

## CHAPTER I

THE POLITICAL AND DYNASTIC  
 HISTORY OF THE IRANIAN WORLD  
 (A.D. 1000–1217)

I. THE EASTERN IRANIAN WORLD ON THE EVE  
 OF THE TURKISH INVASIONS

For nearly a thousand years—indeed, until our own century—Iran has generally been ruled by non-Persian dynasties, usually Turkish but sometimes Mongol or Kurdish. This domination at the highest level has had less effect on Iranian national psychology and literary consciousness than might be expected, for all of the alien ruling dynasties have come from races of low cultural development, and thus they have lacked the administrative expertise necessary for ruling a land of ancient settlement and civilization. Whether consciously or unconsciously, they have adopted Iranian culture at their courts, and they have been compelled to employ Iranian officials to administer the country and collect the taxes.

The first such alien rulers were the Saljuq Turks, who appeared in the Iranian world in the first half of the 5th/11th century. For them as well as for their successors, the process of assimilation to the indigenous culture and practices of Persia was not uncongenial, because they were able to draw on the country's ancient traditions of exalted monarchic power and submissiveness by the people. Moreover, in these traditions kingly authority was identified with divine authority, which helped the dynasties to rise above their tribal origins. The Saljuqs had originated as chieftains of nomadic bands in the Central Asian steppes. Their powers and ambitions often hedged about by a complex of traditional tribal rights and customs, the steppe leaders were little more than *primi inter pares* amongst the heads of all the prominent tribal families. With their entry into the Iranian world, the Saljuqs and their successors found the instruments at hand with which to make themselves, if they so desired, despots of the traditional Persian stamp: these instruments were a settled administration, a steady revenue from taxation, and usually a personal guard and standing army.

## THE IRANIAN WORLD (A.D. 1000–1217)



Map 1. The Iranian world, c. 388/998.

Yet the process of self-magnification had a reverse side. What was to be done with the ladder by which these leaders had risen? For their supporters had included fellow tribesmen, e.g. the Saljuqs' Türkmen; military retainers, such as the Turkish and Mongol soldiers of the Mongol Qa'ans, and fellow sectaries and religious devotees, such as the Šafavids' Qizil-Bāsh. In the Saljuq period the Oghuz and other Türkmen were a pressing problem for the sultans. How could the Türkmen be reconciled to the new concept of royal power—especially when they saw the old tribal custom, which defined and guaranteed each man's personal position and duties, quietly set aside and replaced by the Islamic *shari'a* and by the Iranian governmental ethos, in both of which political quietism and virtually unconditional obedience to the monarch were enjoined? This question, in varying terms, runs through much of Iran's history in the last nine centuries, underlying

## THE EASTERN IRANIAN WORLD

many of its revolutions and crises of power. It is particularly important in the age of the Saljuqs, when the sultans were never able satisfactorily to resolve this tension in their empire.

Whilst it is true that the coming of the Saljuqs inaugurated the age of alien, especially Turkish, rule, the change was not absolutely abrupt. We shall first of all be concerned with the eastern Iranian world, comprising *Khurāsān*, the adjoining regions of modern Afghanistan, and the lands of the Oxus and Syr Darya basins. At the opening of the 5th/11th century, the Iranian world still extended far beyond the Oxus, embracing the regions of *Khwārazm*, Transoxiana (called by the Arabs *Mā warā' al-nahr*, "the lands beyond the river"), and *Farghāna*. In pre-Christian and early Christian times the Massagetae, the Sakae, the Scyths, the Sarmatians, and the Alans—all Indo-European peoples—had roamed the Eurasian steppes from the Ukraine to the Altai. The pressure of Altaic and Ugrian peoples from the heartland of Central Asia and Siberia gradually pushed the limits of Indo-European occupation southwards, but until the end of the 4th/10th century the lands along the Oxus and south of the Aral Sea, together with the middle and upper reaches of the Syr Darya as far as its sources in the slopes of the T'ien Shan, were still generally ruled by royal dynasties or local princes who were apparently Iranian. The picture presented by the holders of power is thus relatively straightforward, except that the Iranian names and titles of petty rulers and local landowners (*dihqāns*) in such frontier regions as *Isfijāb*, *Īlāq*, and *Farghāna* do not make it absolutely certain that they were racially Iranians. However, a demographic analysis of the whole population in this Iranian-ruled area involves certain difficulties. From the earliest times Transoxiana has been a corridor through which peoples from the steppes have passed into the settled lands to the south and west; thus history and geography have worked against an ethnic homogeneity for the region. Whether the invading waves have receded or been swallowed up in the existing population, a human debris has inevitably been left behind. This was undoubtedly the origin of the Turkish elements in eastern Afghanistan, for these *Oghuz* and *Khalaj* were nomads on the plateau between *Kābul* and *Bust* when Muslim arms first penetrated there in the early centuries of Islam, and they survived as an ethnic unity throughout the periods of the *Ghaznavids*, *Ghūrīds*, and *Khwārazm-Shāhs*. It has been plausibly argued by J. Marquart that these Turks were remnants of peoples brought from north of the Oxus by the confederation of the Ephthalites

THE IRANIAN WORLD (A.D. 1000–1217)

or White Huns, whose leaders seem to have been of the same race as the Iranians.<sup>1</sup>

In Transoxiana and *Khwārazm*, the infiltration of Turkish elements must also have begun early. Topography—i.e. the mountain chains running east and west, the land-locked river basins and oases—made Transoxiana and especially *Sogh̄dia* (the basin of the *Zarafshān* river) a politically fragmented region. In the 1st/7th and 2nd/8th centuries the region was a battleground where Iranian rulers fought the invading Arabs from the south as well as the Western Türk or T'u-chüeh from the north, with the Chinese keeping an eye on what was nominally a distant province of their empire. Turkish warriors were frequently invited from outside by the local rulers in an effort to repel the Arabs, but it is also possible that some of these troops were recruited from the Turks already settled within the borders of Transoxiana.<sup>2</sup> For not all Turks were pastoral nomads or forest hunters. In such comparatively favoured spots of Central Asia as the Orkhon and Selenga valleys in Mongolia, and the Chu valley and shores of the *İsīq-Köl* in Semirechye ("land of the seven rivers", or the northern part of the modern Soviet Kirghiz republic and the parts of the Kazakh republic adjoining its northern borders)—in all these areas Turkish agriculturalists had been able to make a living in peaceful periods.<sup>3</sup> Similarly, the rural peasantry and even the town populations of Transoxiana and *Khwārazm* may well have contained Turkish elements from an early date. *Firdausi's Shāh-Nāma* speaks of Iran and *Tūrān*, i.e. the Iranians and the Turks, as two naturally antipathetic groups: "two elements, fire and water, which rage against each other in the depths of the heart",<sup>4</sup> but the economic facts, well brought out by the Arabic geographers, belie this. They say that the economy of the pastoralist Turks from the steppe was complementary to and interdependent with the economy of the agricultural

<sup>1</sup> J. Marquart, "Erānšahr nach der Geographie des Ps. Moses Khorenaç'i", *Abb. der Königl. Gesell. der Wiss. zu Göttingen*, p. 253; *idem* and J. J. M. de Groot, "Das Reich Zābul und der Gott Zūn", *Festschrift Eduard Sachau* (Berlin, 1915), pp. 257–8. The Iranian ethnic nature of the Ephthalites has recently been affirmed by R. Ghirshman, *Les Chionites-Hephthalites* (Cairo, 1946). For a contrary opinion see E. G. Pulleyblank, "The Consonantal System of Old Chinese: Part II", *Asia Major*, N.S., vol. ix (1963), pp. 207–65 (258–60).

<sup>2</sup> Cf. R. N. Frye and A. M. Sayili, "Turks in the Middle East before the Saljuqs", *J[ournal of the] A[merican] O[riental] S[ociety]*, pp. 196 ff.; see also a forthcoming chapter by C. E. Bosworth on the Turks in the early Islamic world, in C. Cahen (ed.), *Philologiae Turcicae Fundamenta*, vol. III (Wiesbaden).

<sup>3</sup> Cf. O. Lattimore, "The Geographical Factor in Mongol History", *Geographical Journal* vol. xci (January 1938), pp. 1–20.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. T. Kowalski, "Les Turcs dans le Šāh-nāme", *Rocznik Orientalistyczny*, vol. xv (1939–49) pp. 87 ff.

## THE EASTERN IRANIAN WORLD

oases and towns of the Iranian Tājiks. The settled regions supplied the nomads with cereals, manufactured goods, and arms, and the nomads reared stock animals and brought dairy products, hides, and furs to the farmers. In Transoxiana and Khwārazm, wrote al-Iṣṭakhrī (c. 340/951), the Oghuz and Qarluq from beyond the Syr Darya and from the Qara Qum steppes supplied horses, sheep, camels, mules, and asses.<sup>1</sup> It is likely, too, that some of the pastoralists remained in the market centres of the settled region and gradually settled down within its borders.

The rule of native Iranian dynasties in Khwārazm, Transoxiana, and Khurāsān foundered by the opening decades of the 5th/11th century. The Sāmānids of Bukhārā had ruled in the latter two provinces, first as local administrators for the ‘Abbāsīd governors of Khurāsān, and then as virtually independent sovereigns.<sup>2</sup> In the last decade of the 10th century their rule sustained almost simultaneous attacks from two Turkish powers, the Qarakhānids and the Ghaznavids. The Qarakhānids originated from a confederation of Turkish tribes who had long occupied the steppes that stretched from the middle Syr Darya to the T’ien Shan. Their nucleus seems to have been the Qarluq tribe and its component peoples of the Yaghma, Tukhsī, and Chigil. The Qarluq were an old people in the steppes, known from the 1st/7th century as a constituent group within the Türkü empire. Already the characteristic title for their chiefs, *Ilig*, appears in the Turfan texts of that period; and in later times Muslim sources often refer to the Qarakhānid dynasty as that of the *Ilig-Khāns*. Within the various confederations that took shape in the steppes after the collapse of the Türkü empire in 125/741, the head of the Qarluq assumed the title first of *Yabghu* and then of *Qaghan* (Arabic form, *Khāqān*), or “supreme monarch”. The adoption of this latter title was to become characteristic of the Qarakhānids, whereas the Saljuqs never felt entitled to adopt it. In the course of the 4th/10th century the Qarluq became Muslim; the first ruler to become converted is traditionally held to be Satūq Bughra Khān (d. ? 344/955), who assumed the Islamic name of ‘Abd al-Karīm and reigned from Kāshghar and Talas over the western wing of his people.

<sup>1</sup> al-Iṣṭakhrī, *Kitāb masālik al-mamālik*, p. 274; cf. Bosworth, *The Ghaznavids: their Empire in Afghanistan and Eastern Iran 994–1040*, pp. 154–5.

<sup>2</sup> There exists no special monograph devoted to the Sāmānids; the best account of this very important but still obscure dynasty remains that by W. Barthold in his *Turkestan down to the Mongol Invasion*, G[ibb] M[emorial] S[eries], vol. v, pp. 209 ff. See also Frye’s brief survey, “The Samanids: a Little-Known Dynasty”, *Muslim World*, pp. 40–5; and *idem*, *The History of Bukhara* (a translation of Narshakhī’s *Ta’rikh-i Bukhārā*), the notes to which contain much valuable information on the Sāmānids.

THE IRANIAN WORLD (A.D. 1000–1217)

Those who worked in the pagan outer darkness of the steppes were mainly the dervishes or *Şūfis*, i.e. religious enthusiasts whose orthodoxy was suspect, and who were often *persona non grata* to the orthodox Sāmānid government and religious institution. Nevertheless the Qarakhānids became firm Sunnis once they entered the Islamic world.<sup>1</sup>

The Qarakhānid Bughra Khān Hārūn or Ḥasan, a grandson of Satuq Bughra Khān, temporarily occupied the Sāmānid capital of Buḫhārā in 382/992. As he passed through Transoxiana he met with little opposition: indeed, he was encouraged in his action by the rebellious Sāmānid general Abū ‘Alī Simjūrī and also by discontented dihqāns. Faced with the Qarakhānid invasion from the north and the revolt of the generals Abū ‘Alī Simjūrī and Fā’iq Khāṣṣa in Khurāsān, the Sāmānid amir Nūḥ b. Maṣṣūr (366–87/976–7 to 997) was compelled to call in from Ghazna another of his Turkish slave commanders, Sebük-Tegin.<sup>2</sup>

Abū Maṣṣūr Sebük-Tegin (d. 387/997) was the founder of the Ghaznavid dynasty and father of the famous Maḥmūd of Ghazna (388–421/998–1030).<sup>3</sup> Sebük-Tegin came originally from Barskhan, a settlement on the shores of the İsiq-Köl, whose ruler, according to the anonymous author of the Persian geographical treatise *Ḥudūd al-‘ālam* (“Limits of the World”), was one of the Qarluq. It seems therefore probable that the Ghaznavids were of Qarluq origin. In a tribal war Sebük-Tegin was captured by the neighbouring Tukhsī and sold in a Sāmānid slave market at Chāch. Because of his hardiness and his skill with weapons, he rose rapidly from the ranks of the Sāmānids’ slave guards, coming under the patronage of Chief Ḥājib or Commander-in-Chief Alp-Tegin. In 351/962 he accompanied his master to Ghazna, where Alp-Tegin henceforth established himself as ruler, and in 366/977 Sebük-Tegin succeeded to power there, continuing, like his predecessors, to regard himself as governor there on behalf of the Sāmānids.<sup>4</sup> In 384/994 the amir Nūḥ b. Maṣṣūr summoned Sebük-Tegin to Khurāsān to fight the rebellious generals but this led to the establishment of the Ghaznavids in Khurāsān and all the Sāmānid

<sup>1</sup> The Qarakhānids and the Qarluq, from whom the dynasty very probably sprang, have been studied by O. Pritsak. Amongst his many articles on them, see especially “Karahānlılar” in *İslām Ansiklopedisi*; and on the origins of the dynasty, “Von den Karluk zu den Karachaniden”, *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, pp. 270–300.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Barthold, *Turkestan*, pp. 254–61.

<sup>3</sup> On the Ghaznavid dynasty, see B. Spuler, “Ghaznavids”, *Encyc. of Islam* (2nd ed.); M. Nāzīm, *The Life and Times of Sultān Maḥmūd of Ghazna*; and Bosworth, *The Ghaznavids*.

<sup>4</sup> On Sebük-Tegin’s early life and his rule as governor in Ghazna, see Nāzīm, *op. cit.* pp. 28–33, and Bosworth, *The Ghaznavids*, pp. 35–44.

## THE EASTERN IRANIAN WORLD

provinces south of the Oxus. These territories were definitely annexed in 388/998 by Abu'l-Qāsim Maḥmūd b. Sebük-Tegin. Meanwhile it had proved impossible to dislodge the Qarakhānids from the Syr Darya basin, and in 389/999 the Sāmānid dynasty was definitely overthrown in Transoxiana by the Ilig Naṣr b. 'Alī (d. 403/1012–13), nephew of Bughra Khān Hārūn. The heroism of the last of the Sāmānids, Ismā'il al-Muntaṣir, could achieve nothing in the face of the division of the Sāmānid empire between the Ilig and Maḥmūd. In 391/1001 these two came to a formal agreement whereby the Oxus was to be the boundary between the two kingdoms, and in 395/1005 Ismā'il was killed through the treachery of an Arab nomad chief in the Qara Qum desert.<sup>1</sup>

In the adjacent province of Khwārazm, the classical Chorasmia, the days of rule by native Iranian monarchs were also numbered. For several thousand years the region of the lower Oxus had held a complex of rich agricultural oases linked by irrigation canals, the full extent of which has only recently come to light through the researches of Soviet archaeologists. (The Iranian scholar al-Bīrūnī says that the Khwārazmian era began when the region was first settled and cultivated, this date being placed in the early 13th-century B.C.) That the ancient dynasty of Afrighid Khwārazm-Shāhs survived for nearly three centuries after the coming of Islam to their land is unique in the Islamic world: al-Bīrūnī lists twenty-two rulers of this line running from A.D. 305 to 385/995.<sup>2</sup> However, the vandalism of Qutaiba b. Muslim's invading Arabs in 93/712 had an enfeebling effect on the culture of ancient Khwārazm, and this seems to have been aggravated by economic decline, whose symptoms, according to S. P. Tolstov, included the neglect of irrigation works and the decline of urban life. The system of large fortified estates, which is characteristic of Khwārazmian agrarian society at this time, was a response to increasing external pressure from Turkish steppe peoples, who were attracted not only by prospects of plunder but also by the winter pasture available along the shores of the Oxus. The Turkicizing of the population of Khwārazm probably began during this period.<sup>3</sup> In the 4th/10th century there were

<sup>1</sup> Barthold, *Turkestan*, pp. 261–721; and *idem*, "A Short History of Turkestan", in *Four Studies on the History of Central Asia*, vol. 1, pp. 21–4.

<sup>2</sup> al-Bīrūnī, *al-Āṭhār al-bāqīya 'an al-qurūn al-khālīya* (tr. E. Sachau, *The Chronology of Ancient Nations*), pp. 40–2.

<sup>3</sup> Sachau, "Zur Geschichte und Chronologie von Khwārizm", *S[itizungs-] B[erichte der] W[iener] A[kad. der] W[iss.]*, Phil.-Hist. C., vol. LXXXIII, 1873; vol. LXXXIV, 1873, pp. 471 ff.

THE IRANIAN WORLD (A.D. 1000–1217)

villages with Turkish names on the right bank of the Oxus. The Ghaznavid historian Abu'l-Faḍl Baihaqī speaks of Qīpchaq, Kūjet, and Chaghraq Turks harrying the fringes of Khwārazm in 422/1030,<sup>1</sup> and a few years after this the Saljuqs and their followers spent some time on Khwārazmian pastures before moving southwards into Khurāsān. The higher culture of Iranian Khwārazm offered resistance to the process of Turkicization, but the trend nevertheless continued over the next centuries (see pp. 141–2 below).

In spite of this, the downfall of the native Afrīghid dynasty of Khwārazm-Shāhs in 385/995 came about through internal disturbances. Gurganj, a town on the left bank of the Oxus, had grown in importance as the terminus of caravan trade across the Oghuz steppes to the Volga and southern Russia, thereby eclipsing the ancient capital on the right bank of Kāth. A local Gurganj family, the Ma'mūnids, succeeded in deposing the last Afrīghid, Abū 'Abdallāh Muḥammad, and assumed the traditional title of Khwārazm-Shāh. But their tenure of power was brief. The Sāmānids had been nominal suzerains of Khwārazm, though in practice they had rarely interfered there; now the shadow of their supplanter, Maḥmūd of Ghazna, grew menacing for the Ma'mūnids. In 406/1015–16 Abu'l-'Abbās Ma'mūn b. Ma'mūn married one of the Ghaznavid sultan's sisters, Hurra-yi Kaljī; nevertheless, Ghaznavid pressure was relentless. The 'Abbāsīd caliph in Baghdad sent directly to the Khwārazm-Shāh a patent of investiture for Khwārazm, a standard, and the honorific titles '*Ain al-Daula wa Zain al-Milla*' ("Eye of the State and Ornament of the Religious Community"); but the shah did not dare to receive these publicly in his capital Gurganj for fear of provoking Maḥmūd's wrath. In the sultan's imperial strategy, possession of Khwārazm was necessary to turn the flank of the Qarakhānids, amongst whom the ruler of Samarqand and Bukhārā—'Alī b. Ḥasan Bughra Khān, known as 'Alī-Tegin (d. 425/1034)—was showing himself an implacable enemy of the Ghaznavids. After an ultimatum to the Khwārazmians, which contained humiliating demands and required the renunciation of national sovereignty, Maḥmūd's troops invaded and annexed Khwārazm in 408/1017. The sultan then installed as Khwārazm-Shāh Altun-Tash, one of his most trusted slave generals and a former *ghulam* or military retainer of his father Sebük-Tegin; for the next seventeen years Khwā-

506; A. Z. V. Togan, "The Khorezmians and their Civilisation", Preface to Zamakhsharī's *Muqaaddimāt al-Adab*, pp. 9–43; S. P. Tolstov, *Auf den Spuren der Alichoresmischen Kultur*, pp. 9 f.

<sup>1</sup> Baihaqī, *Ta'rikh-i Mas'ūdi*, p. 86; cf. Bosworth, *The Ghaznavids*, p. 109.



## THE EASTERN IRANIAN WORLD

razm remained a salient of Ghaznavid power that reached into the steppes.<sup>1</sup>

Some Western orientalists have viewed the downfall of these north-eastern Iranian dynasties through a certain romantic haze. They have idealized the Sāmānids, at whose court the renaissance of New Persian culture and literature began—a court adorned by such figures as Bal‘amī, Rūdakī, and Daqīqī; or, mourning the passing of the Khwārazm-Shāhs, whose kingdom nurtured the polymath al-Bīrūnī, they have called it the end of an epoch, after which Iran lost political control of its destiny for many centuries.<sup>2</sup> On the other hand, as V. Minorsky has justly pointed out, there have been few laments for the passing of those Iranian dynasties farther west, that also went down in the course of the 5th/11th century under Turkish pressure; yet the Būyids’ court at Ray and Shīrāz, the Kākūyids’ at Iṣfahān, and the Ziyārīds’ court at Gurgān and Ṭabaristān gave shelter to such diverse geniuses as al-Mutanabbī, Avicenna, and al-Bīrūnī. To some extent these Western attitudes reflect those of the contemporary Sunnī Muslim sources which are distinctly favourable to dynasties like the Ṭāhirīds and Sāmānids, sprung from the landed classes, while they are hostile to those of plebeian origin, e.g. the Ṣaffārīds or to those tinged with Shī‘ism or unorthodoxy, such as the Būyīds and Kākūyīds.<sup>3</sup>

The collapse of the native Iranian dynasties of the north-east was followed within a few decades by a major migration of Turkish peoples, the Oghuz, from the outer steppes. Similar population movements have been recurrent features of the history of this region from early times, for the Oxus and Syr Darya basins are a transitional zone between Central Asia and the lands of ancient civilization in the Near East. The mountain chains of the Alburz [Elburz], Pamirs, and Hindu Kush are high and, being geologically young, are sharp and jagged, yet they have never seriously hindered the passage of armies and other peoples; nor have invaders from the steppes ever found that the transition to the Iranian plateau necessitated much change in their way of life. In order for a pastoralist economy to survive, each summer the flocks and

<sup>1</sup> Sachau, *S.B.W.A.W.* vol. LXXIV (1873), pp. 290–301; Barthold, *Turkestan*, pp. 233–4, 275–9; *idem*, “Short History of Turkestan”, pp. 18–19; Tolstov, *Auf den Spuren*, pp. 253–63, 286–91.

<sup>2</sup> See, for example, T. Nöldeke, *Das Iranische Nationalepos*, pp. 40–1; and G. E. von Grunebaum, “Firdausī’s Concept of History”, in *Islam, Essays in the Nature and Growth of a Cultural Tradition* (London, 1955), pp. 168–84.

<sup>3</sup> See V. Minorsky, Review of Spuler’s *Iran in frühislamischer Zeit* in *Göttingische Gelehrte Anzeigen*, vol. CCVII (1953), pp. 192–7.

THE IRANIAN WORLD (A.D. 1000–1217)

herds should be driven out of their winter grounds to pastures, or *yailaqs*, in the hills. Thus the terrain of Iran was quite well suited to the traditional way of life of Central Asian invaders. For instance, the oases of *Khurāsān* could provide rich pasture for herds, and certain *chamans* (pasture grounds), e.g. the *Ūlang-i Rādkān* between *Mashhad* [Meshed] and *Khabūshān*, and the *Marg-i Šā'igh* near *Nasā*, have played significant parts in Iranian history as the camping and grazing grounds of armies. As the *Türkmen* moved westwards, they found the valleys of *Āzarbāijān* and *Armenia* and the plains of *Anatolia* highly suitable for their flocks. In this way the *Saljuq* and *Mongol* invasions inevitably had an effect on landholding and land utilization in the Iranian world.

Yet these considerations do not explain why the *Türkmen* succeeded in bringing about permanent changes in the ethnography and economy of the Iranian world, whereas most of the earlier invaders had eventually been absorbed into the existing way of life. It was certainly not through sheer weight of human numbers, for there were not many *Türkmen* bands in *Khurāsān* during the reign of *Mas'ūd b. Maḥmūd of Ghazna* (421–32/1030–41), although the damaging effects of their sheep and goats as they nibbled across the country's agricultural oases were indeed serious.<sup>1</sup> It seems that in the first half of the 5th/11th century, the Iranian bastion of the north-east, whose age-old function had been to hold closed this corridor for peoples, lost its resilience and no longer possessed the absorptive power it had once had. In the previous century the *Afrighid Khwārazm-Shāhs* had every autumn led an expedition into the steppes against the *Türkmen*; and the *Sāmānid* amirs launched punitive expeditions and slave raids across the *Syr Darya*, such as the famous campaign of *Ismā'il b. Aḥmad* (279–95/892–907) against the *Qarluq* at *Talas* in 280/893.<sup>2</sup> It is true that the groundwork for this collapse had been in some measure prepared, with *Turks* taking part in the internal wars of *Transoxiana* and also settling peacefully within its borders. Furthermore, from the early 3rd/9th century onwards *Muslim* rulers in all parts of the eastern caliphate had been growing more dependent on *Turkish* slave troops, which increased the flow of *Turks* through *Transoxiana* and *Khurāsān*. This traffic in human beings became an important source of revenue for the *Sāmānids*, who issued licences and collected transit dues; at the same time the amirs became

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Bosworth, The Ghaznavids*, pp. 128, 224, 226, 241, 259–61.

<sup>2</sup> *Barthold, Turkestan*, p. 224; *idem*, "Short History of Turkestan", pp. 19–20; *Tolstov, Auf den Spuren*, pp. 262–3; *Bosworth, op. cit.*, pp. 31–3.