



AḤMAD B. SAHL B. HĀŠEM

AḤMAD B. SAHL B. HĀŠEM, governor in Khorasan during the confused struggles for supremacy there between the Saffarids, Samanids, and various military adventures in the late 3rd/9th and early 4th/10th century, d. 307/920. Aḥmad sprang from an aristocratic family of Persian *dehqāns* of the Marv oasis, the Kāmkārīān (after whom a particular variety of red rose was named), which traced its ancestry back to the last Sasanian king, Yazdegerd III. The family had scholarly interests, especially in the fields of secretaryship and astrology, and had been in the service of the Taherid governors of Khorasan. Aḥmad's three brothers had been killed in factional strife between the Arabs and Persians in Marv, and Aḥmad sought to avenge them by gathering together a private army there; Ebn al-Aṭīr says that the Saffarid amir 'Amr b. Layṭ appointed Aḥmad as his governor in Marv. Whatever the case, 'Amr forestalled a rising in Marv by seizing Aḥmad and imprisoning him in Sīstān. Aḥmad nevertheless escaped, made his way back to Marv, captured 'Amr's governor there, Abū Ja'far Ġūrī, and proclaimed his adhesion to the cause of the Samanid Amir Esmā'īl b. Aḥmad (r. 279-95/892-907). He went to the Samanid court at Bokhara and speedily rose in favor under Esmā'īl and his successors Aḥmad and Naṣr II; thus he took part in the campaigns to establish Samanid hegemony in Khorasan and Ray and in the conquest of Sīstān from 'Amr b. Layṭ's successors in 298/910-11. In 306/918-19 he suppressed the rebellion in Khorasan of its governor Ḥosayn b. 'Alī Marvarrūḏī. However, he himself then rebelled at Nīšāpūr, raiding the Samanid province of Gorgān and then fortifying himself within Marv against the punitive expedition sent against him under Ḥamūya b. 'Alī by Amir Naṣr b. Aḥmad. Ḥamūya managed



by a ruse to entice Aḥmad out of his almost impregnable position, and in a battle near Marvarrūd (Raġab, 307/December, 919) he was defeated and captured. He died in captivity at Bokhara in Du'l-ḥeġġa, 307/April-May, 920.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

The two primary sources are Gardīzī, ed. Nazim, pp. 21, 23, 27-29; ed. Ḥabībī, pp. 147-48, 151-52; and Ebn al-Aṭīr (repr.), VIII, pp. 117-20 (s.a. 307).

Both depend on a common source, presumably Sallāmī's lost *Ta'rik wolāt Korāsān*. See also R. Vasmer, "Über die Münzen der Ṣaffāriden und ihrer Gegner in Fārs und Ḥurāsān," *Numismatische Zeitschrift* 63, 1930, p. 139 (where read "Aḥmad b. Sahl" for "Moḥammad b. Sahl").