

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE KHWAREZMSHAH STATE DURING THE ANUSHTEGENIAN HORSELESS PERIOD.

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Abstract: This article discusses the period of the rise to power of Atsiz, the ruler of the Anushtegin dynasty, and his campaigns with Sultan Sanjar.

Keywords: Anushtegin, Sultan Malikshah, Malik Abu Muzaffar Alovuddin Jalaluddin Atsiz, Khorezm Shikhnaligi, Sultan Sanjar, Karakhanids, Masud ibn Muhammad Tobar.

Introduction: The founder of the Anushtegin dynasty was Anushtegin (died in 1097). In the second half of the 11th century, the Seljuks were experiencing a period of prosperity. Anushtegin was one of the officials under the Seljuk ruler Sultan Malikshah and, due to his exemplary service, rose to a high rank, becoming one of the closest and most trusted figures in the Sultan's court. Around 1077, he was appointed to the position of governor of the Khwarezm region (in the sense of a commander), and in 1097, his son Qutb al-Din Muhammad achieved the position of governor, or ruler, of Khwarezm. His rule was naturally confined to the Khwarezm region. Qutb al-Din Muhammad was dependent on the Seljuk court[1, 135 b].

Khwarezmshah Qutb al-Din Muhammad ruled over Khwarezm for 30 years. Until his death in 1127, he remained a loyal subject to Sultan Sanjar, continuously paying tribute and taxes to the Sultan's treasury, including regular payments from the ulpon (a type of tax). These tributes were delivered either by Qutb al-Din Muhammad himself or by his son Alov al-Din Muhammad Atsiz. Through this, the Khwarezmshah acknowledged Sultan Sanjar's supreme sovereignty. In return for this loyalty, after the death of Khwarezmshah Qutb al-Din Muhammad, Sultan Sanjar entrusted the throne of Khwarezm to his son Al Malik Abu Muzaffar Alov al-Din Jalal al-Din Atsiz.[2, 109 b].

Atsiz, like his father, initially served the Seljuk dynasty with utmost loyalty. However, as his position strengthened and he realized that his competitors were weakening, he began to resist the Seljuks' control. Although in the last 20 years of his reign he sought to gain full independence and even expand his rule to the lower reaches of the Syr Darya and Khorasan, it must be noted that, in essence, during his time, the Khwarezm region did not achieve full independence. Looking at the political landscape of Atsiz's era, we can see that this task was truly difficult. First and foremost, he had to rely on the Seljuk dynasty of Sultan Sanjar and, at times, the Amir of Khorasan, while also engaging in internal struggles.

The role of Jalal al-Din Atsiz (1127–1156), the son of Qutb al-Din Muhammad, in securing Khwarezm's independence and expanding its borders is noteworthy. He exploited the weakening of the Karakhanids and Seljuks to increase the power of his own state. In 1141, he



minted gold coins, marking an important symbol of Khwarezm's independence. He negotiated with the Karakhitai, agreeing to pay them an annual tribute of 30,000 dirhams, thereby ensuring the internal independence of his state [3, 132].

When Alav al-Din Atsiz ascended to the throne, he was 29 years old. Like his father, he received a good education in the capital of Sultan Sanjar, Marv. Besides supporting the Islamic religion and scholars, Atsiz valued various sciences and the arts. He himself wrote Persian poetry, including qasidas and rubaiyat, and was familiar with the verses of many great poets. He ruled Khwarezm as a concerned and just monarch. According to one source, the people of Khwarezm loved their ruler Atsiz, and during his reign, the citizens lived in peace, free from danger, and in justice. Alav al-Din Atsiz was a brave commander, achieving many victories in battles while serving Sultan Sanjar. This earned him great respect in the Sultan's court.

Once, Atsiz saved Sultan Sanjar's life, further increasing his prestige. This incident occurred in 1130 (Hijri 524). That year, Sultan Sanjar marched against the rebellious Khan of Samarkand, Arslon Khan Muhammad ibn Sulayman. As Sultan Sanjar approached Bukhara, his ministers conspired to kill him during a hunting trip. Atsiz had not gone hunting, but he sensed that the Sultan was in danger during the night and quickly rode out to assist him. By the time he arrived, the traitorous commanders had surrounded the Sultan, leaving him helpless. Atsiz immediately attacked the traitors and rescued Sultan Sanjar. Later, when Sultan Sanjar presumably asked how Atsiz had learned about the conspiracy, Atsiz responded, "I saw in a dream that the Sultan was in danger during the hunt, so I hastily came to help."

Atsiz was with Sultan Sanjar during all of his military campaigns. When Sultan Sanjar fought against another of his nephews, Mas'ud ibn Muhammad Topar (1133–1152), Atsiz commanded the left wing of the army. For ten years (1128–1138), Atsiz served Sultan Sanjar with loyalty and dedication. During this time, under the caliph Mustarshid, relations between the Khwarezmshahs and the Baghdad Caliphate strengthened. The caliph feared the rise of the Seljuks.

Qutbiddin Muhammad Atsiz ruled from 1127 to 1156. A descendant of Anushtegin, who had been the ruler of Khwarezm during the reign of Seljuk Sultan Malikshah, Atsiz skillfully took advantage of every mistake made by the Seljuk sultans he was subjugated to. A shrewd diplomat and skilled commander, Atsiz pursued an independent foreign policy. He significantly expanded Khwarezm's territories, conquering the lower reaches of the Syr Darya and Mangyshlak. Afterward, he rebelled against Sultan Sanjar several times (1138, 1141, 1142, 1147–1148) but was defeated and completely submitted to the Seljuks.[4, 151 b].

The 1153 Oghuz revolt served as a decisive blow to the Seljuk Empire. As a result of the rebellion, Sultan Sanjar himself was captured. In such a situation, Khwarezmshah Atsiz attempted to take responsibility for the state and, through this, aimed to expand the territory and strengthen his kingdom by attempting to seize the Omul fortress in the upper reaches of the Amu Darya. To this end, he sent a messenger to the captured Sultan Sanjar.

Khwarezmshah Atsiz regarded the complete liberation of his state from subjugation and the end of Seljuk rule as his main goal. However, the growing strength of the Oghuz tribes, the dangerous situation in the state, and internal disorder led to Atsiz standing against this threat.

The new Seljuk ruler, Sultan Mahmud Khan, recognizing the position of Khwarezmshah Atsiz in the region, requested military assistance from him to fight the Oghuz rebellion. In April 1156, Khwarezmshah Atsiz, along with his eldest son El Arslon, led an army



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to suppress the rebellion and rescue Sultan Sanjar from captivity. He reached a place called Shahristan in Khorasan and urged local rulers to join efforts for a common cause. At this time, Sultan Sanjar's escape from captivity shifted the situation. Atsiz sent a letter congratulating Sultan Sanjar on his release and reaffirmed his loyalty.[5, 413]

Shortly after this event, while Khwarezmshah Atsiz was in the Habushon area of Khorasan, he fell ill and passed away on July 30, 1156, at the age of 61. It is worth noting that Atsiz is considered the full-fledged founder of the Anushtegin-Khwarezmshah state. He laid the foundation for Khwarezm's international relations and created the groundwork for the state's rising prestige and influence.[6, 449]

Conclusion: Al Malik Abu Muzaffar Alovuddin Jaloliddin Atsiz played a significant role in strengthening the Khwarezmshah state. He laid the foundation for the state's independent foreign policy from the Seljuks, conducted policies against the Karakhanids in Mavaraunnahr, and forced them to submit to a certain extent. He contributed to the economic and political strengthening of the Khwarezmshah state. Atsiz is an important figure in Khwarezmshah history, and his reign was a crucial stage in the creation of the foundation for the later great Khwarezmshah state.

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