

**CHINGGIS KHAN AND HIS CONQUEST OF KHORASAN:  
CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES**

**BY**

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## ABSTRACT

This book explores the causes and consequences of Chinggis Khan's invasion of Khorasan in the 13th century. It discusses Chinggis Khan's charismatic leadership qualities that united all nomadic tribes and gave him the authority to become the supreme Mongol leader, which helped him to invade Khorasan. It also focuses on the rise of the Muslim cities in Khorasan where many Muslim scholars kept their intellectual brilliance and made Khorasan the cultural capital of the Muslims. This study apprises us of Chinggis Khan's war tactics and administrative system which made his men extremely strong and advanced despite their culture remaining barbaric in nature. His progeny also followed a similar policy for a long time until all Muslim cities were fully destroyed. The work also focuses on the rise of many sectarian divisions among the Muslims which brought disunity that eventually led to their downfall. Thus, this study underscores the importance of revitalization of unity in the Muslim world so that Muslims may not become vulnerable to any foreign imperialistic power. Unity also is the key to preserve Muslim intellectual thought and Islamic cultural identities.

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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Chinggis Khan's invasion of Khorasan<sup>1</sup> in the 13<sup>th</sup> century CE was one of the most important events in the Muslim world because this invasion abruptly affected the growth of Islamic civilization and marked the end of the Abbasid Caliphate (750-1258 CE) in Baghdad. The Abbasid period witnessed the birth of the Islamic renaissance wherein Muslim scholars translated the intellectual legacies of Greek, Roman, Persian and Indian civilizations into Arabic. They also made new discoveries and theories in mathematics, science, medicine, history, philosophy and literature, which formed the basis of later intellectual endeavor, particularly in Europe.<sup>2</sup> This advancement radiated throughout the Muslim lands, notably in Khorasan. Many Muslim scholars i.e. Abu Nasr al-Farabi (870-950 CE), Muhammad ibn Ismail al-Bukhari (810-870 CE), Ibn Sina (980-1037 CE), Omar ibn Ibrahim al-Khayyam (1048-1123 CE), Abu Hamid al-Ghazali (1058-1111 CE) were born in that region, and due to their intellectual brilliance, Khorasan became the first cultural capital of the Islamic world in Central Asia.<sup>3</sup>

The history of Khorasan begins with its inclusion in the Achaemenid Empire (648-330 BCE) of Cyrus the Great in the 6<sup>th</sup> century BCE.<sup>4</sup> The people of that area, especially its eastern part, were mainly Persians. Besides Persians, other people lived

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<sup>1</sup> Khorasan is a part of present-day Iran, Afghanistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. Previously, it included many Muslim cities such as Nishapur, Tus, Herat, Balkh, Kabul, Ghazni, Merv, Samarqand, Bukhara and Khiva.

<sup>2</sup> Michael Axworthy, *A History of Iran* (New York: Basic Books, 2008), 81.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 84-95.

<sup>4</sup> Samuel Adrian M Adshead, *Central Asia in World History* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1993), 35-39.

in that region; there were nomads and sedentary cultivators. From the third and second centuries BCE a nomadic dynasty arose, known as the Saka dynasty. In the second century BCE, the Huns invaded and captured the area from the Saka tribes. In the beginning of the 1<sup>st</sup> century CE, Khorasan was occupied by the Kushans.<sup>5</sup> They controlled Khorasan, the influence of which stretched to the upper Indus valley. For almost two centuries, the Kushan Empire practiced Mahayana Buddhism, which was reflected in Gandhara art. Ardashir I, the founder of the Sassanid Empire (226-650 CE) in Persia captured that region in 226 CE.<sup>6</sup>

In 559 CE, the Huns were crushed by Khusrau Anushirvan who had entered into an alliance with the Turks and joined with the Sassanid Empire earlier in that century. For a century, nomadic Turks dominated the region before they began to settle and control the land. From the second half of the 7<sup>th</sup> century CE, Islam spread in Transoxiana.<sup>7</sup> The region of Khorasan came into the orbit of the Umayyad and Abbasid dynasties and became a part of the Islamic world. From the 9<sup>th</sup> century onward, Abbasid rule weakened and gave rise to a number of independent Muslim dynasties such as the Tahirids (821-873 CE), the Saffarids (867-903 CE), the Samanids (875-1005 CE), the Ghaznawids (977-1186 CE) and the Seljuks (1037-1192 CE).<sup>8</sup> None of them destroyed the cities of Khorasan, but Chinggis Khan turned his sights on that region in 1218 CE.

Chinggis Khan came from one of the nomadic Mongol tribes.<sup>9</sup> The major confederation at that time was divided into Mongols, Uighurs, Tartars, Naimans, Onggirats, Markits and Ketails. Those tribes were pastoral nomads and forest hunters. The tribes had their own chiefs who used to quarrel and constantly fight to annihilate each other.<sup>10</sup> From a religious perspective, they believed in God, but worshipped the sun, the moon and fire, with no binding religious faith.<sup>11</sup> According to some sources, Chinggis Khan was a great warrior; one by one he conquered other tribes in battle.<sup>12</sup> The Tartars could not resist him. After his victory over the Tartars, he was elected as

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<sup>5</sup> Hamilton Alexander Rosskeen Gibb, *The Arab Conquest in Central Asia* (New York: AMS Press, 1990), 2-6.

<sup>6</sup> Michael Axworthy, 43-62.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 74.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 84.

<sup>9</sup> Urgunge Onon, *The History and the Life of Chinggis Khan* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1990), 1.

<sup>10</sup> Khwandamir. *Habibu's-siyar, Tome Three* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994), 10.

<sup>11</sup> George Lane, *Daily Life in the Mongol Empire* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2006), 15-17.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 10-15.

Khan.<sup>13</sup> The title Khan encouraged him to aspire to authority over a broader tribal confederation. The ‘Khan’ framed some laws for the Mongols. He established a set of rules for every occasion and regulations for every circumstance. He also fixed a penalty for every crime. The Tartar people had no script of their own. Chinggis Khan first gave orders that Mongol children should learn writing from the Uighur.<sup>14</sup> His laws were compiled in a book which is known as the “Great Book of Yasa”.<sup>15</sup>

At the time of the first dominion, he united all tribes under his wing because he realized the importance of tribal unity, which could be instrumental to defeat enemies. He abolished reprehensible customs which had been practiced by the Tartars. Finally, he established strong military forces that were expert and specialized in hunting. The Mongol archers were so skilled as to be able to silence a trumpeter stationed to warn his city by shooting the man through the neck from over 200 yards away.<sup>16</sup> By their mutual collaborations and hardships, the Mongols advanced in society. All of those advancements enabled Chinggis Khan to conquer the lands of Khorasan. It has been mentioned before that the region of Khorasan was divided into many cities (i.e. Khwarizm, Merv, Bukhara, Samarkand, Ghazni, Balkh and Khiva). Besides the Muslims’ cultural growth, economically those cities were advanced enough to engage in trading activities.<sup>17</sup>

From the tenth century onwards, the caravan trade was very strong and it penetrated much of Eurasia controlled by the Mongols. Merchants and goods of those caravans increased rapidly, coming from China and traveling via the oases of Central Asia, offering numerous economic opportunities to the inhabitants.<sup>18</sup> In the early 1200s, Khwarizm Shah ruled most of the area of Khorasan. In 1218 CE, he condoned the killing of an envoy dispatched by Chinggis Khan, which was a direct challenge to the Mongols, for whom the person of an ambassador was sacrosanct.<sup>19</sup> Due to this, Chinggis Khan prepared his forces against Khwarizm Shah, which was the pretext to

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<sup>13</sup>Ibid., 20.

<sup>14</sup>The Uighur were a nomadic tribe that settled near the Mongol states. Later, two smaller Uighur states (now known as Kansu and Alasan) were conquered by Tanquat in 1030 CE. The head of these Uighur states bore the title of *Idiqt* (sacred majesty). The Uighur had their own alphabet which came from the Semitic source, known in history as the Uighur script. See David Morgan, *The Mongol* (Cambridge: Blackwell publishing, 2007), 41.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., 83-87.

<sup>16</sup>Timothy May, “Genghis Khan: Secrets of Success”. *Military History*, 24:5 (Jul/ Aug 2007).

<sup>17</sup>W. Barthold, *An Historical Geography of Iran* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 87-111.

<sup>18</sup>Beatrice Forbes Manz, *Central Asia in Historical Perspective* (Oxford: Westview Press, 2003), 28.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid.

launch an invasion. The Shah was a weak ruler, and many of his companions were not loyal to him. Realizing his adversary's weakness, Chinggis Khan prepared his armies against Khwarizm Shah in Khorasan. Finally, in 1219 CE, Chinggis Khan crossed the Sayr Daria and captured Khorasan by destroying cities and houses and killing many people. Ata Malik Juvaini, one of the greatest Persian historians, quoted a refugee of Bukhara as saying that the Mongols "came, they sapped, they burnt, they slew, they plundered and they departed."<sup>20</sup> Juvaini's book also details the following:

On 25<sup>th</sup> February, 1221 C.E, the Mongols arrived at the gates of Marv. Tolui, the son of Chinggis Khan, in person with an escort of five hundred horsemen, rode the whole distance around the walls. For six days, the Mongols continued to inspect the defenses, reaching the conclusion that they were in good repair and would withstand a lengthy siege. On the seventh day, the Mongols launched a general assault. The next day, the governor surrendered the town, having been reassured by promises that were not in fact to be kept. Four hundred artisans and a number of children were selected to become slaves, and it was recommended that the whole of the remaining population including men, women and children should be put to the sword. They were distributed for the purpose among the troops--each individual Mongol soldier was allotted the execution of three or four hundred persons.<sup>21</sup>

It is also said that when the Mongols withdrew, they burnt whole cities so that the people who concealed themselves in holes and caves could not emerge from those hiding places. Even their pets like cats and dogs were burnt. Other cities of Khorasan, namely Nishapur, Tus, Herat, Balkh, Bukhara and Samarkand suffered the same fate. Thus, the Mongols destroyed the cultural heritage and agricultural land in Khorasan. All the massacres were led by the armies of the Mongol leader Chinggis Khan.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Ata Malik Juvaini, *Genghis Khan: The History of the World Conqueror* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1997), 107.

<sup>21</sup> Ata Malik Juvaini, *Genghis Khan: The History of the World Conqueror* (John Andrew Boyle's trans), (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1958), 159-162.

<sup>22</sup> Helen Loveday, Bruce Wannell, Christoph Baumer, & Bijan Omrani, *Iran Persia: Ancient and Modern* (Hong Kong: Odessey, 2005), 55.

## 1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The 13<sup>th</sup> century was a period of turmoil for Muslims, particularly in the region of Khorasan, because of Chinggis Khan's brutal attacks on their land. The purpose of this research is to examine the causes that induced Chinggis Khan to invade Khorasan.

In view of the above facts, this study is intended to provide answers to the following questions:

- What were the factors that helped Chinggis Khan to become the supreme leader of the Mongol tribes?
- What were the main factors that induced Chinggis Khan to invade Khorasan?
- What were the long-term consequences of Chinggis Khan's invasion of Khorasan?

## 1.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of this study can be summarized as follows:

- To explore how Chinggis Khan from the Mongol tribes came up in world history.
- To identify the main factors that prompted Chinggis Khan to invade Khorasan.
- To appraise Chinggis Khan's war tactics against the Muslim lands.
- To explore the real reasons for the downfall of the Muslims.
- To gauge how the Islamic civilization was affected by Chinggis Khan's invasion of Khorasan.

## 1.4 LITERATURE REVIEW

This study will be based on both primary and secondary sources. Among the books, Ata Malik Juvaini's *Tarikh-i-jahangushay*, written in Persian (John Andrew Boyle translated this book into English as *Genghis Khan: The History of the World Conqueror*) and *The Secret History of the Mongols* (the book was originally secretly written in Uighur script for the Mongol royal family immediately after the death of Chinggis Khan by an anonymous author; in 1957 CE, Francis Woodman Cleaves translated it into English) are the primary sources, and recent books and articles are the secondary sources. The relevant literature is reviewed below.

Juvaini's *Genghis Khan: The History of the World Conqueror*<sup>23</sup> gives information on Chinggis Khan and his sons from 1252 to 1260 CE. Juvaini himself was an eyewitness of many events in contemporary Mongol society. He was appointed by Hulagu Khan (the grandson of Chinggis Khan) as the governor of Baghdad. In this book he quoted his father's narration who was a contemporary of Chinggis Khan. This book is divided into three parts. The first part begins with a description of the Mongol society, with particular information on Chinggis Khan's early life, rise to power and administrative policies. This book also gives a brief account of his children. Besides his early life and family background, it also narrates Chinggis Khan's conquest of the Uighur and Tartar peoples. It goes on to point out several causes of Chinggis Khan's attack on Transoxiana and Khorasan, including Bokhara and Samarcand, and his campaign to the south of the River Oxus.

Part two of this book deals with the Khwarizm dynasty – its origin and fall (12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries CE). Ata Malik Juvaini was a native of Khorasan, and due to this he gave all the contemporary accounts, including those of sultans, amirs, princes, and their mothers such as Fatima Khatun and Terken Khatun, concerning their preparations for war against Chinggis Khan and his sons. This part also describes the rise and fall of Kara-Khitai and Chinggis Khan's pursuit of Sultan Jalal al-Din to the Indus River.

The third part of this book is concerned with the post-Chinggisid imperial succession and the destruction of Juvaini's own hometown (Juvain) and Isma'ili strongholds in northern Persia. Juvaini witnessed some campaigns and provided eyewitness accounts of many events (e.g. Hulagu's advance to the west and the Mongol siege of an Isma'ili stronghold). Due to its eyewitness account of Chinggisid events, this book is one of the most relevant sources for my study.

Khwandamir's *Habibu's-siyar (The reign of the Mongol and the Turk)*<sup>24</sup> describes the early life of Chinggis Khan and his career. It also gives all the detailed information about the rulers of the Mongols and other nomadic tribes. It provides details of the ancestors of the Muslim rulers who ruled Transoxiana and Khorasan. It

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<sup>23</sup> Ata Malik Juvaini, *Genghis Khan: The History of the World Conqueror* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1997).

<sup>24</sup> Khwandamir, *Habibu's-siyar, Tome Three. The Reign of the Mongol and the Turk* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994).

also highlights the destruction of the Muslim lands (i.e Khorasan, including Bukhara and Samarkand) by Chinggis Khan.

Haider Mirza's *Tarikh-i-Rashidi*<sup>25</sup> is an early Mongolian history. The writer begins with the early history of Tughluk Timur, the great-great-grandson of Genghis Khan. The writer was a contemporary of Timur. In this book, the author says much regarding the title Khan given to the chief by the Mongols. The book also goes into the origin of the Mongols, their civilization and their culture. It sheds light on the other tribes like the Markits, Turks and Uighurs, their historical background and their settlements in Central Asia.

W. Barthold's *Turkestan down to the Mongol Invasion*<sup>26</sup> provides the historical geography (i.e. location, climate, society and culture) of Central Asia, including Khorasan and Transoxiana and their conquest by the Mongols. In completing this book, the writer adopted ideas from Chinese and Muslim sources.

The anonymous *Secret History of the Mongols* (Urgunge Onon's translation)<sup>27</sup> is an eyewitness account of the personal life of Chinggis Khan. It was mainly written to teach the descendants of the Khan how to consolidate the Empire. The events in the script were mainly private information concerning Chinggis Khan (e.g. how his mother was abducted by his father from the Markit tribes, and how his father was poisoned and killed by Tartar tribes). It also narrates how Temuchin (Chinggis Khan) killed his half brother in a dispute over a bird, how Borte (his wife) was kidnapped by the Markits and how his sons fought each other for the throne.

Michel Hoang's *Genghis Khan*<sup>28</sup> elaborates on the environment of the Steppe where Chinggis Khan was born. This book, like others, narrates his early life, accession as a Khan, his wars against Naiman and the strong military camp at Karakorum. In this book, the author mentions Chinggis Khan's preparations for war against China, Russia and the Muslim lands. The author focuses more on the politics and military prowess of Chinggis Khan and how he subjugated vast empires. However, less attention is paid to the main reasons behind Chinggis Khan's attack on the Muslim lands, particularly Khorasan.

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<sup>25</sup> Haider Mirza, *History of the Mongols of Central Asia being The Tarikh-i-Rashidi* (London: Curzon Press, 1898).

<sup>26</sup> W. Barthold, *Turkestan Down to the Mongol Invasion* (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt Ltd, 1992).

<sup>27</sup> Urgunge Onon, *The Secret History of the Mongols* (London: Curzon Press, 2001).

<sup>28</sup> Michel Hoang, *Genghis Khan* (London: Saqi Book, 2004).

Michael Prawdin's *The Mongol Empire*<sup>29</sup> sheds light on Chinggis Khan's great achievements, such as possession of a strong military regiment, the unity of Mongol tribes and his written laws. Like many other books, this book also narrates the background of young Temuchin (Chinggis Khan), his administrative policies, his expanding power, his training the Mongols for unity and his preparations for war against Chinese and Muslim rulers. It also narrates how his successors carried out his mission.

Jeremiah Curtin's *The Mongols*<sup>30</sup> begins with the rise of the Mongol power including Chinggis Khan's mighty career. This book also provides some information on the Muslim rulers of Khorasan. The book mainly narrates the Mongols' expansion policy, which feared that Mongols were inconceivably formidable in battle, tireless in campaign and on the march, utterly indifferent to fatigue and hardship, and with extraordinary prowess with bow and arrow.

Beatrice Forbes Manz edited a set of articles on *Central Asia in Historical Perspective*.<sup>31</sup> The articles in this book cover a long historical period from the Mongol Empire up to the present. The article *Mongol legacy in central Asia* by Morris Rossabi describes the Mongol rulers and their power and its influence on Central Asia. It also narrates how Mongols dominated the region and spread their culture and society for another two centuries.

Paula L.W. Sabloff's "Why Mongolia? The political culture of an emerging democracy"<sup>32</sup> argues that Mongols emulated their liberal democracy (i.e. the system of government, rule of law, equality of citizens and freedom) from their great leader Chinggis Khan. The writer comments that Chinggis Khan did not give people much personal freedom, but gave them at least religious freedom. This article shows the link between democracy in Chinggis Khan's age and in the present day. It praises his democratic system because he was the ideal for modern leaders. However, this article does not highlight the barbaric oppression that Chinggis Khan displayed in the brutal destruction of populous cities like Khorasan.

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<sup>29</sup> Michael Prawdin, *The Mongol Empire* (New Brunswick, N.J: Aldine Transaction Publishers, 2006).

<sup>30</sup> Jeremiah Curtin, *The Mongols* (Cambridge, MA: Da Capo Press, 2003).

<sup>31</sup> Beatrice Forbes Manz, *Central Asia in Historical Perspective* (Oxford: Westview Press, 2003).

<sup>32</sup> P.L.W.Sabloff, "Why Mongolia? The Political Culture of an Emerging Democracy". *Central Asian Survey* (2002), 21(1), 19-36.

W. Barthold's *An Historical Geography of Iran*<sup>33</sup> describes various historical periods and the emergence of the various dynasties in Iran. In this book, all the chapters mainly describe the geography (i.e. the climate, the mountains, sea, rivers, plants and animals) of the various parts of Iran and the human settlements and the civilizations of that region. Chapter Five of the book is very useful for the present study because it deals with Khorasan. This chapter begins with the Aryans' settlements and their establishment of the Achaemenide Empire. It also dwells on the many Muslim empires that ruled Khorasan (i.e. Samanids, Ghaznawids, Khawarism and Mongols). This book also provides an account of the later part of the Mongol ascendancy (i.e. the Timurid dynasty, the Ottoman Empire and Modern Uzbeks). It also gives useful information on the cities of Khorasan, namely Nishapur, Balkh, Herat, Bukhara and Samarkand.

Helen Loveday, Bruce Wannell, Christoph Baumer and Bijan Omrani's *Iran Persia: Ancient and Modern*<sup>34</sup> begins with the pre-historic era of Iran. It gives an idea of the ancient dynasties of Iran and comes down to the present day. It also illustrates the country's art, architecture, geography and religion. It is relevant to this study because it describes ancient Iran and Persia, including Khorasan, and how the cities of Khorasan became famous.

Timothy May's "Genghis Khan: Secrets of Success"<sup>35</sup> argues that the key to the Mongols' success in war was their highly developed military structure. Throughout the expansion of their empire they adopted new methods (i.e. after conquering China they adopted new weapons and tactics like the steel bow, lance and saber). It was compulsory for Chinggis Khan's people to practice those tactics. This ensured that they had sufficient manpower to besiege large cities. This article only describes the military structure of the Mongols.

Joe Palmer's article *Islamic Law and Genghis Khan's Code*, unlike other works, explains Chinggis Khan's code the Great Yasa, which was a faith and a way of life, a religion and a social order, and which was antithetical to Islam.<sup>36</sup> The author

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<sup>33</sup> W. Barthold, *An Historical Geography of Iran* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984).

<sup>34</sup> Helen Loveday, Bruce Wannell, Christoph Baumer & Bijan Omrani, *Iran Persia: Ancient and Modern* (Hong Kong: Odessey, 2005).

<sup>35</sup> Timothy May. "Genghis Khan: Secrets of Success". *Military History*, 24:5 (Jul/ Aug 2007).

<sup>36</sup> Joe Palmer (2009). *Islamic Law and Genghis Khan's code* (<http://www.nthposition.com/islamiclaw.php>)

also showed how Chinggis Khan was able to unite all Mongols and Tartars under his wing.

From the above books and articles, we realize that most writers discussed the political career of Chinggis Khan rather than the course of human civilization. All of the authors mentioned described his prowess in war (which was instrumental in destroying cities in Khorasan), but do not elaborate on the loss of Muslim civilization in Khorasan inflicted by the attack of Chinggis Khan. They also do not provide the real reasons for his sudden attack on the Muslims of Khorasan. These are some important areas where this research hopefully will help to provide some meaningful knowledge.

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

### **1.5 RESEARCH METHODS**

This research is on non-survey data based on mainly library research that will depend on books, articles, magazines, theses and dissertations. It will involve textual analysis of both primary and secondary sources and critical evaluation of the ideas on Chinggis Khan's invasion of Khorasan and the factors which made Muslims susceptible to this attack. This research will be exploratory and qualitative in nature. This study will depend on primary sources such as Ata Malik Juvaini's book *Genghis Khan: The History of the World Conqueror* and the anonymous *Secret History of the Mongols*, and secondary sources produced by various scholars in this field, monographs and online articles.

### **1.6 PROPOSED CHAPTER OUTLINES**

The book will consist of five chapters and the conclusion, as follows:

#### **Chapter One:** Introduction

- Background of the study
- Statement of the Problem
- Purpose of the Study
- Literature Review
- Research Methods

#### **Chapter Two:** Rise of Chinggis Khan

- Background of the Mongols
- Early Life of Chinggis Khan
- Unification of the Mongols by Chinggis Khan

**Chapter Three:** Khorasan in Muslim History

- Early History of Khorasan
- Rise of Islam in Khorasan
- The Situation of Muslims in Khorasan Until the 13<sup>th</sup> century

**Chapter Four:** Chinggis Khan's Conquest of Khorasan

- The Reason for His Conquest
- His Conquest of Khorasan
- His Strategy of War
- The Nature of His Administration

**Chapter Five:** The Impact of his Conquest

- The destruction of Islamic society
- Chinggis Khan's Rule Over Khorasan
- The Impact of Islam on the Mongols
- Conclusion

## CHAPTER 2

### RISE OF CHINGGIS KHAN

#### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

The Mongols belonged to the territory of the modern Mongolian republic. Historians have no consensus on the origin of the term ‘Mongol’. Some historians say that before the 10<sup>th</sup> century CE, all Mongols were a Turkic people who settled near the river Yenisey in Asia. According to them, in the early days all Mongols were known as Tatar, and after Chinggis Khan’s period the name Mongol first became famous to people.<sup>37</sup> Some historians discovered the name Mongol from Chinese history, particularly from the Tang dynasty (618-907 CE), during which the term ‘Mongol’ appeared as *Mong-Ku* (or *Mong-wu*), which developed into ‘Mongol’.<sup>38</sup>

#### 2.1.1 Background of the Mongols

Before the 13<sup>th</sup> century CE, Mongols were a Steppe people. To the north of the Steppe was the Siberian forest Taiga, to the south the famous Gobi desert, in the west two mountains (the Altai Mountain and Tien Shan Mountain). All of this land is in the Eurasian Belt. The weather of the area is extreme, which caused the historic migrations.<sup>39</sup> In the summer, the temperature could climb to over 38°C, and in winter could drop to -42°C.<sup>40</sup>



<sup>37</sup> Tatar is a Persian word and in English is Tartar. See Ata Malik Juvaini, 20; Mehmet Maksudoglu, (2002). Who are the Tatars? *Journal of Hamard Islamicus*, 17 (4), 25-27.

<sup>38</sup> David, 50; Rene Grousset, *The Empire of The Steppes* (New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1970), 121; Paul Ratchnevsky, *Genghis Khan* (Cambridge: Blackwell, 1992), 70.

<sup>39</sup> Bat-Ochir Bold, *Mongolian Nomadic Society* (Curzon: Carzon Press, 2001), 62.

<sup>40</sup> Leode Hartog, *Genghis Khan* (London: I.B Tauris & Co. Ltd, 1989), 1-2.

Figure 2.1: Map of the Steppe<sup>41</sup>

The original land of the Mongols was the Steppe (Figure 2.1), a treeless pasture, not suitable for agriculture. It is clear that in the beginning of their settlement they were nomads. Although trees could not grow in that region, the land was suitable for the pasturing of folks and herds. The nomads mainly reared sheep and horses. In the beginning, those nomads consisted of two groups: (a) pastoral nomads; and (b) forest hunters.<sup>42</sup> When the population increased, they settled in the forest area. After this, the society was divided into many tribes. The major tribes were Mongols, Uighurs, Tartars, Naimans, Unggirats, Markits and Khitails. Later, those tribes were further divided into clans and the clans again divided into a number of sub-clans. The Mongol tribe consisted of the Borjigin and the Tajut clans.<sup>43</sup>

### 2.1.2 The status of the tribes

Before the 13<sup>th</sup> century CE, the Khitails and Naimans were more advanced than the Mongols. They had more highly developed and cultured societies. They had royal families and organized military structures from which Chinggis Khan adopted the organized system of personal bodyguards. At the end of the 12<sup>th</sup> century CE, the Markits and Tartars were very strong and powerful tribes. Other tribes were the Unggirats who were also nomads. They lived south-east of Bayr-noor. In Chinese history, they were known as white Tartars. Chinggis Khan's mother was from that tribe. In about 745 CE, the famous Uighur tribe settled near Mongolia. Although they were nomads, they had their own alphabet, known as the Uighur script.<sup>44</sup>

### 2.1.3 The culture of the Mongols

Before the 13<sup>th</sup> century CE, like other tribes of the Steppe, the Mongols were also nomads. They moved from one place to another with their jurt (*yurt* or dwelling place), and large numbers of cattle and other belongings. In that situation, they had no organized society, no security and no guards to look after their property. They were

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<sup>41</sup> Retrieved September 19, 2011, from: [www.face-music.ch/nomads/horsemen\\_en.html](http://www.face-music.ch/nomads/horsemen_en.html)

<sup>42</sup> Leode, 3.

<sup>43</sup> Ata Malik, 21-35; Leode, 5.

<sup>44</sup> Ata Malik, 25; David, 41.

engaged in robbery, kidnapping and killing people. Beautiful women, slaves and herds were their booty.<sup>45</sup>

The dwellings of the Tartars were made of brick, called jurt (or *yart*).<sup>46</sup> The jurt was a small round-shaped felt tent.<sup>47</sup> In the middle of the jurt stood the main support, made of brick, and in the roof there was a short chimney. Under this jurt was a cooking place for preparing food, and smoke from the fire used to go out through the chimney. During migration, jurts were pulled by family members, whose number depended on the size of the jurt. Later, jurts were made of wooden carts.<sup>48</sup>



Figure 2.2: Various activities carried out in Steppe<sup>49</sup>

As the Steppe is treeless, the people were hunters instead of farmers (see Figure 2.2). They used to hunt mainly dogs, wolves, foxes, rats and rabbits and other available animals for their food. In the early days their clothes were made of the skin of those animals. They also used to eat carrion, having no religious or ethical taboo about the issue. Only animals hit by lightning could not be used for food. Horse-meat was a staple for the Mongols, while cows and sheep usually were used for festive occasions. They used to drink milk, particularly mare's milk. This milk was used to prepare the intoxicating beverage *qumis*. Fruits and vegetables normally did not grow in the Steppe except one fruit, called *qusuq*, shaped like the pine.<sup>50</sup>

In terms of religion, the Mongols believed in God.<sup>51</sup> They worshiped the sun (particularly the rising sun), the moon and fire.<sup>52</sup> They used to offer them food and

<sup>45</sup>Ibid., 20-21.

<sup>46</sup>Leode, 9.

<sup>47</sup>The ancient Mongols were sometimes also called felt-tent people, because their homes were round tents made of felt. See Rene, 196.

<sup>48</sup>Leode, 9.

<sup>49</sup> Mott MacDonald, <http://www.environment.mottmac.com/projects/?mode=type&id=249615> (accessed on 13<sup>th</sup> August 2011)

<sup>50</sup>Ata Malik, 21.

<sup>51</sup>Akbar Shah Khan Najeebabadi, *The History of Islam* Vol. 3. (Darussalam: Global Leader in Islamic Books, 2000), 294.

<sup>52</sup>Bertold Spuler, *History of the Mongols* (New York: Dorset Press, 1988), 73.

drink, particularly in the morning before they themselves ate and drank. Although they believed in God or gods, they had no binding religious faith or organized religion.<sup>53</sup> As the Mongols did not have a written language until the 13<sup>th</sup> century, it was possible that the customs and beliefs of the ancient people came to them from their oral legends,<sup>54</sup> myths, riddles, and proverbs. They only followed the old customs of their predecessors.<sup>55</sup>

Regarding family and marriage, they could marry as many women as they could support. Some of them used to marry ten or twenty or fifty or even a hundred women. As a general rule, they were allowed to marry all their relatives except their own mothers and sisters. There was a marked differentiation between the status of wives and concubines. The chief wife was the head of the family.<sup>56</sup> It was also the custom of the Mongols that the younger brother of the family has the obligation of marrying the widow of his brother.<sup>57</sup> Kidnapping women was also common in Mongol society.<sup>58</sup>

Women also played an important role in Mongol society. It is known that during battle, the wives of the tribal men rode horses and joined their husbands against enemies.<sup>59</sup> It was the duty of the woman to milk the cows, mares, camels and ewes and take care of them. They also knew the processes of making butter and ghee, and how to sew skins to make clothes. They sewed skins with a thread made of tendons.<sup>60</sup> They divided the tendons into fine shreds, and then twisted them into one long thread. By this process they used to sew boots, socks and clothes.<sup>61</sup>

The Mongols feared thunder extremely, and when lighting occurred they would turn out all strangers from their dwellings, wrapped in a black belt. After that, they would hide them until the lightning stopped. They buried their dead in mountains

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<sup>53</sup> George, 15-17.

<sup>54</sup> It is possible that the languages of the tribes of Steppe had similarities so that they can communicate to each other.

<sup>55</sup> George, 18.

<sup>56</sup> For example Chinggis Khan had many wives and concubines. Borte was his chief wife but others were not so important.

<sup>57</sup> This custom also is in Judaism.

<sup>58</sup> Ata Malik, 21; George, 27.

<sup>59</sup> Akbar Shah ( Vol. 3), 290.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 229.

<sup>61</sup> Ata Malik, 21; Leode, 11.

with their valuable personal possessions.<sup>62</sup> It is said that all the people whom they met by the way said to the dead body “Go, serve your lord in the other world”.<sup>63</sup>

According to Juvaini, It was the custom of the Mongols that when they attacked enemies, they killed all the people and burnt all their houses and stole their valuable objects like cattle and all precious things like gold, silver and stones. They made no excuses in killing anybody. They used to kill women, children, the old and young alike. In this environment, in the 12<sup>th</sup> century CE Chinggis Khan was born.<sup>64</sup>

## 2.2 EARLY LIFE OF CHINGGIS KHAN

The 13<sup>th</sup> century CE was the turning point for the Steppe people because their leader Chinggis Khan became a world conqueror. Chinggis Khan, whose original name was Temuchin, came from one of the Steppe nomadic tribes called Mongol. He became famous in the world because of his strong, organized military system. He successfully united all the scattered tribes like Mongols, Uighurs, Tartars, Naimans, Unggirats, Markits and Khitails. He also enforced strong discipline among his family members as well as his tribesmen.<sup>65</sup>

According to Chinese and Mongolian sources, Chinggis Khan was born in 1155 CE, a pig year in the animal circle.<sup>66</sup> His mother was Hoelun, who came from the Unggirat tribe. His father Yesugi was head of the Borgin clan of the Mongols. Yesugi named his son Temuchin.<sup>67</sup> When Temuchin was nine years old, he accompanied his father who arranged for him a 10 year-old bride, called Borte.<sup>68</sup> Having thus arranged for Temuchin’s betrothal, Yesugi returned to his own camp. On the way, the Tartars attacked him and he jumped from his horse. The Tartars

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<sup>62</sup> Bertold, 77.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> Ata Malik, 20-23.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 25.

<sup>66</sup> It is not possible to keep the exact date because the early people of the Steppe used to follow the date of the animal circle. Historian Rasid al-Din says it was 1155 because it was a pig year in the animal circle. In Chinese astrology, each individual personality is associated with an animal sign which followed 12 months (i.e. 1.Rat, 2.Ox, 3.Tiger, 4.Rabbit, 5.Dragon, 6.Snake, 7.Horse, 8.Sheep, 9.Monkey, 10.Rooster, 11.Dog and 12.Pig), which could mean 1155-1167.

<sup>67</sup> The name Temuchin is derived from the name Temur ‘iron’ which also means ‘blacksmith’. See in Ata Malik, 35; Urgunge, 56.

<sup>68</sup> Borte belongs to the Unggirat tribe and her father Dei Secher was a prominent member of the Unggirat tribe. Paul Ratchnevsky, 21.

convicted him and offered him a poisonous drink, from which he fell sick and shortly after died.<sup>69</sup>

In 1166-67 CE, at the age of 11, Temuchin became the chief of the family.<sup>70</sup> Without his father, it was a hard time for young Temuchin to maintain his family. He had three brothers and two step-brothers and a sister.<sup>71</sup> As Yesugi was the leader of the Borgigan clan, when he died, the people of the clan did not accept Temuchin's leadership because of his young age. Thus, Temuchin lost the hereditary political power and the political leadership customarily went to a different clan. Economically, his family survived by hunting and fishing. As they were a nomadic people, they had their own cattle, which were stolen several times by rival tribes, and Temuchin's life was often threatened. Figure 2.3 shows how much trouble Chinggis Khan suffered in his early life. For example, a youth named Bogorgu from the Arulat tribe stole all of their horses, but Temuchin managed to recapture them. Once, his wife Borte was kidnapped by the Markit tribe, but after a few years he bravely got her back. It was his fate to overcome all of these difficulties before becoming Chinggis Khan.<sup>72</sup>



Figure 2.3: Chinggis Khan's hardship in the Steppe environment<sup>73</sup>

From his childhood, Temuchin was physically very strong. According to Khwandamir, it is quoted that one day Temuchin dreamed that he had a sword in each

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<sup>69</sup> Urgunge, 59-60.

<sup>70</sup> According to the date of the animal circle, Chinggis Khan (Temuchin) was either 11 or 13 years old when his father died.

<sup>71</sup> Temuchin's own brothers were Qasar, Qachiun and Temuge and his sister's name was Temulun. His step brothers were named Begtar and Belgutai. See Urgunge, 56.

<sup>72</sup>Ibid., 74.

<sup>73</sup> Gaoalexander, (July 2008) "Quickie Film Review: Mongol" Below is the image at: [fastforwardrevue.wordpress.com](http://fastforwardrevue.wordpress.com) (accessed on 14<sup>th</sup> August 2011).

hand and when both hands were extended towards the East and the West, the tips of the swords touched both of the horizons. When he narrated the dream to his mother, she predicted that her son would shed blood. She also knew that at the time of his birth, Temuchin's fists were tightly closed, and when the fists were opened, there was frozen blood in them. From those events, the people also inferred that he would become a man who would shed blood.<sup>74</sup> They also used to say to his mother "that boy of yours has fire in his eyes and light in his face."<sup>75</sup> It indicated that the boy Temuchin was very active and intelligent. However, after the death of his father, he shouldered the responsibility as head of the family. Due to his physical strength he was an expert in hunting. In his early youth, he killed his half brother Begtar by shooting him with an arrow because Begtar stole a lark (a song bird) from him.<sup>76</sup>

Based on the background of the Mongols and Chinggis Khan's early life, it is clear that his early life helped him to build a strong personality due to the following reasons: his father was murdered by the Tartars, his wife (Borte) was kidnapped and many times he himself saved his own life from danger.<sup>77</sup> Because of this, he was extremely bold and was ready to overcome any kind of danger. In a number of books, it is quoted that before becoming a leader, he observed several problems in the society (i.e. the lack of an ideal ruler in the society, the constant fighting among the rulers and disobedience among themselves). Thus, he made a strong drive for discipline and unity.

### **2.3 UNIFICATION OF THE MONGOLS BY CHINGGIS KHAN**

Chinggis Khan and his predecessors came from one of the nomadic societies, which were divided into many tribes and confederations. Before the 13<sup>th</sup> century CE, the Naimans, Markits, Uighurs, Tartars and Keraits were more powerful than the Mongols, but the Mongol tribes under the leadership of Chinggis Khan (shown in Figure 2.4) always fought against them. Finally, in 1206 CE, he became superior over all of them. From the available literature we realized that four elements helped him to unite all the tribes under his control; alliance and friendship, warrior ability, adoption of new techniques and practices and super personality.

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<sup>74</sup>Khwandamir, 9

<sup>75</sup>Urgunge, 57; Rene, 98-200.

<sup>76</sup>Ibid., 66.

<sup>77</sup>Tora Estep, "The Emotional Intelligence of Genghis Khan, President and C.E.O, Mongolia Inc" *Training and Development*, (December, 2004).

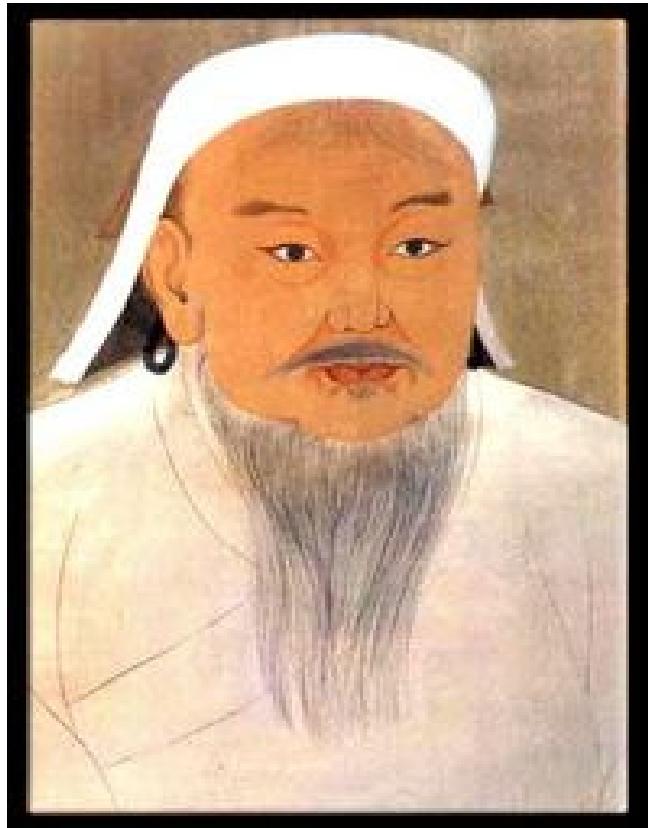


Figure 2.4: Chinggis Khan, the leader of Mongol-Tarar tribes<sup>78</sup>

### 2.3.1 Alliance and friendship

In his early life, strong friendships helped Chinggis Khan to increase his power. It was also the custom of the Mongols to make alliances with other tribes or with the same tribe. This friendship comes under three circumstances; *anda*, *quda* and *nokor*.<sup>79</sup> After his father's death Chinggis Khan realized the importance of friendship. He first made an ally of his father's *anda* (sworn brother or blood brother) Toghrul, who was famous in his clan as Ong Khan, who was also Khan of the Kerait or Qara-Khitai tribe.<sup>80</sup> After the death of his father, he always had the support of Ong Khan. Besides him, Chinggis Khan also got support from Jamuka who was his childhood friend as well as blood brother (*anda*). With them he spent a long time peacefully. Frequently, they renewed their brotherhood by swearing to love one another and exchanging gifts. For example, Jamuka gave Temuchin a roebuck's knucklebone, and in exchange

<sup>78</sup> Ibrahim Lone (2008). "Genghis Khan Meets Islam". <http://www.islam-watch.org/Ibrahim.Lone/Genghis-Khan-Meets-Islam.htm>. (accessed on 14<sup>th</sup> August 2011).

<sup>79</sup> Urgunge, 8.

<sup>80</sup> According to Rasid al-Din 's *Jamiul al Tawarikh*, there was a king among the Turks who had eight dark sons and because of their dark colour , they are called qara which means "black flesh" and Ong Khan was the ruler of that tribe. Ong Khan means the ruler of the country.

Chinggis Khan gave him (Jamuka) a copper (filled) knucklebone. They used to sleep together under one blanket and had an eternal attachment to one another. It was also a custom of the Mongols that those who had sworn brotherhood did not abandon each other, rather they were protectors of each other.<sup>81</sup>

This brotherhood made Chinggis Khan not only strong but also helped him to recapture his wife Borte from the Markit tribe. The secret history gave the full description of how Chinggis Khan was able to recapture his wife. He expressed sorrow to his sworn brother Jamuka by saying the following words:<sup>82</sup>

*The three Markits*

*Made my bed empty*

*Are we not one family?*

*How can we gain vengeance?*

*My heart is broken.*

*Are we not blood relatives?*

*How can we take revenge?*

Chinggis Khan sent the above message to his sworn brother Jamuka through his own brothers Qasar and Belgutei. Then Jamuka realized his feelings and helped him wholeheartedly to recapture Borte from the Markit tribe.

In the year 1179 CE, Jamuka set up camp together with 20,000 men. Besides Jamuka, Ong Khan and his brother Jaka Gambu also helped Chinggis Khan by offering their 20,000 vassals against the Markit tribe. Their joint campaign led to the recapture of Borte near the Onon River where the Markits lived. When the Markits knew of their forces, they hastily fled at night and from that place Borte was recaptured.<sup>83</sup>

Another important tie was *quda*, which means matrimonial alliance. Chinggis Khan made *quda* by making many matrimonial alliances. For example, he married his son Juchi with the daughter of Ong Khan; he also cemented his relationship by marrying his daughter with Arslang Khan. Chinggis Khan himself also married Yisugei Khatun, the daughter of the Tatar Yeke-Cheren.<sup>84</sup> Another friendship is

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<sup>81</sup> Urgunge, 95.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., 85.

<sup>83</sup> Urgunge, 85- 91.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., 130.

known as *nokor* which he used in his policy. For example, when he defeated the enemies, especially the neighboring tribes, he made them friends through *nokor*.<sup>85</sup>

### 2.3.2 Warrior ability

From the very beginning, Chinggis Khan was very strong, active and competitive, and he always defeated people in any type of competition like horse riding, running or fighting. Ong Khan's son Senggum became jealous of Chinggis Khan's growing power and his close relations with his father.<sup>86</sup> Senggun allegedly planned to kill Chinggis Khan but he was saved by Ong Khan. Some days later, Ong Khan became suspicious due to his son's intrigue against Chinggis Khan. Senggun thought that it was impossible to attack him suddenly and openly. Therefore, they (Senggun and his father Ong Khan) secretly planned to kill Chinggis Khan at dawn, while people were still sleeping. By doing this, they wanted to make themselves free from the horror. They made every preparation to execute their plan of a surprise attack on Chinggis Khan but he was saved by getting timely information from two youths named Kishlikh and Badai, who escaped from Ong Khan's service. They fled to Chinggis Khan and informed him that Ong Khan wanted to assassinate him secretly.<sup>87</sup> As a result, Chinggis Khan and his followers moved from that place. Following their plan, the enemy charged down on the tents of Chinggis Khan and found them empty. Then, Ong Khan set off with a large force to capture Chinggis Khan. Jamuka (Chinggis Khan's sworn brother), also joined in the expedition against Chinggis Khan. Finally, in 1203 CE, they confronted each other in battle, in which Chinggis Khan became victorious. Chinggis Khan won the battle and got much booty including daughters and wives as captives and Ong Khan himself was slain.<sup>88</sup>

At the end of the bloody war, Jamuka<sup>89</sup> and his friend took refugee with the Naimans and with the help of that tribe he rebelled against Chinggis Khan. At that time, Jamuka also wanted to be the ruler of the Mongol tribes and finally he succeeded, and was known as Gur Khan (universal ruler). After being elected as Gur

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<sup>85</sup> Michel, 147.

<sup>86</sup> Ata Malik, 37.

<sup>87</sup> Ata Malik, 37.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid., 36.

<sup>89</sup> Jamuka helped to recapture Borte (Chinggis Khan's wife). Their friendship lasted for almost two years (1179-1181). Chinggis Khan did not want to break the relationship, but Jamuka misunderstood him in a conflict. See Urgunge, 96-99.

Khan, Jamuka wanted to fight against Chinggis Khan. According to the *Secret History of the Mongols*, Chinggis Khan again offered his friendship to Jamuka, asking him to return to his side. It is said that once, Chinggis Khan killed men who opposed Jamuka, saying that he did not want disloyal men in his army. Although Chinggis Khan wanted Jamuka to reunite with him, but Jamuka always refused to make friendship by saying “There can only be one Sun in the sky”, and begged for a noble death. The custom of noble death was to die without spilling blood, which is granted by breaking the back. Thus, Jamuka was put to death without spilling his blood.<sup>90</sup>

At the beginning of the 13<sup>th</sup> century CE, the major powerful tribes around the Mongols were the Naimans to the west; to the north, near the Onon river were the Markits; to the south were the Tanguts and the Tartars were in the East near the valley of the Kerulen river.<sup>91</sup> Chinggis Khan from the Mongol tribe defeated all the other tribes. As mentioned above, in 1203 CE, he defeated Ong Khan (Toghrul), the ruler of the Kerite tribe. On many occasions, he defeated Naiman warriors as they were disloyal to him.<sup>92</sup>

The Tartars were his childhood enemies because they poisoned his father. According to the *Secret History of the Mongols*, “Chinggis Khan sent an emissary to tell Ong Khan that Tartars were the ones who destroyed his ancestors and father. Let us jointly attack the Tartar.”<sup>93</sup> Thus, with the help of Ong Khan, Chinggis Khan defeated the Tartars. He also defeated the Uighur Turks, who called their ruler *idi-qat* (Lord of Fortune). By observing Chinggis Khan’s warrior ability, the Uighurs made him master of Khitai.<sup>94</sup> In this way, Chinggis Khan defeated all the other tribes, who subsequently had no power to resist him, so he consequently became Khan.

It was a custom of the Mongol society that the man who ascends the throne of the Khanate would get the title of Khan. The title allowed the Khan to organize a great assembly called *quriltai* in Turkish. Chinggis Khan called his first *quriltai* in 1195 CE, but he was unsuccessful due to the disloyalty of the Markits.<sup>95</sup> In 1206 CE

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<sup>90</sup> Urgunge, 190.

<sup>91</sup> Jean-Paul Roux, *Chinggis Khan and the Mongol Empire* (Thames & Hudson, 2003), 16.

<sup>92</sup> Jeremiah Curtin, *The Mongols* (Cambridge, MA: Da Capo Press, 2003), 39-44.

<sup>93</sup> Urgunge, 108-118.

<sup>94</sup> Ata Malik, 44.

<sup>95</sup> *Quriltai* was a great assembly where all the important questions were discussed. This *quriltai* was conducted under the direction and the rule of Khan.

he called another *quriltai*, which was a success. In that assembly, a Mongol Saman named Tab-Tangri changed Temuchin's name to Chinggis Khan. That night Temchin also dreamed that God said to him "I have given the earth to you and your sons. Now I name you Chinggis Khan."<sup>96</sup> Since that grand assembly, all the tribes became subservient to Chinggis, but Taqtoa Beki, the leader of the Markit tribe, remained unfriendly to him. Taqtoa Beki and his son were anxious and wanted to attack Chinggis Khan. But Chinggis Khan was strong enough to defeat them. Thus, Chinggis Khan conquered all the surrounding neighboring areas. Afterwards, he controlled all the rulers by imposing on them his own rules and appointing all of them to various administrative positions in his empire.

### **2.3.3 Adoption of new techniques and practices**

To keep the peace in his society he continuously borrowed and adopted new techniques and good ideas from other tribes. For example, from the Markit tribe he took the idea of the guard system; from the Khitai and Naimans, he took the idea of a military system; and from the Uighur Turks, he adopted their writing system for Mongol children. According to Grousset:

Chinggis Khan took many advisers in his confidence: Uighur like Ta-Ta-tung-a, Muslims like Mahmood Yalavach and Khitan like Yelu Chu-tsai. Ta-Ta-tung-a who had performed the same function at the court of the last Naiman king, became his chancellor as well as tutor in Uighur writing to his sons. Mahmood Yalavach the first Mongol Governor of Transoxiana became his deputy to the Transoxiana population and the Khitan like Yelu Chu-tsai was chosen in giving his master some tinge of Chinese culture.<sup>97</sup>

### **2.3.4 Super personality**

In 1206 CE Chinggis Khan became Khan and all the people obeyed his sovereignty. But he did not want to merely enjoy his superiority; rather his aim was to make all the people strong like him. To achieve this, he divided several tasks among his sons and

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<sup>96</sup> In Turanian language, Chinggis Khan means "King of Kings." See Khwandamir, 9; Ata Malik, 26-29, 39; Jean-Paul, 25.

<sup>97</sup> Rene, 248-250.

people from the other tribes.<sup>98</sup> Among his four sons, his eldest son Juchi was assigned hunting and chasing, which is a great sport with the Mongols and held in high esteem by them. Another son Chagtaï took the task of administration and law. He selected another son Ogadai for diplomacy and for counsel and administration of the kingdom. His son Tolui took the task of the command and organization of troops and equipment of armies. He also gave practical lessons on unity to his sons. Their co-operation helped him to advance farther.<sup>99</sup>

Besides unity in his own family, he also united all the tribes. He encouraged mingling with the people by organizing military training with iron discipline and hardship. In this way, he was able to unite his family members as well as all the Mongol Tartar tribes. After uniting them, he wanted to make them prosperous by engaging them in trade. From the tenth century onwards, the caravan trade was very strong and it penetrated Khorasan as well as Eurasia under Mongol supervision. From those days onwards, the Mongol caravan trade used to go into neighboring territories, particularly in Khorasan.<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>98</sup>Rene, 253.

<sup>99</sup>Ata Malik, 40.

<sup>100</sup>B.F. Manz, 28.

## CHAPTER 3

### KHORASAN IN MUSLIM HISTORY

#### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

The name Khorasan is derived from the Persian “Khor” (Sun) and “Asan” (the place of rising), hence it means the place of the rising sun. The Amu Darya separated Khorasan on one side from the Haytal on the other. The actual boundary of Khorasan prior to the advent of Islam is not clearly stated. Only the land was famous under the name of powerful tribes such as Achaemenids, Persians, Kushans and Turks.<sup>101</sup> During the period of the Khusans, the merchant class had been considerably enriched by the caravan trade with China and other countries. At that particular time there was no powerful ruler in Khorasan, and thus the region was divided into many principalities. The boundary of Khorasan was thus a combined territory in present-day Iran, Afghanistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan (see Figure 3.1). It included several major Muslim cities like Nishapur, Tus, Herat, Balkh, Kabul, Ghazni, Merv, Samarqand, Bukhara and Khiva. However, the name Khorasan was first used during the Sassanian era (224-651 CE).<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>101</sup> W. Barthold, *An Historical Geography...* 20; Helen Loveday, 209.

<sup>102</sup> S. A. Hasan, “The Expansion of Islam into Central Asia and the Early Turco- Arab Contracts” (1970), *Journal of Islamic Culture*, 44 (1), 1-8; D.S. Rechards (ed), *Islamic Civilization 950-1150*. (Oxford: Bruno Cassirer (Publishers) Ltd. 1973), 93-100; Vladimir Minorsky, *Hudud al-'alam - The Regions of the World : a Persian Geography*, 372 A.H.-982 A.D. (London, W.C: E.J.W. Luzac & Company Ltd, 1970), 102-122.



Figure 3.1: Present day Khorasan<sup>103</sup>

### 3.1. 1 Early History of Khorasan

The early history of Khorasan began with its inclusion in the Achaemenid Empire (675-330 BCE) of Cyrus the Great in the 6<sup>th</sup> century BCE.<sup>104</sup> Besides this, other dynasties, including the Macedonians (336-30 BCE), Seleucids (323-63 BCE), Parthians (247 BCE-224 CE), Kushans (175 BCE-127 CE) and finally Sassanids (224-651 CE) ruled that region. Among them, Achaemenes first ruled in the region of Khorasan. He was the founder of the Achaemenid Empire (648-330 BCE). After his death (640 BCE), the region was ruled by his progeny until Cyrus II (r. 559-529 BCE), who took the title Cyrus the Great. He controlled a vast land spanning three continents (i.e. Asia, Africa and Europe).<sup>105</sup> Figure 3.2 shows all the three continents including Khorasan under the Achaemenid Empire. This Empire was very strong politically as well as economically, and all the kings minted gold and silver coins. The people of that time spoke Aramaic and Persian, and the state religion was

<sup>103</sup> *Khorasan* (n.d.) : [wup-forum.com/viewtopic.php?f=33&t=11136](http://wup-forum.com/viewtopic.php?f=33&t=11136) (accessed on 14<sup>th</sup> September 2011).

<sup>104</sup> Samuel Adrian, 35-39.

<sup>105</sup> Between 545 to 539 BCE, Cyrus the Great controlled all the tribes of Central Asia, and in 538 BCE he returned with his men to Mesopotamia to secure the capital Babylonian. From Babylonian he controlled all the Greek cities along to the coast of Asai minor. See Michael Axworthy, 16.

Zoroastrianism.<sup>106</sup> Cyrus the Great was succeeded by his son Cambyses II (r. 529-522 BCE). Then Darius I came into power and the region was subsequently ruled by him.<sup>107</sup> In 521 BCE, he conquered all the cities including Elam, Media and Babylon. In 518 BCE, like Cyrus the Great, he took the title Darius the Great. He built an enormous palace in his hometown, which was known as Persepolis (city of Persians).<sup>108</sup>



Figure 3.2: Ancient Khorasan under the Achaemenid Empire<sup>109</sup>

After the fall of Darius, Khorasan became a part of the Macedonian Empire. The most famous Macedonian emperor was Alexander the Great (r. 331-323 BCE), who conquered much of the known world, including the land of Khorasan. First, in 334 BCE, he defeated the Persian army at the Granicus River and conquered many towns in Persia. In the battle of Issus (333 BCE), for the second time he defeated Darius III (336-331 BCE), and finally for the third time in 331 BCE, whereupon he

<sup>106</sup>W. Barthold, *An Historical Geography* ....16; Muhammad A. Dandemaev, & Vladimir G Lukonin, *The Culture and Social Institutions of Ancient Iran* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 323.

<sup>107</sup> Michael, 17.

<sup>108</sup>Muhammad A. Dandemaev, 245.

<sup>109</sup> *Achaemenid Empire* (n.d.). [withfriendship.com/.../achaemenid-empire.php](http://withfriendship.com/.../achaemenid-empire.php) (accessed on 19<sup>th</sup> September 2011).

conquered the whole land of Persia including Khorasan (see Figure 3.3). Alexander died childless, and thus his territory was divided into many provinces.<sup>110</sup>



Figure 3.3: The region conquered by Alexander the Great<sup>111</sup>

Before Alexander's death, Seleucus Nicator (312-281 BCE) was the commander-in chief of one of his provinces. In 323 BCE, Seleucus laid the foundations of the Babylonian empire and ruled the entire eastern part of Alexander's empire. In history, his empire was known as the Seleucid Empire (323-63 BC). During this period, the region of Khorasan including its two cities, Sogdiana and Bactria (Balkh) became independent.<sup>112</sup>

After Selucus Nicator's death in 281 BCE, the Parthian tribe established their supremacy in Khorasan. The famous ruler was Arsaces I (247-211 BCE) who led the tribe to control the region of Khorasan. The Parthians established a powerful empire (247 BCE-224 CE) and ruled successfully for more than four centuries. However, as they had nomadic tendencies, they did not hold any strong, centralised culture of their

<sup>110</sup> Helen Loveday, 34-60.

<sup>111</sup> Shirley J. Rollinson (1999). *The Empire of Alexander the Great*, [www.drshirley.org/geog/geog14.html](http://www.drshirley.org/geog/geog14.html) (accessed on 19<sup>th</sup> September 2011).

<sup>112</sup> Michael, 28-32.

own,<sup>113</sup> and the Saka, who were an ancient Persian people, subjugated the Parthians. In 175 BCE, the Kushans (175 BCE-127 CE) penetrated the region and propagated Buddhist religion and culture. Buddhism spread through Khorasanian monks to China and Japan. In the western region they founded the famous Buddhist temple known as “Azar-bargin Mehr”. Although Buddhism spread in that time, most Khorasanians remained Zoroastrian. During the first and early second centuries CE, the Kushans expanded rapidly across the northern part of India and reached Benaras (Varanasi).<sup>114</sup> Finally, in 441 CE, the Huns conquered Khorasan and captured power from the Kushans. The most famous king in the history of the Huns was Attila (434-453 CE). After his death, the whole empire of the Huns was shared between Attila’s sons. Thus, the Hun empire became weakened and the Sassanians subsequently came to power.<sup>115</sup> In 224 CE, after the fall of the Parthian Empire, Ardashir I, a great warrior, founded the Sassanid dynasty (224-651 CE). For a century, Turks also dominated the land of Khorasan as nomads. In 559 CE the Huns were demolished by the combined force of the Turks and Sassanians.<sup>116</sup> Thus, the Sassanian kings’ power was enhanced by the support of the Turks.<sup>117</sup> They maintained their sovereignty over Sogdiana and the middle Oxus basin by frequent expeditions.<sup>118</sup> The last Sassanian king was Yezdigird III (634-642 CE), during whose reign Islam entered the region. Before Islam, the main religion of the Sassanians was Zoroastrianism. The language of the Sassanians was Pahlavi and Persian. From the second half of the 7<sup>th</sup> century CE, Islam spread throughout the entire region, and Khorasan became a key strategic location in the Islamic world.<sup>119</sup>

### 3.2 RISE OF ISLAM IN KHORASAN

The successful campaign of the Muslims began in the Persian region in 14 AH/635 CE during the battle of Qadisiyah. During the Caliphate of Umar Ibn al-Khattab (634-644 CE), Muslims defeated Yezdigird III, the last Sassanian king, in the battle of

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<sup>113</sup> Ibid.

<sup>114</sup> H.A.R. Gibb, 15.

<sup>115</sup> Sinor Denis (ed), *The Cambridge History of Early Inner Asia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 189-200; Helen Loveday, 42; H. A. R. Gibb, 15.

<sup>116</sup> Helen Loveday, 45.

<sup>117</sup> The Turks were the five western tribes (Nu-she-pi), who became independent after the break up of the great Khanate circa 582 CE.

<sup>118</sup> H.A.R.Gibb, 15.

<sup>119</sup> Helen Loveday, 44-48.

Nihayand in 21AH/642 CE.<sup>120</sup> In 22AH/643 CE Caliph Umar appointed Ahnaf Ibn Qais to conquer Khorasan. Ahnaf immediately marched towards Marv and captured the whole territory from Nishapur to Tukharistan. During the Caliphate of Uthman (644-656 CE), Abdullah Ibn Amir conquered the region of Transoxiana.<sup>121</sup> According to al-Baladhuri, Ibn Amir conquered the territory on the side of the river Oxus, but when he came into contact with the people on the other side of the river, they requested him to make a treaty with them. Al-Baladhuri also narrated that he crossed the river Oxus and went from place to place to preach Islam.<sup>122</sup> In 651 CE, Ibn Amir appointed Ziyad Ibn Abu Sufian as his deputy in Basrah and he himself advanced towards Khorasan. Between 651-655 CE, Ibn Amir occupied Balkh, Marv, Nishapur and Herat.<sup>123</sup> He sent Ahnaf Ibn-Qais to conquer Kuhistan, and thus the Muslims captured all the districts of Nishapur. According to Baladhuri, Ibn Amir sent al Aswad Ibn Kulthum al-Adawi to Nishapur to preach Islam there, but the Muslims were seized and killed. Thus, Muslims suffered at the beginning of their conquest.<sup>124</sup>

Ibn Amir sent al Ahnaf Ibn-Qais towards Tukharistan, and he advanced to Marv-al-Rudh and besieged its inhabitants. They resisted fiercely, but the Marjuban (Turkish local ruler) wanted to make peace with Ahnaf Ibn-Qais. Then he (Ahnaf Ibn-Qais) went to Turkistan and made peace with them by paying 60,000 dirhams.<sup>125</sup> According to Abu Ubaida, al-Ahnaf fought a number of severe battles for Marv-al-Rudh and successfully conquered that region in 653 CE. Meanwhile, Ahnaf Ibn-Qais captured Talaqan and Fariyab peacefully. At this moment Ibn Amir appointed Qais Ibn Al-Hitham as his deputy. Meanwhile Qais Ibn Al-Hitham moved towards Tukharistan, where he was able to make peace with the people except with the people of Siminjan. At that time Siminjan was ruled by Rub-Khan, a Turkish prince. Soon Qais conquered Siminjan peacefully.<sup>126</sup>

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<sup>120</sup> M.A. Shaban, *The Abbasid Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), 16.

<sup>121</sup> Abbas Ahmed Ibn-Jabir al- Baladhuri, *Kitab Futuh al-Buldan* (Trans Philip K. Hitti) *The Origin of the Islamic State* (vol. II) (New York: AMS Press, 1969), 159; H.A.R.Gibb, 17; S.A. Hasan, “The Expansion of Islam into Central Asia and the Early Turco- Arab Contracts” (1970), *Journal of Islamic Culture*, 44 (1), 2; Ira M. Lapidus, *A History of Islamic Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 33; Vladimir Minorsky, 84.

<sup>122</sup> Al- Baladhuri (vol.II), 172.

<sup>123</sup> M.A. Shaban, 18-22.

<sup>124</sup> Al- Baladhuri (vol.II), 160.

<sup>125</sup> For 600,000 dirhams, according to al Madani.

<sup>126</sup> M.A. Shaban, 25-26.

During the Caliphate of Ali Ibn Abu Talib (656-661 CE), the Marjuban of Marv visited Kufa to pay homage to the Caliph. Caliph Ali requested that the dihqans pay the Jizya, but the people of Khorasan refused.<sup>127</sup> After Ali's assassination, Muawiyah Ibn Abu Sufian (661-680 CE) became the second caliph of the Umayyad dynasty (661-750).<sup>128</sup> The new Caliph Muawiyah appointed Qais Ibn al-Hitham as leader of Khorasan. He collected taxes from the people who observed the treaty. During the reign of Muawiyah, the people of Badghis, Herat, Balkh and many other cities of Khorasan broke their pledges of loyalty and rebelled against the governor, Qais Ibn al-Hitham. However, after many efforts, in 651-653 CE, Qais subdued and conquered Herat and Marv. In 665 CE, Rabi Ibn-ziyad al-Harith became the governor of Khorasan and conquered Balkh. In 667 CE, the Arabs finally crossed the Oxus and made a series of annual raids on Balkh, Samarkand and other cities of Transoxiana. In 670 CE, thousands of Arab families were moved from Bashrah and Kufah to Khorasan. In 675 CE, Said Ibn Uthman Ibn Affan became governor of Khorasan.<sup>129</sup> In 680 CE, the new Caliph Yazid Ibn Muawiya (680-683 CE) appointed Salm Ibn Ziyad as governor. Salm was the most popular governor of Khorasan. It is said that 20,000 babies were named after him. Salm appointed Abdullah Ibn Khazim as his successor. In the meantime, Marwan II (683-683 CE) and Abd-al-Malik (685-705 CE) became Umayyad Caliphs.<sup>130</sup>

Finally, in 705 CE during the reign of Caliph Walid I (705-715 CE), Hajaj Ibn Yusuf became the ruler of Khorasan. In that year, Hajaj Ibn Yusuf appointed Qutaiba Ibn Muslim al-Bahili as a governor of Khorasan.<sup>131</sup> In 706 CE, Qutaiba marched towards Bukhara, but the Turks surrounded the Muslims and the fighting continued for four months. However, through a peace deal the Muslims were able to end the war. In 707 CE, the inhabitants of Safad and Farghana revolted and invited a Chinese

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<sup>127</sup> S.A. Hasan, "The Expansion of Islam into Central Asia and the Early Turco- Arab Contracts" (1970), *Journal of Islamic Culture*, 44 (1), 6.

<sup>128</sup> S.A. Hasan, "A Survey of the Expansion of Islam into Central Asia during the Umayyad Caliphate" (1970), *Journal of Islamic Culture*, 44 (3), 166; Kausar Ali. *A Study of Islamic History* (Delhi:Idarah-I Adabiyat-I, 1950), 57-159;

<sup>129</sup> Ibid., 165-170; Ira M, 41.

<sup>130</sup> M.A. Shaban, 28; Al- Baladhuri, (vol-II), 169; S. A. Hasan, "A Survey of the Expansion of Islam into Central Asia during the Umayyad Caliphate" (1970), *Journal of Islamic Culture*, 44 (3), 165-170; Kausar Ali, 168-175; W Barthold (ed), *Four Studies on the History of Central Asia* (London: E. J. Brill, 1962), 8.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid., 63; J. J. Saunders, *A History of Medieval Islam* (Routledge: London and New York, 1990), 88.

prince, who had mustered a huge army of 200,000 men, to be their leader. They came to fight with the Muslim armies but Qutaiba defeated them.<sup>132</sup>

In 708 CE, the rulers of Bukhara, Kush, Nasf and Safad jointly rebelled, but were again defeated by the Muslim forces. Qutaiba sent Hiyyan Ibn Nabati (a powerful leader) to Turqun to confirm a peace deal in lieu of himself, to ensure the safety of his kingdom. Turqun agreed to pay an annual tribute of 200,000 dirhams and a similar tribute was received from Samarqand and Bukhara.<sup>133</sup> In 709 CE, after many efforts, Qutaiba conquered the city of Bukhara. He brought 50,000 Arab families to settle in and around Bukhara. He built two mosques in Khorasan, one of which is known as 'Masjid Qutaiba'. In 711, Ratbeel, the Turkish chief, intended to revolt but after a discussion with Qutaiba he begged for peace and paid the Jizya. In 712 CE, Qutaiba conquered the region of Khwarizm, where the local kings agreed to pay the required taxes. Then Qutaiba returned to his country.<sup>134</sup> During the Khorasan campaign of Qutaiba, the inhabitants of Safad rebelled and expelled Qutaiba's governor. On hearing this, Qutaiba and his army rushed towards Safad and defeated them. In 713 CE, the inhabitants of Sash revolted against the Muslims. Qutaiba asked the ruler of Bukhara, Kush, Nasf and Khwarizm for help. All the rulers responded to Qutaiba's request and provided 10,000 soldiers for him. Finally, in 714 CE Sash was conquered by Qutaiba. In the same year, Hajaj Ibn Yusuf died. At that time, Muslims conquered all the territories from Kashgar in Turkistan to the eastern part of China.<sup>135</sup>

During the rule of Caliph Umar Ibn Abdul Aziz (717-720 CE), many people accepted Islam from Khorasan and the surrounding territories. During his reign there was widespread peace and prosperity, and many schools, hospitals and new roads were built, among other public works. Islam progressed steadily, largely due to the Caliph's beneficent rule. He abolished the practice of taking Jizya and Kharaj from new Muslims.<sup>136</sup>

After Umar II, Yazid Ibn Abd al-Malik (720-723 CE) became Caliph, then Hisham Ibn Abdul Malik (723-743 CE) ascended and gave the governorship of

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<sup>132</sup> M.A. Shaban, 70; Gibb, 48-53; Roxanne Marcotte, "Eastern Iran and the Emergence of New Persian (Dari)" (1998), *Journal of Hamdard Islamicus*, 21 (2), 63; Najeebabadi (Vol. 2), 178.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid., 65.

<sup>134</sup> Ibid., 69; H.A.R. Gibb, 42-43.

<sup>135</sup> Kausar Ali, 179; Marcotte, Roxanne, "Eastern Iran and the Emergence of New Persian (Dari)" (1998), *Journal of Hamdard Islamicus*, 21 (2), 63-76; Akhbar Shah, 198.

<sup>136</sup> Ibid., 185-190; M.A. Shaban, 86-92.

Khorasan to the strong leader Asad Ibn Abdullah. However he was subsequently removed due to his harsh behaviour. When Caliph Hisham knew about his nature, he sent Ashras Ibn Abdullah Aslami as the new governor of Khorasan. Ashras worked hard to promote Islam and to bring peace in that region. Because of his generosity, a large number of people accepted Islam.<sup>137</sup>

As many non-Muslims as well as non-Arabs converted to Islam, they worked hard to get equal positions. In this situation, many Umayyad Caliphs were interested to take Jizya from the new Muslims, which was not an Islamic practice. Many Turks also accepted Islam. Thus the newly converted Muslims in Khorasan, including the Turks, were frustrated with Umayyad rule. In this turmoil, in 738 CE, Caliph Hisham appointed Nasr Ibn Sayyar (737-748 CE) as the governor of Khorasan. He was the last Umayyad governor of Khorasan. He introduced Islamic principles and practices throughout the region. He was very intelligent and worked for Muslim society as a reformer. During his time, Jews and Christians lived peacefully. They used to pay Jizya where the Muslims and the Mawali used to pay Kharaj. Thus, all the people in Khorasan enjoyed a peaceful life.<sup>138</sup> Because of his generosity, many leaders of various tribes were opposed to him. The most famous was Juday-al Kirmani, the leader of the Azd tribe. Al-Kirmani was a powerful military leader whose tribe had enjoyed many successes. In 747 CE, Nasr Ibn Sayyar and al-Kirmani camped facing one another outside Marv. In this situation, another tribe known as Hashimiyyah arose, whose leader was Abu Muslim. Al-Kirmani was assassinated, and Kirmani's son Ali Kirmani and Abu Muslim claimed that Nasr Ibn Sayyar had a hand in the murder. All of the people (i.e the Yemenis, the Azd (Ali Kirmani's supporter) and Hashimians) supported Abu Muslim, the young military leader. Because of their confederacy against him, Nasr Ibn Sayyar abandoned the city of Marv.<sup>139</sup>

Marwan Ibn Mohammad (744-750 CE) became the new Caliph. He was also the last Caliph of the Umayyad dynasty. He again appointed Nasr Ibn Sayyar as a governor of Khorasan. Nasr Ibn Sayyar worked hard to establish peace in the region, but the rising powers were so powerful that the Umayyad dynasty could not endure for long. There were many complex problems in society, such as the nascent Shia-Sunni

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<sup>137</sup>Ibid., Akhbar Shah (vol-II), 194-210.

<sup>138</sup>Kausar Ali, 195; Abu Jafar Muhammad Ibn Jarir. Al- Tabari, *The History of al-Tabari [Tarikh al-rusul wal-muluk]* vol. xxvi, *The Wanning of the Ummayad Khaliphate* (State University of New York Press, 1989), 24-35.

<sup>139</sup> M.A. Shaban, 127-129.

sectarianism, the influence of various rising powers (i.e. Kharajit, Shia and Abbasid), jealousy, civil war for nobility, luxuries, the struggle for equal status of the *Mawali* (new Muslims), and non-Islamic practices like taking Kharaj and Jizya from new Muslims - all of these factors led to the downfall of the Umayyads. The entire period of the last Umayyad Caliph's reign was a period of fear. Finally, the rising powers, particularly Abu Muslim's campaign, abolished the Umayyad powers and policies.<sup>140</sup>

However, the Umayyad period was a glorious period in Islam, when the Caliphate was laid on firm foundations. During this period, Islam spread in many parts of Asia, Africa and Europe. Besides Khorasan, it also expanded in a vast territory from the borders of China and the Indus valley in the East to the shores of the Atlantic Ocean and beyond the Pyrenees Mountains.<sup>141</sup>

As Islam spread outside Arabia and many people accepted Islam, the new Muslims such as the Turks, the Burmakids, the Persians and the Khorasanians were intelligent and powerful and thus wanted a hand in the affairs of Islam. At that time, Abu Muslim Khorasani (700-755 CE) was the most powerful and famous military leader in Khorasan. Keeping the volatile situation of Khorasanians under the Umayyads, he took advantage and raised the banner of revolution by claiming that the Abbasids were the true successors of the Prophet Muhammad's (pbuh) family. Due to his support, the Umayyads were defeated. In 750 CE Marwan II, the last Umayyad Caliph, was killed by al-Abbas, who then ascended to the Caliphate, assuming the title Abul Abbas al-Saffa (750-775 CE).<sup>142</sup> In the same year, Abu Muslim was given the governorship of Khorasan. Abu Jafar al-Mansur (754-775 CE), the second Abbasid Caliph, was suspicious of Abu Muslim's growing power and popularity, so he invited him to the court and ordered him to be killed. Thus, al-Mansur ended the possibility of losing the province of Khorasan to the governor.<sup>143</sup>

The Abbasid Caliphs followed a liberal policy and gave high positions like governor general, military officer, qadi etc. to non-Arabs, particularly to the Khorasanians. As Khorasan has a strategic geographical location, under the Abbasids

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<sup>140</sup> M.A. Shaban, 136-137; Kausar Ali, 201-209.

<sup>141</sup> Ahmad Elyas Hussian, *History of the Ummah: Abbasid Dynasty 132-656A.H.* (Kuala Lumpur: Dar Atajidid, 2005), 7.

<sup>142</sup> G.R. Hawting, *The First Dynasty of Islam* (London: Routledge, Tailor& Francis Group, 2000), 110.

<sup>143</sup> Kausar Ali, 229-230; Farouk Omar, "The Nature of the Iranian Revolution the Early Abbasid Period" (1974), *Journal of Islamic Culture*, 48 (1), 1-9; John Alden Williams, *Al-Tabari: The Early Abbasid Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 10-26.

it attracted a lot of attention from the Caliphs. Furthermore, it also produced enormous revenue for the Caliphate. Due to the enormous revenues, Caliph al-Mansur built the gate of Khorasan (Bab Khorasan), known as Madina al-Mansur, the city of Mansur.<sup>144</sup>

The high point of the Abbasid period is considered to begin with the reign of Harun al-Rasid (786-809 CE) and his son al-Mamun (813-833 CE). Harun al-Rasid was the founder of Bait al-Hiqmah, the famous Abbasid library. Hundreds of libraries were built throughout the Muslim world, particularly in Khorasan.<sup>145</sup> During Harun al-Rasid's period, writers and notables wrote many books. Among them, the most famous is the fictional '1001 Nights' (also called 'The Arabian Nights'), which was created by a courtier at the court of Harun. The Bait al-Hiqmah was promoted by al-Mamun. He invited scholars from all around the world and appointed them to translate books on philosophy, medicine, chemistry, science, mathematics and other related scientific disciplines. Due to his personal interest in philosophy, he even asked European rulers to send the ancient books of the Greeks for translation.<sup>146</sup>

After the watershed of Al-Mamun's reign, the later Abbasid rulers became weak and involved in civil war and luxuries. Thus, from the 9<sup>th</sup> century onwards, Abbasid rule weakened and gave rise to a number of decentralised states in Khorasan; then a number of independent Muslim dynasties like the Tahirids (821-873 CE), the Saffarids (867-903 CE), the Samanids (875-1005 CE), the Ghaznawids (977-1186 CE) the Seljuks (1037-1192 CE), Ghurids (1149-1212 CE) and Khwarismis (1077-1231 CE) came into power in the vast region of Khorasan.<sup>147</sup>

### 3.2.1 The Tahirids (821-873 CE)

This dynasty was founded by Tahir Ibn Husain in 821 CE, during the caliphate of the Abbasid Caliph al Mamun al-Rasid. During the civil war between the Caliph al-Mamun and al-Amin, Tahir Ibn Husain (821-822 CE) helped al-Mamun to gain power by replacing his brother al Amin. Due to this, Tahir was rewarded with the governorship of the eastern part of Khorasan, and he soon became very powerful and

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<sup>144</sup> Ahmad Elyas, 20.

<sup>145</sup> Olga Pinto, "The Libraries of the Arab During the Time of Abbasids" (1929), *Journal of Islamic Culture*, 3 (2), 213-248; Ehsanul Karim, *Muslim History and Civilization* (A.S. Noordeen, 2008), 85.

<sup>146</sup> Kausar Ali, 254-255.

<sup>147</sup> Jurji Zayadan, *History of Islamic Civilization: Umayyads and Abbasids* (New Delhi: Kitab Bhavan, 1994), 239-242; J.J. Saunders, 106-118, 140-151.

autonomous.<sup>148</sup> Due to his growing power, Caliph Mamun became suspicious, and in 822 CE Tahir discontinued mentioning the Caliph al-Mamun's name in the Friday sermon (khutba), which was considered an act of rebellion. Unfortunately, the next day, Tahir was found dead in his bedchamber. The Caliph al-Mamun then nominated Tahir's son Talha (822-828 CE) as a governor of Khorasan, and thus the region became independent.<sup>149</sup>

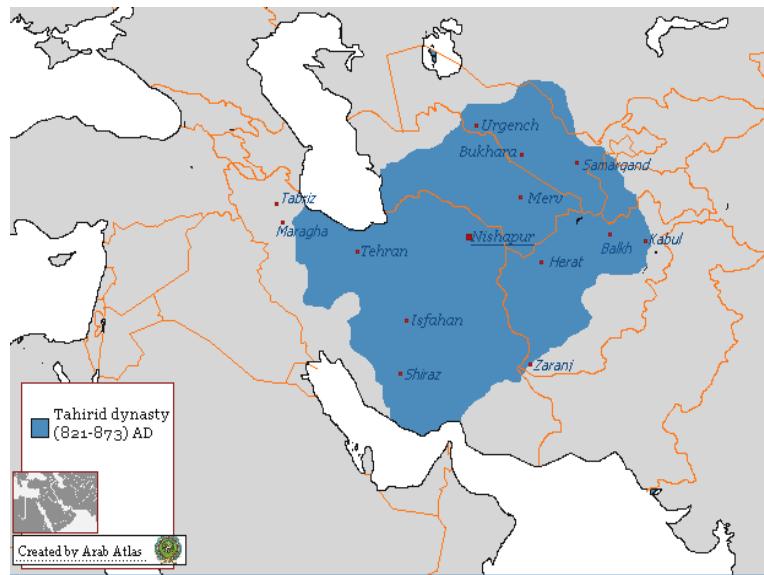


Figure 3.4: Tahirid dynasty<sup>150</sup>

The Tahirid capital was moved from Marv to Nishapur (see Figure 3.4).<sup>151</sup> Although they became independent, they made a regular payment of tribute to the Abbasid caliphate. They were Sunni Muslims and they were also highly educated. They practiced Arabic culture and literature.<sup>152</sup> The dynasty later became weak, and thus the increasingly powerful Saffarids captured Nishapur and overthrew the Tahirid ascendancy.<sup>153</sup>

<sup>148</sup> Akhbar Shah, (Vol-2), 420.

<sup>149</sup> Ibid., 421-222; J.J. Saunders, 118.

<sup>150</sup> *Tahirid Dynasty 821 - 873 (AD)* (From Wikipedia) [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tahirid\\_dynasty](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tahirid_dynasty) (accessed on 19<sup>th</sup> September 2011).

<sup>151</sup> In the 9<sup>th</sup> century, Nishapur was the capital of the Tahirid and Saffarid dynasties. During the Tahirid period, culturally and economically it became developed. In the 12<sup>th</sup> century, it was the principal city of the capital of Khorasan and one of the great centers of learning of the East. See Paul Whetley, *The Places where men Pray Together* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2001), 305-308.

<sup>152</sup> Clifford Edmund Bosworth, *The Medieval History of Iran, Afghanistan and Central Asia* (London: Variorum Reprints, 1977), 103.

<sup>153</sup> Muhammad Nazim, *The Life and Times of Sultan Mahmud of Ghazna* (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1971), 21.

### 3.2.2 The Saffarids (867-903 CE)

Yaqub Ibn Laith al-Saffer (867-879 CE) was the first and most important ruler of the Saffarid dynasty. His native village was Qarnin in Sistan. He adopted the profession of a ‘Saffar’, a brass worker.<sup>154</sup> In his early life, he was so trustworthy that he got support from many people. He was a far-sighted man and did not live a luxurious or sedentary life. His political career began in 851 CE when he defeated Salih Ibn Nadir, the Tahirid governor of Sistan. In 873 CE, he finally defeated Muhammad Ibn Tahir (863-873 CE), the last Tahirid ruler, and consolidated power all over the land. Thus, before his death, his territory extended to Ghazna, Sistan, Zabulistan, Gardiz, Herat, Balkh and Bamian.<sup>155</sup>

After his death, his brother Amar Ibn Laith (879-901 CE) came to the throne. He was not as strong as Yaqub. In 900 CE, he was defeated by Ismail Ibn Ahmed, the ruler of the Samanids. Thus, this dynasty became weakened. After him, his grandson Tahir Ibn Muhammad Ibn Amar (901-908 CE) came to the throne. In 905 CE, Subkari, a slave of Amar Ibn Laith revolted against him and kept him in prison in Baghdad. He was succeeded by Muhammad Ibn Ali Ibn Laith (910-912 CE). The Samanid ruler Ahmed Ibn Ismail defeated him in 911 CE and sent him to prison in Baghdad and annexed Sistan. From that time, Sistan became part of the Samanid Empire. After that the Saffarids were also aided by the help of the Samanids through matrimonial alliance. Amir Nasr Ibn Ahmed, the Samanid ruler, married a princess of his own house to Abu Jafar Ahmad Ibn Muhammad, the Saffarid ruler. After Ahmed’s death, his son Khalaf Ibn Ahmed (963-1003 CE) was the last ruler of this dynasty, and he ruled until the conquest by Mahmud Ghaznavi. However, Khalaf also was a powerful ruler. His capital was Zaranj. He promoted Persian culture and Arabic literature, and re-established the use of the Persian language in official correspondence.<sup>156</sup>

### 3.2.3 The Samanids (819-1005 CE)

Saman i-Khuda (819-864 CE), the founder of the Samanids, converted to Islam during the reign of the Abbasid Caliph al-Mamun, who had a favorable attitude toward

<sup>154</sup> Muhammad Nazim, 186; Akhbar Shah, 330; Jurji, 240.

<sup>155</sup> H.U. Rahman, *A Chronology of Islamic History: 570-10000 CE* (London: Ta-Ha Publishers Limited, 1999), 175.

<sup>156</sup> Muhammad Nazim, 186-189; Akhbar Shah, 331.

Saman Khuda and his progeny. Due to this support they were loyal to the Abbasids. Asad (Saman Khuda's eldest son) had four sons, Abu Muhammad Nuh, Abu Nasr Ahmed, Abul Abbas Yahya and Abul Fadl Ilyas,<sup>157</sup> who were each assigned the governance of different provinces of Khorasan for their faithful service under al-Mamun. Thus they progressed in different places in Khorasan. In 873 CE, Abul Hasan Nasr Ibn Ahmed (Nasr I, 864-892 CE) successfully overthrew the Tahirids and captured their lands. After his death in 900 CE, his brother Ismail Ibn Ahmed (892-907 CE) defeated Amar Ibn Laith, the Saffarid ruler at Balkh and annexed Khorasan.

<sup>158</sup>

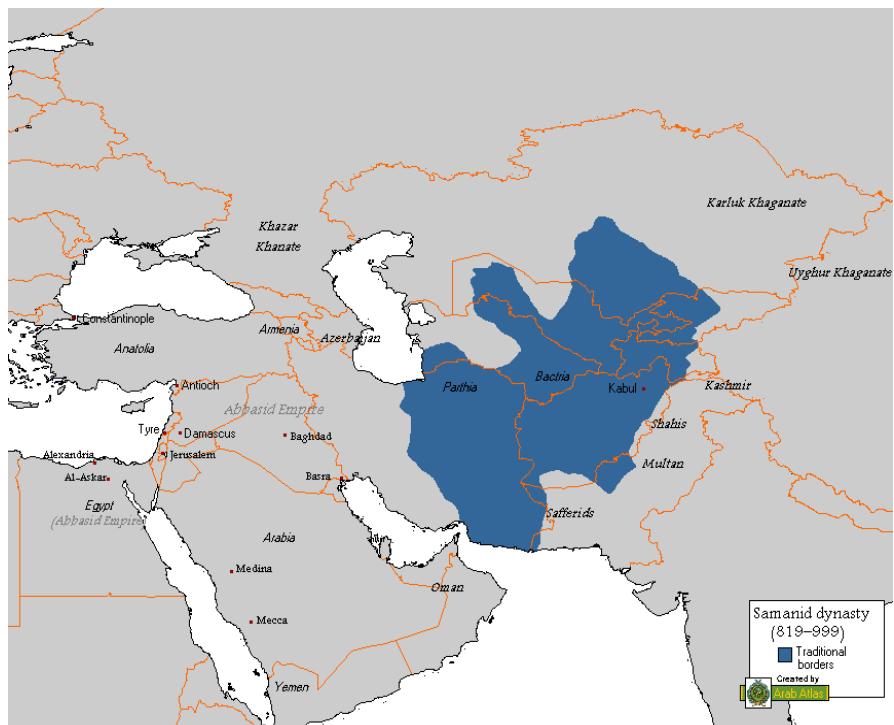


Figure 3.5: Samanid dynasty<sup>159</sup>

The Samanids reached the peak of their power under Abul Hasan Nasr II (914-943 CE). During his reign, the Samanids consolidated their territory from Khorasan to Iraq in the west, to the borders of India in the east and from Turkistan in the north, to the Persian Gulf in the south. Besides political power, his region was very

<sup>157</sup>Ibid., 180-183.

<sup>158</sup>Akhbar Shah, 332.

<sup>159</sup> Samanid Dynasty (Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia) [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Samanids](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Samanids), viewed on 19 September 2011.

prosperous.<sup>160</sup> The people used gold and silver coins and made a great learning centre where they produced art, architecture, literature and science. Due to this, they established the twin capitals, Bukhara and Samarqand. From that time those places became famous for Islamic learning. All the Persian books and literature were translated into Arabic, and Persian became the official language of the Samanids.<sup>161</sup> During this era, Persian literature flourished in the works of the Daqiqi (935-980 CE) and Firdawsi (935-1020 CE). Firdawsi, the world-famous Persian writer, began to compose his work, best known as the *Shahnamah*, the ‘Book of the Kings’.<sup>162</sup>

The Samanids were also an artistic people. Their buildings were mainly brick, highly decorated with Islamic arts and calligraphy. Their coins were also decorated with various Islamic arts. Some Samanid pottery has survived, showing great skill in pottery. Arabic calligraphy featured prominently in their art. They produced various kinds of textiles, such as soft cotton fabrics and shiny silks, which they also used to export.<sup>163</sup>

Abul Qasim Nuh, or Nuh II (976-997 CE) struggled to maintain the kingdom. Figure 3.5 shows the vast land of the Samanids. The last Samanid ruler was Abul al-Malik II (d. 999 CE). The last few years of the Samanids were concerned with endless revolts, murders and civil war, leading to the rise of the Ghaznavids.<sup>164</sup>

### 3.2.4 The Ghaznavids (977-1030)

Alptigin (880-963) was a slave and a body guard of Ahmad Ibn Ismail (892- 907 CE), the Samanid ruler. In his youth he was so strong that he became the leader of the town of Ghazna.<sup>165</sup> He was succeeded by his slave and son-in-law Subuktigin (977-997 CE). When he succeeded to the throne, the power of the Samanids had declined and the governors of the outlying parts of the empire were frequently in rebellion or conflict with other states. Subuktigin maintained his position due to Amir Nuh, the Samanid ruler, who supported him; Subuktigin always helped the ruler Amir Nuh, and many times bravely fought with others on behalf of the Samanids and kept his status

<sup>160</sup> Roxanne Marcotte, “Eastern Iran and the Emergence of New Persian (Dari)” (1998), *Journal of Hamdard Islamicus*, 21 (2), 63-76.

<sup>161</sup> The Pahlavi was the old form of Persian language spoken during pre Islamic period.

<sup>162</sup> H.U. Rahman, 210-224; Azim Nanji, *Dictionary of Islam* (Penguin Books, 2008), 28; Helen Loveday, 460.

<sup>163</sup> Nagy Lukman, *The Book of Islamic dynasties* (Ta-Ha Publishers Ltd, 2008), 32;

<sup>164</sup> Ibid., 34; Akhbar Shah, 332.

<sup>165</sup> Muhammad Nazim, 24; Ibid., 334-335; Ira M, 114-117.

in that region. Thus, in 994 CE, he was rewarded with the governorship of Balkh, Tukharistan, Bamian and Ghur. After his death, his son Abul Kasim Muhammad, popularly known as Sultan Mahmud (998-1030 CE) became the ruler of Ghazna. He struggled for a long time to settle the succession to the throne, and finally became the ruler of Ghazna in 998 CE.<sup>166</sup> Thus, Ghazna became the capital and stronghold of the Ghaznavids.<sup>167</sup>

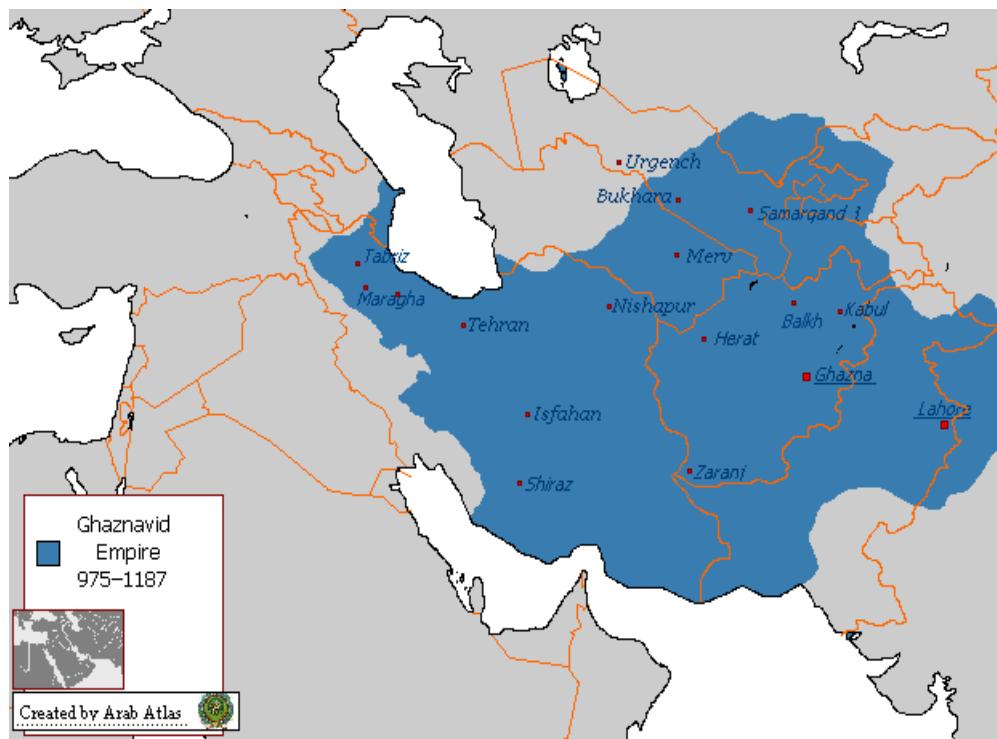


Figure 3.6: Ghaznavid Empire<sup>168</sup>

The Ghaznavid dynasty became famous because of Mahmud's personality. From the beginning, his military organization and administration were highly organised. He himself was an excellent swordsman, thanks to the company of his father. His army was comprised of numerous groups, including Arabs, Turks and even Hindus, who followed his iron discipline. After the capture of Ghazna, Mahmud proceeded to Balkh and did homage to Amir Nuh, the Samanid ruler. The Samanid

<sup>166</sup> His father Subuktigin gave the land Ghaznat to another son Ismail, the grandson of Alaptigin. Ismail was not competent like Mahmud. Thus, Mahmud had to struggle for it. See Muhammad Nazim, 38-41.

<sup>167</sup> Ibid., 38-42; Fazl Ahmad, *Mahmud of Ghazni* (Lahore: Sh Muhammad Ashraf Press, 1986), 15; H.U. Rahman, 247.

<sup>168</sup> Islamic conquest of Afghanistan (From Wikipedia) [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islamic\\_conquest\\_of\\_Afg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islamic_conquest_of_Afg), viewed on 19 September 2011.

ruler congratulated Mahmud on his victory over Ismail and confirmed him in a procession of the provinces of Balkh, Herat, Tirmidh and Bust in Khorasan.<sup>169</sup>

Observing the growing power of Mahmud, the Samanid ruler Abdul Malik fought him. In 999 CE, Mahmud was victorious and Abdul Malik was defeated and took shelter in Bukhara. After that Mahmud defeated Abul Kashim Simjuri, who fled to Tabas. In 996 CE Khalaf, the Saffarid ruler invited Ilak Khan, the king of Kashgar, to attack Ghazna. In 1002 CE, Khalaf had the intention to defeat Mahmud but was not able to do so. Later, he took shelter in Sistan and rebelled against Mahmud. In 1003 CE, Mahmud defeated all the rebellions in Sistan created by Khalaf. Because of his great victory over the other ruler, the Abbasid Caliph al-Qadir Billah (991-1031 CE) gave Mahmud the title *Yamin-ud Daulah wa Aminal Millah* (Right-hand of the State and Trustee of the [Millah]). In the meantime, Ilak Khan, the king of Kashgar, captured Bukhara and arrested Abdul Malik. Mahmud consequently attacked all of them and conquered Bukhara. Besides Khorasan, he also expanded his territory up to the Caspian Sea by defeating the Mongol commander Tugha Khan. Mahmud also extended his territory up to Ghuristan, to the east and south-east of Herat. In 1015 CE, Sultan Mahmud conquered the south-western district of Ghur, and then advanced towards Jurjanniah and Khwarism. In 1017 CE, Muhammad became victorious over all the cities of Khorasan.<sup>170</sup>

Besides political power, Mahmud had a great interest in learning. He knew the Quran by Herat, and studied Islamic jurisprudence under the tutorship of learned scholars. During his tenure, the Persians made rapid progress. Firdausi composed the *Shahnamah* at his court. He was so generous that hundreds of poets and scholars flocked to his court to publish their works. For example, al-Biruni, who had vast knowledge, wrote many books during Mahmud's reign. Later Ghaznavids were equally enthusiastic patrons. Under Bahram Shah (1118-1152 CE), Abul Maali Nasrallah produced the Persian version of *Khalila wa Dimna*.<sup>171</sup>

During the region of Bahram Shah, the Ghuzz became powerful and wrested Ghazna from Bahram Shah's son and successors. Khasru Malik Shah (1160-1186

<sup>169</sup> Muhammad Nazim, 38-42.

<sup>170</sup> Ibid., 56-60, 67-70; Clifford Edmund Bosworth, *The Ghaznavids: Their Empire in Afghanistan and Eastern Iran* (Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt Ltd. 1992), 61-85.

<sup>171</sup> Muhammad Nazim, 35; Clifford Edmund Bosworth, *The Turks in the Early Islamic World* (Variorum: Ashgate, 2007), 16; Martin Sicker, *The Islamic world in Ascendancy* (Westport: Praeger Publishers, 2000), 15.

CE) was the last ruler of the Ghaznavids, and died childless. Thus Khwarizm Shah, the ruler of another dynasty, inherited all of the Ghaznavids' lands (Figure 3.6).<sup>172</sup>

### 3.2.5 The Seljuks (1037-1192 CE)

Seljuk son of Daquq was the founder of this dynasty. They were also famous as one of the tribes of Oghuz Turks.<sup>173</sup> During the tenure of the Samanids, Seljuk (d. 1007 CE) and his family migrated to Khorasan and served the Samanids. During the period of Nuh II (the Samanid ruler), Seljuk embraced Islam.<sup>174</sup> He had five sons, namely Mikhail, Israil, Musa, Yusuf and Yunus. In 1025 CE, Sultan Mahmud gave Seljuk's sons a piece of land in Khorasan to serve as pastures. Then many of their tribesmen crossed the Oxus and were allowed to settle in and around Khorasan. Sultan Mahmud only forbade them to bear armies of any kind and required them to settle in scattered places. They took the opportunity and became strong and occupied many parts of Khorasan.<sup>175</sup> As they were loyal supporters of the Samanids, they got the opportunity to become military leaders, and step by step they conquered many parts of Khorasan. Finally in 1037 CE, Seljuk's grandsons Tughrul and Chagri Beg (the sons of Mikhail) conquered the historical cities of Marv, Herat, Nishapur, Bukhara, Balkh and Ghazni. Then Tughrul Beg (1038-1063 CE) became the ruler of that dynasty.<sup>176</sup> Tughrul Beg married the daughter of one of the Abbasid caliphs, and from that time Abbasid caliph gave him the title Sultan.<sup>177</sup> From that time the Seljuk sultans usurped the Caliphs' power to legislate, while the Abbasid Caliphs remained the spiritual leaders. Thus, the Seljuks became autonomous and gained fame in the whole Muslim world.<sup>178</sup>

After Tughrul Beg, his nephew Alp Arslan (1063-1072 CE) became the next ruler. He led expeditions against the Byzantines. Alp-Arsalan invaded Armenia in 1064 CE. In 1070 CE, he took control of Aleppo and in 1071 CE Jerusalem. In the

<sup>172</sup>Ibid., 62; Akhbar Shah , 339.

<sup>173</sup>Rashid al-Din Tabib, *The history of the Seljuq Turks from the Jami' al-tawarikh : an Ilkhanid adaptation of the Saljuq-nama of Zahir al-Din Nishapuri* (Surrey Richmond: Curzon, 2001), 20; S.A. Hasan, "Some observation on the Problem concerning the Origin of the Saljuqids" (1965), *Journal of Islamic Culture*, 39 (3), 195-204.

<sup>174</sup>Akhbar Shah, 340; Muhammad Nazim, 62-64.

<sup>175</sup>Akhbar Shah, 341; Rashid al-Din Tabib, 29-31.

<sup>176</sup>Clifford Edmund, *The Turks* ....,321-335; S.A. Hasan, "Some Observation on the Problem Concerning the Origin of the Saljuqids" (1965), *Journal of Islamic Culture* , 39 (3), 195-204.

<sup>177</sup>A.H. Siddiqi, "Caliphate and Kingship in Medieval Persia" (1937), *Journal of Islamic Culture*, 11(1), 390-393.

<sup>178</sup> Muhammad Nazim, 64; A.H. Siddiqi "Caliphate and Kingship in Medieval Persia" (1937), *Journal of Islamic Culture*, 11(1), 392-396.

battle of Manzikert, Alp Arsalan defeated the Byzantine Empire and conquered Armenia. This victory firmly established Seljuk power in Anatolia. After his death, his son Malik Shah (1072-1092 CE) conquered Transoxiana and Kirman in 1079 CE. During his tenure, the dynasty reached its peak. In 1089 CE, Malik Shah occupied Bukhara, captured Samarqand and controlled the whole of Khorasan.<sup>179</sup>

In his time, the Seljuks introduced the religious schools of Islamic jurisprudence (including the Hanafi and Nizamiya school). Nizam al-Mulk (d. 1092 CE), a Persian, was the right hand man of Malik Shah. During his reign, they built many schools, hostels, mosques, madrasas and hospitals. During their reign, the Muslim sects like Shias and Sunnis coexisted peacefully.<sup>180</sup> Another famous Sultan of this dynasty was Sultan Sanjar Ibn Malik Shah (1118-1157 CE). After his death, the dynasty became weakened as they could not control the vast land. The last Seljuk Sultan was Tughril III (1176 CE). They had the nomadic tradition that all power had to be shared among their own tribesmen. Thus, after Malik Shah's death, the Seljuk empire was divided into a number of small Turkomen realms. Thus, another two powerful tribes, the Ghurids and the Khwarisms wiped out the Seljuks and occupied all parts of Khorasan.<sup>181</sup>

### 3.2.6 The Ghurids (1149-1212 CE)

The people of Ghur were of Persian origin, and settled in a hilly area to the east and south-east of Herat. During the reign of Sultan Mahmud the area became famous as Mahmud's son, Masud, the governor of Herat, subjugated the hilly area of Ghur.<sup>182</sup> However, the tribe Ghur had strong tribal sensibilities. Alauddin Ghuri (1149-1161 CE) is considered the first powerful ruler of the Ghurids because he conquered Ghazni by his extraordinary courage, and from that time Ghazni became a province of the Ghurid Empire. In the beginning, Sultan Sanjar, the Seljuk Sultan, rebelled against Alauddin but when he saw Alauddin's ability to conquer Ghazna, he moved from that

<sup>179</sup> Rashid al-Din, 57-64; Rene, 147; Ira M, 127-132.

<sup>180</sup> Jurji, 242-244; A.H. Siddiqi, "Caliphate and Kingship in Medieval Persia" (1937), *Journal of Islamic Culture*, 11(1), 37-59.

<sup>181</sup> Akhbar Shah, 343; Mawlawi Fadil Sanaullah, *The Decline of the Saljuqid Empire* (Calcutta: Calcutta University Press, 1938), 95-96.

<sup>182</sup> Muhammad Nazim, 70-73; Muhammad Aziz Ahmed, *Political History & Institutions of the Early Turkish Empire of Delhi (1206-1290AD)*. (New Delhi :Oriental Books Reprint Corp, 1972), 71; W. Barthold, *Turkestan Down...*, 338; J.A Boyle (ed), *The Cambridge History of Iran vol. 5*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968), 158-60; A.H. Siddiqi, "Caliphate and Kingship in Medieval Persia" (1937), *Journal of Islamic Culture*, 11(1), 52-53; Akhbar Shah (Vol. 3), 345.

place. After Alauddin, his son Salauddin II (1161-1163 CE) became the king of the Ghurid dynasty. After a short period of his reign, Alauddin's two nephews, Ghayas ud-Din Ibn Sam and Shihab ud-Din Ibn Sam (1163-1206 CE) penetrated much of Khorasan, as they had much more experience leading campaigns and administration. The brothers worked together for the dynasty, which helped them to conquer most parts of Khorasan. The famous Ghurid Sultan was Shihab ud-Din Ibn Sam whose title was Muizz al-Din Muhammad. His general, Ihtiyal al-Din Muhammad Ibn Bahtiyar Halji had occupied Bihar in 1197 CE and Lakhnawati in Bengal in 1202 CE.<sup>183</sup>

During the time of Shihab ud-Din Ghuri, Khwarizm Shah also became powerful. In 1204 CE, Ala al-din Khwarizm Shah conquered Herat. Alp Ghazi, the governor of Herat, promised to pay a large ransom, and made peace with the Khwarizm Shah, but died shortly afterwards. Thus Khwarizm Shah could not control Herat. On the other hand, Khwarizm Shah suffered from two disasters. One was the overlordship of Kara-Khitai to their rear, and another one was the Abbasid Caliph Nasir al-Din's hesitation against Khwarizm Shah. Thus, in this situation, in 1204 CE, Shihab al-Din marched his forces into the Khwarizm territory and defeated Sultan Muhammad. In this way the Ghurids got the opportunity to establish a strong dynasty in Khorasan. Shihab al-Din left this territory for India and gave it to his nephew Amir Muhammad Ghuri who lost control over that territory. Thus Khwarizm Shah again conquered their land.<sup>184</sup>

### 3.2.7 The Khwarizmi (1177-1231 CE)

The land of Khwaristan is situated at the basin of the lower Amu Darya. The region of the Khwarizm was called Jurjaniya, now divided between Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan.<sup>185</sup> As this land is situated near the river, it has long been famous for its agricultural and trading activities. In the middle of the 12<sup>th</sup> century, the people of this land became autonomous and gained independence from the Seljuks. According to Juvaini Bilge-Tegin, one of the Seljuk kings purchased a Turk slave called Anus-Tegin Gharcha, who became so powerful that in 1077 CE he attained a high position in the Seljuk dynasty. Later Anus-Tegin became so powerful that, in 1097 CE, he was

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<sup>183</sup> Clifford Edmund, *The Turks*...206; Peter Jackson, *The Delhi Sultanate* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 24.

<sup>184</sup> Akhbar Shah, 347.

<sup>185</sup> Ata Malik, 42.

given the title Shah of Khwarizm. He nevertheless remained a slave, and a loyal supporter of Sultan Sanjar. Qutub-al-Din, the elder son of Khwarizm Shah, distinguished himself in the service of the Seljuks. In 1228 CE he was succeeded by his son Atsiz. When the Seljuk Sultan Sanjar was defeated by Gur-Khan, Atsiz became angry and announced independence and took the title Khwarizm Shah. The last Seljuk Sultan Tughrul III (1177-1194 CE) was defeated by Qutub al-Din Muhammad, also known as Ala-al-Din Tekish (the son of Atsiz).<sup>186</sup>

In 1200 CE, Ala-al-Din Tekish's son Muhammad Ibn Ala al-Din Tekish (1200-1220 CE) conquered all of the Seljuk Empire and proclaimed himself Khwarizm Shah Muhammad Ibn Tekish. He ruled for 21 years and brought a major territorial expansion with the conquest of Ghuristan. When Ghyas al-Din Ghuri died (1202 CE), his son Amir Muhammad Ghuri lost control of his father's territory. Thus, Sultan Muhammad Khwarizm could occupy the whole region of the Ghurids.<sup>187</sup> The notables and chiefs of Khorasan also helped Sultan Muhammad to annex Khorasan. Iman al-Din, the chief Amir of Bamian, helped Sultan Muhammad Khwarizm Shah to conquer the neighbouring regions including the territories of Khorasan (i.e. Samarqand, Balkh and Herat). He appointed Iman al-Din as the viceroy of those territories. In 1213 CE Khwarizm Shah also defeated the Gur-Khan (the ruler of the Kara Khitai) and conquered the Kara-Khitai Khanate<sup>188</sup>. In 1214 CE, he also conquered whole Ghaznavid states. Khasru Shah, also known as Taj-al-Din (1160-1187 CE), the last ruler of the Ghaznavids, passed away heirless, and Khwarizm Shah took possession of that land. In 1215 CE, Muhammad Khwarizm Shah became ruler of Iran, Khorasan, Iraq and Turkistan. Figure 3.7 shows the vast lands which were controlled by Muhammad Khwarizm Shah. He also wanted to remove the Abbasid Caliph al-Nasir (1180-1225 CE) in Baghdad, and led an army against him. The Caliph sent Syaikh Sahabuddin Sahardy, a spiritual leader, to meet Muhammad Khwarizm Shah to make peace. However, the latter ignored the advice and was determined to complete his own plan. However, Khwarizm Shah could not attack Baghdad due to

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<sup>186</sup> Akhbar Shah, 344.

<sup>187</sup> Ibid., 347.

<sup>188</sup> Kara Khitai is also known as the Liao Dynasty, and until the 13<sup>th</sup> century it was controlled by the Chinese. Muslim historians initially referred to the state simply as *Khitay* or *Khitai*. It was only after the Mongol conquest that the state began to be referred to in the Muslim world as the *Kara-Khitai* or *Qara-Khitai*.

heavy snowfall. He died on the way and did not return to his capital from his campaign.<sup>189</sup>

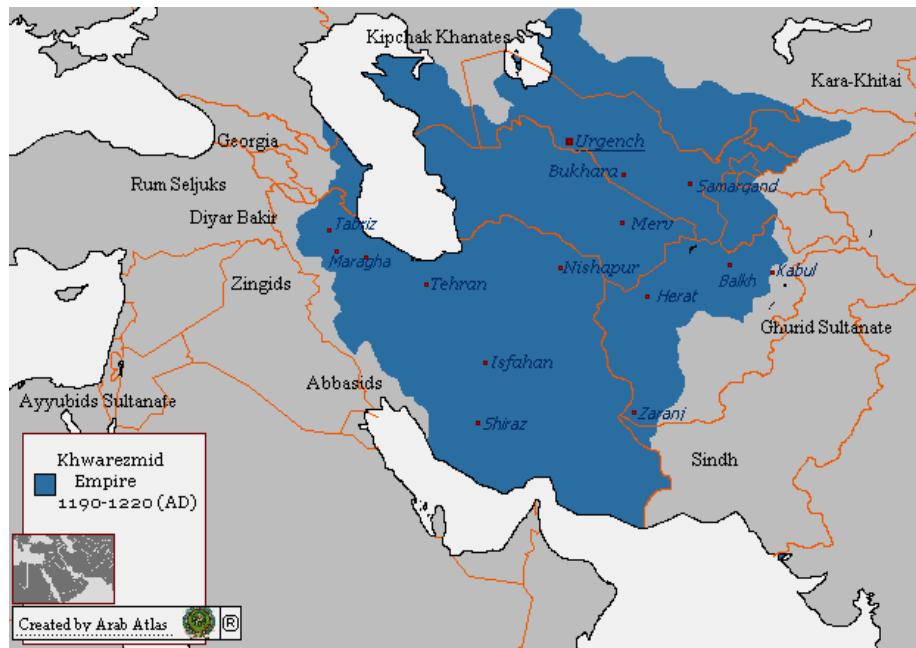


Figure 3.7: Khwarizm Empire<sup>190</sup>

Muhammad Khwarizm Shah was a great and mighty ruler. The Ghurid and Ghaznavid rulers were faithful to him. Thus, he became ruler of the whole of Khorasan including Iraq, Iran, Turkistan and even the frontier of India. Khwarizm Shah himself divided his realm among his children to govern. Among his seven sons three, namely Ruknuddin, Ghaythuddin and Jalal al-Din, were very famous. Jalal al-Din bravely met Chinggis Khan in battle, but escaped for a short time to India. His absence brought the end of the Khwarizm dynasty and the conquest by Chinggis Khan.<sup>191</sup>

<sup>189</sup> Akhbar Shah, 344; Iqtidar Husain Siddiqui, “Indian Sources on Central Asian History and Culture 13th to 15<sup>th</sup> Century A.D” (1993), *Journal of Asian History*, 27(1), 51-63.

<sup>190</sup> *Khwarazmian dynasty* (From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia) [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Khwarazmian\\_dynasty](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Khwarazmian_dynasty), viewed on 19 September 2011.

<sup>191</sup> Akhbar Shah, 345.

### 3.3 THE SITUATION OF MUSLIMS IN KHORASAN UNTIL THE 13<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY

Until the 13<sup>th</sup> century CE, the socio-economic, political and educational contribution of Muslims reached its peak in the entire Muslim world. The Muslim civilization in Khorasan flourished due to their political control, social security and economic opportunities.

In the political arena, the Muslims controlled the whole region of Central Asia. They successfully propagated Islam and a flourishing Islamic culture and civilization. They developed every field including science, technology, literature, language, art, architecture, religious studies and calligraphy. In that region, all the ruling dynasties effectively implemented their policies. For example, during the Umayyad period, the Arabs propagated their culture and civilization. During the Abbasid era, the Turks, Persians and Khorasanians exerted their power, abilities and intellectual achievements, culminating in the emergence of non-Arab regional ruling dynasties like the Tahirids, the Saffarids, the Samanids and the Ghaznavids.

Before the advent of Islam in the region, most of the people lived a nomadic life. In many cases they had no binding religious faith, and most of the time normal people had no social status at all, except rulers or conquerors. When Islam came to Khorasan, the people got full freedom and opportunities to express their ideas and thoughts under the shade of Islam. Khorasan was one of the first places in history where people enjoyed social security. As the region of Khorasan was fertile, there were many opportunities for economic prosperity. Thus, the combined effects of the abovementioned three elements (i.e. political control, social security and economic opportunities) helped Khorasan to become the cultural capital of the Muslims.<sup>192</sup>

The cultural knowledge of Muslims refers to the knowledge of Islam. The civilization flourished by following the true message of the religion. Islam says that Quran is the last and final revealed knowledge, and Muslim scholars expounded its meanings. In addition, Khorasan was the place where Muslim scholars left their intellectual legacy which formed the basic knowledge of later intellectual endeavours,

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<sup>192</sup> Roxanne Marcotte, “Eastern Iran and the Emergence of New Persian (Dari)”, (1998), *Journal of Hamdard Islamicus*, 21 (2), 63-76.

including in Europe. Education is essentially an important part of Islamic teaching.<sup>193</sup>

It is known that, in general, the intellectual faculties of a human being are not developed until they are educated. The Noble Quran highly encourages people to seek knowledge, and in many verses it calls for human beings to study the Creation and nature:

Read! In the Name of your Lord Who has created (all that exists). HE has created man from a clot (a piece of thick coagulated blood). Read! And your Lord is the Most Generous. Who has taught (the writing) by the pen. HE has taught man that which he knew not<sup>194</sup>

Verily, in the creation of the heavens and earth, and in the succession of night and day, there are indeed messages for all who are endowed with insight<sup>195</sup>

Say: Travel in the land and see what happened in the end of those who rejected the truth<sup>196</sup>

There are many *hadiths* of the Prophet (pbuh) regarding the importance of knowledge and respect for scholars.<sup>197</sup> Some of them are:

- The Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) said: “The seeking of knowledge is obligatory for every Muslim (man and woman).” Al-Tirmidhi, 74.
  
- The Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) also said: “Acquire knowledge and impart it to the people.” Al-Tirmidhi, 107.

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<sup>193</sup> M.A. Muid Khan “The Muslim Theories of Education During the Middle Ages” (1944), *Journal of Islamic Culture*, 18(4), 419-434.

<sup>194</sup> Qur’ān, *al-Alaq* : 1-5.

<sup>195</sup> Qur’ān, *al-Imran*:190.

<sup>196</sup> Qur’ān, *al-Annam*:11.

<sup>197</sup> Khalil A. Totah, *The Contribution of the Arabs to Education* (New York: AMS Press, 1972), 86-90; Ali Akhbar Velayati, *The Encyclopedia of Islam and Iran* (MPH Publishers, 2008), 44-48.

- Abdullah Ibn Abbas (radhiallahu anhu) narrated that The Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) said: “A single scholar of religion is more formidable against Satan than a thousand devout people.” Al-Tirmidhi, 217.
- Abdullah Ibn Abbas (radhiallahu anhu) narrated that The Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) said, “Acquiring knowledge in company for an hour in the night is better than spending the whole night in prayer.” Al-Tirmidhi, 256.

From the inception of Islam, many intellectuals developed and enriched knowledge which formed the basis of human civilization. Their creativity encompassed not only a way of life, but also showed in all the fields of education (i.e. science, mathematics, astronomy, anatomy, physics and chemistry, medicine, Islamic learning, theology, literature, history, geography, art and architecture). It is in Khorasan that we find many of the great scientists of Islam who literally left behind hundreds and thousands of books on the various branches of knowledge.<sup>198</sup> A brief discussion is warranted to understand their contributions.

The philosopher Moulana Jalal al-Din Rumi (1207-1273 CE) was the first to describe the scientific theory of universal attraction in his *Mathnavi*. “The sky and the earth are both like iron and magnet to each other. Its attraction is quite like that of amber towards a straw. Love also signifies the strong attraction that draws all creatures back to union with their creator.” This was the first theory of universal gravitation. Later Isaac Newton (1643-1727 CE) discovered that “Every particle in the universe attracts every other particle”. This general theory gives us a good understanding that the heavenly bodies attract each other. Later in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the

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<sup>198</sup> Ali Akhbar Velayati, 93-97.

famous Johannes Kepler (1571-1630 CE) explained the planetary motions by ascribing a soul to every planet.<sup>199</sup>

### 3.3.1 Mathematics

Before the scientific theory of universal attraction, Muslims already studied and introduced various branches of science to the world, most importantly mathematics, which is the backbone of all scientific knowledge. The field of mathematics is subdivided into the study of arithmetic, algebra, geometry and trigonometry. In human history, mathematics generally evolved according to the needs of society. In the early times people introduced the solar and lunar calendars. Before Islam, people used Roman numerals (I, II, III, IV, V etc.) to remember the months and dates of the year. During the golden age of Indian civilization, Aryabartta, Varahamihira and Brahmagupta and others developed some branches of mathematics.<sup>200</sup> Although Indians introduced the system of reckoning, they could not complete their values. After the coming of Islam, with the help of Muslim intellectuals, ideas of the value of mathematics became clear to everyone. In 771 CE a group of Indian scientists stayed in Baghdad and translated many scientific books into Arabic. The transformation of Indian knowledge continued during the period of Harun al-Rashid and his son al-Mamun. For example, around 830 CE, the Arab mathematician Al-Kindi wrote a number of mathematical works, four volumes of which dealt with the use of the Indian Numerals (*Ketab fi Isti'mal al-'Adad al-Hindi*). Because of the Muslim and Hindu contribution to numerals, the digits (0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9) are usually known as *Hindu-Arabic numerals*.<sup>201</sup>

Muhammad Ibn Mussa al Khwarizmi (780-850 CE) first introduced the value of *zero*.<sup>202</sup> His book *Hisab al-Jabr wal Muqabalah* ('The Calculation of Integration

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<sup>199</sup> Razi-ud-Din Siddiqui, "The Contribution of Muslims to Scientific Thought" (1940), *Journal of Islamic Culture*, 14 (1), 33-44.

<sup>200</sup> The Indian scholar Aryabhatta first calculated the length of the solar year as 365.358 days and later declared that the earth is spherical in shape and he proved that the earth revolves round the sun and rotates on its own axis. See Nafis Ahmed, *Muslim Contribution to Geography* (New Delhi: Adam Publishers and Distributors, 1982), 63; A.L. Basham, *A Cultural History of India* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1989), 153; Romila Thaper, *The Penguin History of Early India* (London: Penguin Books Ltd, 2002), 307-308.

<sup>201</sup> Nafis Ahmed, 63; Abdur Rahman Khan, "Scientific Discoveries of the Muslims" (1952), *Journal of Islamic Culture*, 26 (1), 28.

<sup>202</sup> Basheer Ahmed, Syed A. Ahsani, Dilnawaz A. Siddiqui, *Muslim Contribution to World Civilization* (The International Institute of Islamic Thought. The Association of Muslim Social Scientists (USA) 2005), 83.

and Equation') made him very famous because it related astronomical tables; it was the first written work on arithmetic. It contained analytical solutions of linear quadratic equators. His ideas flourished during the time of Caliph Al-Mamun. He also introduced algebra (the word algebra comes from the Arabic *al-jabr*). Because of his great contribution he is known as the 'Father of Algebra' (Figure 3.8). He was also an astronomer and geographer.<sup>203</sup>



Figure 3.8: Muhammad Ibn Musa al Khwarizmi<sup>204</sup>

Mussa al Khwarizmi also gave the idea of geometrical solutions for quadratic equations. In his *Kitab Surat al-Ard* (shape of the Earth), he improved the texts and maps of Ptolemy's *Geography*. In 1126 CE his books were translated into Latin by Adelard of Bath (1080-1152 CE).<sup>205</sup>

Abu'l Hasan Al-Uqlidisi (920-980 CE) was a mathematician who wrote the earliest surviving book on the positional use of the Arabic numerals, *Kitab al-Fusul fi al-Hasab al-Hindi* ('Books of the Parts of Indian Arithmetic') circa 952 CE. This book deals with decimal fractions and showed how to carry out calculations without deletions.<sup>206</sup> He was one of the greatest mathematicians of all time.<sup>207</sup>

<sup>203</sup> Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Science and civilization in Islam* (Cambridge:Islamic Texts Society, 1987), 45; Mahammd Yasin Owadally, *The Muslim Scientist* (A.S. Noordeen Publishers, 2003), 2.

<sup>204</sup> Retrieved September 19, 2011, from: [www.s9.com/.../Al-Khwarizmi-Muhammad-Ibn-Musa](http://www.s9.com/.../Al-Khwarizmi-Muhammad-Ibn-Musa)

<sup>205</sup> Nafis Ahmed, 14; Vladimir, 10.

<sup>206</sup> Nafis Ahmed, 3.

<sup>207</sup> Abdur Rahman Khan, "Scientific Discoveries of the Muslims" (1952), *Journal of Islamic Culture*, 26 (2), 29.

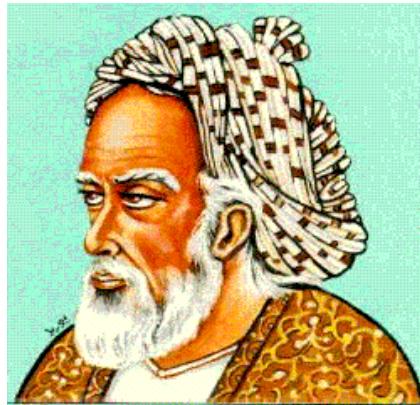


Figure 3.9: Umar Khayyam<sup>208</sup>

The polymath Umar Khayyam (1045-1123 CE), most famous for his poetry, was an astronomer and mathematician who wrote many books (Figure 3.9). His major works were on geometry.<sup>209</sup> His algebra contained geometric and algebraic solutions of equations of the second degree, and admirable classifications of equations including the cubic, which attempted to solve all of them. His classification of equations is very different from modern methods as he based it on the number of different terms in the equations and not on the highest power of the unknown quantity. He recognized 13 different forms of cubic equations. He also reformed the Old Persian calendar, which reckoned the 12 months of the year to consist of 30 days each, with a few days added at the end. His reformed calendar was called *Tarikh i-Jalali*. According to Moritz Cantor (1829-1920 CE) he was one of the greatest mathematicians of all time. Moritz Cantor added “his calendar by solar year is more accurate than any other calendar before or after his time”.<sup>210</sup>

There are also many other mathematicians in the early Muslim history, i.e. Ibn Haythem (966-1039 CE), Al Battani (858 - 929 CE), Abul Wafa,<sup>211</sup> Ibn Ismail al-Buzjani (940-998 CE) and Jabir Ibn Aflah (1100-1150 CE), all of whom contributed to the fields of geometry and trigonometry.<sup>212</sup>

<sup>208</sup> Gene Gordon (n.d.). *Omar Khayyam: the Shakespeare of Iran*, [www.authorsden.com/categories/article\\_top.asp...](http://www.authorsden.com/categories/article_top.asp...) viewed on 19 September 2011.

<sup>209</sup> Abdur Rahman Khan, “Scientific Discoveries of the Muslims” (1952), *Journal of Islamic Culture*, 26 (2), 29; Seyyed Hossein Nasr, 53.

<sup>210</sup> Abdur Rahman Khan, “Scientific Discoveries of the Muslims” (1952), *Journal of Islamic Culture*, 26 (2), 55; Razi-ud-Din Siddiqui, “The Contribution of Muslims to Scientific thought” (1940), *Journal of Islamic Culture*, 14 (1), 37.

<sup>211</sup> Abul Wafa, the very famous mathematician, simplified the version of Ptolemy's Almagest in his well known works--*Tahir al-Majisty* and *Kitab al-Kamil*.

<sup>212</sup> Mahammud Yasin Owadally, *The Muslim Scientists* (A.S. Noordeen, 2003), 5-9.

### 3.3.2 Astronomy

As well as using the moon for calculating months, Islam uses the sun to calculate the times for prayer and fasting. The study of astronomy enabled Muslims to determine the direction of the Qiblah, to face the Ka'bah in Makkah during prayer. In the Abbasid period, Muslim scholars i.e. Fadl Ibn al-Naubakht and Muhammad Ibn Musa al-Khwarizmi first introduced the direction of the Kiblah. They discovered the sun's apogee (the points farthest from the earth in the orbit of the moon). They drew catalogue maps of the visible stars and gave them Arabic names and corrected the sun and moon tables and fixed the length of a year. They were the first to use the pendulum to measure time and the first to build observatories.<sup>213</sup>



Figure 3.10: Al Battani<sup>214</sup>

Among the astronomers was Al Battani (858-929 CE), whose work was mainly on the new moon (Figure 3.10). He improved the solar and lunar tables and wrote an astronomical treatise that remained authoritative until the 16<sup>th</sup> century CE. He determined the solar year as being of 365 days, 4 hours and 46 minutes. He

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<sup>213</sup>Ibid., 11.

<sup>214</sup> Russell McNeil (2007, July) *al-Battani*, [russellmcneil.blogspot.com/2007/07/al-battani...](http://russellmcneil.blogspot.com/2007/07/al-battani...), viewed on 19 September 2011.

proposed a new and ingenious theory to determine the visibility of the new moon.<sup>215</sup> Other famous astronomers included Al-Sufi (903-986 CE), who discovered the motion of the line of apsides of the sun's orbit, or as we would say, a change in the longitude of the perihelion of the earth's orbit.<sup>216</sup>

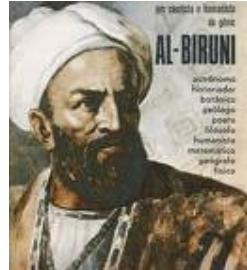


Figure 3.11: The great scholar al-Biruni<sup>217</sup>

Al-Biruni (973-1050 CE) gained mastery in Arabic and its literature (Figure 3.11). He wrote more than 125 books, some of which described the geography and history of India. During his stay in India, local scholars learned from him and were so impressed by his vast knowledge, which was gifted by Allah, that they gave him the title 'Ocean of Knowledge'. His most famous works are *Kitab al-Hind* (A History of India) and *Kitab al-Saydalah* (Treatise on Drugs used in Medicine). In astronomy, he discussed the theory of the rotation of the earth on its axis and how to calculate latitude and longitude.<sup>218</sup> Others such as Al-Fargani (860-950 CE), Al-Zarqali (1029-1087 CE), Abu-Nusaybah Musa Ibn Shakir (813-833 CE) and his three sons (Muhammad Ibn Musa Ibn Shakir, Ahmad Ibn Musa Ibn Shakir and al-Hasan Ibn Musa Ibn Shakir) were famous in the field of astronomy. Modern astronomers took the ideas either directly from them or developed their ideas by adopting their theories.

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<sup>215</sup> Aijaz Muhammad Khan Maswani , "Islamic contribution to Astronomy and Mathematics" (1937), *Journal of Islamic Culture*, 11 (1), 318; Basheer Ahmed, *Muslim Contribution* ....83.

<sup>216</sup> Razi-ud-Din Siddiqui, "The Contribution of Muslims to Scientific thought" (1940), *Journal of Islamic Culture*, 14 (1), 42.

<sup>217</sup> Al Biruni, *The Father of Science* (2010, January), [masmoi.wordpress.com/.../](http://masmoi.wordpress.com/.../), viewed on 19 September 2011.

<sup>218</sup> Seyyed Hossein Nasr, 50; Nafis Ahmed, 45-62; Muhammad Iqbal, "A Plea for Deeper Study of the Muslim Scientists" (1929), *Journal of Islamic Culture*, 3 (2), 203.

<sup>219</sup> Ibid., 83; Ali Akhbar Velayati, 133-135.

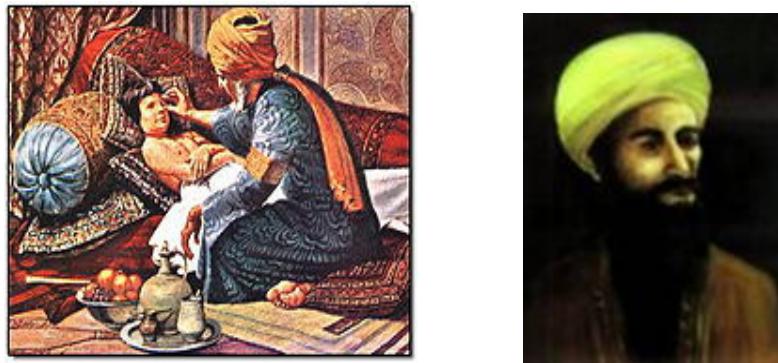


Figure 3.12: Ibn Zakariya Al-Razi<sup>220</sup> & Jaber Ibn Haiyan (the father of chemistry)<sup>221</sup>

### 3.3.3 Chemistry

In chemistry, Abu Bakr Muhammad Ibn Zakariya Al-Razi's (850-923 CE) book 'Secret of Secrets', known in Latin as *Liber Secretorum Bubacaris*, described chemical processes and experiments, and formed the basis of modern chemistry (Figure 3.12). His famous book *al-Hawi* was an encyclopaedia of medicine, with many extracts from Greek and Hindu authors as well as his own personal observations.<sup>222</sup> He contributed greatly to gynaecology, obstetrics and ophthalmology. The most useful book by him is on smallpox and measles (*al-Judavi wa al-Hasbah*), available in English through William A. Greenhill's translations.<sup>223</sup> Al-Kindi (d. 873 CE) was called the 'Philosopher of the Arabs'. He had considerable knowledge of Greek science and philosophy.<sup>224</sup> Jaber Ibn Haiyan (776-803 CE) known as Geber in the West, described in his works the preparation of many chemical products (Figure 3.12). He was the author of more than a hundred substantial essays, twenty-two of which dealt with chemistry and alchemy.<sup>225</sup> Other scientists such as Abu al-Hassan al-Haitham (965-1039 CE) and Al-Asma'i (740-882 CE) were also eminent in optics, and they developed many kinds of scientific methods.<sup>226</sup>

<sup>220</sup> Muhammad Ibn Zakariya Al-Razi From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muhammad\\_ibn\\_Zakariya\\_a...](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muhammad_ibn_Zakariya_a...), viewed on 19 September 2011.

<sup>221</sup> Father of chemistry::Jaber Ibn Haiyan (2008), [muslimeen.ueuo.com/jabiribnhaiyan.htm](http://muslimeen.ueuo.com/jabiribnhaiyan.htm), viewed on 19 September 2011.

<sup>222</sup> Seyyed Hossein Nasr, 46.

<sup>223</sup> A. Rahman Khan, "A Survey of Muslim Contribution to Science and Culture" (1942), *Journal of Islamic Culture*, 16(1), 8.

<sup>224</sup> Seyyed Hossein Nasr, 43.

<sup>225</sup> Seyyed Hossein Nasr, 42.

<sup>226</sup> Ibid., 50,161; Basheer Ahmed (etal ), 82-85; Ehsanul Karim, 1 - 93.

### 3.3.4 Medicine

According to Islam, every Muslim should be careful to have good health. Islam encourages Muslims to cure diseases by taking medicine. In fact, the Abbasids first introduced Greco-Arabian medicine, in which Jandisapur was particularly famous.<sup>227</sup> Regarding medicine, the Quran and Hadith say:

It is He who has made the sea to be of service that may you eat thereof flesh that is fresh and tender.<sup>228</sup>

And the castle He created for you, from them you derive warmth and numerous benefits, and their meal you eat.<sup>229</sup>

And your Lord taught the bee to build its cells on mountains on trees and inhabitants.<sup>230</sup>

Narrated by Abu Huraira (R.A): The Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) said, “There is no disease that Allah has created, except that He also has created its treatment.”<sup>231</sup>

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<sup>227</sup> Jandishapur was the famous place where Abbasids translated from all subjects and languages into Arabic.

<sup>228</sup> Quran, *Nahl*:14

<sup>229</sup> Quran, *Nahl*:5

<sup>230</sup> Quran, *Nahl*:68

<sup>231</sup> *Sahih Bukhari*, 'Medicine'No: 582



Figure 3.13: Ibn Sina<sup>232</sup>

In the field of medicine, Abu Ali al-Hussain Ibn Abdallah Ibn Sina (980-1037 CE) was very famous (Figure 3.13). He mastered natural science and logic. He contributed to all the natural sciences including physics and chemistry. He wrote more than 246 books on medicine, including *Kitab al-Shifa* ('The Book of Healing'), consisting of 20 volumes that describe the healing process. His books were the chief guide for medical science until recent times. He also wrote on neo-platonic metaphysics, natural science and mysticism.<sup>233</sup> Ali Ibn Isa's *Tadkhirat al-Khahalin* discusses 132 diseases of the eye, only one of the Muslim treatments of the subject.<sup>234</sup> Abul Qasim al-Zahrawi (963-1013 CE), known as Albucasis to the West, was also a famous surgeon.<sup>235</sup>

### 3.3.5 Islamic learning and literature

Islamic learning refers to the teaching of the true way of conducting oneself in this world and preparation for the Afterlife. The main sources of this learning are the Quran and Hadith. The Quran itself is a guideline for the Muslim lifestyle, dealing with personal behaviour, ritual, family, business matters and even political questions

<sup>232</sup> Toufik Bakhti, (2006), *Avicenna*, [www.pre-renaissance.com/scholars/ibn-sina.html](http://www.pre-renaissance.com/scholars/ibn-sina.html), viewed on 19 September 2011.

<sup>233</sup> A. Rahman Khan, "A Survey of Muslim Contribution to Science and Culture" (1942), *Journal of Islamic Culture*, 16(1), 8-9; Ali Akhbar Velayati, 173; Ira M, 169-172; Ehsanul Karim, 90.

<sup>234</sup> Ibid., 9; Seyyed Hossein Nasr, 49.

<sup>235</sup> Mahammud Yasin, 33.

such as the selection of rulers, justice and taxation. Islamic scholars aspired to structure life according to the guidelines of the Quran. Some of the most prominent scholars in the history of Islam associated with the region of Khorasan include Abu Hanifa (d. 767 CE), Ibn Hanbal (d. 855 CE), al-Bukhari (d. 870 CE), al-Ghazali (d. 1111 CE), Abu Dawood (d. 833 CE), and Hakim Nishapuri (d. 1012 CE).<sup>236</sup> Persian influence was clearly noticeable in the field of literature. Many books written in Persian, Sanskrit and Greek were translated into Arabic. The most famous Persian poetry books were Muhammad Qazwini's *Bukhara Khuda*, Jalal al-Din Muhammad Awfi's *Lubab al-Albab* and Firdausi's *Shahnamah*.<sup>237</sup>

### 3.3.6 Historians, geographers and biographers

Ali al-Masudi was a historian as well as a geographer. He revolutionised the art of writing history. Among the most famous historians and their works were al-Baladhuri's (d. 893 CE) *Futuh al-Buldan* and *Ansab al-Ashraf*, Ibn Muqaffah's (d. 757 CE) *Siyar-i Mulkal-Azam*, Muhammad Ibn Muslim al-Dinawari's (d. 889 CE) *Kitab al-Marif*, Ahmad Ibn Daud al-Dinawari's (d. 895 CE) *Akhbar al-Tiwal*, , al-Athir's (1160-1234 CE) *Kamil fi-al Tarikh* and *Usd al Ghabah* ( a collection of some biographies of the Companions of the Prophet, pbuh) and Sibt Ibn al-Jawzi's (1186-1257 CE) *Mirat al Zamanfi Tarikh al Ayyam* (the 'Universal History' from creation to 1256 CE).<sup>238</sup> Al-Yaqubi was a famous geographer. His famous book is *Kitab al-Buldan* ('Book of Countries'). It gives detailed descriptions of Baghdad, Samara and Khorasan. He is also called the father of Muslim geography. Al-Baladuri was also a great historian and geographer. In his book *Futuh al-Buldan*, he discussed geographical topics. Hasan Ibn Ahmad al-Hamdani's (d. 945 CE) *Jaziral Arab* described pre-Islamic and Islamic Arabia. Al-Masudi's (896-956 CE) *Muruj adh-dhahab wa maadin al-jawhar* ('The Meadows of Gold and Mines of Gems') gives an epistemological framework of history and geography.<sup>239</sup>

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<sup>236</sup> Ira. M, 160-166.

<sup>237</sup> Kamal Muhammad Habib, "The Technological Elements in the Poets of Central Asia and Khorasan" (1982), *Journal of Hamdard Islamicus* , 5(2), 61-78; Ali Akhbar Velayati, 240-317; Ira M, 84; Seyyed Hossein Nasr, 307-312.

<sup>238</sup> Nafis Ahmed, 1-62; Ali Akhbar Velayati, 240-317.

<sup>239</sup>Ibid., 18-19; Seyyed Hossein Nasr, 48.

### 3.3.7 Architecture and Calligraphy

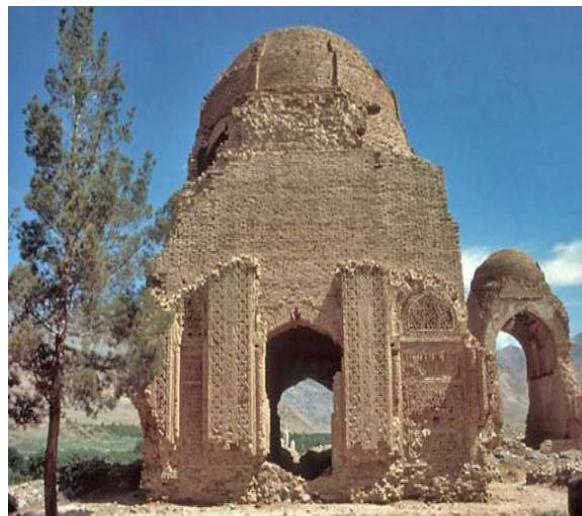
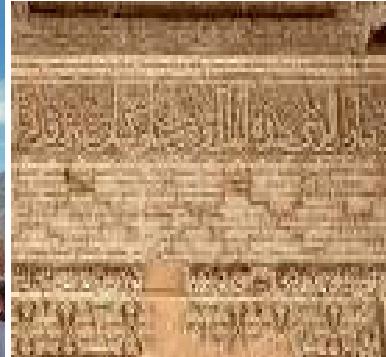


Figure 3.14: Chisht-e Sharif, Khorasan



Friday mosques in Khorasan<sup>240</sup>

The most prominent architectural forms in Khorasan are mosques, palaces, public baths (*hammam*) and citadels, which were decorated with Arabic inscriptions (see Figure 3.14).



Figure 3.15: Calligraphy



Kufiq scripts from the Quran<sup>241</sup>

Calligraphy with Arabic inscription is the most highly regarded and most fundamental element of Islamic art. Ibn al-Nadim in his *Fihrist* mentioned 12 main scripts, with 12 variations. Figure 3.15 shows the calligraphy with Arabic inscriptions. Ibn Muqla (940

<sup>240</sup> Lorenz Korn, (2010) “Saljuqs vi Art and Architecture” : [www.iranica.com/articles/saljuqs-vi](http://www.iranica.com/articles/saljuqs-vi) (accessed on 13<sup>th</sup> August 2011).

<sup>241</sup> Calligraphy in Islamic art, [www.vam.ac.uk/.../c/calligraphy-in-islamic-art/](http://www.vam.ac.uk/.../c/calligraphy-in-islamic-art/), viewed on 19 September 2011.

CE), the Vizier of the Abbasid Calips, was the first to teach the rules of cursive writing.<sup>242</sup>

### 3.3.8 Industry

Many industries also developed in Khorasan for the manufacturing of fabrics, leather, glass and steel. Chemistry was applied in medicine and perfumes. Due to their interest in learning, a paper mill was established by Muslims in 793 CE.<sup>243</sup>

From the above, we understand that Khorasan was the cultural capital of Muslims. Many other Muslim scholars also emerged outside Khorasan, particularly in Africa and Europe. However, by the end of the 12<sup>th</sup> century, weakness was apparent in Khorasan, mainly exhibited in internal problems such as Shia-Sunni conflicts, civil war and wars of succession, and decadence, all of which brought disunity among the Muslims. Islam teaches that every Muslim has his/her own responsibility to unite the society, but the Muslims could not fulfil that responsibility.

Allah Almighty instructs us:

If two parties among the Believers fall into a quarrel, make ye peace between them: but if one of them transgresses beyond bounds against the other, then fight ye (all) against the one that transgresses until it complies with the command of Allah; but if it complies, then make peace between them with justice, and be fair: for Allah loves those who are fair (and just)

The believers are but a single Brotherhood (Ummah). So (make peace and) reconcile between your two (contending) brothers; and fear Allah that you may receive mercy.

Ye who believe! Avoid suspicion as much (as possible): for suspicion in some cases is a sin: And spy not on each other behind their backs. Would any of you like to eat the flesh of his dead brother? Nay, ye would abhor it...But fear Allah: For Allah is Oft-Returning, Most Merciful.<sup>244</sup>

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<sup>242</sup> Hisham Nashabi, "The Place of Calligraphy in Muslim Education" (1982), *Journal of Hamdard Islamicus*, 5(4), 53-74.

<sup>243</sup> H.U. Rahman, 168.

<sup>244</sup> Quran, *al-Hujurat*: 9,10,12

From the abovementioned Quranic verses, we realise that Allah likes unity among believers. Allah does not like the one who sows disunity among Muslims. In the 13<sup>th</sup> century, Khorasan witnessed deep disunity that brought the downfall of Muslims in Khorasan and their subjugation by non-Muslims.

## CHAPTER 4

### CHINGGIS KHAN'S CONQUEST OF KHORASAN

#### **4.1 THE REASON FOR CHINGGIS KHAN'S CONQUEST**

Chinggis Khan became leader of the Mongol nomadic tribes during the tenure of Muhammad Khwarizm Shah in Khorasan. Initially Chinggis Khan had friendly relations with Khwarizm Shah, because many goods such as clothes, grains and other equipment used to come to the Mongols from Khorasan.<sup>245</sup> Thus, both Khwarizm Shah and Chinggis Khan enjoyed peace and prosperity by exchanging ambassadors with enormous gifts. Most of the ambassadors were Muslim merchants. Meanwhile, due to some confusion, Muhammad Khwarizm Shah was suspicious of Mongol traders in Khorasan, believing them to be Mongol agents collecting information about the region. He consequently stopped and interrogated them, and punished one considered guilty of espionage.<sup>246</sup> The incident occurred in 1218 CE when the merchants arrived from the Mongol empire to the Khwarizm border Otrar, a frontier town in the middle of Syr-Darya. Kadir Khan (Ghayir Khan), a relative of Muhammad Khwarizm Shah, arrested them,<sup>247</sup> accusing them of being spies. Afterwards, Chinggis Khan sent three emissaries, one Muslim and two Mongols, to Muhammad's court to try and establish long-lasting relations. Juvaini reported that he referred to Muhammad as his own son.<sup>248</sup> Meanwhile, when the three emissaries came to Muhammad's court, the Mongol emissaries suffered the humiliation of having their beards shaved. Moreover, Muhammad Khwarizm Shah executed some captive Mongol merchants. When that news reached Chinggis Khan, he became furious and immediately ordered the mobilization of troops for war. He mustered 150,000 to 200,000 men against Muhammad Khwarizm Shah.<sup>249</sup>

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<sup>245</sup> Vladimir, 102.

<sup>246</sup> Ata malik, 77-81.

<sup>247</sup> Ibid., 79.

<sup>248</sup> Ibid., 78.

<sup>249</sup> Khwandamir, 15.

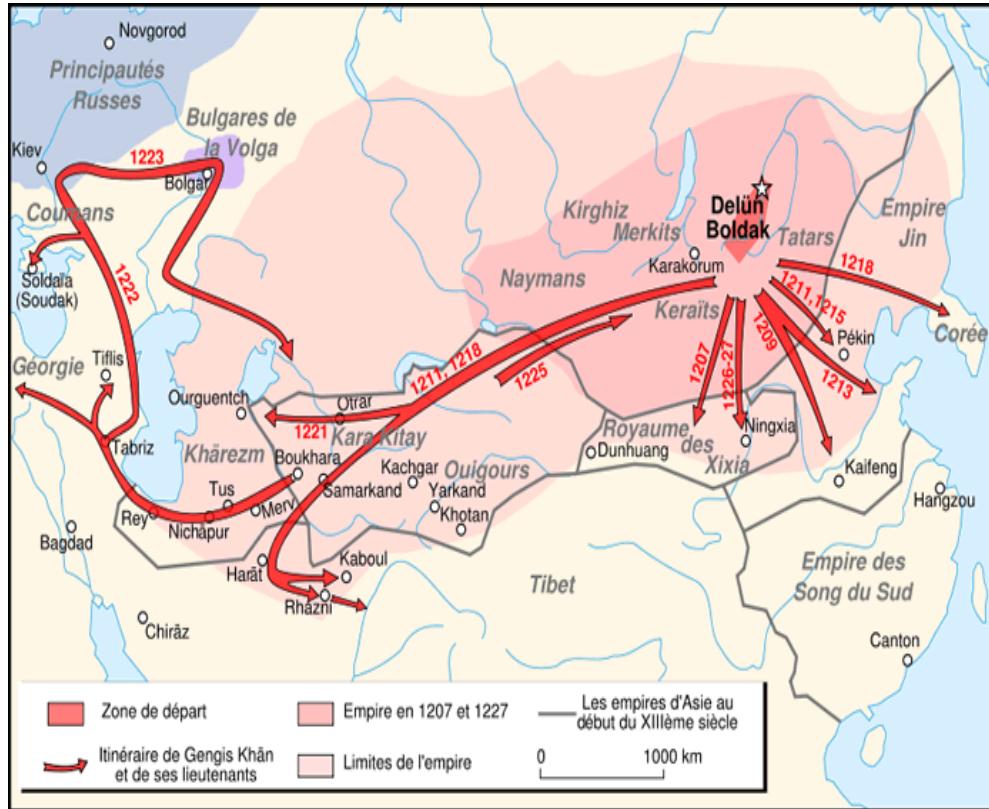


Figure 4.1: Chinggis Khan's conquest<sup>250</sup>

#### 4.1.1 Chinggis Khan's Conquest of Khorasan

In September 1219 CE, Chinggis Khan marched towards the city of Otrar and besieged that city along with his sons Ogdai and Chaghatai. The Mongol army re-entered through the same gate and captured the town. The Mongols massacred many people and the remaining inhabitants were made captives. After that, Chinggis Khan sent his eldest son Juchi north to Syr-Darya towards the large city of Urgench, south of the Aral-sea. He took 5,000 men and besieged the town of Urgench. Afterwards, Chinggis Khan directed his youngest son Tolui to march towards Bukhara and Samarqand.<sup>251</sup>

<sup>250</sup> Mkfitgerald, Genghis Khan, Founder of the Mongol Empire" <https://.../w/page/13960535/Genghis-Khan> (accessed on 13<sup>th</sup> August 2011).

<sup>251</sup> Khwandamir, 15; Ata Malik, 98.



Figure 4.2: Ancient house in Bukhara



Figure 4.3: A minaret in Samarkand & Ruins of Muhammad's palace in Urgench<sup>252</sup>

Before conquering the city of Bukhara, Chinggis Khan captured the adjacent town of Nur.<sup>253</sup> The inhabitants of that city were unprepared for fighting. Thus, they submitted themselves to the Mongols without fighting. The Mongols gave them essential items for surviving with seeds and oxen for their agriculture, but took all of their horses and plundered all their valuables. In 1220 CE, Chinggis Khan conquered the town of Nur and he left the town for Bukhara. Figure 4.2 shows one of the ancient houses in Bukhara which Chinggis Khan destroyed. According to Khwandamir, Chinggis Khan reached the city and besieged it. Khwarism Shah's commanders attacked the Mongols

<sup>252</sup> Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia, [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mongol\\_invasion\\_of\\_Khwarezmia#Sieges\\_of\\_Bukhara.2C\\_Samarkand.2C\\_and\\_Urgench](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mongol_invasion_of_Khwarezmia#Sieges_of_Bukhara.2C_Samarkand.2C_and_Urgench) (accessed on 13<sup>th</sup> August 2011).

<sup>253</sup> Khwandamir, 101-103.

with thirty thousand soldiers, but the city dwellers soon opened the city gates to the Mongols. Other inhabitants like sayyids, scholars, nobles and notables went to Chinggis Khan to sue for peace. Chinggis Khan rode around the whole city. Upon approaching the Mosque he asked the people “Is this the Sultan’s Palace?”, to which they replied “It is God’s house.” Afterwards, Chinggis Khan went to the *Eidgah* and delivered the following speech. “People, you have committed great sins, and therefore the wrath of God is upon you; now nothing that is visible in this city need to be reported. Turn over what you have hidden.”<sup>254</sup>

Chinggis Khan ordered the young Mongol soldiers to capture the fortress. Within a short time, the Mongols had overwhelmed and captured the citadel. All the Muslim fighters were killed, their wives and children taken as prisoners, and the fortress brought down to the ground. The surviving population was divided into three groups: artisans were transported to Mongolia, where they would continue to practice their craft for the benefit of the Mongols; young fighting men were inducted into the army to be used as shock troops during subsequent battles; and the rest were distributed among the Mongol armies as slaves. Bukhara was stripped of its assets, and its maidens were sent to Chinggis Khan as slaves.<sup>255</sup>

In the month of March 1220 CE, Chinggis Khan moved towards Khwarizm Shah’s capital Samarqand, considered one of the greatest commercial centers of the world, and destroyed it (see Figure 4.3). According to Khwandumir, Chinggis Khan pitched his tents in Kok Saray and rested for two days. On the third day, a group of Khwarizm Shah’s commanders fought bravely in the battlefield but were killed. On the fourth day, Chinggis Khan himself rode towards Samarqand and reached it before the people of the city had time to escape. On the fifth day the majority of the people joined the Mongol camp to receive information regarding their families and dependents. Thus, they opened the gates of Samarqand to the Mongols, but were driven from the city by fifty-thousand defenders under the auspices of the Qadi and Mufti; the rest of the people were slaughtered.<sup>256</sup>

In 1221 CE, Chinggis Khan crossed the Oxus and besieged the town of Balkh.<sup>257</sup> It was so prosperous that there were 1200 *Jamah* Mosques and 1200 public

<sup>254</sup> Ata Malik, 103-104; Khwandumir, 16.

<sup>255</sup> Ata Malik, 106-107; Khwandumir, 16.

<sup>256</sup> Ibid., 116-122; Ibid., 18.

<sup>257</sup> Ibid., 130; Leode Hartog, 109-110.

bathhouses (*hammam*). At the time of Chinggis Khan's invasion, Balkh had a handsome population of religious scholars including sayyids, shayks and ulama. When the nobles and notables learned of Chinggis Khan's approach, they hastened out with gifts and presents. Sultan Jalal al-din had assembled a strong army at Ghazna who were ready to resist, but the Mongols put all of them to the sword and Jalal-al-Din escaped.<sup>258</sup>

In April 1221 CE the Mongols plundered the city of Urgench (Figure 3.4) and the artisans were sent to Mongolia while the women and children were enslaved. The rest of the population was massacred. Juvaini reported that the task of killing people was assigned to 50,000 Mongol soldiers, each of whom was given the responsibility of executing 24 prisoners. Meanwhile, Chinggis Khan sent his youngest son Tolui Khan across the Amu Darya to capture the western province of Khorasan. Tolui went with 80, 000 horsemen to Merv i-Shahijan. At that time, Mudir ul-Mulk Sharafuddin Muzaffar governed that area on behalf of Sultan Muhammad Khwarizm Shah. When Tolui appeared outside the city, Mudir ul-Mulk took a defensive stance.<sup>259</sup> According to Khwandumir, in the beginning, Muslim forces annihilated a thousand Mongol soldiers. On the other hand, Tolui Khan prepared for a protracted battle and camped outside Marv, waiting six days before joining battle, and on the seventh day he "rose like the burning Sun, casting his lasso over the shining celestial sphere".<sup>260</sup> Afterwards, the Mongol army was assembled, charged the gate of Marv i-Shahijan, and began the war. At first the Mongols kept watch through the night all around the city. Tolui Khan ordered his men to spare the life of four hundred craftsmen and some of their children. The rest of the inhabitants were divided up among the Mongol soldiers. Each one had the task of killing three or four hundred people.<sup>261</sup>

When Tolui Khan was about to cross over to Merv, Toquchar Kuragan, Chinggis Khan's son-in-law, was dispatched with 10,000 horsemen to Nishapur.<sup>262</sup> Muzirul Mulk Kafi and Ziyaul Mulk Zawzani, viziers of the Sultan, deceived by the vast number of their warriors and implements of battle, placed caissons and catapults

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<sup>258</sup> Ibid., 130-133.

<sup>259</sup> Ata Malik, 153.

<sup>260</sup> Tarik i-jahangushay describes how Toli Khan destroyed Marv.

<sup>261</sup> Ata Malik, 153-164; Khwandumir, 22.

<sup>262</sup> Nishapur was the largest and richest town in Khorasan. It produced various textiles including silk and cotton. See D.S. Rechards (ed), 71-93; Vladimir, 104.

in the towers and got ready to defend. Toquchar laid siege to the city, and on the third day Toqucher was hit by an arrow and died on the spot. Toqucher's widow was heartbroken and ordered that every last person in Nishapur be killed and their skulls be piled in pyramids. The Mongols cut the supply of food and water to the people and razed the city to the ground. The killing was so widespread that it took 12 days to remove the corpses. According to Khwandamir, "apart from women and children," 1,747,000 dead were counted.<sup>263</sup>

In 1221 CE Tolui set out for Herat to plunder the whole city. At first he wanted to make peace with the inhabitants of Herat, but upon discovering that the Heraties were preparing weapons for their defense and attack on the Mongol garrison Chinggis Khan became furious and angrily instructed Tolui Khan "if you had killed the people of Herat, this revolt would not have happened". Thus, Chinggis Khan himself commanded 80,000 soldiers and besieged the city, ultimately killing the entire population except for forty survivors.<sup>264</sup>

Meanwhile, the news came that Jalal al-Din, the son of the late Muhammad Khwarism Shah, had escaped from the Mongols and took refuge in Ghazna.<sup>265</sup> He raised an army at north of Kabul and defeated a Mongol commander, Shigi-Qutuqu, and his army. When the news of that event reached Chinggis Khan, he marched south with his own army and surrounded Jalal al-Din on the banks of the Indus River<sup>266</sup> in 1221 CE. With the flashing sword before him and the ferocious river behind him, Jalal al-Din spurred his horse to battle and fought many skirmishes bravely, but as the situation became desparate, he turned his horse and galloped towards the riverside and succeeded in crossing the river with his seven companions. Thus, he reached the opposite side of the Indus and pitched his canopy there. Having seen his glory on the opposite side of the Indus, Chinggis Khan said to his sons 'a father should have such a son'.<sup>267</sup>

Jalal al-Din then mustered a force of 120 horsemen, which helped him to defeat several local forces. Chinggis Khan dispatched some of his generals specifically to deal with Jalal al-Din, who fled to Lahore and went to seek refuge at the court of the Sultan of Delhi. Meanwhile, after the capture of the fortress of Herat,

<sup>263</sup> Ata Malik, 174-177; Leode, 112; Khwandamir, 23.

<sup>264</sup> Leode, 112; Jeremiah, 129; Khwandamir, 25.

<sup>265</sup> Ata Malik, 133.

<sup>266</sup> Leode, 110-115.

<sup>267</sup> Ata Malik, 134.

the Mongol army was divided into sections; one marched into Sistan and another attacked many other fortresses in various places. In the absence of Jalal al-Din, his son was killed by the Mongols; his mother, wife and other women were drowned in the river to prevent them from falling into the hands of the Mongols. In 1222 CE, Jalal al-Din gathered his army and invaded Sind, Uch and Multan. Thereupon, Sultan Iltutmish marched with an army from Delhi against Jalal al-Din, and thus, in 1223 CE, Jalal al-Din had to return to Persia. In the meantime Ogadai attacked Firuz Kuh and captured it. One by one Tulaq, Ashiyat and other fortresses of Ghuristan fell into the Mongols' hands. Chinggis Khan despatched envoys to the Court of Sultan Iltutmish at Delhi entertaining the design of conducting army through Hindustan and returning to China by way of Lakhnawti and Kamrup. But the territories of Chin, Tamghach and Tingit were in a state of open revolt, so he had to return by way of Lab and the country of Tibbet. Chinggis Khan seized and murdered the Khan of Tingit. And after three days, in 1227 CE, Chinggis Khan passed away. After his death, Ogdai became overlord of the Mongols and besieged the city of Ghazna. Some artisans were spared, but the rest of the population were slaughtered. Thus, the greatest power in Khorasan was absorbed into the Mongols' territory.<sup>268</sup>

The expansion of the Mongol empire was undoubtedly devastating news for the Islamic world in general, and Khorasan, in particular. Figure 4.1 shows that within a short time Chinggis Khan had conquered the whole land of Khorasan. The cruelty of the Mongols to the common people in Khorasan was clearly recorded by Juvaini:

When the Mongols had finished the slaughter they caught sight of a woman who said to them: 'spare my life and I will give you a great pearl which I have.' But when they sought the pearl she said: 'I have swallowed it.' Whereupon they ripped open her belly and found several pearls. On this account Chinggis Khan commanded that they should rip open the bellies of all the slain.<sup>269</sup>

Ibn al-Athir recorded serious Mongol invasions as follows:

Everyone fought, men, women, children and they went on fighting until they [the Mongols] had taken the entire town, killed all the inhabitants and pillaged everything that was to be found

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<sup>268</sup> Ata Malik, 134-145. Muhammad Aziz Ahmed, 88-89.

<sup>269</sup> Ibid., 129.

there. Then they opened the dam, and the water of the Jayhun [Amudarya] submerged the town and destroyed it completely ... Those who escaped from the Tarter were drowned or buried under the rubble. And then nothing remained but ruins and waves.<sup>270</sup>

Ibn al-Athir further expressed his sorrow by describing his emotions on hearing of the Mongols' attack on Khorasan:

O would that my mother had never borne me, that I had died before and that I were forgotten [so] tremendous disaster such as had never happened before, and which struck all the world, though the Muslims above all ... *Dajjal* [Muslim Anti-Christ] will at least spare those who adhere to him, and will only destroy his adversaries. These [Mongols], however, spared none. They killed women, men, and children, ripped open the bodies of the pregnant and slaughtered the unborn.<sup>271</sup>

#### 4.2 CHINGGIS KHAN'S STRATEGY OF WAR

To survive independently in a land, and to preserve the culture, customs, laws, lives, property and principles of a civilization, a viable technique of war is compulsory. Early Chinese strategies of war were described by Sun Tzu:

The art of war is of vital importance to the state. It is a matter of life and death, a road either to safety or to ruin. Hence under no circumstances can it be neglected.<sup>272</sup>

Chinggis Khan was a man who knew the importance of war and since his early life he knew the strategy of war. From childhood he was a warrior, which helped him to defeat other tribes. He learned new techniques from other tribes and probably adopted Chinese techniques of war. To upgrade his armies he strictly followed discipline and rigorous training. He adopted some tactics that were necessary for survival in a brutal environment. He divided his armies into groups and gave them training for survival. Military service was compulsory for all Mongol men under the

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<sup>270</sup> Michel Hoang, 229.

<sup>271</sup> Ibn al Athir: *Kitab al-Kamil*, ed K.J. (Tomberg; 12 vols; Laiden; 1851-72: vol-12), 233-234; Bertold Spuler, *History of the Mongols* (New York: Dorset Press, 1988), 29-30.

<sup>272</sup> Sun-tzu. *The art of War* (New York:Delta, 1983), 1.

age of 60.<sup>273</sup> The training process is known as Mongol military training. The most important Mongol military structures are the decimal system, the spies and guard system, equality, unity, horsemanship, archery and mobility. In addition, all subjects had to follow the administrative manual, the Great Book of Yasa.<sup>274</sup>

#### **4.2.1 The Decimal system**

The most important Mongol military structure was the decimal system or unit tactics. Chinggis Khan organized the Mongol people into groups based on the decimal system with units of 10 (Arav), 100 (Zuat), 1000 (Minggham) and 10,000 (Tumen).<sup>275</sup> According to Juvaini:

Chinggis Khan divided all the 10,000 people into companies of 10, appointing one of the 10 to be the commander of the nine others, while among each commander, one has been given the title of commander of the hundreds. All the hundreds have been placed under his command. So it is with each thousand men and so also each 10,000, over whom they have appointed a commander whom they call commander of Tumen. In accordance with his agreement, if there is an emergency any man or thing be required, they apply to the commander of Tumen, who in turn applies to the commander of thousands and by this process comes down to the commander of the ten. By this process Chinggis Khan gave equality to all the people. Each man toils as much as the next and no difference is made between them. He did not even pay attention to their wealth and power.<sup>276</sup>

#### **4.2.2 The role of spies and guards**

Spies were an important part of war. Many times spies saved Chinggis Khan's own life. For example, Kishliq and Badai gave him timely information about the secret assassination plot against him that saved his life. His spies were everywhere, including

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<sup>273</sup>David Morgan, 85.

<sup>274</sup>Ata Malik, 25-27.

<sup>275</sup>Paul, 176; Leode, 5-6.

<sup>276</sup>Ata Malik, 31.

in Muslim territories.<sup>277</sup> For social security, he introduced a guard system. The guard in effect constituted Chinggis Khan's household too. The imperial guard formed the nursery of the new empire's ruling class. All the guards had to follow the training known as Mongol military training, a part of social discipline.<sup>278</sup>

#### **4.2.3 Equality and unity among all the tribes**

Chinggis Khan realized that only unity and co-operation between people can bring strength to a civilization, as evidenced by the nomadic Mongol civilization. To preserve this unity, Chinggis Khan made for his people a set of rules for every circumstance; a moral law that helped people to live harmoniously with each other and their government, so that they would follow him regardless of their lives, undismayed by any danger.<sup>279</sup>

#### **4.2.4 Breaking tribal allegiance**

Chinggis Khan planned well to break tribal allegiances. The various tribes and clans were divided and kept separately. For each unit, he appointed men whom he knew personally and trusted. For example, Subutai and Batu Khan, grandsons of Chinggis Khan, were the heads of the clans. However, he gave all the people equal status. The promotion system observed people's merits and credibility, not by virtue of noble birth. Only the title 'Khan' was celebrated, indicating the activeness, ability or capacity of the name-bearer. The title 'Khan' also gave legitimacy to the bearer to increase his authority over a broader range of tribal people.<sup>280</sup>

#### **4.2.5 Troop Mobility**

According to Juvaini, Chinggis Khan paid great attention to the chase. The Mongol army could travel at high speeds for days without stopping. If any force escaped from the battle field, the Mongols would always chase them until the fleeing party is forced to surrender. This was the main principle of Chinggis Khan's battle field strategy. Most of the time, the whole army had to practice this strategy, except when engaged in other warfare activities. The mobility of individual soldiers made it possible to send

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<sup>277</sup> Urgunge, 9.

<sup>278</sup> Ibid., 211-216.

<sup>279</sup> Ata Malik, 41.

<sup>280</sup> Ibid., 40-44.

them on scouting missions, gathering intelligence about routes and searching for terrain suited to the preferred combat tactics of the Mongols.<sup>281</sup>



Figure 4.4: The Mongols' military tactics<sup>282</sup>

#### 4.2.6 Horsemanship

Horsemanship was part of Mongol military training and the whole life of the nomadic peoples of central Asia. Each Mongol soldier used to go with a string of several horses or at least four horses. This devise could have the effect of multiplying the apparent size of the army and thus increased the terror in the hearts of enemy soldiers.

#### 4.2.7 Hunting with bow and arrow

According to Juvaini:

Chinggis Khan used to say that the hunting of wild beasts was a proper occupation for the commander of an army which was suitable for steppe and nomadic people. When the Mongols wished to go hunting, they first sent out scouts to ascertain what kinds of game were available and whether it was scarred or abandoned.<sup>283</sup>

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<sup>281</sup> Ibid., 27.

<sup>282</sup> Mongolian Warriors: legends and chronicles (2009), <http://www.legendsandchronicles.com/mongolian-warriors/> (accessed on 13<sup>th</sup> August 2011).

<sup>283</sup> Ata Malik, 27.

The Mongol soldiers used bows capable of firing arrows up to 300 yards and practiced with them regularly (see Figure 4.4). Some Mongol archers were so expert and skillful that they were able to silence a trumpeter stationed to warn his city by shooting the man through the neck from over 200 yards away.<sup>284</sup>

#### **4.2.8 System of plundering**

Chinggis Khan destroyed completely the cities of Bukhara, Samarqand, Ghazni, Herat and Marv in Khorasan, which indicates that he had a sophisticated technology to destroy fortifications.<sup>285</sup> To plunder enemy territories, they used to launch surprise attack. It was the Mongol custom and the advice of Chinggis Khan that when soldiers captured enemies, they should slaughter them, rob them and burn all their lands, along with surviving humans and animals.

### **4.3 THE NATURE OF CHINGGIS KHAN'S ADMINISTRATION**

It is known that to govern the people, it is necessary to have sound administration, which should be exercised with great care and thought. Chinggis Khan was aware of this. His administrative policies were justice, security of life, strict disciplinary rules, job opportunities and adopting innovative good practices.

#### **4.3.1 Justice**

Chinggis Khan knew that a system of justice is essential to run a nation; therefore he framed a binding legal code (*Yasa*) after coming to power. After the conquest of the Naiman in 1204 CE, Chinggis Khan first introduced Mongol Uighur script as the official script. In 1206 CE he ordered that Mongol children should read Uighur language. Before that, Mongols did not have any written document; they did not even know how to read and write.

The *Yasa* was mainly a way of life which was used for tradition, customs, law and regulations for every circumstance. According to Juvaini:

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<sup>284</sup> Timothy May. “Genghis Khan: Secrets of Success”. *Military History*, 24:5 (Jul/ Aug 2007); Leode, 46.

<sup>285</sup> Paul, 178.

Thus, *Yasas* (rules) and ordinance should be written down on roles. These roles are called the *Great Book of Yasas* and are kept in the treasury of the chief princes. Whenever a Khan ascends the throne, or a great army is mobilized, or the princess assemble and begin [to consult together] concerning affairs or state and the administration thereof, they produce these roles and model their actions thereon; and proceed with the disposition of armies or the destruction of provinces and cities in the manner therein prescribed.<sup>286</sup>

Some examples of the *Yasas* (rules) are given below:<sup>287</sup>

- Taste the food before serving. Without sharing do not eat food in front of others and do not eat more than others.
- Spies, false witnesses, as well as adultery are punished by death.
- It is permitted for the Mongols to eat the blood of animals without cooking. Mongols also used to drink each other's blood to keep eternal love.
- It was forbidden to cut the throats of animals slain for food; the slaughtering process was that the animals must be bound, the chest opened and the heart pulled out by the hand of the hunter.
- Clothes should not be washed in running water during thunder.

In religious matters, Chinggis Khan gave people total freedom. He did not spend any time focusing on any creed or religion. He himself always kept busy with hardwork instead of worship, and honoured and respected hardworking and knowledgeable men. According to Juvaini, he respected all religions, including Islam, Christianity and Samanism. Therefore, his children and grandchildren chose any religion they desired.<sup>288</sup> Before Chinggis Khan, the Steppe people had a strong sense of tribal superiority. Chinggis Khan undermined notions of cultural and tribal superiority.<sup>289</sup>

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<sup>286</sup> Ata Malik, 25.

<sup>287</sup> George, 205-225; Leode, 39.

<sup>288</sup> Ata Malik, 26; Urgunge, 279.

<sup>289</sup> Ibid., 27; Ibid., 203.

#### **4.3.2 Security of life or social security**

Chinggis Khan organised a guard system for social security. His own father was poisoned, and Chinggis himself was subject to frequent assassination attempts; his wife Borte had also been kidnapped, thus he was keenly aware of the importance of social security. Everywhere he posted the guards, for example, seventy men were deployed as day guards and 80 men as night guards. Within a few years the number of night guards had risen to 1000, along with the day watch. All guards were well disciplined and conscious of Chinggis Khan's directives. During battle, almost 1000 guards were given special responsibility to ensure the safety of Chinggis Khan. Those guards were also known as strong Mongol armies.<sup>290</sup>

#### **4.3.3 Strict disciplinary rules**

The guards had to obey the strict disciplinary rules; anyone who ignored the disciplinary rules, received 30 strokes on the first offence, 70 on the second offence, and the third time after receiving 37 strokes, the man would be expelled from his position. A similar punishment was also used on captains who forgot to remind their subordinates on the day of the relief. On the other hand, the guardsmen enjoyed great privileges. A combatant guard stood higher in rank than the chief of 1000 men in the army, non-combatants in the guard higher in rank than a chief of 100. The commanders of the guard did not have the right to punish their subordinates on their own authority, and were obliged to report all their actions to the Khan. The guard enjoyed supreme honour.<sup>291</sup>

#### **4.3.4 Job opportunity**

Besides these guards, there were also archers, table duckers, door keepers, grooms and messengers. Chinggis Khan's household was overseen by six *charbi* (chamberlains), and 1000 *baghatus* were appointed as his personal bodyguard. The large royal household provided a lot of employment, and the Mongol hordes generally provided full employment.<sup>292</sup>

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<sup>290</sup> Ibid., 22-26; W. Bartol'd. *Turkestan Down ....* 383-384; Leode, 44.

<sup>291</sup> Urgunge, 211-216.

<sup>292</sup> Leode, 44-45; Urgunge, 215-222.

#### **4.3.5 Continuous adoption policy**

To improve military activities and personalities, Chinggis Khan continuously adopted good ideas from other cultures, like writing scripts, the Asian decimal system, the guard system and many others. Mongols also adopted battle-axes, scimitars, lances, and small shields. Most of the Mongol archers were great warriors. Due to their endurance, they could move across long distances, as much as 100 miles a day.<sup>293</sup>

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<sup>293</sup>Ibid., 46.

## CHAPTER 5

### THE IMPACT OF CHINGGIS KHAN'S CONQUEST

#### **5.1 THE DESTRUCTION OF ISLAMIC SOCIETY**

The Mongols comprehensively destroyed the entire Islamic society of Khorasan and its Muslim rulers. Among those martyred at the hands of the Mongols were, Ghayir Khan, the ruler of Otrar, Sultan Muhammad Khwarizm Shah, the ruler of the Khwarizm, Hasan Haji, a trader, Temur Malik, an emissary to the people of Jand, Alp Khan, a great man in Samarqand, Shaykh Najmuddin Kubra, the great saint, Amir Ziyauddin Ali, one of the nobles of Marv, Muzir-ul Mulk, vizier and ruler of Khorasan, Malik Shamsuddin Muhammad Jurjani, the governor of Herat and many others.<sup>294</sup>

After the conquest of the cities of Khorasan, Chinggis Khan completely destroyed the buildings, palaces, walls, forts, schools and libraries. By burning the cities, the Mongols destroyed the water system consisting of underground irrigation, which destroyed the wealth of Khorasan. Although the massacres and ensuing destruction were widespread, there was a method of destruction in the Mongols' policy. The Mongols spared artisans and craftsmen and their families. They were separated from their less fortunate fellow citizens and transported to Mongolia, China, Russia and Europe to practice their crafts. Young men were drafted into the Mongolian army; many Muslim women went into the Mongols' hand, and the rest of the survivors were sent into slavery.<sup>295</sup> After Chinggis Khan's death, his progeny continued maintaining and extending his power and policy, especially his war strategies, which were unstoppable.<sup>296</sup>

#### **5.2 CHINGGIS KHAN'S RULE OVER KHORASAN**

In his lifetime, Chinggis Khan divided the land of Khorasan among his children. He said "I shall nominate Ogadai Khan (1186-1241 CE) as my successor". The princes, commanders, notables, his brothers and sons all agreed with his decision. After Chinggis Khan's death in 1227 CE, Ogadai Khan, his third son, became the overlord

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<sup>294</sup> Khwandamir, 16-24.

<sup>295</sup> Ata Malik, 106, 120, 195.

<sup>296</sup> Ata Malik, 27-31.

of his territory. He established his new capital in Karakorum.<sup>297</sup> After occupying all the territories including Khorasan, Chinggis Khan's sons became the leaders of those territories. Afterwards, they established their own states. From that time onwards, the three newly created principal states (i.e. the Golden Horde, the Chagtai Khanate and the Persian Dominion) were formed.<sup>298</sup>

The Golden Horde was under the dominion of his eldest son Juchi (1180-1226 CE). He ruled Karakorum, Khazr, Alani, Russia and Bulgar. He died just before Chinggis Khan's death, and his son Batu Khan inherited his father's territory. Although those areas were under the progeny of Juchi, Ogadai Khan was the overlord of those territories. The main achievements of Ogadai Khan's reign were the invasion of Russia and Eastern Europe. In 1234 CE he further expanded the Chin Empire and modern Manchuria, which became parts of the Golden Horde.<sup>299</sup>

The Chagtai Khanate was the province of Chagtai Khan (1185-1241 CE), the second son of Chinggis Khan, comprising Mawaraunnahr (Transoxiana), Khwarizm, Uighur land, Kashgar, Badakhashtan, Balkh, Ghazni and the territory up to the Indus River.<sup>300</sup>

China and Mongolia and adjacent parts of Mongolia formed the Persian Dominion, ruled by Tolui Khan (1192-1232 CE). He was the father of Mongke, Kublai, Arik Boke and Hulagu Khan; thus, Tolui was the founder of the Great Khanate.<sup>301</sup>

Chinggis Khan's successors continued his expansionist policy. After him, Ogadai Khan became the leader of all the conquered territories. He then fulfilled his father's dream of attacking Jalal al-din bin Khwarizm Shah in 1229 CE. Ogadai's raids against Jalal-al-Din continued in Persia, including Khorasan, for a period of two years. In 1231 CE, a Mongol army consisting of 30,000 men under the command of Jurmaghun invaded the headquarters of Jalal-al-Din at Tibriz in Azerbaijan. The Mongols found Jalal al-Din unprepared, thus they wanted to capture him. However, he held Ghazna for a time, and after escaping once more from the Mongols, he was ultimately killed by a Kurd in the year 1231 CE. Some of his family members were also killed by the Mongols and others were taken as captives. Thus, the Mongols ended the powerful Khwarizm dynasty.

<sup>297</sup> Khwandamir, 27-28; Akhbar Shah, 303.

<sup>298</sup> W. Barthold, *Four Studies....*, 127-130.

<sup>299</sup> Akhbar Shah, 307; David, 125.

<sup>300</sup> Khwandamir, 44.

<sup>301</sup> David, 139.

Afterwards, the Mongols captured the fortress and city of Rukn in Sijistan. Ogadai continued dispatching his armies towards the famous cities of Khorasan. Finally, Ogadai reconquered the whole of Khorasan including Tabaristan, Kabul, Ghaznin and Zabulistan. Under the command of Ogadai Khan, the Mongol forces advanced towards Lahore and destroyed the city in 1241 CE. In the same year, Ogadai Khan died and he was succeeded by Chagta Khan.<sup>302</sup>

Chagta was succeeded by Guyuk Khan (1246-1248 CE), son of Ogadai. During his time, the Mongolian army was ordered to march into China, Iran including Khorasan, Iraq and Hindustan. In 1245 CE, the Mongols invaded Uchh and Multan in the reign of Sultan Ala-al-Din Masud Shah (1242-1246 CE) of Delhi.<sup>303</sup> Guyuk was succeeded by Mangu Khan (1209-1259 CE), son of Tolui who in 1251 CE ascended the throne of Chin and upper Turkistan. Mangu Khan appointed his brother Qublai Khan (1260-1294 CE) to China and sent his younger brother Hulagu Khan (1217-1265 CE) to conquer Iran.<sup>304</sup>

Hulagu, the grandson of Chinggis Khan, began the second wave of Mongol invasions. In 1253 CE, he entered Khorasan with his army and turned his forces against the Ismaili heretics of Alamut. Muidduin Muhammad bin Ilqami, who invited Hulagu to conquer Baghdad, was the wazir of Mutasim Billah (1242-1258 CE), the Abbasid Caliph. Hulagu came to Baghdad and killed Mutasim Billah, and Baghdad was plundered and destroyed. Thus, the fall of Baghdad was also a great loss for the Muslims.<sup>305</sup>

One important aspect of Chinggis Khan's rule is that his progeny adopted his ideology. Some of his ideologies like the plundering system were also continued by the Mongols. When they conquered any land, they annihilated all living creatures and demolished cities and walls. They burnt all the conquered lands and thus the fertility of those lands decreased. The impact was so painful that a large number of people were killed and uprooted from such areas. Even a century later, when Ibn Batuta

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<sup>302</sup> Muhammad Aziz Ahmad, 88-91.

<sup>303</sup> Muhammad Aziz Ahmad, 88-91.

<sup>304</sup> Ibid., 90-92.

<sup>305</sup> Mazhar ul-Haq, *A Short History of Islam: From the Rise of Islam to the Fall of Baghdad* (Lahore :Bookland, 1993), 703-705.

visited Bukhara, Samarqand and Balkh and other cities of Khorasan, he found that a large number of ruins still remained.<sup>306</sup>

After settling in the Muslim territories, the Mongols began to use their own Uighur language. From that time the Uighur language became famous as a medium of instruction (i.e. in education, administration and general communication). Besides this, other local Turkic languages were also developed. This led to the progressive decline of the Arabic language in central Asia.<sup>307</sup>

Chinggis Khan and his son Chagta Khan were followers of Shamanist beliefs.<sup>308</sup> Many Shamanist thoughts were spread in Khorasan, for example, during the reign of Chagta, no Muslim dared to slaughter sheep or camel with a knife in front of the Mongols. Mongols used to kill animals by pulling out the hearts using their hands. Another Yasa is that anyone who blew his nose into running water was executed. Finally, after conquering the Muslim land, Mongols continued using the same military tactics which Chinggis Khan introduced. Because of their warlike culture, within a century, they conquered half of the world and that century is called the Mongol era.<sup>309</sup>

### 5.3 THE IMPACT OF ISLAM ON THE MONGOLS

During Chinggis Khan's period, Mongols were largely illiterate, whereas Khorasan was a centre of knowledge and education. Almost all Muslims in Khorasan were educated. A high proportion of people in Khorasani society were educated, especially the governing classes. Many notables, scientists and philosophers also spread their intellectual philosophy all over Khorasan. Because of their intellectual brilliance they built mosques, meeting places, libraries, schools, hospitals and business centres. In the 13<sup>th</sup> century, Chinggis Khan mercilessly killed thousands of people and destroyed all their intellectual institutions and faculties while conquering Khorasan. As the Mongols were uneducated, they used the Muslim captives as their slaves, but later the Mongols appointed knowledgeable Muslims in various administrative posts like *qadi*, jurists and advisers. The Qublai dynasty employed many Muslims as tax collectors and in administrative posts because they were well educated, honest, well-mannered and had efficient administrative abilities. For example, Sayyid Ajjal Shams Al-Din

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<sup>306</sup> Ibn Batuta: Travels in Asia and Africa; translated and selected by H.A.R.Gibb (George Routledge and sons Ltd: London, 1929), 43.

<sup>307</sup> Ahmad Elyas, 57-58.

<sup>308</sup> David, 170-172.

<sup>309</sup> Ibid., 39-40; Ira M, 228.

Umar (1211-1297 CE), the most influential Muslim at that time, was promoted from an army officer in the Mongol army to become a judge, and later as a ruler in China, where he set about establishing a good number of Islamic schools and mosques.<sup>310</sup>

As Muslims continued assisting the Mongol rulers, the Mongols recognized the importance of Islamic education in society. Mongols also benefitted from Muslim astronomy and medicine. During Kublai Khan's period, he invited scholars in China. Among the scholars, the most famous was Jamal-al-Din, who helped the Chinese to set up an astronomical observatory in 1267 CE. Afterwards, the Chinese developed a more accurate calendar with the aid of Muslim astronomers and their advanced technology. Mongols also got many ideas on advanced medicine from the Muslims. They brought a number of doctors from Khorasan to every conquered region in China.<sup>311</sup>

The Mongols saw the human dignity given by Islam in every field of life, like rituals, prayers, manners, behavior etc. For example, when a noble Mongol dies, beautiful young maidens would be buried with him to serve him in the afterlife. Under the shade of Islam, they learned that living creatures should not be buried alive. Another example is the Mongol tradition that one who bathed in a river should be executed; such restrictions on cleanliness and rustic disciplinary measures contrasted poorly with the cosmopolitan Islamic society of Khorasan. Thus, by the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, most of the Mongols in Khorasan and Central Asia had accepted Islam.<sup>312</sup>

Chinggis Khan's third son Ogadai Khan reconquered Khorasan by defeating Jalal-al-Din. There he observed full Islamic culture. He was noted for his soft manner of dealing with Muslims. The author of *Habib-us Siyar* has given many good examples of his goodwill to Islam.<sup>313</sup>

One day someone who did not accept Islam came to Ogadai Khan and said, "I dreamed of Chinggis Khan last night, and he said, 'Tell Ogadai to spare no effort in killing Muslims'." After listening to this, Ogadai asked that man "Did the Khan say this to you himself or was the message given through an interpreter?"

"The Khan said the words directly to me," he answered.

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<sup>310</sup> Khwandamir, 38.

<sup>311</sup> Ira M, 229.

<sup>312</sup> Ira M., 229.

<sup>313</sup> Khwandamir, 27-31; Akhbar Shah, 304-307.

“Do you know Mongolian?” asked Ogadai Khan.

“No”, he answered.

“Then you are obviously a liar”, said Ogadai Khan.

“Gengis khan knew no language other than Mongolian”. Then he ordered the liar to be tortured in fulfillment of the dictum, ‘May he who digs a hole for his brother fall into it’.<sup>314</sup>

Another example of Ogadai Khan’s reign:

It was the custom of the Mongols that no sheep or other animal should be slaughtered by the knife across the throat; rather the animal’s breast should be slit. One day a Muslim brought a sheep, took it home, shut the door tight, and drew a knife across its throat. By chance, a Qipchaq who was hiding on the roof witnessed this and immediately rushed down, grabbed the man by the arm, and took him to the Khan’s court, where, through the intermediary of some court officials, he reported the crime.

“This Muslim has obeyed our order by killing the sheep in private” said Ogdai Khan, “whereas you have contravened our yasa by going up on his roof. Let the Muslim go, and execute the Qipchaq”.<sup>315</sup>

Qublai Khan (1215-1294 CE), the grandson of Chinggis Khan spent much time with the scholars of Islam. Many times he appointed Muslims to high positions, like *qadi*, jurist etc. Qublai Khan used to attend to administrative affairs from sunrise until noon, and then he used to gather the Islamic scholars. During his time, the Quran was translated into Mongolian.<sup>316</sup>

One of his viziers was a nephew of Sayyid Ajall Bukhari (1211-1297 CE), a famous scholar. That Muslim performed such good service that Qublai summoned him to the throne during the very year he gained independence and appointed him to the post of the vizierate. Sayyid Ajall’s son Nasiruddin Abubakar became the governor of Qarachanak. His grandson, also called Sayyid Ajall, had spent nearly 25

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<sup>314</sup>Ibid., 29.

<sup>315</sup>Ibid.

<sup>316</sup> Khwandamir, 38.

years in great prosperity as an administrator. After his death, Amir Ahmed Banakati was appointed as vizier and he became a favourite of the Khan because of his perspicacity and cleverness.<sup>317</sup>

Batu Khan (1207-1255 CE) was also generous towards Muslims. He wrote grants for everything he could for the Sultan of Anatolia and Syria. He constantly planted the seeds of beneficence and generosity in the minds of all nations.<sup>318</sup> Qaidu Khan (1236-1303 CE) also preferred Islam to all other religions and he always held discussions with the learned and wise, commanding them to engage in debates and exchanges of views. He treated his subjects and underlings extremely well.<sup>319</sup>

During the reign of Hulagu, Nasir al-din Tusi (1201-1274 CE) compiled new astronomical tables called *al-Zij –al Ilkhani* with the help of Hulagu. It is said that he compiled 400,000 volumes of astronomical tables in his library, brought from various places in the world. He also built an observatory at Margha in 1271 CE. Hulagu's great grand son Ghazan Khan (r. 1295-1304 CE) converted to Islam. He was a devoted Muslim Mongol ruler who wholeheartedly sacrificed his time and energy to the revivification of Islamic culture.<sup>320</sup> He established Islam as the state religion of the Ilkhanate. Ghazan and his vizier Khwaja Rashid al-Din Fazlullah (r. 1258-1260 CE) brought Iran, including Khorasan, a partial and brief economic revival.<sup>321</sup> The author of *Habib-us-Siyar* described this event:

Ghazan Khan appointed religious servants and trusted men of good will to search the cheats and report them to the representatives of court. By this means many of the forgivers of evil and corrupt men were uncovered and when their false documents were rendered null and void, no one thought again of making false claims.<sup>322</sup>

Thus, in Ghazan's time, the Mongols lowered taxes for artisans, improved agriculture, rebuilt and extended irrigation systems and improved the safety of the trade routes. As a result, commerce automatically increased. Items from India, China

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<sup>317</sup> Ibid.

<sup>318</sup> Ibid., 43.

<sup>319</sup> Ibid., 41.

<sup>320</sup> David, 146-148; Ira M., 228.

<sup>321</sup> Khwandamir, 81.

<sup>322</sup> Ibid., 90.

and Iran passed easily across the Asian steppes and these contracts culturally enriched Iran in general and Khorasan in particular. Later, in 1240 CE, Ulug Beg, the grandson of Tamar Lane, built his observatory at Samarqand. He assembled the best mathematicians there and made many astronomical devices. Thus, Samarqand and Bukhara remained important centres of learning.<sup>323</sup>

#### 5.4 CONCLUSION

After the conquest of China, Chinggis Khan's armies destroyed Muslim cities in Khorasan, which was a unique land in Central Asia. This land was considered the financial and cultural capital of the Muslim world. It produced a huge number of religious scholars, scientists, historians, poets and great rulers of that time. From the beginning of the 8<sup>th</sup> century until the time of Chinggis Khan's conquest, Muslim intellectuals continued to produce great works in science, technology and religious studies. Muslims were highly productive in their respective fields of knowledge. They were also completely active in the essential task of preaching Islam, so that within a short time Islam spread over the other parts of the world.

Due to the growth of their prestige and power, some Muslims neglected their religious practices, which caused disunity among them. Due to this disunity, they became weak and cowardly against their enemies. Besides this, Muslims divided themselves into many sects like Shia-Sunni and other minor sects that brought mutual jealousy, sectarian feelings and unethical fighting. Due to this, Muslims were unable to sense the impending danger of the Mongol attack. With a single blow the Mongols completely routed them. The Mongol attack destroyed the fabric of Muslim civilization in Khorasan, which reached the verge of collapse. The population was brutally decimated by the Mongol war machine, and many young women were enslaved as concubines (causing many of them to take their own lives, to protect their dignity and honor). With the destruction of Khorasan, the whole Muslim civilization and culture completely collapsed.

Chinggis Khan's attack is a reminder and eye-opener for the Muslims who sowed the seed of disunity among themselves. Thus, Chinggis Khan's attack gives a

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<sup>323</sup> Seyyed Hossein Nasr, 81; Philip K. Hitti, *History of the Arabs* (London: Macmillan Press Ltd, 1970), 378; Ira M., 230.

new perspective for people who consider the world intellectually. His attack not only destroyed a well-built civilization and culture, but also the Muslims' glory in Khorasan. The collapse of Khorasan and the attendant Muslim weakness gives us material for re-thinking our existence in Khorasan; one of the most glorious civilizations that mankind produced was destroyed by previously unheard-of peoples due to internal disunity.

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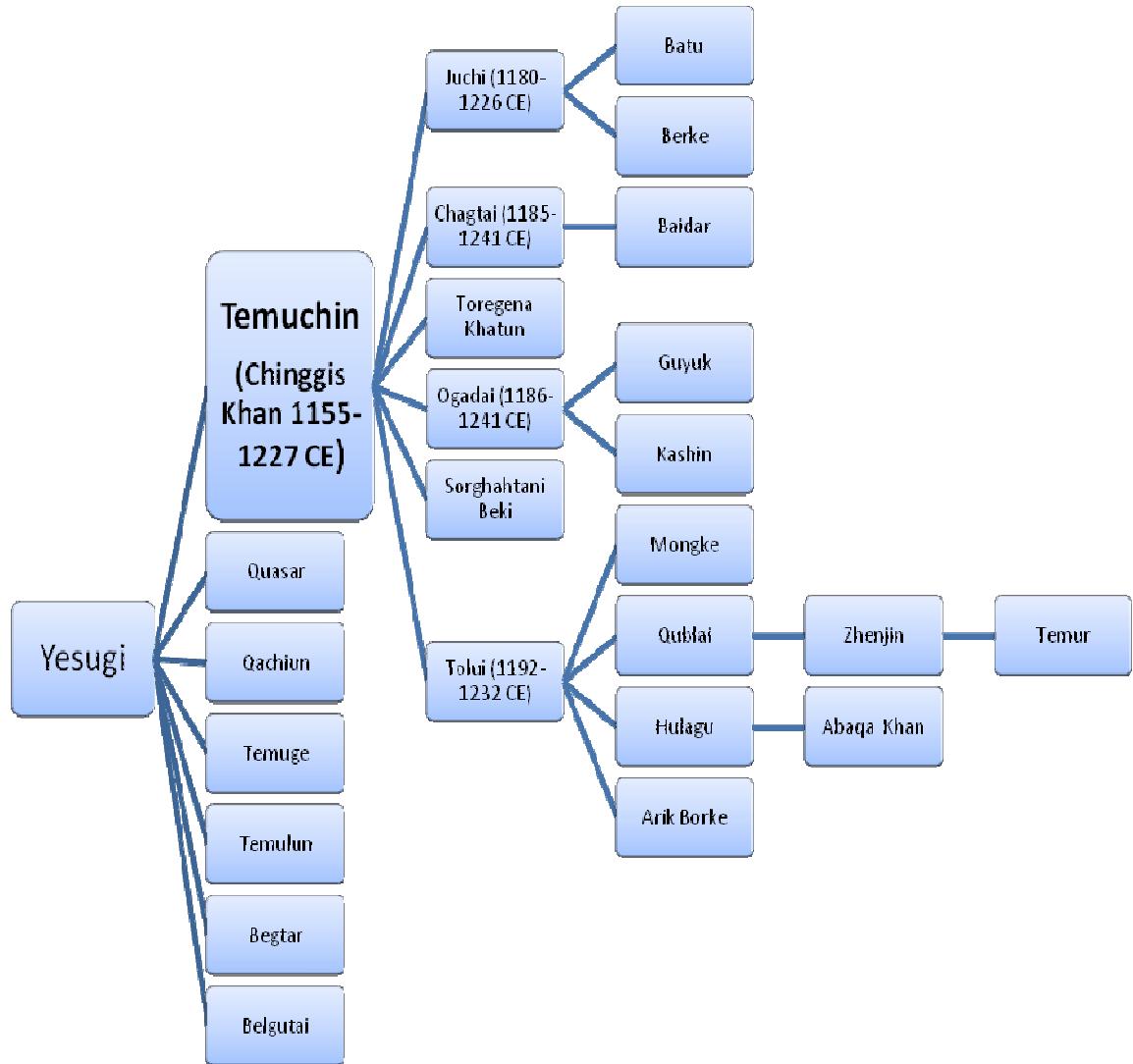
## LIST OF THE DYNASTIES IN KHORASAN

<u>The Period</u>	<u>Dynasties</u>
675-330 BCE	The Achaemenids
808-300 BCE	The Macedonians
323-63 BCE	The Seleucids
247 BCE-224 CE	The Parthians
175 BCE-127 CE	The Kushans
441-453CE	The Huns
224-651 CE	The Sassanids
661-750CE	The Umayyads
750-1258 CE	The Abbasids
821-873 CE	The Tahirids
867-903 CE	The Saffarids
819-1005 CE	The Samanids
977-1030CE	The Ghaznavids
1037-1192 CE	The Seljuks
1149-1212 CE	The Ghurids
1177-1231CE	The Khwarizmi
1219 CE onwards	The Mongols

## CHRONOLOGY OF CHINGGIS KHAN

- 1206 CE: Chinggis Khan unified all the Mongol and Tatar tribes.
- 1215 CE: Chinggis Khan conquered the kingdom of the Chin Empire.
- 1218 CE: The Mongols conquered the kingdom of the Kara-Khitai Khanate.
- 1219 CE: Chinggis Khan crossed the Sayr Daria and marched towards the city of Otrar.
- 1220 CE: Chinggis Khan conquered the town of Nur, Bukhara and Samarqand.
- 1221 CE: Chinggis Khan conquered Balkh, Marv (Uzbekistan) and Herat (Afghanistan).
- 1222 CE: Chinggis Khan surrounded Jalal al-Din on the banks of the Indus River.
- 1224 CE: Chinggis Khan divided his empire into khanates ruled by his four sons Juchi (western part), Ogadai (southern Siberia and western Mongolia), Chagtaï (Transoxania and Kara-Khitai), Tolui (the all Mongol lands).
- 1225 CE: Juchi died and his son Batu inherited his khanate.
- 1226 CE: Chinggis Khan attacked the Soong state.
- 1227 CE: Chinggis Khan passed away and is succeeded by Ogadai Khan; from that time onwards, the three newly created principal states i.e. the Golden Horde, the Chagtaï Khanate and the Persian Dominion were formed.

## CHINGGIS KHAN'S FAMILY TREE



\*All the names of Chinggis Khan's family members have taken from the books which are: *Genghis Khan: The History of the World Conqueror* and the anonymous *Secret History of the Mongols*.

## GLOSSARY

**Achaemenid:** Achaemenid was the first empire in Khorasan.

**Anda:** Some kind of friendship used by the Mongols.

**Arav:** The unit of 10.

**Balkh:** Balkh is an ancient city which was also known as Bactria. The city is situated in the south side of Amudarya River. It was also one of the major cities of Khorasan. The land of this city is fertile. Marko polo described the city Balkh as a “noble and great city.”

**Bukhara:** Bukhara is very old city which is situated on the Silk Route. During Muslim era, this city became very famous and many prominent scholars like Ibn Bardizbah, Ibn Sina and Abubakr Narshahkhi were born there.

**Ghazni:** Ghazni was an ancient city. During the Ghaznavid period, it became capital of the Ghaznavid rulers.

**Herat:** Herat was a large city in Khorasan before the emergence of the Mongols.

**Huns:** They were a group of nomadic people. In 441 CE, the Huns conquered Khorasan.

**Kabul:** Kabul is an ancient city. In Rigveda the word Kuva is mentioned which refers to the Kabul River. In the early 9<sup>th</sup> century, the first Muslim Kingdom was ruled by Shahi, thus, from that time, the

kingdom is known as Kabul Shahi.

**Kara-Khitai:** Kara Khitai was a Chinese state. Muslim historians referred to it as *Khitay* or *Khitai*. It was only after the Mongol conquest that the state began to be referred to in the Muslim world as the *Kara-Khitai* or *Qara-Khitai*.

**Ketails:** A group of early nomadic people lived in Steppe.

**Khan:** Khan was a noble title of a great leader. It was a custom of the Mongol society that the man who can ascend the throne of the Khanate would get the title Khan.

**Khatun:** Khatun is a female title of nobility first used in Central Asia including Khorasan.

**Khiva:** According to the Arab legend, it was an ancient town founded by a son of Noah. In the 8<sup>th</sup> century CE, Islam came in that region. Until the 13<sup>th</sup> century it was only a Muslim town.

**Kushans:** In 175 BCE, the Kushans (175 BCE-127 CE) ruled Khorasan.

**Macedonians:** Alexander the Great (r. 331-323 BCE) was the ruler of the Macedonian empire and Khorasan became the part of his empire.

**Markits:** The Markits were the early nomadic tribe lived in Steppe who were very strong and powerful tribe.

**Marv:** Marv is one of the oldest oasis-cities along the Silk Route in Central Asia. It became famous during the Muslim era because the Abbasid caliph al-Mamun made Marv, the capital of the Muslim world.

- Mingguham:** The unit of 1000.
- Naimans:** Naimans were a group of people dwelling on the Steppe. Before the 13<sup>th</sup> century, their cultures were deemed more advanced than Mongols.
- Nishapur:** In the 9<sup>th</sup> century CE, Nishapur was the capital of Tahirid and Saffarids dynasties. During the Tahirid's period, culturally and economically it became very developed. In the 12<sup>th</sup> century CE, it was a major city and the capital of Khorasan and one of the great centers of the learning in the East.
- Nokor:** Some kind of treaty with enemies used by Chinggis Khan.
- Onggirats:** Onggirats were nomads lived in Steppe particularly in the south-east of Bayr-noor.
- Parthians:** The Perthians were a group of the early tribes. In 281 BCE, they established their supremacy in Khorasan.
- Quada:** The word *quada* is used by Mongols which means matrimonial alliance.
- Quriltai:** Quriltai was a great assembly where all the important questions were discussed. This *quriltai* used to be conducted under the direction and the rule of Khan.
- Saffarids:** It was an Islamic dynasty in Khorasan. Yaqub Ibn Laith al-Saffer (867-879 CE) was the first and the most important ruler of the Saffarid dynasty.
- Samarqand:** Samarqand also located near the river Zeravshan. It is opposite side of the city Bukhara. In the early era of Islam, this city was famous

for paper industry.

**Seleucids:** King Seleucus laid the foundation of the Seleucids empire.

**Tahirids:** The Tahirids was a first independent Islamic dynasty in Khorasan. Its capital was Nishapur.

**Tartars:** Tartars were very strong and powerful tribes in the Steppe.

**Ghaznavids:** It was the Muslim dynasty in Central Asia. Sultan Mahmud (998-1030 CE) was the most famous ruler of Ghazna and in his time Ghaznavids became famous.

**Khwarizmi:** Ala-al-Din Tekish's son Muhammad Ibn Ala al-Din Tekish (1200-1220 CE) was the first ruler of Khwarizm empire. In 1200 CE, he conquered all of the Seljuk Empire and proclaimed himself Khwarizm Shah Muhammad Ibn Tekish.

**Samanids:** The Samanids was one of the Muslim dynasties in Central Asia whose capital was Bukhara. Saman i-Khuda (819-864 CE) was the founder of the Samanids. He was converted to Islam during the reign of the Abbasid Caliph al-Mamun.

**Seljuks:** Tughrul Beg (1038-1063 CE) was the most famous ruler of the Seljuk dynasty. Seljuks ruled over a vast empire in Central and Western Asia.

**Tumen:** The unit of 10,000.

**Tus:** Tus is an ancient city of Khorasan. Many prominent scholars like Nizam al Mulk and Nasir al-Din Tusi were born there.

**Uighurs:** The Uighurs were one of the nomadic tribes in Steppe. In about 745

CE, the famous Uighur tribe settled near Mongolia. Although, they were nomads, they had their own alphabets, known as the Uighur script.

***Yasa:*** The Mongols' laws.

***Zuat:*** The unit of 100.