



## AḤMAD ŠĪRĀZĪ

**AḤMAD B. MOḤAMMAD B. ‘ABD-AL-ŞAMAD ŠĪRĀZĪ**, **ḲvĀJA ABŪ NAŞR** (usually “Aḥmad-e ‘Abd-al-Şamad” in Bayhaqī, Ghaznavid official and vizier, d. ca. 434/1043. The *nesba* “Šīrāzī” indicates a family origin in southwest Persia; and panegyrics to Aḥmad’s son mention descent from the ‘Abbasids. But the family was in the service of the Samanids by the late 4th/10th century; and Aḥmad’s father, Abū Ṭāher, is only heard of as confidential secretary to the Samanid slave-general in Khorasan, Ḥosām-al-dawla Tāš (‘Otbī, *al-Ta’rīḳ al-yamīnī*, Cairo, 1286/1869). Aḥmad began his career, so far as is known, as *katḳodā* (adjutant, in effect vizier) to the Turkish commander Abū Sa‘īd Āltüntāš. The latter was Maḥmūd of Ġazna’s governor in Ḳvārazm after the conquest in 408/1017. Aḥmad was his right-hand man at the battle of Dabūsīya (423/1032) with the Qarakhanid Boġra Khan ‘Alī b. Ḥasan/Hārūn, called ‘Alīṭigin. Although the Ḳvārazmšāh Āltüntāš was mortally wounded, Aḥmad’s diplomatic skill averted any harmful consequences and secured ‘Alīṭigin, withdrawal to Samarqand (see Barthold, *Turkestan*<sup>3</sup>, pp. 295-96). When Sultan Mas‘ūd’s first vizier, Aḥmad b. Ḥasan Maymandī, died in 424/1032, Aḥmad Šīrāzī succeeded him and served for the rest of Mas‘ūd’s sultanate. Bayhaqī much admired Aḥmad; his history amply illustrates how the vizier attempted to moderate his master’s capricious and arbitrary ways and opposed the excesses and tyrannical actions of provincial governors (e.g., the ‘*amīd* of Khorasan, Abu’l-Faẓl Sūrī. His relations with Mas‘ūd were correct rather than cordial. In accepting the vizierate, he carefully set forth his rights and obligations in a formal contract of services (*mowāza’a*) with the sultan. In it he was especially careful to maintain his rights vis-à-vis the *dīvān-e vazīr*’s rival



department, the *dīvān-e 'arz* (war department). Aḥmad gave sound advice on the need for Mas'ūd to concentrate on the defense of Khorasan against the Saljuqs, and was present with his master at the Dandānqān disaster of 431/1040, when Khorasan was lost to the Turkmans. He was unable to dissuade the sultan from the unwise decision to abandon Ġazna for India after this; he remained in northern Afghanistan as adjutant to the heir to the throne, Mawdūd b. Mas'ūd, who was commanding an army sent to defend Balk and ʾTokārestān against the Saljuqs. When Mas'ūd's army mutinied and he was killed in India in 432/1041, Aḥmad played a leading role in organizing Mawdūd's strategy and the occupation of Ġazna before going on to attack the rebels in the Kabul river valley. He accordingly remained as vizier to the new sultan Mawdūd, serving him for two years until he fell into disfavor through the jealousy of the Turkish commanders. According to Bayhaqī, he died shortly after his dismissal; but according to the later biographical sources, he was poisoned by his enemies. His son 'Abd-al-Ḥāmed inherited his father's secretarial expertise and served Sultan Ebrāhīm b. Mas'ūd as vizier for twenty-two years, then the latter's son Mas'ūd III for the seventeen years or so of his sultanate.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

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There are numerous mentions of Aḥmad in the contemporary sources for early Ghaznavid history, above all in Gardīzī and Bayhaqī; these may be supplemented by the entries in the biographical works on the lives of viziers: Nāṣer-al-dīn Kermānī, *Nasā'em al-aṣḥār men laṭā'em al-aḵbār*, ed. J. Moḥaddet Ormavī, Tehran, 1338 Š./1959, p. 45.

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Ḳvāndamīr, *Dastūr al-wozarā'*, ed. S. Nafisī, Tehran, 1317 Š./1938, p. 144.

All these sources are utilized in Bosworth, *Ghaznavids*, and idem, *Later Ghaznavids* (see indices).