى إلا فرحاً بالأمير. فقال سيمجور: على أن لي ذمة الله ورسوله أنا وأهلي ومالي. فقال صاحب الجيش: إن كان الأمر كما تزعم، فمر بمالكك بالترجل وتبرع<sup>(١٧)</sup> السلاح، وإدفعه إلى أصحابي. وتعرف كل مملوك منهم من استعار سلاحه وفرسه، ليرده إليه. فأجاب سيمجور إلى ذلك، وكان معه من ممالكه خمس مائة مملوك. وكان فقيهاً مناظراً على مذهب الشافعي رحمه الله. ووقف سيمجور مكانه والياً وبين يديه غلامان، فكلما مر قائد من المالك، قال له بالتركية: تقدّم، فإني أكفيك هذا، يعني صاحب الجيش. فيتقدم فينكسونه المطوعة بين باب السهلة والقهندز، وهم هنالك مع محمد بن أحمد، ثم يجسونه في دار الخطب، هو وغلمانه. (fol.122a) وأقبل أبو الحسن الكاتب، وعليه القلنسوة، فلما صار بين النهرين، وحاذى صاحب الجيش، قال: السلام عليك يابا محمد. فقال صاحب الجيش: لا سلّم الله عليك يا عدوه. وعلاه بالدبوس، فوقعت الضجة، وصاح الغلمان الذين وراءه، وأميراه، فبادر إليه المطوعة، ونكسوه عن دابته، وطرحوا جُلّاً في عنقه، وعدوا<sup>(١٨)</sup> به، وتفرق الجيش في طلب من تأخر من الغلمان، فأخذوا عن آخرهم، وحبسوا.

فوكّل محمد بن أحمد بدورهم، وبعث من ساعته الجوازات صحبة تابوت<sup>(١٩)</sup> لتحمل الأمير الشهيد أحمد بن إسماعيل. وصلب أبا الحسن الكاتب على سور القهندز، ساعة من النهار، ثم أنزل وحبس. وكان يصلب كل يوم مدة أربعين يوماً، ساعتين من النهار، وكذلك الغلامان القاتلان، ثم قتلوا، وصلبوا وتركوا سبع سنين، حتى فرخ العصفير في أجوافهم.

ولما وصل الرسل بجثة الأمير، أنزل بها دار الإمارة، وغسلت وكفنت، وحمل نعشه ليصلى عليه. وخرج القواد الأحرار حفاة، ليكون، وأخرجت المالك، وأطلقوا للصلاة عليه. فلما وُضع التابوت في المصلى، قام محمد بن أحمد وقال:

أبها المسلمون والأولياء، عندي لكم رأي أنا ذاكره قبل الصلاة على هذا الميت وانفضاض الناس من هذا المحفل، فإن كان صواباً، ساعدتم عليه، إن لم يكن عندكم صواباً قلم غيره. ثم استدعى صاحب الجيش سراً، وقال له: إمض إلى البلد وخذ المطوعة، ووكّل بكل ناحية من البلد شيخاً، وإجمع نساء الأجناد والماليك الموكل بدورهم، وعيالاتهم كلهم في مكان واحد، وخذ خيولهم وأسلحتهم، فأعطها للمطوعة، ورتب راجلهم على القهندز (fol.122b) وفارسهم بين السهلة وبينه، وإثبت حتى يأتيك أمري. فامثل ذلك.

ثم قال محمد بن أحمد: إن هذا الأمير الشهيد، رحمه الله، توفي ولم يخلف ولي عهد، ولا ترك في رقابنا بيعة لأحد، ولا بد للمسلمين ممن يدبرهم، والرأي أن لا نتفرق هذا الجمع حتى نباع ذلك الرجل. فقال له مشايخ البلد وأهل العلم: قد أصاب الأمير. فقال لهم: اختاروا من تشاؤون. فقالوا: <sup>(٣١)</sup> يختار الأمير وننظر نحن بعد ذلك. فقال: إن للأمير الشهيد في رقابنا صنائع، وإني أرى لو ترك جرواً مثلاً، لحفظناه فيه، فكيف وقد ترك خمسة بنين تقر بهم العين، والرأي أن نباع أحدهم. فقال المشايخ والأولياء الأحرار: الرأي ما رأى الأمير. وسكت الأتراك، فقال لهم محمد بن أحمد: ما لكم صمتم وأتم أرباب المملكة؟ فقال بغرا الكبير: صدقت أيها الأمير، ولكن لو صلينا على هذا الميت ودفتناه، ثم رجعنا إلى البلد وتشاورنا، لكان أولى. فقال محمد: لا يجوز أن ينصرف الناس إلى منازلهم إلا بعد مبايعة. فقال بغرا: هو ذا، أنت الحاكم على المسلمين والمتصرف في أمورهم إلى أن يتفقوا على من يولونه أمرهم. وكان محمد بن أحمد يداري الأتراك، ويشاغلهم حتى يرد رسول أبي محمد، صاحب جيش المطوعة، بالقبض على عيالاتهم وخيولهم، وتأهب أهل البلد لحربهم.

ثم قال لقاضي البلد، وهو أبو ذر، ولأبي سهل، شيخها، اختاروا عشرة من مشايخ الفقهاء وعشرة من مشايخ المحدثين، وإمضوا بنا إلى البلد، لننظر من نبايعه من أولاد الأمير. ففعلوا ومشوا بأجمعهم إلى القهندز، واستخلف محمد بن أحمد (fol.123a) على الجنازة بعض أصحابه.

ثم مضوا إلى دار الإمارة، ودخلوا على والدة الشهيد أحمد، وقال لها محمد بن أحمد: أحضري أولادك. وكان الأكبر أبو الفضل العباس عليلاً، لا يُرجا، فاتفقوا على نصر بن أحمد، فبايعوه بين يدي جدته. وحمله محمد بن أحمد على عاتقه، فقال له لصغر سنه: إلى أين بي، تريدون تقتلونني كما قتلتم أبي؟ فبكى ابن أحمد وقال: بل نجعلك، يا سيدي، أميراً. وانتهى به إلى الجنازة، وأجلسه أمام النعش، وبيده سيف مصلت.

ونادى: يا معاشر المسلمين إن لأميركم الشهيد خمسة بنين، أكبرهم العباس، وهو عليل، لا يرجا، فلم ير القاضي مبايعته، وقد بايعنا الأمير نصر بن أحمد، وهو ابن إثنتي عشرة سنة، صحيح العقل، حافظ لكتاب الله، عارف بالفرائض، حسن الأدب فما ترون؟ فأجابه أهل البلد والمشايخ والأولياء الأحرار بالطاعة

والسمع. وقال الأتراك: إن هؤلاء موالينا، ولنا في أمرهم نظر حتى نشاور سيدتنا، يعنون والدة الأمير الشهيد. فقال محمد بن أحمد: إني قد بايعت الأمير أبا الحسن مولى أمير المؤمنين، ألا من كان عازماً على البيعة، فليبايع. فأول من بايع، أبو الحسن علي بن عبد الصمد العارض، ثم الأمير حمويه بن علي، ثم محمد بن أحمد بن جيهان، ثم محمد بن أليس، ثم بايع الناس أجمع، إلا الأتراك، ومعهم أبو الحسن الكاتب القاتل، أحضر الجنازة ليحسر. وأخذوا يدارون لأنفسهم ليرجعوا بلا بيعة، لأن هواهم مع العم الكبير إسحاق بن أحمد بن أسد، وهو إذ ذاك أمير سمرقند، وعنده أهله وبنو عمه، وأجناده متوافرون. (fol.123b) فقال القاضي لسيمجور الخوارزمي: يابا علي، إنك من أهل العلم، وما ينبغي لك أن تخلف عن هذه البيعة، لأن الله منّ عليك بأسلاف هذا الأمير، وهداك على أيديهم إلى الإسلام، وجعلك بهم من ذوي الأمر. فصاح عليه بغرا الكبير: إنك شيخ قد خرفت، ما لك والأتراك؟ عليك بأصحابك، ودعنا حتى نتشاور فيما بيننا كما تشاورتم. وصاح الأتراك وارتفعت الضجة، فقال محمد بن أحمد لصاحب جيش المطوعة: إظهار ما ربت لك. فأحضر جماعة من أولاد الأتراك ونسائهم، وأوقفها فوق القهندز. وخرجت كتائب المطوعة وأهل البلد، ونادى مناد: أمر الأمير محمد بن أحمد أن يقتل من خرج من الأتراك من غير مبايعة، ولمن قتله ماله. فلما رأت الأتراك الجد، بايعوا بأجمعهم كارهين، بعد العصر، وصلوا على الشهيد أحمد إصفرار الشمس ودفنوه عند المغرب. وأمر ابن أحمد بأن لا ترد للأتراك دوابهم، ولا سلاحهم، إلى ثلاثة أيام، إلى أن يحلفوا يميناً أخرى.

ثم كتب من ليلته كتاباً إلى سمرقند، لحضرة إسحاق بن أحمد، عم الشهيد، وبعث الكتاب من الغد، وأحضر الأتراك وأمرهم باليمين. فقام فيهم مامراج، وهو من أجلّ غلمان إسماعيل الماضي، فقال: أيها الأتراك، إنكم لم تقبلوا مني يوم قتل مولانا،<sup>(٢٦)</sup> واليوم لا أعرف لتخلفكم عن اليمين وجهاً. إحلفوا لهم بعدد المطر وورق الشجر، حتى يخلصوا أولادكم وأموالكم. فحلفوا عن آخرهم، وكملت البيعة، ووضع محمد بن أحمد المال، واجتمع بعد ذلك أبو منصور قراتكين ويبلغ وبغرا الكبير وغيرهم (fol.124a) وحلف بعضهم لبعض أنهم يكونون يداً واحدة. ثم قال قراتكين لمحمد بن أحمد: أيها الأمير إنك ما ظفرت بنا إلا بمساعدة أهل بخارا، وكذلك نريد أن تساعدونا في حرب من يحاربنا، فإنكم طرحتمونا في أمر الله تخلصاً منه. فقال أبو سهل شيخ البلد: عليّ الرجال وعليكم الأموال، إن قبلت عشرة آلاف فعليّ مثلها. فطابت نفوس الأتراك وقاموا بأجمعهم، فسلموا على نصر بن أحمد بإلامارة، وقبلوا الأرض.

ولما وصل الكتاب إلى الأمير إسحاق بن أحمد، نزع السواد وبسط بساط التعزية ثلاثة أيام. ثم عزم على طلب الأمر لمكانه من السن والتعدد، وأشار عليه مشايخ سمرقند بذلك، وبايعوه بأجمعهم، وكذلك من كان في جملة من آل سامان.

وأجاب محمد بن أحمد بجميل ويأمره أن يقيم الدعوة له، ويوليه على بخارا كما كان في أيام الشهيد. وكتب الفريقان إلى سائر أمصار خراسان وما وراء النهر. فأجاب الجميع إسحاق بن أحمد وأقاموا له الدعوة، وردوا دعوة نصر بن أحمد. وبعث كل منها كتبه إلى الإمام المقتدر بالله، يخطب العمل لنفسه، فعلم الإمام أنه لا بد من حرب يقع بينهما، وصبر لينظر على من تكون الدائرة. ولما رأى محمد بن أحمد ما كان من مسارعة الناس إلى دعوة إسحاق بن أحمد، فوض من أهل بخارا أربعة آلاف فارس وستة آلاف راجل. واتصل الخبر بإسحاق، فكتب إلى فرغانة وإلى أشروسنة وإلى الشاش وإلى إسفياب وغيرها، فأتى إليه مقدموها، ومعهم اثنا عشر ألف عنان وجمع من سمرقند والسغد وغيرها جملة وافرة. وسار إسحاق (fol.124b) بن أحمد، ومعه زهاء سبعة وثلاثون ألف فارس، حتى نزل بباب بخارا. وكتب محمد بن أحمد إلى عراق بن منصور، صاحب خوارزم، فبعث إليه ألف فارس وألني راجل، فوصلوا يوم وصول إسحاق. وبرز محمد بن أحمد في سبعة عشر ألفاً، وذلك يوم الاثنين مستهل شهر رمضان. ووقعت الحرب بينهم يوم الخميس، وعبأ كل واحد منها جيشه، فجعل محمد بن أحمد على الأولياء الأحرار حمويه بن علي، وعلى الأتراك بغرا الكبير، وجعلهم ميمنة للعسكر، ومعهم جيش خوارزم. وجعل على الميسرة حمويه بن علي وغيره، ووقف بنفسه في القلب، ومعه العرب وغيرهم من الأولياء وعامة جيش بخارا.

وزحف إسحاق بن أحمد، وعلى ميمته جيش الشاش وإسفياب، وعلى ميسرته جيش فرغانة وأشروسنة، وجعل في القلب ابنه إلياس والحسن، ومعها جيش سمرقند والسغد. فحمل جيش فرغانة وأشروسنة، وهي ميسرة إسحاق، على الأتراك ورجالة خوارزم، وهم ميمنة عسكر نصر. فانهزم الأتراك من غير حرب، وقتلت رجالة خوارزم عن آخرهم. وتمت الميسرة فراقاً في مضارب جيش بخارا، ونزلت طائفة مضرب محمد بن أحمد، ونزلت أخرى في مضارب خواصه، ونهبوا الخيام، وحمل جيش الشاش وجيش إسفياب على ميسرة جيش نصر، وفيها حمويه بن علي ومن ذكرنا. فلم يتحزح حمويه بن علي عن موضعه. فلما رأوا إثباتهم، رجعوا فحمل عليهم حمويه، ووافق ذلك حملة محمد بن أحمد على جيش سمرقند، وهو قلب جيش إسحاق، فانهزموا. (fol.125a) وقتل من جيش نصر بضعة عشر ألفاً، وقتل من جيش إسحاق ثلاثة آلاف رجل. ورجع إسحاق بن أحمد منهزماً إلى سمرقند، ورجع جيش بخارا إلى مخيمهم، وسار الجيش أجمعه تابعاً لإسحاق إلى سمرقند، فتحصن بها، وساعده أهلها، وخرجوا بأجمعهم لدفع الجيش عنها. وأمر بغلق أبواب المدينة حتى لا يجدوا سبيلاً إلى الانهزام. فهزمهم محمد بن أحمد هزيمة قتل فيها من أهل سمرقند نحو مائة ألف. وشلّهم القتل والهرب حتى خرج النساء إلى محمد بن أحمد، وقالوا له: خذ طلبتك عنا ودلوه على مكان إسحاق بن أحمد، فأخذه وحمله إلى بخارا.

واستقام الأمر لنصر بن أحمد، وأتاه العهد من الخليفة، وولي الولايات، وفوضت الأمور إلى محمد بن جيهان وجعل وزيراً.

وخرج على نصر إخوته أبو زكريا يحيى، وأبو صالح منصور، وأبو إسحاق إبراهيم، وكان قد اعتقلهم، فاحتال لهم خباز، يقال له أبو بكر الإصبهاني، وكانت جراتهم، وهم في الاعتقال، تجري على يده، فواطأ جماعة من العسكر ببخارا على إخراجهم، وكان نصر غائباً. فأخرجوا، ولم يتم لهم أمر، وأخذ الخباز، وشهر ببخارا وبين يديه المختون، ثم ضرب بالسياط، وألقي في تنوره الذي كان يجنز فيه. وفي أيامه خرج عليه أحمد بن سهل المروري، فسير إليه حمويه بن علي إلى مرو الروذ، وكان حمويه في أربعة آلاف مملوك، وكان مع أحمد بن سهل أربعين ألف رجل وفارس، ومعه لنفسه ألفا مملوك، وكان التقاؤهم بمكان يقال له دستور، وهو مفازة بين الزمّ ومرو الروذ. ولا اجتمع الجيشان، (fol.125b) أوصى حمويه بن علي أصحابه وقال: أريد منكم أن تثبتوا ولا تقتلوهم إلا ريثما تردونهم عنكم. ففعل فحمل عليهم أحمد بن سهل بنفسه ثلاث وأربعين حملة، وكان شجاعاً لا يهوله شيء. فصاح وارتجز وقال: أنا أحمد بن سهل. ثم قال لجاسوسه: أرني حمويه بن علي حتى أقصده، فإما علي وإما لي. فإنهم قد تسمروا في الأرض، فما أحد يتحرك منهم. وكان تكين الطويل أحد مماليك إسماعيل بن أحمد يشبهه، إذا ركب في سلاحه، حمويه بن علي، فأوماً الجاسوس إليه، وقال هو صاحب البيضة المذهبة. فحمل أحمد بن سهل على تكين، فرماه تكين، وهو حامل بسهم، فأصاب صدر الفرس، وغاص فيه إلى الريش، فقنطره، فترجل تكين، وأخذه وذلك بعد العصر، وبعثه حمويه بن علي إلى بخارا.

وكانت هذه الواقعة في سنة عشر وثلاثمائة، وتوفي نصر بالسل في سنة إحدى وثلاثين. فكانت مملكته ثلاثين سنة، وكان عمره، كما ذكره الفرغاني، يوم ولي اثنتي عشرة سنة. وقال الوزير أبو القاسم المغربي: كان عمره ثمانين سنين. وزيره أبو عبد الله محمد بن أحمد الجيهاني، وهو أول وزير آل سامان. وكان به مُذهب فاضح، مر بيطار يداوي كلبه، فتأفف، فأبرز يده من كفه إلى أن نزل داره، فأصب عليها أباريق ماء، وفيه يقول أبو الطيب الطاهري:

أنت إذا كنتَ طول دهرك بالمبَعْر عما سواه تشتغلُ  
فأين نلقاك للحوائج أم في أي يوم يهَمُّك العملُ

(fol.126a) وكان مكروهاً عند جميع قواد آل سامان، وأقام وزيراً إلى أن توفي في جمادى الآخرة سنة ثلاث عشرة وثلاثمائة. فكانت مدة وزارته اثنتي عشرة سنة، ويقال إن أهل بخارا رجموا تابوته، ولم يصلّ عليه أحد منهم، وتولى الوزارة بعده أبو الفضل البلعمي، وكان قبل ذلك يتولى الخراج.

### نوح بن نصر

لقبه أصحابه في حياته بالمويد، وبعد وفاته بالحميد. ولما توفي السعيد نصر،

ولي ولده نوح، وكان ذلك في السنة الثالثة من خلافة الإمام المتقي لله، وهي سنة إحدى وثلاثين وثلاثمائة. وكان إصفهسلار<sup>(٣٩)</sup> جيشه الأمير أبو علي أحمد بن محمد بن محتاج. فسيره لحرب ركن الدولة بن بويه، فلما بعد، نقل عنه ما أوجب استحكام المقاطعة بينهما، فولى الإصفهسلارية لإبراهيم بن سيمجور الدواني، وقبض نوح على وكلاء أبي علي<sup>(٣٠)</sup> بخراسان، وخلعه أبو علي، وبعث إلى أحد عمومته، وهو إبراهيم بن أحمد بن إسماعيل، وكان قد هرب من أخيه نصر، ودخل في جملة بحكم، ثم انتقل إلى ناصر الدولة الحسن بن عبد الله بن حمدان. فاستدعاه لينصبه مكان الحميد نوح، فسار إليه إبراهيم، ولقيه أبو علي بن محتاج بهمدان، وبايعه، وتولى تدير جيشه. وقدم إلى الري وثم إلى خراسان، وسلم الري لركن الدولة، وصالحه، وسار إلى نيسابور. فاضطرب خراسان على الحميد، وسار (fol.126b) العم في عساكره، وابن محتاج معه، إلى بخارا، فانهزم الحميد إلى سمرقند، ودخل ابن محتاج وإبراهيم بخارا، وجلس مجلس الملك بها، وذلك في سنة خمس وثلاثين. وتوسط بنو بويه أمره مع الإمام المطيع لله، فبعث إلى إبراهيم بالخلع والعهد. وأخذ نوح في الإحتشاد، وسعى السعاة بين إبراهيم وبين ابن محتاج، وقيل له: إنه يريد أن يفعل معك كما فعل مع أخيك. فأراد إصطناع إبراهيم بن سيمجور ومنصور بن قراتكين، ليكونا له عوناً على ابن محتاج. فاصطنعها وقرر العم معها ومع الأجناد أن يخلع نفسه، ويباع الحميد، ويكون إصفهسلار جيوشه. واستشعر ابن محتاج من ذلك وتمكن المذكوران من استفساد الأجناد للأمير الحميد. فوافقها الأكثر. فانفصلا إليه فعاد معها، وقد انفصل ابن محتاج من إبراهيم، فلقبه الحميد، فأسره وسمل عينيه، وسمل جماعة من أهل بيته، وملك بخارا. ودام الفساد بينه وبين ابن محتاج، وهو بالدامغان، وتقرر بين ركن الدولة بن بويه الديلمي وبينه صلح، فسار كل واحد منهما إلى الآخر، فالتقيا على موضع يقرب من طبس، واتفقا على أن يأخذ ركن الدولة من الإمام المطيع لله عهداً لأبي علي بن محتاج على خراسان، ويجمعها جميعاً على إزالة آل سامان منها. ورجع ابن محتاج مع ركن الدولة إلى نيسابور، واستعد بكر بن مالك، صاحب جيش الحميد، لقتال ابن محتاج<sup>(٣١)</sup>. ووافى العهد والخلع إلى أبي علي من قبل الخليفة على يد أبي بكر عبد الواحد بن عثمان وأبي مخلد (fol.127a) عبد الله بن يحيى، وصحبتهما جيش من عند معز الدولة الديلمي لنصرة ابن محتاج. وكان خروجهم من بغداد لثلاث خلون من جمادى الآخرة سنة ثلاث وأربعين وثلاثمائة. واتفقت وفاة الحميد في شهر ربيع الآخر سنة ثلاث وأربعين وثلاثمائة، فكانت مدة مملكته اثني عشرة سنة وثلاثة أشهر. أولاده أبو الفوارس عبد الملك، أبو صالح منصور. إصفهسلارية<sup>(٣٢)</sup> جيوشه أبو علي أحمد بن محتاج، الأمير منصور بن قراتكين، الأمير أبو سعيد بكر بن مالك.

### أبو الفوارس عبد الملك بن نوح

لقب في حياته بالموفق، وبعد وفاته بالرشيد بعدائه<sup>(٣٣)</sup>. أبقى بكر بن مالك على الجيش وبعث إلى أبي علي بن محتاج، وهو بنيسابور، فسار بكر بن مالك،

وضبط الطرق، فلم يرعه إلا دلوقة عليه بالعساكر. ففر ابن محتاج بنفسه إلى الدامغان، ودخل بكر نيسابور. وكتب ابن محتاج إلى ركن الدولة، فسار إليه والتقى بجرجان، فتعاقدا وتظاهرا على قتال بكر. وكتب بكر إلى الرشيد، فحشد عساكر خراسان، وبعثها إليه. فلما بلغ ركن الدولة وابن محتاج ذلك، أحججا عنه، ورجعا إلى الري، وكاتبا يستصلحانه. وبذل له ابن بويه من مال الري مائتي ألف دينار كل سنة. فاستأذن بكر الرشيد في ذلك، فأذن له، وتم الصلح. وورد أبو الفضل القاشاني، صاحب البريد، من حضرة ركن الدولة بالمال المبذول جملة، وصحبه كتاب من الإمام المطيع (fol.127b) لله، يذكر فيه أنه رسم أن يحمل من مال الري كل سنة مائتي ألف دينار معونة لعساكر خراسان على استقبال سنة أربع وأربعين وثلاثمائة. وفي صاحب البريد هذا يقول الشاعر:

يابا العباس لو تعلم من والى البريد  
لبكيت الدين والدنيا بدمع كالفريد  
وجه شيطان مريد واست بَعَا مُريد  
وقفا لئنه الصفع ووجه كالحديد

وتعاضم بكر وتكبر، فلما رجع صوروه عند الرشيد بغير صورته، وأخبروه أنه يريد أن ينصب أخاه منصوراً في المملكة. فحضر الدار ليُخلع عليه وعلى قواده، فيينا هو ينتظر الخلع إذ أخذته السيوف، وقبض على الوزير أبي منصور محمد بن عزيز. وكتب أبو يحيى أشعث بن محمد الساماني، وكان قد خرج تلك السنة حاجاً، بالعود ليوليه الجيوش. ثم بدا لهم، فقدموا أبا الحسن محمد بن إبراهيم بن سيمجور، لإفراط بكر كان في تفريطه، وشكره أيام حياته. ووصل محمد هذا إلى بخارا لإصلاح<sup>(٣٤)</sup> حاله عند الرشيد، وأنفذ البتكين من نيسابور إلى الرشيد هدايا كثيرة، من جملته خيول، فعرضت عليه، وهو في الميدان، فجعل يركب فرساً ويركضها، ثم ينتقل عنها إلى غيرها إلى أن أذراه أحدها، فاندقت عنقه، فحمل ميتاً لتسع خلون من شوال سنة خمسين وثلاثمائة. فكانت مدة مملكته سبع سنين. وعلى أيامه سنة تسع وأربعين وثلاثمائة أسلم (fol.128a) من الأتراك مائتا ألف خرگاه.

### ابو صالح منصور بن نوح

لقب في حياته بالمظفر، وبعد وفاته بالسديد. ولما توفي الرشيد، ولي أخوه منصور بن نوح بن نصر بن أحمد بن إسماعيل بن أحمد بن أسد بن سامان. فلما ولي، تحرك البتكين لتجديد عهده بخدمته، من نيسابور إلى بخارا، واستخلف محمد بن عبد الرزاق. فكتب محمد من بخارا بصدده ومناذته، لأنه كان أشار بأن يولي بعض أولاد الرشيد، وكره ولاية السديد. وجددت ولاية الجيش لابن عبد الرزاق، فتحرك إلى البتكين وصدده. فتوجه إلى غزنة، وأقام بها متوفراً على غزو الهند إلى أن أدركه أجله، ورجع عسكره إلى بخارا. ووزراءه أبو علي البلعمي وزير أخيه، وهو الذي قيل فيه:

إن ذا البلعمي في العين غبن<sup>(٣٧)</sup>  
وهو عيب على الزمان وشينٌ

وأبو عبد الله أحمد بن محمد الجيهاني، استوزره في السنة التي توفي فيها وفيه يقول اللحام:

لا لسان لا بيان لا روا لا عبارة  
قد قبلناك ولكن أين آثار الوزارة

إصفهسلارية الجيوش، ألبتكين الحاجب إلى أن عزل بأبي منصور عبد الرزاق، ثم بأبي الحسن محمد بن إبراهيم بن سيمجور إلى أن توفي السيد. أولاده أبو القاسم نوح، أبو زكريا، أبو سليمان، أبو صالح الغازي.

(fol.128b)الرضي أبو القاسم نوح بن منصور

ولي المملكة بعد أبيه بولاية عهده، وهو صغير، غير بالغ. وجلس الطابع في يوم السبت سادس جمادى الآخرة سنة سبع وستين، وولاه، وحملت إليه الخلع واللواء، وكناه أبا القاسم. وأخرج مع الخلع خادم من خدم الخلافة. ولما ولي، تزوج بينتي أبي الحسن بن إبراهيم بن سيمجور وأبي الحارث محمد بن أحمد، مستظهماً بهما. وأسند أموره إلى فائق الخاصة، وولى الحجبة لأبي العباس تاش، وعقد الإصفهسلارية لأبي الحسن السيمجوري، ولقبه ناصر الدولة، وذلك في رجب سنة ست وستين وثلاثمائة. وولى الوزارة لأبي الحسين عبيد الله بن أحمد العتبي. وكان السيمجوري نهى عنه، وقال هو حدث غر، فإضطغنها عليه، وأوحشه وأوحش فائقاً. ثم صرفه عن الإصفهسلارية وتولاه أبو العباس<sup>(٣٨)</sup> تاش. فلما وصل الكتاب إلى محمد بن إبراهيم، كاشف بأن قال ولاية خراسان لي، وسياسة جنودها لأبي علي، ابني. ثم بات له رأيه، فآظهر السمع والطاعة من غد. وولى تاش الإصفهسلارية، ولقب بحسام الدولة، وسار إلى نيسابور وعند حلوله بها، وصل إليه فخر الدولة بن بويه وشمس المعالي قابوس<sup>(٣٩)</sup> بن وشمكير، مستنصرين بالرضي نوح على مؤيد الدولة وعضد الدولة ابني بويه. فأمر تاش بإنجادهم، فسار وهزمه مؤيد الدولة، كما ذكر في أخبار قابوس بن وشمكير. ولما انهزموا، دخل تاش نيسابور ليلاً، وكتب بخبر الواقعة إلى بخارا، وكاتب حينئذ (fol.129a) أبو الحسن السيمجوري، وهو بقهستان، فائق الخاصة، يشكو<sup>(٤٠)</sup> إليه تحامل العتبي الوزير. فأشار عليه بأن يبعث مالا يرضى به الأتراك ببخارا، ففعل. فانحملوا معه على العتبي، وهجموا هجمة عظيمة. فاستر العتبي، ثم ركب في وقت، ظن أن أمره فيه يخفى، وقصد دار الإمارة، فلقبه الأتراك، ففتكوا به، فمات بعد ثلاثة أيام. ونبشه الأتراك بعد دفنه ليتحققوا وفاته.<sup>(٤١)</sup>

وقد كان محمد بن إبراهيم سلم عسكريه وخزانه لولده أبي علي، فخطب أبو علي إلى تاش خلافته على نيسابور، فتعجب تاش من تطامنه لذلك، وكانت مكيدة منه. فلما وليها، قرب الأمر بينه وبين فائق، وهو بطوس، فقرب، وسارا

يطلبان بخارا للتسريب على تاش. وقد كانت الوزارة بعد العتبي وليت لابي الحسن محمد بن محمد المزني، فأحس تاش بميله إليهما، فعاجله بالصرف، فمات غمًا. وولى مكانه كاتبه أبا محمد عبد الرحمن بن أحمد، وتحرك للقاء أبي علي وفائق. فسفر السفراء بينهما على أن لتاش نيسابور، وفائق بلخ، ولأبي علي هراة، ولأبي الحسن محمد بن إبراهيم بوشنج وقهستان وغيرها. ثم نقلت الإصفهسلارية إلى أبي الحسن محمد بن إبراهيم بن سيمجور في سنة ست وسبعين وثلاثمائة، فشجرت الحرب بينه وبين تاش، فاستنجد تاش فخر الدولة بن بويه، واستنجد محمد بن إبراهيم شرف الدولة بن عضد الدولة، فأنجدهما. والتقوا، فانهزم تاش في سنة سبع وسبعين إلى جرجان، فسلمها إليه فخر الدولة، وأقام بها إلى أن توفي في سنة (fol.129b) ثمانين وثلاثمائة. وأقام أبو الحسن في الإصفهسلارية إلى أن مات في سنة إحدى وثمانين وثلاثمائة، فكم موته، واستعد أولاده للمقارعة عن نعمته. وأطاع أبو القاسم منهم أبا علي الأكبر، واضطر الرضى إلى تولية أبي علي جميع ما كان إلى أبيه، ولقبه عماد الدولة، وذلك في شعبان سنة ثمانين. وولى فائقًا هراة، فدفعه أبو علي عنها، وهزمه. فوافى إلى بخارا مشاقًا. فخرج الرضى إليه في غلمانه، وحاربه، فانهزم في شهر ربيع الآخر، سنة ثمانين، إلى ترمذ. واتفق خروج الخان، وهو أبو موسى هرون بن إيلك، من أرض الترك، طالبًا مملكة الرضى، فاستأمن فائق إليه وسار معه إلى بخارا. فهرب الرضى ووزيره البلعمي، وسار إليه فائق، فهزمه الرضى، فهرب إلى أبي علي واستجار به، وصار تابعًا له. ودخل الخان بخارا في شهر ربيع الأول سنة اثنين وثمانين كرة ثانية. وهرب الرضى إلى آمل أيضًا، فصادف بها أبا محمد عبد الله بن عزيز الوزير منفيًا، فاستوزره. وأفاد الخان ببخارا أموالاً عظيمة ومرض ببواسير، فاعتزم العود إلى بلاد الأتراك، وقال: لا دواء لعلتي بها. وكان غاية في العدل والورع، فدعا عبد العزيز بن نوح بن نصر، وسلم إليه الولاية وسار فمات في بعض الطريق وفيه قيل:

يا قاهرًا لملوك الأرض من قهرك  
ويا عماد جميع الخلق من قبرك  
عَجِبْتُ مِمَّنْ أَطَاعَتْهُ أَنَامِلُهُ  
حتى سنى من تراب القبر ما سترك

وعاد الرضى إلى بخارا ولم يتم<sup>(٤٣)</sup> لعبد العزيز ما قرره الخان وكان (fol.130a) أبو علي قد زاد تبسطه وتكبره، حتى أنه كان يسمي الرضى والي بخارا، وكان يُخاطب مرة بسيد الأمراء، ومرة بوالي...<sup>(٤٤)</sup> ومرة بأمر الجهان، معناه أمير الدنيا. وحين رأى الرضى كفرانه لنعمته، وخذلانه إياه، حين دهمه أمر الخان، استنجد بسبكتكين الغازي أبي منصور، وكان قد تغلب على غزنة، وبست والرخج بعد ألبتكين الحاجب. فسار إليه سبكتكين، واجتمع معه، وسار الرضى صحبته، فسبقهم أبو علي إلى نيسابور، فدخلها في رجب سنة أربع وثمانين، ولقيهم في شهر رمضان منها. فانهزم وأخذ جميع عسكره، ولقب الرضى سبكتكين

بناصر الدولة وابنه محمود بسيف الدولة. وعدل الرضى إلى طوس وكتب إليه سبكتكين في بقايا شروط بشرطها عليه. فنقل إليه عن الوزير ابن عزيز سوء محضر، فأنهض ابنه محمود إلى الأرض مظهراً للخدمة، مضماً للقبض على ابن عزيز. فهرب ابن عزيز وأفرد سبكتكين ولده محموداً بولاية نيسابور. فخرج إليه أبو علي وفائق من جرجان، فهزماه واخذا بعض فيلته، وذلك في سنة خمس وثمانين وثلاثمائة. ثم كر محمود فهزمها نحو طوس هزيمة فاضحة، فأنفذ كتبها إلى بخارا بالإعتذار، فلم يقبل، فسار أبو علي إلى نحو خوارزم، فقبض عليه أبو عبد الله خوارزمشاه، وحبس، وذلك في شهر رمضان سنة خمس وثمانين. وكان أبو علي قد ولى مأمون كورة نسا والجرجانية، فسار منها إلى خوارزم، وقاتل صاحبه، وملكها بعد حصار أربعين (fol.130b) يوماً، وقبض على خوارزمشاه، وأطلق أبا علي، وسلمه إليه، فقتله. وراسله حيثئذ الرضى، فسار إليه إلى بخارا، فقبض عليه لما دخل الدار، وذلك في سنة ست وثمانين. ثم سلم هو وغلماه إلى سبكتكين فكان آخر العهد بهما. وكانت وفاة الرضى في رجب سنة سبع وثمانين وثلاثمائة، ومدة مملكته إحدى وعشرين سنة وتسعة أشهر. أولاده أبو الحارث منصور بن نوح، أبو الفوارس عبد الملك، أبو إبراهيم إسماعيل المنتصر، أبو يعقوب. ووزراؤه أبو عبد الله أحمد بن محمد الجيهاني، وزير والده. ثم عزله وولى أبا الحسين عبيد الله العتبي، فأقام إلى أن قتل، فولى أبا الحسن محمد بن محمد الهروي، ثم عزل فمات غمماً، وولى أبا محمد عبد الرحمن بن أحمد، ثم عزل وولى أبا علي الدامغاني، ثم قبض عليه، وولى أبا نصر أحمد بن محمد بن أبي زيد، سنة ثمانين وثلاثمائة. ثم استوزر علي بن محمد البلعمي، ثم استوزر أبا محمد عبد الله بن محمد بن عزيز، ثم هرب من سبكتكين، فولى سبكتكين الوزارة أبا نصر أحمد بن محمد بن أبي زيد دفعة ثانية، فاغتاله غلامان له، فقتلاه، فاستوزر أبا المظفر محمد بن إبراهيم. إصفهسلارية الجيوش، أبو الحسن محمد بن إبراهيم بن سيمجور إلى أن عزل بأبي العباس تاش الحاجب، ثم عزل تاش به في سنة ست وسبعين وثلاثمائة، فأقام إلى أن مات سنة الفجأة، وهي سنة ثمان وسبعين وثلاثمائة. فولى ولده أبو علي الإصفهسلارية، فأقام إلى أن ولى الرضى (fol.131a) جيوشه للغازي سبكتكين في سنة أربع وثمانين وثلاثمائة، فلم يزل سبكتكين واليها، هو وولده محمود، إلى أن توفي الرضى وتوفي بعده سبكتكين بمدة يسيرة.

### أبو الحارث منصور بن الرضى نوح

ولي بعد أبيه بتوليته عهده، فأبقى <sup>٤٥</sup>المظفر محمد بن إبراهيم على الوزارة، وكفله فائق الخاصة، وهو غير مدرك. وكان عند الخانية، فجهزوه في عسكر على مقدمتهم لما علموا وفاة نوح الرضى، فجاء إلى بخارا، فانصرف أبو الحارث عنها، فأنكر ذلك، ونزل على الباب، وتمرغ عليه، فعاد أبو الحارث ورضي عنه. وكان سبكتكين، لما توفي، تغلب ولده إسماعيل على غزنة وسائر أمواله وخزائنه، فسار إليه محمود، واستقل بطلب مملكة أبيه، فولى الحارث الإصفهسلارية

لمملوكه بكتوزون، وأصلح بينه وبين فائق. واستخلف كل واحد منها لصاحبه،  
 وصرف أبو المظفر، واستخلف على الوزارة العباس بن محمد البرمكي، فقتل في  
 الخلافة بها. فاستوزر أبو الفضل محمد بن أحمد الختامي، وختامة قرية من قرى  
 بخارا، ولما تفرغ محمود من أمر أخيه إسماعيل، وصحت له مملكة أبيه، سار إلى  
 بلخ، عازماً على طلب خراسان. فاستدعى بكتوزون أبا الحارث ليقاومه به. فسار  
 إليه من بخارا، فتلقيه بكتوزون، وقبل له الأرض ثلاث مرات، فلم يرفع له  
 رأساً. فغاظه ذلك، واتفق هو وفائق على خلعه، وسمله، فقبض عليه بسرخس  
 (fol.131b) فراسله يسأله ثلاث حوائج: أن لا يسمله، فإن الأعمى لا يتفجع  
 بالدنيا، وأن لا يصادر والدته، فإنها لا ترجع إلى يسار، وأن لا يقطع عنه  
 غلامه تنخوتكين<sup>(٤٦)</sup>، فإنه تربي معه، فلم يفض له واحدة منها....<sup>(٤٧)</sup> وخلع وسمل في  
 صفر سنة تسع وثمانين، فكانت مدة مملكته سنة ونصفاً. وزراؤه أبو المظفر محمد  
 بن إبراهيم، وزير والده، ثم عزله، واستخلف على الوزارة العباس البرمكي،  
 فقتل، واستوزر أبا الفضل محمد بن أحمد الختامي، وبه ختمت الوزارة  
 بخراسان. إصفهسلار الجيوش مملوكه بكتوزون.

### أبو الفوارس عبد الملك بن الرضى

ولما خلع أبو الحارث، ولي أخوه، فأظهر محمود الغضب للخلوع، وزحف إلى  
 بكتوزون طالباً بثأره. فصالحوه على كور خراسان قاطبة بلخ وهرارة. وانصرف  
 عنهم، فأتبعوه غدارين، ومعهم زكريا بن قابوس بن وشمكير<sup>(٤٨)</sup>. فعطف عليهم أبو  
 المظفر نصر بن سبكتكين، فهزمهم هزيمة فاضحة. فكانت هذه الهزيمة معقبة لآل  
 سامان. ومات في شعبان سنة تسع وثمانين، ووصل أبو الحسن أرسلان أيلك،  
 وهو نصر بن علي أخو الخان، بخارا في ذي القعدة سنة تسع وثمانين وثلاثمائة.  
 وكان يملك<sup>(٤٩)</sup> بابي الفوارس وبيكتوزون وبينالتكين الفاتقي، وأظهر أنه حضر لمعوتهم،  
 ثم قبض على جميعهم، واستولى على بخارا. وحمل عبد الملك إلى أوزكند، فمات  
 بها، وقبض على أبي الحارث الخلوع وعلى إبراهيم (fol.132a) المنتصر، وعلى أبي  
 يعقوب إخوة أبي الفوارس، وعلى أعمامهم. وكان القبض على أبي الفوارس في  
 ذي القعدة سنة تسع وثمانين، فلم تتجاوز مدة مملكته السنة.

### المنتصر أبو إبراهيم إسماعيل بن الرضى

قد ذكرنا أن أرسلان أيلك قبض عليه في جملة المقبوض عليهم من السامانية.  
 فاتفق له أن لبس حلة جارية وخرج من محبسه وسار إلى الجرجانية، وتجمع إليه  
 الجند السامانية، فسار بهم، ولقي الأتراك الخانية، فانهزموا عن بخارا. ودخلها  
 المنتصر، ثم رجعت الخانية عليه، فانهزم إلى آمل الشط. ثم سار لمحاربة نصر بن  
 سبكتكين بنيسابور، فانهزم نصر واستفحل أمر المنتصر. فسار نحوه محمود بن  
 سبكتكين، فهرب إلى جرجان في جمادى الأولى سنة إحدى وتسعين، فحمل إليه  
 قابوس بن وشمكير مباراً كثيرة. ثم رجع إلى نيسابور في شوال سنة إحدى  
 وتسعين، فهزمه نصر بن سبكتكين في ذي القعدة منها. فعاد إلى جرجان ورام

التغلب عليها. فدفعه أكراد قابوس<sup>(٥٣)</sup> عنها وقصده نصر بن سبكتكين، فسار الى الجرجانية في شهر جمادى الآخرة سنة إثنين وتسعين. ووقع الى الأتراك الغزية، ومقدمهم يبغوا أرسلان، وهو إسرائيل بن سلجوق، فأكرموه وعظموه، وأسلم يبغوا على يده، وزوجه (fol.132b) ابته وقوي بهم أمره. وقاوم أيلك الخان، وزعزع أمره، ثم كثر قلبه في البلاد، وراسل محمود بن سبكتكين يبذل له التظامن وقبول ما رسمه له. فأكرم محمود رسله، وحمل إليه مالا جزيلاً، وواقعه الخان في إثناء ذلك، فهزمه، وقطع عنه أصحابه ونهض محمود وأخوه نصر لطلبه، فتحير في أمره وعزم على إحراق البلاد، فعاجله الخان بوقعة أخرى، لم يبق معه إلا ثمانية نفر. فصار الى ابن بهيج<sup>(٥٤)</sup> العربي بمفازة مرو، وغدر به فيها، فقتل في شهر ربيع الآخر سنة خمس وتسعين وثلاثمائة. وورد محمود، فاجتاح الحلة إمتعاضاً له، فانقطعت الدولة السامانية بمقتله.

فعدة ولاية السامانية ثلاثة، وجميع الولاة منهم خمسة وعدة الملوك بما وراء النهر وخراسان عشرة ملوك. أولهم إسماعيل بن أحمد الماضي، وآخرهم المنتصر وجميع مملكتهم، دون مدة ولايتهم، مائة سنة وستة أشهر وعشرة أيام. وكان لهم من البلاد في أكثر الأوقات، خراسان وما وراء النهر وسجستان وغزنة وبست والرخج وكرمان وجرجان وطبرستان والري وقومس. وفيهم يقول أبو الطيب الطاهري<sup>(٥٤)</sup>:

أودى ملوك بني ساسان فانقرضوا  
وأصبح الحبل ما ينفك يتقض  
أضحت أمارتهم فيهم وجوهرها  
عبيدهم وهم في عرضها عرض  
فلييك من كان فيهم باكياً  
فما لما فاتهم من ملكهم عوض

وما أحسن ما وصف دولتهم بعض البلغاء، قال: كانت الدولة (fol.133a) السامانية كالدولة الساسانية طول مدة وقلة كفاة، وما أشبهها إلا بالسماء التي رفعها الله بغير عمد.

1 This genealogy, although severely defective, has been left as in the MS, with the addition of diacritical marks in those names for which parallels can be found in Ibn al-Athir's history.

- ٢ MS: ونوح  
 ٣ MS: فقال  
 ٤ Lacuna  
 ٥ MS: الناصر  
 ٦ MS: Sic.  
 ٧ MS: دفنونا  
 ٨ MS: استنشاب  
 ٩ MS: قارباب  
 ١٠ MS: واد  
 ١١ MS: صانه  
 ١٢ MS: لا حن  
 ١٣ MS: كدالين  
 ١٤ MS: كدالين  
 ١٥ MS: محمد بن احمد (this form is repeated throughout the MS.)  
 ١٦ MS: للجمع  
 ١٧ MS: تبرع (alternate reading: تبرع)  
 ١٨ MS: وعوده  
 ١٩ MS: ياقوت  
 ٢٠ MS: تحمل  
 ٢١ MS: من شاروا  
 ٢٢ MS: ثم قال القاضي ابلد  
 ٢٣ MS: احضرى .....  
 ٢٤ MS: حانظا  
 ٢٥ MS: فرت  
 ٢٦ MS: برم قبل مولا ..... اليوم  
 ٢٧ MS: ابر القسم من المغربي  
 ٢٨ MS: الظاهري

- ٢٩ MS: الاصفهسلاار  
 ٣٠ MS: وكلا على خراسان  
 ٣١ MS: لعتان من محتاج  
 ٣٢ MS: here taken as the plural of اصفهسلاار  
 ٣٣ MS: بعداه  
 ٣٤ MS: لصلاح  
 ٣٥ MS: حانتى الع  
 ٣٦ MS: ووراه  
 ٣٧ MS: ان ذا البلغى والعين نمين  
 ٣٨ MS: وتوليه ابن العباس تاش  
 ٣٩ MS: ماوس  
 ٤٠ MS: يشكوا  
 ٤١ MS: لسحقوا  
 ٤٢ MS: الى الاتريد  
 ٤٣ MS: نم تم  
 ٤٤ MS: لوالى الهه  
 ٤٥ MS: فاقى المظفر  
 ٤٦ MS: بخوتكين  
 ٤٧ MS: واحده منها وندايه ....  
 ٤٨ MS: قابوس وشمكر  
 ٤٩ MS: وكان يكر  
 ٥٠ MS: لبس  
 ٥١ MS: جمادى الاول  
 ٥٢ MS: جمادى الاخر  
 ٥٣ MS: ابن بهيت  
 ٥٤ MS: الظاهري

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