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## CHAPTER 5

### THE EARLY GHAZNAVIDS

The establishment of the Ghaznavid sultanate in the eastern Iranian world represents the first major breakthrough of Turkish power there against the indigenous dynasties. The peaceful penetration of Turks into the originally Iranian lands of Central Asia, *sc.* into Transoxiana, Farghāna and Khawārazm, and across the Dihistān Steppe (the modern Qara Qum Desert) towards the Caspian coastlands, had, however, begun several centuries before. The Iranian rulers of Soghdia who opposed the Arab invaders of the 1st/7th and early 2nd/8th centuries received assistance from the Western Turks, before the steppe empire of these Türgesh itself disintegrated. In addition to this, the Soghdian princes hired Turks from the steppes as mercenary soldiers and as frontier guards, thus anticipating the 'Abbāsīd caliphs' employment of Turkish slaves in their armies. In what was, before the rise of the Sāmānids, a politically fragmented region, with the independent political unit often little more than the city-state or petty principality, there was frequent internecine warfare and consequent employment for these warriors.

The Sāmānīd amirate in Transoxiana and Khurāsān meant that there was a strong barrier in the northeast against mass incursions from the steppes into the civilized zone. The Iranian world was now protected by a vigorous power, whose central government in Bukhārā had an advanced bureaucracy, utilizing techniques evolved in the 'Abbāsīd caliphate, and a well-disciplined professional army. Again, this army followed the 'Abbāsīd pattern in that it had a core of Turkish slave guards (*ghilmān*, *mamālīk*) personally attached to the amīr. Hence during the heyday of the Sāmānīds – up to the middle of the 4th/10th century – the frontiers of Transoxiana were held firm against pressure from the Turks outside. Such frontier regions as Isfījāb, Shāsh and Farghāna were protected by chains of *ribāts* or fortified points garrisoned by *ghāzīs* or fighters for the faith. The amīrs personally undertook punitive campaigns into the steppes when need arose, such as the great expedition to Talas in 280/893 of Ismā'il b. Aḥmad, when the capital of the

Qarluq Turks was sacked and an immense booty of slaves and beasts taken. Similarly, the Afrīghid Khwārazm-Shāhs in the 4th/10th century led an expedition each autumn into the steppes, the so-called *Faghbūriyya* or “King’s expedition”.

During this period of Sāmānid florescence, large numbers of individual Turks were brought through Transoxiana into the Islamic world; the greater part of them found employment as military guards in the service of the caliphs and of provincial Arab and Persian governors. During the course of the 3rd/9th century the military basis of the ‘Abbāsīd caliphate was completely transformed. Instead of relying on their Khurāsānian guards, or on the remnants of an even earlier system, that of the militia of Arab warriors, the caliphs came to depend almost wholly on slave troops. These included such varied races as Arabs, Berbers, black Sudanese, Balkan Slavs, Greeks, Armenians and Iranians, but Turks from Central Asia were the most prominent of all. Much of the economic prosperity of the Sāmānid state was built on the slave trade across its territories, for the demand for Turkish slaves was insatiable; the Sāmānid government controlled the export of slaves across the Oxus, exacting tolls and requiring licences for the transit of slave boys. The Turks were prized above all other races for their bravery, hardihood and equestrian skill, and provincial governors and ambitious military commanders emulated the caliphs in recruiting for themselves bodyguards of these *ghulāms*. It was the existence of these professional troops which enabled such governors as Aḥmad b. Ṭūlūn and then Muḥammad b. Ṭughj to throw off direct caliphal control in Egypt.

Thus during the 3rd/9th and 4th/10th centuries there was a gradual penetration from within of the eastern and central parts of the Islamic world by these Turkish soldiers. In Persia itself, the two major powers of the Būyids and the Sāmānids supplemented the indigenous Dailamī and eastern Iranian elements of their forces with Turkish cavalymen, and even the minor Dailamī and Kurdish dynasties of the Caspian coastlands and northwestern Persia added Turks to their local and tribal followings. Numerically, these Turks in the Iranian world did not add up to a great influx – not until Saljuq, Mongol and Tīmūrid times did mass immigrations occur which changed the ethnic complexion of certain regions – but they formed an élite class as military leaders and governors, and in western Persia at least, as owners of extensive landed estates or *iqṭā’*s. Once the hand of central government relaxed, these Turkish commanders had the means for power immediately at hand:

personal entourages of slave guards, and territorial possessions to provide financial backing.

These considerations clearly play a large rôle in the decline and fall of the Sāmānid empire in the second half of the 4th/10th century, and in the rise from its ruins of two major dynasties, the Qarakhānids to the north of the Oxus and the Ghaznavids to the south of that river. Signs of weakness already appeared in the amirate of Nūḥ b. Naṣr (331-43/943-54). Power was usurped by over-mighty subjects such as Abū 'Alī Chaghānī, who came from a prominent Iranian family of the upper Oxus valley, and by the Sīmjūrīs, a family of Turkish ghulām origin who held Kūhistān virtually as their own private domain. The expense of dealing with rebellion and unrest in Khurāsān placed the amīrs in serious financial trouble, driving them to impose fresh taxation and thereby increase their unpopularity with the influential landowning and military classes. Uncertainties over the succession allowed the Turkish military leaders and prominent bureaucrats, such as the Bal'amīs and 'Utbīs, to act as king-makers. With centrifugal forces in the ascendant, outlying dependencies of the Sāmānid empire began to fall away from the control of Bukhārā. Thus in Sīstān, a collateral branch of the Ṣaffārid dynasty reappeared and flourished under Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Khalaf b. Laith (311-52/923-63) and his son Khalaf (352-93/963-1003) (see Chapter 3). In Kirmān, the Sāmānid commander Muḥammad b. Ilyās founded a short-lived dynasty (320-57/932-68) which ruled in virtual independence until the province was conquered by the Būyid 'Aḍud al-Daula. In Bust and al-Rukhkhaj, in southeastern Afghanistan, the ghulām general and governor of Balkh, Qara-Tegin Isfijābī, held power in the years after 317/929. Forty years later, a further group of Turkish ghulāms under one Baituz was ruling in Bust, and it is possible, though unproven, that there was some continuity here with the earlier régime of Qara-Tegin. Baituz's links with his suzerains in Bukhārā had become so far relaxed that on the sole coin of his which is extant, a copper *fals* of 359/970, the name of the Sāmānid amīr is not mentioned.<sup>1</sup>

The Ghaznavids arose indirectly from this atmosphere within the Sāmānid empire of disintegration, palace revolutions and succession *putschs*. The Turkish Commander-in-Chief of the Sāmānid forces, the *ḥājib* Alp-Tegin, in 350/961 allied with the vizier Abū 'Alī Muḥammad Bal'amī to place their own candidate for the amirate on the throne. The

<sup>1</sup> J.-C. Gardin, *Lashkari Bazar II, Les trouvailles . . .* (Paris, 1963), pp. 170-1.

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*coup* failed, and Alp-Tegin was obliged to withdraw to Ghazna in eastern Afghanistan, on the far periphery of the Sāmānid empire, wresting the town from its local ruling dynasty of the Lawīks (351/962). Ghazna was not, however, relinquished by the Lawīks without a struggle. They were connected by marriage to the Hindūshāhī dynasty ruling in Kabul (see below), and clearly enjoyed much local support. During the next fifteen years, they returned on various occasions, and at one juncture, Abū Ishāq Ibrāhīm, Alp-Tegin's son and successor in Ghazna, only regained the town with military help sent out from Bukhārā. Because of this need in the early years for Sāmānid support, the various Turkish governors in Ghazna continued down to Sebük-Tegin's death in 387/997 generally to acknowledge the amīrs on their coins.

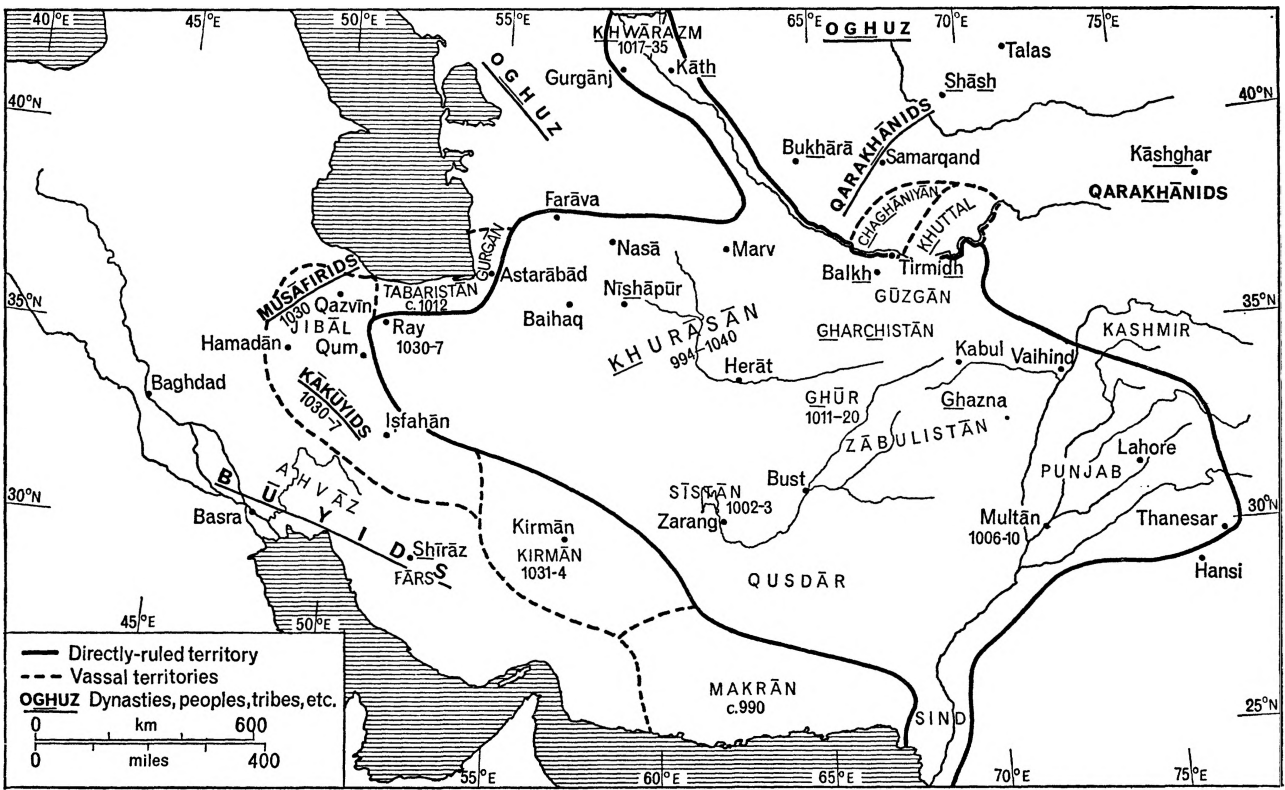
One of Alp-Tegin's most trusted supporters was the ghulām Sebük-Tegin (probably to be interpreted as Turkish "beloved prince"). According to a testament of aphorisms on the exercise of kingly power, allegedly left to his son Maḥmūd (the *Pand-nāma*), Sebük-Tegin came from the region of Barskhān on the shores of the Isiq-Göl, in what is now the Kirghiz S.S.R. It is accordingly probable that he came from one of the component tribes of the Turkish Qarluq group. Obsequious genealogists later fabricated a genealogy connecting Sebük-Tegin with the last Sāsānid Emperor, Yazdgard III, it being supposed that Yazdgard's family had fled into the Central Asian steppes and there intermarried with the local Turks, although they were unable to get round the fact of his pagan birth. Captured in the course of intertribal warfare, he was sold as a slave at Nakhshab, and eventually bought by Alp-Tegin. The story of his rise to eminence in Alp-Tegin's service is detailed in the *Siyāsat-nāma* of Niẓām al-Mulk, although this account should be treated with some caution. Sebük-Tegin accompanied Alp-Tegin to Ghazna, passing into the service of the latter's son Abū Ishāq Ibrāhīm, and quietly building up a following among the Turks in Ghazna. He was prominent during the governorship of Bilge-Tegin, in whose time the town of Gardīz was first attacked (364/974). In 366/977 the Turks of Ghazna deposed the drunken and incompetent governor Böri, and installed Sebük-Tegin as their governor and leader, thereby giving the stamp of formal approval to the substance of power which he had previously enjoyed.

Sebük-Tegin now began a twenty years' reign in Ghazna, ostensibly as governor on behalf of the Sāmānids; the amīrs' names were placed

on his coins before his own, and on his tomb the title of *al-Ḥājib al-Ajall* "Most exalted commander" still proclaims his subordinate status. In fact, the foundations of an independent Ghaznavid power, which was to be erected into a mighty empire by Sebük-Tegin's son Maḥmūd, were firmly laid in his time. The economic stability of the Turkish soldiery in Ghazna was helped by reforms in the system of land grants or *iqṭā's* on which they had settled in the surrounding countryside. The 'Turks' power radiated out from Ghazna over the region of Zābulistān in eastern Afghanistan. Zābulistān was basically Iranian in population, and it played a notable part in Iranian epic lore, especially in that aspect of it concerned with the hero Rustam-i Zāl; in the 5th/11th century, the popular traditions of Zābulistān were worked up by Asadī Ṭūsī into his epic of the *Garshāsp-nāma*. Before the coming of Alp-Tegin, it is probable that this region was only imperfectly Islamized; certainly, paganism persisted in the inaccessible region of Ghūr in central Afghanistan well into the 5th/11th century. Sebük-Tegin endeavoured to conciliate local feeling by marrying the daughter of one of the nobles of Zābulistān; it was from this union that Maḥmūd (sometimes referred to in the sources as Maḥmūd-i Zāwulī) was born.

The group of Turks in Ghazna was a small one, set down in an hostile environment, and a dynamic policy of expansion may have seemed to Sebük-Tegin the best way to ensure its survival. Soon after his assumption of power, Sebük-Tegin moved against the rival group of Turkish *ghulāms* in Bust and overthrew Baituz, at the same time adding Quṣḍār (*sc.* northeastern Baluchistan) to his possessions. As a result of the Bust expedition, Sebük-Tegin acquired the services of one of the greatest literary men of the age, Abu'l-Faṭḥ Bustī, formerly secretary to Baituz; the composition of his new master's *fath-nāmas*, proclamations of victory, and the organization of a Ghaznavid chancery, were now undertaken by Abu'l-Faṭḥ.

Most significant, however, for the future history of the Ghaznavids were the beginnings of expansion towards the plains of India. The *dār al-kufr*, land of unbelief, began not far to the east of Ghazna. The Kabul river valley is geographically an extension of the river system of the northern Indian plain; it was often part of the Indian cultural and religious world too, and Buddhism and Hinduism both left their mark there in pre-Islamic times. In the 4th/10th century, the lower Kabul valley, as far west as Lāmghān and Kabul itself, was the centre of the powerful Hindūshāhī dynasty of Waihind (near the modern Attock, at



Map 4. The early Ghaznavid empire

the confluence of the Indus and Kabul rivers), and these rulers barred the way for Muslim expansion into northern India. For Sebük-Tegin and his followers, the situation resembled that familiar from Transoxiana. Here too there were frontier fortresses like Ghazna and Gardiz facing a pagan land, but with the difference that the plains of India promised an infinitely richer plunder than the bare Central Asian steppes had ever yielded. It is likely that Sebük-Tegin's first clashes with the Hindūshāhīs were, at least in part, defensive measures; we have noted above that the Hindūshāhīs were related to the dispossessed Lawīks of Ghazna, and on more than one occasion, they supplied help from Kabul to the Lawīks. At some time around 367/986–7 there was sharp fighting in the Kabul–Lāmghān region, in which the Hindūshāhī Rājā was finally defeated, enabling Sebük-Tegin to advance down the Kabul river towards Peshawar and implant the first seeds of Islam there.

Sebük-Tegin's successful maintenance of himself in power at Ghazna and his victories against the Indians now made him a force in the internal politics of the Sāmānid empire, at this time moving towards its final collapse. Internal conflicts so weakened the amīrs' authority that in 382/992 Nūḥ b. Maṣṣūr was unable to halt an invasion of Transoxiana by the Qarakhānid chief Bughra Khān Hārūn, who for a time actually occupied the capital Bukhārā. An alliance against the crown of two great men in the state, Abū 'Alī Sīmjūrī and the Turkish general Fā'iq Khāṣṣa, drove Amīr Nūḥ to call in Sebük-Tegin in the hope of redressing the balance (384/994). Sebük-Tegin and Maḥmūd now appeared in Khurāsān and routed the rebels; both consequently received a grant of honorific titles from the grateful amīr, and Maḥmūd was invested with command of the army of Khurāsān. By 385/995 rebel opposition had been temporarily crushed, and Khurāsān was in Maḥmūd's hands; once Maḥmūd was secure on the throne of Ghazna three years later, Khurāsān was to be an integral part of the Ghaznavid empire for the next forty years. However, the shrinking Sāmānid dominions continued to be disordered: the Qarakhānids took over the whole of the Syr Darya basin, and the authority of the amīrs was confined to a small part of Transoxiana.

In the midst of this, Sebük-Tegin died (387/997), and Maḥmūd was obliged to leave Khurāsān and allow the Turkish general Bektuzun to occupy Nishāpūr. Sebük-Tegin had appointed as his successor in Ghazna a younger son, Ismā'il (possibly because Ismā'il's mother was a daughter of Alp-Tegin), and the claims of the more experienced and

capable Maḥmūd were ignored. Maḥmūd proposed a division of power within the Ghaznavid territories, but Ismā‘il refused this; recourse to arms followed, and after a few months’ reign in Ghazna, Ismā‘il was deposed (388/998). The Sāmānid Amīr Abu’l-Ḥārith Maṣṣūr b. Nūḥ now confirmed Maḥmūd in possession of Ghazna, Bust and the eastern Khurāsānian towns of Balkh, Tirmidh and Herāt, but Maḥmūd was left to recover western Khurāsān from Bektuzun. The deposition of the amīr by Bektuzun and Fā’iq enabled Maḥmūd to pose as his avenger, and after further negotiations and renewed fighting, Maḥmūd was in 389/999 at last victorious over all his enemies. Khurāsān was now firmly within his possession, and with the advance of the Qarakhānid Ilig Naṣr to Bukhārā in the same year, the Sāmānid dynasty virtually ended. Maḥmūd established friendly relations with the Ilig, and both sides agreed that the former Sāmānid dominions should be partitioned, with the Oxus as boundary between these two Turkish powers. This cordiality proved to be only transient; very soon, the Qarakhānids were trying to extend their authority into Khurāsān, whilst Maḥmūd later tried to secure a foothold north of the Oxus. Significant for the future orientation of Ghaznavid policy was Maḥmūd’s eagerness to secure legitimization of his power from the ‘Abbāsīd caliph al-Qādir, who at this point sent him the honorific by which he became best known, that of *Yamīn al-Dawla* “Right hand of the state”. The Ghaznavids were always careful to buttress their authority by caliphal approval and by an ostentatious espousal of the cause of Sunnī orthodoxy (see below).

Maḥmūd’s thirty-two years’ reign (388–421/998–1030) was one of ceaseless campaigning and warfare over a vast stretch of southern Asia; at his death, the empire stretched from the borders of Āzarbāijān and Kurdistān in the west to the upper Ganges valley of India in the east, and from Khwārazm in Central Asia to the Indian Ocean shores. Not since the early days of the ‘Abbāsīd caliphate had such a vast assemblage of territories been ruled by one man. This was an entirely personal creation and consequently ephemeral, for Maḥmūd’s son Mas‘ūd was inferior to his father in skill and judgement and was unable to hold the empire together. Yet the might of Maḥmūd’s empire at its zenith immensely impressed succeeding generations of Muslims, and especially excited the admiration of those who held fast to Sunnī orthodoxy and revered the ‘Abbāsīd caliphs as imāms of the community of the faithful. It was fortunate for Maḥmūd that his campaigns on both flanks of the empire could so often be represented in a favourable religious light. In



the east, Maḥmūd achieved his reputation as the great *ghāzī* sultan and hammer of the infidel Hindus. That his motives here were, as is explained below, as much influenced by material as spiritual considerations did not affect the approbation of contemporaries, who knew only that such houses of abomination as the great idol-temple of Somnāth were being cleansed, just as Muḥammad the Prophet had purified the Ka'ba of its 365 idols. In the west, Maḥmūd's main opponents were the Būyids and lesser Dailamī powers like the Kākūyids of Iṣfahān and Hamadān and the Musāfirids of Dailam, and since these were Shī'ī in faith, it was possible to publicize Maḥmūd's campaign of 420/1029 in western Persia as a crusade for the re-establishment of Sunnī orthodoxy.

Finally, Maḥmūd's achievement should be considered within the context of the contemporary Islamic world in general. His victories for orthodoxy came at a moment when the fortunes of that cause were at a low ebb in the more westerly lands of Islam. The extremist Shī'ī Fāṭimids had founded a rival caliphate which stretched from North Africa to Syria, and their capital of Cairo had come to eclipse Baghdad in its splendour and its economic and cultural vitality. To the threat of Fāṭimid expansionism across the Syrian Desert towards Iraq was added danger from without the Islamic world. Under the energetic Macedonian imperial dynasty (867–1057), the Byzantines began to recover ground lost to the Arabs three centuries before. Cyprus, Crete and much of northern Syria were reoccupied, and Greek armies almost reached Damascus and Jerusalem, inflicting a severe blow to Muslim self-confidence. Coming as they did at this time, Maḥmūd's Indian exploits gave a fillip to Muslim spirits; and Maḥmūd was always careful to forward detailed *fath-nāmas* to the 'Abbāsids in Baghdad, so that his achievements might be publicized. In all of these activities, Maḥmūd acted as a fully independent sovereign, save only for his formal acknowledgement of the caliph's spiritual overlordship, signalled by the appearance on his coins from 389/999 onwards of the title *Walī Amīr al-Mu'minīn* "Friend of the Commander of the Faithful". Recognition of the sovereignty of the Sāmānids, still kept up by Ismā'il during his brief reign, was now abandoned.

By acquiring Khurāsān, Maḥmūd became master of a rich and flourishing province. Khurāsān had rich agricultural oases, irrigated by means of a skilful utilization of a modest water supply. Its towns were centres for local industry and crafts, with its textiles and other specialties exported far outside the province; it also benefited by its

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straddling of the long-distance trade route between Iraq and Central Asia. It was also at this time the intellectual and cultural heart of the eastern Islamic world, not only for the traditional Arabic theological, linguistic and legal sciences, but also for the cultivation of New Persian language and literature, a process which culminated in the achievement of Maḥmūd's contemporary and would-be protégé, Firdausī of Ṭūs. In short, the wealth of Khurāsān, as much as that of India, provided the material basis for much of Maḥmūd's imperial achievement.

The sultan was, accordingly, concerned to guard Khurāsān against threats from the Qarakhānids, for despite Maḥmūd's marriage to a daughter of the Ilig Naṣr (390/1000), the khans did not for long relinquish their designs upon the province. Whilst Maḥmūd was away at Multān in India in 396/1006, a two-pronged invasion of Khurāsān was launched. One Qarakhānid army occupied Balkh (where a market belonging to the Ghaznavid sultan, the Bāzār-i 'Āshiqān or "Lovers' Market", was burnt down), and the other occupied Nišāpūr; at this last place, a large part of the *dihqāns* or landowners had already become disillusioned with the rapacity of the sultan's tax-collectors, and actually welcomed the invaders. With characteristic verve, Maḥmūd raced back across Afghanistan, and hurled the Qarakhānids back across the Oxus. The Ilig Naṣr attempted a revanche in the following year, in alliance with his second cousin Yūsuf Qadīr Khān of Khotan. But a great victory by Maḥmūd near Balkh in 398/1008, in which a charge of the armour-plated war elephants of the Ghaznavids had a demoralizing effect on the invaders, ended the campaign; the Qarakhānid commanders had protested that "it is impossible to put up resistance against those elephants, weapons, equipment and warriors". The Qarakhānid dominions were never ruled as a unitary state, but formed something like a loosely-linked confederation. Internal quarrels and warfare broke out within the dynasty at an early date, and over the next years, the Ghaznavid borders were not again threatened by the khans.

Once he had consolidated his power in Khurāsān, Maḥmūd gradually brought under his own control those regions which had lain on the periphery of the Sāmānid empire and had been loosely tributary to Bukhārā, *sc.* Sīstān, Gharchistān, Jūzjān, Chaghāniyān, Khuttal and Khwārazm.

North of the upper Harī Rūd lay Gharchistān ("land of the mountains"), ruled by a line of local princes who bore the Iranian title of Shīr (< Old Persian *khshāthriya* "ruler"). The Shīr Abū Naṣr Muḥam-

mad acknowledged Maḥmūd's suzerainty right away in 389/999, but some years later, the sultan used the pretext of truculent behaviour on the part of the Shīr's son Muḥammad b. Muḥammad to invade the province and incorporate it in his empire (403/1012). That the family of Shīrs nevertheless survived seems possible, for they are mentioned once more in the Ghūrīd period.

Under its dynasty of the Farīghūnids, Jūzjān, the region to the north of Herāt, had been an important vassal-state of the Sāmānids, providing military aid to the amīrs against their rebellious generals. The Farīghūnids had also been patrons of the arts; it was for one of the amīrs that the pioneer geographical treatise in New Persian, the *Ḥudūd al-‘ālam*, was written towards 372/982, and the late Professor V. Minorsky suggested that the author of an Arabic encyclopaedia of the sciences called the *Jawāmi‘ al-‘ulūm*, one Sha‘yā b. Farīghūn, might be a scion of this princely family.<sup>1</sup> The ruler Abū Naṣr Aḥmad fought for Maḥmūd against the Qarakhānids in Khurāsān and also in India, and retained his territories until his death in 401/1010–11, when Gūzgān was placed under the governorship of the sultan's son Muḥammad, who had married a daughter of Abū Naṣr Muḥammad.

It may also be noted at this point that Maḥmūd endeavoured to extend some control over Ghūr, until this time a pagan enclave in the mountains of central Afghanistan. Two expeditions were sent in 401/1011 and 411/1020 and with difficulty procured the submission of certain local chiefs, including Muḥammad b. Sūrī of Āhangarān on the upper Harī Rūd. Teachers were left to inculcate the rudiments of the Islamic faith, but Ghūr was never properly subdued by the Ghaznavids, and the spread of Islam there was to be a slow process.

Another region of Afghanistan, that of Kāfiristān (modern Nūristān), which lies across the Hindu Kush and to the north of the Kabul River, did not become Muslim till the end of the 19th century, when the Afghan Amīr ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Khān led a force into Kāfiristān and replaced the indigenous paganism by Islam. A raid by Maḥmūd is recorded in 411/1020 on the Nūr and Qīrāt valleys, apparently lying in the eastern part of Kāfiristān, but no permanent conquest was attempted.

Because of its distance from Bukhārā, Sīstān had slipped from direct Sāmānid control after the first decades of the 4th/10th century, and a

<sup>1</sup> “Ibn Farīghūn and the *Ḥudūd al-‘Ālam*” in *A locust's leg: Studies in honour of S. H. Taqīzadeh* (London, 1962), pp. 189–96.

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line connected with the Şaffārids Ya'qūb and 'Amr b. al-Laith had reappeared there. When Sebük-Tegin annexed Bust, his territories became contiguous with those of the Şaffārid Khalaf b. Aḥmad. In 376/986–7 Khalaf tried to take advantage of Sebük-Tegin's involvement with the Hindūshāhī Rājā Jaipāl, and seized Bust for a time; later, he tried to set the Qarakhānids against Sebük-Tegin. Whilst Maḥmūd was disputing with his brother Ismā'il over the succession, Khalaf's forces seized the district of Pūshang, to the north of Sistān, and in 390/999 Maḥmūd retaliated by an invasion of Sistān. On numismatic evidence, Ghaznavid authority was first recognized there in 392/1002, although the literary sources state that it was not until the next year that Maḥmūd finally took over Sistān, after Khalaf had put to death his own son Ṭāhir and provoked a civil war there. Khalaf was now deposed and the province placed under Maḥmūd's brother Abu'l-Muẓaffar Naṣr. Yet the Sagzīs' attachment to their own local line and their hatred of the alien Turkish yoke remained constant, and Sistān was never quiet under the Ghaznavids; once the Saljuqs appeared on the fringes of Sistān during the sultanate of Maudūd b. Mas'ūd, the Sagzīs joined with the Türkmens to expel the Ghaznavid officials.

Quşdār had apparently been allowed by Sebük-Tegin to retain its local rulers, for in 402/1011 we hear of an expedition by Maḥmūd to restore the ruler to obedience and the customary payment of tribute; this ruler (who is nowhere named) had tried to establish relations with the hostile Qarakhānids. Makrān, the coastal strip of which Baluchistan is the interior, also had its own line of rulers who had in the 4th/10th century acknowledged the Būyids of Kirmān as suzerains, but who had latterly transferred their allegiance to Sebük-Tegin and Maḥmūd. When the ruler Ma'dān died in 416/1025–6, there was a dispute over the succession between his sons 'Īsā and Abu'l-Mu'askar, in which Maḥmūd in the end negotiated a settlement. Just before Maḥmūd's death in 420/1029, 'Īsā tried to assert his independence of Ghazna; it was left to Maḥmūd's son Mas'ūd to bring 'Īsā to heel and replace him by Abu'l-Mu'askar.

The mountain principalities of Chaghāniyān and Khuttal, on the right bank of the upper Oxus, were of strategic importance to the Ghaznavids: they served as bridgeheads into the Qarakhānid dominions, and were the Ghaznavids' first line of defence against predatory peoples like the Kumījis of the Buttamān Mountains (see below), and beyond them, Turkish peoples of Central Asia. In Sāmānid times, these

principalities had been ruled by local dynasties, tributary to Bukhārā and descended from indigenous Iranian or Arab families such as the Āl-i Muḥtāj in Chaghāniyān and the Abū Dā'ūdids or Banījūrids in Khuttal. It seems, in the absence of specific information to the contrary, that local lines survived in Ghaznavid times as the sultans' vassals; in Maḥmūd's reign, the Muḥtājid Fakhr al-Daula Aḥmad was amir of Chaghāniyān, and in Mas'ūd's reign, the then amir was the sultan's son-in-law.

The acquisition of Khwārazm was one of the most important events of Maḥmūd's middle years. The province itself was rich agriculturally, with a complex system of irrigation canals for utilizing the waters of the lower Oxus. It derived further prosperity from its position as the Islamic terminus for caravans arriving from the Oghuz steppes and Siberia, and the geographer Muqaddasī enumerates an impressive list of the products for which Khwārazm was the distributing centre. But its strategic value was probably the consideration uppermost in the sultan's mind. Possession of Khwārazm enabled him to turn the flank of the Qarakhānids in Transoxiana and, above all, to put pressure on one of his most implacable enemies, 'Alī-Tegin of Bukhārā and Samarqand (see below). Since 385/995 Khwārazm had been ruled from the great commercial centre of Gurgānj by the Ma'mūnid family of amirs, who had in that year overthrown the ancient family of the Afrighid Khwārazm-Shāhs of Kāth. Though nominally dependent on the Sāmānids, the geographical isolation of Khwārazm, surrounded as it was by steppeland, had enabled the Shāhs to live in almost untrammelled independence. The Amir 'Alī b. Ma'mūn (387-99/997-1009) was to some extent dependent on the Qarakhānids, but in 406/1015-16 the grounds of Ghaznavid intervention were laid when Maḥmūd's sister Hurra-yi Kalji married 'Alī's brother Ma'mūn b. Ma'mūn. The very detailed account of the conquest of Khwārazm given by the Ghaznavid official Baihaqī (quoting al-Bīrūnī's lost *History of Khwārazm*), shows how the sultan deliberately provoked the Khwārazmians, and by a series of Machiavellian diplomatic moves, secured a pretext for sending Ghaznavid troops into the country. His demands for recognition in the *khutba* or Friday sermon in Khwārazm (in effect, recognition of Ghaznavid suzerainty there) provoked a patriotic reaction amongst the Khwārazmians, in which Ma'mūn was assassinated. Maḥmūd could now enter the province, ostensibly to avenge his brother-in-law. After fierce fighting, the Ghaznavid cause prevailed; the Ma'mūnid dynasty

was extinguished, a reign of terror unleashed, and the whole land incorporated into the Ghaznavid empire. One of Sebük-Tegin's former ghulāms, the ḥājib Altun-Tash, was installed as governor with the traditional title of Khwārazm-Shāh, and he and his sons ruled there for the next twenty-four years.

The possession of Khwārazm gave Maḥmūd the preponderance over the Qarakhānids, who were by now racked by internal warfare. Not till the latter years of Mas'ūd's sultanate, when the incursions of the Saljuqs were creating general chaos in northern Afghanistan, did a Qarakhānid prince, Böri-Tegin, seriously harry Ghaznavid territory. In the years after his repulse of the Ilig Naṣr's invasion of Khurāsān, Maḥmūd exploited the internal rivalries of the Qarakhānids by allying first with Aḥmad Toghān Khān (d. 408/1017-18) of Semirechye and, till the last years of his life, of Kāshghar also, and then with Yūsuf Qadīr Khān of Khotan and Kāshghar. This last alliance was specifically aimed at the ruler of Bukhārā and Samarqand, 'Alī b. Hārūn Bughra Khān, called 'Alī-Tegin. 'Alī-Tegin had captured Bukhārā in 411/1020, and down to his death fourteen years later, was the most skilful and persistent opponent of Ghaznavid ambitions in Central Asia. In 416/1025 Maḥmūd invaded Transoxiana with the aim of overthrowing 'Alī-Tegin. The sultan met with Yūsuf Qadīr Khān at Samarqand; according to the Ghaznavid historian Gardīzī's account, presents were exchanged on a munificent scale by the two sovereigns, and complex negotiations for a marriage alliance begun. The sultan and the khan joined forces, firstly to scatter 'Alī-Tegin's allies the Saljuq Turks, and then to drive 'Alī-Tegin himself into the steppes. However, Maḥmūd now withdrew from Transoxiana in order to prepare for the Somnāth expedition. 'Alī-Tegin re-emerged and took back his former possessions. Hence Barthold was probably right in surmising that Maḥmūd preferred to leave 'Alī-Tegin in Transoxiana as a counterpoise to the power of Yūsuf Qadīr Khān.<sup>1</sup>

West of Khurāsān stretched the territories of various Dailamī powers, above all, of the Būyids. With the Ziyārīds of Gurgān and Ṭabaristān (who were actually orthodox Sunnis in faith), Maḥmūd had friendly relations, and after the death in 402/1011-12 of Qābūs b. Vuṣhmgīr, this dynasty was virtually tributary to the Ghaznavids. At first, Maḥmūd supported the claims to the succession of Dārā b. Qābūs, who had been a refugee in Ghazna during his father's lifetime; but he

<sup>1</sup> *Turkestan*, pp. 279-86.

soon came to recognize Manūchīhr b. Qābūs as amīr, after the latter had been raised to the throne by local interests. The new Ziyārid amīr became Maḥmūd's son-in-law, and on various occasions, sent troop contingents to the Ghaznavid army. In this way, the sultan maintained a friendly power at the western approaches of Khurāsān, and thereby deterred the Būyids from making moves in that direction.

Although it no longer had the cohesion and might which it had had in the days of 'Aḍud al-Daula, the Būyid empire was still territorially impressive, embracing as it did most of Iraq and western and central Persia. But structurally it was weak, in that by the early 5th/11th century, it lacked a single, generally acknowledged head, and this want of a united front weakened Būyid abilities to resist first the Ghaznavids and then the Saljuqs. It would not have been difficult for the sultan to find a plausible pretext for meddling in Būyid affairs: first, the Būyids were Shī'is, and as long as they held Baghdad, the 'Abbāsīd caliph could not be considered a free agent; and secondly, the inability of the later Būyids to keep internal order meant that pilgrims travelling from the east to the Holy Places were constantly harried and financially mulcted whilst crossing the Būyid lands. According to Ibn al-Jauzī, Maḥmūd was specifically reproached in 412/1021 for his lack of interest in the tribulations of these pilgrims, and was unfavourably compared with the Kurdish ruler of Hamadān, Nihāvand and Dīnavar, Badr b. Ḥasanūya, who always gave subsidies and aid to the pilgrim caravans passing through his lands.

In fact, Maḥmūd showed considerable restraint in making no major move against the Būyids till the last year of his reign. It is true that when in 407/1016–17 the Būyid governor in Kirmān, Qawām al-Daula Abu'l-Fawāris, had rebelled against his brother Sulṭān al-Daula Abū Shujā' of Fārs, Maḥmūd had supplied him with military help. But the Ghaznavid troops had been unable immediately to restore Qawām al-Daula to his former position, and when towards the end of Maḥmūd's reign, a fresh succession dispute broke out in Kirmān, he made no attempt to intervene. It is somewhat surprising that Maḥmūd refrained so long from attacking Jibāl, with its capital of Ray, a rich manufacturing centre and strategically the key to northern Persia; for since the death of the Būyid Fakhr al-Daula 'Alī in 387/997 and the succession of his infant son Majd al-Daula Rustam, *de facto* power there had been in the hands of a woman, the Queen-Mother Sayyida. It is recorded in Baihaqī that towards the end of his life, Maḥmūd was asked by his

vizier Maimandī why he had not before intervened in Jibāl. The sultan replied that if a man had been ruling in Ray, he would have had to keep an army permanently stationed at Nīshāpūr, whereas, with a woman in Ray, there was no real Būyid threat to Khurāsān.<sup>1</sup>

Sayyida's death in 419/1028 left Majd al-Daula with sole power in Ray, but the last years of his exclusion from real authority had sapped his powers to govern effectively; he was unable to keep his Dailamī troops in order, and foolishly appealed to Maḥmūd for help. It is probable that Maḥmūd was already meditating intervention, and when his army reached Ray, he deposed Majd al-Daula and sacked the city in a frightful manner. The sultan felt bound to justify this act of naked aggression, and in his fath-nāma to the caliph spoke of cleansing Jibāl of the "infidel Bāṭiniyya and evil-doing innovators", who had flourished under Majd al-Daula's lax rule; certainly, those suspected of extremist Shī'ī and Mu'tazilī beliefs were mercilessly hunted down, and many allegedly heretical books burnt. The seizure of Ray opened up the possibility of a drive towards Āzarbāijān and the west. Mas'ūd was given charge of operations here. The Musāfirid ruler of Dailam, Ibrāhīm b. Marzubān, was temporarily dispossessed of his capital Tārum and brought to obedience; and then at the beginning of 421/1030 Mas'ūd turned southwards against the Kākūyids of Iṣfahān and Hamadān. The news of his father's death in Ghazna compelled him, however, to leave the Kākūyid 'Alā' al-Daula Muḥammad b. Dushmanziyār, called Ibn Kākūya, as his vassal in Iṣfahān. As it happened, Mas'ūd was never able permanently to subdue the resilient Ibn Kākūya, and Ghaznavid rule in Ray only lasted for some seven years. Yet the Ghaznavids had seriously impaired the Dailamī ascendancy in northern Persia, so that the advance of the Saljuqs through northern Persia a few years later was made correspondingly easier.

So far we have been concerned only with Ghaznavid expansion into Central Asia and the Iranian world. Yet simultaneously, a great military effort was being mounted against India. Each winter, armies of the regular troops, swollen by the ghāzīs and volunteers who flocked thither from all parts of the eastern Islamic world, would descend to the plains of India in search of Hindu temples to sack and slaves to round up. The numerous Indian campaigns of Maḥmūd have been well described by Muḥammad Nāzim, with a skilful elucidation of the geographical and topographical problems involved in the source

<sup>1</sup> Baihaqī, p. 263; tr. pp. 252-3.



material. The first great obstacle to Ghaznavid penetration of India was the continued existence of the Hindūshāhī kingdom of Waihind, with whose Rājā, Jaipāl, Sebük-Tegin had already clashed. In 392/1001 Maḥmūd defeated and captured Jaipāl near Peshawar, so humiliating him that he committed suicide. His son Anandpāl organized a grand coalition of the Indian rulers of northwestern India, but this too was broken by the sultan at Waihind and Nagarkot (399/1009). The next Hindūshāhīs, Trilochanpāl and his son Bhimpāl, carried on the fight against Maḥmūd in alliance with such rulers as Ganda, Rājā of Kālinjar, but were gradually driven eastwards across the Punjab, and with the death of Bhimpāl in 417/1026, the once-mighty Hindūshāhī dynasty came to an end.

Maḥmūd was not, of course, the first Muslim leader to bring Islam to India. The new faith had been implanted in Sind by the Arab general Muḥammad b. al-Qāsim al-Thaqaḫī in Umayyad times (90–2/709–11), and had spread up the Indus as far as Multān. During the course of the 4th/10th century, the Muslim communities of Sind had been won over by Ismā‘īlī *dā‘īs* or missionaries to the cause of extremist Shī‘ism. The early Ghaznavids vigorously uprooted all traces of Ismā‘īlism in their own dominions, and when in 403/1012–13 the Fāṭimid caliph in Cairo, al-Ḥākīm, sent a diplomatic mission to Maḥmūd, the sultan had the luckless envoy executed. Thus Maḥmūd had, in his own eyes, ample reason for taking over the important town of Multān and restoring orthodoxy there. In two campaigns of 396/1006 and 401/1010, the local ruler Abu’l-Faṭḫ Dā‘ūd was humbled and finally deposed, and the Ismā‘īlīs in the city massacred. Nevertheless, Ismā‘īlism lasted there for two more centuries; and only thirty years after Maḥmūd’s efforts there, in Maudūd b. Mas‘ūd’s sultanate, a rising of the Multān Ismā‘īlīs occurred.

However, the majority of Maḥmūd’s Indian campaigns were directed at the Hindu Rājput rulers. Two attempts were made to penetrate into Kashmir (in 406/1015 and 412/1021), but he was held up on both occasions by the fortress of Lohkot, and the mountain barriers proved too much for the invaders; not until the 8th/14th century did a Muslim dynasty, the line of Shāh Mīrzā Swātī, come to rule in Kashmir. The main Ghaznavid effort was directed across the Punjab towards the Ganges–Jumna Dōāb. Here lay Indian towns richly endowed with temples, such as the temple of Chakraswāmī at Thānesar (raided in 405/1014) and the temple at Mathura, reputed birthplace of the hero

Krishna (raided in 409/1018). With these preparatory successes, Maḥmūd was ready to confront the two chief rulers of northern India, the Pratihāra Rājā of Kanauj, Rājyapal, and the Chandel Rājā of Kālinjar, Ganda. Ganda was the most tenacious of Maḥmūd's opponents. In 410/1019 he organized a league of Indian princes against Maḥmūd, but during the expedition of 413/1022 Ganda was besieged in his fortress of Kālinjar and eventually forced to surrender. Yet the climax of the sultan's Indian campaigns was undoubtedly the Somnāth expedition of 416-17/1025-6. For this, Maḥmūd led his troops across the inhospitable Thar Desert to Anhalwāra, and then into the Kāthiāwār peninsula to Somnāth itself. At Somnāth was a famous temple containing a *linga* of the Moon-God Mahādeva, which was served by 1,000 Brāhmins and 350 singers and dancers, and endowed with the income from 10,000 villages. After fierce fighting, the shrine was captured and despoiled to the amount of twenty million *dīnārs*, and finally burnt down. The return journey was arduous and dangerous, and whilst travelling up the Indus valley, the Ghaznavid army was harrassed by the local Jāts; Maḥmūd returned in 418/1026 to lead a punitive expedition against these marauders. The news of the Somnāth victory spread rapidly throughout the Islamic world, and contributed much to the image of Maḥmūd as the hero of Sunnī Islam; the 'Abbāsīd Caliph sent from Baghdad fresh honorific titles for the sultan and his family.

Ghaznavid military activity in India was, as is clear from the preceding paragraph, essentially composed of plunder raids. From the temple treasures came the bullion which enabled the sultans to maintain a good standard of gold and silver coinage, and the extra currency in circulation stimulated trade all over eastern Islam, reversing for a while the normal drain of specie into the Indian subcontinent. This treasure was also used to finance and to adorn the splendid buildings which Maḥmūd began to erect, such as the '*Arūs al-falak* "Bride of Heaven" mosque and madrasa in Ghazna (built from the proceeds of the expedition of 410/1019 against Trilochanpāl of Kanauj and Ganda of Kālinjar), and the vast complex of palace buildings laid out in early Ghaznavid times on the lower Helmand river at Lashkarī Bāzār near Bust. The slaves imported from India were likewise a great economic asset. According to the historian 'Utbi, 53,000 captives were brought back from the Kanauj expedition of 409/1018, and slave merchants converged on Ghazna from all parts of the eastern Islamic world. Some of these slaves

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were incorporated into the Ghaznavid armies, where the Rājputs' fighting qualities had good scope, and they were often considered more reliable than the Turks. It was the Ghaznavids who reintroduced into the Islamic world the use of elephants as beasts of war, and numbers of elephants were often stipulated in the peace treaties with Indian princes; they were regarded as royal beasts, and when captured in battle, fell within the sultan's fifth of the booty.

Since financial considerations seem to have been uppermost in the sultan's mind, it is difficult to see Maḥmūd as a Muslim fanatic, eager to implant the faith in India by the sword. Islam made little progress in India during the Ghaznavid period; the succeeding periods of the Ghūrīds and the Slave Kings were more important for this. His main aim was to make the Indian princes his tributaries and to use them as milch-cows; the temples were despoiled primarily because of their great wealth. The sultan knew well that if he had tried to impose Islam on the princes as a condition of peace, they would have apostasized as soon as his troops left. It seems that conversion to Islam was not even required of Indian troops recruited into the Ghaznavid forces; the excesses of pagan Indian soldiers at Zarang in Sīstān in 393/1003 are denounced in the local history of that province, the *Tārīkh-i Sīstān* (pp. 355-7). Not till the end of Maḥmūd's reign was there any attempt to set up a Ghaznavid civil administration in the Punjab, and this foundered early in the next reign because of jealousies between the civil and military heads. For the remainder of Ghaznavid rule in India, power was exercised from military garrison points like Lahore and Multān; since ghāzīs and other unruly elements gathered at these places, they were frequently centres for unrest and even rebellion.

Maḥmūd's empire was thus an impressive achievement. For the study of mediaeval Islamic political organization, it has a special interest, for the Ghaznavids are a classic instance of barbarians coming into an older, higher culture, absorbing themselves in it and then adapting it to their own aims. The empire was, indeed, the culmination of trends towards autocracy visible in the earlier 'Abbāsīd caliphate and its successor-states. Dynasties like the Būyīds and Sāmānīds had tried to centralize administration in their territories and to make the amīr a despotic figure, but their attempts had foundered; in the case of the Būyīds, because of family rivalries and the impediment of a turbulent Dailamī tribal backing, in the case of the Sāmānīds, because of the entrenched power of the Iranian military and landowning classes and of the

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merchants, all hostile to any extension of kingly power. The Ghaznavids, on the other hand, did not rise to eminence on the crest of a tribal migration or movement of peoples, and had few local, established interests to contend with. Hence they could make themselves far more despotic than their successors in Persia, the Saljuq sultans. Whereas the great Saljuq vizier Nizām al-Mulk (whose views derived from his family background of service in Ghaznavid Khurāsān) later complained that the Saljuqs did not make full use of the machinery of despotism available to them, the Ghaznavid official Baihaqī denounces Mas‘ūd b. Maḥmūd’s over-reliance on this machinery, his arbitrary behaviour, and his use of spies and informers, which created an atmosphere in the state of suspicion and mistrust. Leaving their pagan steppe origins behind completely, the Ghaznavids enthusiastically adopted the Perso-Islamic governmental traditions which they found current in their newly acquired territories. This process of adoption was facilitated by a continuity of administrative personnel with the previous régimes. When Maḥmūd took over Khurāsān, most of the Sāmānid officials remained in office and merely transferred their allegiance to the new master. Thus Maḥmūd’s first vizier, Abu’l-‘Abbās al-Faḍl Isfarā’inī, had formerly been a secretary in Fā’iq’s employ. Certain officials, like the qādī Shirāzī, who was civil governor of northern India in the early part of Mas‘ūd’s reign, had a background of service with the Būyids. Trained men like these were welcomed in the Ghaznavid administration, particularly as the expansion of the empire under Maḥmūd enlarged its sphere of operations and the volume of work with which it had to cope.

In structure, the Ghaznavid administration clearly stems from that of the Sāmānids in Bukhārā, as known to us from Narshakhī and Khwārazmī, which in turn was based on the bureaucracy of ‘Abbāsīd Baghdad. There were five great departments of state: the *divān-i vizārat*, that of the vizier, concerned with finance and general administration; the *divān-i risālat*, that of the Chief Secretary, concerned with official and diplomatic correspondence; the *divān-i ‘ard*, that of the ‘*arīd* or Secretary for War, concerned with the mustering, organizing and equipping of the army; the *divān-i ishrāf*, that of the chief *mushrif*, concerned with the internal communications and espionage system; and the *divān-i vikālat*, that of the *vakīl-i khāṣṣ* or Comptroller of the Royal Household, concerned with the running of the royal palace and the administration of crown properties. All these departments were the

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preserve of Persian secretaries, who continued in them the traditions and techniques of their craft. Although the sultans listened to advice from their officials, they did not necessarily take it, for their power was theoretically uncircumscribed by any other human being. The position of the vizier was an unenviable one, for any independence of thought or action was resented by his master; most of the viziers of Maḥmūd and Mas'ūd suffered falls from favour and even imprisonment or death. Moreover, there was always an over-riding need for more money, and the vizier suffered unless he could tap fresh sources of taxation. However, in Aḥmad b. Ḥasan Maimandī, called *Shams al-Kufāt* "Sun of the Capable Ones", the sultans had a vizier of outstanding intellectual calibre, with a contemporary fame for his Arabic scholarship and his executive skill comparable with that of the great Būyid viziers.

The ethos of the Ghaznavid "power-state" involved a sharp division between the ruling class and the ruled, the division elaborated by Niẓām al-Mulk in his treatise on statecraft, the *Siyāsat-nāma*, and the division crystallized in later Ottoman Turkish terminology as that of 'Askerīs and Re'āyā. At the top were the sultan and his servants, both military and civilian. Beneath them were the masses of population, including merchants, artisans and peasants, whose duties were to obey the sovereign power and to pay their taxes faithfully; in return, the ruler protected them from outside invaders and internal bandits, and left them freedom to pursue their ordinary vocations. The sultan's control over the provinces was based largely on fear, the expectation of swift punishment for wrongdoing or rebelliousness. Information on what was happening in outlying regions was continuously brought to the court by the agents of the *barīd* or postal and intelligence service, an ancient Near Eastern institution which the Ghaznavids developed to a high degree. Provincial governors and officials were often tempted to appropriate monies or to rebel against the distant central government, and the existence of this communications system was one of the few means of control over peripheral regions which the sultan possessed.

On the ideological and religious plane, the sultan's authority was maintained by a rigid adherence to Sunnī orthodoxy, seen in the sultans' favour to the Ḥanafī law-school and to a conservative, literalist sect like that of the Khurāsānian Karrāmiyya, which was favoured by Sebük-Tegin and, in the early part of his reign, by Maḥmūd. Dissenters, above all adherents of the extremist Shī'a like the Ismā'ilīs, were perse-

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cuted as subverters of the *status quo*, and the sultans' zeal is frequently praised in contemporary literature and poetry. Thus Farrukhī, in an elegy on Maḥmūd's death, says that the heretics can now sleep safely:

“Alas and alack, the Qarmaṭiyān [*sc.* the Ismā'īlīs] can now rejoice!  
They will be secure against death by stoning or the gallows.”<sup>1</sup>

A corollary of this zeal was the maintenance of close relations with the 'Abbāsīd caliphs, whose support Maḥmūd had sought at the outset after his victory in Khurāsān of 389/999. The sultans clearly felt the need for legitimation of their power by the caliphs, and they also sought caliphal approval for such acts of dubious political morality as the expeditions against Multān and Ray. Both Maḥmūd and Mas'ūd were careful to forward presents to Baghdad from the captured plunder, and in return they received investiture patents (*manāshīr*, sing. *manshūr*) for their possessions and honorific titles (*alqāb*). They refused any contact with the 'Abbāsīds' enemies, the Fāṭimīds of Egypt; Maḥmūd had a Fāṭimīd envoy executed, and Mas'ūd in 422/1031 revived an old charge of contacts with the Fāṭimīds as an excuse for condemning to death the former minister Ḥasanak.

The culture of the early Ghaznavids was strongly Perso-Islamic, and much influenced by the Iranian civilization of the lands which they had taken over, above all by that of Khurāsān. The Sāmānīds had been great patrons of both Arabic and Persian learning, and their court had nurtured such authors as Rūdakī, Bal'amī and Daqīqī, who had paved the way for the crowning achievement in the early Ghaznavid period of Firdausī of Ṭūs, author of the *Shāh-nāma* or “Book of kings”. Maḥmūd and Mas'ūd both had traditional Islamic educations, and they were determined that their court too should be adorned by the greatest talents of the age. They attracted poets from neighbouring territories, so that amongst their poets, Farrukhī Sīstānī came to Ghazna from the service of the Muḥtājīd amīr of Chaghāniyān, whilst Manūchihri Dāmghānī came from the Ziyārid court in Gurgān and Ṭabaristān. According to the later literary biographer Daulatshāh, there were 400 poets in regular attendance at Maḥmūd's court, presided over by the laureate or *amīr al-shu'arā'*, 'Unṣurī, who was himself continuously engaged in eulogizing his master and other court figures. 'Unṣurī may have composed a metrical version of Maḥmūd's exploits, the *Tāj al-futūḥ* or “Crown of conquests”. Certainly, the *divāns* or collections

<sup>1</sup> *Divān*, ed. 'Alī 'Abd al-Rasūli (Tehrān, 1311/1932), p. 93.

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of verse which have survived from a few of these poets show freshness and attractiveness of expression. Maḥmūd also brought to Ghazna the great scholar, scientist and historian Abū Raiḥān al-Bīrūnī (362–c. 442/973–c. 1050) from his native Khwārazm when that province was conquered by the sultan's army. Al-Bīrūnī was therefore able to accompany the Ghaznavid raids into India. He learnt Sanskrit, and his contacts in India and his boundless intellectual curiosity about other faiths and customs enabled him to produce his *magnum opus* on India, the *Tabqīq mā li'l-Hind*, the first Islamic work dispassionately to examine the beliefs and practices of the Hindus.

The actual court was organized on traditional Persian lines. The sultans were great builders, and constructed for themselves palaces and gardens in all the major towns of the empire. Mas'ūd personally designed and supervised the building of a fine new palace at Ghazna which took four years to complete, cost seven million dirhams and was erected by corvée labour. The surviving ruins at Laṣḥkarī Bāzār, extensively investigated in recent years by the French Archaeological Delegation in Afghanistan, give some idea of the monumental scale and opulence of these palaces. Their upkeep was doubtless a heavy charge on the populations of the towns in which they were situated. The sultans in their court sessions surrounded themselves with their slave guards, sat on a golden throne and engaged in prolonged drinking bouts with their *nadims* or boon-companions. They had their harem, with the inevitable eunuchs in attendance. Because of the hierarchical nature of court society, strict protocol was observed and the sultan was withdrawn from direct contact with the people. Some links with the masses were nevertheless kept up through the Islamic institution of sessions in which people could lay complaints of oppression or wrongdoing (*maḥālim*) before the ruler. A picture accordingly emerges of the sultans as typical Perso-Islamic rulers, in an environment very similar to other courts of the eastern Islamic world. In fact, a certain qualification should be made: we must always remember that the sultans were racially Turks, and only one or two generations removed from the Central Asian steppes; moreover, their power rested largely on their Turkish soldiery. The early sultans were still Turkish-speaking, and it was always necessary for the sultans to stay attuned to the needs and aspirations of their fellow-nationals. The exclusively Arabic and Persian nature of the sources for the period leaves us only to guess at the extent and influence of this Turkish element in early Ghaznavid life and

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culture, but this must have been significant; the Persian court poet Manūchihri was familiar with Turkish poetry, this being presumably of a popular nature.

Since military expansion was the characteristic feature of the empire of the early Ghaznavids, the army was naturally of supreme importance in the state. Much of the work of the civilian bureaucracy, in its search for fresh revenue sources, was directed at supporting this heavy superstructure. The Ghaznavid army was a highly professional one, answerable only to the sultan, and looking to him for successful leadership and a resultant flow of plunder. Being a standing army, it was kept perpetually on a war footing; hence it had to keep occupied as continuously as possible. Regarding numbers, the contemporary historian Gardīzī mentions that Maḥmūd in 414/1023 reviewed outside Ghazna 54,000 cavalry and 1,300 elephants, and that this excluded soldiers in the provinces and on garrison duty. Armies of around 15,000 men were employed in Khurāsān against the Türkmens in Mas'ūd's reign, and 40,000 cavalry and infantry were reviewed on the field of Shābahār outside Ghazna in 429/1038.<sup>1</sup> Following the trend begun in the 'Abbāsīd caliphate, the army was built round a body of slave ghulāms, numbering approximately 4,000; these were principally Turks, but also included some Indians and Tājiks. Their commander, the *sālār-i ghulāmān*, ranked next in importance to the commander-in-chief of the army in general, the *ḥājib-i buẓurg*. Within this body of slaves was a core of élite troops, the sultan's personal guard (the *ghulāmān-i khāṣṣ*), who were prominent on ceremonial occasions (the appearance of these palace ghulāms, with their rich uniforms and bejewelled weapons, is now known to us from the murals found in the palace of Lashkāri Bāzār, giving remarkable confirmation of the descriptions in the literary sources). Although Turks imported from Central Asia predominated in the army, and Turkish generals held the highest commands, many other nationalities could be found in the army, including Indians, Dailamis, Arabs, Kurds and Afghans. This racial diversity was regarded by contemporaries as a source of strength, and is praised by both Kai Kā'ūs and Nizām al-Mulk; it was believed that it discouraged undue dependence on any one group, and that the various races would vie with one another in feats of daring. One obvious advantage of these troops brought in from outside was that they lacked local ties or vested interests, and could be guaranteed not to shrink from such tasks as

<sup>1</sup> Gardīzī, p. 80.



extracting money from the subject peoples of the empire. Maḥmūd's reputation as a war-leader inevitably attracted hosts of ghāzīs and volunteers, especially from Khurāsān and Transoxiana, who supplemented the regular troops. These volunteers were not registered in the *dīvān-i 'arḍ* as entitled to regular stipends, but shared in the captured plunder. Most of the troops in the army were cavalrymen, but there was also a corps of infantrymen, used for instance in siege warfare, and often transported to the scene of battle on swift camels.

The sultans made extensive use of war elephants, drawn as tribute from India, and jealously guarded as royal beasts; there was a body of Indian keepers (*pīlbānān*), whose head held the rank of ḥājib or general. Commanders used elephants to secure a vantage-point in battle; armour was placed over their heads, and they were then used to charge the enemy; and they were further employed to drag heavy equipment such as armouries and siege machinery. Although Maḥmūd had a deserved reputation as a dashing commander, a Ghaznavid army fully equipped for the march had a heavy baggage train, with many impedimenta (it must be remembered that the court and administration, though based on Ghazna, usually accompanied the sultan on his marches). The Ghaznavid armies' comparative lack of mobility placed them at a disadvantage against the highly mobile Türkmen invaders of Khurāsān during Mas'ūd's reign.

Expenditure on these forces was bound to be enormous, and in any case, the adoption of professional armies has in all phases of human history brought about a sharp rise in state expenditure. Such campaigns as the Indian ones and the Ray one of 420/1029 brought in rich plunder, but this was erratic, whereas taxation levied on the rich Iranian provinces yielded a high, regular income. Hence the Ghaznavids were able to pay their troops largely in cash, whereas the Būyids and later the Saljuqs had to resort to a system of land-grants or *iqṭā'*s (this does not necessarily imply that the *iqṭā'* was unknown in the eastern Islamic lands of the early Ghaznavids, but the institution was not yet highly developed there). There are numerous indications in the sources that Ghaznavid administration in the provinces, in its incessant quest for more money, was often oppressive and brutal. The tax-collectors or *'āmils* were often concerned to line their own pockets, but they were also driven on by pressure from the sultan, who acted ruthlessly towards *'āmils* who failed to bring in their stipulated quotas. Maḥmūd's vizier Isfarā'inī was removed from office and jailed because he refused

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to make up tax-deficits from his own pocket. Khurāsān suffered badly from this oppression, and distress there was aggravated by earthquakes and a disastrous famine in 401/1011 followed by plague, when people were at times reduced to cannibalism. In Mas'ūd's time, the governor Abu'l-Faḍl Sūrī similarly drained Khurāsān of its wealth. It is not surprising that the dihqāns and notables of Khurāsān had in 396/1006 encouraged the Qarakhānids to invade, and that in Mas'ūd's sultanate, they were indifferent to the coming of the Saljuqs. The unpopularity of Ghaznavid rule can be further demonstrated from other parts of the empire. In Ray and Jibāl, the Ghaznavid invaders had at first enjoyed a certain popularity, because they promised deliverance from the tyranny and arbitrary rule of the Dailamī soldiery. But disillusionment soon set in, and it is recorded of the Ghaznavid military governor there that "Tash-Farrāsh had filled the land with injustice and oppression, until the people prayed for deliverance from them and their rule; the land became ruined and the population dispersed"; finally, complaints became so loud that Mas'ūd had to send out a new governor and restore more equitable rule. Here, then, is one reason why Ghaznavid rule did not take firm root in the western provinces of the empire and why these lands fell to the Saljuqs comparatively easily: the sultans had done nothing to make the people there feel any attachment to the Ghaznavid cause.

Maḥmūd died in 421/1030, and his son Muḥammad, who had been governor of Gūzgān, succeeded in Ghazna according to his father's will. The situation presents parallels with Sebük-Tegin's choice of Ismā'il in preference to Maḥmūd, for Mas'ūd had been governor of Herāt and was by far the most experienced and capable of Maḥmūd's sons; but he had latterly been on bad terms with his father, and so was passed over. As events fell out, Mas'ūd's reputation as a war leader, and his recent exploits in Jibāl and the west, gained him the support of the Ghaznavid army, and this was the all-important factor; in a military state like that of the Ghaznavids, a sultan without the full confidence of the army was inconceivable. As Mas'ūd came eastwards from Ray to Ghazna, his uncle Yūsuf b. Sebük-Tegin and the other great commanders all rallied to him, and Muḥammad's first reign ended after only a few months (he was briefly raised to the throne again in 432/1041 by the rebels who murdered Mas'ūd).

The new sultan Mas'ūd was a brave soldier, but in many ways he lacked his father's strength of character. His advisers complained of his

capriciousness and deviousness, his refusal to consider unpalatable advice and his dependence on a crowd of sycophants, led by the 'ārid Abū Sahl Zauzanī, whom Baihaqī regards as a maleficent influence in the state. Indeed, in his early years on the throne, Mas'ūd conducted a vendetta against all those connected with his father's régime whom he considered had turned Maḥmūd against him. Not a few of these *Maḥmūdiyyān* (to use Baihaqī's term) were hounded to disgrace or death: the former vizier Ḥasanak was executed on a trumped-up charge of contacts with the Fāṭimids; Mas'ūd's uncle Yūsuf b. Sebük-Tegin was arrested and jailed; and the assassination of the Khwārazm-Shāh Altun-Tash was attempted (see below). Conversely, the former vizier Maimandī, who had incurred Maḥmūd's displeasure and had latterly been imprisoned, was now released and restored to office for the two years preceding his death in 424/1033. His successor in the vizierate, Aḥmad b. 'Abd al-Ṣamad, soon incurred Mas'ūd's hostility because of his independence and criticism of the sultan's unwise policies.

Mas'ūd was determined that his father's achievement in India should be safeguarded; the death of Maḥmūd should not mean that the Indian princes could sit back and breathe again. Mas'ūd had to give up the idea of going to India in 422/1031, because of the danger on the Oxus from the Qarakhānid 'Alī-Tegin and the Saljuqs, but in 424/1033 he led an expedition which captured Sarsūtī or Sarsāwa, a fortress which his father had been unable to take. In the winter of 429/1037-8, he insisted on personally leading an expedition to the allegedly impregnable "Virgin fortress" of Hānsī near Delhi, in fulfilment of a vow he had made, even though the situation in Khurāsān and the west was at that time highly menacing. We can, indeed, detect a constant tension in Mas'ūd's reign between the claims of India, where the Ghaznavids had gained so much glory, and those of Khurāsān, where the mounting intensity of the Saljuq incursions threatened the loss of all the western lands. The dilemma was made worse for Mas'ūd by the instability of affairs in the Punjab. In 422/1031 he had sent out one Aḥmad Īnal-Tegin, formerly treasurer to Maḥmūd, as Commander-in-Chief of the Indian garrisons. Because of earlier ill-treatment at Mas'ūd's hands, he seized the opportunity to rebel, rallying the turbulent ghāzī elements of the garrison towns. Mas'ūd had to send a force under the Indian commander Tilak before Aḥmad Īnal-Tegin's revolt could be quelled (425/1034).

The succession disputes in the tributary state of Makrān have been

already noted. At the beginning of his reign, Mas'ūd deputed his uncle Yūsuf b. Sebük-Tegin to march southwards from Bust with an army, reduce the rebellious governor of Quṣḍār, who was two years behind with his tribute, and then go on to Makrān. One of the disputants over the succession, Abu'l-Mu'askar, had appealed to Mas'ūd for help; Yūsuf's army was now able to help him successfully achieve the throne (422/1031). However, there was a deeper motive behind Mas'ūd's despatch of his uncle to Baluchistan. When Maḥmūd died, Yūsuf had in the first place supported Muḥammad, and Mas'ūd, with his intensely suspicious nature, could never forgive him nor trust him thereafter. He deliberately sent Yūsuf away from the centre of power until his own position in Ghazna was secure; then, when Yūsuf returned, he was arrested, dying in prison shortly afterwards. The success of his troops in Makrān encouraged the sultan to intervene in the Būyid province of Kirmān, which bordered on his own dependent territories of Sīstān and Makrān. Being already master of Ray and Jibāl, the acquisition of Kirmān would have rounded off Ghaznavid territory in central Iran. Mas'ūd proclaimed to the new caliph al-Qā'im's envoy that this project was all part of a grand design, one involving a general onslaught on the Būyids; 'Umān would be attacked from Makrān, and ultimately, Ghaznavid armies would sweep westwards, liberate the 'Abbāsids from Būyid tutelage and attack the infidel Byzantines and heretical Fāṭimids. Naturally, the eruption of the Saljuqs into Khurāsān made these plans unfulfilled dreams. Nor was the Kirmān venture successful. The army which had been victorious in Makrān did in 424/1033 occupy Kirmān. But the Ghaznavids' financial exactions there made the Kirmānis long once more for Būyid rule. 'Imād al-Dīn Abū Kālījār sent from Fārs an army under his vizier Bahrām b. Māfinna, and in 425/1034 the Ghaznavid garrison was ignominiously ejected and had to retreat to Nīshāpūr.

As Mas'ūd's reign progressed, everything else became overshadowed by events in Khurāsān and along the Oxus frontier. The two great disasters which befell Ghaznavid power here were the penetration of Khurāsān by the Oghuz Türkmens and the loss of Khwārazm. The early history of the Oghuz and their gradual migration southwards and westwards from the Central Asian steppes are detailed in *The Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. v. Following the classical pattern of barbarian infiltration into the civilized lands, we find bands of Oghuz, under the direction of the Saljuq family, serving as frontier auxiliaries in Khwārazm and Transoxiana. One group aided Ismā'il al-Muntaṣir, the last

fugitive Sāmānid, before he was finally killed in 395/1005. After this, Oghuz under Arslān Isrā'il b. Saljuq are found pasturing their flocks on the fringes of Khwārazm and then in the service of the Qarakhānid 'Alī-Tegin, who towards 416/1025 allotted them pastures in the Bukhārā district. They were joined by other Türkmens under Arslān Isrā'il's brothers Toghril and Chaghri, who had been previously in the service of another Qarakhānid prince. It seems that the military support of the Oghuz was an appreciable factor in 'Alī-Tegin's maintenance of his power in Transoxiana; the high favour which Arslān Isrā'il enjoyed is shown by 'Alī-Tegin's marriage with one of his daughters.

When in 416/1025 'Alī-Tegin was temporarily driven out of his possessions by the combined operations of Maḥmūd of Ghazna and Yūsuf Qadīr Khān, Arslān Isrā'il was captured by Maḥmūd and imprisoned in India till he died. His Türkmens followers, numbering 4,000 tents, then sought permission from Maḥmūd to settle on the northern edge of Khurāsān in the districts of Sarakhs, Abivard and Farāva, where they promised to act as frontier guards. The decision to admit these lawless elements, who as pastoral nomads could not be expected to have any regard for agriculture and settled life, was later recognized by the sultan to have been a mistake. In 418/1027 Maḥmūd had to send a punitive expedition against them, the people of Nasā and Abivard having complained about their spoliations. But his general Arslān Jādhīb failed to master them, and in the next year, the sultan himself came and inflicted a crushing defeat on the Türkmens, scattering them broadcast. Some fled westwards into the Balkhān Mountains on the eastern shore of the Caspian. Others fled into the interior of Persia, where they successively sought employment as mercenaries: first with the Būyid Qawām al-Daula of Kirmān, then with the Kākūyid ruler of Iṣfahān, 'Alā' al-Daula, and finally with the Rawwādid amir of Tabriz, Vahsūdān b. Mamlān, who aimed to use them against his rivals the Shaddādids of Arrān and against the Christian Armenian and Georgian princes. It is these Türkmens who are called in the sources the "Irāqī" ones, because they had entered 'Irāq 'Ajamī, i.e. western Persia. They do not seem to have had any outstanding leaders, and deprived of Arslān Isrā'il's leadership, they split into undisciplined bands. Eventually, they joined up with other Oghuz who, if the accounts of an expedition under Chaghri Beg as far as Āzarbāijān and Armenia at some time between 407/1016-17 and 412/1021 are to be credited, had entered northern Persia a few years previously.

Thus despite the momentary stability established in Khurāsān by the time of Maḥmūd's death, the position facing Mas'ūd was far from reassuring. At all stages of human history before the spread of firearms, people of the sown have been at a disadvantage against invaders from the desert or steppe. These last rarely possess anything more than their herds, so have little to lose; their incursions occur over a wide front, and even if repelled, mean the trampling of crops and disruption of the agricultural cycle. So it was with the Oghuz in Khurāsān; and furthermore, Mas'ūd for several years persistently underestimated the danger, unable to conceive that half-starved nomads could seriously damage the imposing edifice of Ghaznavid power in Khurāsān. The war there was left to subordinate commanders, whilst the sultan concerned himself with other projects, such as the campaigns in India or the expedition to Gurgān and Ṭabaristān, or else remained in his palaces, engrossed in pleasure and wine-drinking.

In the succession struggle with his brother Muḥammad, Mas'ūd had himself recruited some of the "Irāqī" Türkmens under their chiefs Yagḥmur, Qizil, Bogḥa and Göktash, and these were used as auxiliary troops, e.g. for Ysuf b. Sebük-Tegin's Makrān expedition of 422/1031. But they were never a reliable force, and it proved impossible to hold them in check, so that their depredations spread all over northern Persia. Finally, in 424/1033 Mas'ūd sent to Ray his general Tash-Farrāsh, who there seized fifty of the Türkmens' leaders, including Yagḥmur, and put them to death. The remaining Türkmens inevitably became implacable enemies of the Ghaznavids.

Meanwhile, the Saljuq family under Toghril, Chaghri, Mūsā Yabghu and Ibrāhīm Īnal, had remained in Transoxiana, and in 423/1032 were once more allied to 'Alī-Tegin. Their story now becomes intertwined with events in the neighbouring province of Khwārazm. The Khwārazm-Shāh Altun-Tash had always given unswerving loyalty to the Ghaznavids, and it had been his advice which had made many of the army leaders support Mas'ūd in preference to Muḥammad. Yet Mas'ūd's chronically suspicious nature fell on all who might possibly figure as his rivals. In Khwārazm, Altun-Tash disposed of a large army, and he had recruited large numbers of Qipchaq and other Türkmens as auxiliary troops. These were obviously necessary for the defence of a province so exposed to external attack as was Khwārazm, but the sultan fiercely resented Altun-Tash's military strength. Accordingly, he endeavoured early in his reign to procure the Shāh's assassination, but the plot

misfired. The sultan feared that Altun-Tash would now be driven into the arms of the Ghaznavids' old enemy 'Alī-Tegin, but he nevertheless remained loyal and died fighting against 'Alī-Tegin at the battle of Dabūsiya in 423/1032. Warfare with the Qarakhānid khan had flared up because Mas'ūd, when preparing for a struggle with his brother after his father's death, had rashly promised to cede Khuttal to 'Alī-Tegin in return for military aid. The help had not been needed, but 'Alī-Tegin continued to claim his side of the bargain. The full effects of Mas'ūd's earlier attempt to kill Altun-Tash were now seen. The latter's son Hārūn followed his father as effective ruler in Khwārazm, though without the traditional title of Khwārazm-Shāh. A breach opened up rapidly, and Khwārazm now fell away from Ghaznavid control. In 425/1034 Hārūn allied with 'Alī-Tegin for a joint attack on the Ghaznavid territories along the Oxus, and this was only halted when Mas'ūd managed to have Hārūn murdered by his own ghulāms. 'Alī-Tegin also died at this juncture, but the struggle against the Ghaznavids was continued from Khwārazm by Hārūn's brother Ismā'il Khāndān and from Transoxiana by 'Alī-Tegin's sons. On the upper Oxus, the Kumījī tribesmen of the Buttamān Mountains were stirred up; they were further used by a Qarakhānid prince, Bōri-Tegin, to harry Khuttal and Vakhsh in 429/1038. Thus Khwārazm was now totally lost, and one of the bastions against the flooding of the Türkmens into the Ghaznavid territories removed.

When 'Alī-Tegin died, the Saljuqs and their followers moved into Khwārazm at Hārūn's invitation, but there, enmity flared up between them and the head of a rival group of Oghuz, the Yabghu or traditional head of the tribe, Shāh Malik of Jand and Yengi-kent (two towns near the mouth of the Syr Darya). As the Ghaznavids' ally, Shāh Malik eventually reconquered the whole of Khwārazm; but by that time (432/1041), Sultān Mas'ūd was dead and the power of the triumphant Saljuqs dominant in eastern Iran. In 426/1035 Shāh Malik routed the Saljuqs and drove them southwards towards Khurāsān. Ten thousand Türkmens, under Toghrīl, Chaghri, Mūsā Yabghu and Ibrāhīm Īnal, reached Khurāsān in a desperate condition, and asked the governor Abu'l-Faḍl Sūrī for asylum. Calling themselves "the slaves Yabghu, Toghrīl and Chaghri, clients of the Commander of the Faithful", they asked for the grant of Nasā and Farāva, promising to act as frontier guards against further incursions from the steppes. It seems that the Saljuqs' intentions were at this time peaceable, and the sultan's civilian

advisers suggested a pacific reply, at least until the Saljuqs openly showed their bad faith. But Mas'ūd and his generals were bent on destroying the Türkmens as quickly as possible. He sent an army against them under Begtoghdi, but was astounded to hear that the Saljuqs had defeated this army on the road to Nasā (426/1035). He was forced to yield Nasā, Farāva and Dihistān to them, nominally as governors on his behalf, and in a fruitless attempt to attach them to the Ghaznavid cause, marriage alliances were offered to the Saljuq leaders. Naturally, the latter were merely emboldened by their success, and in 428/1037 asked for the grant of Sarakhs, Abivard and Marv, together with their revenues.

Only now did the sultan really awaken to the gravity of the situation, for it was impossible for him to give up so important a town as Marv without a fight. The warfare in Khurāsān had already put a severe strain on both military and economic resources. The raiders drove their flocks of sheep and their horses unconcernedly over the rich agricultural oases of Khurāsān, preventing the sowing and harvesting of crops, and intercepting the caravan traffic upon which the province's commercial prosperity depended. One historian says of the distressed state of the Nīshāpūr region, just before it was occupied by the Saljuqs in 429/1038, "That region became ruinous, like the dishevelled tresses of the fair ones or the eyes of the loved ones, and became devastated by the pasturing of [the Türkmens'] flocks."<sup>1</sup> Hence the Khurāsānian towns, though secure from direct onslaught behind their walls and ditches (which the nomads were ill-equipped to assault) were gradually starved out through being cut off from their agricultural hinterlands. Such towns as Nīshāpūr, Marv and Herāt in the end surrendered peacefully to the Saljuqs from economic rather than political motives.

Shortages of food and fodder, and the financial drain of keeping armies continuously in the field, plagued Mas'ūd and his generals. It was these needs which in 426/1035 impelled him to lead an expedition to Gurgān and Ṭabaristān on the Caspian coast, where the local ruler Abū Kālījār was behind with his tribute. At first sight, the military advantages in Khurāsān seemed to be on the side of the Ghaznavids, with their professional troops and generals, their superior weapons and equipment, and their numbers at least equal to those of the Saljuqs, but this was not in practice the case. The Türkmens were poorly armed,

<sup>1</sup> Mīrkhwānd, *Rauḍat al-ṣafā*, vol. IV (Tehrān, 1270-4/1853-6), p. 102.



but were highly mobile; they could leave their baggage and families long distances away, and being accustomed to the rigours of steppe life, could operate with minimal food supplies. As one of Mas'ūd's courtiers said, "The steppe is father and mother to them, just as towns are to us."<sup>1</sup> The Ghaznavid armies were skilfully commanded by such generals as Sü-Baṣhī, but they suffered terribly from the shortages of food and water in the desert fringes of northern Khurāsān; also, they were burdened by heavy equipment and had to operate from fixed bases.

The early disillusionment of the people of Khurāsān with Ghaznavid rule has already been mentioned, and the lack of a will to resist begins to play a significant part in the Ghaznavid–Saljuq struggle for the province. The notables and landowners there had to endure the burnings and tramlings across their lands of the opposing forces. The sultan seemed impotent, based as he was on distant Ghazna, to master the invaders; was it not preferable to end it all and come to terms with the Saljuq leaders, in the hope that they might then be able to restrain their lawless followers? Consequently, Marv was occupied by Chaghri as early as 428/1037, and Nīshāpūr opened its gates to Ibrāhīm Īnal in the next year, being occupied by the Saljuqs for several months before Mas'ūd reappeared with an army. Here in Nīshāpūr, the administrative capital of Khurāsān, Toghri had during this occupation mounted Mas'ūd's own throne and behaved as ruler of Khurāsān. Saljuq raiders were now penetrating up the Oxus valley to Balkh and Tukhāristān, and as far south as Sīstān; it was feared that Ghazna itself would be threatened, although the mountain barriers of the Hindu Kush and Pamirs in fact prevented the Saljuqs from reaching eastern Afghanistan. Law and order were everywhere breaking down, and local governors and officials were making the best terms they could with the incomers. Ray and Jibāl were by now, of course, irretrievably lost, for the Türkmens had long been making communication with these western outposts of Ghaznavid power difficult. With the aid of the "Irāqī" Türkmens whom he had hired as mercenaries, the Kākūyid 'Alā' al-Daula had been emboldened to throw off Ghaznavid control in Iṣfahān. Then, at the beginning of 429/1038, the Ghaznavid garrison in Ray was expelled by the Türkmens and the governor Tash-Farrāsh killed; 'Alā' al-Daula managed to secure control of the town, continuing to acknowledge on his coins the overlordship of Mas'ūd, until

<sup>1</sup> Baiha i, p. 537; tr. p. 476.

the Saljuqs wrested Ray from him and for a time made it their capital in Persia.

The climax of the struggle for Khurāsān came in 431/1040. The sultan had before this spent a winter unsuccessfully campaigning in Chaghān-iyān against the Qarakhānid invader Böri-Tegin (430/1038-9); he had, however, defeated the Saljuqs near Sarakhs (430/1039) and recaptured Herāt and Niṣhāpūr. He now decided on a final effort to engage the Saljuqs in the steppes around Marv, and took with him a large army, including a force of elephants. But they found food and water virtually non-existent in the steppes, to such a point that the Ghaznavid cavalrymen were reduced to fighting on camels instead of horses. When Mas'ūd's army engaged some 16,000 Türkmens at the ribāṭ of Dandānqān on the road from Sarakhs to Marv, they were in a dispirited and internally divided condition, so that when the Saljuqs attacked, their "sword-blade fell only on cuirasses already cracked, and on helmets already split". In this crucial battle, the sultan's troops were routed, and a *sauve-qui-peut* back to Afghanistan and Ghazna followed. Khurāsān had to be abandoned to the Saljuqs, and on the battlefield, Toghrīl was proclaimed amīr of Khurāsān.

The towns of Khurāsān all capitulated to Toghrīl and Chaghri. Mas'ūd tried fruitlessly to get help from the Qarakhānid Sulaimān Arslān Khān of Kāshghar. He became plunged in melancholy; conducted a purge of those of his subordinates whom he considered had failed him; he even considered ceding northern Afghanistan to Böri-Tegin, in the hope that the latter would become embroiled with the Saljuqs. Finally, he decided to give up the struggle and abandon Ghazna for India, even though his advisers assured him – truly, as events showed – that eastern Afghanistan was perfectly defensible against the Saljuqs. He gathered together all his treasure and set off for India, but when his column reached the ribāṭ of Marikala near Taxila in the Punjab, the army mutinied and plundered his treasury and baggage. The rebels raised to the throne once more Muḥammad b. Maḥmūd, just released from imprisonment, and Mas'ūd himself was killed (432/1041), giving him in the eyes of future generations the designation of *amīr-i shahīd* "the Martyr-King". Mas'ūd's son Maudūd came from Balkh, setting himself up as his father's avenger, and a few months later, according to some authorities, he overthrew and killed Muḥammad in a battle at Nangrahār in the Kabul River valley.

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One may consider the early Ghaznavid period as ending at this point. The empire survived with reduced territories, essentially those of eastern Afghanistan, Baluchistan and the Punjab, for another 130 years. In the middle decades of the 5th/11th century, peace was made with the Saljuqs, and the frontier between the two empires stabilized; Sulṭān Ibrāhīm b. Mas‘ūd restored some of the glory of his father’s and grandfather’s age and treated with the Saljuq sultans on equal terms. If we are to evaluate the historical significance of the early Ghaznavid empire, we may note the following points. First, the Ghaznavids exemplify the phenomenon of barbarians coming into the higher civilization of the Islamic world and being absorbed by it. The court culture under Maḥmūd and Mas‘ūd, with its fine flowering of Persian poetry and the commanding figure of the polymath Bīrūnī, shows how far this process went, as does the moulding of the administration of the empire within the Perso-Islamic tradition. The sultans also took over one of the historic tasks of the Iranian rulers of the east, the maintenance of a bastion there against further invaders from the steppes. Secondly, the Ghaznavid empire had an essentially military bias. It was built around a highly professional, multi-national army, with a nucleus of slave guards personally attached to the sultan; and because of the connection with India, the sultans were able to keep this standing army generally occupied in the exploitation of the riches of the subcontinent. The constituting of the Ghaznavid army, a fighting instrument so much admired by later political theorists like Nizām al-Mulk, thus marks the culmination of the general infiltration of the eastern Islamic world by Turkish mercenaries. On these fringes, the Turks managed to overthrow the indigenous Iranian powers and build up a mighty empire of their own, setting the pattern for Turkish political domination over much of the Islamic world for centuries to come. Thirdly, the Ghaznavids have a place in history as the introducers on a large scale of Muslim rule into northern India, and the establishers, through the intermediacy of such scholars as Bīrūnī, of the first direct connection with the culture of the Indian world. In terms of permanent settlement and conversions to Islam, the Ghaznavid period in India was not as important as succeeding ages, but the sultans did by their raids accustom the Turkish and Afghan peoples of Inner Asia to utilize the plains of India as an outlet for barbarian energies; and in the course of these incursions, Islam was made one of the major faiths of the subcontinent. Fourthly, the personalities of Maḥmūd and Mas‘ūd were built up in

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popular minds into great Muslim heroes, and almost into folk-heroes. Maḥmūd is prominent in later literature, in both the *adab* collections of anecdotes and in the poetic romances, in various guises: as the great despot, as the lover of his favourite Ayāz, and above all, as the scourge of the infidels in India. Mas‘ūd also, has to a lesser extent a place in the popular mind as a warrior in India and as the “Martyr-Sultan”.

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The bibliographies printed below are selective and not intended to be complete; in general they include those works used by each author in the preparation of his chapter. It has not been possible to check the source references of all authors, especially where rare editions of texts have been used. As a rule books and articles superseded by later publications have not been included.

The abbreviations and short titles used in the bibliographies are listed below.

<i>AA</i>	<i>Arts asiatiques</i> (Paris)
<i>AESC</i>	<i>Annales: économies, sociétés, civilisations</i> (Paris)
<i>AGNT</i>	<i>Archiv für die Geschichte der Naturwissenschaften und der Technik</i> (Leipzig)
<i>AGWG</i>	<i>Abhandlungen der königlichen Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen</i> (Berlin)
<i>AI</i>	<i>Ars Islamica</i> (Ann Arbor, Mich.)
<i>AIEO</i>	<i>Annales de l'Institut d'Études Orientales</i> (Paris–Algiers)
<i>AIUON</i>	<i>Annali, Istituto Universitario Orientale di Napoli</i> (Naples)
<i>AJSL</i>	<i>The American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures</i> (Chicago)
<i>ANS</i>	American Numismatic Society
<i>ANSMN</i>	<i>American Numismatic Society Museum Notes</i> (New York)
<i>ANSNNM</i>	<i>American Numismatic Society Numismatic Notes and Monographs</i> (New York)
<i>ANSNS</i>	<i>American Numismatic Society Numismatic Studies</i> (New York)
<i>AO</i>	<i>Ars Orientalis</i> (continuation of <i>Ars Islamica</i> ) (Ann Arbor, Mich.)
<i>BAIPAA</i>	<i>Bulletin of the American Institute for Persian Art and Archaeology</i> (New York)
<i>BGA</i>	<i>Bibliotheca Geographorum Arabicorum</i> , 8 vols. (Leiden)
<i>BIFAO</i>	<i>Bulletin de l'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale</i> (Cairo)
<i>BSOAS</i>	<i>Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies</i> (London)
<i>EI</i>	<i>Encyclopedia of Islam</i> (Leiden)
<i>GMS</i>	“E. J. W. Gibb Memorial” series (Leiden–London)
<i>IA</i>	<i>Iranica Antiqua</i> (Leiden)
<i>IC</i>	<i>Islamic Culture</i> (Hyderabad)
<i>IQ</i>	<i>Islamic Quarterly</i> (London)
<i>Iran</i>	<i>Iran</i> (journal of the British Institute of Persian Studies) (London–Tehrān)
<i>Iraq</i>	<i>Iraq</i> (journal of the British School of Archaeology in Iraq) (London)

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- IS* *Islamic Studies* (journal of the Central Institute of Islamic Studies, Karachi) (Karachi)  
*Der Islam* *Der Islam* (Zeitschrift für Geschichte und Kultur des Islamischen Orients) (Berlin)  
*JA* *Journal asiatique* (Paris)  
*JAOS* *Journal of the American Oriental Society* (New York)  
*JESHO* *Journal of Economic and Social History of the Orient* (Leiden)  
*JNES* *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* (continuation of *American Journal of Semitic Languages*) (Chicago)  
*JRAS* *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (London)  
*JSS* *Journal of Semitic Studies* (Manchester)  
*MRASB* *Memoirs of the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal* (Calcutta)  
*MSOS* *Mitteilungen des Seminars für orientalische Sprachen* (Berlin)  
*MW* *Muslim World* (Hartford, Conn.)  
*NC* *Numismatic Chronicle* (London)  
*NHR* Miles, G. C. *The Numismatic History of Rayy*. New York, 1938 (*ANSNS*, vol. II)  
*NZ* *Numismatische Zeitschrift* (Vienna)  
*RENLO* *Revue de l'École Nationale des Langues Orientales* (Paris)  
*RFLM* *Revue de la Faculté des Lettres de Meched* (Mashhad)  
*RFLT* *Revue de la Faculté des Lettres et des Sciences Humaines de Téhéran* (Tehrān)  
*RN* *Revue numismatique* (Paris)  
*SBWAW* *Sitzungsberichte der Wiener (Österreichischen) Akademie der Wissenschaften* (Vienna)  
*Syria* *Syria* (revue d'art oriental et d'archéologie) (Paris)  
*WZKM* *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes* (Vienna)  
*ZDMG* *Zeitschrift der deutschen morgenländischen Gesellschaft* (Wiesbaden)

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## CHAPTER 5

For surveys of the sources, see Barthold, *Turkestan*, "Introduction - Sources", pp. 18-24; Nāzīm, *Sultān Maḥmūd*, chapter on "Authorities", pp. 1-17; Bosworth, *The Ghaznavids*, "Note on the Sources", pp. 7-24, and "Bibliography", pp. 308-14; Bosworth, "Early Sources for the History of the First Four Ghaznavid Sultans (977-1041)", *IQ*, vol. VII (1963), pp. 3-22. The relevant items in the bibliographies in Spuler, *Iran in früh-islamischer Zeit*, pp. 532-94, and Rypka *et al.*, *History of Iranian Literature* (Dordrecht, 1968), pp. 751-861, should also be consulted.

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