

THE MILITARY POTENTIAL AND DEVELOPMENT OF MILITARY ART OF THE
KHOREZMSHAHS - ANUSHTEGINID STATE

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Abstract. This article provides information on the military potential, composition, and size of the Anushteginid dynasty of Khoazmshah, who united twenty-seven states under a single flag in the 13th century, based on an analysis of sources.

Keywords. weapons, Seljuks, army supply, Kara-Chinese, mercenary army.

In the formation of Jalaluddin Manguberdi as a capable commander, the level of military power of the Khorezmshahs-Anushteginid state, the military environment and traditions formed in the state, and the existing conditions were of great importance. Therefore, before talking about the military art of Jalaluddin Manguberdi, it is necessary to analyze, first of all, the military potential of the Khorezmshahs-Anushteginid state, the traditions of military art formed in this state, the supply of troops, their number and ethnic composition, types of military weapons, and the issues of military strategy and tactics formed in the state.

In the 10th-12th centuries, a mixture of various military traditions was formed in the territory of Khorezm, which was formally part of a single political-administrative unit, first within the Samanid and Ghaznavid states, and later within the Seljuk states. In addition, the military traditions of the Karakhanid, Ghurid and Karakhitai states that formed in Central Asia, Khorasan and the Seven Seas in the following centuries also played an important role in the development of the military sphere of the Anushteginid state.

The Khorezmshah - Anushteginid state from its emergence to its crisis to further improve its military potential, to make the army the most powerful of its time perfect. They certainly tried to provide weapons and replenish their numbers, and to ensure the uninterrupted supply of troops.

As in all states of that time, the army of Khorezm during the early Anushteginid period consisted of a regular army. However, over time, the army of the Khorezmshahs also lost its fighting ability under the influence of the laws of society based on land ownership, like the Samanids, Ghaznavids, Seljuks, Karakhanids and Karakhitai states. At the same time, the regular army lost its importance and turned into a mercenary army.

It is known from the history of world military art that any country that relies on mercenary forces ultimately leads to the weakening of the state and, ultimately, to crisis.

The heavily armed Khorezmian cavalry, which served as the main elite army of the Khazar Khaganate as early as the 10th century, gradually gave way to a mercenary army consisting of various units united on a tribal basis.

Each of these tribal-mercenary army formations had its own style of armament or types of military weapons, its own fighting methods. For example, V.V. Bartold, who has deeply studied the history of the Khorezmshah-Anushteginid state and the Mongol invasion of Central Asia, writes that the army of the Khorezmshahs during this period consisted only of mercenaries and in most cases they could not get along with the local population[3].

We can obtain fragmentary information about the size of the Khorezmshah-Anushteginid army on the eve of the Mongol invasion, its military equipment, and the types of military weapons from written sources of that period and later. However, it should be emphasized that the information

from these sources should not always be taken as accurate, especially since it was common in medieval source studies in all regions to exaggerate the number of troops.

In particular, some sources state that the total number of the army of the Khorezmshahs on the eve of the Mongol invasion reached 400,000 people. Z. Buniyadov cites that on the eve of the Mongol invasion, the Khorezm state had a total of 540,000 warriors.

True, if we analyze the lands under the control of the Anushtegini dynasty geographically and by population, most of these territories were densely populated and economically developed. This means that the state had a very large military reserve. However, if we look at the information in the sources, we see that according to the military laws of that period, only a very small part of the population was involved in the military sphere. Because, firstly, the largest part of the population who were able to work or hold weapons in their hands was tied to the land, that is, they formed the peasant class and were not subject to military service. Secondly, the purchasing power of this peasant class, which constituted the largest majority, was low and did not have the means to purchase weapons. Because written sources fully confirm that military weapons were very expensive and that not everyone could afford to buy most of them.

Most of the information we find in sources about the size of the Khorezmshah-Anushteginid army does not correspond to historical truth.

In particular, if we look at the sources, we can see that in the early years of his reign, Alauddin Muhammad Khorezmshah was able to field up to 70,000 cavalry in a few days. How can we understand the information that about 100,000 cavalry participated in his campaign against Iran-Iraq in 1214, and that in the war with the Kara-Chinese in 1211 and 1212 he fielded only 400,000 cavalry against them [2]. It is difficult to imagine how so many horses could be fed during a military campaign, and secondly, how so many cavalry could move during campaigns. Even when this cavalry moved in dense formations, this column of troops easily covered a distance of 100-200 km. This information does not make sense, even if we take into account the high cost of horses and the way they were raised and maintained in fighting condition.

In general, no researcher has analyzed this data so far. Only the Turkish scholar Maryam Gorbuz has analyzed this issue, considering the relative size of the army. However, she also emphasizes the large size of the Khorezmshahs' army. In fact, as we noted above, if we pay close attention to the information found in the sources about the size of the army, it is difficult to determine the exact size of the Khorezmshahs' army. However, even the results of estimates based on the numbers given in the sources should be treated with skepticism. As the Turkish researcher Kafesoglu noted, it should not be forgotten that "it was common for oriental authors to greatly exaggerate the size of the army" [4]. The only thing that is certain is that the Khorezmshahs' army was the largest in the Islamic world in terms of size during the reigns of Sultan Takash and Sultan Alauddin Muhammad. Because, in the process of development of the Anushteginid state, by the time of Sultan Takash, this state had already reached the level of an empire and its entire army was not yet composed of completely mercenary troops, but also an army at the disposal of the state. In addition, it should be taken into account that as a result of Takash's marriage to Turkon Khotun, many warring groups came from the Dashti Kipchak. In fact, based on the information in the Khorezmshahs' "Devon-i Arz" notebooks, according to the information given to the Abbasid Caliph by Sultan Takash about the number of the army, the number of the Khorezm state army was one hundred and seventy thousand cavalry in 1195[4]. This number may be the number of cavalry that made up the main army, and if infantry is added to it, this number will naturally increase further.

The number of troops may have increased further during the reign of Sultan Alauddin Muhammad. However, now the situation, composition and quality of this army have undergone significant changes, and the army of the Khorezmshahs has now acquired a purely mercenary character. Nasavi, describing the Sultan's situation when he was about to travel to Iraq (1217),

indicates that his power was at its peak, and notes that the number of his soldiers was more than four hundred thousand. According to Nasavi, Sultan Alauddin was proud of this military strength.[1] Although Nasavi's figure is exaggerated, Alauddin Muhammad's army was larger than the armies of other states of his time.

In 1218, Sultan Alauddin Muhammad organized a parade with one hundred and fifty thousand cavalry, and the Sultan had about one hundred thousand infantry.[2]

The main information about the size of the army during the reign of Sultan Alauddin Muhammad can be obtained from the military measures taken by the Sultan after it became known that the Mongols had begun their campaign against the Khorezmshahs. Accordingly, Sultan Muhammad, instead of directly meeting and resisting the Mongol army with his own military forces at the military council, approved a plan aimed at defending the region and distributing his army to cities and fortresses. The numbers of this deployment, according to our sources, were as follows: Fifty thousand soldiers were added to the twenty thousand soldiers in Otrar, and Karacha Khajib was also sent to help him with ten thousand soldiers. Twenty thousand soldiers in Bukhara were supported by another thirty thousand soldiers. There were one hundred thousand soldiers in Samarkand. Other forces, the number of which was not specified, were also stationed in Termez, Balkh, the Vahsh region, the Tokharistan and Ghur regions, Zand, Sighnaghi, Barchinligkent, Banokand, and Khujand. There were also sufficient forces in Merv, Nakhshab, and Nishapur . [1]

It is clear that the exact size of the Khorezm army during the reign of Alauddin Muhammad Khorezmshah cannot be determined with certainty. However, the number of troops reached a very large number for its time. When Nasavi, in protest at the Khorezmshah's relatively flawed plan on the eve of the Mongol invasion, said, "If the Sultan had remained in a position to fight face to face, such a large army would have been gathered in one place that no one had ever seen such an army," he was referring to the fact that the Khorezm army was numerically superior to the Mongols.[1]

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