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## **THE HISTORY OF RELATIONS BETWEEN GEORGIANS AND THE ISMAILI**

The aim of the given research is to reflect the relationships between the Georgians and the Ismaili based on the Persian and Georgian historical sources. The paper focuses on the attitude of Georgians towards this direction of Islam. The paper studies the reasons for the crimes committed by Assassins in Tbilisi and identifies the geographical area of the confrontation between the Alamut Ismaili and Georgians.

**KEYWORDS:** Ismaili, Islam, history of Georgia

**T**he study of Ismailism plays an important role in the research of the history of Islam and the East<sup>1</sup> (Japaridze 1999, 22-23; Goldtzer 1912, 226; Sanikidze 1999(1), 88-101; Narimanishvili 2006, 103-110). This movement of Islam, as a religious and political phenomenon, had a significant influence on the political and ideological life of Iran, Iraq, Syria and Egypt.

The aim of the given research is to reflect the relationships between the Georgians and the Ismaili based on the Persian and Georgian historical sources. The paper focuses on the attitude of Georgians towards this direction of Islam. The paper studies the reasons for the crimes committed by Assassins in Tbilisi and identifies the geographical area of the confrontation between the Alamut Ismaili and Georgians.

The research is based on the methods of comparison of sources, as well as critical and complex analysis.

The importance of Ismaili activities in Iran and their State is proved by the fact that all authoritative Persian-speaking historians such as Rashid al-Din, Juvayni, Mirkhvand (also Ibn al-Athir) provide data regarding the Ismaili. The data embrace facts about the origin of Hassan-i Sabbāh,

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1 G. Japaridze, *Alids, Islam, Encyclopedia*, Tbilisi, 1999, pp. 22-23; Goldtzer, I, *Lectures on Islam*, 1912, p. 226 (In Russian); G. Sanikidze, *The Doctrine of Ismaili Imamate and its Political Aspects, Georgia and the Middle East, II*, Tbilisi. Chronograph, 1999 (1) pp. 88-101; G. Narimanishvili, *The History of Origin of Ismailism, Perspective XXI, VIII (2)*, Tbilisi, 2006, pp. 103-110

different stages of his life, establishment of the Ismaili State, their religious-political hierarchy, the Ismaili doctrine and lifestyle. The historians analyze the strategy of murders organized by Assassins, their methods and the geographical area of their activities.

Ismailism became part of Islam in the second half of the VIII century. The sixth Imam of the Shiites Jafar al-Sadiq declared his younger son Musa al-Kazim (died in 799) as his heir and the seventh Imam instead of his elder son Ismail (died in 762). The Shiites who were discontented with Jafar al-Sadiq's decision opposed Jafar and named the son of the deceased Ismail – Muhammad as the seventh Imam. They were called Qarmatians ("Al-Qaramita" – named after the founder – Hamdan Qarmat)<sup>1</sup> (Stroyeva 1978, 32; Sanikidze 1999(2), 103-104; Narimanishvili 2006, 103-104; F. Daftary 2012, 34).

In 910, Ismaili missionary Ubayd Allah al-Mahdi Billah (Ubaydula) (910-934) who considered himself a descendant of Jafar al-Sadiq, declared himself as Imam and created the Fatimid Caliphate of Ismaili in Northern Africa (910-1171)<sup>2</sup> (Tikadze 2008, 152). In 969, the Fatimid Ismaili occupied Egypt, and soon afterwards conquered Southern Syria. They declared Ismailism as an official religion. In the Fatimid period, the ideological system of the Ismaili became fully developed<sup>3</sup> (Stroyeva 1978, 32; Sanikidze 1999(2), 103-104)

Fatimid authorities attached great significance to the spreading of their ideology. For this purpose, they had special administrative officials called Da'i who promoted the religion on a large scale. According to V. Gabashvili, in the middle of the XI century, Fatimid Da'i implemented successful propaganda on remote territories, including Tbilisi emirate<sup>4</sup> (Gabashvili 2016, 175; Narimanishvili 2006, 108-109; F. Daftary 2012, 36-40;). Marshall Hodgson, who relies on the data of Rashid al-Din and Juvayni, as well as the memories of Hassan i-Sabbah, notes that in the 50s of the XI century the Fatimid Caliph appointed Nasir Khusraw as Hujjat of Khorasan and Gurgistan<sup>5</sup> (Hodgson 1955, 43-44; Nanji 1999, 1006). V. Gabashvili agrees

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1 Stroyeva L. V. The State of Ismaili in Iran in the XI-XIII Centuries. Moscow. 1978, p. 32; G. Sanikidze, the Ismaili, Islam, Encyclopedia, Tbilisi, 1999 (2), pp. 103-104; G. Narimanishvili, The History of Origin of Islam, Perspective XXI, VIII (2), Tbilisi, 2006, pp. 103-104; F. Daftary, Historical Dictionary of the Ismaili, Toronto, 2012, p. 34

2 M. Tikadze, The History of Arabia, Tbilisi, 2008, p. 152

3 Stroyeva L. V. The State of Ismaili in Iran in the XI-XIII Centuries. Moscow. 1978, p. 32; G. Sanikidze, the Ismaili, Islam, Encyclopedia, Tbilisi, 1999 (2), pp. 103-104;

4 V. Gabashvili, The History of Georgian-Egyptian Relations (XI-XII centuries), "Valerian Gabashvili, Collected Papers," I, Tbilisi, 2016, p. 175 (pp. 167-181). G. Narimanishvili, *ibid.* pp. 108-109; <https://www.iis.ac.uk/academic-article/ismailis-history/> last visited on 29/01/2021; F. Daftary, Historical Dictionary of the Ismaili, pp. 36-40

5 Hodgson, M. C. S. 1955. The Order of the Assassins, Struggle of the early Nizari Ismailis against the Islamic world. University of Chicago, pp. 43-44, 69; A. Nanji, Nasir-i Khusraw, The Encyclopedia of Islam, vol. VII, ed. C.E. Bosworth, E. Van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs and CH. Pellat,

with this opinion. Based on the biography of Nasir Khusraw, Gabashvili argues that in 1052, Khusraw was appointed Hujjat of Khorasan and Gurjistan. Gabashvili also notes "... Nasir Khusraw as Hujjat (Chief Da'i – Kh. B) of Georgia had to supervize all the Da'i of Tbilisi Emirate"<sup>1</sup> (Gabashvili 2016, 175).

V. Gabashvili underlines the fact that Gurjistan and the furthermost Southern province of Khorasan – Garjistan are written in Arabic in the same way. As in the given period Garjistan formed part of Khorasan province, V. Gabashvili excludes their separate mention. Therefore, he argues that Nasir Khusraw was appointed Hujjat of Gurjistan i.e. Georgia<sup>2</sup> (Gabashvili 2016, 175-176). In order to justify his opinion, based on A. Bertels' work, the Georgian scholar also notes that the Fatimids divided the world into 12 Jaziras (regions) and appointed Hujjats who supervized the propagandistic activities of the Da'i in their respective regions.<sup>3</sup> (Bertels 1959, 175, 184). V. Gabashvili's opinion should be taken into consideration. However, we should answer a question: was it possible to unite such geographically distant territories as Khorasan and Gurjistan under one Jazira? Our doubts are also due to the fact that in contemporary European historiography<sup>4</sup> Nasir Khusraw is mentioned solely as the Hujjat of Khorasan. This is due to the fact that, like other territories, Garjistan formed part of the huge region of Khorasan in the 50s of the XI century. Thus, the issue of appointment of Nasir Khusraw to the position of Hujjat of Gurjistan remains unclear.

Hassan-i Sabbah has played an especially important role in the history of Ismailism. Sabbah contributed to the formation of a new stage of the given sect and the history of Iran in general. In the given paper, I will discuss the key activities of Hassan i-Sabbah and thus describe the religious and political situation in Georgia's neighbouring regions which affected the relations between Georgians and the Ismaili.

At the end of the XI century, the Fatimid Caliph of Egypt Mustansir (1036-1094) deprived his elder son Nizar of his heritage and granted it to his younger son Al-Mustali. After the death of his father, Nizar started struggling for authority against his brother. However, he was captivated and executed in 1094. This fact caused discord among the Ismaili.

Hassan i-Sabbah, who no longer hoped for the assistance of the Fa-

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Brill, 1991, p. 1006 [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nasir\\_Khusraw](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nasir_Khusraw) - last visited on - 13. 02. 2021

1 V. Gabashvili, 2016. The History of Georgian-Egyptian Relations (XI- XII centuries), p. 175

2 Gabashvili, V. 2016. The History of Georgian-Egyptian Relations (XI- XII centuries) "Valerian Gabashvili. Collected Papers", volume I.Tbilisi. pp. 175-176

3 A. E. Bertels, Nasir Khusraw and Ismailism. Moscow. Oriental Literature, 1959, pp. 175, 184

4 [https://iphras.ru/uplfile/Korneeva/nasir\\_khusraw\\_life\\_a.pdf](https://iphras.ru/uplfile/Korneeva/nasir_khusraw_life_a.pdf); [https://www.academia.edu/35040021/Nasir\\_Khusraw\\_Life\\_and\\_Works\\_of\\_Ismaili\\_Philosopher](https://www.academia.edu/35040021/Nasir_Khusraw_Life_and_Works_of_Ismaili_Philosopher) – last visited on 21.01. 2021

timid Ismaili in his struggle against the Seljuk, supported Nizar as Imam in 1094. In this way, he confronted the Fatimids. The Iranian Ismaili were called Nizarits (whereas the Egyptian ones were called Mustalits).<sup>1</sup>

On September 4, 1090, Hassan i-Sabbah occupied the Alamut Fortress without battle and in Iran, in the region of Turk-Sejuks, formed the State of the Ismaili with its center in Alamut. The Nizarite (//Alamut) State in Iran embraced the territories of Deilemi and Quhistan. Residents of Alamut supported the Ismaili. The main aim of Hassan i-Sabbah was to overthrow Sunni Turk-Seljuks in Iran.<sup>2</sup>

Hassan i-Sabbah formulated his political and social ideas in his religious doctrine “Dawat-e-Jadid” (“New Appeal”).<sup>3</sup> This doctrine opposed the Fatimid “Dawat-e-Qadim” (“Old Appeal”).<sup>4</sup>

According to V. Ivanov, Hassan i-Sabbah was “a man of extraordinary talent, born as a leader, capable of the almost impossible – turning obedient and peaceful Iranian peasants into courageous warriors.”<sup>5</sup>

The Ismaili sect of Alamut was a secret organization with severe discipline. Each Ismaili obeyed the orders of “The Mountain Patriarch” (Hassan i-Sabbah). The highest step in the hierarchy was the Imam, followed by Hujjat and Da’i. The importance of the members of the hierarchy was measured based on their closeness to the Imam.<sup>6</sup>

A peculiar characteristic feature of the Nizari was terror. During the first Crusade, the Europeans called the Ismaili a sect of killers.

From the second half of the XVIII century, European historians consid-

1 Stroyeva L.V., The Ismaili State in Iran in the XI-XIII Centuries, 1978, p. 47; <https://www.iis.ac.uk/academic-article/ismailis-history-> last visited on 29/01/2021; Stroyeva L/V., The Ismaili State in Iran in the XI-XIII Centuries, pp. 34, 40-49, 61-63; <https://www.iis.ac.uk/academic-article/ismailis-history-> last visited on 29/01/2021; Historical Dictionary of the Ismaili, p. 40-44 – <https://archive.org/details/HistoricalDictionaryOfTheIsmailis/page/n33/mode/2up>;

pp. 81-96, 102, كتاب بهادایت المؤمن الطالبیان معروف بتأریخ اسمعیلیه، تألیف محمد بد زین العابدین خراسانی فدائی، مسکوم، ۱۵۹۱

2 Stroyeva L.V., The Ismaili State in Iran in the XI-XIII Centuries, pp. 65-66; T. Natroshvili, The History of the Ismaili Movement, The Herald of the Georgian Academy of Sciences, Series in History, Archeology, Ethnography and Art, Tbilisi, 1977, №2, p. 65 (pp. 64-74); G. Sanikidze, The Doctrine of Ismaili Imamate and its Political Aspects, p. 88;

p. 91, كتاب بهادایت المؤمن الطالبیان معروف بتأریخ اسمعیلیه، تألیف محمد بد زین العابدین خراسانی فدائی، مسکوم، ۱۵۹۱

3 Kalami Pir, A Treahise on Ismaili Doctrine also (Wrongly) Called Haft-Babi Shah Sayyid Nasir, Ed. in General Persian and Transl. into English by W. Ivanow, Bombay, 1935, gv. XXVIII

4 G. Sanikidze, The Doctrine of the Ismaili Imamate, p. 97; Ash-Shakhrastani, The Book on Religion and Sects, Translated into Russian from Arabic. Introduction and Comments by S.M. Prozorov, Moscow. 1984, p. 172.

5 Ivanow, V., Brief Survey of the Evolution of Ismailism, B-7, Leiden, 1952, p. 17

6 G. Sanikidze, The Doctrine of the Ismaili Imamate and its Political Aspects, p. 93; Hodgson M. C. S. The Order of the Assassins, Struggle of the Early Nizari Ismailis against the Islamic World, University of Chicago, 1955, p. 21

ered the Ismaili as a sect of terrorists. However, in the beginning of the 50s of the XX century, an American scholar Hodgson published a monograph which dissipated all legends about the Ismaili.<sup>1</sup>

As the Ismaili killed their victims when they were under the effect of hashish, they were termed “hashishines“. This word was modified as “assassins” and began to denote murderers in a number of European languages. In Iran, they were called “Al-Malahida” (Al-Mulhid), which meant a heretic. <sup>2</sup>

According to Marco Polo, Hassan i-Sabbah sent his Fidai (Fidai – Arabic. “a person who is ready for self-sacrifice“) to distant countries.<sup>3</sup> If a Fidai was captivated after he had performed his duty, he committed suicide. But if a Fidai succeeded and returned to Alamut safely, there were several days of feasting in his honour.<sup>4</sup> In some cases, Fidai were captured and executed. Sometimes they were put on trial and punished on the basis of fatwa. Sometimes they were killed on the spot.

Opinions of scholars vary regarding the methods of murder used by the Ismaili. Some scholars think that the assassins committed murders publicly, others consider that the murders were committed secretly and stealthily. However, if we compare the sources, we will see that the Ismaili did not stick to one concrete method of murder. For instance, the Ismaili of Syria killed people publicly, thus spreading the syndrome of terror and helplessness among their opponents. The Iranian assassins, especially those from Ispahan, used both secret and public methods of murder based on the situation. According to Stroyeva, the Ismaili of Alamut planned the murders secretly but implemented them publicly.<sup>5</sup> I cannot agree with this opinion, because, according to the Georgian Annalist, during the siege of Alamut, the Mongol governor Chaghat was murdered by an assassin when he was alone in his own tent. The Georgian annalist also notes that the Ismaili killed their victims stealthily.<sup>6</sup>

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1 Hodgson M. G. S., *The Order of Assassins, The Struggle of the Early Nizari Ismailis against the Islamic World*, The Hague, 1955

2 Katsitadze, D. *The History of Iran*, Tbilisi, 2009, pp. 208-209; G. Sanikidze. *The Ismaili, Islam*, Encyclopedia, Tbilisi, 1999, pp. 103-104; Stroyeva, p. 154; Polo Marco, *The Book of Marco Polo*, translated from Old French by I. P. Minaev, edited and prefaced by I.P. Magidovich, Moscow, 1956, pp. 70-72

<https://www.google.com/search?q=iis.+ac.+uk/eu/research/encyclopedia-contributions/assassin&spell=1&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwiGhK7mn8HuAhWiyUKHes5BCkQBSgAegQIBhAu&biw=1366&bih=625-> last visited on 29/01/2021; <https://www.iis.ac.uk/academic-article/ismailis-history-> last visited on 29/01/2021

3 Stroyeva, p. 154; Polo Marco, *The Book of Marco Polo*, translated from Old French by I. P. Minaev, edited and prefaced by I.P. Magidovich, Moscow, 1956, pp. 70-72.

4 Polo Marco. *The Book of Marco Polo*, p. 72

5 Stroyeva L.V, *The Ismaili State in Iran in the XI-XIII Centuries*, Moscow, p. 97.

6 *Annals. Kartlis Tskhovreba (Life of Georgia)*, II, the text identified by S. Kaukhchishvili based on all key manuscripts. Tbilisi, 1959, p. 208.

In Iran, the Seljuks struggled against the Ismaili. Beginning from the 90s of the XI century, upon the orders of Malik Shah and Nizam al-Mulk, numerous activities were implemented aimed at the captivation of Hassan i-Sabbah, but these activities did not bring the desired result.<sup>1</sup>

The Ismaili aroused fear and aggression among the Seljuks. Nizam al-Mulk assessed these threats quite objectively. One of the chapters of his work "Siyāsatnāmeḥ", called "In Order to Reveal of Affairs of Heretics who Are the Enemies of the Shah and Islam," is dedicated to the Ismaili and the threats caused by the latter. Nizam al-Mulk notes that "there are no people as evil, superstitious and criminal as this group of people. ... They are secret enemies of the State, who try to destroy the faith. They listen to every sound, observe every wink of an eyelid. If there is a riot, these villains will leave their ambush and rebel against the State, urging people for disobedience, ... and there will be all the terrible things: discord, fight, heresy. They will leave nothing behind them. There is no one in the world who could be more detrimental to the country's authority."<sup>2</sup> This quotation from Nizam al-Mulk proves the fear and risks related to the Ismaili during the Seljuk reign.

Due to the above-mentioned radical attitude to the Ismaili, on October 16, 1092, in Hamadan, Ismaili Abu Tahir Arrani approached Nizam al-Mulk as the latter was going to his harem after Iftar, killed Nizam with a knife and tried to escape. Abu Tahir Arrani was caught and killed on the spot.<sup>3</sup> After twenty days, Malik-Shah also died unexpectedly. The assassins were accused of poisoning him. Malik-Shah's death caused turmoil in the Seljuk State. The central authorities had no time for the Ismaili now.<sup>4</sup>

The anti-Seljuk policy of the Ismaili attracted the Iranian bureaucracy which was hostile to the Seljuks.<sup>5</sup> The high-rank religious authorities of Ispahan were loyal to the Ismaili. According to Ibn al-Asir, some Faqihs of Ispahan were against the execution of the Ismaili, while others hesitated.<sup>6</sup>

The geographical area of murders committed by the Ismaili is vast and embraces Amol, Merv, Ray, Sarakhs, Nishapur, Maragha, Tabriz, Ispahan, Hamadan, provinces: Khwarazm, Kerman, Tabaristan, Gorgan, outside Iran - Baghdad, Mosul, Tbilisi, Cairo and Syrian towns.<sup>7</sup>

This is the number of murders committed at the times of three Ismaili rulers: Hassan i-Sabbah (1090-1124) – 49 people, Kiya Buzurg-Ummid (1124-

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1 Stroyeva L.V, The Ismaili State in Iran in the XI-XIII Centuries, Moscow, p. 70.

2 Nizam al-Mulk, *Siyāsatnāmeḥ*. The Book on the Rule of Vizier of the XI Century Nizam al-Mulk, translated into Russian and commented by B. N. Zakhoder, Moscow. Literature, 1949, pp. 188-189; Stroyeva, *ibid.* p. 62.

3 Rashid ad-Din, p. 110; Stroyeva, p. 71.

4 Stroyeva L. V., The Ismaili State in Iran in the XI-XIII Centuries, p. 68.

5 Stroyeva, *ibid.* p. 135-136.

6 Ibn al-Asir, volume X, p. 301, quoted from Stroyeva, *ibid.* p. 83.

7 Stroyeva, *ibid.* p. 152.

1138) – 12 people, Mohammad Ibn Kiya Buzurg-Ummid (1138-1162) – 14 people. In all, during the 72-year period, 75 people fell victim to the individual Ismaili terror. The victims included people of high administrative, military and religious authority – Caliphs, Sultans, Padishahs, Emirs, Viziers, military commanders, Valis, Hakims, Rays, Mustoufi, Mufti, Qadi and theologians. The Ismaili killed six Viziers of Seljuks.<sup>1</sup> They killed almost every Qadi and Mufti who had judged and executed the Ismaili. Among them was the Qadi of Herat – Abu Sayeed Kharevi (1132), who had the title of “The Qadi of the East and West”. In the second half of the XIII century, there was an attack on the historian Juvayni in Baghdad. The historian was seriously wounded. The reason was that Juvayni not only burnt the library of Alamut but also condemned the Ismaili in his works.<sup>2</sup>

Now I would like to focus on the social nature of the Ismaili movement. Numerous scholars have been interested in this issue. Due to the fact that the majority of Ismaili Da'i were artisans, peasants and merchants, L. Stroyeva considers that their movement was entirely anti-feudal in its nature.<sup>3</sup> V. Gabashvili partly disagrees with Stroyeva's opinion and notes that “the highest political aim and aspiration of Hassan i-Sabbah was to overthrow the State of Seljuks. Their movement was not directed against the feudal system“. Gabashvili adds that the upper layer of the Ismaili gathered merchants and artisans around them by means of social demagoguery.<sup>4</sup>

In general, the Soviet historiography viewed everything from the social viewpoint due to its ideology and attached priority to the opposition between different social classes. This theory was dictated by the Soviet policy which forced scholars to make conclusions in favour of social issues.

Analysis of oriental sources proves that the Ismaili movement in Iran was a national-liberation movement against the Seljuk governance. The majority of adepts of this movement were artisans and peasants because the Iranian aristocracy served the Turk-Seljuks. The aristocrats who opposed the Seljuks had secret links with the Ismaili and fought with the Seljuks in this way. In the periods of Hassan i-Sabbah and Kiya Buzurg-Ummid, being a Nizari was a kind of national and religious indicator of Iranians. Therefore, we cannot define the Ismaili movement as a purely social

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1 Stroyeva, *ibid.* pp. 148-149; D. Katsitadze, *The History of Iran, III-XVIII Centuries*, Tbilisi, “Horos XXI,” 2009, p. 209.

2 Stroyeva, *ibid.* p. 149; *Persian Sources on the History of the Turkmens and Turkmenistan*, volume 1, VII-XV Centuries. *Arabian and Persian Sources*, Edited by S.L. Volin, A. A. Romaskevich and A. Y. Yakubovsky. – TIVAN, XXIX, Moscow. Literature, 1939, p. 151. (In Russian).

3 Stroyeva L.V. *The Ismaili State in Iran in the XI-XIII Centuries*. Moscow, 1978, pp. 30-33, 106, 108, 136.

4 V. Gabashvili. *Social Movements in the Middle Eastern Cities (IX-XIII Centuries)*, *Issues in the History of the Middle East, Caucasus and Georgia*, Collection of Papers, I. Tbilisi. 2016, p. 145 (pp. 130-147).

phenomenon.

According to Rashid al-Din, at the end of the reign of Hassan i-Sabbah (died in 1124), the Ismaili movement became active in Iraq, Azerbaijan, Khorasan, Mazandaran, Gilan and Gurjistan.<sup>1</sup> As T. Natroshvili correctly notes, the formation of the Alamut Ismaili State coincides with the reign of Davit the Builder in Georgia. Naturally, Georgians were aware of the Ismaili activities. However, the Georgian sources of this period do not mention the Ismaili.<sup>2</sup> According to T. Natroshvili, the activation of Mulids in Georgia followed the annexation of Tbilisi by Davit the Builder.<sup>3</sup> The scholar notes that "... The Georgian King had to protect the interests of the Moslem population of Tbilisi in the same way as the Seljuk Sultans did it. The Georgian King had to protect the population from the Mulid threat and prevent their terror and propaganda. Besides, the subjects who obeyed the Alamut ruler instead of the local authorities would be considered undesired citizens. ... The Georgian feudal society would not bear an organization of rebels in the Kingdom of Georgia. In its turn, the Ismailite movement excluded compromise with regard to any authority, be it Moslem or Christian. Naturally, Mulids would be against the strong authority of Georgian kings in Tbilisi."<sup>4</sup> This opinion is quite acceptable, but it should be underlined that the activation of the Ismaili in Tbilisi was not solely due to the political factor. As we can see from the following events, the Ismaili opposed the Sunni authorities in Tbilisi, because the latter oppressed the Ismaili and considered them heretic.

At the end of the 30s of the XII century, there was an Ismaili sect in Tbilisi. According to Rashid al-Din, one Ismaili assassin from Tbilisi – Ibrahim Damghani (1138/39 (H. 533)) killed the Qadi of Tbilisi, because the latter had sentenced the Ismaili of Tbilisi to death.<sup>5</sup>

The fact that Rashid al-Din mentions the representative of Ismaili sect (called Damghani) as a resident of Tbilisi proves that he belonged to the local Moslem community. This means that Damghani Ismaili lived in Tbilisi for a long time. He was a Da'i sent from Alamut for preaching Nizari doctrine in Tbilisi. As the Ismaili kingdom was geographically quite close to Georgia, the Da'i reached Tbilisi, started propaganda and had adepts soon after the beginning of Nizari movement.

Georgian and Persian sources do not mention the crimes committed by the Ismaili in Tbilisi. However, it is obvious that the assassins applied their

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1 Rashid al-Din, p. 55 quoted from T. Natroshvili, *ibid.* p. 69;

2 T. Natroshvili, *ibid.* pp. 68-69

3 T. Natroshvili, *ibid.* p. 69

4 T. Natroshvili, *The History of the Ismaili Movement*, p. 69

5 Jami Al-Tawarikh, part of the Ismaili History by Rashid al-Din Fadl Allah, Persian text of VIII-th Century A.H., ed., by M. T. Danesh Pajuh and M. Modaresy, Tehran, 1960, p. 87 – quoted from T. Natroshvili. "The History of the Ismaili Movement", p. 69.



peculiar methods and often committed murders.

In the given period (the reign of Demetrius I), the Moslems of Tbilisi felt calm and protected. The chief direction of Islam among the Moslems of Tbilisi was Hanafi Madhhab of Sunni Islam. The Sunni considered the Ismaili as heretic and fought with them. This must have been the reason for the confrontation between the Sunni of Tbilisi and the Ismaili. The fact that oriental sources say nothing about the murder of politicians in Tbilisi, proves that Alamut Nizari were in confrontation with the Sunni of Tbilisi and not with the royal authorities of Georgia.

Special attention should be paid to a document preserved by Rashid al-Din, according to which there was a confrontation between Georgians and Ismaili during the reign of the third governor of Alamut – Muhammad ibn Buzurg-Ummid (1138-1162).

According to Rashid al-Din, in the February of 1142, during the attack of Deshte-Deylaman (Gilan), the Ismaili occupied the fortress of Mubarak-Kuh and built another fortress, the name of which is not mentioned by the historian. After this, the Ismaili attacked Gurjistan. The Ismaili besieged their (Georgians' – Kh. B.) fortress (the name of which is not mentioned – Kh. B.) and soon took control over it. "The Gurji were in trouble". There was no unity among the besieged. Some of them preferred to take the Ismaili side. The besieged had two leaders – Emir Tarasf ibn Mekilshah Gurjani and his brother Gurshasfi. The first took the Ismaili side and thus saved his life, but "there was not a slightest hope for Gurshasfi." Later, the Ismaili killed him. At the end of the struggle the Rafiqs (Iranian Ismaili – Kh. B.) built the Mor-Quh fortress, also called Mubarah-Quh. "The Rafiqs returned to Alamut as soon as they had done with the Gurji."<sup>1</sup>

This fact told by Rashid al-Din coincides with the period of reign of Demetrius I in Georgia (1125-1156). Georgian sources provide scarce information regarding this King. Therefore, it is logical that the above-mentioned fact is not registered in any document. Based on Rashid al-Din, it is possible to restore important facts referring to the confrontation between Georgians and the Ismaili.

Rashid al-Din's story proves that the borders of the Ismaili State were close to Georgia and that there was a clash of territorial interests.

As we do not know exactly which territory is implied by Rashid al-Din, we argue that he must have implied the farthermost Southern provinces of Georgia, because these lands were close to the territories of Deyleman and Northern Azerbaijan.

Separate mention should be made of the information found in Georgian sources regarding the Iranian Ismaili. These sources are scarce, but they reflect the political, religious and social activities of the Ismaili in

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<sup>1</sup> Rashid al-Din, p. 148 – in Stroyeva, *ibid.* pp. 139-140

Iran as well as Georgia and the entire Caucasus. Like the oriental sources, Georgian documents reflect the attitude of the political, religious and scholarly circles of that period to the terrorist ideology of the Assassins.

The Mulids are first mentioned in a Georgian source called "Istoriani da Azmani Sharavandedtani" (History and Eulogies of the Crowned Ones). In 1191, the first historian of Queen Tamar wrote about the death of Muzaffar al-Din Qizil Arslan (1186-1191), the ruler of the feudal kingdom of the Eldiguzids within the Seljuk State of Iran: "In this year was killed Atabag Qizil Arslan, who had adopted Islam under the influence of the Mulids."<sup>2</sup> Mirkhond also notes this fact,<sup>3</sup> whereas Rashid al-Din says that the murderers were not identified.<sup>4</sup>

As it seems, the opponents of the Ismaili took advantage of the tainted reputation of the latter. It is highly probable that Mulids were blamed for murders they had not committed.

Another Georgian source providing information on Georgian-Ismaili relations is the Georgian annalist. After the Mongol occupation of Georgia, the Georgian annalist tells about the struggle of Mongols against Alamut, which lasted for seven years. Georgians were actively involved in this struggle. In 1246, Mongols introduced permanent military service which forced Georgians to take part in the wars launched by Mongols. This caused great discontent of Georgians. The Mongols divided the Georgian army into two parts. One part sieged Alamut for six months, and, during another six months, the other part sieged the fortress. Thus, the entire military resource of Georgia was mobilized to struggle against the Ismaili. According to the Georgian annalist, the Mongols "... went to struggle in Alamut and took Georgians with them, dividing the Georgian army into two parts, each staying in Alamut for half a year. The struggle of Alamut continued for seven years. The residents of Alamut are murderers called Mulids who kill people stealthily."<sup>5</sup>

Mongol Governor Chaghat died under unknown circumstances during

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1 I. Jalaghania. The Eldiguzids, Georgian Soviet Encyclopedia, volume 5, Tbilisi, 1980, p. 106; N. Shengelia, Georgian Foreign Relations during the Reign of Tamar, Papers in Georgian History, IV, Tbilisi., 1979, p. 321

2 Kartlis Tskhovreba, II, The text identified by Simon Kaukhchishvili based on all key manuscripts. Tbilisi, 1959, p. 62

3 I. Jalaghania, The Eldiguzids, Georgian Soviet Encyclopedia, volume 5, Tbilisi, 1980, p. 106; Rouzat as-Safa, IV, Tehran, 1960, p. 605 – in T. Natroshvili. The History of the Ismaili Movement, Matsne, 2, 1975, p. 70;

بيرنيا، حسن، اشتیانی، عباس اقبال. ۴۶۹۱. تاریخ ایران قبل از اسلام بعد از اسلام. تهران. کتابخانه ملی ایران.

p. 328

4 T. Natroshvili. The History of the Ismaili Movement, Matsne, 2, 1975, p. 75

5 The Georgian Annalist. Kartlis Tskhovreba (life of Georgia), II, The text identified by Simon Kaukhchishvili based on all key manuscripts. Tbilisi, 1959, p. 208

Alamut siege. According to a Georgian source, he was killed by an assassin. The annalist tells this story in detail, because the Mongols suspected Georgians of having committed this murder. "One day a skilled Mulid was sent from Alamut. He stealthily passed the guards, penetrated into Chaghat's tent and stabbed him to death. Nobody knew who he was."<sup>1</sup> Rashid al-Din also writes about this event, noting that a heretical Ismaili man cut Chaghat's throat, although the author does not mention the place where this murder happened. Neither the Georgian annalist nor Rashid al-Din mentions the year when Chaghat was murdered.<sup>2</sup>

According to the Georgian annalist, the Mongols suspected Georgians of killing their governor Chaghat because a Georgian military unit was close to Chaghat's camp.<sup>3</sup> Georgians would have been punished by Mongols if the Mulid had not confessed. According to the Georgian annalist, "... One man came out of the reeds, holding a blood-stained dagger. He raised the dagger and shouted: „Man Kushtem Chaghat“ which in Persian means "I have killed Chaghat." After this, he ran into the reeds to save his life.<sup>4</sup> The Mongols caught the man and asked him why he had confessed the murder. He said: "I am a Mulid, special among the Mulids. The Mulids gave me plenty of gold for killing one of the four people (Chaghatar, Charmaghan, Iosur and Bichu – Kh. B.). I came and killed Chaghat and then I hid in the reeds."<sup>5</sup> When asked why he had left his ambush, the Mullid said that he had dreamt of a woman who warned him that, unless he confessed, the blood of many innocent people would be shed. Georgians concluded that this woman was Virgin Mary, because they had prayed to the Holy Virgin and Jesus Christ, begging to escape punishment for the murder which they had not committed.<sup>6</sup>

As we have mentioned, neither Georgian nor Persian sources give the date of murder of Chaghat. It should be noted that Rashid al-Din, who dedicates a separate chapter to the occupation of Alamut in 1256 and describes the destruction of the Ismaili State in detail, does not mention the murder either.<sup>7</sup>

The information given by the Georgian Annalist proves that Georgians

1 The Georgian Annalist, p. 208

2 Rashid al-Din, 1967. Collection of Annals, I, Book One, Translated from Persian into Russian by L. A. Khetagurov, edited and commented by A. A. Semyonov, Moscow-Leningrad: USSR Academy of Sciences, p. 100; Occupation of Alamut by Hulagu – عباس، اشبتیانی، p. 414-418. اقبال. 1964. تاریخ ایران قبل از اسلام بعد از اسلام. تهران. کتابخانه ملی ایران

3 The Georgian Annalist. Kartlis Tskhovreba (Life of Georgia), II, p. 209

4 The Georgian Annalist, p. 210

5 The Georgian Annalist, p. 210

6 The Georgian Annalist, p. 210-211

7 Rashid al-Din. 1946. Collection of Annals. Translated from Persian into Russian by A. K. Arends. Edited and commented by A. A. Romaskevich. E.E. Bertels and A. Y. Yakubovski. Moscow-Leningrad: USSR Academy of Sciences, pp. 28-32

were well aware of the Ismaili organization and their activities. Under the influence of the Persian language, Georgians mentioned the Nizari under the name of Mulids (Mulid is an Arabic term denoting a heretic. The Iranian Nizari were called Mulids.<sup>1</sup> Rashid al-Din also qualifies the Ismaili as heretic<sup>2</sup>). The Georgian Annalist calls the Ismaili Alamutians<sup>3</sup>. The Annalist is well aware of the Ismaili method of stealthy murder.

Coming back to the fact of Chaghat's murder: the Georgian narrative regarding the murder of Chaghat seems suspicious, because a skilled Mulid, "special among the Mulids", as he called himself, hid in the reeds instead of returning to Alamut or escaping altogether. Later the Mulid declared that he had been paid plenty of gold for killing Chaghat. Having confessed his crime, the Mulid again tried to hide in the reeds. What is more, the Mulid mentioned a woman from his dream and thus explained his confession.

We know from the Ismaili history that the Nizari did not pay the Fidai for their service. The Fidai would not receive any gold for their job, because they fulfilled the task according to their law and religion. For an assassin, the chief authority was the Imam and the Hujjat. An assassin would not follow the instructions of a woman seen in his dream. Besides, it is unusual for an assassin to run away and hide after confession.

The Georgian annalist writes: "when the Mongols had listened to this man, they pierced him with a sword.<sup>4</sup> The Mongols must have been surprised by the discrepancy between the man's actions and the Ismaili doctrine.

Taking into account the above-mentioned, it is logical to think that the Mongol governor was in fact murdered by the Georgians. They paid a lot of gold to the man who took the responsibility for the murder. The reason for the murder of Chaghat by Georgians was that, according to the annalist, Georgians were severely affected in the fight with the Alamut: "... Georgians suffered greatly due to the Tatars (Mongols – Kh. B.) who had a longlasting and permanent struggle with the Alamutians."<sup>5</sup>

According to the Georgian Annalist, one of the reasons for Kokhtastavi rebellion (1246 or 1247) was Georgia's participation in the prolonged war of Mongols against Alamut: „... We cannot disobey the Tatars who make us suffer by forcing us every year to go to Alamut where troubles and misery await us. We are helpless because we have no king. We must get together

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1 G. Sanikidze. The Ismaili, Islam. Encyclopedia, p. 104

2 Rashid al-Din. 1946. Collection of Annals. Translated from Persian into Russian by A. K. Arends. Edited and commented by A. A. Romaskevich. E.E. Bertels and A. Y. Yakubovski. Moscow-Leningrad: USSR Academy of Sciences, pp. 28-32

3 The Georgian Annalist, p. 211

4 The Georgian Annalist, p. 211

5 The Georgian Annalist, p. 211

and struggle with the Tatars.”<sup>1</sup> According to B. Lominadze, “it is quite natural that the struggle of Mongols in Alamut led to a rebellion in Georgia. Prior to attacking Alamut, Georgians decided to struggle with the Mongols, because they had suffered greatly during the raids of Alamut.”<sup>2</sup>

Vakhushti Bagrationi writes about the Mongol military expeditions against the Ismaili: “As the expedition to Alamut went on, Khan Ulu took the army, accompanied by Davit son of Lasha. ... The kings Davit and Narin Davit constantly accompanied Khan Ulu.”<sup>3</sup> (Under the leadership of Davit Ulu, Georgians also took part in the occupation of Baghdad on February 10, 1258, and in the struggle against the Egyptian Sultan in 1259). The unbearable taxes and obligatory military service introduced by the Mongols led to rebellions of Georgians (Davit Narin started a rebellion in the summer of 1259, whereas Davit Ulu rebelled in 1260-1261 due to the Egyptian military expedition.<sup>4</sup>)

Thus, considering the above-mentioned situation, we can conclude that the murder of Chaghat by Georgians is quite probable.

To summarize: at the end of the XI century, representatives of the most radical movement of Ismailism – Nizari appeared in Georgia. They became active in the beginning of the 20s of the XII century. The murders committed by the Mulids in Tbilisi mostly affected high rank Sunni officials. Ismailism, declared by the Sunni as a heretic movement, had a strong Moslem opposition in Tbilisi. This must have been the cause for the confrontation between the Sunni and the Ismaili of Tbilisi.

The confrontation between Georgians and Alamutians in 1142 proves the closeness of the Ismaili State to the Georgian borders and the clash of territorial interests.

Thus, in the given paper, we have focused on the information provided by the Georgian Annalist which is contrary to the Ismaili code of behaviour. Hence, there is an assumption that the Mongol Khan might have been murdered by the Georgians. After the murder, Georgians paid a lot of gold to the person who took the blame. Otherwise, Georgians would have been severely punished for Chaghat’s murder.

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1 The Georgian Annalist. Kartlis Tskhovreba (Life of Georgia), II, p. 215

2 B.Lominadze, Mongol Domination in Georgia and the Struggle against it (XIII b. 40-XIV c. 10s) Papers in Georgian History. III, pp. 554, 569

3 Vakhushti Bagrationi, Life of Georgia, IV, p. 213

4 B.Lominadze, *ibid.* Papers in Georgian History, IV, pp. 570-571