

**Medieval Catapult illustrated in the *Jami' al-Tawarikh*  
 (World History or Compendium of Chronicles) by Rashid al-Din  
 (d. 1318)**

UAV (Drones) Inquiry Unit

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The predecessors to the UAVs of our time were a variety of catapults used since antiquity to attack enemies from a long distance by sending projectiles through the air.



We know this from the visual and textual evidence left by those who wrote the histories of war. One of the most famous of these is the *World History or Compendium of Chronicles* by Rashid al-Din, written in the early fourteenth century in the Arabic Naskh script. This page, “Mahmud ibn Sebuktegin attacks the rebel fortress (Arg) of Zarang in Sijistan\* in 1003 AD” depicts a counterweight trebuchet.

\*Nimruz province in northwestern Afghanistan.

**Source:** University of Edinburgh Library. Record Or.Ms 20. Rashid al-Din, *Compendium of Chronicles*, page n61.

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