



## AḤMAD MAYMANDĪ

**AḤMAD B. ḤASAN MAYMANDĪ**, ŠAMS-AL-KOFĀT ABU'L-QĀSEM (d. 424/1032), Ghaznavid vizier, statesman, and foster brother and schoolfellow of Sultan Maḥmūd of Ġazna (r. 388-421/998-1030). His father was the 'āmel of Bost under Maḥmūd's father Seboktegīn before he was crucified on Seboktegīn's orders, a victim of intrigues. Seboktegīn is reported to have regretted the act (Jorfādeqānī, *Tarjama-ye Tārīk-e Yamīnī*, ed. J. Še'ār, Tehran, 1345 Š./1966, p. 337). Maymandī enjoyed Maḥmūd's favor until, like his father, he fell because of intrigues; but he survived and after imprisonment was rehabilitated. He died during his second term as vizier, under Maḥmūd's son Mas'ūd (r. 421-32/1030-41). Bayhaqī discusses Maymandī's short second vizierate in detail, but information about his early career is sparse. He began his administrative duties in 384/994 as head of Maḥmūd's *dīvān-e rasā'el* (department of correspondence), when Maḥmūd was appointed military commander of Khorasan during the reign of the Samanid Amir Nūḥ b. Maṣṣūr. He was rapidly promoted to *mostawfī* (chief accountant) and 'āreż, head of the *dīvān-e 'arż* (department of the army). During this period Maymandī was also 'āmel of Bost and Rokkāj.

Maḥmūd's first vizier (384-401/994-1010) was Abu'l-'Abbās Fażl b. Aḥmad Esfarāyenī. According to 'Otbī (in Jorfādeqānī's version), Maḥmūd wanted Maymandī for the post but selected Esfarāyenī on Seboktegīn's insistence. This account is not convincing, since Esfarāyenī remained in office for thirteen years following Seboktegīn's death (d. 387/997), and Maymandī did not gain the post until 404/1013, three years after Esfarāyenī's dismissal. 'Otbī, through



Maymandī's favor, later was appointed *ṣāḥeb-e barīd* (postmaster) of Ganj Rostāq, perhaps in appreciation of his account of these events (N. Falsafī, *Hašt maqāla-ye tārikīo adabī*, Tehran, 1330 Š./1951, pp. 85, 86, 91). Following Esfarāyenī's fall, Maḥmūd ordered Maymandī temporarily to assume the civil governorship of Khorasan and to collect its revenues. He was able both to win the praise of the Khorasanians for his administration (Nāṣer-al-dīn Monšī Kermānī, *Nasā'em al-ashḥār men laṭā'em al-aḳbār*, ed. J. Moḥaddet Ormavī, Tehran, 1338 Š./1959, p. 41) and to present Maḥmūd, whose financial demands were never modest, with copious revenues (Bosworth, *Ghaznavids*, p. 87; cf. Ġ. Ḥ. Yūsufī, *Farroḳī Sīstanī: Baḥt-ī dar šarḥ-e aḥwāl o rūzgār o še'r-e ū*, Mašhad, 1341 Š./1962, pp. 197-201, 266-71). Maḥmūd recognized his competence and appointed him vizier in 404/1013.

While little detailed information about Maymandī's first vizierate survives, an anecdote preserved by Neẓām-al-molk suggests a policy of centralizing the state's fiscal administration. To obtain an accurate picture of K̲vārazm's yield, Maymandī ordered all revenues to be sent to Ġazna, where the gold could be assayed and weighed, before the K̲vārazmšāh Āltūntāš received his allowances. The practice had been for provincial tax officials to deduct their own pay before forwarding the balance to the central *dīvān* (*Sīāsāt-nāma*, ed. J. Še'ār, Tehran, 1348 Š./1969, pp. 370-72). He also reinstituted Arabic as the language of his chancery: Orders, records, and correspondence were to be in Arabic unless addressed to persons ignorant of the language; this reversed the policy of Esfarāyenī, who had introduced Persian for official use. Maymandī was a trained scribe with a mastery of Arabic (Jorfādeqānī, *Tarjama*, pp. 337, 343, 345-46; Kermānī, *Nasā'em*, pp. 41-42; Sayf-al-dīn 'Aqīlī, *Āṭār al-wozarā'*, ed. J. Moḥaddet Ormavī, Tehran, 1337 Š./1958, p. 153; K̲vāndamīr, *Dastūr al-wozarā'*, ed. S. Nafīsī, Tehran, 1317 Š./1938, p. 139; Neẓāmī 'Arūzī, *Čahār maqāla*, ed. M. Qazvīnī and M. Mo'in, Tehran, 1335 Š./1956, pp. 22, 29-31). In contrast, Esfarāyenī's knowledge of Arabic was minimal, at least according to 'Otbī—who, however, was probably a partisan of Maymandī's against Esfarāyenī in the conspiracy-ridden court of Ġazna (see Falsafī, *Hašt maqāla*, pp. 93-94; cf. Yūsufī, *Farroḳī*, pp. 322-28).

Whether or not rivalry had anything to do with language policy, intrigues surely contributed to Maymandī's dismissal from his first vizierate and his imprisonment. A detailed record of Maymandī's fall has been preserved ('Aqīlī, *Āṭār*, pp. 154-61, 171-76). His influential enemies included the K̲vārazmšāh Āltūntāš, Ḥasanak (Maḥmūd's last vizier and Maymandī's successor),



prominent courtiers such as ‘Alī Qarīb and Abū Bakr Ḥaṣīrī, Amir Moḥammad (Maḥmūd’s son and successor of brief tenure, who allowed Maymandī to languish in prison), and even Maḥmūd’s sister. His few supporters included Mas‘ūd, who rehabilitated Maymandī upon attaining the throne, Arslān Jādeb and Abū Naṣr Moškān, whose *Maqāmāt* is quoted by ‘Aqīlī in his account of the affair. Maymandī had accumulated enormous wealth during his administration, arousing the suspicion of the avaricious Maḥmūd (other sources also mention Maymandī’s wealth; cf. ‘Aqīlī, *Āṭār*, p. 176; Ebn al-Aṭīr, IX, p. 167; ‘Onṣorī, *Dīvān*, ed. M. Dabīrsiāqī, Tehran, 1342 Š./1963, p. 91; Bayhaqī, p. 681). Unmoved by Maymandī’s large cash offers, Maḥmūd ordered his and his family’s arrest and confiscation of their property. Still dissatisfied, Maḥmūd brought in two of Maymandī’s worst enemies (Sārūg and ‘Abd-al-Ḥamīd) from remote areas to act as interrogators and “extractors” (*mostakreḥ*). Maymandī was finally sent to India and imprisoned in the castle of Kālānjar. Maḥmūd resisted the urgings of Maymandī’s enemies to have him executed (‘Aqīlī, *Āṭār*, pp. 172, 174). Bayhaqī (pp. 464-65), however, tells of a written order from Maḥmūd to Abu’l-Qāsem Kaṭīr to have Maymandī killed. He remained in prison six years, through the rest of Maḥmūd’s reign and the brief reign of Moḥammad.

Mas‘ūd deposed his brother and assumed the throne in 421/1030. He soon ordered Maymandī’s release and summoned him to Balk with many tokens of favor. When after a few days he offered Maymandī the vizierate, he refused, much correspondence passing between them. In the Ghaznavid court, there was a lively rivalry between the supporters of the old regime (the Maḥmūdīān or Pedarīān) and the new (the Pesarīān), which must have put Maymandī on his guard. His pretext for refusal was that he had sworn to accept no appointment, but more probably he sought a clear delineation of his authority and responsibility, for when Mas‘ūd agreed to sign a contract (*mowāza’a*), item by item, and to swear to uphold it, Maymandī accepted the appointment and on 4 Šafar 422/31 January 1031 he assumed the vizier’s robe of honor (*keḷ’at*) (Bayhaqī, pp. 72, 87, 95, 105, 181-91; ‘Aqīlī, *Āṭār*, pp. 178-86, including the text of the *mowāza’a*). He demanded full authority over financial affairs, particularly in the *dīvān-e ‘arż* and the *dīvān-e wekālāt* which “administered the crown lands and supervised the financial side of the running of the Royal Household” (Bosworth, *Ghaznavids*, p. 68). In another item of the *mowāza’a* he claimed the right to appoint deputy *ṣāḥeb-e barīds* and *mošrefs* (inspectors). “It was the Vizier who was ultimately responsible for safe collection of the taxes. Consequently, he kept as close a watch as was possible, by means of the *Barīd*



[courier] system, over the collectors, *‘ommāl*, and the forwarding of the sum assessed for each collector’s district was strictly required” (ibid., p. 72).

On entering his second vizierate, Maymandī took tactful measures to avoid the jealousies which had led Maḥmūd to dismiss him. He distributed food and money to the poor on his first day, and, although indigent at the time, sent to the sultan’s treasury the many valuable gifts given him by the wealthy upon his rehabilitation. On his second day and thereafter he wore a simple robe; many believed he had but one garment, although his wardrobe was full of them (Bayhaqī, pp. 191-95). Bayhaqī reports that Maymandī took vengeance against his enemies (p. 196), but he was equally capable of forbearance, as when he attempted in vain to save the life of the vizier Ḥasanak, imprisoned and executed by Mas’ūd (ibid., pp. 225-27, 229-32, 236). Similarly, he intervened, successfully this time, on behalf of the K̲v̲ārazmšāh Āltūntāš, who was the object of an ill-advised plot of Mas’ūd’s in 423/1032. After this incident the sultan agreed to yield to his vizier’s judgment in affairs of state (ibid., pp. 402-06, 409-10, 413-17).

It is as a statesman that Maymandī’s biographers memorialize him. Bayhaqī reports his tact in dealing kindly with personal enemies who were in favor with Mas’ūd, his policy vis-à-vis the encroachments of the Saljuqs, his opposition to Mas’ūd’s invasion of India, his handling of the Āltūntāš affair, and his skill at making appointments (pp. 197-212, 348-53, 374-76, 430-32, 462-65, 515). Farroḳī and later ‘Awfī compare him to the great Buyid vizier, Šāḥeb b. ‘Abbād (Farroḳī *Sīstānī, Dīwān*, ed. M. Dabīrsīāqī, 2nd ed., Tehran, 1349 Š./1970, p. 154; ‘Awfī, *Lobāb*, p. 62): Both were men of letters and are cited as scribal models (Neẓāmī ‘Arūzī, *Čahār maqāla*, pp. 22, 29-31), and both are remembered for their generosity with poets. Maymandī is the object of fifteen panegyrics by Farroḳī (*Dīwān*, pp. 23, 48, 153, 155, 156, 201, 240, 303, 305, 306, 308, 310, 355, 358, 394) and two by ‘Onṣorī (*Dīwān*, pp. 91, 265; see also ‘Awfī, *Lobāb*, pp. 278-79). ‘Otbī, who was a boon companion (*nadīm*) of the vizier, may have praised him in gratitude for his patronage. Neẓāmī ‘Arūzī’s report that Maymandī attempted to sponsor Ferdawsī when he sought Maḥmūd’s patronage for the *Šāh-nāma* is improvable (*Čahār maqāla*, pp. 78-80, 82), and his story of Maymandī’s support for Bīrūnī against Maḥmūd (p. 93) has been questioned (see Yūsofī, *Farroḳī*, pp. 305-07).

Maymandī was severe and unforgiving with his officials, and devoted to the maintenance of the state (*ET*<sup>1</sup> III, p. 153; ‘Aqīlī, *Āṭār*, p. 155). Bayhaqī depicts him in his last days as ruinously severe with his tax collectors, while in the



same breath he mourns him as one “with whom bravery, honesty, ability, and greatness all passed away” (pp. 465-66). He died in Herat on 25 Moḥarram 424/31 December 1032, less than two years after beginning his second vizierate.

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