



## AZHAR-E ƘAR

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**AZHAR B. YAḤYĀ B. ZOHAYR B. FARQAD**, nicknamed **AZHAR-E ƘAR** “Azhar the ass,” third cousin, and military commander of the Saffarid amirs Ya‘qūb and ‘Amr b. Layṭ; like them, he was provided by the author of the *Tārīk-e Sīstān* (p. 204) with a patently spurious genealogy going back to the Sasanian king of kings Ƙosrow II Aparvēz. Neither the date of his birth nor of his death is known, but he flourished in the second half of the 3rd/9th century.

He was the confidant and aide of both Ya‘qūb (r. 253-65/867-79) and ‘Amr (r. 265-88/879-901) during their amirates, being not only described as a mighty warrior but also as highly literate, an *adīb*, and a *dabīr* or secretary (ibid., p. 269). In an anecdote in the *Qābūs-nāma* of Kay Kāvūs b. Eskandar (ed. Ğ.-Ḥ. Yūsufī, 3rd ed., Tehran, 1364 Š./1985, p. 96), he is described as giving good counsel to ‘Amr about dangers of exposing himself to injury and thus harming the state. One suspects from the anecdotes given about him in the local *Tārīk-e Sīstān* and from his nickname Azhar-e Ƙar that he deliberately cultivated a mask of obtuseness in order to disarm and confuse potential opponents.

When the amir was outside Sīstān, he seems regularly to have been entrusted with the government of the homeland. Thus in 261/875, when Ya‘qūb b. Layṭ was absent in Fārs, Azhar acted as his deputy in Sīstān; and in the crisis of Ramaẓān, 276/January, 890, when ‘Amr was away in Fārs and his brother ‘Alī b. Layṭ escaped from confinement in Bam, collected an army, and threatened to march on Sīstān, Azhar and Aḥmad b. Šahfūr rallied the defense and deflected ‘Alī into Khorasan (ibid., p. 247). Before this, he had acted as Ya‘qūb’s agent in 248/862 in winning over the leaders of the Kharijites in Sīstān,



thereby securing for him an accession of troops for his ambitions of external expansion (ibid., pp. 204-05); he had fought at the side of Ya'qūb in Kermān in 254-55/868-69 when the Saffarid amir had attacked the caliphal governor there, 'Alī b. Ḥosayn, personally capturing in battle 'Alī's commander Ṭawq b. Moğalles (ibid., p. 213); and he had taken part in an expedition against the local ruler of Zamīn(-e) Dāvar in southeastern Afghanistan, the Zonbīl, distinguishing himself in battle.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

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See also *Tārīk-e Sīstān*, pp. 213, 225, 269-71; tr. M. Gold, pp. 162-63, 169, 178-79, 196, 214-17.

Rašīd-al-dīn Vaṭvāṭ, *Ḥadā'eq al-seḥr fī daqā'eq al-še'r*, ed. 'A. Eqbāl Āštīānī, Tehran, 1308 Š./1929, pp. 105-07.

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