



# AḲBĀR AL-DAWLAT AL-SALJŪQĪYA

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**AḲBĀR AL-DAWLAT AL-SALJŪQĪYA**, an Arabic chronicle on the history of the Great Saljuq dynasty in Iran and Iraq, conventionally ascribed to the person mentioned at the head of the work as “al-Amīr al-Sayyed al-Emām al-Ajall al-Kabīr Ṣadr-al-dīn Abu’l-Ḥasan ‘Alī b. al-Sayyed al-Ajall al-Emām al-Šahīd Abu’l-Fawāres Nāṣer b. ‘Alī al-Ḥosaynī;” this same heading names the work itself as the *Zobdat al-tawārīk aḡbār al-omarā’ wa’l-molūk al-saljūqīya*. It exists in a unique British Museum manuscript, Suppl. 550, first described by Rieu in his *Supplement to the Catalogue of the Arabic Manuscripts*, London, 1894, p. 342; cf. Brockelmann, *GAL I*<sup>2</sup>, p. 392, Suppl. I, pp. 554-55. It was edited from this manuscript, with a critical introduction and indices, by Moḥammad Eqbāl (Punjab University Oriental Publications, Lahore, 1933). There are considerable problems of authorship and composition, first discussed by K. Süssheim in his *Prolegomena zu einer Ausgabe der im Britischen Museum zu London verwahrten Chronik des Seldschuqischen Reiches*, Leipzig, 1911; then by M. T. Houtsma, “Some remarks on the history of the Saljuks,” *Acta Orientalia* 3, 1925, pp. 145ff.; and by Cl. Cahen, “Le Malik-nāmeḥ et l’histoire des origines seljukides,” *Oriens* 2, 1949, pp. 32-37. The work seems, in its present form, a three-part compilation. First, there is the early history of the Saljuqs, comprising the semi-legendary origins of the family in the Central Asian steppes, their struggle with the Ghaznavids for control of Khorasan and Jebāl, establishment of the Great Saljuq empire, and its expansionist policies up to the death of Malekšāh in 485/1092. Second, the history of the dynasty is carried



on to ca. 548/1153, the beginning of the reign of Moḥammad II b. Maḥmūd; this is clearly an abridgement, adhering closely to the original, of ‘Emād-al-dīn Kāteb Eṣfahānī’s history of the Saljuqs, the *Noṣrat al-fatra*, completed in 579/1183, known to us only in Bondārī’s early 6th/12th century abridgement, the *Zobdat al-noṣra*. Third, there is discussed the last year of the Great Saljuq sultanate, ending with the death of ʿŪḡrīl II b. Arslan in 590/1194, but with a brief closing note on the slave commanders and atabegs. Reference is made to an event of 622/1225 and to the ‘Abbasid caliph al-Nāṣer as still living, although he died in that same year.

The author is unknown, as are his sources; but he probably wrote under the Atabegs of Azarbaijan and composed his work in 622/1225.

Süssheim suggested as author of the redaction of the whole work the Egyptian writer Ebn Zāfer (d. 623/1226), on the grounds of resemblances in subject matter and style to his general history *Aḳbār al-dowal al-monqaṭe’a*, but the work seems to emanate from the Iranian world rather than from Egypt. The problem is complicated by the fact that Ṣadr-al-dīn Ḥosaynī remains unidentified, apart from the fact he was clearly an ‘Alid, possibly from Nīšāpūr. The value of the work is considerable. The information on Saljuq origins complements that of Ebn al-Aṭīr; and both these sources have been shown by Cahen to stem, directly or indirectly, from the lost *Malek-nāma*, cited by Mīrkvānd. There is important material on the Saljuq campaigns in Anatolia and Georgia under Alp Arslan against the Christians. On Ghaznavid-Saljuq relations the *Aḳbār* again complements Ebn al-Aṭīr, with some valuable dates from the chronology of the Ghaznavid sultans of the 430-40s/1040-50s. It also provides the fullest account available of the last decades of the Great Saljuq sultanate and ʿŪḡrīl II’s attempts to retrieve the deteriorating situation in Iran, the whole of this second half of the 6th/12th century being extremely ill-documented. (It is of interest that Jovaynī [II, p. 44; tr. Boyle, I, p. 312] conserves a passage relating to Sultan Arslan b. ʿŪḡrīl I, attributed to Ṣadr-al-dīn’s *Zobdat al-tawārīk*, which is absent from the text of the *Aḳbār* as we know it.)

*Bibliography* : Given in the text.