



## FATH-NĀMA

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**FATH-NĀMA**, Arabic-Persian term used to denote proclamations and letters announcing victories in battle or the successful conclusion of military campaigns. They might be composed on the actual battle field by one of the ruler's secretaries or put together later in the ruler's chancery. These last tended to have a more polished form, and some may have been written more as literary exercises than as propaganda, the normal purpose of the *fath-nāma*.

Examples from early Persian history are sparse compared with those from the later periods, and what we possess are written in a straightforward style rather than the elaborate *enšā'* style which later became prevalent. Thus the *fath-nāma* issued by the Ghaznavid Sultan Maḥmūd (r. 388-421/998-1030) on 1 Jomādā II 420/16 June 1029 on his conquest of Ray from the Buyids (q.v.) and addressed to the 'Abbasid caliph Qāder was composed immediately in his army camp. In it, the sultan justified the deposition of Majd-al-Dawla and the savage massacres by his troops of the local people on the grounds that Ray had become a nest of heretics, i.e., Mo'tazilites, Rawāfeẓ, Isma'ilis, etc. (text in Ebn al-Jawzī, *Montaẓam* VIII, pp. 38-40, tr. in Bosworth, 1962, pp. 70-72; cf. idem, *Ghaznavids*, pp. 53-54). Likewise, after the battle in 431/1040 of Dandānqān (q.v.), the victorious Saljuq leaders sent from the battlefield, using writing materials plundered from the chancery of the routed Ghaznavids, a proclamation of victory to the Qarakhanids in Transoxania; and at some point not exactly defined in the sources, a similar letter was sent to the caliph Qā'em by the hand of a certain Abū Eshāq Foqqā'ī, presumably a Persian secretary recruited immediately into the Saljuq service (Bayhaqī, 628; Ẓahīr-al-Dīn



Niṣāpūrī, pp. 17-18; Rāvandī, pp. 102-4; cf. Bosworth, *Ghaznavids*, p. 268).

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