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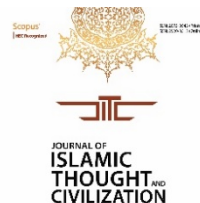
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Khwārazmshāh's Policy against Caliph Al-Nāsser's Strategy to Regain Political Power of the Caliphate and its Consequences in Irān

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Abstract

With the establishment of the Caliphate, Iranians became disappointed. It was so because, cooperating with the Caliphate, 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 Khwārazmi'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 Ismāīliya.*

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 Khwarizmi's environs where their inhabitants were *Hanafi*² 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, "Turkistan⁴ has been the most formidable war zone of the Muslims". Despite the problems caused by infidels, Khwārazmshah offered the opportunity for attacking them, getting trophies, developing their possessions and making religious reputations out of the Islamic world.⁵

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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-taghāsīm fī Marefat al- aghālīm*, Ali Naghi Monzawi (trans.) (Tehrān: Iranian Authors and Translators' company, 1982) 1/70-71; Muhammad ibn Howqal, *Sūrat al-Arz*, Jafar Shoār (trans.) (Tehrān: Iran's Culture Foundation, 1966) , 206-207; Sheikh Shams al-Din al-Ansari al-Dimashqi, *Nokhbat al-Dahr fī Ajāeb al-bere wal-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'ei Hassani Razi, *Tabserat al- Awām fī Marefat Anām*, y Abbās Iqbāl (Ed.), 2nd edition, (Tehran: Asātir Publication, 1985), 91; Muhammad ibn Zakaryyā

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 Islamic world. Some new-born powers such as Ghūrīds⁶ and Qarakhatāeids⁷ 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 Ghaznavids⁸ and Seljūks⁹ 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?".

2. 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.¹⁰ 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.¹¹ But he was really a very cruel and seditious ruler. Ibn Athir¹², 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.

Qazwini, Āsār al-belād wa Akhbār al-belād, Muhammad ibn Abdurrahmān (trans.), Muhammad Shāhmorādī (Ed.), (Tehran: Tehran University Press, 1994), 344.

⁶The Ghorids, or Ale Shanab, 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 Ghaz 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.

¹⁰Tārīkhe Fakhri ibn Taqtaqā, Muhammad Wahid (trans.), *Golpāyegāni* 3rd edition, (Tehran: Scientific and Cultural Publication (Elmi va Farhangi), 1988), 422; Hamdullāh Mostawfī, *Tārīkhe Gozādeh*, (Tehrān: Amir Kabir Publication, 1960), 366; Hindu shah Ibn Abdullah Sāhebī Nakhjawānī, *Tajārob Al-Salaf*, (Tehrān: Tahūrī Publication, 1965), 320-321.

¹¹Fakh al-Din Abū Suleiman Dāvood ibn Abī al-Fazl Muhammad Benāketī, *Rozat Ūlol al-bāb fi Marefat al-tawarikh Walansāb*, compiled by Ja'afar Sho'ār, (Tehran: The Association of Iranian Works and Figures [Anjoman-e Āsār va Mafākher], 1970), 205-209; Nakhjawānī, Sāhebī, *Tajārob Al-Salaf*, 321.

¹²Izz al-Din Ali ibn Muhammad ibn Athir, (1160/539-1223/602).

According to Ibn Athir, Al-Nāsser was such a cruel ruler that he really ruined Irāq during his reign.¹³

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-Sūyūti believes that Al-Nāsser was a Shi'ite and attributes his prescience to Shi'ite beliefs of their Imams.¹⁴

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 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.¹⁵ One of 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 Gūrīds and Qarakhatāeids against Sultān Muhammad. However, this was ineffective and resulted in reinforcement of the King and the overthrow of the Gūrīds.¹⁶ 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.

3. 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.¹⁷ 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.¹⁸

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

¹³Izz al-Din Ali Ibn Muhammad ibn Athir, *Al-Kamel fī al-Tarikh*, (Beirut: Dār Sāder, 1966), 3/136.

¹⁴Jalāluddīn Al-Sūyūti, *Tārīkh al-Kholafā*, researched by Muhammad Mohyeddīn Abdolhamid, (Giza, Egypt: Dar El-Farouk, 1959), 451; Muhammad ibn Shāker Al-Katbī, *Fawāt al-Wafayāt wa Zail Alaihā*, research by Dr. Ehsān Abbās, (Beirut: Dār al-Thiqāfeh, 1363), 1/ 66-67

¹⁵Muhammad Ibn Ahmad Ibn Jūbair, *Travelogue*, Parviz Atābaki (trans.), (Tehrān: Astān-e Qods-e Razawi, 1991), 277-278.

¹⁶Atāmalek Ibn Bahā al-Dīn Joweinī, *Tārikhe Jehāngoshā*, (Leiden: Brill Publishers, 1916), 2/ 86.

¹⁷Unsor Abol-Ma'ālī Keikāwous ibn Eskandar, *Ghābūsnameh*, Gholam Hussein Yousefi (Ed.), (Tehrān: The Corporation of Books Translation and Publication, 1966), 246.

¹⁸Mowlānā Hussein Kāshefī Sabzewāri, *Fotūwatnāmeḥ Soltānī*, compiled by Muhammad Jafar Mahjoub, (Tehrān: Iran's Culture Foundation, 1951), 19.

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.¹⁹

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-Jabbārin 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.²⁰

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-Mozaffar Keykāwous bin Keykhosrow bin Qelij Arsalān from Seljuk's kings.
- ✓ Shahāb al-Din Ghūri
- ✓ Atābak Saad
- ✓ Al-Malek al-Zāhir Qāzi bin Salāhedin Ayoubi.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-Nāsser'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.²²

Al-Nāsser 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 Ali²³, from then on, al-Nasser considered himself not only as the successor of Prophet Muhammad, but as the successor of Ali bin Abu Tālib whom the Shiite regard as their first Imam.²⁴ He subsequently tried to demonstrate himself as one of Imam Ali's adherents.

¹⁹Ibid, 31-32.

²⁰AbīTālib Ali bin Anjab Tāj al-Din ibn al-Sāei al-Khāzin, *Almokhtasar fi Onwan al-tawārīkh wa Oūn al-Sīar*, (Egypt: al-Hussainiya Publications, n.d.) 11/221-222.

²¹Mowlānā Hussein Kāshefi Sabzewāri, *Fotūwatnāmeḥ Soltānī*, 61; Nasser al-din Hussein Ibn Muhammad ibn Bībī, *Saljūghnāmeḥ yā Akhbāre Salājeghaye Rome*, (Tabriz: Tehrān Bookstore, 1971), 45.

²²Sabāh Ibrahim Saeed al-Sheikh, *Guilds in the Abbasid Period*, Hādī Ālem Zādeh (trans.), (Tehran: Markaz-e Nashr-e Dāneshgāhī, 1983), 137.

²³The first Imam of the Twelve Imams or Jafari Shi'ites.

²⁴Shīrīn Bayānī, *Religion and Government in Mongol Iran Period* 2nd edition, (Tehrān: Markaz-e Nashr-e Dāneshgāhī, 1991), 1/271-272.

4. Al-Nasser and his triple alliance against Sultan Muhammad

Al-Nasser's most important succession factor was his political acumen. He could easily unify Ismailia and Atabaks of Azarbāijān²⁵ and Fārs²⁶ against Sultan Muhammad and send his representatives out of Persian Irāq²⁷. In such a situation, the joining of Jalāl al-din Hassan²⁸, known as the *New Muslim*, to the Abbasid Caliph had a special significance. It seems necessary to review the Ismailia' 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 *Nazari* 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 *Nazari* Ismāilia, during the last or third period 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.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 Seljuks 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 Seljuks 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.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-Nasser achieved a great success by encouraging Jalal al-Din Hassan to join the Sunni sect.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

²⁵Azarbāijān Atābakān is one of the local governments of Iran who they ruled from 531/1152 to 622/1243 in Azerbaijan in North West of Iran.

²⁶Atābakān Fārs is one of the local governments of Iran who they ruled from 543/1148 to 686/1287 in Fārs in southern Iran.

²⁷Persian Irāq 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 Kawīr desert and from the north to the Alborz Mountains.

²⁸Jalāl Al-din Hassan or the New Muslim Jalāl al-dīn (562/1183-618/1239) is the sixth Ismāili ruler in Alamoot Castle.

²⁹Marshall Goodwin Simms Hodgson, *The Order of Assassins: The Struggle of the Early Nizari Ismailis Against the Islamic Word* 2nd edition, Fraidoun Badra'ei (trans.), (Tabriz: Tehrān Bookstore, 1985), 101.

³⁰Ibid, 298-299.

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

mother, who was a Sunni, was appreciated by the Caliph in the Hajj season³² 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.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 Ismāilia 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 Ismāilia. 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.³⁴ The Caliph who was very angry with the sermons presented in the name of Sultan Muhammad in Persian Irāq ordered the Ismāilia devotees, dispatched by Jalāl al-Din Hassan, to assassinate Oghlamish.³⁵ This event increased hostilities between Sultān Muhammad and the Caliph. The Uzbek Atābak conquered Isfahan after the death of Oghlamish. Saad, the Atābak 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.³⁶

5. 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 Baghdād:

- ✓ The differences between the Khwarazmis 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-Din 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.

³²Hajj 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.

³³Bernard Lewis, *The Origin of Ismailism*, Yaghūb Āzhand (trans.), (Tehrān: Maowlā, 1984), 324-325; *Zobdato Kāshāni, Al-Tawārīkh*, 2nd edition, by the efforts of Muhammad Taghi Dānesh Pazhouh, (Tehrān: the Institute of Cultural Studies and Researches, 1987), 214-215; Muhammad Modarresī Zanjāni, (as his efforts), *Majma al-Tawārīkh al-Soltānīyeh*, (Tehrān: Ettlāat Publication, 1985), 264-265.

³⁴Muhammad Modarresī Zanjāni, (as his efforts), *Majma al-Tawārīkh al-Soltānīyeh*, 256-257; *Zobdato Kāshāni, Al-Tawārīkh*, 216-217.

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

³⁶QafasUghli, Ibrāhim, *History of Khwarezmshahid's Government*, Dāwood Esfāhāniyān (trans.), (Tehrān: Gostardeh Publication, 1988), 249.

- ✓ 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 Baghdād sermons and the Caliph's refusal.
- ✓ Khwārazmi'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.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 successors³⁸ and hence he recognized one of his contemporary mullahs, Zokā al-Molk Termezi, 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 Abbāsīd Caliph.³⁹ Shabānkārei in his thesis assessed the seevens as the main faults of Sultān Muhammad.⁴⁰

However, Sultān Muhammad defeated the army of Sad Atābak 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.⁴¹

He subsequently defeated the army of Uzbek Atābak 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 Khwārazmi as his special representative to negotiate. But the negotiations did not bear any results and the Caliph did not accept his conditions. Sheikh Shahāb al-Din Sūhrawardi was then sent to Sultān Muhammad as the Caliph's representative. But he was not warmly welcomed.⁴²

Following negotiation failures Sultān Muhammad then decided to attack Baghdād, but his army was trapped by a blizzard on Assad Ābād col. Many writers have assessed Sultān 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

³⁷Ibn Athir, *Al-Kāmel fī al-Tārīkh*, 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-safā*, (Tehrān, Markazī, Khayām, Pirouz, 1960), 4/397-398

³⁸Joweinī, *Tārikhe Jehāngoshā*, 121-122.

³⁹Ibn Athir, *Al-Kāmel fī al-Tārīkh*, 26/26-27&97.

⁴⁰Shabānkāraei, Muhammad ibn Ali, *Majma Al-ansāb*, (Tehrān: Amir Kabir Publication, 1984), 138-139.

⁴¹Joweinī, *Tārikhe Jehāngoshā*, 2/ 97-98; Ibn Athir, *Al-Kāmel fī al-Tārīkh*, 26/26.28 & 29; Jouzjānī, Minhāj Serāj, *Tabāghhāte Nāserī* 2nd edition, (Kabul: 1916), 1/271-272.

⁴²Muhammad Zeidarī Nasawī, *Sīrat al-Soltān Jalāl al-Dīn*, Muhammad Ali Nāseh (trans.) 3rd edition, by the efforts of Khalil Khaṭīb Rahbar, (Tehrān: Sadī Publication, 1987), 20-22; Salāh al-Din Khalil Ibn Aibik al-Safī, *Alwāfi Belwafayāt*, (Istānbul: The Publication of Science Ministry, n.d.) 2/ 276-277.

⁴³Muhammad Zeidarī Nasawī, *Sīrat al-Soltān Jalāl al-Dīn*, 27; Jalāluddin, Tārī Al-Kholafā Al-Sūyoutī, 449.

⁴⁴Shīrīn Bayānī, *Religion and Government in Mongol Iran Period*, I, 279.

⁴⁵Vasilii Vladimirovich Bartol'd, *Caliph and Sultān*, Syrus Izadī (trans.), (Tehrān: Amir Kabir Publication, 1979), 27.

misadventure for the Sultān. 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 Sultān and the Caliph, in the meantime tried to attract the Shiites attention.⁴⁶

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

Sultān Muhammad who had a variety of problems in Khorāsān 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

6. 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. Khwarizmi 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 *Ithnāshariyyah* (twelve) sect of Shi'ism was gradually getting forced, Sultan Muhammad tried to challenge Al-Nāsser Ledin 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 Khwārazmi's wishes of a unified Shiite government to go with the wind by Sultān Muhammad's failure in his war with the Caliph. Then the Mongols, whom some scholars believe had been invited by Al-Nāsser, 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.

Conflict of Interest

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⁴⁶Bertold Spuler, *The Muslim World*, Qamar Āryān (trans.), (Tehrān: Amir Kabir Publication, 1966), 154-155.

⁴⁷Ibn Athir, *Al-Kāmel fi al-Tārīkh*, 26/26 & 31.

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