

Military Art of The Peoples of Central Asia Against the Troops of Genghis Khan in The Middle Ages

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Abstract. The article talks about the peoples of Central Asia in the Middle Ages against the aggressive actions of the troops of Genghis Khan/ o the tactics used by the two sides, tactical techniques, form, methods of combat by the Khorezmshah and Mongols.

Key words: tactical techniques, harassment, mamluk, warrior, catapult, siege engines, wall-piercing devices.

The military art of the Middle Ages received significant development in the aggressive campaigns of Genghis Khan and his ancestors. At the beginning of the 13th century. In distant Mongolia, a nomadic state arose, the unifier and creator of which was Temujin, who received the name Genghis Khan.

In a short period of time, he created a large, well-armed army. In 1206, Genghis Khan ousted the Mergit and Naiman tribes, and in 1207-1208. captured the northern part of Semirechye and conquered the Uyghurs; in 1209 he made a campaign against the Tangut state, located in the northeastern part of China. Having captured large booty and slaves, he returned to Mongolia. In the following 1211-1214. he made several campaigns in China, and in 1215 he occupied Beijing and annexed Northern China to Mongolia. Genghis Khan's military successes were due to the high organization of troops, strict discipline, great mobility, endurance of soldiers in campaigns and courage in battles.

The basis of the Mongol army was cavalry, armed with bows and arrows, sabers, axes and iron clubs. The bow was the main weapon of the Mongols. The troops were also armed with ballistae for throwing large arrows, catapults and special machines for throwing pots of burning oil. This military equipment was borrowed by the Mongols from the Chinese.

The main form of warfare of the Mongols was the offensive. The campaign plan was drawn up in advance and necessarily after familiarization with the enemy's country and its military forces. Experienced military leaders who gathered for a council (kurultai) took part in drawing up the plan. After drawing up the plan, the Great Khan's demand was sent to the country chosen for the attack: to submit without resistance and accept the conditions presented, the essence of which was the destruction of military defensive structures, the admission of Mongol troops to its territory, the payment of an annual tribute and the recruitment of a certain number warriors. The acceptance of peaceful conditions did not save the country from devastation, but only made it easier for the winner to conquer it. Mongol commanders used intimidation and treachery constantly. This was one of the means to "win with ease." Entering a particular country, Mongol commanders usually immediately used the most brutal measures in order to intimidate the enemy and break his will to resist.

Dividing your opponents during the war and thereby facilitating their defeat was one of the rules of Genghis Khan and his commanders.

The Mongols always strived for a surprise attack. While conducting an offensive, in order to take the enemy by surprise, they often made deceptive movements. If a surprise attack failed, then the Mongol commanders used a false retreat to force the enemy to leave their positions and go into pursuit. Feigned retreat and attacking the enemy from ambush in order to force him to move forward and backward were also practiced during field battles.

The main tactical method of the Mongols was to use the actions of the advanced units - light cavalry - to wear down and throw the enemy into disarray, and then deliver a decisive blow with all their might. The Mongols avoided large frontal battles, preferring attacks on the enemy's flanks or attacks from several directions at once.



Mongols warrior: heavily and lightly armed

Having consolidated the successes achieved in Northern China, Genghis Khan turned his attention to the state of Khorezmshah, located on a large territory of Central Asia. At the beginning, good relations were established between Genghis Khan and Khorezmshah. They exchanged good messages, ambassadors and gifts.

The state of Khorezmshah was one of the powerful states of that time. Its borders reached the Aral Sea and the Kipchak steppes in the north, the Indian Ocean in the south, India in the east and Iraq in the west.

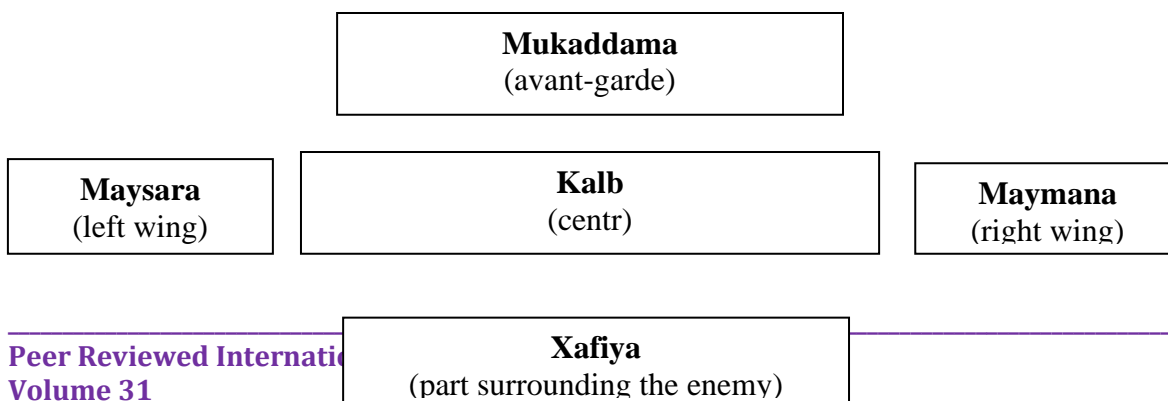
The total number of Khorezmshah's troops reached more than 400 thousand soldiers. The army consisted of cavalry and infantry; in addition, in case of war, a collection of people's militia was announced. During military campaigns, the people's militia did not receive salaries, but were content with booty. The majority of the army was cavalry, which included heavy, light and camel cavalry. The basis of the Khorezm army were Turkic warriors, individual units and units of which were organized according to their tribal affiliation.

The peace of the Khorezm shahs was protected by special units of bodyguards (kharas), which were recruited from the Mamluks (warrior-slave). The army of Sultan Muhammad Alauddin included 10 thousand bodyguards.

Khorezm warriors were armed with swords, spears, bows and arrows. For the assault and siege of fortresses, they were armed with catapults (manjanik), siege engines (dabbabat), "turtles", walking towers (mataris), wall-piercing devices (zhamalukat) and ladders (salalim).

The defense of the border of the Khorezmshah state relied on strong fortresses surrounded by strong and high walls. The garrisons of these fortresses were commanded by mustakhfizi.

The battle formation of the Khorezm army during the battles consisted of four parts. Ahead of the army was the vanguard (muqaddama or yazak). The second line consisted of the right wing (maymana), the center (qalb) and the left wing (maysara). The rear of the army was covered by a rearguard (muakhhara). A special unit (khafia) was built separately, which was intended to complete the defeat of the enemy and encircle him, i.e. acted as a reserve.



Khorezmshah Sultan Muhammad Alauddin (reigned 1200-1220) was called by his subordinates “Iskandari Sonii” (the second Alexander the Great) because in 1210 he defeated the army of the Karakitas, who previously dominated Central Asia.

At the end of 1218, the first clash between the troops of Khorezmshah and the Mongols took place. At that time, Mongol troops were conducting military operations against the Mergit tribe, who fled to the Kipchak steppes bordering the possessions of Khorezmshah.

Khorezmshah Muhammad with 60 thousand. The army headed north, crossed the Irgiz River and overtook the Mongols in the Turgai steppe. Their leader was Genghis Khan's eldest son Jochi. In the three-day battle between them, about 20 thousand warriors from among the Khorezmians were killed, and the Mongols - much less. On the fourth day, Jochi withdrew his army. In this skirmish, the eldest son of Khorezmshah Jalal ad-Din Manguberdi (1199 - 1231) demonstrated his military skills for the first time. If not for his personal courage and bravery, the Khorezmians could have suffered a crushing defeat. After returning to Genghis Khan's headquarters, Jochi told his father about the state of the Khorezm troops and the personal courage of Jalal ad-Din Manguberdi.

In 1218, Genghis Khan equipped a huge trade and embassy caravan of 440 people and 500 camels, loaded with gold, silver, Chinese silk and other valuable goods. At the end of 1218, the caravan arrived at the border town of Otrar. And here, by order of the commandant of the fortress, the caravan was plundered, and the warriors and caravanners accompanying it were killed. All this meant a complete break in trade and diplomatic relations. It became clear that war could not be avoided.

Assessing the impending military danger, Khorezmshah council at which war tactics were to be developed. Khorezmshah, conspiracy by the Kipchak military leaders, rejected the proposal to the main army in one place and strike at the Mongols and adopted a dismember the army into individual cities, relying on their fortifications and well-armed garrisons. For example, the following troops were allocated for the defense of large cities: Samarkand 110 Bukhara 50 thousand. An additional 20 thousand soldiers were sent garrison. This tactic led to the fact that the troops of Muhammad Khorezmshah were scattered. This made it possible for Genghis defeat the troops of Khorezmshah piece by piece.

In 1219, Genghis Khan, at the head of a huge army, moved to fortress. There is no consensus on the total number of Genghis troops that approached and surrounded the Otrar fortress. According experts, the number of troops that went on the campaign reached thousand people.

In September of the same year, the siege of Otrar began. The of the fortress offered courageous resistance to the invaders. The siege of the city dragged on. Genghis Khan split his huge army into four parts. The siege of Otrar was entrusted to the troops of the second and third sons of Genghis Khan - Chigatai and Ogedei. The main forces of the Mongols, led by Genghis Khan, headed through the Kyzilkum desert to Bukhara. After a six-month siege, the Otrar fortress was taken.

In February 1220, Genghis Khan with his main forces approached Bukhara, which was poorly prepared for defense. The garrison left by Khorezm Shah after an unsuccessful night attack on the Mongol camp left the city and was ingloriously exterminated.



Central Asia warrior dressed in chain mail

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After the capture of Bukhara in March 1220, Genghis Khan's troops began a campaign against the city of Samarkand. Attaching great importance to the defense of the city, Khorezmshah concentrated thousands of troops here and strengthened the city walls.

Genghis Khan stayed in the suburbs and directed the siege from there. On the third day of the siege and bloody battles near the walls of the ancient city, a foray of the people's militia was carried out, which was defeated by Genghis Khan. After this defeat, the city's highest officials decided to capitulate, sent a deputation to Genghis Khan and surrendered the city. Massacres and robberies began in the city. A handful of defenders took refuge in the cathedral mosque and heroically resisted. They all died in the burned mosque.

The third detachment of Genghis Khan's troops, moving up the Syr Darya, took the city of Benaket, then went to Khojent, whose ruler was Temur Malik, a brave, gifted military leader. However, under pressure from the superior forces of the Mongols, he was forced to leave the city and took refuge with 1000 soldiers on one of the fortified islands on the Syr Darya. Having manufactured 12 special ships protected from burning arrows, Temur Malik daily inflicted blows and significant losses on the enemy. When the food began to run out, Temur Malik equipped the ships and, by the light of torches, sailed down the river at night under a hail of Mongol arrows from both banks. Having suffered losses, Temur Malik reached Jend. Here defenders disembarked from the boats and into a fierce battle. In an unequal battle, of Temur Malik's warriors died, and he with a small group of comrades, at the cost losses, reached Urgench¹, where he was a hero.



Warship Temur Malik on the Syrdarya

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In the fall of 1220, after fierce the Mongols occupied Termez and the city to plunder and destruction.

Khorezm has not yet been affected by actions. This rich agricultural region was on all sides by the desert and the Aral Sea. In Khorezm, command of the troops passed to the hero of Khujand Temur Malik. Genghis Khan undertook to conquer one of the rich and beautiful cities of the East, the stronghold of the Khorezmshahs - the city of Urgench. Khorezmshah Muhammad fled to the area of the southern coast of the Caspian Sea, where he hid on a small island and died there in December 1220. In January 1221, Jalal ad-Din, the eldest son of Muhammad, arrived in Urgench, to whom the titles of Khorezmshah and Sultan passed. He was the only capable commander and ruler and could subsequently successfully organize and lead resistance to the troops of Genghis Khan. Jalal ad-Din considered the main goal of his life to be the fight against the Mongols. However, in Khorezm, the ruling elite began to struggle for power. The part of the ruling clique hostile to Jalal ad-Din did not want to see a strong man like him at the head of the state, and refused to obey him. Seeing the impossibility of organizing the defense of Khorezm, Jalal ad-Din, together with Temur Malik and a small detachment, left Khorezm.

military
protected

Near the ancient settlement of Nisa (near the modern city of Ashgabat), with a small group of soldiers, he defeated a Mongol detachment of 700 people. On the way to the city of Ghazna (on the territory of modern Afghanistan), he gathered 30 thousand troops, uniting them with the well-armed garrison of Ghazna under his

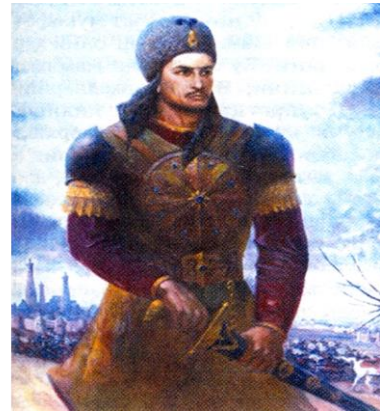
¹Urgench - Gurgenj (modern Kunya Urgench, on the territory of Turkmenistan), the capital of the Khorezmshah state

command.

In the summer of 1221, Jalal ad-Din set out to meet Genghis Khan. He camped near the village of Parwan. From here he made a successful attack on a large detachment of the Mongol army that was besieging the Valiyan fortress (in Tokharistan) and defeated it. Alarmed by the defeat of his troops, Genghis Khan sent a large detachment (30-40 thousand people) led by one of the experienced military leaders Shigi-Khutukhunoyon against Jalal ad-Din.

Battle of the village of Parvan It was a long and battle, the Mongols were defeated and put to flight.

In December 1221 on the banks of the Sind River(the name of the Indus River, in the territory of modern Pakistan), battle took place between the troops of Genghis Khan and Jalal ad-Din, in which the Mongols were victorious. Abandoned by the allies, Sultan's troops did not have time to cross the river. Jalal ad-Din's army, built in the shape of a crescent, was pressed against the river. Jalal ad-Din fought bravely and courageously, he was in the center of the army and struck first to the left, sometimes to the right, he was surrounded by selected warriors in the amount of 700 people. Under the pressure of Jalal ad-Din's troops, even Genghis Khan was forced to retreat. But a pre-prepared Mongol ambush of 10 thousand decided the outcome of the battle. Jalal ad-Din was defeated. Many of his close and intimate people died in the battle. Thanks to his courage, the Sultan escaped from the encirclement and rushed with his horse into the river. Admiring the courage of Jalal ad-Din, Genghis Khan forbade his entourage to pursue him.



Sultan Djalal ad-Din
Manguberdi

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Winter 1221 Mongol troops approached the capital of the Khorezmshahs - Urgench: from the north, led by Jochi, the eldest son, from the side of Bukhara - troops of the younger sons of Ogedei and Chigatai. The siege of Urgench began. The Mongol army that surrounded the city reached 50 thousand people.

The people fought bravely and defended every quarter. Among the defenders of the city was Sheikh Najmiddin Kubro (1145 - 1221). Considering the authority of the sheikh, Genghis Khan invited him to leave the city, but the sheikh refused to leave the ranks of the city's defenders. His motto "Either homeland or glorious death" gave strength to the defenders of Urgench. During the siege, the Mongols used stone-throwing and battering machines. Due to the lack of large stones outside the city, sawn pieces of mulberry trees were used as projectiles. After a five-month siege, the city was taken. The Mongols plundered and devastated the city, the artisans were sent to the rear, and the children were distributed to the soldiers as slaves. Then they destroyed the dam on the Amu Darya and flooded the city. During the defense of Urgench, 76-year-old Sheikh Najmiddin Kubro died along with the city's defenders.

After the fall of Urgench, there was no longer any other power in Central Asia other than the Mongolian one. But the fight against the Mongols continued. Genghis Khan gave the order to pursue and destroy Jalal ad-Din.

After crossing the Sind River, Jalal ad-Din established his power in a small part of Northern India. Until 1224, Jalal ad-Din lived in India, and then in the Caucasus, where he rallied local rulers to fight against the Mongols. In September 1227, at the Battle of Isfahan, he defeated the Mongols who had invaded western Iran.

He was a talented commander, distinguished by his courage and unbending will, despite the enormous numerical superiority of the Mongols, he inflicted on them such major defeats as the defeat of Parwan, Valiyan, and Isfahan. "We know from historical chronicles," wrote historian Sharafuddin Ali Yazdi, "that Jalal ad-Din courageously and persistently defended the lands of Afghanistan from Genghis Khan from Parwan to Ghazni, from Ghazni to the shores of Sindh, inflicting sensitive blows on the Mongols."

In 1231, Jalal ad-Din Manguberdi died in the mountains of Kurdistan. During his short life (only 32 years), he managed to do a lot in the name of freedom of his people and country.

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