



IMPACT OF MONGOL INVASION ON THE POLITICAL CONDITIONS OF ISLAMIC EMPIRE

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Paper Received On: 20 July 2020

Peer Reviewed On: 28 August 2020

Published On: 01 September 2020

Abstract

Mongol invasion on Islamic empire is a land mark event in the history of world. This invasion began in around 1219 A.D. from Otrar a city under the dominion of Khwarazm dynasty situated in Transoxiana and ended with the capturing of Baghdad, the capital of Islamic empire in 1258A.D. Al-Mustasim, the Abbasid Caliph was captured and assassinated. Thus, in 1258 A.D. the Islamic empire came to an end. Any invasion has its devastating effects however, the Mongol invasion on Islamic empire was more devastative than the others. Apart from social and economic systems Mongol invasion has mainly destroyed the political system. The small and big Islamic states, which were functioning under the caliph who ruled over the country as political head were destroyed. After defeat of small and major ruling dynasties even the Abbasid Caliph the whole political system was collapsed. This was because the head of the states who were under the Caliph had virtually become independent and were fighting with each other which, made them and the central leadership weak which, resulted in their defeat and collapse of political system. Thus, it can be said that the Mongol invasion destroyed the whole political system.

Keywords: Condition, Impact, Invasion, Islamic Empire, Mongol.

Introduction

Mongol invasion on Islamic empire is a land mark event in the history of world which, began in around 1219A.D. from Otrar under the dominion of Khwarazm dynasty. After victory over Otrar Mongol did not stop there. After one another Mongol army destroyed and plundered

all the cities which, came in their way and which, tried to resist the Mongol army. In 1258A.D. Mongol army reached Baghdad where Al-Mustasim, the Abbasid Caliph was ruling. Without any resistance Baghdad, the capital city of the Islamic Empire was surrendered to the Mongol army. Thus, in 1258 A.D. the Islamic empire came to an end. Any invasion has its devastating effects however, the Mongol invasion on Islamic empire was more devastative therefore, its impacts on the Islamic empire was more destructive. During Mongol invasion men, women and children in large number were killed. Cities where people tried to resist the aggressive army of the Mongol were destroyed and plundered.

At the time of Mongol invasion, the whole Islamic empire was divided in various states with its governor who was appointed by the Abbasid Caliph who ruled from Baghdad. However, all the Governors of the Islamic states had become independent and Caliphate had no virtual power to keep them under his control. The Governors were fighting with each other and even some Governors tried to make the Caliph prisoner. The division of Islamic state and disunity among the Governors of Islamic States and the weakness of Caliph were known to every one including Mongols therefore, when the invasion of Mongol started neither any independent Islamic state no Caliph could defend themselves which, resulted in the destruction of cities and the entire political system and Mongol rule was established which, ruled till 1295A.D.

Review of literature: The topic impact of Mongol invasion on the political conditions of Islamic empire is quite interesting and important. However, the review of literature suggests that so far no systematic research has been done on the topic. It is therefore, that this topic has been selected for this research article.

Case Study

Rising from utter obscurity, Chingiz marshaled together the pastoral nomadic clans and swept south and east to overrun civilized China. In 1219 he turned west at the head of some 700000 men, many of them mounted on wiry steeds. At the limits of the Khwarazmian kingdom he paused to send envoys to Sultan Muhammad. The latter scorned to treat with these unknown savages, and the result was the speedy destruction of his realm. (1) The Mongol army moved ahead to take Bokhara, Samarqand, Balkh, and Marv. Towns which, offered resistance were besieged, stormed, burned, and frequently obliterated from the face of the land. Nishapur fell in 1221, its inhabitants and all living things, including cats and dogs, were slaughtered, and Sultan Muhammad was hunted across the country to the Caspian coast where he escaped in a

small boat just a few paces ahead of his pursuers. In this first invasion and in the succeeding waves millions of the people of Iran were slain.

Changez Khan returned to the East when almost all of Iran had been overrun, and died there in 1227. The council which, named his successor determined to send an army against the remnants of the Khwarazmian power, and the general Charmaghan led the Mongols as far as northwestern Iran and Iraq. In the next years the slaughter and plundering continued. In 1256 Halaku Khan carried out a mission against the Assassins, razing their fortresses and destroying their power. In 1258 he marched against Baghdad and after a siege lasting a month stormed the city. Thousands were slain, the palaces, mosques, and tombs of the Caliphs were burnt, and a vast store of booty collected. The last of the Abbasid Caliphs was put to death and his line was wiped out. In Palestine Halaku Khan was decisively defeated by the Egyptians; this way the first check was administered to the Mongol forces. (2)

Halaku withdrew to Maragha in northwest Iran, and there the Mongols settled permanently in Iran. Halaku Khan took the title of Ilkhan or subordinate Khan, the title, which, passed on to his successors and gave to the dynasty the name Ilkhans of Iran. Once the Mongols began to live in the country, they were subject to manners, modes of dress, and religious beliefs foreign to their tribal mode of life. The force and continuity of Iranian civilization worked to alter their very character. The feudal system of government was retained, Persians were soon named to the highest administrative posts, and the Ilkhan rulers became patrons of literature and the arts.

In 1267 Halaku Khan died and was succeeded by his son Abaqa, who ruled until 1282. The campaigns against Syria having met with failure. He proposed, as did several later rulers, a military alliance of East and West against the Moslem Egyptians. Such an alliance might have secured for the Christian nations the holy sites of Palestine, but they showed little serious interest in the plan. Takudar, a brother of Abaqa who succeeded him on the throne, was murdered in 1284. He was succeeded by Arghun, a son of Abaqa. During his reign the Nestorian Christians, long entrenched in Northwestern Iran and Iraq, were especially favoured, and their bishop rebuilt the church at Maragha. The reins of government were now entirely in the hands of capable Iranian officials. Upon Arghun's death in 1292 his brother Ghaikhatu reigned for four years and was then followed by Baidu who occupied the throne less than a year.

The accession to the throne in 1295 by Ghazan Khan, a great-grandson of Halaku Khan, ushered in a new golden age, which was to continue during the reign of his successor Oljaitu.

Ghazan Khan became a convert to Islam, and the spirit of religious tolerance, which had marked the Il- Khanid period began to wane. The court at Tabriz, the capital city, was entirely Moslem and Persian in character. Good government and general prosperity were the serious concerns of the ruler, with equitable taxes regularly collected, laws codified, and internal security established. Ten thousand men guarded the main roads along, which numerous caravans passed in safety. Both Genoa and Venice had commercial envoys and colonies of merchant's resident in Tabriz. In 1297 Ghazan ordered construction work, which begun in a suburb of Tabriz and in a few years his twelve-sided tomb structure, crowned by a great dome, was the center of a group of buildings set within gardens. The buildings included monastery, hospital, religious schools, an observatory, library, palace or administrative building, and an academy of philosophy.(3)

Near the end of his life, in a final attempt to conquer Syria and Egypt, Ghazan Khan captured Aleppo but was defeated by the Egyptians near Damascus. Ghazan stands out as a figure of heroic proportions, but his great Wazir, Rashiduddin, is a figure of equal interest. Rashid was a native Persian who was first a practicing physician in the reign of Abaqa and later court historian and principal administrator under Ghazan Khan and Oljaitu. Much of his energy went into the writing of a universal history a part of which gave a detailed account of the Mongols and the establishment of their kingdoms. Only the best and more reliable sources were used: the official Mongol chronicle was consulted, a Kashmir hermit aided in composing the history of India, and two learned Chinese dealt with the Chinese material. Rashid's information about the political conditions in Europe was very accurate; he knew far more about Europe than the Europeans then knew of Asia, recording even the recondite fact that there were no snakes in Ireland. When the work was completed in 1310 A. D. every precaution was taken to see that it should endure. Many copies were sent to the libraries of large towns, the manuscript was made available for copying, and several new copies in different languages were made out every year. (4)

Ghazan Khan died in 1304 A. D. and his brother Oljaitu reigned until his own death in 1316 A. D. at the age of thirty-six. As a child Oljaitu had been baptized a Christian, but he later embraced Islam and took the name Mohammad Khodabanda. He was much interested in the several Moslem sects and was successively a Hanefi, a Shi'a, and a Sunni. In 1306 A. D. Oljaitu ordered the work to begun on the city of Sultaniya, located on a wide plain near Qazvin, which was to replace Tabriz as the capital of IL-Khanid Iran. (5) Abu Sai'd was enthroned as his father's successor at the age of twelve. Mongol power had now passed its peak in Iran, and it

would have taken a greater figure than this ruler, who was a mere youth during most of his reign, to arrest the accelerating decline. The great nobles became increasingly unruly, and sections of the kingdom tended to break off from the main body.

The south of Iran had been spared Mongol devastation because its rulers had made huge payments to the invaders, and now the Muzaffarid dynasty of Kerman spread its authority over Fars and most of western Iran. Abu Sai'd died in 1335. Ghazan Khan had slain many of the rival members of the Mongol families, and now the more remote claimants to the throne fought among themselves without decisive results. During most of the rest of the fourteenth century the country drew in upon itself and petty dynasties held fleeting power, of which the Muzaffarids were the strongest while the Sarbadarides held Khorasan and Damghan.

The period from the death of Halaku Khan to the end of the reign of Abu Sai'd was extraordinarily rich in literary production and at no other time were so many first-rate histories written in Persian. Considerable work was also done in the fields of medicine, botany, astronomy, and the natural sciences. Juwaini, one member of a remarkable family of Persian officials under the Mongols and himself governor of Baghdad for many years, completed his *Tarikh-i-Jahan -Gusha* in 1260 A. D. This work contains the histories of Chaghatay Khan, of the Khwarazmshahs and of the Assassins. Another Persian, Abdullah Ibne Fazlullah, who is generally known as Wassaf, brought this work up to date in his history called the *Tarikh-i-Wassaf*. Rashid uddin composed other important work in addition to his monumental history. Hamdullah Mustawfi of Qazvin, a protege of Rashiduddin, wrote two important histories, one geographical work, and a long historical poem called the *Zafar Nama*, or "Book of Victory." (6)

By the viral extinction of the Ismaili sect Halaku Khan had rendered a great, if unintentional, service to orthodox Islam. His next blow was to be directed against the fount head of orthodoxy, the Abbasid Caliphate. (7) The thirteenth century of Christian era to which Rumi belonged, was seventh century of Islam. The Islamic empire had already achieved its full political maturity within the first century of Islamic period and rising from Mecca, Islam reached into Syria, North Africa and then leaping the straits of Gibraltar it hammered at the door of Europe. Islam conquered Sicily and reached as far as the campagna and Abruzzi in the south. Using Spain as a spring board it jumped into Provence, Northern Italy and even to Switzerland. From its strong hold in Spain and Sicily it transmitted its powerful cultural influence to the whole of Europe.

But, by thirteenth century A.D. Islam and Islamic empire, which was already threatened from within was confronted with two of the most dangerous enemies. The first being the

crusaders from the west, who were rather a familiar, the second enemy was Mongol from the east, who were more formidable in the immediate effects of its destruction. According to Afzal Iqbal "While the Crusader exercised an indirect, though an important influence on the spiritual growth of Rumi, the Mongols have a direct bearing on his life". The opinion of Afzal Iqbal has got potential, because, in the case of crusades Maulana Rumi was a distant spectator but he was a living actor in the bloody drama staged by the Mongols. In the beginning of thirteenth century A.D. most of the parts of Iran was ruled by Alauddin Mohammad Khwarzam Shah (1195-1221A.D.), the ruler of Khwarzam Shahi dynasty (1077-1221). His kingdom extended from Ural Mountains to Persian Gulf, and from Indus, almost, to the Euphrates, and included, nearly the whole of Persia, except provinces of Fars and Khujistan. The immediate cause, which provoked Mongol invasion over Iran is said to be related with an incident. It is told that Changez Khan (1206-1227A.D.) sent to Otrar, (an important frontier town of Khwarzam) a company of merchants in around 1218A.D. laden with the wares of his country. Assuming that, they were Mongol spies, they were barbarously murdered at the instance of the Governor of Otrar.

When the news of murder of the merchants reached to Changez Khan, he dispatched an embassy consisting of two Mongols and a Muslim, formerly in the services of Sultan Tekish to the court of Khwarzam Shah to protest the killing of merchants and demand surrender of the Governor of Otrar. Instead of thinking over the demands put forth by the embassy, all the three were killed. When this news reached to the court, Changez Khan called an urgent meeting of the Qurrelatai, and took decision of invasion, over the kingdom of Khwarzam Shah. Thus, in the autumn of 1219 A.D. Mongol invasion commenced with the attack on Transoxiana by Changez Khan, and Otrar town being the first target fell after a siege of five or six months. After Otrar, Uzkand and two or three other small towns were sacked, Jand was reduced after a short siege and in 1220 A.D. Bukhara was also captured to which they plundered and burnt, massacring a great number of inhabitants, and outraging their wives, sisters, and daughters.

After plundering Bukhara and massacring its inhabitants, Mongols turned towards Samarqand. Only, after the siege of four five days Samarqand was also surrendered to the Mongols and thus, the conquest of Transoxiana virtually completed. After surrendered of the city followed plundering and massacring of its inhabitants and those escaped were reduced to slavery. Meanwhile, Alauddin Khwarzam Shah continued to retreat, and believing that the Mongols would not dare to cross the Oxus, halted at Nishapur; but three weeks later, hearing upon that Mongols were already in Khurasan, fled to Qazvin and from there he turned back to

Gilan and Mazindran. By this time, he was deserted by most of his followers and was attacked by pleurisy. Thus, he died a miserable and hunted fugitive on an Island in the Caspian, nominating his son Jalaluddin as his successor.

After Khurasan, Mongols turned towards Khwarzam where they were offered stubborn resistance, which irritated them and after the surrender of the city Mongols put to the swords, nearly all inhabitants except artisans and crafts-men, who were transported to Mongolia. According to the author of the Jami-ut-Tawarikh, the besieging army numbered 50,000 and each man of them had twenty-four prisoners to kill. The blood thirsty ferocity of Mongols seemed to have increased in proportion to their successes. At-Balkh, Nusrat-Kuh, Nasa, Nishapur, Marv and elsewhere, the same atrocious massacres invariably followed the capture or surrender of the towns, Ibnul Asir says that those slain at-Marv alone are computed at 7,00,000.

At Nishapur the heads of the slain were cut-off and built into pyramids. The heads of men, women and children being kept apart. Bamyan where a Mongol prince was slain in the attack was destroyed, not even spoils of war being taken, so that for a hundred years it remained a desert void of inhabitants. The same attitude was applied towards the treasure of art and literature, preserved in these ancient cities. Here this is to mention that the Mongol invasion over Iran was carried on in two phases. The first began with the invasion of Chaghatay Khan in 1219 A.D. and came to an end with the death of Mangu Khan in 1257 A.D. The second phase commenced with the arrival of Halaku Khan in 1256 A.D. and came to an end in 1295 A.D.

Halaku Khan marched from Qaraqoram in July 1252 A.D. having received special instructions to exterminate the Assassins and to destroy the caliphate of Baghdad and therefore he reached Samarqand in September 1255 A.D. In Jan 1256, he met Argun at-Kish who had been re-appointed Governor General of Persia by Mangu in 1253 A.D. Tashkent and Khwaf, the two of the strong holds of the Assassins in Kuhistan were the first places to bear the brunt of Halaku's attack. Both the towns were captured in around the end of March 1256 A.D. and all the inhabitants of the later town, over ten years of age were put to death save a few girls of exceptional beauty who were reserved for a worse fate. Ruknuddin, the leader of the Assassin was taken to Qaraqoram where he was put to death by the order of Mangu Khan.

The extirpation (total eradication) of Assassins won for Halaku Khan the applause of the orthodox Muslims. But his next move was unexpected and terrifying for them. In September 1257 A.D. Halaku sent a summon from Hamadan to the Caliph Al-Mustasim Billah (1242-1258A.D.) to surrender himself and Baghdad, to the Mongols. But Caliph Mustasim

Billah did not follow Halaku's order. In November 1257 A.D., on the pretext of noncompliance of the order Halaku marched towards Baghdad and siege of Baghdad began on 13th February 1258 A.D., which lasted for a week. According to J. W. Lal Halaku Khan who exterminated the terrible order of the Assassin captured Baghdad in 1258 A.D., massacred 800000 of its inhabitants, killed Al-Mustasim, the last Abbasid Caliph, plundered the city and destroyed the literary and scientific monuments of the once glorious metropolis of Islam.

After capturing Baghdad Halaku left on 20th February for the village of Waqf, and it was in this village that on the same day Mustasim was killed by Halaku. Both Nasiruddin and Rashiduddin, in their accounts are silent as to how the caliph was killed but the late historians inform that he was rolled up in a carpet and trampled or kicked to death. Sadi's eulogy on the sack of Baghdad has become a classic in Persian literature. His couplets give an idea of the destruction, the plundering, killings, and terror, which followed the sack and to which Sadi himself was a witness.

Thus, the caliphate, which had existed for more than six centuries, became extinct at one blow. Not only the caliphate was ended, but the whole Iran was devastated by Changez Khan and Halaku. In these devastations not only men, women and children perished in great number but the cities were also destructed and plundered in a planned manner. The irreparable loss was the destruction and burning of libraries and rare books and the killing of scholars. In fact, the Mongol invasions were so devastative that Muslim Civilization and especially Iran never recovered.

Conclusion

In the light of the above facts and circumstances it can be concluded that the impact of Mongol invasion on the political conditions of Islamic empire was tremendous. Mongol invasions not only completely destroyed the ruling class but also finished them in such a way that they never raised their heads again to form political group until Mongols became weak. The complete eradication of Assassins brought laurel to Halaku Khan but the destruction of Baghdad, its monuments and library was irreparable loss to the Islamic world. The assassination of Abbasid Caliph Al-Mustasim Billah and wiping out his family members were a great loss to the Abbasid dynasty.

Notes and References

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