

Factors and Consequences of the Battle between the Seljuks and the Ghaznavids at Dandanqan

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DOI: 10.47760/cognizance.2024.v04i10.011

Abstract: Afghanistan, our wonderful country, has a glorious past. Many great men and heroes have been nurtured in this ancient land, leaving valuable contributions in the golden pages of our country's history, which society and the nation take pride in. Among them, we can mention the invaluable services of Sultan Mahmood of Ghaznawi in the political and cultural fields of the country. As soon as he became powerful, he made all possible attempts to broaden his territory. Although the establishment of the independent and grand Ghaznavid state is attributed to Alp-Tegin, its glory is linked to Sabuktigin, especially his son, Sultan Mahmud of Gaznavi. After the fall of the Samani state, Mahmood stepped in, restored the lost state, and founded a vast empire. He worked to strengthen the internal unity of the country by defeating his internal rivals and making comprehensive efforts to implement his various plans. Among his plans and programs was the invasion of India, which he pursued with strong determination and achieved numerous successes. The purpose of this research paper is to examine the factors influencing Sultan Mahmood Ghaznavi's military campaigns in India, his focus on conquests and expansion, the spread of the Islamic religion in non-Islamic lands, and the elevation of religion and the economy during this period. Research has various methods and approaches. This research paper has been prepared with the library research method and by using the most reliable historical books with complete integrity. In conclusion, we can say that Sultan Mahmood Ghaznavi established a central government in India, spread Islamic culture and religion there, and obtained significant economic gains and wealth from the conquest and occupation of India.

Keywords: Sultan Mahmood Gaznavi, Seljuk, military campaigns, India, Dandanqan.

I. Introduction

The medieval period of Afghanistan (formerly Khorasan) is considered one of the most eventful and transformative eras in history, where states and emperors fought to consolidate their rule and, for various reasons, faced decline and extinction. The Seljuks and the Ghaznavids were among the greatest emperors of the time, who extended their realms beyond Asia to Europe and Africa through the politics of the sword and intellect. Therefore, it can be acknowledged that the Seljuk era is one of the most important periods in the history of Khorasan. Numerous characteristics contributed to this state gaining significant importance and value in Khorasan's history, making it one of the brightest periods of Islamic civilization.

Furthermore, it can be stated that the Seljuk Turkmens, a part of the Oghuz tribes, converted to Islam after entering Islamic lands in the 4th century AH. In 431 AH, they defeated the Ghaznavids in Mā warā' an-Nahr and established their rule in Khorasan in the early 5th century AH. Their governance brought significant military changes and transformations, transitioning from nomadic life to urban living, which facilitated their familiarity with settled life and led to the establishment of one of the world's greatest empires. The Ghaznavids initially laid the foundations of their governance system in the city of Ghazni, earning the title of Ghaznavids. The founder of this dynasty's empire was Sultan Mahmud of Ghazni. His ancestors were Turkish slaves and commanders in the Samani court in Khorasan who migrated to Khorasan. The most famous rulers of this dynasty were Sultan Mahmud and his son, Sultan Masud. Ultimately, after their defeat by the Seljuks in the Battle of Dandanaqan and following Sultan Masud, the dynasty faced collapse, and their dominion was limited to parts of present-day India and Afghanistan [6].

The stages and research of this study focus on the causes of the Battle of Dandanaqan between the Seljuks and the Ghaznavids and its consequences. It is organized into four main sections: the first section discusses the reasons for the rise of the Seljuks and their relations with the Ghaznavids; the second section covers the actions of the Ghaznavids against the Seljuks; the third section details the two equipped armies on the battlefield of Dandanaqan; and the fourth section presents the findings or results of the research.

A. Problem Statement

The most important problem Statement that this research addresses is that the main cause of this event was the expansionist actions of the Seljuks to seize the territories of the Ghaznavids. Both Tughril Beg and Chaghri Beg were in search of land for the settlement of the Oghuz tribes. Thus, when they came to Khorasan to establish their state, they achieved their long-standing goal of settling in Khorasan after the Battle of Nasa and attacked the Ghaznavids who controlled those areas. As a result, this struggle between the Seljuks and the Ghaznavids lasted twenty years. In most of these conflicts, the Seljuks were victorious and captured several cities belonging to the Ghaznavids. On the other hand, the declaration of independence by the Seljuk state undermined the credibility of the Ghaznavid state. Sultan Masud, the ruler of the Ghaznavid state, marched with an army of his armored units to put an end to the Seljuk threat in the areas of Dandanaqan. The Battle of Dandanaqan in 1040 CE was a battle in which the Seljuk state defeated the Ghaznavid state, leading to the dissolution of their state [10]. After this battle, the Ghaznavid state entered a period of decline, and the Seljuks formally established their own state. This is considered one of the important historical issues.

B. Importance of this research

The logical basis for the importance of this research topic lies in the fact that before the Battle of Dandanaqan, the Ghaznavid lands had reached a high level of political and administrative power. In contrast, the Seljuks had no political or military power and, in search of fertile lands, led by Tughril Beg and Chaghri Beg, entered Khorasan in groups from the city of Jand Khwarazm and obtained permission for settlement through political relations. The political relations between the Ghaznavids and the Seljuks were completely different in two periods. Firstly, the political relations between the two sides were entirely secret, and the Ghaznavid state

was keenly trying to reclaim the lost territory. After being defeated by the Seljuks in the Battle of Dandanaqan, they recognized their existence. Secondly, lasting peace governed the relations between the two sides for some time, and they mutually recognized each other's rights. It should not be overlooked that this battle was the result of the motivations and actions of the Seljuks, specifically Tughril Beg and Chaghri Beg, which, due to the overall temporal and spatial conditions, stemmed from their will or that of a group of Oghuz Turkmen for settlement. Therefore, research on such significant events and incidents is of great importance.

C. Research Questions

Since war is a multifaceted phenomenon and its occurrence depends on various causes and factors, we can base the explanation of this manuscript on the following four questions:

- Why did the Battle of Dandanaqan occur?
- Why was it not possible to prevent the Battle of Dandanaqan between the Seljuks and the Ghaznavids?
- Why did the Battle of Dandanaqan result in the defeat of the Ghaznavids?
- What were the main consequences of the Battle of Dandanaqan?

D. Hypothesis

In this way, the following can be proposed as a hypothesis: Settlement was not the main goal of the Seljuks; therefore, the war between the Seljuks and the Ghaznavids did not emerge. It was possible for the Ghaznavids to respond to the Seljuks with peace and prevent war. Most likely, the Seljuks played the biggest role in this arena because they are considered the main actors in this war.

E. The research objectives of this research are as follows, summarized briefly:

- To identify the fundamental aspects of the Battle of Dandanaqan.
- To gain a comprehensive understanding of the tactics employed by the Seljuks in their war against the Ghaznavids.
- To uncover the actions taken by the Ghaznavids against the Seljuks.
- To discover facts regarding the roles of commanders and rulers from both sides in the war.

F. Background study

In the background study, our argument is that the Battle of Dandanaqan can be considered one of the hottest topics in history. Undoubtedly, numerous books and articles have been written about this battle; however, less attention has been paid to the causes and main roots of the Battle of Dandanaqan. Therefore, to clarify and introduce such an event, I present thought-provoking lines beyond the research and investigations of historians. After analyzing and discussing, reviewing, and examining, I extract the facts, perspectives, and academic thoughts as follows:

First and foremost, it is necessary to mention that contemporary researchers mainly discuss events and relationships between the Seljuks and the Ghaznavids up to the earliest years. For example, works such as "Tarikh-i Gardizi" or "Zayn al-Akhbar" by Abu Sa'id 'Abd al-Hayy Gardizi, discuss general history events up to the early days of Sultan Mahmud's reign. Similarly, "Tarikh-i Bayhaqi" by Abu al-Fadl Bayhaqi Secretary discusses the relations of Sultan Mahmud's era and the beginning of Sultan Mahmud's reign. Also, books like "Al-Muntazam fi Tarikh Muluk wa al-Umam" by Ibn al-Jawzi or "Tarikh-i Guzidah" by Hamdallah Mustawfi Qazvini, and "Tarikh-i Farshad" by Gulshan Ibrahim provide information about the relations between the Ghaznavids and the Seljuks. Additionally, "Saljuqnameh" by Zahir al-Din Nishapuri covers the events of the Seljuk period up to the year 582. In this book, there is limited and general information about the initial encounters between Sultan Masud Ghaznavi and the Seljuks [5]. Therefore, in the course of this research article, every effort has been made to use modern analytical methods such as critique and examination, analysis and

discussion, and deep thinking to obtain accurate results for proving historical events and to address both the said and unsaid aspects.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

To address the topic of the relationship between the Ghaznavids and the Seljuks, it is essential to illuminate the emergence of the Seljuks because their initial activities lay the groundwork for their relations with the Ghaznavids. It is worth mentioning that the main ancestor of the Seljuks was from the twenty-two Oghuz tribes, each of which played a role in identifying themselves through their distinctive symbols. The most prominent among them were the Qang tribes, which constituted a group of Seljuks [9].

According to Az-Zahir Ali ibn Athir in the book "The Complete History of Islam and Iran"¹ the ancestor of the Seljuk Turkmens, Taqaq (Daqaq), also known as Tamrbaligh, meaning "hard bow," was the father of the Seljuk. Daqaq, a courageous and astute man, served under Yabghu, the Khazar king. After him, the Seljuk came into the service of Yabghu, and due to his competence and skill, he was appointed as the commander of the army [1]. During the conflicts between the Seljuks and Yabghu, the Seljuks were forced to leave their homeland and settled with their supporters and fellow Turkmen in the "Jand" region located on the right bank of the Syr Darya River. In this region, the Seljuks embraced Islam and engaged in jihad against non-Muslim Turks, exempting the people from taxation [8].

Furthermore, in some historical sources, the number of Seljuk's sons is mentioned as three: Musa, Isra'il, and Mikhail. Mikhail was killed in battle against non-Muslim Turks during his father's lifetime, and his sons, Tughril Beg and Chaghri Beg, gained prominence among the Seljuks. With the death of Seljuk, leadership of the Seljuk Turkmen passed to Isra'il. Isra'il, Tughril Beg, and Chaghri Beg participated in various power struggles Mā warā' an-Nahr and in Khwarazm. The Seljuks took part in battles between the Samanids and the Qarakhanids, and later between the Qarakhanids and the Ghaznavids. Since then, the Seljuks' influence has grown day by day, and eventually, they came into the service of Ali Tegin, the commander of the Ilek Khans [3].

During that time, conflicts arose between Sultan Mahmud Ghaznavi and Ali Tegin Qarakhan over the lands surrounding Bukhara. Sultan Mahmud embarked on a campaign Mā warā' an-Nahr to suppress him. Ali Tegin avoided facing Sultan Mahmud and fled from him. Meanwhile, Israel, the son of Seljuq, and Seljuq Turkmen were also among the allies of Ali Tegin. After numerous conflicts, Sultan Mahmud sent an envoy to the Seljuqs and asked them to send one of their leaders for negotiations. He also encouraged them to send troops to participate in the jihad against infidels in India. From the Seljuqs' side, Arslan Israel and his son Qutalmish, along with three hundred young Turks, went to Sultan Mahmud. Sultan Mahmud respected Arslan Israel, but when he learned about their large population during a conversation with Israel, he captured Israel and his companions, sending them to India and imprisoning them in Kalinjar Fort near Multan [11].

Sultan Mahmud himself sent a delegation to Tughril and Chaghri Beg, explaining the reason for imprisoning Israel: due to his lack of experience in royal courts, his intoxicated behavior was unbecoming of the monarchy, leading to his brief imprisonment. Sultan Mahmud expressed sympathy for them in his letter. Initially, the Seljuqs intended to revolt upon hearing this, but fearing the consequences, they ultimately obeyed Sultan Mahmud. The Seljuqs, waiting for the right opportunity, sent a group to Sultan Mahmud, lamenting the oppression of their rulers and stating, "We are four thousand households; if you command, may our Lord accept us, so we may settle in Khorasan. May He grant us ease, and may His rule be lenient upon us, for we are nomadic people with abundant sheep, and may we be a multitude in His army"[10].

Shabankareyi, in his work "Majma al-Ansab," writes about Sultan Mahmud's decision. Sultan Mahmud Ghaznavi consulted with his ministers, Khwaja Ahmad Hasan Maimandi and Altuntash Khwarazmshah, on this matter. Both of them initially opposed allowing the Seljuqs to pass through, but Sultan Mahmud agreed to let them pass through the Jihun River. He settled them with four thousand households, along with their tents and

¹ تاریخ کامل بزرگ اسلام و ایران

flocks, in the deserts of Sarakhs, Farvah, and Bawurd. When Sultan Mahmud returned to Khorasan, Arslan Jazeb, the governor of Tus, said to him, "Why did you bring these Turkmens into your territory? This was a mistake! Now that you have brought them, either kill them all, or give them to me so that I can cut off their fingers, making them unable to shoot arrows." Sultan Mahmud was astonished by his words and described him as merciless. According to Shabankareyi, over time, Sultan Mahmud realized his mistake in bringing the Seljuks to Khorasan and blamed himself for it[2].

Historians of the Seljuk era, such as Nishapuri, Rawandi, Husayni Yazdi, and Bandari, all agree that the Seljuks showed no reaction during the reign of Sultan Mahmud Ghaznavi and consider the conflicts between the Seljuks and the Ghaznavids to be related to the reign of Sultan Mas'ud Ghaznavi [11].

However, when we look at historical evidence, conflicts between Sultan Mahmud Ghaznavi and the Seljuks did occur. For instance, in the late year 408 AH, a group of people from Nesa, Bavard, and Faraveh complained to Sultan Mahmud about the insecurity caused by the Seljuks. Sultan Mahmud, under the leadership of Arslan Jazeb, the governor of Tus, suppressed them. However, Arslan Jazeb's military campaign was ineffective due to the increased number of Seljuks. Arslan Jazeb wrote a letter to the Sultan inviting him to punish the Seljuks. In the year 417 AH, Sultan Mahmud Ghaznavi set out from Ghazna with his army towards the city of Bust, then proceeded to Tus, where he was welcomed by the people of the city and Arslan Jazeb. During this military campaign, near Rabat-e Faraveh, the Seljuks suffered a decisive defeat, with 4,000 Seljuk cavalymen killed, many captured, and some fleeing to the mountains and villages of Balkh. Some of them fled to Kerman, seeking refuge with Kuam al-Din Abu al-Fawaris Buwayhi. This battle resulted in the devastation of those regions [10].

With the death of Sultan Mahmud Ghaznavi, the Seljuks found an opportune moment for themselves. The internal conflicts among the Ghaznavids, particularly between Prince Muhammad and Prince Mas'ud, led to the Ghaznavids having no military relations with the Seljuks. This situation provided the Seljuks with the most suitable opportunity to renew their strength and confront the Ghaznavids.

III. METHODOLOGY

In this research, considering the nature and importance of all prominent research dimensions, a Qualitative method has been employed. This method involves utilizing dependable national and foreign sources, followed by thorough reading, analysis, and data extraction to examine and synthesize information directly related to the topic.

IV. Sultan Mas'ud Ghaznavi's Actions Against the Seljuks

During the reign of Sultan Mas'ud Ghaznavi, the Seljuk Turkmens once again found an opportunity to launch military actions in the regions of Khorasan. This was because Sultan Mas'ud, preoccupied with internal conflicts following the death of his father and the succession dispute with his brother Sultan Muhammad, did not have an appropriate time to confront the Seljuks. Thus, it was the best chance for the Seljuks to subjugate various regions and expand their dominion even further [2].

After stabilizing the internal situation in Ghazni, when Sultan Mas'ud became aware of the political and military activities of the Seljuks, he grew concerned. In the year 422 AH, the Sultan set out from Ghazni to the cities of Ray and Isfahan and arrived in Herat. In Herat, a group of people from Sarakhs and Baward came to the Sultan and complained about the Seljuks' mistreatment of the people in those areas. To prevent the political activities of the Seljuks, Sultan Mas'ud sent a large army under the command of Abu Sa'id Abdus ibn Abd al-Aziz against them. Consequently, the two armies clashed in the Farava region, resulting in heavy casualties on both sides. However, the battle was inconclusive, and the Ghaznavid army retreated [14].

In the year 423 AH, Altuntash (the Ghaznavid-appointed ruler of Khwarezm) engaged in battle with Ali Tegin Qarakhani (the ruler of Samarkand and Bukhara), who intended to collaborate with the Seljuk Turkmens. Sultan Mas'ud sent an army of fifteen thousand to assist Altuntash in Khwarezm. Ultimately, a fierce battle

ensued between the two sides. Although Altuntash defeated Ali Tegin's army, he was wounded during the battle and was compelled to make peace with Ali Tegin. Shortly after, Altuntash passed away.

- **Territorial Expansion:** The green-shaded area on the map represents the extent of the Seljuk Empire after their victory. It stretches from modern-day Turkey to Central Asia, including parts of Iran, Iraq, Syria, and Afghanistan as shown in Figure 1.
- **Cities Marked:** Major cities that were part of the Seljuk Empire are labeled in Persian script. Cities like Isfahan, Merv, Nishapur, Baghdad, and others are likely present, representing the administrative and cultural centers of the empire as represented in Figure 1.
- **Borders and Neighbors:** The map shows the Seljuk Empire's borders and its neighboring regions and empires. To the north, the Caspian Sea is visible, and to the south, parts of the Arabian Peninsula are shown. The Seljuks had both Christian and Muslim neighbors, such as the Byzantine Empire and the Fatimid Caliphate.



Figure 1 Map depicting the Seljuk Empire's territorial extent after their victory in the Battle of Dandanaqan (1040 AD), highlighting major cities and regions under Seljuk control across the Iranian Plateau, Central Asia, and parts of the Middle East

Image Source: [<https://andisheh-haghdar.blogspot.com/2020/05/blog-post.html>]

The death of Altuntash created a more favorable environment for the political and military activities of the Seljuks in Khwarezm, depriving Sultan Mas'ud of a powerful supporter and a deterrent against the Seljuks [5].

Altuntash was succeeded by his son, Harun Khwarazmshah, who collaborated with the Seljuk Turkmens. At this time, the Seljuks were led by Tughril, Chaghri, and Ibrahim Yinal, who had entered the borders of Khwarezm from the Nur region of Bukhara to confront Sultan Mas'ud. Harun offered valuable gifts and substantial assistance to the Seljuks, utilizing them as powerful allies to achieve his main goal of occupying Khorasan, a primary objective for both parties. Observing their alliance, Mas'ud dispatched Shah Malik, the Emir of Jand, to suppress them. In Dhu al-Hijjah 425 AH, Shah Malik launched a nighttime attack, defeating and scattering the Seljuks, killing many of them. Consequently, Harun's plan did not succeed [7].

For the second time in 426 AH, Harun and the Seljuks attempted to invade Khorasan again. However, Harun Khwarazmshah was assassinated that year, a plot orchestrated by Sultan Mas'ud Ghaznavi in collaboration with Ahmad Abd al-Samad (Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Abd al-Samad Shirazi), Harun's vizier. This led to chaos in Khwarezm. Eventually, Ismail Khandan succeeded Harun, but the Seljuks, noticing the turmoil in Khwarezm, left the region, crossed the Jayhun River, and entered Khorasan [7].

In the year 425 AH, Sultan Mas'ud Ghaznavi set out for Rayy to collect overdue taxes from that region when he received a letter from Suri ibn Mu'taz, the governor of Khorasan. The letter stated that the Seljuks had reached the borders of Merv, Badghis, Sarakhs, and Bavard, and were devastating those areas. It also mentioned the inability of the Sultan's appointees to resist them. The letter from Suri ibn Mu'taz read:

"If, God forbid, the lord does not intend to come to Khorasan soon, it is feared that it will be lost. They are secretly supported by Ali Tegin, and Harun from Khwarezm is fully encouraging them. It is said that secretly Ali Tegin has agreed that Harun will come from Khwarezm to Merv, while Ali Tegin moves towards Termez and Balkh to meet them" [4].

This news worried Mas'ud. On one hand, the Seljuks, and on the other hand, Harun Khwarazmshah, occupied his mind. However, when Harun was killed, the Seljuks' influence in Khorasan continued to grow.

In Muharram of 426 AH, Sultan Mas'ud asked Khwaja Bu Nasr Mushkan, the head of the chancery, and his capable vizier, Khwaja Ahmad Abd al-Samad, for their opinions on whether to go to Merv to confront the Seljuks or to go to Rayy and the mountains. Both clearly advised going to Merv to suppress the Seljuks, warning that if he did not, Khorasan would be lost. Mas'ud accepted their advice but was preoccupied with preparations for the Sadeh festival, an event he always attended.

During this time, Sultan Mas'ud received news that his commander, Nushtakin Khasah Khadim, had defeated a group of Turkmens in Sarakhs. Mas'ud rewarded the messengers and had the captured Seljuks trampled by elephants [4].

Despite the advisors' insistence on the necessity of confronting the Seljuks, after the Sadeh festival ended, Mas'ud was influenced by one of his scribes named Abu al-Hasan Iraqi and decided against going to Merv to confront the Seljuks. Instead, he chose to send a force under the command of Suri ibn Mu'taz, Abdus, and others to aid Nushtakin in Khorasan. Mas'ud himself decided to head towards Khorasan to get closer to Rayy, so that the people of Rayy and Gorgan would send their overdue taxes. In Rabi' al-Awwal of 426 AH, Mas'ud arrived in Nishapur, and despite continuous objections from Khwaja Bu Nasr Mushkan and the vizier Ahmad Abd al-Samad, he decided to go to Gorgan. Even in the final moments before Sultan Mas'ud's departure, Ahmad Abd al-Samad, seeing the Sultan's determination to go to Gorgan, wrote a letter and gave it to Bu Nasr Mushkan to deliver to the Sultan. The letter stated:

"It is unwise to go to Gorgan and abandon Khorasan amidst much chaos, insurgency, and opportunism. The rest is at the Lord's command."

However, the vizier's relentless efforts to dissuade Mas'ud were in vain, and Mas'ud went to Gorgan. While Mas'ud was in Amol, a messenger from Suri ibn Mu'taz, the governor of Khorasan, arrived with a letter from the Seljuk leaders, who had written to Suri requesting his mediation with the Sultan. In their letter, the Turkmens referred to themselves as "the slaves of Yabghu, Tughril, and Chaghri Beg Dawood, the allies of the Commander of the Faithful." They asked Suri to hand their letter to the vizier Ahmad Abd al-Samad to mediate between them and the Sultan, seeking permission to settle in the regions of Nisa and Farava. Since the death of Ali Tegin in Bukhara and Harun in Khwarezm, they no longer had a place in those territories. In exchange, the Seljuks promised to act as border guards in those areas for the benefit of the Sultan. When Khwaja Ahmad Abd al-Samad read the letter, he said to Bu Nasr Mushkan:

"O Khwaja, we have been dealing with shepherds until now and must see how long this headache will last. The calamities are still to come. Now the rulers have come to claim territories. I have cried out many times that coming to Tabaristan and Gorgan is not advisable, but the Lord did not heed."

Upon learning of the situation, Sultan Mas'ud decided to send a large army, composed of prominent commanders and led by his great commander Salar Begtughdi, to Khorasan to suppress the Seljuks. Mas'ud himself went to Nishapur. That year, the well-equipped army of Salar Begtughdi reached Nisa. Khwaja Husayn Ali Mikali, one of Sultan Mas'ud's officials, was also with Begtughdi. In the initial encounter between Begtughdi's army and the Seljuks, Begtughdi's forces were victorious and began gathering spoils. However, during this time, Chaghri Beg Dawood launched a massive attack with a large Seljuk force, leading to a fierce

battle in which the Seljuks emerged victorious. Salar Begtughdi fled the battlefield, but Husayn ibn Ali Mikali was captured[5].

The reason for the defeat of the Ghaznavid army was that it consisted of troops from various ethnicities, including Indians, Kurds, Arabs, and Turks, each with its own commander. They were not entirely under the command of the overall leader (Salar Begtughdi) and did not follow his orders effectively. As a result, the large and well-equipped Ghaznavid army could not withstand the Seljuks and was defeated. This defeat greatly alarmed Mas'ud, and according to Bayhaqi:

"This was the first major disgrace that befell this king, and after this, disgrace upon disgrace until his end when he was martyred."

The reason for his fear was that he saw his large and well-equipped army, led by his great commanders, unable to effectively confront the relatively small number of Seljuks.

Afterwards, the Seljuks sent an envoy to Mas'ud, requesting peace. Mas'ud accepted their request and sent his envoy, Qadi Bu Nasr Sini, to negotiate with them. After discussions with Yabghu, Tughril, and Chaghri Beg Dawood, Qadi Bu Nasr returned to Nishapur with their envoys. Eventually, Mas'ud granted Nisa to Tughril, Dehestan to Dawood, and Farava to Yabghu, sending them official decrees along with robes of honor and banners. In those decrees, he gave them the title of "dehqans" (landowners)[4].

Historians attribute one of the reasons for the numerous Seljuk rebellions during this period to the killing of Isra'il by Mas'ud. Isra'il had been imprisoned in the fortress of Kalinjar since Mahmud's time. In his final year, Isra'il wrote a letter to the Seljuk leaders, highlighting Sultan Mas'ud's weaknesses and encouraging them to rise against Mas'ud. Thus, the Seljuks, who were already looking for an opportunity to rebel, found the necessary impetus in Isra'il's killing [11].

Between 427 and 428 AH, while Sultan Mas'ud was in Balkh, he repeatedly received letters from Suri ibn Mu'taz, the governor of Khorasan, as well as from the governors of Guzgan, Sarakhs, Bust, and other regions of Khorasan. These letters reported the political activities of the Seljuks in those areas and urged the Sultan to take action. Despite the persistent encouragement from his competent vizier, Ahmad Abd al-Samad, to confront the Seljuks, Mas'ud refused, arguing that his troops were already present in Merv and Herat, making his own presence unnecessary. Amidst the chaotic situation created by the Seljuks in Khorasan, Mas'ud left for Ghazna with the intention of embarking on a jihad to Hansi in India, following the longstanding traditions of his dynasty. Before departing for India, he sent Amir Hajib Subashi with a force of ten thousand to Khorasan to confront the Seljuks. However, Subashi made no significant progress against the Seljuks [4].

During this time, the people of Khorasan, particularly the residents of Nishapur, were not fond of the Ghaznavids and suffered from the oppression of Ghaznavid officials. According to Sadr al-Din Hosseini, the people of Nishapur gave the title "Pak-Rub" to a Hajib sent by Sultan Mas'ud to Khorasan in 428 AH due to his excessive demands and oppression. The people of Khorasan saw no reason to support the Ghaznavids, as this dynasty had failed to provide adequate security against Seljuk invasions and was unsuccessful in fostering economic prosperity in Khorasan. As a result, the local nobility and landowners renounced their allegiance to the Ghaznavids and aligned with the Seljuks. Muhammad bin Munawwar also mentions a story of the Seljuk leaders meeting with Sheikh Abu Sa'id Abu'l-Khayr, indicating the collaboration of the Khorasan people with the Seljuks, attributing it to the oppressive actions of Mas'ud and his officials [5].

In 429 AH, after conquering Hansi, Mas'ud returned from India. Upon hearing about the situation in Khorasan and the Seljuks' advances, he regretted going to India under those circumstances. That year, Subashi Hajib, Mas'ud's renowned commander, suffered a severe defeat by the Seljuks, and his troops fled. This defeat led Suri ibn Mu'taz and Abu Sahl Hamdawi, the officials of Khorasan, to take the wealth of Khorasan and flee, leaving Khorasan in the hands of the Seljuks [4].

In 429 AH, after defeating Subashi Hajib, the Seljuks captured Nishapur. The people of Nishapur welcomed them warmly, going out to greet Tughril and his troops. Chaghri Beg Dawood, Tughril's brother, also captured

Herat and Merv. In these cities, sermons and coins bore the names of Seljuk leaders. From then on, they controlled almost all of Khorasan and Balkh. However, since the Seljuks did not yet have a strong foothold in Khorasan and still feared Mas'ud's power, they recited the Friday sermon in Mas'ud's name first, followed by their own names [1].

When the Seljuks captured Nishapur, they received a letter from the Abbasid Caliph al-Qa'im bi-Amr Allah, delivered by the Caliph's envoy Abu Bakr Wasiti. In this letter, the Caliph urged the Seljuks to refrain from looting cities, spreading corruption, and instead encouraged them to worship God and build cities. The Seljuks warmly welcomed the Caliph's envoy, gave him thirteen robes of honor, and then sent him back to Baghdad. It appears that the Seljuks bribed the Caliph's envoy to speak favorably of them to the Caliph, which he did, thereby inclining the Caliph towards the Seljuks. Tughril, upon receiving the Caliph's letter, even prevented his own brother Chaghri Beg from looting the city [5].

From the writings above, it can be inferred that when the Seljuks captured Nishapur in the year 429 AH, they had no plans for governance and all matters occurred incidentally. Most of them intended to plunder the city, and it was only Tughril Beg who, thanks to the Caliph's letter and his relative foresight compared to other Seljuk leaders, prevented them from doing so.

Sultan Masud, upon observing this chaotic situation, left Ghazni for Balkh at the beginning of 430 AH. At this time, he received news that Buri Tegin, the Qarakhanid ruler of Transoxiana, had rebelled. Despite the repeated recommendations of his loyal advisors, who urged him to confront and repel the Seljuks, Masud decided to deal with Buri Tegin first. According to Gardizi, Masud coveted his territory and intended to conquer it. Eventually, Masud went to Transoxiana but wandered there aimlessly and without result for a while, as no forces came to confront him. However, due to the winter season, Sultan Masud's troops suffered greatly from the cold and heavy snowfall, which played a significant role in their erosion [5].

While Sultan Masud was in Transoxiana, he received a letter from Khwaja Ahmad Abd al-Samad, his minister who was in Balkh. The letter informed him of the presence of Seljuk forces led by Chaghri Beg in Balkh and warned Sultan Masud that he could not defend Balkh against the Seljuk forces alone, urging him to return quickly. Since most of the Ghaznavid forces were with Sultan Masud in Transoxiana, he decided to return to Khorasan. The Seljuks, upon hearing this news, became frightened and sent an envoy to express their submission. Masud also sent an envoy to them and made a pact with Musa Yabghu, making him swear allegiance, which all the Seljuk leaders accepted. However, the Seljuks did not honor their word and continued their previous actions [14].

Sultan Masud then went to Herat and, because the people there had minted coins and pray the Friday prayers in the name of Tughril and the Seljuks, he brought the city under his control. He was successful in several small skirmishes with the Seljuks in 430 AH. He spent the winter of that year in Herat and in the spring of 431 AH, with a well-equipped army adorned with war elephants, he set out from Herat to battle the Seljuks. As usual, his army was composed of Kurdish, Arab, Indian, and Turkish forces led by commanders like Salar Ali and the Grand Chamberlain Subashi. At this time, Tughril was in Nishapur. Masud intended to go to Tus to block Tughril's path so he could not join his brother Chaghri Beg Daud in Nasa, preventing their union. If Tughril tried to go to Herat or Sarakhs, Masud could capture him. However, Sultan Masud's predictions did not materialize because his army moved slowly, and he could not reach Tughril in time. Tughril, with his fast riders, quickly left the area and headed to Bavard, where he joined Chaghri and other Seljuks [5].

Masud then went to Nishapur and decided to go to Marv. Despite the elders' advice not to go there due to drought, water shortage, and lack of forage, Masud, as usual, did not heed their counsel and set out for Marv in the month of Ramadan. He reached the vicinity of the Dandanaqan fortress. Severe drought prevailed in the region, and the Seljuks had destroyed all the wells, leaving no water available. On Friday, the eighth of Ramadan in 431 AH, the Battle of Dandanaqan took place between Masud's forces and the Seljuks [4].

V. Two well-equipped armies on the battlefield of Dandanaqan

Dandanaqan, situated between Sarkhas and Merv on the trade route between the Far East and the Mediterranean Sea, was one of the important commercial and artistic cities of the Middle Ages and is located at the site of the current-day Tashr Abad in the Republic of Turkmenistan. The Battle of Dandanaqan took place in the year 431 AH, corresponding to 1040 AD, on the plains of Dandanaqan near the city of Sarakhs and Merv between the Seljuk and Ghaznavid forces.

On May 24, 1040 AD, two armies marched towards the Dandanaqan fortress, and the Seljuk army began their attacks first. Despite the Ghaznavid army being thirsty and tired, they showed full resistance against the Seljuks. However, all the water wells had been closed off by the Seljuks, preventing the Ghaznavid forces from accessing water. Additionally, 375 armored palace soldiers joined the Seljuks during the battle. United with those who were already fighting, they fiercely attacked the Ghaznavids [15].

Before the battle took place, in 1038 AD, Sultan Mas'ud of Ghazni, in an effort to stabilize his precarious situation, allied with the Emir of Jand, Shah Ismail, against the Seljuks by ceding Khwarazm to him. Afterward, with an army of 50,000 men, "against which even all of Turkestan could not stand," including numerous war elephants, he set out, initially moving towards Balkh and then Sarakhs. Meanwhile, Chaghri Beg, who was busy capturing Taloqan, Faryab, Shoburqan (Shibirghan), and their surrounding areas, came to Sarakhs in response to the Sultan's move. Subsequently, Tughril Beg and Musa Inanch Yabghu arrived in Sarakhs and gathered together to prepare for battle against the Ghaznavids. However, some Seljuk leaders, who believed they could not withstand the powerful Ghaznavid army, considered retreating towards Ray, Korkhan, and Sibal. Chaghri Beg, who did not agree with this opinion, stated that success in new areas would be very difficult, Khorasan should never be abandoned, and if they fought, they would be victorious against the Ghaznavid army this time [12].

After that, in Ramadan 430 AH, corresponding to June 1039 AD, the 20,000-strong Seljuk army and the 50,000-strong Ghaznavid army clashed in the Talhab region. Unable to withstand the large Ghaznavid army, the Seljuk forces were forced to retreat to the surrounding deserts. As the heat intensified, the Seljuks began their attacks to exhaust the Ghaznavid army by sending cavalry from the deserts, destroying and blocking the water wells in the region. During this period, the Seljuk leaders accepted Sultan Mas'ud's peace proposal, which involved ceding Nasa, Baward, and Farawa to the Seljuks while Nishapur, Sarakhs, and Merv remained under Ghaznavid control, reaching a temporary agreement with him. Thus, both sides gained time to prepare for a decisive battle. Meanwhile, Oghuz masses from Turkestan joined the Seljuks, slightly strengthening their position against the Ghaznavids [13].

Sultan Mas'ud, who spent the winter in Nishapur, was determined to deliver a decisive blow to the Seljuks and either drive them out of Khorasan or subjugate them. To achieve this, he set out from Nishapur towards Tus and Sarakhs with an army of 100,000 men, consisting of 70,000 cavalry and 30,000 armoured infantries. The Seljuk leaders, with their 36,000 cavalry and infantry, immediately gathered and discussed the situation. Most of the Seljuk commanders, facing this serious threat, considered retreating to western Iran. However, with firm determination, Chaghri Beg convinced them that they could easily defeat the tired Ghaznavid army, which lacked mobility. Following this decision, the Seljuk commanders moved from Sarakhs and attacked the Ghaznavid army advancing towards Merv. As a battle tactic, the main Seljuk army retreated towards the desert [16].

Some of the Seljuk soldiers destroyed and blocked all the water wells along the path of the Ghaznavid army. By doing this, they successfully executed their plan to deprive the large Ghaznavid army of water. Consequently, the Ghaznavid army, moving towards Dandanaqan, where there was abundant water near Merv, faced threats of thirst and exhaustion. Additionally, the increasing attacks by the Seljuks inflicted heavy losses on them. Sultan Mas'ud, confronted with this situation, became despondent. The discipline and order within his army began to deteriorate, and disagreements arose between him and the army commanders. The Seljuk leaders,

having managed to place the Ghaznavid army in a dire situation, decided to engage them in a decisive battle in front of the Dandanaqan fortress and immediately took action.

In a battle that lasted three days and ended on the 8th of Ramadan 431 AH, corresponding to May 23, 1040 AD, the Ghaznavid army, deprived of unity, hungry, thirsty, and exhausted, suffered a decisive defeat due to the skillful tactics and attacks of Chaghri Beg. Chaghri Beg, well-versed in military tactics, effectively controlled the battle. Sultan Mas'ud fought heroically but, realizing he was surrounded, barely managed to escape the battlefield with 100 cavalymen, saving his life. Other Ghaznavid commanders also abandoned their ranks and fled. After the battle, the Seljuks captured a large amount of booty, much of which was distributed among the soldiers who participated in the battle. Sultan Mas'ud, who barely escaped with his life, intended to go to Lahore to take all his wealth and treasures but was captured and imprisoned by his own soldiers en route. In 1041, he was killed in prison by his nephew [13].

Following the victory at Dandanaqan, Tughril Beg established the Great Seljuk Empire, marking the peak of their long and difficult struggles with the Karakhanids. On the last day of the battle, the Seljuk council and governors declared Tughril Beg the first sultan of the new state and sent letters of victory to surrounding rulers to announce their triumph. The victory at Dandanaqan had significant implications for Turkish-Islamic and global history. After establishing their state in Khorasan, the Seljuks, as the representatives of the material power and authority of the entire Sunni Islamic world, took on the duty of protecting Muslims from various internal and external threats [16].



Figure 2: This figure symbolizes the Seljuk victory over the Ghaznavids in Dandanaqan war.

Image Source: [12]

VI. CONCLUSION

The research findings indicate that the Battle of Dandanaqan is one of the most notable and renowned battles in history, having both military and political significance. In this battle, the Seljuk state defeated the Ghaznavid state, leading to the dissolution of the latter. Following this war, the Ghaznavid state entered a period of decline, and the Seljuk state was officially established.

One of the political mistakes of the Ghaznavid state was the oppression and tyranny of the Ghaznavid governors in Khorasan, which facilitated the Seljuks' progress in the region. As Beyhaqi explicitly states, the Ghaznavid governor Suri inflicted significant injustice on the people, but because he sent many gifts to Sultan Mas'ud, the Sultan turned a blind eye to his actions. Complaints from the people went unaddressed. Consequently, the people of Khorasan sided with the Seljuks and even encouraged them to seize Ghaznavid territories. Another instance was the commander sent by Sultan Mas'ud to Khorasan in 428 AH, who settled in Bayhaq but looted the city so extensively that he incited the hatred of the people. In this regard, Ibn Funduq writes that this commander not only sent all the pistachio crops from Bayhaq to Ghazni but also burned all the trees, arguing that their wood burned well. Thus, Mas'ud's lack of prudence in the face of his governors' oppression played a significant role in his downfall. He generally ignored the advice of prudent and experienced individuals and his well-intentioned advisors, stubbornly adhering to his erroneous decisions. The author of Qabus Nama writes about Sultan Mas'ud's misguided decisions: His noble and courageous nature contrasted with his poor governance, and despite having wise advisors, he was influenced by self-serving and imprudent advisors, disregarding the well-meaning advice of people like his minister Ahmad Abd al-Samad. Ahmad Abd al-Samad once said, "Our ears are full of his talk, and they still are."

Ibn Khaldun mentions three reasons for the Ghaznavids' defeat:

1. The foresight, prudence, and decision-making power of Tughril;
2. The exhausted and ineffective army of Sultan Mas'ud due to prolonged wars with the Seljuks;
3. Mas'ud's imprudence and incompetence, which prevented him from making the right decisions when needed.

Mas'ud's failure to establish good relations with the Karakhanids was also a factor in his defeat against the Seljuks. Mahmud Ghaznawi had understood this issue well and maintained good relations with the Karakhanids, ensuring peace on that front. However, Mas'ud, lacking his father's prudence, failed in establishing ties with the Karakhanids. Consequently, the Karakhanids supported the Seljuks against him and, as Beyhaqi mentions, encouraged the Seljuks by offering them all the forces they needed.

Moreover, Mas'ud's neglect of the eastern front was another factor in the loss of Khorasan during his reign. Even in the direst circumstances, Mas'ud could not abandon the thought of going to India, making almost annual trips there. This gave the Seljuks the opportunity to strengthen their foothold in Khorasan in his absence.

One of the most significant factors in Mas'ud's defeat against the Seljuks was the tyranny of the emirs and his neglectfulness. This issue is easily observable in Beyhaqi's history. The tyranny of the emirs and Sultan Mas'ud's inattention caused him to disregard the well-meaning advice of his ministers, courtiers, and commanders. The more his ministers and advisors recommended actions to him, the less he heeded them and instead implemented his misguided decisions. His advisors had no practical power against him and whenever they offered their opinions, they would say that it would be better to do a particular action, but immediately added that the Sultan's decision was final. This autocratic approach by the Sultan led to his downfall.

Based on the course of this writing, it was concluded that it is rare in history for two military powers at their peak to confront each other. Usually, an ascending power crushes the old states in its path and moves forward. However, the battle between the Ghaznavids and the Seljuks at Dandanaqan is a notable exception in history. Due to Sultan Mas'ud's mistakes, the ascending Seljuks clashed with the Ghaznavids, and inevitably, one of them had to bid farewell to the world of conquerors. The outcome of the battle was disastrous for the Ghaznavids, bringing Sultan Mas'ud's reign close to the collapse of his empire.

Acknowledgement

The extensive history of warfare reveals this truth. The major reward that the Seljuks gained from the Battle of Dandanaqan was the success and sovereignty over Khorasan, which enabled Tughril Beg to attain the position of Sultan. They announced this victory by sending letters to neighboring states such as the Abbasid Caliphate, the Karakhanids, and all the rulers of Turkestan.

This research article has endeavored to deeply analyze and discuss the significant and valuable historical issues surrounding the confrontation between the two superpowers of the time, the Ghaznavids and the Seljuks. We believe that the findings on this subject are expandable and in future research, we will further utilize primary sources and historical references regarding the civilization and culture of both states, the Ghaznavids and the Seljuks, to present and explain them to those interested in knowledge and enlightenment.

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