

THE SELJUQS AND THE KHWARAZM SHAHS*

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Part One

THE ORIGINS OF THE SELJUQS AND THE
ESTABLISHMENT OF SELJUQ POWER IN THE
ISLAMIC LANDS UP TO 1055

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What might be called the prehistory of the Seljuqs is in many ways obscure. The Seljuqs were a family of the Kinik tribe of the Oghuz Turkish people, a tribe which the lexicographer Mahmūd al-Kāshgharī (who completed his *Dīwān lughāt al-turk* in 1074) describes as the leading, princely tribe of the Oghuz (for the early history of the Oghuz, see above, Chapter 3).¹ In the early and middle decades of the tenth century the Oghuz nomadized in the steppes to the north of the Aral Sea and the east of the Caspian Sea, reaching as far west as the Ural and Emba rivers. They were, however, at a much lower stage of cultural development than such peoples as the Bulghars on the middle Volga and the Khazars on the lower Volga or the Karluk to their east. The envoy of the ^cAbbasid caliph to the king of the Bulghars, Ahmad b. Fadlān, travelled from Baghdad via Khwarazm and then across the Oghuz steppes to the middle Volga. His *Risāla* [Epistle] containing his travel account provides us with our earliest authentic, as opposed to semi-legendary, information on the Oghuz. He describes them as animistic in belief, following the counsel of their shamans in some religio-cultural matters but in effect largely irreligious, and as wandering ‘like straying wild asses’ in the region of the Ustyurt plateau to the east of the Caspian.² It may be that, at this time, they had some relationship with the Khans of the powerful Khazar state, since certain sources state that Dukak and his son Seljuq³ served the king of the Khazars.

¹ Al-Kāshgharī, 1939–41, Vol. 1, pp. 55–8; Barthold, 1935, pp. 79 et seq.; Kafesoğlu, 1955; Barthold, 1962, pp. 109–16; Bosworth, 1973, pp. 210–11, 219; Kafesoğlu, 1988, pp. 21–2.

² Ibn Fadlān, 1939, sections 20 et seq.; Barthold, 1962, pp. 91–9; Bosworth, 1973, pp. 215–18.

³ The conventional spelling of European scholarly usage is adopted here. Strict adherence to the phonological laws of Turkish would require something like Seljük, as in certain early sources, but by far the most common spelling of the medieval Arabic and Persian sources is *S.ljūq*. See Rasonyi, 1939; Bosworth, 1973, pp. 298–9.

It is further possible that the general southwards movement of the Oghuz at this time was in response to pressure from other Turkish peoples, the Kipchak and Kimek, in the steppes further to their north.

The tribal leader of the Oghuz was the Yabghu, a title dating back to Orkhon Turkish times, and there were various other titles in the tribe denoting military office. Among the shadowy ancestors of Seljuq himself are mentioned one Temür-yaligh ('[the man with the] iron bow') and Seljuq's own father Dukak (unless Temür-yaligh and Dukak were the same person). The Yabghu appointed Seljuq as *sü-bashi*, or war leader (Ibn Fadlān's *sāhib al-jaysh*), but seems speedily to have considered him as a potential rival. Hence at some point soon after the middle of the tenth century, Seljuq and his followers moved further up the Jaxartes (Syr Darya) from the Yabghu's winter capital of Yengi-kent ('New Town') to Jand. They were now near the borders of the *Dār al-Islām*, and soon afterwards, Islam began to spread among the Seljuq family and their retainers, as it was at this time spreading among the so-called 'trucial Turks', i.e. those on the northern borders of the Samanid state, semi-Islamized and in some sort of loose treaty relationship with the Muslims. Later Seljuq historiography then states that they immediately became *ghāzīs* (fighters for the Islamic faith), and that Seljuq's son Mīkā'īl was killed in such fighting, so that his two sons Toghrīl Beg Muhammad and Chaghri Beg Dāwūd had to be brought up by their grandfather.⁴

The Seljuqs' position at Jand allowed them to be recruited as auxiliary troops for the defence of the Samanid amirate against pressure on its northern boundaries from the Karakhanids and their Karluk followers (see above, Chapters 4 and 6). The Samanid Nūh II b. Mansur recruited Seljuq troops under the leadership of Seljuq's son Arslan Isrā'īl, and subsequently allowed them to settle near the small town of Nakhshab or Nur (modern Nur Ata) between Bukhara and Samarkand (c. 990). Seljuq himself did not migrate southwards and died at Jand in c. 1007. After his death, his eldest son Arslan became the Yabghu of the Seljuqs, adopting this title as a conscious act of rivalry with the elder branch of the Oghuz – for use of the title implied headship of the whole Oghuz people – from whom Seljuq had split by his move from Yengi-kent. The rivalry between these two branches of the Oghuz was to continue almost until the middle of the eleventh century, until the branch of the Seljuqs was finally triumphant over the branch of the original Yabghu (see below). It seems that various bands of Oghuz gave their allegiance to several leading figures in the Seljuq family, such as Toghrīl, Chaghri and Mūsā, so that, in subsequent decades, when the Turkmans (as the Oghuz, Kūpchak and related tribes of the south-western Turkish people

⁴ Cahen, 1949, pp. 41 et seq.; Pritsak, 1953, pp. 397–405; Barthold, 1962, pp. 99–100; Turan, 1971; Bosworth, 1973, pp. 219–23; Kafesoğlu, 1988, pp. 22–5.

begin to be called in the Islamic sources)⁵ were overrunning Khurasan and northern Iran, such separate bodies as the Yinaliyān, followers of Ibrāhīm Yinal, are mentioned.

Meanwhile, the Karakhanid Bughra Khan Hārūn (Hasan) had entered the Samanid capital in 992 and temporarily occupied it (see above, Chapter 6). A few years later, the Samanid amirate came to an end and its dominions were divided between the Ilig Khan Nasr and Mahmūd of Ghazna. In this fighting – and in the attempts, up to his death in 1005, of the last Samanid Ismāʿīl al-Muntasir to retrieve his ancestral lands – the Seljuqs and their partisans were to be found in the service of both sides on various occasions, following whoever could promise them the most plunder and pasture grounds and changing sides without compunction. With the final triumph of the Karakhanids in Transoxania, the Seljuqs forged links with the new regime. Arslan Isrāʿīl gave military aid to ʿAlīl Tegin b. Bughra Khan Hārūn, enabling him to seize control of Bukhara, married the Khan’s daughter and became influential at his side. Toghrīl and Chagrī, however, seem to have been excluded from these arrangements and may have been on cool terms with Arslan Isrāʿīl. They and their followers were at this time in the steppes to the west of Sogdiana, the Kara Kum desert.⁶

Towards the end of the second decade of the eleventh century, in 1018 or 1019, these Turkmens are recorded in certain Christian Syriac and Armenian sources and the late Islamic source of Mīrkhwānd as having mounted, under the leadership of Chagrī, a long-distance raid westwards, across northern Iran to Azerbaijan and eastern Anatolia, reaching as far as Dvin and Lake Van. The late Ibrahim Kafesoğlu devoted a special study to this episode and affirmed its historicity.⁷ But Claude Cahen raised cogent objections to an expedition as early as this, and placed it ten years later, the whole episode either resulting from some chronological confusion in the sources or else from a subsequent attempt by publicists or historians of the Seljuqs to glorify the exploits of Chagrī, forebear of all the later Great Seljuq sultans after Toghrīl.⁸

Certainly by the mid-1020s groups of Turkmens had crossed the Kara Kum steppes and were harrying the northern fringes of the Ghaznavid province of Khurasan. A catalyst for these southward movements was the alliance of Mahmūd of Ghazna with the Karakhanid ruler of the east, Kadir Khan Yūsuf b. Bughra Khan Hārūn, against ʿAlīl Tegin in Bukhara. This led to the temporary ejection of ʿAlīl Tegin from his city in 1025 and the consequent

⁵ The Arab geographer al-Maqdisi, who wrote *c.* 980, mentions *Turkmāniyyūn* as harrying frontier posts in the province of Isfijab on the middle Syr Darya, but it is not clear whether this was originally a political or an ethnic term. See Pritsak, 1953, pp. 397–8.

⁶ Barthold, 1962, pp. 101–3; 1968, pp. 269–70; Bosworth, 1968, pp. 16–18; 1973, pp. 223–4.

⁷ Kafesoğlu, 1953*b*.

⁸ Cahen, 1949, pp. 50–1.

flight from Sogdia of his Turkmen auxiliaries, under Arslan Isrā'īl, into the deserts to the west. Mahmūd must have felt that the Turkmens were a danger to his position in Khurasan, for he seized Arslan Isrā'īl and dispatched him to imprisonment at the fortress of Kalanjar in northern India, where he died after seven years' incarceration.⁹

Deprived of Arslan's leadership, his Turkmen followers could only straggle across the desert towards Khurasan. Various minor chieftains led individual bands, but Toghrīl and Chaghri do not yet seem to have had sufficient prestige to impose their leadership on all the Turkmens, and only emerged in dominant roles after the death in 1032 of Arslan Isrā'īl (although the actual title of Yabghu was at that point assumed by the senior member of the Seljuq family, Mūsā). Some of Arslan Isrā'īl's former followers, complaining of the tyranny of their amirs and promising to act as frontier guards against further Turkmen incursions from the deep steppes, asked Mahmūd for permission to settle in northern Khurasan. The sultan allowed 4,000 families, with their baggage and flocks, to settle near the towns of Farawa, Sarakhs and Abiward. However, the Turkmens attacked the towns of northern Khurasan and their herds disrupted the agricultural systems of the oases there. When in 1027 the people of Nasa and Abiward complained to the sultan about these activities, Mahmūd first sent a punitive expedition under his commander Arslan Hājib and then in 1028 came personally to Khurasan with an army, inflicting a crushing defeat on the Turkmens. Elements of them scattered wide, some to the Balkhan Kuh hills to the south-east of the Caspian, some to the Dihistan steppes adjacent to Gurgan and others into northern Persia. These last sought employment as auxiliaries with the local rulers there, threatened by Ghaznavid expansion, such as 'Alā' al-Dawla Ibn Kākūya of Isfahan.

They now appear in such sources as the Ghaznavid historian Abu 'l-Fadl Bayhaqī and the later source Ibn al-Athir¹⁰ as the so-called 'Iraqi' Turkmens, because they had penetrated as far as western Iran, or 'Iraq 'Ajamī. Under various leaders, among whom are named Bugha, Kizil, Göktash, Yaghmur and Anasī-oghlu, they speedily became a source of chronic violence and unrest in the provinces of Rayy and Jibal. In his bid for the throne of Ghazna in 1029, Mahmūd's son Mas'ūd enlisted Turkmens under Yaghmur at Rayy. He later used them, as auxiliaries of the Ghaznavid regular army, for an expedition to Makran in southern Baluchistan, but they never proved a reliable military force. Other Turkmens remained in the Kara Kum and continued to raid northern Khurasan from there and from Balkhan Kuh; in 1033 the Ghaznavid governor of Rayy, Tash Farrāsh, executed 50 of the Turkmen chiefs, including Yaghmur. It is clear that such bands as these 'Iraqi' Turkmens

⁹ Nāzim, 1931, pp. 63–4; Barthold, 1962, p. 103; Bosworth, 1973, pp. 223–4; Kafesoğlu, 1988, pp. 27–8.

¹⁰ Here Ibn al-Athir was very probably quoting the lost *Malik-nāma*, an account written in Persian for Chaghri Beg's son, the subsequent Great Seljuq sultan Alp Arslan, as something like an official history of the dynasty's origins and early history.

operated entirely independently of each other, in general remaining separate from those bands acknowledging the leadership of the Seljuq family, with hostility between the two groups rather than co-operation. The amirs of whose tyranny the Turkmens had complained to Sultan Mahmūd may have been members of the Seljuq family trying to extend their authority over other bands. In 1035 the Seljuq leaders Mūsā Yabghu, Toghrīl, Chaghri and Ibrāhīm Inal or Yinal (leader of the group of Turkmens appearing in the sources as the Yināliyān) approached the Ghaznavid *°amīd* (governor) of Khurasan, Abu 'l-Fadl Sūrī, for permission for their 7,000 or 10,000 followers to settle at Nasa and Farawa. In return, they promised to act as guards against fresh incursions of Turkmens from the Kara Kum and Balkhan Kuh and to inflict punishment on the 'Iraqi' Turkmens.¹¹

Meanwhile, other Turkmen bands under the leadership of the Seljuq family had remained in Sogdia, in an uneasy relationship with *°Alī Tegin*, now as his allies, now as his foes. But they felt their position to be increasingly untenable, and after 1029 moved away from Sogdia to Khwarazm, settling on lands allotted to them by the Ghaznavid governor of the province, Altuntash Hājib. Altuntash died of wounds received in 1032 at the battle of Dabusiyya against *°Alī Tegin*, the enemy of the new Ghaznavid sultan Mas[°]ūd b. Mahmūd. Altuntash's son and successor in Khwarazm, Hārūn, received less favour from the sultan than had his father; hence by 1034 he renounced his allegiance to Ghazna and in effect declared his independence. He allied with *°Alī Tegin* of Bukhara and with the Seljuqs, awarding the Turkmens further territories in Khwarazm.¹²

The return movement northwards to Khwarazm brought the Seljuqs close to their ancestral territories at the mouths of the Oxus (Amu Darya) and Jaxartes (Syr Darya), where an Oghuz principality had remained in existence, based on Yengi-kent and Jand, and directed by the family of the original Yabghu of the Oghuz people. By this time the office of the original Yabghu had devolved upon Abu 'l-Fawāris Shāh Malik b. *°Alī*, who ruled from Jand. Shāh Malik raided the Seljuqs, now in Khwarazm, and is said to have killed between 7,000 and 8,000 of their followers and carried back an immense booty of captives and goods to Jand; efforts by Hārūn to mediate between the two groups of Turkmens failed. *°Alī Tegin*, who had in general been favourably disposed towards the Seljuqs as allies in his struggle to maintain his position against the Ghaznavids, died in 1034. His sons Yūsuf and Arslan Tegin continued the anti-Ghaznavid alliance with Hārūn. A concerted attack was planned, with the military assistance of the Seljuqs, in which Hārūn and the Seljuqs were to invade Khurasan, and the sons of *°Alī Tegin* were to attack the Ghaznavid

¹¹ Nāzim, 1931, pp. 64–5; Cahen, 1949, pp. 56–7; Barthold, 1962, pp. 104–7; Bosworth, 1968, pp. 17–19; 1973, pp. 224–5; Kafesoğlu, 1988, pp. 28–9.

¹² Barthold, 1968, pp. 282–6, 295–6.

dependent principality of Chaghaniyan along the upper Oxus, then crossing the river at Tirmidh (modern Termez) so that the two invading forces could link up at Andkhuy in what is now northern Afghanistan. Mas^cūd of Ghazna procured the assassination of the Seljuqs' protector Hārūn in 1035, and the double attack came to a halt when the forces of the sons of ^cAlī Tegin were unable to capture Tirmidh.¹³

Let us now return to the Seljuqs and their followers on the northern fringes of Khurasan. Sultan Mas^cūd received the humbly worded request of the Seljuqs and their followers (at this time, in a wretched condition after their defeat and dispersal by Shāh Malik in Khwarazm) to settle on these fringes as frontier guards and auxiliaries. His vizier Ahmad b. ^cAbd al-Samad and his civilian advisers advised acceptance, at least until the Turkmens had openly shown their bad faith; but the sultan and his commanders, mindful of the depredations of the Turkmens in Khurasan towards the end of Mahmūd's reign, replied by dispatching to Khurasan a powerful army under the Turkish commander Begtoghdi. The Seljuqs suffered initial defeats but then in August 1035, on the road to Nasa, they won a decisive victory over the Ghaznavid army. In this instance, as was to be the case later, the superior mobility and lighter equipment of the Turkmens enabled them to defeat the more heavily armed but cumbersome Ghaznavid forces, hampered as they were by their long baggage train and their inability to manoeuvre in the desert without extensive supplies. Begtoghdi only returned to Nishapur with difficulty. The Seljuqs acquired an immense booty of money, arms, clothing, horses, and so on, and were amazed at their own victory over the seemingly invincible Ghaznavids, ascribing their victory to Divine Providence and to Begtoghdi's poor tactics rather than to their own abilities. Mas^cūd now had no choice but formally to award to Toghril, Chaghri and Mūsā Yabghu the regions of Nasa, Farawa and Dihistan, with the insignia – standards, robes of honour, etc. – and style of *dihqāns* (here, governors on behalf of the sultan).

Mistrust nevertheless prevailed between the two sides. The sultan endeavoured to detach Mūsā Yabghu from the other leaders by, among other things, awarding him the additional title of Inanj, and marriage alliances were proposed, with wives from the Ghaznavid military and official class for the Seljuqs. But Toghril and Chaghri, in particular, remained suspicious. New demands were made, this time for a grant of the regions of Merv, Sarakhs and Abiward, on the grounds that the Turkmens' existing pasturelands were inadequate. Mas^cūd could certainly not agree to hand over a rich city like Merv to the nomads; moreover, the Seljuqs were making a nuisance of themselves in other ways, raiding through Khurasan as far as Sistan and entering into relations with enemies of the Ghaznavids

¹³ Pritsak, 1953, pp. 407–8; Barthold, 1968, pp. 297–8; Bosworth, 1973, p. 238; Kafesoğlu, 1988, pp. 30–2.

like Ismā^cīl Khāndān (brother of the murdered Hārūn b. Altuntash), who had taken over Khwarazm and assumed the historic title of Khwarazm Shah, and the Karakhanid Bughra Khan Muhammad b. Yūsuf Kadīr Khan. Ghaznavid armies were now sent to Khurasan under the commander Sü-bashī and also to Herat, while the sultan himself, failing to comprehend the seriousness of the situation in the west, campaigned in India. Sü-bashī's army was again soundly defeated in May 1038 and he fled with the remnants of his forces to Herat.¹⁴

The way was now open for the Seljuqs to enter the capital of Ghaznavid Khurasan, Nishapur. Ibrāhīm Inal appeared there with 200 horsemen later in May 1038 as the advance guard for what was to be the first Seljuq occupation of the capital. According to the sources – which may, however, exaggerate the degree of political sophistication shown by the Turkmens at this time – Toghrīl proclaimed himself successor to the sultan. He seated himself on the latter's own throne in the suburb of Shadyakh, performed such sovereign acts as presiding over the hearing of complaints (*mazālim*) and assumed regal titles including, it is related in the *Malik-nāma*, that of *al-sultānal-mu^cazzam* (Exalted Sultan). Toghrīl is said to have tried to restrain the Turkmens from their natural instinct to pillage, but to have dissuaded his brother Chaghri from this only with difficulty. The ^cAbbasid caliph al-Qā'im (1031–75) subsequently sent an envoy to Toghrīl, implying some degree of recognition for the Seljuqs in Khurasan. The Seljuqs are said already to have styled themselves *mawālī amīr al-mu'minīn* (Clients of the Commander of the Faithful) when they were established on the fringes of northern Khurasan in 1035, but such phrases were stereotypes and need not have implied at this point any direct connection between the Seljuq chiefs and Baghdad.¹⁵

Mas^cūd now endeavoured to concert operations against the Seljuqs by allying with the original Oghuz Yabghu, Shāh Malik of Jand, against the rebellious Ismā^cīl Khāndān in Khwarazm and his Seljuq allies. (Shāh Malik was ultimately victorious in Khwarazm, in early 1041, but Mas^cūd himself was killed shortly afterwards.) An army of 50,000 troops was prepared for Khurasan. Some of the Seljuq leaders were fearful of their position there, and of what they still regarded as Ghaznavid invincibility, and proposed a withdrawal westwards to Rayy and Jibal. It seems that the Seljuqs may still have placed Sultan Mas^cūd's name in the *khutba* (Friday worship oration) of Nishapur alongside their own leader's name. The Seljuqs were defeated by the Ghaznavid army in summer 1039 and compelled to withdraw into the Kara Kum desert. Nishapur was reoccupied by the sultan and his army towards the end of 1039, and a great campaign against the Seljuqs was prepared for spring

¹⁴ Cahen, 1949, pp. 55–61; Bosworth, 1973, pp. 241–3; Kafesoğlu, 1988, pp. 32–4.

¹⁵ Cahen, 1949, pp. 61–3; Bosworth, 1973, pp. 244–5, 252–68; Kafesoğlu, 1988, p. 34.

1040. Khurasan had already been denuded of food and fodder by the incessant warfare and the trampling of the nomads' herds. The Ghaznavid army, with all its impedimenta, including war elephants, was thus ill-equipped for the campaign, and suffered severely from the lack of water and supplies in the heat of the desert between Sarakhs and Merv.

A historic battle, which was to be decisive for the future of the Iranian lands and for the establishment of Seljuq power in the ancient lands of Islamic civilization, took place at the *ribāt* (outpost) of Dandanqan in May 1040. In this clash, 16,000 lightly armed but mobile Turkmens overcame the ponderous Ghaznavid army, by now demoralized and badly affected by hunger and thirst. Mas^cūd fled and ultimately withdrew towards northern India, fearing the loss of the whole of his possessions in Khurasan and Afghanistan to the Turkmens – he was killed by a revolt among his troops while en route for Lahore. (Mas^cūd's despair proved premature, for his son and eventual successor Mawdūd re-established the Ghaznavid position at least in the eastern half of Afghanistan: see above, Chapter 4, and below, Part Two.)

The victorious Toghrīl set up his throne on the battlefield of Dandanqan as amir of Khurasan. Letters announcing the victory were dispatched to various Karakhanid rulers, including to the sons of ^cAlī Tegin, to Muhammad b. Nasr ^cAyn al-Dawla of Uzgend and to Ibrāhīm b. Nasr Böri Tegin, who had been harrying the Ghaznavid lands on the upper Oxus; to the rulers of western and central Iran; and to the ^cAbbasid caliph in Baghdad. The *fat'h-nāma* (announcement of victory) to al-Qā'im detailed the oppression to which the Turkmens had been subjected at the hands of Mahmūd and Mas^cūd and promised faithful allegiance by the Seljuqs to the caliph and the cause of orthodox Sunni Islam; at the top of the letter was inscribed the ancient bow-and-arrow symbol of the Turks.¹⁶

Toghrīl was now a territorial sovereign and not merely a chief of nomadic bands. In accordance with the old Turkish practice of a patrimonial concept of power, with senior members of the ruling family sharing out governorships and territories, the supreme ruler Toghrīl now made various delegations of his authority in the form of grants. His brother Chaghri Beg Dāwūd was allotted all of Khurasan and all those lands north of the Oxus that he might conquer, while Merv was to become his capital. Mūsā Yabghu was subsequently to make his headquarters in Herat and extend his power southwards to Sistan, where the local Nasrid Maliks became Seljuq vassals.

The Seljuqs were complete strangers to the business of ruling a territorial state which had long-established administrative traditions rooted in the Perso-Islamic past. They were therefore unable to do without the services of local Khurasanian secretaries and officials

¹⁶ Barthold, 1962, pp. 107–8; 1968, pp. 302–3; Bosworth, 1968, pp. 19–23; 1973, pp. 251–2; Kafesoğlu, 1988, pp. 35–6.

(just as the Turkish Ghaznavids had recourse to former officials of the Samanids of Transoxania and Khurasan) for the actual running of the extensive lands they now controlled. Many officials moved from the service of the Ghaznavids to that of the new regime. In his first occupation of Nishapur, Toghrīl had relied greatly on the aid of a local magnate, the Sālār of Buzgan, Abu 'l-Qāsim Būzgānī. Various sources give lists of Toghrīl's later viziers, including among others Abu 'l-Qāsim al-Juwaynī; the *ra'īs al-ru'asā'* (head of the town notables) of Nishapur, Abū 'Abd Allāh Husayn, from the distinguished local family of the Mīkalīs; and the *amīd al-mulk* (chief secretary) Abū Nasr Muhammad al-Kunduri, a former official of the Ghaznavids, who went on to serve Toghrīl's successor Alp Arslan. Chaghri had as his vizier Abū 'Alī Shādhān, and among the officials in his administration was a brother of the famous Isma'īli author and traveller Nāsir-i Khusraw.¹⁷

The next years were spent consolidating the Seljuq position in the eastern Iranian lands and making new conquests in central and western Iran. Responsibility for the first had been allotted to Chaghri Beg. He laid siege to Balkh (defended by its governor, Altuntash) on behalf of the Ghaznavids, and despite counter-measures by the new Ghaznavid sultan Mawdūd b. Mas'ūd, captured it, together with other towns and fortresses of the regions of Badghis, Guzgan and Tukharistan. While Chaghri was preoccupied with affairs in Khwarazm (see below), Mawdūd was able temporarily to recapture Herat from Mūsā Inanj Yabghu, but lost it again. Chaghri's son Alp Arslan now undertook operations in the upper Oxus districts of Tirmidh, Qubadiyan, Wakhsh and Qunduz until a stable frontier was eventually established in northern Afghanistan during the 1050s between the Ghaznavids and the Seljuqs (see below, Part Two). Ertash, the brother of Ibrāhīm Inal, imposed Seljuq control over Sistan in the name of Mūsā. Chaghri's son Kāwurd was encouraged to expand southwards through Kuhistan and was able to set up in Kirman, in place of the local branch of the Buyid dynasty, a semi-autonomous amirate which was to endure for nearly one and a half centuries (see below, Part Two).

Shāh Malik of Jand had by 1041 driven out of Khwarazm the Khwarazm Shah Ismā'īl Khāndān, who was compelled to seek refuge with the Seljuqs. Chaghri led an army into Khwarazm in 1043 which expelled Shāh Malik from the province; he fled southwards through Khurasan to Makran on the Arabian Sea coast, but was captured by Ertash (who was then operating in Sistan), handed over to Chaghri and killed. In this way, the ancient rivalry between the senior branch of the Oghuz under the Yabghus of Yengi-kent and Jand and the new force of the Seljuqs was finally ended by the total victory of the latter. Khwarazm was placed under a Seljuq governor, and little more is heard of the province during Chaghri's lifetime except for a revolt there whose suppression required Chaghri's

¹⁷ Bowen, 1957; Bosworth, 1973, pp. 257, 262–3, 264–6.

presence. On this occasion, he also received the submission of the ‘amir of Kipchak’, who became a Muslim and married into Chaghri’s family.¹⁸

In the west, the lands for which Toghril made himself responsible, Toghril’s kinsman Ibrāhīm Inal overran Dihistan, Gurgan and Tabaristan. He brought under obedience to Toghril the Turkmens formerly headed by Arslan Isrā’īl who, under Kizil Beg, had established themselves in Rayy and northern Iran. Under new pressure, these Turkmens moved westwards towards Azerbaijan and the Byzantine and Armenian frontier. Hence in 1042–3 Toghril was unable to come to Rayy personally, receive the city from Ibrāhīm Inal and begin the reconstruction of the city’s buildings, which had been much devastated in the previous warfare. A new government headquarters (*dār al-imāra*), was built, together with a mosque and a *madrasa*; Toghril now moved his capital from Nishapur to Rayy, and in this year (A.H. 434) began minting coins there.¹⁹

Ibrāhīm Inal moved westwards to conduct operations against the Kurdish ^cAnnazids and other local powers on the Iran–Iraq–Byzantium frontiers. Toghril himself marched against the Kakuyid ruler of Isfahan, Farāmarz b. ^cAlā’ al-Dawla Muhammad, and made him his vassal, soon afterwards making Isfahan his own capital. In subsequent years, Toghril endeavoured to reduce the power in western and southern Iran of the Buyids, who were, fortunately for his purposes, undergoing a period of internal strife and rivalry between the contending princes, al-Malik al-Rahīm Khusraw Fīrūz b. Abū Kālījār of Iraq and his brother Fūlād Sutūn of Fars. By 1052 Turkmen raiders had penetrated into Buyid Fars. It was almost inevitable that one of the warring brothers should call on the Seljuqs for aid; hence in 1053 Fūlād Sutūn agreed to place Toghril’s name in the *khutba* of his capital Shiraz, and in the following years a group of Turkmens took over Khuzistan. Al-Malik al-Rahīm’s seven-year rule in Baghdad (1048–55) was marked by continual violence and rioting. Hence in 1055 Toghril assembled forces in Jibal and Kurdistan with the proclaimed intention of making the pilgrimage to Mecca and of combating the Shi^cite Fatimids of Egypt and Syria. He entered Baghdad with his army in December 1055, deposed the Buyid ruler and undertook operations against the Fatimids’ supporters in Iraq. Eventually, in 1058, he appeared in Baghdad again and on this occasion, met for the first time the caliph al-Qā’im. In a series of splendid ceremonies, the ^cAbbasid bestowed on Toghril the honorific titles *rukṅ al-dawla* (Pillar of the State), *qasīm amīr al-mu’minīn* (Partner of the Commander of the Faithful) and *malik al-mashriq wa ’l-maghrib* (King of the East and West), together with robes of honour in the ^cAbbasid colour of black and two crowns

¹⁸ Pritsak, 1953, p. 408; Bosworth, 1968, pp. 49–52; Köymen, 1972, pp. 3–9; Bosworth, 1977, pp. 9–30, 49–52; Merçil, 1980, pp. 11 et seq.; Kafesoğlu, 1988, pp. 36–8.

¹⁹ Miles, 1938, pp. 196 et seq.

signifying rule over the Arabs and the °Ajam or non-Arabs, and the *khutba* in the Great Mosque of Baghdad was made in Toghril's name. In this way, the caliph was relieved of his enemies in Iraq, and Toghril's position exalted as his deliverer.²⁰

There now begins the de facto dual arrangement, of such importance for the future constitutional development of the Islamic world, whereby the sultan is recognized as the secular ruler and the caliph–imam remains the moral and spiritual head of the Islamic community. This arrangement, although initially seen as novel and disturbing, was ultimately to be recognized by Sunni Muslim constitutional and legal theory.

Part Two

THE CONSOLIDATION OF THE SELJUQ SULTANATE IN IRAN (1055–1118)

(C. E. Bosworth)

Historical survey

After his formal assumption of the sultanate at Baghdad in 1055, Toghril was during his latter years largely occupied with consolidating his family's power in the Iranian lands west of Khurasan and in the Arab lands of Iraq and Mesopotamia. Khurasan and the east were left to his brother Chaghri Beg under Toghril's supreme overlordship, even though in practice Chaghri seems to have been left very much to himself in his territories (in the sources, Chaghri remains a distinctly more shadowy figure than Toghril).

In Chaghri's time, the province of Sistan, straddling what is now the border between Iran and Afghanistan, remained under the indigenous family of the Nasrid Maliks of Nimruz, as vassals of the Seljuqs, required on occasion to furnish troop contingents for the Great Seljuq army. By 1048 Kirman in south-eastern Iran had passed from the hands of its former masters, the Buyids, into those of the Seljuq prince Kara Arslan Kāwurd b. Chaghri Beg, and a line of Kāwurd's descendants now followed in Kirman, forming an autonomous Seljuq dynasty. For well over a century, the province was to enjoy a period of peace and prosperity under its new rulers, favoured by its position on trade routes connecting Central

²⁰ Bosworth, 1968, pp. 45–8; Kafesoğlu, 1988, pp. 39, 42–3.

Asia and Khurasan with the Persian Gulf and Indian Ocean ports. This favourable status was only ended when, after 1170, real power in the principality passed to Turkish slave commander *atabegs* (tutors to young Seljuq princes); also, the province was invaded by bands of Oghuz Turks deflected southwards from Khurasan by the fighting there between the Khwarazm Shahs and the Ghurids (see below, Part Three, and Chapter 8), so that the line of Seljuq princes was ended in 1186 when the Oghuz leader Malik Dīnār took over in Kirman.²¹

In the lands to the south of the upper Oxus, what later became northern Afghanistan, a rough, north–south boundary was established between the Seljuqs and the rulers whom they had supplanted in eastern Iran, the Ghaznavids. This was to remain substantially the boundary between the two great powers for over fifty years, since Ibrāhīm of Ghazna (1059–99) – with the exception of one or two occasions, see below – eschewed irredentist campaigns aimed at recovering the Ghaznavids’ lost Khurasanian provinces.

Since Toghrīl was childless, it was Chaghri Beg’s son Alp Arslan who in 1063 took over as supreme sultan of the Seljuq empire – like his uncle, with the formal approval of the ʿAbbasid caliph in Baghdad, who granted him the honorific titles of ʿAdud al-Dawla and Diyā’ al-Dīn. The decade of Alp Arslan’s rule, together with the twenty-years’ rule of his son Malik Shāh, represent the zenith of Great Seljuq power: their empire reached an extent unparalleled since the heyday of the ʿAbbasid caliphate in the later eighth and early ninth centuries. The two reigns of Alp Arslan (1063–73) and of Malik Shāh (1073–92) may be considered as a unity, the unifying factor being the directorship of the continued, day-to-day running of the state by the great vizier, Nizām al-Mulk. A native of Tus in Khurasan, he exemplified the class of professional Iranian secretaries and officials upon whom the Seljuq sultans—as incomers into the Islamic world from the Central Asian steppelands—wisely relied for the administration of their vast empire. Nizām al-Mulk had grown up in Ghaznavid Khurasan and had spent some years in Ghazna. Thus when he entered the service of Chaghri Beg and Alp Arslan he brought with him into the Seljuq administration an element of continuity, that of the old-established Perso-Islamic government tradition whose origins went back to the Sasanian period. He was to expound these traditions in a masterly and effective way in his treatise on statecraft, the *Siyāsat-nāma* [Book of Statecraft].²²

At the outset, Alp Arslan secured his position in the east by placating his elder brother Kāwurd of Kirman, although an expedition thither was necessary in 1067 when Kāwurd withdrew his allegiance. Although he restored it in the face of Alp Arslan’s superior military might, Kāwurd was never fully reconciled to his subordinate position. On Alp Arslan’s

²¹ Merçil, 1980; Kafesoğlu, 1988, pp. 65–6; Bosworth, 1994, pp. 376–86.

²² *EP*², ‘Nizām al-Mulk’.

death he was to rebel against the new ruler Malik Shāh, only to be defeated and then executed by the victor in 1073. For most of his reign, Alp Arslan was occupied with affairs in the west, including the frontiers of the empire in the Caucasus, and it was in the west that he achieved his famous victory over the Byzantine emperor Romanus Diogenes at Mantzikert (Malazgird) in 1071. The eastern frontiers were strengthened by the granting out, in 1066 when the sultan proclaimed Malik Shāh as his heir, of various districts there as appanages for Seljuq princes: for example, Khwarazm to his brother Arslan Arghun, Balkh to his brother Sulaymān, Merv to his son Arslan Shāh and Tabaristan to Inanj Yabghu. Alp Arslan personally led expeditions into the Kipchak steppes of Central Asia, as far as Jand on the lower Syr Darya, and to the Mangishlak peninsula on the eastern shore of the Caspian Sea.²³

On his father's death, Jalāl al-Dawla Malik Shāh secured the support of the army by distributing wealth from the treasury of Nishapur, the capital of Khurasan. He continued Alp Arslan's policies and in some ways surpassed the latter's triumphs. As noted above, an equilibrium had been established between the Ghaznavid and Seljuq empires, and this was only briefly disturbed in 1073 when Ibrāhīm of Ghazna attempted, vainly as it turned out, to regain former Ghaznavid territory in northern Afghanistan. Seljuq cultural influence grew in the Ghaznavid empire during these decades, with the Ghaznavid sultans assuming for themselves the established Seljuq title *al-sultān al-mu^cazzam* (Exalted Sultan) in addition to their normal ones of amir and Malik. Marriage links were forged and Ibrāhīm's son Mas^cūd (the subsequent Sultan Mas^cūd III, 1099–1115) married one of Malik Shāh's daughters, Jawhar Khātūn.²⁴

Malik Shāh's activities in the east of his empire mainly involved relations with the Karakhanids, except for the two occasions (in 1080 and 1084) when he had to deal with revolts in Khurasan by his brother Tekish b. Alp Arslan, the second one ending in the rebel's imprisonment and blinding. One of Malik Shah's most forceful wives was the Karakhanid princess Terken Khātūn, who was, at the Seljuq court, for long the focus of opposition to the vizier Nizām al-Mulk and his policies. Soon after his accession, the sultan led an expedition to the capital of the Western Karakhanid Khanate, Samarkand, in order to punish Shams al-Mulk Nasr b. Ibrāhīm Tamghach Khan, who had tried to profit from the succession uncertainties on Alp Arslan's death by invading Tukharistan to the south of the upper Oxus.

For several years, nothing is heard of Seljuq–Karakhanid relations (although we know that Seljuq cultural influence spread within Transoxania during this period, as seen in the Karakhanid adoption of Seljuq-type titulature) until towards the end of Malik Shāh's reign.

²³ Barthold, 1968, pp. 313–14; Bosworth, 1968, pp. 54–6; Köymen, 1972; Kafesoğlu, 1988, pp. 45–9.

²⁴ Bosworth, 1977, pp. 50–8.

At this point, he was persuaded by the orthodox Sunni religious opponents of the Khan Ahmad b. Khidr in 1089 to invade Transoxania and depose the Khan. He then pushed on beyond the Syr Darya to Talas and into Semirechye in order to impose his overlordship on the eastern branch of the Karakhanids, receiving at Uzgend the submission of the Khan of Kashghar, Hasan or Hārūn b. Sulaymān Tamghach Bughra Kara Khan. Thus at this moment, the *khutba* was made in Malik Shāh's name from northern Syria to East Turkistan. Tribal and family dissensions continued within the Karakhanid lands, requiring Malik Shāh's intervention, and at some point restoring Ahmad b. Khidr to his former throne in Samarkand (he was later, in 1095, to be arraigned and executed by his old opponents, the religious classes in Samarkand, on the grounds that he had adopted Isma^cili doctrines).²⁵

Malik Shāh's death in 1092 inaugurated some twelve years of confusion and internecine warfare within the western Iranian and Iraqī lands of the Seljuq empire, for the dead sultan's two sons Berk-yaruk and Muhammad quarrelled over the succession. Berk-yaruk, the candidate of the Nizāmiyya, the sons and supporters of the vizier Nizām al-Mulk (who had been assassinated shortly before the sultan's own death), eventually prevailed, but he was never to be undisputed master of the united sultanate. Various members of the Seljuq family seized the opportunity to intrigue or to assert their own claims, including the former rebel Tutush, Berk-yaruk's uncle, now in touch with elements in his former appanage of Tukharistan, and his son, and another uncle, Arslan Arghun, in Khwarazm. Military campaigning by Berk-yaruk and his supporters eventually made firm his power in Khurasan, to which in 1097 the sultan appointed his half-brother Sanjar as governor, providing him with an *atabeg* and a vizier (see below, Part Three).²⁶

Affairs among the Karakhanids in Transoxania had been somewhat confused and troubled after the death of Ahmad Khan, but in 1097 Berk-yaruk, now suzerain, confirmed the succession in Samarkand of a succession of ephemeral rulers: Sulaymān b. Dāwūd b. Tamghach Khan, Kadīr Khan Ibrāhīm (1097), Mas^cūd b. Muhammad (1097–9) (both of whom married daughters of Berk-yaruk) and Jibrā'īl or Jibrīl b. ^cUmar (1099–1102). Later in 1097, however, Berk-yaruk had to leave the east for western Iran and Iraq, essentially the seat of his power. Before departing from Khurasan, he appointed as governor in Khwarazm the Turkish commander Qutb al-Dīn Muhammad b. Anūshtegin Gharcha'ī to replace the dead Ekinchi b. Kochkar, in this manner inaugurating the line of shahs in Khwarazm from the line of Anūshtegin which was to endure for over a century (see below, Part Three). It was Sanjar who was now to be responsible for the maintenance of Seljuq authority in

²⁵ Kafesoğlu, 1953a; Barthold, 1956, pp. 97–8; 1968, pp. 314–18; Bosworth, 1968, pp. 66–7, 87–102; Kafesoğlu, 1988, pp. 49–55.

²⁶ Sanaullah, 1938, pp. 82–113; Bosworth, 1968, pp. 102–13; Kafesoğlu, 1988, pp. 56–9.

the east. He continued to exercise power there, from his capital at Balkh, when his full brother Muhammad Tapar b. Malik Shāh succeeded to the Great Seljuq throne after Berkyaruk's death in 1104. Sanjar continued to acknowledge his constitutional dependence on the supreme Sultan Muhammad, who enjoyed on his coins the title *al-sultān al-mu^cazzam*, and was content to style himself on coins *malik al-mashriq* (King of the East)—a subordination which was, however, to be abandoned on Muhammad's death in 1118 (see below, Part Three).²⁷

The structure of the Seljuq state in the east

The eastern Iranian lands of the Seljuq state were governed, like the rest of the empire, from the central Great *Dīwān*, the sultans' executive organ, which was, for nearly thirty years, as noted above, under the direction of Nizām al-Mulk, aided by his sons and partisans. All of these made up the body which came to be known, especially after Nizām al-Mulk's own death, as the Nizāmiyya. Hence during Malik Shāh's reign, the vizier appointed several of his sons to strategically important provincial governorships, where trusty subordinates were required for putting his administrative measures into practice. Two of his sons, Shams al-Mulk ^cUthmān and Jamāl al-Mulk Mansūr, were governors in Merv and Balkh respectively at certain times.²⁸

All through his official career, Nizām al-Mulk was concerned to buttress the authority of his masters, the Seljuq sultans, against such external foes as the Fatimid caliphs of Egypt and Syria and internal dissidents like the Isma^cilis of Daylam and the Elburz mountains region and of Kuhistan in southern Khurasan. Military operations were undertaken on various occasions against the Isma^cilis within the empire, but on the ideological and intellectual level, Nizām al-Mulk's name is associated with the founding and the spread of Sunni orthodox *madrasas*, named Nizāmiyyas in his honour. The institution of the *madrasa* had flourished in the eastern Iranian lands for many decades before the vizier's time, so he was far from being an innovator here.²⁹ But Nizām al-Mulk may have hoped that his newly founded *madrasas* – which for the east were located in Balkh, Herat, Merv, Nishapur and Amul in Gurgan, according to the later biographer of Shāfi^cī scholars, Tāj al-Dīn al-Subkī—would produce theologians and lawyers who could uphold orthodoxy against sectarian currents like Mu^ctazihism and Isma^cilism, and also officials and secretaries who could implement his own policies for the Seljuq empire's future. For staffing these

²⁷ Barthold, 1968, pp. 318–19, 323–4; Bosworth, 1968, pp. 135–6, 138–9.

²⁸ Bosworth, 1968, pp. 56–7, 69–70; Klausner, 1973; *EP*², 'Nizām al-Mulk'.

²⁹ On educational policies and the spread of the *madrasa* in general, see Volume IV, Part Two, Chapter 1, of the present work.

colleges, Nizām al-Mulk made especial use of scholars from Khurasan, for Khurasan and Transoxania had long been bastions of Sunni orthodox theology, law and scholarship.³⁰

The Seljuq military forces at this time comprised not only a professional army, with a nucleus of *ghulāms* (slave soldiers) but also contingents of free troops, mercenaries. Turks were naturally dominant, and held many of the high commands, but the professional army was multi-ethnic, and included Armenians, Greeks, Slavs, Arabs and others. In his *Siyāsat-nāma*, Nizām al-Mulk positively commends the use of Daylamites, Khurasanians, Georgians and Shabānkāra'ī (Kurds) from southern Iran in the army. But at the side of this professional, standing army – supported, at least in western Iran and Iraq, by a system of *iqṭāʿ*s (land grants) – the sultans still relied to a great extent on the descendants of their original, Oghuz tribal following, the Turkmens. The military power of these last was particularly important for the defence of Khurasan and the eastern marches, the border lands beyond which lay such powers as the Ghaznavids and the Karakhanids, and beyond the latter, the peoples of the Inner Asian steppes and forests. These frontier lands were often granted as appanages to Seljuq princes or to the protégés of Nizām al-Mulk, but their actual defence fell largely to the Turkmens. Since they had first appeared on the fringes of Ghaznavid Khurasan (see above, Part One), the Turkmens had been assigned grazing grounds and rights for their herds there, and these rights continued under the Seljuqs, since they provided the livelihood and the maintenance of these unpaid, auxiliary troops. The tribal nomads thus had a definite place within the economic and agricultural structure of such eastern provinces as Khurasan, Gurgan and Dihistan. It was felt that it should be the sultans' care to conciliate and to look after the interests of their Turkmen supporters, since these had been the original mainstay of the Seljuq family's power, states Nizām al-Mulk again in his treatise – possibly with the implication that the Turkmens' complaints and just claims were no longer being listened to properly or dealt with immediately, now that a ruler like Malik Shāh relied increasingly on his professional, standing army. The sultans did, however, continue to give regular feasts (*shölen*) for their supporters, but Nizām al-Mulk states that Malik Shāh's failure to provide such a feast for the Chigil tribesmen of the Karakhanid army, when he campaigned in Transoxania in 1089, caused him a loss of prestige there.³¹

³⁰ Bosworth, 1968, pp. 70–4; Lambton, 1968, pp. 214–17.

³¹ Sanaullah, 1938, pp. 18–35; Bosworth, 1968, pp. 79–84; Lambton, 1968, pp. 224–39.

Part Three

THE EASTERN SELJUQ SULTANATE (1118–57) AND THE RISE AND FLORESCENCE OF THE KHWARAZM SHAHS OF ANŪSHTEGIN'S LINE UP TO THE APPEARANCE OF THE MONGOLS (1097–1219)

(C. E. Bosworth)

Historical survey

°Adud al-Dawla Ahmad Sanjar (Turkish *sanjar*. 'he who pierces, thrusts') governed the eastern provinces of the Great Seljuq empire for some sixty years, being appointed in 490/1097, while still a boy, by his half-brother, the Great Seljuq sultan Berk-yaruk after the unsuccessful revolt in Khurasan and the death of Arslan Arghun b. Alp Arslan. He remained there, as boy and man, until his death shortly after escaping in 1156 from the custody of the Oghuz of Khurasan. During the civil strife in western Persia and Iraq between his elder brothers Berk-yaruk and Muhammad Tapar (see above, Part Two), Sanjar generally took the side of his full brother Muhammad, but from the constitutional aspect he regarded himself as governor only of the eastern provinces and as subordinate to the supreme sultan in the western lands, calling himself on his coins merely a Malik and acknowledging Berk-yaruk and then Muhammad as *al-sultān al-mu°azzam*.³²

When Muhammad died in 1118, however, Sanjar refused to consider himself subordinate to his nephew in the west, Mahmūd b. Muhammad. As the senior member of the Seljuq family, both his de facto power and his position under Turkish tribal custom gave him a claim to the supreme sultanate even though this had previously been held, for eighty years, by the Seljuq who controlled western Iran and Iraq. The squabbling sons of Muhammad b. Malik Shāh were too divided and militarily weak to dispute Sanjar's position, and

³² Bosworth, 1968, p. 135; Lowick, 1970, pp. 244–5.

they had generally to place Sanjar's name plus his title of *al-sultān al-mu'azzam* on their coins before their own names and titles. At the outset, the only serious opposition to Sanjar's claims came from Mahmūd, but in 1119 Sanjar marched westwards with a powerful army (whose commanders included, besides Sanjar himself, four vassal rulers), defeated Mahmūd near Sawa in northern Jibal and marched onwards to Baghdad. When peace was made, Mahmūd agreed to Sanjar's supremacy and was made the latter's heir (in the event, he died long before Sanjar did), but he had to relinquish to Sanjar the Caspian provinces of Mazandaran and Qumis and the town of Rayy, the key point for control of northern Persia, and to agree to the reappointment of Sanjar's *shihna* (military governor) in Baghdad.³³

On Mahmūd's death in 1131, his brothers Mas'ūd, Toghrīl and Seljuq Shah successfully disputed the succession of Mahmūd's young son Dāwūd, but were unable to agree among themselves as to who should be sultan. They laid the question before Sanjar, as senior member of the dynasty. Sanjar's favoured candidate was Toghrīl b. Muhammad, but his preoccupation with events in Transoxania at this time (see below) prevented him from providing Toghrīl with much military support. Toghrīl died soon afterwards in 1134, allowing Mas'ūd to succeed in the west and to reign for twenty years, the longest reign of a Seljuq there since Malik Shāh's time. Sanjar's last major intervention in the affairs of the family in the west had been his defeat of Mas'ūd at Dinawar in 1132, but thereafter affairs in Khurasan and Transoxania increasingly claimed his attention.³⁴

Sanjar continued to exercise the overlordship over the Karakhanids of Transoxania first imposed by his father Malik Shāh (see above, Chapter 6), but had on various occasions to intervene with his army across the Oxus against recalcitrant Khans. At Tirmidh in 1102 he had stemmed the invasion of a Karakhanid claimant, Kadir Khan Jibrā'īl or Jibrīl of Balasaghun and Talas, placing on the throne in Samarkand Muhammad II Arslan Khan. But towards the end of the latter's long reign, in 1130, Sanjar came with an army to reinforce the Khan's faltering authority in Samarkand. Disputes occurred, with the Seljuq army plundering part of the Karakhanid capital and with the sultan finally placing on the throne his nominees: first, Hasan Tegin b. °Alī; then briefly in 1132 Muhammad Arslan Khan's brother, Ibrāhīm Tamghach Bughra Khan (who had been brought up at Sanjar's court); and then, possibly in the same year, Muhammad Arslan Khan's third son, Mahmūd. Mahmūd was Sanjar's nephew since his mother Terken Khātūn, wife of Muhammad Arslan Khan, was Sanjar's sister. The fortunes of Sanjar and Mahmūd were to be closely interwoven over the ensuing years; when Sanjar was captured by the Oghuz in 1153, Mahmūd was

³³ Köymen, 1954, pp. 5 et seq.; Bosworth, 1968, pp. 119–20, 135–7.

³⁴ Köymen, 1954, pp. 174 et seq.; Bosworth, 1968, pp. 124–8.

recognized by the Seljuq army in Khurasan as interim sultan of Khurasan and, after Sanjar's death in 1157, likewise as legitimate ruler there until his own death in 1162.³⁵

As ruler of Khurasan, Sanjar was also concerned with the neighbouring great power to his east, the Ghaznavids. They were ancient enemies of the Seljuqs during the period when the Seljuqs were taking over Persia and western Afghanistan but had largely been at peace with them since 1059 and the peace agreement – essentially one which divided Afghanistan with a north-south line between the two imperial powers – made by the Seljuq Chaghri Beg and the Ghaznavid Ibrāhīm b. Mas'ūd I. Over the following decades, there was a considerable Seljuq cultural penetration of the Ghaznavid lands, visible for instance in numismatic patterns, titulature of the rulers and literary trends. The inaccessible and largely independent mountain region of Ghur in central Afghanistan passed into the Seljuq sphere of influence during the early part of Sanjar's reign after a raid into it by the sultan. According to the Ghurid historian Minhāj-i Sirāj Jūzjānī, the Shansabānī Malik of Ghur, 'Izz al-Dīn Husayn, sent to Sanjar as annual tribute the specialities of the region, including arms and armour and fierce dogs (see below, Chapter 8). The once-mighty Ghaznavid empire was by now moving towards what it in fact became in its final years, essentially a north Indian power rather than one of the eastern Iranian lands. A succession dispute between Arslan Shah and Bahrām Shah, the sons of the Ghaznavid sultan Mas'ūd III b. Ibrāhīm, allowed Sanjar to extend direct Seljuq suzerainty over the now somewhat truncated Ghaznavid empire (see above, Chapter 5). On Arslan Shah's accession to the throne in 1115, Bahrām Shah had escaped to Khurasan and had appealed to Sanjar for help. The Seljuq ruler marched eastwards with a formidable army, defeated Arslan Shah outside Ghazna, despite the presence of awesome war elephants in the latter's army, sacked the capital Ghazna and placed Bahrām Shah on the throne in 1117. Bahrām Shah agreed to become a vassal of Sanjar, and to pay an annual tribute of 250,000 dinars and to place Sanjar's name first in the *khutba* and on the coinage – the first time that the Seljuq *khutba* had ever been heard in the Ghaznavid dominions. For some thirty years, Bahrām Shah acknowledged this subordinate status, only once becoming restive when in 529/1135 Sanjar and his other vassal, the Khwarazm Shah Atsiz, came with their forces from Balkh against Ghazna, expelling Bahrām Shah to India before the latter returned and agreed to reassume his vassalage.³⁶

Along the northern fringes of Khurasan, Sanjar found himself at odds for the first time with another line of his vassals, the Turkish Khwarazm Shahs. The old lines of

³⁵ Pritsak, 1953–4, pp. 49–53; Köymen, 1954, pp. 158–63; Barthold, 1968, pp. 319–22; Bosworth, 1968, pp. 138–40.

³⁶ Bosworth, 1968, pp. 157–9; 1977, pp. 89–100.

Iranian Afrighid and Ma'munid shahs had been swept away by the Ghaznavids in the early eleventh century; Mahmūd and Mas'ūd I of Ghazna had appointed Turkish slave commanders from their own army, Altuntash and his sons, as governors there with the ancient title of Khwarazm Shah. The Seljuqs continued this pattern of domination over Khwarazm: jutting out as it did into the Central Asian steppes, the region was not only strategically important to the sultans as a bastion against the pagan Turks of the Kipchak steppe but it was also significant as the springboard for raids into the recruiting grounds for Turkish auxiliary and slave troops. Sultans like Alp Arslan and Malik Shāh had led punitive expeditions into these steppe regions on various occasions, such as that of the first ruler in 1065 into the Ustyurt area and the Mangishlak peninsula to the east of the Caspian Sea against the Kipchak (see above, Part One).

In order to secure these important regions, Malik Shāh had appointed the keeper of the royal washing bowls (*tast-dār*), his slave commander Anūsh-tegin Gharcha'ī, as titular governor at least in Khwarazm. During Berk-yaruk's reign, the sultan appointed in 1097 another Turkish *ghulam*, Ekinchi b. Kochkar, with the historic title of Khwarazm Shah. When, in that same year, Ekinchi was killed, Berk-yaruk nominated in his stead Anūshtegin's son Qutb al-Dīn Muhammad as governor, and Muhammad's tenure of power there (1097–1127) inaugurates the fourth and most brilliant line of hereditary Khwarazm Shahs. This dynasty eventually built up, as the Seljuq empire in the east tottered to its close, the most powerful and aggressively expansionist empire in the Persian lands, in the end defeating their rivals for control of Khurasan, the Ghurids of Afghanistan, threatening western Persia and Iraq and the Abbasid caliphate itself, and only disintegrating under the overwhelming military might of the Mongol invaders in the opening decades of the thirteenth century.

Qutb al-Dīn Muhammad was a faithful vassal of Sanjar's, assiduous in attendance at the Seljuq capital of Merv, but it was his son and successor 'Alā' al-Dīn Atsīz (1127–56) who was the real founder of the dynasty's might and splendour. He also attended Sanjar's court regularly, accompanying him, for example, on the campaign to Samarkand of 1130, and securing the northern and western frontiers of Khwarazm against the Kipchak and other marauders. But relations with Sanjar started to deteriorate as Atsīz gradually built up his own military strength and began identifying himself with the particular interests of his power base in Khwarazm. Sanjar later accused his vassal of indiscriminately killing, together with pagans, Muslim *ghāzīs* and *murābitūn* (dwellers in *ribats* and frontier fighters) in Mangishlak and at Jand on the lower Syr Darya (although this could possibly be an a posteriori justification for Sanjar's subsequent actions against Atsīz). The Khwarazm Shah rebelled openly in 1138, flooding lands in the Oxus valley to impede

the advance of the Seljuq army, but this failed to halt Sanjar's progress. He defeated the Khwarazmian army at Hazarasp on the Oxus, executed Atsiz's son Atligh, drove out Atsiz from Khwarazm, occupied the province and left a Seljuq prince there as governor accompanied by an *atabeg*. However, as on earlier occasions when the attempts of an outside power like the Ghaznavids to impose its authority on Khwarazm had provoked a national reaction there, the Khwarazmian people now showed their resentment of alien domination. As soon as Sanjar returned to Merv, they rose and expelled the Seljuq occupying troops. Meanwhile Atsiz returned from his refuge in Gurgan and took the offensive, invading Transoxania and attacking the Seljuq garrison in Bukhara in 1139–40.³⁷

A new power now intervenes in the affairs of Central Asia: the Kara Khitay (the Kitan or Liao of the Chinese sources), possibly of Mongol origin and certainly stemming from the region of eastern Mongolia and northern China before they started to move westwards and southwards into Semirechye and Transoxania (see below, Chapter 11). From their base at Balasaghun, this pagan people began, under their Gür Khan (Universal Ruler) Yeh-lü Tashih, to attack the various Turkish tribes and amirs of western Turkistan, pagan and Muslim alike, inevitably coming up against the Karakhanids. Already in 1137 Mahmūd Khan of Samarkand had been defeated in a battle with the Kara Khitay at Khujand in Ferghana. Four years later, internal disputes within the Western Karakhanid amirate led to one side in the conflict, disaffected Karluk tribesmen, calling in the Kara Khitay. Mahmūd appealed to his kinsman and suzerain Sanjar, who invaded Transoxania with a large army, but he was defeated in 1141 by the Kara Khitay in a bloody battle on the Qatwan steppe of Usrushana, on the middle Syr Darya. Sanjar and Mahmūd Khan fled to Khurasan, abandoning Transoxania to the incomers, who went on to invade Khwarazm and to make Atsiz their vassal. Accordingly, while Sanjar's defeat was clearly opportune for Atsiz, it seems improbable that the Khwarazm Shah had, as several of the Islamic sources state, incited the Kara Khitay to invade as an act of revenge on Sanjar for the sultan's killing of his son Atligh. At this point, Atsiz himself raided into Khurasan, but was driven back by a Seljuq counter-invasion of Khwarazm which penetrated to the capital Gurgan and compelled the Khwarazm Shah to disgorge the treasuries which he had previously looted from Merv in 1143–4. Yet once again, Khwarazm proved too hostile for the Seljuq troops to remain there.³⁸

The eventual downfall of Seljuq power in the east, however, did not result from the attacks of external foes like the Kara Khitay or from the rebelliousness of ambitious vassals like the Khwarazm Shahs, whose military strength was still inferior to that of

³⁷ . Köymen, 1954, pp. 312–45; Kafesoğlu, 1956, pp. 44–50; Barthold, 1962, pp. 126–7; 1968, pp. 323–6; Bosworth, 1968, pp. 140–4.

³⁸ Köymen, 1954, pp. 323 et seq.; Barthold, 1956, pp. 100–5; Kafesoğlu, 1956, pp. 51–7; Barthold, 1968, pp. 326–7; Bosworth, 1968, pp. 146–50; *EP*, 'Kara Khitay'.

Sanjar – it was the result of an explosion of discontent within Khurasan itself, largely caused by the policies of Sanjar's aides and officials there. Khurasan and the steppes to the south-east of the Caspian Sea, in Gurgan and Dihistan, contained extensive pasture grounds which supported numerous groups of nomadic, tribally organized Turkmens. Some of these had probably been driven southwards into the Khurasanian fringes by recent upheavals in the Central Asian steppes, including pressure from the Khwarazm Shahs and the Kara Khitay. Others were descendants of the Oghuz tribesmen whose dynamic had originally brought the Seljuqs to power in Khurasan a century before. The sultans had accordingly always felt certain obligations towards these kinsfolk of theirs, often making special administrative arrangements for them in the regions where they were particularly numerous, appointing special *shihnas* and *ru'asā'* (sing. *ra'īs*) (chiefs) to act as channels of communication between the nomads and the Seljuq state, whose dominating Perso-Islamic ethos was largely alien to the Turkmens (see below).

These arrangements now came under severe strain because of the financial exigencies arising from Sanjar's military adventures, which became increasingly expensive and elaborate after 1135: he is said to have disbursed 3 million dinars for his Transoxanian campaign of 1141, not counting the cost of gifts and robes of honour for various local potentates. The burden of taxation in order to pay for these fell on sedentaries and nomads alike, but the Oghuz in the upper Oxus regions of Khuttalan and Tukharistan finally rebelled against the tax demands and the harsh collecting methods of the *shihna* over the Turkmens there, the slave commander ^cImād al-Dīn Kumāch of Balkh. Despite placatory approaches from the Oghuz, Sanjar insisted on mounting punitive expeditions against them, but he was twice defeated, forced to evacuate his capital Merv and finally captured by the nomads in 1153. The Oghuz bands swept through Khurasan, attacking the towns and showing particular violence and hostility towards members of the Seljuq administration and the religious institution, closely linked with the Seljuq state. A general climate of insecurity was created in both town and countryside, in which other anti-social elements, such as the ^c*ayyārs* (bands of urban rowdies and vigilantes) took advantage of the breakdown of authority to advance their own interests.

Sanjar was carried round by his Oghuz captors for three years, apparently in humiliating circumstances and enduring hunger and deprivation, until he managed to escape in 1156 to Tirmidh and Merv. But a year later, he died at the age of 71, and with him, the authority of the Seljuqs in eastern Persia ceased; to his contemporaries it seemed like the end of an epoch. Only in western Iran, essentially in Jibal, and in Kirman, did members of the Seljuq family retain power for another thirty-eight and thirty years respectively. The western Seljuqs were increasingly circumscribed, however, by the growth of Atabeg

principalities in provinces like Fars, Azerbaijan, Arran and Armenia and by the later twelfth-century upsurge of ʿAbbasid caliphal authority in Baghdad and Iraq, while the Kirman Seljuqs fell victim to similar Oghuz pressures to those which had affected Khurasan and which had caused Sanjar's downfall, involving Oghuz plunder raids on Kirman.³⁹

The Seljuq army in Khurasan had been left leaderless on Sanjar's capture. It now offered the throne in Khurasan to the refugee Karakhanid Mahmūd Khan, the son of Sanjar's sister Terken Khātūn, hence with Seljuq blood in his veins; the Seljuq sultan in the west, Muhammad II b. Mahmūd, agreed to this and sent an investiture diploma. In fact, real power in Khurasan was falling into the hands of the Seljuq princes, who over the next years parcelled out the towns and districts of the province among themselves, especially as Mahmūd was unable firmly to establish his authority – he was even prepared at one point to summon assistance against the Oghuz of Khurasan from the Khwarazm Shah Atsīz – and he died in 1162. Sanjar's former slave commander, Mu'ayyid al-Dīn Ay Aba (d. 1174), had already risen to prominence in Nisha-pur. He established firm and just rule in the town, being termed by the contemporary historian of Bayhaq, Ibn Funduq, as 'the emperor of Khurasan, king of the East', and he eventually recognized Mahmūd Khan as his suzerain. Another of Sanjar's former slave commanders, Ikhtiyār al-Dīn Ay Tak, took possession of Rayy and, as nominal vassal of the western Seljuq sultan Muhammad II, made himself a power in northern Persia; while yet another former Seljuq general, Bahā' al-Dīn Toghrīl, took over Herat. These experienced and capable commanders were helped by the Oghuz bands' own disunity and low level of political sophistication; the Oghuz could win individual battles but could not establish a state. The rule of the Seljuq princes was only curtailed in the 1170s by the westwards expansion of the Ghurid sultans, who then disputed control of Khurasan with the Khwarazm Shahs and with the pagan Kara Khitay, who had a foothold south of the Oxus in Balkh and Tukharistan. It was actually the Khwarazm Shahs who triumphed there in the first decade of the thirteenth century, but they were only to enjoy power for a short time before the whole dynasty was swept away by the incoming Mongols.

The Khwarazm Shah Atsīz remained loyal to Sanjar after the latter's capture, and on his escape from the Oghuz sent Sanjar a message of congratulation; but Atsīz died shortly afterwards in 1156. He had by that date established the Khwarazmian state through his skilful adaptation to the superior military strength of the Seljuqs and the Kara Khitay and by the extension of his territories and his influence northwards into the Kīpchak steppe as far as Mangīshlak. This region was to be important as a reservoir of manpower for the

³⁹ Köymen, 1947; Lambton, 1953, pp. 57–9; Barthold, 1968, pp. 329–30; Bosworth, 1968, pp. 152–5; Lambton, 1968, pp. 246–7.

Khwarazmian army when Atsiz's successors embarked on grandiose policies of expansion throughout the Iranian world and beyond to the Near East and to India; according to one authority, Atsiz even entertained the plan of conquering the town of Saksin on the lower Volga in southern Russia.⁴⁰

Atsiz's son Tāj al-Dunyā wa 'l-Dīn II Arslan (1156–72) had more potential freedom of action after the death of his Seljuq suzerain Sanjar, but was at first largely preoccupied with affairs in the lands north of the Oxus. Here, the Kara Khitay were his suzerains, but these last were little disposed to interfere in Khwarazmian affairs provided that the stipulated tribute was forwarded to the Gür Khans at their *ordo* (military camp) in Semirechye. The Khwarazm Shahs especially coveted the domains of the Karakhanids – who were likewise vassals of the Gür Khans – in Transoxania. Disputes within the Karakhanid dominions between the Khans and contingents of their Karluk tribal followers culminated in the murder of Mahmūd Khan's brother Ibrāhim III Tamghach Khan of Samarkand, by the Karluk in 1156. When his successor 'Alī b. Hasan Tegin Chaghri Khan took draconian measures against the tribesmen, II Arslan seized the opportunity to invade Transoxania in 1158, ostensibly on behalf of the Karluk, and the Khan was compelled to take back the Karluk chiefs into his service. II Arslan's troops also appeared in Khurasan against the former Seljuq princes there, and Ibn Funduq mentions the Khwarazmian army's presence at Bayhaq and Nishapur in 1166–7, although full-scale Khwarazmian intervention in Khurasan was only to come later.⁴¹

It was the reign of 'Alā' al-Dīn Tekish b. II Arslan (1172–1200) which brought the Khwarazm Shahs to new heights of power. Khwarazmian arms vigorously combated Ghurid attempts to annex Khurasan for themselves, succeeded in bringing about the final demise of the Seljuq sultanate of western Persia and penetrated across Jibal and Kurdistan to the borders of Iraq. Tekish, who had been governor of Jand, owed his throne to support from the Kara Khitay in the succession struggle with his brother Sultān Shāh after II Arslan's death. The outcome of this struggle was that Sultān Shāh was driven southwards from Khwarazm into Khurasan, where he attempted, with considerable success, to carve out a principality for himself at the expense of the local Turkish commanders in towns like Sarakhs, Nishapur, Tus and Merv. But once firmly on the throne in Khwarazm, Tekish sought an opportunity to throw off the Kara Khitay yoke – comparatively light though it was – by adducing the increasing harshness of the Kara Khitay tax-collectors and their

⁴⁰ Köymen, 1954, pp. 424 et seq.; Kafesoğlu, 1956, pp. 65–72; Barthold, 1968, pp. 330–1; Bosworth, 1968, pp. 155–7, 185–7.

⁴¹ Pritsak, 1953–4, pp. 53–4; Kafesoğlu, 1956, pp. 73–83; Barthold, 1968, pp. 332–7; Bosworth, 1968, pp. 185–8.

continuing paganism. This made possible an appeal to the local Muslim religious classes for support for the Khwarazm Shahs in the work of *jihād* (holy war).

The result was an alliance of Sultān Shāh with the Kara Khitay, who tried to invade Khwarazm but were blocked by the time-honoured expedient of the defenders opening the canal barrages and dykes of the Oxus valley irrigation network, thereby flooding the terrain. Later, however, in the 1190s, Tekish was to seek Kara Khitay aid in his struggle with the Ghurids, for the Kara Khitay hoped to regain control of Balkh and Tukharistan, formerly tributary to them. These hopes were dashed by a decisive victory of the Ghurids over the Kara Khitay on the banks of the upper Oxus, allowing the Ghurids to occupy the towns of Khurasan and to install at Merv Tekish's grandson and rival for power, Hindū Khan b. Nāsir al-Dīn Malīk Shāh (1198–1200).

Many of Tekish's diplomatic and military efforts were to be devoted to the situation north of the Oxus and in the steppes and then, towards the end of his reign, to expansion westwards into northern Iran, with Iraq as his ultimate goal. In general, he aimed at conciliating the Turkmens of the steppes to the north and west of Khwarazm, partly through marriage alliances between members of his own family and the local Khans' families; thus Tekish's wife Terken Khātūn, mother of his son and successor 'Alā' al-Dīn Muhammad, was from either the Kangli or the Yemek Turkish tribe and was the daughter of Kīpchak Khan. Tekish drew on these Turkmens as troops for his forces, even though many of them were still pagan, and it was these unassimilated barbarians who made the Khwarazmian army a byword for cruelty and violence among the peoples of northern and western Iran. But diplomacy did not always work, and at least one punitive expedition by Tekish against the Kīpchak in the vicinities of Jand and Sīgnak on the lower Syr Darya is recorded (1195–6). In Transoxania also, there is mention of an expedition to Bukhara in 1182 and possibly another one with the same goal in 1198 (reported by the chronicler Ibn al-Athīr, but whose historicity was nevertheless doubted by Barthold), when the local population of Bukhara supported the Kara Khitay garrison until the town was stormed by the Khwarazmians.⁴²

The disappearance of the Seljuqs from Khurasan and the shrinkage of the territory controlled by the last Seljuq sultans in western Iran, hemmed in as they were by various Atabeg principalities such as that of the Ildenizids of Azerbaijan and Arran and the Salghurids of Fars, led Tekish to dream of establishing a Khwarazmian empire which would dominate Iran proper as well as the lands north of the Oxus. The sultan who was to be the last of the Seljuq line in Persia, Toghrīl III b. Arslan, was a young, vigorous and effective commander, who by 1192 had made firm his control over Jibal and had defeated the Atabeg ruler in Rayy, Kutlugh Inanch. But the latter now appealed to Tekish for help, thus giving the

⁴² Kafesoğlu, 1956, pp. 84–108, 113–21; Barthold, 1968, pp. 337–46; Bosworth, 1968, pp. 188–92.

Khwarazm Shah a pretext to intervene in the affairs of Iran. Tekish came to Rayy with an army and demanded that his name should be placed in the *khutba* of western Persia immediately after the caliph's name, but had to return to Khurasan in the face of a threatened invasion by Sultān Shāh. Toghrīl was accordingly able in 1193 to clear the Khwarazmian garrison out of Rayy. But when Tekish returned the following year, Toghrīl, having refused to negotiate with the shah, was defeated outside Rayy and killed in 1194; henceforth, the Seljuq dynasty survived only in Anatolia as the sultanate of Rum, centred on Konya.

Tekish now occupied the whole of Jibal and parcelled it out as *iqṭāʿ*s for his commanders. The proximity of the powerful and aggressive shah to the ʿAbbasid territories in Iraq disquieted the caliph al-Nāsir (1180–1225). He nevertheless deemed it prudent to bow to Tekish's evident military superiority and sent the shah an investiture patent for the sultanate of Iraq (i.e. ʿIrāq ʿAjamī, or western Iran), Iran (i.e. the remainder of the country, essentially Azerbaijan, Fars, Khurasan and Kirman) and Turkistan. Tekish was active in northern Iran, especially against the Ismaʿilis of Daylam, but died in 1200; on hearing the news, the people of Jibal rose and massacred all the Khwarazmians they could find.⁴³

The new shah, Tekish's son ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn Muhammad (1200–20), continued his father's anti-caliphal policy. At the end of his life, Tekish had demanded that his son's name be placed in the *khutba* at Baghdad, but subsequent preoccupations in the east with the Ghurids, the Kipchak and the Kara Khitay prevented Muhammad from enforcing his-claimed rights against al-Nāsir. Not until 1217, the very eve of the Mongol invasions, was Muhammad ready to march westwards. By now, he knew from captured diplomatic correspondence that al-Nāsir had in the past incited the Ghurids against him and had tried to have him assassinated by the Ismaʿilis. Muhammad was aware that his anti-caliphal policies would deprive him of support from the Sunni majorities in Iran and Iraq. Hence he now adopted a pro-Shiʿite policy, obtaining a *fatwā* (legal opinion) from compliant ʿulamāʾ that al-Nāsir was unfit to rule and that the ʿAbbasids had usurped the caliphate from the house of ʿAlī, and proclaiming a Sayyid as anti-caliph. His army proceeded to cross the Zagros mountains barrier down to the plains of Iraq, but snow-storms of unparalleled severity held it up in Kurdistan, and news of the appearance of the Mongols on the eastern fringes of his empire caused Muhammad to abandon his plans to overthrow the ʿAbbasid caliphate.⁴⁴

During the earlier part of his reign, Muhammad's eastern policy involved conciliating the Kara Khitay in order to leave him free to eject the Ghurids from Khurasan, where Ghurid rule had proved unpopular. After the death of Muʿizz al-Dīn Muhammad Ghūrī

⁴³ Kafesoğlu, 1956, pp. 123–44; Barthold, 1968, pp. 346–8; Bosworth, 1968, pp. 181–3; Mason, 1972, pp. 99–100, 102–4; Hartmann, 1975, pp. 75–8.

⁴⁴ Kafesoğlu, 1956, pp. 199–205, 214–21; Bosworth, 1968, pp. 183–4; Mason, 1972, p. 104; Hartmann, 1975, pp. 76–85.

in 1206, the power of the Ghurids declined perceptibly. The new sultan in Ghur, Ghiyath al-Dīn Mahmūd, had to acknowledge the Khwarazm Shah as his suzerain and place his name in the *khutba* and on the coinage. Khwarazmian control was now imposed over all the towns of Khurasan, and the Bawandid local ruler in the Caspian provinces was made a Khwarazmian vassal. Muhammad could therefore now dispense with Kara Khitay support, especially as the latter were distracted by the rebellion in Semirechye of the Naiman Mongol chief Küchlüg and the revolt of the Kara Khitay's Muslim vassals in East Turkistan. Securing the northern frontiers of Khwarazm by a successful campaign against the Kipchak, Muhammad turned to Transoxania and allied with the last Karakhanid ruler of Samarkand, °Uthmān Khan b. Ibrāhīm, and other local magnates who were discontented with Kara Khitay financial demands, against their suzerains. The fact that the Kara Khitay were distracted by Küchlüg's revolt meant that the Gür Khan was unable to maintain his occupation of Samarkand (probably in 1209–10) and was defeated near Talas by the combined forces of °Uthmān Khan and °Alā' al-Dīn Muhammad. By this time, an advance force of Chinggis Khan's Mongols had appeared in northern Semirechye; the Gür Khan died; and Muslim Khwarazmian rule was established throughout Transoxania. Yet this domination speedily proved unpopular. The people of Samarkand rose against the Khwarazmians there and slaughtered them. °Uthmān Khan attempted to renew his connections with the Kara Khitay, but brought down on himself the Khwarazm Shah's wrath. This culminated in a general massacre of Karakhanid family members in 1212, thereby extinguishing the western branch of the dynasty almost completely (a branch seems to have persisted in Ferghana, with its capital at Uzgend, for some years more: see above, Chapter 6).

°Alā' al-Dīn Muhammad asserted his power against the Kipchak and incorporated Sīgnak into his empire, but he was less successful against Küchlüg, who had taken over most of the former Kara Khitay territories. Even after his Talas victory over the Naiman chief, Muhammad was unable to bring relief to the Muslim population of the town of Balasaghun in Semirechye or to protect Ferghana; and he was equally impotent to protect the Muslims of East Turkistan or Kashgharia against Küchlüg's fiercely anti-Muslim policies there.⁴⁵

The defeat of Küchlüg by Chinggis Khan's forces in 1218, his flight into Badakhshan and his death there only postponed the hour of reckoning for the Khwarazm Shah. There had been relations between him and Chinggis in 1215, when °Alā' al-Dīn Muhammad had sent an embassy to the Mongol Khan in northern China, and an indecisive military encounter in (?)1219 between Muhammad's forces and Chinggis' eldest son Jöchi in the

⁴⁵ Pritsak, 1953–4, pp. 56–9; Barthold, 1956, pp. 106–9; Kafesoğlu, 1956, pp. 187–93, 223–9; Barthold, 1968, pp. 349–70; Bosworth, 1968, pp. 192–5.

steppes to the north of the Aral Sea. But the immediate cause of large-scale intervention in Trans-oxania by the Mongols was Muhammad's ill-advised execution of Chinggis' envoys at Utrar, which brought down on his head the full violence of Mongol military might in the later part of 1219. The ensuing years saw the speedy disintegration of the Khwarazmian empire, culminating in the death in Diyar Bakr in 1231 of the refugee last Khwarazm Shah, Muhammad's son Jalāl al-Dīn (?) Mingburnu; for all these events, see below, Chapter 12.

The structure of the eastern Seljuq state

As noted above, Sanjar was originally a Malik subordinate to the Great Seljuq sultan Berkyaruk and then Muhammad b. Malik Shāh. After the latter's death, Sanjar acquired, by seniority, headship of the main line of Seljuqs in Persia and Iraq, with the title of *al-sultān al-mu^cazzam* appearing on his coins minted at Isfahan and Rayy from 1118 onwards. Attached to his personal court, which was usually in the capital Merv, Sanjar had a fully developed administration headed by the *dīwān-i a^clā* (Supreme Ministry). It was presided over by a series of viziers, of whom eight are known, from Shihāb al-Islām ^cAbd al-Razzāq (in office 1117–22) to Nizām al-Mulk Hasan. Naturally, high officials like viziers were normally Persians or Arabs, though from 1122 to 1124 Sanjar had a Turkish vizier, Muhammad b. Sulaymān Kāshgharī Yīghan or Toghan Beg. The vizier's colleagues included the usual array of officials concerned with accounting and financial checking procedures, the *mustawfī* (chief accountant) and the *mushrif* (inspector); those manning the chancery, under the *tughrā'ī* (chief secretary), combining the departments of the *tughrā* (official insignum on documents) and of *inshā'* (correspondence); and the ^c*ārid*, the head of the *dīwān-i a^card* (department of the army).

Administrative and military control over a town or province of the empire was exercised by the sultan's appointee, the *shihna*, who was concerned with public security and the regulation of crime. Various religious and judicial officials, including the *qādī* (judge) and the *khatīb* (preacher at the Muslim worship), were appointed directly by Sanjar. All these figures – as also the commanders of the army, mainly military slaves or freedmen – were supported materially by the system of *iqṭā'^c*s, with the military holder of such an estate additionally being liable for military service; often, no duration is mentioned for these tenures, although one cannot thereby conclude that the grants were necessarily for life, still less that they were hereditary.

Provincial government (*wilāyat*, *iyālat*) under Sanjar was exercised through centrally appointed officials with designations like *wālī*, *nā'ib*, *shihna* or *ra'īs*. The last of these had an additional role as the representative of the urban notables – from the leading families

of whom the *ra'īs* was generally chosen – and of his fellow-townsmen *vis-à-vis* the central government, above all in matters relating to taxation. From Sanjar's reign, we possess documents on the nomination of provincial governors for Gurgan and its dependencies, Mazandaran, Rayy, Balkh and its dependencies, Merv, Tus and Dihistan. There were also domains which belonged personally to the sultan, i.e. crown lands (*amlāk-i khāss*, *amlāk-i khālisāt*), with their own special administration, headed by a *wakīl* (intendant), and their own financial organs.⁴⁶

The relations of Sanjar and his amirs with the Oghuz nomads, who were an appreciable element of the population in Khurasan, northern Jibal and the Caspian provinces, have already been touched upon, and special arrangements were made for the government of those areas where they predominated. The Oghuz felt that they had a particularly close relationship with the sultan, with a right of approaching him directly. At the time when Sanjar's governor in Balkh, °Imād al-Dīn Kumāch, was increasing his harsh demands on them (see above), the Oghuz protested, according to Rāwandī, the historian of the Seljuqs, 'We are the specially close subjects [*ra'īyyat-i khāss*] of the sultans and we do not come under the jurisdiction of anyone else.' Towards the end of Sanjar's reign, the numbers of these Oghuz in Khurasan seem to have increased, and the problem of how to find a place for them in the administrative and social structure of the Seljuq empire became acute; Sanjar's failure to solve it was a major factor in the decline and disappearance of the eastern Seljuq empire by the end of his reign.⁴⁷

The structure of the Khwarazmian state

Material on the internal structure and administrative system of the Khwarazmian state of the line of Anūshtegin is sparse. It stems mainly from the volumes of *inshā'* literature, comprising official letters, investiture diplomas, and so on, stemming from authors who worked under the Khwarazm Shahs like Bahā' al-Dīn Muhammad Baghdādī, who was head of the *dīwān-i inshā'* for °Alā' al-Dīn Tekish and who left us an important collection, the *Kitāb al-Tawassul ilā 'l-tarassul*; and, above all, the famous littérateur Rashīd al-Dīn Muhammad Watwāt (d. ?1182–3), who served Atsiz, Il Arslan and finally Tekish as chief secretary and who compiled two collections of *rasā'il* (epistles), the °*Arā'is al-khawātir* and the *Abkār al-afkār*.

It is a reasonable assumption that the central and provincial administrations of the Khwarazm Shahs, who were themselves originally provincial governors for the Great

⁴⁶ Lambton, 1957; Horst, 1964; Lambton, 1968, pp. 247–69; Klausner, 1973.

⁴⁷ Lambton, 1957; 1968, pp. 245–7.

Seljuqs, were modelled on those of the Seljuqs in Iran and Iraq. The hub of the administration was undoubtedly the *dīwān-i a'ālā* headed by the vizier, with its ancillaries, the chancery, the office of the *mustawfī* and that of the *ʿārid-i lashkar* (inspector-general of the army), as noted above. In the middle decades of the twelfth century the *dīwān-i inshā'* was headed by the great poet and stylist, Rashīd al-Dīn Watwāt. Only towards the end of the dynasty's existence did ʿAlā' al-Dīn Muhammad decide – in c. 1218 according to Nasawī – to dispense, within the territories that he controlled (his estranged mother, Terken Khātūn, was the real ruler in Khwarazm itself), with a vizier. He appointed instead, as an executive body, a council of six (*sitta min al-wakīldāriyya*), who included the *wakīl* of the *khāss* (crown domains) and the *kātib al-inshā'* (chief secretary). The accelerated course of events after this year, with the irruption of the Mongols into Transoxania and beyond, does not allow us to estimate how these new administrative arrangements, involving a more direct personal management by the Khwarazm Shah, would have worked.

As mentioned above, provincial government was in the hands of *wālīs* or *shibnas* appointed by the Khwarazm Shah: those of Farah (in northern Sistan), Turkistan and Bukhara are mentioned under Il Arslan, and those of Jand, Barjanligh-kent (= Barjligh-kent on the Syr Darya between Jand and Signak) and its dependencies, Gurgan, Dihistan and Khwarazm itself under Tekish. The region of Jand, the base for Khwarazmian raids into the Kipchak steppe, was especially important and was often entrusted to the Khwarazm Shah's eldest son and heir. One of the functions of the *wālī* was the organizing of corvée labour for state requirements (*shāhkār*, *bīgār*). As in Seljuq Khurasan, the *ra'īs* was the channel of communication with the local populations, and the appointment of *ru'asā'* by the Khwarazmian chancery is recorded for Dihistan, Gurgan and Khwaf in Kuhistan.⁴⁸

The historical sources say little of daily life and the condition of the ordinary people at this time. They report widespread devastation in the Khurasanian towns by the Oghuz towards the end of Sanjar's reign. The reports of thousands of casualties may be exaggerated, but the destruction of several mosques, *madrasas* and important libraries in Nishapur is attested, such as that of the Sabuniyya *madrasa*, where a copy of the celebrated 100-volume compendium of Qur'anic sciences, made nearly two centuries before for the Saffarid amir Khalaf b. Ahmad, perished, according to the biographer al-Sam'ānī. Similar losses continued in the ensuing disorders in Khurasan even after Ay Aba had restored some order. Khwarazm itself continued to flourish agriculturally at this time, while ethnically becoming more and more Turkicized, so that the indigenous Iranian Khwarazmian language shrank until it apparently disappeared in the fourteenth century. The geographer and traveller Yāqūt, writing just after the Mongol devastation of Khwarazm, stated that

⁴⁸ Kafesoğlu, 1956, pp. 205–14; Horst, 1964.

when he had been in Gurganj in 1219, he had never seen a richer or fairer city in the world than the Khwarazmian capital; and he found the Khwarazmian countryside extraordinarily fertile, filled with settlements which had markets and an abundance of food. Soviet excavations there seem to show an extension of cultivation based on irrigation canals during the twelfth century.⁴⁹

As the Khwarazm Shahs built up their realm into what was, by the end of the twelfth century, the most powerful empire of the eastern Islamic world, the pace of centralization within the state increased. The urgent need for money to finance military expansion led to much hardship and disaffection, certainly outside Khwarazm itself. Wherever the Khwarazmian armies penetrated, they established a reputation for violence and extortion which made them highly unpopular and a focus for popular hatred; in none of the provinces they conquered did the Khwarazm Shahs ever succeed in creating a bond of interest between themselves and their subjects. In their sporadic attempts to expand into Transoxania at the expense of the Karakhanids and Kara Khitay, the Khwarazm Shahs were nevertheless often at pains to conciliate the powerful orthodox Sunni religious authorities in the Transoxanian towns. At Bukhara, for instance, an influential line of local *ʿulamāʾ* the *Āl-i Burhān*, rose to power in the first half of the twelfth century as *ruʿasāʾ* of the city, holding also the religious title of *sudūr* (sing, *sadr*; ‘eminences’). At times, they held more authority within the town than the Karakhanid secular rulers, and in 1207, Burhān al-Dīn Muhammad b. Ahmad, called Sadr-i Jahān, actually collected taxation there on behalf of the Kara Khitay, as the real rulers in the town. When Tekish was at Bukhara in 1182, he acknowledged in his edicts the spiritual authority of the religious leaders there; and although, when Tekish and *ʿAlāʾ* al-Dīn Muhammad embarked on their anti-caliphal policies in western Iran, they could no longer count on Sunni Muslim religious support, within Transoxania they were able to pose as the defenders of Islam against the pagan Kara Khitay.⁵⁰

⁴⁹ Tolstov, 1953, pp. 295–317; Bulliet, 1972, pp. 76–81.

⁵⁰ *EIr*, ‘Āl-e Borhān’.