

## SOME DYNAMICS OF MONGOL-ARMENIAN INTERACTIONS

There are no sources compiled by historians of the Mongol dynasty for the Armenians. Therefore, accounts of the Mongol-Armenian relationship are mainly based on what the Armenians and others chose to mention about it in their historiographical traditions. As luck would have it, the 12-14<sup>th</sup> centuries formed one of the richest periods in Armenian historiography. It produced more than ten historians and chronologists: Samuēl Anec'i, Mxit'ar Anec'i, Matt'ēos Urhayec'i, Mxit'ar Ayrivanec'i, Vardan Arewelc'i, Kirakos Ganjakec'i, Grigor Aknerc'i, Vahram Rabuni, Smbat Sparapet, Het'um Patmič', Step'annos Ōrbēlean and others. Comparative reading of a large variety of contemporary Armenian sources brings together essential knowledge of contemporary Armenian sources for the Mongols and thereby allows a reconstruction of the details of historical events that can furnish a distinctive picture of the relationship between Mongols and Armenians in this period. The overall impact of bringing the Armenian sources to bear upon study of the Mongol Empire is to add another dimension to our understanding of the relationships established between conquerors and subject people during the Mongol period. In the 13<sup>th</sup> century, the Mongols controlled territory that stretched from the Pacific Ocean to the Adriatic Sea, most of Eurasia, excluding India, and Eastern Europe including Hungary. 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»<sup>1</sup>.

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1 MORGAN, D.O., *The Mongols*, Oxford 1990, p. 5.

No one in medieval times gave the Mongols such a wonderful name as the *Nation of Archers* as Grigor Aknerc'i did. Usually they were called barbarians, or at best «Tartars». Nevertheless, when the Mongol tribes were amalgamated into the *Yeke Monggol Ulus* (the Great Mongol State) in 1206, neither Armenians nor Mongols were known to each other.

Armenian sources state that the very first interaction of the Mongols with Greater Armenia started in 1220, when the scouting expeditions of the Mongols entered the land of Gugark' from Albania (*Afuank'*)<sup>2</sup>. On their way, they met the Georgian and Armenian army and defeated them. There are some differences between the Armenian and Muslim sources as to the location and the size of army in this and the next Mongol battle with the Caucasians. However, I am not going to address this subject here.

Rather, I would like to address the fact that the Georgian Queen Rusudan and the *atabeg* Iwanē Zak'arean must have been confused, seeing the Mongols carrying a cross in their front line. This ruse is referred to in western scholarship in relation to King David's army and Prester John<sup>3</sup>. According to Kirakos Ganjakec'i,

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2 SEBASTAC'I, *Ananun Sebastac'u taregrut'yunə (XIII d.)* [Annals of Anonymous Sebastac'i (13<sup>th</sup> century)], in HAKOBYAN, V.A., ed., *Manr žamanakagrut'yunner XIII-XVIII dd.* [Minor Chronicles of the 13<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> centuries], vol. 2, Erevan 1956, pp. 137. *Afuank'* in the Armenian sources refers to Caucasian Albania; BARXUTAREANC', M., *Patmut'iwn Afuanic'* [History of Albania], Valaršapat 1902, p. 9.

3 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, P., *The Mongols and the West, 1221-1410*, London 2005, pp. 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, *The Mongols*, op. cit., p. 178. On various articles about Prester John, see SPULER, B., *The Muslim World*, tr. by BAGLEY, C. – RONALD, F., vol. 2: *The Mongol Period*, Leiden 1960, p. 29; BECKINGHAM, C. – HAMILTON, B., eds., *Prester John, the Mongols and the Ten Lost Tribes*, Aldershot



the Mongols had been preceded by false reports that they were Christians who carried a portable tent-church and miracle-working cross and had come to rescue their fellow-Christians from the tyranny of the Muslims<sup>4</sup>. As elsewhere, the Armenians were not ready to face the Mongols. A complaint about the Mongol invasion was addressed to Pope Honorius III (1216-27) by Iwānē, and later it was left to the queen to explain why no precautions were taken<sup>5</sup>. It is not clear whether the «cross» was deliberately used 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<sup>6</sup>.

Reconstructing the details of historical events through Armenian sources, it becomes clear that in 1222, when the Mongols returned to Armenia and Georgia, their scouts found that the Georgians and Armenians this time were ready to fight. Being informed about this readiness, the Mongols decided not to wage war and went «somewhere else»<sup>7</sup>. The first scouting expedition of the Mongols through the Caucasus northwards had come to an end<sup>8</sup>.

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1996; DE RACHEWILTZ, I., *Papal Envoys to the Great Khans*, London 1971, pp. 30-40.

4 KIRAKOS GANJAKEC'I, *Patmut'yun Hayoc'* [History of the Armenians], ed. by MELIK'-ŌHANJANYAN, K.A., Erevan 1961, p. 202.

5 MUTAFIAN, C., *Roma-Armenia*, Rome 1999, p. 149; JACKSON, *The Mongols and the West*, op. cit., p. 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 AK-NERC'I, *Patmut'iwn T'at'arac'* [History of the Tatars], ed. by POLAREAN, N., Jerusalem 1974, p. 20.

6 JACKSON, *The Mongols and the West*, op. cit., p. 49.

7 VARDAN AREWELC'I, *Chronicle*, Facsimile of Ališan's ed. (Venice 1862), with an Introduction by THOMSON, R.W., Delmar, NY 1991, p. 142.

8 Afterwards, Sübedei headed the expedition to North China in 1233, MUNKUEV, N., *Kitajskij istočnik o pervyh Mongol'skih hanah* [A Chinese Source on the First Mongol Khans], Moscow 1965, p. 66. He marched on Carpathia towards Hungary and Poland in 1241, LIDDELL HART, B.H., *Great Captains Unveiled*, Edinburgh-

The next major Mongol intervention in Greater Armenia took place in the time of Ögedei Khan (r. 1229-41), who had succeeded his father as Great Khan. In 1230, Ögedei Khan issued a decree that general Chormaghan should remain in Iran and the Caucasus as garrison commander<sup>9</sup>. Eastern Caucasus 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.

According to Juvaynī, Chormaghan came to the region with an army of three *tumans* or thirty thousand men<sup>10</sup>. 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, with the number of Mongol names exceeding my expectations. Grigor Aknerci records that «110 chieftains» with winter residences in Muḥan divided the country and that «thirteen chieftains divided the countries of the Georgians and the Albanians, highland and lowland,

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London 1927, p. 22. Sübedei died in 1248, when he was 72/73 years old, *YÜAN SHIH*, [The History of the Yüan Dynasty], Peking 1978, ch. 121, 1a-5a. Jebe probably died after 1231, when he was sent by Ögedei to invade Northern China, *Mongolyn Nuuts Tovchoo* [The Secret History of the Mongols], ed. by TSERENSODNOM, D., Ulaanbaatar 2004, p. 95, §272.

9 As *tamghachi*, in *Mongolyn Nuuts Tovchoo*, op. cit., p. 96, §274; *The Secret History of the Mongols. The Life and Times of Chinggis Khan*, tr. by ONON, U., Richmond 2001, p. 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; *Mongolyn Nuuts Tovchoo*, op. cit., p. 96, §274; *The Secret History*, op. cit., p. 267. When Khurasan was subjugated, Ögedei 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; 'ALĀ' AL-DĪN JUVAYNĪ, *The History of the World Conqueror*, tr. by BOYLE, J.A., Manchester 1997 (1958), p. 227.

10 JUVAYNĪ, *The History of the World*, op. cit., p. 190.

among themselves»<sup>11</sup>. 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<sup>12</sup>. This withdrawal gave the Mongols a chance to use their famous tactics in pursuing the fugitives. They divided districts up among themselves and conquered them one by one. This implies that the Mongols knew the terrain well before they conquered it.

The main organiser of this conquest remained Chormaghan, who, at that time, had established himself on the shores of Lake Gêlark'unik' (Sevan)<sup>13</sup>. According to contemporary Armenian sources, Chormaghan sent out his military detachments under various *noyans* to capture the key fortresses of the Armenian lords. Kirakos Ganjakec'i gives extended accounts of the Mongol *noyans'* siege of the cities and fortresses one by one and of the techniques they applied<sup>14</sup>.

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. 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.

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11 GRIGOR AKNERC'I, *Patmut'iwn T'at'arac'*, op. cit., p. 26.

12 MXIT'AR AYRIVANEC'I, *Patmut'iwn Hayoc'* [History of the Armenians], ed. by ĖMIN, M., Moscow 1860, p. 66.

13 *Ibid.*, p. 255.

14 KIRAKOS GANJAKEC'I, *Patmut'yun Hayoc'*, op. cit., pp. 241-243, 253-255, 258-261.

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 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 1236 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 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 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'arean (d. 1234), was the first Caucasian noble to submit to the Mongols. Kirakos Ganjakec'i gives a detailed account of how this happened<sup>15</sup>. In 1236, Awag found that the Mongols continued to besiege his stronghold Kayean, even after taking his daughter and gifts. Therefore, he sent one of Xač'en's nobles, Grigor called Tlay, to meet the Mongol

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15 *Ibid.*, pp. 254-257.

leader Chormaghan, who was encamped at that time by the shores of Lake Gełark'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 »<sup>16</sup>.

As has been said above, Awag's father *atabeg* Iwanē Zak'arean faced the Mongol advance into Armenia. He fought against Jebe and Sübedei. There is no record in contemporary Armenian sources of the exact relationship between Iwanē Zak'arean 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»<sup>17</sup>. When the Mongol commander ordered a meal in Awag's honour, he sat the latter (Awag) below all his nobles. Awag was offered a large quantity of meat «both from clean and unclean animals» and *xmuzs* (*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<sup>18</sup>.

16 *Ibid.*, p. 256. Iwanē Zak'arean died in 1234, MANANDYAN, H.A., *K'nnakan tesut'yun hay žolovrdi patmut'yan* [Critical Survey of the History of the Armenian People], vol. 3, Erevan 1952, p. 410.

17 KIRAKOS GANJAKEC'I, *Patmut'yun Hayoc'*, op. cit., p. 256.

18 *Ibid.*, pp. 256-257. 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, M., ed., *Contemporaries of Marco Polo: Consisting of the Travel Records to the Eastern Parts of the World of William of Rubruck [1253-1255]; the Journey of John of Pian de Carpini [1245-1247]; the Journal of Friar Odoric [1318-30] and the Oriental Travels*

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<sup>19</sup>.

The plausibility of this conversation is debatable, 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 element in the initial 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'arean was the first Caucasian lord to exemplify individual submission to the Mongols. This act secured Awag's land<sup>20</sup>. He obtained a status of *enchū* (*injū*) (invulnerability)<sup>21</sup> for all his dominions and established a strong friendship with Chormaghan. In return, Awag was obliged to take his troops with

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of Rabbi Benjamin of Tudela [1160-1173], New York 1989 (1928), p. 77. The same answer was given by al-Kāmil Muhammad, the Ayyubid ruler of Mayyāfāriqīn to Möngke Khan, MINHĀJ-I-SIRĀJ JŪZJĀNĪ, *Tabakāt-i-Nāsīrī: Muhammadan dynasties of Asia*, tr. by RAVERTY, H.G., New Delhi 1970, p. 1266.

19 KIRAKOS GANJAKEC'I, *Patmut'yun Hayoc'*, op. cit., pp. 254-257.

20 *Ibid.*, p. 257.

21 For *enchū* / *injū*, see ŠČERBAK, A.M. [=SCHERBAK, A.M.], *Rannie tjurksko-mongol'skie jazykovye svjazi (VIII-XIV vv.)* [Early Turco-Mongol Linguistic Connections, 8<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> centuries], St. Petersburg 1997, p. 194; cfr. DOERFER, G., *Türkische und mongolische Elemente im Neupersischen*, vol. 1, Wiesbaden 1963, pp. 220-225. The etymology of *enchū* is Mongolian *emčū*, which means a private property, LESSING, F., ed., *Mongolian-English Dictionary*, Bloomington, IN 1973, p. 635. Shiraiwa suggests that *injū* / *injū* is Persianised form of the Mongolian *emčū* and Rashīd al-Dīn gave the term three meanings, namely «personal property», «crown land», and «immediate vassal», SHIRAIWA, K., *Īnjū in the Jāmi' al-Tavārīkh of Rashīd al-Dīn*, in *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 47 (1988), pp. 371-376.



him to march against the city of Ani and to participate in the conquest of the West (Asia Minor)<sup>22</sup>. 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<sup>23</sup>. 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, but he paid this visit before the replacement of Chormaghan by Baiju, presumably in 1240/41. According to Kirakos Ganjakec'i, Awag himself was happy to make this journey so as to ameliorate the situation in his country<sup>24</sup>. In fact, the Great Khan, presumably Ögedei Khan (r. 1229-41), received the prince with affection, gave him a Mongol wife and sent him home<sup>25</sup>.

It is worth mentioning that the practice of giving vassals a Mongol girl in marriage was exercised extensively by Chinggis Khan and his successors<sup>26</sup>. 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<sup>27</sup>.

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 Ganjakec'i testifies, Awag fled to Queen Rusudan, who was still living in a fortress. The Mongols viewed this action as rebellion. Therefore, Awag

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22 Awag participated in Baiju's conquest, *ibid.*, p. 280.

23 *Ibid.*, p. 238. Queen Rusudan, being under constant pressure from the Mongols, took poison voluntarily and left a will entrusting the kingdom to Awag Zak'arean, *ibid.*, p. 316.

24 *Ibid.*, p. 262.

25 *Ibid.*, p. 263.

26 *Mongolyn Nuuts Tovchoo*, op. cit., pp. 78 §235 and 79 §§238-239.

27 Vasil T'at'ar, 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 NERSESSIAN, S., *The Armenian Chronicle of the Constable Smbad or of the "Royal Historian"*, in EAD., *Byzantine and Armenian Studies*, vol. 1, Louvain 1973, pp. 373-374.

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 Güyük 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<sup>28</sup>. But before this order came, Queen Rusudan died in 1245 and Awag himself died in 1250<sup>29</sup>.

Awag's submission had a domino effect on the other lords. The Armenian princes, such as Šahnšah (d. 1261), the son of Zak'arē, Vahram Gagec'i (fl. 1240-50) and his son Ałbuła, and Hasan Ĭalal, the prince of Xač'ēn, all followed his example in 1236.

On seeing that the other lords retained their lands, the Armenian princes of the Ōrbēlean, Prōšean, Dop'ean, Vač'utean and Ĭalalean 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<sup>30</sup>. It was

28 KIRAKOS GANJAKEC'I, *Patmut'yun Hayoc'*, op. cit., p. 266.

29 VARDAN AREWELC'I, *Chronicle*, op. cit., p. 148; SEBASTAC'I, *Ananun Sebastac'u*, op. cit., p. 140.

30 YOVSEP'EAN, G., *Xałbakeank' kam Prōšean' Hayoc' patmut'ean mej* [The Xałbakeans and the Prōšean in Armenian History], Vałaršapat 1928 (Repr. Antelias 1969), pp. 16-17. Iwanē Zak'arean granted the Ōrbēlean house the lands in eastern Vayoc' Jor, in Kotayk', Gelark'unik' and Kayean in 1184; STEP'ANNOS ŌRBĒLEAN, *Patmut'iwn nahangin Sisakan* [History of Siwnik' Province], ed. by ŠAHNAZAREANC', K., Paris 1860 (Repr. Tiflis 1910), p. 397. In the 1210s, the Prōšean or Xałbakeans helped the Zak'areans in the re-conquest of Vayoc' Jor, Bĭjni and Duin. As a reward, they were given lands in western Vayoc' Jor, Šahapunik', Varažnunik' and parts of Kotayk' and Ayrarat. The head of the Vač'uteanc' family, Vač'ē was a loyal follower of Zak'arē who gave him all the districts of Aragacotn, Širak, Nig and Anberd as far as Erasxajor. Iwanē's sister Dop'i married Hasan, the prince of Arc'ax 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'eans. Another sister of Iwanē married Vaxt'ang, the lord of Xač'ēn province; the house took on the name of Ĭalaleans after Hasan Ĭalal, BABAYAN, L.H., *Zak'aryan išanut'yunnerē ev haykakan feodalakan nor tneri ařajac'umē* [The Princes Zak'arean and the Emergence of the New Armenian Feudal Houses], in AŁAYAN,

understood that they could regain their own land from the Mongol commanders, as in Ēlikum Ōrbēlean's deal with Aslan Noyan<sup>31</sup>. This desire of the Armenian lords was welcomed by the Mongols, who gave them *enchü* status, that of the Khan's personally owned people. This in Ōrbēlean's *History of the Siwnik' Province* is interpreted as *tēruni* or lordly<sup>32</sup>. 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 from taxation and sovereignty *vis-à-vis* the Mongols. The outcome of this act brought about the dissolution of earlier ties, for the princes began to abandon their attachment to the Georgian King and to ally themselves with the Mongols.

This was true as well for Hasan Ĵalal Dawla (d. 1261) of the Xaç'ēn province, the next Armenian noble to support the Mongols. Receiving honour and trust from the Mongols, in practice Hasan Ĵalal 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<sup>33</sup>. Perhaps because of this, or because he exercised some privileges in arranging his own and Mongol affairs, Amir Arghun (d. 1275), the administrator of Mongol taxation, disliked him and treated him harshly<sup>34</sup>. In 1251, in order to escape from Amir Arghun, Hasan Ĵalal paid a visit to Sartakh of the Golden Horde<sup>35</sup>. Sartakh took Hasan Ĵalal to his father, Batu Khan (r. 1205-55), who restored to Hasan Ĵalal his patrimony of Č'araberd, Akanay and Karkar, which the Seljuks and the Geor-

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C.P. et al., eds., *Hay žołovrdi patmut'yun* [History of the Armenian People], vol. 3, Erevan 1976, pp. 546-550.

31 STEP'ANNOS ŌRBĒLEAN, *Patmut'iwn nahangin Sisakan*, op. cit., pp. 402-403.

32 *Ibid.*, p. 409; cfr. *supra*, n. 21.

33 KIRAKOS GANJAKEC'I, *Patmut'yun Hayoc'*, op. cit., pp. 269, 284.

34 *Ibid.*, p. 373.

35 *Ibid.*, p. 358. This was a master stroke of Hasan Ĵalal, to use the conflict between two Mongol powers in Iran and in Russia. The Caucasus became an occasional arena of conflicts between the Il-Khanate and the Golden Horde from 1261 until 1266.

gians had previously taken from him<sup>36</sup>. Using his close relationship with Sartakh, he succeeded in separating Xaç'ēn from Georgia and the Zak'arid Princes, as reflected in his title. Armenian inscriptions of Mama-Khatun, the daughter of Hasan, in Ganjasar, dating to 1280 and 1286, mention his name as «Prince of Princes, the Lord of Xaç'ēn». In the inscription of Amaḥu-Noravank', dating to 1292, Mina-Khatun, the other daughter of Hasan, refers to her father as «Great King»<sup>37</sup>.

In 1255, when Sartakh went to visit Möngke, the Great Khan, Hasan Ĵalal joined him with his family, as is mentioned in the colophons of a Gospel in 1261<sup>38</sup>. He was granted *enchü* status by Möngke Khan (r. 1251-59) in 1255. In return, he was obliged to perform military service every year<sup>39</sup>. His position was secured by the marriage of his daughter to Bora Noyan, the son of Chormaghan<sup>40</sup>. However, his daughter's marriage could not guarantee his life. In 1261, because of his failure to pay tax to the Mongols, and mainly because he had lost the protection of Sartakh who died in 1257, Hasan Ĵalal was tortured and killed by Amir Arghun in Qazvin<sup>41</sup>.

Another prince to whom Möngke Khan granted *enchü* status was Smbat Örbēlean of the Siwnik' province, who visited Qara-Qorum in 1251/52. He went there to secure his land from Gonc'a, the wife of the late Awag, who had infringed on his territory. In

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36 *Ibid.*, p. 359.

37 ORBELI, I.A., *Izbrannye Trudy* [Selected works], Erevan 1963, p. 158; BARXUDARYAN, S.G., *Arc'ax*, in *Divan hay vimagrut'yan/Corpus Inscriptionum Armenicarum*, vol. 5, Erevan 1982, p. 80.

38 MAT'EVOSYAN, A.S., ed., *Hayeren jerageri hišatakaranner ŽG dari* [The Colophons of the Armenian Manuscripts of the 13<sup>th</sup> century], Erevan 1984, pp. 311-312, No. 258; ORBELI, *Izbrannye Trudy*, op. cit., pp. 155-156, 163, No. 26.

39 KIRAKOS GANJAKEC'I, *Patmut'yun Hayoc'*, op. cit., p. 269. Hasan Ĵalal had already participated with Baiju in the battle of *Ch'man-katuk* (Köse Dagħ) between the Seljuks of Rūm and the Mongols in 1243, *ibid.*, pp. 283-284.

40 *Ibid.*, p. 391.

41 VARDAN AREWELC'I, *Chronicle*, op. cit., p. 152; Hasan Ĵalal's son At'abek brought his father's body to be buried in Ĵalal's ancestral cemetery at Ganjasar monastery; KIRAKOS GANJAKEC'I, *Patmut'yun Hayoc'*, op. cit., pp. 390-391.

the narration of his journey written by Step'annos Ōrbēlean, Smbat, in return for a valuable precious stone (a ruby) presented to the Great Khan, retained the lands of Orotan up to the boundaries of Borotna and Błen, within which the Siwnik' court of Tat'ew was located. Besides this, he received Eġegis with the district of Vayoc' Jor; P'olahanos; Urc, Vēdi with the valley of Ererawn, and many villages in Kotayk and Gełark'uni<sup>42</sup>.

Just before the vital shift of Mongol power from Baiju to Hülegü in Greater Armenia, Smbat Ōrbēlean secured sovereignty over his dominions from the Zak'arid suzerains and the Georgian king by his second journey to Möngke Khan in 1256<sup>43</sup>. The independence of the Ōrbēlean prince was reflected in his title as «King Smbat» in the inscription in Noravank' in 1275<sup>44</sup>. Smbat remained an important vassal of the Mongols in the time of the Il-Khans. He was sent by Hülegü Khan (r. 1256-65), the first Mongol Il-Khan, to Ala Taq (*Darīn Dašt*), to assist the latter in building a large royal palace<sup>45</sup>.

Having support from Hülegü Khan to implement his political goals, Smbat Ōrbēlean encountered a serious opponent, Sadun Arcruni/Mankaberdeli (d. 1284), the *atabeg* and army commander of Awag. Seeing that Smbat was ambitious, Sadun Arcruni decided to support Gonc'a, the widow of Awag and subsequently the wife of the Georgian King David (r. 1259-70)<sup>46</sup>. While Smbat was in

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42 STEP'ANNOS ŌRBĒLEAN, *Patmut'iwn nahangin Sisakan*, op. cit., p. 411.

43 *Ibid.*, p. 414.

44 KOSTANEANC', K., ed., *Vimakan tarēgir. C'uc'ak žolovacoy arjanagrut'yanc' Hayoc'* [The Annals of the Inscription: Collection of Armenian Inscriptions], St. Petersburg 1913, p. 118; GRIGORJAN, G.M., *Očerki istorii Sjúnika IX-XV vv.* [Studies in the History of Siwnik' 9<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> centuries], Erevan 1990, pp. 72, 75.

45 STEP'ANNOS ŌRBĒLEAN, *Patmut'iwn nahangin Sisakan*, op. cit., p. 415.

46 MELIK'SET'-BEK, L.M., ed., *Vrac' albyurnerō Hayastani ev Hayeri masin* [Georgian Sources about Armenia and the Armenians], vol. 2: the 13<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> centuries, Erevan 1936, p. 58.

Qara-Qorum, Sadun replaced him as the guardian of Xošak<sup>47</sup>, the daughter of Awag and Gonc'a, according to an anonymous Georgian source of the thirteenth century, and he was consequently recognised by the Georgian Court<sup>48</sup>. Thus, Sadun became an influential figure in the political arena. Later, he was also recognised and honoured by Hülegü when he defeated the most valiant Mongol wrestler<sup>49</sup>. The wrestling match at the Mongol Court was perhaps equivalent to the Christian knights' jousting tournaments. Being a successful 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 the Armenian lords' internal rivalry.

When Abaqa Khan (r. 1265-82) succeeded to the Il-Khanid throne, Sadun befriended the *sāhib-dīvān* Shams al-Dīn Juvaynī (executed in 1284), whom Sadun's protégée Xošak' married in 1269<sup>50</sup>. After Hülegü's death, Smbat Ōrbēlean 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<sup>51</sup>. The cities of Kars, Telavi and Bailaqan were separated from royal Georgian control and given to Sadun Arcruni<sup>52</sup>.

47 The names of Xošak' and Sadun, the *atabeg*, are found in the inscription of the church of the Mother of God in Noratus, AVAGYAN, S.A., *Vimakan arjanagru-t'yunneri barak'nnut'yun* [The Lexical Study of Inscriptions], Erevan 1978, p. 277.

48 MELIK'SET'-BEK, ed., *Vrac' albyurnerə*, op. cit., p. 58.

49 GRIGOR AKNERC'I, *Patmut'iwn T'at'arac'*, op. cit., p. 49.

50 ŌRBĒLEAN, STEP'ANNOS, *Patmut'iwn nahangin Sisakan*, op. cit., p. 418. Xošak' and Shams al-Dīn Juvaynī had a daughter Khuandze and a son Zak'arē, RASHĪD AL-DĪN, *Sbornik Letopisej* [Compendium of Chronicles], vol. 3, ed. by ROMASKEVIČ, A.A., Moscow-Leningrad 1946, pp. 115-116; MELIK'SET'-BEK, ed., *Vrac' albyurnerə*, op. cit., p. 60; BABAYAN, L.H., *Social'no-ekonomičeskaja i političeskaja istorija Armenii v XIII-XIV vekah* [Socio-Economic and Political History of Armenia in the 13<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> c.], Moscow 1969, p. 175.

51 MELIK'SET'-BEK, ed., *Vrac' albyurnerə*, op. cit., p. 60.

52 *Ibid.*, p. 60.



In order to re-establish the Ōrbēlean House's authority, a brother of Smbat, Tarsayiĉ, showed his loyalty to Abaqa Khan by participating many times in his battles<sup>53</sup>. On becoming regent in 1270, Tarsayiĉ placed young King Demetrē II (r. 1270-89) on the Georgian throne<sup>54</sup>. This move by Tarsayiĉ was welcomed by Arghun Khan (r. 1284-91), who gave Demetrē all the territories of the Zak'arids, Gagec'i and Sadunians (Arcrunids)<sup>55</sup>. Demetrē also appointed Tarsayiĉ as *atabeg* of the Georgian lands<sup>56</sup>.

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 their lands.

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 Güyük Khan (r. 1246-48)<sup>57</sup>. Bora Noyan, the son of Chorma-

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53 STEP'ANNOS ŌRBĒLEAN, *Patmut'iwn nahangin Sisakan*, op. cit., p. 423. The first wife of Tarsayiĉ, Aruz Khatun, was not a Mongol (as Babayan and others suggest) but an Ismaelean (*խաւսայէլացիոցն*) from Siwnik', *ibid.*, p. 416.

54 *Ibid.*, p. 426.

55 *Ibid.*

56 *Ibid.*

57 KIRAKOS GANJAKEC'I, *Patmut'yun Hayoc'*, op. cit., p. 263.

ghan was married to the daughter of Hasan Ĵalal<sup>58</sup>. Smbat Sparapet was given a Mongol wife and had a son by her called Vasil T'at'ar, who died in a battle with the sultan of Egypt in 1269<sup>59</sup>. The daughter of the Georgian king Demetrē was married to Bugha Noyan<sup>60</sup>. 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<sup>61</sup>. Vasil T'at'ar was buried in September 1269 in the holy Monastery of Mliĉ<sup>62</sup>.

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 Tawuš fortress, Molar Noyan captured the cleric Kirakos Ganjakec'i, who was to serve his secretarial needs, writing and reading letters throughout the summer of 1236<sup>63</sup>. In 1246, Lord Vahram Gagec'i was sent to Caesarea to

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58 *Ibid.*, p. 391.

59 GALSTJAN, A.G., ed., *Armjanskije istočniki o Mongolah* [Armenian Sources for the Mongols], Moscow 1962, pp. 9 and 122. Vasil T'at'ar was baptised and knighted in 1265 and was a general-in-chief of the Cilician Armenians, Smbat Sparapet in DER NERSESSIAN, *The Armenian Chronicle*, op. cit., pp. 373-374.

60 STEP'ANNOS EPISKOPOS, *Step'annos Episkoposi Taregrut'yunə* [Annals of Step'annos Episkopos], in HAKOBYAN, V.A., ed., *Manr žamanakagrut'yunner XIII-XVIII dd.* [Minor Chronicles of the 13<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> centuries], vol. 1, Erevan 1951, pp. 48-49.

61 Smbat Sparapet in DER NERSESSIAN, *The Armenian Chronicle*, op. cit., pp. 373-374.

62 Smbat Sparapet in GALSTJAN, *Armjanskije istočniki*, op. cit., p. 64.

63 KIRAKOS GANJAKEC'I, *Patmut'yun Hayoc'*, op. cit., pp. 243-252. Vanakan Vardapet and Kirakos Ganjakec'i were in Mongol captivity for one year, DAVIT'

represent Baiju in negotiations for the liberation of David, the son of King Lasha, from prison<sup>64</sup>. The priest Barseł was known as Batu Khan's emissary (*ղեսպար*); he accompanied King Het'um (r. 1226-70) on his journey through Caucasian Albania and the Gate of Derbent to Batu's headquarters<sup>65</sup>.

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 it possible for Nersēs, the Catholicos of Caucasian Albania, to return to his seat. While Nersēs was hidden in the monastery of Xamši in Awag's territory, Altuna Khatun invited him to her camp in Mułan. 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], assuring his immunity from any Mongol harassment<sup>66</sup>. 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'adēos in Greater Armenia. After the construction work had been completed, the monastery was opened with the assistance of the Mongol commander, Angurag Noyan, who had summer quarters near this monastery<sup>67</sup>. In the early 1250s, Smbat Ōrbēlean received a decree that freed all the churches and priests of Armenia from taxes. With the encouragement of General

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BALIŠEC'I, *Davit' Bališec'u žamanakagrut'yunə* [Chronicle of Davit' Bališec'i], in HAKOBYAN, *Manr žamanakagrut'yunner*, op. cit., vol. 2, p. 346.

64 GRIGOR AKNERC'I, *Patmut'iwn T'at'arac'*, op. cit., p. 33.

65 KIRAKOS GANJAKEC'I, *Patmut'yun Hayoc'*, op. cit., pp. 366 and 370; Smbat Sparapet in GALSTJAN, *Armjanskje istočniki*, op. cit., p. 49.

66 KIRAKOS GANJAKEC'I, *Patmut'yun Hayoc'*, op. cit., pp. 290-292.

67 *Ibid.*, pp. 311-312.

Baiju's Christian wife, Smbat renovated Siwnik's religious seat, Tat'ew<sup>68</sup>. The Armenian monk Sergius [Sargis], who played a very active role in the court of Möngke Khan in Qara-Qorum, even attempted to baptise the Mongol Khan in 1254<sup>69</sup>. In 1264, Hülegü received some Armenian clerics, including Vardan Vardapet, in order to explore the disposition of the ecclesiastics towards the Mongol policy<sup>70</sup>. These examples of support for Christianity show that, in both Greater Armenia and 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 Ganjakec'i, Grigor Aknerc'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 also be explained 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 the local level but was taken under Mongol lordship<sup>71</sup>. This «indirect rule» relates to the third point of view, in

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68 STEP'ANNOS ÖRBËLEAN, *Patmut'iwn nahangin Sisakan*, op. cit., p. 412.

69 WILLIAM OF RUBRUCK in KOMROFF, *Contemporaries of Marco Polo*, op. cit., pp. 138-146.

70 VARDAN AREWELC'I, *Tiezerakan patmut'yun* [Universal History], Mod. Arm. trans. by T'OSUNYAN, G.B., Erevan 2001, pp. 204-209.

71 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, *Patterns of Conquest and Control by the Mongols of the 13<sup>th</sup> Century*, in CH'EN CHIEH-HSIEN – JAGCHID, S. eds., *Proceedings of the Third East Asian Altaistic Conference*, Taipei 1969, p. 157.

which the Mongols considered the conquered territories in general as their personal possessions<sup>72</sup>.

This system of personal territorial possession is well 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, the policy that perfectly served the Armenian lords. With regard to this, it is worth stressing that these individual submissions were made in timely fashion, before the Mongols devastated the whole country, thereby 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'arean to Chormaghan and Güyük Khan; Hasan Jalal to Sartakh and to Möngke Khan; Smbat Örbēlean to Möngke Khan and Hülegü; and Prōš Zak'arean and Sadun Arcruni to Hülegü and Abaqa Khan illustrate effective Mongol-Armenian partnerships.

#### BAYARSAIKHAN DASHDONDOG

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72 SCHURMANN, H.F., *Mongolian Tributary Practices of the Thirteenth Century*, in *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 19 (1956), p. 305.

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### Riassunto

## ALCUNE DINAMICHE DI INTERAZIONE MONGOLO-ARMENA

BAYARSAIKHAN DASHDONDOG

Nel XIII sec. gli Armeni della Grande Armenia e del regno armeno di Cilicia vennero in contatto con i nomadi mongoli delle steppe dell'Asia centrale. La loro interazione è uno degli esempi più importanti di incontro tra Oriente e Occidente.

Le relazioni tra gli Armeni e i Mongoli furono di varia natura. In questo articolo vengono affrontati i diversi aspetti di tale rapporto: da una parte la Grande Armenia, che fu assoggettata all'impero mongolo, dall'altra gli Armeni di Cilicia che, in un rapporto di vassallaggio, si allearono con i Mongoli contribuendo ad espanderne le conquiste.

Vengono messi in luce i motivi che portarono all'invasione della Grande Armeniā e le ragioni di entrambe le parti per stringere un'alleanza armeno-mongola. Lo studio attinge a fonti scritte in armeno, persiano, mongolo e in altre lingue, al fine di analizzare nel modo più completo possibile i vari aspetti delle questioni prese in esame.