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PROBLEMS OF MEDIEVAL ARMENIAN AND MUSLIM HISTORIOGRAPHY: THE MXIT'AR OF ANI FRAGMENT

Only the introductory portion of the History written by the Armenian Mxit'ar of Ani has come down to us. However, an extensive passage on the Ghaznavids and Seljuks from the lost part of the work is quoted in the Universal History composed c. 1268 by Vardan Vardapet. The content and the sources used for the compilation of this much-neglected narrative is the subject of this study.

From biographical data and the final date (1193) in the surviving introduction,
the history can be safely ascribed to the last years of the twelfth century. Near the beginning of the same extant section Mxit'ar provides a list of sources he used, which for the eleventh and twelfth centuries are exclusively Armenian. Yet we know he was able to utilize Islamic, or at least Persian, sources, for both Vardan and Mxit'ar of Ayrivank' (Chronological History to 1289) report that he translated a book on eclipses from the latter language into Armenian. As will be seen later, Mxit'ar seemingly consulted both Armenian and Muslim works for the section of his history under study.

An examination of the works of the writers of the period who are named by Mxit'ar – Aristakes (History to 1070), Kozein (History of the Bagratids, written c. 1050), and Samuel of Ani (Chronology to 1179) – reveals that the detailed information on the Ghaznavids and Seljuks presented by him did not originate from these works. There is the further possibility that he used other contemporary Armenian authorities but neglected to cite them; these might include the may consult P. S. Somal, Quadre della Storia Letteraria di Armenia (Venice, 1829), p. 106; Ališan, Snorhali and His Time [in Arm.] (Venice, 1873), pp. 126–8; A. Lazikean, New Armenian Bibliography and Encyclopaedia of Armenian Life [in Arm.] (Venice, 1909–12), vol. I, cols. 2013–14; H. Acafean, Dictionary of Armenian First Names [in Arm.], vol. III (Erevan, 1946), pp. 369–70; G. Hovsep'yan, ‘Mxit’ar of Ani, Scribe and Miniaturist’ [in Arm.], Hask Yearbook, vol. I (Antelias, 1948), esp. pp. 192–4, which discusses four different Mxit’ars of Ani living during our period, the one of the title not being the Mxit’ar of this paper.

1 Ed. Patkanean, p. 15, with details in R. E. Arm., p. 334; the list will be found in the next paragraph of the text below.

2 Vardan, ed. Venice, p. 137, ed. Moscow, p. 180; Mxit’ar of Ayrivank’, ed. Emin (Moscow, 1860), p. 64. It is also mentioned by Afakel of Tabriz, History (seventeenth century), ed. (Valarsapat, 1884), p. 48, and probably copied from the latter in an eighteenth-century chronology which has only recently been published, N. Polarean, ‘Chronology’ [in Arm.], Banber Matenadarani, vol. 9 (1969), p. 259. The name of the author is given as Öcic in older manuscripts and as Öcik’e in later ones as well as Afakel and the eighteenth-century chronicle. Acafean, loc. cit., suggests the possibility that Mxit’ar of Ayrivank’ understood it as a date, i.e. RCIE = 1127, and that later it was mistakenly entered in Afakel under 1187, but this should probably be rejected, for all of the oldest manuscripts of Vardan agree exactly in understanding it as a name; Mxit’ar of Ayrivank’ places the event just before 1191 and after 1181, and Afakel and the eighteenth-century chronicle also clearly regard it as a name. On the other hand, Brosset’s more reasonable, yet still problematic, suggestion that it is a poor Armenian rendering for Persian ziy, a book of astronomy, deserves further investigation, Mém. de l’Acad. vol. IV (1862), no. 9, pp. 5–6; see R. E. Arm., p. 333, n. 10 for full citation. Ališan expresses the same opinion, but without reference to Brosset, Snorhali, p. 127.

3 Mxit’ar actually says as a preface to the short history in the Vardan fragment, ‘A great deal of effort was exerted in discovering [the history of] the sultans who were Turks, and by the grace of God I found it [to be] as follows’; ed. Venice, p. 94; ed. Moscow, p. 127. The great effort was probably research into non-Armenian as well as Armenian sources; Ališan comments much to the same effect, ibid.

4 Aristakès of Lastivert, critical ed. (Erevan, 1963) and Russian trans. (Leningrad, 1968), both by K. N. Yuzbašyan; Samuel of Ani, critical ed., A. Tër-Mik’elean (Valarsapat, 1893); for Kozein and a discussion about the surviving parts of his lost history see below, pp. 467–8, n. 4. It is most interesting that Ališan felt the lost history of Kozein contained an account of the Seljuk invasions, but unfortunately he does not say on what grounds he bases this (Hayapatum [in Arm.], vol. I (Venice, 1901), p. 90).
History of Hovahannès Sarkawag (d. 1129), the Chronicle (952–1136) of Matthew of Edessa, the Chronicle to 1162 of Mxit’ar Goš, and that of Vahram (type and date of work uncertain).¹

But once again, none of these have any important material on the Ghaznavids or Seljuks with the possible exception of the history of Sarkawag. However, it has not come down to us. From excerpts of this work quoted by his pupil Samuel of Ani and later by Kirakos of Ganjak (History to 1265)² we have some idea of its general content. The first of its two parts dealt with the ‘Scythians’, i.e. the Turks, more probably the Seljuks, while the second part was specifically about Malikshâh son of Alp Arslan.³ In a previous study (see p. 465, n. 1), by incorrectly associating the name Kožern, in the oblique form ‘Kozrann’, with Hovahannès Sarkawag, it was conjectured that Mxit’ar of Ani used this important history. Even now that ‘Kozrann’ is clearly identified as Hovahannès of Tarôn, called ‘Kozern’,⁴ it is still held by this writer on the basis of contextual

¹ On Hovahannès Sarkawag see below in the text; Matthew of Edessa, ed. (Jerusalem, 1869) and a later edition based on a more complete text (Valarsapat, 1898), Fr. trans., E. Dulaurier (Paris, 1883); Michael the Syrian, ed. (Jerusalem, 1871), Fr. trans., V. Langlois (Venice, 1868), but on the question of the various and divergent Armenian versions see J.-B. Chabot, Chronique de Michel le Syrien, vol. 1 (Paris, 1899 [actually pub. 1924]), pp. 1–11; Mxit’ar Goš, Albanian Chronicle, transl. and commentary, C. J. F. Dowsett, BSOAS, vol. xxi (1958), pp. 472–90; on Vahram see Alisâr’s comment in Vardan, ed. Venice, p. 94, n. 3, and Hayapatum, vol. 1, p. 92, cf. R. E. Arm, p. 333, n. 12. This latter Vahram is probably not to be confused with Vahram of Edessa who wrote a rhymed history of the Kings of Cilician Armenia despite comments in some eighteenth-century manuscripts, for which see H. A. Anasyan, Armenian Bibliology [in Arm.], vol. 1 (Erevan, 1959), p. lv.


⁴ An additional note attached to offprint copies only of the writer’s article in R. E. Arm, vol. vi, correctly identified Kožern/Kozrann with Hovahannès of Tarôn, an eighteenth-century author of several works including a History of the Bagratids, believed to be lost. He is mentioned by a large number of contemporary and later authors. For fuller details see Aćatean, vol. iii, pp. 566–7; Zarbhânalean, pp. 570–1, 788, is not aware that Hovahannès of Tarôn and Kožern are one and the same person, probably repeating the mistake of Mxit’ar of Ayrivank’, ed. Emin, p. 23, and an eighteenth-century manuscript (Anasyan, op. cit. p. 11v) where the two names are listed separately. MS. no. 1775 of the Matenadaran in Erevan contains the first pages of the beginning of Kožern’s history (folios 8v–9v), which according to the heading in the manuscript was a history of the house of the Bagratids (f. 8v). G. Abgaryan quotes verbatim the opening paragraphs of this history, Banber Matenadarani, vol. 6 (1962), pp. 50–1, and again in his The History of Sebôs and the Enigma of the Anonymous (Erevan, 1963), pp. 128–30, and maintains that the first chapter of the pseudo-Sebôs (the so-called Primary History of Armenia) belongs to the lost part of the History of Kožern. An examination of the surviving pages of this
similarities that Mxit’ar probably utilized Sarkawag’s History and that conclusions based on this premise are valid. The work seems to have existed in Mxit’ar’s time, for his contemporary Samuel of Ani used it, and later writers – Kirakos, Vardan, Mxit’ar of Ayrivank – mention it. More factually, sections of Sarkawag’s work quoted by Samuel and Kirakos contain the unusual spelling ‘Sarč’uk’ for Seljuk, a form also used by Mxit’ar.1 (On the other hand, the Mxit’ar passage uses hijri dates, while normal Armenian era dating is used in the fragment of Sarkawag’s work preserved by Samuel.) Unfortunately, a definitive statement on the relationship between the lost History of Hovhannes Sarkawag and the passage in Vardan from the lost History of Mxit’ar cannot be made.

Yet it is clear that either Mxit’ar or possibly an Armenian predecessor (i.e. Sarkawag) relied on Islamic works, not only because hijri dates are used exclusively in the fragment (while in other extant parts of Mxit’ar’s work they are not), but also because of (1) the relative accuracy in the rendering of Muslim names and titles, (2) the use of many Arabic and Persian words, and (3) the detailed account of certain incidents totally unrelated to Armenian history.2

What then were Mxit’ar’s Muslim sources? Since the fragment, which, being written before the close of the 6th/12th century, is comparatively early, deals with details of Bûyid, Ghaznavid and Seljuk history, the answer to this question is of special interest to the historiography of these dynasties as well as that of Armenia. Before entering into a discussion of this matter, a paraphrased summary of the Mxit’ar fragment on the history of the sultans of the Turks preserved in Vardan is herein presented.4

Mahmûd son of Sebuktegin (Sbk’t’anay), like Ardashir the Sasanian, became great in the city of Balkh (Bahl) in the land of the Kushans. Word of his strength reached the Caliph (Xalifay) who, becoming frightened, sent him presents, an insignia of office (alam, Arabic ‘alam), the laqab (lalap) Amin al-‘aidil (Amin-adl, read Yamîn al-Dawla), and called him Sultan. With these honors Mahmûd’s reputation grew even greater. He history does not reveal much of interest; beginning with Adam and Eve in Paradise and continuing about the Hebrew prophets and kings, it goes up to the birth of Christ (f. 16r). The history was to be in two parts: (1) from the beginning of the world to 887 when the first Bagratid King Ašt was crowned, (2) from the reign of Ašt to the author’s own days (c. 1050). It is possible, indeed very likely, that the second part discussed the Seljuk invasions, which occurred during the author’s floruit, as Ališan had himself surmised (see p. 466, n. 4 above). The author would like to thank L. Xac’ikyan, Director of the Matenadaran, and B. C’ugaszyan, Assistant Director, for kindly making available photographs of the manuscript text of the Kozein fragment.

1 Samuel, p. 98; Kirakos, p. 84, in the variants at the foot of the page; for Mxit’ar, ed. Venice, p. 96, ed. Moscow, p. 129, the passage to be translated shortly in the text. The final section of the extant introduction of Mxit’ar’s work also uses the form azgn Turk’ac’, Sarı’uk’in, ‘the nation of the Turks, the Seljuks’, ed. Patkanean, p. 48. Ališan felt very strongly that Sarkawag’s history began with the origin and development of the Seljuks Hayapatum, vol. 1, p. 95, col. 1. 2 Ed. Patkanean, passim; Zarbhanalean, pp. 725–6. 3 See the passage given in the text, below, and the discussion in R. E. Arm, p. 251. 4 Italicized words in parentheses indicate the Armenian spelling found in the text; when not so indicated the Armenian either has already been given or is identical or very close to the accepted form.
marched to India to the famous idol of Somnath (Mat'an), which he destroyed, and after taking much booty returned home, leaving his son Muḥammad there. Then he took Gurgan and from its ruler 400,000 gold pieces (tahekank') and a treasure in the year 420/I029 of their (i.e. the Muslim) era. He then passed to Rayy (Ré); the ruler of the city, Majd al-Dawla Rustam (Maja-dawla Rstôm), who had gathered Daylamite (Dimikk') troops three days before, advanced to meet him. Maḥmūd arrived at Sarāv (Sraw) with a formidable force and 250 elephants, and seeing Majd al-Dawla, he said, ‘Have you read the Shāhnāma (Sah namaz)?’ And the other answered, ‘Yes.’ Now Maḥmūd asked, ‘Have you ever played chess?’ The answer was again, ‘Yes.’ ‘Then does a king enter another king’s square (tun, lit. ‘house’)?’ And the ruler of Rayy remained silent. Maḥmūd seized him and sent him captive to Khorāsān (Xorasan) and took all his possessions in Rayy. Then Maḥmūd went to Ṭabaristān (Taparastan) and Ṭarābi (?) and ʿArū; he gave his son Masʿūd (Masxut) Rayy, Qazwin (Łazuin), and the whole of Kūhistān (K'ohastan).³ Leaving Masʿūd in Rayy he went to Sarāv and took 100,000 dinārs (denari) and passed to Nishāpūr (Naśawur) in 421/I030 of their era. Masʿūd then took Hamadān (Hamian) and ʿIsfahān (Aspahan) and returned to Rayy, where he heard that his shahna (sahnays) had been killed in ʿIsfahān. He went there again, killed 4,000 men and returned to Rayy. Just at that time they brought him the sad news of his father’s (i.e. Maḥmūd’s) death and that his brother Muhammad was made Sultan. Rising in revolt, Masʿūd marched [toward Ghazna], seized his brother, blinded him, and took his sovereignty and throne.

Sometime before, Masʿūd’s father, while on his way to help Qadir-Khan Boghra-Khan (Xtrlan-P6lrlan) [the Qarakhanid], met an army of Turks; later, he returned on the same road and with a great victory,⁴ he seized their amir Yabghu (Ap'alu) and sent him captive to Khorāsān. The amir’s people begged Maḥmūd, and later Masʿūd, to release him, but neither would. Thus angered, the Turks passed across the Oxus (Jahan) with all their troops and fighting with all their might seized Nishāpūr. Afterwards they destroyed the armies of Sultan Masʿūd at Dandānqān (Dadanlan) near Mārv (Mrmn). The sultan fled to Ghazna (i Ḵāzīn) and then India, but on the way he was killed and his blind brother Muḥammad was enthroned in Ghazna (i Ḵāzīn [sic]) where until today his sons rule.

As for the leader of the Turks, whose name was Mūsā Yabghu (Musėap'alu) son of Seljuk (Sarćuk'), he had five [sic, read two] nephews whose names were Abū Salim (Abusalim, read Abū Sulaymān) Da'ūd (Dawut') Chaghri Beg (Č'alrbek), [and] Abū ʿAlī (Abutalib) Tughrīl Beg (Tōrlīl-Bēk). It was Tughrīl who received the authority

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1 Tentatively it would seem that Armenian Mat'an is a badly transcribed form for Arabic manâ, ‘idol’, in its generic sense, but originally Manât, one of the pagan idols of the Ka'bah, which was closely, though incorrectly, associated by Muslim writers with Somnāth, especially with regard to Maḥmūd’s campaign there in 416/1025-6.

2 Other localities mentioned in the text are easily identifiable; Ta'ābi, however, presents some problems. It would seem too far removed to be either Tarāb near Būkharā (V. Barthold, Turkestan, 2nd ed. [London, 1968], p. 115 n.) or Dārāb-jīrd in Fars (G. Le Strange, Lands of the Eastern Caliphate [Cambridge, 1905], pp. 248, 288-9), though Alīsān identifies with the latter (Vardan, ed. Venice, p. 95, n. 4).

3 Kūhistān in Syria, i.e. al-Ṭībāl, V. Minorsky, Ḥudūd al-ʿĀlam (London, 1937), p. 150. The author would like to thank Professors William Gohlman of Baldwin-Wallace College and William Hanaway of the University of Pennsylvania for independently suggesting the more correct reading in place of the author’s Kūzhīstān.

4 The words ‘with a great victory’ were inadvertently omitted from the more exact translation (of the Seljuk portion only) given in R. E. Arm, p. 339, but were properly included on page 342. In general, for specific questions on the Seljuks suggested by the Mxit'ar fragment one should consult the translation and commentary in R. E. Arm.
of the sultanate and dividing the lands of Khurāsān, he extended his realm for fifteen years. Later Tughrīl came to Rayy and discovered two treasures filled with gold, seized them, and sent to the Caliph asking for his blessing. The latter honored him with ambassadors, an insignia of office (alam), presents, he read his name from the minbar (mambar), and gave him the title Rūkn al-Dawla (Rūk'nadovla). And from that day he was proclaimed conqueror. \(^1\)

The passage, even in its abridged form, contains a wealth of diverse information which naturally lends itself to a detailed commentary. As mentioned above (p. 465, n. 1), the Seljuk portion has already been treated in a monograph, and the section on the Ghaznavids will be studied thoroughly in a forthcoming article. For the present discussion, only two episodes will be singled out to help determine the sources used by Mxit'ar. They are (1) from Ghaznavid history, the interrogation of Majd al-Dawla by Mahmūd of Ghazna, and (2) from Seljuk history, the occurrence and use of the Turkic title yabghu.

The dialogue between Mahmūd of Ghazna and Majd al-Dawla Rustam b. Fakhr al-Dawla of Rayy is best known in the version preserved in Ibn al-Athir's al-Kāmil fi al-ta'rikh (finished c. 619/1222). After the death of his capable mother Sayyida (the de facto ruler of Rayy) in 419/1028, Majd al-Dawla assumed the full responsibility of governing the city. We are told that being unable to control his Daylamite troops, he called on Mahmūd for help. The latter was waiting for such an opportunity and in 420/1029 he took Rayy. Under that year Ibn al-Athir records the following conversation. Having had Majd brought before him, Mahmūd asks, ‘Have you read the Shāhnāma, the history of the Persians,\(^2\) and the Ta'rikh of al-Ṭabarī, the history of the Muslims?’ Majd answered, ‘Yes.’ ‘But your conduct was not like one who had read them,’ said Mahmūd. He continued, ‘But do you not play chess?’ ‘Yes,’ replied the other. ‘And did you ever see one king approach another?’ questioned Mahmūd. ‘No,’ said the ruler of Rayy. ‘Why then,’ admonished Mahmūd, ‘did you call to your kingdom one who is stronger than yourself?’ And saying that, Mahmūd sent him captive to Khurāsān.\(^3\)

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\(^1\) The passage has been published in Armenian as follows: ed. Venice, pp. 93-7; ed. Moscow, pp. 127-31; the Venice version again by Patkanean (op. cit. n. 2), pp. 49-52; by Alişan again, Souvenirs, vol. ii, pp. 353-4; and partially (the initial section on Mahmūd of Ghazna) by A. Alboyadjian, History of the Armenian Emigrations [in Arm.], vol. ii (Cairo, 1955), p. 24, n. 1. It has been translated into French, M. F. Brosset, Additions et éclaircissements à l’histoire de la Géorgie (St Petersburg, 1851), pp. 220-7; Russian, M. Emin (Moscow, 1861), pp. 118-21; Turkish, H. D. Adreasyan, ‘Müvərrih Vardan Türk Fütuhati Tarihi (889-1269)’, Istanbul Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Tarih Semineri Dergisi, vol. 1/2 (1937), pp. 167-72; English (partial), R. E. Arm, vol. vi, pp. 339-41.

\(^2\) There is an added poignancy and irony to the story. Firdausi completed the Shāhnāma at the commission of Mahmūd (c. 400/1009-10), but disappointed by the terms of the payment, he fled from the Ghaznavid court and took refuge with the Būyids, specifically, according to some authorities (e.g. Ethê), at the court of Majd al-Dawla in Rayy; see E. G. Browne, A Literary History of Persia (Cambridge, 1906), vol. ii, pp. 141, 131 n.

\(^3\) Ibn al-Athir, ed. Tornberg (Leyden, 1851-76), vol. ix, pp. 261-3 (reprint, Beirut, vol. ix, pp. 371-2); the dialogue has been translated at least twice – Browne, vol. ii, p.
Though Mxit'ar’s account neglects to mention that fact which makes sense out of the chess episode, namely Majd al-Dawla’s invitation to Mahmud, his version and Ibn al-‘Atîr’s are nearly the same. Though the famous Arab historian wrote some thirty years after Mxit’ar of Ani, there is absolutely no conceivable reason to assume he could have used the Armenian as an authority. Where then did Ibn al-‘Atîr get his story? Of the existing Ghaznavid sources written before his time – ‘Uthî, Bayhaqî, Gardîzî, and the anonymous Mu‘jmal al-tawârîkh wa‘l-qîṣâs – none mention the incident. Perhaps it may have been included in the lost parts of Bayhaqî’s Mujalladât which dealt with Mahmûd, for the surviving section, the Ta‘rîkh-i Mas‘ûdî, only begins in 421/1030, just after the events related above, but there are no references to such a story in the works of later writers who had access to these lost parts. Yet should we some day find the missing parts of Bayhaqî, or even a new Persian source, we might conjecture its use by Mxit’ar, who knew Persian, but there would still be a problem since we are not sure whether or not Ibn al-‘Atîr could use that language.

Two further possibilities may help solve this historiographical question. The story may have been transmitted by the Persian ‘Ali b. Zayd Bayhaqî, known as Ibn Funduq, in his Mashârib al-tajârib, which was written not in Persian but in Arabic, during the second half of the 6th/12th century. Though the work has not come down to us, there is reason to suppose that Ibn al-‘Atîr may have used it. But once again the problem of Ibn Funduq’s source would arise as well as that of the extensive sources written by ‘Abîl-Fadl Bayhaqî (385/995 to 470/1077) which comprise only some five of the supposed thirty-volume history, the Mua’lladât; the section preserved covers the years 421/1030 to 433/1041. The Zayn al-akhbâr of Gardîzî was written before 444/1053 and contains events to 432/1041. The Anonymous Mu‘jmal was written in 520/1126 according to the unique manuscript in the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris. The author would like to thank Prof. C. E. Bosworth of the University of Manchester for sending photocopies of the sections from Gardîzî, ed. Nâzîm (Berlin, 1928), pp. 90–1, and the Mu‘jmal, ed. Bahâr (Tehran, 1939), pp. 403–4, used to check this statement.


1 ‘Uthî, al-Ta‘rîkh al-Yamini, written in Arabic prior to 431/1039–40, the year of the author’s death, ed. (Cairo, 1869), with a Persian version by Jurbâdâqânî (c. 602/1206), ed. A. Qawîm (Teheran, 1955). The Ta‘rîkh-i Mat‘ûdî of Abû l-Fadl Bayhaqî (385/995 to 470/1077) comprises only some five of the supposed thirty-volume history, the Mua’lladât; the section preserved covers the years 421/1030 to 433/1041. The Zayn al-akhbâr of Gardîzî was written before 444/1053 and contains events to 432/1041. The Anonymous Mu‘jmal was written in 520/1126 according to the unique manuscript in the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris. The author would like to thank Prof. C. E. Bosworth of the University of Manchester for sending photocopies of the sections from Gardîzî, ed. Nâzîm (Berlin, 1928), pp. 90–1, and the Mu‘jmal, ed. Bahâr (Tehran, 1939), pp. 403–4, used to check this statement.

2 An examination of the second and revised edition of the Russian translation of Bayhaqî, A. K. Arends (Moscow, 1969), which contains in the appendix 19 excerpts from the lost parts of the Mua‘lladât quoted by later authors, shows no mention of the episode; of course this does not absolutely exclude the possibility of its being preserved in the still-missing parts of the work.

3 ‘For, much as we may admire on the one hand the breadth of his documentary researches, nothing, on the other hand, indicates that he knew Persian’ (Cl. Cahen, ‘The Historiography of the Seljuq Period’, Historians of the Middle East, ed. B. Lewis and P. Holt [London, 1962], pp. 65–6). Contrariwise, his brother Diya al-Din ibn al-‘Atîr seemingly knew Persian (see G. Von Grunebaum, Islam, Essays in the Nature and Growth of a Cultural Tradition [London, 1961], pp. 109, n. 9 and 178), and therefore one might conjecture that Ibn al-‘Atîr himself could in fact use Persian sources. The reference to Diya al-Dîn was supplied by Prof. Gohlman.

4 Cahen, ibid. p. 66.
of Mxit'ar's access to it. A second alternative might be that some caliphal or Baghdadi chronicle, in this case probably written in Arabic, may have included the tale. A likely candidate is the History (a narrative to 447/1055) of Hilâl al-Šâbi, of which only the years 388/998 to 393/1003 have been preserved, but which was used and partially transmitted in Ibn al-Jawzi's al-Muntazam (6th/12th century), Sibt Ibn al-Jawzi's Mir'ât al-zamân (7th/13th century), and an anonymous chronicle in the Munich State Library dated 644/1246-7, all three of which expressly used Hilâl's work. In the Muntazam we do in fact have preserved the Fatnhâma actually issued by Mahmûd of Ghazna and sent to the Caliph after his conquest of Rayy; but again, though Ibn al-Jawzi's work is quite detailed, it has no mention of the confrontation with Majd al-Dawla. Furthermore, it would seem that the absence of our story from the rather full account of Ibn al-Jawzi, who relies on al-Šâbi, would also exclude its existence in Sibt Ibn al-Jawzi or the Munich anonymous, though a check through the manuscripts of both authors must be made before a definitive negative statement is possible.

A final supposition that the story may have been totally fabricated around the turn of the 6th/12th to 7th/13th century seems improbable in view of its existence in two completely unrelated works. Therefore, we are back where we started without a very encouraging probability as to its origin. At the end of this study

1 Of course the lost part of the Mujalladât comes to mind: however, another possibility is the work of the Bûyid vizier Abû Sa'd Manşûr b. al-Husayn al-Âbî, which is named by the anonymous Majmal as one of its sources. On Abû Sa'd see C. E. Bosworth, ‘On the Chronology of the Ziyârids in Gurgân and Ṭabaristan’, Der Islam, vol. 40/1 (1964), p. 30, n. 10; the author again expresses his thanks to Prof. Bosworth for this suggestion and a copy of the article. As for the question of Mxit'ar': use of Ibn Funduq or other Arabic sources, we have no definite evidence that he did not know and use Arabic, only positive proof that he was able to use Persian (p. 466, n. 2 above). Ališan’s statement that the translation of the astronomical work already cited (p. 466, n. 2 above) was made from an Arabic book, yArab dprut'ene (Širak [in Arm.] [Venice, 1881], p. 95, col. 2), must be considered an unintentional slip, for in the same work (p. 100, col. 2) he quotes the source of our information directly from his edition of Vardan (p. 137), ‘i parsik lezue’, ‘from the Persian language’. Nevertheless, Arabic as well as Persian, Georgian and other languages, Eastern and Western, were common in the city of Ani at that time (Ališan, ibid. p. 96). A detailed linguistic analysis of the non-Armenian vocabulary in both the surviving introduction and the Vardan fragment needs to be made to determine if such words were borrowed from Arabic rather than Persian texts.

2 al-Muntazam, partially published (including the years under discussion), vol. v-x (Hyderabad, 1938-1941, with a recent reprint); Mir'ât al-zamân, still unpublished for the years under consideration, but a later section on the Great Seljuks has recently been published, A. Sevim, Mir'ât’i-z-Zeman fi Tarikh ü'l-Ayan 447/1056-479/1086 (Ankara, 1968), on which see Cl. Cahen, ‘A propos d’une edition . . .’, Arabica, vol. xvii/1 (1970), pp. 82-91; the Munich anonymous has not been published, but reference to the manuscript and its contents will be found in M. Kabir, The Buwayhid Dynasty of Baghdad 334/946-447/1055 (Calcutta, 1964), p. 216 and passim. A discussion of Hilâl al-Šâbi’s history will be found in Cahen, ‘Historiography’, pp. 60-4.

something will be said about one final possibility, the work of a contemporary to the fall of Rayy, one Ibn Ḥassūl.

Our second example, taken from Mxit'ar's History, concerns the identity of the Seljuk Yabghu. The title goes back at least as early as the eighth-century Kök Turkic Confederation, being used in the Orkhon inscriptions to designate the office next after the Qaghan, the King. After the breakup of the Kök Empire, the Oghuz Turks, who were an integral part of it, kept the title yabghu and used it to designate their leader. By the end of the 4th/10th century, when the Seljuk Turks broke away from the Oghuz Yabghu, whose capital was at Yengi-Kent on the lower Syr Darya, or shortly after this, Arslan-Isrāʾīl b. Seljuk took the title yabghu as an act of defiance as well as a sign of his family's increasing power. The title was normally held by the eldest male member of the family and Arslan-Isrāʾīl was at the time senior to Mūsā, Seljuk's only other surviving son.

Whether or not 'Yabghu, leader of the Oghuz', mentioned by Gardizi as aiding a Sāmānid ruler in 393/1003 against the Qarakhānids, was Arslan or the Oghuz Yabghu himself is still not clear, but certainly by 416–17/1025–6, when Arslan was captured and imprisoned by Mahmūd of Ghazna, he definitely held the title yabghu, for not only does the Akhbār al-dawlat al-Saljuqīyya (early 7th/13th century) refer to him as 'Arslan Yabghu called Isrāʾīl', but Mxit'ar of Ani confirms this by calling the captured leader (amīr) of the Turks only by his title: Yabghu (Ap'alu). Since Mxit'ar wrote at least a quarter of a century before the Akhbār was composed, his source is independent of it and provides a link with an earlier and now lost source, perhaps in this case the Maliknāma.

Further along in the Armenian text, around the events associated with the battle of Dandaṅqān (431/1040), we find that now it is Mūsā b. Seljuk who has the title yabghu and even more that he is clearly identified as the leader of the Turks. Of the early sources which have anything to say about Mūsā, only Mxit'ar and Zahir al-Dīn Nishapūrī in his Saljuqnāma (second half of the 6th/12th century) correctly identify him as both the Seljuk Yabghu and the uncle of Tughril and Chaghri Begs. Thus, though Mxit'ar's subsequent testimony makes

1 A further discussion with full references to the literature will be found in R. E. Arm, pp. 337–8.

2 Gardizi, ed. M. Nāẓim, p. 64; in addition to the citations in R. E. Arm, pp. 338–9, nn. 42–5, see also Cahen, 'Arslān b. Saldjūk', EI².


5 Further confirmation of this point is found in Mxit'ar of Ayrwānki (p. 2, n. 2 above; this point not presented in R. E. Arm), who, probably using Mxit'ar of Ani, places Mūsā Yabghu (Mūsē' Paloy) at the head of his dynastic list of Seljuks, ed. Emin, p. 22. He again mentions Mūsā in the chronological part of his work after the year A.D. 901 [sic!], 'the Turkman (T'urkman) Seljuk (Salcuk') and Mūsā Yabghu (Musē' Paloy) and Tughril Beg (Dōllabēk) . . . etc.', p. 55.

6 There is an almost literal version of the Saljuknāma preserved in the Rōbat al-yūdār (end of 6th/12th century) by al-Rawandi, quoted here in the ed. by M. Iqbal (London, 1902), pp. 102, 104; cf. R. E. Arm, pp. 336, n. 34, n. 346, n. 91.
474 Dickran K. Kouymjian

it evident that Tughril was the most powerful member of the Seljuk family in the post-Dandanqan period – although he never took the then seemingly honorary title yabghu – it is also evident that we must not regard his uncle Mūsā as simply ‘far from dynamic’.¹

It is obvious that in our second episode neither the yabghu question nor the many other details about the Seljuks contained in the fragment allow us to be as precise in discussing Mxit’ar’s authorities for this section as we were in considering those for the Ghaznavid one. We have nothing as pronounced as the events centered around the capture of Rayy to pin-point the Islamic sources on the Seljuks which Mxit’ar may have used. Nevertheless, generalizations about early Armenian historical works made with regard to Ghaznavid history are equally valid for Seljuk history (see above, pp. 465–8). All we can say is that the pattern which develops out of the Armenian account seems more related to the Zahir al-Dīn group of Persian sources (which are independent of the reconstructed Maliknāma) than to the Maliknāma itself, this despite certain similarities between the latter work and Mxit’ar’s.² The problem still remains very unsatisfactorily resolved.

We are left to speculate that there was yet another early Seljuk source, perhaps now lost, which was used either by Mxit’ar or his predecessor Hovhannēs Sarkawag as well as later Muslim authors. As has been suggested elsewhere (R. E. Arm, vol. vi, pp. 348, 352–3, and above, p. 473), a distant possibility is a supposed late 5th/11th century Chronicle about the early Seljuks by Abū’l-‘Alâ’ Muhammad b. Hassūl (d. 450/1058), a vizier of Mājd al-Dawla, who subsequently worked in Rayy as a bureaucrat for the Ghaznavids and later for the Seljuk conqueror of the city, Tughril Beg.³ Beside the fact that Ibn Hassūl was employed by all the major figures in both the episodes cited above, what makes him particularly interesting from the point of view of the Armenian sources is that in another existing work of his, a Risāla which was to have been a preface to the same Chronicle, he shows, like Mxit’ar but unlike the pro-Chaghnr Maliknāma, a strong bias towards Tughril,⁴ and, more importantly, again like Mxit’ar and Sarkawag, he uses the rare form (at least for Muslim sources) of Sarjuk (s.r.j.k) for Seljuk (normally spelt s ljuk).⁵

To add further support to this supposition, a Ta’rikh by one Abū-’l-‘Alâ-i-

² For details, R. E. Arm, pp. 352–3.
The Mxitʿar of Ani fragment

Ahwal is in fact cited by the early 8th/14th century Persian historian Hamdullah Mustawfī Qazwinī in the introduction to the section on the Seljuks in his Taʿrīkh-i guzida.1 Claude Cahen believes that by a simple orthographic correction this personnage is almost certainly to be identified with Abūʾl-ʿAlā Muhammad b. ʿAli b. Ḥassūl and one and the same as the author of the Risāla.2 Furthermore, if we can believe a note in H. Raverty’s translation of Jūzjānī’s Ṭabaqat-i Naṣīrī, this Taʿrīkh of Abūʾl-ʿAlā-i-Aḥwal (now to be read Abūʾl-ʿAlā ibn Ḥassūl) states that Seljuk had four sons named ʿIsrāʾīl, Mīkāʾīl, Mūsā-i-Beghū (sic, to be read Mūsā-Yabghu)...and Yūnus’.3 Since Raverty claims to have actually used this Taʿrīkh,4 a manuscript of Ibn Ḥassūl’s work may in fact still exist. Of course, like the vizier’s other work, the Risāla, it would probably have been written in Arabic and would raise again the question of Mxitʿar’s use of it. Yet if we can take Raverty’s statement referring to such a manuscript at face value, there would seem to be good reason for less caution about the existence of such a history, which, since Ibn Ḥassūl worked for the Ghaznavids in Rayy, might have contained information on the capture of the city by Mahmūd and, not unlikely, even the story about the author’s former employer, the Buṭrid Majd al-Dawla. If this proves to be true, then Ibn Ḥassūl’s Taʿrīkh could have served very well as the foundation for the details on both the Ghaznavids and Seljuks found in Mxitʿar’s report as well as the original source for the Muslim accounts.5

No matter how one may react to the myriad speculations presented above, it is clear that Mxitʿar of Ani’s short history of the sultans of the Turks as preserved in Vardan is a well-informed and detailed account which, when more thoroughly examined, may help us to understand better some of the important aspects of Muslim and Armenian historiography of the 5th/11th to the 7th/13th century.

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BEIRUT, LEBANON

2 ‘Le Malik-nāmeh’, pp. 37–8, for a complete discussion.
4 Raverty, p. 117, n. 3.
5 Bosworth likewise comments (letter of 10 October 1970): ‘This leaves rather a mystery, and I can’t, offhand, suggest any obvious solution, unless al-ʿĀbī [p. 472, n. 1 above] or Ibn Ḥassūl are possible relaters of the anecdote.’