Published: January 1, 2000
Last Updated: December 20, 2012

MASʿUD (III) B. EBRĀHIM

MASʿUD (III) B. EBRĀHIM, ʿALĀʾ-AL-DAWLA WA'L-DIN ABU SAʿD, Ghaznavid sultan (r. 492-508/1099-1115), recorded on his coins with various other honorifics (see Bosworth, 1977, p. 83).

He succeeded his father, Ebrāhim, probably after fratricidal succession disputes amongst his many brothers, though details are lacking; indeed, in the light of Masʿud's apparently successful reign, we know remarkably little about specific events within it. He seems to have had generally peaceful relations with his western neighbors, the Great Saljuqs, and in his father's lifetime, he had married, possibly in about 475/1082-83, a daughter of Sultan Malekšāh, Jawhar Ḵātun (known in the sources as the *Mahd-e ʿErāq*), although in 495/1102 he gave shelter at Ghazna to Kontoḡdi, a rebellious slave commander of Sultan Sanjar (Juzjāni, I. p. 240; Ebn al-Atir, X, pp. 168, 347-49; Bosworth, 1977, pp. 83-84).

With the western frontier of the empire now stable, Masʿud's main sphere of military activity seems to have been India; information here comes mainly from his court panegyrists, such as ʿOṯmān Moḵtāri, Masʿud-e Saʿd-e Salmān, and Abu'l-Faraj Runi. ʿOṯmān Moḵtāri, assigned by the sultan, composed for him an epic poem in rhymed couplets (*maṯnawi*), the *Šahriār-nāma*, which is partially extant (text in his *Divān*, pp. 798-844; editor's commentary, pp. 765-95; Ṣafā, II, pp. 502-4). The defeat and capture of the *rājā* of Qanawj is recorded, and there were raids beyond the Ganges-Jumna Doāb as far as Malwa in Central India (Ray, I, pp. 513-15; Bosworth, 1977, pp. 84-85; ʿOṯmān Moḵtāri, editor's commentary, pp. 654-74).

We are better informed, primarily from the excavations of the 1950s and 1960s at Ghazna of the Italian Archeological Mission in Afghanistan (see ĠAZNI ii), about Masʿud's extensive construction of palaces and gardens, doubtless financed from the spoils of India, and apparently with the trophies from Hindu temples incorporated in their fabrics. There is a tower at Ghazna, whose inscription was read by Henry Rawlinson in the 19th century as being constructed by Masʿud (Flury, 1925, pp. 75-78). The Italian excavations have revealed what must have been a splendid palace of Masʿud, constructed of brick but with marble slabs around a courtyard, that are inscribed with a *maṯnawi* poem in the *motaqāreb* meter in praise of the sultan, which was put together and read by Alessio Bombaci (1966, pp. 413-14).

Masʿud died in Šawwāl 508/March 1115, survived by a number of sons, of whom several are mentioned (Juzjāni, I, p. 240, n. 5; tr. Raverty, I, p. 107; Ebn al-Aṯir, X, p. 508). This proliferations of sons, and the fact that three of them, Širzād, Malek Arslān, and Bahrāmšāh engaged on their father's death for three years in internecine fighting, with the first two very briefly holding the throne, resulted in Masʿud acquiring, obviously posthumously, the sobriquet of Abu'l-Moluk (Father of Kings). From these struggles, Bahrāmšāh finally emerged as victor, but only with military help from the Saljuq Sultan Sanjar, and the weakened sultanate fell under Saljuq suzerainty (Juzjāni, I, pp. 241-42; Bosworth, 1977, pp. 89-98).

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