



ALTUNTAŠ

ALTUNTAŠ (ĀLTŪNTAŠ) ḤĀJEB, ABŪ SA'ĪD, Turkish slave commander of the Ghaznavid sultans and governor in K̲v̲ārazm (408-23/1017-32). He began his career under Sebūktigin, founder of the Ghaznavid dynasty, and under his son Maḥmūd was a leading general. He commanded the right wing of the forces in the battle near Balk in 398/1008 between Maḥmūd and the invading Qarakhanids under the *ilig* Naṣr b. 'Alī. In 401/1010-11, he is mentioned as governor of Herat. In 408/1017 he accompanied Maḥmūd when the latter invaded K̲v̲ārazm ostensibly to avenge his brother-in-law, the K̲v̲ārazmšāh Ma'mūn b. Ma'mūn, but in reality to annex K̲v̲ārazm to his empire. Once K̲v̲ārazm was secured for the Ghaznavids, Altuntaš was appointed governor with the ancient title of K̲v̲ārazmšāh. During his fifteen years' governorship, he always remained faithful to the sultan and defended the frontiers of his province against incursions by the Oğuz and Qipčaq from the steppes; in particular, he kept a close control of the Oğuz bands under the leadership of the Saljuq family. He also took part in Maḥmūd's campaign against the Qarakhanid ruler in Bokhara and Samarqand, 'Alī b. Ḥasan or Hārūn Boğrā Khan, called 'Alītigin. Thus he was present at the meeting of Maḥmūd and his ally Yūsuf Qadīr Khan of Kāšġar in 416/1025. The isolated position of K̲v̲ārazm, and the fact that Altuntaš was able to build up his military strength by recruiting Turkmen auxiliaries from the steppes, made him an object of suspicion to Maḥmūd latterly and especially to his son Mas'ūd after 421/1030; Altuntaš seems always to have prudently remained in K̲v̲ārazm and never to have gone to the court in Ġazna.



Mas'ūd continued his father's policy of hostility towards 'Alītigīn, and in 423/1032 again allied with Yūsuf Qadīr Khan and his sons against their kinsman but rival, 'Alītigīn. In that year, the sultan ordered Altuntaš to invade Transoxania, and an indecisive battle took place at Dabūsīya near Bokhara, in which, however, Altuntaš was mortally wounded; fortunately his *katkodā* or adjutant, Aḥmad Šīrāzī (who subsequently became Mas'ūd's vizier), managed to conceal his master's wounded condition and conclude a peace with 'Alītigīn before Altuntaš died.

Altuntaš's son Hārūn succeeded him in K̄vārazm as de facto governor, although the suspicious Mas'ūd recognized him only as *kalīfat-al-dār* (lieutenant) of his son Sa'īd, who was given the official title of K̄vārazmšāh. Within two years Hārūn rebelled openly against the sultan, in alliance with 'Alītigīn and the Saljuqs (425/1034); but a year later Mas'ūd managed to procure Hārūn's assassination by his own guards. Altuntaš's other son Esmā'īl K̄andān succeeded to power in K̄vārazm, inevitably as the sworn enemy of Mas'ūd and the ally of the Saljuqs. Mas'ūd cleverly dealt with this threat by investing Šāh-Malek of Jand, son of the Oğuz *yabgū* but the enemy of the Saljuq family, with the rule over K̄vārazm (420/1038). Šāh-Malek successfully enforced his new claim to K̄vārazm in 432/1041. Esmā'īl had to flee to the Saljuqs and is no more heard of; and Šāh -Malek was proclaimed ruler in the Khwarazmian capital of Gorgānj. Yet by this time Sultan Mas'ūd was already dead, and the whole edifice of Ghaznavid rule in the west had crumbled. With the ousting of Esmā'īl, the short-lived dynasty of Altuntaš and his sons came to an end; the title K̄vārazmšāh lapsed for several decades and was not revived until the Saljuq Malekšāh gave it to his Turkish slave governor Anūštigin Ġarča'ī.

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