



MANŞUR B. NUḤ

MANŞURB. NUḤ, the name of two of the later Amirs of the Samanids (q.v.), the first ruling in both Transoxiana and Khorasan, and the second in Transoxiana only.

1. **MANŞUR(I) B. NUḤ (I)**, Abu Şāleḥ, called *Amir-e Sadid* “The Righteous, Just Amir” (r. 350-69/961-76). By the mid-4th/10th century, the Samanid empire had reached its peak of power. Subsequently, the authority of the Amirs was increasingly challenged by powerful military commanders, with the army intervening to set up and remove rulers. Therefore, Manşur’s reign may be regarded as the last one in which the fabric of the empire held firm, such that its prosperity excited favorable comment from outsiders (see below). The rulers’ viziers continued to come from families with long traditions of public service, such as the Bal’amis, Jayhānis and ‘Otbis, although these men were not, on the whole, of the same caliber as their forebears, and had increasingly to contend with the influence in the state of military leaders.

The new Amir succeeded his brother, ‘Abd-al-Malek (I), who had died suddenly in Šawwāl 350/November 961; this followed a failed attempt by the Chief Ḥājeb (chief chamberlain) [Alptegin](#) to place the dead Amir’s young son Naşr on the throne. The army commanders, headed by the [Ḥājeb Fā’eq Kāşsa](#), gave allegiance to Manşur in Bukhara on 19 Šawwāl 350/1 December 961 (Narşaki, pp 115-16; tr. 99). The opening years of his reign were taken up with internecine struggles among rival army leaders, ending in the ousting of Alptegin from the centers of power. Fā’eq and Abu Manşur b. ‘Abd-al-Razzāq, Alptegin’s governor in Tus, banded together against Alptegin. The latter



defeated the Samanid army, according to Gardizi, near Kōlm in what is now northern Afghanistan (ed. Nazim, p. 44; ed. Ḥabibi, p. 162), but he deemed it prudent to withdraw with his personal guard of *ḡolāms* to Ghazna on the eastern periphery of the Samanid empire, which he then seized from a local ruler (351/962); from among the commanders who succeeded him, eventually Sebüktegin emerged as founder of the [Ghaznavid dynasty](#) (Neẓām-al-Molk, pp. 137-47; tr. pp. 106-14; Bosworth, 1963, pp. 37-8). Abu Manşur then rebelled against Samanid authority, mulcted the towns of Khorasan in an effort to seize as much money as possible while he could, and entered into negotiations with the Samanids' western rival, the Buyid Rokn-al-Dawla, before he was killed in 351/962 by Abu'l-Ḥasan Simjuri's General Aḥmad b. Manşur b. Qarategin (Gardizi, ed. Nazim, pp. 44-45; ed. Ḥabibi, p. 162). Simjuri had taken over the governorship of Khorasan from Alptegin and was to hold it for the rest of Manşur's reign; according to Gardizi (loc. cit.), in contrast to Abu Manşur, he behaved equitably with the subjects in Khorasan and cultivated the ulema. In 352/963, Alptegin's son and successor, Abu Eşhāq Ebrāhim, was ejected from Ghazna by the returning indigenous ruler, and had to be restored in 354/965 with military assistance from Bukhara. Thereafter, the Turkish governors in Ghazna acknowledged the Samanids as their suzerains, placing the Amirs' names on their coins (Barthold, *Turkestan*³, pp. 250-51; Bosworth, 1963, p. 38).

Gardizi is our main source for the remainder of Manşur's reign. In 356/967, Simjuri led an expedition to Gorgān from his base in Nişāpur to aid the Ziyarid ruler, Voşmgir, against threats from the Buyid ruler of Ray, Rokn-al-Dawla (Gardizi, ed. Nazim, p. 45; ed. Ḥabibi, p. 163; Frye, "The Sāmānids," p. 152). Voşmgir died in the next year and his son Bisotun succeeded to power with Buyid help, so that Simjuri had to march into the Caspian provinces again in order to compel the new Ziyarid ruler to resume payment of tribute to the Samanids. Simjuri was subsequently accused by his enemies of inactivity and of allowing the northern Persian lands to slip from Samanid control, but he went to the Amir in Bokhara, justified himself and returned to his post (Gardizi, ed. Nazim, p. 46; ed. Ḥabibi, p. 163). It is not clear whether the punitive expedition which Simjuri sent against a rebel in Bād@ògis under Abu Ja'far Ziādi fell within Manşur's last years or in the early ones of his successor (Gardizi, ed. Nazim, pp. 46-7; ed. Ḥabibi, p. 164). There was certainly a *détente* during Manşur's later years between the Samanids and Buyids, based, according to Gardizi again, on an understanding reached through negotiations between Manşur's vizier Abu Ja'far 'Otbi and Rokn-al-Dawla's vizier, Abu'l-Faẓl [Ebn al-'Amid](#). The power and prestige of the Samanids at this time was such



that in 361/971-2 the Buyids agreed to pay an annual tribute of 200,000 dinars to Bukhara, and the daughter of his son ‘Azod-al-Dawla, was married to Maṣṣur’s son Nuḥ; how long payment of tribute continued is unclear, though Rokn-al-Dawla died in 366/976 just after Maṣṣur himself (Gardizi, ed. Nazim, p. 47, ed. Ḥabibi, p. 164; according to Naršaḳi, p. 116, tr. p. 99, the sum stipulated was 150,000 Nišāpuri dirhams; according to Ebn al-Aṭir, VIII, p. 626, 150,000 dinars).

Maṣṣur died on 11 Šawwāl 365/13 June 976 (‘Otbi, I, p. 349; and Gardizi, ed. Nazim, p. 47; ed. Ḥabibi, p. 164; according to Naršaḳi, p. 116, tr. p. 99, it was on 16 Moḥarram 365/25 September 975), to be succeeded by his son Nuḥ (II). The geographer Ebn Ḥawqal, who traveled through the Samanid lands and was in Bukhara during his reign, praises Maṣṣur as “the most just monarch of his age,” filled with all the virtues, despite a weak body and feeble constitution, and he admired the military ardor and effectiveness of the army in Transoxiana, supported as it was on a sound, regular financial system (Ebn Ḥawqal, pp. 468-70, 472; tr. Kramers and Wiet, pp. 451-52, 454). What credence should be attached to the story in Neẓām-al-Molk (pp. 278-84; tr. pp. 221-26) of a recrudescence of Isma‘ili activity in Khorasan and the presence of one of the “Wearers of White,” or *Mobayyeza*, in Farḡāna during Maṣṣur’s reign is unclear, since, as with the similar episode in his grandfather’s reign (see NAŞR B. AḤMAD), the most reliable historical sources do not mention it. Naršaḳi comments on the peace that prevailed in his reign once rebels and ambitious commanders had been brought to heel (p. 116; tr. p. 99). The court in Bukhara was undoubtedly a dazzling center of culture, and it was during Maṣṣur’s reign that, at the Amir’s command, the Vizier Abu ‘Ali Moḥammad b. Moḥammad ‘Otbi made his Persian epitome of Ṭabari’s great *History*. For a more detailed consideration of cultural life and trends at this time, see SAMANIDS.

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2. **MANŞUR(II) B. NUḤ (II) B. MANŞUR (I)**, Abu’l-Ḥāreṭ, ruled only in Transoxiana between 387/997 and 389/999. His father **Nuḥ** had been reduced to controlling only a part of Transoxiana through the rivalries and ambitions of powerful military commanders like Abu ‘Ali Moḥammad Simjuri, Fā’eq, Begtuzun, Sebüktegin and Maḥmud, and through incursions from the steppes to the north of Transoxiana by the Turkish Qarakhanids. Nuḥ died on 14 Rajab 387/23 July 997, but it was not until Du’l-Qa’da 387/November 997 that homage was done to Manşur (Sam’āni, VII, pp. 27-28), an indication of the confusion in the realm.

Bayhaqi (ed. Fayyāz, p. 865) praises Manşur for his courage and intelligence, but the Amirate was now in a state of terminal decline, with all real power in the hands of Fā’eq Kāşsa and the vizier Abu’l-Możaffar Moḥammad Barġaşı, who held the vizierate until he was dismissed in the summer of 388/998 (cf. *ibid.*, pp. 456-59; Barthold, *Turkestan*³, p. 265). Manşur’s two-year reign was entirely taken up with the struggles of the competing military leaders, with Fā’eq endeavoring to prevail in the capital Bukhara and Begtuzun to establish his position in Khorasan against Maḥmud b. Sebüktegin, who in 388/998 managed to retain control of Ghazna against his brother Esmā’il and was not disposed to give up his governorship of Khorasan. Manşur came with Fā’eq



and an army to Khorasan, but his indecisiveness and the suspicions of his ally that he was going to intrigue with Maḥmud prompted Fā'eq and Begtuzun to depose Manşur on 12 Safar 389/1 February 999 and to blind him (Gardizi, ed. Nazim, pp. 59-60; ed. Ḥabibi, p. 172; Bayhaqi, p. 866; Barthold, pp. 265-66; Frye, pp. 158-59). His younger brother 'Abd-al-Malek (II) was then set up as his successor, but the end of the Samanid dynasty was now imminent.

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