

From the History of the Foreign Policy of Georgian Kings in the 1st Half of the 14th Century

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The present paper focuses on the diplomatic relations between Georgia and the Sultan of Egypt. The Georgian envoys were sent to Egypt several times – in 1305/6, 1310/11, 1316/7, 1320. Their goal was restitution of the Monastery of the Holy Cross in Jerusalem confiscated in 1270s by Baybars I, the Sultan of Mamluk Egypt. Considering the issue the author of the paper comes to the following conclusions:

In all cases the envoys were sent by the king of the West Georgia, Constantine, son to David, who achieved the goal in negotiations with the Mamluk Sultan;

Giorgi the Brilliant began his activities on the Holy Land after establishing peaceful relations between Ilkhans and Mamluk Sultan under the treaty concluded in 1323. The latter was carried out with the active parng Giorgi V. Giorgi the Brilliant got independence by the flexible diplomatic policy, alliance with Ilkhans in the confrontation between the Golden Horde and Ilkhans and determining his right function in that situation;

“King of kings” David, who is mentioned is a renovator of the Monastery of the Holy Cross in the bead-roll of the Monastery, is not David VIII, as it was supposed in the scholarly literature, but David IX, son of Giorgi the Brilliant.

ქართველი მეფეების საგარეო პოლიტიკის ისტორიიდან

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გიული ალასანია

საქართველოს უნივერსიტეტი

სტატიაში განხილულია ქართველი მეფეების დიპლომატიური ურთიერთობა ეგვიპტის სულთანებთან. ქართველი ელჩები გაიგზავნენ ეგვიპტეში რამდენიმეჯერ: 1305/6, 1310/11, 1316/17, 1320 წლებში. მათი მიზანი იყო იერუსალიმში ჯვრის მონასტრის გამოხსნა მუსლიმანთაგან. აღნიშნული მონასტერი ჩამოერთვა ქართველებს ეგვიპტის სულთანმა ბეიბარს I-მა, 1270-იან წლებში. განხილული წყაროების საფუძველზე სტატიის ავტორი მიდის შემდეგ დასკვნებამდე:

ელჩებს ყველა შემთხვევაში აგზავნიდნენ დასავლეთ საქართველოს მეფე, დავით ნარინის შვილი, კონსტანტინე, რომელმაც მიაღწია მიზანს მაძლუქ სულთანებთან მოლაპარაკებაში და დააბრუნებინა ჯვრის მონასტერი ქართველებისათვის;

გიორგი V აქტიურ ურთიერთობას წმიდა მიწასთან იწყებს მხოლოდ 1323 წლიდან, მას შემდეგ, რაც მისი მონაწილეობით დაიდო ზავი ილხანებსა და მამლუქ სულთანს შორის;

გიორგი ბრწყინვალემ მოიპოვა დამოუკიდებლობა მოქნილი დიპლომატიური პოლიტიკით, ილხანებთან მოკავშირეობით ოქროს ურდოსა და ილხანების დაპირისპირებაში და არსებულ ვითარებაში თავისი ფუნქციის სწორად განსაზღვრით;

“მეფეთა მეფე” დავითი, რომელიც მოხსენიებულია მონასტრის აღაპში როგორც ჯვრის მონასტრის მეორედ აღმშენებელი, არ არის დავით VIII, როგორც ეს ნავარაუდევია სამეცნიერო ლიტერატურაში, არამედ დავით IX, გიორგი ბრწყინვალეს შვილი.

The present work is contemplation on some episodes from the history of Georgia in the first half of the 14th century – the time of momentous triumph. It is the period when Mongol rule over Eastern Georgia came to an end, the country restored its political integrity, and talks on the protection of the rights of Georgians on the Holy Land - one of such rights being the deliverance of the monastery of the Holy Cross in Jerusalem - completed successfully.

Some considerations established in historiography and different views on the same facts, often caused by scarcity and insufficiency of resources and consequently miscellaneous interpretation of sources – have drawn our attention. The purpose of the current study is not to bring new original materials into scientific circulation. Rather, it is to present a different reading of some historical sources and hence to specify some facts, taking into consideration the international context of the time.

First of all, it concerns the relation of Georgian kings with the sultans of Egypt that was followed by the return of the monastery of the Holy Cross in Jerusalem, seized by Muslims, to Georgians. In the Georgian historiography three potential different dates are mentioned to denote this fact: 1305, 1310 and the 1320s. The first version is the most supported of all [1, 208-216; 2, 95; 3, 47; 4, 79; 5, 263, 6, 43, 48; 7, 697; 8, 102; 9, 482-483; 10, 83; 11, 26-27; 12, 103].

It has been mentioned many times that according to the notes of Arab historians: Baybars al-Mansuri (approx. 1247-1312), Shihab al-Din al-Nuwayri (died in 733/1333), al-Maqrizi (1364-1442) and al-‘Ayni (died in 1451), in 705/ 24.07.1305_12.07.1306 and 710/31.05.1310_19.05.1311, Georgian envoys paid a visit to Cairo with an aim to get back the monastery of the Holy Cross. Some authors only refer to the year AH 705 (Mujir al-Din al-Hanbali, the same al-‘Ulaymi, died in 1521), while others (for example, Mufaddal ibn Abi l-Fada’il, whose work was completed 759 /1357-58) only point to 1310/11 [12, 94-104; 13, 38-9; 14, 289 -299].

Not long ago, G. Japaridze also touched upon the subject and by way of adding new additional materials cast light on the issues that still seem obscure. At the same time, G. Japaridze repudiated the position of a German

scholar J. Pahlitzsch, according to whom there were two missions – in 1305 and in 1310, not only the one of 1305, when the monastery of the Holy Cross was freed. G. Japaridze called for the attention of the following information of Baybars al-Mansuri of 710-1310-11:

“Georgian envoys arrived from Constantine, son of David, lord of Kurjistan (Georgia) and Tiflis (Tbilisi). They asked him [Sultan al-Nasir Muhammad] to return the Church of the Cross (*Kanizat al-Musallaba*) which had been taken [from them] in the past by force. It is known to have been theirs from old times and the chief of their priests dwells in it [in the church]. And His well-embracing justice proceeded slowly with returning it, in fulfillment of the *Shari‘a*, intending to protect the public interests and impede [others’] schemes... [14, 294].

The quoted fragment makes it clear that: 1. it was Constantine, son of David, the King of western Georgia, who initiated sending the envoys – an unknown fact for Georgian historiography; 2. there lives a chief of the Georgian monks in the Monastery; and 3. The Sultan delayed returning the Monastery.

Right here, G. Japaridze states that although Constantine was not “the lord of Tbilisi”, this is the way the latter presented himself in his letter to the Sultan [14, 295-296].

Similar to D. Gocholeishvili [13, 39], G. Japaridze considered that the monastery of the Holy Cross was returned in 1310. With an aim to substantiate his position, the latter presented convincing argumentation. First of all, he noted that “after the year 710/1310-11, Georgian envoys never went to the Sultan to Cairo again to return the monastery of the Holy Cross” – the evidence that G. Japaridze gained while studying Arabic narrative sources of 14th_15th cc. and based on the decree of Sultan al-Nasir Muhammad b. Kalawun dating back to Ramadan 8, 710, i. e. January 29, 1311 on paying an honor to Sadun al-Kurji – a monk living in the monastery of the Holy Cross, as well as all other monks living with him, the Georgians and Georgian pilgrims residing in other churches of Jerusalem [14, 295]. Right here, we would like to draw your attention to the fact that although, according to the source referred to above (the work of Baybars al-Mansuri), there was a Georgian chief residing in the Monastery, the information may be reflecting the event of a relatively later period of time than 1310/11 – when the work of Baybars al-Mansuri was being written (no later than 1325). It should be recalled that it would have been quite possible for Georgian monks to live in one of the chambers of the monastery of the Holy Cross, even at the times when the Monastery was seized and renovated as a mosque by Muslims. There is evidence that Georgian monks managed to get back to the premises of the Monastery under some circumstances. For instance, this happened in the reign of Vakhtang III, when in 1300, accompanied with Mongols, the

king managed to enter Jerusalem - controlled by allies for a short time. The same can be proved by the other sources [36,188], among them by the dead-scroll of the Jerusalem monastery of the Holy Cross, which was presumably established to commemorate Vakhtang III. It is common knowledge that together with Mongols Vakhtang III participated in the Syrian campaign; he entered Jerusalem, visited Georgian monks and contributed silver - 1000 "Tetri" and great amount of Satin and different kinds of tissues to support the Monastery. "*We fathers Sol(o)m(o)n and Svi(me)on used this contribution for the good of the Monastery*" – reads one of the dead-scrolls of the monastery of the Holy Cross [6, 42, 97-8].

G. Japaridze remarks that "only al-Maqrizi writes on the failure of the year 710, while the positive outcome is mentioned by al-Nuwayri, Mufaddal ibn Abi l-Fada'il and al-'Ayni. Out of them Mufaddal Ibn Abi l-Fada'il and al-'Ayni were the contemporaries of the event" [14, 291]. This is really the case however the authors provide the information somewhat later – after some times as passed. The earliest of them is al-Nuwayri, since his work was written in 1314-1331. According to the second author Mufaddal ibn Abi l-Fada'il (whose work was completed in 1357/58) "the envoys of al-Ashkari, accompanied by Georgian envoys, visited the Sublime Porte with a request to return the monastery of the Holy Cross of Noble Jerusalem. (The monastery) was seized by Sheikh Khidr in the reign of al-Zahir and remodeled into a mosque, as stated above. It was returned (to Georgians) based on the decision of learned people (*al-'ulama'*). Indeed, it [the church] cannot be taken away" [13, 38]. About the same information is preserved in the work of al-'Ayni: "in the month of Rajab, the envoys of al-Ashkari – Ruler of Constantinople - visited the Sublime Porte. The envoys were accompanied by Georgian envoys. They asked for the return of the church of Musallahia (resp. al-Musallaba) in Jerusalem. Sheikh Khidr had taken it away from them in the reign of al-Zahir, and returned it based on the decision of learned people" [13, 37-38]. As mentioned above, the author of the information died in 1451. There can be an opinion that data on the return of the Monastery appeared any time from 1310 till the time when the authors created the works. However we'd probably need to take into account the circumstance that, whatever the case, in the works of the authors - constructed according to the principle of chronology – the information that we are interested is to be found in the events of 710. We should also note that in 1320, during his pilgrimage to the Holy Land, Italian Pipino Francesco – who visited the Monastery of the Holy Cross of Jerusalem, attributed the ownership of the monastery to Georgians [15, 10, 11, 15].

After having clarified the identity of the one who sent envoys to Cairo in 710/1310-11, G. Japaridze never again touched on the issue of the identity of the Georgian king who sent envoys in 705/1305-6. However he justly questioned the possibility of Georgian subordination to the Sultanate of Egypt under Mongol rule, promised by Georgian envoys: "In 705, according to al-Maqrizi, Georgians promised to help and support the Sultan whenever

he needed, in exchange for the return of the monastery of the Holy Cross. Subordination to the Sultan of Egypt at the time of Mongolian strength in Georgia would have been out of question”, claims the scholar [14, 296].

In historiography there are different opinions on the identity of the person who initiated sending envoys in 1305-6. Some scholars refer the mission of AH 705 to David VIII (1293-1311) [6, 45; 12, 97; 9, 478-479]; A. Tsagareli, D. Kipshidze and S. Kakabadze refer the release of the Monastery of the Holy Cross to Vakhtang III (1298-1308, or 1304 according to D. Ninidze), who is at the same time identified with Brtilma, mentioned in Arab sources. How well are these doubts substantiated?

It is well-known that after the creation of the Il-khan State (1256), Eastern Georgia fell under its control. From that time on, all the forces of the kings of Eastern Georgia participated in each war of Il-khans and were the main buttress for them. In addition to Georgians sources, Arab sources also provide information about this. According to the latter, Georgians are “support and reserve for the Hulaguid army, who trust them and rely on them. Especially the family of Juban and his sons and the remainder of their descendants owing the past kindnesses of Juban to them [the Georgians] ... Juban was a sincere friend to their king BRTLMA..” [4, 77; 13, 51]. Georgian participation contributed a lot to the seizure of Baghdad in 1258. In the following years Georgians together with Il-khans participated in campaigns against Egypt several times, and returned to their homeland with trophies. In 1268-9 “the khan expressed his will to launch a campaign against Egypt and called on King David with all his forces. There was a fierce warfare wherein King David and his forces fought as mighty advance-guard. There was a massacre, with people killed on both sides and it all ended with the fleeing of the Egyptians... enriched with countless trophies. They came to Tpilisi [16, 235-236]. Because of the joint Georgian_Il-khan campaigns against Egypt in the 1270s, Georgians were taken away the monastery of the Holy Cross. For some time, it was turned into a mosque. At the same time, Georgians were forbidden to enter holy places on horses and were only allowed to sit on horses with their legs dropping down on one side [12. 91].

Georgians further continued carrying out similar attacks together with Il-khans. David, son to Giorgi-Lasha, Demetre the Devoted, Vakhtang III and Beka – the Atabeg of Samtskhe, all participated in these warr. The Cilician Armenia and the Rum Sultanate, i. e. all those under the Il-khan control also participated in this coalition of Georgians and Il-khans. The comment of D. Gocholeishvili, regarding the hypothesis of B. Silagadze, seems reasonable. According to this hypothesis, in the times of Ghazan Khan (1295-1304), after defeat from the Sultan of Egypt, there started a new peaceful era in the history of relations between Egypt and Georgia [12, 93; 13, 36], since - as sources illustrate - Georgians also participated in the campaign of 1312/13 of Il-khans against Egyptian mamluks on the territory of Syria [13, 36]. In this situation, any initiative of Eastern Georgia to get closer to Egypt

and establish peaceful relations seems questionable in those years. By that time the foreign policy of Eastern Georgian kings was quite synchronous and tightly intertwined with the policy of Il-khans.

It should be pointed out that the Pope of Rome and the rulers of Western Europe also participated in the anti-Egyptian coalition. When Öljeitü Khan (his Muslim name was Muhammad Khodabandeh) ascended the throne of Il-khans in 1304, in an attempt to seek an ally in his fight against the Sultans of Egypt, he immediately sent two envoy missions in the Mongolian language in a letter written with Uighurian characters to the French king Philippe IV. He also sent letters to the King of England, Edward II and the Pope of Rome Clement V [17, 225]. It is a fact that that Georgian participation (together with Crusaders) in the conquest of Palestine-Syria in the beginning of the 14th cent. was a widely-discussed issue in European sources. The work of Hetum – the King of Cilician Armenia – created round 1300, provides some important information on the Georgia split into two parts: “each has a king of its own. The King of Georgia is the subordinate of the Asian Emperor .. The King of Abkhazia never subordinated either Tatars or the Emperor of Asia”. The Author addressed the Pope of Rome with the following words: “would he be willing to write a letter to the King of Georgia. They are Christians and compared to other nations they have greater willingness to return the Holy Land. Would he ask them help the Crusaders” [18, 159]. The same author gives a detailed description of the failed campaign of Il-khans - supported by Cilician Armenians and Georgians - to Syria at the time of Ghazan Khan. In this fight Georgians were led by Vakhtang III and Beka Jakeli - the ruler of Samtskhe.

M. Tamarashvili notes that in the year 1307, Pope Clement V has sent missionaries to Georgia [19,39]. Especially active they became in times of King Giorgi the Brilliant, and since 1318, many missionaries were sent here. In 1321 the Pope calls the King of Georgia to join the Western Church and also, asks Him to give a helping hand to the missionaries, ensuring their security and free pass to the areas inhabited by the Tatars or any other tribes [19, 40].

According to some related sources, in the year of 1323, new Crusade was planned to take start from France and the Egypt was quite aware of it. Al-‘Ayni points that ‘the Pope of Rome intended to send the whole army against “the infidels”, i.e. us; our troops marched to stand against, but there has been no sign of the enemy. Thus we presume that he (the Pope) could not maintain his menace’ [20, 16].

In the years of 1328-1329, according to the prescript of Pope John XXII, Episcopacy was transferred from Smirna (Asia Minor) to Tbilisi, and was put under ascendancy of the Archiepiscopacy established in Il-khan State, Sultaniye, in 1318 [19, 32-33, 39]. In 1332-1333 King Giorgi the V received envoys from the Philip V of France, and delivered personal letter urging Georgian king to participate in joint campaign against Egypt – to liberate the Holy Land [20,159; 21,96]. In his answer, Giorgi V claims that ‘Divine Lords

of France often call for the Eastern kings against Muslims, but then change their minds, never come and desert us alone in this everlasting struggle... Firstly, tell us, exactly when you are planning to come overseas, and I'll be right there with my 30 thousand troops [22, 210; 21, 96; 20, 158].

Attitudes towards the King of Eastern Georgia is well shown in the letter of the Sultan of Egypt, that Arab authors – one Al-'Umari and Al-Qalqashandi had preserved: 'May God Almighty make permanent the felicity of the exalted presence, the presence of the great monarch, the hero, the bold, the lion, the illustrious, the attacker, the dauntless, the enthroned, the crowned, a scholar of his community, just to his subjects, the successor of the Greek kings, Sultan of the Georgians...the bulwark of the lands of Rum and Iran, the strengthener of Christianity..supporter of the religion of Jesus, who glorifies Jerusalem by sincere purpose, the helper of the Bab who is the Pope of Rome, the lover of the Muslims, the best of close companions, and friend of Kings and Sultans" [4,78; 13, 52].

However, the interrelations between Western Georgia and Egypt was quite different, and started right after breaking Georgia into two parts. Mongols' apostate, David Narin, son of the Queen Rusudan, was first to send his envoys to Egypt; though a bit earlier, in 1265, and that before Hulagu's death, Sultan Baybars had sent his envoys to Georgia [23, 277]. According to al-Maqrizi (1364-1442) Georgians visited Baybars in Ramadan, 663/ June-July, 1265 and brought him a lot of gifts and went away burdened with even more [23, 277]. Then, in 1268, envoys came again and brought letters from king of Georgia to the Sultan of Egypt [12, 89-90]. Iv. Javakhishvili comments on the issue: 'Undoubtedly, Sultan would be pleased to find Hulagu Khan's enemies his allies: as it was, Il-khan of Iran never abandoned the plans of conquering his domains' [24, 88].

Chr. Müller and J. Pahlitzsch hold the opinion that two Georgian kings addressed the Sultan of Egypt in 1268: one - the King of Abkhazs and the other – "King of Tbilisi"; thus the scholars presume that the King of East Georgia, though under Il-khan control, still hoped to overthrow them [23, 27, 78]. But I still think that that day situation was in no favor for such assumptions. The envoys from Egypt clearly were sent to Western Georgia and the letters they brought back should have been from the King of western Georgia, who eventually titled himself the same way as it is in the above-mentioned writings of Baybars. We believe that in both cases, the King of West Georgia is the person. It's rather dubious to think that David, son of Giorgi-Lasha, once pardoned for his tergiversation by the Mongols, would dare to step so far – at the very time when he and the Il-khans, confronted the Sultan of Mamluks.

In 1263, according to the treaty between Byzantium and Egypt, the latter got rights to sail the Black Sea. The same time, intensive political, diplomatic and cultural relations were set up between the Golden Horde and Egypt [25, 15, 26, 81]. Also, some sources provide us information about the West Georgia's contacts with the Golden Horde. 14th century anonymous

Georgian author tells of some anti-Il-khans getting shelter in the West Georgia, the case with David Narin himself receiving the fugitive Tegüder: "...and met him with pleasure, and laid a table for five hundred stewed beef, and pork and mutton; six hundred horses, fifteen hundred caws, thousand sheep, two thousand pigs – all for his host, and served Tegüder as inferior' [27,261]. Contacts between the West Georgia and Egypt were by no means lessened afterwards, as it is well proved by the fact of Konstantine's (son to David) envoys' visit to Egypt in 1310-11.

In the 1260s David Narin also establishes close contacts with Byzantium and marries the daughter of John, the Emperor Mikhail II Paleologos's brother [22, 204]. This was part of the treaty set between David Narin and the Byzantium. According to this Treaty, the privileges assigned to the Georgians before Crusaders' conquer of Constantinople were restored. Thanks to the Arab historians, it's getting clear that Byzantium, confronting the Rome, held close relationship with the kings of West Georgia, as it is proved by the fact of the joint trip of their envoys to the sultan of Egypt in 1305-1310. Arab historians, though, make a mistake stating that the Lascar Dynasty hold power in Constantinople of that age – as since 1260s, Byzantium had been ruled by the Paleologos family.

While East Georgian kingdom and Samtskhe princedom kept alliances with the Il-khans, Cilician Armenia, Rum Sultanate, and the Pope of Rome, the West Georgian kingdom, naturally, allies with the Golden Horde, Egypt, and Byzantium – those that confront the Il-khans and the Pope of Rome.

It's clear that both Eastern and Western Georgian kingdoms strongly depend on outer circumstances and their steps are cautiously measured according to then present political conjuncture.

Thus, we may sum up that in the years of 1310-11, as well as in 1305-6, envoys were sent to Egypt not by the king of eastern, but of western Georgia – i.e. Konstantine, though in none of the known documents the name of the king is ever mentioned.

Alongside with his rule time dating (1299-1311), presumption that the king of East Georgia, David VIII participated in getting back the monastery of the Holy Cross, is based on the records in one of the dead-scrolls of the Holy Cross monastery in Jerusalem: 295 (m-288), table XXXII says that 'In eternal memoriam of David the King of Kings, reconstructor of the Monastery that had been turned into mosque and now again in Georgian possession...' [6, 106]. E. Metreveli comments that nobody else but David VIII should have been presumed here [6, 176], but how much trustworthy is the assumption? David the King of Kings is also mentioned in another dead-scroll : (m-193 XXVII), 196 (m-XXCIII) and there we read: 'blessed he be, for a lot of gold had been bestowed to the Monastery, thus liberating it from great debt...' [6, 97]. According to the comments, David IX (1346-1360) is named here, as well as in 7 (m-6) table XXVII; 195 (m-193) table XXVII [6, 117, 162], and no other dead-scroll naming any David from East Georgia. Uniting all in the table XXXII, 'that does not surpass the

chronological margin of the yearly XIV c., can not be considered as a solid proof, as it already has been pointed by B. Silagadze [12, 97]. As for liberating the Monastery in 1305/6, it can't be true, so far as the talks for its liberation were carried even through the years 1310/11 (see D. Gocholeishvili and G. Japharidze).

Apart from the abovementioned authors, some other historians also provide information on Egypt-Georgia relationships: Al-'Umari (1301-1349), and Al-Qalqashandi (1355-1418). They say that the talks on liberating the Monastery were held by Brtilma, the King of Georgia, identified by the most of scholars as Giorgi the Brilliant; but taking into consideration the discrepancy between the names Brtilma-Giorgi, some scholars have different points of view [4,77,80; 13,42-43]. According to David Lang, Al-'Umari mixed up the King with his vassal - it has to be the Prince of Siuniq, son to Eliqum Orbeliani - Burtel (Birtvel) Orbeliani [4, 77, note 4; 5, 262, note 2].

Al-'Umari says that '... he started negotiations with the Sublime Porte of Sultan about the Monastery, and quite succeeded, as Sultan issued decree on giving it back to the Georgians. It's located outside Jerusalem and in earlier time, had been turned into mosque' [13, 52].

Besides, King Giorgi's activities concerning the Holy Land are well reported in some Georgian documents. The Book of Eristavs (15th c.) tells as follows: 'The news spread that Persians conquered Jerusalem, and the King was in woe. Then sent He Pipai. the son of Shalva Eristavi to Jerusalem, all upon dry land, with lots of gifts to deliver and was he well greeted, the gifts accepted, and the locks of Jerusalem opened to him; thus came he back to King Giorgi with good news, and the King rejoiced, as the locks were in hand of Georgians again' [29, 350].

Iv. Javakhishvili presumed that one of the pleas to Sultan of Egypt would have been the liberation of the Holy Cross Monastery and returning it to the Georgians [24,175]; then he aligned Arabic sources on Georgian-Byzantium joint mission to Egypt, carried overseas, with the name of Giorgi the Brilliant [24,175], discharging the underlined note of Pipai's travel "all upon dry land".

A. Menteshashvili accepts the opinion on redeeming the monastery by Giorgi the Brilliant. Relying on al-'Ayni saying that Georgians got to Egypt together with Golden Horde and Byzantine envoys in 1320, he sums up that this was the very mission aimed at redeeming the Holy Cross Monastery. Thus - he says - this very year should be considered as the date of liberating it' [30, 19]. A. Menteshashvili also reveals another document about Georgians visit to Cairo in 716/1316-17. According to the script, eight ambassadors came to Cairo that year, one being that of Georgian King's [30, 19].

However, Iv. Javakhishvili's and A. Menteshashvili's opinion on dating the redeeming of the Monastery was not accepted by other scholars but V. Kiknadze (21, 62). It's noteworthy that most of them also assigned Georgian missions to Egypt in 1316-17 and in 1320 to Giorgi the Brilliant, among

them V. Kiknadze who also holds that he was enthroned in 1318 [21, 58]. Different opinion is carried out by G. Arakhamia, who considers Giorgi Mt-sire to be the initiator of sending the envoys in the first case [8, 104].

We can not abstain but share V. Kiknadze's and G. Japaridze's viewpoints, that long talks were held for the redemption of the Holy Cross Monastery [21, 63; 14, 298], as well as their opinion concerning Giorgi the Brilliant's activities concerning the Holy Land, but we are far from agreeing that Georgian missions of 1316/17 and 1320 were also inspired by him. We should keep in mind that right at that time East Georgia, together with the Il-khans, were confronting the Golden Horde raids.

In 1318/19 Uzbek-Khan invaded Shirvan and Arran and reached the Kura River. Next year Choban raided Transcaucasus to give support to Abu-Said, and Uzbek had to retreat. Then, in 1325, Choban raided through Georgia to Derbent, and reached as far as Tergi River [4,80; 5,264; 21, 43-44]. It's inevitable that Georgians were participating in the raid – after all, military operations were carried on through Georgia. Thus, it's hard to believe that the king of East Georgia would send his envoys at such a time and with the Golden Horde companions.

Taking into consideration the given circumstances, we are inclined to think that the talk is about the king of Western Georgia, Constantine, whose activities towards Egypt were quite clear. But the point is that the interrelation between the East and the West Georgian kingdoms are not of that kind: confrontation started even in 1360s c., and then, King Giorgi the Brilliant had to use all his power and diplomatic skills to unite the two – part by part, so to say.

As for his activities concerning the Holy Land issues, they are more expectable to have started in after the long talks between the Il-khans and the Sultan of Egypt came to the end. In 1323 they signed treaty and everlasting peace was proclaimed. Thus, we conceive that the scholars who think that Giorgi the Brilliant was the one who actually redeemed the Monastery of Holy Cross are partly right [24, 175-176; 32, 251; 30, 18] since the position of the monastery became more sustained in his times.

Arab historian Ibn Al-Dawadari claims that the same year - 723/1323 Abu Said's envoy came to the Sultan of Egypt and asked for peace, and the treaty was the result of this visit [13, 49; 33, 131; 119-148]. The peace was established for many years between those two states. It's also mentioned that Choban played favorable part in signing this treaty, and King Giorgi, according to Georgian and Arab sources, held close contacts with him; some even claim that the Monastery case was solved with his personal effort. We may presume that this was the very reason for the destruction of Pope's plans for raiding Egypt in 1223, as the Il-khans and the Georgians would not support the coalition.

We share opinion of V. Kiknadze, that the envoys of Giorgi the Brilliant came to the Sultan of Egypt not with one, but with several requests; the status of the Cross monastery was still on agenda (21,64). Although the

monastery was possessed by the Georgians by that time, Giorgi the Brilliant probably asked once again for confirmation of their rights.

According to al-'Ayni, in 1322/23 Uzbek of the Golden Horde reproaches the Sultan of Egypt for not allowing his ambassador to build a mosque within Jerusalem, while letting Georgians to reconstruct the church [21, 65]. There is no mention of the name of the king there, but by that time it could well be Giorgi V.

All in all, Giorgi the Brilliant, who's enthroning was partly due to Choban the Vezir of the Il-khans, kept loyalty to him – till his death in 1327. Flexible policy and diplomacy helped the King to solve the row of local problems: according to evidence by Vakhusti, being enthroned he suppressed the Samtskhe governors who perpetually confronted Il-khan Öljaitu, being separated from the common political space and achieved their obedience, then 'repressed and enslaved all who was intractable within Caucasus and made them all to render tribute' [34, 256]. All these were in the Il-khans' interests, as since 1262, the Golden Horde, the owner of the much part of the North Caucasus, permanently raided their territories. At the same time Giorgi expelled Ossetians from the Georgian territory and solved his longstanding problem.

Some of the Georgian feudal lords' secession from the king may well be explained by the grudge between Choban and Il-khan families - Georgian warlords might have taken the latter's side. Their treason could be an explanation why the son of Choban, Mahmud, the appointed ruler of Georgia in those years, couldn't reach the ruler of Golden Horde Uzbek Khan. One can find the related evidence in the Arabic sources: (al-'Umari, al-Qalqashandi): "When his father got into trouble, he was seeking protection at the court of Sultan Uzbek Khan but failed. Danger could not be avoided and he lost his life and that couldn't be escaped". "As Giorgi had taken advantage, he invited the nobles of Her – Kakhi and Somkhiti, who adjoint Chingizids, to Tsivi and massacred them", - one can read in the late interpolation of some manuscripts of "Kartlis Tskhovreba". [27, 325]. It's supposed "Chingizids in this context doesn't mean Mongols as a whole, but descendants of Chingiz Khan and the Georgian nobles adjoint Chingizids against Choban. Taking apart a short time after defeat of Choban, nevertheless, King Giorgi had no significant problems with the Il-khans – in spite of the fact that he refused to pay tribute and maintained considerable autonomy. Even in time when Giorgi V was in the West Georgia and was dealing with unification of the country, Mongols didn't appoint another king in the East Georgia. According to the order of the Pope in 1328-29 Tbilisi Episcopacy was subordinated to Sultaniye Arch-Episcopacy, as the East Georgia was considered to be under Il-khans' control.

The Georgian nobles could betray the Georgian King in other times as well. That could happen many times when the Georgian King was repulsing the invaders from the North. One can suppose that Giorgi V massacred the

Georgian nobles at Tsivi as they adjoint Mongol invaders from the North. The related evidence is preserved considering attacks of the Golden Horde in 735/1334-35 and 736/1335-36. Uzbek Khan invaded Azerbaijan and Iran and reached Kura. According to the sources, "some by their mindedness aspired toward him and he reached Kura relying on them" [35, 93,143]. Not accidentally, Abu Said died in 1335, during the campaign against the Golden Horde.

Vakhushti Bagrationi mentions King Giorgi's raids to Daruband and setting order on Caucasian crossovers and that was duly appreciated by the Mongol Il-khans [34, 256-257]. "He conferred the title of Atabeg and Amirspasalar to Sargis Jakeli, gathered troops and entered Rani; nobody opposed him; from there he moved to Shirvan and subdued them and levied Daruband with Lezghians." [34, 256-257].

After uniting the Georgia "the King again investigated the situation of Mtiuls and Caucasians (highlanders of Georgia and Central and West Caucasia), since a lot was improper there. Gathered the troops, entered and subdued all in Caucasus who exceeded the rights of the King" and 'taming and enslaving all and everybody throughout the Caucasus, and ruling from Nicophysy to Daruband...' [34, 258-259] – Georgia again summons up the traditional role of defending the southern territories from invaders. Probably, that was the reason why, according to the Arab authors, the Hulaguids 'Trust and lay on the Georgians, and especially so the sons, grandsons and other offspring of Juban' [13, 51, 54].

Thus, we presume that:

* In the years of 1305/6, 1310/11, 1316/7 and 1320 it was the King of the West Georgia – Constantine the son of David, who sent his envoys to the Sultan of Egypt and managed to redeem the Holy Cross Monastery from Muslims;

* Giorgi the Brilliant starts his activities in the Holy Land in strict accordance with the Peace Treaty he himself negotiated between the Il-khans and Egypt (1323);

* No dead-scroll carries the script of David VIII, the King of Georgia, but David IX, son to Giorgi V, is named as the rebuilder of the Holy Cross Monastery.

* King Giorgi the Brilliant obtains independence thanks to his flexible diplomacy, through his backing up the Il-kans in confrontation of the Northern and Southern Mongols, and rightly defining his personal role in the conflict.

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