

SOME ASPECTS OF MONGOL-ARMENIAN INTERACTIONS

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In the mid-thirteenth century, the Mongols, named by Grigor Aknerts'i, the contemporary Armenian historian, as a *Nation of Archers*, became widely known to the world for building the most extensive land empire in history. According to Morgan, "the major difference between the Mongols and previous conquerors is that no other nomadic empire had succeeded in holding both the Inner Asian steppe and the neighbouring sedentary lands simultaneously."¹ The Mongol tribes of the Naimans, Keraites, Merkits, Tatars, Oirats, Taiji'uts, Onggirats, Jalayirs, Onguts, Besuts and many others were amalgamated into the *Yeke Monggol Ulus* (the Great Mongol State) in 1206. They controlled territory that stretched from the Pacific Ocean to the Adriatic Sea, all the way to Korea, most of Asia, excluding India, and Eastern Europe including Hungary. There was a power vacuum in most lands conquered by the Mongols. China was disunited and relatively weak due to the internecine strife between the Chin (Jin) and Sung dynasties.² Central Asia was fragmented into several khanates and city-states. In the Middle East, the 'Abbasid dynasty that had ruled from Baghdad for five centuries was in decline. Russia was also disunited and fragmented. All of these areas suffered from a lack of centralised control, which was exploited by the Mongols.

¹ Morgan, 1986, 5.

² Morgan, 1990, 50-51.

The interaction of the Mongols with the Greater Armenians happened after the occupation of territories in Central Asia, which put the Mongols in contact with the Kh^wārazmians, in pursuit of whom the Mongols entered the Caucasus.³

The first interaction of the Mongols with Greater Armenia started in 1220, when the scouting expeditions of Commander Sьbedei entered to the land of Gugark from Albania (Aghvank').⁴ The most corroborated dates for this event are recorded by Vardan Arevelts'i (c. 1200-71) and by the anonymous author from Sebastia in his *Chronicle*.⁵ The latter states that, in the year 669 Arm. (1220), twenty thousand Tatars under Commander Sьbedei came to the land of Gugark.⁶

In earlier literature relating to the Mongol conquest, the Mongols were frequently represented as a monolithic barbarous force under the name *Tatars* (*Tartars*). Actual study of the Mongol invasion of Armenia reveals that, under the general name 'the Mongols' or 'the Tatars', there existed a range of individuals or groups of people representing different tribes at different times and thus different powers pursuing different goals.

In general, the decision to launch a Mongol expedition was made at the *quriltai* (assembly) or by the order of Chinggis Khan (r. 1206-27). From the sources, it is understood that, in the year of the Hare (1219), in pursuit of 'Alā' al-Dīn Muḥammad Kh^wārazm-Shāh (r. 1200-20), Chinggis Khan sent General Jebe as a vanguard, Sьbedei as Jebe's rearguard, and Toghachar (Toghuchar) as Sьbedei's rearguard.⁷

³ After the massacre of the merchants and of the Mongol embassy, Chinggis Khan sent his envoys to the Kh^wārazm-Shāh protesting at his deceitful action and demanding the surrender of Īnālchik, the governor of Utrār, but his envoys were killed by order of the Shāh, according to Nasawī, or were freed after their beards had been shaved, according to Ibn al-Athīr; Barthold, 1977, 399.

⁴ Sebastats'i in Hakobyan, 1956, 137. Aghvank' in the Armenian sources refers to Caucasian Albania; Barkhutareants', 1902, 9.

⁵ Vardan Arevelts'i, 1991, 142.

⁶ Sebastats'i in Hakobyan, 1956, 137. On the actual incursion of the Mongols, see below.

⁷ MNT, 2004, 90, § 257; Rashīd al-Dīn, 1952, v.1, part 2, 209. In the *quriltai* of 1206 on the bank of the river Onon when Chinggis Khan was proclaimed the Great Khan of all the Mongols, Jebe also known as Jirgudai of the Besyt tribe and Sьbedei from the Urianqat tribe were granted the title of *Miangatyn Noyan* or Commander of a Thousand among the ninety-five commanders; MNT [military terms], 2004, 266; MNT, 2004, 35, §145; SHM, 2001, 118; MNT, 2004, 65, § 202.

After Toghachar was dismissed for disobeying orders,⁸ Jebe with one *tuman* (*ṭmen/tūmān*) (ten thousand) soldiers and Ṣbedei with another *tuman* marched towards Arran/Arrān. On their way, they met the Georgian and Armenian army and defeated them. There are some arguments between the Armenian and Muslim sources about the name of the location, size of army of this and next Mongol battle with the Caucasians. However, I am not going to address this subject here.

Rather, it is worth mentioning here that Jebe and Ṣbedei carried a cross among their front line. This ruse is referred to in western scholarship in relation to King David's army and Prester John.⁹ The Georgian queen, Rusudan, and the *atabeg*, Iwanē Zak'arian, must have been confused to see a cross in the hands of the invaders. According to Kirakos Gandzakets'i, false information had preceded the Mongols, that they were Christians who carried a portable tent-church and a miracle-working cross, and had come to avenge their fellow-Christians from the tyranny of the Muslims.¹⁰ The Armenians were not ready to face the Mongols. A complaint about the Mongol invasion was addressed to Pope Honorius III (1216-27) by Iwanē, and later it was left to the

• Toghachar in Muslim sources is identified as Toghachar Ḳregen, a son-in-law of Chinggis Khan; Juvaynī/Boyle, 1997, 174; Nasawī, 1996, 91. Toghachar was from the noble Qongirat tribe, the male representatives of which used to marry the girls of Chinggis Khan's family; Rashīd al-Dīn, 1952, v.1, part 1, 162. The account given in Kirakos Gandzakets'i that the Mongols came to Albania through the Derbent (Darband) Gates, is contradicted by the Muslim sources of Ibn al-Athīr (1160-1233), *al-Kāmil fi'l-ta'rikh*, and Rashīd al-Dīn (ca. 645/1247-718/1318), *Jāmi' al-Tawarikh*. According to them, the Mongols more correctly came to Armenia from the direction of Tabriz through the Mughan (Mūghān) Steppe; Ibn al-Athīr, 1940, 140; Rashīd al-Dīn, 1952, v.1, part 2, 227.

⁸ Toghachar disobeyed the order of Chinggis Khan to act peacefully as the rearguard of Jebe and Ṣbedei in their reconnoitring expedition in 1219, and infringed on the territories of Amīn Malik (Amīn al-Mulk, a cousin of a Qanglīn Turk, *malik* of Herāt; Boyle, 1968, 318; Nasawī, 1996, 215-16). Due to this, Chinggis Khan wished to have Toghachar executed, but forgave him and demoted him from his command; MNT, 2004, 90, §257; SHM, 2001, 250. According to Rashīd al-Dīn, Toghachar was killed in battle by the highlanders of Ghūr soon after; Rashīd al-Dīn, 1952, v.1, part 2, 220. As Nasawī and Juvaynī state, he was killed in battle by an arrow near Nīshāpūr in November (1220); Nasawī, 1996, 93; Juvaynī/Boyle, 1997, 175.

⁹ In 1141, when the Seljuk Sultan Sanjar was defeated by a Qara Khitan Emperor, it was believed that a Christian king called John, who was also an ordained priest, existed in Central Asia. The Latin world wanted to believe in this legend and from the 1160s, circulated within Catholic Europe a *Letter of Prester John*, a forgery, which was copied and translated into several languages during the next two or three centuries; Jackson (The Mongols and the West), 2005, 20-21. In 1221, when the Crusaders were in Egypt, another legend spoke of the Mongols as the army of a mysterious David, the Christian King in India, who was on his way to aid the Crusaders; Morgan, 1990, 178. On various articles about Prester John, see Spuler, 1960, 29; Beckingham and Hamilton, 1996; Morgan, 1996, 159-167; Rachewiltz, 1971, 30-40; Jackson, 1999, 711.

¹⁰ Kirakos Gandzakets'i, 1961, 202.

queen to explain the reason why no precautions were taken.¹¹ It is not clear whether the 'cross' idea was executed deliberately as a consequence of good intelligence gathering, with the intention of misleading the Armenians and Georgians, or whether the Mongol front line was composed of representatives of Nestorian Christian tribes. However, as Jackson states, this strategy remained one of the tactics of Mongol diplomacy and warfare.¹²

According to Rashīd al-Dīn's narration of the *Jāmi' al-Tawārīkh*, Chinggis Khan ordered the above mentioned Mongol generals to return through Dasht-i Qipchak (Qıpçak) and to join him in Mongolia only after the capture of Sultan Muḥammad.¹³ In fact, as a result of the Mongol siege, the Kh^wārazmian Empire fell, causing its rulers to flee. Since Muḥammad Kh^wārazm-Shāh had fled to a lonely island in the Caspian Sea and had died there in 1220, and his son Jalāl al-Dīn (1220-31) had fled to India in 1221,¹⁴ the Mongols, after passing through Hamadan, withdrew to the Mughan plain.¹⁵

In 1222, when the Mongols returned to Armenia and Georgia, their scouts found that the Georgians and Armenians were ready to fight, so they decided not to wage war and went 'somewhere else.'¹⁶ In fact, the troops of Jebe and Šēbedei went to the Gates of Derbent.¹⁷ On their way to Derbent, they besieged the city of Shamakha in Shirvan. After many days of brave defence by the inhabitants, the city fell to the Mongols.¹⁸ In 1223, after defeating the Russian troops on the river Kalka, Jebe and Šēbedei departed to the east to join Chinggis Khan.¹⁹ Their

¹¹ Mutaḥfian, 1999, 149; Jackson (The Mongols and the West), 2005, 49. Reality showed that the Mongols were not saviours of the Christians at all. This disappointment for the Armenians gave rise to the idea that the Lord in his anger had roused the Mongols in order to rebuke them; Grigor Aknerts'i, 1974, 20.

¹² *Ibid*, 49.

¹³ Rashīd al-Dīn, 1952, v.1, part 2, 209.

¹⁴ For Jalāl al-Dīn's conquest of Panjāb and Sind, see Jackson, 1990, 45-54.

¹⁵ According to an Arabic source, there was a cold winter and snow in Hamadān; Ibn al-Athīr, 1940, 137.

¹⁶ Vardan Arevelts'i, 1991, 142.

¹⁷ Kirakos Gandzakets'i, 1961, 203.

¹⁸ Ibn al-Athīr, 1940, 141.

¹⁹ The withdrawal from the Caucasus probably had to be sanctioned by Chinggis Khan, and approved by the *quriltai* (great assembly) of January /February 1221, which was held near the river Benaket (Syr Darya) when Chinggis Khan decided to go back to Mongolia; Rashīd al-Dīn, 1952, v.1, part 2, 226.

scouting expedition through Azerbaijan, Armenia, Georgia and the Northern Caucasus to Russia was completed. The army of Jebe and S̄bedei did not stay in Armenia any longer.²⁰

The next major Mongol interaction with Greater Armenia took place in time of ʕgedei Khan (r. 1229-41), who succeeded his father as Great Khan, and sent in 1229 another Mongol commanders, Ogotor and M̄nqet̄ as rearguards for Chormaghan while the latter was campaigning against Jalāl al-Dīn, who was still active in Khurasan (Khurāsān) and Iraq.²¹ In September and October 1229, Jalāl al-Dīn Kh̄ārazm-Shāh took Khlāt.²² Soon after retreating from the onslaught of Chormaghan, Jalāl al-Dīn fled to Amida. He was probably killed there in 1231 by local bandits.²³ The most powerful opponent of the Mongols in this region was thus eliminated.²⁴

In 1230, three years after Chinggis Khan's death, ʕgedei-Khan issued a decree that Chormaghan should remain in Iran and the Caucasus as garrison commander.²⁵ Azerbaijan was found to be a very suitable place to settle. Strategically, it was important because of its pasturelands. Moreover, it was a crossing point connecting Iran with Armenia and Georgia.

Mongol activity in the Caucasus, recorded in connection with Chormaghan in 1231, started with the conquest of the city of Gandzak. According to Sebastats'i, in 1229, "countless multitudes under the leadership of Chormaghan entered *Gandzak-shahastan*, seized it and brutally slaughtered the inhabitants, taking women and children into captivity. In general,

²⁰ Afterwards, S̄bedei headed the expedition to North China in 1233; Munkuev, 1965, 66. He marched on Carpathia towards Hungary and Poland in 1241; Liddell Hart, 1927, 22. S̄bedei died in 1248, when he was 72/73 years old; *Yān Shih*, chapter 121, 1a-5a. Jebe probably died after 1231, when he was sent by ʕgedei to invade Northern China; MNT, 2004, 95, §272.

²¹ MNT, 2004, 147, § 270; SHM, 2001, 262. The set of triples applies in this case as well. Juvaynī/Boyle, 1997, 190.

²² Nasawī, 1996, 240-43.

²³ According to Vardan Arevelts'i, Jalāl al-Dīn fled towards Amida (modern Diyarbakir/Diyārbakr) and died there; Vardan Arevelts'i, 1991, 144. According to Nasawī, Jalāl al-Dīn was captured in the mountains of Amida and was killed by the Kurds; Nasawī, 1996, 287.

²⁴ At that time, Chormaghan occupied most of Iran above the 32nd parallel. Chormaghan already controlled Khurasan, Mazandaran, Kirman, and Fars as well as Ray, Qum and Hamadan. Isfahan held out until 1237; May, 1996, 23, 31.

²⁵ As *tamghachi*, in MNT, 2004, 96, § 274; SHM, 2001, 267. The Great Khan, knowing that the land was said to be good and its possessions fine, ordered Chormaghan to send him each year yellow gold, gilt, *naqut* (gold brocade), brocades, damask, small pearls, large pearls, sleek Arab horses with long necks and legs, dull brown work-horses, camels, small-humped camels, pack-mules and riding mules; MNT, 2004, 96, § 274; SHM, 2001, 267. When Khurasan was subjugated, ʕgedei-Khan was told about the wrestlers of Khurasan and Iraq, and he sent a messenger to Chormaghan and ordered him to send one of them; Juvaynī/Boyle, 1997, 227.

Armenian sources provide only scarce information about Chormaghan's activities in the Caucasus from 1231 until 1236. One of the Armenian colophons, dated 1231, states:

...In this year appeared a nation called T'at'ar, [which] caused the Persian king [Jalāl al-Dīn] to flee, who plundered the land of Persia and reached the Mediterranean lands as far as the places Edessa and Samosat, slaughtered many Turks, Kurds, and Christians, and besieged many.²⁶

Kirakos Gandzakets'i mentions only the fact that the disorder in Armenia increased because Commander Chormaghan had become deaf from his wounds. However, until 1242, Chormaghan was in charge of all affairs in the region. After his sickness, his wife, together with children and officials, held authority in the region.²⁷

As stated earlier, according to Juvaynī, Chormaghan came to the region with an army of three *tumans* or thirty thousand men.²⁸ The number of this detachment assumes that there were three main commanders in charge of a *tuman* or 30 commanders in charge of every thousand soldiers, although it is not clear how many of them Chormaghan placed in Armenia. However, it is fortunate that Armenian historians provide some of the names of Mongol noyans (commanders) to whom Armenian land was allotted in 1236. These noyans in a short, one-year period conquered the northern and eastern parts of Armenia, which were under the Georgian crown. According to contemporary Armenian sources, Georgian and Armenian lords chose less destructive ways to resist the Mongols. The Georgian Queen Rusudan (r. 1223-45) was a witness to Chormaghan's presence in the region. She and many lords of Georgia and Armenia fled to their fortresses in fear of the Mongols.²⁹ This withdrawal gave the Mongols a chance to chase the fugitives using their own famous tactics: dividing districts up among themselves and conquering them one by one. This implies that the Mongols knew the terrain well before they conquered it.

²⁶ Mat'evosyan, 1984, 175.

²⁷ Kirakos Gandzakets'i, 1961, 265.

²⁸ Juvaynī/Boyle, 1997, 190.

²⁹ Mkhit'ar Ayrivanets'i, 1860, 66.

Grigor Akierts'i records that '110 chieftains' with winter residences in Mughan divided the country and that 'thirteen chieftains divided the countries of the Georgians and the Albanians, highland and lowland, among themselves'.³⁰ The main organiser of this conquest remained Chormaghan, who, at that time, had established himself on the shores of Lake Geghark'unik' (Sevan).³¹ According to contemporary Armenian sources, Chormaghan sent out his military detachments under various noyans to capture the key fortresses of the Armenian lords. Kirakos Gandzakets'i gives extended accounts of the Mongol noyans' siege of the cities and fortresses one by one and of the techniques they applied.³²

The lands of Awag Zak'arian, the son of Iwanē, were taken by Itughata Noyan from the Jalayir tribe, whose name is also given as Tulata (Dolata).³³ Awag Zak'arian fled to his fortress Kayen along with the people of the district. Itughata Noyan and his men blocked the access to water of the fortress and commanded the 'people to come down and live among them', which was another technique applied by the Mongols to force castles and their inhabitants to surrender.³⁴ Kirakos Gandzakets'i describes the way the inhabitants and animals, cut off from the water supply, began to suffer from thirst and the Mongol noyan gradually took their horses and all their livestock which were valuable to the Mongols.³⁵

The lands of Vahram Gagets'i, a nephew of Iwanē Zak'arian, consisting of the city of Shamkor, the fortresses of Tavush, Katsaret', Terunakan, Ergavank', and the impregnable forts of Gavazin and Gag³⁶ fell to the lot of Molar Noyan, or probably Molghor Noyan, who was from the Sunit tribe.³⁷

³⁰ Grigor Akierts'i, 974, 26.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 255.

³² Kirakos Gandzakets'i, 1961, 241-43, 253-55, 258-61.

³³ Rashīd al-Dīn, 192, v.1, part 1, 98; *Dolata Noyan* in Vardan Arevelts'i, 1991, 144.

³⁴ Kirakos Gandzakets'i, 1961, 255.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 255.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 241, 263. On the Zak'arian Princedoms, see Babayan, 1976, 541-50. The first cousin of Iwanē and Zak'arē Zak'arians, named also Zak'arē, ruled lands in Tavush, P'afisos and Gardman. The centre of his realm was Gag fortress. This line became known as Vahranean after Zak'arē Gaghets'i's son, Vahram of Gag; Babayan, 1976, 541.

³⁷ Rashīd al-Dīn, 192, v.1, 100.

The Mongols' main tactic in taking the cities was to surround the location or block the entrance to the city, as Molar Noyan did with the city of Shamkor. The city was under the authority of Vahram and his son Aghbugha, who were in Gardman at the time of the Mongol siege and who refused to help the residents of Shamkor despite their appeal. Moreover, Vahram ordered them not to resist. Molar Noyan ordered his men to fill the trench that surrounded the city walls with wood and branches so that they might easily climb onto the walls. However, at night the citizens of Shamkor hurled down fire and burned the brushwood. Seeing this, Molar ordered each soldier to bring a load of soil and to throw it into the trench until it reached the level of the wall.³⁸ After the capture of Shamkor, Molar Noyan attacked the Kiurikian Prince Vasak's fortress of Matsnaberd and Nor-Berd.³⁹

The Zak'arid city of Lori fell into the hands of Chaghatai Noyan of the Arulat tribe.⁴⁰ It is recorded in the sources that Chaghatai had heard about the fortifications of Lori because Prince Shahmshah Zak'arian had kept his treasury there.⁴¹ Prince Shahmshah himself fled westward to Adjaria with his family, leaving the city under the supervision of his father-in-law.⁴² After all his preparations, Chaghatai Noyan ordered his men to dig at the base of the walls of the city until they collapsed. This was another effective Mongol tactic for besieging cities and fortresses.⁴³ Chaghatai Noyan took the city and Shahmshah's treasure, and he did the same to the cities of Dumanis, Shamshulde and Tiflis.⁴⁴

In the same way, the city of the Surb-Mari (Holy/Blessed Mary) fell under Qara Noyan or Ghara Baghatur from the Baarin/Sukanut tribe.⁴⁵ The city had been under the rule of Shahmshah [and Awag].⁴⁵

³⁸ Kirakos Gandzakets'i, 1961, 241-42.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 243; Vardan Arevelts'i, 1991, 144.

⁴⁰ Rashid al-Din, 1952, v.1, 100.

⁴¹ Vardan Arevelts'i, 1991, 144; Kirakos Gandzakets'i, 1961, 253.

⁴² Melikset-bek, 1936, 54.

⁴³ Kirakos Gandzakets'i, 1961, 253-54.

⁴⁴ Rashid al-Din, 1952, v.1, 189; Kirakos Gandzakets'i, 1961, 260-61.

⁴⁵ Step'annos Episkopos, 1951, 41.

The cities of Ani and Kars, the centres of Zak'arid authority, were looted and captured by Chormaghan, who used the catapults and siege techniques in bringing down the fortresses.⁴⁶

The same applied to the territories of Utik: Gardman, Charek (the northern part of Artsakh), Getabk and Vardanashat (southern Utik),⁴⁷ fell into the hands of Ghatagha Noyan, who was perhaps Ghadaqan *Qorchi* or Qatagan, a relative of Jebe, from the Besyt tribe.⁴⁸

The lands of Khachen, namely the fortress of Khokhanaberd, fell to Jukh-Bugha Noyan.⁴⁹ He waged war against fortified places filled with fugitives and the people of Prince Hasan Jalal, a nephew of Zakarē and Iwanē, using a massive army with many siege machines and weapons, and enslaving or killing those he defeated.⁵⁰

In almost all cases in which the Mongols undertook a siege, this was followed by negotiations with the Armenian lords, requiring them to submit in exchange for sparing their possessions, including their lands and people. However, it was not always true that, after a voluntary submission, the Mongols kept their promises, as happened with the city of Kars. After learning what the Mongols had done to Ani, the inhabitants of the city of Kars hastened to give the keys of the city to them in the hope that they might be spared. Nevertheless, the destiny of Kars was similar to that of Ani, though not because of the booty that attracted the Mongols. Perhaps in order to discourage densely populated cities from confronting and resisting in future, the Mongols slaughtered the inhabitants, took some residents into captivity, and then ravaged and ruined the city.⁵¹ However, after the Mongols had left the cities, the troops of the Sultan of Rūm, Ghiyāth al-Dīn Kay Khusraw II (1237-46), arrived and mercilessly led into slavery those who had escaped the Mongols.⁵²

⁴⁶ Kirakos Gandzaks'i, 1961, 258-59.

⁴⁷ Vardan Arevelts', 1991, 144.

⁴⁸ Rashīd al-Dīn, 152, v.1, 195; Ghadaghan Qorchi in Juvaynī/Boyle, 1997, 590.

⁴⁹ The origin of Juk-Bugha is uncertain.

⁵⁰ This information not found in primary sources but is mentioned in Chamchians, 1789/1984, 210.

⁵¹ This slaughter might have had the opposite effect, encouraging resistance or revolt, because the population would be killed anyway.

⁵² Kirakos Gandzaks'i, 1961, 260.

On the whole, the Mongols took fortresses and cities without having to engage in large battles. The occupation of the Armenian lands in general did not last long. The Armenian lords were clever enough to show their loyalty to the conquerors and in this way did get back their lands, as was the case with the Orbelians, who retained Siwnik' province⁵³ which had fallen into the hands of Aslan (Arslan) Noyan.⁵⁴ This happened in a very exclusive manner: in 1236, Elikum, the eldest son of Liparit, one of the Siwnik' princes fortified the impregnable fortress of Hrashkaber. Having found that it was impossible to capture this fort, Aslan Noyan sent messengers to negotiate with Elikum, saying that as he would not leave this land, given him by God, "the sooner you and your family come out to us the better and you will be rewarded". Elikum agreed with this proposal and asking for his safety to be assured, he went with many gifts to Aslan Noyan. Seeing this, the Mongol commander received Elikum with honour and, moreover, appointed him as a leader of his troops. Aslan Noyan and Elikum subjugated all lands up to the city of Ani: Vayots' Dzor, Eghegis up to Ereron, a village situated opposite Garni. However, all these lands Aslan Noyan returned to Elikum saying that 'both those taken by the sword and those purchased by gold are equally the dominion of the people, now whatever place may be taken by my sword will be your patrimony'.⁵⁵ After that, these lands came under the dominion of the house of the Orbelians.

Single or individual submissions by Armenian lords and their direct negotiations with local Mongol governors made it easy for the Mongols to divide and rule. However, this brought about a unique situation where the land was formally under Mongol overlordship but was actually ruled by local Armenian lords.

⁵³ After the death of King Gregory IV (c.1105/24-c.1166), the territories of the kingdom of Siwnik' passed to the Muslims. Around 1200, Elikum I Orbelian received the Siwnik' districts of Chahuk and Ernjak (Julfa) from the *atabeg* of Azerbaijan. Liparit, the son of Elikum was granted by the Georgian Queen T'amar the districts of Orotn (Vorotn) and Bargiwshat in addition to Hrashkaber in Chahuk. Elikum II (d.1243) obtained from the Mongol noyan Aslan Vayots' Dzor and Egeis in 1236. Elikum's brother Smbat II (1243-73) received from the Mongols Orotn, Eghegis, Vayots' Dzor, Urts, Vedi and other lands; Step'annos Orbelian, 1910, 404; Hewsen, 1975-76, 220-21; Grigoryan, 1990, 65-69; 84-89.

⁵⁴ According to Armenian and Muslim sources, the origin of Arslan is impossible to identify.

⁵⁵ Step'annos Orbelian, 1910, 404.

To sum up, the course of 1236, the Mongol commanders conquered the Georgian territories of the Zak'arids, along with the regions of Geghark'unik' (Sevan), Arts'akh, Siwnik', Khachen, and Utik'; the cities of Ani, Kars, and Kayen; Shirvan with the city of Shamakha; Arran with the cities of Gandzak (Ganja) and Shamkor; Mughan and Azerbaijan. Thus, the Mongols' conquest of eastern and northern Armenia progressed either by force or by negotiation and met with no major opposition. From 1242 to 1245, the Mongols advanced further to the west and south of Armenia.

At the beginning of 691 Arm. (1242), because of his deafness, Chormaghan was replaced by Baiju Noyan from the Yisyt/Besyt tribe.⁵⁶ After Baiju had assumed authority, he mustered troops from all of the peoples under his dominion and went to the western part of Greater Armenia, which at that time was under the dominion of the Sultan of Rūm, Ghiyāth al-Dīn Kay Khusraw II (r.1237-46).⁵⁷ In 1242/43, Baiju first besieged T'eodupolis (Karin/Erzurum), erecting numerous catapults and ordering his men to demolish the city walls.⁵⁸ According to Kirakos Gandzakets'i, he demolished the city walls and mercilessly put everyone to the sword. Baiju's army destroyed goods and property and set fire to the city in revenge for the perceived insult to the Mongol ambassadors sent to demand a peaceful submission. At that time, the city was densely populated by several different communities, Christians and Muslim.⁵⁹ With regard to the Christians, it is said that in the city there were many valuable Gospels written in gold; the Mongols took the valuable ones and sold them cheaply to the Christians amongst their troops,

⁵⁶ It is *Bach'u* in Grigor Aknerts'i, 1974, 26; *Bach'u-ghurchi* in Kirakos Gandzakets'i, 1961, 279; and *Bach'aw nuin* in Vardan Arevelts'i, 1991, 147. Western travellers depicted his name as Baachu; Rubruck in Komroff, 1989, 200-01; Jackson (Rubruck), 1990, 263. Baiju was a relative of Jebe; he was appointed as commander by Ugedei Khan and participated in the capture of Baghdad with Hulegü; Rashīd al-Dīn, 1952, v.1, part 1, 99. Baiju is one of the Mongol noyans with extensive references in Arabic, Seljuk, Persian and Armenian sources; Korobeinikov, 2002, 126-29. In 1254, one of Baiju's residences was in the city of Kars; Kirakos Gandzakets'i, 1961, 367. Baiju stayed as chief commander in Armenia until 1257; Kirakos Gandzakets'i, 1961, 374. Mamluk sources say that Baiju was converted to Islam; Melville, 2008, (in press). With thanks to Dr. Melville, I have been able to consult his chapter "Anatolia under the Mongols" prior to its publication in the *Cambridge History of Turkey*, v.1, 2008.

⁵⁷ Kirakos Gandzakets'i, 1961, 279; Manandian, 1952, 219.

⁵⁸ Grigor Aknerts'i wrongly dates the siege of Karin by Baiju to 688 Arm. (1239).

⁵⁹ Kirakos Gandzakets'i, 1961, 279.

who then distributed them to their own district churches and monasteries.⁶⁰ The Armenian Princes Awag, Shahنشah, Vahram's son Aghbugha, and Dop'i's son Grigor Khachenets'i, ransomed from captivity as many men, women, children, bishops, priests and deacons as they could.⁶¹

After the two month siege of Karin (Erzurum), the key to expansion to Asia Minor, Baiju destroyed many other districts under the rule of the sultan of Rūm and returned to Mughan with much booty.⁶² He spent the winter at his base in Azerbaijan, but in the spring of 1243, he returned to crush the forces of the Seljuk Sultan of Rūm, Ghiyāth al-Dīn Kay Khusraw at Kūse Dagħ, near Erznka (Erzinjan/Erzincan).⁶³

Although the Mongols were outnumbered, General Baiju divided his soldiers, putting them under pre-eminent and brave commanders. To avoid treachery, he intermingled the troops who were made up of various nationalities. Then, selecting the most valiant and brave ones, he organized a vanguard, which battled with the Sultan's troops, causing the sultan to flee.⁶⁴ If Kirakos attributes the success in Kūse Dagħ to Baiju's profound knowledge of warfare, Grigor Aknerts'i attributes the victory to the Georgio-Armenian army.⁶⁵ According to Āqsarā'ī, the cause of the Seljuks' failure in Kūse Dagħ was disunity within the sultanate.⁶⁶ Ibn Bībī is in agreement with this; he says that various discords and upheavals within the Seljuk state led to the defeat.⁶⁷ The Anonymous Seljuk author blames the Seljuk sultan for his passivity and his amirs for their imperious advice, which aided the Mongols' triumph in Kūse Dagħ.⁶⁸ The sources put forward the advantages and disadvantages for the battle from their own points of view.

⁶⁰ Grigor Aknerts'i, 1974, 28.

⁶¹ Kirakos Gandzakets'i, 1961, 280.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 280. Step'annos Episkopos states that, after the capture of Karin, the Mongols took with them many of the writings [manuscripts] and church ornaments; Step'annos Episkopos, 1951, 41.

⁶³ Cahen, 1968, 138.

⁶⁴ The Sultan escaped to Ankara seeking further assistance, while his mother, wife and daughter sought refuge in Cilicia. Kay-Khusraw died in the winter of 1245-46; Cahen, 1968, 138, 271.

⁶⁵ Kirakos Gandzakets'i, 1961, 281-83; Grigor Aknerts'i, 1974, 29.

⁶⁶ Āqsarā'ī, 1944, 61-62.

⁶⁷ Ibn Bībī, 1956, 510-12; Melville, 2006, 158.

⁶⁸ Melville in Pfeiffer, 2006, 158.

I. МОНГОЛЫН ТҮҮХИЙН ДУНДАД ҮЕИЙН АСУУДАЛ

After this victory at Kuşe Dagħ, the Mongols under Baiju besieged Caesarea (Kayseri/Qysāriyya) in Cappadocia.⁶⁹ Then they came to Sebastia (Sivas); since the inhabitants had surrendered in advance, coming out with gifts and presents, the people were spared, although part of the city was looted. After conquering the city, the Mongols set up overseers and left.⁷⁰

The defeat of the Seljuks at Kuşe Dagħ had important political consequences for the history of Asia Minor.⁷¹ It was the turning point which led to the submission of the Seljuk Sultanate of Rūm to the Mongols.⁷² Baiju established himself as the representative of the Great Khan in the lands of Armenia, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Syria, Rūm and Western Iran.

By 1243, the major cities of central Asia Minor, Erznka, Melitene and Divriği had also fallen to the Mongols. In 1244, Baiju started to launch a number of raids on Ayyubid territory, as he moved south. In 1245, Baiju Noyan captured Khlat, which was under the political domination of the Ayyubids, and also Amida, Urha (Ruha/Edessa), and Naṣībīn (Nisibis).⁷³ After the submission of the Seljuk Sultanate to the Mongols, Baiju held an important position among Mongol representatives in West Asia. In May 1247, Baiju received an embassy from Innocent IV headed by the Dominican monk Ascelin.⁷⁴ According to the letter sent to Pope Innocent IV in July 1247, Baiju had a residence in Sisian, near Nakhichevan.⁷⁵ In 1254, one of his residences was in the city of Kars.⁷⁶ Baiju stayed as chief commander in Armenia until 1257.⁷⁷ Later, in 1258, he participated actively in the Mongol campaign against the caliph of Baghdad.

By the middle of the thirteenth century, all of Greater Armenia had fallen under the rule of the Mongol noyans. Further names of Mongol noyans who were allotted Armenian lands are

⁶⁹ When the inhabitants did not surrender, the Mongols took the cities forcibly and put the populations to the sword, destroying whatever was in the cities and leaving them deserted; Vardan Arevelts'i, 1991, 147.

⁷⁰ Kirakos Gandzakets'i, 1961, 281-83. Vardan Arevelts'i, 1991, 147.

⁷¹ Cahen, 196, 138.

⁷² In 642 H. (1244), the Seljuks issued a new coinage in Rūm to pay tribute money to the Mongols; Kolbas, 2006, 123.

⁷³ In 694 Arn (1245), the Mongols captured Khlat, and handed it over to T'amt'a, the sister of Awag, who was a former ruler of the city after her marriage to Ashrap' Melik; Kirakos Gandzakets'i, 1961, 292-93. She was sent to the Mongol Khan and stayed there for many years; Sebastats'i in Galstyan, 1962, 26; Saint-Quenin, 1965, 94-118.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 115; Apprill, 1981, 190; Jackson (Rubruck), 1990, 31; Korobeinikov, 2002, 126.

⁷⁵ Kirakos Gandzakets'i, 1961, 367.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 374. On Baiju's activities in Anatolia after 1257, see Melville, 2008 (in press).

given by Grigor Aknerts'i, namely Khul/Xul, (who 'called himself a brother of God'), Balakhē, Tut'ar, T'agughar, Ghataghan, Bawraghan, Asut'u (who was the companion of the Khan), Chaghatai (who was surnamed Khan), Sanit'ay, little Chaghatai, Asar, Xut't'u, T'ut'tu, Awgawtai, Xojay, Xurumchi, Xunan, T'enal, and Angurag.⁷⁸ Many on this list are not found in other contemporary Armenian sources. Since the names are mentioned briefly, it is difficult to identify who was who, although Awgawtai, Xojay, Xurumchi, Angurag and many others might have been well known people in Mongol and Muslim sources. Yet another spelling of Ghataghan as Ghada-khan who raided the city of Khamakh in 705 Arm. (1256), is found in Sebastats'i.⁷⁹ Step'annos Episkopos mentions the same Ghada-khan who destroyed the city of Erznka in 706 Arm. (1257).⁸⁰ In his Chronicles, the seventeenth-century author David Baghishets'i gives the names of Iskrar Noyan and Ghutun Noyan, together with Chormaghan.⁸¹ It is worth noting that a Mongol noyan Eljigidei is mentioned by Kirakos only once as Elch'i-Gada, whilst he talks about the revolt against Mūngke Khan by the Mongol princes. It implies that the Mongol commander Eljigidei (Eljigidai)⁸² was not well known to the Armenians. Eljigidei, who had previously participated with Chinggis Khan in his expedition to Tangkut and China, was ordered by Гьык Khan (1246-48) to replace Baiju.⁸³ Гьык appointed Eljigidei as his representative in the West, responsible for Anatolia, Georgia, Armenia, Aleppo and Mosul. He was dispatched to head the reinforcements for the Mongol armies already stationed there, so that the local rulers would be directly answerable to him for their tribute.⁸⁴ However, his name is known in the first place for his message sent to Louis IX (1226-70) in 1248, in which he wished success for the crusade and

⁷⁸ Grigor Aknerts'i, 1974, 26, 38.

⁷⁹ Sebastats'i in Hakobyan, 1956, 142.

⁸⁰ Step'annos Episkopos, 1962, 35.

⁸¹ Davit' Baghishets'i, 1956, 346.

⁸² According to Rashīd al-Dīn, there was a Mongol commander called Eljigidei, who was from Jalayir tribe and who was sent to Iran with instructions to assume supreme command in demolishing the Muslim forts, beginning with the Ismā'īlīs; 1952, v.1, 95; 1960, 120; 1996, 50, 570. For Eljigideis, two Mongol generals, see Jackson, 1998, 366-67.

⁸³ MNT [military terms], 2004, 305.

⁸⁴ Melville, 2008, (in press).

gave assurance of protection for Christians under Mongol rule.⁸⁵ While he was on the road to Iran, Eljigidei received news of the death of Гьык Khan, and stayed where he was to see who would take the throne. Mungke Khan (1251-59) was enthroned with the assistance of Batu Khan (d.1255), the son of Jochi (d.1227).⁸⁶ According to Kirakos Gandzakets'i, learning that Eljigidei was among the rebel princes who were against his enthronement, Mungke Khan ordered Eljigidei to be sent to him. Eljigidei was seized and killed, because among the rebel noyans were his two sons.⁸⁷

By examining the establishment of the Mongol protectorate in non-Mongol lands, one can see that a conventional set of demands was made for newly conquered peoples or lands. These demands included the local king's or lord's personal presentation at the Mongol court; the delivery of hostages, usually sons of the nobility; the provision of armed forces; the submission of household registers and payment of taxes; and the provision of stations (*yams*) for the Mongol governors. I want to address the first of these requirements: the personal visits of Armenian lords to the Mongol court and their policy towards the new reality of the Mongol presence in their lands between 1235 and 1256. Consideration is given to their individual and collective decisions to ally with the Mongols and to make explicit use of this co-operation, although there were some conflicts existed among the Armenian princes that led to local revolts against the Mongol regime and the Georgian crown (1245 and 1259-61).

During and after the completion of the Mongol conquest of the Caucasus, some of the Georgio-Armenian princes, recognizing the authority of the Mongols, decided to support the Mongol regime and in this way to secure their rights and lands. One of the key decisions of the lords, either on Mongol demand or on a voluntary basis, was to visit the Mongol Great Khans. In my opinion, there was an internal factor as well. Apart from being required by the Mongol

⁸⁵ Jackson, 1998, 33; 1999, 713-14. The envoys of Eljigidei claimed that Eljigidei and Гьык Khan were Christians. The letter was forwarded to Louis' mother, Queen Blanche in France, who in her turn forwarded it to the English King Henry III (1216-72); Jackson (The Mongols and the West), 2005, 98-99.

⁸⁶ Kirakos Gandzaketsi, 1961, 357.

⁸⁷ MNT [military term], 2004, 305.

overlords, the travels of the Armenian lords to Mongolia also aimed to resolve personal or local matters, and the far-reaching result of these journeys was to remove their own potential Georgian or Armenian competitors from the political arena, an aim which perfectly suited Mongol policy.

Awag (d. 1250), the son of Iwanē Zak'arian (d. 1234), was the first Caucasian noble to submit to the Mongols. Kirakos Gandzakets'i gives a detailed account of how this happened.⁸⁸ In 1236, Awag, seeing that the Mongols continued to besiege his stronghold, Kayen, even after taking his daughter and gifts, sent one of Khachen's nobles, Grigor called Tghay to meet the Mongol leader Chormaghan, who was camped at that time by the shores of Lake Geghark'unik' (Sevan). When the great Commander Chormaghan heard about Awag's intention to submit, he ordered his troops to stop besieging the fortress. Soon after, Awag was received by Chormaghan. An interesting conversation between Awag and Chormaghan followed, which can be interpreted from different angles. I am interested in seeing how the interaction between the conqueror and his subject proceeded. The Mongol commander asked Awag why he had not come earlier, when he crossed the borders of his land. Awag replied:

That time you were remote, my father was alive, and he served you [the Mongols] in all ways, and since he has died, I will serve you according to my ability, and now, as you have come to my land, here I come to you.⁸⁹

As has been said above, Awag's father *Atabeg* Iwanē Zak'arian faced the Mongol advance into Armenia. He fought against Jebe and Šēbedei. There is no record in contemporary Armenian sources of the exact relationship between Iwanē Zak'arian and the Mongols; however, Awag's answer shows that his father had already given service to the Mongols. Chormaghan told a proverb to Awag, "I came to the dormer window, you did not come. I came to the door, behold, you have come".⁹⁰ When the Mongol commander ordered a meal in Awag's honour, he sat the

⁸⁸ Kirakos Gandzakets'i, 1961, 254-57.

⁸⁹ *Ibid*, 256. Iwanē Zak'arian died in 1234; Manandian, 1952, 410.

⁹⁰ Kirakos Gandzakets'i, 1961, 256.

latter below all his nobles. Awag was offered a large quantity of meat 'both from clean and unclean animals' and *khmuks* [kumis], fermented mare's milk, but Awag said that the Christians were not accustomed to eat such food or to drink such a beverage; they ate meat from permitted animals and drank wine.⁹¹ Therefore, Chormaghan gave an order to bring what he requested. The next day, Awag was seated above many nobles, and day after day, he was honoured more and more until he sat among the ranks of the great lords.⁹²

The plausibility of this conversation is contentious, but surely, Kirakos wants to highlight the pride and bravery of the Armenian prince and the details of his submission. Referring to the customs of the Mongols and Armenians, Kirakos tries to engage with the cultures of both sides, and thus to show the diversity of the people coming into contact for the first time. We can assume that the Mongol recognition of Armenian nobility by the Mongols was a very important start in the relationship between conqueror and subject. Perhaps the way Awag was received by the Mongols had a significant influence on the other lords' decision-making.

Indeed, Awag Zak'arian was the first Caucasian lord to exemplify individual submission to the Mongols. This act secured Awag's land.⁹³ He obtained a status of invulnerability for all his dominions and established a strong friendship with Chormaghan. In return, Awag was obliged to take his troops with him to march against the city of Ani and to participate in the conquest of the west [Asia Minor].⁹⁴ After the escape of Queen Rusudan (1223-45) to Swanetia out of fear of the Mongols, Awag became the most influential figure at the Georgian royal court.⁹⁵ He was *de facto* ruler of Armenia, and the Mongol administrators sent him to the Great Khan. The exact date of Awag's journey to Mongolia is not known, although he paid this visit before the

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 256. Friar William of Rubruck gave the same answer to the Mongol host's offer, namely, that the Christians do not drink *kumis*, and that once they had drunk it they would renounce their Christian faith. Rubruck in Komroff, 1989, 77. The same answer was given by al-Kāmil Muḥammad, the Ayyubid ruler of Mayyāfāriqin to Munkge Khan; Jūzjānī, 1970, 1266.

⁹² Kirakos Gandzakets'i, 1961, 254-57.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 257.

⁹⁴ Awag participated in Baiju's conquest; Kirakos Gandzakets'i, 1961, 280.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 238. Queen Rusudan, being under constant pressure from the Mongols, took poison voluntarily and left a will entrusting the kingdom to Awag Zak'arian; Kirakos Gandzakets'i, 1961, 316.

replacement of Chormaghan by Baiju, presumably in 1240/41. According to Kirakos Gandzakets'i, Awag himself was happy to make this journey so that his visit would help the situation in his country.⁹⁶ In fact, the Great Khan, presumably Ugedei Khan (r. 1229-41), received the prince with affection, gave him a Mongol wife and sent him home.⁹⁷

It is worth mentioning that the practice of giving vassals a Mongol girl in marriage was exercised extensively by Chinggis Khan and his successors.⁹⁸ However, to my knowledge, there are no records in the Armenian historical annals or church council documents about the regulation of Mongol-Armenian marriages. In view of the fact that the children of such marriages were baptised, one can conclude that these mixed marriages were accepted by the Armenian Church.⁹⁹

After his return from the Mongol court, Awag restored his lordship over his dominion. Nevertheless, in 1245, with increasing anarchy caused by tax collectors, as Kirakos Gandzakets'i testifies, Awag fled to Queen Rusudan, who was still living in a fortress. The Mongols considered this action as rebellion, so Awag wrote a letter to the Khan explaining that his action was not a revolt, but that he was only escaping from disorder. A messenger called Tonghus-aqa came from Gьyьk Khan (r. 1246-48) to Awag with proof of his immunity. In return, Awag was obliged to convince the Queen to submit voluntarily to the Great Khan.¹⁰⁰ But Queen Rusudan died in 1245 before this order came, Awag himself died in 1250.¹⁰¹

Awag's submission had a domino effect on the other lords. The Armenian princes, such as Shahنشah (d. 1261), the son of Zak'arē, Vahram Gagets'i (fl. 1240-50) and his son Aghbugha, and Hasan Jalal, the prince of Khachen, all followed his example in 1236.

⁹⁶ *Ibid*, 262.

⁹⁷ *Ibid*, 263.

⁹⁸ MNT, 2004, 78 § 235, 79, § 238, § 239.

⁹⁹ Vasil Tatar, the son of Smbat Sparapet by his Mongol wife, was baptised and knighted in 1265 and was a general-in-chief of the Cilician Armenians; Smbat Sparapet in Der Nerssessian, 1973, 373-74.

¹⁰⁰ Kirakos Gandzakets'i, 1961, 266.

¹⁰¹ Vardan Arelvelts'i, 1991, 148; Sebastats'i in Hakobyan, 1956, 140.

On seeing that the other lords retained their lands, the Armenian princes of the Orbelian, Prōshian, Dop'ian, Vach'utian and Jalalian houses, aimed to co-operate with Mongol administrators in order to retain their principalities, which had been under the suzerainty of the Zak'arids during the previous century.¹⁰² It was understood that they could regain their own land from the Mongol commanders, as mentioned above concerning a deal between Elikum Orbelian and Aslan Noyan.¹⁰³ This desire of the Armenian lords was welcomed by the Mongols who gave them *enchb* (*injь*) status, that of the Khan's personally owned people, which in Orbelian's *History of the Siwnik' Province* is interpreted as *tērūni* or lordly.¹⁰⁴ Although this status meant that the Mongols imposed some direct obligations on these lords, it did give the latter, who had previously allied with the Georgian King, and their lands some privileges, such as immunity in terms of tax and sovereignty vis-a-vis the Mongols. The outcome of this act brought about the detachment of ties they had formed earlier, for the princes started to alter their attachment to the Georgian King, allying themselves with the Mongols.

This was true as well for Hasan Jalal Dawla (d. 1261) of the Khachen province, the next Armenian noble to support the Mongols. Receiving honour and trust from the Mongols, in practice Hasan Jalal arranged his own affairs. According to the Armenian source, he was the one who supported the Mongol *elchis* or messengers, and did whatever was possible for them, whether this meant providing food or horses.¹⁰⁵ Perhaps because of this, or because he exercised some privileges in arranging his own and Mongol affairs, Amir Arghun (d. 1275), the

¹⁰² Hovsep'ean, 1928, 16-V. Iwanē Zak'arian granted the Orbelian house the lands in eastern Vayots' Dzor, in Kotayk', Geghark'unik' and Kayen in 1184; Step'annos Orbelian, 1910, 397. In the 1210s, the Prōsians or Khaghbakians helped the Zak'arians in the re-conquest of Vayots' Dzor, Bjni and Dvin (Dwin). As a reward, they were given lands in western Vayots' Dzor, Shahapunik', Varazhnunik' and parts of Kotayk and Ayrarat. The head of the Vach'utants' family, Vach'ē was a loyal follower of Zak'arē who gave him all the districts of Aragatsotn, Shirak, Nigand Anberd as far as Eraskhadzor. Iwanē's sister Dop'i married Hasan, the prince of Arts'akh in eastern Armenia, receiving a large area on the southern shore of Lake Sevan and the district Sot'k in Siwnik'. They were known as Dop'ians'. Another sister of Iwanē married Vakht'ang, the lord of Khachen province; the house took on the name of Jalalians after Hasan Jalal; Babayan, 1976, 546-50.

¹⁰³ Step'annos Orbelian, 1910, 402-03.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 409; For *enchb/injь*, see Scherbak, 1997, 194; cf. Doerfer, 1963, v.1, 220-25. The etymology of *enchb* is Mongolian *emčb*, which means a private property; Lessing, 1973, 635. Shiraiwa suggests that *injь/īnjū* is Persianised form of the Mongolian *emčb* and Rashīd al-Dīn gave the term three meanings, namely 'personal property', 'crown land' and 'immediate vassal'; Shiraiwa, 1988, 371-76.

¹⁰⁵ Kirakos Gandzakets'i, 151, 269, 284;

wrestler in the ring meant being a good warrior in the field. Therefore, according to Grigor's perception, Sadun's victory impressed the Mongols. This may serve as another example of an Armenian historian's insights into the development of Mongol-Armenian relations as well as may illustrate Armenian lords' internal rivalry.

When Abaqa Khan (r. 1265-82) succeeded to the Il-Khanid throne, Sadun befriended Shams al-Dīn Juvaynī, the *ṣāhib-dīvān* (executed in 1284), whom Khoshak, Sadun's protǵǵe, married in 1269.¹²² After Нылегь's death, Smbat Orbelian lost his influential role in the political life of Armenia, and Sadun became the favourite of Abaqa Khan. Moreover, he strengthened his position as *atabeg* of Georgia.¹²³ The cities of Kars, Telavi and Bailaqan were separated from royal Georgian control and given to Sadun Artsruni.¹²⁴

In order to re-establish the Orbelian House's authority, a brother of Smbat, Tarsaich, showed his loyalty to Abaqa Khan by participating many times in his battles.¹²⁵ On becoming regent in 1270, Tarsaich enthroned young King Demetrē II (r. 1270-89) on the Georgian throne.¹²⁶ Tarsaich was welcomed by Arghun Khan (r. 1284-91), who gave Demetrē all the territories of the Zak'arids, Gagets'i and Sadunians (Artsrunids).¹²⁷ Demetrē also appointed Tarsaich as *atabeg* of the Georgian lands.¹²⁸

As can be seen, the above examples are cases of individual submission and of negotiations to ally with the Mongol Empire. Individual contacts between Armenian lords and either the Mongol Khan or his representatives during the early period of the Mongol presence secured Greater Armenia from major Mongol repression. Later, obtaining support from the Il-Khans, the Armenian lords once again secured authority over their Houses and lands.

¹²² Step'annos Orbelian, 1910, 418. Khoshak and Shams al-Dīn Juvaynī had a daughter Khuandze and a son Zak'arē; Rashīd al-Dīn, 1946, 115-16; Melikset-bek, 1936, 60; Babayan, 1969, 175.

¹²³ Melikset-bek, 1936, 60.

¹²⁴ *Ibid*, 60.

¹²⁵ Step'annos Orbelian, 1910, 423. The first wife of Tarsaich, Aruz Khatun, was not a Mongol (as Babayan and others suggest) but an Ismaelean from Siwnik'; Step'annos Orbelian, 1910, 416.

¹²⁶ *Ibid*, 426.

¹²⁷ *Ibid*, 426.

¹²⁸ *Ibid*, 426.

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As a result, the use of Mongol power guaranteed several Armenian lords not only security in their own lands, but also an extension of their patrimony by removing their local opponents from the political arena. In the long run, this policy of the local princes suited the Mongols. They preferred to have their own suzerainty over the Armenians and to see the Armenian lords attached to them rather than to the Georgian court, ensuring that the Georgio-Armenian lords were more disunited.

One of the methods of maintaining good relations was the use of diplomatic marriages between the Caucasian nobility and the Mongols. The sources mention several examples where the Armenians took Mongol spouses. Awag was given a Mongol wife by Гъуьк Khan (r. 1246-48).¹²⁹ Bora Noyan, the son of Chormaghan was married to the daughter of Hasan Jalal.¹³⁰ Smbat Sparapet was given a Mongol wife and had a son by her called Vasil Tatar, who died in a battle with the sultan of Egypt in 1269.¹³¹ The daughter of the Georgian king Demetrē was married to Bugha Noyan.¹³² These marriages facilitated support for Mongol rule and also served the Armenians' cause.

It would be very useful to find some contemporary ecclesiastical sources permitting the Armenian aristocracy to have a polygamous marriage to a Mongol as well as a Christian wife. The only observation that can be made is that the state of being a vassal or being under the military and political dominion of the conquerors, meant that the Armenian Church had to deal with this phenomenon through unwritten rules or regulations, since it allowed the baptising or knighting of the children born from such marriages, as is illustrated in the case of the son of Smbat Sparapet.¹³³ Vasil Tatar was buried in September 1269 in the holy Monastery of Mlich'.¹³⁴

¹²⁹ Kirakos Gandzakets'i, 1961, 263.

¹³⁰ *Ibid*, 391.

¹³¹ Smbat Sparapet in Galstyan, 1962, 9, 122. Vasil Tatar was baptised and knighted in 1265 and was a general-in-chief of the Cilician Armenians, Smbat Sparapet in Der Nerssessian, 1973, 373, 374.

¹³² Step'annos Episkopos, 1951, 48-49.

¹³³ Smbat Sparapet in Der Nerssessian, 1973, 373, 374.

¹³⁴ Smbat Sparapet in Galstyan, 1962, 64.

According to the statements of Armenian historians, the monks and lords of Greater Armenia were also employed by the Mongols as their diplomats and secretaries. Thus, in a village called Lorut, south of the Tavush fortress, Molar Noyan captured the cleric Kirakos Gandzakets'i, who was to serve his secretarial needs, writing and reading letters throughout the summer of 1236.¹³⁵ In 1246, Lord Vahram Gagets'i was sent to Caesarea to represent Baiju in negotiations for the liberation of David, the son of King Lasha, from prison.¹³⁶ The priest Barsegh was known as Batu Khan's emissary; he accompanied King Het'um (r. 1226-70) on his journey through Caucasian Albania and the Gate of Derbent to Batu's headquarters.¹³⁷

The Armenian Church supported the collaboration of the Armenian lords with the Mongols. Undeniably, the fact that some of the Mongol chiefs had Nestorian Christian wives assisted the Christians in the Caucasus. Thus in 1242, the help of Altuna Khatun made possible the return of Nersēs, the Catholicos of Caucasian Albania to his seat. While Nersēs was hidden in the monastery of Khamshi in Awag's territory, Altuna Khatun invited him to her camp in Mughan. With Awag's permission, he visited her on a special day when she was celebrating the weddings of her two children. Altuna Khatun asked her two brothers, both Christians and newly arrived from Mongolia, to honour the Catholicos, and afterwards she gave Nersēs the document with the *altamgha* [red seal], proving his immunity from any Mongol harassment.¹³⁸ In 1247, when Catholicos Kostandin (1221-67) of Cilicia saw the ruins of Armenia and the sufferings of the people, he circulated canonical orders throughout the districts of Armenia to all bishops, monks and princes to bring church affairs into order. He sent presents of silk clothes, expensive mantles and quantities of gold for the monastery of St. T'adeos in Greater Armenia. After the construction work had been completed, the monastery was opened with the assistance of the

¹³⁵ Kirakos Gandzakets'i, 1961, 243-52. Vanakan Vardapet and Kirakos Gandzakets'i were in Mongol captivity for one year; Davit' Baghishets'i, 1956, 346.

¹³⁶ Grigor Aknerts'i, 1974, 33.

¹³⁷ Kirakos Gandzakets'i, 1961, 366, 370; Smbat Sparapet in Galstyan, 1962, 49.

¹³⁸ Kirakos Gandzakets'i, 1961, 290-92.

Mongol commander, Angurag Noyan, who had summer quarters near this monastery.¹³⁹ In the early 1250s, Smbat Orbelian received a decree that freed all the churches and priests of Armenia from taxes. With the encouragement of General Baiju's Christian wife, Smbat renovated Siwnik's religious seat, Tat'ew.¹⁴⁰ The Armenian monk Sergius [Sargis], who played a very active role in the court of Mungke Khan in Qara-Qorum, even attempted to baptise the Mongol Khan in 1254.¹⁴¹ In 1264, Нылегъ received some Armenian clerics, including Vardan Vardapet, in order to explore the disposition of the ecclesiastics towards the Mongol policy.¹⁴² These examples of support for Christianity show that both in Greater Armenia and in Cilicia, the Mongols dealt sufficiently with Christian issues. They illustrate the circumstances in which Mongol-Armenian collaboration might be carried out more easily.

To conclude, with the advance of the Mongols on non-Mongol territories, a system of conquest emerged. As Kirakos Gandzakets'i, Grigor Aknerts'i and other contemporary Armenian sources indicate, Armenian lands were divided by the Mongols into lots during their conquests. The method of land division that occurred in the earlier stages of Mongol expansion may be explained also by the nomadic mindset of the steppe people, in which the concept of maintaining the conquered land and its people had not yet been developed. At this stage, the Mongols sustained supremacy over their conquered lands in a passive way rather than with direct rule. In our case, the existing indigenous system of Armenian rule was preserved at local level but was taken under Mongol lordship.¹⁴³ This 'indirect rule' relates to the third point of view, in which the Mongols considered the conquered territories in general as their personal possessions.¹⁴⁴

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, 311-12.

¹⁴⁰ Step'annos Orbelian, 1910, 412.

¹⁴¹ Rubruck in Komroff, 1989, 138-46.

¹⁴² Vardan Arevelts'i, 2001, 204-09.

¹⁴³ The category of territorial ruling among the Mongol noyans was applied also in the Chaghatai Khanate (1224-1369) and in the Ulus of Jochi /Golden Horde (1243-1502); Koh Byong-ik, 1969, 157.

¹⁴⁴ Schurmann, 1956, 305.

This system of personal territorial possession is particularly illustrated in the case of Greater Armenia before 1256; there was a direct relationship between the Armenian lords and the Mongol noyans. Early Mongol commanders exercised great freedom in acting and making decisions regarding local matters. Each had autonomous power in their respective areas that perfectly served the Armenian lords. With regard to this, it is worth stressing that these individual submissions were made in a timely way, before the Mongols devastated the whole country, giving them a chance to safeguard most of the Armenian lands.

The strategy of the Greater Armenian lords towards the Mongol presence was co-operative rather than confrontational. In fact, the assistance given by Awag Zak'arian to Chormaghan and Гъуьк Khan; Hasan Jalal to Sartakh and to Мүнгке Khan; Smbat Orbelian to Мүнгке Khan and Ньлегъ; and Прoш Zak'arian and Sadun Artsruni to Ньлегъ and Abaqa Khan illustrate effective Mongol-Armenian partnerships.

ABSTRACT

In the thirteenth century, the Armenians of Greater Armenia and of the Armenian Kingdom in Cilicia came into direct contact with the Mongol nomads of the Inner Asian steppe. This interaction was one of the major examples of 'east' meeting 'west'.

The Armenians' relations with the Mongols were varied. In this article, the various aspects of these relationship is tackled while the Greater Armenians became subjects of the Mongol Empire, whereas the Cilician Armenians, by entering into vassalage, became allies and furthered the Mongol conquests.

The arguments are set out for determining the reasons for the invasion of Greater Armenia; the motives on both sides for establishing the alliance between the Mongols and Armenians. The article draws on sources written in Armenian, Persian, Mongolian, and in many other languages to exercise these features of the subject as fully as possible.

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