



ESMĀ'ĪL, B. SEBOKTEĠĪN

ESMĀ'ĪL, b. Seboktegīn, Ghaznavid prince and briefly amir in Ġazna in 387-88/997-98. Esmā'īl was one of Seboktegīn's younger sons by a daughter of his old master Alptegīn. Seboktegīn had appointed him as his successor in Ġazna and Balk, so that on his death in Ša'bān 387/August 997, Esmā'īl was able immediately to assume power there as the vassal of the Samanid amir, Maṣūr b. Nūḥ, and of the then deposed 'Abbasid caliph, al-Ṭā'e'. It is difficult to discern Seboktegīn's motives for settling the succession on Esmā'īl in preference to his elder son Maḥmūd, the commander of the Samanid forces in Khorasan; the reason adduced by C. E. Bosworth (1962) no longer seems tenable. At all events, the forceful and more experienced Maḥmūd refused to accept the situation. He demanded recognition as supreme overlord in the Ghaznavid dominions, enlisted the help of his brother Abu'l-Moẓaffar Naṣr, governor of Bost, and of his uncle Boġrāčōq of Herat, and marched on Ġazna, defeating Esmā'īl outside the town in Rabī' I 388/March, 998. Esmā'īl's short reign of seven months thus ended, and he spent the last years of his life in captivity in Gūzgān under the tutelage of the vassal line of Āl-e Farīġūn (q.v.). He is said to have been a man of culture and to have been literate in Arabic and Persian.

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