CHAPTER EIGHT

THE END OF MONGOL-ARMENIAN RELATIONS
(1295–1335)

With the death of Abaqa Khan, Tegüder, as a convert to Islam, transferred the Il-Khanate to the Sultanate. The Mongol minority was absorbed slowly but steadily by the indigenous Islamic majority. The process of the Mongols’ conversion to Islam reached its peak during the reign of Ghazan Khan when he adopted Islam. Ghazan, as a Mongol Chinggisid, actually demonstrated that affairs of state could prevail over the ancestral tradition of religious tolerance. The accomplishment of the Mongols’ conversion to Islam was well received by the Muslims and is well documented in Muslim historiography. However, the reaction of the Christians, particularly Armenians, to this act is less known. In fact, the Armenians perceived the Mongols’ conversion process in light of their national interest. Therefore, the arguments related to Mongol-Armenian relations after the Islamisation of the Mongol Il-Khans, the end of Mongol-Mamluk war during the reign of Öljeitü Il-Khan (r. 1304–1316), and the aftermath of the cooperation merits our attention.

The Last Chance to Save the Alliance: Het’um II and the Il-Khan Ghazan (r. 1295–1304)

As was noted earlier, the personality or individuality of each ruler in the Il-Khanate and Cilician Armenia was crucial in determining the direction of the relationship between the Mongols and Armenians. Our next pair of rulers, despite the fact that Ghazan was Muslim and that He‘tum II was periodically dethroned by his ambitious brothers, tried to maintain their relations.

When Ghazan Khan ascended as Il-Khan after five years of fighting for the throne,² the Armenian chronicler states:

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² The name Ghazan derives from Qaisan, a cooking pot. The Mongol custom of naming a new-born child after the first person to enter the house applied to the Il-
In 744 (1295) Ghazan killed Baidu and mounted the throne. Then he ordered Nawruz and Şadr al-Din [Zanjānī], the Sahib Divan to destroy all Christian churches and to put the priests to the sword.\(^3\)

From this account, one expects to see both an obvious deterioration in the prospects for Mongol-Armenian affairs and negativity in the accounts of the chroniclers. Indeed, in October 1295, an order was issued to destroy all Buddhist monasteries, Christian churches and Jewish synagogues in Tabriz, Baghdad and in other cities of the Il-Khanate.\(^4\) But surprisingly, another statement follows:

However, the Armenian King Het’um happened to be there and with divine help, he succeeded in extinguishing the heart of Ghazan and in dissipating the anger towards the Christians.\(^5\)

Het’um II and his brother Smbat I travelled to Iran in 1295 to see the Il-Khan Baidu in order to re-affirm their alliance with the Mongols. However, Ghazan was already on the throne.\(^6\) Knowing that the character of Mongol rule in the Il-Khanate could change with the Islamisation of the Mongols, the King was very keen to be assured that the Mongol-Armenian partnership was still operational. Ghazan Khan reassured King Het’um II that the Christian churches would not be destroyed and possibly promised military assistance.\(^7\)

According to Armenian sources, Ghazan Khan was not entirely antagonistic to the Christians in Cilicia and the Caucasus. From the colophons of the Armenian Gospels from Vaspurakan and Nakhichevan both dated 1304, it appears that Ghazan Khan was a beloved, wise and beneficent monarch. He was a just king because, during his reign, there was ‘peace on earth as in God’s paradise.’\(^8\) This statement can be explained. The Il-Khan sought to wage war against the Sultan of Egypt with the help of Christian powers. There are records of the Il-Khan of sending embassies to King Henry II of Jerusalem and Cyprus (d. 1324) and to Pope Boniface VIII (1294–
1303) in 1299.\textsuperscript{9} The Pope addressed the French King Philip IV (r. 1285–1314) and the King of England Edward I (r. 1272–1307), emphasising the importance of Cilicia in regaining the Holy Land after the fall of the Frankish states in the Middle East.\textsuperscript{10} However, the outbreak of hostilities between France and England in 1294, and the impending conflict of the Papacy with the French monarch put paid to this correspondence.

Before launching into a discussion of the military collaboration between Ghazan and Het’um II in Syria, it is important to introduce some aspects of the internal affairs of the Il-Khanate and Cilician Armenia.

From the beginning of his reign, Ghazan understood that, after the execution of his predecessor, the Mongol noyans might cause trouble and disorder in Iran. Consequently, he eliminated all candidates among the bloodline princes capable of resisting him. All the executions were implemented during the first 12 months of Ghazan’s reign.\textsuperscript{11} Ghazan involved the amirs Qutlughshāh and Nawruz in suppressing the revolts.\textsuperscript{12} In order to keep power in his hands, Ghazan converted from Buddhism to Sunni Islam in September 1295. This should be considered a momentous event for Muslims in Iran and in the region.\textsuperscript{13} As a Muslim ruler, he assumed the title of Sultan and the name Mahmūd.\textsuperscript{14} The conversion of Ghazan is attributed to the charisma of the Muslim mystics, or Sufis, as well as the dervishes, known as qalandaris.\textsuperscript{15} This in turn brought about a mass conversion of Mongols,\textsuperscript{16} though in some cases only nominally. In fact, Mongol conversion to Islam was not a recent development; it already had its roots in Central Asia, where the Mongols were in constant contact with the Turkic-speaking Muslims.\textsuperscript{17} With Mongol penetration of the Middle East, these contacts intensified and accelerated steadily.

\textsuperscript{9} Jackson, 2005a:171.
\textsuperscript{10} Mikaelean, 1952:429.
\textsuperscript{11} Rashīd al-Dīn, 1954:912–917; Boyle 1968:381.
\textsuperscript{12} \textit{Ibid.}, 1968:381–382.
\textsuperscript{13} Rashīd al-Dīn, 1954:902–903. For the various accounts of Ghazan’s conversion, see Melville, 1990a:159–177.
\textsuperscript{14} Boyle, 1968:381.
\textsuperscript{15} Dervishes were powerful mainly in the tribal society of north-west Iran and eastern Anatolia (Melville, 2003a:57–58).
\textsuperscript{16} Rashīd al-Dīn, 1954:904; Melville, 1990a:166.
\textsuperscript{17} Barthold, 1977:463–494;
in the new political situation.\(^\text{18}\) I agree that there are doubts about the sincerity of Ghazan’s adoption of Islam and his actual understanding of his new faith.\(^\text{19}\) Indeed, the coins struck by Ghazan Khan in 1297 in Baghdad after his conversion to Islam, inscribed in Mongolian as ‘The coinage of Ghazan Mahmud by the power of Heaven’ correspond to the official invocations of the Mongol protocol ‘Möngke Tengri-yin Xučun Dor’ (by the Might of Everlasting Heaven).\(^\text{20}\) This was not surely an appeal to a shamanistic deity, but rather a claim of the Il-Khan to be the direct offspring of the Chinggisid. Nonetheless, regardless of his symbolic or token conversion, Ghazan is referred to as the \textit{Pādshāh-i Islām} in contemporary Muslim historiography.

Scholars once questioned why the Mongols converted to Islam but not to Christianity. According to Leo de Hartog, Christianity was of much less importance in the Golden Horde than shamanism. Christianity was significant for the Mongols only at the beginning of their world conquest.\(^\text{21}\) Fletcher’s statement, though without any solid evidence, on the origin of Islam as a religion of nomads and thus attracting the nomadic Mongols, is very contentious. He attributed the same quality to Tibetan Buddhism, particularly its dGe-lugs-pa creed, which was adopted by the Mongols after it became, as Fletcher argues, the Tibetan nomads’ tradition.\(^\text{22}\) Moreover, his account of the parallels between the Mongol shamanistic concept of the universal deity \textit{Tenggeri} (Eternal Sky) and the Semitic concept of \textit{Allāh}, needs to be proved. My argument for the Mongols’ conversion to Islam centres on the cultural assimilation of the outnumbered Mongols by the majority of Muslim subjects in order to retain the right to rule.

Ghazan needed to use political propaganda to appeal to the local subjects. The revival of Islamic institutions (madrasas and mosques), religious law (\textit{shari‘a}), and pilgrimage (\textit{hajj}) consoled the religious scholars or \textit{‘ulamā‘}.\(^\text{23}\) This appeal was not only to the Iranian faith, but also to Iranian identity. The Mongols sought to be identified as the latest Iranian dynasty with Persian epic heroes from the \textit{Shāhnāma}.

\(^\text{18}\) Bundy, 1996:34.
\(^\text{22}\) Fletcher, 1986:44.
(Book of Kings) written by Firdausi (ca. 935–ca. 1020). The Iranians idealised Ghazan as a Persian philosopher-king. In his turn, Ghazan appointed Iranians to the higher positions in his administration. Also religious figures, such as Shaikh Şafi al-Dīn (d. 1334), the ancestor of the Şafavid dynasty in Iran from 1501 until 1722 and who frequented all three of the last Il-Khans, was patronised by Ghazan.

The person who assisted in enthroning Ghazan Khan and thus exercised power was chief amir Nawruz (Naurūz), a son of Arghun Aqa from the Oirat tribe. Nawruz was known in Greater Armenia and in the region for his hostility towards the Christians. It was he who issued instructions that the Christians and Jews had to wear distinctive dress, such as a girdle around the loins for the Christians and a mark on their heads for the Jews. His policy of pursuing the Caucasian Christians and his destruction of the churches in Baghdad, Mosul, Hama, Tabriz, Maragha, Nakhichevan, Siwnik, Somkhit, Kartli and a few other places in Georgia provoked riots and rebellion against the Mongols among the Georgian nobles in the 1290s. Thus in Nakhichevan, the Mongol governors were under threat from sudden raids by Georgio-Armenian forces who were displeased with the religious enmity of Nawruz. Later, Ghazan Khan expelled Nawruz to Khurasan and sent amir Qutlughshāh to restore peace with the Armenians and the Georgian King David VIII (r. 1293–1311), the cousin of Vakhtang II (r. 1289–1292). When Nawruz plotted against Ghazan, however, according to the Armenian source, his plot was revealed, with the help of the Armenian princes Liparit Orbelian and Eachi Pŕoshian, and Nawruz and all his family were executed.

25 Rashīd al-Dīn, 1954:853. However, there were still many Mongols in his bureaucracy (see Melville, 2006b:135–163).
31 Ibid., 473.
32 Ibid., 475–476. King David VIII was appointed by the Il-Khan Geikhatu in 1293 and ruled over the eastern part of Georgia. In 1295, he supported Baidu. When Baidu was killed by Ghazan, the latter summoned David to Tabriz. David refused and Ghazan sent an expedition to ravage Kartli. In 1299, Ghazan appointed David’s younger brother Giorgi V as king of Georgia.
33 Step’annos Orbelian, 1910:475.
According to Rashīd al-Dīn, Nawruz was captured in Herat by Qutlugshāh with the help of the governor of the city, Fakhr al-Dīn.34

Meanwhile, in Cilicia, King Het’um II was in danger. In 1296, he went to Constantinople, accompanied by T’oros, his brother and partner in the administration, to ask for the assistance of Byzantium in addition to that of the Mongols. Regardless of his pro-Latin policies, Het’um II sought alliance with the Byzantines.35 In his absence, his brother Smbat I (r. 1297–1299) seized power and went with presents to Ghazan Khan to be acknowledged and to marry a Mongol princess, the Il-Khan’s relative.36 On his way back, he met his brothers near Caesarea. Subsequently, the usurper imprisoned Het’um II and T’oros. T’oros was strangled and Het’um was partially blinded. In 1298/1299, another brother of Het’um II, Constantine I (1298/1299) overthrew Smbat, and, having declared himself king, released Het’um. In 1299, Het’um retook the throne and exiled both Smbat and Constantine to Constantinople, where they died.37

Knowing that there was conflict over the Cilician throne among the Het’umid brothers, the Mamluk Sultan Lachin al-Manṣūr (r. 1296–1299) intensified his raids in Cilicia. According to Het’um Patmich’, the Mamluks attacked Cilician Armenia seeing the internal instability within the kingdom.38 The Arabic sources indicate a different reason for the attack, stressing the discord among the Mongols in the Golden Horde and the Il-Khanate, especially after the execution of Nawruz and his followers, which brought the Mamluks to Cilicia.39 The Mamluk invasion of bilād al-Sīs led by Badr al-Dīn Bektash al-Fakhrī Amīr-Silāḥ took place in May 1298. The Mamluk army entered Cilicia through the Syrian Gates. A detachment was sent to attack Ayas, the heart of the kingdom, but the Armenians withstood it.40 In connection with this, in 1298, the Armenian monarch (Smbat I) sent a letter to Pope Boniface VIII (1294–1303)

35 Het’um married one of his sisters (Rita) to Michael Paleologos, later Emperor Michael IX in 1296. Another sister was engaged to a Byzantine prince, but died before her marriage (Rüdt-Collenberg, Table III, 71, n.157; Stewart, 2001:99).
38 Het’um Patmich’, 1951:64.
40 Stewart, 2001:114.
through an embassy of two Dominican monks asking for help to resist the Mamluks. Without making any actual promises, Boniface provided the embassy with a letter of commendation to Edward I of England.\(^{41}\) Meanwhile, the Mamluks headed north and besieged the castle of Hamus (H’amūs) in June 1298. Abu’l-Fidā’ mentions that in Hamus, a great number of Armenians who had gathered there seeking refuge were taken into captivity.\(^{42}\) The Mamluks took T’il (Tall) Hamdun which had already been abandoned by the Armenians.\(^{43}\) The continuator of Anets‘i states that by 1299, the Mamluks had seized half of Cilicia.\(^{44}\) The Cypriot source records that the Kingdom of Armenia was very weak and the Mamluks ‘ruled’ over almost all of Cilician Armenia.\(^{45}\)

Intervention by the Il-Khan Ghazan in 1299 and 1300 allowed the Armenians to recover their lost territories.\(^{46}\) From this account, one can see that the Mongols came to help the Armenian Kingdom against Mamluk aggression once again.

When Ghazan raided Syria, the Il-Khanid army defeated the Mamluk Sultan al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, Qalāwūn’s 14-year-old son, near Ḥims [Emesa].\(^{47}\) As a result of this expedition, the Mongols took Damascus on 31 December 1299. In connection with this, another interesting statement, the plausibility of which is questionable, is found in Nersēs Palients‘, the fourteenth-century author. He records that King Het‘um, who joined Ghazan’s troops with his force of 150,000 men, begged him to burn the city of Damascus, to which Ghazan answered: ‘It would be a great sin to set this beauty on fire. I will give this city to my son and keep it for him.’\(^{48}\) The chronicler continues that, when the young Sultan fled, King Het‘um, with 4,000 Cilician Armenian elite horsemen, chased him as far as a place called Toli. According to Palients‘, as the Armenian King was unsuccessful

\(^{41}\) Lloyd, 1988:255.
\(^{43}\) Ibid., 29.
\(^{44}\) Anonymous in Galstyan, 1962:84.
\(^{45}\) Crawford, 2003:145–146.
\(^{46}\) Het‘um Patmich‘, 1951:64. A decisive Mongol victory at Wādī al-Khaznadār near Ḥoms in 1299 was the only Mongol success in a major battle against the Mam-
luks (Amitai, 2005:361).
\(^{47}\) Nersēs Palients‘, 1956:183; Jackson, 2005a:170.
\(^{48}\) Nersēs Palients‘, 1956:183. The number of Armenian soldiers who took part in this battle varied from 10,000 to 50,000 and even 150,000 (Galstyan, 1962:95–96). Het‘um Patmich‘ says that Ghazan wanted to keep Damascus for the needs of his court (Het‘um Patmich‘, 1951:66).
in catching the Sultan, he returned to Jerusalem and stayed there visiting the holy sites when Ghazan allegedly issued a decree to give Jerusalem to him.\footnote{According to an anonymous Georgian chronicler, in the aftermath of Ghazan’s raid on Syria, Jerusalem was plundered by the Mongols and many Christians and Muslims were massacred (Amitai, 1987:246–247).} Afterwards, the Armenian King went to Ghazan in Damascus, where they spent a Winter together before both returned to their domains.\footnote{Nersēs Palients’, 1956:185–186.}

The occupation of Damascus and the nearby region of al-Ṣāliḥiyya by the Armenian King during the Mongol raids is also commented on in the Arabic sources.\footnote{The description of this event is found in al-Jazarī, al-Birzālī, al-Maqrīzī, al-Yūnīnī and al-‘Aynī; Stewart, 2006:140–142. For different accounts of Ghazan’s raid, see Amitai, 1987:244–246.} This time, they explain that King Het’um gave his men a considerable sum to destroy the city in revenge for the ravaging of his land.\footnote{Stewart, 2001:141–143.} Al-Yūnīnī and Ibn Taymiyya, the Damascene writers, give details of King Het’um’s appearance during his occupation of Damascus, saying that he looked pale, having grown a thick beard.\footnote{Ibid., 140.} As has been said earlier, since Hūlegū’s time the blame for plundering Damascus has been laid on the Mongols and especially the Armenians. Since Ghazan and the Mongols were already officially Muslims, on this occasion the blame was laid solely on the Armenians.\footnote{Little, 1970:70–71; Crawford, 2003:202–203; Stewart, 2001:142–143.}

Nevertheless, the Mamluks retook Damascus soon after. According to an Armenian source, amir Qibjaq, the governor of Damascus appointed by Ghazan, betrayed the Il-Khan and returned the city to Sultan al-Nāṣir Muḥammad (693–741/1293–1340 with breaks).\footnote{Hayton, 1869:198.} The Armenian King Het’um was determined to retake Damascus, so, according to Nersēs Palients’, the Cilician monarch visited Ghazan Khan and persuaded him to prepare for another raid on Syria immediately.\footnote{Nersēs Palients’, 1956:186–187.} In 1300, when Qutlughshāh again arrived in Damascus with a royal army and took it, Het’um joined him. Nersēs Palients’ continues that instead of waging war against the Mamluks, the Mongols retreated having been bribed by nine carts of Mamluk gold. The Armenians followed them as far as the plain near Damascus where
the Sultan set an ambush, filling the plain with water from two rivers. The number of Mongol and Armenian soldiers that escaped death in this quagmire was very small.\(^{57}\) In contrast to the Armenian sources, al-ʿĀynī and other Muslim historians explain Qutlughshāh’s retreat by stressing the extremely inclement weather, rain and snow, which prevented Ghazan’s troops from proceeding further.\(^ {58}\)

Meanwhile, Ghazan Khan sent emissaries to Amaury, the titular lord of Tyre and Constable of the Kingdom of Jerusalem in 1300 before his next campaign against Syria. The Lord of Tyre sent an expedition to Ghazan, which Jackson characterises as the first attempt by the Latin West to coordinate military activities with the Il-Khan’s forces to restore Latin settlement in the Holy Land.\(^ {59}\) Unfortunately, the Mongol army, commanded by Qutlughshāh, missed this opportunity to assist Amaury who occupied the small island of Ruad (Arwād) and was not able to resist the Mamluk army.\(^ {60}\) The Armenian King Het’um II participated in this and the next two Mongol wars against Syria in 1300 and in 1303 but for no reward. Among the Mongol troops there were Georgio-Armenian forces headed by the Zak’arian amirspasalar Shahnshah II.\(^ {61}\) The expeditions against the Egyptian Mamluks ended in the time of Ghazan Khan, who was not satisfied with the results of his letters sent to the masters of the Temple, the Hospital and the Teutonic Order and to Henry II of Cyprus in 1299, and to Edward I of England in 1302.\(^ {62}\) Any hope of receiving aid from the Christian West was lost. The idea of the conquest of the Syrian coast was also lost and Ghazan died in May 1304. An interesting detail about his death is found in Nersēs Palients’, who claims that the Mongol Il-Khan died because his beloved wife had poisoned him, in order to prevent him from moving against the Mamluks.\(^ {63}\) Soon after Ghazan’s death, in 1305, Het’um II abdicated

\(^{57}\) *Ibid.*

\(^{58}\) Stewart, 2006:147. The second expedition of Ghazan to Syria did not last long as he could not remain in Syria because of the weather (Amitai, 2005:361).

\(^{59}\) Jackson, 2005a:171.

\(^{60}\) *Ibid.*

\(^{61}\) Nersēs Palients’, 1956:186–87; Sebastats’i in Hakobyan, 1956:151. Ghazan Khan’s last attempt to invade Syria was in 1303, but the Il-Khan did not participate himself (Amitai, 2005:361).


\(^{63}\) Palients’i says that the Sultan bribed those who were very influential at Ghazan’s court (Nersēs Palients’, 1956:188).
for the last time and left the throne of Cilician Armenia to his nephew, his co-ruler since 1301, Lewon IV (1305–1307). 64

In Ghazan and Het‘um’s collaboration, Ghazan was the strong link, being successful in his internal and external affairs. Het‘um’s role was very passive both locally and beyond his realm. Although the Armenian monarch had an opportunity to reestablish the fading contacts with the Mongols, his domestic and external concerns and his own problematic personality did not do him any favours. The ever-vanishing chances to obtain any progress in the Near East certainly loosened the Mongol Il-Khan and Armenian Monarch’s partnership.

Little is known from contemporary Armenian sources about the actual political impact of Ghazan’s reign over Greater Armenia, except that the Nakhichevan area was devastated by Nawruz, and Qutlugshāh had enormous power over the Georgian King. 65 Among the sources, only the colophons are explicit about Ghazan. The colophon of the Gospel of Nakhichevan says:

In this year (1304) the monarch Łazan (Ghazan Khan) departed this life and great grief befell all the peoples of the east, especially among the suffering Christian nations. May his memory be blessed and may he occupy the throne with the holy kings, because during his reign there was peace on earth as in God’s paradise, (and) everywhere all taxes were removed. The Lord God gave him, as the Psalmist said, ‘the justice of a king’ [cf. Psalms 72:1], for he was the son of Arłun Łan (Arghun Khan), the just king, and ‘the king’s strength loves justice’. 66

Besides his political activities, Ghazan Khan was also involved in construction projects, developing a new city quarter outside Tabriz, called Ghazaniyya, including a spectacular mausoleum for himself, a mosque, a hospice for sayyids (descendants of the Prophet), an observatory, two madrasas and other buildings. 67 In addition to this, Ghazan’s name is associated with initiatives on fiscal reform in Iran, which had influence on taxation policy of Greater Armenia as well. 68
The Armenians in Cilicia were fearful of Mamluk forces crossing their territory. The Mamluks launched about ten major invasions against the Armenian Kingdom between 1266 and 1305. In 1285, the Armenians were forced to agree with humiliating conditions to pay an annual tribute to the Sultanate.\(^6^9\) Considerable profits from the transit trade that connected the Mongol Empire with the Mediterranean allowed the Armenians to deal with their debts. The small Mongol garrisons that functioned within the Armenian Kingdom were more active for tax collecting than providing protection. In connection with this, Mamluk offensives against Armenia lost their frequency and according to the Arabic sources, the raids were undertaken more by a nā‘ib of Aleppo, rather than by the armies of the Sultan.\(^7^0\)

After Ghazan’s reign, both Cilician Armenia and the Il-Khanate experienced moments of discord and decline, which seriously affected the Mongol-Armenian relations. This happened during the time of Ghiyāth al-Dīn Muḥammad Khudā-Banda Öljeitū Khan, Ghazan’s brother. In 1304, when the Mamluks raided the territory of Sis, Öljeitū succeeded to the throne. In his childhood, he was baptised and given the name of Nicholas but, in his youth, he was first converted to Buddhism and then along with his brother Ghazan he adopted Islam.\(^7^1\) When Öljeitū assumed the Il-Khanid throne, his name Khar-Banda (Mule Driver) was changed to Khudā-Banda (Slave of God).\(^7^2\)

The Armenians hoped that Öljeitū would be beneficent to them, as the scribe in the Ayrarat canton notes when concluding the catechism of Cyril of Jerusalem: ‘In this year (1304) the p’ashah ghan named Kharpanday ascended the throne; may Christ the King guide him to protect the Christians with piety and affability.’\(^7^3\) However,

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\(^7^0\) Al-Maqrizī, Abū al-Fidā’ and Al-‘Aynī in Stewart, 2001:134, 139, 148.
\(^7^1\) Het’um Patschich’, 1951:70; Golubovich, 1906:336; Pfeiffer, 1999:36–49.
\(^7^2\) The name Kharbanda (mule driver) can be explained as the Mongol custom of protecting a child against ‘bad eye’ (Pfeiffer, 1999:37). According to a Muslim source, following Mongol custom, a new-born child was named after the first person to enter the place. In the case of Öljeitū, it was a mule driver (kharbanda(h)) (Ibn Battutah, 2003:77).
\(^7^3\) Sanjian, 1969:49.
two years later, contrary to this, in the *Commentary on the Epistles* by Sargs Shorhali we find the following:

... At the same time during the patriarchate of the Lord Zak’aria, and in the Armenian year 755 (1306), during the reign of the Armenian king of Cilicia, Het’um [II], and at the conquest of the nation of archers, ... being converted to the wrong law of Mohammed, which leads along an open road to perdition, they force all to convert to their vain and false hope, they persecute and oppress and afflict, some carrying off possessions by force, some torturing, some blaspheming, insulting the cross and the church, and all of this is because of our sins ...\(^{74}\)

As a ruler, Öljeytū desired to live in tranquillity, involving himself with completing the building of a new town, Sulțāniyya, a capital residence and with erecting his mausoleum, which later would be considered a splendid example of Persian architecture.\(^{75}\) During his time, the long-lasting arguments between the Chinggisids finally ended.\(^{76}\) In his letter to Philippe de Bel in April 1305, Öljeytū confirmed that the Chinggisids had reached mutual agreement and the lands governed by the descendants of Qubilai Khan, by the Golden Horde and the Il-Khanate were joined to each other ending 45 years of recrimination.\(^{77}\) Indeed, the Chinggisid rivalries over lands in Iran were eliminated by agreement between these three parties for the time being.

However, he was involved in military actions. From Sulțāniyya, he set out upon his main campaign against the inhabitants of Gīlān in May 1307. According to Qāshānī (Kāshānī), the Gīlān conquest was provoked by a Chaghataid prince who had insulted the Il-Khan for not being able to conquer a small province in the north-west of Iran, let alone Syria.\(^{78}\) Once the Il-Khan had decided to wage war on the Gīlānīs, he launched three successive expeditions led by Choban, Qutlugshāh, and by Ṭūghān and Mu‘min. Qutlugshāh fought the main battle. With Qutlugshāh’s death, Öljeytū Khan himself went to war with a royal army and subjugated the Gīlānīs, demanding

\(^{74}\) Khach’ikyan, 1950:40–41.

\(^{75}\) Melville, 1990b:55. In Persian history, Öljeytū appears more as a patron of architecture. In addition to Sulțāniyya, he built a second capital called Sulțānabad Chamchimâl at the foot of Mount Bīsitūn.

\(^{76}\) Boyle, 1968:398.


\(^{78}\) Qāshānī, 1969:55–56. For different motives for Öljeytū’s conquest of Gīlān in contemporary Muslim sources, see Melville, 1999b:84–87.
obedience and the payment of taxes (māl). This war with the Gilānis, as preliminary achievement for the Il-Khan, was gained at high cost, though there was another five years before his second war in 1312–1213. This time Öljeitū was defeated by the Mamluks.

Meanwhile, the Mongol-Cilician Armenian collaboration reached a turning point during the time of Öljeitū. After the Mamluk capture of T‘īl Hamdun, where a large group of Cilician Armenians had blockaded themselves, a new agreement was reached between the Armenian King and the Mamluk Sultan in July 1304, to pay two years’ tribute. The Armenian monarch (the joint rule of Het‘um II and Lewon IV) who expected no help from the Mongols and who was troubled constantly by substantial Mamluk raids that tried to claim delayed payment of tribute, sent his embassies to Rome and Paris in 1306. Pope Clement V (1305–1314) promised help but urged the Armenians to profess Catholicism. Therefore, the Armenian King and the Armenian Catholicos Grigor VII Anavarzets‘i (1293–1307) called a council in Sis. Because Grigor VII died shortly after, his successor, Konstandin III Kesarats‘i (1307–22) summoned a Synod in Sis, which confirmed the union between the Armenian and Roman Churches. By this, the Cilician nobles hoped to gain support from the West. However, the outcome of the synod was not welcomed either in Greater Armenia or in Cilicia. There was concern that the unification would possibly mean assimilation and thus would destroy the two strongholds of Armenian national life, the nobility and the church. Therefore, this event is considered to be the moment of decline in the history of Cilician Armenia.

The contemporary Armenian sources are, on the whole silent, about the relationship between the Mongols and the Cilician Armenians in the time of Öljeitū Il-Khan. There is a reason for this. Nersēs Palients‘and the Anonymous Chronicler have a reference to Öljeitū. They state that, on 17 November 1307, the Armenian King Het‘um II and his nephew, the teenage joint ruler King Lewon IV were

79 Melville, 1999b:112–113. For mal, see Chapter 4.
82 RCH/DA, 1869(II):199.
83 Der Nersessian, 1947:15.
84 Galstyan believes that this anonymous chronicler is one of the continuator of Samuel Anets‘i (Samuel of Ani) (Galstyan, 1962:129[n. 210]).
85 Lewon IV was a son of T‘oros III, the ruler of Cilician Armenia in 1293–1298, during the period of his brother Het‘um II’s abdication. T‘oros and Het‘um II were
murdered at the foot of the citadel in the village of Անաւարզ (Anazarbus) in Cilicia by the Mongol general Bilarghun (Bīlārghū), a commander of the Mongol garrison resident in Sis. Alinakh, a brother of Het‘um, went to the Mongol Khan (Öljeitū) to secure Bilarghun’s death by trial. Various reasons for the murder have been advanced. The continuator of Anets‘i claims that the Mongol general desired to make himself master of Cilicia and therefore he murdered the reigning monarch. According to the Arabic sources, Het‘um wrote to the Il-Khan a letter informing him that one of his officials was in league with the Mamluks. Öljeitū summoned Bilarghun to the court, which was a direct threat to the latter’s career. Therefore, Bilarghun had invited Het‘um to a banquet and killed him with a sword. Despite the fact that Öljeitū later executed his commander Bilarghun, the murder of the Cilician monarch became indicative of the deteriorating Mongol-Armenian relationship.

For the time being, the Il-Khan dispatched conciliatory messages to the Mamluk Sultan. He was aiming at least to gain time while he was waiting for the response to his appeal to the Latin princes. Öljéitū wrote another letter to the French king but had no reply. A similar letter was sent to Edward I of England, which was answered by his son Edward II, firstly in a letter dated 16 October 1307 from Northampton and secondly dated 30 November from Langley. The English King expressed his regrets at being too geographically distant to cooperate with the Il-Khan. In the second letter, Edward urged the Il-Khan to extirpate ‘the Mahometan heresy.’ Pope Clement V maintained contact with Öljeitū encouraging him to assist a crusade. The Pope wrote to the Il-Khan on 1 March 1308:

We have noticed with pleasure, from these letters and communications, that appealing to our solicitude on behalf of the Holy Land, you have

imprisoned in 1296 by their brother Smbat (1296–1298). T’oros was killed in 1298 while Het‘um II was blinded.
92 Ibid.
offered us 200,000 horses and 200,000 loads of corn which will be in Armenia [Cilicia] when the army of the Christians arrives there, and in addition to march in person with 100,000 horsemen to support the efforts of the Christians to expel the Saracens from that Holy Land.95

The Pope made no actual proposal to cooperate with the Mongol Il-Khan. The Mongol-Mamluk relation continued to be tense.96 After a long wait of responses from Latin powers, Öljeitü launched only one ill-fated invasion into Mamluk territory. In 1312–1313, the 50-year war between the Mongols and the Mamluks for the possession of Syria had ended.97

The reign of Öljeitü coincided with the reigns of Het’um II and Lewon IV, and after their deaths with Oshin (a brother of Het’um II), who ruled the Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia from 1308 until 1320. The fairly long but interrupted series of reigns of Het’um II (1289–1293; 1295–1297; 1299–1305; 1305–1307) contributed to the downfall of the Armenian Kingdom which in practice meant the loss of territories inside and outside Cilicia. The serious conflict within the royal family caused by religious affairs affected the whole Armenian nation. Decades of intermittent war must have distracted Cilicia. Oshin had to deal with a new situation in which there was no partnership with the Mongols but a new Mamluk stability in the third reign of al-Nāṣir Muhammad (1310–40). Cilicia was more open to ravages by the Mamluks and by the Turkoman tribes in Anatolia.98

After an incident in Malatya between the Armenian and Muslim population in 1315, Oshin renegotiated the terms of the treaty of 1304 with the Mamluks. The tribute was increased.99 Ongoing civil wars in Cyprus following the death of Amaury, the Lord of Tyre (1310), and their alienation from the Het’umids also affected the Kingdom.100

Öljeitü did not care much about his partnership with Cilicia. It can be said that he saw no use for this alliance anymore. The reason for this claim is that the Muslim sources say nothing about the par-

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95 Boyle, 1968:403.
96 Ibid., 399. Vaṣṣaf indicates that Öljeitü had every intention to pursue his predecessors’ anti-Mamluk policy (Vaṣṣaf, 1852–1853:472).
99 La Porta, 2007:110.
100 Stewart, 2001:183.
Öljeitū’s indifference towards the Armenians and their affairs was shown in Greater Armenia as well. He pursued a harsh economic policy levying a heavy burden of *kharaj* on the Greater Armenians. As a result, a negative image of the Il-Khan is found in the continuator of Samuel Anets’i, who states that the whole country’s economy declined sharply due to the Il-Khan’s ruthless policy so that people could not afford to buy clothes and were only able to wear animal skins. A colophon written in Erzurum in 1314 states:

... During the khanate of *Kharpanday*, in grievous and bitter times, our Armenian nation fell under the yoke of levies, and there is neither hope of refuge, nor place of shelter; the whole country is suffering and subjected to taxation; and our Armenian nation was substantially reduced in number; in this city many churches were demolished; and some individuals, abandoning their faith in Christ, joined the wicked nation of the Ismaelites; and there were numerous other afflictions and sufferings everywhere on account of our sins ...

In 1314, Öljeitū took a census in his realm. According to the Armenian colophon of Glajor monastery, the census-takers and tax collectors arrived in Vayots’-Dzor, where even one-month-old children were registered. Therefore, it seems quite natural to find very hostile images of Öljeitū in the Armenian sources. Öljeitū died from digestive disorders in Sulṭāniyya on 17 December 1316 in his 36th year. Armenian hopes for regaining power in the region vanished with Öljeltū.

*The Aftermath of Cooperation: Lewon V (r. 1320–1341/1342) and Abū Sa‘īd (r. 1316–1335)*

During the reign of the next Il-Khan Abū Sa‘īd Bahatur, Öljeitū’s son, a Sunnī Muslim, Cilician Armenia was ruled by Oshin I (1308–1320) and then by Lewon V (1320–1341). The Mamluk Sultanate was still ruled by al-Nāṣir Muḥammad b. Qalwūn (1310–1340).
After King Het’um’s murder, Oshin, who was connected through his two marriages to King Hugh III of Cyprus (1267–1284) and King Robert of Naples (1309–1343), made it his first task as a monarch to expel the Mongols from Cilician Armenia. It appears that he tried many ways to defend his country without help for 13 years before his natural death. After the cooperation between the Armenians and the Mongols had ended, Oshin and his successors had no other choice but to re-examine their relationship with Cyprus, their closest Christian ally, and even to establish more stable contact with the Mamluks, who did not feel directly threatened by the Muslim Mongols.

The Il-Khanate’s weakened position meant that it ceased to be so important for the Mamluk Sultans, and with the decline of the Armenian kingdom in Cilicia, Mamluk-Mongol-Armenian affairs received correspondingly less attention from the chronicles. On the whole, little attention was given in Armenian sources to the Il-Khan Abū Sa’id who, after the death of Qutlughshāh in Gilan, retained the service of Amir Choban as commander-in-chief, against whom the amirs revolted in 1319. As Melville indicates, the events of that year were more than just rivalries between the Mongol amirs or between a young ruler and a powerful regent; they were indicators of the destruction of the kingdom. Among the entangled intrigues at the Il-Khanate court, Choban’s name was connected with some episodes that occurred in Greater Armenia and in Cilicia as well.

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109 The delay in Abū Sa’id’s coronation was due to rivalry between Amir Sevinch and Choban. Sevinch died in January 1318. In November, the Amirs Dilqandi and Ranbū were killed by Choban in Sultāniyya. Esen Qutlugh, the governor of Khurasan, who expressed his doubts about the amirs’ death, suddenly died in October 1318. Choban established himself as a leader but was not approved by many amirs, nor by the Il-Khan himself (Melville, 1997:92–96).
111 In 1318, Rashid al-Din was put to death mainly because of ‘Ali-Shâh’s intrigues (Boyle, 1968:407). In 720 H. (1320), Abū Sa’id in trying to end the conflicts between the ambitious amirs, wrote an edict in Sultāniyya, addressed to the Noyans of Hundreds in Gilan, Dashtawand and Gushţāsfī, to those appointed in Arran and Mughan, to the maliks, nā’ībs and mutasarrīfs, to the scribes, qāzīs and shaikhīs, and to the ra’īs and ra’īyats, which was a code of behaviour to avoid the use of violence in resolving personal issues (Cleaves, 1953:27–33).
The condition of the Caucasus in general and of Greater Armenia in particular deteriorated when Abū Saʿīd experienced open hostilities from the Chaghatai Uluṣ and the Golden Horde in 1318/1319. The battle between Öz-Beg and Abū Saʿīd, assisted by Choban, occurred again in the Caucasus, near the river Kur, where the army of the Golden Horde was crushed. Choban punished those who did not come to assist the Il-Khan, among whom was Qurumshi (Qurumishi), the son of Alinaq in Georgia. His rebellion against Abū Saʿīd in 1319 takes us to the Caucasus. The region of Gegharkʻunik’ was devastated, churches were ruined, and children and elders were severely oppressed. However, the revolt was suppressed. Qurumshi and his army surrendered and were liquidated.

In the following year, the officers who had been subjected to corporal punishment after the battle with Öz-Beg, sought to take revenge on Choban and they ambushed him near Lake Sevan in Armenia. Choban escaped through Tabriz to Sultāniyya. The Golden Horde officers were joined by the forces of Amir Irenjin, the former governor of Diyārbakr dismissed from his office by Choban. Abū Saʿīd’s personal intervention routed the enemy near Miāneh. The young Il-Khan received the title of Bahadur (hero) and Choban was rewarded by marriage to Princess Sati Beg, the Il-Khan’s sister.

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112 Yasa’ur, the Chaghatai prince, revolted against the Il-Khanate to take over Māzandarān in 1319. Amir Ḥusain, the father of Ḥasan-i Buzurg (1336–1356), the founder of the Jalayir dynasty, was sent to suppress Yasa’ur’s revolt. Meanwhile, Öz-Beg, the ruler of the Golden Horde (1313–1341) approached Derbent in the same year. His attack on north-west Iran provided the pretext for the uprising against Choban (Melville, 1997:96).

113 In 1325, Öz-Beg tried again to invade the Il-Khanate, and he was again defeated by Choban. It was only in the time of Jani-Beg (1342–1357), the son of Öz-Beg, that the Golden Horde succeeded in incorporating Azerbaijan in its territories (Boyle, 1968:408).


116 Boyle, 1968:408.

117 Ibid., 409; Melville, 1999a:6.
For the time being, as al-Maqrīzī suggests, in 720 H. (1321), Abū Saʿīd agreed to peace with the Mamluk sultan on a seven point basis.118 There was to be:

1. No Ismāʿīlī assassins dispatched from the Mamluk Sultan;119
2. No repatriation of Egyptians from the Il-Khanid territory;
3. No repatriation of the Il-Khanid subjects from Egyptian domains unless they so desired;
4. No Arab (Bedouin) or Turcomen tribes’ raids on the Il-Khanid territory;
5. No restriction for merchants on the roads between two domains;
6. A grant of the royal Mamluk banner and standard for the Il-Khans’ official pilgrimage to Mecca;120 and
7. No request for the repatriation of the Mamluk fugitive Qara-Sonqur, who was given asylum with the Il-Khans.121

The agreement was completed by an assurance to send a Mamluk envoy with the sultans’ oath to observe the condition of peace, and the Il-Khan and his chief minister Choban should swear the same.122 Despite protest from both sides, these terms were ratified and gift exchange continued.123 Among the missions exchanged following this agreement, was an important one of 1322, when the Sultan requested

119 Some 100 Ismaʿīls are recorded as being sent to the territories of the Il-Khan to assassinate the Mamluk fugitives. During Abū Saʿīd’s reign this issue had an important impact on the peace negotiations (Melville, 1996a:247–263). A group of 30 fidāʾīs was sent by al-Nāṣir Muḥammad with the aim of murdering Abū Saʿīd, Choban and other leading amirs (Melville, 1992:204). This request in the agreement was repeated in 1322 by the Mongol mission to Cairo (Amitai, 2005:370).
120 There had been several cases of hajj pilgrims travelling from territories under Mongol control, including the Mongols themselves (Amitai, 2005:366). The first Il-Khan who encouraged pilgrimage from Iran was Aḥmad Tegūder (1282–1284) (Melville, 1992:198).
121 The Sultan dispatched half a dozen assassins to kill the Mamluk renegade Qara-Sonqur, who found shelter at Öljeitū’s court in 1312. Qara-Sonqur survived (Abu’l-Fidāʾ, 1983:69). For the Sultan’s various attempts to assassinate Qara-Sonqur, see Melville, 1996a:247–263.
123 Amitai, 2005:363–364, 370; Little, 2006:37–38. Among the gifts to the Il-Khan were girls, animals, trains (qiṭār) of Bactrian camels, Anatolian horses, cheetahs, falcons, jewels, pearls and Balkash rubies, bejewelled golden belts and saddles trimmed in gold. The Egyptians received swords of various types, maces and arrows, and all kind of fabrics and cloth. Abū Saʿīd sent al-Nāṣir a steel helmet engraved with a complete Qurʾān in pure gold (Little, 2006:39–40).
that his name should be mentioned in the *khutba* (weekly sermon) alongside Abū Saʿīd’s.\textsuperscript{124} However, the peaceful relationship established between the Il-Khan and the Sultan did not do much to help the Cilician Armenians.

Although the Mamluk raids on Cilicia lost their frequency, they targeted specific areas that would attract them in terms of profit. Thus in May to June of 1320 (Rabiʿ II 720) the Mamluks launched an attack on Cilician Armenia.\textsuperscript{125} In 1321, the Egyptians raided Ayas, ravaging and setting fire to the city and taking into captivity 20,000 people, and in 1322, the fortress Adana.\textsuperscript{126} Abu’l-Fidāʿ reports that Ayas was taken in May 1322.\textsuperscript{127} However, Nersēs Palientsʿ attributes the sack of Ayas to 23 April of 1321. He says that the Mamluks entered the city from the seaside and cut a pass from the city into the harbour. Employing catapults, they destroyed the walls and the gate and, erecting bridges, they killed all who approached the walls.\textsuperscript{128} The King of Cyprus sent nine ships to aid the Armenians. However, as the Armenian chronicler testifies, the ships did not help the situation, as they allowed everyone to run towards the ships and to leave the city without fortification.\textsuperscript{129} Later in 1335, Ayas would experience another major Mamluk assault, which allowed the Sultan to control the port.\textsuperscript{130}

In 1322/1323, Catholicos Konstantin Lambronatsʿi (1322–1326) was sent to al-Nāṣir Muḥammad to agree to peace with the Sultan.\textsuperscript{131} Maybe just before this, Pope John XXII (1316–1334) received news about the sack of Ayas with much grief and sent 30,000 florins in order to rebuild Ayas fortress.\textsuperscript{132} In fact, 37,722 florins were paid to the bankers to send to the Armenians. Some of this was used to repair the fortification in Ayas, and some to build ships in Cyprus.\textsuperscript{133} The Pope enlisted the aid of Philip V (1293–1322) of France on behalf

\textsuperscript{124} Melville, 1992:203; Melville, 1996a:254.
\textsuperscript{125} Abu’l-Fidāʿ, 1983:79–80; Amitai, 2005:365.
\textsuperscript{126} Anonymous in Galstyan, 1962:81, 85–86.
\textsuperscript{127} Abu’l-Fidāʿ, 1983:82.
\textsuperscript{128} Nersēs Palientsʿ, 1962:102.
\textsuperscript{129} \textit{Ibid.}, 102.
\textsuperscript{130} Stewart, 2001:185.
\textsuperscript{131} Anonymous in Galstyan, 1962:81.
\textsuperscript{132} Nersēs Palientsʿ, 1962:102.
\textsuperscript{133} Boase, 1978:126.
of Cilician Armenia; however, the kingdom concluded a 15-year truce with the Sultan.\textsuperscript{134}

Meanwhile, the conflict between the Il-Khan and the Chobanids turned into the clash of interests among the Mongol elites in Persia.\textsuperscript{135} The latter became so powerful that they were in a position to ignore the Il-Khan, so that he remained Il-Khan only in name.\textsuperscript{136} However, Abū Saʿīd decided to assert his authority over the Chobanids. Finally, they confronted each other.\textsuperscript{137} The Armenian source states that in 1326, Abū Saʿīd ‘chased Choban’\textsuperscript{138} who fled to Herat but was captured and killed and his head sent to Baghdad.\textsuperscript{139}

With increasing Mongol Islamisation, an institution was inaugurated in the early fourteenth century to support the Christian Church at the Mongol court. It was during Abū Saʿīd’s reign that Pope John XXII founded the archbishopric of Sulṭānīyya in 1318 with six suffragan sees.\textsuperscript{140} Abū Saʿīd ignored the Pope’s demand to embrace Christianity but he paid some attention to the Pope’s appeal to protect Christian Armenians from their Muslim neighbours.\textsuperscript{141} The corpus of letters exchanged between the Pope and the Armenian abbots and archbishops both in Greater Armenia and Cilicia witnesses the beginning of the Papacy’s efforts to establish a metropolitan diocese at the Il-Khanate.\textsuperscript{142} The first letter of Pope John XXII written in Avignon on 15 October 1321, addressed to Archbishop Zakʿaria of Artaz, begins as follows:

\textsuperscript{134} Ibid., 127.
\textsuperscript{135} On Temūr-Tash’s aggressive military policies in Anatolia, see Melville, 2009:51–101. He started his own conquest of Cilicia, even before he was appointed as governor in Rūm. In 1317, Temūr-Tash entered Cilicia and tried to invade Sis, but apart from taking many people into captivity, he was not successful (Anonymous in Galstyan, 1962:85–86). Temūr-Tash recruited many Mamluks to his service. He also took off the tribute taken to the Il-Khanid treasury for himself (Abu'l-Fidā', 1983:83–84). Temūr-Tash was blamed by the Mamluk Sultan for breaking a peace treaty established in 1323. Besides Temūr-Tash, who was reinstated in his post, Choban had another son Dimashq Khwājā, with whom Choban became the real power in the Il-Khanate (Melville, 2009:51–101).
\textsuperscript{137} Melville, 1996b:88–89.
\textsuperscript{138} Anonymous in Galstyan, 1962:86.
\textsuperscript{139} Ibn Battutah, 2003:78. Because of his revenge on Choban, the Mamluk Sultan al-Nāṣir Muḥammad forbade the body of Choban from being buried in his mausoleum in Medina, so he was laid in Baqī’s cemetery in 1329 (Melville, 1992:207).
\textsuperscript{140} Cowe, 2003/2004:49.
\textsuperscript{141} Boyle, 1968:413.
\textsuperscript{142} Cowe, 2003/2004:49.
To our venerable brother Zacharia, Archbishop of St. Thaddeus the Apostle, ... to the Vicar of the Preachers and ... to the Custos of the Fratres Minores dwelling in the realm of the Mongols ...\textsuperscript{143}

Another letter from the same Pope written on the same day was addressed to all the people in the lands of the Mongol Empire, particularly heads of state, upper nobility, and some theologians of the Southern Caucasus, whose names were listed and identified by Cowe.\textsuperscript{144} In the colophon of the \textit{Collection of Homilies} written in Jerusalem in 1335, it is stated that ‘this is an evil time, for the dominical places (in Jerusalem) are in captivity and are completely destroyed, and it is doubtful that they will be restored. The Christians are being insulted and trodden under the feet of the infidels. Yet, we have received the good tidings that the Franks are on the move to save the dominical sanctuaries in the Holy Land of Jerusalem.’\textsuperscript{145}

However, during the reign of Abū Saʾīd, the Armenians in Greater Armenia were persecuted greatly because of their faith. A colophon written in the monastery of Varag in 1318, states that the Il-Khan ‘instigated by Satan, issued orders that levies should be collected from all Christians on account of their faith in Christ, and a blue sign should be sewn on the shoulders of the believers.’\textsuperscript{146} Moreover, in 1334, many of the Christians within the Il-Khanate were tattooed.\textsuperscript{147}

The Armenians, especially those of the later period under Mongol Il-Khanid dominion, interpreted the Mongols as God’s chastisement for human sins. Thus, Vahram of Edessa in the \textit{Rhymed Chronicle} laments: ‘Is it just, they said, that punishment has struck us? Are we greater sinners than the other peoples of the world?’\textsuperscript{148} The Armenian manuscript colophons of the early fourteenth century are full of such sentiments. The scribe Daniel of Aght’amar describing the taxes says ‘all of this is on account of our sins.’\textsuperscript{149} An anonymous scribe was more explicit: ‘... and because of our impenitence God’s wrath was not abated; rather, His hand is still raised to punish and chastise

\textsuperscript{143} Ibid., 61.
\textsuperscript{144} Ibid., 64.
\textsuperscript{145} Sanjian, 1969:74.
\textsuperscript{146} Ibid., 60.
\textsuperscript{147} Anonymous in Galstyan, 1962:86.
\textsuperscript{148} RHC/DA, 1869(I):532.
\textsuperscript{149} Khach’ikyan, 1950:46–48; Sanjian, 1969:52–53.
Taxes were collected from ecclesiastics without specific instructions from the Il-Khan. For this reason, the Catholicos Zak‘aria I of Aght’amar went to Baghdad and spent a whole year there to get a yarligh to exempt monks and priests from taxation. In the same colophon of 1318, it is stated that although the monasteries were tax-exempt, the tax-collectors terribly tortured those whom they seized and collected an enormous quantity of ducats from them. However, Abū Sa‘īd tried to coordinate tax issues, as can be seen in his edict inscribed on the wall of Manuche mosque in Ani. The colophons of 1321 describe the time of Abū Sa‘īd and Choban as bitter and grievous. A colophon written in K‘ajberunik‘ canton in 1325 is very explicit in characterising that time:

… The Kingdom of the Arshakuni (Arsacid) dynasty had waned and weakened, as foreseen in the vision of St. Sahak. And because of our impenitence, His (God’s) wrath has not abated; rather, His hand is still raised to punish and chastise us. And yet we are still unrepentant; we have become feeble, lean and languishing; we are nearing death and hell, our loins have been lowered to the ground. For the savage, strange-looking and dark-countenanced nation of archers abandoned their native faith and followed the evil sect of the forerunner of Antichrist Mahmet, and they subjected the Christians to more intense anguish and persecution. Who, indeed can recount or put into writing their tragic anguish?

The ultimate destiny of the Cilician Armenian kingdom was strongly linked to the decline of the Il-Khanate. There were even some parallels and similarities in the biographies of their two leaders. Among the Il-Khans, the long reign of Abū Sa‘īd (1316–1335) corresponded with the long reign of Lewon V (1320–1341). The two monarchs both came to the throne during their early years. They were both under the strong influence of their regents. Lewon was brought up by Oshin of Korikos, who was against Latin influences. Due to his policy, the

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151 Sanjian, 1969:60.
152 A ducat is a gold or silver coin of varying value (Sanjian, 1969:61; Khach’ikyan, 1950:138–139).
153 See Chapter 4.
155 Ibid., 66.
Armenian Church was re-established in Cilicia.\footnote{Chahin, 1987:291.} During the first decades of Abū Saʿīd’s reign, Amir Choban, a devout Muslim, was effectively the ruler.\footnote{Melville, 1996b:81.} When Lewon V came to his majority in 1329, he showed a strong pro-Latin interest and executed his patron, Oshin of Korikos.\footnote{Boase, 1978:30; Chahin, 1987:291.} When Abū Saʿīd considered himself as Il-Khan, he inherited a Perso-Islamic government full of court intrigues, where the viziers, Rashīd al-Dīn (1317) and ‘Ali-Shāh (1319) were persecuted. Abū Saʿīd was vulnerable to powerful amirs; however, he expelled Choban and his clan.\footnote{Melville, 1996b:79, 83–84, 89.} Lewon was married to Alice, the daughter of Oshin of Korikos; Abū Saʿīd was married to Choban’s daughter, Baghdad Khatun, who held a very high position at his court.\footnote{Abu’l-Fidā’, 1983:87.} Both wives were killed.\footnote{Lewon’s second wife was Constance of Aragon, the widow of Henry II of Cyprus (Boase, 1978:30). Later, Abū Saʿīd was married to Choban’s granddaughter Dilshad Khatun (Melville, 1999a:12, 16, 38).} Lewon favoured a union of the Armenian and Roman Churches, which was a serious reason for the Armenian barons to revolt against him and murder him.\footnote{Boase, 1978:30.} Abū Saʿīd died in the Qarabagh area in November 1335, when he went to resolve a conflict with the Golden Horde over territory in the Caucasus and Arran.\footnote{Boyle, 1968:412.} However, it is alleged that when Abū Saʿīd preferred a woman called Dilshad Khatun, whom he loved with violent passion, Baghdad Khatun out of jealousy poisoned Abū Saʿīd and that soon after she was beaten to death by the senior Amir Khwājā Lu’lu’, a former Greek slave.\footnote{Ibn Battutah, 2003:78.}

After the deaths of the strong regent Oshin of Korikos and then of Lewon V, the Armenians in Cilicia lost both the lands they controlled outside Cilicia and the fortresses inside Cilicia. In the absence of a male Armenian heir, the barons offered the Armenian crown to Guy de Lusignan, the son of Isabel (King Oshin’s sister) and Amaury (Aimery) of Cyprus in 1342.\footnote{Chahin, 1987:291; Boase, 1978:30.} After the deaths of Choban and then Abū Saʿīd, the Il-Khanid regime was shaken and became a stage for competing candidates eager to experience power.\footnote{Melville, 1999a:73–74.}
To sum up, Het’um II and Ghazan tried to sustain the alliance established by their ancestors. During this period, even after the conversion of the Il-Khan Ghazan to Islam, Mongol interest in their Cilician partners and in their common aims in Northern Syria did not vanish completely. As one can see, the reaction of the Cilician Armenians to the Islamisation of the Mongol Il-Khans was not negative at first. The Il-Khan’s policy towards the Christians was temperate as well, due to their need for Western assistance in their external affairs. On the other hand, of course, neither the Western powers, nor the Mamluks were reconciled to the Mongols’ conversion.

Mongol-Armenian cooperation ended during the time of Öljeitu. The reason was that the Mongol Il-Khan was not effective in continuing war with the Mamluks. He was busy rather with his domestic affairs and wished to live in tranquillity. The consequence of this was a breakdown of the Mongol-Armenian relationship, which brought Cilician Armenia to pay increased tributes to the Sultanate, to declare the union of the Armenian and Roman Churches, and to cause Greater Armenia to suffer under a heavy burden of taxes and levies.

Under Abū Sa’īd, the next Il-Khan, there was no cooperation with the Armenians either in Cilicia or in Greater Armenia. The decline of and discord within the Il-Khanate and the Armenian kingdom in Cilicia brought no further Mongol and Armenian involvement in joint ventures. The sources show that with the decline of the Il-Khanate, the Armenian kingdom was not only more vulnerable to the Mamluks’ incursions, but also lost its importance as a zone of conflict for the Mamluks.168

The Armenian kingdom of Cilicia ceased to exist in 1375. It had experienced disorder, internal strife and siege for the most part of a century. Despite this, Ayas, the heart of the kingdom, was still important to the Latins and the kings of Cyprus. The papacy finally recognised its responsibility to aid the Armenians; however, this aid did not go beyond diplomatic and financial support.

With the decline in the relationship with the Mongols, the information related to the Mongols and their affairs are less reflected in the Armenian sources. However, tax references along with the lamentations of their sins are more characteristic of the Armenian colophons. The reaction of Greater Armenia to the Islamisation of the

Mongols is less clear and differs according to region. As the contemporary Armenian colophons state, those who were closer to Azerbaijan were more vulnerable to any type of religious discrimination.169 In general, the Greater Armenians experienced the worst of the turmoil caused by the wars between the Il-Khanate and the Golden Horde, which took place in Georgia and Armenia. From 1262 until 1320, the battles among the Chinggisids occurred on the shores of the River Terek, the River Kur, and the Lake Sewan and all over the Gurjistan region.

After the death of Abū Saʿīd in 1335, the Il-Khanate became a puppet court in the hands of different Mongol grandees. Between 1335 and 1344, eight Il-Khans ascended the throne. The fierce fighting among the groups of the Mongols in Iran, which lasted about nine to ten years, ended with the collapse of the Il-Khanate and with the establishment of several independent states on its territories. Among them, the most powerful was the Chobanid state in Azerbaijan, in which Greater Armenia was initially included and which lasted until 1356; and the Jalayirid state in ʿIrāq-i ʿArab with its centre in Baghdad. In the second half of the fourteenth century, after the retreat of the Golden Horde, the Jalayirids ruled the territories of the Chobanids, taking Armenia into their realm.170

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