

THE POLITICAL POWER OF THE MEDIEVAL ECCLESIASTICAL AUTHORITIES
AND THE MAMLUK-ILKHANATE WARFARE BETWEEN 1284 AND 1304:
COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE ARMENIAN APOSTOLIC CHURCH AND THE
ASSYRIAN APOSTOLIC CHURCH IN CILICIAN ARMENIA AND ILKHANATE

by

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Abstract

The modern history often avoids researching the marginalized medieval Christian religious institutions due to the lack of their political significance. However, the medieval accounts present the information about their significant role in the Mongol conquest of the Mamluk Sultanate. From the one hand, the study of the ecclesiastical representatives of the Assyrian Apostolic Church in the Mongol court is one of the underexplored topics in the medieval history of Central Asia and Middle East. Morgan and Grousset explored the significance of the Nestorian authorities in the court as a matter of the personal favorability of khans, however, the effect of the Mongol conquest to the power of Christians in Ilkhanate was undefined. Russell tried to examine this connection; however, her paradigm lacks scientific proofs and proper methods of analysis. On the other hand, the studies of the Armenian Apostolic Church were better developed. Ghazarian analyzed the effects of the Latin-Armenian encounters to the Armenian domestic politics. Dashdonbog explored how the Mongol-Armenian relationships affected the institutional power of the Armenian Church. However, the authors fail to examine the question of why the Armenian Church became one of the most significant religious entity among marginalized Christian religions in the Middle East. This comparative study explores the relationships between the Mamluk-Ilkhanate warfare during 1284 and 1304 and the political power of the Nestorian and Armenian clergies in Ilkhanate and Cilician Armenia. The main argument is that the political power of the Nestorian and Armenian ecclesiastical authorities was damaged by the Mongol-Mamluk warfare between 1284 and 1304. In particular, apart the military damages of the warfare, the consequences of Islamization of ilkhans and reciprocity with Catholics became significant factors that explain the downward trend in political power of the Christian clergies in Cilician Armenia and Ilkhanate. Mainly, these factors were the intentional discourses to stimulate the military capabilities of the Armenians and Mongols through the attraction of the domestic and foreign alliances against

Mamluks. Furthermore, the study will also prove that the political ties between Armenian kings and ecclesiastical authorities affected the survival of the Armenian Church and localization of the Nestorian clergy. Hereby, the institutional power, political positions in the courts, patronage and social status as well as repressions and institutional devastations are the main variables that determine the political power of the ecclesiastical authorities in Ilkhanate and Cilician Armenia. The thesis mainly explores the periods of Lewon II and Hetum II reigns in Cilician Armenia; and simultaneously evaluates the period from Arghun khan's reign to Ghazan khan's rule in Ilkhanate. The study uses content and linguistic-political discourse analyses as major methodological tools. The research is based on Syriac, Latin, Armenian and Persian primary sources that were conducted between 13th and 16th centuries. In particular, the diplomatic reports, correspondences between rulers, ecclesiastical and Islamic chronicles will be evaluated throughout the study. Hopefully, this paper will contribute to the political, military and religious history of the medieval Middle East, Ciscaucasia and Central Asia.

Introduction

The political power of the Middle Eastern Christian communities during the late medieval century is an underexplored topic. The Assyrian Apostolic Church (also Nestorians), Armenian Apostolic Church and Coptic Church were the major minorities that constituted the group of the marginalized world Christendom. Up to the late medieval period some of these communities preserved in their own kingdoms such as Armenians, whereas the rests existed under the Islamic regimes. In particular, Nestorians and Copts were the subjects of caliphs and sultans in the Persian lands, Arabic peninsula and Egyptian territories where they were institutionalized. However, right in the middle of 13th century the Mongol conquest of the Middle East took a place. Hulagu, the grandson of the Chinggis khan, marched with the Mongol troops to the territories of the Abbasid caliphate and Persian Ismaliis, and conquered the vast territories of Mesopotamia. As a result of the conflicts with the Muslim kingdoms, the new political entity of Ilkhanate had emerged under the Mongol rule.¹ However, the Mongol campaign did not limit itself to the conquered territories, but also challenged the authority of other Muslim kingdoms including the Mamluk Sultanate. The Mongol Mamluk warfare was a continuous military struggle and was periodized from 1260 to 1323 by the modern historians.² The Christian groups that lived in the Middle East could not avoid the impact of the Mongol conquest and each of them experienced political and military discourses brought by the Mongols. There were Nestorians who established religious institutions mainly in the newly emerged political entity called Ilkhanate, and also were direct subjects of Hulaguids.³ There was a major maritized Christian confession called the Armenian Apostolic Church that was originated on the territories of Rum, Ciscaucasia and Syria, and its representatives were in the

¹ René Grousset , [*L'empire Des Steppes.*] *The Empire Of The Steppes. A History Of Central Asia*” trans. Naomi Walford. (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1970), 353

² Grousset, [*L'empire Des Steppes.*] *The Empire Of The Steppes. A History Of Central Asia*, 387

³ Grousset, 356

tight political relationships with the Mongol ilkhans up to the beginning of 14th century.⁴ Finally, the religious entity of the Coptic Church was also a significant marginalized religious congregation that lived under the rule of the direct enemies of Ilkhans, the Mamluks.⁵ Henceforth, the history of these communities had some connections with the military campaigns conducted by the ilkhans between 13th and 14th centuries. This paper will explore the links and cross impacts between the political power of the Armenian and Nestorian ecclesiastical authorities and the Mamluk-Ilkhanate warfare between 1284 and 1304. The political power of the Copts will not be explored in details but will be considered in the context of the geopolitical military conflict between the Mongols and Mamluks and the political power of Armenian and Nestorian ecclesiastical authorities.

The main research question of this study is how and why the Mongol conquest of the Mamluk Sultanate affected the political power of the Nestorian and Armenian ecclesiastical authorities in Ilkhanate and in the Cilician Armenian between 1284 and 1304. Furthermore, analyzing primary and secondary sources of the Medieval Middle East showed that a discontinuity in the political power of the Nestorians between 13th and 14th centuries, and the clear continuity of the political power of the Armenian Church during the same period. The narratives about the Armenian Apostolic Church and its representatives are vividly seen in both Armenian, Latin and Islamic sources. For instance, Rashid ad Din and Vasaf incorporated the Armenian political figures to the Islamic history of the ilkhans.^{6 7} The Armenian historian

⁴ Bayarsaikhan Dashdondog, *The Mongols and the Armenians (1220-1335)* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1163/j.ctt1w8h10n>.

⁵ Donald P. Little, "Religion under the mamluks", *The Muslim World* no.73 (1983): 165-181, doi:10.1111/j.1478-1913.1983.tb03263.x.

⁶ Rashīd al-Dīn, *Jami At-Tawarikh*, (Baku: Nagyl Evi, 2011).

⁷ Vladimir Tizengauzen, *Sbornik Materialov Otnosyashihsya k Istorii Zolotoi Ordyy*, (Moscow: Izdatelstvo Akademii Nauk SSSR, 1941).

Hetum produced the plan of the united Christendom and the Mongols that attempted to reconquest the city Jerusalem.⁸ The Latin sources describe the struggle between the Roman Catholic Church and the Armenian Apostolic Church for the power over the Cilician congregation during the reigns of Hetum II and his successors.⁹ Hence, the Armenian Church or its footsteps are present in different perspectives during late 13th century and afterwards. However, Ilkhanate Nestorians were depicted mainly in Latin and Syriac sources that were written before the mid of 14th century. The Muslim sources of 14th century and after don't actively present the Nestorians in the historical narratives. For instance, the accounts of Shaikh Uveis and Khwandamir that date back to 15th and 16th centuries avoided to insert the Nestorians in their chronicles. Rashid ad-Din refers to the figure of Isa Kelemenchi, a Nestorian representative from China; however, the author does not provide any direct references towards Ilkhanate servants who belonged to Nestorian Christianity. Furthermore, modern scholars who study the Nestorian Christianity mainly focus on the archaeological and linguistical aspects of the church ruins like Professor Wilmshurst.¹⁰ Henceforth, it is possible to assume that the political significance of the Nestorians in the Middle East sharply declined somewhere between the late 13th and the beginning of 14th centuries, whereas the Armenian Apostolic Church preserved its political influence. Therefore, the specific question exists: why was the political power of the Nestorians damaged irrevocably in Ilkhanate whereas the political power of the Armenian ecclesiastical authorities was preserved in the Middle East? This issue is underexplored by the modern historians despite the understanding about the role of Christianity

⁸ Hetum, *The Flower of Histories of the East*, trans. Robert Bedrosyan (Long Branch: Internet Archive, 2004), 49-50, <https://archive.org/details/HetumTheHistoriansFlowerOfHistoriesOfTheEast>

⁹ Jacob G. Ghazarian, *The Armenian Kingdom In Cilicia During The Crusades*, (London: Routledge Curzon, 2005), 67

¹⁰ David Wilmshurst, *The Ecclesiastical Organisation Of The Church Of The East, 1318 - 1913*. (Lovanii: Peeters), 2000.

in maintaining the alliance between the Mongols and Roman Catholic Christian powers against Mamluks. Henceforth, the understanding of the reasons behind the evolutionary or degradative trends in the political power of the Armenian and Nestorian ecclesiastical authorities should be examined using the comparative study vis-a-vis the Mongol “yoke” against Mamluks.

The main argument of this thesis is that the period between 1284 and 1304 could be considered as damaging to the political power of the Nestorian and Armenian ecclesiastical authorities. Here, the Mongol conquest of the Mamluk Sultanate brought a significant decline to the political power of Christendom in the Middle East. On the one hand, the political power of Nestorian Christians experienced an upward shift during the reign of Arghun khan since it strengthened the sense of pro-Christian orientation of Mongols. This was due to the attempt that Eastern Christians could attract the aid of European forces against Mamluks. Therefore, political power of Nestorian Christians was shaped in terms of granting the wealth, political positions and investments to the churches. Even though the cooperation mainly failed, Ilkhanate Nestorians preserved their political status during Arghun khan’s reign. During Ghazan’s reign the political power of Nestorian Christians immediately declined, since the attempt to ally with European powers against Mamluks failed. Simultaneously, the reorientation to Islam was an alternative step to strengthen the military capabilities of Ilkhanate army. Hence, the reorientation demanded the instalment of the close relationships with Islam, and also the demolition of previous Christian discourses. Consequently, the political power of the Nestorian Christians had been limited by persecutions, expropriations, destruction of religious institutions etc. At the same time, the khan attracted Muslim nobilities who shared to him their political loyalty that resulted in the centralization of Ghazan’s authority. Finally, it brought new opportunities to promote different military reforms within taxation, logistics and troop supply systems. Consequently, these changes benefited the Mongol military campaigns the against Mamluks. On the other hand, the political power of Armenian Christians also

experienced a general decline, with slight oscillations. During the power of Lewon II the political power of the Armenian Apostolic Church experienced both damages and restorations. The Mongol Campaign against Mamluks convinced the Cilician Kingdom to side with the ilkhans. Consequently, the territories of the Armenian kingdom were damaged by the Mamluk troops including their religious institutions. However, from 1285 to 1289 the Armenian authorities put the efforts to restoration of the instructional power of the Armenian Apostolic Church. The peace treaty with Mamluks and consequent investments in Armenian religious institutions by the Armenian crown affected the revival of the political power of the Armenian ecclesiastical authorities from the consequences of military damage. In 1289 king Hetum II came to power in Cilician Armenia and his religious policies brought significant changes to Armenian ecclesiastical power. Firstly, the Mamluk attacks damaged the political power of the Armenian clergy. Secondly, the political power of the Armenian Apostolic Church was damaged by Islamic policies of Ghazan khan in 1291 since the Mongol troops also conducted a series of attacks against the Armenian indigenous religious institutions. Finally, the Latinization-Byzantinization policies of Hetum II that served for maintaining the military relationships with European powers (Catholics and Byzantine Empire) against Mamluks also damaged the political power of the Armenian clergy. In particular, Hetum's discourses affected the appropriation of many Catholic doctrines that substituted the norms of the Armenian Apostolic Church, and convergence to Catholicism. However, the effects of Latinization and Byzantinization should be considered had a partial significance, because the political power of the Armenian clergy was shaped not only by the king but also by local lords who expressed the willingness to support the native religious institutions and oppose against forceful Latinization of the Kingdom. Generally, the political power of each Middle Eastern Christendom was damaged by the Mongol conquest and its functional structures between 1284 and 1304. However, the Armenian ecclesiastical authorities could preserve their political status in

comparison with Nestorians, since structurally the political relationships between the Christian religious institutions and the kingdom authorities were different. In particular, the political power of the Armenian clergy was constructed by both king and the local lords whereas the Nestorians were fully dependent on the favorability of ilkhans. Therefore, the firsts could outlive the consequences of the warfare whereas the political power of the Nestorians was localized, minimized and left insignificant.

To answer the research questions the several steps will be conducted in this research thesis. Firstly, the literature review will be presented for the reader that will show the main contributions of the scholars as well as the main existed methodological gaps and limitations of the previously conducted literature. The purpose of this section is to show how the current research could contribute to the Middle Eastern military, political and religious history. Secondly, the significance and contribution of the used primary sources will be reflected. This section will provide the basic explanation of how the sources were synthesized and how the methodological instruments were used by the researcher vis-à-vis the main research argument. Thirdly, the Primary source analysis of “*The History of Mar Yaballaha III and his vicar Raban Sauma*” will be introduced to the reader. This part is important because of the lack of primary sources about Nestorians and the precise analysis of the book will reflect the historical context and main discourses that will show the meta-reality of the Nestorian Christianity in Ilkhanate. Fourthly, the next part will be about the Nestorians between 1284 and 1304 that will reflect the political power of the Nestorian ecclesiastical authorities and the role of the Mongol conquest in the formation of their authority. In this section the reigns of Arghun khan, Ghaikatu-Baidu period and Ghazan’s authority will be analyzed in the context of the Mongol-Mamluk warfare and the political power of the Nestorian ecclesiastical authorities. The next chapter will evaluate the political power of the Armenian Apostolic Church between 1284 and 1304. Specifically, the effect of the Mongol conquest to the political power of the Armenian clergy

power will be evaluated. This part as the previous one was classified according to the periods of reigns of the Cilician leaders. Hence, the Lewon II reign and the power of Hetum II will be researched. Finally, the last chapter will introduce the comparative analysis to the reader. In particular, this chapter is going to examine the structural differences of the declining trends in power of the Christian religious institutions in Ilkhanate as well as in the Cilician Armenia. This part is significant since it will reflect the reasoning of why the Armenian Church had preserved their political status whereas the Nestorians lost in Middle East.

Chapter 1

Literature review

The Mongol Mamluk relationships had brought significant effects to the Christian minorities of the Middle East. The warfare of ilkhnas involved the Christian groups such as Armenians and Georgians directly to the conflict and some presence of Nestorians indirectly could be observed during the late middle ages. From the other hand, Mamluks also used some policies towards Copts during the wartime with Christians and the Mongols. Therefore, the link between the religious history of the Christian groups and warfare process is vividly seen from the first shot of observations. However, the historiographical development of this topic is another issue that should be explored. Hereby, in this literature review the effect of the continuous military struggles between Ilkhanate and Mamluks between 1286 and 1304 on the political power of ecclesiastical establishment of Coptic, Armenian and Nestorian Churches within the domestic territories of each power will be explored. Specifically, this paper will evaluate the historiographical development of the paradigms of the secondary sources on the political power of the medieval Coptic and Nestorian ecclesiastical authorities in relations to the Mamluk-Ilkhanate wars. The purpose of this part is a reflection of main gaps, leakages and significances of previous studies which will possibly be helpful for the proposed paradigm for the Thesis. To begin with, this literature review will explore five major elements: firstly, the nature of Mongol-Mamluk relationships will be analyzed; secondly, the political power of Nestorian Christians in Ilkhanate will be explored; thirdly, the political power of Armenian clergy will be evaluated, fourthly, the political power of Coptic authorities in Mamluk Egypt will be evaluated lastly, the conclusion will be provided. Although, within these topics major patterns of historiographical development will be extracted and presented for the reader.

The Mongol Mamluk Interactions

This topic of discussion should be explored under the new paragraph since this topic of the discussion is one of the major parts for the future research paper. Morgan was one of the first scholars who contributed to understanding of the Mongol invasion to the Mamluk territory. Particularly, he explored the warfare process between Mongols and Mamluks. His book contains the analysis of the failure of Ilkhanate and reasons behind them. Specifically, the author mentions the logistic reasons which affected the failure of the Mongols. Hereby, the author states that the territory of the modern Iran was quite distant from the Syriac battlefields.¹ Consequently, the Mongols were alienated from the access to the unit, food and other logistical supplies. Furthermore, the Syriac territory was quite climatically unfriendly unlike the territory of Mesopotamia and as a result it significantly decreased Mongol's chances of victory.² These arguments were challenged by Reuven Amitai, who chose the structural analysis of the warfare process. Specifically, in his book, "*The Mongols and Mamluks: Mamluk-Ilkhanate war*" he describes the complexity of the relationships between the Mongols and Mamluks. Particularly, he refers to the Janus-faced relationships. Hereby, the Golden Horde allied with Beybars against Ilkhanate.³ Specifically, the author refers to the trade relationships which benefited Mamluks by a constant supply of slaves which became pivotal for military success of Mamluks. On the other hand, the author explained the failure of Ilkhanate with 4 major factors. The author concludes major patterns within the battles: the victory of Mamluks can be explained by the failure of maintaining the military cooperation with Franks, leadership role of Mamluk Sultans, morality of the soldiers, developed arm technologies of Mamluks and

¹ David Morgan, *The Mongols*, (Oxford, OX, UK: Blackwell, 1990), 231-235.

² Morgan, *The Mongols*, 231-235.

³ Reuven Amitai, *Mongols And Mamluks: The Mamluk-Ilkhanid War, 1260-1281*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 85-86

relations with the Golden Horde.⁴ Finally, the author criticized the previous attempts to examine the Mamluk victory over the Mongols. Particularly, the author states that Mongol Army consisted with Armenians and other native to Syria region soldiers who received enough supply from the vassal kingdoms.⁵ Hence, the lack of logistics could not affect the failure of Ilkhanate campaign as Morgan proposed. The author is significant since he reflected multi-level analyses showing the impact of diplomacy, trade, technologies on the success of Mamluks. In the other article proposed by Reuven Amitai the author tried to reflect the role of Armenian Kingdom in Ilkhanate-Mamluk wars. Specifically, the author considers the role of the Armenians as the significant factor for realization common geopolitical aims.⁶ Hereby, the Armenians served as the mediators between Mongols and Catholic powers who could facilitate the coordinative military campaign against Mamluks. Secondly, they active participation in military campaigns since Hulagu's reign also highlights their role in Mongol Mamluk wars.⁷ The major significance of this article lies in the fact that the author presented the role of Armenians as a major part of Mongol Mamluk relationships. The other important article proposed by Reuven Amitai explains the role of the ideology in shaping the attitudes towards the warfare relationships between the Mongols and Mamluks. Particularly, Amitai states that the Mongol ideology was the key factor which had become the primary motive for the conquest.⁸ Specifically, the author evaluated the attitudes of khans towards the conquest of Mamluk territory. Specifically, he found one common pattern for all khans despite their

⁴ Reuven Amitai, *Mongols And Mamluks: The Mamluk-Ilkhanid War, 1260-1281*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 235

⁵ Amitai, *Mongols And Mamluks: The Mamluk-Ilkhanid War, 1260-1281*, 225-229

⁶ Reuven Amitai, "Dangerous Liaisons: Armenian-Mongol-Mamluk Relations (1260- 1292)," In *La Méditerranée des Arméniens, XII e -XV e siècle*, 191-206. (Paris: Geuthner, 2014), 192.

⁷ Amitai, "Dangerous Liaisons: Armenian-Mongol-Mamluk Relations (1260- 1292)," 192

⁸ Reuven Amitai and David Morgan, *The Mongol Empire And Its Legacy*, (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 60

constant religious conversions and fluctuations in sympathies. The ideological standing proposed by Chinggis Khan about the conquest of the world and subjugating as many nations as possible became the key element for formation of the warfare against Mamluks. The author also rejects the reason of access to the Mediterranean, since Mongols already had it through the territory of Armenians who were loyal vassals.⁹ Therefore, Amitai proved that the Mongol ideology of Imperialism was the most significant factor for understanding the military warfare between Mongols and Mamluks. Hence, this paradigm is significant for understanding the military campaign against Mamluks since the author crushed the rational choice paradigms proposed previously. The last author who proposed a completely new approach to understanding the Mongol Mamluk warfare was Aubrey Russell. Her book *“The Nestorian Churches”* contains a part of a discussion about the role of the Nestorian Christianity in formation of the warfare against Mamluks. The main argument of the author is that the pro-Christian identity was the rational tool for maintaining the additional support from Catholic powers and also an ideological tool against Mamluks.¹⁰ Particularly, she refers to the cases of the Nestorian clergy as a tool for shaping the perception of Mongols as pro-Christian and anti-Islamic rulers. Hence, the Nestorian Christianity became a powerful tool for realization of the political ambitions of khans to conquer the Mamluk lands. Hence, the Nestorian Christianity is one of the essential parts of formation of the warfare relationships between Mongols and Mamluks in terms of ideology and inclusion of Christian powers to this conflict. Therefore, Russell is significant in terms of proposition of the religious basis of Christianity to the Mamluk Mongol relationships. Her contribution to the history of Mongols is surely innovative since the author explored the Mongol conquest of the Mamluks territory from the religious perspective. In conclusion, the

⁹ Reuven Amitai and David Morgan, *The Mongol Empire And Its Legacy*, (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 66

¹⁰ Aubrey V. Russell, *The Nestorian Churches*, (New York: AMS Press, 1980), 149-151

understanding of the Mongol Mamluk warfare experienced significant development, since authors presented different structures of the conflict. Hence, the paradigms about the history of the Mongol invasion to the Mamluk territories experienced the development from the political, religious geographical trajectories to more structural and multilevel understanding of the military capabilities, diplomacy, logistics and leadership effects of rulers. The last article for this chapter refers to the study of Mari Favero who researched the diplomatic relations between the Golden Horde and Mamluks. Specifically, she states that despite of the rational choice for the cooperation the sharing of the common Desht-i-Kipchak identity of the leaders affected the maintaining of the cooperation. Here the author refers to the cases of Beybarys and Berke who shared both pro-Kypchak identity on the basis of birthplace which had become a strong matter for cooperation against Ilkhans.¹¹ Furthermore, the author proposed that the role of saving the trade between Mamluks and Golden Horde was the additional factor for maintaining the cooperation against the common enemy.¹² Hence, the author is significant in terms of reflecting a new paradigm based on the additional factor of common birthplace background for the cooperation against Ilkhans. Finally, the relationships between Mongols and Mamluks could be called as multi-vector since the Mongol Empire was decentralized by partially independent uluses which had their own geopolitical intensions. As a result, the cases of hostile relationships between Ilkhans and Mamluks on the one hand and supportive-coordinative relationships between Golden Horde and Mamluks on the other hand clearly show the complexity of the “premodern international” relations. The understanding the Mongol Mamluk relationships experienced the vast development. Specifically, Russell as one of the first pioneers of Mongol Mamluk interactions was focused more on the religious aspect and the role of the Christianity in warfare. In the beginning of 20th century historians explored the Mongol conquest from the

¹¹ Mari Favero, "Kak Sultan Mamlukov Obrashalsya K Chanu Zolotoi Ordy," *Zolotoordynskoe Obozrenie* 6, no.1 (2018): 51, doi:10.22378/2313-6197.

¹² Favero, "Kak Sultan Mamlukov Obrashalsya K Chanu Zolotoi Ordy," 51

affiliation to the institution of Christianity and avoided depicting the complexity of the relationships between the Mongols and Muslims. Hereby, the paradigm was dichotomic in terms of Christians against Muslims, and Mongols who were affiliated to Christian communities. Particularly, such emphasis could be explained by extensive Eurocentrism and orientation to Christian primary sources. However, Russell's book can be considered as more ahistorical since it does not fit to the current standards of referencing and can be classified as artistic rather than scientific. However, the development started from the Morgan who tried to challenge the existed literature by focusing on Muslim sources, which helped to reflect the inner problems of Mongol Mamluk relationships within the military and political histories. Specifically, the issues of logistics, climate and other underexplored factors were mentioned in his paper. The vast development occurred in the book of Reuven Amitai who structurally referred to the conceptualization the warfare between Mongols and Mamluks. Specifically, he highlighted the significance of spirit, advancement of technologies, leadership roles, and furthermore, explored the nature of the relationships from both sides of actors. Moreover, the author depicted the role of Golden Horde and therefore, the paradigm of Mongol Mamluk relationships can be considered as more multi-vectoral. The recent studies tried to re-understand the relationships between the Golden Horde and Mamluks and Favero succeeded in explaining the relationships on the basis of ideological and rational choice theories within trade, military and foreign politics. Hence, overall, the conceptualization of Mongol Mamluk relationships experienced the shift, since the authors cumulatively presented them from different perspectives which finally contributed to multi-layer understanding and complexity within different spheres of institutional relationships. However, there is a still demand for further studies of the Mongol-Mamluk relationships.

The political power of Nestorian clergy in Ilkhanate in the end of 13th century

Grousset partially evaluates the political power of the Nestorian establishment in the Mongol court. Specifically, he mentions that the Persian court of the Mongols had a lot of Nestorians who served as ambassadors of the Mongol khans. Specifically, here he refers to the case of Raban Sauma whose power in the Mongol court was very extensive.¹³ Specifically, he was very close to khans Abaqa and Arghun and participated in maintaining the relations with the Christian countries. The other character of Nestorian nobility was Yaballaha III who was the Catholicos of the Church of the East.¹⁴ Specifically, the author states that he had experienced patronage of Arghun and Abaqa khans who granted him lands, money and other gifts. In its turn Nestorian nobilities paid back with their loyalty and participation in Mongol political projects used by khans. Hereby, the Nestorian ecclesiastical nobility experienced cooptation and consequently their political power and influence came from ilkhans significantly rose up. However, the author also mentions that the political power of the Nestorians experienced shrinking during the rule of Islamic rulers such as Ahmad-Tekuder and Ghazan khans.¹⁵ Specifically, the author refers to the cases of repressions and intentional connivance to the injustices experienced by Nestorians. Hence, the political power of the Nestorians fluctuated depending on the religious preferences of khans. Hereby, Grousset is significant in reflecting core explanatory factor for understanding the political power of the Nestorians. On the other hand, Russell proposes the alternative scenario. She states that the discourses used by khans were a part of a big military project proposed by khans. Specifically, the fluctuations in political power mentioned by Grousset could be explained in terms of identity making project which was intentionally built by khans for realization their political

¹³ René Grousset, [*L'empire Des Steppes.*] *The Empire Of The Steppes. A History Of Central Asia*” trans. Naomi Walford. (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1970), 371-375

¹⁴ Grousset, [*L'empire Des Steppes.*] *The Empire Of The Steppes. A History Of Central Asia*, 375

¹⁵ Grousset, 370, 379

ambitions towards the conquest the rest Muslim territories.¹⁶ Hence, the significance of the paradigm proposed by Russell lies in the fact that the author used the assumption of rational use of religious tools for maintaining the ideological principle of the right to conquer the world proposed by Chinggis khan. Moreover, Russell unlike Grousset mentions the political power of the Nestorian ecclesiastical establishment during Gaikhatu khan. Specifically, she states that Nestorian clergy was also patronized by this khan.¹⁷ Specifically, the attitudes of Ghaikatu and Baidu towards Christianity were the same as Arghun's since policies experienced continuity in terms of granting money and generally the Nestorians did not lose their political influence in the court. Hence, the author eliminated the major gap in Grousset's book. Finally, Russell states that the Nestorian ecclesiastical establishment experienced the general decline even during the rule of khans. Specifically, she refers to the institutional power of the Nestorian clergy. Specifically, the archeological proofs of the Nestorian churches explicitly show that the Nestorian Christianity was in constant decline after the early medieval period.¹⁸ The next author Aptin Khanbaghi was more detailed in depiction the fluctuation of the political power of the Nestorian Christians in Ilkhanate. The author analyses the political power of the Nestorian clergy from the position of institutional of the Church of the East and policies of khans towards the Nestorian clergy. As previous scholars he refers to cooptation of the Nestorian clergy and building the churches within Ilkhanate as an indicator of the rise of political power of Nestorian Church.¹⁹ However, unlike Russell he states that the up shift of the political power of the Nestorian clergy during Arghun khan should be explained in terms of deconstruction previous ideological basis created by Ahmad khan for centralization the

¹⁶ Aubrey V. Russell, *The Nestorian Churches*, (New York: AMS Press, 1980), 151

¹⁷ Russell, *The Nestorian Churches*, 153-154

¹⁸ Russell, 154-155

¹⁹ Aptin Khanbaghi, *The Fire, The Star And The Cross*. (New York: I. B. Tauris & Co Ltd, 2006), 66

personal power. Hence, the position of the author could be claimed as endogenous evaluation of the political history of Ilkhanate.²⁰ However, the author differently used the case of Ghaikatu as a point of stagnation the political power of Nestorian clergy. Specifically, he states that the case of granting sums of money is insufficient argument for claiming the increase in power of the Nestorian clergy.²¹ Also, the author slightly mentions the period of Baidu, specifically, the author states that Muslims started to use the cooptation the local Mongol rulers to convert them into Islam whereas Christian institutions did not have such opportunity during Baidu.²² To sum up the author succeeded in explaining the gaps in understanding the political power of Nestorian clergy during Ghaikatu and Baidu reigns. As previous authors Wilmshurst also states that the rise in power of Nestorian Christians is connected to the patron relations of Mongol Establishment and ecclesiastical nobility. He refers to the massive building of churches in Ilkhanate such as Mar Giwargis, Mar Shallita, Mar Man etc.²³ As a result, the building of the churches is one of the explanatory factors for the understanding the power of the Nestorian Church. However, as it was mentioned above the author is different in his approach for understanding the power of the Nestorians. The paradigm he presented also constituted the bottom-up perspective. Specifically, Wilmshurst makes the argument which states that the failure of the Abbasids affected the disenchantment of Muslim part of population in Islam.²⁴ Here, the author states that simple believers including nobilities, peasants and others converted to Christianity, what affected the popularization and empowerment of the existed Church of the East. As it was mentioned above there is a lack of studies on Nestorian Christianity during

²⁰ Aptin Khanbaghi, *The Fire, The Star And The Cross*. (New York: I. B. Tauris & Co Ltd, 2006), 66

²¹ Khanbaghi. *The Fire, The Star And The Cross*, 68

²² Khanbaghi, 68

²³ David Wilmshurst, *The Ecclesiastical Organisation Of The Church Of The East, 1318 - 1913*. (Lovanii: Peeters, 2000), 17

²⁴ Wilmshurst, *The Ecclesiastical Organisation Of The Church Of The East, 1318 - 1913*, 16-17

the Mongol conquest of the Middle East. To sum up this paragraph it can be clearly seen that the authors faced the lack of the primary sources and evidence for evaluation the political power of the Nestorian ecclesiastical nobility, therefore, major part of scholars refer both existed primary sources and archeological evidence which in combination could illustrate institutional power of the Nestorian clergy. All authors agree with the major trends in fluctuations of the political power of the Nestorians despite the periods of Ghaikatu and Baidu reigns which lacks in evidence. However, there are 2 major camps of research position, specifically, some authors focus on the exogenous effect on the political power of the Nestorian clergy whereas the rests tried to evaluate this process from the endogenous processes occurred in Ilkhanate. Overall, the understanding of the political power of the Nestorian ecclesiastics shifted from the individual cases to institutional power. However, the development of paradigms was not so significant in comparison with the previous thematical chapters. Particularly, the lack of primary evidence is the major factor, but the authors tried to manipulate with methodologies extracting the evidence from archaeological sources. However, there are still a lot of gaps there, which should be eliminated. Finally, the scholars avoid analyzing the Nestorians of Ilkhanate, and generally Nestorian Christianity is one of the most underexplored research topics. Possibly, the marginalized political position of this group even in the 21st century recreates the image of insignificant institution for historians. Therefore, the Nestorian studies and specifically, the evaluation of their degradative paces in Ilkhanate vis-à-vis their political significance would certainly answer the question of why this group dramatically declined.

The political power of the Armenian ecclesiastical authorities in the end of 13th century

The political power of the Armenian Church was described by the modern scholars without much focus. Mainly, the relationships between the Armenians and the Mongol establishment were research with a primary focus. Ghazarian was one of the first 21st century scholars who described the Armenian-Mongol relationships. His book *The Armenian Kingdom*

in Cilicia during the Crusades discusses the history of the formation and the collapse of the Armenian kingdom from the ancient period to the early modern one. Particularly, the author explains the role of the Armenian kings in maintaining the simultaneous alliance with the European powers and the Mongols.²⁵ The Mongol invasion to the Middle East brought the challenge to the Armenians that stimulates their cooperation with the Inner Asian Empire. For Hetum I this was a necessary alliance to maintain the protection from the Seljuk forces that constantly threatened the borders of the kingdom.²⁶ As a result of the submission in 1253 the Armenians were favored by the Mongols and received the protection from the Islamic challenges. Furthermore, the author states that the Armenian kings often created the discourses to maintain the relationships with the European powers. Hereby, the discussion of the Armenian ecclesiastical power comes in. Specifically, the author brought the policies of Hetum II that mainly damaged the institutional power of the Armenian Church. Latinization of the culture as well as the appropriation the Catholic and Byzantine religious norms put the Armenian ecclesiastical authorities to the hazard position.²⁷ Henceforward, the author succeeded in explaining partially the role of Catholicism and the intermediary position of the Armenians in maintaining the relationships between the Mongols, Catholic powers against Mamluks. Dashdondog described the Armenian history of the late middle ages from the perspective of the involvement of the Cilician Kingdom to the Mamluk-Mongol warfare. Particularly, the author argues that the cooperation with the Mongols brought the negative consequences to the Armenians. Specifically, being ally with the Mongols made the Armenians

²⁵ Jacob G. Ghazarian, *The Armenian Kingdom In Cilicia During The Crusades*, (London: Routledge Curzon, 2005), 55

²⁶ Ghazarian, *The Armenian Kingdom In Cilicia During The Crusades*, 56-57

²⁷ Ghazarian, 66-67

vulnerable to the attacks from the side of Mamluks.²⁸ For the author this is one of the indicators that signifies the failure of the cooperation between the Mongols and the Armenians. The Mamluks Sultanate committed huge devastations to the geopolitical power of the Armenians devastating their military, religious, governmental institutions. Particularly, the author also refers to the raids against Christians committed by Sultan Baybars. Specifically, the devastation of the churches and damages to the flock and a clergy were the outcomes of the warfare that were inevitable.²⁹ Henceforward, the military geopolitical perspective brought by Dashdondog was a significant to understand the devastations on the physical level resulted from the Mongol-Armenian cooperation. Lauren Prezbindowski conducted her MA thesis exploring the connections between the Mongol-Armenian encounters and the reasons behind the formation the alliance structures. Specifically, she argues that the formation of the relationships between the Armenians and the Mongols were the matter of the cost and benefits analysis. She also argues that Armenians tended to enter the cooperation due to the Mongol Prestige effect that utilized the respect for Mongol military capabilities. Secondly, she states that the cooperation behavior was more likely than costs from being in conflict with the Mongols. Thirdly, the religious effect could be underestimated. In particular, the belief that the success of the Mongols was the bless of the God was constantly circulated among Middle Eastern establishment.³⁰ Furthermore, the author made the auxiliary reference to the Armenian Apostolic Church. In particular, the Church flourished during the reign of Hulagu and his wife in Ilkhanate. The Armenian clergy received the foreign support for their missionary activities

²⁸ Bayarsaikhan Dashdondog, *The Mongols and the Armenians (1220-1335)*, (Leiden:Brill, 2011), 190, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1163/j.ctt1w8h10n>.

²⁹ Dashdondog, *The Mongols and the Armenians (1220-1335)*, 187-188

³⁰ Lauren Prezbindowski, "*The Ilkhanid Mongols, The Christian Armenians, And The Islamic Mamluks : A Study Of Their Relations, 1220-1335*" (Master Thesis, University of Louisville, 2012), 42-43

outside the Cilician Armenia in terms of tax exemptions, gifts, political appointments.³¹ However, the study showed that the cooperation between Mongols and Armenians deteriorated soon that made the Cilician Churches vulnerable for the Mamluk attacks.³² At this point she agrees with Dashdondog saying that the political power of the Armenian Apostolic Church was damaged as a result of the lack of military support from the Mongols. Nevertheless, the study conducted by Prezbindowski is significant due to the fact that she provided the longitude study of the relationships between the Armenians and the Mongols. Despite that she restates the existed arguments about the Armenian Church we can't consider her work nonconstructive and non-contributive. The next study was conducted by Marco Bais who did the research on the Latinization of the Cilician Armenia. Specifically, the main focus of his study was Hetum Pampich's *Flos historiarum*. The Author argues that the portrayal of the Cilician Armenia and the Mongols to the Catholic powers by the author was a vivid discourse of Latinophilism.³³ This act served to the harmonization the relationships between the Armenia and the Catholic powers that would possibly stimulate their cooperation. The author used the discourse analysis that presented completely different paradigm regarding the Armenian Apostolic Church. He does not openly state about the degradation pattern. However, the pattern of weakening the power of the indigenous Armenian Church could be observed in his study. The author provides the examples of Hetum Pampich who converted to Catholicism and used the variety of discourses that were going to unite the Armenia and the rest of the Europe. Particularly, the idealization of the Armenian geography, ascetic connections between Armenia and Christianity

³¹ Lauren Prezbindowski, "*The Ilkhanid Mongols, The Christian Armenians, And The Islamic Mamluks : A Study Of Their Relations, 1220-1335*" (Master Thesis, University of Louisville, 2012), 54-55

³² Marco Bais, "Armenia And Armenians In Het'Um'S Flos Historiarum Terre Orientis", *Medieval Encounters* 21, no.2-3 (2015): 229, <https://doi.org/10.1163/15700674-12342192>.

³³ Bais, "Armenia And Armenians In Het'Um'S Flos Historiarum Terre Orientis", 229

and other representations served to make Cilicia closer to the Roman church.³⁴ Henceforward, the autonomy of the Armenian Apostolic Church would seem to be in decline. The study conducted by Bais is very important since it presents the linguistic notion of the declining power of the Armenian Apostolic Church that is a new one for the existed. However, the main gap among all above scholarship still exists. Specifically, the authors rely mainly on the Armenian primary sources and there is not any reference to the archaeological studies or art studies that certainly could be used. Henceforward, the study of the Armenian ecclesiastical authorities could be considered as auxiliary and homogenous since the mainly Armenian primary sources were used. The devastations committed by the Mamluk forces and evidence of the unification with the Roman Catholic Church should be found in the church architecture and art. These findings will definitely strengthen the proofs about the devastating pattern of the political power of the Armenian Church during the late medieval period. Possibly, all these descriptions could be the exaggerations conducted porously by Armenian clergy to stimulate the cooperation against Mamluks. Overall, nobody from the scholars could not answer the question that asks why Armenian Church became one of the most powerful marginalized entity across the Middle East. Henceforward, this issue might be explored with a precise attention. Furthermore, the church studies and the political power of the Armenian clergy are mainly presented as an auxiliary focus whereas the primary one is still Armenian kings and the political historiography. Therefore, the evaluation of the Church as a central object has a great research potential for further studies.

The Mamluk Sultanate and the religious policies towards domestic Christians

To reach the complexity in understanding the role of the Christianity in the process of the warfare between Ilkhanate and Mamluks in it essential to refer to the political power of the

³⁴ Marco Bais, "Armenia And Armenians In Het'Um'S Flos Historiarum Terre Orientis", *Medieval Encounters* 21, no.2-3 (2015): 230-231, <https://doi:10.1163/15700674-12342192>.

Coptic Christians in Mamluk Sultanate. The first article was written by Donald Little who evaluate the policies of Mamluk sultans towards native Christians. Specifically, he mentions that major part of Christians in Egypt were Copts, who experienced some extend of autonomy. Specifically, they could exercise their festivals, where some laws of Sharia were violated and secondly, Copts served as ministers within the court of Sultan.³⁵ Hence, Copts before the Mongol invasion had enough power to be considered as partially autonomous religious community. However, the policy of Sultan reorientated as Mongols invaded to Syria in 13th century. Specifically, author mentions the importance of rise of Islam as counter ideology against pro-Christian infidels.³⁶ Hence, it affected the political power of Christians in Mamluk Sultanate. As a result, the political power of Copts declined. Specifically, the celebration of traditional Coptic festivals was abandoned and furthermore minister who served Sultan were forced to convert to Islam or executed. Therefore, the Mongol conquest affected the political power of Christians in Egypt in a negative way since the necessity in creation pro-Islamic ideology immediately took a place. As a result, these policies affected the stability in the country and maintaining the regime stability of Mamluks. The other article written by Little “*Coptic Conversion to Islam under the Bahri Mamluks*” is more detailed in depiction the process of conversion Copts in Mamluk Sultanate. Specifically, the author pays attention to the intentional policy of propaganda against non-Muslim population. Specifically, the author states that there is a correlation between the active promotion of anti-non-Islamic discourses and invasion of the Mongols to Syria.³⁷ Hereby, the author is very detailed in depicting that government used Islamic discourses to justify their actions, secondly, they constantly had a

³⁵ Donald P. Little, “Religion under the mamluks”, *The Muslim World*. no.63 (1983): 179-180, <https://doi:10.1111/j.1478-1913.1983.tb03263.x>.

³⁶ Little, "Religion under the mamluks", 180

³⁷ Donald P. Little, "Coptic Conversion To Islam Under The Bahri Mamluks, 692–755/1293–1354", *Bulletin Of The School Of Oriental And African Studies* 39, no.3 (1976): 553, <https://doi:10.1017/s0041977x00051004>.

census system during the invasion period.³⁸ All these actions were performed to convert Copts to Islam. Furthermore, the government used some repressions such as limitation the working hours of churches and imposition rules which heavily limited Christian lifestyle.³⁹ Hence, the author concludes that the political power of Christians in Mamluk Sultanate during the Mongol invasion experienced rapid decline and consequently the role of Islam sharply rose up. For both articles, the author used Syriac, Arabic sources which represented both views: establishment and marginalized part of the population. Finally, the author is significant in understanding the link between the Christian identity and the warfare process between Mamluks and Mongols. The next article written by Linda Northrup examined the same question of policies of Mamluk government towards Christianity. Here she agrees with Little in a sense that anti-Crusade and anti-Mongol discourses affected the conversion of a huge part of the Christians in Egypt.⁴⁰ Specifically, she refers to the choice between conversion and death, also she states about destruction of churches etc.⁴¹ However, the author is different in terms of reflecting the complexity. Specifically, she states that Qawalun also granted some privileges to Christians as well. Specifically, the abolishment of taxes could be the great example here.⁴² The author states that political power of Christians in Egypt experienced the decline, however, the ruler used a benefits system towards Christianity to maintain their loyalty and ease the tensions between Muslim and non-Muslim populations. Hereby, the complexity of policies could be seen which

³⁸ Donald P. Little, "Coptic Conversion To Islam Under The Baḥrī Mamlūks, 692–755/1293–1354", *Bulletin Of The School Of Oriental And African Studies* 39, no.3 (1976): 553, <https://doi:10.1017/s0041977x00051004>

³⁹ Little, "Coptic Conversion To Islam Under The Baḥrī Mamlūks, 692–755/1293–1354", 556

⁴⁰ Linda Northrup, "Muslim-Christian Relations During The Reign Of The Mamluk Sultan Al-Mansur Qalawun, A.D. 1278-1290," in *Conversion and Continuity: Indigenous Christian Communities in Islamic Lands, Eighth to Eighteenth Centuries*, ed. by Michael Gervers, (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1990), 253-254

⁴¹ Northrup, "Muslim-Christian Relations During The Reign Of The Mamluk Sultan Al-Mansur Qalawun, A.D. 1278-1290," 253-254

⁴² Northrup, 258

resulted in maintenance of the internal political stability and popularity of anti-Crusade and anti-Mongol discourses in Mamluk Sultanate. Hence, the author is significant in terms of depiction of policies of balancing between religious communities in combination with anti-Christian ideology. Another book “*The Thousand Years of Coptic Christianity*” was written by Otto Meinardus. It explores the history of Coptic Christianity from Antique to Modernity. Particularly, the author mentions when Mamluks in 1250 ACE came to power in Egypt, they almost did not have any sympathy towards Copts, or they even despised the Coptic presence. Particularly, the author states that Mamluks 8 times tried to dismiss Copts from governmental positions.⁴³ Also, the author states that primary sources refer to institutional deterioration of the Churches of Copts due to Mamluks persecutions. Hereby, the cases of Monastery of Saint Makarios and ruins of Saint John Monastery prove the purges of Copts by Mamluks.⁴⁴ Hence, the author uses both archaeological and historical narratives to explain the decline in political power of Copts. However, the issue of lack the Coptic primary sources is the major one and author vividly states it in his reflexive part. Therefore, Islamic sources are only available today and this is the major gap within the study of medieval Copts. Comparing the study with previous scholars, Meinardus is quite speculative in understanding the nature of despise, hereby, he just constates the fact but the reasoning behind such attitude was not explained.⁴⁵ However, unlike the previous scholars the author succeeded in terms of using the archaeological evidence. One of the most exceptional studies was conducted by Iris Habib el Masri. She wrote the book called “*The Story of the Copts: the true story of Christianity in Egypt*”. The major significance lies in fact that the author presented the process of shaping the political power of Copts during Mamluk rule based on the biographies of Coptic ecclesiastical

⁴³ Otto Meinardus, *Two Thousand Years Of Coptic Christianity*, (Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press 1999), 65

⁴⁴ Meinardus, *Two Thousand Years Of Coptic Christianity*, 161, 170

⁴⁵ Meinardus, 65

authorities. The author explores the political power of Coptic authorities structurally and states that it was fluctuating in respect to various circumstances.⁴⁶ Particularly, as previous author, Masri refers to the cases of persecutions and destruction of churches.⁴⁷ However, the main difference lies in the fact that paradigm was centered around the biographies of Abba Yoannis VII, Abba Yoannis VIII and others.⁴⁸ Hereby, she refers to the cases of increase in tributes, dismiss from governmental positions and even official proclamation the murder of Copts.⁴⁹ Finally, the author as well as previous scholars refers to the cases of Church devastations and restrictive laws against Copts. In addition, the author somehow tries to connect the persecutions with the cases of warfare, however, she did not succeed, since the author simply correlates these events but does not qualitatively explain the connection. To sum up the paradigms about the decline in political power of Coptic authorities was explained by the repressive nature of Mamluk governance. However, the positive discrimination paradigms were also presented within studies of Northrup and other scholars. However, the main pattern of the decline still exists and dominates the alternative explanations. Also, the main reasoning is that it was the result of responsive ideology against invaders. The study of Copts is also quite underdeveloped since there is lack of primary sources of the late medieval period which will illustrate the inside perspectives. Therefore, as with the case of Nestorians the authors use also archaeological evidence from Church ruins to expand the understanding about the history of Copts.

The presented topics of the discussion really vary in terms of the historical development and the use of methodological paradigms. Firstly, it is important to pay attention to the Mongol Mamluk interactions. Specifically, the early writers explained the paradigm of

⁴⁶ Īrīs Ḥabīb Maṣrī, *The Story Of The Copts: The Tru Story Of Christianity In Egypt*, (Los Angeles, Calif.: Saint Anthony Coptic Orthodox Monastery, 1982), 183-184

⁴⁷ Maṣrī, *The Story Of The Copts: The Tru Story Of Christianity In Egypt*, 185

⁴⁸ Maṣrī, 186

⁴⁹ Maṣrī, 186

the relationships from the perspectives of Christianity, anti-Islamic warfare, Ilkhanate and avoided the depiction of economic interactions, stratification of Mongols on uluses and structures of warfare. The accounts of Amitai, Favero challenged the existed perspectives, since they included the structure, reflected the complexity, and challenged the dichotomic relationships between Mongols and Mamluks. Hence, it can be claimed that the studies of Mongol Mamluk interactions significantly expanded and became more precise in description of the meta-reality of the relationships. Mainly, the focus of Arabic, Persian, Armenian and other non-Christian sources contributed to the complexity in understanding the nature of the Mongol conquest and the Mamluk-Mongol interactions. However, the studies of the political power of Nestorians, Armenian clergy and Copts in Ilkhanate, Cilician Armenia and Mamluk Sultanate leave something to be desired. Particularly, the issues of the lack of primary sources and hardship of extraction the archaeological evidence affected the scientific underdevelopments of these religious communities. The paradigms on Christian communities did not succeed in a vast development as understandings the nature of the Mongol Mamluk interactions except the studies on Armenians. The descriptions about the institutional devastations committed by the Mamluk troops as well as the Latinization of the Armenia were described perfectly. However, some parts of the studies demand further proofs that will eliminate the methodological gaps. Firstly, the authors don't vividly answer the question of why the Armenian Christianity became one of the most significant Christian entity in the Middle East. Secondly, the studies of the relationship between the Mongol-Mamluk warfare and the political power of Coptic and Nestorian ecclesiastical communities were not explicitly shown, or the approaches of the authors were quite inconsistent in the use of primary sources or any other potential limitations mentioned earlier. In particular, the Nestorian studies don't accurately consider the effect of the Mongol military campaigns to the political power of Ilkhanate Christianity. Additionally, the scholars don't present the answer to the question of

why the political power of the Nestorians shrunk immediately right after the reign of Ghazan khan. Henceforward, these questions demand the additional study that will possibly unite the exogenous processes such as warfare, foreign relationships and endogenous such as development of the military capabilities and internal religious policies such as conversion. Finally, the Coptic studies that relate to the Mongol invasion period, are quite limited due to the lack of the primary sources. In particular, the Coptic perspective was not present in the secondary sources. Fortunately, these scholarships could reflect the complexity of the relationships between Mamluks and Copts. This perspective will be used in this thesis to explain the relationships between Mamluks and the rest Christian religious institutions. This paper is not going to explain the detailed perspective of Copts since it isn't necessary one for the research question but will try to adapt the current Coptic literature to the Nestorian-Armenian paradigm vis-à-vis the Mongol-Mamluk warfare. Overall, the thesis will be significant since firstly it is going to find the connections between the foreign relationships, warfare and religious policies for the Nestorian studies; secondly, it will try to explain the why the Armenian Apostolic Church became one of the predominant Christian entity among the marginalized one; and finally, will try to explain how the Mamluk policies towards Copts could be parallelized with their encounters with Armenian Apostolic Church.

The literature review showed main gaps in existed literature which could be fulfilled by further studies. Specifically, the comparative study of the non-Muslim communities of Ilkhanate, Cilician Armenia and Mamluk Sultanate will be a new innovative approach which will possibly contribute to the understanding the Global pattern of Christianity in the context of warfare between Mongols and Islamic forces on the domestic levels. Also, the comparative study will reflect the reasons of why some religious communities outlived the warfare whereas the others became localized. Furthermore, the re-understanding of the Islamization of the Mongols could be elaborated from this study. Specifically, the vectors of political discourses

from tops to Christian religious institutions within the context of warfare will possibly open new frame of understanding the nature of the conversion, moving from internal factors of Sufi influence and power centralization to exogenous factors of foreign politics, war, trade etc. The comparative study will be unique approach which have never been used for understanding the Mongol conquest and Mongol-Mamluk interactions. Therefore, the thesis can be considered as significant contribution to the political, religious and military history of the medieval Middle East.

Chapter 2

Primary sources

This part will introduce the primary sources that will be utilized throughout the whole research thesis. All primary sources are available in Russian and English translations. Mainly, the sources could be classified on 4 types that represent 4 different perspectives: Armenian, Persian, Latin and Syriac perspectives. According to the genres, the sources are represented in diplomatic reports, chirographies, historical chronicles and correspondences. Basically, they reflect the memory about the events happened during 13th and 14th centuries in the Middle East and Inner Asia. Thematically, they show the links of the Mongol conquest of the Middle East, the Mamluk-Mongol warfare and the Mongol-Christian encounters. The main purpose of this section is an introduction of short summaries of the primary sources, analysis of their relevance to the thesis and reflection significance to the main research argument. Firstly, the Latin sources will be utilized; secondly, the Armenian sources will be evaluated; thirdly, the Persian sources will be evaluated. This chapter is not going to analyze the Syriac sources, in particular, the unique Syriac source of *The History of Mar Yaballaha and Raban Sauma*, because the separate chapter for this chronicle was introduced in the next part of the thesis. The main purpose of a such stratification was a precise analysis of this source since it is only one that could represent the history of Nestorian clergy. Therefore, this book should be evaluated with a special focus under the new chapter.

Latin primary sources

The Latin sources were utilized for this study such as *The Journey of William of Rubruck to the Eastern Parts of the World* and correspondences between ilkhan Ghazan and Pope Boniface VIII. The sources are available in English translations that mainly were conducted in 20th and 21st centuries.

The first account is about the route of the Catholic clergy William of Rubruck to the Mongol capital Karakorum between 1253 and 1255. This book is in Dawson's translation of primary sources that relates to the Europe-Asian encounters during late medieval and early modern periods. Rubruck's account is the late medieval ethnographical report that contains information about the Mongol Empire. The report was necessary for the Catholic clergies and rulers to maintain diplomatic, trade, religious and military relationships with the Mongol khans. In particular, the author presented the information about religions, economics, political structure, Mongol establishment, military capabilities, dietary, geographical landscapes and other valuable data. This account is relevant for this study because it presents the information about Nestorian clergy and their institutionalization in the Mongol Empire. Specifically, the author presents the information about the Nestorian clergy in the Golden Horde and in the capital Karakorum.¹ The author vividly shows the political ties of the Nestorians with the Mongol establishment that shaped their political privileges. Rubruck in details described the churches and the welfare of Nestorians.² This information provides independent variables that reflect the constituency of the political power of the Nestorians. Furthermore, the author expresses the attitudes towards Nestorians. Thus, he shows the Catholic perspective on the Inner Asian Christianity. Henceforward, the account is significant for this study since it could explain the structures of the Nestorian power within Inner Asia as well as the basis of Latin-Mongol encounters and cooperation against Mamluk Sultanate from the European perspective. This book does not cover the research period. However, it provides valuable insights about the development of the Nestorian power across the Middle East including Ilkhanate.

Secondly, for this study the correspondences between the ilkhan Ghazan and the Pope Boniface VIII will be analyzed. Generally, these sources were carried by Buscarel of Gisolf

¹Christopher Dawson, *Mission To Asia*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press in association with the Medieval Academy of America, 2008), 201-205

² Dawson, *Mission To Asia*, 201-205

and Bernard of Entenca in the beginning of 14th century. These people served as diplomatic intermediaries in the court of Ghazan khan. The letters present the information about possibility to cooperate against the Mamluk Sultanate, and also they slightly refer to the failure of the Ruan collaborative campaign.³ This source is valuable because it provides data to understand the structures of cooperation between the Mongols and Europeans. Specifically, in the longitude perspective it will show how the structures of the cooperation had changed and possibly will answer why question. Specifically, the source may explain the role of Christianity for the cooperation and the significance of Catholic and Nestorian clergies in maintaining these relationships. For this source, the linguistic discourse analysis will be used that will check out Ghazan's and Boniface's polemics from the text. In particular, his attitudes, norms and values will be extracted that will reflect foundations of the cooperation. Furthermore, the correspondence can give the answers to the question of how the role of the Nestorians had changed. In particular, from the first observation the Nestorians actively participated in maintaining relationships with the Europeans. This pattern could be observed up to Arghun's reign. Therefore, the analysis of the correspondences and people who carried these letters can show the continuity or discontinuities in diplomatic power of the Nestorian clergy in Ilkhanate. Therefore, these letters are important to study the dynamics in the continuity of the political power of the Christian clergies.

Overall, the Latin perspectives in the sources are significant for understanding the development of the Mongol-Catholic encounters, the diplomatic power of the clergy, rational-religious bases for the cooperation and corresponding Mongol European cross-attitudes as well as their perceptions towards each other. Therefore, the sources will definitely contribute to the main parts of the research argument.

³ Malcolm Barber and Keith Bate, *Letters From The East*, (New York: Routledge, 2016), 168

Armenian primary sources

There are variety of Armenian primary sources conducted in Russian translations about Armenian Mongol relationships and the warfare against Mamluks. These sources contain a rich information about the Mongol political structure, ideology, laws, the leadership role of the political establishments in maintaining the foreign relationships between Cilician Kingdom and the Mongol Empire. Generally, these sources were presented by Armenian clergies who actively inscribed the history of the late medieval centuries into the Church chronicles. However, there are some sources that were written by Armenian establishment such as chronicles of the Armenian king Hetum II. Mainly, these sources were conducted between the second half of 13th century and the first half of 14th century.

The first source is Grigor Akner's *The History of the Nation of Archer*. This source was written in the second half of 13th century by the Armenian monk and covers the period from 1229 to 1273. Generally, this source represents the history of the Mongol Empire and Cilician Armenia, the political structures of entities, economic relationships and foreign politics of the region. Here, the author pays attention to the formation of Ilkhanate and the development of the relationships between Cilician Armenia and the Mongol court. Specifically, the author describes the role of Hetum I and the significance of his subjugation to the Mongol khans for further economic, military, religious and cultural benefits for Armenia and Ilkhanate.⁴ Despite the general significance of the regional history, this primary account is valuable for the thesis since it reflects the political structure of the Armenian kingdom. In particular, the relationships between the church and the king as well as their power relationships are discussed in the book. Henceforward, the source will contribute to the main

⁴ Grigor the Akner, *History Of The Nation Of Archers*, trans. Robert Bedrosyan, (New Jersey: Internet Archive, 2009) <https://archive.org/details/GrigorAknertsisHistoryOfTheNationOfArchersmongols>

research question to understand the sources of the political power of the Armenian Apostolic Church that dominated Cilician Armenia. Consequently, this information will be analyzed to understand the effect of the Mongol conquest to the sources of the power of Armenian clergy in the late medieval period.

The next source is Galstyan's collection of the Armenian primary sources translated in Russian during the Soviet period. The book contains various sources that generally discuss the role of the Mongols in the political, territorial, religious and economic changes that Cilician Armenia experienced during 13th and 14th centuries. The next sources will be utilized in the thesis: "*Chronicle*" of Stephanos the Bishop, "*Chronicle*" of Sebastazi, anonym's "*Chronicle*", Hetum II "*Chronicle*" and Nerses Palienz's "*Chronicle*". These materials were written in a classic Christian format of a date and a short description of event. Specifically, these sources represent the history of the Armenian, Mongol and Mamluk relationships and domestic policies implemented in Cilician Armenia. Cumulatively, they cover the period from 13th to 14th centuries.⁵ These sources show the effects of the warfare to the political power of the Armenian clergy in terms of church damage, victimization, looting, investments etc. Furthermore, they reflect the cases of Latin-Byzantine involvement into the domestic religious system of Cilician Armenia. These cases generally were represented in the various discourses created by Armenian kings. The discourses may tell the reader that the Armenian kings challenged the authority of the Armenian Church oscillating between Byzantine Orthodoxy and Catholics. Specifically, the narratives about conversions, religious disputes and repressions against clergy were exemplified in these accounts.⁶ However, the accounts do not present the information that will explain a downward trend in the political power of the Armenian Church.

⁵ A. Galstyan, *Armyanskie Istochniki O Mongolah: Izvlecheniya Iz Rukopisey XIII-XIV Vv*, (Moscow: Izdatelstvo Vostochnoy Literatury, 1962).

⁶ Galstyan, *Armyanskie Istochniki O Mongolah: Izvlecheniya Iz Rukopisey XIII-XIV Vv*.

Thus, it is the main limitation of these primary sources. Nevertheless, such valuable information will be used to understand how the Mongol warfare against Mamluks affected the structures of the political power of the Armenian clergy.

Galstyan also translated one important Armenian manuscript but under a separate book. Specifically, he contributed to the historical studies translating Smbat Sparapet's "*Chronicle*". Hereby, this source contains the historical information which covers the period from the second half of 10th to 13th century. Generally, this book reflects the historical data about kingdom relationships and warfare. Specifically, the author describes Armenian wars with Seljuks, Armenian relationships with Byzantine Empire and the warfare between Seljuks and Mongols. Furthermore, the author presents the information about domestic unrests and ways of handling them by Armenian kings in Cilician Armenia. As Akner, Sparapet refers to the relationships between Armenians and Mongols; here, the author presented the negotiations between the rulers. Thus, the source is a significant historical material to understand the Armenian-Mongol encounters. This source is also important for this research thesis, since the author have presented the missing narratives about Mamluk damages to the Armenian religious institutions.⁷ Specifically, the source provides more detailed information about damage to the churches, cases of enslaving the Armenian clergy and other repressive discourses of Mamluks towards the Armenian monks and their congregation. Henceforward, this account is significant because it fills the gaps of the previous Armenian authors of the medieval period. Therefore, it will be used as a supplementary material to the chronicles mentioned earlier.

The last Armenian source is Hetum's *La flor des Estoires de la Terre d'Orient* (The Flowers Of Histories Of The East) which was translated by Robert Bedrosyan and published in 2004. Originally, this work was written in the beginning of 14th century and covers the period of the last hundred years from the beginning of writing. The source contains four books that

⁷ A. Galstyan, *Letopis'*, (Yerevan: Aivastan, 1974), 102

present the information about Middle Eastern and Inner Asian geography, military history of Muslims from Seljuks to Khwarazmshah, empowerment of Chinggis khan and his successors and strategic suggestions to cooperate with Mongols against Mamluks. Henceforward, this source is distinct from other political chronicles since it uses the historical information for diplomatic purposes to maintain military relationships between Europeans, Armenians and Mongols. This source is relevant for the current study since it reflects the ways of how Armenians tried to maintain the European support. Specifically, the linguistic discourse analysis can show the appealing points of the affiliation to Christianity.⁸ Simultaneously, Hetum's narrative may explain why the reciprocity with the Catholic powers was important for the Cilician Kingdom in the context of the warfare with Mamluks. The previous Armenian sources mainly disguise the fact of the Latin interruption to the religious sphere of the Cilician Armenia, or mainly, describe this process in a compressed format. Hetum, who was a converted clergy from Armenian Apostolic Church to Catholicism, succeeds in explaining the process of Latinization. Henceforward, the source is important to understand the hidden reasons behind discourses of Armenian kings to challenge the authority of the Armenian Church.

The Armenian sources present the indigenous perspective on the warfare with Mamluks. They are significant because they explain different challenges to the political power of the Armenian clergy. Furthermore, Hetum's book is highly essential since it is a unique source that may represent a comparative competition between Catholics and Armenian clergy for the power over Cilician Armenia. Therefore, Armenian source cannot be underestimated for this research study.

⁸ Hetum, *The Flower of Histories of the East*, trans. Robert Bedrosyan, (Long Branch: Internet Archive, 2004), 51, <https://archive.org/details/HetumTheHistoriansFlowerOfHistoriesOfTheEast>.

Persian primary sources

For this research study some Persian medieval accounts also will be utilized. Specifically, three major historical books will present the Islamic perspective on the Mongol-Mamluk warfare. Rashid ad-Din's book, Shaykh Uveis account and Kwandamir's history are primary sources that date back to 14th, 15th and 16th centuries and reflect the history of the Mongol rule over Persian territories. Specifically, they contain the information about the military campaign against Mamluks, ilkhans' conversions to Islam, religious and military policies in Ilkhanate etc. Henceforward, the sources are important to understand the political, military and religious spheres of the Middle East under the Mongols. These sources are available in Russian and English translations.

The first source is Rashid ad-Din's *Jami at-Tawarikh* which was written in the beginning of 14th century by the vizier of Ilkhanate. The translated version of the source was released under the edition of Asadzade in 2011. This source presents the political history of the region from the beginning of the Mongol conquest of the Middle East and establishment of Ilkhanate under Hulaguids. The source presents biographical materials from khans' biographies, genealogical information and the important historical events that affected the empowerment of khans. This source is important for the current study since it covers the period from Arghun khan's reign to Ghazan's power. In particular, the author discusses the impact and reasons of the conversion of Ghazan khan in Ilkhanate. Specifically, the author examined the role of local amirs whose power affected the centralization of Ghazan's authority in Ilkhanate after the conversion.⁹ This description is important to understand the religious policies of Ghazan khan towards the Christian minorities and the role of Muslim nobles in shaping their power. Furthermore, the account may present the information about the

⁹ Rashīd al-Dīn, *Jami At-Tawarikh*, (Baku: Nagyl Evi, 2011), 251

relationships between Muslims and Christians showing the Islamic perspective. Henceforward, the account of Rashid ad-Din is a significant source to reveal the system of religious institutions, their structures and sources of power in Ilkhanate.

The next source is a *History of Shaykh Uveis* which is a history of the Islamic rulers in Persian territories. This source was translated partially by Vladimir Tizengausen, and his version will be used to the current study. Mainly, the source was written by anonym in 15th century and contains a historical information from the beginning of the world until the reign of Jalairid's ruler Uveis I who was in power between 1415-1421. The source contains the information about the Mongol rule over Ilkhanate. In particular, the period of Ghazan's rule was described perfectly by the author. Specifically, the author presented a missing part of the previous Islamic scholar. Rashid ad-Din did not present the military campaigns in Syria conducted by Ghazan. However, the anonym greatly succeeded in representation of the military campaign and its phases. Specifically, the author indicates the role of Muslim amirs in taking the victory during the Third Battle of Homs.¹⁰ Henceforward, this source will contribute to the part about the Mongol-Mamluk warfare since it reflects the structures of the warfare that are significant to understand the impact of the religious-military policies of Ghazan khan to the military capabilities of the Mongol army.

The last Persian source is Kwandamir's account *Habib al-Siyar*, which was conducted by famous Islamic governmental servant between 1521 and 1524. Kwandamir worked at the courts of Timurids, Safavids, Baburids, and this book was presented to his patron who was the ruler of Herat. The book consists of 4 big volumes and the third book is the main focus of this study. This volume also refers to the Mongol rule in Ilkhanate and describes the political, military and religious history of the region between 13th and 14th centuries. The source presents

¹⁰ Vladimir Tizengausen, *Sbornik Materialov Otnosyashihsy k Istorii Zolotoi Ordy*, (Moscow: Izdatelstvo Akademii Nauk SSSR, 1941), 78

the biographical information of ilkhans and the historical events that characterize their reign and power of each leader. The author included the chapters about Ahmad khan, Arghun khan and Ghazan khan whose power was significant in Ilkhanate during the late 13th century. Specifically, the source is contributing to evaluation of the religious attitudes of ilkhans. Specifically, the cases of granting the political positions, persecutions of certain individuals who belong to certain religious community reflect attitudes of the ilkhans. Henceforward, this point is important for understanding the religious policies of Ahmad and Ghazan who converted to Islam.¹¹ As a result, this evidence will reflect the political power of the religious groups in Ilkhanate. Furthermore, the author is significant for his detailed descriptions of the laws ordered by Ghazan khan. These legislative acts serve to understand how Ghazan khan maintained the development of the military capabilities for his army and the domestic supply system.¹² In particular, this information is significant to the current thesis since it reflects the connections between the centralization of Islamic power of Ghazan khan and the outcomes of the warfare during Ghazan's conquest of Syria. Therefore, the contribution of this source is pivotal to understand why the political power of the Nestorian clergy had changed during Ghazan's rule vis-à-vis the warfare against Mamluks.

The Islamic perspectives give a huge information that could be utilized to understand why Islamization was a part of the declining trend in the political power of the Christian communities in Ilkhanate. Also, it shows how the religious policies affected the political power of these Christian communities. Henceforward, Persian primary sources are essential to provide the necessary connections between the Mongol conquest and the political power of the Nestorians. Furthermore, the implementation of Islamic sources will balance the Christian representations and this fact is significant to utilize them.

¹¹ Ghiyāś ad-Dīn Muḥammad Khwāndamīr, *Habibu's-Siyar*, trans. Wheeler Thackston, (Cambridge: Harvard University, 1994.), 87, 82

¹² Khwāndamīr, *Habibu's-Siyar*, 102

Overall, this study will use Latin, Persian and Armenian scholarships which reflect military, political and religious histories of the Middle East between 13th and 14th centuries. Hereby, the Latin sources will present the explanation for cooperation with Mongols against Mamluks and explain the effect of the intermediary role of Christian clergies in the process of maintaining these relationships. Secondly, the Armenian sources represent the effects of the warfare damage as well as the role of Catholics to the political power of the Armenian ecclesiastical authorities in Cilician Armenia. Finally, the Persian accounts reflect the impact of Islamization to the military structures of the Mongol army and centralization of ilkhans power. Islamic scholarships will help to understand how these factors contributed to the damage to the political power of the Nestorian clergy in Ilkhanate. Furthermore, the additional details in understanding the process of the warfare and domestic discourses of the kingdom leaders will be extracted from the primary sources. Finally, the synthesis of these accounts together represents three perspectives that constructed the historical memory about the Mongol-Mamluk warfare. Thus, exaggerations and biases will be balanced. Next chapter will present the Syriac source that will provide the information about the political power of the Nestorians in Ilkhanate. The separate chapter was presented due to the uniqueness of this source.

Chapter 3

Syriac source analysis

The Syriac account describes one of the first Mongol envoys to the Europe and political life of religious communities within the Mongol Empire between 1245 and 1317. The name of this source is “*History of Mar Yaballaha III and his vicar Raban Sauma*”. The manuscript was underexplored by scholars until the end of the XIX century. However, the value of this source is highly essential for understanding different spheres within the Mongol Empire. This is a history of the journey committed by two Nestorian monks. They made a trip from Khanbalykh to Rome together and separately. Also, the source describes the life chronicle of Mar Yaballaha III who was a Nestorian Patriarch. This account describes the political life within the Mongol Empire, relations between countries, religious politics and social history of Inner Asia.

The source “*History of Mar Yaballaha III and his vicar Raban Sauma*” reflects the period between 1245 and 1317. Both travelers started their journey from Khanbalyk (China) and finished their journey in Maragha city (Middle East). Moreover, the chronicle presents the diplomatic report of Raban Sauma who traveled alone to Byzantine Empire, Rome, Paris and other European territories.¹ The original name of the source is “*History of Mar Yaballaha III and his vicar Raban Sauma*”. It was written by the anonymous author who lived after 1317 (Islam was already the primary religious power in the Middle East). The author was interested in the life of Nestorian ecclesiastical establishment and wrote the book about one of the Nestorians Catholicos.² The reason of his anonymity was a hazardous political situation for Christians in the Middle East. In particular, it seems that the author tried to avoid Islamic

¹ Nina Viktorovna Pigulevskaya, *Syriiskaya Srednevekovaya Istoriografiya*, (Saint Petersburg: Dmitri Bulanin, 2000), 371-373

² Pigulevskaya. *Syriiskaya Srednevekovaya Istoriografiya*, 383-384

persecutions that were frequent against Christian minorities.³ Pigulevskaya mentions that the source criticizes the political acts of pro-Islamic khans against the Nestorians. Also, the author reflects the sympathy to the Nestorian Christians. Overall, there is a duality in the authorial perception of the reality (Islam versus Christianity). Thus, it could affect the purposeful erasing the name of the author. Secondly, the author was very familiar with the Nestorian rituals. For instance, the author provides the depiction of the eucharist and other ecclesiastical canons committed by Raban Sauma during his trip to Europe as well as ecclesiastical rituals committed by Mar Yaballaha III.⁴ Henceforth, the author could be a Nestorian monk who lived between 13th and 14th centuries. Thirdly, the author was very familiar with biographies of Mar Yaballaha III and Raban Sauma. The detailed description of the Mar Yaballaha's initiation to the throne of the Catholicos, defense of Irbil from the Mongols, familiarity with hidden intrigues within the Nestorian Church and political relations between the Catholicos and Mongol nobility are the examples of his close relationships with the main heroes.⁵ Hence, the author was a Nestorian monk who had personal relations with Mar Yaballaha and Raban Sauma. Additionally, he also could be a witness of some historical events such as the defense of Irbil. However, due to the dangerous political situation his name was erased for the sake of his survival.

This source was scholarly found in 1884 by Pole Bedzhan who received the original manuscript from the private collector from Kurdistan. He made the copy of this source. However, he did not have a chance to find the date of writing.⁶ The original first manuscript was picked back, and the presence of the original source is still unknown. Therefore, the first

³ Nina Viktorovna Pigulevskaya, *Syriiskaya Srednevekovaya Istoriografiya*, (Saint Petersburg: Dmitri Bulanin, 2000), 383-384.

⁴ Pigulevskaya, *Syriiskaya Srednevekovaya Istoriografiya*, 385

⁵ Pigulevskaya, 385.

⁶ Pigulevskaya, 384-385

edition (1894) of the source had a lot of errors and mistakes.⁷ Bedzhan tried to minimize these errors and explored other manuscripts connected to the content of the source. He used Solomon manuscript, the list made in Ambi and the copy of the manuscript which belonged to Uman from Thukum (Nestorian monk).⁸ Afterwards, Bedzhan created the second edition which was more accurate in terms of historical names, dates and historical events. Therefore, there is a textual issue of using the other sources for recreation the original text. However, this strategy helped to maximize editorial reliability, because the second version is clearer than the first one. Nevertheless, the translation is not accurate for several reasons. Firstly, the loss of the original material limits the accuracy. Secondly, the study is based on different copies of the original material that doubts the realiability. Pigulevskaya also mentions in the commentary that the copies (used by the author to recreate the original manuscript) were not original and accurate.⁹ Therefore, the issue of historical textualization exists. However, all these materials contributed to the recreation of the best possible version of the text. The original language of the source was a Syriac language. It was written in Syriac script, and was presented by Bedzhan in its original form.¹⁰ Pigulevskaya translated the source from Syriac language to Russian in 1958 using the second edition of Bedzhan's work.¹¹ Hence, she avoided the errors which occurred in the first edition.

The information presented by the anonymous author of "*The history of Mar Yaballaha III and his vicar Raban Sauma*" describes the life of the Nestorian monks Mar Mark and Raban Sauma. It consists of several thematical lines: the first is unrealized trip to Jerusalem and the

⁷ Nina Viktorovna Pigulevskaya, *Syriiskaya Srednevekovaya Istoriografiya*, (Saint Petersburg: Dmitri Bulanin, 2000), 384-385

⁸ Pigulevskaya, *Syriiskaya Srednevekovaya Istoriografiya*, 378

⁹ Pigulevskaya, 378

¹⁰ Pigulevskaya, 377

¹¹ Pigulevskaya., 379

election of Mar Yaballaha III (1281-1317) to the throne of the Catholicos of the East. The second theme is a diplomatic trip of Raban Sauma to Europe. The last one is about the life chronicle of Mar Yaballaha III.

Both Nestorian Monks decided to do the pilgrimage to Jerusalem in order to obtain the God's bless.¹² The author does not depict the geographical landscape or nature during the trip in details, but the author pays attention to the interactions which main characters had during the trip. Specifically, the encounters with citizens of Tangut show that both monks had an undoubtable authority among simple believers.¹³ Next, the audience with Khaidu, the ruler of Talas, shows that monks were patronized by Mongol nobilities who granted them the protective document.¹⁴ Finally, the interactions with the Catholicos Dengha I in Maragha show that the authority of the monks was also recognized by Nestorian authorities. The Nestorian Catholicos gave them his bless and ensured in his help whenever they will ask.¹⁵ Therefore, the first part is about the authority and piousness of the main characters. Unfortunately, the trip to Jerusalem was not realized. The monks returned to Baghdad and Mar Yaballaha received the position of Periodevt. Soon, he became the next Catholicos.

The second part of the book is based on the report written by Raban Sauma during his trip to European countries. He was the leader of the Mongol embassy and tried to negotiate after the name of Arghun khan with European leaders. He was concerned with the possibility to create potential military alliance against Mamluks. The trip of the delegation passed through the Byzantine Empire, Rome, Paris, Bordo and other western territories of the Europe. The narrative presented by Raban Sauma tells us that European leaders, specifically, the leaders of

¹² Nina Viktorovna Pigulevskaya, *Syriiskaya Srednevekovaya Istoriografiya*, (Saint Petersburg: Dmitri Bulanin, 2000), 682-683

¹³ Pigulevskaya. *Syriiskaya Srednevekovaya Istoriografiya.*, 684

¹⁴ Pigulevskaya., 685

¹⁵ Pigulevskaya., 686

Byzantine Empire, England and France were highly interested in creation the potential alliance with Arghun khan. For instance, the king of England claimed: “*We, kings of these cities, accepted the cross sign on bodies of ours, and don’t have another thought, despite this business. And my will was liberated, since when I heard, that what I think is the same for king Arghun*”.¹⁶ Furthermore, the king of France was also interested in these potential relations and sent his ambassador with Raban Sauma back to Ilkhanate.¹⁷ However, the Catholic priests in Rome were wary of Nestorian monk. They tried to find little differences in understanding the nature of the Christ, rituals and other dogmas to blame Nestorians and Mongols in heresy.¹⁸ The theological dispute which happened between Raban Sauma and Catholic monks in Rome is the example that supports the argument. Finally, Raban Sauma returned to his home and was rewarded by Arghun khan and Mar Yaballaha III.

The last thematic part of the book is a historical narrative about Mar Yaballaha III life. The author narrates about his life depicting his relations with khans, ordinary populations, amirs and others. The author tried to show how the religious identity and political ideology of khans affected the life of Mar Yaballaha III. Moreover, the author attempted to describe how Mar Yaballaha III adapted to these discourses to protect Christianity in Ilkhanate. The author narrates that Mar Yaballaha III and all Eastern Christendom prospered during the reigns of khans who were Christians or had a sympathy towards Christianity. Specifically, many Nestorian churches were built, and also big sums of money were granted during the rule of Abaqa khan and Arghun khan.¹⁹ However, the rule of Ahmad khan and Ghazan khan negatively affected the life of Christians. In particular, Mar Yaballaha III was tortured and robbed by

¹⁶ Nina Viktorovna Pigulevskaya, *Syriiskaya Srednevekovaya Istorioografiya*, (Saint Petersburg: Dmitri Bulanin, 2000), 705

¹⁷ Pigulevskaya, *Syriiskaya Srednevekovaya Istorioografiya*, 705

¹⁸ Pigulevskaya, 702

¹⁹ Pigulevskaya, 710-711

Muslim amirs during the reign of Ghazan khan.²⁰ Moreover, the Christians of Irbil and Maragha experienced massacres committed by Mongol troops.²¹ However, the author states that despite all the hardships Mar Yaballaha III always tried to protect the Christendom of the East compromising with khans and court nobles. The chapter about the siege of Irbil can support this argument. Here, the Catholicos made a huge effort in mediating the conflict between the citizens and authorities. The life of Mar Yaballaha III ended in 1317 in honorable modesty in monastery near Baghdad.

Generally, the Nestorian Church was in the certain competition or opposition with the rest religious institutions in the Mongol Empire and in Ilkhanate. The authorial biases towards religious authorities, nobles and khans reflect the historical context of the late medieval period. Henceforth, the political position of the Nestorian Church in the Mongol Imperial structure experienced different challenges and support. Thus, it shows the relationships between religious institutions and the Mongol leaders. Firstly, the author is quite biased in terms of presenting Mar Yaballaha as a part of divine revelation and God's choice.²² Specifically, the author exaggerates the revelations which Mar Yaballaha received right before his appointment to the position of the Catholicos of the East. The author tries to highlight the divine nature of these revelations and show that Mar Yaballaha was blessed by the God.²³ Apparently, the nomination of Mar Yaballaha could be a result not of the divine choice but rather political patronage of Ilkhans, previous Catholicos and charismatic prestige of Mar Yaballaha. Firstly, Mar Dengha I (1265-1281) granted the position of *Periodvt* to Mar Yaballaha due to his

²⁰ Nina Viktorovna Pigulevskaya, *Syriiskaya Srednevekovaya Istoriografiya*, (Saint Petersburg: Dmitri Bulanin, 2000), 716-717

²¹ Pigulevskaya, *Syriiskaya Srednevekovaya Istoriografiya*, 724-725

²² Pigulevskaya, 680-681

²³ Pigulevskaya, 691

personal favoritism.²⁴ Secondly, there is also an assumption that personal relations with Abaqa khan and his family could affect the election of Mar Yaballaha.²⁵ The author disguises the anthropoid nature of main characters and purposefully symbolizes his political success as the God's will. Hence, the author ignores the discourses which are central for understanding the political dynamics around Catholicos' thrown. However, a such representation highlights the significance of the Church in the Empire. The author constantly makes the emphasis that Mar Yaballaha was chosen by the God. Henceforward, the appeal to supernatural and unique transcendental position of the Church leader had to increase the authority of the institution. On the other hand, the author tries to demonize the oppositional forces to Mar Yaballaha III. Such social elements as Muslim amirs and oppositional bishops are depicted as barbaric, cunning, power seeking, greedy elements. They were blamed in torturing the Catholicos, massacres in Maragha and turned khans against Mar Yaballaha.²⁶ Hence, there is a duality in perception the reality of these times. The author clearly divides the society on good and evil through attitudes, beliefs and values which determine their relationships with Mar Yaballaha III and Raban Sauma. It is possible to state that the author artificially demonstrates an understatement of the other religious entities. Specifically, Muslims were not ideal and rightful people for the author. They tended to have a direct links with a bad part of a human nature. Amid the representation of Mar Yaballaha and his followers who were chosen by the God, the picture of Muslims in Ilkhanate was demonized. Henceforward, the author tried to show that Islam was not the right religion; and the Christianity was in a constant struggle with it. A such perception and ways of its representation clearly show the religious conflicts that create the meta-reality in Ilkhanate.

²⁴ Nina Viktorovna Pigulevskaya, *Syriiskaya Srednevekovaya Istoriografiya*, (Saint Petersburg: Dmitri Bulanin, 2000), 688

²⁵ Pigulevskaya, *Syriiskaya Srednevekovaya Istoriografiya*, 692

²⁶ Pigulevskaya, 696

Next, more clear examples will be provided that relate to each of the khans' period vis-à-vis the relationships between Islam and Christianity.

The dichotomic perception of khans who were either pro-Christian and either pro-Islamic put the shadow to the credibility and validity of the historical narrative. Particularly, the bias in understanding the role of Arghun khan to the political power of Nestorian authorities still exists since the anonym certainly created the image of the God blessed khan whose authority pushed forward the power of the Nestorian clergy in the court. The author used the historical events in the chapter 8 that for sure symbolizes prosperity of the Nestorians during Arghun khan. In this part the author mentions a huge feast, donations for churches and cultural non-verbal act of Turkic-Mongol tribes of placing the most respectful guests next to the master. Thus, these relationships clearly make the khan almost the saint for the Nestorians.²⁷ A such description is a vivid exaggeration, since it is not possible to assume that the Nestorian clergy never challenged any political interests of the khans. The figure of Aghun khan is to some extent controversial in terms of the favorability of the Nestorian clergy and the church. The Armenian sources describe that Arghun's interests in maintaining the centralized power over the territories of Ilkhanate prevailed his attitudes towards the Christianity. The case of Buka's uprising against Arghun khan was the most significant historical event that gives us a clue. This description shows that the khan could even suppress the Nestorians. According to Stephanos the Bishop, Buka was one of the powerful lords in Ilkhanate during the reign of Arghun khan. He was not happy with the policies and lifestyle that Arghun practiced. Henceforth, he decided to rebel against the sovereign. He gathered many lords to his fraction. However, his plot was exposed by Arghun and all people of his fraction were sentenced to

²⁷ Nina Viktorovna Pigulevskaya, *Syriiskaya Srednevekovaya Istoriografiya*, (Saint Petersburg: Dmitri Bulanin, 2000), 710-711

death.²⁸ Here, the Armenian priest has a reference to the figure of Shimon who was the Syriac priest and the chief doctor. As a result of his loyalty to Buka's plan, he was also executed to the death.²⁹ Therefore, the figure of Arghun khan and his attitudes towards the Nestorian clergy were complex since political interests of the khan shaped the policies towards Nestorian Christians. However, this exaggeration shows that the author tried to hide the political motives of Arghun khan. Thus, he claims that the khan strictly followed the right path of the God supporting the Nestorians. The reflection of the complexity of Arghun's attitudes towards Nestorians could disturb this idealized image. Therefore, these minor situations were intentionally erased by the author. Obviously, the Nestorian anonym incorporated Arghun khan and presented his image as almost rightful pro-Nestorian khan despite that he never converted to Christianity. Consequently, Arghun khan was opposed to Islamic ilkhans such as Ahmad-Tekuder with whom the first one fought in the battle and won with the help of the God. Henceforward, the struggle between Ahmad and Arghun clearly shows the conflict between Islam and Christianity. The bias of the author exaggerates the degree of this conflict. Nevertheless, the discourse of oppositional relationships between religious institutions could exist during this period, and the power struggle among the authorities could take a place in Ilkhanate.

The second methodological gap exists in the part of the narrative about the reign of Ahmad-Tekuder. He was a khan right before Arghun's empowerment. The author tried to depict him in a substantial negative light as a weak ruler and totally pro-Islamic khan. Specifically, the author insists that the khan was a puppet in the hands of the close nobles. As a result, the repression against Mar Yaballaha were committed by the command of Ahmad. In

²⁸ A. Galstyan, *Armyanskie Istochniki O Mongolah: Izvlecheniya Iz Rukopisey XIII-XIV Vv.*, (Moscow: Izdatelstvo Vostochnoy Literatury, 1962), 41

²⁹ Galstyan, *Armyanskie Istochniki O Mongolah: Izvlecheniya Iz Rukopisey XIII-XIV Vv.*, 41

the text the author claims that Shams-ad-Din, amir Shamut, shaykh Abdu-Rahman and couple Nestorian priests conspired the plot against Catholicos, and the khan could not see the truth. Consequently, Mar Yaballaha was accused in disloyalty to Ahmad and imprisoned.³⁰ The description of the khan could not be reliable since some historical narratives suggested the reverse. Particularly, the influence of the Muslim nobles to Ahmad khan were exaggerated and the khan was able to conduct the policies and laws regardless the approval of nobles. For instance, Rashid-ad-Din describes the event which happened during right after the coronation of Ahmad khan. According to the source, the khan did not trust to Madzh-al-Mulk, whom he suspected in support of prince Arghun. As a result, he was interrogated and sentenced to the death. Despite the petitions from Shams-ad-Din and other Muslim nobles to save him alive, Ahmad-Tekuder sentenced him to the death.³¹ Therefore, this event clearly shows that Ahmad was able to conduct the decisions by him own. Hence, the repressions against the Catholicos could be interpreted in a different way, since the complexity of the decision-making process exists. Particularly, the personal interest of khans in various spheres such as foreign policy or domestic centralization of the power shall be considered. The support of khan's decisions by the Muslim nobles could be just a coincidence, that is sufficient but not a necessary factor for determination the policy-making process. Hence, Ahmad Tekuder was not a weak and gutless ruler as the anonymous author described. Overall, in the passage the weak personality of Ahmad khan is in opposition with a strong personality of the Catholicos who outlived all limitations and hardships. It has some links to the leitmotiv about Christian martyrs and weak despotic pagan rulers of the Middle East. Therefore, there is also the overlapping with the opposition between Islam and Christianity. For the author Islam could not give a strong power

³⁰ Nina Viktorovna Pigulevskaya, *Syriiskaya Srednevekovaya Istoriografiya*, (Saint Petersburg: Dmitri Bulanin, 2000), 693-694

³¹ Rashīd al-Dīn, *Jami At-Tawarikh*. (Baku: Nagyl Evi. 2011), 151-152

that mainly is shown in the portrait of Ahmad, whereas the Christianity and the belief in God gave Mar Yaballaha spiritual forces to survive. Henceforward, this bias also reflects the dichotomic relationships between Islam and Christianity that existed during the rule of Ahmad khan. Apparently, a such presentation was exaggerated, however, the author tried to highlight the discourse of opposition to demonstrate the historical context of the oppositional relationships between Islam and Christianity.

Nevertheless, the complexity of Ghazan khan and his relationships with the Catholicos were described perfectly. This is one of the significances of the source to the historical events happened between 13th and 14th centuries in Ilkhanate. The reflection of the friendly relationships with a repressive nature of Ghazan's attitudes towards Christians of Ilkhanate is the pivotal narrative for readers and historians. Specifically, the author described that the massacres in Maragha and Irbil were the results of the centralization of Islam as a primary religion in Ilkhanate under the fraction of Ghazan khan and his followers. As a result, the Catholicos was punished, and his congregation was executed to the death.³² The author also provides hidden assumption that the centralization of Ghazan's authority had direct relationships with the Islamic discourse. Henceforth, the persecution of the Christians was a necessary step towards the achievement of the goal since this act would allow to attract important Muslim nobles. When the centralization was achieved the khan stopped the persecutions. The author is credible for explaining the role of Hetum II in termination the malicious acts against Christians. The same leitmotiv could be seen in the Armenian source. The chronicle of Sebastazi tells us that in 1295 king Hetum II had a trip to Ghazan khan and he was able to stop the persecutions against Christians.³³ Afterwards, the second half of

³² Nina Viktorovna Pigulevskaya, *Syriiskaya Srednevekovaya Istoriografiya*, (Saint Petersburg: Dmitri Bulanin, 2000), 726-727

³³ A. Galstyan, *Armyanskie Istochniki O Mongolah: Izvlecheniya Iz Rukopisey XIII-XIV Vv*, (Moscow: Izdatelstvo Vostochnoy Literatury, 1962), 31

Ghazan's rule were quite calm for Nestorians. Therefore, the anonymous author succeeded in describing the complexity of the relationships between Nestorians and Ghazan khan. Furthermore, the reflection of the policies of centralization of the power as well as importance of the foreign alliances provide a necessary reasoning which connects two dichotomic perceptions of Ghazan khan's image. Henceforward, this part could be considered as credible and useful for the Nestorian studies in Ilkhanate.

The source is important for understanding the political structure of Ilkhanate and the role of Nestorian Christianity in the political processes. The study of Eastern Christianity is one of the most underdeveloped fields of studies. Hence, this source can help to evaluate the role of Nestorians in different processes within Inner Asia. Therefore, it is possible to address several questions: what was the role of Nestorian Christians in the formation of the foreign politics of the Mongols, how can the relations between Christians and Muslims be described in Ilkhanate, to what extent did the failure of Nestorian Christianity affect the defeat of the Mongols in wars against Mamluks, how can be described the relations between Nestorians and khans? Hence, the source is very valuable for understanding the discourses between 13th and 14th centuries and their effects on formation the reality of politics, foreign relations, warfare etc. in Ilkhanate. However, the existence of the methodological gaps in perception of the Mongol rulers still exist and should be reapproached with underlining the political conditions of this time, particularly, the policies of centralization, foreign relationships and military campaigns should be taken into the account as well. Nevertheless, these biases certainly reflect the historical context of the Nestorian power development during Arghun, Ahmad and Ghazan khans. This valuable information is important since it shows the nature of the relationships among the religious institutions and between the Mongol establishment and the religious authorities.

Chapter 4

The political power of the Nestorian ecclesiastical authorities and the Mongol conquest of Mamluks between 1284 and 1304

The Mongol-Mamluk warfare was one of the drastic events in the history of the late medieval century. It had broad effects including the sustainability of the religious institutions such as Nestorians. The Nestorian Christianity was one of the most developed Abrahamic religion in the Mongol Empire. However, it is hard to imagine that Nestorians could not avoid impacts of the warfare, since any conflict always brings a lot of costs. Referring back to the previous scholarships, the political power of the Nestorian clergy was not discussed with a precise attention. Furthermore, their role in the European literature as the objects of the study had a link to the diplomatic power in the Mongol court and the process of the centralization during Ghazan khan. These scholars were Grousset and Pfeiffer.^{1 2} Russell tried to connect the foreign relationships, the warfare process and the political power of the Nestorians under one paradigm. However, her theory lacks methodological evidence.³ Thus, this study must be reevaluated. Analyzing the previous scholarships, it is possible to claim that there is no paradigm that could unite military, foreign, domestic and religious policies with a political power of the Nestorian Church in Ilkhanate. Furthermore, the studies don't clearly answer the question of the possible localization of the Nestorian power in Ilkhanate in the beginning of 14th century. The main aim of this part is to evaluate the existence and the possible nature of relationships between the military campaigns of Ilkhans against the Mamluk Sultanate and the political power of the Nestorian ecclesiastical authorities. Specific focus will be given to the

¹ René Grousset , [*L'empire Des Steppes.*] *The Empire Of The Steppes. A History Of Central Asia*" trans. Naomi Walford, (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1970).

² Judith Pfeiffer, "Reflections On A 'Double Rapprochement': Conversion To Islam Among The Mongol Elite During The Early Ilkhanate," In *Beyond The Legacy Of Genghis Khan*, ed. Linda Komaroff, 369-89. (Leiden: Brill, 2006)

³ Aubrey V. Russell, *The Nestorian Churches*, (New York: AMS Press, 1980)

period from Arghun khan to Ghazan khan reigns. Hence, the research period covers the time between 1284 and 1304. The main argument of this chapter is that the political power of the Nestorian ecclesiastical authorities in Ilkhanate was extremely high during the rule of Arghun khan but after the empowerment of Ghazan khan it was in declining trend. Specifically, this pattern could be explained by the argument that the political power of the Nestorian clergy was a significant political tool for maintaining the alliances both domestic and foreign which would possibly affect the success of the Mongol conquest of Mamluks. As a result, the political power of the Nestorians was shaped by the military necessities which khans experienced.

The first part will give the background analysis on the political power of the Nestorian clergy during the period from Caliphate to Ahmad khan's death and also will provide the nature of the relationships between Muslims and Nestorians; secondly, the analysis of the formation of the political power of the Nestorian clergy during the rule of Arghun khan will be given, thirdly, the essay will analyze the trend in political power of the clergies during the intermediary period; fourthly, the political power of the Nestorian authorities will be examined during the rule of Ghazan khan and finally, the conceptualization of the significance of the political power of the Nestorian ecclesiastical authorities to the warfare between Mongols and Mamluks will be reflected.

The political power of Nestorian clergy before the reign of Arghun khan

The Nestorian Church was longer existed before the Mongol conquest of the Middle East. They outlived the Sassanid rule and the Arab conquest and met the Inner Asian tribes before the rise of Chinggis khan. This part will give a short introduction to the political power of Nestorian clergy before the establishment of Arghun khan to the throne of Ilkhanate in 1284. Specifically, the part will discuss the political power of Nestorians from the Arab conquest until the death of the 3rd ilkhan Ahmad. The main argument here is that the political power of Nestorian clergy was very limited during the reigns of Muslim rulers before the Mongol

conquest. However, the invasion of Hulagu in 1261 and the rule of his successors up to Ahmad khan gave Nestorians an opportunity to restore their political privileges. During the empowerment of Ahmad khan there was again a decline in the political power of the Nestorian representatives. The main purpose of this part is to provide the initial point of the political power of the Nestorian Church for further determination of their oscillations from Arghun to Ghazan khans' periods. Also, it will be proven that the relationships among religious communities in the court of Ilkhans can be characterized as competitive and were shaped primarily by khans with different political discourses for maintaining the balancing served for political purposes.

The political power of the Nestorian clergy during the Islamic rule of Caliphate between 7th and 13th centuries can be characterized as limited and strictly controlled. Particularly, Christians had to follow special norms and laws which definitely discriminated them in a contrast to Muslim population. The cases of discrimination could vividly be seen in terms of imposition of jizya-kharaj taxes and wearing the special attributes on their clothes which showed their religious identity.⁴ Moreover, Christians were restricted to sit on horseback, wear weapons on public places. Moreover, it was not allowed to build new churches in a new city, but certainly it was allowed to restore the old ones.⁵ The cases of active repressions could be seen during the rule of Umar II, Mahdi and Mutawakkil. Specifically, many Christians were murdered and householdings were expropriated for the penalties. However, the main reason for that was the role of the warfare with Christian powers and inadequate reforms to taxation systems. Also, the Muslim rulers sometimes used to intervein in the internal politics of the Nestorian Church. The case of Mutawakkil (847-861) who

⁴ Aubrey V. Russell, *The Nestorian Churches*, (New York: AMS Press, 1980), 90

⁵ Russell, *The Nestorian Churches*, 95

deposed the Nestorian Catholicos Theodosius is a vivid example of the intervention.⁶ Despite the religious exemption from taxation the Nestorian clergy was sometimes ordered to pay jizya for the needs of Caliphate. Furthermore, the cases of destruction of churches by Muslim population was a result of laxly imposed system of *melets*, which sometimes gave the privileges to Christians over Muslims.⁷ At the same time the Nestorian clergy used to be hired for the political positions in Caliphate for scientific and educational jobs. Thus, it indicates their social status.⁸ Generally, the political power of the Nestorian clergy did not change so much in a contrast to the past times of living under Sassanids. Therefore, their political power can be characterized as limited and discriminated by the new masters.⁹

However, the Mongol conquest of the Middle East in the 13th century gave the opportunity for the Nestorian Church to rebalance the situation in terms of political power of Muslim population. Hulagu and his wife Dokuz khantun started to patronize the activities of the Nestorians and their institutions. Particularly, they were given certain privileges in terms of investments in building new churches, appointment to important political positions and abolishment of previous restrictions which discriminated their activities. For instance, Hulagu gifted to the Nestorian Catholicos the old castle of Caliph and abolished the law of prohibition of drinking the wine during Ramadan and wearing attributes for indication the religion.¹⁰ Furthermore, Dokuz khatun was perceived by Nestorians as a protector of Christians. Her patron activities resulted in granting welfare as a part of her charity activities.¹¹ Joseph refers

⁶ Aubrey V. Russell, *The Nestorian Churches*, (New York: AMS Press, 1980),, 95

⁷ Russell, *The Nestorian Churches*, 88-89

⁸ Russell, 87

⁹ Russell, 89

¹⁰ Russell, 146

¹¹ Russell, 146

to Bar Hebraeus and states that both Hulangu and Dokuz were equalized to Constantine and Helena for their protection of the Christianity.¹² Finally, there was a continuity that Nestorians were hired as administrators, scientists, doctors and teachers.¹³ Also, some Nestorians served in the Mongol army. The general Kitbugha is a vivid example.¹⁴ However, the political power of Nestorians did not exceed the power of Muslims. Specifically, the violent act of persecution the Christians for plundering the Muslims in Takrit is a vivid example of balancing their power.¹⁵ Therefore, the empowerment of Hulagu was a point of balancing the political privileges between Muslims and Nestorian Christians.

The establishment of Ahmad khan on the throne of Ilkhanate in 1282 caused troubles to the political power of the Nestorian clergy. Specifically, the Islamization of the khan caused the reorientation for Islamic support and consequently a lot of Muslim nobilities were appointed to the political positions. Also, there were short repressions against Nestorian clergy, and it was a factor of the damage to their political power. The vivid cases are the appointment of Shams-ad-Din and Abdr-Rahman who were Muslims and high representatives of the divan.¹⁶ It is also important to mention that Abaqa khan who ruled right before Ahmad khan between 1265 and 1282 introduced mainly Jews and Nestorian Christians to the court and discriminated Muslims.¹⁷ Hence, the introduction of Muslims to the court would mean the substitution of Nestorians and Jews. Hence, it is a vivid case of the decline in the political

¹² John Joseph, *Muslim-Christian Relations And Inter-Christian Rivalries In The Middle East*, (Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 1984), 16

¹³ Aubrey V. Russell, *The Nestorian Churches*, (New York: AMS Press, 1980), 145

¹⁴ Joseph, *Muslim-Christian Relations And Inter-Christian Rivalries In The Middle East*, 16

¹⁵ Russell. *The Nestorian Churches*, 147

¹⁶ Nina Viktorovna Pigulevskaya, *Syriiskaya Srednevekovaya Istoriografiya*, (Saint Petersburg: Dmitri Bulanin, 2000), 693

¹⁷ Richard Foltz, *Religions Of The Silk Road*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 123

power of Nestorians at the court of khan. Simultaneously, when Ahmad came to the throne the Nestorian clergy experienced short-term repressions. The Chronicles of Mar Yaballaha explicitly narrate that during the reign of Ahmad khan the Nestorian Catholicos became a victim of unjust conspiracy against his power by Muslim nobilities who were close to Ahmad khan.¹⁸ The khan sentenced him into the prison and wished to kill him. However, the mother of the khan was a Christian and influenced the decision to give a mercy to Catholicos and realized him from the prison.¹⁹ This story supports the argument that the Nestorian clergy and their institutional power experienced a slight decline during the empowerment of Ahmad khan. The repressions against the Catholicos and the empowerment of Muslim nobilities are good explanatory factors for the downward trend in the political power of the Nestorian clergy in Ilkhanate during Ahmad khan.

The relationships between Muslims and Christians in Ilkhanate can be characterized as competitive and the concept of power struggle can surely explain fluctuations and balancing. Particularly, the relationships between members of the royal family and religious authorities could become a significant factor for the process of power accumulation by the seconds. Hence, the political patronage for the one community could grant them political privileges that indicated their political power. Specifically, the first case again refers to the struggle between Mar Yaballaha and Muslim advisors of Ahmad khan. Muslim advisors tried to convince the khan to execute the Catholicos, whereas Mar Yaballaha was really disappointed and had a regret that Ahmad khan followed the advice of Muslims who were intriguing against him.²⁰ Hence, the regret was based on the unexpected decline in favorability for Mar Yaballaha by

¹⁸ Nina Viktorovna Pigulevskaya, *Syriiskaya Srednevekovaya Istorioografiya*, (Saint Petersburg: Dmitri Bulanin, 2000), 693-694

¹⁹ Pigulevskaya, *Syriiskaya Srednevekovaya Istorioografiya*, 693-694

²⁰ Pigulevskaya, 693-694

Ahmad khan (in a contrast to favorability by Abaqa khan). The accusations by Muslim advisors clearly show that the relationships were competitive since the Catholicos wished to restore his political status whereas Muslims tried to demolish his power and influence on the khan and the royal family. Therefore, the relationships between Islam and Christianity in the court of ilkhans were competitive. The second case refers to the political struggles between Christian and Muslim authorities in a form of literature. Specifically, both sides tried to connect their religious identity to khans or khans' family. Therefore, it would highlight the social status and the significance of their religion. Also, representatives tried to stress the significance of their religion and tried to negatively describe the oppositional. Rashid ad-Din while was writing *Jamih at-tawarikh* represented Ghazan khans in a solidarity with Islam.²¹ Specifically, the description of Ghazan khan was mainly positive. Hereby, the author refers to the process of the conversion to Islam.²² The author starts a narrative referring to a miracle birth of Ghazan khan in 1271. He highlights that the whole world was happy, and this khan was born under the lucky star.²³ Therefore, bless of Allah was seen in terms of his birth that signifies the role of Islam to his destiny. Furthermore, he glorifies Ghazan khan and his military and political success and refers to his conversion as the important factor of his victories. Particularly, the conversion gave him a power to attract people on his side. Therefore, even supporters of Baidu allied with him. Specifically, the author insists on the service to the Muslim-ruler.²⁴ Parallely, the bias towards Nestorians could be seen in the story about the ruler of Mawsilya. Fahr-I Isa, the Nestorian ruler, was described as a cruel ruler who despotically governed people. Hence, the

²¹Judith Pfeiffer, "Conversion Versions: Sultan Öljeytū's Conversion to Shi'ism (709/1309) in Muslim Narrative Sources," *Mongolian Studies* 22, no.3 (1999): 67, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/43193284>.

²² Rashīd al-Dīn, *Jami At-Tawarikh*, (Baku: Nagyl Evi, 2011), 251

²³ Rashīd al-Dīn, *Jami At-Tawarikh*, 251

²⁴ Rashīd al-Dīn, 254

justice of Ghazan khan against him helped citizens of Mawsilya to prosper.²⁵ Therefore, the bias towards Nestorians exists in the scholarship. Thus, the author presents this picture in contrast with the Islamic hero, almost a Messiah, whose personality reflects the power of Islam as a proper religion. Hence, the linguistic analysis showed that the success of the ruler was depended on Islam, and it was a matter of fatalism. Therefore, it can be concluded that the author used this bias to persuade the rightfulness of Islam. Also, the contrast between the Islamic protagonist and the Nestorian antagonist vividly depicts that the author tries to highlight the power and rightfulness of Islam. Thus, it reflects the competitive nature between Islam and Christianity. On the other hand, the anonymous Syriac chronicle showed that the author tried to connect khans with Christianity. Specifically, he appreciates and glorifies khans who patronized Christianity such as Abaqa and Arghun, at the same time all Muslim heroes of the narrative were represented as cruel, tricky demons who negatively affected the decisions of khans. Especially, when the description of Ghazan or Ahmad proceeds all their Muslim followers such as Shams Ad-Din or Nowruz were presented with negative attitudes.²⁶ Moreover, he insists on baptism of Arghun's son that significantly increases the prestige of Christianity.²⁷ All books were mainly written for the court and hereby the religious discourses of the author tried to influence the current or future khans in a favor for their own religion.²⁸ Therefore, the competition between Muslims and Christian authorities could be seen even in literatures in terms of persuading in the rightfulness of the religions. There were no stories about the involvement of Christians and Muslims to the conversions of ilkhans in a form of

²⁵ Rashīd al-Dīn, *Jami At-Tawarikh*, (Baku: Nagyl Evi, 2011), 303

²⁶ Nina Viktorovna Pigulevskaya, *Syriiskaya Srednevekovaya Istoriografiya*, (Saint Petersburg: Dmitri Bulanin, 2000), 693, 716

²⁷ Pigulevskaya, *Syriiskaya Srednevekovaya Istoriografiya*, 693, 711.

²⁸ Judith Pfeiffer, "Conversion Versions: Sultan Öljejtü's Conversion to Shi'ism (709/1309) in Muslim Narrative Sources," *Mongolian Studies* 22, no.3 (1999): 67, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/43193284>.

competition, as it was described in the story about Baba Tukles and the conversion of Uzbek khan (Golden Horde).²⁹ Neither there were no stories as in Rubruck's account who witnessed a theological competition among Nestorian Christians, Muslims and Shamans in front of Mongke khan (Yuan court).³⁰ Hence, the linguistic discourse and content analyses are the only forms of proofs for understanding the nature of the relationships among religious confessions in Ilkhanate. As a result, that the nature of the relationships between Islamic and Christian authorities at the Ilkhanate court was a competitive which explains the power struggle between them.

The formation of the political power of the Nestorian clergy during Arghun khan

The Nestorian political power in Ilkhanate experienced oscillations during various khans. The first case of the political power of the Nestorians in the Mongol court will be explored during the reign of Arghun khan who ruled between 1284 and 1291. The main question of this part is how the power of Nestorian clergy was shaped by the Mongol conquest of the Middle East during the reign of Arghun khan and why it was significant. The main argument is that the power of Nestorians experienced upward shift due to the military ambitions of Arghun khan to maintain the potential alliances with the Christian powers based on the pro-Christian identity. Specifically, the political power of the Nestorian ecclesiastical establishment was shaped by granting political positions, institutional empowerment and showing the personal patronage in a form of wealth and non-quantifiable benefits.

Firstly, the Mongol warfare against the Mamluk Sultanate affected the granting of the political privileges within diplomatic power to the Nestorians clergy. Thus, the diplomatic power contributed to the political power of Nestorian ecclesiastical authorities in the court of

²⁹ Devin A DeWeese, *Islamization And Native Religion In The Golden Horde*, (University Park, Pa: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1994)

³⁰ Christopher Dawson, *Mission To Asia*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press in association with the Medieval Academy of America, 2008), 201-206

Arghun khan. The diplomatic power is a part of the political power since Nestorian clergies could shape the foreign relationships between kingdoms. Henceforth, the diplomatic empowerment is a shift in a political power of Nestorians in Ilkhanate. The cases of Isa Kelemenchi and Raban Sauma support this argument. Isa Kelemenchi was a Nestorian monk, physician and astronomist who served both courts of Yuan China and Ilkhanate. According to Rashid ad-Din he was very close to Kublai khan. Therefore, the Great khan paid a huge attention to his advice.³¹ Moreover, within the court of ilkhans he served as the ambassador to the Latin kingdoms. Specifically, in 1285 he was sent by Arghun khan as the head of the delegation to negotiate with the Catholic Pope Honorius IV about the coordinative attack to Egypt.^{32 33} The other figure was a Nestorian vicar named Raban Sauma, who as Isa was the Mongol ambassador to Catholics. He also tried to maintain the military relationships with the European powers against the Mamluk Sultanate. Specifically, the political power of Raban Sauma was high to the extent that he individually was appointed in 1287 to lead the negotiations with the Pope, the king of England and the king of France. Raban Sauma as the official Mongol ambassador received *yarlyq* which was a document of his official status as the ambassador and the representative of the khan's will.³⁴ Hence, during his visit to Rome and France he was recognized and welcomed by the courts of foreign actors. Here, the negotiations on the military affairs were very essential for the Mongols. Specifically, the authority of the Nestorian monk was high in Ilkhanate since he was a vicar of the Church. Therefore, he was recognized by Arghun khan for further promotion for his reliability and expertise in affairs of

³¹ Rashīd al-Dīn, *Jami At-Tawarikh*, (Baku: Nagyl Evi, 2011), 176

³² William Bayne Fisher, Ilya Gershevitch, and Ehsan Yar Shater, *The Cambridge History Of Iran*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 371

³³ Peter Jackson, *The Mongols And The West, 1221-1410*, (New York: Routledge, 2005), 168

³⁴ Nina Viktorovna Pigulevskaya, *Syriiskaya Srednevekovaya Istoriografiya*, (Saint Petersburg: Dmitri Bulanin, 2000), 697

Christians.³⁵ The delegation of the power to speak after the name of Arghun khan on the foreign arena and a consequent discussion of the opportunities to regulate the issues of the warfare are the vivid cases of the importance of the Nestorian monks in the court of Mongols. The diplomatic empowerment of Nestorians brought them an opportunity to coordinate military affairs and security issues of the ulus and Middle Eastern region. The extent to which their efforts were successful is another question. However, before Arghun khan Nestorian monks almost did not participate in diplomatic negotiations processes between Europe and Mongol Empire. Therefore, Arghun's reign was a period of an upward shift in diplomatic privileges of Nestorians and their political power. Considering that before Nestorians did not have any diplomatic power, the delegation to coordinate foreign affairs was a significant shift for Nestorians. The cases of Isa Kelemenchi and Raban Sauma explicitly show that the political power of the Nestorians experienced upward shift, because the warfare with Mamluks affected the cooperation with Europe. Thus, Nestorian clergies became important intermediaries in this process.

During the power of Arghun khan the rapid institutionalization of the Assyrian Christianity also took a place. In particular, the khans' policies that attempted to develop the relationships with the European powers against the Mamluk Sultanate contributed to the development of the Nestorian churches and the restoration of old ones within Ilkhanate. Henceforward, the institutionalization of Nestorians (as a part of the anti-Mamluk campaign) during the reign of Arghun khan is the indicator of the upward shift in the political power of the Nestorian ecclesiastical authorities. The Syriac source narrates that Arghun khan ordered to build the new church near the khan's court. Also, he helped to restore old churches in Shalita

³⁵ Nina Viktorovna Pigulevskaya, *Syriiskaya Srednevekovaya Istoriografiya*, (Saint Petersburg: Dmitri Bulanin, 2000, 696

and Maragha. The cost of the church was amounted 105000 zuze.³⁶ This narrative clearly shows the rise in the institutional power of the Nestorian clergy in Ilkhanate. The contribution of the Nestorian clergy to the attempts in maintaining anti-Mamluk alliances with the Europeans affected this shift in institutional power. The author concludes the story of building the church with a sentence: “*In the days of Arghun’s reign Nestorian Church was strengthened*”.³⁷ David Wilmshurst also supports this argument and states that during Arghun’s reign new churches were built. Hereby, he uses the archaeological evidence from the territories of Mesopotamia of the 13th century: Mar Awgin, Mar Shallita, Mar Mari, Mar Giwargiz and monastery of Saint John were established during Arghun khan’s reign.³⁸ The building of the new churches is a vivid proof that signifies the expansion of the Nestorian influence. Therefore, the Nestorian clergy became more competitive and challenging political power to Muslims who were the majority in Ilkhanate. Overall, building churches and investments into them were the policies that shifted their political influence. These discourses attempted to intensify the cooperation with the Europeans. Hence, the political power of the Nestorian ecclesiastical authorities experienced expansion due to the institutional development of the Nestorian Christianity.

Finally, the personal favorability of Arghun khan for Nestorian clergy affected the rise in the political power of the Nestorian ecclesiastical authorities. Thus, Nestorian clergies received non-measurable benefits which indicated the social status and the power in the court. These acts were important to develop a necessary reciprocity in relationships between Ilkhanate and Europeans since they could influence the success of the war with Mamluks. Hence, the

³⁶ Nina Viktorovna Pigulevskaya, *Syriiskaya Srednevekovaya Istoriografiya*, (Saint Petersburg: Dmitri Bulanin, 2000), 710

³⁷ Pigulevskaya, *Syriiskaya Srednevekovaya Istoriografiya*, 711.

³⁸ David Wilmshurst, *The Ecclesiastical Organisation Of The Church Of The East, 1318 – 1913*, (Lovanii: Peeters 2000), 17.

khan domestically had to express the favorability towards Christians. The patronage activities are evident in the Syriac source. Particularly, Arghun khan expressed his personal respect of the Catholicos and also granted him many social privileges. These privileges indicate close ties between the royal family and the leader of Nestorian Church. For instance, the Catholicos received a privilege to baptize Arghun khan's son. Hence, it indicates that the khan tried to bring the Catholicos close to his family.³⁹ Also, during the big feast Arghun khan gave to Mar Yaballaha a place near to him and demonstrated to everybody his exclusiveness in the court.⁴⁰ Therefore, the personal favorability of the khan clearly demonstrates the high extent of the political power of the Nestorian clergy. Thus, it affects the perception of him as being in close ties with to the establishment of the Mongol court in Ilkhanate. As a result of patron relationships, Arghun khan followed advice of Mar Yaballaha including political ones. For example, the Catholicos shared his advice to Arghun khan of giving a mercy to oppositional groups which supported the previous khan. It demonstrates how the political decisions were influenced by the Catholicos.⁴¹ Overall, the political power of the Nestorian clergy experienced the upward shift during the reign of Arghun khan. The discourses of granting political positions, wealth, personal favorability, institutional developments and other forms of political discourses clearly explain this trend. However, the question of why it was significant for the Mongols to grant the political power to Nestorian authorities during Arghun's reign is still open.

Arghun khan continued the military and foreign politics of his father. Particularly, he had the ambition to conquer the Mamluk territories. The primary source narrates that Arghun

³⁹ Nina Viktorovna Pigulevskaya, *Syriiskaya Srednevekovaya IstorioGRAfiya*, (Saint Petersburg: Dmitri Bulanin, 2000), 711

⁴⁰ Pigulevskaya, *Syriiskaya Srednevekovaya IstorioGRAfiya*, 710

⁴¹ Pigulevskaya, 695-696

khan had the similar ambitions as his father and as a good son he would like to continue the conquest of the rest Muslim territories on the west. However, without the support of European powers it would not be possible. Specifically, Arghun claimed that “*If western kings do not help me, I will not be able to realize my willingness*”.⁴² Hence, it was important to attract additional forces to realize the ambitions of the khan. Back to Nestorian authorities, the development of the political power of the Nestorian clergy in Ilkhanate was significant to the success of the Mongol campaign against Mamluks. Specifically, pro-Christian identity in Ilkhanate was important strategic tool for maintaining the alliances against Mamluks. Hereby, Arghun khan used different methods to stimulate the political power of the Nestorian Christians: granting them wealth and political positions, expressing his personal patronage and stressing their institutional power. Particularly, he would expect that pro-Christian identity would stimulate the military relationships with Europeans. The role of the Nestorian ambassadors to the European kingdoms shows that the pro-Christian identity of the Mongols would be a good matter for cooperation. The case of Raban Sauma clearly supports this statement. During his conversations with the Pope about the military cooperation proposed by Arghun khan, the last granted him Christian relics and valuable gifts which signify the positive attitudes of the Pope to cooperate with the Mongols on the basis of the pro-Christian identity.⁴³ For instance, for Mar Yaballaha he gave the golden crown and phita (a ring which symbolizes the power of the Church), for Raban Sauma he gifted 1500 coins of the gold, the brother kiss and granted him permission to freely enter Catholic churches. Finally, for Arghun khan he also sent some gifts.⁴⁴ This gesture clearly shows the positive attitudes to cooperate with the

⁴² Nina Viktorovna Pigulevskaya, *Syriiskaya Srednevekovaya Istoriografiya*, (Saint Petersburg: Dmitri Bulanin, 2000), 696.

⁴³ Pigulevskaya, *Syriiskaya Srednevekovaya Istoriografiya*, 709.

⁴⁴ Pigulevskaya, 709

Mongols on the basis of pro-Christian identity of the ambassadors and the khan. Moreover, the Pope and the king of England Edward were impressed by Arghun khan who was perceived as the protector of Middle Eastern Christianity. This theme occurs several times in the narrative of the dialogue between the vicar and the Pope.⁴⁵ Therefore, the military cooperation could be reached, and the religious similarities were pushing factors to maintain the alliance. Hence, the pro-Christian oriented identity of the ilkhan was a significant factor to the military cooperation between the Mongols and the Europeans against the Mamluk Sultanate. The counterexample to the Christian identity of the Mongols and its role in the Mongol conquest refers to the case of Islamization of Ahmad khan. Specifically, Ahmad khan surrounded himself with Sunni Muslims. He also granted them many political positions within his court. Khwandamir states that Ahmad Sultan appointed Khwaja Ala'uddin Ata-Malik to the administrative and finance positions and then he appointed him to govern Baghdad. Thus, this evidence clearly shows the pro-Islamic attitudes of Ahmad khan.⁴⁶ Moreover, Ahmad khan used anti-Christian discourse to highlight his pro-Islamic power. Specifically, the slander of Mar Yaballaha for his sympathy to Arghun clearly proves this. The Catholicos faced a lot of issues, since Muslim servants who were close to the khan practiced rumors to belie him.⁴⁷ Hence, the identity of Ahmad was clearly pro-Islamic in the context of Christian-Islamic opposition. Additionally, Ahmad khan tried to cooperate with Mamluks instead of European Christians. Thus, it affected a short-term exit of Ilkhanate from the warfare with the Mamluk Sultanate. This peace treaty was based on the idea of Islamic solidarity between Sultanates. Simultaneously, he also signed trade and pass

⁴⁵ Nina Viktorovna Pigulevskaya, *Syriiskaya Srednevekovaya Istoriografiya*, (Saint Petersburg: Dmitri Bulanin, 2000), 705, 710

⁴⁶ Ghiyās ad-Dīn Muḥammad Khwāndamīr, *Habibu's-Siyar*, trans. Wheeler Thackston, (Cambridge: Harvard University, 1994.), 67

⁴⁷ Pigulevskaya, *Syriiskaya Srednevekovaya Istoriografiya*, 693

agreements with Mamluks.⁴⁸ Therefore, the presentation of khan's religious identity affected significantly the Mongol conquest of Mamluks. Ahmad khan converted to Islam and presented himself as the Islamic ruler. This image affected the end of the Mamluk-Ilkhanate warfare. On the other hand, Arghun khan stimulated his pro-Christian image. This discourse was important to attract potential alliances from Europe against Mamluks. Henceforth, the development of the Nestorian Christianity in Ilkhanate was important strategic tool to present himself as a pro-Christian ruler. Consequently, this pro-Christian image positively affected the attempts to maintain the relationships with the European powers which hypothetically should result in a successful anti-Mamluk coordinative measures.

Hence, during Arghun khan the political power of the Nestorian clergy was highly influential and experienced the upward shift. Specifically, the political patronage of the khan in terms of granting the political positions to Nestorian clergy, the development of Nestorian churches within Ilkhanate and the expression of the personal favorability for the Catholicos affected upward shift in the political power of Nestorians in Ilkhanate. The major conclusion is that Arghun khan was perceived as a pro-Christian ruler who highly patronized the Nestorian development. Overall, the military necessities affected the demand in cooperation with Europeans. As a result, the development of the Nestorian power was an essential tool in terms of the creation the pro-Christian image to maintain the necessary alliances with Europeans to succeed in the Mongol conquest of Mamluks.

The political power of the Nestorians during the intermediary period

The political power of Nestorians after the death of Arghun khan in 1291 did not change. The primary source suggests that after the death of Arghun khan, Gaikatu khan supported Nestorians as well as his predecessor. Specifically, the anonymous author states that

⁴⁸ Linda Komaroff, *Beyond The Legacy Of Genghis Khan*, (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 286

Gaikatu gifted Mar Yaballaha everything that he wanted and granted him 6000 zuze, 2 mules, coat and other valuable gifts.⁴⁹ These gifts show the matter of respect and close relationships between the khan and the Nestorian Catholicos. However, the attitude of Gaikatu khan was the same for every religious community. He did not differentiate or gave special privileges to any of the religious group. The narrative suggests that he gave official provisions to all representatives of religions and honored all heads of the confessions.⁵⁰ However, unlike Arghun khan Gaikatu did not use Nestorians to maintain military relations with Europeans. Specifically, there were no records about extensive collaborative relations between Mongols and Europeans. Possibly, it was due to the short reign of Gaikatu khan. Hence, the political power of Nestorians did not change.

The successor of Gaikatu was Baidu who overthrew him in 1295 and became the 6th ilkhan. However, his power was very short. Therefore, he could not influence the power of Nestorians. Overall, the intermediary period took four years (1291-1295), and the political processes (also military) did not affect the political power of the Nestorians. However, it is not possible to extract the connection and significance of the political power of Nestorian clergy to the warfare of Mongols and Mamluks due to the lack of primary sources on this period. However, during the intermediary period the active forms of warfare did not occur, and Mongol elites were dealing with power struggles inside Ilkhanate. Therefore, both variables of the warfare process and the political power of the Nestorian clergy remained unchanged. Hence, it is hard to evaluate the significances of these factors at intermediary period.

The political power of the Nestorian clergy during Ghazan khan

The death of Baidu in 1295 and the establishment of Gazan khan became the crucial point for the decline of the Nestorian community. The main argument of this part is that the

⁴⁹ Nina Viktorovna Pigulevskaya, *Syriiskaya Srednevekovaya Istoriografiya*, (Saint Petersburg: Dmitri Bulanin, 2000), 712

⁵⁰ Rashīd al-Dīn, *Jami At-Tawarikh*, (Baku: Nagyl Evi. 2011), 199-200

political power of the Nestorian clergy had declined since the Nestorian clergies became obstacles for the centralization of the personal power of Ghazan khan and consequent Mongol-Mamluk warfare. Secondly, they became unnecessarily political tool for maintaining the relations with the Catholic powers against Mamluks. Henceforth, the institutional damages and political repressions against Nestorians affected the decline in the political power of Nestorian ecclesiastical authorities.

Firstly, the political power of the Nestorian clergy experienced the damage to the religious institutions during the empowerment of Ghazan khan. The period from the reign of Arghun khan to the intermediary one was a renaissance of the political power of the Nestorian clergy and their religious institutions. However, Ghazan's coming to power in 1295 signaled the start of the eclipse for the Christian institutions. Specifically, the devastation to the Nestorian churches and the massacres against the congregation are the main explanatory factors that underline the decline in the political power of the Nestorian institutionalism in Ilkhanate. The case from the History of Mar Yaballaha III examines the devastation of churches across Ilkhanate. Hereby, it is a vivid case of institutional damage. Specifically, the source narrates that *When Ghazan khan came to power the dark times were for the Nestorians*.⁵¹ Then the author exemplifies that churches in Irbil were highly damaged and churches in Tabriz, Mosul were completely destroyed to the basis. Finally, the church in Baghdad was appropriated by Muslims and had been redeemed for a high sum of money.⁵² Also, the author focuses on raids against churches in Shalita. Hereby, the relics, the vessels for eucharist and everything that was valuable were stolen.⁵³ The congregation prayed for the help saying: "*Reprobates (Mongol-*

⁵¹ Nina Viktorovna Pigulevskaya, *Syriiskaya Srednevekovaya Istoriografiya*, (Saint Petersburg: Dmitri Bulanin, 2000), 715

⁵² Pigulevskaya, *Syriiskaya Srednevekovaya Istoriografiya*, 721

⁵³ Pigulevskaya, 717

Muslims) destroyed our churches, where we used to pray diligently, desecrated altars in front of which we had not served properly"⁵⁴ Hence, these facts explicitly show that the institutional power of the Nestorian Church was damaged significantly during the empowerment of Ghazan khan. Hence, the political power of the Nestorian clergy was damaged since religious institutions are one of the pillars for the power of religious authorities.

Secondly, the decline of the political power of Nestorian ecclesiastical authorities was a result of the political repressions against clergy. The empowerment of Ghazan khan was followed by the oppressions against the ecclesiastical authorities of the Nestorian Church. The picture was completely vice versa to the situation during Arghun's reign, when the political patronage shifted up the political status of the Nestorian clergy. Repressions clearly show that a particular group of society is insecure and has a lack of power to secure themselves. The history of the Catholicos of the Church of the East and particularly, the repressions against him during Ghazan's reign are the closest description of how the political power of the Nestorian clergy declined. The first case refers to the racketeering charges against the Catholicos. Particularly, Mar Yaballaha was asked to return the gifts of Gaikatu khan in a sum of 10000 dinars by the order of Nowruz amir. This person who one of the supporters of Ghazan khan.⁵⁵ Catholicos had to take a loan to return the sum of money. Moreover, the author describes the welfare of the Catholicos saying that Mar Yaballaha was without any means, beasts of burden and mounts.⁵⁶ Hence, the impoverishment of the Nestorian authority was a vivid case of the repressions against the clergy. The second case refers to the physical type of repressions against the Nestorian Catholicos. The story tells that Mar Yaballaha was taken from the church in

⁵⁴ Nina Viktorovna Pigulevskaya, *Syriiskaya Srednevekovaya Istoriografiya*, (Saint Petersburg: Dmitri Bulanin, 2000), 716-717

⁵⁵ Pigulevskaya, *Syriiskaya Srednevekovaya Istoriografiya*, 718

⁵⁶ Pigulevskaya, 718

Maragha and in the next day he was tortured and bitten by the Muslim followers of Ghazan khan.⁵⁷ He was bitten with iron stick to his chest, back and legs. Finally, the executors wished to take contribution and asked Catholicos to convert to Islam.⁵⁸ These stories show that the Nestorian clergy experienced violent acts during Ghazan khan. Specifically, physical attacks and expropriation of the welfare are the vivid cases of the repression. Consequently, these acts are the indicators of the decline in the political power of the Nestorian clergy.

The political power of the Nestorian clergy experienced had a declining trend during Ghazan khan's reign. Particularly, the cases of repressions against them and damage to their institutions are the main signifiers of the eclipse. Therefore, from the reign of Arghun khan to the reign of Ghazan khan the power of Nestorian ecclesiastical authorities was diminishing. However, the question of why the political power of the Nestorian clergy had declined is still open. The main argument here is that Nestorians became the obstacle for political-military ambitions of Ghazan khan. Also, they became insufficient political instrument to maintain the potential alliance with the European powers. Hence, next paragraphs will explain the reasoning behind the damage in the political power of Nestorian clergy connecting this policy with centralization of Ghazan's power and consequent military conquest against Mamluks. Secondly, this paper also will present the connections of the decline in the power of Nestorian ecclesiastical authorities with insufficiency to provide a solid influence to stimulate the relationships with European powers against the Mamluk Sultanate.

Firstly, the political standing of Ghazan khan will be presented. Pfeiffer suggests that the quantity of the Muslim amirs sharply increased after the death of Arghun khan in 1291.⁵⁹

⁵⁷ Nina Viktorovna Pigulevskaya, *Syriiskaya Srednevekovaya Istoriografiya*, (Saint Petersburg: Dmitri Bulanin, 2000), 716

⁵⁸ Pigulevskaya, *Syriiskaya Srednevekovaya Istoriografiya*, 716

⁵⁹ Judith Pfeiffer, "Reflections On A 'Double Rapprochement': Conversion To Islam Among The Mongol Elite During The Early Ilkhanate," In *Beyond The Legacy Of Genghis Khan*, ed. Linda Komaroff. (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 374

In fact, this event affected the reorientation of the khan to Islam. Specifically, the khan tried to oppose Baidu and the major political source of his power were Muslim amirs. The narrative from Mar Yaballaha Chronicles shows that the death of Baidu was a result of internal intrigues of “*Arabs*”.⁶⁰ Possibly the author calls Sunni aristocracy who supported Ghazan in his pathway to power. Moreover, Rashid ad-Din as well as anonymous author of the Chronicle of Mar Yaballaha exemplify the role of Nowruz who participated in the conversion of Ghazan khan.⁶¹ Therefore, referring to *arabs* the anonymous author could refer to individuals such as Nowruz. Pfeiffer states that the centralization of the authority of the khan demanded a new source of power, which Sunni Muslims and the conversion to Islam could contribute.⁶² Parallely, to legitimize a personal authority, Ghazan khan tried to demolish the oppositional religious fractions such as Nestorians who represented the legacy of the previous khans. This legacy based on the pro-Christian ideology. Consequently, the acts of repressions highlighted the role of Islam to the khan’s power.⁶³ In fact, the demolishment of the previous pillars of ilkhan’s legitimacy was a necessary step to create the image of the ideal Islamic ruler who had a divine right to rule *dar al-Islam*. Before Ghazan khan’s reign, the Mongol legitimacy in Islamic territories was partial since Mongols were infidels and submitted to non-Muslim rulers of the Yuan dynasty. Therefore, the conversion as well as the repressions had created the legitimate path to rule Ilkhanate since these policies distinguished Ghazan from the previous rulers such as Abaqa and Arghun. Abaqa and Arghun practiced Inner Asian paganism and surrounded

⁶⁰ Nina Viktorovna Pigulevskaya, *Syriiskaya Srednevekovaya Istoriografiya*, (Saint Petersburg: Dmitri Bulanin, 2000), 715

⁶¹ Rashīd al-Dīn, *Jami At-Tawarikh*, (Baku: Nagyl Evi. 2011), 219

⁶² Judith Pfeiffer, "Reflections On A 'Double Rapprochement': Conversion To Islam Among The Mongol Elite During The Early Ilkhanate," in *Beyond The Legacy Of Genghis Khan*, ed. Linda Komaroff, (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 274

⁶³ Bertold Spuler, *History Of The Mongols*, (New York: Barnes & Noble Books, 1996), 34

themselves with non-Muslims.⁶⁴ Furthermore, analyzing Ghazan's and Ahmad's legitimacies the first was far more religiously legitimate and independent ruler rather than Ahmad. In particular, the coin studies show that Ahmad used actively the formula which connects his Islamic identity with the submission to Yuan court (non-Muslims) saying *in the name of Kagan*, whereas Ghazan fully rejected this part.⁶⁵ He presented himself as *Padishah of the World, Shahin Shan of the Earth* etc.⁶⁶ However, generally there are no records at the back of the coins about his submission to Yuan court. Therefore, Ghazan could be considered as a more legitimate Islamic ruler than all previous ilkhans. Parallely, it is important to mention that the relationships between Muslims and Christians were still competitive. The acts of violence in terms of power struggle are vivid during Ghazan's reign. Therefore, the persecution of the Christians was a necessarily tool for maintaining the centralization of the Ghazan khan's Islamic authority. The narrative from the chronicles supports this argument referring to the purge of Christians of Irbil and Maragha.⁶⁷ The massive bloodbath, destruction of churches, robbery of Christian shrines and tortures of Mar Yaballaha III by Muslims were the outcomes of religious policies of Ghazan khan. Hence, the formation of the political power of Ghazan khan was a matter of alliances with Sunni Muslims. Thus, he could legitimize personal power. As a result of these policies Ghazan khan could maintain the unique control in Ilkhanate.⁶⁸ The conversion to Islam gave to Ghazan khan the power to legitimize his rule in Ilkhanate and ally with important domestic nobles who helped him to overcome his political enemies.

⁶⁴ Denise Aigle, *The Mongol Empire Between Myth And Reality*, (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 260-261

⁶⁵ Thomas T. Allsen, *Culture And Conquest In Mongol Eurasia*, (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press), 26

⁶⁶ Allsen, *Culture And Conquest In Mongol Eurasia*, 32

⁶⁷ Nina Viktorovna Pigulevskaya, *Syriiskaya Srednevekovaya Istoriografiya*, (Saint Petersburg: Dmitri Bulanin, 2000), 716-719

⁶⁸ René Grousset, [*L'empire Des Steppes.*] *The Empire Of The Steppes. A History Of Central Asia*" trans. Naomi Walford. (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1970), 378-379

Specifically, Khwandamir states that Ghazan khan with a help of Nowruz persecuted his political enemies such as Ujai son of Baraq khan, who rebelled against him.⁶⁹ The rebel was overwhelmed by Nowruz successfully. Sadr-I Jahan who was a minister of the divan. He was also persecuted because of accusation in robbery and corruption. The oppositional Mongol-Nestorian nobles Soga, Barla were also persecuted, since they wished to assassinate Nowruz and Ghazan.⁷⁰ Hence, the conversion to Islam helped Ghazan khan to legitimize his power by persecuting the oppositional forces using the power of Sunni Muslim nobilities.

Here, it is the inflection point that connects the process of centralization the power of the khan and his military ambitions to conquer the Mamluk Sultanate. As a result, Ghazan khan could maintain the domestic reforms which resulted in rapid development of Ilkhanate's power. One of the measures concerned with the supply of the military. Specifically, Ghazan khan attributed the laws which granted the military soldiers the right to have lands and householdings from the government.⁷¹ Henceforth, Ghazan khan contributed to the regulation of the supply management which was highly important at the battles in desert lands. Secondly, Ghazan khan subsidized the military armories from the taxes collected. The newly centralized system of arm supply allowed Mongols to modernize the military equipment solving the issue of the disproportional quality of arms among the soldiers.⁷² As a result of modernization, the army of Ilkhanate became stronger than before and could possibly overcome the Mamluk army. Despite the conversion Ghazan khan surprisingly did not give up his ambitions to conquer the Mamluk territories as his ancestors did. The victory in the third battle of Homs is a vivid result of these

⁶⁹ Ghiyāś ad-Dīn Muḥammad Khwāndamīr, *Habibu's-Siyar*, trans. Wheeler Thackston, (Cambridge: Harvard University, 1994.), 68

⁷⁰ Khwāndamīr, *Habibu's-Siyar*, 68

⁷¹ Khwāndamīr, 101

⁷² Khwāndamīr, 102

military reforms.⁷³ The primary source of Shaykh Uveis narrates that in 1299 the forces of Ghazan khan supported the forces of Choban, Yassavul and Ilbasmysh. The army of Mamluks was broken and it resulted to victory at Homs. Then, the khan decided to march to Damascus and easily took the city. Citizens and amir Nasr ibn-Alfi tried to give the rebuff but it was in vain. Finally, the khan appointed Kutlug-kai to be the governor of Damaskus and sent Choban to support his power in Syria.⁷⁴ Hence, the centralization of Ghazan's power had a certain effect to the modernization of the military system that also explained the success of the military campaign against Mamluks. Overall, the persecution of Christians was one of the necessarily tools to maintain the new source of power. Therefore, being an obstacle to maintain the successful campaign against Mamluks the Nestorian clergy lost their political power.

However, the argument could be reoriented in a different way. There is a question of Gazahn khan, being strategist, deprived himself from the opportunity to maintain the alliance with the Europeans by persecuting the Christians. Specifically, the patron relations with Christian community which were the primary source for the maintaining the relations with the European powers were completely devastated. The second reason refers to Nestorians as unnecessarily political tool for maintaining the relations with the Catholic powers. The major reason is that Frank ambassadors substituted Nestorian clergy at their diplomatic positions. Consequently, it did not affect damage to the attempts in Mongol Frank alliance. During Ghazan khan, the communications with the Frankish kingdoms was proceeded via Franks who served in the court of khan. The primary sources give the names of Buscarel of Gisolf and Bernard of Entenca who served as intermediaries between Franks and Mongols. Specifically, Buscarel of Gisolf was a Latin noble who served since the death of Arghun khan in the court

⁷³ Reuven Amitai, *Mongols And Mamluks: The Mamluk-Ilkhanid War, 1260-1281*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 102

⁷⁴ Vladimir Tizengauzen, *Sbornik Materialov Otnosyashihsy k Istorii Zolotoi Ordy*, (Moscow: Izdatelstvo Akademii Nauk SSSR, 1941), 78

of ilkhans. During Ghazan khan he was a primary diplomat who dealt with questions of the military cooperation. The accounts do not provide the information about the political involvement of the Nestorians in the foreign relations of Ilkhans.⁷⁵ Hence, the active political engagement of Franks, the absence of records about Nestorians who served to the khan and the previous purges to Nestorians mean that the Nestorians were no longer active intermediaries. However, the attempts to cooperate did not fail, specifically, the Mongols could maintain the cooperative military campaign against Mamluks with Henry VI the king of Cyprus during the first invasion to Syria. The letter of Ghazan to Pope Boniface VIII show that the negotiations still continued. Specifically, the khan asked the military support after the failure during Ruan military operation.⁷⁶ Hence, the Nestorian clergy were no longer necessarily tool to maintain the relationships with the European kingdoms since the cooperation proceeded without their engagement. Therefore, pro-Christian identity was no longer necessarily tool for the alliances. Possibly, the concept *enemy of my enemy is my friend* is more applicable for understanding Catholic-Ilkhanate partnership. However, this question will be analyzed in other essays.

To sum up the political power of the Nestorian clergy during Ghazan khan experienced the devastation. Specifically, devastation of the churches in Ilkhanate and repressions against the ecclesiastical authorities show the declining trend in the political power. Overall, the centralization of Ghazan's power which resulted in the success of the military campaign against Mamluks demanded a deprivation of the Nestorians from their political privileges. Secondly, the Nestorian clergy was no longer the essential intermediaries which could affect the cooperation between Europeans and Ilkhanate against Mamluks.

⁷⁵ Malcolm Barber and Keith Bate, *Letters From The East*, (New York: Routledge, 2016), 168

⁷⁶ Malcolm Barber and Keith Bate, *Letters From The East*, 168

The significance of the Nestorian clergy to the Mamluk Mongol warfare within the broader context which unifies 3 periods of khanships

This chapter will explain the relationships between the political power and the formation the identity. According to Simon and Klandermans the power is a construct of the relationships in which one social group is able to impose the will on the other.⁷⁷ For Haslam, the power is defined in terms of the extent of control the behavior and circumstances using reward and punishment systems.⁷⁸ These definitions explain the power as a broad concept, whereas the political power is a part of these definitions. Hence, the political power can be defined as the ability to impose the will on others using the political instruments defined by rules and norms of a political system.⁷⁹ The political power and the identity can integrate each other. Specifically, the political power functions as an expressive tool that defines the dominant view of what the society calls “good life”.⁸⁰ Hence, values, norms and beliefs shared by a politically powerful part of society could define the identity of the population through the mechanism of the control, punishment and reward. This theory was proposed by Ricoeur in 1990. This paradigm could be applied to understand the political power of the Nestorians and the identity project proposed by the Mongol khans.⁸¹ The Nestorian Church was one of the dominant monotheistic confessions in the Mongol Empire. The power of the church and individuals oscillated from decline to rise and vice versa. This power was granted to Nestorians though the patron relationships with Mongol establishment. Referring to the main question, the

⁷⁷ Denis Sindic, “Power by the people and for the people: Political power and identity in the separation and integration of national states”, in *Power and Identity*, ed. Denis Sindic, Manuela Barreto and Rui Costa-Lopes, (Routledge: Psychology press, 2015), 233

⁷⁸ Sindic, “Power by the people and for the people: Political power and identity in the separation and integration of national states”, 233

⁷⁹ Sindic, 234

⁸⁰ Sindic, 245

⁸¹ Sindic, 239

formation of the Christian identity project or anti-Christian by the Mongols was a product of these relationships. Specifically, khans granted and took the political power of Nestorians in the Mongol Empire. For instance, institutional development, granting political positions and wealth, political patronage as well as damage to these variables affected the perception of the Mongol identity as pro-Christian or anti-Christian. This chapter will evaluate the significance of the political power of the Nestorian ecclesiastical establishment within 2 main domains: foreign and domestic levels. Specifically, the main argument of this part is that the identity projects created by ilkhans affected both foreign and domestic levels of the perception of Ilkhanate. As a result, the perception of the identity was significant to the Mongol military campaign against Mamluks. This chapter will try to summarize the previous parts under one theoretical paradigm of the importance of political power, identity, levels of perception and military campaign.

The significance of the artificial stimulation of the political power of the Nestorian clergy to the Mongol-Mamluk warfare was proved in the previous parts. Hereby again, the political power of the Nestorian clergy during the establishment of Arghun khan was important strategic tool to develop the perception of Ilkhanate as pro-Christian oriented entity. The attempts in military collaboration with Catholic powers was based on the pro-Christian identity of ilkhans.⁸² The narratives clearly support this fact. Particularly, the Pope and king Edward IV were very happy with the support of Christianity in the Middle East. Specifically, this impression was based on the institutional development of the Nestorian Christianity and the support of the Nestorian monks in the court of ilkhans.⁸³ Furthermore, these cases were not pioneering. Specifically, the legends about Prester John influenced this perception. Europeans

⁸² Peter Jackson, *The Mongols And The West, 1221-1410*, (New York: Routledge, 2005), 169

⁸³ Nina Viktorovna Pigulevskaya, *Syriiskaya Srednevekovaya Istoriografiya*, (Saint Petersburg: Dmitri Bulanin, 2000), 705, 709.

assumed that Prester John was a king of Christians on the other side of the big sea who will help Crusades to return back the promised land.⁸⁴ Furthermore, the report on travel of Caprini who highly insisted on the high institutional development and spread of the Nestorian Christianity at the Mongol court might influence this perception.⁸⁵ The report of William Rubruck insisted on the close relationships of Nestorian monks with royal family and their comparative favorability at the court. Firstly, the narratives about the role of monk Sergius to Mongke khan's wife and his mother affected the perception of Mongols as pro-Christian. Secondly, the victory of Nestorians in the theological debate among Shamans, Nestorians and Muslims is evident to perceive the Mongols as pro-Christian rulers. Here, the khans also expressed favorability to the Nestorian clergy because of their positive attitudes towards Jesus and God. These examples signify the power of the Nestorians in the court of the Mongols.⁸⁶ Hence, these cases and additional envoys of ilkhans under the leadership of Nestorian monks affected the perception of Ilkhanate as pro-Christian entity which was important for the liberation of Middle East from Muslim influence. Therefore, pro-Christian identity project, which was developed during Arghun khan, determined the foreign perception of Ilkhanate as a friendly to cooperate against Mamluk.

On the other hand, the anti-Christian project of Ghazan khan was important to the domestic level of Ilkhanate. The persecutions of Christians were a part of the Islamic project promoted by Ghazan khan to centralize his personal power in Ilkhanate. Specifically, the anti-Christian campaign in Ilkhanate involved repressions and damage to the institutional power of Nestorians. The cases of destruction of the Nestorian churches, massacres in Maragha and Irbil

⁸⁴ Peter Jackson, *The Mongols And The West, 1221-1410*, (New York: Routledge, 2005), 21

⁸⁵ Christopher Dawson, *Mission To Asia*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press in association with the Medieval Academy of America, 2008), 61

⁸⁶ Dawson, *Mission To Asia*, 160

and repressions against Nestorian Catholicos Mar Yaballaha were the major instruments of this project. As a result, Ghazan khan attracted sources of Islamic power. Thus, he allied with Muslim servants such as amir Nowruz.⁸⁷ As a result, Ghazan khan could succeed in maintaining the centralization of his authority within Ilkhanate territories. From this argument, the identity project of anti-Christian policies and his pro-Islamic attitudes affected the Muslim nobility's perception. Specifically, the sense of sharing the common religious identity was one of stimulus to give their loyalty and support. The power struggles among pretendents to the throne determined the victory of Ghazan khan since the khan gained the support of the Muslim nobilities. Next, Baidu, Barla, Sadr-I Jahan and many others were persecuted. As a result, Ghazan khan could maintain the centralized power in Ilkhanate.⁸⁸ Consequently, the centralization of the personal power affected the developments and promotion of the reforms in the first half of his khanship. Finally, it resulted in the successful Syriac campaign against Mamluks and the victory at the Third Battle of Homs. Hence, the anti-Christian identity project in Ilkhanate during Ghazan khan affected the domestic perception of himself as a pro-Islamic ruler. Thus, it determined the success of the military campaign against Mamluks.

These results could reflect the power of the identity project in Ilkhanate proposed by 2 khans for the military campaigns against Mamluks. Specifically, pro-Christian and anti-Christian projects were main determinators for the external and internal perceptions of ilkhans. These perceptions were significant to attract the important alliances at both levels that generally could determine the outcome of the military campaign against the Mamluk Sultanate. Hence, the mechanism worked both sides. Thus, the Mongol khans deeply understood that and used the discourses for realization of their political ambitions.

⁸⁷ Peter Jackson, *The Mongols And The West, 1221-1410*, (New York: Routledge, 2005), 344

⁸⁸ Ghiyās ad-Dīn Muḥammad Khwāndamīr, *Habibu's-Siyar*, trans. Wheeler Thackston, (Cambridge: Harvard University, 1994.), 83

The oscillation in the political power of the Nestorian Christians in Ilkhanate happened between 1284 and 1304. However, the general trend in the political power of the Nestorian ecclesiastical authorities was in decline. From the one hand, the upward shift in power of the Nestorian clergy happened during the empowerment of Arghun khan who developed the diplomatic and institutional power of the Nestorian clergy. Furthermore, the khan also granted his personal patronage and protection to the Nestorian authorities. On the other hand, the dramatic decline was during the reign of Ghazan khan. The policies of Islamization affected the damage to the institutional power of the Nestorians. These policies resulted in repressions against the ecclesiastical authorities and Nestorian congregation. It is not possible to determine the trend in the political power of the Nestorian clergy during the intermediary period since there is a lack of primary source and information about this period. Overall, the military conquest against Mamluks had connections with fluctuations in the political power of the Nestorian clergy in Ilkhanate between 1284 and 1304. Specifically, the necessity in maintaining the additional resources in terms of strategically important alliances and elimination of the problems within the military system of the Mongols explain these fluctuations. Arghun khan tried to attract potential friends from Europe using pro-Christian discourse to stimulate the cooperation against Mamluks, whereas Ghazan khan relied on the internal forces of Muslim nobilities to realize the military project using anti-Christian and, simultaneously, pro-Islamic discourses. Overall, these oscillations in the political power of the Nestorian clergies could be classified as a downward trend.

Chapter 5

The political power of the Armenian ecclesiastical authorities and the Mongol conquest of Mamluks between 1284 and 1304

The Mongol conquest of the Middle Eastern territories brought significant changes to Armenian Christianity. The Armenian kingdom sided Ilkhanate against Mamluks. This cooperation started from the beginning of the Mongol conquest of the Middle Eastern territories. In particular, the political relationships between the Armenian establishment and the Mongols date back to 1243 when the Armenian king Hetum I signed the treaty with Mongol generals. This treaty obliged Armenians to supply a certain number of military troops as well as some quantity of products for the military needs of the Mongols in the Middle East.¹ Later in 1247 and in 1253, the Armenian king and his brother committed the official diplomatic visits to Inner Asia where they received official recognition from the great khans to rule the territories of Cilician Armenia. These recognitions were secured with great yarlyks, golden payzas, and bilateral treaties. The episodes from Akner's chronicles support the claim describing the diplomatic visit of Hetum I and his brother Smbat to the Mongol capital. The Armenian establishment tried to maintain diplomatic relationships within political, economic, and military spheres.² In 1256 the Mongol establishment declared the war against Mamluks. Ilkhans led this military campaign and received military support from Armenians.³

The main research question of this part is how the Mongol conquest of Mamluks during 1284 and 1304 affected the political power of the Armenian ecclesiastical authorities in Cilician Armenia. The main argument is that the political power of the Armenian ecclesiastical authorities experienced a decline during this period. In particular, the damage to the political

¹ A. Galstyan, *Letopis'*, (Yerevan: Aivastan, 1974), 7

² Grigor the Akner, *History Of The Nation Of Archers*, trans. Robert Bedrosyan, (New Jersey: Internet Archive, 2009), 10, <https://archive.org/details/GrigorAknertsisHistoryOfTheNationOfArchersmongols>

³ Akner, *History Of The Nation Of Archers*, 10

power of Armenian clergy was a result of the institutional damage to Armenian churches and their belongings, a number of the war victims among the clergy and the flock. Also, the partial decline in the political power of the Armenian Church was due to the effects of Hetum II policies of reciprocity with Catholic and Byzantine powers. Firstly, the warfare against Mamluks brought institutional damage to the political power of the Armenian clergy in terms of damage to Armenian churches and their belongings. Secondly, the campaign affected the increase in the number of victims among Armenian clergy and flock. Thus, it was the additional damage to the institutional power of the Armenian Church. This damage came from both Mamluks and Mongols. Thirdly, attempts to succeed in the campaign against Mamluks caused Catholic and Byzantine Orthodox involvement in the religious affairs of Cilician Armenia. As a result, the appropriation of the Catholic and Byzantine Orthodox norms affected the partial decline in the political power of the Armenian Church. Armenian local nobilities supported the Armenian Church and tried to preserve their religious autonomy. Therefore, the Armenian Church could preserve its political status in Cilician Armenia and successfully resist the influence of the other Christian branches.

Firstly, the historical context of the Armenian Apostolic Church formation will be provided. Secondly, the relationships between the Mongol campaign against Mamluks and institutional damage to the Armenian churches will be explained. Thirdly, the effect of the warfare on the increasing number of victims at the Mongol-Mamluk clashes will be analyzed. Fourthly, the effect of Catholic and Byzantine religious institutions on the Armenian ecclesiastical power will be explored. These factors will be presented in the context of the Armenian kings' reigns dating back from 1269 to 1307. This period covers the rule of Lewon II and his sons: Hetum II, Thoros, and Smbat. Henceforward, for simplification the separate sections that cover the first period from 1269 to 1289 and the second period from 1289 to 1307

will be presented. Finally, the conclusion will be drawn which will summarize the main trend in the political power of the Armenian ecclesiastical authorities between 1284 and 1304.

The historical development of the Armenian Apostolic Church before 1269

This part will examine the formation of the Armenian Church under different regimes like native Armenian, Sassanid, Byzantine, and Islamic regimes of Caliphates. The Armenian Apostolic Church had different periods of decline and rise before 1269. In particular, the rise in the political power of the Armenian clergy was associated with the periods of Armenian kingdom emergence and its consequent restorations. The independent Armenian rulers legitimized their power with the authority of the church. Henceforth, the Armenian kings were interested in the development of the political power of the church. However, the intermediary periods of foreign invaders' rule over the Armenian territory were damaging to the political power of the Armenian clergy. In particular, under Sassanids, Byzantines, and Arabs the political power of the Armenian ecclesiastical authorities was constantly challenged by forceful conversions, taxes, and religious repressions. However, there was no total devastation of the ecclesiastical power. During the last restoration of the Armenian kingdom under the houses of Rubenids and Hetumyans the political power of the Armenian clergy experienced a renaissance. The upward shift in the political power of the Armenian ecclesiastical authorities was a result of the domestic support for the church by local nobilities and kingship. Furthermore, the relationships with the Mongols stimulated the development of the Armenian Orthodoxy across Middle East and Ciscaucasia since the Mongol rulers tolerated a plurality of religious institutions.

Christianity was brought to the territory of modern Armenia in the 1st century by the apostles Bartholomew and Thaddeus. However, until the 4th century, it was not

institutionalized as a main religion.⁴ The Armenian king Tiridates III in 301 was converted to Christianity by Gregory the Illuminator. The king by himself was the appointer of the Roman Emperor from whom he received sufficient support in the centralization of his personal power. Simultaneously, the political power of the Armenian Church increased since the king's power was linked to the Armenian Orthodoxy. During the first 10 years from the establishment of the Armenian kingdom, the local Armenian lords also contributed to the rise in the political power of the Armenian clergy.⁵ However, the Roman Emperor Maximinus Daza between 310 and 313 tried to subjugate the Armenian kingdom converting to pre-Christian traditions. The Armenian Church resisted this influence that indicates the power of the Armenian Church. Consequently, these attacks were unsuccessful.⁶ The Armenian kingdom, as well as the church, could preserve its political and religious autonomy. In the period of independence, the Armenian Apostolic Church flourished because the conversion of Armenian lords and their support affected the institutionalization of the church in Cilician Armenia. As a result, the institutionalization of the Armenian Apostolic Church boosted intellectual productions.⁷ In 405 these developments fostered the creation of the Armenian alphabet and translation of the biblical sources to the Armenian language.⁸ Thus, the Armenian Church received autonomy from Syriac and Byzantine churches. Overall, the vast institutionalization of the Armenian Church during the 4th century influenced the rise in the political power of the Armenian clergy.

⁴ "Armenian Apostolic Church," Encyclopedia Britannica, Accessed April 11, 2021, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Armenian-Apostolic-Church>.

⁵ John Binns, *An Introduction To The Christian Orthodox Churches*, (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 30

⁶ Evsevii Kesariyski, *Tserkovnaya Istoriya*, (Saint-Petersburg: Izdatelstvo Olega Abyshko, 2013), 375

⁷ Yeznik Petrosyan, *Istoriya Armyanskoy Tserkvi*, (Etchmiadzin: Etchmiadzin Typography, 1995), 188

⁸ V. Nalbandyan, *Zhizn' I Deyatelnost' Mesropa Mashtoza*, (Yerevan: Sbornik Statey, 1963), 32

During the 5th century, the Armenian kingdom experienced catastrophic geopolitical changes. The neighborhood empires divided the Armenian kingdom. The eastern and western parts correspondingly became the provinces of Sassanid and Byzantine Empires. Western Armenia was under the rule of Byzantine Emperors, who always tried to integrate the Armenian population. For instance, the Byzantine Emperor Maurice supported the Chalcedonian proponents of the Armenian Church. As a result, there was a schism in the Armenian Apostolic Church. The Chalcedonian fraction came to power with the Catholicos Bagaran in 593. Afterward, the church became highly dependent on decisions from Constantinople.⁹ Hence, the power of the Armenian Church experienced a decline since the initial centralized unity was lost. Thus, the Byzantine influence affected the loss of the initial political power of the Armenian ecclesiastical authorities.

On the other hand, the Persian rulers tried to convert the eastern territory to Zoroastrianism and Manicheism. During the 5th century, the Armenian Apostolic Church experienced various repressive acts that negatively influenced the autonomy of Armenian Christianity. These acts were parts of integrational policies aimed to homogenize the Sassanid population.¹⁰ Consequently, in the year 449, the Armenian Church revolted against the invaders. The Artashat Council formed the rebellion. This assembly petitioned the Sassanid Emperor Yazdegerd II to stop his attempts to subjugate Armenia, but the revolt was violently suppressed by Sassanids. However, the Emperor did not have enough resources to continue the policies of conversion and maintenance of the regime stability in the region. Thus, he granted the privileges to the Armenian Church that restored the political power of the Armenian clergy

⁹ Jean Meyendorff, *Imperial Unity And Christian Divisions*, (Crestwood, N.Y.: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1989), 189, 343

¹⁰ Ronald Grigor Suny, *The Making Of The Georgian Nation*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), 23

with all their rights.¹¹ Henceforward, the political autonomy of the church during the Sassanid rule had been oscillating but finally restored. Overall, between the 5th and 7th centuries, the political power of the Armenian Church experienced a turbulency. However, in comparison with the 4th century, it is vivid that the political power of the Armenian clergy was in the declining trend.

In the middle of the 7th century, the Arab invasion happened. The Islamic conquest also put some consequences to the Armenian Apostolic Church. Muslim dynasties directly ruled Armenian territories until the 11th century. During this period, the Armenian kingdom was a frontier of the Caliphate. Generally, like non-Muslim population, the Armenian congregation had to pay taxes to practice Christianity without obstacles. Specifically, Armenians paid the jizya, which was the Islamic tax on non-Muslims. Also, the Armenian congregation was considered dhimmi, which means the second status citizens.¹² However, the political status of the Armenian Church was the same as under Sassanids. The Arabs continued integrational policies of conversion. In particular, they increased jizya from time to time to stimulate the conversion to Islam.¹³ Therefore, in the 7th century, the Armenian Church experienced the same extent of autonomy as it had during the Sassanid rule.

The situation changed when Armenia fell to the direct rule of Umayyads in 703. The centralization of the Umayyad dynasty affected the violent policies in Armenia. Between 701 and 703, the newly appointed governor Abu Shaykh ibn Abdallah expressed repressive acts towards the Armenian Church. He frequently burned Armenian churches and committed massacres against the congregation. One of the victims of the purges was the Catholicos

¹¹ Susan Paul Pattie, *Faith In History*, (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1997), 282

¹² Seta B. Dadoyan, *The Armenians In The Medieval Islamic World*, (New Brunswick, N.J: Transaction Publishers, 2011), 72

¹³ Dadoyan, *The Armenians In The Medieval Islamic World*, 72

Shahak, who was imprisoned and sent to Damascus.¹⁴ However, the Armenian-Umayyad treaty signed in 703 guaranteed autonomy for the church again. As a result, this act restored the political power of the Armenian clergy. In 750, the Abbasid dynasty became the ruling dynasty of the Caliphate. One of the Abbasid representatives, Harun al-Rashid, created his borderland projects that certainly tried to reduce the autonomy of Armenians. He imposed restrictions on all Christians, including Armenians. During al-Rashid's reign, the destruction of the churches and the imposition of discriminatory laws were practiced. For instance, the ruler forbade to dress in a certain type of clothes and put restrictions to ride a horse for Christians.¹⁵ It certainly affected the reduction of Armenian autonomy since it damaged religious rights, which Christians enjoyed before.

This trend continued until the 9th century when the Bagratuni dynasty became the kings of Armenia. After Bagratuni's empowerment, there was a restoration of the political autonomy of the kingdom and the political status of the Armenian Church. Abbasids and Byzantines agreed that the Armenian territory had to be a buffer zone that privileged to some extent the political autonomy of the Armenian Church.¹⁶ The Armenian Catholicos again could crown the kings of Armenia. Also, many Armenian churches were restored or renewed. Caliphs and Byzantine Emperors recognized the coronations of Ashot I and Ashot III from the house of Bagratuni. Thus, the political power of the Armenian clergy experienced an upward shift during independent Armenian kings.¹⁷ The development of the church under Islamic rule continued until the middle of the 11th century. However, the rise in the political autonomy of the Armenian Church caused internal issues such as a huge corruption inside Armenian

¹⁴ Seta B. Dadoyan, *The Armenians In The Medieval Islamic World*, (New Brunswick, N.J: Transaction Publishers, 2011), 68-69

¹⁵ Dadoyan, *The Armenians In The Medieval Islamic World*, 83

¹⁶ Dadoyan, 105

¹⁷ Dadoyan, 113

religious institutions. In 1054 the bishop Yakobos of Hark protested against the corruption at the Armenian Apostolic Church and accused the clergy in brutal immodesty. The rhetoric of the bishop resonated with the Armenian public and the nobility. Consequently, the church reforms took a place with a series of purges against the ruling fraction. Many traditional customs such as the sacrifice of animals were abandoned.¹⁸ Generally, the internal schism inside the Armenian Church negatively affected the ecclesiastical power. Overall, the period of the Muslim domination between the 7th and 11th centuries both direct and de-jure could be considered as a power oscillating for the Armenian clergy.

The Cilician principality after the turbulent period eventually restored its political status in the 12th century. It became fully independent from Byzantine and Muslim lordships. Specifically, modern historians highlight the figure of Ruben III from Rubenid house who was the king of Cilician Armenia between 1175 and 1187.¹⁹ He could stop the Byzantine invasion and maintained the alliance with Catholics and Muslims. His power was a signal for a new pace of development for the Armenian Church. Specifically, under his rule, a lot of monasteries and churches were built.²⁰ He was respected by clergy and ordinary citizens for his contribution to the cultural developments of the Armenian people. However, lately his successor Lewon II partially damaged the political power of the Armenian ecclesiastical authorities. He segregated the Armenian Church from the king's power. The king submitted to the Roman church as its vassal and was crowned by the Papal legate named Conrad in 1198.²¹ However, this submission was nominal since Catholics did not have political instruments to influence the Armenian court. Therefore, the Armenian Church still enjoyed the de-facto privileges of the crown. Under

¹⁸ Seta B. Dadoyan, *The Armenians In The Medieval Islamic World*, (New Brunswick, N.J: Transaction Publishers, 2011), 135

¹⁹ Vaham Kurkjian, *A History Of Armenia*, (Chicago: Bill Thayer, 1958), 216-217

²⁰ Kurkjian, *A History Of Armenia*, 217

²¹ David Marshall Lang, *Armenia Cradle Of Civilization*, (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1970), 24

Lewon II Armenian churches and monasteries reached a fascinating level of architectural development. One of them he built in Sis and named Agner. The city of Sis became the pearl of the Armenian clerical power.²²

In 1226 the new Armenian king Hetum I took power and became the king of Cilician Armenia from the house of Hetumyans. The Armenian kingdom during his reign preserved its ecclesiastical autonomy. Armenian clergy had a strong connection with the king's power. They still legitimized the authority of Armenian kings. Furthermore, the foreign relationships with the Mongol rulers further shifted up the geopolitical influence of the Armenian Church. Hetum I submitted to the Mongol khan Guyk between 1246 and 1248. As a result of the submission, the Armenian Church received patronage for their activities in the Mongol Empire. They were exempted from taxes, and also the Mongol khans stimulated their institutionalization in the Middle East. Specifically, during ilkhan Hulagu, there was a boom in building the Armenian churches in the territories of Mesopotamia.²³ Overall, the period of the independent Armenian dynasties between the 12th and 13th centuries was positive to the political power of the Armenian clergy.

To sum up, the Armenian ecclesiastical authorities experienced different periods of decline and upward shifts from the 1st to 13th centuries. In particular, under the independent Armenian rulers, the Armenian Apostolic Church reached the peaks of power. However, the period from the 5th to 11th centuries was turbulent since Sassanids, Byzantine Empire and Islamic leaders constantly tried to subjugate the Armenian Christians. Parallely, the Armenian clergy experienced various discourses of integration and resisted them too. Finally, the period of Hetum I reign right before 1269 was significant to the political power of the Armenian

²² Vahram, *Vahram's Chronicle Of The Armenian Kingdom In Cilicia, During The Time Of The Crusades*, trans. Robert Bedrosyan, (London: The Oriental Translation Fund, 1831), 44 <https://archive.org/details/vahramschronicle00vahrrich/page/n7/mode/2up>.

²³ Grigor the Akner, *History Of The Nation Of Archers*, trans. Robert Bedrosyan, (New Jersey: Internet Archive, 2009), 10, <https://archive.org/details/GrigorAknertsisHistoryOfTheNationOfArchersmongols>

Church. The encounters with the Mongols allowed enhancing the political influence of the church across Middle East and Inner Asia.

The effect of the Mongol conquest to the Armenian ecclesiastical authorities during the power of Lewon II (1269-1289)

The cooperation between the Mongols and Armenians against Mamluks was continuing up to Ghazan's death. Lewon II, the father of Hetum II, was ruling between 1270 and 1289. During his reign, Armenians were actively involved in the Mongol military campaigns against the Mamluk Sultanate. For instance, the Armenian king gave his support to the Mongols during the Second Syriac campaign. Thus, Lewon II joined Abaqa Khan and his brother Mengu-Timur.²⁴ During his rule, the Armenian Church and its ecclesiastical authorities experienced oscillations in political power due to the military consequences brought by the warfare. Next, the unsuccessful campaigns against Mamluks negatively affected the political power of the Armenian clergy in Cilician Armenia. In particular, the Mongol conquest of Mamluks supported by the Armenian kingship brought damage to the Armenian churches and ecclesiastical belongings. Also, the war took off the lives of many Armenian Christians including the ordinary flock and clergy. The Mamluk troops under the leadership of Baybars and Qawalun marched through the lands of Cilician Armenia looting the Armenian churches and murdering many Armenian people. However, the peace treaty of 1285 with Mamluks allowed Lewon II to restore the damage brought with the warfare.²⁵ In particular, the Armenian king invested in the institutionalization of the Armenian Church and preserved its development with the peace treaty. Thus, it guaranteed the level up for the political power of the Armenian Church. Henceforward, the paces of decline and restoration in the political power of the

²⁴ Reuven Amitai, *Mongols And Mamluks: The Mamluk-Ilkhanid War, 1260-1281*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 183

²⁵ Bayarsaikhan Dashdondog, *The Mongols and the Armenians (1220-1335)*, (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2011), 181-185, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1163/j.ctt1w8h10n>.

Armenian ecclesiastical authorities in Cilician Armenia were the result of the varying degrees of success of the Mongol-Armenian campaigns against Mamluks during the reign of king Lewon II.

From the one side, the political power of the Armenian ecclesiastical authorities in Cilician Armenia experienced a declining trend since Mamluk raids to Cilicia brought damage to the Armenian churches and the ecclesiastical belongings. Furthermore, these attacks led to the increasing number of victims among the clergy and the flock. Overall, these factors generally put damage to the institutional power of the Armenian clergy. The Armenian kings were the great proponents of the Hulaguids. They sided with the Mongols and shared the damage of the warfare. For instance, the invasion of Sis and Aeos regions by the Mamluk troops brought significant damage to the churches and ecclesiastical belongings. According to Stephanos the Bishop, the Mamluk troops, led by Sultan Funduktar [Baybars], in 1273 invaded Cilician Armenia. The author describes that Mamluks burned out the cities of Sis and Aeos, including the Armenian churches.²⁶ Moreover, the attacks brought the violence to Armenian clergy and its congregation. According to Sebastazi chronicles, the Egyptian soldiers had captured and killed the Armenian Catholicos Ter Sarkin, his son, and 38 clergy followers.²⁷ Additionally, in 1274 Baybars captured the big Cilician city of Tarsus. As a result, the city degraded to the level of a village. According to Kurkjian, Baybars killed in Tarsus more than 15000 Armenian people, took into captivity more than 10000 citizens, and ordered to burn St. Sophia church. Whilst the treasury of the church and the city governor were looted.²⁸ Therefore, the damage brought by Mamluks during the first half of Lewon's reign negatively affected the political power of the Armenian ecclesiastical authorities. The same story happened again in

²⁶ A. Galstyan, *Armyanskie Istochniki O Mongolah: Izvlecheniya Iz Rukopisey XIII-XIV Vv.*, (Moscow: Izdatelstvo Vostochnoy Literatury, 1962), 33

²⁷ Galstyan, *Armyanskie Istochniki O Mongolah: Izvlecheniya Iz Rukopisey XIII-XIV Vv.*, 76

²⁸ Vaham Kurkjian, *A History Of Armenia*, (Chicago: Bill Thayer, 1958), 247-248

1287. Stephanos the Bishop narrates that the Egyptian soldiers invaded the region of Zara. Many Christians there were murdered, and churches were damaged.²⁹ It is not possible to extract whom either was killed: the flock or the clergy. However, there is no doubt, that the Armenian population, who constituted the Armenian Apostolic Church, was victimized by the Egyptian forces. Henceforth, the Armenian kingdom siding Hulaguids became a vivid enemy for Mamluks. As a result, the Armenian territories were under the constant risk of attacks.

Analyzing this effect, the negative consequences of the warfare were significant to the political power of the Armenian ecclesiastical authorities. Firstly, the sources and the structures of the power of the Armenian clergy were quite similar to the European Christendom. Specifically, the church and its clergy possessed lands and were structured under the feudal system in Cilician Armenia. Evaluating the Sis archbishop Ghazarian concludes that the political power of the Armenian clergy was very huge. The sources of that were also the churches, lands, and other ecclesiastical belongings. Furthermore, the Armenian congregation constituted this religious institution (the relationships between the flock and the priests).³⁰ Thus, people also were a source of ecclesiastical power. Hence, these sources cumulatively legitimized the divine power of the church. The damage to the Armenian churches, cases of looting their relics, and violence against Armenian believers are the indicators of the decline in the political power of the Armenian Church and its authorities during the reign of Lewon II.

The Mamluk-Christian relations is the best theory that could explain the damage committed by Egyptian troops in Cilician Armenia. In particular, the relationships with the domestic Christians had determined the attitudes of Mamluks towards the foreign Christians. The Coptic community was one of the most significant Christian denominations in the Mamluk

²⁹ A. Galstyan, *Armyanskie Istochniki O Mongolah: Izvlecheniya Iz Rukopisey XIII-XIV Vv.*, (Moscow: Izdatelstvo Vostochnoy Literatury, 1962), 30

³⁰ Jacob G. Ghazarian, *The Armenian Kingdom In Cilicia During The Crusades*, (London: Routledge Curzon, 2005), 89

Sultanate. Hence, the understanding of the political position of these Christians could further explain the damage to the Armenian religious institutions. Coptic Christianity never had a strong affiliation to suzerain's power, as Catholics and Byzantine Orthodoxy had. They existed under the imperial regimes of different authorities: Byzantines, Sassanids, and Muslims. Henceforth, historically they were the objects of various political discourses. Foreign rulers always tried to integrate them into the Imperial structures. Under Byzantines, Coptic Christianity experienced various persecutions. Their Christological dogmas did not correspond to the Chalcedonic tradition practiced by Byzantines. Therefore, Byzantine Emperors constantly tried to integrate Coptic ecclesiastical authorities. For example, the Byzantine emperor Heraclius I (610 and 641 ACE) constantly challenged the political power of the Coptic clergy. Specifically, here the emperor tried to integrate Copts to Chalcedonian traditions using repressive methods against the clergy. When the intruding Patriarch governor Cyrus arrived in Egypt, he was willing to persecute the leaders of the Coptic Church. Abba Benyamin and his followers were demanded to surrender. As a result, Benyamin's brother Mena was arrested, tortured, and sentenced to death.³¹ He had become the first Martyr during Byzantine rule.

In the 7th century, the Arab conquest happened. During the Islamic domination, the Coptic Church was partially unmolested until they pay jizya. Islamic leaders often introduced Copts to governmental service. For instance, the governor Abd al-Malik, the son of the Caliph Marwan, hired two Coptic representatives and introduced them into high-ranking ministry vacancies.³² However, Islamic leaders imposed restrictive laws towards Copts as well. Copts were forbidden to have weapons and participate in military service. Henceforth, the Coptic congregation was left insecure to protect their land.³³ Under Fatimids, the political power of

³¹ Īrīs Ḥabīb Maṣrī, *The Story Of The Copts: The Tru Story Of Christianity In Egypt*, (Los Angeles, Calif.: Saint Anthony Coptic Orthodox Monastery, 1982), 5-6

³² Maṣrī, *The Story Of The Copts: The Tru Story Of Christianity In Egypt*, 52-53

³³ Maṣrī, 11-12

the Coptic ecclesiastical authorities did not change. When Caliph Muiz captured Egyptian territories Abdul Yomn, the Coptic vizier, was not dismissed from his position and continued to serve under the new ruler.³⁴ However, Fatimids also harassed Copts. In particular, al-Hakim who ruled between 981 and 1021, forced all Copts to dress in black and wear a heavy wooden cross. Furthermore, during his reign, all Copts were dismissed from governmental services. In addition, many Coptic churches were burned.³⁵ Henceforth, Fatimids used hybrid policies towards Copts. Generally, the political power of the Coptic ecclesiastical authorities was always limited and shaped by foreign rulers.

The Mamluk perception on Copts was very similar to the perspective of the past Islamic dynasties. In particular, two mainstream ideological agitations circulated at the Mamluk court during the 13th century. On the one hand, Shaykh Najm ad-Din Ahmad proposed that Christians and Jews with their synagogues and churches should be banished and destroyed. On the other hand, Ibn Dakik claimed that violence including the destruction of churches and synagogues will be unlawful if the buildings are pre-Islamic.³⁶ These ideas produced a hybrid policy of toleration and persecution of non-Muslims in Egypt. Mamluk Sultans often damaged Coptic churches as well as funded the development of Christian religious buildings. Henceforth, the political status of Coptic representatives frequently fluctuated in the Mamluk Sultanate depending on the political agenda of the rulers. Northrup states that these policies were a synergy of the anti-Christian ideology and the governmental support. The toleration of Christian-Judaic institutions was a necessary decision because non-

³⁴ Īrīs Ḥabīb Maṣrī, *The Story Of The Copts: The Tru Story Of Christianity In Egypt*, (Los Angeles, Calif.: Saint Anthony Coptic Orthodox Monastery, 1982), 110

³⁵ Maṣrī, *The Story Of The Copts: The Tru Story Of Christianity In Egypt*, 123-124

³⁶ Moshe Perlmann, "Notes on Anti-Christian Propaganda in the Mamlūk Empire." *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London* 10, no. 4 (1942): 853.

Muslims supplied the Islamic treasury with a poll tax.³⁷ According to Little anti-Christian acts served to lift the ideological spirit and the military capabilities of Mamluks. In particular, it resulted in the unification of people against the invasions of Mongols, Crusades, and Ciscaucasians.³⁸ Henceforth, during the late medieval period, Mamluk's perspective on non-Muslims was a mixture of anti-Christian and toleration policies.

Mamluks also transposed this hybrid policy towards the non-Muslim population from Ciscaucasia. In particular, the Armenian episcopacy in Jerusalem segregated from the Armenian Apostolic Church claiming independence. This act was a necessary step to save themselves from repressive policies of Mamluks. As a result, the episcopacy was tolerated by paying *jizya* for Mamluks.³⁹ On the other hand, the Georgian Orthodox Church in Damascus was expropriated for the benefit of Shaykh Khadir and his *zawiya*. Lately, it became a major place of the Sufi institution in Syria.⁴⁰ That was a case of the repressive discourses committed against the Christians that fit in Shaykh Najm ad-Din Ahmad's propaganda in the late medieval Mamluk Sultanate.

Meanwhile, applying this theory to the case of original Armenian religious institutes there are no obvious rational reasons for Mamluks to tolerate Christians on the unconquered territories of Cilicia. Mamluks could not collect *jizya* from Cilician territories since they did not establish direct control. Therefore, the damage to the Armenian religious institutions was a part of the anti-Christian military-religious ideology of Mamluks. Henceforward, damage to

³⁷ Linda Northrup, "Muslim-Christian Relations During The Reign Of The Mamluk Sultan Al-Mansur Qalawun, A.D. 1278-1290," in *Conversion and Continuity: Indigenous Christian Communities in Islamic Lands, Eighth to Eighteenth Centuries*, ed. by Michael Gervers, (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1990), 253-254, 258

³⁸ Donald P. Little, "Religion under the mamluks". *The Muslim World* 73 no.3-4, (1983): 180. doi:10.1111/j.1478-1913.1983.tb03263.x.

³⁹ Sergio La Porta, "The Armenian Episcopacy in Mamluk Jerusalem in the Aftermath of the Council of Sis (1307)," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 17, no. 2 (2007): 99-100. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25188701>.

⁴⁰ Johannes Pahlitzsch, "Mediators Between East And West: Christians Under Mamluk Rule", *The Middle East Documentation Center (MEDOC)*, (2005), 33, doi:10.6082/M19P2ZS5.

the Armenian churches and commitment the violence against Armenian Christians were significant instruments of the far more complex ideological propagations of Mamluks. Thus, the repressions against the Armenian Apostolic Church served to the military purposes of the defense from non-Muslim threat.

However, the political power of the Armenian ecclesiastical authorities was not in the state of decline during the rule of Lewon II. Specifically, the Mongol-Mamluk warfare contributed to the pace of restoration of the political power of the Armenian Apostolic Church. The unsuccessful campaign against Mamluks during the Second Battle of Homs and constant raids of the Egyptian forces drained the resources of the Armenian kingdom. The chronicles of Hetum II narrate that the joined forces of Mongols and Armenians entered Syria. However, the initial success over Mamluks was short-term. When the general battle near Homs happened, the Mongol soldiers deserted, and more than 2000 Armenian cavalry died.⁴¹ Also, the Turks from the west constantly attacked the Armenian kingdom. Hence, it was challenging to protect the borders and maintain domestic stability.⁴² In 1285 the damage brought by Mamluks affected the decision of Lewon II to sign the peace treaty. The document secured the borders of Cilician Armenia for the next 10 years from the attacks of the Mamluk soldiers.⁴³ Armenians used this time for the restoration of the consequences of the warfare. During the last 4 years of the reign, Lewon II renewed his kingdom, including the Armenian ecclesiastical institutions. As Ghazarian mentions, the political power of the Armenian Church and its representatives revived after the contribution of the king. For instance, Lewon II increased the investments in the existed church funds. As a result, the Armenian ecclesiastical authorities produced many

⁴¹ Reuven Amitai, *Mongols And Mamluks: The Mamluk-Ilkhanid War, 1260-1281*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 174

⁴² A. Galstyan, *Armyanskie Istochniki O Mongolah: Izvlecheniya Iz Rukopisey XIII-XIV Vv.*, (Moscow: Izdatelstvo Vostochnoy Literatury, 1962), 30

⁴³ Bayarsaikhan Dashdondog, *The Mongols and the Armenians (1220-1335)*, (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2011), 181-185, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1163/j.ctt1w8h10n>.

liturgies and religious canons. The author refers to Vahram, who was the Armenian clergy as well as the governmental servant. His knowledge production is an indication of the Armenian Church revival.⁴⁴ Furthermore, the king granted official positions to the ecclesiastical authorities in the court. Thus, it highlights the power restoration during the period of a fragile peace between Mamluks and Armenians. Finally, Lewon II also invested a lot of gold and silver that materially helped the Armenian Church to restore ecclesiastical buildings.⁴⁵ Hence, the political power of the Armenian ecclesiastical authorities was restored between 1285 and 1288 with the contribution of king Lewon II.

This passage will analyze the significance of the restoration of the political power of the Armenian clergy in the context of the Mongol-Mamluk warfare. The Mongol conquest during the rule of Abaqa khan involved the participation of the Armenian kingdom in the war. Thus, the involvement of Armenians made them automatically the enemies of Mamluks. The previous evidence proved the hostile or enemy relationships. The damage committed by Mamluks in the Cilician territories is evident here. The damage to the religious institutions of the Armenian clergy was significant not only to the ecclesiastical authorities but also to the king. In particular, the analysis of the power relationships between the king and Christian institutions in Armenia will provide a necessary explanation to the pace of the restoration of the clergy power during Lewon II. As Ghazarian mentions, the power structure in the Armenian kingdom was similar to the late medieval Catholic kingdoms. Here, the author refers to the power relationships between the church and the king. The Armenian Apostolic Church and its religious establishment legitimized the power of the king in Armenia. The power of kings was considered divine. Therefore, it had to be inherited from God through his representatives on the earth. In 1270 Lewon II inherited his father's crown from Jacob I, who was the Catholicus

⁴⁴ Jacob G. Ghazarian, *The Armenian Kingdom In Cilicia During The Crusades*, (London: Routledge Curzon, 2005), 63

⁴⁵ Ghazarian, *The Armenian Kingdom In Cilicia During The Crusades*, 63

of the Armenian Church.⁴⁶ As a result, the Armenian Apostolic Church legitimized the political authority of Lewon II. Thus, the Armenian princes accepted the power of the king. A similar concept of the divine right of kings was in Catholic Europe. This concept reflects legitimizing relationships between the power of a king and the Catholic Church. The earliest medieval accounts present the information about Adomnan, who gave the prophecy to the son of the Irish king Diarmait, Aed Slaine. The prophecy tells that he was chosen by God to rule Ireland after his father. However, if he does the sin of family murder, he will lose the divine power and God's support.⁴⁷ Hence, the Irish account describes that only God gives and takes the power to rule on the earth. Therefore, only God may legitimize the ruler. Later, the king of England Richard I recognized nobody superior to God. Therefore, only to God, he was responsible for his actions.⁴⁸ Hence, Christian religious institutions functioned as a bridge between kings' power and God in medieval Europe. This link makes European kings superior and absolute. The same narratives are present in Armenian chronicles. Grigor the Akner, while describing the empowerment of the king Hetum I, calls him *Christ crowned*.⁴⁹ This metaphor indicates his divine power and his absolute authority in the kingdom. Therefore, the Armenian Church was not marginalized to the common Christian trend of exercising the power of God to the throne. Henceforth, the sustainability of the Armenian Apostolic Church was a significant issue for the kings of Armenia since the institution legitimized their authority and promoted the

⁴⁶ Jacob G. Ghazarian, *The Armenian Kingdom In Cilicia During The Crusades*, (London: Routledge Curzon, 2005), 62

⁴⁷ Adomnan, *Life Of St. Columba*, (London: Penguin Books, 1995), 258

⁴⁸ Jonathan Duncanson, *The Dukes Of Normandy: From The Times Of Rolls To The Expulsion Of King John By Phillip August Of France*, (London: Joseph Rickerby, Sherbourn Lane, 1839), 290-291
https://archive.org/stream/DuncanJTheDukesOfNormandyFromTheTimesOfRollsToTheExpulsionOfKingJohn1839/Duncan%20J%20The%20dukes%20of%20Normandy,%20from%20the%20times%20of%20Rolls%20to%20the%20expulsion%20of%20King%20John%20-%201839_djvu.txt

⁴⁹ Grigor the Akner, *History Of The Nation Of Archers*, trans. Robert Bedrosyan, (New Jersey: Internet Archive, 2009), 7, <https://archive.org/details/GrigorAknertsisHistoryOfTheNationOfArchersmongols>

absolute right to rule in the kingdom. Hence, Lewon II relied on the political power of the Armenian Apostolic Church because it was one of the pillars for his own. Therefore, the restoration of the Armenian Apostolic Church after the warfare was a necessary policy for Lewon II power. Hence, the political peace treaty with Mamluks signed in 1285 became an important decision that affected the restoration of the political power of the Armenian clergy and the political authority of the king.

The political power of the Armenian Church was both in declining and restoration phases during the reign of Lewon II. In particular, before 1285 the warfare brought significant damage to the religious institutions of Armenians. Simultaneously, the war affected the decline in the divine authority of the king. Between 1285 and 1288, there was a restoration of the Armenian Church. Generally, the involvement of the Armenians in the Mamluk-Mongol warfare became a significant factor for development and degradation of the Armenian Apostolic Church in Cilician Armenia during the reign of Lewon II.

**The political power of the Armenian ecclesiastical authorities in Cilician Armenia
during the power of Hetum II and his brothers (1289-1307)**

The damage to the political power of the ecclesiastical authorities in Cilician Armenia was continuing during the rule of Hetum II and his brothers. The involvement of Hetum II in the Mongol conquest under the command of Ghazan khan right at the end of the 13th century sharpened the relationships between Mamluks and Armenians. Thus, it damaged the political power of the Armenian ecclesiastical authorities in Cilician Armenia. The war brought negative outcomes to the political power of the Armenian ecclesiastical authorities between 1289 and 1307. Firstly, Mamluk forces continued raids into the territories of the Cilician Kingdom. As a result, the warfare brought again damaging consequences to the Armenian churches and other ecclesiastical belongings. Simultaneously, Armenian people who constituted the Armenian Apostolic Church were victimized by the warfare. Secondly, the Islamic policies of Ghazan

khan also damaged the Armenian religious institutions. These policies were a part of the Mongol-Mamluk warfare that should maximize the success of the Mongol conquest. Finally, Hetum II policies of unification with Byzantine and Catholic Christianity had a partial effect on the decline in the political power of the Armenian ecclesiastical authorities.

Hetum II became the king of Cilician Armenia in 1289 after the death of his father Lewon II. His reign outlived five ilkhans including Arghun, Ghaikatu, Baidu, Ghazan, and Oljeitu. During his rule, the Armenian kingdom also participated in the Mongol campaigns against Mamluks allying with the Inner Asian establishment.⁵⁰ In particular, Hetum II received a *yarlyk* that acknowledged his power in Armenia by the Mongols. Being a military supporter of the Mongols caused damage to Cilicia by Egyptian troops. Especially, the damage to the Armenian churches, the violence against the flock and the clergy were the outcomes of these constant raids into the territories of Cilician Armenia between 1289 and 1307. In 1291 Sultan Ashraf moved out his forces from Egypt. Along the way to Cilicia, his troops captured Akka and murdered the Christians of Sehel.⁵¹ In 1291 the Egyptian forces invaded Romkola and damaged the Armenian churches. Furthermore, they looted the relics and captured the Catholicos Ter-Stephanos IV as well as his clergy followers. Afterward, they sent them to prison in Egypt.⁵² According to Hetum's chronicles, Hetum II had to ransom the Armenian priests and the relics (St. Grigori's right hand) paying back the castle of Behes.⁵³ The other story is presented by anonym, who claims that the Catholicos died in prison without any help.⁵⁴

⁵⁰ Grigor the Akner, *History Of The Nation Of Archers*, trans. Robert Bedrosyan, (New Jersey: Internet Archive, 2009), 10, <https://archive.org/details/GrigorAknertsisHistoryOfTheNationOfArchersmongols>

⁵¹ A. Galstyan, *Letopis'*. (Yerevan: Aivastan1974), 102-103

⁵² A. Galstyan, *Armyanskie Istochniki O Mongolah: Izvlecheniya Iz Rukopisey XIII-XIV Vv.*, (Moscow: Izdatelstvo Vostochnoy Literatury, 1962), 33

⁵³ Galstyan, *Armyanskie Istochniki O Mongolah: Izvlecheniya Iz Rukopisey XIII-XIV Vv.*, , 102-103

⁵⁴ Galstyan, 79

The third narrative was presented by Nerses Paliencz. The chronicle describes that the Catholicos escaped from slavery after the order of the Sultan. The ruler of Egypt was impressed with the holiness of the Catholicos and had a fear of divine punishment.⁵⁵ All these stories have common points: firstly, the Egyptian troops damaged the institutional power of the Armenian Church committing violence against the clergy and the flock; secondly, Mamluks also damaged Armenian churches and their holy objects. The Egyptian forces again invaded Cilician Armenia in the following year and attacked the city Edessa. During the siege, they destroyed the Patriarch's palace residence. In addition, the Egyptian forces looted the bursaries of religious and governmental institutions at the city of Molewon.⁵⁶ Henceforth, Mamluks damaged significantly the power of the Armenian religious institutions vandalizing the ecclesiastical institutions and their constituencies. Specifically, the cases of the relics and bursaries expropriations, the damage to the churches and the clergy residencies, the enslavement of the Armenian Catholicos, priests, and flock are vivid outcomes of the impact of the war on the religious institutions of the Armenian Apostolic Church. Therefore, the warfare against Mamluks damaged the political power of the Armenian ecclesiastical authorities.

Church buildings, lands, and ecclesiastical property were the constituencies of the political power of the Armenian clergy. Furthermore, the clergy and flock together created the institutional power of the Armenian Apostolic Church and its establishment. Henceforward, the attacks on the churches and the violence against Armenian Christians brought a significant impact on the declining trend in the political power of the Armenian ecclesiastical authorities. Moreover, the Mamluk perspective on the Christians is again applicable here. Specifically, Shaykh Najm ad-Din Ahmad's proposal shaped the Mamluk military ideology. Thus, the Egyptian forces did not provide mercy for the Christian institutions on the unconquered

⁵⁵ A. Galstyan, *Armyanskie Istochniki O Mongolah: Izvlecheniya Iz Rukopisey XIII-XIV Vv.*, (Moscow: Izdatelstvo Vostochnoy Literatury, 1962), 92-93

⁵⁶ Galstyan, *Armyanskie Istochniki O Mongolah: Izvlecheniya Iz Rukopisey XIII-XIV Vv.*, 92

territories. Generally, it served to embrace the Mamluk military power against the common enemy in the face of non-Muslims. Therefore, the involvement of the Armenian kingdom in the Mongol conquest made the Cilician territories vulnerable to the attacks of the Mamluk Sultanate. Ghazarian mentions that the Mongol military assistance to the Cilician forces was not so effective up to the empowerment of Ghazan khan in 1295.⁵⁷ In particular, Ghaikatu and Baidu, who ruled between 1291 and 1295, were less proactive leaders. Specifically, Ghaikatu was described as a drunker pagan who was not interested in politics, whereas Baidu's reign was too short to do significant geopolitical steps towards the Mongol-Armenian relationships.⁵⁸ Henceforward, the Armenians were in a vulnerable position at the warfare with Mamluks. Hence, the war brought damaging effects to the Armenian churches, the people who constitute this institution, the sources of the institutional legitimacy, and consequently to the political power of the Armenian ecclesiastical authorities during Hetum II reign. The lack of military support from the Mongols and the Mamluk ideological perspective are significant to explain the damaging effect of the warfare.

The damage to the Armenian religious institutions was not only the Mamluk's responsibility. In particular, the Mongols during the power of Ghazan khan also vandalized the churches of the Armenian Apostolic Church. Ghazan khan tried to embrace the Islamic forces using repressions against Christian institutions in Ilkhanate. This religious policy served to attract domestic Islamic forces. Thus, Ghazan khan could centralize his authority and properly allocate the resources. Consequently, Ghazan could promote necessary military reforms which made the army more sustainable. Generally, these policies were a part of the Mongol conquest

⁵⁷ Jacob G. Ghazarian, *The Armenian Kingdom In Cilicia During The Crusades*, (London: Routledge Curzon, 2005), 58-59

⁵⁸ Hetum, *The Flower of Histories of the East*, trans. Robert Bedrosyan, (Long Branch: Internet Archive, 2004), 38, <https://archive.org/details/HetumTheHistoriansFlowerOfHistoriesOfTheEast>.

of the Mamluk Sultanate. Mainly, the damage came to the heads of Nestorians, but some cases are also evident to the Armenian ecclesiastical authorities. Both religious entities were the subjects of the Great khan and ilkhans. The sources narrate that between 1295 and 1296 Ilkhnate Muslims committed offensive actions towards Christian institutions. The anonymous chronicles narrate that after Ghazan's approval amir Nowruz and his Muslim followers committed series of attacks against the Armenian Christians in Cilicia.⁵⁹ Nowruz desecrated the churches of the Armenian Apostolic Church. In particular, he significantly damaged them in the region of Nakhichevan and murdered many people there.⁶⁰ This damage was unique. The sources narrate that Hetum II could calm down the temper of Ghazan khan. Thus, the khan stopped the persecutions both in Ilkhanate and Cilician Armenia. The violence committed by Nowruz happened during the decline of Nestorians. Thus, both Nestorian and Armenian clergy shared anti-Christian violence from the Muslims of Ilkhanate. In particular, the damage in Nakhichevan, Tabriz, Mosul, and other Ilkhanate cities were all parts of the common pattern of the Islamic violence against Christians during the empowerment of Ghazan khan. Henceforth, the religious policies of Ghazan khan regarding Islamization in the initial period of his khanship also brought damage to the political power of the Armenian ecclesiastical authorities. The devastation of the Christian institutions was an intentional policy of centralization that served the military ambitions of the khan. Therefore, the role of Ghazan's policies also found their significance in the case of Cilician religious institutions. Despite that it was a small, rare, and unique case, this event cannot be underestimated. Therefore, the religious policies of Ghazan khan also damaged the political power of the Armenian ecclesiastical authorities during the reign of Hetum II.

⁵⁹ A. Galstyan, *Armyanskie Istochniki O Mongolah: Izvlecheniya Iz Rukopisey XIII-XIV Vv.*, (Moscow: Izdatelstvo Vostochnoy Literatury, 1962), 85

⁶⁰ Galstyan, *Armyanskie Istochniki O Mongolah: Izvlecheniya Iz Rukopisey XIII-XIV Vv.*, 86

The last effect relates to the role of Catholic and Byzantine Orthodox religious institutions to the political power of the Armenian ecclesiastical authorities. Mainly, king Hetum II artificially stimulated the development of these religious institutions in the Cilician Kingdom. Thus, he intended to gain the support of the European powers against Mamluks. The Latin-Armenian encounters during Hetum II had intensified. Specifically, the Armenian king sent 4 embassies to Pope Nickolas IV and negotiated about the cooperative military actions between the Mongol-Armenian alliance and the European kingdoms against the Mamluk Sultanate.⁶¹ The king discussed the opportunity to recapture the Holy Land by using collaborative forces.

The Mongol-Armenian cooperation was continuing to exist despite Ghazan's conversion to Islam. Ghazan khan was constantly challenged for his Islamic illegitimacy by his geopolitical opponents since his army gained the support of Armenians and Georgians who practiced Christianity. From the Mamluk perspective, this contradiction should delegitimize Ghazan's authority and his jihad against the Mamluk Sultanate. However, Ghazan khan claimed that his perfect Islamic identity does not contradict the multireligious constituency of his army. Here, he formed the explanation on the notions of the Islamic ruler and umma protector. So, God gave him the power to rule on the Earth after his name. Ghazan refers to Hadith-Quranic citations and says that it is his divine obligation to protect and rule non-Muslims justly until they pay jizya. Henceforth, God instructed Ghazan to care about both Muslims and non-Muslims.⁶² Ghazan's ultimate divine power justified the military relationships with Armenians and other Christians. Thus, he created the image of the perfect Islamic prince who followed the Islamic norms to rule justly multireligious entity. Therefore,

⁶¹ Bayarsaikhan Dashdondog, *The Mongols and the Armenians (1220-1335)*, (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2011), 186, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1163/j.ctt1w8h10n>.

⁶² Denise Aigle, *The Mongol Empire Between Myth And Reality*, (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 262-263

the Armenian encounters with Ilkhanate had legitimacy to exist even after the conversion of Ghazan khan.

Back to the argument, the Armenian-European diplomatic negotiations were also a part of the Mongol-Mamluk war. The cooperation with the Europeans was a necessary step towards the expected success in the conquest of the Mamluk territories. Furthermore, these relationships had to provide necessary protection for the borderlands, which Mongols failed to do. Hetum II used the appropriation of Catholic-Byzantine Orthodox norms and fostered the institutionalization of the main Christian branches in Cilician Armenia. These policies aimed to maintain close relationships with the European powers. The king used hybrid policies regarding both Byzantine Orthodoxy and Catholics to maximize the efficiency of negotiations. From time to time, the king brought religious reciprocity with the Byzantines, then with the Catholics. In general, he did a crossover to maximize the possibility of obtaining security for Cilician Armenia. Simultaneously, these policies negatively affected the political power of the Armenian ecclesiastical authorities. Initially, Hetum II already had close ties with the Franciscan order in Cilician Armenia. He was a clergy there for a short period.⁶³ The active reciprocity with Catholics began when the king invited Otto von Grandisson to legitimize his second transfer to the throne from his brother Thoros.⁶⁴ Thus, this evidence reflects the significance of Catholicism in Armenia. Next, the king tried to increase the presence of the Catholic Church in the kingdom. Hetum II dismissed Ter Constantine II from the throne of the Catholicos (1286-1289).⁶⁵ Ter Constantine II was the active oppositional leader to the policies of unification with Catholics and Byzantines. He believed that any unification would deteriorate the authority and the autonomy of the Armenian Apostolic Church. Next, the king

⁶³ Jacob G. Ghazarian, *The Armenian Kingdom In Cilicia During The Crusades*, (London: Routledge Curzon, 2005), 66

⁶⁴ Ghazarian, *The Armenian Kingdom In Cilicia During The Crusades*, 67

⁶⁵ Ghazarian, 67

appointed a more loyal candidate named Ter Stephanos IV (1290-1293) between 1289 and 1290.⁶⁶ Hence, the Armenian Apostolic Church became more vulnerable to the appropriation from the side of Greek Orthodoxy and Catholics. In 1290 a huge dispute about the celebration of Easter among the Cilician princes and Armenian ecclesiastical authorities happened. Cilician nobles divided into 2 fractions: the first fraction protected the traditional position of the Armenian Church to celebrate Easter according to the Armenian calendar, whereas Armenian priests and the king tried to celebrate Easter using the Greek date.⁶⁷ The king and his clergy supporters initiated the celebration of Easter according to the Greek calendar. In 1291 Hetum and Ter Stephanos officially celebrated Easter according to the Greek calendar.⁶⁸ Later, in 1307 the celebration of Easter was according to the Roman calendar. Again, the king and his clergy supporters initiated the celebration of Easter according to the Roman tradition.⁶⁹ These examples prove the oscillation between Byzantine Orthodoxy and Catholicism. In 1292 a huge disaster to the Armenian religious institutions took a place. After Hetum II request, the Catholic Pope Nickolas IV sent his missionaries to Armenia. Afterward, the mass conversion to Catholicism among Cilician nobles happened in 1292.⁷⁰ All these facts indicate that the political power of the Armenian ecclesiastical authorities, their autonomy, and the independence from the major Christian powers were in the declining trend. Thus, the religious policies of Hetum II negatively affected the political power of the Armenian Church and its authorities. In particular, the flock, that constituted the church, and the patronage of the king, who had to support the native religious institutions, shifted siding the major Christian religious

⁶⁶ A. Galstyan, *Armyanskie Istochniki O Mongolah: Izvlecheniya Iz Rukopisey XIII-XIV Vv.*, (Moscow: Izdatelstvo Vostochnoy Literatury, 1962), 30

⁶⁷ Galstyan, *Armyanskie Istochniki O Mongolah: Izvlecheniya Iz Rukopisey XIII-XIV Vv.*, 83

⁶⁸ Galstyan, 30

⁶⁹ Galstyan, 80

⁷⁰ Bayarsaikhan Dashdondog, *The Mongols and the Armenians (1220-1335)*, (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2011), 186-187, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1163/j.ctt1w8h10n>.

branches. Finally, the policies brought a collapsing effect to the Armenian Church. Specifically, in 1307 during the Council of Sis, the Armenian Church decided to unify with the Roman Catholic Church.⁷¹ The unification symbolizes the dependent relationships and shows the weakness of the Armenian Apostolic Church. Overall, Hetum II mainly succeeded in maintaining the relationships with Catholics and gave up the attempts regarding the Byzantines. However, the hybridity of his policies cannot be ignored even though the pattern of Catholicism dramatically dominated Byzantinization.

The Mongol conquest of the Mamluk Sultanate explains the significance of the Catholic Church in Cilician Armenia. Ghazarian mentions the weakness of the Mongol-Armenian alliance to conquer the Mamluk territories and protect the borders from Egyptians. Henceforward, the active involvement of the Catholic powers in the geopolitical contest was a necessary step towards security measures. Specifically, the indicator of the lack of cooperation was a refusal of Hospitallers to participate in the Second Battle of Homs.⁷² Armenians already succeeded in making connections with the Mongols, but certainly had difficulties maintaining the relationships with the European powers. Nevertheless, the Armenian kings heavily relied on their military support. Specifically, the report conducted by the Armenian historian Hetum Pampich in the 4th book of his *La flor des Estoires de la Terre d'Orient* suggested negotiating with Tatars to create a common military strategy against Mamluks. In particular, the author claims that Tatars should attack Aleppo from Babylon, whereas the Catholic powers should attack the coastal territories from the island Corcose.⁷³ Moreover, the Armenian scholar creates the linguistic discourses of Christian unity against Muslims. He says the phrase *the God*

⁷¹ Sergio La Porta, "The Armenian Episcopacy in Mamluk Jerusalem in the Aftermath of the Council of Sis (1307)," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 17, no. 2 (2007): 99. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25188701>.

⁷² Jonathan Simon Christopher Riley-Smith, *The Knights Hospitaller In The Levant, C.*, (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 86-87

⁷³ Hetum, *The Flower of Histories of the East*, trans. Robert Bedrosyan, (Long Branch: Internet Archive, 2004), 51, <https://archive.org/details/HetumTheHistoriansFlowerOfHistoriesOfTheEast>.

commonly beloved by all Christians. Thus, the author reflects the importance of the Holy Land as a common Christian value. Therefore, he calls it a duty for *All Christians* to reconquer the Kingdom of Heaven. Also, he promotes the Oriental discourse of Muslim demonization. For instance, he uses many negative adjectives such as *evil*, *greedy*, *Tartar* that he relates to Mamluks.⁷⁴ Henceforth, the Armenian establishment tried to maintain the European support creating the linguistic discourses which call for cooperation and common military strategy. Furthermore, Hetum Pampich avoided signifying differences between Armenians and Catholics and mainly referred to the common Christian identity. Overlapping these facts, the continuity in the harmonization of the Christian identities is evident in the policies of Hetum II. Specifically, Latinization was an important tool that would help to create the common identity shared by Catholic powers and Cilician Christians. Meanwhile, the Catholic identity could stimulate the military cooperation of the Christian powers against Mamluks. Henceforth, the policies of Hetum II intended to create the common identity space for military support, which was generally absent for a long time. The cooperation with the Antiochian principality existed and was the most successful. However, the attraction of Cyprian, French and English forces to support the Mongol campaign had various obstacles. This project was unsuccessful. The European kings did not cooperate actively with Armenians and Mongols. Nevertheless, the process of Latinization had to attract the Catholic powers to ally with the Armenians and the Mongols. Henceforth, Latinization was a part of the campaigns against Mamluks with the involvement of the Armenians and the Catholics into the war.

However, the religious policies of Hetum II did not devastate the political power of the Armenian Church. In particular, the source of the Armenian Church power was not only the king, but the Cilician congregation also supported the Armenian Apostolic Church.

⁷⁴ Hetum, *The Flower of Histories of the East*, trans. Robert Bedrosyan, h (Long Branch: Internet Archive, 2004), 49-50, <https://archive.org/details/HetumTheHistoriansFlowerOfHistoriesOfTheEast>.

Particularly, ordinary peasants, soldiers, Armenian vassals, and priests themselves were this congregation. Henceforth, the discourses created artificially by Hetum II did not damage the political power of the Armenian ecclesiastical authorities even though they had some portion of the influence. In particular, the Armenian nobles actively opposed the policies of Latinization and Byzantinization in Cilician Armenia. The historical chronicles narrate that Hetum II faced resistance from the Armenian ecclesiastical nobles who received the support of the local Armenian lords. The case of a huge dispute between proponents of Hetum II and supporters of the indigenous autonomy about the celebration Easter again is a vivid example.⁷⁵ It shows that the political power of the Armenian Church was not devastated. Henceforth, the Armenian Apostolic Church still preserved the portion of the congregation who disobeyed the policies of the king. Furthermore, in the long run, the resistance was a continuous process. Oshin I, who was a successor of Hetum II, continued the policies of his uncle. As a result, the new king faced the same troubles after the reciprocity in relationships with European kingdoms. Some Armenian priests and lords did not express the willingness to submit to the Latin Pope. Consequently, Oshin I persecuted the Armenian priests imprisoning or exiling them out of the country. He also violently murdered Armenian nobles and ordinary people who resisted his will.⁷⁶ In 1317 king Oshin called the Council of Adan which legitimized again the decision of the previous Council of Sis. According to Mutafyan the king did not hear the willingness of the majority and continued the Latinization legacy of his uncle.⁷⁷ Again, Oshin's successor Lewon V was also a propagator of reciprocity with Latin kingdoms. However, in 1342 he was killed by the oppositional fraction formed with Armenian clergy and nobles. These

⁷⁵ A. Galstyan, *Armyanskie Istochniki O Mongolah: Izvlecheniya Iz Rukopisey XIII-XIV Vv.*, (Moscow: Izdatelstvo Vostochnoy Literatury, 1962), 83

⁷⁶ Alexei Sukisyan, *Istoriya Kilikiiskogo Armyanskogo Gosudarstva I Prava XI-XIV vv.*, (Yerevan: Mitk, 1969), 85

⁷⁷ Claude Mutafyan, *Poslednee Korolevstvo Armenii*, (Moscow: Mediacrat Publishing, 2009), 79

people were the adversaries of Latinization.⁷⁸ Henceforward, in the long-term, the Catholic Church did not significantly damage the political power of the Armenian clergy because they successfully resisted the influences of the policies of the Armenian kings. Henceforth, the political power of the Armenian clergy was also tightened with the Armenian nobles and ordinary congregation. Therefore, the political power of the Armenian ecclesiastical authorities was preserved despite the policies of Hetum II and his successors.

The warfare with Mamluks brought degradative consequences to the political power of the Armenian ecclesiastical authorities between 1284 and 1304. The period before 1285 brought damage to the churches and victimization of the flock and the clergy. Mainly, the war and the reverse attacks of Mamluks brought these outcomes. Furthermore, the significance of the anti-Christian discourses in the Mamluk Sultanate cannot be underestimated to the damage of the Armenian Church. This period ended with a short-term peace treaty signed by Lewon II. This document gave an opportunity to partially restore the political authority of the Armenian clergy in Cilician Armenia. However, the empowerment of Hetum II in 1289 became significant in a negative way to the political power of the Armenian priests. Specifically, Hetum II again participated in military campaigns. Consequently, the Mamluk forces damaged the Armenian churches and committed violence against the flock and the clergy. Exogenously, the religious policies of Ghazan khan also brought slight damage to the political power of the Armenian clergy. These policies affected the centralization of Ghazan's power and strengthened the military capabilities of the Mongols. The damage to the Christian institutions in Ilkhanate and Cilician Armenia were necessary acts to ally with domestic Muslims. As a result, the Armenian churches were partially damaged during Ghazan's reign. Lastly, the kings of Cilician Armenia also tried to form military relationships with the Europeans appealing to

⁷⁸ Alexei Sukisyan, *Istoriya Kilikiiskogo Armyanskogo Gosudarstva I Prava XI-XIV vv.*, (Yerevan: Mitk, 1969), 88

the common Christian identity. The policies of Hetum II intended to develop Catholicism in Cilician Armenia. Simultaneously, they decreased the power of the Armenian native religious institutions. The king tried to build a common religious identity with Catholics that would help in the military campaigns against Mamluks. However, this last effect again put only partial damage to the political power of the Armenian clergy since the relationships with other feuds and ordinary citizens became vital to the resistance, and consequent survival. Overall, during the reign of Hetum II and his brothers the political power of the Armenian ecclesiastical authorities was damaged further in comparison with the period of Lewon II reign. Therefore, during 1284 and 1304, the political power of the Armenian Apostolic Church and its representatives was in decline.

Chapter 6

Comparative analysis of the political power of the Armenian and Nestorian ecclesiastical authorities between 1284 and 1304

Overall, there were downward trends in the political power of both ecclesiastical communities in Ilkhanate and Cilician Armenia. The effect of the Mongol conquest of the Mamluk Sultanate became pivotal for declining patterns. In particular, the Christian institutions experienced damage to the churches, murders of the flock and priests, expropriation of the church legacies etc. Furthermore, the pace of restoration of the power of the Christian authorities in Ilkhanate and Cilician Armenia approximately date back to the same period. Specifically, the upward shift in the political power was between 1284 and 1289 in Cilician Armenia and between 1284 and 1290 in Ilkhanate. Despite these similarities the structural differences exist. Hereby, this part will reflect them showing the combinational effects of the various internal and external factors of the Mongol Mamluk warfare. The main point of this chapter is to introduce the structural complexity that constituted both trends in the political power of the Nestorian and Armenian clergy during 1284 and 1304. From the first eyesight these trends might seem similar and to some extent may be considered the same. However, the structural complexity exists in the next factors: the differences in the power capabilities, personal interests of the leaders to develop Christianity, the extent to which Catholicism penetrated the kingdoms and the sources of Christendom powers.

The Armenian and Syriac sources narrate about damage to churches and commitment the violence against Christian flock and clergy. However, in the Armenian case the vandalization of the churches mainly was a consequence of the warfare. In particular, from the period of Lewon II the Mamluk forces which constantly raided the territories of Cilicia damaged the Armenian religious institutions. Specifically, looting of the church property, burning the Christian building were committed by Mamluks. There is a continuity of this type

of damage from the reign of Lewon II to the power of Hetum II and his brothers. Simultaneously, the violence against the flock and clergy was not inevitable. As a result of the raids and sieges, the murders and slavery of the Armenian flock and clergy happened.¹ Henceforward, the damage to the religious institutions in terms of damage to physical buildings, ecclesiastical property and commitment the violence towards the people, who constituted the churches, were the terrible outcomes of the warfare. On the other hand, the damage to the Nestorian churches inclined to the period of Ghazan's rule. The situation in Ilkhanate was different regarding the damage to the churches. Specifically, the vandalization of the religious institutions happened after 1295 when Ghazan khan announced the policy of embracing the Islam in Ilkhanate. Thus, the persecutions happened when the relationships between Christians and Muslims sharpened. The Muslim amirs and their Muslim followers such as Nowruz committed the series of attacks against Nestorian churches. Consequently, the religious buildings in Tabriz, Baghdad, Mosul, Irbil and in other cities of Ilkhanate were destroyed. Moreover, the cases of violence against the Nestorian Catholicos and his clergy followers in Mosul and Irbil were evident to the religious policies of Ghazan khan.² Comparing the cases of violence and damage to the churches it is possible to conclude that the Cilician case mainly had the exogenous nature. In particular, the damage was committed by Mamluks troops who were motivated by anti-Christian polemics of Islamic theologians. However, the damage to the Nestorian churches and murders of the flock and clergy in Ilkhanate had the endogenous nature. Thus, the hostile power relationships between Muslims and Christians in Ilkhanate explain this outcome. However, the point of intersection was the damage to the churches in Nakhichevan by Muslim amirs of Ilkhanate.³ The religious policies of Ghazan khan

¹ Refer Chapter 5., parts 5.2-5.3

² Refer Chapter 4., part 4.4

³ Refer Chapter 5., part 5.3

also spread out to the territories of Cilician Armenia. The main reason here is that Armenians were the subjects of ilkhans. Henceforth, the policies of Hulaguids could also have the impact to Armenian Christians. Therefore, the unique case of the destructions in Nakhichevan is evident to the flow of the religious policies from Ilkhanate to the subjected territories.

However, the question of why the nature of Cilician case was distinct from Ilkhanate case is still open. Particularly, the continuity in the exogenous damage could be observed in the Armenian case whereas the endogenous damage in Ilkhanate was found after the empowerment of Ghazan khan. This difference can be explained with the fact that Cilician Armenia was more insecure to the Mamluk attacks whereas Ilkhanate was a more powerful entity. Henceforth, the Mongols could protect their territorial integrity in Persia. In particular, Islamic and Syriac sources do not give any references to the Mamluk raids into the territories of Ilkhanate. On the other hand, the Armenian chronicles are full of the descriptions about the damage committed by Mamluks. Furthermore, the studies regarding the number of soldiers during the battles may also indicate the power of Cilicia and Ilkhanate. Specifically, in the study of the Second Battle of Homs Professor Amitai shows that the number of Armenian soldiers did not exceed 5000 people, whereas the number of the Mongols varied from 25000 to 100000 people. Simultaneously, the military power of Mamluks was averagely counted 50000 people.⁴ Henceforward, the Cilician Kingdom was the least powerful actor among three and constantly relied on the support of Mongols and Catholic powers. Henceforth, the kingdom experienced constant attacks whereas Ilkhanate had a comparative success to protect the original borders. Therefore, the asymmetry between Cilician Armenia and Ilkhanate exists. Thus, the balance of the geopolitical powers and abilities to protect the territories explain this difference.

⁴ Reuven Amitai, *Mongols And Mamluks: The Mamluk-Ilkhanid War, 1260-1281*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 189, 193

The next point of comparison refers to the encouragements of the Christian religious authorities in Ilkhanate and Cilician Armenia. In both cases the leaders of the kingdoms stimulated the power of the ecclesiastical authorities. In particular, ilkhans and Armenian kings invested in the churches, appointed clergies to the governmental positions, made valuable gifts for ecclesiastical authorities and shared other benefits with church authorities. Particularly, these benefits refer to the period of Arghun and Lewon II reigns. Additionally, the cases share the continuity in the positive policies of the developments. Particularly, neither Arghun nor Lewon II did not change their mind regarding the development of the Christianity in their kingdoms. However, the main difference was in the reasoning of these policies. Specifically, considering the Armenian case, Lewon II tried to restore the political authority of the church since his power relied on the Church itself. The Church legitimacy which came from God cultivated his divine right and power.⁵ Hence, the restoration of the power of the Armenian clergy between 1285 and 1288 was highly essential for the king since it had a direct link with his personal power. As a result of these policies, a huge amount of silver and gold was invested in to restore the Armenian churches and produce a knowledge. Furthermore, the case of Vahram is evident here since he was the representative of the Armenian ecclesiastical authorities who served in the court and produced the chronicles, poems and liturgies.⁶ On the other hand, the renaissance of the Nestorian clergy power was a matter of the geopolitical ambitions of Arghun khan. He stimulated their development to create his pro-Christian image. Specifically, here the khan granted the political positions to Nestorians such as diplomatic privileges to represent the kingdom to the foreign actors. The case of Raban Sauma vividly shows that. Moreover, Arghun also granted gifts and his patronage to the Nestorian clergies.

⁵ Refer Chapter 5., part 5.2

⁶ Jacob G. Ghazarian, *The Armenian Kingdom In Cilicia During The Crusades*, (London: Routledge Curzon, 2005), 63

In particular, the khan gifted the gold, mounts and his protection to the Nestorian Catholicos Mar Yaballaha. As a result, the European powers recognized khan's sympathies to Christianity. That became the main reason of the negotiations regarding the collaborative military campaign against Mamluks. Henceforth, the development of the Nestorian political power in Ilkhanate was a matter of personal ambitions of Arghun to subjugate Mamluks attracting the Christian powers. Hence, structurally, these developments have completely different reasons behind them.

The next point of comparison is the role of the Catholic Church to the warfare against Mamluks vis-a-vis the political power of the Armenian Apostolic Church and Nestorian religious institutions. Both Armenians and Mongols attempted to attract the European powers to cooperate against Mamluks. Hetum Pampich provided the strategic plan to Latin kingdoms that involved the Armenian and Mongol forces in the reconquest of the Holy land. In particular, he tried to persuade the Catholic powers to coordinate the military actions with Mongols and Armenians. He used the linguistic discourses to appeal the common Christian identity to foster development of the relationships and achievement of the main goal.⁷ The same pattern was described in the Syriac chronicle. The case of Ilkhanate provides the same evidence about the role of Raban Sauma. He actively negotiated with the Pope, the king of England and the king of France about the possibility to cooperate with the Mongols. Particularly, as the previous author Raban Sauma also greatly insisted on pro-Christian attitudes of the khan as a matter of cooperation which should unite the actors against the common enemy.⁸ Henceforth, both diplomats referred to the common Christian identity to legitimize the military necessities of both kingdoms. However, the role of Christianity had different effects to the political power of the Armenian and Nestorian ecclesiastical authorities.

⁷ Refer Chapter 5., part 5.3

⁸ Refer Chapter 4., part 4.2

In this paragraph the structural difference refers to the continuity of the policies that aimed to attract the military support of Catholic powers. Analyzing the basis for cooperation, there was a continuity in the Armenian case, whereas the transformation in the policies was in Ilkhanate. In particular, the policies of Hetum II aimed to make a reciprocity in the relationships between Latin kingdoms and Cilician Armenia. The king tried to minimize the differences between the theological doctrines. Therefore, the religious unity should be the basis for the military cooperation. These policies continued up to his death. Here, the celebration of Easter, appointment more loyal Armenian Catholicos are examples these policies. Thus, these political decisions fostered the conversion to Catholicism and unification with the Rome.⁹ The reciprocity in the relationships between Mongols and Catholics also existed. Mainly, the development of the Nestorian Christianity was a foundation of this process. This policy was continuing up to the death of Arghun khan who stimulated the pro-Christian image of the Mongols. However, the matter of this cooperation changed in 1295. In particular, the correspondence between the Pope and Ghazan khan clearly shows that the pro-Christian attitudes are no longer the matter for cooperation. Nevertheless, the collaboration on the basis of the rational behavior became a new motivation for both powers.¹⁰ Therefore, comparing the significance of Catholicism to the warfare, the continuity in the Armenian policies was still preserved, whereas the Mongol studies show that the process had transformed. In particular, this difference was in Ghazan's approach to the warfare. Ghazan khan relied on the Muslim forces and sacrificed the pro-Christian image for the sake of the military success. However, the Armenian leaders preserved, fostered and also made theological differences between the Armenian Apostolic Church and the Catholic Church less vivid. Despite the fact that they brought quite the same outcomes to the political power of the marginalized Christian entities,

⁹ Refer Chapter 5, part 5.3

¹⁰ Refer Chapter 4, parts 4.2-4.4

the discourses inside these processes were very distinct. Hence, it highlights the complexity of Catholic involvements to the affairs in Ilkhanate and Cilician Armenia.

Generally, Catholicism had damaged the political authority of Nestorian and Armenian ecclesiastical authorities. This is a superficial similarity that could be drawn from the analysis of the political power of church representatives. However, the structures of the damage were different in Ilkhanate and Cilician Armenia. On the one hand, the Latin ambassadors substituted the Nestorian clergies. Hence, Catholics damaged the diplomatic power of the Nestorians priests in Ilkhanate. Actually, it was a pretty local damage since the degradation in the political power of the Nestorian clergy relates to the one of the functions of their political power.¹¹ This is structurally different from the case of Armenia since the broader power of the Armenian clergy was challenged. The institutionalization of Catholicism brought the damage to the institutional power of the Armenian Apostolic Church. The mass conversions, dismissal of the Armenian clergy from the political positions and the deviations from the indigenous norms of the Armenian Church happened during the reign of Hetum II.¹² Therefore, the modes of damage were different since Catholicism negatively affected the Armenian ecclesiastical power on the kingdom-institutional level, whereas the Nestorian power was damaged mainly on the local level. Firstly, the conversion of Ghazan khan to Islam explains this asymmetry. He already embraced the Islamic power in Ilkhanate which constituted his authority. Therefore, the shift to Catholicism would be irrational policy since it would damage his personal Islamic authority. Secondly, Catholicism could not challenge the Nestorian Christianity to the extent that it could succeed in Cilician Armenia. Nestorian Christians were less institutionalized as well as were already heavily persecuted. Therefore, a strong institutional rise of Catholicism in Ilkhanate did not happen.

¹¹ Refer Chapter 4, part 4.4

¹² Refer Chapter 5, part 5.3

The next difference is the major one. It gives the answer to the main research question. In particular, the difference in sources of ecclesiastical power explain why the Armenian clergy restored their political status, whereas the Nestorian authorities irrevocably left insignificant religious entity in the Middle East. From the one hand, the Latinization of Cilician Armenia brought long-term significant disputes between proponents of the autonomy of the Armenian Apostolic Church and the followers of the Armenian kings. This process started from Hetum II and continued up to the reign of Lewon V. Moreover, these debates transformed into the violent conflict between the fractions. Both Armenian kings and local lords contributed to the political power of the Armenian ecclesiastical authorities. As a result, the Armenian ecclesiastical authorities could survive and defend the institutional autonomy. On the other hand, the khans were the unique source of the power that contributed to the political power of the Nestorian Church. Exploring the power relationships in the Mongol Empire, the khans used different religious sources of power that legitimized their authority. As a result, they could easily shift from one religion to another. The cases of conversions of ilkhans clearly demonstrate that. Ghazan khan could convert easily from Buddhism to Islam. The next example is Oljeitu ilkhan who constantly oscillated between Sunni Islam, Buddhism and Ismaili religious doctrine.¹³ There are no vivid records about the active resistance of Nestorians to the political discourses during Ghazan's reign. Thus, they did not have the other sources of the political support to express the disobedience to the Islamization policies. Henceforward, the khans had the lion share of the influence on the political power of the Nestorian institutions. Consequently, the damage to their political authority in Ilkhanate was irrevocable since Ghazan khan and his successors literally turned off their favorability. As a result, the study clearly demonstrates the asymmetry in the extents of the damage to the

¹³ Judith Pfeiffer, "Conversion Versions: Sultan Öljeitü's Conversion to Shi'ism (709/1309) in Muslim Narrative Sources," *Mongolian Studies* 22, no.3 (1999): 35-67, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/43193284>.

political power of the religious institutions in Ilkhanate and Cilician Armenia. This difference was a result of power relationships between religious authorities and leaders of the kingdoms. Henceforward, the Armenian Apostolic Church became one of the leading marginalized Christian entities in the Middle East, whereas the Assyrian Apostolic Church became insignificant religious institution.

The political power of Nestorian and Armenian ecclesiastical authorities experienced downward trend between 1284 and 1304. Firstly, the Armenian ecclesiastical authorities mainly experienced the external invasions to the territories that damaged churches and the people who constituted their institution. The Nestorian clergy in Ilhanate otherwise experienced the internal damage which was a result of Ghazan khan's religious policies. The lack of the military capabilities to protect the territories and lack of the Mongol support explain the exogenous nature of the damage in Cilician Armenia. Secondly, both Nestorians authorities and Armenian clergy had upward shift in political power between 1285 and 1289. However, the reasons behind these processes were different. Christianity for Mongols was a tool for maintaining the relationships with powerful Catholic states against Mamluks. The restoration of the Armenians clergy was a matter of the personal power for the king of Armenia. Thirdly, the role of Catholic powers showed that damage to the political power of clergies in Ilkhanate and Cilician Armenia had different extents. Specifically, Ghazan's affiliation to Islam and the lack of Nestorian institutionalization in Ilkhanate were significant factors to this difference. Henceforward, even though the political power of the Nestorians in Ilkhanate and Armenian clergy in Cilician Armenia were quite similar, the complexity of these processes exists. Finally, the last point of conclusion is that the Armenian clergy constantly had various sources of the political support. The kings of Armenia and local nobility contributed to the power of the Armenian Church. On the other hand, the ilkhans were the unique source for the political power of the Nestorian clergy. Henceforth, the negative impact of the leaders on the political power

of the ecclesiastical authorities had different extents of damage. Armenians were more privileged since their relationships with local nobility gave an opportunity to preserve the autonomy. However, Nestorians lost the unique source of their sustainability. Thus, this asymmetry reveals the restoration of the Armenian Apostolic Church and eclipse of the Assyrian Apostolic Church in the beginning of 13th century.

Conclusion

The Mongol Mamluk warfare between 1284 and 1291 brought significant changes to the religious institutions of the Middle East. The marginalized Christian churches of the Nestorians and the Armenians were not exceptional since the complexity of the warfare also damaged the political power of the clergies in the late medieval period. The political power of the Nestorian Church in between 1284 and 1304 experienced a downward trend in Ilkhanate. Arghun khan tried to maintain the relationships with the Catholic kingdoms based on pro-Christian identity. These relationships should contribute to the mutual military support against Mamluks. To achieve this goal the khan developed different political discourses that fostered an increase in the political power of the Nestorian authorities. Arghun khan invested in church infrastructures, patronized the activities of the Nestorian clergies, granted them wealth and political positions in the court. Cumulatively, it affected the upward shift in the political power of the Assyrian Apostolic Church in Ilkhanate. These privileges continued up to Ghazan's empowerment in 1295. However, unlike Arghun Ghazan khan relied on the support of domestic Muslims. Henceforth, he initiated the policies of embracing the Islamic power in Ilkhanate. This discourse damaged the political power of the Nestorians. Specifically, the Assyrian Apostolic Church experienced devastations of churches, expropriations of the wealth, repressions against clergy and ordinary congregation. Afterward, Ghazan khan could maintain necessary military reforms in Ilkhanate that contributed to the development of the Mongol military capabilities. As a result, Ghazan's Syriac campaign against Mamluks in 1299 eventually succeeded. Henceforth, the political power of the Nestorian ecclesiastical authorities was significantly damaged during Ghazan's reign due to the military necessities. Overall, the Mongol conquest of the Mamluk territories damaged the political power of the Nestorian clergy between 1284 and 1304.

On the other hand, the Armenian ecclesiastical power in Cilician Armenia also had a degradative trend because of the warfare with Mamluks between 1284 and 1304. During the reign of Lewon II, the political power of the Armenian Apostolic Church was challenged by the Mamluk troops. However, damage to the churches, Mamluk looting of the Armenian Church belongings, and victimization of the congregation stopped in 1285 when Lewon II signed the peace treaty. For the next four years, the king tried to restore the political power of the Armenian Church. He significantly invested in the churches and ecclesiastical productions. It was necessary since the Armenian Church legitimized the power of the king. However, during the reign of Hetum II, this trend of restoration experienced a reversal. The war started again in 1289, and the Mamluk troops invaded Cilician Armenia and put significant damage. The Mamluk troops committed violence against the Armenian clergy and the laity. Also, the churches and their belongings were damaged or looted as a result of the military attacks. Henceforth, the political power of the Armenian ecclesiastical authorities continued the diminishing trend. Next, Ghazan's Islamic policies in Ilkhanate also had a partial effect on the political power of the Armenian clergy. The Armenian Apostolic Church and its laity experienced attacks from the Mongol troops after Ghazan's intentional conversion to Islam. This conversion was a part of the anti-Mamluk campaign. Lastly, the policies of Latinization and Byzantinization partially damaged the political power of the Armenian clergy. Specifically, Hetum II artificially created the discourses of appropriation of Catholic and Byzantine Orthodox norms and tried to eliminate the proponents of the Armenian religious autonomy. Henceforward, Hetum's policies created degrading conditions to the political power of the Armenian ecclesiastical authorities, since their representatives were dismissed from the important political posts and the congregation flowed out from the indigenous church. However, these policies had a partial effect because the Armenian Church received a support of the local Armenian lords who tried to preserve the autonomy of their power. Overall, the

constant attacks of the Mamluk army, the effect of Islamization policies in Ilkhanate, and reciprocity with European powers damaged the political power of the Armenian Apostolic Church between 1284 and 1304.

The comparative study has shown that the Christian institutions of Armenians and Nestorians were damaged by the structures of the warfare with Mamluks. Of course, these trends have some differences. The Armenian Church experienced both damages from Mongols and Mamluks, whereas Nestorian power was damaged only by Mongol khans. Secondly, the effect of the Latin Christendom was different for Nestorians and Armenians. The Armenian Church experienced massive problems with the Latinization of its congregation, whereas Nestorians only lost diplomatic power. However, the main point of the paper was the question of why the Armenians could preserve their political status, whereas the Nestorians failed. The difference in the sources of their power affected the success of the firsts and the failure of the seconds. The Nestorian Church was highly dependent on the favorability of ilkhans who shaped their political status. Contrary, the political power of the Armenian Church was supported by the king and the local Armenian nobility. The nobility was essential for the preservation of political autonomy from conversion to Catholicism. The Armenian Church could resist the discourses of the Armenian kings, whereas Nestorians did not have such support. As a result, the political power of the Nestorians was localized irrevocably, whereas the Armenian Apostolic Church could preserve its autonomy and restore its political status.

Historical studies about marginalized Christian institutions during the medieval period are underdeveloped. The Nestorian studies do not have a clear answer to the question of why they rapidly disappeared from the historical annals of the Persian world during the Mongol rule. Mainly, the centralization of the khan's power and the role of Sufi shaykhs are the main theories to explain the institutional victory of Islam over other religious entities in Ilkhanate. However, the scholars fail to answer the question of how the Nestorians declined during the

13th and 14th centuries, and how the role of warfare and foreign relationships influenced the process. This scholarship is significant because it connects exogenous and endogenous processes in Ilkhanate with the declining trend of the Nestorian power. Specifically, the warfare with Mamluks, the diplomatic relationships with European powers, the political ties with domestic Muslims, the centralization of khans' power, and other internal religious discourses were main factors that affected the decline in their political power. Secondly, the scholars of Armenian studies focus mainly on the political and military history of the region. The ecclesiastical history was considered an auxiliary one. Moreover, the authors fail to explain why the Armenian Apostolic Church preserved its political status and became the most significant religious institution among marginalized Christian churches. My study attempted to explain the reasoning behind this. It tried to explore the sources of the medieval ecclesiastical power. In particular, the Armenian Church had different sources of power: kings, local nobilities, and ordinary citizens. Therefore, the Armenian Church could preserve its autonomy and became one of the leading marginalized Christian entities of the Middle East during the late medieval and the early modern periods. The last significance of this paper is that it explains how the domestic policies of Mamluks affected the treatment of the Armenian Apostolic institutions. Generally, it shows the link between Mamluk domestic and foreign policies vis-à-vis the Christian religious institutions. Overall, this thesis contributes to the religious, military, and political history of the Middle East. The paper has a comparative study technique that succeeds to explain the role of Christianity in the warfare between Mongols and Mamluks. Specifically, the reflection of the role of representatives from marginalized Christian institutions shows the diversity of foreign politics and the role of pro-Christian identity in maintaining the alliances against Mamluks. Also, the comparative study of the church structures helps to understand the advantages of the Armenian Apostolic Church over Nestorian Christianity. Mainly, the evaluation of the religious discourses of the leaders, the

sources of ecclesiastical power, and the effects of the Mongol-Mamluk warfare on the Christian institutions provide the answers to the questions of why the damage and restoration were important political tools to maintain different geopolitical and domestic interests.

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APPENDIX

Table 1: List of Nestorian Catholicoses during the rule of Hulaguids (1256-1335)¹

<u>Name</u>	<u>Years of rule</u>
Sabaryeshu V	1226-1257
Machicha II	1257-1265
Dengha I	1265-1281
Yaballaha III	1281-1317
Timothy II	1318-1360

¹ Aubrey V. Russell, *The Nestorian Churches*, (New York: AMS Press, 1980), 131, 185

Table 2: List of Armenian Catholicoses in Cilician Armenia during the rule of Hulaguids (1256-1335)²

<u>Name</u>	<u>Years of rule</u>
Constantine I	1221-1267
Jacob I	1267-1286
Constantine II (Ter Constantine II)	1286-1289
Stephen IV (Ter Stephanos IV)	1290-1293
Gregory VII	1293-1307
Constantine III	1307-1322
Constantine IV	1322-1326
Jacob II	1327-1341, 1355-1359

² Jacob G. Ghazarian, *The Armenian Kingdom In Cilicia During The Crusades*, (London: Routledge Curzon, 2005), 195

**Table 3: List of Armenian Kings of Cilician Armenia from
Hetumyan dynasty³**

<u>Name</u>	<u>Years of rule</u>
Hetum I	1226-1270
Lewon II	1270-1289
Hetum II	1289-1293
Thoros	1293-1298
Hetum II	1295-1296
Smbat	1296-1298
Constantine I	1298-1299
Hetum II	1299-1303
Lewon IV	1303-1307
Oshin	1307-1320
Lewon V	1320-1341
Constantine II	1342-1344
Constantine III	1344-1362
Constantine IV	1362-1373

³ Lauren Prezbindowski, “*The Ilkhanid Mongols, The Christian Armenians, And The Islamic Mamluks : A Study Of Their Relations, 1220-1335*” (Master Thesis, University of Louisville, 2012), 110

Table 4: List of Ilkhans from Hulagu dynasty⁴

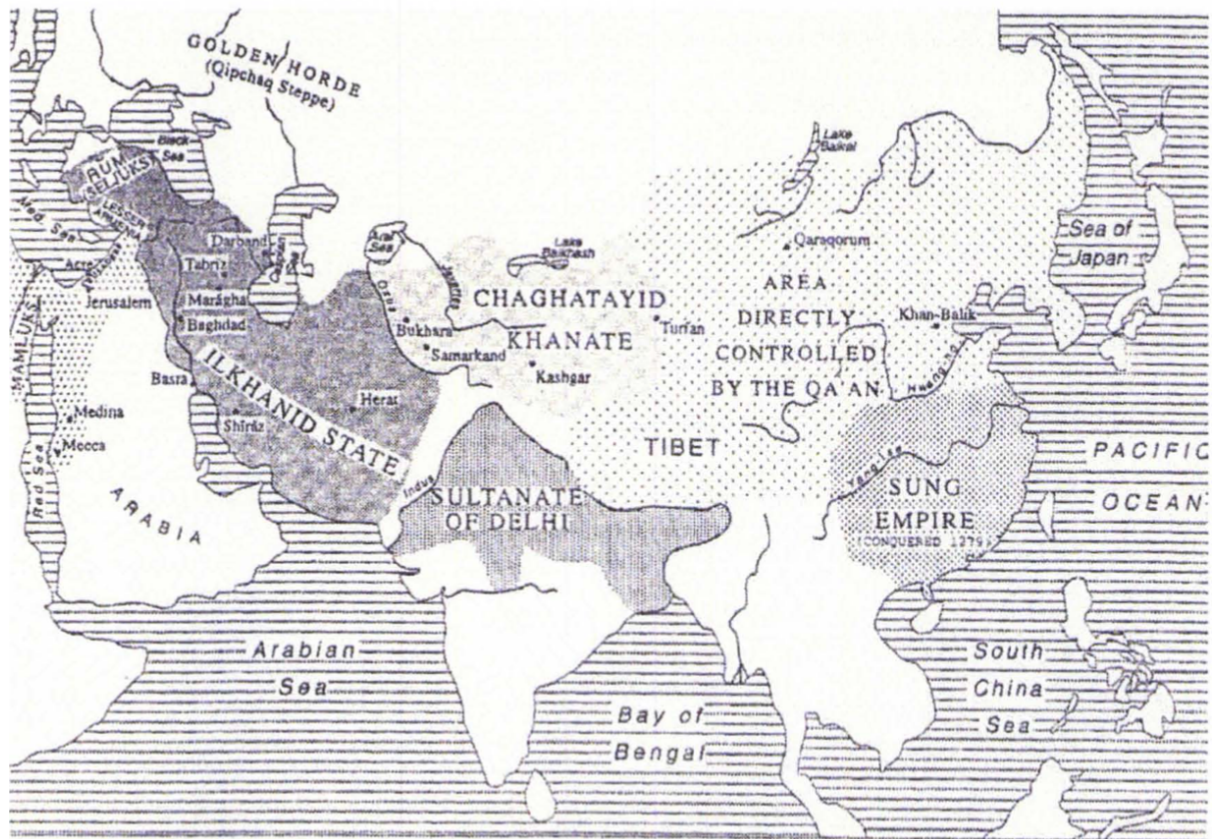
<u>Name</u>	<u>Years of rule</u>
Hulagu	1256-1265
Abaqa	1265-1282
Ahmad-Tekuder	1282-1284
Arghun	1284-1291
Ghaikatu	1291-1295
Baidu	1295
Mahmud Ghazan	1295-1304
Muhammad Kharbandah Oljeitu	1304-1316
Abu Said Bahadur	1315-1335

⁴ Lauren Prezbindowski, “*The Ilkhanid Mongols, The Christian Armenians, And The Islamic Mamluks : A Study Of Their Relations, 1220-1335*” (Master Thesis, University of Louisville, 2012), 110

Table 5: List of Sultans of the Mamluk Sultanate⁵

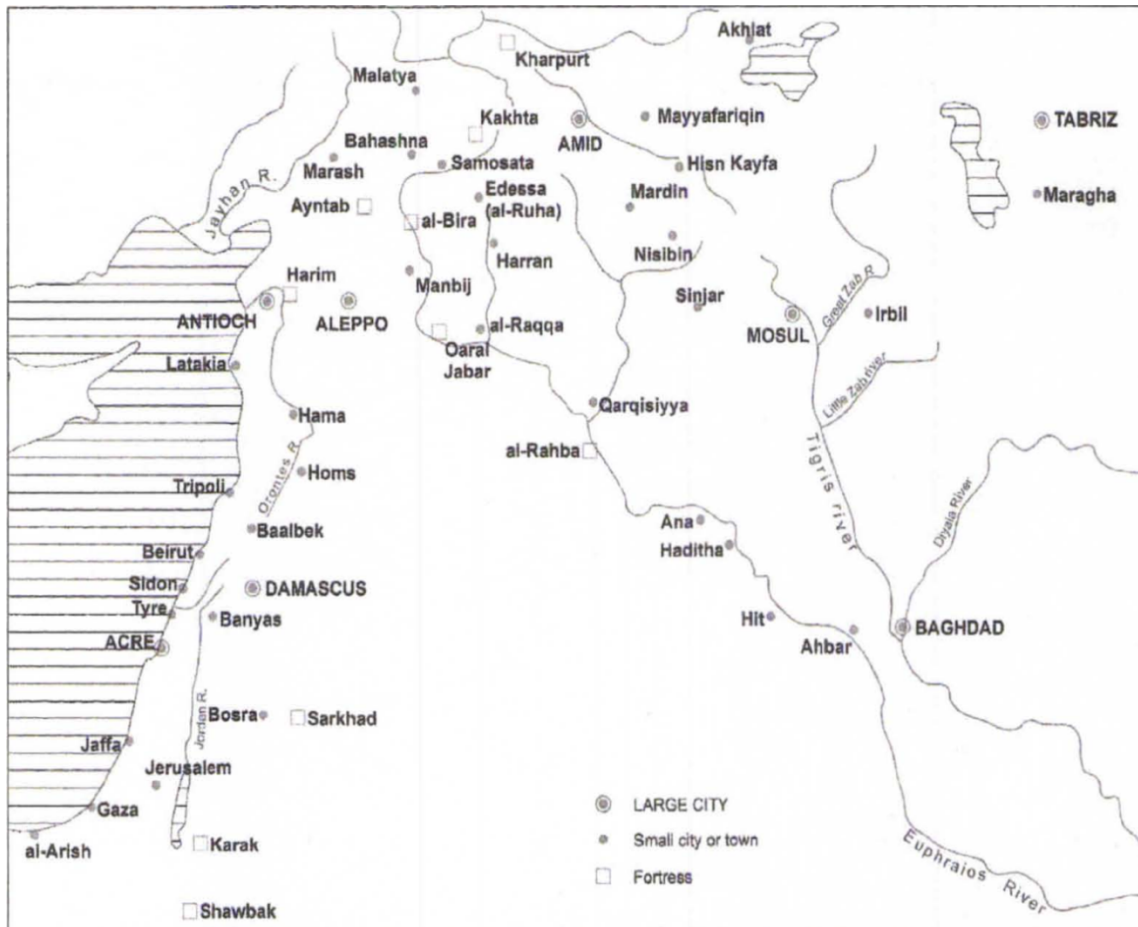
<u>Name</u>	<u>Years of rule</u>
Al Muizz Aybeg al-Turkmani	1250-1257
Al-Mansur Ali b. Aybeg	1257-1259
Al-Muzaffar Qutuz	1259
Al-Zathir Baybars al-Bunduqdari	1260-1277
Al-Said Berke Khan b. Baybars	1277-1279
Al-Adil Sulamish b. Baybars	1279
Al-Mansur Qawalun b. Alfi	1279-1290
Al-Ashraf Khalil Qawalun	1290-1293
Al-Nasir Muhammad b. Qawalun	1293-1294
Al-Adil Ketbugha	1294-1296
Al-Mansur Lachin	1296-1299
Al-Nasir Muhammad b. Qawalun	1200-1309
Al-Muzaffar Baybars al-Jashnakir	1309-1310
Al-Nasir Muhammad b. Qawalun	1310-1340
Al-Nasir Muhammad's successors	1340-1382

⁵ Lauren Prezbindowski, "*The Ilkhanid Mongols, The Christian Armenians, And The Islamic Mamluks : A Study Of Their Relations, 1220-1335*" (Master Thesis, University of Louisville, 2012), 111



Map 1: Mongol Empire during the 13th century⁶

⁶ Reuven Amitai, *Mongols And Mamluks: The Mamluk-Ilkhanid War, 1260-1281*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 236



Map 2: Middle Eastern cities and fortresses in the mid of 13th century⁷

⁷ Bayarsaikhan Dashdondog, *The Mongols and the Armenians (1220-1335)*, (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2011), xviii <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1163/j.ctt1w8h10n>.



Map 3: Cilician Armenia during the 13th century⁸

⁸ Bayarsaikhan Dashdondog, *The Mongols and the Armenians (1220-1335)*, (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2011), xv, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1163/j.ctt1w8h10n>.