The Mongol World

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The Mongol Conquest of Caucasia

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The most powerful state in the early thirteenth-century South Caucasus was undoubtedly the Kingdom of Georgia. Following its consolidation and expansion under Queen T’amar (r.1184–1213), Georgia was at the height of its power, ruled by T’amar’s son, Giorgi IV Lasha (r.1213–23). All of the Georgian-speaking lands, most importantly Imeret’i to the west of the Lixi Mountains and K’art’li to the east, were united under a single monarch, a rare event for a country that had been divided between different rulers for most of its history. Moreover, following Georgia’s expansion during T’amar’s reign, its kings were now hegemons of a larger empire. This included the northern half of the Armenian lands, including the great cities of Ani and Dvin; the Armeno-Georgian marchlands of Somxit’i, south of Tiflis; and the powerful principality of Siwnik, in the approximate area of modern Nakhichevan.

However, royal attempts to centralize power during the preceding century had been largely unsuccessful, and Georgian politics was dominated by powerful noble families. Most of the major offices of state were held by members of the Kurdish-Armenian Zak’arian clan (also known as Mxargrzeli in Georgian sources). Ivane Zak’arian held the rank of atabeg (vizier) until his death in 1227, whereupon he was succeeded by his son, Avag. The office of amirspasalar (constable) was held by the son of Ivane’s brother Zak’are (d.1211), Shahnshle Zak’arian. Another son of Zak’are, Varam of Gag, was one of the most powerful magnates of eastern Georgia. Between them, these members of the Zak’arian clan dominated the Armenian marchlands and Georgian politics. However, other nobles, such as the brothers Shalva and Ivane, lords of Axalt’sixe in southwest Georgia, and the Orbelean family of the principality of Siwnik, looked on warily at their power.

The Georgians stood in an uneasy relationship with the Muslim principalities to the east, in the territory of modern Azerbaijan. Ibn al-Athir described a cycle of raiding, negotiation, and largely symbolic submission between these polities, which he called ‘the best of enemies.’ While the Shirvanshahs – a long-standing Muslim dynasty (861–1538) with their capital at Shamakhi, near Baku – were consistent,
if distant, vassals of the Georgian kings, the more southerly cities of Ganja and Baylaqan and the failing dynasty of the Ildegizids (1136–1225), based in Tabriz, stood in a more antagonistic position to the Georgians.

Meanwhile, to the north of the Great Caucasus Mountains, there was no such hegemonic state. By the early thirteenth century, the kingdoms of Alania and Sarir, which had dominated the Central North Caucasus and Daghistan during the eighth to twelfth centuries, had declined. While it was still possible to form loose regional confederations, such as that which formed in Alania under the leadership of a certain Ajs to oppose the Mongol invasion of 1238–39, the main political unit appears to have been the As: a local village or valley community united by ties of real or imagined kinship. Their settlements were frequently located on inaccessible heights and could be extremely difficult to capture, as the Mongols would discover. While the evidence is very uncertain, it seems that the western part of the North Caucasus, populated by the Adyghe or Circassians, had a similar political structure. Rashid al-Din mentions a certain Buqan, king of Circassia; however, what this title indicates is unclear.

Our sources for this time period vary widely in quantity and quality. Certain elements of the Mongol invasion of the Caucasus, notably the campaigns against Armenia and Georgia in 1220–21 and 1235–36, are attested by multiple sources from different historiographical traditions. On the other hand, the campaigns in Circassia and Dagestan in 1238–40 can only be reconstructed in the broadest of outlines. The principal reason for this is the florescence of an indigenous South Caucasian historical tradition, whereas North Caucasian traditions of written history were relatively sparse both before and after this period. By this point, the Armenian historical tradition was overwhelmingly dominated by ecclesiastical chronicles, although some secular chroniclers such as Step’annos Orbelean did also appear. The Georgian historiographical tradition, by contrast, remained largely under royal control, which could result in overtly political distortions of the historical record. Despite these biases and the general trend of presenting the Mongol invasions in apocalyptic terms, both traditions present a relatively nuanced picture of interactions with the Mongols. For example, the early fourteenth-century Hundred Years' Chronicle, our best Georgian source for the period, explicitly models its descriptions of the Mongol invasions after the biblical destruction of Jerusalem by the Assyrians but also frequently praises their morals and conduct. This nuanced picture provides an important corrective to much of the historiography of the Mongol invasions of the Caucasus, particularly from the Soviet period, which considers these a uniquely destructive set of campaigns. Our principal sources are rounded out by the Arabic and Persian historiographical traditions, of which Ibn al-Athir and Rashid al-Din’s accounts are particularly important for the campaigns of 1220–23 and 1238–40 respectively. Finally, a number of other historical traditions, notably accounts of European travellers and the Chinese Yuan Shi, provide important information on the Mongol campaigns in the North Caucasus.

THE FIRST MONGOL INVASION OF 1220–23 AND ITS AFTERMATH

The initial Mongol invasions of the South Caucasus appear to have been proximate and accidental, a result of Sübedei and Jebe’s pursuit of the Khwarazmshah
Muhammad. Their force of two tümen, initially numbering some 20,000 men, seems to have been considerably reduced by the time it arrived in the Caucasus – the generally reliable Georgian Hundred Years’ Chronicle describes it as numbering only 12,000 by January 1221. According to Ibn al-Athir, this force’s arrival in the South Caucasus appears to have been a consequence of the need to winter in pastureland following the campaigns of 1220. For this purpose, the most useful area in the South Caucasus was the Mughan steppe of modern Azerbaijan, an area of grassland that would gain critical importance as a base area for later Mongol armies.

Despite the existence of multiple sources for this first Mongol campaign in the Caucasus, the course of the following events and the precise order in which they occurred is rather confused. For example, the near-contemporary Georgian Chronicle of Giorgi Lasha claims that the Mongols invaded Georgia twice, being defeated both times, despite most other sources claiming that it was in fact the Georgians who were defeated; and the generally reliable Armenian chronicle of Kirakos Gandzakets’i claims that the Mongol army invaded the South Caucasus from the north via the pass of Darband, not from Iran, as is recorded by practically every other source. Nevertheless, with the significant exception of several near-contemporary Georgian sources, which will be addressed at the end of this section, most major sources broadly agree on the outlines of the campaign.

Around the time of the Mongols’ initial move into the Mughan steppe in late 1220, they clashed with and defeated a smaller force of Georgian troops, possibly somewhere near Tiflis. According to Ibn al-Athir and Rashid al-Din, this Georgian force numbered 10,000. This number is broadly corroborated by the letters sent in 1223 to Pope Honorius III by Queen Rusudan (r.1223–45), sister and successor of Giorgi Lasha, and her atabeg, Ivane Zak’arian. These state that the Georgians suffered 6,000 casualties in an initial clash with the Mongols. It appears that this clash came as a surprise to the Georgians, since they had apparently been informed that the Mongols were Christians and potential allies against the Muslim states of the region; Ivane Zak’arian’s letter to Pope Honorius states that ‘the Tartars, with a cross preceding them, entered our land and under the guise of the Christian religion deceived us’. Following this engagement the Mongols returned to the Mughan steppe for the winter. Meanwhile, the Georgians set about raising forces for a spring campaign, making alliances with Uzbek b. Pahlawan, the Ildegizid lord of Tabriz, and al-Ashraf b. al-‘Adil, lord of the principality of Khilat on Lake Van.

However, the Mongols struck first. Recruiting a force of local allies under the leadership of one of Uzbek’s former commanders, the mamluk Aqush, they moved out of the Mughan steppe in December 1220 or January 1221. In January 1221, Jebe and Sübedei met the main Georgian field army, which was commanded by King Giorgi Lasha. This Georgian army, somewhat implausibly placed at 90,000 men by the Hundred Years’ Chronicle, consisted of the royal army, the forces of the Zak’arian princes Ivane and Varam of Gag, possibly other vassal contingents such as that of Hamid al-Dawla, the Lord of Manasgom, and Alan mercenaries from the North Caucasus. While the precise location of this battle is disputed, it clearly took place in the Armeno-Georgian marchlands of Somxit‘i, on a plain near a river – most likely the Plain of Kotman, near modern Bagratshen. While it resulted in a Mongol victory, this was clearly a hard-fought engagement. Ibn al-Athir claims that the Mongol vanguard, comprising Aqush and his local allies, suffered heavy losses
at the hand of the Georgians. However, it seems clear that the Mongols, coming up to support Aqush, were able to use their classic feigned retreat tactic to break the cohesion of the Georgian forces. The disruption of the Georgian army may have been exacerbated by poor co-ordination between its right wing, under the command of Varam of Gag, and the left wing under Ivane Zak’arian, which failed to come to Varam’s support at a crucial moment. In any case, while the Mongols won the day, they retreated to Azerbaijan relatively soon afterwards due to the strength of Georgian opposition. This allowed the Georgians to claim victory in their official correspondence.

Following a raid towards Mosul, Irbil, and Hamadan during the spring and summer of 1221, Jebe and Sübedei returned to the Mughan steppe around September and extorted further funds from Tabriz and the city of Ganja on the Georgian border. They conquered the city of Baylaqan in October or November 1221, an event which, together with a Georgian raid in 1223 and a further Mongol capture of the city in 1235, appears to have effectively destroyed it. Following this, the Mongols renewed their invasion of Georgia, advancing towards Tbilis as far as the village of Agara. However, faced with a superior Georgian force under the command of King Giorgi Lasha, the Mongols elected to retreat without offering battle.

Following their withdrawal, Jebe and Sübedei brought their forces to the Emirate of Shirvan, in the north of modern Azerbaijan. They attacked and took the city of Shamakhi, the Shirvanshahs’ capital, in a terrific struggle but failed to take the city of Baku, according to the geographer Abd al-Rashid al-Bak’uvi (fl. 806–16/1403–14). Under the guise of peace negotiations, they forced a group of emissaries from the Shirvanshah to show the Mongol army a difficult pass through the Great Caucasus Mountains, bypassing the defences of the stronghold of Darband on the Caspian coast, which subsequently submitted to the Mongols.

At this point the Mongols encountered the peoples of the North Caucasus. In early 1222, after swiftly sweeping through the highland territories of the Daghistani Lakz (Lezgian) people, the Mongols were confronted by a powerful force of Alan troops, who had allied with a group of Qipchaqs, a Turkic people of the steppes to the north. This Alan-Qipchaq force, under the command of Iurgii, son of the Qipchaq prince Konchak, and an Alan leader called “T’a-t’a-ha-erh” by the Yuan Shi, initially fought Jebe and Sübedei’s army to a standstill. However, the Mongols were able to split the alliance by striking a deal with the Qipchaqs, allowing them to defeat the Alans. Following this, Jebe and Sübedei’s army moved into the Qipchaq Steppe to the north before encountering the Rus’ princes at the Kalka River.

While undoubtedly destructive, this first Mongol invasion does not seem to have had a decisive impact on the course of events in the South Caucasus. The pattern of regular raids, intermarriage and shifting alliances between Georgia and its eastern neighbours swiftly resumed; and while the Georgian forces had been defeated, the Mongols had withdrawn from Georgia twice, allowing the Georgian court to launch a concerted propaganda campaign to claim that they had, in fact, been victorious. Far more destructive to the region’s political order were the indirect consequences of the Mongol invasions. While a Qipchaq incursion into Shirvan and Arran in 1222 was defeated by the Georgians, the invasions of the fugitive Khwarzamian army of Jalal al-Din, son of the Khwarazmshah, were extremely damaging. Notably,
Map 12.1 The Caucasus region in the 13th century
Source: Created by Mapping Specialists, Ltd.
following Jalal al-Din’s capture of Tiflis in 1226, the eastern half of Georgia was effectively severed from royal control, and Rusudan’s attempts to have her son David Narin recognized as heir were thwarted by the eastern magnates’ inability to attend his coronation. This was the effective start of Georgia’s division into two kingdoms, a process which would accelerate once the Mongols returned in the 1230s and 1240s.

THE SECOND MONGOL INVASION OF THE SOUTH CAUCASUS, 1236–45

Whereas the Mongols had entered the South Caucasus in their first invasion almost by accident, their second invasion was a deliberate conquest. And whereas their first invasion had been met by a concerted and united Georgian resistance, by the late 1230s, the weakened state of the Georgian kingdom rendered such concerted opposition impossible.

The prelude to the Mongol conquest of Georgia and its Armenian vassals was the movement of the Mongol general Chormaqan, dispatched to Iran with an army of 30,000 men, into the Mughan steppes. Apart from a relatively brief sojourn in Mughan in 1230 during the pursuit of Jalal al-Din, it is not clear exactly when Chormaqan set up his base camp in this area. Bayarsaikhan Dashdondog and Timothy May respectively suggest that this took place in 1231 or 1233. Following this, it appears that Chormaqan spent several years securing his flanks and by 1235 had reduced the cities of western Iran and conquered the Muslim cities of Ganja and Baylaqan in Arran.

The exact date of the Mongol invasion of Armenia and Georgia is also not known; the general consensus is 1236, following Step’annos Orbelean and Step’annos Episkopos, although a slightly earlier date has also been suggested. The Georgian kingdom, weakened by internal division and frequent wars, was unable to create a single army to resist the Mongol invasion. Contemporaries blamed this state of affairs on Queen Rusudan, although her being prevented by custom from leading the army like a king undoubtedly did not help matters. In the face of the Mongol advance, Rusudan repeated her tactic from Jalal al-Din’s invasion and retreated to the safety of Imeret’i, behind the Lixi Mountains, ordering Tiflis to be destroyed to deny it to the enemy. The Armenian and Georgian lords of the kingdom generally retreated to their fortresses to wait out the Mongol advance.

With no Georgian field army to oppose them, the Mongol army was able to divide into several columns to besiege the various Georgian and Armenian fortresses. It appears that each column pursued a specific Armeno-Georgian magnate, fanning out into the foothills of the Armenian plateau and besieging fortresses one by one until their target was cornered. Chormaqan set up his headquarters on the banks of Lake Sevan, from where he appears to have been able to co-ordinate the various columns’ activities. Chaghadai noyan pursued the amirspasalar Shahnshe Zak’arian to the city of Lori, as well as taking the fortresses of Dmanisi and Samsvilde and the city of Tiflis. However, Shahnshe was able to escape Lori to the west, leaving the city’s defence to his father-in-law, who was executed by the Mongols after its fall. Aslan noyan was sent southwards into the principality of Siwnik, where the local ruler, Elikum Orbelean, submitted to the Mongols. Detachments under Ghatagha noyan...
and Jukh-Bugha noyan also headed south into the regions of Charek’ and Khachen (modern Nagorno-Karabakh), taking Getabek, Vardanashat, and Khokanaberdi. Molghor noyan led a column from Shamkhor, which was taken in a fierce assault, into Somxit’i, the Armeno-Georgian marchland south of Tiflis. There they besieged a series of fortresses under the rule of Varam of Gag: Terunakan, Ergevank’, Matsnaberdi, Gardman, and Ch’arenk. A final column, under the command of Itughata noyan, struck southeast towards Lake Sevan, besieging Avag Zak’arian, son of Ivane, in the fortress of Kayen. Avag, after lengthy negotiations, submitted to Chormaqan, who offered relatively generous terms in return for forcing Avag to accompany his main force in a campaign against the cities of Ani, Kars, and Surp Mari. Following Avag’s submission, most of the major magnates of Armenia and Eastern Georgia also submitted to the Mongols, notably Shahnshe and Varam of Gag. This would begin a new chapter in Armenian-Mongol relations, described by Dashdondog in Chapter 44 in this volume.

Reading lists of fortresses which submitted to the Mongols can sometimes feel rather abstract and give little indication of the uncertainty and fear which the advance of these unfamiliar armies undoubtedly gave the people of northern Armenia and eastern Georgia. However, we get a much better appreciation of these experiences from the first-hand account of the cleric Kirakos Gandzakets’i, who was taken prisoner by Molghor noyan’s column in the summer of 1236 and was forced to work as a secretary. Kirakos was present at the capture of the cave monastery of Lorut, under the rule of the influential vardapet (doctor of the church) Vanakan. In their time of desperation, it seems that the peasantry of the surrounding villages turned to the church, fleeing with their priests to Vanakan’s monastery. Kirakos describes the Mongols besieging the Armenian refugees in the waterless cave, leading to the vardapet Vanakan being selected to speak to the Mongol commander, Molghor. This exchange, as recorded by Kirakos, gives us a good idea of the uncertainties the Mongols themselves faced, since Vanakan was initially questioned under the misapprehension that he was a secular lord. Once Molghor had established Vanakan’s identity, the Mongols promised to protect the villagers and leave them unharmed if they left the cave monastery. One can almost feel the summer sun beating down on the Armenian plateau as Kirakos describes how ‘we descended, quaking, like lambs among the wolves, frightened, terrified, thinking we were about to die, each person in his mind repeating the confession of faith in the Holy Trinity.’ While Vanakan, Kirakos, and a few others were forced to accompany the Mongol force, for the most part Molghor kept his word, specifically leaving overseers to ensure the villagers’ safety. What is striking about this account is the effective breakdown of the secular order: the Armeno-Georgian nobility, holed up in their fortresses, effectively abdicated their responsibilities to the church, the only organization remaining to help the peasantry.

In this atmosphere of political breakdown, it is hardly surprising that the age-old Caucasian tendency towards political fission reasserted itself. In 1242, Queen Rusudan was persuaded to submit to the Mongols and supported them in their campaign against the Seljuks of Rum in 1243. However, on Rusudan’s death in 1245, the fracturing of Georgia took on an unstoppable momentum. Two claimants to the throne presented themselves to the Mongols: David VI Narin (Mongol for ‘Little/Younger David’), Rusudan’s son, and David VII Ulu (‘Big/Elder David’), an
illegitimate son of Giorgi IV Lasha who had previously been an involuntary resident of the Seljuk court.\textsuperscript{55} Initially, Güyük Khan decided that David Ulu was to be vassal king of all Georgia and was to be succeeded by David Narin.\textsuperscript{56} It appears that this system was one the Mongols considered beneficial, since it survived an abortive rebellion in 1249 in which David Ulu’s participation was rumoured.\textsuperscript{57} However, upon Hulegu Khan’s arrival in Iran, the two co-rulers resubmitted their case to this new overlord, who instead decided that David Narin and David Ulu would be co-rulers but brought both with him on his campaign against Alamut.\textsuperscript{58} While the reason is not clear, the Hundred Years’ Chronicle tells us that Hulegu quickly turned against David Narin.\textsuperscript{59} David Narin, fearing that he was going to be executed, fled to Imereti, where he was able to successfully establish himself as an independent ruler. In 1259–60, a rebellion against Mongol tax exactions in eastern Georgia failed, with David Ulu fleeing to the court of David Narin.\textsuperscript{60} While it seems that neither David wished each other ill, the presence of two kings at the same court made them a focus for plots; consequently, in 1262 they agreed to officially divide the treasury and the kingdom, with David Ulu able to return to Tiflis.\textsuperscript{61} This official division of the kingdoms formalized the split of Georgia into two polities, the final act of the drama opened by the first Mongol invasion. While Georgia occasionally reunited in the following centuries, this division of Georgia into two or more kingdoms persisted until the eighteenth century.

THE SECOND INVASION OF THE NORTH CAUCASUS, 1238–40

In contrast to the South Caucasian campaign, the Mongol conquest of the North Caucasus was an offshoot of Möngke and Güyük’s campaign into Bulghar and Rus’. Due to the almost complete lack of indigenous narrative historical sources, it is also far less well-documented than the campaign in the South Caucasus.

Its initial stage is a case in point. The North Caucasian campaign began in 1238 with the subjection of the Circassians of the western North Caucasus by the army of Möngke and Qada’an.\textsuperscript{62} However, apart from the fact that the Circassian king Buqan was killed, we know nothing further of this campaign.\textsuperscript{63}

Having been reinforced by a further Mongol army under Güyük and Büri, the following year the combined Mongol force moved into the lands of Alania, to the east of Circassia – approximately speaking, the eastern fringe of modern Krasnodar Krai, Karachai-Cherkassia, Kabardino-Balkaria, North Ossetia, Ingushetia, and Chechnya.\textsuperscript{64} There they faced a situation not dissimilar to that in the Georgian and Armenian lands – a lack of a central opposition figure or army to oppose them. A Dominican monk, Julian of Hungary, who visited Alania in 1236, commented that ‘there are as many princes as villages, none of whom owes allegiance to another. The war there is incessant, leader against leader, village against village.’\textsuperscript{65} While this near-anarchic situation may not have been representative of all of the Central North Caucasus, it is unsurprising that many local leaders sided with the Mongols, undoubtedly with settling old scores in mind. However, the Mongols also faced considerable resistance.

Initially, the most important prince who sided with the Mongols was a certain Arslan, who submitted to Möngke and was declared ruler of Alania.\textsuperscript{66} However,
it seems that he was replaced by another important prince, called Hanghusi by the Yuan Shi, who brought a force of around 1,000 men to support the Mongol army, and in return was declared ruler of Alania and granted the title batyr, the Mongol version of the old Alan royal title baqatar.67 Hanghusi served with the Mongol army throughout the North Caucasian campaign but was killed on his journey home. His wife, Waimasi, and then his son, Anfapu, successively replaced him as the Mongol-recognized rulers of Alania – the former, we are told, leading Hanghusi’s troops into battle while wearing her deceased husband’s armour.68 In all these cases, however, it is highly debatable how far these Mongol vassals actually held any authority in Alania. Notably, according to Rashid al-Din, it seems that a confederation of Alan tribes, led by a certain Ajis, was formed to oppose the Mongol advance, culminating in Ajis’ capture by Möngke’s forces.69

The campaign against Alania seems to have climaxed in late November or early December 1239 with an extended siege of the fortress of Magas, the former capital of the Alan kings of the tenth and eleventh centuries.70 The location of Magas has been a matter of considerable debate but most likely can be identified with the fortress of Il’ichëvsk on the southeastern border of modern Krasnodar Krai. Il’ichëvsk was a massive site, 15 kilometres across, with seven layers of stone and earth walls.71 It is therefore unsurprising that this was a lengthy siege, lasting until late February 1240.72 At this point, an assault by a number of small squads, led by Alan, Tangut, and other allied contingents in the Mongol army, was able to capture the walls.73 According to Juwayni, an extensive massacre followed this assault, which appears to have marked the end of the main Mongol campaign in Alania.74 Archaeological evidence from Il’ichëvsk bears out Juwayni’s account, with evidence of one of the city’s churches being burned down and an unburied child’s body being found in the porch.75

At the same time as the campaign in Alania, it appears that a part of the Mongol army was detached to conduct a reconnaissance-in-force of Dagestan, the region to the east of Alania. The evidence for this is preserved in the village of Richa, lying approximately 30 kilometres southwest of Darband in the Agul valley. There, three Arabic inscriptions record the rebuilding of the village’s fortress and mosque, which had been destroyed by the Mongols. According to these inscriptions, the Mongol force arrived on 10 or 21 Rabī‘ al-Awwal 637 (10 or 21 October 1239), and the fortress was held until the middle of Rabī‘ al-Akhir (approximately 15 November 1239).76 L.I. Lavrov reasonably suggests that in order to reach this relatively isolated village, this Mongol force must have campaigned for a considerable amount of time in the region.77 A further reconnaissance of the region seems to have been conducted from the south, since Baku was apparently also captured in 1239, according to Bakuvi.78 However, the final conquest of Darband had to wait until the siege of Magas was concluded. After this had been accomplished, Möngke and Güyük dispatched a force under Buqudai to take Darband, which seems to have been successfully achieved, according to the reports of Simon of St. Quentin and William of Rubruck, the latter of whom noted when he passed through Darband in 1254 that its towers had been slighted by the Mongol army.79

Despite the immediate successes of Möngke and Güyük’s campaign in the North Caucasus, it seems that Mongol control remained ephemeral. Apart from the numerous mentions of opposition to the Mongols’ appointed rulers of Alania, the fact that the
fortress of Richa in Dagestan was rebuilt within two years of its destruction, an event commemorated by a valedictory inscription, implies that the Mongols were unable to maintain effective control of the region. This is supported by the descriptions of the North Caucasus by European travellers. Both John of Plano Carpini and William of Rubruck described extensive Alan resistance to the Mongol armies, the former passing on chronologically implausible rumours of an Alan fortress that had resisted the Mongols for twelve years, the latter mentioning Alan raids on animal herds in the lowlands. We may suggest that a process similar to that at Richa occurred all over the North Caucasian highlands: once the Mongols had departed, the destruction was repaired, and without an established state structure able to act as vassals to the Mongols, the former political structures of the region reasserted themselves.

Despite this reassertion of local political autonomy, the Mongol Empire continued to have a considerable impact on the North Caucasus. The most drastic impact appears to have been large-scale deportations to China of North Caucasian groups identified in Mongol sources as Asud (Alans), most likely drawn from the agricultural lowlands which were under firmer Mongol control. These appear to have begun almost immediately after the Mongol invasion, with Hanghusi’s eldest son, Atachi, being brought as a hostage to Mongolia. These deportations appear to have escalated during the reign of Möngke, due to the requirement for troops for campaigns against the Southern Song and Yunnan; Allsen places the number of deportees in the period 1252–75 at around 10,000. Indeed, by 1309–10, Alan troops formed two divisions of the Mongol army in China, with a paper strength of 22,000 men. Further deportations to the territory of the Golden Horde can also be inferred from the presence of Alans in Moldavia in the early fourteenth century, giving their name to its modern capital city, Iasi, and from the movement of a 16,000-strong group of Alans from this region into the Byzantine Empire in 1300. However, it is worth noting that these deportations did not, it seems, entirely depopulate the North Caucasus. For example, a number of existing settlements were expanded under Golden Horde rule in the late thirteenth century, notably the cities of Nizhnii and Verkhnii Dzulat on the Terek River. Moreover, it is still an open question how far effective Mongol control ever extended into the Caucasian highlands.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, we can trace the profoundly different effects of the Mongol campaigns in the North and South Caucasus to the varying political structures of these regions. In the South Caucasus, the Mongol campaigns, together with their indirect effects in the shape of Jalal al-Din’s invasions, effectively shattered the relatively centralized political structure of the Georgian kingdom. However, at a sub-royal level, the main noble dynasties of Georgia and Armenia survived and were in many cases able to expand their power under Mongol rule. By contrast, in the already polycentric North Caucasus, the Mongols had tremendous difficulty constructing any lasting order out of the fragmented political landscape, and a high degree of local autonomy was swiftly reasserted. While the peoples of the North Caucasus were unable to resist the immediate Mongol advance, it seems that in the medium term their polycentric political structure proved a much more effective defence than the centralized kingdoms of the South Caucasus.
NOTES

1 Suny 1988, 3–40.
4 KFTR, 240.
6 Latham-Sprinkle 2018.
7 RDT, I, 325.
8 A handful of written histories were composed in Dagestan; however, only one of these, the Tarikh al-Daghistan of Muhammad al-Rafi, has any potential bearing on the Mongol invasions of 1239–1240. The only written historical narrative from the Central North Caucasus, the late fourteenth- or early fifteenth-century Nuzal Inscription, has no information on the Mongol conquests. See Shikhsaidov et al. 1993, 90–105; Kuznetsov 1990, 78–79.
10 Eastmond 1998, 3.
11 Met’reveli and Jones 2014, 317, 327.
13 Dashdondog 2011, 44–47.
14 Met’reveli and Jones 2014, 321.
15 KFTR, 214.
18 Bedrosian 1979, 95. KFTR, 214; RDT, I, 259.
19 Pertz and Rodenberg 1883, 179.
20 This cross carried in the Mongol ranks might have been a deliberate ruse or alternatively may have been carried by Nestorian Christian troops in Jebe and Sübedei’s army. See Dashdondog 2011, 50.
21 KFTR, III 214.
22 For the presence of Alan mercenaries at Kotman, see YS chapter 120 (biography of “Ho-ssu Mai-li”), cited in Allsen 1987, 11. Met’reveli and Jones 2014, 321; Grigor Aknerts’i 2003, 3.
25 Met’reveli and Jones 2014, 321.
26 See Grigor Aknerts’i 2003, 3; Vardan Arewelts’i 2007, 28; on the Battle of Garni, see Met’reveli and Jones 2014, 323; Kirakos Gandzakets’i 1986, 188.
27 KFTR, 216; Pertz and Rodenberg 1883, 179.
28 KFTR, 216–220.
30 KFTR, 221; Met’reveli and Jones 2014, 206.
32 KFTR, 222; RDT, 259.
33 On the date of this campaign, see Allsen 1987, 15. KFTR, 222.
34 KFTR, 222; Allsen 1987, 13–14.
35 For the resumption of local conflicts, see KFTR, 240–255. The evidence for a co-ordinated campaign by the Georgian court to present the first Mongol invasion as a victory comes from the letters of Queen Rusudan and Ivane Zak’arian, the Chronicle of Giorgi Laša, and the claim of Georgian envoys to Jalal al-Din that they had defeated the Mongols. See Pertz and Rodenberg 1883, 179; Met’reveli and Jones 2014, 205; KFTR, III, 258.
37 Met’reveli and Jones 2014, 326–328.
38 May 1996, 17.
39 HWC, 453–454.
40 Dashdondog 2011, 55; May 1996, 36.
44 Met’reveli and Jones 2014, 330–331.
49 Molghor noyan is called ‘Molar Noyin’ by Armenian sources; for the reconstruction of his name, see Dashdondog 2011, 57; Kirakos Gandzakets’i 1986, 204–205.
52 Met’reveli and Jones 2014, 332.
53 Kirakos Gandzakets’i 1986, 209.
54 Met’reveli and Jones 2014, 323–324.
58 Met’reveli and Jones 2014, 346.
59 Met’reveli and Jones 2014, 347.
60 On the date of this rebellion, see Dashdondog 2011, 92.
62 For the date of this campaign, see Allsen 1987, 17.
63 Allsen 1987, 18 has this king’s name as Tuqtar, based on RDA, 136. RDT, 325.
64 RDT, I, 325.
65 Theiner 1968, 152.
66 Arslan is called ‘Aersilan’ by the YS.
67 The title baqatar (brave one, hero) was originally held by Alan rulers in the ninth century but was apparently still in use as a personal name in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, judging by the Zelenchuk inscription from Karachai-Cherkassia. See Alemany 2000, 260–261, 408–410; Zgusta 1987, 60.
68 Alemany 2000, 410.
69 RDRM, II, 825.
71 Latham-Sprinkle 2021.
74 Allsen 1987, 20; HWC, 269.
75 Latham-Sprinkle 2021.
76 Lavrov 1966, 81–83.
78 Ashurbeili 1983, 186.
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79 RDT, 326; Allsen 1987, 24.
80 Lavrov 1966, 81–82.
83 Allsen 1987, 35–38.
84 Alemany 2000, 407.
87 See Chapter 44 of this volume by Bayarsaikhan Dashdondog.

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RDA, See List of Abbreviations.
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