



'ABD-AL-MALEK B. NŪḤ B. NAṢR

'ABD-AL-MALEK B. NŪḤ B. NAṢR, ABU'L-FAVĀRES, ruler of the Samanid dynasty in Transoxania and Khorasan, 343-350/954-61. The historian of Bokhara, Naršaḳī, and the Ghaznavid historian Gardīzī accord him the designation of al-Amīr al-Rašīd, but it appears from his coins that he was called al-Malek al-Movaffaq during his lifetime, and it seems that he was referred to after his death as al-Malek al-Mo'ayyad.

The reign of 'Abd-al-Malek's father, Nūḥ I, had seen the growth of serious internal difficulties within the Samanid amirate; these were to increase and to contribute to the collapse of the state by the end of the 4th/10th century. The amir had found it difficult to control ambitious and powerful army leaders within the state, particularly Abū 'Alī Čaġānī, governor of Khorasan, who had an important power base through his domains in Čaġānīān on the upper Oxus, and his rival, Abū 'Alī Ebrāhīm Sīmĵūrī, a general of Turkish slave origin but the holder of extensive lands in Qūhestān. These rivalries aggravated the financial difficulties of the state; taxation had to be increased, but the army nevertheless remained frequently unpaid and consequently mutinous.

Such was the situation when Nūḥ's ten-year-old son 'Abd-al-Malek succeeded in Bokhara (Rabī' II, 343/August, 954). The geographer Maqdesī praises his capabilities as a ruler, but he seems in practice to have been largely helpless in the face of the determined policy of the military commanders to seize the



substance of power. He was able at the outset to confirm Abū ‘Alī Čaġānī’s dismissal from Khorasan and to appoint his own governor, Bakr b. Mālek, there. In the capital he appointed his own vizier, Abū Maṣṣūr Moḥammad b. ‘Ozayr. The governorship of Khorasan later passed to Abu’l-Ḥasan Moḥammad Sīmǰūrī and then in 349/960 to Abū Maṣṣūr Moḥammad b. ‘Abd-al-Razzāq. The vizierate in Bokhara went to Abū Ja‘far ‘Otbī and in 348/959 to Abū Maṣṣūr Yūsuf b. Eshāq. The amir attempted to break away from the tutelage of the military, executing one of the generals, Baḳteġīn. But disorders in the state compelled him to appoint the Turkish slave general Alptegīn, whose ambition he suspected, to the governorship of Khorasan in 349/961. He had previously dismissed him from the post of commander-in-chief of the army in favor of Abū Naşr Maṣṣūr b. Bāyqarā. He also had to accept the pliant and mediocre Abū ‘Alī Moḥammad Baḷ‘amī as vizier; Gardīzī points out that Alptegīn and Baḷ‘amī worked hand-in-glove, and says that “Baḷ‘amī never did anything without the knowledge of Alptegīn and on his recommendation.”

At this point, ‘Abd-al-Malek, a devotee of polo, was killed after falling from his horse in the *maydān* of Bokhara at the age of 17 (Šawwāl, 350/November, 961). To his brother and successor Maṣṣūr b. NūḤ he left a disturbed kingdom. Naršaḳī says: “When they buried him, the army grew restless and rebelled; everyone coveted the kingdom, and troubles raised their head.” One result of the ensuing situation was that Alptegīn was compelled to withdraw to Ġazna on the periphery of the Samanid empire, where his slave Sebükteġīn eventually founded the Ghaznavid empire.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

The main primary sources are Gardīzī, ed. Nazim, pp. 39-42; idem, ed. Ḥabībī, pp. 159-61; Ebn al-Aḫḫār, years 343, 349, 350; and Naršaḳī, p. 115; tr., p. 98.

For secondary sources, see Barthold, *Turkestan*³, pp. 248-51, and R. N. Frye, in *Camb. Hist. Iran* IV, pp. 151-52.