



## ĀL-E FARĪĠŪN

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**ĀL-E FARĪĠŪN**, a minor Iranian dynasty of Gūzġān (Gūzġānān, Jūzġān; in what is now northern Afghanistan) which flourished from some time before the beginning of the 4th/10th century until the incorporation of Gūzġān into the Ghaznavid empire in the early 5th/11th century. The Iranian name of the family, FarĪġŪn, may well be connected with that of the legendary Iranian figure FarĪdŪn/AfrĪdŪn; moreover the author of the *Ḥodūd al-ālam*, who seems to have lived and worked in Gūzġān (see below), specifically says in his entry on the geography of Gūzġān that the *malek* of that region was a descendant of AfrĪdŪn (p. 95; tr. Minorsky, p. 106). Presenting less chronological difficulty is an equation of “FarĪġŪn” with the dynastic name of the original family of K̄vārazmšāhs, that of AfrĪġ, who ruled in K̄vārazm from the early 4th century A.D. until 385/995 (See [Āl-e AfrĪġ](#)). The name is obviously a northeastern Iranian one, to be localized in the Oxus basin. The geographer Maqdesī (Moqaddasī; p. 347) mentions a place called Rebāṭ-e AfrĪġŪn near Andġūy in northern Gūzġān; conceivably, this had been founded by the eponymous FarĪġŪn at some point in the 3rd/9th century.

Ṭabarī (under the years 90/709, 119/737, and 121/739) mentions that there was a line of local potentates in Gūzġān at the time of the Arab invasions of Ṭoġārestān and Central Asia who become involved in the resistance of Ṭarġān Nġzak against the Arab general Qotayba b. Moslem; some years later they aided Asad b. ‘Abdallāh Qasrī against the rebel al-Ḥāreṭ b. Sorayġ. It is quite possible that these rulers were, like Nġzak himself, of Hephthalite stock. Ṭabarī merely calls the ruler of Gūzġān al-Jūzġānī or al-Jūzġān b. al-Jūzġān, but Ebn



Kordādbeh gives him the title of Gūzgān-koḏāh (see Markwart, *Ērānšahr*, pp. 80-81, and M. A. Shaban, “Khurasan at the time of the Arab conquest,” *Iran and Islam, in memory of the late Vladimir Minorsky*, ed. C. E. Bosworth, Edinburgh 1971, p. 485). Unfortunately, we have no information to connect these magnates with the later Farighunids.

Out of the sporadic mentions in the Arabic geographers and historians, Markwart (*Ērānšahr*, p. 80, n. 4) constructed a genealogical list: Afrīgūn, Aḥmad, Abu'l-Ḥāreṭ Moḥammad, Abū Naṣr Aḥmad. However, Markwart did not use the prime source for the dynasty's history. 'Otbī's *al-Ta'riḳ al-Yamīnī*, which contains many references to the Farighunids in its account of events in northern Khorasan, culminating in Maḥmūd of Ġazna's annexation of Gūzgān. But the confused nature of these references and the discrepancies in the names of the Gūzgān rulers do not allow us to construct with complete certainty a neat genealogical tree. This was recognized by D. M. Dunlop (“Farīghūnids,” *EI*<sup>2</sup> II, pp. 798-800); Minorsky (*Ḥodūd al-'ālam*, p. 175) also compiled a genealogical tree. In the light of the information and suggestions below, a tentative, amended genealogy may be offered in [Table 1](#):

Farīgūn

Aḥmad

Abu'l-Ḥāreṭ Moḥammad

Abu'l-Ḥāreṭ Aḥmad • daughter = Maḥmūd of Ġazna • Farīgūn

Abu'l-Naṣr Moḥammad

Ḥasan • daughter = Moḥammad b. Maḥmūd of Ġazna

The first ruler mentioned in the sources is Aḥmad b. Farīgūn, who together with the Banijurid or Abu Da'udid amir of Balk and Ṭoḳārestān, responded eventually to the overwhelming military might of the Saffarid 'Amr b. Layṭ ca. 287/900; Naršakī speaks of Aḥmad b. Farīgūn as a potentate on the same level of authority as the Samanid amir in Transoxania (*Tārīḳ-eBoḳārā*, ed. Modarres Rażawī, Tehran, 1319 Š./1940, p. 102; tr. R. N. Frye, *The History of Bukhara*, Cambridge, Mass, 1954, p. 87). At the battle of the following year on the Oxus banks near Balk, 'Amr was defeated by the Samanid Esmā'īl b. Aḥmad; and his vast but transient military empire collapsed. Gūzgān must now have passed into the sphere of influence of the expanding Samanid empire, together with



all the other upper Oxus principalities as far as eastern Afghanistan.

After a chronological gap of some decades, the sources mention Aḥmad's son, Abu'l-Ḥāreṭ Moḥammad, who must have enjoyed an unusually long reign. One of his daughters married his youthful suzerain, the Samanid amir, Nūḥ b. Maṣṣūr, at some point shortly after the latter's accession in 365/975-76 (Gardīzī, ed. Nazim, p. 48; ed. Ḥabībī, pp. 164-65); and in 372/982-83 he received the dedication of the geographical work, *Ḥodūd al-ālam*. Abu'l-Ḥāreṭ's reign marks the apogee of Farighunid power and influence. The *Ḥodūd al-ālam* states that the chiefs of the adjoining regions of Ġarḥestān and Ġūr all acknowledged his overlordship; such chiefs (*mehtarān*) as those of Rīvšārān in Ġūr paid an annual tribute (*moqāṭa'a*) to the Farighunid ruler, while for a district like Mānšān in Ġūr the Farighunids sent out their own governor (*kārdār*). The Farighunids also controlled the numerous Arab nomads in the steppes of Gūzgān (on the lands sloping down to the left bank of the Oxus), drawing tribute from them and appointing their chiefs (pp. 95-97).

During the last decade of the 10th century the Farighunids became involved in the complex fighting in Khorasan between rival military commanders of the Samanids and their sovereigns; the confusion and declining central control speedily led to the downfall of the Samanid dynasty and the partition of their lands between the Ghaznavids and the Qarakhanids. The chief source is 'Otbī's *Ta'rīk al-Yamīnī* (copied by subsequent historians like Ebn al-Aṭīr, Rašīd-al-dīn, and Ebn Ḳaldūn); it has a special section on the Farighunids, headed *Dekr Āl Farīgūn* (ed. with commentary by Shaikh Manīnī, Cairo, 1286/1869, II, pp. 101-05; 'Otbī also mentions Abu'l-Ḥāreṭ Aḥmad b. Moḥammad in earlier passages regarding the warfare in Khorasan). Shortly after 380/990 Abu'l-Ḥāreṭ was deputed by the Samanid ruler to oppose Fā'eq Ḳāṣṣa, the rebellious Turkish slave general of the Samanids, but his force was routed by Fā'eq's Turkish and Arab troops. By 385/995 the relations of the Farighunids began to impinge on the activities of Sebūktigin and his son Maḥmūd, recently appointed to command the Samanid army in Khorasan. In that year, Abu'l-Ḥāreṭ and his forces came together with those of Sebūktigin and Maḥmūd at Herat against the rebels Fā'eq and Abū 'Alī Sīmḵūrī. About this time the two families of Gūzgān and Ġazna were united by a double marriage alliance; Maḥmūd married one of Abu'l-Ḥāreṭ's daughters, and Maḥmūd's sister was married to Abu'l-Ḥāreṭ's son, Abū Naṣr Moḥammad. When Sebūktigin died in 387/997 and the succession in Ġazna was disputed between his sons Maḥmūd and Esmā'īl, Abu'l-Ḥāreṭ, tried to mediate between the two sides; after



Maḥmūd had successfully crushed Esmā'īl's short-lived bid for the throne (388/998), he eventually, in 389/999, consigned Esmā'īl to confinement under his father-in-law in Gūzgān (see Nazim, *The Life and Times of Sulṭān Maḥmūd of Ghazna*, Cambridge, 1931, p. 41). A difficult point is that Abu'l-Ḥāreṭ Moḥammad is never mentioned as such by 'Otbī in these various mentions of the Farighunids, but only Abu'l-Ḥāreṭ Aḥmad b. Moḥammad. Dunlop has concluded, no doubt correctly (and *pace* Minorsky's doubts, *Ḥodūd al-'ālam*, p. 176), that Abu'l-Ḥāreṭ must have died or retired from power, apparently after a long reign, at some date shortly after 372/982-83, when the *Ḥodūd al-'ālam* was dedicated to him. He must then have been succeeded by his son Aḥmad, who also had the patronymic Abu'l-Ḥāreṭ; this name may have become as characteristic of the Farighunids as that of Abū Dā'ūd of the neighboring Banijurids.

Abu'l-Ḥāreṭ Aḥmad apparently died ca. 390/1000; by that time, with the triumph of Maḥmūd of Ġazna and the disintegration of the Samanid amirate, Gūzgān and other former dependencies like Ġarčestān, Čaġānīān and Kottal were being brought into the Ghaznavid imperial orbit. He was succeeded by his son Abu'l-Naṣr (?) Aḥmad ('Otbī has "Abu'l-Naṣr Aḥmad b. Moḥammad;" possibly we should read "Abu'l-Naṣr Moḥammad b. Aḥmad," as does Nazim, *Life and Times*, pp. 153, 178); the latter continued to rule in Gūzgān under Ghaznavid suzerainty until his death in 401/1010-11. It is just possible that the Farīġūn b. Moḥammad ('Otbī, I, p. 343) who was sent by Sultan Maḥmūd in 394/1004 or 395/1005 against the fugitive last Samanid, Esmā'īl al-Montaṣer, ruled in Gūzgān during an interim between the reigns of Abu'l-Ḥāreṭ Aḥmad and Abu'l-Naṣr Moḥammad; he was presumably a brother of the former prince, but nothing further is known of him. During these years, Abu'l-Naṣr enjoyed Maḥmūd's close confidence. In 398/1008 he fought in the center of the Ghaznavid line at the battle on the plain of Katar near Balḵ against the Qarakhanid invaders of Khorasan, the Ilig Naṣr b. 'Alī and Qadīr Khan Yūsuf (Nazim, *Life and Times*, p. 50). The next winter, he accompanied Maḥmūd on his Indian campaigns against the fortress of Bhīmnaḡar. It was at some point in Abu'l-Naṣr's reign that one of his daughters was married to Maḥmūd's son Moḥammad, whom the sultan was later to designate his heir but who was to have his rights set aside by his more forceful brother, Mas'ūd.

The Ghaznavid historian Bayhaqī (p. 112) mentions a last Farighunid, Ḥasan; he is described as the young son of the amir of Gūzgān, a youthful companion of the two princes Moḥammad and Mas'ūd. With Abu'l-Naṣr's death, Gūzgān



became totally absorbed into the Ghaznavid empire; and if Ḥasan was a son of Abu'l-Naṣr's, his claims to succeed in Gūzgān must have been set aside. Instead, Maḥmūd entrusted the governorship of the province to the prince Moḥammad, who already had connections there through his marriage to a Farighunid princess; and Moḥammad ruled Gūzgān with justice and benevolence for the rest of his father's sultanate. Thereafter, we hear no more of the Farighunid dynasty. One may note that no coins of the Farighunids are known to have been minted.

At this time, when the renaissance of New Persian learning and literature was beginning to blossom in the eastern Iranian lands, the Gūzgānī rulers appear to have been of considerable cultural significance, as were such parallel lines as the Samanids, the Ma'munid K̄vārazmšāhs, and the Ziyarids. 'Otbī is very laudatory about the personal qualities of Abu'l-Ḥāret Aḥmad, "the outstanding figure of the dynasty, the very pupil of that eye, the adornment of that region and the glittering embroidery on that fine garment" (*Yamīnī* II, p. 101). Two of the outstanding poets and stylists of the day, Badī'-al-zamān Hamadānī and Abu'l-Faṭḥ Bostī, addressed poems to the Farighunids; and if the Ottoman historian Monajjembāšī is to be believed, the Abū 'Abdallāh Moḥammad K̄vārazmī who wrote his encyclopedia of the sciences, the *Mafātīḥ al-'olūm* for a vizier of the Samanid Nūḥ b. Maṣṣūr (son-in-law of Abu'l-Ḥāret Moḥammad), had connections with the Farighunids.

The link with the Farighunids is certain with regard to the valuable geographical work, *Ḥodūd al-'ālam*, which is one of the earliest monuments of New Persian prose. The author began his book in 372/982-83 for Abu'l-Ḥāret Moḥammad and, not surprisingly, devotes special attention to the geography of Gūzgānān and northern Afghanistan (see Barthold's preface, pp. 4-7; Minorsky, "Ibn Farighun and the *Ḥodūd al-'ālam*," *A Locust's Leg: Studies in Honour of S. H. Taqizadeh*, London, 1971, pp. 189-96). Less obviously to be connected with the Farighunids, but quite possibly having some link with them, is the author of an early Arabic encyclopedia of the science, the *Jawāme' al-'olūm*. This was written in the middle years of the 4th/10th century for the Muhtajid amir of Čaġānīān, Abū 'Alī Aḥmad b. Moḥammad, a northern neighbor of the Farighunids (see *Āl-e Moḥtāj*). The author was one Ša'yā or Isaiah b. Farīġūn, who it has been suggested, was ascion of the Farighunid ruling dynasty (Dunlop, "The Čawāmi' al-'ulūm of Ibn Farīġūn," *60. doġum yılı münasebetiyle Zeki Velidi Togan's armaġan*, Istanbul, 1955, pp. 348-53; and Minorsky, "Ibn Farighun," pp. 189-91, 194-95).



## BIBLIOGRAPHY

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There exists no monograph devoted to the dynasty, but of special value are *Hodūd al-‘ālam*, tr. Minorsky, pp. 4-7, 173-78, and *EI*<sup>2</sup> II, pp. 798-800.

A brief resume of the dynasty’s history is given in Nazim, *Sulṭān Maḥmūd*, appendix C, pp. 177-78.