

## RESISTANCE

When it comes to Mongol invasion of Kazakhstan lands, the first thing which comes to our minds is heroic defence of Otrar, there is a lot of written information and even feature film about Otrar. Nevertheless, battles took place not only in the environs of this city, but unfortunately there is not much information about other battles. Reference: At the time of Genghis Khan's troops' invasion, there were several states in the territory of modern Kazakhstan: Cuman-Kipchak confederation in northern steppes, the state of Turk-Karluks (under Kara-Khitans Khanate) in northern part of Semirechye, Kangly located in the area of Talas and Chu, also there were Kara-Khitans's states and Naymans who invaded a part of their territory. Test of strength For the first time Mongols appeared in Semirechye in 1211 under command of Khubilay-noyan. His troop did not even have to fight – when they advanced close Karluks' leader Arslan-khan ordered to kill Kara-Khitans vicegerent and voluntarily surrendered to Mongols. His neighbor Buzar, the ruler of Almalyk (in Ili valley) did the same. However, Khubilay's troops were called out back to Mongolia because of the war in China and for almost five years they would not return. In 1216 Genghis Khan dealt with China and ordered his son Jochi to finally smash fugitive Merkits who fled to the west. Jochi caught Merkits in Turgay steppes near Irghiz. Here bloody battle of sworn enemies took place. Although, Merkits fought up to the last ditch, they could not withstand skill and martial ardor of Mongols. Jochi's army settled for night rest, but it was not long, next day Khwarazm-shah's army, which outnumbered Jochi's troops, approached them. Khwarazm-shah Mukhammad-sultan was not coming to the rescue of Merkits. He was pursuing another aim, i.e. to fight with unknown eastern conquerors, who appeared close to his dominions' borders, demonstrate his strength and keep intruders from pretension to his state. Having gathered his detachments (about 60000 men) in Jend, Khwarazm-shah set off to meet unknown conquerors. At first Jochi was not going to get into fight with Mukhammad-sultan and started negotiations. He tried to explain that he had not come there to fight with Khwarazmshah. Nevertheless, seeing his numerical superiority (while Mongols had only two tumens, i.e. about 20000 warriors), Mukhammad-sultan was obstinately driving situation to war. Eventually he got what he wanted. Even despite Khwarazm-shah's numerical superiority it was not easy to defeat Jochi. Moreover, there was a moment when it looked like Mongols would win the battle. After the dark both armies drew off to their camps to start a new battle in the morning. Lights were burning all night long, but when the day broke Khwarazm-shah's soldiers saw that there was not a single man in Mongol camp. Although Jassy laws and warrior's pride would not let Jochi leave battlefield during the fight, avoiding battle was not prohibited. Fortress cities ...Two years later Genghis Khan sent 2 tumens under Jebe command to Semirechye to fight with Naymans, living under Kuchluk's rule. Here people met Mongols as if they were liberators and even rose in rebellions against former conquerors, because they had strongly oppressed local people and had not been tolerant of faith. In this regard Mongols were tolerant and thus, Semirechye and other adjoining lands fell under their rule. The

road to Khwarazm shah's state was open. Several fortress cities stood in conquerors' path. Khwarazm shah reinforced their garrisons and strengthened their walls. He did not take into account a fact that by that time Mongols could perfectly employ the tactics of seizing fortified cities and possessed all necessary equipment and specialists. Only Otrar detained them for half a year, while other fortresses withstood for much lesser periods of time, and some of them did not even show resistance.

### **Sygnak**

It was the first city in the path of Jochi's tumens. Mongol warlord sent ambassador, a Muslim merchant Khassankhaji. The ambassador could not incline his brothers in faith to capitulate, moreover, rulers let plain folk tear the truce envoy to pieces and started preparing for besiegement. Jochi was infuriated by such behavior of Sygnak defenders, because according to Mongol customs a figure of truce envoy was immune. The siege lasted almost uninterruptedly for seven days and nights. When Mongols broke into Sygnak they killed almost all those who survived. Moreover, the son of murdered merchant was appointed the governor of this district.

### **Ashnas**

There were not real troops in this city, only armed citizens, but they were determined to fight against the enemy and they were defending their city persistently until everyone who was able to use arms, fell. Residents were almost completely slain for their rebelliousness.

### **Jend**

Khwarezm-shah's troops left this city together with its ruler Kutluk khan. When Jochi heard about this he sent his truce envoy with proposal to surrender. Several determined local residents offended the truce envoy named Chin-Timur and almost killed him. Things looked bad and Jochi's envoy reminded about dreadful fate of Sygnak and asked them to save his life, having promised to withdraw Mongol troops from the city walls. Local people let him walk out of the city, but they could not decide whether they should get into fight with Mongols or not. Seeing people's uncertainty, Mongols approached walls and having accounted no resistance with the help of siege ladders ascended the walls. All citizens were evicted to field and kept there for nine days while warriors were plundering the city. Several men, who offended the truce envoy, were executed.

### **Jankent**

Separate tumen of Jochi's army conquered this small town. Having offered no resistance, it did not preserve material values, but it did preserve townsmen's lives.

## **Timur-Melik's odyssey**

Khwarazmian warlord, commander of Khujand garrison (a city located in the territory of Tajikistan) emir Timur-Melik deserves special attention. He was one of few warlords who actively and efficiently resisted Mongol invasion. Having been unable to hold his city with only 10000 warriors against Alak-nayon and Suketyucherbi's tumens, together with detachment of the most loyal men Timur-Melik broke through Mongol siege and consolidated his position in a fortress on the island in the middle of Syrdarya. It was difficult to reach him there. Genghis khan even sent reinforcement to his warlords, i.e. 20000 soldiers, still they could not break down Khwarazmians' resistance. Khwarazmians built twelve ships covered with clayed felt soaked in vinegar. Khwarazmians would approach both shores in their ships and shoot arrows at Mongols through specially made loopholes, thus they inflicted damage while Mongols could not hit the enemy neither with arrows, nor with torches and burning oil. Later Mongols started using big catapults against ships and Timur-Melik's soldiers were having a rough time. Having incurred losses, one night he ordered to equip seventy ships and started moving down the river towards the Aral Sea. Pursuing Khwarazmians, Mongol army accompanied the ships, moving along the shores. Near Benakent they stretched an iron net across the river, expecting that the flotilla would be detained, but Timur-Melik himself cleft the barrier with one stroke of his sword and cleared passage for other ships. While sailing down the stream (in the territory of modern Kazakhstan) his warriors managed to make sallies. During one of those sallies they liberated above-mentioned Jankent for a short time, which made Mongols extremely enraged. In the Barchanlygkent area they constructed a pontoon bridge, installed projectile weapons and started waiting. Timur-Melik learned about the ambush and made landing not far from it. He rode to the south, in direction of Khwarazm. He had been evading prosecution for several days and fighting with Mongols. Finally he lost all his soldiers and left alone, but he managed to fling off his pursuers and reach Khwarazm to resume his struggle with conquerors.

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