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Khwārazmshāh’s Policy against Caliph Al-Nāsser’s Strategy to Regain Political Power of the Caliphate and its Consequences in Irān

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Abstract

With the establishment of the Caliphate, Iranians became disappointed. It was so because, cooperating with the Caliphathe, they could not access their own political aims. Therefore, they gradually started to reconstruct their kingdom regime and began a competition that somehow had a tough hostility towards Abbasids. In such a situation, the Abbasids, especially the Caliph al-Nasser, followed the process of recovering the Caliphate political hegemony. On the other side, the Khwārazm’s, in parallel, were planning a rigid dominance in Islamic world’s eastern regions including Baghdad, the capital of the Caliphate, to restrict its power to religious affairs. But after several battles between the armies of both sides, Sultan Muhammad Khwārazmshāh failed finally. This article attempts to recognize and analyze the motives and causes of the contest that existed between these two power centers and their subsequent political and military consequences.

Keywords: Abbasid Caliphate, Al-Nāsser Ledin-Allah, Khwārazmshāh, Sultān Muhammad, the Ismā‘ila.

Introduction

Throughout history Khwārazm1 has had a great role in the political issues of Iran and Central Asia and has always had significant military and political importance. It was of greater importance as the fertile lands were adjacent to the Oxus River and located on the trade and commercial routes of caravans. Since the region was geographically apart from the other surrounding lands, it could remain politically independent and preserve its special culture for a long time. More than 83 cities, towns and villages have been cited in several sources as Khwarizim’s environs where their inhabitants were Hanafi2 who followed Motazili jurisprudence.\(^3\) Khwarazmshah also had an outstanding military and strategic significance on account of the surrounding deserts and Oxus River which helped in its independence and provided it with very facile defenses against enemies. As Estakhri said, “Turkistan\(^4\) has been the most formidable war zone of the Muslims”. Despite the problems caused by infidels, Khwārazshah offered the opportunity for attacking them, getting trophies, developing their possessions and making religious reputations out of the Islamic world.\(^5\)

Benefiting from such an eco-political base, Khwārazm contributed a great role in political and even military affairs of Iran and the eastern Islamic world from the 6th A.H/ 12th A.D century onwards. When Ātsez Khwarazmshah ascended to the throne in 521 AH, there was a great chaos in the eastern parts of the

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1Khwārazm is an ancient and large region in Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan, located in the delta of the Amu Darya River next to the Aral Sea.

2A branch of Islamic Sunni sects

3Abū Abdullāh ibn Ahmad Moqaddasi, Ahsan al-tagḥāsīm fi Marefat al- aghālīm, Ali Naghi Monzawi (trans.) (Tehrān: Iranian Authors and Translators’ company, 1982) 170-71; Muhammad ibn Howqal, Sūrat al-Arz, Jafar Shoqr (trans.) (Tehrān: Iran’s Culture Foundation, 1966), 206-207; Sheikh Shams al-Dīn al-Ansari al-Dimashqi, Nokbat al-Dahr fi Ajā’ib al-bere wa-l-Bahr, Habib Tayyebiān (trans.) (Tehran: Iran’s Art and Literature Academy /Farhangestān-e Adab va Honar-e Iran,1978), 378

4The name was originally used to refer to the land where the Turks people lived and is almost the current state of Xinjiang or Turkestan in China, but due to the continuous migration of this people to the east and west, most of Central Asia gradually took the name of Turkestan.

5Sayed Morteza ibn Dā’ī’i Hassanī Razī, Tabserat al- Avām fi Marefat Anām, y Abbās Iqbal (Ed.), 2nd edition, (Tehran: Asātir Publication, 1985), 91; Muhammad ibn Zakaryāī Qazwini, Ṣār al-belād wa Akhbār al-belād, Muhammad ibn Abdurrahmān (trans.), Muhammad Shāhmoradī (Ed.), (Tehran: Tehran University Press, 1994), 344.
Islamic world. Some new-born powers such as Ghūrids and Qarakhātāeids appeared, while the Abbasids tried to retrieve their political power to dominate the Islamic World by stimulating kinglets against each other and creating several disagreements between adjacent local governments. Such struggles, besides the Khwarizmi kings’ vision for being dominant in the eastern parts of the Islamic World on one hand, and restricting the Abbasid Caliphs in religious affairs on the other hand, arose in conflicts between the Khwarizmi kings and Abbasid Caliphs, especially from the reign of Takesh onwards, which culminated in the battle of Sultan Muhammad and the Caliph Al-Nāsser. The aim of the present research was to recognize the motives and causes of pursuing the policy of confrontation among the Abbasids and Khwarizmi’s, and finding answers to the following questions: “Why was Khwārazm not able to benefit from the Caliphate’s situation to progress in terms of their political and military programs such as what the Ghaznavids and Seljūks did?”, and “What were the roles of Sultan Muhammad and the Caliph Al-Nāsser in the destruction of religious and political interactions?”, and finally “What were the results of these confrontations?”.

The Character of Al-Nāsser and his Political Techniques

It is believed, on the basis of all sources, that Al-Nāsser was a very clever and resourceful politician. Some other sources have also cited the success that the Muslims had gained, the stability and security that had occurred, and the construction of mosques and inns during his era. But he was really a very cruel and seditious ruler. Ibn Athir, who devoted himself to the study of history and Islamic tradition, has well pointed out that the Caliph Al-Nāsser oppressed the people during his last three years of life while he was completely palsied and blind. According to Ibn Athir, Al-Nāsser was such a cruel ruler that he really ruined Irāq during his reign.

He tried to create different political intrigues and disagreements between Islamic governments, and had fun besides development of a very complicated network of spies who informed him with the news of his empire. To advance his policies he used scientists as his ambassadors and made the Muslim Kings to accept them. Iraqis, during his era, were not immune and could not dare speak against him. Some of his people thought of him as a prescient. Al-Sūyūtī believes that Al-Nāsser was a Shi’ite and attributes his prescience to Shi’ite beliefs of their Imams.

Al-Nāsser Ledin - Allah greatly benefited from his generosity. Indeed, he neglected nothing to achieve his aims. He even disguised himself and walked among the society to accumulate necessary

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6The Ghorids, or Ale Shanbas, were an Iranian dynasty in present-day Afghanistan that ruled between the 4th and 5th/10th and 11th centuries in the Ghor region, in the mountains between Herat and Ghazni.
7It was a Khatāei kingdom that existed in Central Asia between 522-614/1124 - 1218.
8The Ghaznavid dynasty 344- 583/975-1187 was a Turkic-speaking dynasty in the eastern parts of great Iran, especially Great Khorasan. But as a promoter and publisher of Islam, it was considered and approved by the Abbasid Caliphate. The dynasty is best known for its conquests in India.
9A dynasty of Ghoz Turks who were Sunnis and in the 5th to 6th/11th to 12th centuries by creating an empire, ruled over large parts of the territory of ancient Iran in West Asia and Asia Minor such as Iran, Afghanistan, Syria, Palestine and modern Armenia.
10Tārīkh e Fakhrī ibn Taqtaqā. Muhammad Wahíd (trans.), Golpāyegānī 3rd edition, (Tehran: Scientific and Cultural Publication (Elmī va Farhangī), 1988), 422; Hamdūllāh Mostawffī, Tārīkh e Gozideh, (Tehran: Amir Kabir Publication, 1960), 366; Hindu shah Ibn Abdullah Sāhebī Nakhjavānī, Tajārob Al-Salaf, (Tehran: Tāhirī Publication, 1965), 320-321.
11Fakhīr al-Dīn Ābū Suleiman Dāvood ibn Ābī al-Fazl Muhammad Benāketī, Rozat Úlol al-bāb fi Marefat al-tawarīk Walansāb, compiled by Ja’afar Sho’ār, (Tehran: The Association of Iranian Works and Figures [Anjoman-e Āsār va Maftāh], 1970), 205-209; Nakhjavānī, Sāhebī, Tajārob Al-Salaf, 321.
12Izz al-Dīn Ali ibn Muhammad ibn Athir, (1160/539-1223/602).
13Izz al-Dīn Ali Ibn Muhammad ibn Athir, Al-Kamel fi al - Tarkh, (Beirut: Dār Sāder, 1966), 3/136.
14Ja‘aluddīn Al-Sūyūtī, Tārī - al-Kholaafā, researched by Muhammad Mohyeddin Abdolhamid, (Giza, Egypt: Dar El-Farouk, 1959), 451; Muhammad ibn Shāker Al-Katbī, Fawātī al-Wafayāt wa Zail Alaīhā, research by Dr. Ehsān Abbās, (Beirut: Dār al-Thiqāfah, 1363), 1/ 66-67
news and information from the earliest days of his rule. Ibn Jūbair himself had seen Al-Nāsser in Baghdad when he was 25 years old. One of al- Al-Nāsser’s features were the tensions he aroused between local and regional authorities to exploit to his advantage. On the other hand, Sultan Muhammad, who unluckily ruled contemporary to Al-Nāsser, was a cool-headed person and relied on his military forces, an attitude that brought him disastrous results. The discrepancies between the Caliphs and the Kings during the Takesh period promoted Abbasids hatred towards the King. Al-Nāsser stimulated the Gūrids and Qarakhatācids against Sultān Muhammad. However, this was ineffective and resulted in reinforcement of the King and the overthrow of the Gūrids. Sultān Muhammad who was now arrogant and had found evidences of the Caliph’s interference, decided to overcome his problems with Al-Nāsser through depending on his military forces. Nevertheless, he did not proceed without planning. However, the Caliph had his own plot.

**Al-Nāsser and Chivalry Utilization**

Chivalry was one of the factors the Caliph al-Nasser used to advance his programs and extend his influence and domination. Chivalry had been current for several centuries in Islamic society and many were committed to it. Valiancy, generosity, commitment, veracity and fortitude are all well-known characteristics of chivalry. By the late Umayyad era other qualities such as carousing, recreation, pleasure, music and singing songs were joined with chivalry, while preserving the main characters of chivalry.

Some others called it *Ehdāth*, the plural form of *Hadath* which emerged throughout Levant cities in the early fifth AH. Eleventh AD. Century. The chivalries of Aleppo were the most famous *Ehdāth* of Levant who involved in politics, which caused several battles and intrigues, helped some kings and enabled others to get official posts. Since chivalries caused a lot of problems during the Seljūkids era, the government restricted these activities and they had no choice except to turn back to virtue and honesty, and these were being gathered in secret communities under unknown titles and involved the Fatimid’s in Egypt. Hence, the Abbasids began to encounter them. Chivalries were used to plunder cities and to kill their inhabitants from the fourth century AH. They assessed the procedure as chivalrous and looted the wealthy. They had a great number of sympathizers among the public because of their roots. Al-Nāsser Ledin - Allah was completely aware of the situation, and hence he decided to have a special policy towards them. He also had propensities toward Shiites and chivalry groups. He was made to put on the chivalry pants’ by Mālek ibn Abdū al-Jabbārīn 578/1182 and sought to militarize chivalry groups and regulate them under his own supreme leadership. From then on, nobody was allowed to hold chivalry titles except for him. The kings who were associated with chivalry by Al-Nāsser were the following:

- Abu-Bakr bin Ayoub known as al-Malek al-Ādel, and his sons, al-Malek al-Moazzam, al-Malek al-Kāmil and al-Malek al-Ashraf.
- Izz al-Din Abū al-Moazzār Keykāwūs bin Keyhoshrow bin Qelīj Ārsalān from Seljuk’s kings.
- Shahāb al-Din Ghūrī
- Atābak Saad

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15 Muhammad Ibn Ahmad Ibn Jūbair, *Travelogue*, Parviz Atābakī (trans.), (Tehrān: Astān-e Qods-e Razawi, 1991), 277-278.
16 Atāmakl Ibn Bahā al-Dīn Jawwānī, *Tārikhe Jehāngoshā*, (Leiden: Brill Publishers, 1916), 2/ 86.
17 Unsor Abol-Ma‘āli Keikāwūs ibn Eskandar, *Ghabūsnameh*, Gholam Hussein Yousefi (Ed.), (Tehrān: The Corporation of Books Translation and Publication, 1966), 246.
18 Mowlānā Hussein Khāshefī Sabzewārī, *Fotūwatnāmeh Solānī*, compiled by Muhammad Jafar Mahjoub, (Tehrān: Iran’s Culture Foundation, 1951), 19.
19 Ibid, 31-32.
20 AbīTālib Ali bin Anjāb Tāj al-Dīn ibn al-Sāeī al-Khāzīn, *Almokhtasar fi Onwan al-tawārīkh wa Oūn al-Star*, (Egypt: al-Hussainiya Publications, n.d.) 11/221-222.
✓ Al-Malek al-Zâhir Qâzî bin Salâhedin Ayoubi.\textsuperscript{21}

It was designed in such a way, depending on his tact, that it benefited the strength of chivalries in a very controlled process. It has been said that he tried to fade the problems with which the Islamic World was grappled with, as a result of crusaders invasions and disturbances in Andalusia, using the power of chivalry to make the Islamic world united against its enemies.

Al-Nâsser’s aims were recorded by different authors as follows:

✓ Restoration of the Caliphate religious power.
✓ Militarizing chivalries to achieve his aims.
✓ Fighting the crusaders.
✓ Controlling internal riots and chivalries as the main operators.
✓ Organizing the Muslim Kings and improving the unity of the Muslim communities.\textsuperscript{22}

Al-Nâsser failed to get all his aims by involving chivalries. But thanks to such involvement, he could dominate an enormous number of his enemies who were scattered all over the Islamic World. Since chivalries were all under professionals in various industrial crafts, they brought a lot of benefits for the Caliph. As the chivalries were originally related to Imam Ali\textsuperscript{23}, from then on, al-Nasser considered himself not only as the successor of Prophet Muhammad, but as the successor of Ali bin Abu Tâlib whom the Shiite regard as their first Imam.\textsuperscript{24} He subsequently tried to demonstrate himself as one of Imam Ali’s adherents.

**Al-Nâsser and his triple alliance against Sultan Muhammad**

Al-Nasser’s most important succession factor was his political acumen. He could easily unify Ismailia and Atâbaks of Azarbâijân\textsuperscript{25} and Fârs\textsuperscript{26} against Sultan Muhammad and send his representatives out of Persian Irâq\textsuperscript{27}. In such a situation, the joining of Jalâl al-dîn Hassan\textsuperscript{28}, known as the New Muslim, to the Abbasid Caliph had a special significance. It seems necessary to review the Ismailia’s background and policies to ensure the subject of religious restoration could become clear.

The Ismailia movement is generally divided into three periods. The first period lasted about eight decades. (483-560/1090-1165) and was led by three leaders. They established the basis of a Nazârî society and struggled ineffectually to overthrow the Sunni Caliphate. The second period took half a century from 560 to 610/1165-1213. The Ismailia movement in this period changed its path, paying attention to spiritual matters and avoiding corporals. The Nazârî Ismâîlia, during the last or third period

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\textsuperscript{21}Mowlânâ Hussein Kâshefî Sabzewârî, *Fotūwatnâmeh Soltânî*, 61; Nasser al-dîn Hussein Ibn Muhammad ibn Bîbî, *Saljûqnâmeh yâ Akhbârê Salâjeghaye Rome*, (Tabriz: Tehrân Bookstore, 1971), 45.
\textsuperscript{22}Sabâh Ibrahim Saeed al-Sheik, *Guilds in the Abbasid Period*, Hâdî Âlem Zâdeh (trans.), (Tehran: Markaz-e Nashr-e Dâneshgâhî, 1983), 137.
\textsuperscript{23}The first Imam of the Twelve Imams or Jafari Shi’ites.
\textsuperscript{24}Shirîn Bayânî, *Religion and Government in Mongol Iran Period* 2\textsuperscript{nd} edition, (Tehrân: Markaz-e Nashr-e Dâneshgâhî, 1991), 1/271-272.
\textsuperscript{25}Azarbâijân Atâbakân is one of the local governments of Iran who they ruled from 531/1148 to 622/1243 in Azerbaijan in North West of Iran.
\textsuperscript{26}Atâbakân Fârs is one of the local governments of Iran who they ruled from 543/1148 to 686/1287 in Fârs in southern Iran.
\textsuperscript{27}Persian Irâq or Iraq Ajam is the historical name of a region in central Iran that leads from the west to the Zagros Mountains, from the east to the Kâwîr desert and from the north to the Alborz Mountains.
\textsuperscript{28}Jalâl al-dîn Hassan or the New Muslim Jalâl al-dîn (562/1183-618/1239) is the sixth Ismâîli ruler in Alamoot Castle.
from 610 to 654/1165-1256, tried to find a position in the Islamic community, but the newly-constructed government became collapsed after the compromise.\(^\text{29}\)

Undoubtedly, the Ismailia movement came out of the problems of succession, and was then developed using cultural and economic issues, with the dictatorship of Turks-Seljuk’s, in particular the disagreement to rational sciences and cultural poverty. Ismailia knew the Abbasids were the main cause of the miseries of Islamic society and obliged them to fight ruthless rulers. Difficulty in understanding Ismailia’s complicated beliefs and complexity of their religious concepts, opposition of both Sunni and Shiite sects of the Muslims, assassinations attributed to them and the very powerful propaganda of their enemies changed them into unpopular characters and made people ignore their movement. Yet neither the Seljūks nor the Khwarizmi’s were able to defeat and conquer their fortifications. The doctrine of Resurrection which should have been an end to all problems of Ismailia and the whole world was bewildered by them. They probably thought that by bringing up the Resurrection theory when the Seljūks were weakened could motivate their advocates to help them dominate different cities. According to the rules, with the announcement of Resurrection, Shari’ah practice and reservations were abolished and all humane problems and illnesses were being forced out, but were disappointed when nothing came off Ismailia.\(^\text{30}\)

In understanding such issues, the successors of Hassan II, normally turned in to Reality. The Jalāl al-Din Hassan III wished to return the Sunni sect, as the main body of the Islamic world. Bosworth believed that the Caliph Al-Nāsser achieved a great success by encouraging Jalal al-Din Hassan to join the Sunni sect.\(^\text{31}\) However, it seemed wrong as Jalāl al-Din Hassan sermonized in the name of Sultān Muhammad for a long time and became the Caliph after a while. Jalāl al-Din’s mother, who was a Sunni, was appreciated by the Caliph in the Hajj season\(^\text{32}\) and the Ismailia’ flag stood superior to that of Khwarizmi’s. This is considered as one of causes that misled Sultān Muhammad about Al-Nāsser.\(^\text{33}\). Ismailia also accepted this change. Most of Hassan’s advocates considered his activity as a repeated reservation; however, he may have probably joined the Sunni sect honestly. Al-Nasser then helped Hassan to unify with Uzbek Atābak. Now the main question was: “Why Hassan did not unify with Sultān Muhammad instead?"

The main issue was Persian Irāq which was still dominated by Khwarizmi. The Caliph had great influence and validity in the Islamic world and could help Jalāl al-Din more effectively. The Ismā‘īlia with the significant national-political ideals could never co-operate with the Khwarizmi Turks who had nothing from the Iranian soul. Nāsser al-Din Mongoli, appointed by Sultān Muhammad to govern Persian Irāq, was at war with Jalāl al-Din Hassan and Uzbek Atābak. By being forced by the suggestion of the Abbasid Caliph and with the help of his soldiers, these two collaborated to defeat and kill Mongoli in a war and divided his possessions among themselves. The areas near Abhar and Zanjān were delivered to Ismā‘īlia. The Uzbek Atābak appointed Seyf al-Din Oghlamish to Persian Irāq, but he sermonized in the name of Sultān Muhammad and after a while disobeyed Atābak.\(^\text{34}\) The Caliph who was very angry with the sermons

\(^{29}\)Marshall Goodwin Simms Hodgson, *The Order of Assassins: The Struggle of the Early Nizārī Ismā‘īlis Against the Islamic World* 2nd edition, Fraidoun Badra’ei (trans.), (Tabriz: Tehrān Bookstore, 1985), 101.

\(^{30}\)Ibid, 298-299.

\(^{31}\)Clifford Edmund Bosworth, *The New Islamic Dynasties*, Feraidoun Badrahei (trans.), (Tehrān: Iran’s Culture Foundation /Bonyād-e Farhang-e Iran, 1970), 196.

\(^{32}\)Hajj is one of the most important branches of Islam. Under certain conditions, Muslims are required to go to the Masjid al-Haram in Mecca, Saudi Arabia, in the first decade of the month of Dhu al-Hijjah to perform a series of acts of worship.

\(^{33}\)Bernard Lewis, *The Origin of Ismailism*, Yaghūb Āzhand (trans.), (Tehrān: Maowlā, 1984), 324-325; Zobdato Kāshānī, *Al-Tawārīkh*, 2nd edition, by the efforts of Muhammad Taghi Dānesh Pazarhough, (Tehrān: the Institute of Cultural Studies and Researches, 1987), 214-215; Muhammad Modarresī Zanjānī, (as his efforts), *Majma al-Tawārīkh al-Soltānīyah*, (Tehrān: Ettlāāt Publication, 1985), 264-265.

\(^{34}\)Muhammad Modarresī Zanjānī, (as his efforts), *Majma al-Tawārīkh al-Soltānīyah*, 256-257; Zobdato Kāshānī, *Al-Tawārīkh*, 216-217.
presented in the name of Sultan Muhammad in Persian Irāq ordered the Ismā‘īlis to assassinate Oghlamish.\textsuperscript{35} This event increased hostilities between Sultān Muhammad and the Caliph. The Uzbek Atābāk conquered Isfahan after the death of Oghlamish. Saad, the Atābāk of Fars, then conquered Rey, Qazvin and Semnān. Therefore, Sultān Muhammad had no way of starting a campaign against Caliph’s allies in Persian Irāq.\textsuperscript{36}

**Sultān Muhammad’s Campaign on Irāq**

Based on the issues discussed above, it was apparent that the following were the causes that made Sultān Muhammad attack Irāq, particularly Baghdad:

- The differences between the Khwārazmīs and Abbāsids which resulted in hostility between Sultān Muhammad and the Caliph.
- The power vacuum that existed in Persian Irāq after Seljūks.
- Stimulation of local governors against Sultān Muhammad by the Caliph as revealed by the documents.
- Placing the flag of Jalāl al-Dīn Hassan, the *New Muslim*, in an upper position to Sultān Muhammad’s in the Hajj ceremony.
- Killing of Mongoli and assassination of Oghlamesh by the order of the Caliph.
- Sultan Muhammad’s expectations who believed himself as more than the Būyids and Seljūks who had supremacy on the Caliphate.
- Sultan’s request to be named in Baghdad sermons and the Caliph’s refusal.
- Khwārazmī’s efforts to develop possessions throughout the west and south of Iran.
- The plot to assassinate Mecca’s Amir, planned and ordered by the Caliph, which enabled Sultān Muhammad to know that the Caliph was the one who violated respect for the Kaaba.
- The refusal of the Caliph to fight Europeans.
- Other conspiracies of the Caliph against a Sultān who did his best to advance Islam and exterminate its enemies.\textsuperscript{37}

Sultān Muhammad gathered the greatest mullahs to disparage the Abbasids because of the silence of the Caliph against the pagans. He knew the Caliphate was the right of Imam Hussein’s successors\textsuperscript{38} and hence he recognized one of his contemporary mullahs, Zokā al-Molk Termēzi, as the Caliph and moved towards the central areas of Iran with an army. He announced that there were more than one hundred persons in his army who were better than the Abbāsid Caliph.\textsuperscript{39} Shabānakārei in his thesis assessed the events as the main faults of Sultān Muhammad.\textsuperscript{40}

However, Sultān Muhammad defeated the army of Sad Atābāk and captured him as soon as he arrived in central Iran. He extricated him with some conditions that he should sermonize in his name, appoint the Sultan’s reliable staff and that he should send the Sultan one fourth of Fars products as tax.\textsuperscript{41}

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\textsuperscript{35} Atāmalek Ibn Bahā al-Dīn Joweinī, *Tārikhe Jehāngoshā*, 2/120-121.

\textsuperscript{36} QafasUghlī, Ibrāhim, *History of Khwarezmshahid’s Government*, Dāwood Esfahāniyān (trans.), (Tehran: Gostardeh Publication, 1988), 249.

\textsuperscript{37} Ibn Athīr, *Al- Kāmel fi al – Tārikh*, 26/27-28; Joweinī, *Tārikhe Jehāngoshā*, 2/121-122; Ibn Kathir, *Albedāyeh wa Alnehāyeh*, (Egypt, al-Saādat Publication, n.d.), 1/13; Mirkhānd, *Rauzat al-su‘ūd*, (Tehrān, Markazī, Khayām, Pirouz, 1960), 4/397-398

\textsuperscript{38} Joweinī, *Tārikhe Jehāngoshā*, 121-122.

\textsuperscript{39} Ibn Athīr, *Al- Kāmel fi al – Tārikh*, 26/26-27&97.

\textsuperscript{40} Shabānakārei, Muhammad ibn Ali, *Majma Al-ansāb*, (Tehrān: Amir Kabir Publication, 1984), 138-139.

\textsuperscript{41} Joweinī, *Tārikhe Jehāngoshā*, 2/ 97-98; Ibn Athīr, *Al- Kāmel fi al-Tārikh*, 26/26.28 & 29; Joujānī, Minhāj Serāj, *Tabāghāte Nāserī* 2nd edition, (Kabul: 1916), 1/271-272.
He subsequently defeated the army of Uzbek Atäbak but avoided in pursuing him. He thought that after all the victories the Caliph would be forced to accept all his conditions. So he sent the Caliph Mojir al-Din Sa'ad Khwârzmi as his special representative to negotiate. But the negotiations did not bear any results and the Caliph did not accept his conditions. Sheikh Shahâb al-Din Sührawardi was then sent to Sultân Muhammad as the Caliph’s representative. But he was not warmly welcomed.42

Following negotiation failures Sultân Muhammad then decided to attack Baghdâd, but his army was trapped by a blizzard on Assad Abâd col. Many writers have assessed Sultân Muhammad’s failure as God’s blessings on the Caliph.43 He made mistakes by providing an army that was not able to handle the cold and by selecting an unsuitable season to start the war.44

It is hard to determine the tendency of people towards which side of the war, but the Caliph was in a way more reliable.45 The military affairs were of the least importance. The failure was a great misadventure for the Sultân. He missed his religious standing among the Muslims and ordinary people accepted the Caliph as the rightful person who was blessed by God. Both the Sultân and the Caliph, in the meantime tried to attract the Shiites attention.46

Using his vast spy network, Al-Nâsser had realized the Shiites’ influences, and so he appointed some of his ministers from among them to prevent any political division in his territory.

Sultân Muhammad who had a variety of problems in Khorâsân and Transoxiana returned east and announced the death of the Caliph and ordered his name be omitted from sermons. Thus, the Iranian efforts to be independent failed again.47

Conclusion

The Islamic world was experiencing political turmoil and religious irregularities on the eve of the Mongol invasion. Iranians’ exhausting struggle for independence and recreating their political and social identity and of course being separated from the Abbasid Caliphate was entering a crucial stage. Khwarîmzî tried, even superficially, to adopt Shiite faiths and to announce a Shiite Caliphate to get rid of the Sunni Caliphs. Although Iranians had more or less adopted Shi’ism and were at liberty in it, but Zaidi and Ismailia Shiite branches could not prepare them for the rescue, and now that the Ithnâsharîyyah (twelve) sect of Shi’ism was gradually getting forced, Sultan Muhammad tried to challenge Al-Nâsser Lедин Allah, the Abbasid Caliph, who was unfortunately seeking the political hegemony of the Caliphate, and turned the Twelve sect of Shi’ism and announced the birth of a Shiite Caliphate. Iranian political fragmentation on one hand, and the existence of local and regional governments which sought their own interests and were motivated by the Abbasid Caliph on the other hand, made Khwârzmi’s wishes of a unified Shiite government to go with the wind by Sultân Muhammad’s failure in his war with the Caliph. Then the Mongols, whom some scholars believe had been invited by Al-Nâsser, attacked Iran. Their invasion encountered Iran and other parts of Islamic world a terrible disaster. Many cities were destroyed and a lot of people were killed, but Shiites were successful in taking full advantage of the Mongols’ religious policies, particularly their religious tolerance. Two and a half centuries after the invasion, Iranians were politically and religiously unified and were independent under the rule of the Safavids.

42Muhammad Zeidârî Nasawî, Sirât al-Soltân Jalâl al-Dîn, Muhammad Ali Nâseh (trans.) 3rd edition, by the efforts of Khalîl Khatîb Rahbar, (Tehrân: Sadî Publication, 1987), 20-22; Salâh al-Dîn Khaliîl Ibîn Aibîk al-Salâhî, Alwâfî Belwafâyât, (İstânbul: The Publication of Science Ministry, n.d.) 2/ 276-277.
43Muhammad Zeidârî Nasawî, Sirât al-Soltân Jalâl al-Dîn, 27; Jalâluddîn, Târîkh al-Khâlaîfî al-Sûyoutî, 449.
44Shîrîn Bâyânî, Religion and Government in Mongol Iran Period, I, 279.
45Vasîlii Vladimirovich Bartoîd, Caliph and Soltân, Syrus Izaîî (trans.), (Tehrân: Amir Kabîr Publication, 1979), 27.
46Bertold Spuler, The Muslim World, Qamar ârîyân (trans.), (Tehrân: Amir Kabîr Publication, 1966), 154-155.
47Ibn Athîr, Al- Kâmîl fi al-Târîkh, 26/26 & 31.
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