

Political situation of Khorasan & Transoxiana in the late ninth century and beginning of tenth century in Muhammad ibn Jarir Al-tabari's view

Ezzatollah Khodadadi

Department of History, Shoushtar Branch, Islamic Azad University, Shoushtar, Iran

ABSTRACT: samanids who tract back their ancestry to bahram chubin, are the descendants of saman khodat. he was among influential figures in transoxiana that approached the governor of khorasan(Asad ibn Abdullah ghashri) and converted to islam during the rule of Umayyad caliph, hisham ibu abdul malik-he had four sons named Nuh, Ahmad, yahya, and Elyas) who were favored by ma'mun. the governor of khorasan, ghassan ibu ebad, granted them each a rule in 204 AH. With the beginning of tahirid reign in 206 AH, taheer would retain their previous positions. Since samanid era has been among the brightest and most effective periods in Iranian history in terms of political, economic, and social aspects having a significant impact on history of Iran, and also because samanids have caused major political, economic and social changes, as well as high importance and credibility in foreign and domestic relationships in their period, if this era and its events are measured in works of a great impartial author as tabari, it will add to its value and validity. given the particular political conditions in dealing with Iranian and Persian emerging local powers and also, considering the contributions of samanids in scientific and cultural prosperity and development of Iran whose obvious reason is the growth and emergence of great scientists in this era more than any other eras, the revival of Persian literature and culture which can be clearly inferred from the works of other historians and authors as well as any place in tabari history, could not be realized except it would be aligned with the will of samanid rulers (Amirs) and kings. **political situation of Khorasan & Transoxiana in the late ninth century and beginning of tenth century in Muhammad ibn Jarir Al-tabari's view*** *Academ Arena* 2013;5(11):20-23] (ISSN 1553-992X). <http://www.sciencepub.net/academia>. 4

KEYWORDS: politics, samanids, khorasan, tabari

Introduction

Since tarikh al-tabari (tabari history) is considered one of the main sources in this historical period and it has been written in Arabic, it is important in terms of identification of Iran history, and through investigating it, we can clarify this juncture in history. Since the purpose of this study is to carefully investigate the political situation in the era of samanids in Muhammad ibn jarir Al-tabari's view, we mostly focus on his great work(tabari history) to help us clearly investigate, put light on, and obtain the result in Muhammad ibn jarir al-tabari's view in his historically valuable work, "history of the prophets and kings(popularly know tarikh al-tabari)", and compare it with other sources so that we could investigate and analyze the political situation in the era of samanids from different aspects and with more confidence and support. political situation of Khorasan & Transoxiana in the late ninth century and beginning of tenth century in Muhammad ibn Jarir Al-tabari's view*.

Political history of samanids:

1-Ssamanids originated from saman, a village in Samarkand. They were originally Zoroastrians and local rulers of Persia. According to most historians, samanids are the ascendants of bahram chubin, the famous general of fourth hormuz and KHosrow Parviz. Saman khoda, the ancestor of the samanid rulers, was first a cameleer. then, being highly

ambitious as Yaqub leyss seffari, he turned to banditry and chivalry and came to power in shash, where is now Tashkent. During the rule of Asad ibn Abdullah qasri over khorasan in the period of hisham ibn Abd al-malik reign, he converted to Islam and called his son, Asad. The rule of this dynasty, in terms of political developments for gaining political power, begins from early third century AH(9th century AD) when ma'mun the Abbasid caliph in that time gave parts of khorasan and transoxiana to samind dynasty, and lasts till 287 AH(900 AD), the zenith of samanid power. One of the political practices used by Abbasid caliphs was to appoint non-Arabs in sensitive positions. In time of ma'mun, Asad along with his four sons, nuh, Ahmad, Elyas, and Yahya came int ma'mun's service. the caliph(ma'mun) appointed Assad's sons each in a position. He (ma'mun) granted Samarkand to Nuh, forghana to Ahmad, shash to Yahya, and herat to Elyas. Asad ibn Abdullah qasri passed away in 120 AH(738AD) due to illness. Recommended by the caliph, tahirids left them independent in their positions and promoted their positions. Samanids would like to link their race to sassanids 1-nasr ibn Ahmed (261 AH/875 AD-279AH/892 AD): Nasr headed his six brothers, and they become all obedient to him (Nasr was their elder brother). In 261 AH, caliph motamed abbasi officially sent him charter of governing over transoxiana, and Nasr moved to Samarkand as his residence and sent

his brother Ismail to Bukhara as his successor and appointed his brothers each a city to rule over. Nasr ibn Ahmad samani came to tabaristan in 214 AH(829 AD) to completely eliminate the minor Daei. given the extent of the country, samanids used to appoint plenipotentiary representatives in provinces. Tabari provides short but useful information about Nasr ibn Ahmad samani, as he indicates his death and his succession.

2-Ismail ibn Ahmad (279 AH/892 AD – 295 AH/908 AD): Nasr ibn Ahmad passed away in this year and thus, his brother Ismail ibn Ahmad took over the task that he (Nasr) was responsible for across the Balkh river. Ismail long reigned with justice by the command of his elder brother, Nasr, in Bukhara. He showed his respect to Nasr till Rafe ibn Harsameh left neyshabour and delivered speeches in the name of Muhammad ibn zaid talebi and his father in khorasan.in order to approach Ismail who had captured neyshabour and northern khorasan, he became a friend of Ismail. This friendship turned into an alliance. some malicious persons reported to Nasr that Ismail was going to obtain rule over Samarkand and overthrow him (Nasr) and become the ruler (Amir) of the whole transoxiana. this caused Nasr to send troops to suppress ismail. since Ismail was not able to stand against Nasr, he sought help from rafe ibn harsameh. the two brothers were reconciled with the mediation of harsameh. however after a little while the war between these two began again in 275 AH (888 AD), Ismail defeated nasr and captured him near Bukhara, though he respected his defeated brother, Nasr, and retained him as Samarkand ruler and continued to be the ruler of Bakhara and remained obedient to Nasr until he (Nasr) died in 279 AH (892 AD). Tabari, Hamzeh Esfahani, Ibn Asir, Ibn jowzi, and other have mentioned that Nasr was died in 279 AH (892 AD), so it is closer to the truth. Ismail added Samarkand to his territory and became the independent Amir(ruler) of transoxiana. in this year, the news of Nasr's death spread everywhere and Ismail took the responsibilities of his deceased brother. In short, important events in the period of Ismail samani are as follows: 1- the battle between Ismail and Amr ibn al-layth safari and defeating Amr by Ismail in Jumada al-Awol 287 AH (may 900 AD). When caliph motamed heard the news, he admired Ismail and denounced Amr. 2-the battle between Ismail and Muhammad ibn zaid. In this war, Ismail took a lot of captives, got lots of booty, killed many Alavis and defeated and killed Muhammad ibn zaid. Also, he invaded Gorgan and tabarestan and dominated on them in 287 AH (900 AD), that is, the year in which Amir Ismail samani defeated Amr ibn layth safari. That is, defeating Amr ibn al-layth by Ismail and involvement of the strong caliph made Nasr

ibn samani capture tabarestan, however, samanids made peace with great Nasser.

3- Ismail military campaign to exterminate Muhammad ibn harun in 288 AH(9.1 AD) in tabaristan and defeating him and his companions, because muhammad ibn Harun had rebelled against Ismail and attempted to capture rey and ghazvin.4- Ismail military campaign in Turkish land and conquering the city of kings and capturing khatoon (the king's wife) and 10000 people and killing and injuring many people of that land as well as gaining a lot at booty such that any cavalry received a thousand dirhams. Khwaja nizam al-mulk describes Ismail as follows: "he was very fair and he had many good characteristics and honestly believed in the exalted god. He was also generous as dervishes".

Tabari has presented rather comprehensive information and explanations about the political struggles of Ismail samani. For example, the conflict between Amir Ismail, Amr ibn al-layth, Muhammad ibn Harun, and rafe ibn Harsameh has been well mentioned in his work.3-Abu Nasr Ahmad ibn Ismail (295 AH/908AD-301 AH/914- AD): after the death of his father, Ahmad ibn Ismail was officially recognized as the ruler of khorasan by the caliph muktafi's order. the country's leaders and commanders pledged their allegiance to him.his first goal was to conquer Rey. Secondly he captured his uncle Ishagh ibn Ahmad, the ruler of Samarkand who apparently was going to revolt, so he imprisoned him. Nasr ibn Ahmad's huncles and cousins each wrote letters to the caliph demanding the rule over one area of khorasan. Ahmad ibn Ismail also made great bares, the agent of gorgan who had refused to pay tribute, escape without any battle. Ahmad ibn Ismail organized the chaos in systan caused by layth ibn Ali ibn layth. in the same year (2988 AH/911 AD), he punished sobkeri and surrendered the city of zaranj, headquarters of safari army. Among important events during his reign, we can mention conquering sistan or sakestan through which samanid territory reached its peak. Another important event was authoritative confronting with the turks and suppressing them. Ahmad ibn Ismail defeated the turks and regained the properties. The last great event which occurred during the lifetime of Ahmad ibn Ismail was the rebellion of tabaristan Alavis led by great Nasser in 301 AH (914 AD). Tabari's narratives have also been mentioned in history of ibn Athir and history of Gordizi which confirms what have been said by Muhammad ibn jarir al-tabari.4- Nasr ibn Ahmad (301 AH/914AD/331 AH/943 AD): after the death of the father, his son Nasr who was only 8 year of age came to power. He selected the title of "saeid". At the beginning of his reign, many rebellions were mady by samanid dynasty to seize power. however, Nasr had two privileges:

firstly, nasr was officially recognized by the caliph, and secondly, he had a competent minister as jehani who was clever and smart and highly supported Nasr. The largest uprising took place by Ishagh ibn Ahmad Alavi, his uncle, who was captured after a hard battle. Ishagh ibn Ahmad was defeated by a Nasr ibn Ahmad's generalissimo called Hamaviah. Another uprising was led by Hossein ibn Ali Marvroudi. One other rebellion was an uprising of the people of sistan dominance of Alavis over Rey and central parts of Iran made samanids take action. The samanid empire sent an army commanded by As far ibn shiraviah with the mission of capturing tabaristan. With the eradication of tabaristan Alavis, tabaristan and Gorgan were annexed to samanid territory. in 321 AH (933 AD).

Mardavij mad peace with samanids who captured Gorgan and Ray. 5-Nuh ibn Nasr (331 AH/943 AD-343 AH/945 AD):the weakness of the samanid dynasty revealed in his period. The main cause of weakness was the efforts of khorasan generalissimos- who had the position of commanding samanid army-to make dominant Borzouyeh and bureaucratic system. Another cause was seizing power by turks and weakness of Iranian peasants. In addition, conflicts between Turkish and Iranian Amirs(rulers) to acquire position and rule over khorasan were other causes of weakness. in addition to Ismailis, the main problem faced by nuh ibn nasr was uprising of Abu ali choghani, a well-known generalissimo from the family of Persian peasants. During (33,AH/948 AD-337AH/949AD), there were clashes between the armies of nuh and Abu ali choghani, but finally, they made peace. The main causes of war between samanids and Buwayhids(also known as Buyid dynasty) were the tendency of the two sides for extending their territory, as well as religious difference and agitations by ziyarids (ziyarid dynasty) led by ziyarid vashmgir.Ibn Athir in his book entitled "Al-kamil", provides us with good information and knowledge on samanid relationships at this point of time. Also, gordizi in his book entitle".zin al-Akbar(the best news)", mentions the same thing.(6)-Abu al-favares Abdulmalik ibn nuh (343 AH/954AD-350 AH/961 AD): Abdul Malik came to power in a critical condition. By reinstating Abu saeid Bakr ibn Malik forghani, he tried to consolidate his position. Bakr ibn malik made great progress in khorasan, but in 345 AH (95,AD)he was killed by Albtakin charging with being qarmation⁽¹⁾.(7)-Abu saleh Mansour ibn nuh (350 AH/961AD-365 AH /976,AD): Afer the death of Abdulmalik, Known as Amir Rashid, his son became king with the support of Albtakin. However, some other wanted Abu saleh Mansour ibn nuh, the brother of Abdul Malik, to be the king. Albtakin got discontent with the situation and left for ghazni city and founded ghaznavid dynasty. In the days of king

Abu saleh Mansour ibn nuh, a roman origin slave nemrd faiq khaseh made great effort. (8)- Abu al-ghasem nuh ibn Mansour (365 AH/976AD-387AH/997AD):After the demise of mansour ibn nuh, his 13 year old son, nuh ibn Mansour (nuh II), know as "Amir razi" came to power. Nuh was a supported and advocate of scientists (scholars) and poets. (9)-Abu al-Harith Mansour ibn nuh (387 AH/997AD-389AH/999 AD):Mansour ibn nuh (Mansour II) had been selected as his father's successor when his father was still alive. Following his father's death, he appointed Abu muzaffar Muhammad ibn Ibrahim marashi as his minister. The countrys commanders and leaders banded together and asked Ilak khan, the king of Turkestan to come to Bukhara. By bringing Ilak khan to Bukhara, courtiers undermined Mansour and dominated on him comoletely.10-Abu al-favares Abdu Malik ibn nuh (12th of safar,389AH/7th of February, 999AD-Dhu Al Qaeda, 389AH/October,999AD): After Mansour, his little brother became the king. When mahmuod ghaznavi heard the news of the overthrow and killing of Mansour, he imposed a major defeat on Baktowzen and Faiq. Ilak khan captured them all. After a while, Abdul Malik ibn nuh died in prison and thus, the samanid dynasty disappeared. Turks become more dominant over transoxiana and the land of scientists and great men was lost.

Major causes of the collapse of the samanid dynasty:

1-one of the biggest reasons for the fall of dynasties including samanids is wars, hostility, and conflicts between those who ought to guard and back up the country.

2-disagreement and conflicts between ministers, generalissimos, Amirs, heads of courts, and empowerment of Turkish Amirs and slaves.

3-some of Amirs were very young 5- expectation of local kings for more freedom of action and non-obedience to the central political power. 6- public discontent with the social situation, tyranny of rulers, and injustice of government officials.7- pressure of heavy taxes and lack of government support for the public 8-fighting of hard-working people, sowers, and artisans aimed at collapsing the government which resulted from intense class conflict.9-tendency to luxury life and extreme comfort (10)-out of border wars, and conflicts with neighboring states. (11)-insecurity in provinces and cities. (12)-prevailing adulation and flattery in samanid system. 13-dominance and superiority of Turkish army and their influence in the administration.14-disintegration of political unity in samanid state 15-increased uprising of commanders 16-invasion of Qarakhanids (Afrasiab dynasty) to transoxiana and Bukhara. 17-weakness of the ruling system, and political and military dominance of

ghaznavids 18-coup committed by baktowzen, faiq, and aristocrats to overthrow Mansour II.(19)-disagreements between samanids and buyids whose main reason was poor diplomacy of samanids. (20)-the crisis of poverty in the fourth century AH(11th century AD).

CONCLUSION:

Al-tabari has not mentioned anything about cultural, economic, agricultural, and religious issues in tahirid period. he just gives a rather extensive and event between tahirids and their competitors, and tahirids and caliphs in tahirid era. He also provides a short explanation about political events in general, and major political events in specific. Muhammad ibn jarir al-tabari has provided some good pieces of information on political issues and struggles over power in late 9th century AH and early 10th century AH. Though tabari's narratives may be short and brief compared to the source of "al-kamil" by ibn Athir, they contain very useful and significant information regarding political situation in samanid era. Much of the writings of al-tabari have also been mentioned in his contemporary sources and in books of historians after him. This adds to the importance and validity of "the history of the prophets and kings" and confirms its accounts.

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11/2/2013