

*ARCHIVI DI STUDI INDO-MEDITERRANEI, VII (2017)*

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## **Alans in Armenian sources after the 10<sup>th</sup> c. AD**

### **Abstract**

The ethnic name *Alank'*, Alans, is attested by a number of Armenian written sources of the 11<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> centuries. In many instances the reference is to the Alan Gates or to a generic Caucasian region, rather than to a specific population. Only few occurrences are related to historical or legendary events, but even in these cases the name *Alank'* is sometimes deprived of its ethnic meaning, being mistaken with the name *Aluank'*, Caucasian Albanians. Besides there are instances where the *Alank'* are considered a mythical tribe, like the enigmatic nations of Gog and Magog.

**Key words:** Armenian Literature, Armenian sources, Alans, Albanians (Caucasian)

Rozalija A. Gabrieljan's work *Армяно-аланские отношения (I-X вв.)* [*Armeno-Alan Relations (1<sup>st</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> centuries)*], published in 1989 in Yerevan, marked a turning point in the evaluation of the references to Alans in ancient Armenian sources.

In the Introduction to this volume, Gabrieljan lists the authors and works she will consider in her study. There we find: Agat'angelos, P'awstos Buzand, Elišē, Movsēs Xorenac'i, Łazar P'arpec'i, Anania Širakac'i (*Ašxarhac'oyc' – Geography*), Sebēos, Yovhannēs Mamikonean, Movsēs Kałankatuac'i, Łewond, Šapuh Bagratuni (Pseudo-Šapuh), Uxtanēs, Step'anos Tarōnec'i (Asołik),

T'ovma Arcruni, Vardan Arewelc'i called the Great, Kirakos Ganjakec'i, Step'anos Ōrbelean, *Manr Žamanakagrut'yunner* [*Minor Chronicles*], among which the work of the Anonymous of Sebaste, T'ovma Mecop'ec'i, Yovhanisik Carec'i, Ařak'el Dawriřec'i<sup>1</sup>.

On the other hand, in the course of her study Gabrieljan refers to other works of ancient Armenian literature, which she considers to be sources for the history of Alano-Armenian relations. These works include a series of hagiographic writings such as the *Life* of S. Nersēs<sup>2</sup>, the *Martyrdom of the Oskeank'* and the *Martyrdom of the Sukiasank'* – the latter two are used to shed light on the early spread of Christianity among the Alans<sup>3</sup> and to get information about Alan social history<sup>4</sup> – and the *Life of Grigoris*<sup>5</sup>, or the work of the *catholicos* Yovhannēs Drasxanakertc'i (9<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> c.)<sup>6</sup>.

Thus, notwithstanding the fact that she focuses on Armenian-Alan relations up to the 10<sup>th</sup> c., Gabrieljan seems also to have gathered material from the Armenian literary sources of the following centuries. On at least three occasions, in fact, she claims that her study is based on Armenian sources from the 5<sup>th</sup> through the 18<sup>th</sup> centuries<sup>7</sup>, and such an assertion is supported even in the Foreword written by Academician Suren T. Eremjan, editor of the book<sup>8</sup>. Nevertheless, not all the authors mentioned in the Introduction are really taken into account in the four chapters of this study. Gabrieljan does indeed elaborate on data taken from the sources going back to the 5<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> centuries, but she simply passes over later authors, with the exception of Vardan Arewelc'i. So that Kirakos Ganjakec'i, Step'anos Ōrbelean, the *Minor Chronicles*, T'ovma Mecop'ec'i, Yovhanisik Carec'i, and Ařak'el Dawriřec'i are only mentioned in the Introduction and nowhere else in Gabrieljan's study. And even in the Introduction, although we are given information about them and the general content of their works, nothing is said about their specific importance as sources on the Alans. On the contrary, Vardan Arewelc'i is mentioned a couple of times by Gabrieljan, but the Armenian scholar takes into account some statements of Vardan which do not refer clearly and specifically to the Alans, but generically to the *kovkasayin zōrs* [*Caucasian forces*], gathered by the Georgian King Giorgi I (1014-1027)<sup>9</sup>, or to the Sarmatians (*iřxann Sarmatac'woc'*)<sup>10</sup>. Gabrieljan does not quote any of the passages dealing with the Alans or the Alan Gates which we find in at least three works

<sup>1</sup> Р.А. ГАБРИЕЛЯН, *Армяно-аланские отношения (I-X вв.)* [*Armeno-Alan Relations (1<sup>st</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> centuries)*], Yerevan 1989, p. 10-26.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 42-43

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* p. 48-50.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* p. 95-96.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* p. 55.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.* p. 84.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.* p. 9, 10, 64.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.* p. 5, 7.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.* p. 86-87.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.* p. 100-101.

attributed to Vardan<sup>11</sup>. On top of that, in at least one case the Armenian scholar quotes her source inaccurately, citing the Alans in a passage of the medieval *Life* of St Nersēs<sup>12</sup> where there is no mention of them<sup>13</sup>.

Another *mise à point* of the Armenian sources on the Alans has been done by A. Alemany in his epoch making work *Sources on the Alans: a Critical Compilation*<sup>14</sup>.

While recognizing his debt to Gabrieljan, Alemany is wary of her “*ingenuous acceptance of all the evidence at his (sic) disposal*”<sup>15</sup>, of her “*bias when dealing with some questions, such as the presumed spreading of Christianity among the Alans by the Armenian Church*”<sup>16</sup>, and of her excessive confidence in identifying “*other ethnic names or general designations (like ‘Barbarians’ or ‘Northern peoples’)*” with the Alans<sup>17</sup>. Alemany re-examines the question on a more critical basis. Besides he increases the list of Armenian sources concerned with the Alans, turning to the *Haykakan hamabarbar*, the concordances of Classical Armenian authors, edited in Yerevan from 1972 onward under the direction of A.S. Łaribyan<sup>18</sup>. So that Alemany quotes: (a) the *Patmut‘iwn tiezerakan* [*Universal History*], of Step‘anos Tarōnec‘i called Asołik (10<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> c.), where we read that the *marzpan* Vahan Mamikonean stopped the raids of the Alans in Armenia<sup>19</sup>, a piece of information handed down also by other sources as we shall see; (b) the verses of the poet Frik (13<sup>th</sup> c.) mentioning *Alan arewordi* [*Alan son of the sun*], and the *Alan arewelk‘c‘i* [*Alan the Eastern*]<sup>20</sup>; (c) the passage of Het‘um’s *Patmut‘iwn T‘at‘arac‘* [*History of the Tartars*] referring to a *nahang*, *nahang* [*region/province*], called *Alank‘*, which “*mixes up Albanians (Ałowank‘) with Alans (Alank‘)*”<sup>21</sup>. Strictly speaking, Het‘um’s work, known as *La flor des estoires de la terre d’Orient*, is not a piece of Armenian historiography, having been written originally in old French and then translated into Latin by a certain Nicole Falcon to be presented to Pope Clement V (1305-1314), as

<sup>11</sup> VARDAN AREWELC‘I, *Hawak‘umn patmut‘ean* [*Historical Compilation*], Venice 1862 (Repr. Delmar NY 1991), ch. 5, p. 12; ID., *Ašxarhac‘oyc‘* [*Geography*], Paris 1960; ID., *Čark‘, Nerboleank‘* [*Sermons, Panegyrics*], Yerevan 2000.

<sup>12</sup> *Yalags zarmic‘ srboyn Grigori hayoc‘ Lusaworč‘i ew patmut‘iwn srpoyn Nersisi Hayoc‘ hayrapeti* (*About the Descendants of St Gregory the Illuminator and the History of St Nersēs Patriarch of the Armenians*), in Ł. ALIŠAN, ed., *Sop‘erk‘ haykakank‘* [*Armenian Writings*], vi, Venice 1853, p. 9-147.

<sup>13</sup> P.A. ГАБРИЕЛЯН, *op. cit.*, p. 42-43. The *Life* of S. Nersēs (ch. 11, p. 70) lists a number of peoples gathered by the King of Persia Šapuh in order to invade Armenia. According to Gabrieljan’s quote and translation, the Alans were among them. The name she translates as Alans, however, is written in the text as *Agugac‘, Agugac‘* (nominative: *Agugk‘*). Ł. Ališan, editor of the *Life*, and J.-R. Emine, the French translator, do not record the existence of *variae lectiones* nor do they conjecture different readings. Cf. J.-R. EMINE, “Généalogie de la famille de saint Grégoire Illuminateur de l’Arménie et vie de saint Nersēs, patriarche des Arméniens”, in V. LANGLOIS, ed., *Collection des historiens anciens et modernes de l’Arménie*, ii, Paris 1869, p. 34.

<sup>14</sup> A. ALEMANY, *Sources on the Alans: a Critical Compilation*, Leiden-Boston 2000, p. 278-301.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.* p. 278 n. 1.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.* p. 298.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

it is attested by a colophon<sup>22</sup>. The old Armenian translation is quite recent, dating back to 1842<sup>23</sup>. Moreover the French text reads: “*Le royaume de Jorgie, devers orient, comence à une grant montaigne que est apellée Albors, e là habitent maintes nacions de gens, e por ce est apellée cele contrée Alani*” [“*The Kingdom of Georgia begins in the east at the mountain called Albors, and many different peoples dwell there, and thus that district is named Alania*”]<sup>24</sup>, where *Albors* is unquestionably the name of Mount Elbrus, the highest peak in the Caucasus Mountains, in spite of the obscure Armenian translation *Alponis*, which led Alemany to conjecture the readings *Aluanic* ‘[of the Albanians]’ instead of *Alponis*, and consequently *Aluank* ‘[Albanians/Albania]’ instead of *Alank* ‘.

The present paper is an attempt to improve this small dossier of references to the Alans in ancient Armenian literature relying basically on a new powerful information source, i. e. a database of classical Armenian texts available on CD-ROM, which includes approximately one hundred of the best known works of Armenian literature<sup>25</sup>. I searched throughout this *corpus* for the word *Alan(k)*<sup>26</sup> declined in all its possible grammatical forms – including those with the agglutinated prepositions *z-*, and *y-* [*i*] – and written with initial capital or small letter. An online version of this collection of texts in HTML format, containing works not yet available on CD-ROM, has also been considered, in spite of the site’s being quite difficult to access<sup>27</sup>. The data found in this way have been integrated with the findings obtained going through the indexes of the printed edition of some other works not yet digitised, which I have been able to consult in the libraries of the Pontifical Oriental Institute and the Pontifical Biblical Institute in Rome, and of the University of Bologna. This means, of course, that the passages highlighted in the present paper are those in which the ethnic name *Alank* ‘ is quoted, whether the reference is to the people we identify as Alans or not. Thus, the possible contexts in which the Alans are alluded to, but not explicitly named, are not taken into account.

<sup>22</sup> The critical edition of both the French and the Latin texts was published in E. DULAURIER-CH. KOHLER, eds., *Recueil des historiens des Croisades. Documents arméniens*, ii, Paris 1906, p. 113-253 (Fr. text); 255-363 (Lat. text). About the translation and the presentation of the work to the Pope, see in particular p. lviii-lix, 252-253 and 362-363.

<sup>23</sup> *Patmut’iwn T’at’arac’ šaragreal i Het’moy Aramean i kargē Prēmonsdratenanc’*. *Yealeal i latin ōrinakē i hay barbar’ i jejn H. Mkrtič’ At’o’akal vardapeti Awgerean* [History of the Tatars, composed by the Armenian Het’um, of the Order of Premonstratensians. Translated into Armenian from the Latin text by the vicar vardapet F. Mkrtič’ Awgerean], Venice-San Lazzaro 1842; cf. E. DULAURIER-CH. KOHLER, eds., *op. cit.*, p. cxxx.

<sup>24</sup> E. DULAURIER-CH. KOHLER, eds., *op. cit.*, p. 129. The Latin translation (*Ibid.* p. 268) reads: “*Regnum Georgie incipit [ex parte orientis] a quodam magno monte qui vocatur Albors, ubi multe nationes gentium habitant varie et diverse, et ideo illa patria dicitur Alania*”. If not otherwise indicated, the translations are mine.

<sup>25</sup> American University of Armenia, *Hay dasakan matenagrut’iwn* [Classical Armenian Literature], Version 1.0, CD-ROM for Windows 95/98/Me/NT4.0/2000/XP, Yerevan 2003.

<sup>26</sup> *K* ‘ is the ancient Armenian nominative plural morpheme.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. [www.digilib.am](http://www.digilib.am).

As for the chronological boundary of my investigation, I have confined myself to the works written between the 11<sup>th</sup> and the 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. I have left out the *Hayoc' patmut' iwn* [*History of the Armenians*], of the Mekhitarist father Mik'ayēl Čamčean (18<sup>th</sup> c.), which has to be considered the first modern attempt to write a history of the Armenian people, whereas I have included the authors of the above-mentioned period already referred to by Gabrieljan, but not properly exploited in her work.

I have found forty-two occurrences<sup>28</sup> of the ethnic name *Alank'* scattered throughout the works of twenty authors – Matt'ēos Urhayec'i (11<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> c.), Nersēs Šnorhali (12<sup>th</sup> c.), Kirakos Ganjakec'i (13<sup>th</sup> c.), Vardan Arewelc'i (13<sup>th</sup> c.), Smbat Sparapet (13<sup>th</sup> c.), Samuēl Anec'i (13<sup>th</sup> c.), Step'anos Ōrbelean (13<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> c.), Tovma Mecop'ec'i (14<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> c.), Grigor Alt'amarc'i (16<sup>th</sup> c.), Yovhanisik Carec'i (16<sup>th</sup> c.), Barseł Arčišec'i (16<sup>th</sup> c.), Arak'el Dawrižec'i (16<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> c.), Eremia Č'ēlēpi K'ēōmiwrčean (17<sup>th</sup> c.), Zak'aria K'anak'erc'i (17<sup>th</sup> c.), an Anonymous Chronicler of the 17<sup>th</sup> c., Dawit' Bałišec'i (17<sup>th</sup> c.), Yakob Karneč'i (17<sup>th</sup> c.), Esai Hasan Ĵalalean (17<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> c.), Šahamir Šahamirean<sup>29</sup> (18<sup>th</sup> c.), Simēon Erewanc'i (18<sup>th</sup> c.).

In eighteen cases the reference is to the Alan Gates, while eighteen occurrences out of the remaining twenty-four are related to historical events connected with the Alans or refer to legendary tales linked with them and presented as true historical facts. The last six occurrences of the ethnic name *Alank'* in the Armenian sources taken into consideration do not deal with a specific event, whether historical or legendary, they rather refer to the *erkir Alanac'* [*land of the Alans*], to their language, or to the Alan people in general.

I will not elaborate here on the references to the Alan Gates, because in such cases the ethnic name *Alank'* has lost its ethnic meaning and is used as a mere toponym<sup>30</sup>. I find it more interesting to

<sup>28</sup> Forty if we consider that the passage of Arak'el Dawrižec'i where the ethnic name occurs twice is taken from Yovhanisik Carec'i, ARAK'EL DAWRIŽEC'I, *Patmut' iwn* [*History*], Vałaršapat 1896, ch. 55, p. 608 and 612.

<sup>29</sup> The authorship of the *Girk' anwaneal orogayt' p'arac'* [*Book Called Snare of Glory*], has long been disputed – Yakob Šahamirean, whose name is printed on the title page of the book, Šahamir Šahamirean, Movsēs Bałramean –, but it seems most likely to be the work of Šahamir Šahamirean, cf. H.D. SIRUNI, “Le rôle des Arméniens de l'Inde dans le mouvement d'émancipation du peuple arménien”, in *Studia et Acta Orientalia*, No. 5-6, 1967, p. 304-306; M. TOLOLYAN, “Shahamir Shahamirian's 'Vorogait Parats'”, in *The Armenian Review*, No. 2, 1989, p. 22-35; H. KHACHATRIAN, “Shahamir Shahamirian's Views on Natural Law”, in *The Armenian Review*, No. 2, 1989, p. 37-46.

<sup>30</sup> The references to the Alan Gates are the following: KIRAKOS GANJAKEC'I, *Patmut' iwn hayoc'* [*History of the Armenians*], Yerevan 1961, ch. 65, p. 395 (2 occ.); VARDAN AREWELC'I, *Sermons, Panegyrics... op. cit.*, (1 occ.); ID., *Geography... op. cit.*, (1 occ.); STEP'AN[N]OS ŌRBELEAN, *Patmut' iwn nahangin Sisakan* [*History of the Province of Sisakan*], Tbilisi 1910, ch. 70, p. 476 (1 occ.); T'OVMA MECOP'EC'I, *Patmagrut' iwn* [*Chronicle*], Yerevan 1999, ch. 5 (2 occ.); BARSEL ARČIŠEC'I, *Taregrut' iwn* [*Annals*], in V.A. HAKOBYAN, ed., *Manr Žamanakagrut' yunner XIII-XVIII dd.* [*Minor Chronicles 13<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> centuries*], i, Yerevan 1951, p. 126 (1 occ.); ARAK'EL DAWRIŽEC'I, *History... op. cit.*, ch. 51, p. 568. (1 occ.); EREMIA Č'ĒLĒPI K'ĒŌMIWRČEAN, *Patmut' iwn hamarōt dē tarwoy Ōsmanc' woc' t'agaworac'n* [*A Short History of Four Hundred Years of Ottoman Sultans*], Yerevan 1982 (1 occ.); ZAK'ARIA K'ANAK'ERC'I, *Patmagrut' iwn* [*Chronicle*], Vałaršapat 1870, ch. 9 (1 occ.); *Ananun žamanakagrut' iwn (žē d.)* [*Anonymous Chronicle (17<sup>th</sup> c.)*], in V.A. HAKOBYAN, ed., *op. cit.*, p. 186 (1 occ.); YAKOB KARNEC'I, *Talagir verin Hayoc'* [*Topography of Armenia Superior*], in V.A. HAKOBYAN, ed., *Manr Žamanakagrut' yunner XIII-XVIII dd.* [*Minor Chronicles 13<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup>*

analyse the passages in which the authors speak of the Alan people and of events connected with them.

More than half of the eighteen occurrences dealing with legendary or historical accounts relate events going back to the 6<sup>th</sup> c. or earlier. In particular, three authors – namely Nersēs Šnorhali<sup>31</sup>, Dawit‘ Bališec‘i<sup>32</sup>, and Eremia Č‘ēlēpi K‘ēōmiwrčean<sup>33</sup> –, for a total of eight occurrences, refer to the well-known story of the Alan king’s daughter Sat‘enik who married the Armenian king Artašēs. Our main Armenian source for this legend is the work of Movsēs Xorenac‘i, dating back to the 5<sup>th</sup> or, according to other scholars, to the 8<sup>th</sup> c.<sup>34</sup>, whose narrative is directly referred to by Eremia Č‘ēlēpi K‘ēōmiwrčean. Moreover, Dawit‘ Bališec‘i includes in his version of Satenik’s story the hagiographic account of the martyrdom of the St Sukias and his companions (Sukiasank‘), who came to Armenia from among the Alans together with Satenik and were baptized by the St Oski and his companions (Oskeank‘), disciples of the apostle St Thaddeus. After the Oskeank‘’s martyrdom, the Sukiasank‘ fled to mount Sukaw<sup>35</sup> and eventually they were martyred by a certain Barlahas, who came from the land of the Alans. These facts are known to us from the work of Yovhannēs Draxanakerc‘i (9<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> c.)<sup>36</sup>, explicitly referred to by Dawit‘ Bališec‘i, and from two hagiographic writings about the SS Oskeank‘ and Sukiasank‘<sup>37</sup>.

Three other occurrences deal with Vahan Mamikonean, *marzpan* of Armenia from 485 to his death, probably around 505, who is said by Samuēl Anec‘i<sup>38</sup>, Kirakos Ganjakec‘i<sup>39</sup> and Dawit‘ Bališec‘i<sup>40</sup> to have stopped the Alans. The three historians use the same expression: *zAlans argelakan arar*, which seems to be borrowed from the *Universal History* of Step‘anos Taronec‘i, called Asolik,

*centuries*], ii, Yerevan 1956, p. 555. (1 occ.); YAKOB [ŠAHAMIR] ŠAHAMIREAN[C‘], *Girk‘ anwaneal orogayt‘ p‘arac‘* [*Book called snare of glory*], Tbilisi 1913, ch. 1 (4 occ.); SIMĒON EREWANC‘I, *Ĵambṛ* [*Archive*], Vałaršapat 1873, ch. 10 (1 occ.).

<sup>31</sup> NERSĒS ŠNORHALI, *Vipasanut‘iwn* [*Epic*], Yerevan 1981.

<sup>32</sup> DAWIT‘ BALIŠEC‘I, *Žamanakagrut‘iwn* [*Chronicle*], in V.A. HAKOBYAN, ed., *op. cit.*, ii, p. 314-316.

<sup>33</sup> EREMIA Č‘ĒLĒPI K‘ĒŌMIWRČEAN, *T‘ult‘er* [*Letters*], in M. NŠANEAN, ed. *Ōragrut‘iwn* [*Diary*], Jerusalem 1939, p. 405-586.

<sup>34</sup> MOVSĒS XORENAC‘I, *Patmut‘iwn Hayoc‘* [*History of the Armenians*], Tbilisi 1913 (Repr. CATRS 1981), i, ch. 30 ; ii, ch. 49-50, 52, 58, p. 84, 176-179, 181-182, 187. Engl. trans. by R.W. THOMSON, *Moses Khorenats‘i: History of the Armenians*, Revised edition, Ann Arbor 2006, p. 116-118, 187-192, 197. See A. ALEMANY, *op. cit.*, p. 285-291.

<sup>35</sup> Mountain of Bagrewand, in the Ayrarat, see E. HONIGMANN, *Die Ostgrenze des byzantinischen Reiches von 363 bis 1071*, Brussels 1935, p. 194. It is the nowadays Köse-Däge.

<sup>36</sup> YOVHANNĒS DRASXANAKERTC‘I, *Patmut‘iwn Hayoc‘* [*History of the Armenians*], Tbilisi 1912, (Repr. Caravan Books 1980), ch. 7, p. 47-48. Fr. trans. by P. BOISSON-CHENORHOKIAN, *Yovhannēs Draxanakerc‘i: Histoire d’Arménie, Introduction, traduction et notes*, CSCO 605 (Subsidia 115), 2004, p. 89-90.

<sup>37</sup> *Vkayabanut‘iwn srhoc‘ Suk‘iasanc‘* [*Martyrology of the SS Suk‘iasanc‘*], in L. ALIŠAN, ed. *Armenian Writings... op. cit.*, xix, p. 33-56; *Ban ew asut‘iwn čšmarit srhoc‘ Oskeanc‘ k‘ahanayic‘* [*True Word and Speech of the SS Priests Oskeanc‘*], *ibid.* p. 59-66.

<sup>38</sup> SAMUĒL ANEC‘I, *Hawak‘munk‘ i groc‘ patmagrac‘* [*Collection from the Writings of Historians*], Vałaršapat 1893, p. 72.

<sup>39</sup> KIRAKOS GANJAKEC‘I, *History of the Armenians... op. cit.*, ch. 1, p. 37.

<sup>40</sup> DAWIT‘ BALIŠEC‘I, *Chronicle*, in V.A. HAKOBYAN, ed., *op. cit.*, ii, p. 328.

(10<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> c.)<sup>41</sup>. This hint about possible military actions directed by Vahan Mamikonean against the Alans puzzled earlier scholars<sup>42</sup>. Anyway it seems reasonable to connect this episode of Vahan's career with the Hunnish raids on Transcaucasian territories favoured by the Byzantines at the beginning of the 6<sup>th</sup> c., when Persian and Byzantine Empires resumed hostilities, being unable to find an agreement on the defence of Caucasian passes precisely against the Hunnish hordes<sup>43</sup>.

The remaining seven occurrences dealing with historical events refer to facts dating from the 11<sup>th</sup> c. onwards. Among them, two occurrences concern the relations between the Alans and the Georgians. In particular, Matt'ēos Urhayec'i and Smbat Sparapet report the presence of Alans among the Georgian forces fighting against the Seljuk army at the decisive battle of Didgori, on 12 August 1121<sup>44</sup>. The victory of the Georgian army under the command of King David the Builder marked a turning point in the process of wresting the Georgian territory from Muslim hands and led to the final liberation of Tbilisi the following year. According to Matt'ēos Urhayec'i the Georgian King marched against the enemy "with an army of 40,000 fearless warriors. Besides he had other 15,000 brave and crack soldiers [sent] from the King of the Kipchaks, 500 men [sent] from the nation of the Alans, and about a hundred Franks"<sup>45</sup>. The numbers given by Smbat Sparaper are slightly different, he speaks of "40,000 cavalrymen from the Kipchaks, and 18,000 men brave and eager to fight from the Alans, 500 from the Franks, 10,000 from the Armenians"<sup>46</sup>.

In the 13<sup>th</sup>-century *Geography* attributed to Vardan Arewelc'i, there is a puzzling allusion to Alania in the period of the Mongol invasion. The author says: "Hogt'ala Khan is the son of Č'ankz Khan, who came <and> stayed among the Alans, and sent three sons against three parts of the world. He sent Manku Khan against Xorasan, Arlun Khan against the Hořomk', Hulawu Khan against the

<sup>41</sup> STEP'ANOS TARŌNEC'I [ASOLIK], *Patmut'iw n tiezerakan [Universal History]*, St Petersburg 1885, ii, ch. 2, p. 82.

<sup>42</sup> See, for instance, M.-F. BROSSET, ed., *Deux historiens arméniens, Kiracos de Gantzac, XIII<sup>e</sup> s., Histoire d'Arménie; Oukhtanès d'Ourha, X<sup>e</sup> s., Histoire en trois Parties*, St Petersburg 1871, p. 19 n. 8: "Ce passage... a, non sans raison, fort embarrassé le traducteur russe. Comme rien, chez les auteurs arméniens, ne peut servir à l'expliquer, je pense qu'il signifie simplement que Vahan, par ses victoires, ferma aux Alains l'entrée de l'Arménie. Le traducteur russe, le faisant rapporter à Lazar de Pharbe, nommé ici-même dans son texte, lui donne une tout autre interprétation, qui ne paraît pas admissible, comme si Lazar, abbé de Pharbe, avait reçu dans son couvent un certain nombre d'Alains".

<sup>43</sup> Cf. R. GROUSSET *Histoire de l'Arménie des origines à 1071*, Paris 1947 (rééd. 1995), p. 231-232.

<sup>44</sup> Cf. M. LORDKIPANIDZE, *Georgia in the 11th-12th centuries*, Tbilisi 1987, p. 97-98; K. SALIA *Histoire de la nation géorgienne*, Paris 1980, p. 178-183; V. SILOGAVA-K. SHENGELIA *History of Georgia. From the Ancient Times through the "Rose Revolution"*, Tbilisi 2007, p. 88-89. S. RUNCIMAN *History of the Crusades*, ii, Cambridge 1952, p. 160 n. 1 refers to some Arabic sources on this event.

<sup>45</sup> MATT'ĒOS URHAYEC'I, *Žamanakagrut'iw n [Chronicle]*, Vařarřapat 1898, p. 382: "...zōrac'n k'arāsun hazarov koroveac' ew aranc' k'ajac' ew kirt' paterazmolac'; unēr ew ayl zōrs i Xap'č'axeac' t'agaworēn ars tasn ew hing hazar k'ajš ew antirs ew yazgē Alanac' ars hing hariwr ew P'rank, hariwr" (quoted after the repr. of Vařarřapat edition with facing modern Armenian trans., Yerevan 1991).

<sup>46</sup> SMBAT SPARAPET, *Taregirk' [Annals]*, Venice-San Lazzaro 1956, p. 150: "i Xp'č'axac' XŘ heceal, ew yAlanac' ŽĒŘ, i Frangac' EČ, i Hayoc' ŽŘ, ark' k'aj ew paterazmolc'".

*Armenians and the Georgians and the Babylonians, and they took over the entire world*<sup>47</sup>. There is no doubt that the Hogt'ala Khan mentioned in this passage is Ögedei<sup>48</sup>, third son of Genghis Khan and second Great Khan (1229-1241) of the Mongol Empire. Nonetheless, the reference to the Alans here remains quite obscure, even from a grammatical point of view. The ethnic name, in fact, appears in the text in the nominative plural case (*i yAlank'*), instead of the expected form of accusative/locative plural (*i yAlans*). Besides, there is room to suggest that this passage confuses Alans with *Aluank'* [Caucasian Albanians], since according to other Armenian sources for Ögedei's military campaigns, the Mongol army reached the land of the *Aluank'* and wintered there<sup>49</sup>. Moreover, a similar confusion occurs in another section of the *Geography*, as we shall see below. Anyway, it may be worth recalling here that in the work of an anonymous Georgian writer of the 14<sup>th</sup> c., called *History of the Mongol Invasions* by modern scholars, Ossetia is mentioned among the lands given as appanage to Jochi, Genghis Khan's eldest son, who died shortly before his father's death<sup>50</sup>, thus smoothing the way for Ögedei's succession to Genghis Khan.

Another reference to the *Alank'* in connection with the Mongol control over Southern Caucasian territories is attested by the 13<sup>th</sup>-century historian Step'anos Örbelean in his *History of the Province of Sisakan*, where we are told that “*when Nawruz arrived and destroyed the churches, the young Georgian King Dawit', son of Demetrē, together with all the naxarars and with the men of the noble-contingent (azatagund), was afraid and went to Met'ewulēt', and entered that impregnable fortress, which is called Mude naxē, i.e. 'Come and see'. And he allied himself with the inhabitants of Met'ewulēt', with the P'xayk' and with all the other neighbouring peoples. He conquered the Gate of the Alans, which the Ancients called Darial, and now is called Ĵasani Pass. And he drove the Tatar garrisons away. There is the way of the Xazirk', Alank', Ōsk', Xp'č'alk' and of the descendants of Berkay, the forces of that great Kingdom of the northern land, whose Khans are now T'awdamankoy'n and Nuxayn, grandsons of Bat'u and Sart'ax*”<sup>51</sup>. These events took place within

<sup>47</sup> VARDAN AREWELC'I, *Geography... op. cit.*: “Hogt'ala xann ordi ē Č'ankz lanin, or ekn nstaw i yAlank', ew zG ordisn arak'eac' i veray G bažin ašxarhis. ZManku lann arak'eloc' (T'CLČ) i veray Xorasanay, zArtun lann i veray Horomoc', zHulawu lann i veray Hayoc' ew Vrac' ew Babelac'woc', ew arin zborol ašxarhs”.

<sup>48</sup> This name (Mong. Өгөөдэй, Ögöödei) has various transcriptions, among which *Ogotay* and *Oktay*. The Armenian form attested in the *Ašxarhac'oyc' – Hogt'ala xan* – is clearly derived from *Hogt'a-lan xan* with the repetition of the title *khan* (Arm. *lan* or *xan xan*), in the first case agglutinated to the proper name. Cf. the form *Hogdaxan lan* handed down by DAWIT' BALIŠEC'I, *Chronicle*, in V.A. HAKOBYAN, ed., *op. cit.*, ii, p. 345 and 347.

<sup>49</sup> Cf. MХИТ'АР АЙРИВАНЕС'І, *Patmut'iwn Hayoc' [History of the Armenians]*, Moscow 1860, p. 66; DAWIT' BALIŠEC'I, *Chronicle*, in V.A. HAKOBYAN, ed., *op. cit.*, ii, p. 345-346; А. Г. Галстян, *Армянские источники о монголах [Armenian Sources on the Mongols]*, Moscow 1962, p. 90 and 103.

<sup>50</sup> See A. ALEMANY, *op. cit.*, p. 321-322.

<sup>51</sup> STEP'AN[N]OS ÖRBELEAN, *History of the Province of Sisakan... op. cit.*, ch. 70, p. 476: “Bayc' manuk t'agaworn Vrac' Dawit', ordi Demetrēi, i gal Nawruzin ew i k'akel zekelec'is, erkeaw ew gnac' amenayn naxararōk' ew azatagund arambk' i Met'ewulēt'; ew mtaw i berdn anarik or koč'ēr Mudē naxē, aysink'n ek ew tes. Ew arar t'ikuns zMet'ewulk'n ew zP'xayk'n ew zamenayn azgsn šrjakay. Graweac' ew yink'n zdu'n Alanac' zor hink'n Darial koč'ēin

the frame of the conflict between the Georgian King Davit' VIII (1292-1310), son of Demetre II (1269-89), and the Ilkhan ruler Ghazan in the last years of 13<sup>th</sup> c., when Georgia was ravaged by the Ilkhanid forces and by the Ossetes, supported by them, and David organized his counter-offensive entrenching himself in the Mtiuleti mountains<sup>52</sup>.

The last three passages referring to the Alans in connection with historical facts report events which took place between the 16<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> centuries.

The short *Chronicle* of Yovhanisik Carec'i gives important information about the Ottoman political, social and economical life of his time. It pays particular attention to the military expeditions led by the viziers Mustafa Pasha, known as Lala Pasha, and Ozdemiroglu Osman Pasha in the Caucasus and Western Iran between the end of the 70s and the beginning of the 80s of the 16<sup>th</sup> c. Speaking of the fortresses and garrisons left by Lala Mustafa Pasha in the years 1578-79, Yovhanisik Carec'i says: "*Anyway we heard that he built fortresses and left there soldiers in Tp'xis (Tbilisi), Tumanis, Gori and Lorē and in other places, and he himself passing to the Alans went on to the Iron Gates, and built a fortress there too...*"<sup>53</sup>. Further on, the Armenian chronicler condenses in a few lines the appointment of Osman Pasha as grand vizier on July 28<sup>th</sup> 1584 and the subsequent capture of Tabriz on September 23<sup>rd</sup> 1585. Yovhanisik Carec'i writes that Osman Pasha was summoned to Constantinople by the Sultan Murat III (1574-1595), "*and he went and was honoured by him, being appointed as commander and prince of the princes (grand vizier) in the entire Orient, from Byzantium as far as the Alans, and <Murat> put under his command many troops amounting to 600,000 men, and sent him against the city of Tavriz, residence of the shah, and he (= Osman) came with great boldness, conquered and plundered it looting everything that was in it*"<sup>54</sup>.

An *Anonymous Chronicle* of the 17<sup>th</sup> c. provides an account of military events which took place at the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> c., when a new war broke out between the Ottomans and Safavid Iran, ending up with the Safavid recapture of most of the territories previously conquered by

*ew ayžm, Ĵasanin kap. Ew ehan zpahaksn T'at'arin, ew na ē mutn Xazrac', Alanac', Ōsic', Xp'č'alac', ew mec ark'ayut'eann hiwsisayin ašxarhin Berk'ayeanc', oroc' ēr ayžm lan T'awdamankoyñ ew Nuxayn, t'orunk' Bat'uyin ew Sart'axin*".

<sup>52</sup> Cf. B. LIMPER, *Die Mongolen und die christlichen Völker des Kaukasus – Eine Untersuchung zur politischen Geschichte Kaukasiens im 13. und beginnenden 14. Jh.*, (Dissertation), Köln 1980, p. 178-179.

<sup>53</sup> YOVHANISIK CAREC'I, *Žamanakagrut'iwñ [Chronicle]*, in V.A. HAKOBYAN, ed., *op. cit.*, ii, p. 242: "*Sakayñ lwak', t'ē zTp'xis zTumanis, zGōri ew zLōrē, ew ayl telik' šineac' berds ew et'ol i nmay zōrs, ew ink'n yanc'eal i Yalans gnac', i duñ Erkat'i, ew šineac' and ews berd ew asi Damur lap'*". As already pointed out, both passages of this writer concerning Alans are reproduced in the same form in ARAK'EL DAWRIŽEC'I, *History... op. cit.*, ch. 55, p. 608 and 612. On Lala Pasha see J.H. KRAMERS, "Muštafā Pašha, Lala", in *Encyclopédie de l'Islam*, vii, Leiden-New York-Paris 1993, p. 721-722.

<sup>54</sup> YOVHANISIK CAREC'I, *Chronicle*, in V.A. HAKOBYAN, ed., *op. cit.*, ii, p. 245: "*or ew gnac' isk ew patuec'aw i nmanē ew zōrapet ew yišxanac' yišxan kargelov znay bolor yareweleans, i Biwzandioy minč'ew i Yalans; ew et i jeřs nora zōrs bazum t'vov O hazarac' ew arak'eac' i veray šahastan k'alak'in T'avrizoy, or ew ekn isk yoyž xroxtanōk', ar zna ew awareac' yawar arnelov zamenayñ inč' or i nmay*". On Ozdemiroglu Osman Pasha see J.R. BLACKBURN, "Othmân Pašha Özdemir-Oghli", in *Encyclopédie de l'Islam*, vii, Leiden-Paris 1993, p. 186-188.

Ozdemiroglu Osman Pasha. While relating Shah Abbas' campaign in the Caucasian region, the Anonymous Chronicler says that *“the King of Persia crossed the Kura River with a countless army and entered in the land of the Alans, and the Gugark' and the Utēac'ik' and laid siege to the impregnable stronghold of Šamax, and seized it and cut into pieces the troops that were there, 11,000 men”*<sup>55</sup>.

Reading the last passages I quoted, one has the impression that the name Alans is completely lacking its original ethnic meaning, being instead employed as a mere toponym, referring solely to a given territory. Moreover in the case of the *Anonymous Chronicle* of the 17<sup>th</sup> c. it is clear that the writer has mixed up *Alank'* (Alans) and *Aluank'* (Caucasian Albanians). This confusion, attested in much earlier Armenian texts<sup>56</sup>, is suggested here by the mention of Gugark' and Utēac'ik' along with the Alans: in fact, these two Caucasian peoples are usually associated with the Albanians in ancient Armenian authors<sup>57</sup>. What's more, on that occasion the military action of Shah Abbas' army was directed against the stronghold of Šamax (Shamakhi), a town lying on the territory of the former Albanian Kingdom, which had been the political centre of the Shirvan state between the 8<sup>th</sup> and the 16<sup>th</sup> centuries<sup>58</sup>.

A similar confusion we find in the 13<sup>th</sup>-century *Geography* attributed to Vardan Arewelc'i, where we read: *“Alank' is Šrvan, which Atəl Nuširvan built and was called Šarwan and Šamaxi”*: the identification of the territory of the Alank' with Shirvan is evident, as it is evident the mistaking of *Alank'* for *Aluank'*<sup>59</sup>.

In the *Short history of the land of the Albanians* written by Esay Hasan-Ĵalalean, who was *catholicos* of Albania from 1701 till his death, in 1727, one finds the following curious statement: *“At the time of the same Shah sultan Hiwsēin [Hussein 1694-1722] there was a nation in the territories of Xorasan and Łantahar, called Aluank', and about this nation they say that it sprang from the mountain people of Caucasus and from the land of the Alank', they are Aluank' by race and are still called by their ancient name; they were Christian by faith, and at a later time they were subjugated by Lankt'amur, who subdued an entire part of the world with his victory, as the histories relate about him, and they say that he exiled this nation from their territories, and*

<sup>55</sup> *Anonymous Chronicle* (17<sup>th</sup> c.), in V.A. HAKOBYAN, ed., *op.cit.*, i, p. 187: *“Darjeal i gal č'orord amin anc'aw zKur getn t'agaworn Parsic' anhun zōrōk' ew emut i yekirn Alanac' ew Gugarac' ew Utēac'oc' ew xsareac' zamur dleakn Šamaxoy ew ēar znay ew kotoreac' əzzōrs, or and ēin t'vov metasan hazar”*.

<sup>56</sup> Cf. the cases quoted by A. ALEMANY, *op. cit.*, p. 297.

<sup>57</sup> Cf. M. BAIS, *Albania Caucasica. Ethnos, storia, territorio attraverso le fonti greche, latine e armene*, Milano 2001, p. 39-40, 42, 49, 54-55, 61-62, 167.

<sup>58</sup> W. BARTHOLD-[C.E. BOSWORTH], *“Šhīrwān”*, in *Encyclopédie de l'Islam*, ix, Lieiden 1997, p. 505-506.

<sup>59</sup> VARDAN AREWELC'I, *Geography... op. cit.*: *“Alank' Šrvan ē, zor Atəl Nuširuan šineac' ew koč'ec'aw Šaruan ew Šamaxi”*.

deported 25,000 families and settled them in that land”<sup>60</sup>. Thus, according to Hasan-Ĵalalean, there should be a link between the population living in Xorasan and Lantahar and Caucasian Albanians, because the people living there and the Albanians bear the same name: *Aluank’*. Furthermore, both Caucasian *Aluank’* and Asian *Aluank’* seem to be linked with the *Alank’*, since their homeland should be placed in the Caucasian region, and, more precisely, in the land of the *Alank’*. M.-F. Brosset, the French translator of Hasan-Ĵalalean’s work, thinks that this assumption has been based on a *Völksetymologie* of the name Afghans, wrongly compared with *Alank’* [Alans] and *Aluank’* [Albanians]. In fact, in a note to this passage of his translation Brosset remarks: “*C’est une des étymologies et des origines qu’on a supposées au nom et à la race des Afghans*”, and ends his note by totally dismissing this interpretation: “*Il est inutile de dire qu’entre les Alains, les Albains ou Aghovans du Caucase et les Afghans, il n’existe aucun lien historique ni philologique*”<sup>61</sup>.

We find a generic reference to the “*land of the Alans*” in a piece of poetry composed by the *catholicos* Grigor Aĥt’amarc’i (1512-1544)<sup>62</sup>, in order to celebrate the life and the martyrdom of Astuacatur Xt’ayec’i, a young Kalmyk enslaved by some cavalymen of the land of Xt’ay<sup>63</sup> and bought by the Armenian merchant Mxit’ar Baĥšec’i. The young slave embraced the Christian faith and ended his life being martyred by the Turks in 1519<sup>64</sup>. While describing the travels which led Mxit’ar to Atrpatakan, Łum, Širaz, Xorasan, Samarłand, Buxara, Hndkastan and Xt’ay, the author mentions the Alan territory as well: “*They crossed land and sea,/they travelled to the land of the Alans*”<sup>65</sup>. The expression *yAlanac’ erkirn* [land of the Alans], may have been employed here just to refer generically to a Caucasian land, rather than to the exact territory where the Alans lived.

<sup>60</sup> ESAY HASAN-ĴALALEAN[C’], *Patmut’iwn hamarōt Aluanic’ erkir* [Short History of the Land of the Albanians], Jerusalem 1868, ch. 4: “*ew zi elew i žamanaks soyn suldan Hiwsēin t’agaworis, azg mi i kolmans Xorasanay ew Lantaharu, zors Aluank’ anuanen; ew asen vasn azgis aysorik, et’ē en bnik i lernabnakac’n Kawkasu ew yerkrēn alanac’, or en azgaw Aluank’ or ayžm ews naxkin anuambn verakoč’in; ew leal en hawatov k’ristonēayk’, ew apa zkni žamanakac’ Lankt’amurn koč’ec’eal brnakal, zor tireac’ yolov masin ašxarhis yalt’ut’eambn iwrov; zor patmut’iwnk’n vkayen zsmānē ew asen vtaranteal zazgs zays i tehwojē iwreanc’ ew tareal zk’san ew hing tunn bnakec’oyc’ yerkrin aynmik*”.

<sup>61</sup> M.-F. BROSSET, *Collection d’historiens arméniens*, ii, St Petersburg 1876, p. 205-206 n. 3.

<sup>62</sup> See H. AČAREAN, *Hayoc’ Anjanunneri Bařaran* [Dictionary of Armenian Personal Names], i, Beirut 1972, s.v. “Grigor”, p. 621-21 n. 704.

<sup>63</sup> This toponym is related to Turkish *Xətay* and Mongol *Xataj*, both meaning “China, northern province of China”, to be compared with Russian Китай, China. These words probably originate from Chinese *Ch’i-tan*, name of an ancient Altaic tribe. See P. PELLIOU, *Notes on Marco Polo*, i, Paris 1959, p. 216-229 (s.v. “Catai”); G.R. CARDONA “Indice Ragionato”, in M. POLO, *Milione. Versione toscana del Trecento*, Milano 1975, p. 586-587; В.И. АБАЕВ, *Историко-этимологический словарь осетинского языка* [Etymological Dictionary of Ossetian Language], Leningrad 1989, iv, p. 143-144 (s.v. “xatiag”). I would like to express my gratitude to Prof. Dr. S. Kullanda, who kindly sent me the photocopies of the relevant pages of Abaev’s etymological dictionary.

<sup>64</sup> See H. AČAREAN, *op. cit.*, i, s.v. “Astuacatur”, p. 247-48 n. 176.

<sup>65</sup> Y. MANANDEAN-H. AČAREAN, eds., *Hayoc’ nor vkaner (1155-1843)* [Armenian Neo-martyrs], Vałaršapat 1903, p. 354: “*Əzcov ew əzc’amak’ nok’a koxec’in,/Ew yAlanac’ erkirən žamanec’in*”.

We find the same vague use of the name *Alank'* in chapter 92 of Šahamir Šahamirean's *Snare of glory*. In fact, this 18<sup>th</sup>-century author named the Armenian Smbat “*naxarar of Armenians, of T'orgomk', of Alank' et cetera*”<sup>66</sup>. A part from the reference to Armenians, due to the fact that Smbat was an Armenian, the mention of the Alans here has nothing to do with the representation of a true historical situation, rather it is intended to emphasise Smbat's far-stretching authority over the Caucasian lands, as it is underlined by the words *ew ayln* [*et cetera*]. Moreover, the presence of the name *T'orgomanc'* shows that the author mixes up real ethnic names with names taken from the Biblical tradition, taking no account of the actual ethnic and politic situation of the Caucasian world. As it is known, in fact, according to Movsēs Xorenac'i, Armenians descended from Noah's son Japhet, through his grandson Togarmah, in Armenian Torgom, whose son was Hayk, eponymous forefather of the Armenian people<sup>67</sup>.

Most interesting is a passage from the *History of the Province of Sisakan* of Step'anos Ōrbelean, in which the process of depriving the name *Alank'* of its real and genuine meaning reaches its highest point. In chapter 32, Step'anos writes: “*At that time, according to Ezekiel's prophecy that in the last days, at the time of the end of this world, Gog and Magog will enter the land of Israel, the Northern Gates will be opened, and the forces of the people shut out by Alexander in the Northern regions will come out: Gog and Magog, Anig and Agig, Ak'iaz, Dip'or, P'orinac'ik', Alrenac'ik', Honk', P'arziac'ik', Deklimac'ik', Sarmatk', T'et'lēac'ik', Zarmetac'ik', Kak'onac'ik', Amazardk', Garmadac'ik', Mardakerk', T'arp'ac'ik', Alank', P'asklinkac'ik', Argnēac'ik', Satarēac'ik'. Those are the kingdoms which have been closed behind the gate placed by Alexander*”<sup>68</sup>. This passage is an obvious reference to the story of Gog and Magog, mentioned by Ezekiel<sup>69</sup> and by the Apocalypse<sup>70</sup> and then identified by Flavius Josephus with the Scythians enclosed by Alexander within an iron barrier located in the Caucasus, and often identified with the Derbent Gate in the mediaeval cartographical representation of the world (*mappaemundi*)<sup>71</sup>. Thus, the Caucasus Range coincides with the frontier between the Christian nations and the peoples of the Antichrist shut out

<sup>66</sup> YAKOB [ŠAHAMIR] ŠAHAMIREAN[C'], *Book Called Snare of Glory... op. cit.*, ch. 92: “*naxararn Hayoc', T'orgomanc', Alanac' ew ayln*”.

<sup>67</sup> MOVSĒS XORENAC'I, *History of the Armenians... op. cit.*, i, ch. 5 and 9-12, p. 17-21 and 29-42. Engl. trans. by R.W. THOMSON, *Moses Khorenats'i ... op. cit.*, p. 71-74 and 80-89.

<sup>68</sup> STEP'AN[N]OS ŌRBELEAN, *History of the Province of Sisakan... op. cit.*, ch. 32, p. 153-154: “*Yaynžam əst margarēt'eann Ezekieli or asē, et'ē yawurs yetins i vaxčani ašxarhis elc'en Gog ew Magog yerkirn Israyēli, bac'c'in drunk' hiwsişoy, ew elc'i zōrut'iwn azgac'n zors argel Alēk'sandr i cags hiwsişoy, Gog ew Magog, Anig ew Agig, Ak'iaz, Dip'or, P'orinac'ik', Alrenac'ik', Hink', P'arziac'ik', Deklimac'ik', Sarmatk', T'et'lēac'ik', Zarmetac'ik', Kak'onac'ik', Amazardk', Garmadac'ik', Mardakerk', T'arp'ac'ik', Alank', P'asklinkac'ik', Argnēac'ik', Satarēac'ik'. Aysok'ik t'agaworut'iwnk' ork'en argelealk' ənd drambk'n zor kangneac' Alēk'sandr*”.

<sup>69</sup> Ez 38-39.

<sup>70</sup> Ap 20, 7-10.

<sup>71</sup> The symbolic meaning of Alexander's Gate has been accurately studied by A.R. ANDERSON, *Alexander's Gate, Gog and Magog, and the Inclosed Nations*, Cambridge Mass 1932.

by the Gate of Alexander the Great. The Armenian historian reworks the legend conflating the list of people with fictitious names such as Anig and Agig, evidently patterned on the couple Gog and Magog, or with names of people already attested in previous Armenian literature, such as Mardakerk', a formation based on the Greek Ἀνθροποφάγοι, *Anthrōpophágoi*<sup>72</sup>, or employing ethnic names which perhaps seem deprived of any connection with a real people, such as Alank'.

The last of the six occurrences of the name *Alank'* not linked with historical or supposed historical facts is a passage from *The Historical Compilation* of Vardan Arewelc'i, where the speech goes over the division of the human languages. The author says: "*From the first rough and unshaped language [derived] the very gentle language of the Hellenes, the severe one of the Romans, the menacing Hunnish, the imploring Syrian, the sumptuous Persian, the finely shaped Alan, the ridiculous Gothic, the ensnaring Egyptian, the chirping Indian, the sweet Armenian, fully embellished and seasoned. Just as various colors make beauty and there are differences of stature, so there are differences of languages. The original language remained with Eber, who did not join with the others*"<sup>73</sup>. The listing and description of various languages is found in other Armenian authors, as R.W. Thomson observes in a note to his English translation of Vardan's work<sup>74</sup>. What is interesting here is the positive feeling evoked by the Alan language according to Vardan, who defines it as *gelec'kajew* [*having a beautiful shape*], an attribute which can originate from the transposition on a linguistic level of a general feeling about the Alan people, in the same way as the adjectives "severe", "menacing" and "sumptuous" referring respectively to the Latin, Hunnish and Persian languages, suggest a particular attitude of Armenians toward the peoples speaking those languages, rather than being a judgement of the language itself.

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The Armenian sources written between the 11<sup>th</sup> and the 18<sup>th</sup> centuries taken into consideration in this study attest 42 occurrences of the ethnic name *Alank'*, including the eighteen references to the Alan Gates. As we have seen, only eighteen occurrences deal with historical (or supposed historical) facts, but only seven are concerned with historical events dating from the 11<sup>th</sup> century onwards. At least two of these seven occurrences – the *Geography* attributed to Vardan Arewelc'i

<sup>72</sup> Cf. R.H. HEWSEN, *The Geography of Anania of Širak (Ašxarhac'oyc')*. *The Long and the Short Recension*, Introduction, Translation and Commentary, Wiesbaden 1992 [Beihefte zum Tübinger Atlas des Vorderen Orients, nr. 77], p. 117 n. 76.

<sup>73</sup> VARDAN AREWELC'I, *Historical Compilation... op. cit.*, ch. 5, p. 12: "*i xošor lezuēn ařajnoy ew i koptajew; p'ap'kagoyinn Ellenac'woc', ew sastkaginn Hřovmayec'woc', Honn spařnakan, ew Asorin alač'akan, Parsikn perčakan, ew Alann gelec'kajew, Gudn calrakan, Egiptac'in xarap'ajayn, ew Hndikn ččuol, Hayn hamel ew amenazard ew hamenakan; ew orpēs aldi azgi goynk' gelec'kut'iwn arnen, ew zanzanut'iwnk' hasakac', aypēs ew lezuac' zanzanut'iwnk'*", translation by R.H. THOMSON, *The Historical Compilation of Vardan Arewelc'i*, *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 43, Washington 1989, p. 147.

<sup>74</sup> R.H. THOMSON, *The Historical Compilation... op. cit.*, p. 147 n. 3.

and the *Anonymous Chronicle* – present a probable confusion between Alans and Caucasian Albanians, while the use of *Alank'* by Yovhannes Carec'i seems to be generic. The confusion between these two Caucasian populations and the use of the ethnic name *Alank'* with a generic meaning is clearly found in the last six occurrences examined – except for Vardan's reference to the Alan language –, covering a period from the 13<sup>th</sup> to the 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. These data confirm Alemany's statement that “*brief news items on the Alank', geographically associated with the Darial Pass (drunk' Alanac' 'the Gates of the Alans'), can be found scattered throughout the Armenian historiography, often in reference to sporadic raids against Transcaucasia*”<sup>75</sup>, on the other, however, they draw our attention on the semantic shift of the ethnic name *Alank'* as employed in Armenian sources. This name was not only used to identify a specific tribe which we call the Alans, but it was also given a collective meaning to designate other north Caucasian peoples<sup>76</sup>. Likewise, it was confused with the name *Aluank'*, a south Caucasian people, and, what's more, it was put on the same level as Gog, Magog and similar mythical nations populating medieval geography. So it is difficult to agree with Gabrieljan, when she claims that “*В армянских источниках последующих веков (после VII в.) этноним алан носит узкоэтнический характер*” [“*in Armenian sources of the following centuries (after the 7<sup>th</sup>), the ethnic name Alan has a strictly ethnic character*”]<sup>77</sup>. To get a more detailed picture of the Armenian sources on the Alans from the 11<sup>th</sup> through the 18<sup>th</sup> centuries it would be worthwhile not only to extend the research to other works of this period not surveyed in the present paper, but also to take into account other testimonies, such as the colophons and inscriptions scattered throughout the land once inhabited by the Armenians. Besides it would be interesting to analyse the relation between the use of the names *Alank'* and *Ōsk'/Ōsēth(k')*, attested for instance in the above quoted excerpt from Step'anos Ōrbelean and by Kirakos Ganjakec'i<sup>78</sup> and T'ovma Mecopec'i<sup>79</sup>. ǰ

<sup>75</sup> A. ALEMANY (2000) *op. cit.*, p. 278.

<sup>76</sup> P.A. ГАБРИЕЛЯН (1989) *op. cit.*, p. 29.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.* p. 44.

<sup>78</sup> KIRAKOS GANJAKEC'I, *History of the Armenians... op. cit.*, ch. 38, p. 289.

<sup>79</sup> T'OVMA MECOP'EC'I, *Chronicle... op. cit.*, ch. 9.