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Excerpt

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Part One

CHAPTER I

AUTHORITIES

BEFORE proceeding to the extant authorities on the period of Sulṭān Maḥmūd of Ghazna, it is necessary to state the works that have perished. Of these, the contemporary or nearly contemporary works were, firstly, an official chronicle, most probably named *Dawlat Nāmah*;¹ secondly, the metrical *Tāju'l-Futūḥ*,² dealing with the exploits of Sulṭān Maḥmūd; thirdly, *Kitāb fī Ghurar-i-Akbbār-i-Mulūki'l-Furs* by 'Abdu'l-Malik b. Muḥammad b. Ismā'il ath-Tha'ālibī, dealing with the history of the kings of Īrān, from the earliest times to the reign of Sulṭān Maḥmūd;³ fourthly, three works composed by Abu'l-Faḍl Muḥammad b. Ḥusain al-Baihaqī,⁴ namely the *Maqāmāt-i-Abū Naṣr-i-Muḥkānī*⁵

¹ Farrukhī, f. 23 b. No reference has hitherto been made to this work.

² 'Unṣurī, pp. 79, 85, refers to this work in glowing terms which shows that it was most probably composed by himself. It is incorrectly stated in E. and D. ii, 53, that *Tāju'l-Futūḥ* was the title of that portion of Baihaqī's *Mujalladāt* which dealt with the history of Sulṭān Maḥmūd. Cf. *infra*, p. 2.

³ This work was written in four volumes for Abu'l-Muzaffar Naṣr, brother of Sulṭān Maḥmūd and commander of the troops of Kḥurāsān. Only the first two volumes dealing with the history of the Pre-Islamic period and the history of Muḥammad have come down to us, and have been edited and translated into French by H. Zotenberg (Paris, 1900).

⁴ For an account of his life see Ibn Funduq, ff. 101 b–103 a; and *Ency. of Islam*, i, 592. In Bākhari, f. 104 a, his name is mentioned among the poets.

⁵ *Āthāru'l-Wuṣarā*, f. 106 a, and Baihaqī, p. 749. His full name was Abū Naṣr b. Muḥkān (?) Aḥmad b. 'Abdu's-Samad. He was the head of the Correspondence Department of Sulṭān Maḥmūd. Extracts cited from this work in the *Āthāru'l-Wuṣarā* show that it contained valuable information. Cf. Baihaqī, p. 461.

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containing, among other things, useful details about the history and court life of the Sulṭān, the *Mujalladāt*,¹ or a history of Sulṭān Maḥmūd and his successors in thirty volumes,² from the year 409 to about 460³ (1018–68), and a collection of important diplomatic correspondence of Sulṭān Mas‘ūd,⁴ and most probably that of Sulṭān Maḥmūd, named *Zīnatu’l-Kuttāb*.⁵

It is evident from the extracts preserved in the *Jawāmi‘u’l-Hikāyāt* and *Āthāru’l-Wuṣarā* that the *Maqāmāt* contained much useful material for the history of Sulṭān Maḥmūd, while the *Mujalladāt*, of which only the second half of the sixth volume, volumes seven, eight, nine and the part of the tenth dealing with the period of Sulṭān Mas‘ūd are preserved, was a comprehensive work several parts of which were known by special names derived from the titles of the sovereigns to whom they related. Thus the history of Sulṭān Maḥmūd was named *Ta’riḫ-i-Yamīnī*,⁶ that of Sulṭān Mas‘ūd, *Ta’riḫ-i-Mas‘ūdī*, and so on. The importance of Baihaqī’s *Ta’riḫ-i-Yamīnī* appears from the fact that

1 This title was given to Baihaqī’s history in later times on account of its voluminousness. It has been named *Ta’riḫ-i-Nāsirī*, *Jāmi‘ fi’l-Tawāriḫ banū Subuktigīn*, and *Jāmi‘u’l-Tawāriḫ*, by Ibn Funduq, f. 101 b, and Ḥājji Khalifa, ii, 508, 580. These titles have misled some writers like Major Raverty (*Tab. Nās.* p. 105), and Elliot and Dowson (ii, 53), to attribute to Baihaqī a history of the predecessors of Subuktigīn as well.

2 Ibn Funduq, ff. 12 b, 101 b; and *Rawḍab*, p. 7. Raverty, *Tab. Nās.* p. 105, note, however, limits their number to twelve without specifying his authority.

3 Baihaqī, pp. 233, 317. Ibn Funduq, f. 12 b, says that it was a history of Sulṭān Maḥmūd and his descendants but he contradicts himself on f. 101 b by saying that it included the history of Subuktigīn as well.

4 Baihaqī, p. 528.

5 Ibn Funduq, f. 101 b. Probably Baihaqī refers to this work on p. 528.

6 Baihaqī, pp. 10, 26, 66, 158. This work has sometimes been confused with ‘Utbi’s *Kitābu’l-Yamīnī*.

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it was based on original state documents¹ and a diary which the author used to keep.²

Fifthly, the universal history of Maḥmūd-i-Warrāq ending with the year 409³ (1018); sixthly, the *Dhail Tajāribu'l-Umam* by Hilāl b. Muḥassin b. Ibrāhīm aṣ-Ṣābī which contained *in extenso* the letters of victory despatched by Sulṭān Maḥmūd to al-Qādir Bi'llāh, the 'Abbāsīd Caliph;⁴ and finally, the *Farīdu't-Tawārikh*, dealing with the history of *Khurāsān*, by Abu'l-Ḥasan Muḥammad b. Sulaimān.⁵

Besides these contemporary works, at least five later works have also been lost. Firstly, *Ta'rikh-i-Mujadwal* by Imām Muḥammad b. 'Alī Abu'l-Qāsim 'Imādī;⁶ secondly, the *Mashāribu't-Tajārib* in four volumes by Abu'l-Ḥasan 'Alī b. Zaid b. Amīrak Muḥammad b. Ḥusain b. Funduq, known as Ibn Funduq;⁷ thirdly, a history by Abu'l-Ḥasan al-Haiṭham b. Muḥammad-i-Nāǰī;⁸ fourthly, a history of *Khurāsān* by Abū Muḥammad Hārūn b. 'Abbās al-Ma'mūnī who traced his genealogy from the Caliph al-Ma'mūn;⁹

1 Baihaqī, pp. 120, 354, 528.

2 *Ibid.* pp. 177, 268, 693.

3 *Ibid.* p. 317.

4 Only a small fragment of this chronicle, embracing three years (A.H. 390–2) has been preserved, and published by Professor D. S. Margoliouth as a part of the third volume of the *Tajāribu'l-Umam* of Abū 'Alī Ahmad b. Muḥammad Miskawih and its Continuation by Abū Shujā' ar-Rūdhrawarī.

5 Ibn Funduq, ff. 12 a, 53 a, 76 b, 77 a; and Yāqūt, *Irshād*, ii, 60.

6 *Tab. Nās.* p. 69. It is probably the same work to which reference is made in *Mujmal*, f. 263 b, as *Ta'rikh-i-Amīr 'Imādī Maḥmūd b. al-Imām as-Sinjarī al-Ghaznawī*. See also Barthold, p. 24.

7 Ibn Funduq, ff. 12 a, 40 a; Ibnu'l-Aṭhīr, ix, 249; and *Gurjāda*,

p. 8. Ibn Funduq (f. 12 a) himself speaks of this work being a continuation of 'Uṭbī's *Kitābu'l-Yamīnī*; but Juwainī, *Ta'rikh-i-Jabān-Gushā*, p. 1, says that it was a continuation of *Dhail Tajāribu'l-Umam* of Hilāl aṣ-Ṣābī. See also Yāqūt, *Irshād*, v, 212.

8 *Tab. Nās.* pp. 11, 19, 26, 31, 56, 60, 116, 317, 320. It was written before the seventh century A.H.

9 Ibn *Khallikān*, ii, 334. Al-Ma'mūnī died in 573 (1177–8).

and fifthly, *Ta'riḫ Maḥmūd bin Subuktigīn wa Banīhi* by Jamālu'd-Dīn Abu'l-Ḥasan 'Alī b. Yūsuf al-Qiftī.¹

The extant authorities may be divided into four classes:² (1) contemporary, (2) early non-contemporary, that is those composed roughly from the middle of the fifth century to the middle of the ninth century A.H., (3) later works, and (4) archaeological records.

I. CONTEMPORARY AUTHORITIES

The first among the contemporary authorities is the *Kitābu'l-Yamīnī* of Abū Naṣr Muḥammad b. Muḥammad al-Jabbār al-'Utbī.³ It covers the full period of Subuktigīn and of Sulṭān Maḥmūd up to 411 (1020).⁴ The style of *Kitābu'l-Yamīnī* is very ornate and verbose, and the author has concentrated on beauty of diction rather than historical precision. His descriptions are singularly lacking in detail. In his account of the expeditions beyond the river Indus, 'Utbī usually makes the Sulṭān penetrate "the interior of Hind", defeat the "infidels", and "return laden with plunder".⁵ He rarely mentions the route followed by the Sulṭān, and does not give any indication of the locality of the forts that he cap-

1 Yāqūt, *Irshād*, v, 484. Barthold, p. 27, mentions another work named *Lama'ūt-Tawāriḫ* by Abu'l-Futūḥ Barakāt b. Mubārak b. Ismā'il. The author was born at Ghazna after 460 (1067-8), and his chronicle was brought down to 500 (1106-7).

2 It is necessary to point out here that since there is no work dealing exclusively with Sulṭān Maḥmūd, the criticism of the different authorities given in the following chapter is not general but specific, that is, it is applicable only to those portions of the works which deal with Sulṭān Maḥmūd.

3 For an account of 'Utbī's life, see my article "al-'Utbī" in *Ency. of Islam* (in preparation).

4 And not 422 (1031) as stated by Reynolds, p. 474.

5 For example, the expedition to Nārāyan as translated in E. and D. ii, 36.

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ured. The expeditions to Central Asia and Sistān are also treated in the same superficial manner as those against India; while other matters of interest to a modern historian, viz. the early life of the Sulṭān, his system of administration, his method of warfare, and the condition of “the dumb million” under him, receive scarcely a mention. *Kitābu’l-Yamīnī* is deficient in dates, and even as a record of the military exploits of Sulṭān Maḥmūd it is neither comprehensive nor exhaustive. Nevertheless, being the only history of Sulṭān Maḥmūd written during his lifetime, its value as an authority cannot be overrated.¹

The second in point of importance is the *Zainu’l-Akbbār* of Abū Sa’īd ‘Abdu’l-Ḥayy b. aḍ-Ḍaḥḥāk b. Maḥmūd al-Gardīzī. It deals with the history of Irān from the earliest times to the middle of the fifth century A.H.² It was named after the reigning sovereign Sulṭān Zainu’l-Millāh Abū Maṣṣūr ‘Abdu’r-Raḥīd, son of Sulṭān Maḥmūd (441–4/1049–52). In his introduction to the account of the Ghaznavids, the author proposes to narrate briefly only the most conspicuous events of the reign of Sulṭān Maḥmūd, and offers very little criticism or reflection on them, not even enough to break

¹ There are several Persian translations of *Kitābu’l-Yamīnī*. The best known of them is the one by Abu’sh-Sharaf Nāṣir al-Jurbādḥqānī which was completed about 603 (1206). It was printed in Ṭeherān in 1272 (1855). It is a free translation and some portions of the text have been altogether omitted. A literal Persian translation of *Kitābu’l-Yamīnī*, entitled *Ta’rikh-i-Amīnī*, was made in the beginning of the nineteenth century A.D. by Karāmat ‘Alī. A copy of it is preserved in the British Museum (Or. 1888). The translation of Jurbādḥqānī into English by the Rev. J. Reynolds is hopelessly incorrect.

The most valuable of the several commentaries on *Kitābu’l-Yamīnī* is the *Faṭḥu’l-Wabbī*, written about 1150 (1737) by Aḥmad b. ‘Alī b. ‘Umar aṭ-Ṭarābulusī al-Manīnī. Cf. also E. and D. ii, 14–18; Barthold, pp. 19–20; and Browne, ii, 471.

² The manuscript however breaks off abruptly in the beginning of the account of the reign of Sulṭān Mawdūd, son of Sulṭān Mas’ūd (432–41/1041–9).

the monotony of the narrative. He has consequently omitted some expeditions and described others in such a sketchy manner as to excite rather than satisfy the curiosity of the reader. Although a brief and colourless chronicle of dry facts, the *Zaimū'l-Akḥbār* is a work of considerable importance, as it is the only extant contemporary history which covers the full period of the reign of Sulṭān Maḥmūd, and, unlike *Kitābu'l-Yamīnī*, it is precise in assigning dates to the events recorded.¹

About the time of the death of Sulṭān Maḥmūd, Abū Raiḥān Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Bīrūnī finished his famous work on India,² dealing with the religion, philosophy, literature, geography, astronomy and customs of the Hindūs in the fifth century A.H. Though not a historical work, it contains some valuable references to the Hindūshāhiyya Dynasty of Waihand and the origin of the idol of Somnāth.

Another work of importance is the *Ta'riḫ-i-Mas'ūdi* by Abu'l-Faḍl Muḥammad b. Ḥusain al-Baihaqī which deals primarily with the reign of Sulṭān Mas'ūd, but contains numerous digressions on the history of Sulṭān Maḥmūd and his predecessors, and gives a close insight into the working of the different departments of the Ghaznawid state. Baihaqī gives a vivid description

¹ Only two manuscripts of this work are known to exist, one in King's College Library, Cambridge (MS No. 213), and the other, in the Bodleian Library, Oxford (Ouseley, No. 240). The text is confused at many places, but as the Bodleian manuscript is a copy of the King's College manuscript, it is difficult to remove the confusion by collation. For a detailed account of the contents, see Ethé and Sachau's *Cat. of Pers. MSS in Bodl. Library*, coll. 10–12. A portion of it from f. 81 b to f. 141 a, King's College MS, dealing with the history of Kḥurāsān from the Tāhirids to the beginning of the reign of Sulṭān Mawdūd, son of Sulṭān Mas'ūd the Ghaznawid, has been edited by me for the Managers of the Browne Memorial Fund, Cambridge, as the first volume of the Browne Memorial Series. See also Barthold, p. 21.

² The title of this work is *Ṭabqāq mā li'l-Hind...*, and not *Tāriḫū'l-Hind* or *Tāriḫ-i-Hind*, as incorrectly given in Brockelmann, i, 475; Huart, p. 302; *Ency. of Islam*, i, 726; and E. and D. p. 1.

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of the court life, the intrigues of officials and rivalry of persons who sought to influence the sovereign one way or the other. Appended to *Ta'riḫ-i-Mas'ūdi* is a portion of the lost history of *Khwārizm* by al-Bīrūnī which, besides containing interesting details about the conquest of that country, makes numerous allusions to the political relations of Sulṭān Maḥmūd with the rulers of Central Asia.¹

The last, though not the least in importance, are the *Diwāns* of the poets 'Unṣurī and Farrukhī. Their *qaṣīdas* in praise of Sulṭān Maḥmūd contain many historical facts which are useful in correcting and supplementing the accounts of the contemporary historians. These poets usually accompanied the Sulṭān on his expeditions², and their descriptions of some of the journeys help to fix the routes which he followed.

2. EARLY NON-CONTEMPORARY WRITERS

These are all the contemporary works which give an account of the reign of Sulṭān Maḥmūd. Among non-contemporary works, the earliest is the *Siyāsat Nāmāh*, composed in 484 (1091–2) by Abū 'Alī Ḥasan b. 'Alī, commonly known as Niẓāmu'l-Mulk, wazīr of the Seljuk³ Sulṭān Malik Shāh. It contains numerous anecdotes about Sulṭān Maḥmūd and his predecessors but from an historical point of view, they are not trustworthy and defeat the expectations aroused by the high reputation of the author. The *Siyāsat Nāmāh*, however, is a mine of information regarding the Ghaznawid system of administration.⁴

¹ See also Barthold, pp. 22–4.

² Farrukhī, ff. 8 b, 48 a.

³ For the correct form of this word, see Barthold, p. 257, note 1.

⁴ Cf. also Barthold, p. 25.

The *Mujmalu't-Tawārikh*, of unknown authorship, was written about 530 (1135) in the time of the Seljuk Sulṭān Sinjar, son of Sulṭān Malik Shāh. It dismisses Sulṭān Maḥmūd with a brief and unsuggestive paragraph, but, in the chapters on the Sāmānids and the Buwaihids, it contains some useful references to him.

The *Rājataranginī*, a metrical chronicle of the kings of Kashmīr, was composed by Kalhana about 545 (1150). It is the only Sanskrit work that contains even a brief reference to Sulṭān Maḥmūd in the account of a battle between *Hammīra*,¹ as the Sulṭān is called, and Rājā Trilochanpāl of the Hindūshāhiyya Dynasty.

The *Chahār Maqāla* of Abu'l-Ḥasan Nizāmu'd-Dīn Aḥmad b. 'Umar b. 'Alī an-Nizāmī al-'Arūḍī as-Samarqandī was written about 552 (1157). It is the earliest extant work to give in the form of a story the relations of Sulṭān Maḥmūd with Firdawsī and al-Bīrūnī and the ungenerous treatment which they are supposed to have received at his hands.

Al-Muntaẓam fī Tawārikhī'l-Mulūk wa'l-Umam is a universal history composed about the end of the sixth century A.H. by Abu'l-Faraj 'Abdu'r-Raḥmān b. 'Alī Ibnu'l-Jawzī al-Bakrī. It contains numerous quotations from some earlier work, probably aṣ-Ṣābī's *Dhail*, and large extracts from the Sulṭān's letters of victory to the Caliph.

Akbbāru'd-Duwalī'l-Munqaṭi'a, which is a general history arranged according to dynasties, was composed about the beginning of the seventh century A.H. by Jamālu'd-Dīn Abu'l-Ḥasan 'Alī b. Abī'l-Manṣūr Zāfir b. al-Ḥusain b. Ghāzī al-Ḥalabī al-Azdī. The Ghaznawids are not treated in a separate chapter but are mentioned under the account of the 'Abbāsids. The author gives a valuable quotation from the Sulṭān's letter of victory to the Caliph concerning the expedition to Somnāth.

1 See *infra*, p. 92, note 4.

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About the year 625 (1228) three important works were composed, namely, the *Jawāmi‘u’l-Ḥikāyāt* and *Lubābu’l-‘Albāb* by Nūru’d-Dīn Muḥammad ‘Awfī, and *Ādābu’l-Mulūk wa Kifāyatu’l-Mamlūk* by Muḥammad b. Maṣṣūr b. Sa‘īd b. Abu’l-Faraj al-Qurayshī, known as Fakhr-i-Mudīr, one of whose ancestors was connected by marriage with the Ghaznawid house. The *Jawāmi‘u’l-Ḥikāyāt* is a collection of anecdotes some of which relating to Sulṭān Maḥmūd are taken from the works of Baihaqī, but they furnish very little information, because, the main object of the author being usually ethical rather than historical, he has occasionally distorted facts in order to illustrate some vice or virtue.

The *Lubābu’l-‘Albāb* is a poetical anthology with brief biographical sketches of poets prefixed to selections from their works. It gives an idea of the large number of poets who thronged the court of Sulṭān Maḥmūd.

The *Ādābu’l-Mulūk wa Kifāyatu’l-Mamlūk* is a treatise on the art of war and bravery and contains numerous historical anecdotes relating to Sulṭān Maḥmūd which, from their language and style, appear to have been taken from Baihaqī’s *Mujalladāt* or some other work of that period.

Al-Kāmil fī t-Ta’rīkh of Abu’l-Ḥasan ‘Alī b. ‘Abdu’l-Karam Muḥammad b. Muḥammad b. ‘Abdu’l-Karīm b. ‘Abdu’l-Wahhāb ash-Shaibānī, known as Ibnu’l-Athīr, is a voluminous chronicle of events up to the year 628 (1230). It has been deservedly called by Ibn Khallikān “one of the best productions of its kind”.¹ Ibnu’l-Athīr does not mention his sources, but he seems to have drawn upon aṣ-Ṣābī’s *Dhail*, ‘Utbi’s *Kitābu’l-Yamīnī* and Ibn Funduq’s *Mashāribu’l-Tajārib*. With the exception of a few confused and inaccurate statements, Ibnu’l-Athīr’s account of Sulṭān Maḥmūd is generally very authentic and trustworthy.

Mir’ātu’l-Zamān fī Tawārīkhī’l-A’yān is a universal

¹ Ibn Khallikān, ii, 289.

history composed about the middle of the seventh century A.H. by Abu'l-Muzaffar Yūsuf b. Qizughlī, known as Sibṭ Ibnu'l-Jawzī (that is, daughter's son of Ibnu'l-Jawzī, author of *al-Muntaẓam*). In this work large quotations are given, on the authority of aṣ-Ṣābī's *Dhail*, from the Sulṭān's letters of victory to the Caliph.

Ṭabaqāt-i-Nāṣiri was written by Abū 'Umar Minhāju'd-Dīn 'Uṭhmān b. Sirāju'd-Dīn Jūzjānī, about the year 658 (1260). The author's account of the reign of Sulṭān Maḥmūd is very brief and uninformative, but in other parts of his work he has given quotations from earlier authorities bearing upon the history of the Ghaznavids and the relations of Sulṭān Maḥmūd with the Ghūrids, the Seljukids and the Khāns of Turkistān.

In 710 (1310-11) Rashīdu'd-Dīn Faḍlu'llāh b. 'Imādu'd-Dawlah Abu'l-Khair b. Muwaffaḡu'd-Dawlah 'Alī completed his general history, named *Jāmi'ū't-Tawārikh*. It is a voluminous work but as an authority on the reign of Sulṭān Maḥmūd it is absolutely of no value. The brief chronological summary of universal history in it is an epitome of Ibnu'l-Aṭhīr, and the account of Sulṭān Maḥmūd is an unacknowledged verbatim copy of Jurbādhqānī's translation of 'Uṭbī's *Kitābu'l-Yamīnī*. It is a glaring instance of plagiarism in Oriental literature.¹

About the year 730 (1329-30), Ḥamdu'llāh b. Abū Bakr b. Aḥmad b. Naṣr al-Mustawfī composed two works on history, namely, *Ta'rikh-i-Guẓida* and the metrical *Zafar Nāmāh* which was intended to be a continuation of Firdawsī's *Shāhnāmāh*. *Ta'rikh-i-Guẓida* does not furnish any valuable material for the history of Sulṭān Maḥmūd though the author mentions among his sources the *Maqāmāt-i-Abū Naṣr-i-Mushkānī* and *Mujalladāt* of Baihaqī, and *Mashāribu't-Tajārib* of Ibn Funduq. The last ten years of the reign of the Sulṭān receive very scanty notice, while the events of the

¹ See Appendix A (1).