

KESHIG IN CAUCASUS

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In the creation of early state formations among nomadic tribes, the immediate circumference of the leader, had a great role in the governance system. From the strongest and young representatives were gathered the “*unique link of management*” of leader, the primary problem of which was the security of the head of state. Thus, “Royal Scythians”, which are still mentioned at Herodotus, were collected from the junior representatives of the Scythian influential clans and were obliged not only to secure the king's personality, but also to fulfill various assignments in the government. They were assigned to high government posts¹. The Xianbei's² khagan's guard was gathering from "great people's" younger brothers and sons. As in the case of Scythians, people included in Royal Guard were actively participating in state rule³. Similar guards also existed at the Mongolian kidans and the Tungusic Jurchen, which had a great influence on the formation of the Mongolian governance system⁴.

The guard of the Mongol's leader was called Keshig⁵. Formation of keshig is not only conditioned with social relations at the Mongols. It's embryonic

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¹ **Braund D.** “Royal Scythians and the slave-trade in Herodotus' Scythia”. *Antichthon*, vol. 42, 2008, pp. 6-10.

² **Xianbei** - Turkic or Mongolian nomadic tribes residing in Inner Mongolia. In the early Middle Ages, they created in northern China quite strong nomadic state in the II-III centuries (See more about Xianbei **Holcombe Ch.** *The Xianbei in Chinese History, Early Medieval China*, (2013), *The Cambridge History of Inner Asia*, edited by Nikola Di Cosmo, Allen J. Frank and Peter B. Golden, Cambridge University Press, 2009, Part One, The Rise of the Chinggisids, pp. 7-10).

³ **Holcombe Ch.** *The Xianbei in Chinese History, Early Medieval China*, (2013), p. 25.

⁴ **Biran M.** *Nomads as Agents of Cultural Exchange: The Mongols and Their Eurasian Predecessors*, Honolulu, University of Hawaii Press, 2017, pp. 152-181.

⁵ The explanation of the word "Keshig" still gives rise to controversy. Thus, Keshig meets in *History of Yuan* in the form of Ch'ieh-hsieh (Kese /g/) and interpreted as "*soldier-guards who serve in shifts*" (**Ch'i-ch'ing Hsiao**, *The Military Establishment of the Yuan Dynasty*,

manifestations or similar forms, as mentioned, existed in the nomadic state units formed in different historical eras in the Asian steppes. The functions of Keshig were finally clarified during the reign of Genghis Khan (1206-1227). It not only carried out the functions of the Royal guard, but also certain state government, because in the composition of Keshig were included free class and people belonging to a notable family. It was often viewed as a "prison camp", as well as an "academy", for demonstration of young nobility⁶. In *History of Yuan*⁷, members of the Keshig are mentioned with their respective functions. More than 14 functions are mentioned. It was divided into dozens of systems, including 10,000 members.

The members of the Keshig were unique "*honorable hostages*", through which Mongols succeeded in establishing a relatively reliable ruling system. Keshig's primary task, of course, was to provide Khan's security. On the other hand, Ubeing collected from the representatives of the aristocratic families, it was also presented the elite of the Mongolian state. Very often they organized reconnaissance campaigns. Mongolian noyans⁸, on the one hand, were presented as talented commanders, who were skilled in the wars, were also effective in remote and unfamiliar countries, and, on the other hand, being involved in the Keshig, they were not limited to the conquering operations but also organized

Harvard University, London, 1978, pp. 92): According to P. Buell, Keshig is the word of Mongol origin and has the meaning of the "*near, beloved and dear slave to the head of state*" (Buell Paul D. *Historical Dictionary of the Mongol World Empire*, Historical Dictionaries of Ancient Civilizations and Historical Eras, No. 8, Lanham, Maryland and Oxford, 2003, pp. 222-223). According to C. Atwood's observation, the word has a Turkic origin in the sense of "*shift*" (Atwood Ch. *Encyclopedia of Mongolia and the Mongol Empire*, Indiana University, 2004, pp. 308-309).

⁶ Ch. Hsiao is convinced that the keshig, first of all, was the Imperial embryonic administration, which was the "*interior bureau of service*" of Mongolian nomadic nobility, which was serving the interest of noyans (Ch'i-ch'ing Hsiao, Harvard University, London, 1978, p. 34).

⁷ *The History of Yuan* (Yuán Shī), also known as the Yuanshi, is one of the official Chinese historical works known as the Twenty-Four Histories of China. Commissioned by the court of the Ming dynasty, in accordance to political tradition, the text was composed in 1370 by the official Bureau of History of the Ming dynasty, under direction of Song Lian (1310-1381).

⁸ **noyan** (noyon)-the word noyan has throughout Mongolian history signified those not of the ruling lineage who are entrusted by the sovereign, or Khan, with higher office. Its specific designation at any one time flows from the particular character of Mongolian authority at the time. In the Mongol empire the commanders of the decimal units (10s, 100, 1000s and 10000s) were all noyan, although in practice the title was reserved for the higher ranks (Atwood Ch. *Encyclopedia of Mongolia and the Mongol Empire*, 2004, Indiana University, p. 426):

temporary military-civilian supervision. In this regard, an interesting example is the Caucasian region, where we meet many noyans from Keshig, about which medieval sources have kept rich information.

In the Caucasus, the first Mongol army commander known to us from the Genghis Khan and then from the Ögedei Khan's Keshig, was Sübedei, who served for many years as a *ba'atur* in the Genghis Khan's Keshig. In Armenian sources, he is mentioned as "Sabadah Bahatur"⁹ (arm. Սաբադահ Բահատուր). As it is known, together with Jebe and Togachar, Sübedei led the Mongolian intelligence army in the Caucasus in 1220-1223. In 1236, during the general invasion, is mentioned Ghara Noyan¹⁰. Kirakos Gandzakets'i mentions the latter as "Ghara Bahatur" (arm. Ղարա Բահաթուր) in connection with the capture of St. Mary¹¹. The next representative was Chormaghan, who had previously carried out the duties of qorchi (quiver-bearer) at Genghis Khan and Ögedei's Keshig.¹² After Chormaghan (1241/1242), Baiju Noyan was appointed commander of the Mongolian troops, which Kirakos Gandzakets'i mentions in the form of "Bachu-ghurchi" (arm. Բաչու-ղուրչի)¹³. From the qorchis is mentioned Ghatagha Noyan, who also was in the army of Chormaghan¹⁴. Ghatagha Noyan is mentioned by Juvaini, referring to the activity of Batu Khan, Juvaini speaks about Ghatagan qorchi, who was in charge of arresting Elchigidei¹⁵. Perhaps, this same Ghataghan noyan was also mentioned by anonymous author from Sebastia in his Chronicle and the Step'annos Episkopos (bishop) who mention him during the capture of Kamakh and Erzincan¹⁶.

Rashid al-Din mentions Chaghatai, from the arulat's tribe, who carried out qorchi's duties again¹⁷. This is the same Chaghatai who killed by the assassins

⁹ **Kirakos Gandzakets'i**, History of the Armenians, Melik'-Ohanjanyan (ed.), Erevan: Academy of Science Press, 1961, p. 204 (in armenian).

¹⁰ **Rashid al-Din**, 1952, v. 1, p. 189 (in russian).

¹¹ **Kirakos Gandzakets'i**, p. 261.

¹² **Rashid al-Din**, 1952, v. 1, т. 1, p. 98, The Secret History of Mongols, § 260, p. 252.

¹³ **Kirakos Gandzakets'i**, p. 279.

¹⁴ **Vardan Arevelts'i**, Universal History, completed in 1267, G.B. T'osunyan (ed.), Erevan University Press, 2001, p. 146 (in armenian).

¹⁵ **Juvaini**, Genghis Khan, History of the World-Conqueror, Boyle J. (ed.), Manchester University Press, 1958, p. 590.

¹⁶ **Hakobyan V.** (ed.), Minor Chronicles of the 13th-18th centuries, vol. 2, Erevan: Academy of Science Press, 1956, p. 43 (in armenian).

¹⁷ **Rashid al-Din**, 1952, v. 1, т. 1, кн. 1, с. 100.

(arm. «ճնսլիեղ») according to Kirakos Gandzakets'i¹⁸. According to Grigor Aknerts'i Chaghatai had a rather high position among the Noyans and soon is called "Khan" (arm. «Ղան») ¹⁹. According to the Georgian anonymous Chronicle Chaghatai headed the Mongolian armies with Chormaghan, Baiju, and Yusur, and was referred to as "Greate noyan" (ge. ღიღი ნოინი)²⁰. Kirakos Gandzakets'i speaks about the high position of Chaghatai, pointing to the increase of lawlessness after his death²¹. According to information provided by Kirakos Gandzakets'i²² and Vardan Arevelts'i²³, Chaghatai was ordered to conquer Lori. The Keshig system was also preserved after the splitting of the united Mongol empire. After the division of the latter, as was known, the great khan's title was given to the rulers of Yuan empire created in China and Mongolia. There were formed three substantive states so called uluses independently from the Karakorum: Chaghataids in Central Asia, the Golden Horde, or the Juchids in the Dasht-e Qipchak, the Russian principalities and some parts of Eastern Europe, Ilkhanids in Iran, in the South-Caucasus Range, in majority of Asia Minor, in Mesopotomia and in a part of Afghanistan. All rulers of uluses, even formal, were accepting the supremacy of Greate khan sitting in Karako-

¹⁸ **Kirakos Gandzakets'i**, p. 264.

¹⁹ It should be noted that the historian mentions another Chaghatai calling him "*another little Chaghatai*" (**Grigor Aknerts'i/Grigor of Akanc'**, History of the Tatars/ History of the Nation of the Archers, Jerusalem, St. Jacob Press, 1974, p. 26, in armenian). The letter is also mentioned by Rashid ad-Din, mentioning that Chaghatai was from the tribe of sunit. According to Mongolian tradition, after the death of Genghis Khan's son Chaghatai (1242), that name was forbidden and banned to use and the Chaghatai Junior was called Sanit'ay, considering the tribal affiliation (**Rashid al-Din, 1952**, v. 1, p. 98). Bar Hebraeus mentions him as Sunatai Aghonesta, who acts in Cpppadocia (**Bar Hebraeus' Chronography**, translated from the Syriac by Budge E., vol. 1, Oxford University Press, 1932, p. 394). According to Grigor Aknerts'i Chaghatai Elder, from arulat's tribe, was called Sanit'ay (arm. Սոնիթայ), and as we have seen, that person was the Chaghatai Junior from the sunit tribe and not Chaghatai Elder. Here, the historian probably missed the name Sanit'ay. Taking into account this specification, L. Babayan and D. Bayarsaikhan mistakenly viewed Sanit'ay as a separate noyan who operated with two Chaghatai (**Babayan L. Socio-Economic and Political History of Armenia in the 13th-14th c.**, Erevan, 1964, p. 234 (in armenian), **Bayarsaikhan Dashdondog, The mongols and the Armenians (1220-1335)**, Brill, 2011, p. 69).

²⁰ **Kartlis Tskhovreba**, Georgian National Academy of SSciences, Tbilisi, 2014, p. 340, էջ 75, 91, comp. ქართლის ხცოვრება, ტ. II, თბილისი, 1959, გვ. 184, 210.

²¹ **Kirakos Gandzakets'i**, p. 264.

²² *ibid*, p. 255:

²³ **Vardan Arevelts'i**, p. 146.

rum. But when broke a civil war (1260-1264) between Kublai and his brother Ariq Böke, ulus-states were completely separated in legal terms. In spite of all this, the rulers of Yuan held the structures typical of central government. The preservation and subsequent survival of the Keshig is largely referred to by the sources in the Yuan court. XIII century Venetian traveler Marco Polo kept the interesting information about the role and importance of the Keshig in the royal court of Yuan. According to the latter, "*Quescican*" means "*knights dedicated to their master*", whose number exceeded 12,000 during the reign of Kublai²⁴. Being a member of this unit was primarily a great responsibility and dignity²⁵. As a result of state reforms carried out by Kublai Khan in 1263, some changes took place in the process of replenishing the Keshig. Particularly, a large number of Chinese people have been added to the Keshig from both well-known nobility dynasties and non-well-known, mainly military men²⁶.

L. Kwanten claims, that the Keshig was preserved only in Yuan, and in the rest of the ulus-states, the leaders of the latter were keeping their own security unit.²⁷ But, as we shall see, the Keshig preserved its existence not only in the center of the empire, but also in ulus-states. Keshig was first introduced as a unique symbol of the Mongol Empire, and was a connecting link between the conquerors and the conquered. Under the reign of Hulagu (1261-1265), a local "Keshig" was formed in Mongolian-Iranian state, which included the non-Mongols. According to Ch. Melville, the junior representatives of the local Iranian noble dynasties mainly were included in that structure²⁸. But, author did not pay attention to Armenian and Georgian sources whose study also gives an opportunity to study the process of establishing the Keshig system, in which an important role was played not only the representatives of the Iranian, but also the Armenian, Georgian and Alan noble dynasties.

²⁴ The Book of Ser Marco Polo, The Venetian Concerning the Kingdoms and Marvels of the East, translated and Edited, with Notes, by Colonel sir Henry Yule, Vol. II, ch. 12, p. 379.

²⁵ *ibid.*

²⁶ **Endicott-West E.** Mongol Rule in China, Local Administration in the Yuan Dynasty, Harvard University, 1989, pp. 85-86.

²⁷ **Kwanten L.** Imperial Nomads, A History of Central Asia, Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1979, pp. 92-93.

²⁸ **Melville Ch.** The *Keshig* in Iran: The Survival of the Royal Mongol Household, Beyond the Legacy of Genghis Khan, Brill, 2006, pp. 135-140.

Armenian, Georgian, Arabian and Persian sources, unfortunately, do not provide information on replicating Keshig from the alans. We meet them only in *The History of Yuan*. Mongols from 1238 to 1239 conquering the Kingdom of Alania and after capturing the capital of Magas, immigrated to the Far East a large number of alan noble families with their military forces²⁹. Soon they went into service in the great royal court and, as *The History of Yuan* said, added a Keshig of Great Khan³⁰.

If the Alans were found in the Great Khan Keshig, then the Armenians and the Georgians filled the Keshig in Ilkhanate. The Armenian-Georgian forces have often demonstrated their military capabilities in the battlefield and came to the attention of the Mongols. Armenian-Georgian military units have been particularly active in the defeat of the Seljuks of Rum and have made some contributions to the determination of the outcome of the Battle of Kose-Dagh (1243). The picture is repeated also during the Mongol invasion to Syria (1260). The emphasis on military superiority in the battlefield was not one that was praised by Mongol commanders. Perhaps on this occasion Grigor Aknerts'i mentions Armenian-Georgian forces: "*since Hulegu liked them extremely because of the bravery they had displayed before him in all battles*" (arm. յոյժ սիրէր Հուլաու Ղանն զգաւրքն Հայոց եւ Վրաց, վասն կարի քաջութեան հրեանց, զոր առնէին առաջի նորա յամենայն պատերազմունս)³¹. Continuing, the historian adds: "*Therefore he styled them Bahatur. He Chose the handsome and young sons of the princes of the Armenians and Georgians and set them up as his guards (door-keepers), calling k'e'sikt'oyk' who are the guards with sword and bow*" (arm. «վասն որոյ **Բահադուրս** անուանեց զնսայ. զի զգեղեցիկ եւ զերիդասարդ որդիս մեծ իշխանացն Հայոց եւ Վրաց ընտրեաց եւ կացոյց զդոնապանս իւր, եւ անուանեաց զնսայ **քէսիկթոյք**, որք են դոնապանք, սրով եւ աղեղամք»³²). So, Grigor Aknerts'i mentions

²⁹ Minorsky V. Caucasia III: The Alān Capital *Magas and the Mongol Campaigns // Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, Vol. 14, № 2, 1952, pp. 221-238.

³⁰ In *The history of Yuan* they were mentioned Asu/d/ (**Ch'i-ch'ing Hsiao**, The Military Establishment of the Yuan Dynasty, p. 97):

³¹ Grigor Aknerts'i, p. 47.

³² ibid.

some functions, that was in Keshig. Subdivision of *ba'aturs*³³ in the Keshig was created still in the reign of Genghis Khan (1203) and have thousand member. The soldiers of the latter were responsible for 24-hour supervision at the Khan's residence and were divided into daytime "*torguud*" and night time "*Khevtuul*" shifts subdivisions³⁴. They were considered Khan's vanguard in battles. Functions, those we find in the history of Grigor Aknertals'i, are mentioned in *The History of Yuan*, specially: door-keepers as "*e'üdechi*", sword-bearers as "*ildüchi*" and quiver-bearers as "*qorch*".³⁵ The fact that Armenians and Georgians played an important role in Keshig and were in the ranks of Hulagu Khan's relatives, often appearing in suggestions, appears from the Aknerts'i testimony when it comes to the strict punishments made against the Muslim figures in the state system, according to the historian, "*This was schooling for the Armenian and Georgian troops*" (arm. *Եւ այս եղել ի խրատորէ զայրացն Հայոց եւ Վրաց*).³⁶

The Georgian Anonymous Chronicle also shows the high role of the Armenian and Georgian nobles. The latter contains interesting information about the replenishment of Keshig from the Armenians and Georgians. The source does not mention the word Keshig, but lists the functions that existed in that structure. Talking about the arrival of Hulagu, the historian states that the Commander of the Mongolian Troops "*Chormaghon, Iosur, Bicho and Angurag*" are heading to Hulagu, and the latter places high positions from the Georgians and Armenians³⁷. According to the historian: "*The Georgian dignitaries appeared before Ulo (Hulagu). He looked kindly upon them, welcomed them and armed them, assigning them as his allies; he appointed some of them to the rank of **uldachs**, which means sword-bearers, people who have swords and stay as guards at gates, others are called **sukurchs**, which means that they bear refreshing folded circle, which they unfold when needed over the Khan's head on a high pole-the staff, and keep it in this way (cooling him) No one,*

³³ This word is met in *The History of Yuan* as *ba'atur* or *ba'atud* in the meaning of the word "brave" (**Ch'i-ch'ing Hsiao**, *The Military Establishment of the Yuan Dynasty*, p. 36). In Russian it is preserved as «*богатырь*».

³⁴ **Ch'i-ch'ing Hsiao**, *The Military Establishment of the Yuan Dynasty*, p. 36.

³⁵ **Melville Ch.** *The Keshig in Iran: The Survival of the Royal Mongol Household, Beyond the Legacy of Genghis Khan*, p. 137.

³⁶ **Grigor Aknerts'i**, p. 47.

³⁷ **Kartlis Tskhovreba**, p. 344, comp. ქართლის ხცოვრება, ტ. II, გვ. 222-223.

who was not of the Khan's family, was allowed to hold it; others were made **q'ubchachs**, who were trusted with garment and footwear; others **evdarchs**, who were door-keepers; others **q'orchs**-arrow-bearers and quiver-bearers"³⁸. According to the historian, this step was humiliating for the Georgian nobles, but at the same time, this step was regarded as a privilege by the Mongols. These functions except q'ubchach, also are giving in *The History of Yuan*. Thus, mentioned sword-bearers (ge. "ულდაზი") meet in *The History of Yuan* as "ildüchi", fold-bearers (ge. "სუქურზი") as "sugurci", door-keepers (ge. "ევდარზი") as "e'üdechi" and quiver-bearers ("ყორზი") as "qorci"³⁹.

The replenishment of the Keshig was periodic. As we mentioned, involving representatives of the noble class from the occupied territories into Keshig allowed the Mongols first of all to control them and prevent possible rebellions. The information of Mkhit'ar Ayrivanets'i is noteworthy in this regard. On the occasion of armenian-georgian second rebellion (1259-1261) the historian mentions that after the failure: "*Two king Davids of Georgia fled to Sonet (Svaneti), and (mongols) take hostages in horde iskhkans (noblemens, princes) and freelances and called them k'e'sik'tank*" (arm. «...*փախեան երկրքին Ղաւիթ թագաւորքն Վրաց ի Սոնէթ. իսկ զիշխանսս և զազապորդիս զամենեսին պապանդ պարանս յորպուն (այսինքն՝ հորդա) և քեսիքդանք անուանեցին*»)⁴⁰. The forms of *k'e'sikt'oyk'* and *k'e'sikt'tank'* preserved by Grigor Aknerts'i and Mkhit'ar Ayrivanets'i have the meaning of "Keshig's member". We have parallels in this case. According to Ch. Hsiao's research, Keshig's members were called "*kesigdei*" (unique, member's meaning) and "*kesigden*" (plural, meaning of members) in Chinese official historiography⁴¹. According to W. Cleaves – *k* of "*k'e'sikt'oy*" is an Armenian plural, and the word is transcription of the Mongolian "*kesigtü*"⁴².

Interestingly, the word keshig has been preserved in some Armenian dialects. In the sense of "guard" or "bodyguard" it use T'hovma Metsobets'i. His-

³⁸ *ibid.*

³⁹ **Ch'i-ch'ing Hsiao**, *The Military Establishment of the Yuan Dynasty*, p. 94.

⁴⁰ **Mkhit'ar Ayrivanets'i**, *History of the Armenians*, M. Emin (ed.), Moscow: Lazar Institute Press, 1860, p. 94 (in armenian).

⁴¹ **Ch'i-ch'ing Hsiao**, *The Military Establishment of the Yuan Dynasty*, p. 35.

⁴² **Cleaves W.F.** *The Mongolian Names and Terms in the History of the Nation of the Archers* by Grigor of Akanc, *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, vol. 12, No. ¾ (Dec., 1949), p. 38.

torian referring to the achievements of Tamerlane states, that the letter forms his keshig in the way to Khorasan⁴³.

Much later, in the sense of “shift” and “guard”, we find keshig in archive document during the siege of the fortress of Shusha/Shushi (1826 yule)⁴⁴.

Thus, the information provided by Armenian and Georgian sources on Keshig enables us to expand and complement our understanding of the Mongolian nomadic governance system, where, as we saw, were included the members of the subordinated noble families.

ՔԵՇԻԿԸ ԿՈՎԿԱՍՈՒՍ

ՊՈՂՈՍՅԱՆ Ա.Տ.

Ամփոփում

Պետական վաղ կազմավորումների ձևավորման ընթացքում քոչվոր ցեղերի մեջ կառավարման համակարգը ստեղծելու հարցում մեծ դերակատարում ունեին առաջնորդի անմիջական շրջապատի մարդիկ: Նրանցից կազմվում էր պետության ղեկավարի անվտանգությունը պահպանող գվարդիան, որի գործառույթներն ավելի լայն էին, քանի որ այդ մարդիկ մասնակցում էին նաև պետության կառավարմանը: Մոնղոլներն այդ համակարգը կոչում էին *քեշիկ*, որն իր ավարտուն տեսքը ստացավ Չինգիզ խանի կառավարման շրջանում: Քեշիկը պահպանվեց նաև մոնղոլական միասնական պետության տրոհումից հետո: Հայկական և վրացական միջնադարյան աղբյուրները հետաքրքիր տվյալներ են հաղորդում իլխանների ձևավորած քեշիկի մասին, որտեղ իրենց գործուն մասնակցությունն ունեին նաև վրացի և հայ իշխանական տոհմերի ներկայացուցիչները:

Բանալի բառեր՝ քոչվոր ցեղեր, քեշիկ, իշխան, պատվավոր պատանդներ, բահաթուրներ, ռազմական ներուժ, կառավարման հուսալի համակարգ:

⁴³ T’hovma Metsobets’i, History of Tamerlane and His Successors, Moscow, 1860, p. 10 (in armenian).

⁴⁴ Մեսրոպ Մաշտոցի անվան Մատենադարան, Կաթողիկոսական դիվան, թ. 54, վավ. 342:

КЭШИК НА КАВКАЗЕ

ПОГОСЯН А.Т.

резюме

В формировании ранних государственных образований среди кочевых племен непосредственное окружение лидера играло существенную роль в создании системы управления. Функции дружины или личной охраны были шире, так как они также являлись частью правительства. У монголов эта система называлась кэшик, и процесс её формирования завершился при Чингис-хане. Система кэшик сохранилась и после распада единого монгольского государства. В армянских и грузинских источниках приводится интересная информация о кэшиках, образованных при ильханах, в которые также были вовлечены представители знатных родов Грузии и Армении.

Ключевые слова – кочевые племена, кэшик, ильхан, почетные заложники, баатуры, военный потенциал, надежная система управления.

KESHIG IN CAUCASUS

A. POGHOSYAN

Abstract

In the process of formation of the early state structures and control systems among the nomadic tribes, the immediate environment of the leader played a significant role. Functions of the squad or personal guard were broader, as they were also part of the government. The Mongols called this system keshig, and the process of its formation was completed at Chinggis Khan. The keshig system was preserved even after the collapse of the unified Mongolian state. In the Armenian and Georgian medieval sources interesting data have been kept about the keshig, which was formed under the Ilkhans. In the system of keshig representatives of noble families of Georgia and Armenia also actively participated.

Key words – nomadic tribes, keshig, ilkhan, honorable hostages, ba'aturs, military capability, reliable ruling system.