

The Diplomatic Correspondence of the Armenian King Levon I with the Egyptian Sultan Al-Malik Al-`Adil (1208–1209)

▼ **ABSTRACT** A conflict over the inheritance of the throne of Antioch, in which a number of Eastern Mediterranean countries were involved, started in 1201 and lasted until 1216. The two main opponents were Bohemond IV, Count of Tripoli, and Levon I, King of Cilician Armenia, who was trying to place his nephew, Raymond-Ruben, on the throne of Antioch. Bohemond IV had powerful allies in this struggle: the Seljuk Sultanate of Iconium and the Ayyubid Principality of Aleppo. Meanwhile, King Levon tried to get the support of the Pope, which, however, was clearly not enough in 1208 to tackle with a hostile siege. Therefore, the Armenian king took a bold step by sending a message to al-Malik al-`Adil, the sultan of Egypt (1200–1218) and the senior member of the Ayyubid dynasty. According to the valuable information provided by two historians (Anonymous of Edessa and Kamal al-Din Ibn al-`Adim), in 605 AH (1208–1209), in response to the request of King Levon, al-Malik al-`Adil sent letters to Kay Khosrow, the Seljuk sultan of Iconium, and al-Malik al-Zahir, the Ayyubid ruler of Aleppo, persuading (or forcing) them to make peace with the Armenian side. According to the reconciliation established between parties, the Seljuks of Rum and the Ayyubids of Aleppo stopped their joint attack against Cilicia. In its turn, the Armenian side had to fulfil some of their demands. The main demand was “not to interfere in the affairs of Antioch”. Therefore, Levon made no such an attempt during the next eight years (from 1208 to 1216), and there was a relative peace around that issue. Nevertheless, his dream was accomplished in 1216. This was the last stage of the 15-year-long conflict, in which all the mentioned states took part again, and diplomatic correspondence, including messages between al-Malik al-`Adil and Levon I, this time too had a decisive role. It clearly

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demonstrated that the Egyptian Sultanate and Cilician Armenia relations were maintained during this period on the level of the monarchs, and that the correspondence of 1208–1209 was not something accidental or unique.

▼ **KEYWORDS** Levon I (Levon the Great), Raymond-Ruben, al-Malik al-`Adil, Kay Khosrow (Khusraw) I, Cilician Armenia, Princedom of Antioch, Egypt, Ayyubids, Roman Church, Hospitallers, Gaston (Baghras) fortress.

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1. Introduction

Cilician Armenia was declared a kingdom at the end of the twelfth century (1198). The newly established Armenian state experienced a great military and political rise. Levon the Great, both as a prince (1187–1198) and as a king (1198–1219) expanded the borders of his state at the expense of neighboring countries. As a result, the Armenian Kingdom became one of the most powerful political entities in the Eastern Mediterranean. According to the *Chronicle* of the thirteenth century Syrian historian Bar Hebraeus (d. 1286), “Lion became very powerful after the death of Kelej Arslan,¹ and he took seventy-two citadels, some from the Turkaye,² and some from the Greeks.³ And in all his wars he appeared as a conqueror” (Bar Hebraeus 1976, vol. 1, 344).

As early as 1194, one of the terms of the peace treaty signed between Cilicia and Antioch (Smbat Sparapet 1956, 204) after a conflict between them⁴ stipulated that Raymond, the son of Prince Bohemond III, should marry Alice, the daughter of Stepané, Prince Levon’s brother.⁵ In 1200 and 1201, Raymond and then his father, Prince Bohemond III, died one after the other. Thus, Raymond-Ruben, son of Alice and Raymond, the grandson of Levon’s brother remained as the only legal heir to the Princedom of Antioch. To prevent such a development, his uncle Bohemond IV, Count of Tripoli (1187–1233), immediately took possession of Antioch and created a single state from two crusader political entities — the County of Tripoli and the Princedom of Antioch.

Such a situation was absolutely unacceptable to King Levon. This was the beginning of a long-term conflict for Antioch. The Armenian king, for his part, aimed to create another powerful union, that of Cilicia and Antioch, becoming the leading ruler of the northern part of the Eastern Mediterranean. In other words, Raymond-Ruben’s ascension to the throne meant the establishment of a *de facto* united state of

¹ In the year AD 1192.

² The Seljuks of Asia Minor.

³ The Byzantine Empire.

⁴ Of which Cilician Armenia came out victorious.

⁵ Later, in 1209, Raymond-Ruben, born from this marriage, was declared heir to the throne of Cilicia by Levon I (see Smbat Sparapet 1956, 204).

Cilicia-Antioch. The other countries of the region were worried about the creation of such a kingdom and tried to prevent the unification of Cilicia and Antioch. So the main opponent of Levon, Count Bohemond IV of Tripoli (Bohemond the One-Eyed), received tangible help from two states bordering with Cilicia — the Seljuk Sultanate of Iconium (Konya) and the Ayyubid Principality of Aleppo (Halab). An anti-Cilician alliance began to form in 1201 (see *Acta Innocentii PP. III* [1198–1216] 1944, 560) and became formal in 1203. This conflict lasted a decade and a half and is often referred to in historiography as the “Antiochene War” (1201–1216).⁶ In its turn it consisted of a series of intermediate wars, military clashes, establishment of alliances and counter-alliances, and intensive diplomatic correspondence. The conflict was considered finished in 1216 when Antioch passed to Raymond-Ruben and his patron Levon I.

One of those intermediate wars was that of 1203–1206 between the Armenian Kingdom and the Ayyubid Principality of Aleppo, which did not bring victory to either side, but a peace treaty was signed and the military clashes ceased for two years.⁷ Having secured the temporary neutrality of Aleppo, Levon I continued the struggle for the throne of Antioch. The military-political and religious elite of that city were also divided into two hostile camps. The majority of the political upper class, the Greek patriarch and the Templars were from the camp of Bohemond the One-Eyed, while the Latin Patriarch and the Hospitallers assisted Raymond-Ruben. Pope Innocent III (1198–1216) also supported the candidacy of Levon’s nephew as the legitimate heir to the throne.

It should be noted that starting from 1199, a very active correspondence between Innocent III and the leaders of Cilicia (the King, Catholicos, and Archbishop of Sis) began. The Pope tried to direct the Armenian Kingdom to the solution of all-Christian problems (such as the liberation of Jerusalem and the Holy Land) (see *Acta Innocentii PP. III* [1198–1216] 1944, 201), and King Levon was trying to get the support of the Roman Church for Raymond-Ruben’s enthronement (554–55). Pope Innocent’s positive attitude undoubtedly influenced the position of the Latin Patriarch and the Hospitallers. As for the Templars, they were in an irreconcilable long-term dispute with the Armenians regarding the possession of the strategically important Gaston (Baghras) fortress, so they preferred to be part of the anti-Cilician camp.

The Armenians had already tried twice (in 1201 and 1203) to enthrone Raymond-Ruben. A similar attempt was made in 1208. Relying on their supporters in Antioch (among whom the Latin patriarch Peter of Angoulême was the leader), King Levon and his nephew entered the city with the Armenian army. In the Cathedral of St Peter,

⁶ Usually 1216 is regarded as the end of the conflict (see Cahen 1940, 596–623), but, for example, Jochen Burgtorf (2016, 196) brings it up to 1219. In the first case, the year when military operations between the countries of the region were over is chosen as an endpoint, while in the second case, the moment when the question of the ownership of Antioch was finally resolved (it passed back to Bohemond IV). However I prefer to follow the traditional point of view, considering that the events of 1219 had much less international impact and were a result of mainly internal changes in the Principality of Antioch.

⁷ The truce was signed for eight years, but it lasted only for two (Burgtorf 2016, 201).

Raymond-Ruben was solemnly consecrated as the Prince of Antioch (see *Acta Innocentii PP. III [1198–1216]* 1944, 589–90). However, that success was short-lived. Bohemond IV entrenched himself in the citadel with his followers and after a few days was able to expel Raymond-Ruben from the city (Grousset 1936, 279–80).

The entry of the Armenian army into Antioch reactivated the anti-Cilician alliance of the three states, the first move of which was the attack of the Seljuks of Iconium on the mountain fortresses belonging to Armenians in the north of Cilicia. Meanwhile, the Seljuks received the military support of Al-Malik al-Zahir from Aleppo (see Ibn Wasil 1957, 187).

Being in a hostile environment, the Cilician leadership had to take urgent steps and involve extra-regional powers, which would be able to influence the situation. By 1208 it was clear to Levon I that the Papal intervention was not sufficient to solve his problems and that it was far more important to disrupt the military alliance against him. Before that, Levon had tried to wage wars separately against the County of Tripoli, the Seljuks of Iconium, and the Ayyubids of Aleppo to repel them from his realm, but this provided only a temporary solution, because after staying away for two-three years, they attacked Cilicia again at the first opportunity; the entry of the Armenian army into Antioch in 1208 was just such an occasion.

It is worth noting here that since 1208, the intensity of the letters between Rome and Cilicia decreased. There were two reasons for this. First, Levon I, feeling strong enough, began to expel the Catholic clergy from his country (see Brocardus 1906, 486–90), and second, the fate of the Gaston (Baghras) fortress, which had already become a bone of contention between the Armenian Kingdom and the Templars, had brought bitterness into Rome-Cilicia relations.

Therefore, the Armenian King took a bold step by sending a message to al-Malik al-'Adil, the sultan of Egypt (1200–1218) and the leading figure of the Ayyubid dynasty. We find information about it only in two thirteenth century historical works — the *Chronicle* of the Anonymous of Edessa and the *History of Aleppo* by Kamal al-Din Ibn al-'Adim.

2. A Letter Sent from Sis to Cairo

The most powerful member of the anti-Cilician coalition of three states was the Sultanate of Iconium (Konya), or the Rum Sultanate, which tried to invade Cilicia at every opportunity. Back in 1188, Kilij (Kelej/Kılıç) Arslan II (r. 1156–1192) divided the country among his sons as a hereditary domain. The inevitable result of this division was the internal struggle and the weakening of the Sultanate until the second ascension of Kay Khosrow (Khusraw) I (r. 1192–1196 and 1205–1211) to the throne (see Gordlevsky 1941, 29). After that, the Sultanate of Rum became very powerful and gradually spread its influence over the neighboring countries until 1243, when in the famous battle of Köse Dağ it received a heavy blow from the Mongols and was subsequently subjugated.

The Seljuks were especially attracted by Cilicia's mountain fortresses, which were of great defensive importance. In the *Chronicle* of the Anonymous of Edessa, there is a remarkable chapter entitled "About Cilicia and the Ingenuity of Prince Levon", which provides information about the Armenian-Seljuk armed conflicts of 1208–1209 and the mediation of the Sultan of Egypt. The chronicler says that in the year 1520 of the Greeks (1209), Sultan Khosrowshah⁸ gathered an innumerable army for the purpose of raiding Cilicia. When Prince Levon of Cilicia saw that Kay Khosrow was about to enter his country, he made a cunning plan. One of his nobles was sent to the Sultan and pretended to be angry with his sovereign Levon. Strongly accusing him before the Sultan, he assured that if he was given an army, he would enter the Armenian land and hand over the famous fortresses to the Sultan. Kay Khosrow believed and gave him prominent and noble men from his army as well as a great deal of gold. As he led them to the ambush site, the ambushers, undetected by the Turks, attacked and massacred them. The commanders were captured and chained. Hearing this, Kay Khosrow became furious and gathered troops in order to take revenge on the Armenians and demand compensation. He entered the land of Armenians and began to raid and plunder it. Having captured the fortress called Berdus, he wanted to attack the depths of the country, but through the mediation of al-Malik al-'Adil, peace was made between them, and the sultan returned to his country (see Anonymous of Edessa 1982, 171–72).

It is noteworthy that one of the main Armenian historians of the Cilician era, Smbat Sparapet (Smbat the Constable), speaking about the same events, does not mention in any way the intervention of the sultan of Egypt or the participation of any third country (Smbat Sparapet 1956, 215):

And Sultan Khosrow Shah, the son of Kilij Arslan, became the ruler of the land of the Romans as monarch and started to threaten King Levon... He came with a great force against Berdus, seized it by fighting and captured its lord Grigor ... and after that Berdus was excluded from Armenian power, and that was the year of the Armenians 657 [1208].⁹

Two other Armenian historians of that epoch, Kirakos of Gandzak (Kirakos Gandzakets'i 1961) and Vahram Rabuni (Vahram Rabuni 1869), do not refer to the sultan's raid at all.

It should be noted that the famous Arab historian of the early thirteenth century, Ibn al-Athir (d. 1233; see Ibn al-Athir 1981), who provides plenty of information about Cilicia-Syria relations, is also silent in this case. Therefore, the account of another author of the same era, Kamal al-Din Ibn al-'Adim, who adds important details to the information of the Syrian historian, is even more valuable. We find the following lines in his work: "And so Kay Khusraw ibn Kilij Arslan went to the

⁸ Kay Khosrow I.

⁹ The translation of the passages from Armenian and Arabic sources, where there is no reference to an English edition, is mine.

country of Ibn Levon,¹⁰ and at the same time asked al-Malik al-Zahir for help, and he [al-Zahir] sent an army under the command of Sayf al-Din ibn `Alim al-Din, and he was accompanied by Aybek Futays. [They] gathered in Marash and besieged Burnus¹¹ in 605,¹² then captured it and also captured a number of fortresses from the country of Ibn Levon". The continuation of this passage is of exceptional importance:

And Ibn Levon sent a letter to al-Malik al-`Adil, seeking support from him. And al-Malik al-`Adil [in turn] sent letters to Kay Khusraw and al-Malik al-Zahir. And Kay Khusraw hurried to make peace with "Ibn Levon" on the condition that he returns the fortress of Baghras to the Templars, also not interferes in the [affairs] of Antioch and returns the property left [by Kay Khusraw] during the reign of Rukn ad-Din,¹³ his brother (Ibn al-`Adim 1968, 159–60).

Unfortunately, we do not have the full text of King Levon's letter, so we should examine the historian's words carefully when he retells its contents. It is especially important what word Ibn al-`Adim uses when describing the purpose of the letter. The following is written in the original Arabic text: *Fa-rāsilu "Lawun" al-Malik al-`Adil, wa iltaja'a ilayhi ...* (Ibn al-`Adim 1968, 160). The verb *iltaja'a*, which I have translated "seek support", literally means "seek shelter", "seek refuge". Of course, it is difficult to draw conclusions based on one word only, but we may assume that Levon I could even formally recognize the supremacy of the sultan of Egypt. This did not oblige him to do anything, as Malik al-`Adil's domains had no immediate borders with Cilicia.

It is also worth noting that Kay Khusraw, upon receiving al-Malik al-`Adil's letter, hurried to make peace with "Ibn Levon". The key word here is "hurried" (*ibtadara* in Arabic). This can be interpreted as a sign of caution on the part of the sultan of Rum to avoid collision with a powerful opponent at all costs. As we have seen, after conquering the basin of Lake Van in 1207, the senior Ayyubid ruler had become a direct neighbor to the Seljuks of Iconium from the east.

The thirteenth century Arab historian Ibn Wasil (d. 1298) discusses these same events, referring to another reason for the cessation of the Seljuk invasion:

In that year, the Seljuk Ghiyath al-Din Kay Khusraw ibn Kilij Arslan, the lord of the land of Rum, arrived in Marash to go to the land of the Armenian king Ibn Lawun. And al-Malik al-Zahir sent a detachment of soldiers to him under the command of Sayf al-Din ibn `Alam al-Din ibn Jandar and `Izz ad-Din Aybak Futays. And Ghiyath al-Din entered the land of Ibn Lawun and stayed there, and

10 By "Ibn Levon" the Arab historians mean someone from the Levonid dynasty, which is the same as the Rubenid dynasty, because they call it not after Prince Ruben I (1080–1095), but after Prince Levon I (1129–1137); see Ter-Ghevondian 2019, 113–50.

11 Berdus.

12 July 16, 1208 – July 6, 1209.

13 The property that Kay Khosrow had left in Cilicia when he was in exile from his country (before 1204) as a result of the conflict with his brother Rukn al-Din (1196–1204). Running away from the Sultanate of Iconium and avoiding retaliation, Kay Khosrow first took refuge in Aleppo but quickly escaped fearing that he would be caught and handed over to his brother. From there he went to Cilicia, but did not stay there long because of the same fear and was forced to leave the large amount of money he had to the Armenian King (see Ibn al-`Adim 1968, 160).

fought for a fort known as Baghrkus¹⁴ and captured it with an *aman*,¹⁵ and stayed there and rebuilt the fort. He also captured a number of other fortresses and destroyed them. Then Ghiyath ad-Din returned [to his country], because it was snowing, but he had [already] captured many forts (Ibn Wasil 1957, 187).

We should try to understand whether the correspondence between the leaders of Cilician Armenia and the Ayyubids was something exceptional. In his historical work, the Coptic author Abu al-Makarim (d. 1208) mentions an Armenian delegation arriving in Egypt in 1186–1187 and bringing the letters of the Cilician prince Ruben III and the Catholicos Gregory IV addressed to Saladin. It was an attempt to ameliorate the state of the Armenian community in Egypt, which had suffered much during Saladin's rise to power (since the Armenian regiment remained loyal to the last Fatimid caliph). According to the historian, at the request of the Armenians, Saladin and his brother Sayf al-Din Abu Bakr interceded in their turn and sent letters to the relevant officials to receive the bishop (head of the Armenian delegation) with honour and give two Armenian churches back to them — al-Zuhra and al-Bustan (Abu al-Makarim 1895, 7, 10).

In 1190, there was a critical moment when during the Third Crusade a large German army under Frederick Barbarossa (r. 1155–1190)¹⁶ entered Cilicia, while in the north of Syria, Saladin's troops were waiting for them. The small Armenian state was in the focal point of the Crusader-Moslem clash, which could greatly damage Cilicia. This explains why the Catholicos Gregory IV (with the knowledge of Prince Levon) wrote a warm response to the emperor's letter, welcoming the arrival of the crusaders (see Vardan Bardzrberdts'i 1861, 136), but at the same time sent two letters to Saladin, trying to gain his alliance and friendship. Some Arab historians describe this state of affairs, calling the Armenian Catholicos "Caliph of the Armenians". Among them, the first to be mentioned is the famous judge of the twelfth–thirteenth centuries Baha' al-Din Ibn Shaddad (d. 1234), who wrote a biography of Saladin (Ibn Shaddad 2002, 114, 116–17, see also Ter-Ghevondian 2017, 100–21).

Thus, we can see that the leaders of Cilician Armenia had enough experience in corresponding with the Ayyubids before the events of the early thirteenth century. The next question that arises is the following: why did King Levon hope that his request could receive a positive response? Here we need a brief summary of the events of the late twelfth century. Before his death, Sultan Saladin divided the giant state into four parts between three of his sons and his brother. Al-Afdal received Southern Syria and Palestine, al-'Aziz got Egypt, and al-Malik al-Zahir received Northern Syria. Jazira and Diyar Bakr went to the Sultan's brother al-Malik al-'Adil Abu Bakr, who, as a skilled politician, took advantage of the internal strife between his nephews (1196–1199) and united Egypt, South Syria, Palestine, and Jazira under his power. Only al-Malik al-Zahir was able to maintain the power in Aleppo at the cost of accepting the supremacy of his uncle. After all these events, the political

14 A corrupt form of the name Berdus.

15 A letter of guarantee promising safety to those who surrender willingly.

16 Though soon he was drowned in the Saleph (Seleucia) river, and the army was led by his son.

situation in this part of the Middle East stabilized in 1200–1201. However, almost at the same time, the atmosphere began to heat up in the north-west of Syria, and the “Antiochene War” broke out, as noted above.

3. The Role of Cairo-Iconium and Cairo-Aleppo Relations

Sultan al-Malik al-ʿAdil certainly was not interested in contributing to the conquest of Antioch by the Armenians, but the strengthening of the Seljuk Sultanate of Iconium was even more dangerous for his state. In the first decades of the thirteenth century, the Sultanate had become so powerful that it could be a serious opponent to the Ayyubids, at least in north Syria and the Lake Van region. Those years were important from the viewpoint of the activation of the regional policy of the Ayyubids. It was then that the positions of the Egyptian Ayyubids in Jazira (Northern Iraq) expanded and strengthened. They finally took possession of Khilat (Akhlāt) and the basin of Lake Van — territories that even Saladin had not conquered. All this coincided with the temporary capture of Antioch by King Levon and Raymond-Ruben.

Al-Malik al-ʿAdil additionally had serious problems with the County of Tripoli and even initiated a campaign against Bohemond IV: “... The Hospitallers’ various campaigns, launched from their castles at Margat and Krak des Chevaliers¹⁷ against Hamah, Homs, and Latakia, had enraged al-ʿAdil, ... who held Bohemond responsible for the order’s actions, led a campaign against Tripoli in 1208/1209, and forced Bohemond to ransom himself and his city” (Burgtorf 2016, 202).

We should try to understand why the Sultan of Egypt, upon receiving King Levon’s letter, appealed not only to the Seljuk Sultan, but also to his nephew al-Malik al-Zahir, whose domains were formally considered subordinate to Cairo. He demanded to end the war and make peace with the Armenians. The Ayyubids of Egypt, who were at the peak of their power in those years, sought to restrain their clansmen of Aleppo at every opportunity. The Aleppo branch had survived independently for about 15 years (or 22 years, if calculated from 1186) and even opposed Egypt in its efforts to subjugate southern Syria, especially Damascus in 1196–1201 (see Humphreys 1977, 103–22). In his letter-demand, Al-Malik al-ʿAdil made it clear to his nephew that he should not participate in the adventurous activities of the Seljuks of Asia Minor, but should provide military force for an all-Ayyubian campaign if necessary. Ibn al-ʿAdim also alludes to the same fact (Ibn al-ʿAdim 1968, 168–69). Interestingly, according to the same historian, five years before that, when military clashes were taking place between Cilician Armenia and the Aleppo branch of the Ayyubids, al-Malik al-Zahir’s uncle, al-Malik al-ʿAdil, in response to his request, had sent auxiliary armed forces to him (157). As we can see, during those years, Cairo-Aleppo relations were variable and depended on the current international situation. In any case, prevention of the Seljuq sultans of Asia Minor from becoming too powerful was a priority in al-ʿAdil’s policy.

¹⁷ Or Hisn al-Akrad.

In order to understand better the internal relations of the Ayyubid state, it is necessary to keep in mind that Damascus, Aleppo, and Mosul, while accepting the supremacy of Egypt, sometimes allowed themselves much liberty in their actions. Depending on the situation, from time to time the rulers of those states/principalities even conducted an autonomous foreign policy without agreement from Cairo. By using a modern word, it can be inferred that the Ayyubid Sultanate, especially after the death of Saladin, more resembled a confederation than a monolithic entity.

The contradictions between Cairo and Aleppo were expressed not only in the case of Cilicia. As noted by the historian Bar Hebraeus (referring to the year 1209), when Muzaffar ad-Din Gökborni, the Lord of Erbil, wrote to the Lord of Aleppo al-Malik al-Zahir, and to the Sultan of Iconium, urging them to expel al-Malik al-'Adil from Jazira, both agreed with readiness (Bar Hebraeus 1976, vol. I, 365–66).

Levon I was most likely well aware of the internal relations between the various representatives of the Ayyubid dynasty, and his task was to ensure at all costs that the supreme Ayyubid monarch would restrain his nephew, ruler of Aleppo, thereby neutralizing an active member of the anti-Cilician alliance.

4. Conclusions

To sum up, we can state that, according to the valuable information provided by two historians, in response to King Levon's request, al-Malik al-'Adil sent letters to Kay Khosrow and al-Malik al-Zahir in 605 AH (1208–1209), persuading (or forcing) them to make peace with the Armenian side. As a result of the reconciliation of the parties, the Seljuks of Rum and the Ayyubids of Aleppo stopped their joint attack against Cilicia. In its turn, the Armenian side had to satisfy some of the demands of the three participants of the anti-Cilician alliance. In particular, King Levon had to: a) hand over the fortress of Gaston (Baghras) to the Templars, b) not interfere in the affairs of Antioch, and c) return the property left by Sultan Kay Khosrow in Cilicia (see Ibn al-'Adim 1968, 160). Of these requirements,¹⁸ Levon complied only with the last one as a sign of commitment to the Sultanate of Iconium (see Cahen 1940, 614).

Regarding the Gaston fortress, not only the Templars and the states of the anti-Cilician bloc, but also the Pope were very interested in its surrender. But Levon was intransigent and did not fulfil that demand, even at the cost of worsening relations with the Roman Church. At least in 1211–1212, Wilbrand of Oldenburg who visited Cilicia, testifies in his travelogue that Gaston was part of the Armenian Kingdom (Wilbrand of Oldenburg 2012, 74, 79).

¹⁸ Anne-Marie Eddé adds two more conditions to the mentioned requirements: 1) release of all Muslim prisoners who were in the territory of Cilicia and 2) assurance of no longer attacking the principality of Aleppo (Eddé 1999, 83). In fact the Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia did not take any hostile steps against Aleppo after that, until its participation in the Mongol campaign of 1259–1260. As for the captives, they were released and sent to Aleppo, but only 8 years later, in 1216, after the Cilician army had entered Antioch, and when once again the Armenians had to ensure Aleppo's neutral position in the Antioch issue.

As to the main condition, namely, “not to interfere in the affairs of Antioch”, it is true that such an attempt was not made in the next eight years (from 1208 to 1216), and there was a relative peace around the issue of Antioch. However, King Levon was waiting for a more favorable moment to accomplish his long-standing dream of making Raymond-Ruben the Prince of Antioch. During those eight years, important changes took place in the internal life and international relations of the countries participating in the “Antiochene War”. Levon I’s dream was accomplished in 1216, ending a 15-year-long conflict in the north-eastern Mediterranean. This was the last stage of that conflict, in which all the aforementioned states took part, and once again the diplomatic correspondence, including messages between al-Malik al-’Adil and Levon the Great, played a decisive role and significantly affected the final result of the conflict. It clearly demonstrates that the Egypt-Cilician Armenia relations were maintained during that period on the level of the monarchs, and that the correspondence discussed in this paper was not accidental or unique.

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