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*IRÁN A ZOROASZTRIÁNZISMTÓL A JELENKORIG: TÖRTÉNELEM,
KÖLTÉSZET, NYELVÉSZET*

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The strait gate and the wide gate in Matthew 7, 13

as represented on the cover of Calvin's

Institutio Christianae religionis,

published by Antonius Rebulius, Geneva, 1561.

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MIKLÓS SÁRKÖZY

Some Notes about Jalāl al-Dīn Ḥasan III – and his Contacts with the Abbasids

Foreword

The rule of Jalāl al-Dīn Ḥasan III lasted for only a decade between 607/1210 and 618/1221 but it proved to be significant in the history of the Nizārīs. During his rule, momentous changes were occurring in the Middle East: the mighty Khwārizmian Empire was annihilated by Chingiz Khan's invading Mongol armies, who pillaged much of Central Asia and northern Iran, causing an unprecedented disaster in the Islamic world.

Generally, Ḥasan III is credited with building a rapprochement with Sunni Islam and, for this, he was awarded the title *naw-musalmān* (according to Sunni sources).¹ Indeed, his efforts to gain wider acceptance within the Islamic world—and to be accepted by the Abbasid caliphate—were especially successful. Ḥasan III was a significant and talented figure among the *kbudāwands* of Alamūt, someone who did his utmost to reposition the Nizārī state both internationally and locally. His bold steps transformed the milieu around the Nizārī state, which was in dire need of obtaining new allies.

The Nizārīs had been extremely flexible in their local and regional policies, usually making agreements with every possible local force and dynasty which could serve their interests. Thus, we see the existence of Nizārī-Twelve Shī'ī, Nizārī-Sunni and Nizārī-Zaydī coalitions, which nonetheless greatly fluctuated according to the needs of the Nizārī state.

In the case of Ḥasan III his rapprochement with the Abbasids and Sunni Islam fits well into the above-mentioned Nizārī policy of pragmatism; however, we also believe that some aspects of his rule were exceptional. First, Ḥasan III's decision was widely publicised in the Sunni world by both contemporary and later Sunni

¹ The term *naw-musalmān* refers to Ḥasan III's newly acquired 'Sunni identity' as reflected in Sunni sources. See 'Alā' al-Dīn 'Atā-Malik b. Muḥammad JUWAYNĪ: *The History of the World-Conqueror*, vol. 3, tr. John A. Boyle. Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 1958, 243–249. Faḍl Allāh Hamadānī RASHĪD AL-DĪN: *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh*, ed. Muḥammad Rawshan, Tehran, Mīrās-i maktūb, 1387 Sh./2008, 171–175. Jamāl al-Dīn Abū'l Qāsim 'Abdallāh b. 'Alī Kāshānī: *Zubdat al-tawārīkh: bakhsb-i Fātimīyān wa Nizāriyān*, ed. Muḥammad Taqī Dānishpazhūh, 2nd ed., Tehran, Našr-i Dāniš, 1366 Sh./1987, 214–217, Marshall G. S HODGSON: *The Order of Assassins: The Struggle of the Early Nizārī Ismā'īlīs Against the Islamic World*, The Hague, Mouton & Co, 1955, 217–225, Bernard LEWIS: *The Assassins: A Radical Sect in Islam*. London, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1967, 78–81. Farhad DAFTARY: *The Isma'īlīs, Their History and Doctrines*, Second Edition, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2007, 375–376.

chroniclers.² Unlike the dealings of his predecessors with various local and major powers, which are either neglected or suppressed in our written sources, the decision of Ḥasan III to join the Abbasid Caliphate was generally well received.

It is beyond this article's scope to comprehend the true reasons for this adoption of Sunni Islam – and much has been written about them. I very much agree with Marshall Hodgson³ and Farhad Daftary,⁴ who both emphasise an increasing isolation as a possible reason for Ḥasan III's decision to nominally accept Sunni Islam. On the other hand, Hodgson is right when he says that Ḥasan III was perhaps the most versatile Nizārī ruler, one who did not hesitate to create a coalition with any possible partner who might serve his interests.⁵ His followers regarded his 'new' policy simply as a certain kind of *taqiyya*.⁶

The foreign policy of Ḥasan III

As for the Khwārizmians, we need to note that, according to Juwaynī⁷ (who occasionally praises Ḥasan III for his turn towards Sunnism), Ḥasan III had also made some gestures towards the Khwārizmians at the beginning of his rule, sending envoys to Gurgānj and perhaps having the *khutba* recited in the name of the Khwārizmian ruler. Nasawī⁸ says that the Khwārizmians carefully noted this gesture and, later, under Ḥasan III's successor, 'Alā' al-Dīn Muḥammad III, they reproached the Nizārīs for abandoning their custom of reciting the *khutba* in the name of the Khwārizmshāh. The Khwārizmians demanded this as one of the preconditions for reinstating normal contacts between the two states.⁹

While Ḥasan III could, theoretically, make overtures to the Khwārizmians, in reality he had clearly sided with the Abbasids. According to Juwaynī, Ḥasan III sent secret envoys to Nizārī communities living under Khwārizmian rule in Central Asia as early as 616/1219 to inform them about the arrival of the enormous Mongol army.¹⁰ Yet it was the same Ḥasan III who was the first ever Muslim ruler to greet Chingiz Khān (in Jumādā I 616/August 1219) when the Mongols crossed the Oxus River.¹¹ These two facts (the secret Nizārī operations in Central Asia and the attempt

² See DAFTARY, 2007, 635, n. 177–178.

³ HODGSON, 217–220.

⁴ DAFTARY, 2007, 175.

⁵ HODGSON, 223.

⁶ Taqiyya is certain sort of concealment of intentions and identity widely practiced by different Shī'ī groups in order to save their communities.

⁷ JUWAYNĪ, vol. 3, pp. 243–245.

⁸ Muḥammad b. Aḥmad NASAWĪ: *Sirat-i Jalāl al-Dīn Minkubīrni*, ed. Muḥammad Minuwī. Tehran, Bungāh-i Tarjumah va Nashr-i Kitāb vol. 1, 344 Sh./1965. 230.

⁹ NASAWĪ, 163–166.

¹⁰ JUWAYNĪ, vol. 3, 243; HODGSON, 223.

¹¹ HODGSON, 223; DAFTARY, 2007, 377.

to make peace with the invading Mongols), and the wish to have the Mongols not attack Nizārī areas, prove the great flexibility of Nizārī state policy under Ḥasan III.

Hodgson emphasises the signs of mutual understanding and reconciliation between Baghdad and Alamūt since it is highly likely that Caliph al-Nāṣir (r. 596–622/1200–1225) was as motivated as Ḥasan III when it came to building up stronger contacts with the each other. As Hodgson and others have said,¹² al-Nāṣir was an avid supporter of the so-called *futuwwa* movement¹³ and a builder of the so-called *Talisman Gate* in Baghdad with its inscription ‘*al-da‘wa al-bādīya*’ (‘the rightly guiding mission’)—which possibly shows Shī‘ī influence.¹⁴ The presence of Shihāb al-Dīn al-Suhrāwardī in Baghdad, a leading Sufi scholar of his age who was attracted by al-Shāhrastānī’s alleged Ismā‘īlī thought,¹⁵ and his influence over the caliph cannot be excluded, either. Al-Suhrāwardī was even accused by Khwārizmshāh Muḥammad II of Ismailism when the latter was sent as an envoy to the Khwārizmians camp in Hamadān in 615/1218.¹⁶ As noted, accusations of Ismailism were quite widespread and indeed demonstrated a type of paranoia before the Mongol period.¹⁷

Abbasid-Nizārī cooperation thus quickly evolved into a relatively strong anti-Khwārizmian military and political coalition. Ḥasan III, as a ‘Sunni’ *Ḥasan naw-musalmān*, acted relatively freely—with the blessings of the Abbasids. His main objective was (as Daftary says)¹⁸ to create a less isolated geopolitical situation in northern Iran for the Nizārīs. Within the framework of this cooperation, Ḥasan III and al-Nāṣir intervened on behalf of the last Īldigūzid ruler, Muẓaffar al-Dīn Uzbek (607–622/1210–1225), the ruler of Ādharbayjān and northern ‘Irāq, when Minglī, the governor of northern ‘Irāq and western Iran, rebelled against his overlord and made himself an independent ruler in ‘Irāq-i ‘Ajam. In an unprecedented military adventure organised by al-Nāṣir, forces from Baghdad, Syria and Alamūt joined in concerted action against the rebellious Minglī, who suffered a humiliating defeat at the hands of this coalition. The whole military action lasted for two years (610–612/1214–1215). During this time, Ḥasan III left Alamūt and enjoyed the hospitality of Muẓaffar al-Dīn Uzbek. The decisive battle of this campaign was fought near Hamadān in 612/1215, and the forces of the

¹² HODGSON, 1955, 222, n. 31.

¹³ For Shī‘ī sympathies and other alternative religious tendencies under al-Nāṣir see: Angelika HARTMAN: *An-Nasir li-Din Allah: Politik, Religion und Kultur in der späten Abbasidenzeit*. Berlin–New York, De Gruyter 1975, 109–172.

¹⁴ HARTMANN, 118–121.

¹⁵ HARTMANN, 111–122. Muḥammad AL-SHAHRASTANI: *Struggling with the philosopher: a refutation of Avicenna’s metaphysics*. ed. and transl. Wilferd Madelung – Toby Mayer, London, I.B. Tauris, 2001, 13.

¹⁶ HODGSON, 223, n. 32.

¹⁷ Deborah TOR: ‘The Importance of Khurāsān and Transoxiana in the Classical Islamic World’ A.C.S. Peacock and D.G. Tor (eds.), *Medieval Central Asia and the Persianate World: Iranian Tradition and Islamic Civilisation*, London, I.B. Tauris, 2015, 1–12. 279–297.

¹⁸ DAFTARY, 2007, 375–376.

caliphate, the Īldigūzids, the Syrian amīrs and the Nizārīs, defeated the army of Mingli—who was imprisoned and put to death by Muẓaffar al-Dīn Uzbek. It was a major victory which could have strengthened the positions of the anti-Khwārizmian forces in the region.¹⁹ Following this military intervention, the retreating Nizārī forces, headed by Ḥasan III, were rewarded with the cities of Abhar and Zanjān in the south of the Alburz for their military services. Rashīd al-Dīn says that Abhar, a former Sunni and pro-Saljūq stronghold, as well as Zanjān, remained in Nizārī possession for a few years under Ḥasan III, perhaps implying that these were probably lost to the Nizārīs before the end of Ḥasan III's rule in 618/1221.²⁰ The Nizārī acquisition of these two cities was of major importance both in terms of the economy and of strategy. The Nizārī state already possessed significant sites and locations around Dāmghān and Bistām, and many of its revenues could have come from taxes levied on merchants and caravans along northern Iranian trade routes. We have also suggested that during Sanjar's time there had also been economic agreements between the Nizārīs and Sanjar about the division of taxes and revenues from major trade routes in northern Iran. From this point of view the Nizārī request for Abhar and Zanjān may seem a logical step to widen their taxation base in the area of the Alburz Mountains.

As Hodgson has noted, the gift of Abhar and Zanjān was a quite unique 'reward' in the history of the Nizārīs: 'the direct conquest of alien territories by formal armies without settlement or conversion. Villages had been taken before; but only in the case of rectification of frontiers. Now the Nizārīs took towns openly as tribute for their assistance.'²¹ After the victory of the allied Nizārī-Sunni forces, the Īldigūzid Muẓaffar al-Dīn Uzbek appointed a certain Ighlamīsh as the new governor of 'Irāq-i 'Ajam. Ighlamīsh received the bulk of the areas that Mingli had formerly possessed—including Hamadān, Rayy and Isfahan. However in 614/1217, Ighlamīsh rebelled against his master. At this time there was no serious military intervention against Ighlamīsh, but Ḥasan III was asked by Muẓaffar al-Dīn Uzbek and al-Nāṣir to despatch *fidā'īs* (self-sacrificers) against him and the rebellious Īldigūzid governor was promptly executed.²²

Control over Abhar and Zanjān helped the Nizārīs to weaken and isolate Qazwīn, which fiercely resisted the Nizārīs. Nevertheless, Ḥasan III made some efforts to convince the Qazwīnīs of his sincerity and his conversion to Sunni Islam—and it is said that he invited a delegation of devout Sunni Qazwīnīs to Alamūt to participate in the burning of books deemed heretical by this delegation.²³

¹⁹ JUWAYNĪ, tr. Boyle vol. 2, 245–246, 701–702; RASHĪD AL-DĪN, ed. Rawshan, 176–177; KĀSHĀNĪ, *Zubdat al-tawārikh*, 216–217; 'Alī 'Izz al-Dīn al-Jazarī IBN AL-ATHĪR: *al-Kāmil fi'l Tārīkh*, vol. 12. ed. Carl Johan Thornberg, Beirut, Dār Ṣādir, 1982. vol. 12, 114, 116, 118; DAFTARY, 2007, 377.

²⁰ HODGSON, 223. RASHĪD AL-DĪN, 176.

²¹ HODGSON, 221.

²² DAFTARY, 2007, 377; HODGSON, 221–222.

²³ HODGSON, 218.

As far as local history is concerned, these events have their own significance and implications. Firstly, the strong support of al-Nāṣir, and the possible personal sympathy between Ḥasan III and the caliph helped to legitimise the Nizārī state. Al-Nāṣir, for instance, stipulated that local Sunni clans of Gilān give their daughters to Ḥasan III, which would greatly enhance the acceptance of the Nizārī state. We do not know what sort of relations these Sunni clans held with the Nizārīs, but they accepted the caliph's offer of marriages with the relatives of Ḥasan III. This step perhaps helped to lessen the isolation and anti-Nizārī feelings in Gilān.²⁴ One must note, however, that Ḥasan III's mother was also said to be a local Sunni—and this fact suggests that there had been Nizārī contacts with local Sunni clans long before 607/1210, though these remained entirely unnoticed in our sources.

The brave military adventure into 'Irāq-i 'Ajam greatly enhanced the international prestige and acceptance of the Nizārīs. The reasons for this campaign may have been manifold: the personal ambitions of Ḥasan III, the mutual sympathy and interests shared by al-Nāṣir and Ḥasan III and their concerted efforts to suppress any kind of disunity in their camps on the eve of possible Khwārizmian military intervention into northern and western Iran.

Be that as it may, all these aspects clearly suggest that it was chiefly the Abbasid caliphate which underwent notable ideological-doctrinal changes via the 'innovative' or unique personality of al-Nāṣir. As with Ḥasan III, in the case of al-Nāṣir there were personal doctrinal interests that actively shaped al-Nāṣir's perceptions of Islam—and these were often seen as verging on 'heresy'. It remains a question, though, whether these rulers' theological rapprochement can be conceived as personal religious interest and unconnected with doctrinal questions—or did these bold steps to create alliances with diverse religious groups serve the political interests of the two main decision-makers, Ḥasan III and al-Nāṣir? This question cannot be easily answered, for political and personal ambitions seem to be inseparable here.

It is also important to note that al-Nāṣir's attempts to foster good relations with the Shī'ī rulers of northern Iran were not restricted to Ḥasan III. According to Ibn Isfandiyyār, al-Nāṣir sent robes of honour to Ḥusām al-Dawla Ardashīr I, the Bāwandid ruler in 591/1195, following the Abbasid occupation of Rayy by Ibn al-Qassāb, an Abbasid military leader. Not long after the Saljūqs' fall, the speedy return of the Abbasids to Rayy and Ṭabaristān is more than surprising. It appears that the Abbasids endeavoured to fill the political vacuum left by the Saljūqs,

²⁴ Jamāl al-Dīn Abū'l Qāsim 'Abdallāh b. 'Alī Kāshānī: *Tārikh-i Uljāytū*, Tehran, Širkat-i intišārāt-i 'ilmī wa farhangī, 1391 pp., 57–58, Hyacinthe Louis RABINO DI BORGOMALE: 'Deux inscriptions du Gilān du temps des Mongols', *Journal Asiatique*, 238 (1950), 328–329. See also Hyacinthe Louis RABINO DI BORGOMALE: 'Rulers of Gilān', *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 1920. 288–289, 293–295. Hyacinthe Louis RABINO DI BORGOMALE: 1949 'Les dynasties locales du Gilān et du Daylam', *Journal Asiatique* 237 (1949), 314–315.

thus challenging the Khwārizmians. However, in Abbasid connections with the Bāwandids we are not able to discover any personal ‘episode’ as in the case of Ḥasan III. Owing to the scarcity of our written sources the response of Ḥusām al-Dawla Ardashīr I is not known—but it must have been at least constructive given that his political position was under heavy pressure from the Khwārizmians after the death of Ṭughril III in 590/1194; so Ḥusām al-Dawla Ardashīr I turned his attention towards non-Khwārizmian forces in western Iran.

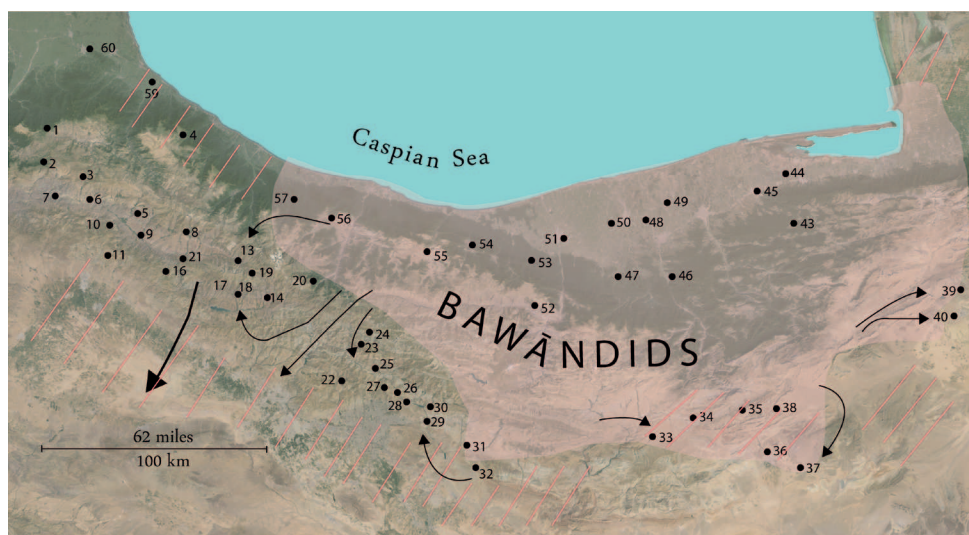
The arrival of the Abbasids could have not caused the Bāwandids too much frustration in terms of politics as the deposed Saljūqs were also Sunnis. In 592/1196, the Abbasid forces were forced to retreat from Rayy after receiving Khwārizmian threats—and we do not then hear any more about Abbasid-Bāwandid contacts. Yet it is not unlikely that the case of the Bāwandids can be seen as a forerunner to Abbasid attempts to win the favour of the *khudāwands* of Alamūt. The possible warm welcome given to the Abbasid envoy in Ṭabaristān may have further enhanced the need to send delegations to courts threatened by the Khwārizmians.

As for the above-mentioned difficulty of choosing between personal and political motifs in Nizārī-Abbasid rapprochement and reconciliation, Abbasid-Bāwandid contacts suggest that perhaps political hopes and gains could have played a more important role than personal convictions. As is clear from our sources, during these years a new political alliance was created in northern Iran with Twelver Shīʿīs, Nizārīs and Sunnis cooperating closely against the Khwārizmians—which resulted in an interesting political and religious situation just before the Mongol invasion.

Concerning the results of this pro-Abbasid policy of Ḥasan III, one might also refer to two other interesting examples which appeared to be important in the Caspian provinces. First, according to the *Tārīkh-i Uljāytū*,²⁵ al-Nāṣir, after accepting Ḥasan III as a true Sunni leader, urged the local Sunni clans of western Gīlān to have arranged marriages for Ḥasan III (or, as he was called in Sunni sources ‘Ḥasan-i naw musalmān’). According to this source (written in the Ilkhānid period), Ḥasan III married not less than four daughters of local Gīlānī families—among others the daughter of Kay Kāʾūs b. Shāhanshāh, the hereditary ruler of the town of Kūtum, who claimed to have a mythical pre-Islamic lineage. The *Tārīkh-i Uljāytū* does not name the three other local Gīlān dynasties, and the possible reason for naming the ruler of Kūtum was because this wife of Ḥasan III bore Ḥasan’s later successor, ‘Alā’ al-Dīn Muḥammad III. One needs to note, too, that (according to Rashīd al-Dīn)²⁶ even the mother of Ḥasan III was of Sunni origin. Even though this is not corroborated by other sources, her Sunni origin also means that intermarriages were not uncommon between Nizārī Imams and local Sunni families. As for the marriage policy of the Nizārī Imams, it is rather unclear as a phenomenon; and

²⁵ KĀSHĀNĪ: *Tārīkh-i Uljāytū*, 57–58, RABINO DI BORGOMALE, 1950, 328–329. See also RABINO DI BORGOMALE, 1920, 288–289; 1949, 314–315.

²⁶ KĀSHĀNĪ: *Tārīkh-i Uljāytū*, 57–58.



- | | | | |
|----------------------|--------------------|--------------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Kasha | 16. Diz Shirkūh | 31. Rūdahan | 46. Firīm (Pirīm) |
| 2. Jarrīndah | 17. Diz Āwa | 32. Diz Kulkhandān | 47. Lafūr (Lapūr) |
| 3. Kilīshum | 18. Qalca Haranj | 33. Fīrūzkūh | 48. Mamṭīr |
| 4. Diz digāsar | 19. Diz Jalūpar | 34. Diz-i Lājiwardī | 49. Sārī |
| 5. Lamāsar | 20. Alīt/Alayt? | 35. Diz-i Wahal | 50. Bābul |
| 6. Ganjak | 21. Mucallimkalāya | 36. Shahrīrād | 51. Āmul |
| 7. Chārūd | 22. Shāhdiz Aranka | 37. Diz-i Sarawī (Sārūī) | 52. Lārijān |
| 8. Qalca Shamskalāya | 23. Kājira | 38. Shīr Qalca | 53. Lāwīj |
| 9. Ustaband | 24. Diz Lūrā | 39. Mihrān (Mihr Nigār) | 54. Nātil |
| 10. Bahrām dizh | 25. Diz Ustuwār | 40. Girdkūh | 55. Kujūr |
| 11. Dizwartawān | 26. Fašm/Bašm | 41. Dihistān | 56. Kalār |
| 12. Chanāshak | 27. Maygūn | 42. Astarābād | 57. Gurjiyān |
| 13. Alamūt | 28. Diz Imāma | 43. Kabūdajāma | 58. Rūdsar |
| 14. Diz Arzhang | 29. Diz Sarband | 44. Bahmanshahr | 59. Hawsam |
| 15. Andijrūd | 30. Ufja/Afja | 45. Nikā | 60. Fūman |

The political fragmentation of Northern Iran before and after 1200 AD

except for the two cases of Nūr al-Dīn Muḥammad and Ḥasan III, our sources remain silent about the wives and concubines of Nizārī Imams.

Disturbances of succession

As for the 'harem policy' of the *khudāwands* of Alamūt, these certainly did have a growing importance in the history of Alamūt in the last decades of its history.

After the assassination of Ḥasan II in 562/1166, we notice regular troubles connected with Nizārī Imams' successions. Although the concept of *naṣṣ* (divinely inspired designation of successors) did work—i.e. it was never put into abeyance by any *kbudāwand* of Alamūt, and all Imams were designated their predecessor's successor based on *naṣṣ*—there were personal conflicts in every succession 'case'; we see a number of occasions when the succession of an Imam was heavily disputed or questioned by other family members.

The plot against Ḥasan II, the eradication of his plotters led by Ḥasan b. Nāmāwar in 562/1166, the alleged poisoning of Muḥammad II in 607/1210, the supposed plot against Ḥasan III in 618/1221, the question of the participation of his wives in this plot, the later execution of all the wives of Ḥasan III at the order of his successor, the murder of Muḥammad III by one of his friends and the spying of one of the former concubines of Muḥammad III on Rukn al-Dīn Khurshāh, were all cases when the increasing role of the Nizārī Imams' harem might have played some part in events. The growing role of wives and concubines suggests a more clan-like character for the ruling Nizārī dynasty; and though our sources are limited, these well-recorded conflicts lead us to hypothesise that, alongside the act of *naṣṣ*, the role of influential women and powerful courtiers should not be underestimated. Factors relating to a prestigious marriage with a local Gīlānī and Māzandarānī princess as well as the role of important courtiers or clan figures could not undermine or eliminate the importance the act of *naṣṣ*; indeed, they probably filled it with certain nativist or clan-like dynastic tradition, where concubines tried to exert some influence when there was to be official designation of a successor Imam or at a time of dynastic crisis upon the death of an *kbudāwand*. The cultural backgrounds of these new princesses was first and foremost local Caspian, where legends, 'pre-Islamic' tales and different Shī'ī groups could all play a role. Thus we can see that the concept of *naṣṣ* was complemented by local traditions. The more the Nizārī state resembled a local Caspian kingdom, the more the succession of the Nizārī Imams reflected local clan-like influences. The series of above-mentioned scandals suggests this new behaviour.

Final years

The last years of Jalāl al-Dīn Ḥasan III were, however, marked by the menace of the Mongol conquest. As noted, the Nizārīs were well-informed concerning the political events of their age and Jalāl al-Dīn Ḥasan III was the first Muslim ruler to try to make terms with the Mongols after their crossing of the Oxus in August 616/1219. The period 616–619/1219–1222 saw the first Mongol attacks against Iran and Central Asia. It is not precisely known what the direct objective of the Nizārī visit in 616/1219 to the Mongol camp was, but perhaps the Nizārīs realised the menace the Mongols posed to the eastern Iranian world and wished to make diplomatic contacts with the Mongols before any potential onslaught. It was the

vehemently anti-Nizārī Juwaynī who said that the Nizārīs were building contacts with the Mongols upon the arrival of Chingiz Khan at the Oxus river although some scholars have raised doubts about the claim.²⁷ It is important to note that we do not hear of any Nizārī-Mongol clashes during the first Mongol attack against Iran. If this was a result of this early and cautious diplomatic mission, it was indeed a successful step taken by the Nizārīs. Hodgson's opinion, that both the Nizārīs and the Abbasid caliphate were involved in the diplomatic mission against the Khwārizmians, is quite plausible based on the following analogies: '[Ḥasan III] was noticeably loyal to the Caliph. This is supposed to have gone so far when the (pagan) Mongols invaded (Sunni) Khwārizmian territory, allegedly at the invitation of the (secretly Shī'ite) Caliph, that the Ismā'īlīs claimed that Ḥasan had sent them friendly overtures even before the invasion. Juwaynī, who, unlike Rashīd al-Dīn, doubts this claim, admits that the Ismā'īlīs were the first to make a submission after the Mongols had crossed the river Oxus.'²⁸

On the other hand, the Nizārīs of Quhistān hosted Khwārizmian and Khurāsāni refugees in their fortresses, which caused anxiety among the Nizārīs of Alamūt. According to Jūzjānī, the *muhtasham* (governor) of Quhistān, when hosting Khwārizmian refugees after the first Mongol attack in about 617/1220, was immediately reprimanded by the vehemently anti-Khwārizmian 'Alā' al-Dīn Muḥammad III.²⁹ We must note that Nāṣir al-Dīn Ṭūsī was among the refugees when he fled from Nishāpūr to Quhistān.³⁰ Yet the hosting of Khwārizmian refugees can be explained as a sign of solidarity and as evidence of daily contacts existing between local Nizārīs and Khwārizmians. The story preserved by Juzjānī underpins our idea that some Nizārī groups (especially those of the Caspian provinces) may have helped or even served as guides for the Mongols against the Khwārizmians.

Lewis's suggestion that Nizārī-ruled Quhistān was deliberately spared by the Mongols during their first attack against Iran³¹ cannot be entirely accepted since *The Shengwu qinzheng lu* (*Campaigns of Chingiz Khan*), a Chinese source written in the Yuan (Mongol) period, says that Tolui, the fourth son of Genghis Khan, plundered Nizārī-populated areas in Khurāsān, too:

²⁷ 'It was alleged that the Heretics and the truth are not clear, but this much is evident, that when the armies of the World-Conqueror Chingiz-Khan entered the countries of Islam, the first ruler on this side of the Oxus to send ambassadors, and present his duty, and accept allegiance, was Jalāl al-Dīn [Ḥasan III]' JUWAYNĪ, tr. A. Boyle, vol. 3, 248.

²⁸ HODGSON, 223.

²⁹ Minhāj al-Dīn Uthmān b. Sīraj Jūzjānī: *Ṭabaqāt-i Nāṣiri*, ed. 'Abd al-Ḥayy Ḥabībī, 2nd ed., Kabul, (1342–1343 Sh./1963–1964), Anjuman-i tārikh-i Afghānistān vol. 2, 699–700. Daftary, 2007, 376.

³⁰ Clifford Edmund BOSWORTH: 'The Isma'īlīs of Quhistān and the Maliks of Nīmruz or Sīstān', in F. Daftary (ed.), *Medieval Ismaili History and Thought* (London, 1996), Cambridge University Press, 211–229. Hamīd: DABASHĪ: 'The Philosopher/Vizier Khwāja Nāṣir al-Dīn Ṭūsī and the Isma'īlīs', in Farhad Daftary (ed.), *Medieval Ismaili History and Thought*, London, Cambridge University Press, 1996, 321–345.

³¹ LEWIS, 90.

[§51.2] In the winter, the Fourth Crown Prince also sacked Maruchaq, Yeke Maru,³² and Sirāqs³³ cities, before moving on with his troops. [§51.3] In year *ren/xu* [Year of the Horse, or 619/1222], in the spring, he also sacked Tus, Nicha'ur,³⁴ and other cities. Since just then the summer-heat was becoming excessive, His Majesty sent envoys summoning Tolui to make haste and return. As he was passing through the Mulayid realm,³⁵ he totally plundered them. Crossing the Choqchoran River, he sacked Heri³⁶ and other cities.³⁷

Almost the same information and the same text can be found in the *Yuanshi* (another Chinese chronicle of the Yuan period) which covers Tolui's attack on Khurāsān and Quhistān:

Year seventeen, that of *ren/xu* [that is, 619/1222]. Spring. The imperial prince Tolui conquers Tus, Nicha'ur and other cities. Returning, he passed through the Mulayid kingdom, plundering it heavily. Crossing the Choqchoran River, he conquered Heri and other towns.³⁸

It would be interesting to see whether the Nizārī areas and their neighbours in the Caspian provinces were affected or not by the first Mongol invasion. As peripheral and mountainous and often inaccessible areas with a largely humid and unwelcoming climate, Gīlān and Māzandarān had many fewer urban centres than other provinces in Iran, and the Nizārī-controlled areas in these provinces offered the Mongols less promise than other parts of Iran.

However, on one occasion the first Mongol armies did not even leave these areas untouched. The reason for Mongol penetration into the Caspian region was due to the escape of Muḥammad II, the Khwārizmian ruler of the Caspian areas. Muḥammad II, who never dared to fight face-to-face with the much-feared Mongol opponents, found asylum in northern Iran having first made his way into Ṭabaristān in 617/1220 and then fleeing to the Caspian littoral area of Astarābād in 618/1221.

³² Yeke Maru, present-day Merv. The Mongol attack against the city took place on 1–2 Muḥarram 618/25–26 February 1221; see JUWAYNĪ, tr. A. Boyle, vol. 3, 160–61.

³³ Sarakhs at the present day border of Iran and Turkmenistan.

³⁴ Nicha'ur (Neyshābūr or Nishapur) is an important urban centre of Khurāsān. The decisive Mongol assault took place on 12–15 Šafar 618/7–10 April 1221, JUWAYNĪ, tr. A. Boyle, vol. 3, 176–77.

³⁵ The term '*mulayid*' is the usual Mongol name applied to the Nizāris in this Chinese source; it is almost certainly a borrowing of the Arabic-Persian term *mulhid*.

³⁶ The river here called the Choqchoran is the modern Harī Rūd, and Heri must be the city of Herat, the most important city in present-day northwestern Afghanistan. This first Mongol siege of Herat ended with a negotiated surrender and thus meant the sparing of most of the city's population (by courtesy of C. P. Atwood).

³⁷ §51.3 in Christopher P. ATWOOD: *The Campaigns of Chinggis Khan: Text, Translation, and Commentary* (forthcoming, Leiden). These data are provided by courtesy of Prof. C. Atwood.

³⁸ *Yuanshi*, ed. Song Lian, Beijing, Liyue, 1976, 1.22.

It is also known that Muḥammad II visited Āmul, the former Bāwandid capital during his flight, where unnamed local princes advised him to flee to the islands of the Caspian Sea. He presumably died on the island of Ashūrada due to the grief and upset caused by his losing his harem during the flight (or, according to Nasawī, Muḥammad II died of pneumonia).³⁹ The first Mongol forces led by the most famous Mongol generals of the age Jebe and Sübötei closely trailed Muḥammad II as he fled but failed to capture him. Thus the Mongols entered the Caspian areas for the first time in 618/1221, in hot pursuit of the Khwārizmian court. It is also known that they caused more damage in Māzandarān than in Gilān. According to Juwaynī, Jebe's forces caused great destruction in Māzandarān, when marching from the direction of Juwayn, and he states that they pillaged the city of Āmul in their search for Muḥammad II.⁴⁰ Furthermore, Jūzjānī says the Mongols raided the encampment of Muḥammad II in Tamīsha, in Eastern Māzandarān. Jūzjānī's statement is confirmed by Juwaynī: that the Mongols invaded Māzandarān for the first time from Gurgān, via the traditional gate of Gurgān, which was the weakest strategic point in the Caspian area.⁴¹ The Mongols in Māzandarān, in 618/1221, failed to capture Muḥammad II, but they intercepted his harem by successfully besieging those castles where his women and concubines had taken refuge.

Meanwhile, the forces of Sübötei, arriving from the direction of Nishāpūr, razed the town of Dāmghān almost to the ground. The local aristocracy had fled to the neighbouring Nizārī fortress of Girdkūh before the Mongols overrun Dāmghān. According to Juwaynī, only some '*runūd*', or disorganized elements of the Dāmghān population, resisted the invading Mongol forces. Yet one should note that the Nizārīs of Girdkūh moved in and captured Dāmghān, and perhaps Qūmis, after the departure of the main Mongol forces.

Sübötei's forces headed westward, and they swiftly conquered and destroyed Simnān and Rayy as well as massacring the local population. During this first Mongol campaign, whose principal objective was the capture of Muḥammad II, we do not hear about any attacks against the Nizārīs and the Nizārīs abstained from attacking the Mongols.⁴²

The fact that the Nizārīs kept a low profile here can be explained by two reasons. Firstly, they were outspoken opponents of the Khwārizmians but Nizārī leaders had witnessed the unprecedented brutality, ruthlessness and absolute military supremacy of the Mongols. The forces of Jebe and Sübötei did not waste time attacking the Nizārīs, either, because their designated task was to capture Muḥammad II; and in the case of the first Mongol attack in the Middle East, we cannot speak of any systematic territorial conquest. Their main goal was to paralyze

³⁹ Nasawī, 68–69.

⁴⁰ JUWAYNĪ, tr. A. Boyle, vol. 1, 133–140.

⁴¹ Jūzjānī, vol. 2, 108–109.

⁴² JUWAYNĪ, tr. A. Boyle, vol. 1, 133; Berthold SPULER: *Die Mongolen in Iran, Politik, Verwaltung und Kultur der Ilchanzeit*, 617/1220–1350, Leiden, Brill, 1985, 23–25.

any defensive forces and prepare these areas for a later, more complete administrative and military submission to the Mongol empire. As the Nizārīs were enemies of the Khwārizmians, it would be interesting if we could see traces of any possibly tacit support given by the Nizārīs to the Mongols, which might be a logical step; yet our sources do not mention any pro-Mongol activity coming from the Nizārīs during the Mongol campaign in Māzandarān and Gilān in 618/1221.

The petty warfare between the Nizārīs and Bādūspānids continued around and after 618/1221. Yet neither Āmulī and Mar'ashī provide information about these wars and there is no historical data to link these local campaigns with the much more important Mongol wars. Such Nizārī activity of petty warfare was more in consequence of the radically changed political landscape after 618/1221. The Nizārīs therefore survived the first Mongol attack and, they did not hesitate to exploit these wars for their own benefit after the fall of the Khwārizmian Empire.

Abstract

This paper addresses the political relations of the Nizārī Ismā'īlī state at the beginning of the 13th century AD during the rule of Ḥasan III (1210–1221). As for the religious-political profile of this Imam, it appears that he had a conscious, cautious and first of all pragmatist approach rather than a pro-Sunni religious attitude on behalf of the Nizārī Ismā'īlī leadership who always sought to counterbalance major powers politically. Nizārī relations held with the Ildigūzids and Abbasids in their anti-Khwārizmian stance very much helped the Nizārīs to reach the zenith of their power in the early thirteenth century. Somewhat later the same flexible policy of Ḥasan III can be detected in his diplomatic contacts with the emerging Mongol world-empire.

Keywords

Ḥasan III, Nizārī Ismā'īlīs, Alamūt, Abbasids, Qazwīn,

Resümé

A jelen dolgozat a 13. század elejének észak-iráni politikai viszonyait vizsgálja, azon belül a nizári iszmá'ilita állam politikáját III. Ḥasan (1210–1221) alatt. A dolgozat rámutat, hogy III. Ḥasan szunnitabarátnak gondolt, a síita taqiyya 'tettetés' fogalmával jellemzett politikája valójában óvatos és tudatos pragmatizmus volt a nizári iszmá'ilik részéről, akik regionális politikájukban mindig a nagyhatalmak ellensúlyait keresték és támogatták. Az Abbászidákkal és az Ildigüzidákkal fenntartott kapcsolatai és khwārizmsah-ellenes szövetségi rendszere révén a nizári iszmá'ili állam hatalmas csúcsára a 13. század elején. III. Ḥasan ugyanilyen pragmatikus és rugalmas politikát folytatott a felemelkedő mongol világbirodalommal kiépített diplomáciai kapcsolataiban is.

Kulcszavak

III. Ḥasan, nizári iszmá'iliták, Alamút, Abbászidák, Qazvín, taqiyya