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Framing the conquest: Bactrian local rulers and Arab muslim domination of Bactria (31-128 AH/651-746 CE)

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Chapter Four: Conquests Through Violence: Second Fifty Years (86–128/705–746)

If you want to be the governor of Khurasan, then mount your horse, hold the lariat strong, beat him so hard that the horse enters the fire, if you can't do this, then go back.⁶⁹²

Introduction

This chapter covers the second fifty years (86–128/705–746) of the Arab Muslim presence in Bactria. This period is characterised by a change in Umayyad policy towards the eastern Iranian regions, namely Bactria, Sogdiana, and Khwarazm. Unlike the first fifty years in which the Arab Muslim forces peacefully interacted with local Bactrian rulers and used western Bactria as a safe passage to raid Sogdiana, the new Umayyad policy aimed for direct control over these regions by systematic conquests and their incorporation into the Umayyad empire. The incorporation of these regions would allow the Umayyads to control all main overland trade routes crossed these regions and connect to India, China, and the western parts of the empire. The Umayyads conquered the region by carrying out diplomacy and violence side by side, consolidating their authority by forming a standing army, establishing a network of garrisons within or near the main cities, and appointing administrators in the conquered regions. By focussing on Bactria, this chapter examines how such incorporation was achieved. Similarly, it tries to understand how this new policy interacted with local interests.

Before examining this historical turn, I should add some words about the sources consulted for this chapter. This chapter keeps the areas of political control and local power politics (discussed in chapters two and three) in mind, and I thus rely more on the traditional historical narratives because they allow me to explain the next fifty-year period of the Arab Muslim presence in Khurasan that continued to be fundamentally impacted by local concerns. By reading the Arabic historical narratives with specific attention to the local voices preserved in these reports, I posit answers to the following questions: How did Umayyad policy change towards the eastern Iranian regions, and how did this interact with local interests in creating Umayyad Khurasan?

This chapter attempts to explain the complexity of power dynamics in the region in three parts. I begin with the changes in Umayyad policies towards the East. The new power

⁶⁹² Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'riḫ*, 7: 52

balance among Arab tribal leaders in Khurasan, the formation of the conquest armies, and the first round of the conquests will be discussed. In the second part, I will focus on Bactrian local rulers' responses to the conquests, and the subsequent Umayyad reaction. In the third part, I will explain the final Bactrian attempts to restore their rule independent of the Umayyads during the political crisis created when the Türgesh Turks went to war with the Umayyads. This part presents the political chaos in which Bactrian local rulers eventually decided to support the caliphate, but not the Umayyad dynasty, and prepared to bring the Abbasids to power.

4.1. The Umayyads' new policy towards the East

In 86/705, al-Ḥajjāj b. Yūsuf al-Thaqafī, the governor of Iraq and the East (*al-mashriq*), appointed Qutayba b. Muslim al-Bāhilī (d. 96/715) as governor over Khurasan.⁶⁹³ Qutayba belonged to the tribe of Bāhila, which was part of the Muḍr. Other Arabs considered the Bāhila as an undignified and unworthy tribe.⁶⁹⁴ However, Qutayba's family was known for its loyalty to the Umayyads, and Qutayba's father had helped Ibn Ziyād in Iraq. Before coming to Khurasan, Qutayba proved his loyalty and capability by serving al-Ḥajjāj in Iraq, Sistan, and Rayy.⁶⁹⁵ The appointment of Qutayba with such a background in Khurasan reflected a change in Umayyad policy towards professional administrators who did not have elite backgrounds, but were loyal and capable to carry out administrative duties in Khurasan.⁶⁹⁶ Until that time, the governors of Khurasan had often been relatives of the caliphs or important tribal leaders. Choosing someone solely for his achievements in politics and military affairs started a new chapter. Al-Ḥajjāj was determined to expand the empire in the east and bring local rulers

⁶⁹³ On his biography, see Jean Périer, *Vie d'Al-Ḥadjjāj ibn Yūsuf (41–95 de l'hégire, 661–714 de J.-C.) d'après les sources arabes* (Paris: Librairie Émile Bouillon, Éditeur, 1904); Shiv Ray Chowdhry, "Al-Ḥajjāj b. Yūsuf: an examination of his works and personality" (PhD diss., University of Delhi, 1972); Iḥsān Ṣidqī Al-'Amad, *Al-Ḥajjāj b. Yūsuf al-Thaqafī, ḥayātih-i wa ārā'hu al-siyāsiyya* (Beirut: Dār al-Thiqāfa, 1973); Z. I. Oseni, "An Examination of Al-Ḥajjāj b. Yūsuf al-Thaqafī's Major Policies," *Islamic Studies* 27, no. 4 (Winter 1988): 317–327; Pamela Marketa Klasova, "Empire through Language: al-Ḥajjāj b. Yūsuf al-Thaqafī and the Power of Oratory in Umayyad Iraq" (PhD diss., Georgetown University, 2018).

⁶⁹⁴ Abī Sa'd 'Abd al-Karīm b. Muḥammad al-Sama'ānī, *Al-ansāb*, ed. 'Abd Allāh 'Umar al-Bārūdī (Beirut: Dār al-Janān, 1408/1988), 2: 275.

⁶⁹⁵ J. Hell, "Bāhila," *Encyclopedia of Islam, First Edition*, <https://referenceworks.brillonline.com> (accessed on 16 February 2021).

⁶⁹⁶ Shaban, *The Abbāsīd Revolution*, 63; Appointing Qutayba as the governor of Khurasan shows that the Umayyads changed their policy from relying on high elites to creating a class of professional administrators who did not have an elite background. It recalls the Sasanian reformation and creation of the *dihqān* class. For the Umayyad's policy in bringing up officers from non-elite backgrounds, see Petra Sijpesteijn, "Closing Ranks: Discipline and Loyalty in the Umayyad Army," in *Acts of Rebellion and Revolt in the Early Islamic Caliphate*, ed. Petra Sijpesteijn and Alon Dar, Special Issue, *Al-'Uṣūr al-Wuṣṭā* 30 (2022): 469–499.

residing in it under Umayyad rule. The unification of the eastern regions under the Umayyad banner required both political and military preparations.

The new policy was primarily the result of political stability brought to the western regions of the empire.⁶⁹⁷ The second *fitna* (61–73/680–692) ended with the victory of ‘Abd al-Malik over Ibn Zubayr,⁶⁹⁸ and the suppression of anti-Umayyad rebels in Iraq.⁶⁹⁹ The victory of ‘Abd al-Malik opened a new chapter in the history of the Umayyad period, and this was associated with the physical growth of the empire. To implement imperial expansion in the east and the incorporation of its local rulers, al-Hajjāj sent Qutayba, his most loyal and capable general, to Khurasan.

The expansion of the empire in the east had benefits. It would allow the Umayyads to control the great trade centres in Bactria and Sogdiana. The main overland trade routes between China, India, and Iran crossed Bactria and Sogdiana. Unification of these regions would also bring them within the Umayyad empire and reduce the possibility of any invasions from the steppes that often disturbed the Sasanians in the past. We saw in the previous chapter that the Arab Muslim migration to Khurasan was to secure the region from such kinds of military entrustments. However, achieving these goals was not easy. The conquest of these regions required the loyalty and cooperation of Arab tribal leaders in the frontier region of Khurasan, a standing army, and logistical support. Likewise, consolidating Umayyad authority in the conquered regions and bringing local rulers under Umayyad control needed a network of garrisons. These were significant challenges for Qutayba. In this part, I will explain how Qutayba achieved all these one by one.

4.1.1 Making a new political order in Khurasan

The first challenge was to bring the Arab tribal leaders of Khurasan firmly under the caliphal authority. This required creating a new political order among them to ensure that they did not revolt against the Umayyad caliph. Before Qutayba’s arrival, the Azd and Tamīm were the leading tribes in Khurasan, and they almost exclusively occupied all important offices. In the previous chapter, I explained that the Muhallabids were the most significant obstacle to al-

⁶⁹⁷ Haug, *The Eastern Frontier*, 114.

⁶⁹⁸ For the second *fitna*, see Madelung, *The Succession of Muhammad*; Chase Robinson, *Abd al-Malik: Makers of the Muslim World* (Oxford: OneWorld, 2005).

⁶⁹⁹ For these rebellions, see Ibrāhīm Baydūn, *Min dawlat ‘Umar ilā dawlat ‘Abd al-Malik: dirāsāt fī takawwun al-ijāhāt al-siyyāsiyya fī al-qarn al-awwal al-hijrī* (Beirut: Dār al-Nihdat al-‘Arabiyya, 1411/1991), 250–286.

Ḥajjāj’s expansionist aims. The Muhallabids were loyal to ‘Abd al-Malik, directly responding to his commands, and ignoring al-Ḥajjāj because they considered themselves senior leaders of the conquests and turned Khurasan into their fiefdom. Moreover, the Muhallabids were not pro-war but pro-peace and supported investment in local infrastructure. Therefore, any political change or military operation in the east had to be done with their consent and cooperation. The death of ‘Abd al-Malik and the coming of al-Walīd I (r. 86–96/705–715) to power provided the opportunity for al-Ḥajjāj to take on the Muhallabids because they lost their greatest supporter.⁷⁰⁰ With the help of the new caliph, al-Ḥajjāj managed to dismiss Yazīd b. al-Muhallab from Khurasan and replace him with his half-brother al-Mufaḍḍal b. al-Muhallab as a transitional governor. Removing Yazīd from his position allowed al-Ḥajjāj to create a new power balance between the Arab tribes in Khurasan.⁷⁰¹

The success or failure of al-Ḥajjāj’s policy of imperial expansion depended on Qutayba’s ability to alter the power dynamics in Khurasan.⁷⁰² Before his arrival, the Southern Arabs, namely the tribes of Azd and Tamīm, occupied all important administrative positions and supported the Muhallabids. According to the third/ninth-century local Khurasani historian Abū al-Ḥusayn ‘Alī b. Aḥmad al-Sullāmī, the author of *Akhbār Wulāt Khurāsān* (“Reports concerning the governors of Khurasan”), the Azd and Tamīm were numerous in Khurasan but followed their local interests.⁷⁰³ They could form an opposition to the new Umayyad policy. In contrast, the Northern Arabs, i.e., the tribes of ‘Abd al-Qays, Rabī‘a, and Muḍr were fewer in number but more loyal to the caliph. To change the tribal power balance, Qutayba had to reduce the power of the Azd and Tamīm and support the Northern Arab leaders. This is the reason that Ibn A‘atham al-Kūfī mentions that the leaders of the Azd and Tamīm resented the arrival of Qutayba, but it became a reason for the happiness of ‘Abd al-Qays who saw Qutayba as their ally.⁷⁰⁴ Apparently, they knew that he would change the tribal power balance in Khurasan.

To reduce the power of the Azd and Tamīm, Qutayba removed their leaders, particularly the Muhallabids. Al-Ya‘qūbī mentions that al-Ḥajjāj ordered Qutayba to arrest al-Mufaḍḍal and the rest of the Muhallabids, and send them to Iraq handcuffed (*fa-yahmiluhum*

⁷⁰⁰ Ibn al-A‘tham al-Kūfī has explained the Muhallabids’ relation with ‘Abd al-Malik and the impact of ‘Abd al-Malik’s death on them (Ibn al-A‘tham al-Kūfī, *Futūḥ*, 7: 134–135).

⁷⁰¹ Ibn al-A‘tham al-Kūfī, *Futūḥ*, 7: 130–133.

⁷⁰² Al-Sullāmī, *Akhbār Wulāt Khurāsān*, 109.

⁷⁰³ Al-Sullāmī, *Akhbār Wulāt Khurāsān*, 100.

⁷⁰⁴ In Ibn A‘atham al-Kūfī’s words: *falam yakun bi Khurāsān Qaysīyyun illā istabshara bi wilāyatihi wa lā Yamāni illā karaha dhālika* (Ibn A‘atham al-Kūfī, *Futūḥ*, 7:135).

ilayhi fī al-asfād).⁷⁰⁵ A similar report is given in other Arabic sources.⁷⁰⁶ Qutayba arrested the Muhallabids he found in Marw, and destroyed the garden palace that was constructed there by Yazīd b. al-Muhallab and turned it into a place for keeping camels.⁷⁰⁷ The removal of the Muhallabids sent a clear message to all tribal leaders in Khurasan that this group was no longer in charge. It also reduced any possibility of an Azdi uprising.

After the Azd, Qutayba turned towards the Tamīm. He arrested ‘Uthmān b. Mas‘ūd al-Tamīmī, who had a family connection to the Hephthalites through marriage. Qutayba sent him to Iraq, where he died in al-Ḥajjāj’s prison in 91/711.⁷⁰⁸ He also dismissed Wakī‘ b. al-Aswad al-Tamīmī from his position.⁷⁰⁹ Qutayba’s harsh attitude towards the Azd and Tamīm scared all other tribesmen and brought them under his command. In other words, in the new political order, the Umayyad imperial representatives took control of political affairs and pushed the local representatives to the corner. The change in tribal political dynamics reflected the Umayyad’s new policy, which was different from the Muhallabid period of governorship. According to al-Sullāmī, Yazīd b. al-Muhallab’s policy was “generosity and tolerance” (*akrama wa-asmaḥa*), but Qutayba changed it to “raid and conquest” (*aghzā wa-aftaḥa*).⁷¹⁰ Qutayba’s presence in Marw showed that the age of peace was over, and the time of war had arrived. Once the tribal leaders came under control, Qutayba started consolidating armies to assist in expanding the empire to the east.

4.1.2 Forming armies of the conquests

The second challenge for Qutayba was to form a large standing army to conquer the eastern Iranian regions. Unlike his predecessors, who often brought new forces from Iraq or Syria, Qutayba did not bring any troops. Instead, he had to form his army by using the existing military forces in Khurasan. On the authority of the Bāhila people, al-Ṭabarī mentions that when Qutayba arrived in Marw, the army was scattered, and there was not much war equipment.⁷¹¹ Though the Bāhilis exaggerated it - the Muhallabids had after all enough forces

⁷⁰⁵ Al-Ya‘qūbī, *Kitāb al-buldān*, 82; Al-Ya‘qūbī gives similar narrative in his *Ta’rīkh*, 2: 208.

⁷⁰⁶ Ibn A‘tham al-Kūfī, *Futūḥ*, 7: 133; Ibn al-Athīr, *Al-kāmil fī al-ta’rīkh*, 4: 227.

⁷⁰⁷ Fāmī mentions that when the *marzbān* of Marw objected to him, he said that Yazīd’s father was a gardener (*būstān bān*), but his father was a camel keeper (*ushtur bān*) (Fāmī, *Tārīkh-i Herāt*, 6).

⁷⁰⁸ Ibn A‘tham al-Kūfī, *Futūḥ*, 7: 142–143.

⁷⁰⁹ Later, Waikī‘ b. Abī al-Aswad arranged a plot and killed Qutayba (al-Sullāmī, *Akhbār Wulāt Khurāsān*, 114–115).

⁷¹⁰ Al-Sullāmī, *Akhbār Wulāt Khurāsān*, 103–104.

⁷¹¹ Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta’rīkh*, 8: 1180.

to fight the *nizak* and the king of Guzgan, an achievement that required military prowess - it still shows that the Muhallabids had forces in Khurasan. Nevertheless, these did not number nor were they ready for a systematic conquest.

To create the conquest army, Qutayba had to reorganise the Arab tribal forces and form different divisions. In doing so, Qutayba followed the Basra model of tribal organisation in which the tribesmen were divided into five tribal groups: Azd, Tamīm, Bakr, ‘Abd al-Qays, and *ahl al-‘āliya*. This was the first reorganisation of the army in Khurasan.⁷¹² The new army was small, but gradually enlarged in the course of time after recruiting new soldiers. Al-Balādhurī, al-Ṭabarī and Ibn A‘tham al-Kūfī mention that the forces of Khurasan exceeded 47,000 soldiers when Qutayba was killed in 96/715.⁷¹³ Did Qutayba begin the conquests with the small reorganised forces he created in 86/705? The answer is negative. He needed more forces.

Whatever form it took, Qutayba’s new army could not fight multiple Bactrian and Sogdian rulers in different geographical conditions. Qutayba’s next move attests that he was aware of the fact that he needed many more men. He started to recruit locals. He recruited *mawālī* and put them under the command of Ḥayyān al-Nabaṭī (d. 102/720–21), a Daylamite by origin. The *mawālī*, as Haug has argued, were not necessarily local Khurasanis who had entered into a dependent relationship (*wilāya*) with the Arabs, but many of them would have come to Khurasan with the Arab Muslims. They spoke different languages and were alien to the region compared to those Arabs who had already settled there.⁷¹⁴ Next, Qutayba began recruiting non-Muslims from Marw and registering them in the *dīwān al-jund*, or the army register of stipends. Al-Mufaḍḍal, when he wanted to remove Mūsā from Tirmidh earlier, had already made a start at this, but Qutayba expanded it to include recruits from Inner Khurasan; namely Abarshahr, Abiward, Sarakhs and Herat. He also introduced a kind of military corvée-labour, forcing non-Muslim local authorities to provide him with a specific number of soldiers to fight in his summer campaigns, then return to their residencies in the winter. These seasonal forces were not registered in the *dīwān al-jund* but possibly received their shares from the war booties and were paid by their local authorities.⁷¹⁵ In the next chapter (5.1.2), I will discuss the army’s organisation in more detail. Once the forces were ready, Qutayba needed to ensure that

⁷¹² Shaban, *The ‘Abbāsīd Revolution*, 54–65.

⁷¹³ Al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-buldān*, 433; Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta’rīkh*, 8: 1290–1291; Ibn A‘tham al-Kūfī, *Futūḥ*, 7: 176.

⁷¹⁴ Haug, *The Eastern Frontier*, 115.

⁷¹⁵ Shaban, *The ‘Abbāsīd Revolution*, 65.

his army could cross western Bactria safely. That required the cooperation of the western Bactrian local rulers, and this brings us to the third challenge that Qutayba managed to solve.

4.1.3 Interaction with Bactrian local rulers to facilitate the conquests

Qutayba had two routes to reach Sogdiana. The first route connected Marw to the Bukhara oasis via the Kara-Kum Desert, for which the armies had to cross the Amu Darya. It was about a 400 km journey in the desert.⁷¹⁶ The second option was to go along the Marw al-Rūd, traverse Guzgan and Balkh, cross the Amu Darya and the Iron Gate located in Ghaghaniyan, before reaching Bukhara. This route was about a 1,200 km journey long.⁷¹⁷ The Umayyads did not take the first route but constantly used a long route round. The reason for avoiding the first route was possibly because of the logistical challenge of taking along the many supplies that this route would have required such as drinking water, fresh grass for their animals, and food for their soldiers. In contrast, the second route had access to the river, and crossed the plains of western Bactria which provided rich grasslands for the armies.⁷¹⁸ However, crossing western Bactria and reaching Sogdiana required the cooperation of Bactrian local rulers. This necessitated Qutayba's direct interaction with Bactrian local kings. He already had the experience of dealing with local rulers before coming to Khurasan.⁷¹⁹ Here, he had to deal with

⁷¹⁶ This is according to the modern motorway.

⁷¹⁷ This is according to the modern motorway.

⁷¹⁸ The northern Badghis were the ideal grasslands even during the Mongol period (Sayf b. Muḥammad b. Ya'qūb al-Herawī, *Tārīkh-nāma-yi Herāt*, ed. Ghulām Rizā Ṭabāṭabāyī Majd (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Asāṭir, 1383/2004), 345, 575.

⁷¹⁹ Qutayba was the first Umayyad governor who came to Khurasan via the Rayy-Nishapur route, about a 1,000 km journey (the modern-day motorway from modern Rey to Nishapur to Merv follows the old route). This route was blocked for almost half a century, and the Arabs often went to Khurasan via the Kirman-Nishapur route (al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, 5: 2839). Qutayba's travels via this route was the outcome of political events that happened shortly before he arrived in the region, and it shows how the Arabs and local rulers cooperated. The fourth/tenth-century historian Ḥasan b. Muḥammad b. Ḥasan al-Qummī, in his *Tārīkh-i Qum* ("History of Qum"), mentions that the Daylamites, the inhabitants of the southern part of the Caspian Sea, used to raid Qum. However, in 700–701, a group of the Ash'ariyya people who were harassed by al-Ḥajjāj for their support of Ibn al-Ash'ath (d. 85/704) arrived in Qum and pushed back the Daylamite attackers. The Zoroastrian elites of Qum, led by Yazdānfādhār, requested the Arabs to settle in Qum and protect them permanently from the Daylamites. In return, the Arabs received some villages and settled there (Ḥasan b. Muḥammad b. Ḥasan al-Qummī, *Tārīkh-i Qum*, trans. Ḥasan b. 'Alī b. Ḥasan al-Qummī, ed. Sayyid Jalāl al-Dīn Ṭīhrānī (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Ṭūs, 1361/1982), 242–44; For Yazdānfādhār whose name is mentioned in Middle Persian documents from Qum, see Dieter Weber, *Berliner Pahlavi-Dokumente: Zeugenisse spätsassanidischer Brief-und Rechtskultur aus frühislamischer Zeit, Mit Beiträgen von Myriam Krutzsch und Maria Macuch* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2008). Shortly after, Qutayba was appointed governor over Rayy, the region known for its cooperation with the Arabs from 31/651 (al-Ya'qūbī, *Kitāb al-buldān*, 82). In 79/697, the Khārijite leader Qaṭarī b. Fujā'a (d. 79–80/698–699) took refuge in Tabaristan. According to Bahā' al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Ḥasan b. Isfandiyyār, the seventh/thirteenth-century author of *Tārīkh-i Ṭabaristān* ("History of Tabaristan"), Farrukhān, the *spāhbed* of Tabaristan, sheltered Qaṭarī, but the latter betrayed the *spāhbed* and killed his family members. In response, the *spāhbed* appealed to the Umayyad authority, and soon, the Umayyad forces came to help the *spāhbed*. In a joint operation, Qaṭarī was killed, and the *spāhbed* could return to his region. Ibn Isfandiyyār mentions that Qutayba had friendly relation with the *spāhbed*

the *marzbān* of Marw al-Rūd, the Hephthalite *nizak* of Badghis, the king of Guzgan, the authorities in Balkh, and the king of Chaghaniyan.

The local political situation in western and northern Bactria was in favour of Qutayba. Before Qutayba arrived in Marw, the Muhallabids had already imposed their authority on the *nizak* of Badghis and the king of Guzgan and took tribute from them. They also captured Tirmidh from Mūsā, had some forces in Balkh, and made a peace treaty with the king of Khuttal. However, the Muhallabids did not interfere in these kings' internal affairs and did not establish any garrisons in their areas. These local rulers did not fight the Arab Muslims and allowed them to cross Bactria and raid Sogdiana. Upon the arrival of Qutayba, al-Mufaḍḍal, the governor of Khurasan, was preparing to campaign in Shuman and Akhrun in northern Bactria. Al-Balādhurī and al-Ṭabarī confirm that the kings of Shuman and Akhrun attacked Bish (Tish of the Chinese sources), the king of Chaghaniyan (*ghazāhu wa ḍayyaqa 'alayhi*). Possibly, the king of Chaghaniyan appealed to al-Mufaḍḍal for help. Seeing such an opportunity, Qutayba personally marched towards northern Bactria to help Bish.⁷²⁰ Apparently, some local elites inclined to help Bish but did not have enough military power. They all needed an external power. In Talaqan, a city in Guzgan, a delegation of elites from Balkh (*'uzamā'uhūm*) received Qutayba and accompanied him to Balkh.⁷²¹ Some local elites of Talaqan also joined them. With the help of these Bactrian elites, Qutayba crossed the Amu Darya for Chaghaniyan.

The king of Chaghaniyan warmly welcomed Qutayba. He presented Qutayba with gifts, including a golden key symbolising his submission. Seeing this, the king of Kaftan, an area near Tirmidh, followed suit.⁷²² Qutayba's presence in northern Bactria, and the changed balance of power his presence represented, made the kings of Shuman and Akhrun decide to

and never tried to disturb him (Bahā' al-Din Muḥammad b. Hasan b. Isfandiyār, *Tārīkh-i Ṭabaristān*, ed. 'Abbās Iqbāl Ashtiyānī and Muḥammad Ramaḍānī, (Tehran: Kulāla-yi Khāvar, 1320), 179–180). Al-Qummī and Ibn Isfandiyār's narratives show that the local rulers of Qum and Tabaristan had built up good relations with the Umayyads. It was this relationship that explains that Qutayba was able to travel between Ray and Nishapur undisturbed. Qutayba's friendly relationship with locals facilitated faster communication between Umayyad officials in Khurasan and Iraq as well (al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, 8: 1222). Thus, Qutayba was aware of the local political situation and the importance of keeping local rulers close. For the new route, see al-Ya'qūbī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 196.

⁷²⁰ Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, 8: 1179–1180; Al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-buldān*, 419–420.

⁷²¹ Al-Ṭabarī gives a narrative from the Bāhila people, saying that when Qutayba was in Balkh, the people of Balkh fought him, and the Arabs captured the Naw Bahar. Qutayba's brother 'Abd Allāh possessed the *barmak*'s wife and conceived her. When Khālid b. Barmak became the minister in the time of al-Mahdī, the progenies of 'Abd Allāh claimed to be the relatives of Khālid (al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, 8: 1180). They possibly made this story to connect with Khālid, the minister.

⁷²² Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, 8: 1150.

visit him as well, make a peace treaty, and agree to pay him tribute (*fidya*).⁷²³ Al-Balādhurī implies that the submission of Bactrian rulers was not because of Arab Muslim supremacy, but for their internal hostility. Local competition motivated Bish and other local rulers to invite the Arabs to solve their problem.⁷²⁴ This recalls the way the *kanārang* of Tus invited ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Āmir to Khurasan, as was discussed in the previous chapter (3.2.1). In both cases, it was the local rulers who pulled the Arabs into their political rivalries with the aim to restore their own positions. That the Arabs gained a foothold as overlords in the region was an unintended but hugely consequential byproduct of these actions.

The alliance formed between Qutayba and local Bactrian rulers was a win-win deal. On the one hand, it saved the king of Chaghaniyan from the threat of his neighbouring enemies. On the other hand, Qutayba received the tributes he needed for the salaries of his army. The alliance between Qutayba and the king of Chaghaniyan had another great significance: the king of Chaghaniyan became the most loyal Bactrian ally of the Umayyads. In return, the Arab Muslims did not attack Chaghaniyan or establish any garrison there. Chaghaniyan remained independent but very loyal to Arab Muslims and helped them in their difficult days in Khurasan.⁷²⁵ In accordance with his position as overlord, not as a ruler, Qutayba returned to Marw, without engaging in any war or leaving any troops behind in northern Bactria.⁷²⁶ Though the kings of Chaghaniyan and Kaftan recognised Qutayba’s overlordship, these areas were not conquered or incorporated into the Umayyad empire.

The alliance with the northern Bactrian rulers was a diplomatic success. However, it was not enough to initiate the conquests of Sogdiana, which was the main goal of the expansion. To reach Sogdiana, the Arab Muslim forces had to cross western Bactria. Qutayba had to ensure that the Hephthalites of Badghis, and king of Guzgan remained neutral or joined him. The targets were the *nizak* and Zhulad Guzgan (r. 80–91/699–711), the king of Guzgan. Al-Ṭabarī’s narrative shows that Qutayba understood the situation. While in Balkh, Qutayba began exchanging letters with these local kings.⁷²⁷ The king of Guzgan responded positively and sent a delegation to Qutayba to negotiate. However, Qutayba insisted that the king should visit him in Marw. That indicated Qutayba’s plan to bring the king under his overlordship. For

⁷²³ Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta’rīkh*, 8: 1180.

⁷²⁴ In Arabic: *fadhālika a’ṭā Qutayba mā a’ṭāhu wa da’āhu ilā mā da’āhu* (al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-buldān*, 419–420); Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta’rīkh*, 8: 1180.

⁷²⁵ The second part of this chapter, section 4.3.2 explained it.

⁷²⁶ Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta’rīkh*, 8: 1180.

⁷²⁷ Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta’rīkh*, 8: 1184–85.

unknown reasons, the king accepted it and visited Qutayba in Marw. That may have led to a peace treaty, because we do not hear if the king resisted Qutayba later when he crossed Guzgan for Sogdiana.⁷²⁸

Dealing with the *nizak* was a lot harder. The *nizak* was called Abū al-Ḥayyāj by the Arab Muslims in Khurasan, and he had friendly relations with leaders of the Tamīm and Muḍr, who praised him for being a powerful ruler.⁷²⁹ He also held some Arab hostages in Badghis.⁷³⁰ To bring the *nizak* to his side, Qutayba reached out to local advisors who knew the *nizak*. He sent Salīm, his advisor (*al-nāṣih*), to negotiate with the *nizak*. Haug identified Salīm as a Bactrian, which makes Salīm the earliest known Bactrian character who worked as an advisor for the Arabs.⁷³¹ According to al-Ṭabarī, the *nizak*, who intensely disliked Qutayba's letters, informed Salīm: "It is inappropriate [for an Arab governor] to write such a letter to him."⁷³² That indicates the fact that the *nizak* viewed himself as much higher in station than an Arab governor. Nevertheless, Salīm managed to bring the *nizak* to Marw eventually after much negotiation, where he and Qutayba made a peace treaty.

The peace treaty's conditions between the *nizak* and Qutayba are not fully known. Only al-Ṭabarī mentions that the *nizak* accepted to help Qutayba in his war in Sogdiana on the condition that Qutayba should not enter Badghis under any circumstances.⁷³³ That means that while the *nizak* recognised Qutayba as the Umayyad governor of Khurasan, the latter also acknowledged the *nizak* as an independent ruler. Qutayba's diplomatic acts to bring western and northern Bactrian local rulers to his side were a great success. Tactically, without engaging in any war, he created the safe passage he needed to reach Sogdiana, receive tributes, and reinforce his newly formed armies with local Bactrian forces who were not paid by Qutayba but by their local rulers. Politically, the local kings of Chaghaniyan, Shuman, Akhrun, Kaftan, and Guzgan accepted Qutayba's overlordship by visiting him and paying tributes. Qutayba did not interfere in local rulers' internal affairs, nor did he establish any military garrisons. This form of overlordship was already familiar to the Bactrian rulers discussed in chapter two (2.3). The outcome was the creation of a great regional alliance, and the acquisition of a substantially increased army to support his conquests of Sogdiana. However, his peace treaties with Bactrian

⁷²⁸ Al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-buldān*, 420.

⁷²⁹ 'Utham b. Mas'ūd al-Tamīmī had familial relation with him (Ibn A'tham al-Kūfī, *Futūḥ*, 7: 151; Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'riḥ*, 8: 1184).

⁷³⁰ Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'riḥ*, 8: 1184–85.

⁷³¹ Haug, *The Eastern Frontier*, 120.

⁷³² Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'riḥ*, 8: 1185.

⁷³³ Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'riḥ*, 8: 1185.

local rulers did not mean that he had brought them under his control. This happened later and will be discussed next.

4.1.4 Qutayba's conquests in Sogdiana and Bactrian rulers' responses

Qutayba began a series of military campaigns from 87–90/707–710 with the explicit purpose to conquer Sogdiana. He targeted only the prominent and wealthy oasis cities in the Zarafshan Valley from Bukhara to Samarkand. Sogdiana was the hub of regional trade. The Sogdian merchants almost exclusively controlled all trading activities in Transoxiana, had expanded their business into northern China,⁷³⁴ and traded with India.⁷³⁵ Qutayba's focus on Sogdiana indicates that the Umayyads wanted to control big cities that were the hub of regional trade in the east.⁷³⁶ Gibb, Wellhausen, Shaban, Luce, and Haug best describe Qutayba's conquests of Sogdiana in detail.⁷³⁷ They highlighted the financial gain of these campaigns; hence, I will not repeat them. Instead, I shall briefly explain what Qutayba did in Sogdiana that caused great resentment among Bactrian local rulers, who subsequently formed a regional alliance to stop the conquests. This issue has not been properly discussed by other scholars.

The first target of the conquests was Paykand (Ar. Bikand), the heavily fortified city of merchants (*madīnat al-tujjār*) whose traders had traded with China.⁷³⁸ To defend their city, the elites of Paykand recruited many soldiers and blocked the roads against Qutayba. They also bribed Qutayba's local spy (*'aynun li Qutayba*), called Tundar, to mislead Qutayba by saying that the caliph dismissed al-Ḥajjāj and that he should return to Marw.⁷³⁹ However, Qutayba ordered his Persian *mawlā* called Siyāh to execute Tundar. Meanwhile the *fā'ala* or labourers who accompanied the army, tried to destroy the city wall. This forced the elites of Paykand to submit, make a peace treaty, and agree to pay tributes. Qutayba left, leaving his appointee in charge of the city. However, al-Ṭabarī narrates that some elites of Paykand killed Qutayba's

⁷³⁴ See La Vaissière, *Sogdian Traders*.

⁷³⁵ Sogdian graffiti surviving in the Swat Valley in modern-day Pakistan supports this idea.

⁷³⁶ A similar issue happened in Sindh. The Umayyads tried to open the route from Sistan to Kabul to reach Punjab, but the *Kabul-shāh* (Ar. *al-Rutbīl*) blocked their way. To reach India, the Umayyads had to look for an alternative route. That was provided by the local Buddhist merchants who sent a delegation to al-Ḥajjāj and facilitated the conquest of Sindh (see MacLean, *Religion and Society in the Arab Sind*; Bosworth, *Sīstān under the Arabs*).

⁷³⁷ See Gibb, *The Arab Conquests in Central Asia*, 29–58; Wellhausen, *The Arab Kingdom*, 434–446; Shaban, *The 'Abbāsīd Revolution*, 63–72; Luce, "Frontier Process," 136–175; Haug, *The Eastern Frontier*, 11–121.

⁷³⁸ See Rocco Rante, "Paykend," in *The Osis of Bukhara, vol. 1: Population, Depopulation and Settlements Evolution*, ed. Rocco Rante (Leiden: Brill, 2019), 194–230. I have noticed the Chinese coins excavated from the ruins of Paykand in the local museum of Paykand during my fieldwork in October 2018.

⁷³⁹ Ibn A'tham al-Kūfī is the only one who says that Tundar was a local Sogdian but worked for Qutayba (Ibn A'tham al-Kūfī, *Futūh*, 7: 144).

representative soon after, which brought Qutayba back to Paykand. The Arabic narratives related to the return of Qutayba to Paykand are confusing, and some mix this episode with the conquest of Bukhara.⁷⁴⁰ Though they all talk about the plunder of the city, they do not clarify the reasons behind it. Therefore, I have consulted these narratives alongside the local Persian narratives to depict a better image.

The reasons behind the revolt of Paykand after its residents made a peace treaty is not given in Arabic narratives. There is some information in the *Tārīkh-i Bukhārā* (“History of Bukhara”) compiled by the fourth/tenth-century historian Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. Ja‘far al-Narshakhī. He clarifies that the elites of Paykand cut off the nose and ears of Qutayba’s representative after he harassed their women.⁷⁴¹ According to al-Ṭabarī, Qutayba besieged the city a second time and again ordered the *fa‘ala* to undermine the city walls, but this time in order to destroy them by making fire under them. Destruction of the city walls would decrease the possibility of resistance in the future. Demolishing this infrastructure with that purpose was already done by the Arab Muslims in the conquest of Alexandria in 644 after the Greeks recaptured the city and then lost it to the Arab Muslims.⁷⁴² However, in Paykand, Qutayba’s motivation was not only revenge, but to remove the city’s symbols of independence. After capturing Paykand, Arab Muslim soldiers massacred its defenders, and destroyed and plundered the religious places.⁷⁴³ What can explain Qutayba’s response with such violence when he could have renegotiated a peace treaty?

Qutayba’s act can be understood in the context of war. Qutayba could not move on to conquer Bukhara while the enemy was behind him.⁷⁴⁴ In any case, the plunder of Paykand brought enormous booties to the Arabs. Merchants’ properties, including silk fabrics,⁷⁴⁵ precious objects from the temples, weapons, and other war logistics (*alāt al-ḥarab wa ālat al-safar*) were seized from Paykand.⁷⁴⁶ Apart from these, the merchants of Paykand whose families were enslaved had to pay a heavy ransom to free their kin.⁷⁴⁷ This was the first time

⁷⁴⁰ Ibn A‘tham’s narrative is the best example.

⁷⁴¹ Al-Narshakhī, *Tārīkh-i Bukhārā*, 52–54.

⁷⁴² For the Arab conquest of Alexandria, see Petra Sijpesteijn, *Shaping a Muslim State: The World of a Mid-Eighth-Century Egyptian Official* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 50–56.

⁷⁴³ Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta‘rīkh*, 8: 1186–1189.

⁷⁴⁴ Al-Ṭabarī adds that Qutayba could not send any messenger to Iraq for several months and that worried al-Ḥajjāj who ordered people to pray for Qutayba (al-Ṭabarī, *Ta‘rīkh*, 8: 1186–1189).

⁷⁴⁵ Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta‘rīkh*, 8: 1186–1189.

⁷⁴⁶ The gemstones from the looted temples were sent to al-Ḥajjāj (al-Narshakhī, *Tārīkh-i Bukhārā*, 54; al-Sullāmī, *Akhhār Wulāt Khurāsān*, 105–106).

⁷⁴⁷ Al-Narshakhī, *Tārīkh-i Bukhārā*, 54; Ibn A‘tham al-Kūfī, *Futūḥ*, 7: 146–147.

the Arabs consciously destroyed a western Sogdian merchant city and attacked its religious places.

After Paykand, the conquest army was free to march on toward Bukhara.⁷⁴⁸ Qutayba followed a different policy in Bukhara. He did not attack Bukhara, but fought Khunak the *Wardān-khudā*, or the king of Wardana, an area to the north of Bukhara in response to an appeal from Ṭughshāda, the heir to the throne of Bukhara. Ṭughshāda (lit. lord of flags) was from the house of *Bukhārā-khudā*, or the king of Bukhara, and was the son of a famous queen (*khātun*) of Bukhara who had made peace treaties with the Arab Muslim governors of Khurasan.⁷⁴⁹ Shortly before Qutayba's arrival, Khunak had usurped power from the house of *Bukhārā-khudā* and expanded his authority over the Bukhara region.⁷⁵⁰ The domination of Khunak over the region forced Ṭughshāda, the *Bukhārā-khudā*, to leave Bukhara and appeal to the Arab Muslims.⁷⁵¹ With his Bactrian allies, particularly the *nizak*, Qutayba defeated Khunak and his Turkic supporters⁷⁵² and restored Ṭughshāda to rule over Bukhara.⁷⁵³ Ṭughshāda was indebted to Qutayba, and thus he became a loyal supporter of the Umayyads and even named his son after Qutayba.⁷⁵⁴ To control Bukhara, Qutayba applied a new policy. He forced local merchants to leave their houses and other properties to the Arab Muslim soldiers.⁷⁵⁵ As a result, even the *Bukhārā-khudā* was forced to move outside of Bukhara. This policy, as Haug argued, had a profound social impact as it turned some local merchants into agriculturists because they had to leave their houses and properties to the Arab Muslims and move to the countryside.⁷⁵⁶ Quartering soldiers inside the city walls was also a drastically different policy than establishing garrisons or new quarters outside the existing cities, as had been the Muslims practice like in the Marw region until then.

⁷⁴⁸ Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, 8: 1194–1195.

⁷⁴⁹ Al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-buldān*, 420; Al-Narshakhī, *Tārīkh-i Bukhārā*, 42–43.

⁷⁵⁰ Al-Narshakhī, *Tārīkh-i Bukhārā*, 8–10; Haug has suggested that the Khunak was a Sasanian descendant (Haug, *The Eastern Frontier*, 115). However, Sören Stark suggested that Khunak may have been a Turk and had good relations with other Turkic groups (Sören Stark, “The Arab Conquest of Bukhārā: Reconsidering Qutayba b. Muslim's Campaigns 87–90/706–709,” *Der Islam* 95, no. 2 (2018): 380–382). Al-Narshakhī clarifies that Khunak was a Turk from Turkistan (al-Narshakhī, *Tārīkh-i Bukhārā*, 9).

⁷⁵¹ Stark, “The Arab Conquest of Bukhārā,” 380–382.

⁷⁵² Al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-buldān*, 420; Though al-Ṭabarī praised the Azd and Tamīm for their bravery in this war, he says that the *nizak* was with Qutayba (al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, 8: 1195, 1204); Stark also noticed this issue (Stark, “Arab Conquest of Bukhārā,” 383).

⁷⁵³ Haug, *The Eastern Frontier*, 111–112.

⁷⁵⁴ Al-Narshakhī, *Tārīkh-i Bukhārā*, 14–15.

⁷⁵⁵ Al-Narshakhī, *Tārīkh-i Bukhārā*, 57.

⁷⁵⁶ The memory of confiscating locals' properties during the conquests remained among descendants of the conquerors and the locals. It continued to the early Abbasid period (Haug, *The Eastern Frontier*, 116–117).

The conquests of Paykand and Bukhara forced Ṭarkhūn, the king of Samarkand, to send a delegation to Qutayba and negotiate for peace to keep the Arab Muslims away from Samarkand. That strategy worked. Qutayba wanted peace and tributes too. Qutayba sent Ḥayyān al-Nabaṭī, the commander of the *mawāli* forces, to negotiate with the Sogdians. According to al-Narshakhī, Ḥayyān used his diplomatic skill to convince Ṭarkhūn to make peace, pay tribute, and give some hostages to guarantee the treaty.⁷⁵⁷ The peace treaty kept the armies of the conquests away from Samarkand. However, al-Ṭabarī mentions that the Sogdian elites resented the peace treaty as they interpreted it as a mark of humiliation. As a result, the Sogdian elites organised a plot and killed Ṭarkhūn, putting Ghūrak in his place on the throne of Samarkand.⁷⁵⁸ After these campaigns, Qutayba did not move to Samarkand but returned to Marw.

From 85–90/705–710, Bactrian local rulers supported Qutayba. The *nizak* and his Hephthalite forces played a crucial role in Qutayba's success. All this time, they did not object to Qutayba's conquests. The reason for it is unknown. Shifting the geography of the conquests to Sogdiana likely kept Bactria safe from war. In addition, Bactrian rulers who joined Qutayba may have received their share of war booties. Similarly, Qutayba did not interfere in the local political situation in Bactria and even agreed not to enter the Hephthalite domain under any circumstances. However, Bactrian rulers could not swallow it all: Qutayba's policies in Sogdiana, namely the massacre and destruction of Paykand, plundering religious places, and building garrisons out of peoples' houses in Bukhara, were too much to bear. These are in addition to all the while confiscating local peoples' properties, and incorporating the family of *Bukhārā-khudā* under the Umayyad rule, and the peace treaty with Tarkhūn. None of the earlier governors of Khurasan had ever done all of these at the same time. These were also against the nature of overlordship Bactrian local rulers knew from the past. Qutayba's policy was a significant threat to the foundation of Bactrian independent rule. Hence, not surprisingly, Qutayba's acts of conquest caused immediate reactions among Bactrian local rulers. The *nizak* was the first Bactrian ruler who tried to stop Qutayba. The rebellion of the *nizak* and Qutayba's response to it is the subject of the following part.

⁷⁵⁷ Al-Narshakhī, *Tārīkh-i Bukhārā*, 63–65.

⁷⁵⁸ Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 8: 1204.

4.2. Incorporating Bactrian local rulers

The rebellion of the *nizak* that led to the formation of a regional alliance against the Umayyads is a well-known subject in Arabic and Persian narratives relating to Umayyad Khurasan. However, these narratives contradict each other in many places. Among these sources, Ibn A‘tham al-Kūfī and al-Ṭabarī give the most detailed information. However, the former does not reveal his sources and uses hostile language towards the *nizak* by calling him an apostate (*murtadd*), the betrayer (*ghaddār*), and an enemy of Islam (*‘aduww li-ahl al-Islām*).⁷⁵⁹ In contrast, al-Ṭabarī reveals his sources and uses neutral language. Here, we should rely more on al-Ṭabarī, who narrates from al-Madā’inī the leading authority on the history of Khurasan. Al-Madā’inī’s reports about Qutayba and the *nizak* combine both Arabic and Persian perspectives. He narrates from the perspective of the Bāhila people, who may have been with Qutayba in Khurasan and were aligned to the *marzbān* of Quhitsan, a region in Inner Khurasan whose local rulers helped Qutayba against the *nizak*. By explaining the revolt of the *nizak*, I will show that it was only after this rebellion that the Umayyads conquered most of Bactria and imposed their authority on Bactrian local rulers.

4.2.1 The rebellion of the *nizak* in Bactria

Distrust between the *nizak* and Qutayba formed during the conquests of western Sogdiana. According to al-Ṭabarī, the *nizak* helped Qutayba, but the *nizak* did not trust the Muslim general. The *nizak* considered Qutayba an angry and unworthy person. The words attributed to the *nizak* show his deep resentment of Qutayba’s policy. In the *nizak*’s words quoted by al-Ṭabarī, “the Arab [implying Qutayba] behaves like a dog. If you beat him, he barks, and if you feed him, he wags his tail.”⁷⁶⁰ To keep a distance from Qutayba, the *nizak* went to Balkh, where he visited Naw Bahar, prayed, and asked for divine blessing. This indicates the possibility that the *nizak* was a Buddhist. Then, he went to Baghlan in eastern Bactria, which was under the Hephthalites’ control.⁷⁶¹ From there, he began to form a regional alliance against Qutayba by communicating with Bactrian local kings.

The *nizak*’s alliance was primarily a western Bactrian coalition. He invited local rulers namely, the *marzbān* of Marw al-Rūd, the *shahrab* of Talaqan, the *tarsul* of Faryab, al-Juzjānī

⁷⁵⁹ Ibn A‘tham al-Kūfī, *Futūh*, 7: 150.

⁷⁶⁰ In Arabic: *inna al-‘Arabi bi manzilat al-kalb, iżā ḍarabtahu nabaḥa wa iżā aṭ’amahu baṣbaṣa* (al-Ṭabarī, *Ta’rīkh*, 8: 1205).

⁷⁶¹ Grenet, “Regional Interaction,” 212–213.

the king of Guzgan and the *spāhbed* of Balkh.⁷⁶² Except for a few of these individuals, the identity of the rest of these rulers is unknown. As already discussed in chapter two (2.1.3), the *spāhbed* of Balkh at this time was not the *barmak*, but it is possible that it was, in fact, the *nizak* who appointed him.⁷⁶³ The *marzbān* of the Marw al-Rūd was Badhān, and as Haug suggested, he was the son or grandson of the famous Badhān, who made a peace treaty with al-Aḥnaf sixty years earlier.⁷⁶⁴ Al-Juzjānī was Zhulad Guzgan. The limits of the *nizak*'s alliance to western Bactria can be understood by the fact that this list does not include the king of Chaghaniyan, the kings of Shuman and Akhrun, the king of Tirmidh, the king of Khuttal, the Turkic *yabghu* of Tukharistan, the *khar* of Rob, or the Bilgā Sāvūg, the Turkic ruler of Kadagstan.⁷⁶⁵ Nevertheless, the *nizak* resided in eastern Bactria and tried to lead his alliance in western Bactria. The *nizak* asked western Bactrian rulers to join him in the spring and dismiss Qutayba (*ilā khal'a Qutayba*). The Arabic term *khal'a* here also means to remove Qutayba from the region. The *nizak* sent his movable treasury to the king of Kabul and requested support in case of need.⁷⁶⁶

The *nizak*'s alliance may have created hope among the western Bactrian rulers who disliked Qutayba's new policy of conquests. However, the *nizak*'s alliance also disturbed the local political order in eastern Bactria, which led to his demise. Al-Ṭabarī mentions that the *nizak* was under the suzerainty of the *yabghu* of Tukharistan (*min 'abīdihī*), but he arrested the *yabghu*.⁷⁶⁷ The *yabghu* had a good relationship with the Arab Muslims. Muḥammad, son of Salīm, the Bactrian advisor of Qutayba, was in the company of the *yabghu*. The *nizak* imprisoned the *yabghu* and expelled Qutayba's representative (*'āmil*).⁷⁶⁸ By these acts, the *nizak* practically rejected both the Turkic and the Umayyad overlordship and declared himself the new overlord in Bactria. The overlordship of the Hephthalite prince of Badghis was not welcomed by the eastern and southern Bactrian rulers, who were loyal to the Turkic *qaghān*, as we will see later.

Qutayba's response to the rebellion of the *nizak* was well planned, showing his awareness of the local political situation in the region. His tactic was not to face the *nizak*

⁷⁶² Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, 8: 1206.

⁷⁶³ Ibn A'tham calls him al-Shāh b. Nizak (Ibn A'tham al-Kūfī, *Futūḥ*, 7: 154).

⁷⁶⁴ Haug, *The Eastern Frontier*, 120.

⁷⁶⁵ Bactrian document no. T in Sims-Williams, *BDI*, 98–103. I think he was still the king of Kadagstan in 709–710 because other documents from Kadagstan do not mention other kings at this time.

⁷⁶⁶ Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, 8: 1205–06.

⁷⁶⁷ Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, 8: 1206.

⁷⁶⁸ Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, 8: 1206.

immediately on the battlefield, but to cut off his contacts with western Bactria. In doing so, he sent his brother with 12,000 soldiers from Marw to Baruqan, an area in Balkh that became the main Umayyad garrison in Bactria after this time. Subsequently, he contacted the local rulers of Inner Khurasan to send him their local forces. Soon, the local forces of Nasa, Abiward, Sarakhs, and Herat joined his camp.⁷⁶⁹ Qutayba's alliance with the local rulers of Inner Khurasan reveal two crucial issues. Firstly, he was not able to confront the Hephthalites only with his Arab Muslim forces. Secondly, he could not trust the western Bactrian rulers anymore because they had shifted sides and supported the *nizak* while they had concluded peace treaties with Qutayba. Therefore, once the local forces of Inner Khurasan joined Qutayba, he left Marw for Bactria with a special mission of removing the Hephthalites.

The information on Qutayba's military campaign against the *nizak* and the rest of the western Bactrian rulers was reflected in the Arabic narratives. Among the narrators of these, al-Ya'qūbī, Ibn A'tham al-Kūfī, and al-Ṭabarī provide more information. These authors have taken their reports mainly from al-Madā'inī and some other unknown sources. Al-Ṭabarī gives full details on the authority of al-Madā'inī and added some reporters from the Bāhila tribe. Al-Ya'qūbī summarised the event, and Ibn A'tham al-Kūfī reorganised the reports in a way so that his narrative does not look similar to that of al-Ṭabarī's. However, they all agree that Qutayba received help from local rulers of Khurasan and then acted with maximum violence to destroy the *nizak* and his western Bactrian allies. That had no precedent and shook the foundations of the Bactrian local power balance.

According to al-Ṭabarī, Qutayba first turned to the *marzbān* of Marw al-Rūd, but the latter fled to the land of the Persians (*fa haraba ilā bilād al-furus*). Qutayba captured the city, found Badhān's sons, killed them, and crucified their bodies (*fa-qatalahumā wa ṣullibahumā*) as a sign of punishment. It is difficult to accept that the *marzbān* fled to Persia because at this time, most of the Persian regions were already conquered by the Arab Muslims. Possibly, Badhān fled to Talaqan. Al-Ya'qūbī mentions that Badhān was in Talaqan and captured the city by force (*taghallaba 'alā al-balad*).⁷⁷⁰ Probably, Badhān was not welcomed by the *shahrab* of Talaqan, and so he had to act forcefully. Ibn A'tham al-Kūfī and al-Ṭabarī mention that Qutayba massacred a group of thieves (*lašūṣ, sa'ālīk*) in Talaqan without identifying them.⁷⁷¹ Badhān and his followers possibly were called thieves because they had captured

⁷⁶⁹ Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, 8: 1218.

⁷⁷⁰ Al-Ya'qūbī, *Ta'rikh*, 2: 208.

⁷⁷¹ Ibn A'tham al-Kūfī, *Futūḥ*, 7: 153; Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, 8: 1218.

Talaqan by force before Qutayba arrived there. That fact that the *shahrab* did not fight Qutayba can help us infer that he allowed Badhān to be removed by the Arab Muslims.⁷⁷² Ibn A‘tham al-Kūfī provides a different narrative about Badhān. According to him, Qutayba found Badhān in Marw al-Rūd and killed him, his eldest son and his younger brother. He hung a severed head on the neck of Badhān’s mother and then ordered her execution which caused anger among the Arab Muslims.⁷⁷³ He does not explain the reasons, but possibly Qutayba’s extreme violence and eradication of the ruling family was not a policy among the previous Arab leaders of Khurasan. Whether or not Badhān was killed in his region or in Talaqan, the important issue is that all the narratives agree that Qutayba eradicated his family. They also mention that Qutayba appointed his brother ‘Amru b. Muslim over Talaqan.

From Talaqan, Qutayba went to Faryab. The *tarsul* of Faryab submitted to Qutayba, thereby saving his life and that of his people. Qutayba appointed a man from the Bāhila on the Faryab and moved to Guzgan where the king of Guzgan fled into the mountains (*kharaja ilā al-jibāl*), but some elites of his region visited Qutayba and surrendered. That saved Guzgan from destruction, and the king later made peace with Qutayba. Qutayba appointed ‘Āmir b. Mālik al-Ḥimmānī over Guzgan.⁷⁷⁴ From Guzgan, Qutayba went further to Balkh. According to al-Ṭabarī, the *spāhbed* of Balkh visited Qutayba and offered his loyalty to Qutayba; thus, having appeased the entire region, Qutayba did not have any reason to remain in Balkh and thus moved towards eastern Bactria.⁷⁷⁵ This was the first time that the Arab Muslim forces entered eastern Bactria.

Once western Bactrian rulers were subdued, Qutayba appointed his brother ‘Amru b. Muslim and other men from his tribe over the region. Appointing these men could not have been without establishing military garrisons in the conquered areas because the local rulers of

⁷⁷² Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta’rīkh*, 2: 1218.

⁷⁷³ Ibn A‘tham al-Kūfī, *Futūḥ*, 7: 152.

⁷⁷⁴ Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta’rīkh*, 8: 1218; Ibn A‘tham al-Kūfī, *Futūḥ*, 7: 153.

⁷⁷⁵ Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta’rīkh*, 8: 1218–1219; The *Faḍā’il-i Balkh* gives different information. According to the *Faḍā’il*, the *nizak* had authority in Balkh, and the *dihqān* of Balkh offered his submission to Qutayba on condition that the *nizak* surrender as well. Qutayba could thus not demand submission but made a treaty with the *dihqān* asking for a certain amount of gold and silver. However, the Arab Muslims demanded more than had been agreed upon in the treaty and even broke down some golden objects. This caused anger among the locals. The *dihqān* of Balkh worded it thus: “Did you bring the army to extract some unworthy objects?” (al-Balkhī, *Faḍā’il-i Balkh*, 27). The *dihqān* in the *Faḍā’il* is not identified, but he could be the *spāhbed*. This places the events in Balkh. Possibly, the Arabs remained in Balkh long enough to take the gold and silver objects that may have been brought from Naw Bahar. It is known that the site had wealth (al-Bal‘amī, *Tārkh-nāma-yi Ṭabarī*, 1: 818). The *Faḍā’il* adds that Qutayba asked the local elites of Tirmidh, Balkh, and Chaghaniyan to help him against the *nizak*, and they accepted it. This report suggests that the local rulers of these three areas did not, in fact, stand behind the *nizak*’s revolt. Even if they supported the *nizak* initially, they quickly shifted their loyalty and sided with Qutayba once he marched towards Bactria.

these areas had their military forces and could organise attacks on the Arab Muslims. In other words, Arab Muslims military presence was established in the Marwal-Rūd, Talaqan, Faryab, Guzgan and Balkh. This was the beginning of incorporating western Bactrian rulers under Umayyad control. The level of violence applied to western Bactria by Qutayba surprised Bactrian local rulers because no Umayyad governor had ever done this before. Furthermore, the eradication of resisting rulers and crucifying them publicly was new.⁷⁷⁶ I will discuss this process in more detail later, but first I shall explain how Qutayba suppressed the *nizak*.

The situation in eastern Bactria was different and in favour of Qutayba. I already mentioned that the *nizak* arrested the *yabghu* of Tukharistan. This action contributed to his downfall. Qutayba combined the forces of Inner Khurasan with soldiers he brought from Marw and 12,000 soldiers from Baruqān and moved towards Khulm to the east of Balkh.⁷⁷⁷ The Pass of Khulm (*shi' b khulm*) was already blocked by the *nizak*. Here, not only the *nizak* but the geography of Bactria proved to be a significant obstacle for the conquerors. To reach Baghlan, Qutayba had two options: opening the pass by force, or by taking the army via the desert to Qala-yi Zal and from there to Baghlan via Kunduz. However, Qutayba remained stuck because neither route was an option for him. He could not open the pass because it was a very narrow and long gorge with the river flowing through it, and the *nizak*'s soldiers blocked it. He also could not take the long route via Kunduz because it would take a long time and more logistics. Qutayba had no choice except to return, but internal political intentions in eastern Bactria brought him success.

To Qutayba surprise, the *khar* of Rob visited him and promised his support to remove the *nizak*. With the help of the *khar*, Qutayba's army attacked the *nizak*'s soldiers from behind opening the road to Baghlan, where the *nizak* was stationed.⁷⁷⁸ Possibly, Qutayba was hosted by the *khar* of Rob before marching towards Baghlan. Whether the *khar* fully joined Qutayba is unknown, but he must have seen in Qutayba the perfect opportunity to destroy the *nizak*. Indeed, the help that the *khar* offered Qutayba, forced the *nizak* to leave Fanj-jāh in Baghlan for the fortress of Karz (or Kurz/Kuzr) located in eastern Bactria.⁷⁷⁹ Al-Ṭabarī, the main source

⁷⁷⁶ Ibn A'ṭham al-Kūfī, *Futūḥ*, 7: 153.

⁷⁷⁷ Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'riḫ*, 8: 1218–1219.

⁷⁷⁸ Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'riḫ*, 8: 1219.

⁷⁷⁹ Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'riḫ*, 8: 1219; Fanj-jāh can be identified with the place of Chishma-yi Shir in Baghlan as it matches with the Arabic description. The exact location of this fortress is disputed. Gerent suggested that it was the Kafir Qala in present-day Barfak (Grenet, "Regional Interaction," 217). However, La Vaissière suggested that Karz was not in Barfak but in Namak Valley corresponds to medieval Khost (La Vaissière, "The Last Bactrian Kings," 217). In a personal communication in January 2018 at Leiden University, La Vaissière informed me that the Karz fortress should have been located in this area. Ṭughyān Sākāyī, who is a native of Andarab, informed me

of information on the *nizak*, does not explain why the *khar* of Rob helped Qutayba but says that the two figures met, negotiated and made a peace treaty. From the discussion on local rulers given in chapter two (2.1.4), we learned that the *khar* of Rob did not have good relations with his neighbouring Hephthalites. The Hephthalites controlled the trade routes from Kabul towards the north, and the *khar* of Rob was in competition over control of the trade routes with his Hephthalite neighbours.⁷⁸⁰ In addition, the *nizak* had dismissed the *yabghu*, thereby disrupting the power balance in place in eastern Bactria. Certainly, the *khar* of Rob did not want a powerful Hephthalite prince in his neighbourhood who moved himself to the top of the political hierarchy by arresting the *yabghu* and making himself the new overlord in Bactria. Hence, the *khar* of Rob had both economic and political reasons to act against the *nizak*. Again, this situation recalls the *kanārang* of Tus, or the king of Chaghaniyan, who helped the Arabs to overcome their rival neighbours. To break down the *nizak*'s power, the *khar* of Rob needed external help, and none was better than Arab Muslims who moved in, restored the balance, and became the overlord, but from a distance while satisfied with the incoming tribute.

To end the *nizak*'s revolt, Qutayba used diplomacy and military pressure in tandem. He first besieged the fortress and cut off its lines of food supply. However, Qutayba himself was under pressure because the cold winter was approaching and his Arab Muslim and Inner Khurasani forces had to return to their residences.⁷⁸¹ According to al-Ṭabarī, Qutayba sent Salīm, the afore-mentioned Bactrian advisor, to convince the *nizak* to surrender. Salīm had a personal friendship with the *nizak* and had brought him to Marw to meet Qutayba when Qutayba had come to Khurasan a few years earlier. Qutayba authorised Salīm to give safe conduct (*amān*) to the *nizak* if required so. He also threatened to kill Salīm and crucify him if he failed this mission. The food shortage affected the Hephthalite soldiers, and Salīm took it as an advantage and convinced the *nizak* to submit. Seeing no other way out, the *nizak* put his trust in the *amān* offered to him by Salīm and surrendered. He left the fortress with his relatives and also the hostages. His nephew Shiqrān (who was called 'Uthmān too in the narrative); followed by the *sūlū* or military commander; an individual with the title or name *khanas tarkhān*;⁷⁸² and the head of his guards (*ṣāhib al-shurṭa*) came out from the fortress. Then came

that Karz in Arabic narrative should be read as Kuzr. He explained that there is a fort east of Baghlan towards Kelagay with the same name, and local people still call it Kuzr because it is located on a cliff. Kuzr is a shortened form of Kuh-i Zur (personal communication in August 2023).

⁷⁸⁰ Grenet, "Regional Interaction," 216.

⁷⁸¹ Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, 8: 1206.

⁷⁸² Possibly, Khanas is the Arabicised form of Bactrian personal name *χαλασο*. See Bactrian Document no. P in Sims-Williams, *BDI*, 84–87.

his hostages including the *yabghu* of Tukharistan, and his representative the *sülü tarkhān*. However, Qutayba betrayed the *nizak* and arrested him despite the *amān* which had been offered in his name. The fortress of Karz was evacuated, and the Umayyad forces plundered it.⁷⁸³

Killing the *nizak* was not as straightforward as that. Before his revolt, the *nizak* had been an important Umayyad ally, and Qutayba's conquest of western Sogdiana was owed mainly to him. The *nizak* had a good relationship with the Arab tribal leaders in Khurasan who supported Qutayba. Both Ibn A'tham al-Kūfī and al-Ṭabarī say that Qutayba asked al-Ḥajjāj about his dilemma in a letter. The latter replied that Qutayba should execute the *nizak*. Nevertheless, it is clear that Qutayba was torn and continued to vacillate. He gathered the Arab tribal leaders to hear their opinions. Here, the Arabic reports are contradictory. Ibn A'tham al-Kūfī mentions that the *nizak* was the enemy of Islam and everyone wanted him dead. He adds that the *nizak* was not given the *amān*, and thus his execution was justified. However, Ibn A'tham al-Kūfī contradicts himself here because he also mentions that Qutayba authorised Salīm to give the *amān* to the *nizak*.⁷⁸⁴ In contrast, al-Ṭabarī remarks that some Arab leaders advised Qutayba to leave the *nizak* because he had the *amān*. Eventually, Qutayba followed al-Ḥajjāj's orders, and also knew that he could not control Bactria if the Hephthalites were around. He ignored his *amān* and the advice of some Arab leaders, had the *nizak* and his nephew executed, and crucified their bodies near a spring called Wakhsh-Khashan. The significance of hanging the dead bodies near the spring escapes us now, but it would have had special significance and sent a message. Subsequently, all others surrendered, and the surrendered Hephthalites were massacred.⁷⁸⁵ The death of the *nizak* changed the local political situation in Bactria to benefit the Umayyads and allowed them to incorporate most parts of Bactria into the Umayyad empire. This will be discussed next.

4.2.2 Incorporation of Bactria into Umayyad Khurasan

The death of the *nizak* had a great political impact on Bactria. For the first time, the Arab Muslims conquered western Bactria and established their control there through military presence. They entered eastern Bactria and destroyed the Hephthalites. The process of

⁷⁸³ Al-Ṭabarī, *Tarīkh*, 8: 1221; Ibn A'tham al-Kūfī, *Futūḥ*, 7: 149; Al-Ṭabarī refers to a poem in which name of the *nizak* and his relatives are mentioned (al-Ṭabarī, *Tarīkh*, 8: 1226–1227).

⁷⁸⁴ Ibn A'tham al-Kūfī, *Futūḥ*, 7: 149–151.

⁷⁸⁵ Al-Ṭabarī, *Tarīkh*, 8: 1218.

consolidation of Umayyad rule followed four main stages: a) the initial destroying of local military forces; b) eradicating local rulers who resisted and making peace treaties with those who wished to submit and cooperate; c) establishing military presence in form of garrisons in the conquered region; and d) appointing Arab Muslim administrators in the region. Here, I will briefly explain these stages.

The revolt of the *nizak* brought the Arab Muslims to eastern Bactria for the first time and enabled them to destroy Hephthalite military power in the latter's homeland. The massacre of the Hephthalite forces in Baghlan reduced the threat of the Hephthalites to a great extent. The Hephthalites had been such a nuisance for the Arab Muslims, because they could simply disappear into the mountains, rapidly re-organise, and attack the Umayyads. The Umayyads had no control over these mountain regions.⁷⁸⁶ The death of the *nizak* annihilated his principality in Badghis, and the Hephthalites of western Bactria were reduced to a small local power. Though they supported an anti-Umayyad rebellion led by al-Ḥārith b. Suryaj (d. 128/746) two decades later, which will be discussed in the next section, they could not directly fight the Umayyads anymore. Gibb argued that as a result of the war against the *nizak*, the Arab Muslims brought Bactria under their control and “for the first time Arab authority was expanded over the Jābghū [*yabghu*] and his immediate vassals in the Oxus Basin.”⁷⁸⁷ However, as Haug has argued although it is true that Qutayba removed the *yabghu* from Tukharistan by sending him to Syria, he replaced the *yabghu* with the latter's son, and thus local politics in eastern Bactria were not fundamentally changed.⁷⁸⁸ Qutayba did not stay in Baghlan, nor did he establish any garrison in eastern Bactria. Likewise, he did not appoint anyone in eastern Bactria. So, it is difficult to accept Gibb's argument that Umayyad authority had expanded to the Oxus Basin. The Bactrian documents from eastern Bactria do not show any sign of the establishment of Arab authority in the region at this time.⁷⁸⁹ What is clear is that the confrontation with the *nizak* placed Qutayba in a position of great political power vis-à-vis the local rulers in eastern Bactria, albeit from a distance. He appointed the *yabghu*'s successor. After Qutayba destroyed the Hephthalite military forces in eastern Bactria, we do not hear of any revolt like that of the *nizak* in our sources anymore.

⁷⁸⁶ Haug, *The Eastern Frontier*, 121.

⁷⁸⁷ Gibb, *The Arab Conquests in Central Asia*, 81; Interestingly, Shaban had similar idea about it (Shaban, *The Abbāsid Revolution*, 67).

⁷⁸⁸ Haug, *The Eastern Frontier*, 121.

⁷⁸⁹ The name of local authorities can be found in Bactrian documents no. U, Uu, V in Sims-Williams, *BDI*, 106–111, 112–115, 116–125.

The eradication of Bactrian local rulers was reported only for Marw al-Rūd. It is already mentioned that Qutayba killed Badhān, the *marzbān* of Marw al-Rūd and his sons. It is not clear if Qutayba did the same in Shuman. According to al-Ṭabarī, the king of Shuman expelled Qutayba's agent (*'āmil*) and refused to pay the tribute he had accepted earlier (*wa mana 'a al-fidya allatī ṣālaha 'alayhā*). Qutayba sent 'Ayyāsh al-Ghanawī with another pious man (*min nussāk ahl Khurāsān*) to convince the king of Shuman to respect the treaty he made with Qutayba.⁷⁹⁰ A resident of Shuman, called al-Muhallab, killed 'Ayyāsh. Killing Qutayba's representative was, in fact, rejecting Qutayba's overlordship and declaration of war.

The news about Shuman forced Qutayba to march again. He crossed Guzgan and arrived in Balkh, which was under his authority by now, went to Shuman via Tirmidh and Chaghaniyan, and besieged the king's fortress. For the first time, we hear that the Arab Muslims used catapults (*al-majāniq*) to destroy a fortress in the east. Earlier, Qutayba used the *fa'ala*, or local corvée labourers in Paykand, so it is possible that his loyal local allies provided him with the catapults. The use of catapults against the many fortresses in the mountains of Bactria and Sogdiana was a well-established technique, and it is depicted in the Sogdian paintings from early eighth-century Panjikent.⁷⁹¹ Whatever it may be, Qutayba captured the fortress by force (*'anwatan*), killed the people of the fortress who resisted him, and enslaved anyone who was there (*fa qatala al-muqātila wa sabiya al-dhariyya*).⁷⁹² The narrative does not say if the king of Shuman was killed. Apparently, he survived the attack or maybe someone from his family continued ruling over Shuman, because we will see later that the king of Shuman helped the Umayyads in Sogdiana. Qutayba did not establish any garrison in Shuman. From Shuman, Qutayba marched to Chaghaniyan and crossed it without war because the king of Chaghaniyan was his ally. From there, Qutayba attacked Kish and Nasaf and burned the city of Farab near the Amu Darya.⁷⁹³ This was the first time the Arab Muslims burnt a city in the eastern regions.

The last western Bactrian ruler who remained to be controlled was the king of Guzgan. It is already mentioned that the king of Guzgan fled to the mountains to save his life from the wrath of Qutayba, while some notables from the city submitted to the Arab general. According

⁷⁹⁰ Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, 8: 1129.

⁷⁹¹ The Sogdian painting from Panjikent shows locals used the catapult (Guitty Azarpay, *Sogdian Paintings: The Pictorial Epic in Oriental Art*, with contributions by A. M. Belenitskii, B. I. Marshak and Mark J. Dresden (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981), 65); For the image of the catapult in Panjikent, see <http://sogdians.si.edu> (accessed on 10 July 2023).

⁷⁹² Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, 8: 1127–1129.

⁷⁹³ Al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-buldān*, 420; Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, 8: 1129.

to al-Ṭabarī, Qutayba sent a letter to the king of Guzgan (*malik al-Juzjān*) and asked him for a meeting in Marw. However, the king did not trust Qutayba anymore. To ensure his safety, the king of Guzgan asked for Arab Muslim hostages, and Qutayba sent some of his relatives to Guzgan. Similarly, the king of Guzgan sent some of his family members (*min ahl baytihi*) to Qutayba as hostages. The king sent the Arab Muslim hostages to a fortress in Guzgan, and then went on to meet Qutayba in Marw, where they made a peace treaty. However, on his return to Guzgan, the king of Guzgan died in Talaqan, and the Guzganis assumed that the Arab Muslims had poisoned their king. Out of revenge, they killed the Arab Muslim hostages. Qutayba retaliated by executing the Guzgani hostages, but the violence remained limited to the respective noble families and did not lead to a new war.⁷⁹⁴

Whether the Arab Muslims poisoned the king of Guzgan or not, the fact that Qutayba communicated with the king of Guzgan and made a peace treaty in Marw shows that they did not wish to fight each other. The mountains of southern Guzgan provided a safe place for the king of Guzgan, and Qutayba could not campaign in the high and snowy mountains. The preeminence of the mountains for the king is clear from his title ‘king of the mountain’ (*γαριγο βανο*) that he used on his coins.⁷⁹⁵ At the same time, the king could not wage war against the Umayyads in Marw or even in the plains of Bactria because he fled his capital when Qutayba was going to fight the *nizak* mentioned earlier. Hence, a peace treaty would keep both enemies away from each other. In any case, with the death of the king in 91/711, Guzgan lost its significance as a local kingdom. The discontinuation of the coins of Zhulad after 91/711 supports this idea.⁷⁹⁶ It also shows that Zhulad was the king of Guzgan. The Arab Muslim established their military presence in Guzgan. From 91/711 onwards, the royal family of Guzgan continued as a petty principality, and we will see that the king of Guzgan, who may have been from this family, supported the Umayyads against the Türgesh Turks in 119/737.

An important outcome of the consolidation of Umayyad rule in Bactria was the return of the *barmak*, whose progeny became the most celebrated imperial noble family during the early Abbasid period. Though there is a rich bibliography on the *barāmika*, mostly relating to their role in Abbasid politics, the existing studies missed how this family benefitted from the

⁷⁹⁴ Al-Ṭabarī, *Taʾriḫh*, 8: 1225–1227; Ibn Aʿtham al-Kūfī gives a different narrative. He says that the king of Guzgan was killed by one of his own companies. Qutayba arrested that man and burned him (Ibn Aʿtham al-Kūfī, *Futūḥ*, 7: 153).

⁷⁹⁵ Malik, *Arab-Sasanian Numismatics*, 1: 71.

⁷⁹⁶ Cribb, “Coinage in Afghanistan.”

shift in the balance of power in Bactria.⁷⁹⁷ I will briefly address it here because it shows how the power dynamics changed by the Arab Muslim conquests affected the lives of some Bactrian elites who later became part of the Islamic empire. As mentioned in chapter two (2.1.3), the *barmak* and the *spāhbed* controlled Balkh when the Arab Muslims arrived. The *yabghu* of Tukharistan claimed that Balkh was under his overlordship. Then, the Arab Muslims captured Balkh, and the *barmak* allegedly converted to Islam. A ruler called the *nizak* reacted to that by killing the *barmak* and most of his sons between 670–680. Whether the Hephthalites had a role in that is not certain. However, the *barmak*'s wife and one of the sons survived the massacre. She took her son and fled to the Buddhist kingdom of Kashmir.⁷⁹⁸ The son grew up and was educated in Kashmir. While the *barmak*'s son was there, the *nizak* revolted and the Qutayba suppressed his rebellion and with that the *spāhbed* of Balkh surrendered and we do not hear about him anymore. The news of the *nizak*'s death must have reached Kashmir because the *barmak*'s son then returned to Balkh. Upon his return, he married the daughter of the *Chaghān-khudā* and occupied the office of the *barmak* in Naw Bahar. He inherited his father's title, the *barmak*, and became a loyal supporter of the Umayyads. Out of this marriage Khālīd b. Barmak was born in 91/711.⁷⁹⁹ Unlike his father and father-in-law, who supported the Umayyads, Khālīd shifted his loyalty from the Umayyads to the Abbasids and became an Abbasid missionary in the east.

Consolidation of Umayyad control over western Bactria was immediately undertaken after crushing the Bactrian rebels. Qutayba established an Arab Muslim military presence by keeping forces commanded by Arab Muslims in western Bactria. The next chapters (5.1.4, 6.1.2) will discuss the garrison and their military structure in Bactria. To ensure absolute

⁷⁹⁷ Only La Vaissière has noticed this issue but did not elaborate on it (La Vaissière, “De Bactres á Balkh,” 525).

⁷⁹⁸ Her move suggests that she had contacts in Kashmir, presumably because she was a Buddhist from Kashmir. After all, she did not go to Tirmidh, the Buddhist kingdom of Bamiyan, nor to Kabul, but preferred to go to Kashmir. This makes sense as the Arabic and Persian sources relating to the *barāmika* mention that the *barmak* was respected by the rulers of northwest India (see Ibn Faqīh, *Mukhtaṣar Kitāb al-buldān*, 322). Also, Ibn al-Nadīm, in his *al-fihrist* (“Index”), mentions that the *barāmika* were keen to collect information about India and even sent scholars to India to retrieve it. He adds that Yahyā, the grandson of the *barmak*, commissioned the book *Fī milal al-Hind wa-adyānihā* (“About the People of India and their Religions”) in Baghdad (Ibn al-Nadīm, *al-Fihrist*, 484). This was the earliest Arabic book about India. It shows their connection to India, which is also expressed in their support for translating Indic texts into Arabic. For more information on the Barmakid's role in transforming Indian knowledge into Arabic, see Dominik Wujastyk, “From Balkh to Baghdad: Indian Science and the Birth of the Islamic Golden Age in the Eighth Century,” *Journal of History of Science* 51, no. 4 (2016): 679–690; For the *barāmika* and the translation movement, see Demitri Gutas, *Greek Thoughts Arabic Culture: The Graeco-Arabic Translation Movement in Baghdad and Early 'Abbasid Society 2nd–4th/5th–10th c* (New York: Routledge, 1998), 4–129. For Buddhism in Bamiyan, see Deborah Klimburg-Salter, *The Kingdom of Bāmyān: Buddhist Art and Culture of the Hindu Kush* (Naples: Istituto universitario orientale, Dipartimento di studi asiatici; Rome: Istituto italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente, 1989).

⁷⁹⁹ La Vaissière, “De Bactres á Balkh,” 526–27.

loyalty and political control over Bactria, Qutayba appointed only his brothers and relatives from the Bāhila tribe in western Bactria.⁸⁰⁰ In essence, he formed a family federation to control the frontier region of Khurasan.

From 91/711 to 96/715–716, most parts of Bactria came under the Umayyad authority. The methods of controlling these areas were different. In western Bactria, all areas from the Marw al-Rūd to Khulm came under Umayyad's direct control. They established a network of military garrisons in or near the main cities, appointed Arab Muslim administrators in these areas and demanded tributes. The Umayyads did not enter any mountain areas in western Bactria and focussed only on the main cities in the plain/oases. It is unknown if the Umayyads conquered Badghis after they crushed the *nizak*. Gharchistan remained untouched, possibly because it was located in the mountains and did not have much to offer. In northern Bactria, the kings of Chaghaniyan, Akhrun and Kaftan submitted paid tributes and accepted the Umayyad's overlordship. Khuttal already had a peace treaty with the Umayyads from the time of the Muhallabids. The Umayyads did not build military garrisons in these areas. Only Shuman was captured by force. Tirmidh had already been under the Umayyad's control and had a military garrison after Mūsā's death. In southern Bactria, the *khar* Rob maintained a good relationship with the Arab Muslims without losing his autonomy in his area. In eastern Bactria, after removing the *nizak*, Qutayba sent the *yabghu* to Iraq and appointed *yabghu*'s son in his position. Kadagstan was left to its ruler. Among all these areas, western Bactria became part of the Umayyad Khurasan because the Umayyads directly controlled it. The northern Bactria was indirectly controlled, and eastern and southern Bactria remained outside Umayyad Khurasan (Figure 20).

4.2.3 The end of the Umayyad conquests in Bactria

The period of the conquests ended with the death of Qutayba in 96/715–716 in the Farghana valley. Qutayba revolted against the caliph Sulaymān (r. 96–99/715–717), who came to power after the death of his brother al-Walīd in 96/715. Shortly after, al-Ḥajjāj died, and Qutayba lost his prominent supporter in Iraq. The new caliph supported the Muhallabids, and Qutayba feared that Yazīd b. al-Muhallab will be appointed in Khurasan and take revenge for what Qutayba did to the Muhallabids. The fear from the new caliph forced Qutayba to rebel against Sulaymān, but the Arabian leaders of Khurasan did not support Qutayba. The leaders from the Tamīm,

⁸⁰⁰ Al-Sullāmī, *Akhbār Wulāt Khurāsān*, 105; Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, 8: 1225.

Azd, and Hayyān al-Nabaṭī, the commander of the *mawāli* forces, organised a plot and killed Qutayba.⁸⁰¹ The leaders of the Tamīm and Azd found it a perfect opportunity to remove Qutayba and revive their political authority in Khurasan, which was disturbed by Qutayba's new political order, discussed at the beginning of this chapter (4.1.1). With the death of Qutayba, the chapter on the Umayyad conquests in Bactria was also closed.

The Umayyads' conquests in the east had significant regional impacts. The southern and northern Bactrian rulers who recognised the Umayyads' overlordship continued their cooperation with them. The kings of Shuman and Akhrun joined the governor of Khurasan, Sa'īd al-Ḥarashī (d. ca. 115/735), in his campaigns in Farghana⁸⁰² and in Panjikent, which led to the death of Dewāshṭīch, the king of eastern Sogdiana in 104/722.⁸⁰³ That indicates they supported the expansion of the Umayyads in Sogdiana. Similarly, in 106/724, when the Arab Muslim soldiers from Muḍr and Yaman rebelled in the garrison of Baruqan in Balkh, the king of Chaghaniyan sent his forces to help Naṣr b. Sayyār (d. 131/748), the commander of the garrison. Naṣr faced disobedient soldiers who did not want to go to Sogdiana to fight the Türgesh Turks.⁸⁰⁴ The local troops of Chaghaniyan helped Naṣr subdue the rebels.⁸⁰⁵ The king of Chaghaniyan could have stood with the Türgesh, but his cooperation with Naṣr shows that he preferred the Umayyads over the Türgesh. The rest of Bactria did not object to the presence of the Umayyads. From 96–116/715–734, no resistance against Arab Muslims is reported in our sources.

The expansion to Sogdiana had a different result. It allowed the Umayyads to control the Zarafshan Valley and collect tributes. The Umayyads did not stop there but crossed the Syr Darya River and captured the city of Chach (modern Tashkent).⁸⁰⁶ By crossing the Syr Darya, the Umayyads entered the world of the 'Steppe'. Historically, different nomadic groups erupted from the steppes, attacked sedentary societies, and created nomadic empires.⁸⁰⁷ Soon after

⁸⁰¹ Al-Sullāmī, *Akhbār Wulāt Khurāsān*, 111–112; Al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-budlān*, 434; Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'riḫ*, 9: 1296; Al-Bal'amī, *Tārīḫnāma-yi Ṭabarī*, 1: 874–876.

⁸⁰² Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'riḫ*, 9: 1447.

⁸⁰³ For details, see Said Reza Huseini, "Thinking in Arabic, writing in Sogdian: Arab Sogdian Diplomatic Relation in the early eighth-century," in *From the Ruler of Samarqand to the Andalusian "Law of the Muslims": Sogdian, Greek and Arabic Documents and Manuscripts from the Islamicate World and Beyond*, ed. Andreas Kaplony and Matt Malczycki (Leiden: Brill, 2023), 67–87.

⁸⁰⁴ Refusing soldiers to fight is a common issue mentioned in Arabic narratives for Iraq and Egypt, and it should not be taken as a topos. It reflects a serious problem in the early Islamic period.

⁸⁰⁵ Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'riḫ*, 9: 1473–75.

⁸⁰⁶ Haug, *The Eastern Frontier*, 111–137.

⁸⁰⁷ For further information on the nomadic empires, see Christopher Beckwith, *Empires of the Silk Road: A History of Central Eurasia from the Bronze Age to the Present* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009); For the most

Qutayba conquered Sogdiana, the Türgesh, a confederation of Turkic groups, united under the leadership of the *qaghān* Sülü (r. 716–736), and began invading Sogdiana. They defeated the Umayyad forces in the battle of the “Day of Thirst” (*yawm al-‘atsh*) in 106/724 and the battle of the “Day of Pass” (*yawm al-shi‘b*) in 112/731.⁸⁰⁸ The Türgesh forces imposed two decades of war, which put enormous pressure on the Umayyad Khurasan and almost captured what the Umayyads conquered in Sogdiana. The endless war with the Türgesh, and caliphal pressure on the Arab Muslims to continue to fight the Türgesh, caused resentment among many Arab Muslim soldiers, including those in the garrison of Baruqan in Balkh that were suppressed by Naṣr b. Sayyār. The resentment among Arab Muslim soldiers provided space for a great anti-Umayyad rebellion led by al-Ḥārith b. Surayj in 116/734 in western Bactria. This rebellion again revealed the complexity of local politics in the region, and how Bactrian local rulers responded to an Arab Muslim rebel, the Umayyads, and the Türgesh. It was the last Bactrian resistance before their final submission to the Umayyads. This will be discussed next.

4.3. The rebellion of al-Ḥārith b. Surayj in Bactria

The political order created by Qutayba in Umayyad Khurasan did not last long. Two decades after his death, Khurasan witnessed a great rebellion that changed the political situation in the Umayyad East. Unlike the earlier rebellion led by the *nizak*, this time al-Ḥārith b. Surayj, a notable Arab Muslim leader from the tribe of Tamīm and commander of the Umayyad troops in the garrison of Andkhud in western Bactria, led the rebellion. As explained earlier, the *nizak*’s goals were to remove the Umayyads’ physical presence from Bactria, reduce the Umayyads’ status to distant overlords, and revive the earlier power balance in the region. In contrast, al-Ḥārith wished to form a fully independent Khurasan. Hence, the scope of the second rebellion was more extensive, and its organisation was different. To achieve his goal, al-Ḥārith successfully united the diverse constituencies of Khurasan—including Muslims and non-Muslims, Arabs and non-Arabs—and allied them to the Türgesh Turks, who were considered to be the strongest enemy of the Umayyads in the east. His rebellion weakened the Umayyads in Khurasan and facilitated the Abbasid takeover of this region a few years after al-Ḥārith’s death.

recent study on this subject, see Warwick Ball, *The Eurasian Steppe: People, Movement, Ideas* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2021).

⁸⁰⁸ Blankinship, *The End of the Jihād State*, 126–128, 155–61; Saleh Said Agha, “The ‘Battle of the Pass’: Two Consequential Readings,” *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London* 63, no. 3 (2000): 340–355.

Al-Ḥārith's rebellion is a well-known issue in the Arabic historical narratives related to Khurasan and has been studied by modern scholars. I have addressed this rebellion in historical narratives and modern studies elsewhere. I have argued that al-Ḥārith's rebellion was the result of several issues, namely the military pressure put on the Arab Muslims by the Türgesh Turks who competed with Umayyads over the control of Sogdiana. Add to this the mismanagement of the Umayyad governors, particularly their imposing poll tax (*jizya*) on Sogdian converts, and crushing the protests that pushed the converts to appeal to the Türgesh *qaghān* Sülü to protect them from the Umayyads. Al-Ḥārith's interest was in creating an independent rule in Khurasan by establishing the *shūrā*, or an assembly of pious Muslim leaders, to appoint all officials in Khurasan. Al-Ḥārith's rebellion started in western Bactria and expanded all over the region, bringing the Umayyads and the Türgesh forces to fight each other on the Bactrian ground.⁸⁰⁹ That put enormous pressure on the Bactrian rulers, who responded differently to this rebellion. In this part, I will only discuss the Bactrian rulers' position in this rebellion and the way they attempted to use it as an opportunity to restore the old political order that existed before Qutayba's conquests.

4.3.1 Al-Ḥārith b. Surayj and Bactrian local rulers

Al-Ḥārith started his rebellion in 116/734 in the garrison of Andkhud in western Bactria. His message of stopping the caliphal pressure on Arab Muslims by establishing an independent Khurasan from the caliphate was welcomed by the soldiers from the Tamīm and Azd in the Andkhud garrison. Al-Ḥārith marched towards Balkh and attempted to bring the Arab Muslim soldiers of the garrison of Baruqan to his cause. At this time, Baruqan had ten thousand troops from various Arab tribes commanded by Naṣr b. Sayyār. As mentioned earlier, the Arab Muslim soldiers of this garrison were already resisted the caliphal policy of war in Sogdiana and were suppressed by Naṣr. Some Arab leaders of the garrison rejected al-Ḥārith's call, and al-Ḥārith captured Baruqan. Naṣr fled towards Marw, and his absence allowed al-Ḥārith to establish his authority in Balkh.⁸¹⁰

The capture of Balkh was a political and military victory. Al-Ḥārith appointed Sulaymān b. 'Abd Allāh b. Khāzim over Balkh.⁸¹¹ The Ibn Khāzim family was known for their

⁸⁰⁹ Said Reza Huseini, "The Rebellion of Ḥārith b. Surayj (116–128/734–746): A Local Perspective," in *Acts of Rebellion and Revolt in the Early Islamic Caliphate*, ed. Petra Sijpesteijn and Alon Dar, Special Issue, *Al-'Uṣūr al-Wuṣṭā* 30 (2022): 516–53.

⁸¹⁰ Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, 9: 1566–67; Ibn A'tham al-Kūfī, *Futūḥ*, 7: 283.

⁸¹¹ Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, 9: 1568.

anti-Umayyad position, discussed in the previous chapter (3.3.3, 3.3.4). First ‘Abd Allāh b. Khāzim formed his *de facto* independent rule in the Marw region, and later his son Mūsā established his kingdom in Tirmidh. The Umayyads killed both and imposed their authority in Khurasan. Appointing Sulaymān from this family projected al-Ḥārith’s mission to be sympathetic towards anti-Umayyads’ influential families. It would bring such families to support al-Ḥārith. Al-Ḥārith minted silver coins in Balkh with specific Arabic legends reflecting his rebellion as a movement for justice.⁸¹² The Arab Muslim soldiers of Balkh joined al-Ḥārith, which increased his military forces. However, he could not conquer the Umayyad Khurasan without local support, bringing him into contact with the Bactrian rulers.

The capture of Balkh was significant for the expansion of the rebellion. It allowed al-Ḥārith to establish his position independent from Umayyad rule: he held onto his Arab Muslim forces, minted coins, and appointed representatives. His achievements in Balkh brought him to the attention of Bactrian local rulers, who immediately responded by joining the rebellion. Al-Ṭabarī mentions that the rulers of Guzgan, the *tarsul* (local chief) of Faryab, the *shahrab* or ruler of Talaqan, and Qaryāqis the *dihqān* of Marw joined al-Ḥārith, but he does not explain what motivated them to do that.⁸¹³ However, ‘Abd al-Ḥayy b. Zahāk Gardīzī, who lived in the eleventh century and compiled the *Zayn al-akhbār* (“Ornament of histories”), a Persian chronicle dealing with Ghaznavid history, provides an answer. According to Gardīzī, after capturing Balkh, al-Ḥārith promised to maintain existing agreements with the “protected peoples” (*ahl al-dhimma*).⁸¹⁴ Though the *ahl al-dhimma* is a general term referring to non-Muslims, here, in this context, it refers to the Bactrian local rulers because agreements were signed with rulers and not regular people.

The list of local rulers provided by al-Ṭabarī reveals a crucial point. These rulers were from western Bactria. The rulers of Guzgan, the *tarsul* of Faryab, and the *shahrab* of Talaqan were also mentioned to have supported the *nizak*’s rebellion in 90/710.⁸¹⁵ It is already explained in this chapter that Qutayba killed the *nizak*, conquered western Bactria, and imposed his military control over the region. The royal family of Guzgan, the *tarsūl* of Faryab, and the *shahrab* of Talaqan survived Qutayba’s suppression. Joining al-Ḥārith’s rebellion means these local rulers attempted to retrieve their independence. Apart from these western Bactrian rulers,

⁸¹² Sears, “Revolt of al-Ḥārith ibn Surayj,” 395.

⁸¹³ Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta’rīkh*, 9: 1569.

⁸¹⁴ Gardīzī, *Zayn al-akhbār*, 257–58.

⁸¹⁵ Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta’rīkh*, 8: 1204–1206.

the Hephthalite groups who were still present in the region joined al-Ḥārith to regain their independence disrupted after the *nizak*'s death.⁸¹⁶ Unlike western local Bactrian rulers who had a direct interest in opposing the Umayyads by helping al-Ḥārith, the rulers of northern, southern, and eastern Bactria were not interested in the rebellion. They had valid reasons not to join al-Ḥārith. Qutayba helped the king of Chaghaniyan to overcome his rival neighbours, and later the king supported Naṣr b. Sayyār to subdue the Arab Muslim rebels in Balkh. The *barmak* of the Naw Bahar monastery returned to Balkh only after Qutayba killed the *nizak*. The *khar* of Rob helped Qutayba against the *nizak* earlier and had good relations with Arabs. The kings of Shuman and Akhrun supported the Umayyad expansion in Sogdiana. These rulers were directly interested in keeping the Umayyads in Bactria because the Umayyads helped maintain the power balance that benefitted them. Hence, the rebellion of al-Ḥārith created a great political dilemma in Bactria and brought these rulers to fight each other.

4.3.2 Bactrian rulers between the Umayyads and the Türgesh Turks

After forming a rebellion army consisting of Arab Muslim soldiers, the Sogdian converts and western Bactrian rulers, al-Ḥārith attacked Marw, the political centre of Umayyad Khurasan.⁸¹⁷ Al-Ḥārith dressed in black and carried black flags; this had cultural and political meaning to his local supporters.⁸¹⁸ Though al-Ḥārith led the coalition forces, he was defeated. The reason behind his failure was said to have been his Arab Muslims' fear of the many non-Muslims who supported al-Ḥārith. Thus, the Azdite soldiers of al-Ḥārith left his camp and joined 'Āṣim al-Hilālī, governor of Khurasan (in office in 116/734) before the battle.⁸¹⁹ Apart from that, al-Hilālī's forces destroyed the dam on the Marw River that flooded al-Ḥārith's camp.⁸²⁰ Shortly after, his Bactrian supporters deserted him. The reason for abandoning al-Ḥārith is unclear.

Al-Ḥārith's attack on Marw reflected the dangerous situation in Khurasan. To suppress the rebellion, the caliph Hishām (r. 105–125/723–742) combined the forces of Iraq and Khurasan under the leadership of Khālīd al-Qasrī (d. 126/743),⁸²¹ and he sent twenty thousand

⁸¹⁶ Their support can be seen from the silver coins countermarked al-Ḥārith's movement financially (Sears, "The Revolt of al-Ḥārith ibn Surayj," 380).

⁸¹⁷ Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, 9: 1570; Khaleifat, "The Caliphate of Hisham b. 'Abd al-Malik," 222.

⁸¹⁸ The black colour signified political change, political power, and mourning in the eastern Iranian regions. In an online conversation conducted on 11 October 2021, La Vaissière kindly informed me that this was an important local 'cultural code' in the eastern regions. For his argument on the colour code, see La Vaissière, "The 'Abbāsīd Revolution in Marw," 537–40.

⁸¹⁹ Blankinship, *The End of the Jihād State*, 177.

⁸²⁰ Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, 9: 1569–71.

⁸²¹ Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, 9: 1574–82.

Syrian forces led by his brother Asad al-Qasrī (d. 120/738) to Khurasan. The reason for sending Syrian forces was that the Iraqi forces of Khurasan were not totally faithful to the caliph.⁸²² Upon his arrival in Marw, Asad secured it and defeated the rebels in Marw al-Rūd. Asad's advance towards Bactria pushed al-Ḥārith to Balkh, where he formed his rebellion forces. Although al-Ḥārith resisted, he could not keep the city of Balkh and went to Tirmidh.⁸²³ Once al-Ḥārith left the region, the king of Chaghaniyan and other local elites welcomed Asad and joined him. Al-Ḥārith besieged Tirmidh to create a base in the region, but the people of Tirmidh defeated him.⁸²⁴ Having no chance in Tirmidh, al-Ḥārith sent some of his followers and their families to the Tabushkan fortress in Tukharistan given to him by the *yabghu* of Tukharistan.⁸²⁵ However, Asad sent Juday' b. 'Alī al-Kirmānī (d. 129/746), a senior leader from the Azd who captured the fortress and massacred al-Ḥārith's supporters. To end the rebellion, Asad publicly executed the Arab Muslim elites who supported al-Ḥārith.⁸²⁶ Asad's victory in Bactria pushed al-Ḥārith to seek refuge with the Türgesh *qaghān* and encouraged him to invade Bactria.

Al-Ḥārith's appeal to the Türgesh *qaghān* provided an opportunity for the *qaghān* to invade Bactria. The Türgesh Turks were the strongest rival to the Umayyads in the east because they defeated the Arab Muslims in several battles. To protect the region from the Türgesh, Asad applied a new policy. He shifted the political centre of Khurasan from Marw to Balkh by transporting the official registers to Balkh (*ittakhadha Asad madīnat Balkh dāran...wa naqala ilayhā al-dawāwīn*). He also restored the irrigation system (*al-maṣāni*) in Balkh that likely had been damaged in the war.⁸²⁷ This was not the first time that he paid attention to Balkh. In 107/725 when Asad was the governor of Khurasan, he appointed the *barmak* to restore the city and then moved Arab Muslims from Baruqan to it.⁸²⁸ All these conveyed the message that the Umayyads would not leave Bactria to the Türgesh. However, it did not stop the Türgesh *qaghān*, and he surprised Asad by attacking his forces in Khuttal in 119/737.⁸²⁹

The coming of the *qaghān* and al-Ḥārith created a problematic situation for Asad. Asad's main concern was to keep his Arab Muslim soldier, and local Bactrian forces united. He feared that if some of his Arab Muslim soldiers joined al-Ḥārith or his Bactrian allies would

⁸²² Blankinship, *The End of the Jihād State*, 126–28, 179.

⁸²³ Haug argued that taking Balkh was not easy and the rebels resisted there. He noticed that the Umayyad coins issued in Balkh four years later after al-Ḥārith minted his coins in Balkh (Haug, *The Eastern Frontier*, 142–143).

⁸²⁴ Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, 9: 1582–85, 1590–92; Al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ahsrāf*, 12: 111.

⁸²⁵ Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, 9: 1582–85, 1590–92; Al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ahsrāf*, 12: 111.

⁸²⁶ Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, 9: 1589.

⁸²⁷ Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, 9: 1591.

⁸²⁸ Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, 9: 1490.

⁸²⁹ Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, 9: 1592–94.

support the *qaghān*. This is echoed in al-Ṭabarī's report. He mentions that Asad sent a letter to Ibrāhīm b. ʿĀṣim, a commander of his forces, saying he will execute Ibrāhīm if he betrays Asad and joins the enemy. The *qaghān* was aware of this situation and tried to create disunity among Asad's forces. Thus, he ordered his forces to fight the king of Chaghaniyan first and then take on the Arab Muslims. He wanted to show the outcome of joining the Arabs. However, he was not successful, and the king of Chaghaniyan fought the Türgesh and lost his life defending Asad. Once the *qaghān*'s victory became clear, he sent al-Ḥārith's people to Asad, saying that the entire region beyond the Amu Darya was part of his territory and he should defend his region. However, he sent his forces from Khuttal to plunder western Bactria, and they reached as far as Marw al-Rūd.⁸³⁰ This invasion turned Bactria into a war zone between the Umayyads and the Türgesh.

The military defeat by the Türgesh forces in Khuttal forced Asad to seek more local support. He understood that his Arab Muslim forces could not defeat the Türgesh.⁸³¹ He ordered to make fire on the city walls to invite people from the surrounding districts (*min al-rasātīq*). Once people joined him in Balkh, he accused al-Ḥārith of bringing the Türgesh forces to destroy people. His message was convincing because the Türgesh forces plundered Bactria, and in some places like Guzgan, they destroyed the local ruler's palace.⁸³² The Türgesh threat was significant, and northern and western Bactria rulers preferred to ally with Asad rather than join the Türgesh *qaghān*. However, the king of Khuttal and the *yabghu* of Tukharistan supported the Türgesh *qaghān*. The position of the *khār* of Rob, and the king of Kadagstan is unknown. Al-Ṭabarī mentions that the *qaghān* asked the local rulers of Tukharistan to join him,⁸³³ but it is not sure if the *khar* and the king of Kadagstan supported him.

The Umayyad and the Türgesh forces fought for the last time in 119/737 at Kharistan, an area in Guzgan. The Türgesh *qaghān* and his allies—including al-Ḥārith, the *yabghu* of Tukharistan, the king of Khuttal, and some Sogdian rulers—met Asad, who led the Umayyad forces supported by some local Bactrian allies like the king of Guzgan. Regarding forces, the *qaghān* was weaker because his main forces were already scattered to plunder the region, and he relied on small forces and his local allies. Thus, the *qaghān* played the same game he did in Khuttal to disunite Asad's camp. He announced that all Guzganis who joined Arabs would be

⁸³⁰ Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, 9: 1594–1601.

⁸³¹ Blankinship, *The End of the Jihād State*, 181.

⁸³² Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, 9: 1603–05.

⁸³³ Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, 9: 1604.

massacred if Asad was defeated. At the same time, Asad wanted the Guzgan forces to come forward and fight the *qaghān* while sending some Arab troops to Guzgan to watch the region. The king of Guzgan caught between Asad and the *qaghān*, which must have pressured him to decide. Eventually, he supported Asad and sent his forces, accompanied by Arab soldiers, to attack the *qaghān*'s camp from an area where the *qaghān* did not expect any attacks. The Guzgan surprise attack created chaos in the enemy's camp, helping Asad to defeat them. Thus, the *qaghān* and his allies fled away and returned to their areas.

The *qaghān* and al-Ḥārith returned to the north of Amu Darya and prepared to attack Samarkand. However, the sudden assassination of the *qaghān* by Bugha Kul Cür, chief of the "Yellow Bone clan" failed their plan of attacking Samarkand. The death of the *qaghān* created an internal war among the Türgesh Turks,⁸³⁴ and they could never more challenge the Umayyads. Al-Ḥārith lived among the Turks for two decades and then returned to Marw, where he was killed in 128/746 after organising another rebellion against the Umayyads.⁸³⁵ Al-Ḥārith's rebellion in Bactria shows the power dynamic in Bactria. It reveals that al-Ḥārith had to bring local rulers to his side to fight the Umayyads. Similarly, to suppress the rebellion and fight the *qaghān* Asad needed local support. This rebellion also shows how local rulers responded to different powers. The local ruler's decision to join al-Ḥārith, Asad, and the *qaghān* or to fight them depended on their political priorities. It helps us understand that controlling a frontier region by any political power requires local support (Figure 21).

4.3.3 Re-consolidation of Umayyad authority in Bactria

The battle of Kharistan and the subsequent death of the *qaghān* had a significant impact on Bactria. The rulers of western and northern Bactria remained on his side. Those who helped al-Ḥārith's rebellion, like the Hephthalites and the rulers of western Bactria, submitted to Asad. That helped Asad to remove the last local enemy: the king of Khuttal, who supported the *qaghān*. Asad attacked Khuttal and executed its king.⁸³⁶ He then publicly celebrated the re-consolidation of the Umayyad's authority over Bactria. In 120/738, Asad's overlordship was celebrated during the *mihragān* festival in Balkh. Traditionally, the people of Balkh visited their rulers and presented their gifts during this festival. Asad appeared like a king on a throne and received the local rulers or their representatives from Bactria, Herat, and other areas who

⁸³⁴ Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, 9: 1604–1614; Beckwith, *The Tibetan Empire in Central Asia*, 90.

⁸³⁵ Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, 9: 1917–33.

⁸³⁶ Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, 9: 1630–33.

prostrated before him and presented him with their gifts.⁸³⁷ This ceremony symbolised the final submission of many Bactrian rulers to the Umayyads. Perhaps, for this reason, our sources no longer report any anti-Umayyad uprising or resistance in Bactria. The fact that there are no more revolts means that the local leaders resolved to submit to the Umayyads. Bactrian local rulers, like the king of Guzgan, helped Asad's successor, Naṣr b. Sayyār, to campaign in Sogdiana.⁸³⁸ Asad died in Balkh in 120/738 and was buried there.

The political situation in Umayyad Khurasan entered a new phase after 120/737. The political confusion in Iraq and Syria, and rivalries among Arab Muslim leaders in Khurasan led to political fractionalisation and civil war. The Arab Muslim leaders who were part of the political structure of Umayyad Khurasan were divided into different hostile groups. Naṣr represented the Muḍr, al-Kirmānī led people from the Azd, and al-Ḥārith, who returned from Sogdiana to Marw, led his supporters from the Tamīm. They fought each other over the control of Khurasan. Movement from one side to another was so frequent that one could not make a clear-cut tribal division to define these camps.⁸³⁹ After the defeat of al-Ḥārith, the sources do not provide any information on Bactria because their focus shifted to Marw and the Abbasid Revolution.

During the civil war, Naṣr had to withdraw from Marw to Nishapur. His rivals, al-Ḥārith and al-Kirmānī, fought each other over control of Marw. Al-Ḥārith was killed in Marw in 128/746 as his supporters abandoned him because he entered tribal conflicts. The political chaos in Marw, the death of al-Ḥārith, and the withdrawal of Naṣr made Bactrian rulers realise that the Umayyads could no longer keep the region politically stable. Thus, they had to decide to stay with the Umayyads, or leave them.

In this chaotic situation, a new force appeared in Khurasan to manage the political fractionalisation to its benefit. This was none other than Abū Muslim al-Khurāsānī (d. 137/755). In fact, the main reason behind the success of the Abbasid Revolution was Abū Muslim's skilful management of this political fractionalisation. Abū Muslim began his *da'wa*, or mission, precisely in the year 129/746–747 when political fractionalisation was at its peak. He fashioned himself like al-Ḥārith. He dressed in black garments and exalted the black flags, and followed almost the same political issues, including al-Ḥārith's idea of *al-bay'at li-l-Riḍā*, but changed it to *al-bay'at li-l-Riḍā min āl Muḥammad* ('allegiance for the leadership of the

⁸³⁷ Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'riḫh*, 9: 1636–1639.

⁸³⁸ Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'riḫh*, 9: 1695–96.

⁸³⁹ Shaban, *The 'Abbāsīd Revolution*, 134–135.

Elected One from the Prophet's family'). However, Abū Muslim could not bring Khurasan under his control through a top-down application of force. He was not an Arab tribal leader, nor did he have an army. Thus, he did as al-Ḥārith had done and united Arabs and non-Arabs. For instance, he attracted Arab leaders from Marw and non-Arab elites like Khālid b. Barmak from Balkh and Muḥammad b. Sūl from Jurjān.⁸⁴⁰ These local elites had been loyal supporters of the Umayyad caliphate, but now turned away and supported Abū Muslim. To conquer Khurasan, Abū Muslim successfully applied a 'divide and rule' policy and removed one rival by the hands of another rival. With this strategy, Abū Muslim managed to secure the Marw region in less than two years, something that Naṣr had not been able to do in a decade.⁸⁴¹ Again, success in controlling Khurasan was in understanding the local situation, including local rulers' rivalries, as Abū Muslim did. The lesson is that only by focussing on the local context is it possible to understand what happened in Khurasan. Far away, political rulers might be assigned instrumental roles by the chroniclers; the local circumstances were the crucial factor.

The triumph of Abū Muslim in Marw had direct consequences for Bactria. Abū Muslim could not see any hostile region behind his back before moving towards the western regions. He sent forces led by a certain Abū Dāwūd to Balkh, where his supporter Khālid b. Barmak lived. The Umayyad *'āmil* of Balkh fled to Tirmidh, and Abū Dāwūd captured Balkh in 128/747.⁸⁴² Possibly, the Rob region was taken in this year as well. A Bactrian legal document mentions that a family in Rob had to sell their farming land because the Arabs imposed taxes on them.⁸⁴³ It is not clear then what happened to the local ruler of Rob. The Arabic documents from Rob show that this region was under Arab Muslim authority in 755, and the local people paid their land taxes to the Abbasid authorities stationed in Samangan.⁸⁴⁴

The Abbasid forces did not enter eastern Bactria. Kadagstan remained under the control of the Turks and recognised the overlordship of the *qaghān* of the Turks till 772. The Turkic ruler of Kadagstan also had influence in the Rob region, which was part of the Abbasid empire. Expansion of the Abbasid empire in this zone was achieved later by Faḍl b. Yaḥyā al-Barmakī (d. 187/803), the great-grandson of the *barmak* of Balkh who now acted as the Abbasid

⁸⁴⁰ Al-Sullāmī, *Akhbār Wulāt Khurāsān*, 120.

⁸⁴¹ Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, 9: 1965, 2000–2001. If we look at Abū Muslim's achievement from a local perspective, then there is no reason to accept the Arabic narratives' exaggeration of the leadership of the Abbasid Imam anymore. The Abbasid Imam may have been influential in Iraq and Syria, but he had no power or resources to manage a rebellion in Khurasan.

⁸⁴² Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, 9: 1965–1997.

⁸⁴³ Bactrian document no. W in Sims-Williams, *BDI*, 126–135.

⁸⁴⁴ See Khan, *Arabic Documents*, 92–136

governor of Khurasan. Faḍl's grandfather was Khālid b. Barmak, whose mother was the daughter of *Chaghān-khudā*. The *barmak* and the *Chaghān-khudā* were loyal allies of the Umayyads, but their progenies turned away, joined the Abbasids, and completed the conquests of Bactria a century after the first group of Arab Muslims entered Bactria. Bactrian local rulers recognised the overlordship of the Abbasid caliphate, which had a firm Khurasani root and supported the Abbasids. If the earlier generation of the Bactrian rulers cooperated or resisted the Arab Muslims, it was to maintain their local autonomy, but the new generation of the Bactrian local elites, who were now Muslim, opted for a much bigger aim. They sought to create a new empire: that of the Abbasids.

Conclusion

The conquest of Bactria resulted from a series of diplomatic negotiations and military operations implemented side by side. Local Bactrian elites were instrumental in realising both. For instance, Qutayba was involved in local politics in north and west Bactria and made alliances with local rulers that helped him to expand Umayyad control in Sogdiana. However, Qutayba was not interested in raiding Sogdiana, but systematically conquered and incorporated it into the empire. His violent conquests, destruction of religious places, interference in local politics, and confiscation of local people's houses to settle the Arabs disturbed the local power balance in the region. That was noticed by the *nizak*, who objected to Qutayba's policies and formed a regional alliance against him. Qutayba suppressed the *nizak*'s rebellion only with the help of the local rulers from Inner Khurasan and some of his Bactrian allies, such as the king of Rob. Nevertheless, the rebellion provided an opportunity for Qutayba to conquer western Bactria. The conquest was achieved through ruthless military campaigns, the execution of resisting rulers, the establishment of military garrisons within or outside the main cities in the plains, and the appointment of Arab Muslim administrators in the conquered areas. Considering these elements as the main features of the conquests, we can safely say that western Bactria was conquered in this period. However, Qutayba did not follow the same policy in southern, northern, and eastern Bactria. He attacked Shuman only after the king of Shuman refused to pay tributes, and the Shumanis killed Qutayba's delegation. Qutayba did not establish any garrison in Shuman. Similarly, Gharchistan and Gaz remained outside of his campaigns. The rulers of southern, northern, and eastern Bactria recognised the overlordship of Qutayba by visiting him and paying tributes. Qutayba left these areas to their local rulers. Hence, western

Bactria was conquered and brought under Umayyad's direct control, while southern, northern, and eastern Bactria came under indirect rule.

The rebellion of al-Ḥārith disrupted the new power balance created by Qutayba in the region. This rebellion allowed western Bactrian local rulers who survived Qutayba's suppression to support al-Ḥārith to revive their political autonomy. However, the predominance of local supporters of al-Ḥārith created fear among the Arab Muslims in al-Ḥārith's camp, and the inability of al-Ḥārith to assuage this caused his mission in Marw to fail. Nevertheless, this rebellion was a unique occasion because al-Ḥārith convinced different Muslim and non-Muslim political groups to join him. With this assistance, he captured Balkh, established his government, and attacked Marw, the political centre of Umayyad Khurasan. He eventually joined with the Türgesh Turks to fight the Umayyads. Finally, al-Ḥārith and the Türgesh were defeated in Guzgan, which allowed Asad to re-consolidate Umayyad control in western Bactria. Asad removed the king of Khuttal, but it is unclear if he established any military garrisons there. What is clear is that Asad re-established the Umayyad control in western Bactria and shifted the political centre from Marw to Balkh. However, eastern, northern, and southern Bactria remained under their local rulers, who recognised Asad's authority. After this, Bactrian rulers did not revolt against the Umayyads anymore but assisted them in Umayyad's expansion in Sogdiana. They remained loyal to the Umayyads until Umayyad Khurasan sank into civil war. In this situation, most of the Bactrian local rulers remained loyal to the idea of the caliphate, but in practice, they changed sides and supported the Abbasids. With that, they became part of the makers of the Abbasid empire.

The Umayyads' control was not the same all over Bactria. In western parts, the Umayyads imposed direct control. In northern, southern, and eastern Bactria, the Umayyads applied a different policy and imposed an indirect rule. This creates a question: how and why did the Umayyads enforce these different policies? The next chapter will provide some answers.

