

MAKING, REMEMBERING AND FORGETTING
THE LATE ANTIQUE CAUCASUS

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NOTE ON TRANSLATION AND TRANSLITERATION

The system of transliteration for Georgian is adopted from the *Revue des Études Georgiennes et Caucasiennes*. The Armenian system is adopted from the *Revue des Études Armeniennes*.

Most of the translations are mine, except when standard translations exist and a philological argument is not required.

When quoting from already existing translations, transliterations will remain according to the author's preferences and not changed throughout unless required for clarity's sake.

Proper names and technical terms, that are common in both Armenian and Georgian languages, will be transliterated according to the source language. E.g. Ašot' (Geo.)/Ašot (Arm.). Armenian and Georgian forms of one and the same toponyms will be used interchangeably depending on the context and the point of view. I.e. Both *Gugark'* and *Gugareti* will be used.

Proper names of contemporary authors are not transliterated according to the adopted system of transliteration but rather by modern convention, e.g., Javakhishvili and not Žavaxišvili, Aleksidze and not Aleksizje. In case of extreme variance in orthography, e.g., Malxaseants/Malxaseanc'/Malkhaseants, etc, one system will be adopted.

In the bibliography, all languages utilizing Latin alphabet remain untranslated, whereas Armenian, Georgian, Cyrillic, Greek and other alphabets will be provided in their original and then translated. In the footnotes, the shorter translated titles will appear.

Georgian

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| u | p | k | γ | q' | š | č | c | z | c' | č' | x | q | g | h | | | | | | | |

Armenian

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INTRODUCTION

0.1. THE CHRONOTOPE OF THE SCHISM

The inhabitants of Old Tbilisi keep the following curious practice: each year, in late January or early February, they prepare salted pies and porridges and place the bowl of porridge outside on the balconies or on the rooftops. It is not unusual of heavy and depressing winds to blow in this time of the year. This tempest is popularly known as the wind of *Supsarkis* [Surb Sarkis], when Sarkis mounted on his horse will fly as a whirlwind through the houses and check that everyone commemorates him as appropriate. The legend has it that many centuries ago Sarkis St Sargis's lover was kidnapped and raped after which Sargis sought for revenge. Another tradition says that Sargis was martyred for his faith. But as it happened, the Georgians and the Greeks did not recognize him as saint and refused to venerate him. Hence the Armenians believe that during these days the vengeful saint will raise whirlwinds and will certainly strangle a *Horom* – a Greek or a Georgian. The Georgians are particularly afraid of this Sargis. He is also considered as a saint of lovers and of the newly wed. So they have to strictly observe the Fast of St Sargis before the Great Lent in order to pacify him. The fast of Saint Sargis falls at the end of January or the beginning of February and the person they dream about at one of the nights, will eventually become their spouse. But on the same days, the saint, moved by the spirit of vengeance, rises in the form of a whirlwind and suffocates those who rejected him or who do not believe in him. The Surb Sargis wind is especially feared among the Georgians, as the legend relates how the wind strangled a newly-married Georgian couple when they were going from the Church to feast. Another legend known by the Armenians relates that Saint Sargis especially targets “Romans” (that is Chalcedonians) and Georgian travelers. According to the Armenians of Borčalo in Georgia, each year Saint Sargis strangles a Greek or a Georgian. But the most curious fact of all is that Georgians of the southern regions or even today in Tbilisi, venerate Saint Sargis as a legitimate saint, although he was never included in

the Orthodox canon. He is often considered to be a protector of youth and of the bride-groom who sincerely try to pacify him by keeping the “fast of Saint Sargis” in one way or another.¹

I believe that the story presented above, spread, known and told in almost entire South Caucasian region, encapsulates in itself the spirit of the problematic to be discussed below. I believe this very peculiar legend preserves in itself some fifteen hundred years of remembrance of unity and separation between Armenians and Georgians, remembrance of the period of beginnings when there used to be a legendary peace and accord, which was then followed by schism and disputes and separation between the two lands. The markers of Orthodoxy and heterodoxy, the remembrance of the separation in the Caucasus is present in this narrative.² Below I shall try to demonstrate how each and every element of this legend has a profound historical basis and how was the remembrance forged and disseminated.

The story of St Sargis takes us back to the time that can be called the beginnings of the Christian Caucasian history, to the formative centuries of Late Antiquity, where the Christian cultures and specific theological stands of Albanians, Armenians³ and Georgians⁴ were being formed. The sixth century was of a

¹ On this legend, see Melikset-Bek, *Aražavor*, 109-111; Lalayants, “Surb Sargis”, 350-353.

² For the sake of convention, by *Caucasus* or *Caucasian* I will mean the south Caucasian kingdoms and people. The west to east borders of the Caucasus is not difficult to define, as it encompasses the territory from the North-East of the Black Sea to the Caspian Sea to the East. Neither does the fitting of Georgia or Albania into the sphere of the Caucasus provide any serious problems. As for Armenia, it is true that most of the territory that was called Armenia in Late Antiquity or medieval period was not located in the Caucasus but the generalized usage of the term *Caucasus* is justified by the objectives of the dissertation as a whole: to present a contrasting picture of the formation of Georgian and Armenian identities in Late Antiquity and Early Middle Ages.

³ Henceforward *Armenia* and *Armenian* invariably designates the Church of Pers-Armenia or Greater Armenia and specifically the See of Dwin. A separate designation is used for all ethnic Armenians, or parallel Chalcedonian hierarchies. For a discussion on the limits of the terms *Armenia* and *Armenian* in the frames of Church history, see Garsoïan, “Preliminary Precisions I”, 73-85.

⁴ *Iberia* and *Georgia* will be used to translate Georgian *Kartli* and *Sakartvelo*. E.g. *Mokcevaj Kartlisaj – Conversion of Georgia, Kartlis Cxovreba – Life of Georgia, Ayceraj Samepojsa Sakartvelojsi – Description of the Kingdom of Georgia*. Likewise *Kartveli* shall be translated as *Georgian*. This is of paramount importance as I cannot agree with the rather new differentiation between Georgian and *Kartvelian*. S. Rapp claims that *Kartvelian* is supposed to render Georgian *Kartveli* but in fact it renders not *Kartveli*, but *Kartveluri*. Rapp elaborates further on the understanding of Georgian unity and claims that *Sakartvelo*, as opposed to *Kartli*, is a post thirteenth century concept implying a higher unity of Georgia. For a lengthy discussion on the term *Sakartvelo*, see Rapp, *Studies*, 413-440. I believe term *Kartvelian* is misleading in two ways: first of all in modern academic discourse, *Kartvelian* is heavily associated with a pan-Kartvelian linguistic realm and is used to describe a certain theoretical prehistoric linguistic entity, called Kartvelian language, as opposed to modern Kartvelian languages such as Svan, Georgian and Zan. Secondly *Sakartvelo* is not always necessarily a wider term than *Kartli*. Both *Kartlis Cxovreba* and *Ayceraj Samepojsa Sakartvelojsi* are early modern titles but both refer to the same entity – Georgia. *Kartli* and *Sakartvelo* are overlapping terms; they are not narrow as opposed to broad. *Sakartvelo* simply literary meant “a place where Georgians live”, whereas *Kartli* is a toponym. *Georgia* in English or in any other European language is not directly super imposable to the Georgian

transitional importance for the entire Christian East and especially so for the South Caucasian peoples. Indeed, no other period in Caucasian history has received so much attention within scholarly communities as Late Antiquity. This is understandable for throughout the entire Middle Ages down to modern times, Late Antiquity is considered to be the formative period of the Christian Caucasian cultures. The fourth century was marked by the adoption of Christianity; the fifth century was highlighted by the creation of literacy among Albanians, Armenians and Georgians; the sixth century was faced with the turbulent years when doctrinal identity of these peoples was defined and finally the seventh century, when ecclesiastical and political separation marred the Caucasus, was marked with the collapse of a doctrinal union. Just as for the majority of the Eastern Churches, the last two centuries were formative for the Caucasian religious identities: specific Christological stands and theologies were proclaimed and political aspirations and theology were inextricably interwoven. On a smaller scale, this period was defined by the establishment not only of Christological positions for the three Caucasian Churches but also political stands arose, this being the age both of unity and of the separation of the Churches of Albania, Armenia and Iberia.⁵ For introduction's sake, we can reproduce Step'anos Orbelean's (13th c.) summary of the period which is both graphic and elegant in that it reflects every misunderstanding and intentional or unintentional blunder that the period in question could produce. For Step'anos it was a time of tribulations, changes and formations:

In those days, there were numerous tumults among the Romans, Iberians and Armenians, discords, divisions, controversies, quarrels, misunderstandings and rebellions against the divine regulations, sometimes because of Chalcedon, sometimes because of the nine ranks of the Church, sometimes because of the Iberian claims and their instigation of the Albanians to distance themselves from the

Sakartvelo. It is true that *Sakartvelo* is a later term, but this does not necessarily indicate a higher understanding of Georgian unity. Henceforth I shall be using *Iberia* when speaking specifically about east-central Georgia and Lazika, and Egrisi or Apxazeti when speaking of western Georgia in respective periods.

⁵ The remembrance of ethno-religious identities resulted in a particular myth. In Soviet and post-Soviet scholarship, for obvious political reasons, a special need arose in the Caucasian states to argue for a continuity of the existence of statehood, or even more of nation-states in the region. One example is the upheaval of Albanian studies in modern Azerbaijan that served the needs of arguing an uninterrupted continuity of the existence of statehood on Azerbaijani soil. The same refers to Georgia, where Georgian scholars like to present the entire history of Georgia as an uninterrupted continuity of the state of Georgia both in antiquity, in Late Antiquity and in the Middle Ages. The same processes existed and still exist in Armenia – on the one hand the lacuna in our knowledge of ethno-confessional shifts at the outset of Middle Ages, and on the other hand, an implicitly different understanding of nationhood by the medieval authors and by modernity led to the creation of these myths. For this reason the above discussed issue of the use of ethnic and confessional determinants was used. For a discussion on the nationalistic narratives in the Caucasus, see Garagozov, “Narratives”, 52-98; Zekiyan, “Subcaucasian Region”, 329-361.

Armenians and also because of the pride of the Bishop of Mardpetakan. Because of this, numerous councils were held and intense allusions [made] to the divine Testaments.⁶

Despite such a decisive role that this period played in medieval and contemporary Caucasian consciousness, our knowledge of the doctrinal situation in the Caucasus during the sixth century has not advanced firmly in the aftermath of the first Armeno-Georgian polemics. Developments in Iberia are unclear due to the absence of a contemporary Georgian voice. Understandably, even less clear is the situation in Albania.⁷ Hence we are left to judge according to Armenian univocal testimonies. Consequently, the lacuna in contemporary and medieval knowledge of the doctrinal relations between the Georgian and Armenian Churches prior to the “schism” still affects the interpretation of all subsequent events. Hence, the following dissertation is an examination of what, in terms of modern literary theory, could be called the *chronotope* of the narrative of the Caucasian schism, the so-called, *erlebte Zeit* and *belebter Raum* of the narrative of unity and separation.⁸ And of how the phenomenon of the schism became an interpretive schema for the medieval South Caucasian intellectuals in their evaluation of the *status quo* of the Armeno-Georgian relations and for contemporary scholars in their attempts to perceive the same problematic.

Perceptions of unity and separation remained deeply-set in the consciousness of the South Caucasian peoples. The shadow of the schism persisted in the relations between Armenians and Georgians and it strongly determined current knowledge of Caucasian Late Antiquity. It may be a truism to say that what we imagine to know of the religious history of Late Antique Caucasus is largely determined by what people in the tenth to thirteenth century wished themselves to know about the past. A common assumption and narrative framework devised in the Middle Ages, in terms of absence of specific knowledge is that, for centuries, even for millennia, the three Caucasian cultures and then Churches developed synchronically,

⁶ SO II, 99: Բայց զի եղեն յայսմ ժամանակի բազում խրովութիւնք և մեծամեծ յուզմունք ի Հռոմոց, ի Վրաց, և ի մեջ Հայոց՝ երկպառակութիւնք, բաժանմունք, վեճք, աղմուկք, շփոթմունք, նշկահմունք աստուածային օրինացն, երբեմն վասն Քաղկեդոնի ժողովոյն. երբեմն վասն ինն դասուց եկեղեցւոյ, երբեմն Վրաց մեծաբանութիւն և թնակոխումն ի վերայ Աղվանից. վասն որոյ և դառնալ Աղվանից ի Հայոց, հպարտանալ և Մարդպետական եպիսկոպոսին և անկումն ի պատուոյն: Սակս որոյ բազում ժողով և ուժեղ քննութիւն աստուածային կտակարանաց.

⁷ Some studies on Late Antique Caucasian Albania may be found in Anassian, “Albanie”, 299-330; Bais, *Albania Caucasia*, 103-145; Bunyatov, *Azerbaijan*; Dumezil, “Albaniens”, 125-132; Gejušev, *Christianity*; Mamedov, *Albania and Atropatena*, 47-75; Mamedova, *Caucasian Albania*, 540-565; For an overview of the relevant studies, see Trever, “Caucasian Albania”, 16-55; on the Albanian Church history, see Trever, “Albanian Church”, 65-94.

⁸ Assman, *Erinnerung*, 38-39.

constituting a kind of a single body, only to diverge in the early seventh century, when a major scandal, the Caucasian ecclesiastical schism occurred. The often advocated modern scholarly narrative elaborates further that since the separation from each other's communion, the two cultures started to diverge and moreover, to antagonize. Since the early seventh century, the Georgians began to construct their "national" culture and history, to forge their national remembrance, a remembrance that could be called Georgian, i.e. not Armenian and which was supposed to become an alternative to the Armenian *recherche du temps perdu*.⁹ The "schism" is accredited with the creation of "nationalistic" narratives *vis-à-vis* each other hereby the "post schism" Georgian identity was generally perceived as "non or anti-Armenian". Moreover, according to the same framework, immediately after the schism, the Georgians began to nail down their "national" histories.¹⁰ The "innovations" in Georgian church tradition are attributed to the famous Katholikos K'yrion, who was either the protagonist or the antagonist, depending on one's point of view, of the debates among the Caucasian churches in the early seventh century. Acquiring a highly dogmatic role in the Armenian narrative, the *schism* or *separation* is, on the other hand, entirely absent in the medieval Georgian literature. The separation is neither recorded, nor remembered, nor alluded to in medieval Georgian tradition. Moreover, Katholikos K'yrion simply vanished from the centre stage of the Georgians' vision of their own history, not being remembered or commemorated.¹¹

Almost all aspects of Christian culture in this period were studied from the viewpoint of the schism and under the assumption that until that specific moment the Caucasian churches and cultures in general developed contemporaneously and only after the notorious events of the early seventh century the Georgians

⁹ For discussion on the term *nation* in the context of other medieval communities see Brock, "Christians"; Kłoczowski, "Church and Nation", 47-57; McLoughlin, "Nations and Loyalties", 39-47; Walsh, "Two Nations", 81-99; Abrahamian, *Identity*, 137-153; for a detailed overview of the problem of Armenian identity and history of nationhood, see van Lint, "Identity", 251-275. R. Panossian offers his definition of nation and nationhood particularly in the Armenian realm, in *Armenians*, 12-32. See, also, Ferrari's understanding of the pre-modern Armenian nationhood as of an "Azg structured on a communality of language, territory, religion, as well as shared memories and traditions, in the first place those of descent from the mythical ancestor, Hayk". Ferrari, *Alla frontiera*, 16. See van Lint's comment, in "Identity", 253-354.

¹⁰ Rapp reiterates this claim on numerous occasions. See, e.g., Rapp, *Studies*, 170-171.

¹¹ L. Zekiyan's closing paragraph of his article on Armeno-Georgian separation is an elegant rhetorical statement, but as I hope the subsequent pages will demonstrate, lacking of historical support. "La tâche de mener à bien cette évolution, avec fermeté et clairvoyance, était réservée au catholicos Kvirion. Son nom s'inscrit assurément au rang de ces personnages exemplaires qui tiennent une place spéciale dans l'histoire de leur peuple, dont ils contribuent à forger l'esprit en y empruntant un sceau distinctif et durable. La civilisation chrétienne de la Géorgie, en ce qu'elle a de plus authentique et d'original, lui doit certainement beaucoup". Zekiyan, "Rupture", 174.

broke away. Expressions such as “pre-schismal and post-schismal Georgian literature” have been coined and comparative Armeno-Georgian studies have looked at the development of Church architecture, liturgy, theology and literature within the general framework of “before and after the schism”.¹² At the outset of the seventh century, the rule of K‘yron of Mcxeta and Armenian Katholikos Abraham (607–15) was, and often still is, considered to be the ultimate watershed in the formation of Christian Caucasian cultures and identities.

Consequently the word *schism* became synonymous with reference to the late sixth-early seventh century processes. The word itself is not especially problematic; it may mean any kind of separation.¹³ But in this case it still carries the rather dubious connotation of a hierarchical separation, of a breakaway from a metropoly, a withdrawing of obedience by one Church from another mainly by political or hierarchical reasons.¹⁴ For centuries the severance of the Armenians and the Georgians was considered to be the single most important event in the history of Caucasian Late Antiquity, one that affected further cultural and political development of the South Caucasian kingdoms of Armenia and Iberia and to a certain extent of Albania. This was at least how most medieval Armenian intellectuals understood the schism. For them it implied the undermining of a single hierarchy or of some pan-Caucasian Church organization which had been sabotaged by the “disgraced” Georgian Katholikos K‘yron. This assessment of the separation as a cataclysmal breakaway was strongly advocated by medieval Armenian historiographers, each serving his own ideological purposes, whereas Georgians saw it merely as an Armenian apostasy from Orthodoxy. Even the headings of the two most important medieval accounts of the separation demonstrate polarized attitudes. For the eleventh century Georgian Katholikos Arseni of Sapara what happened was a *Separation of the*

¹² See Rapp, *Studies*, 124; See also Babian’s outline of the Schism, in *Relations*, 183-251.

¹³ For the study of the word schism and its implications, see Greenslade, *Schism*, 15-37. On its national character, see *Ibid*, 58-74.

¹⁴ See *infra*, pp. 115-129; Greenslade, *Schism*; Lemerle, “Schisme”, 228-246.

*Armenians and the Georgians*¹⁵ whereas for the tenth century Armenian Bishop Uxtanēs of Sebastia it was rather a *Separation of the Georgians from the Armenians*.¹⁶

In my opinion the “schism” was much less influential on the formation of “national traditions” in the Caucasus, than say, creation of multiethnic kingdoms in the Caucasus, the Georgian adoption of Constantinopolitan rites and the increase in the influence of Byzantium over Georgia via various Georgian monastic centres abroad. I uphold that the schism was and still is wrongly understood and bears too heavy a burden of liminality. Thereafter I propose to eschew the lens of the schism in our reading Late Antique and Early Medieval religious, ideological and ethnic transformations. It is not my intention to advance a certain kind of French Annales School method of *longe durée* here, although I firmly oppose a *histoire événementielle* reading of this period in Caucasian history. Not only are liminalist or eventualist readings in principle erroneous, but they are also ideologically determined by both medieval and modern narratives.

Such is the narrative that I shall attempt to deconstruct on the following pages and indeed the medieval and to a certain extent modern narrative of the schism, of the unity and separation in the Caucasus had a specific *chronotope*. The schism acquired a specific mythical chronology and geography. For this very reason the sixth century is probably one of the most complex periods in the Caucasian history. It is not the absence of the sources where the complex nature of the period lies, but on the contrary the high degree of interest that resided in this period for Armenian historiography and medieval consciousness.

0.2. CHAPTER SUMMARIES

The first chapter examines the period which is usually immediately associated with the schism – the sixth and early seventh century. Here the main question is what do we actually know about the doctrinal and ecclesiastic history of the sixth century Caucasus? Moreover, how knowable this situation is at all? I shall be looking at the epistolary documents emanating immediately from the scandalous events of the early seventh century and thereby attempting to show what these letters actually convey to us and what the nature of the

¹⁵ For the edition, see AS, 77-94, for study and commentary, see *ibid.*, 15-76, 94-198; For the facsimile reproduction and French translation of the text and commentary on the AS, see AS-Fr, 59-132.

¹⁶ For editions, see US I, US II, for English translation, see US-Eng.

“separation” was. I believe that our understanding of some of the liminal events of the period, such as the so-called First Council of Dwin (506), the Second Council of Dwin (555) and finally the Caucasian schism is in a certain way misconstrued. If we make a thorough examination we shall discover that the layers through which we are forced to look at the “beginnings” of the Christian Caucasian cultures are multiple, thick and abounding in misconceptions.

Apart from its theological value, the documents emanating from the so-called first Council of Dwin (506) are important as they are first recorded instance when the Caucasian people and churches documented their common confessional position. Moreover, this is the period from which the same churches started remembering or recollecting their mutual past. It is my belief that the Caucasus, or as we call it now the Christian Caucasus was a concept made and remembered when the Albanian, Armenian and Georgian sides had to defend their positions and their views of their united or separate past. Secondly, the medieval authors perceive this period and the entire sixth century as that of union and accord between the three Caucasian. Even now, as a result of a strong conceptualization of the schism, the “union” is also sometimes viewed as a valid historical concept without a clear knowledge of what this union actually meant.¹⁷

The second chapter analyzes the remembrance of the same period in medieval Armenian and Georgian historical consciousness, how the schism was remembered in “official” and “unofficial” or popular memories of the South Caucasian peoples and what role did this remembrance play and still plays. Also, in frames of the *chronotope* of the schism, this chapter shall look at the “times of the schism” at how historical chronology was perceived and how time was related to the event. As a case study, as substantial subchapter will be dedicated to Movsēs Kałankatwac‘i’s testimony and how his view concerning the Caucasian schism underwent a number of interpolations and amendments thus changing the very paradigm of the meaning of the Caucasian schism.

If the third chapter deals with the *chronoi* part of the *chronotope*, the third chapter focuses on the *topoi*. Hence the general question raised is: What is the geography of the discourse of the schism? Where was the

¹⁷ See Babian’s chapter heading, in *Relations* where the history of Armeno-Georgian relations is divided as *Unity* and *Schism*.

narrative of the schism construed and where did it happen? With Arab dominance in the Caucasus and, more importantly, with its eventual decline drastic geo-political transformations occurred in the Caucasus that strongly shifted the cultural and political centrifuges. Between ninth and eleventh centuries every South Caucasian political entity, whether Christian or Muslim, was involved in the struggle for power in the Caucasus, and this was accompanied equally by ardent political rhetoric. In the late eighth century the Georgian political locus shifted from the central Caucasus, occupying the territories of T'ao and K'laržeti where the Kingdom of the Georgians was established. Here two of the largest ethnic groups of Georgians and Armenians held very close ties which resulted in reshaping of ethnic, religious and ethno-religious identities on the Armeno-Georgian marchlands.¹⁸ Later, after the second half of the eleventh century, the Georgian Bagrat'ionis took the upper hand over the Caucasus and the Kingdom of the Georgians incorporated also the so-called northern Armenia. This trajectory spearheaded the creation of corresponding rhetoric and the writing and rewriting of histories.¹⁹ This was the period of intensive remembrance, evocation, commemoration and finally forgery of the beginnings.²⁰ Throughout the history of Armeno-Georgian relations, the marchlands T'ao/Tayk' and Gugark'/Lower Kartli suffered a kind of a dichotomy: on the one hand they have always been and still remain apple of discord and on the other some of the most clear attempts of inclusion of these two peoples were carried out there. Hence the *loci memoriae* of the regions will be examined.

The final chapter is a rather broad case study. The main question is, how did the contemporary scholarship conceptualize the schism and what other aspects of the history of the South Caucasian people

¹⁸ See C. Toumanoff's study of these marchlands in *Studies*, 437-499.

¹⁹ The history of Armeno-Georgian philology in the respective countries is a subject that requires a dissertation on its own. The term, "Armeno-Georgian philology" was coined by N. Marr. See Marr, "Armeno-Georgian philology", 15-29; Almost all key questions and problems were tackled by scholars over the past century and a half when proper study of the common Armenian and Georgian historical problematic was undertaken.

²⁰ On the sixth century Christological debates P. Gray writes: "Whether or not reconstruction enabled either side to convince the other was to a certain extent irrelevant. The reconstruction of the past was necessary for each side so that it could assure itself that its vision of monolithic orthodoxy was not innovation, but simply the perpetuation of the authentic tradition of the authoritative Fathers. To put it another way, to progress towards the monolithic theological position that was emerging as Orthodoxy in the sixth century, while maintaining an ideological insistence on the authority of the past, theologians had no choice but to reconstruct the past in some way. In that sense forgery was, very clearly, an essential instrument of progress ... The use of forgery as a means to reconstruct the past in times which are ideologically opposed to accepting the necessity of moving beyond ancient tradition is, of course, no novelty in human history". Gray, "Forgery", 289.

were affected by such a conceptualization. The problem of the Christianization of the region, the creation of national literacies and the problem of the ethnic and religious identities shall be examined. All of these have been often abused by the erroneous conceptualization of the schism. The problem of ethnic and religious identities in the Caucasus in the early Middle Ages, formed during several centuries after the religious separation, is one of the most blurred, ideologized, compromised and abused chapters of the region's history. Here too the ghost of the Caucasian schism wanders throughout the research of the Medieval Caucasus. It has been argued, quite erroneously, that the religious separation between Armenians and Georgians resulted in an immediate and mutual antagonism, that affected culture, politics and "national" identities. That from the seventh century onwards both Georgians and Armenians began to rewrite their respective histories, the former trying to eliminate the role of the latter and the latter disregarding the former. A number of medieval literary pieces have been studied through that very prism. There is no doubt that some of this took place but not as an immediate consequence of the schism and not as candidly as has been maintained.

On the one hand it will be argued that modern discourse on Late Antique Caucasian studies (and this includes not only Armenian and Georgian scholarship but also non-Caucasian scholarship on the Caucasus) was shaped and predetermined in the polemical language of medieval South Caucasus. On the other hand, contemporary scholars tend to project their experience of modern national and nationalistic discourse on the medieval narrative and on its interpretation. Put another way, writers often erroneously expect that the "nationalist" feelings and the "nationalist" interpretation of one's past were in principle, the same in the Middle Ages. Hence, modern Caucasian studies are heirs to the medieval polemics yet divorced from medieval aspirations. Armeno-Georgian scholarship, being strongly affected by a medieval perception of the same events, often suffers from an ideologized misrepresentation of the consequences of ecclesiastic separation in the Caucasus. I am convinced that today and indeed throughout the whole of the twentieth century we are witnesses of a formation compatible to that in the Middle Ages, when ideological demands lead to the rewriting of history. It is a fact that nationalistic rhetoric in historiography that is being created today, but to ascribe modern nationalistic narrative to the Middle Ages is in principle wrong. It should not be

assumed that perceptions in Late Antiquity (up to the Middle Ages) are essentially the same as those of the Middle Ages or of Late Antiquity held by modern nationalistic narratives.

0.3. REMEMBRANCE AND FORGETTING

Latterly memory, or remembrance, is one of the most popular aspects in the philosophy of history and phenomenology. Both the effort to recall, the *anamnesis*, the effortful brining to the surface of the mind of things otherwise latent or seemingly forgotten, and *mneme*, “the simple evocation”, or “the persistence within the mind of impressions formed at an earlier moment” will be of our interest.²¹ Indeed, the tenth to the thirteenth centuries was a period of active recollection with attempts at creating new remembrances and in many cases of forging memories.²² It is also widely accepted that remembering is inextricably coupled with forgetting. It follows, therefore that any attempt at recollection is the result of forgetting and in some cases of active forgetting or of an effort to forget. Forgetting will be of special interest when turning to the Georgian case, as the curious circumstance of almost complete neglect of one’s religious past has to be explained in some way or another. Along the same lines I shall propose to speak of the two modes of forgetting, neither of which is fully super-imposable on remembering but will contribute to the clarification of our subject matter: forgetting as something inevitable as a general phenomenon, something that always runs along with remembering, and forgetting as an intentional act.²³ There is, in addition, “luxury to forget”, as opposed to, what P. Ricoeur calls, “struggling against forgetting, wrestling a few scraps of memory from the rapacity of time, from sinking into oblivion”.²⁴ Intentional forgetting, if we may at all speak of forgetting as an action and not only passivity, has its aspects: forgetting as an act of exclusion and forgetting as an act of inclusion. In modern discourse these are tolerance or pardon. Medieval “tolerance” is, of course, neither understood as a modern value, nor a sort of a “Córdoba dream” but yet another mode of rhetoric. Through acts of

²¹ See, e.g., Cubitt, *History and Memory*, 75; Ricoeur, *Memory*, 19.

²² I will not put too much pressure on the phenomenological differentiation of the notions of remembrance and imagination, although I am fully aware of their radically different locations in epistemology. On the opposition of memory and imagination, see Ricoeur, *Memory*, 5-56; Casey, *Remembering*, 1-20. Similarly, differentiation between a forgery and an act of memory is equally problematic, despite this, throughout the thesis forgery and act of remembrance or of creation of remembrance will be taken as overlapping phenomena.

²³ This second type of forgetting was thoroughly studied by P. Ricoeur in a number of his works. See, for example, Duffy, *Paul Ricoeur*, 46-59, 78-105.

²⁴ Ricoeur, *Memory*, 30.

remembering we will see how religious and national identities were formed, based on a remembrance of Late Antiquity. For as J. Droysen put it:

Die historische Forschung setzt die Reflexion voraus, dass auch der Inhalt unseres Ichs ein vermittelter, gewordener, ein historisches Resultat ist. Die anerkannte Tatsache der Vermittlung ist die Erinnerung.²⁵

In summarizing my understanding of Caucasian history, I could refer to P. Geary, when he spoke about a completely different context, namely Carolingian Europe:

What is most interesting is not primarily the rate of change itself, or how such change should be quantified or classified, but why and how generations perceived discontinuity, and how these perceptions continued to influence the patterns of thought for a thousand years.²⁶

Indeed, the history of the Caucasus in Late Antiquity was perceived and acknowledged by both medieval Armenian and Georgian authors, though in different ways, as a sum of transitional events and moments that absorbed in itself all other developments.

²⁵ Droysen, *Historik*, 325; see, also, Patzel-Mattern, *Erinnerung*, 50.

²⁶ Geary, *Phantoms*, 25.

CHAPTER ONE: THE SCHISM

“Such is the faith that the Romans,
we the Armenians,
the Iberians and the Albanians profess”
Katholikos Babgēn

“Do you remember that you came to stay
under the protection of our holy cathedral?”
*Katholikos Abraham
to Katholikos K‘yron*

1.1. *STATUS QUAESTIONIS*

The single event which strongly determined the medieval and modern readings of Late Antique Caucasian history was the so-called “ecclesiastical schism” of the late sixth-early seventh century. The process of mutual alienation or of the finalization of separation, between the Armenian and Georgian Churches is probably the most richly documented event in Caucasian Church history, reported in numerous letters exchanged among the participants in the controversy. All contemporary documents reflecting this process are incorporated in, and constitute the core of the *Book of Letters*, a collection of the correspondence of the Armenian ecclesiastical and lay hierarchs with neighbouring churches.²⁷ They were re-edited later in the tenth century by Bishop Uxtanēs of Sebastia²⁸ and on all possible occasions alluded to by the medieval Armenian polemicists.²⁹

On the one hand the accumulation of polarized doctrinal and more importantly political aspirations triggered a robust scandal, and on the other, the remembrance of this scandal affected and still affects the

²⁷ For some studies on the textual history and transmission of the collection, see Melikset-Bek, “Liber Epistolarum”, 263-269; Schmidt, “Buch der Briefe”, 511-533, also commentary to GT‘ II, 09-014. The debates between the Georgians and the Armenians can be considered as the central part of the entire collection around which the *Book of Letters* as we know it was formed. One of the later manuscripts (19th c.), kept at the National Centre of Manuscripts of Georgia contains only the correspondence between Katholikos Abraham and Katholikos K‘yron.

²⁸ On this author, see Brosset, “Oukhtanes”, 157-171; Kolanjyan, “Uxtanēs”, 397-413.

²⁹ The problem of the authenticity of these letters has not been sufficiently discussed, although warnings had already been given by Uxtanēs, the earliest known editor of the *Book of Letters*, to the effect that we must expect interpolations or in some cases even total elimination of certain letters, especially those from the Georgians. According to his own words, Uxtanēs had carefully studied various manuscripts of the *Book of Letters* and had tried to sort out what was missing and what was present. See commentary to US II, 36-37.

interpretation of almost all related previous and subsequent events. The dialectic of the two, of the original sources and the constructed image of the schism, will attract our primary attention. Therefore before embarking upon a study of the role of the Schism in the mediaeval remembrance of Late Antiquity, it will make sense to have a look at the schism itself and the documents that, we more or less agree, reflect the immediate processes. While remembrance is our primary subject, this most dramatic page in Caucasian Church history was also opened by an act of remembrance or rather by that of forgetting. A major scandal broke out between the Armenians and Georgians on the verge of the sixth and seventh centuries, when Movsēs the Armenian bishop of Curt'avi was expelled from his diocese by the Georgians. The bishop wrote to the *locum tenens* of the Armenian patriarchal throne, Vrt'anēs K'erdoł (604–7):

I ask you the following, my Lord: I fully appropriated and copied the book of blessed Timothy [Aeluros] and copied all of the letters that can be found in that holy Church and with you.³⁰ Other letters also reached me in fullness from various places that expose and anathematize the council of the diphysites. But after the eradication of the definitions of that Jewish Council by the blessed emperors Zeno and Anastasius, I could not discover anywhere in what manner or by whom the new teaching re-emerged and brought down so many churches. May your holiness tell and write to my humbleness whatever he might know concerning this.³¹

This inquiry by Movsēs is indeed the first instance in Armenian literature when lack of historical record concerning the Christian doctrine is referred to as a problem. The issue centred on what had happened during the previous one hundred years, from the time of the supposed “eradication” of the Chalcedonian error by the blessed Emperors Zeno and Anastasius. The historical ignorance of a provincial bishop may be more or less understandable, but the lengthy answer by Vrt'anēs about this enquiry, is no less incompetent, being full of pious legends and lacking particular knowledge of concrete developments. Vrt'anēs narrates at length about the Emperors Justin (518–27) and Justinian (527–65), without even mentioning the Second Council of Constantinople or any of the accompanying events that would have fostered the Chalcedonian “regeneration”

³⁰ For the Armenian translation of Timothy Aeluros and study, see Lebon, “Timothée Elure”, 713-720; Rucker, “Timotheus Aelurus”, 699-722; Schmidt, “Refutatio”, 149-165.

³¹ GT' I, 140; GT' II, 44; GT' III, 283: Եւ զայս ևս աղաչեմ զՏէր. զգիրս երանելոյն Տիմոթէոսի բովանդակ ստացայ. և թուղթք որ ի սուրբ եկեղեցւոջ և առ ձեզ գտան զամենայն գրեցի: Հասին առ իս և այլ թուղթք բովանդակ տեղաց տեղաց երանելի վարդապետացն որք յանդիմանեն և նգովն զժողով երկաբնակացն: Բայց յետ ի բաց բարձութեան սահմանի հրեական ժողովոյն. բարեպաշտ թագաւորացն երանելոյն Ջենոնին և Անաստասայ. ոչ գտի ուրեք, թէ որպէս դարձեալ նորոգաձևութիւնն շարժեալ կործանեաց զբազում եկեղեցիս, և կամ ի ձեռն որոց. որպէս տեղեկացեալ է սրբութիւնդ ձեր, հրամանայեցեք զրել առ մեր նուաստութիւն:

in the region. Neither is there provided an account of the Armenian reaction against Chalcedon or of any Armenian council convened against the Chalcedonians.³² Impression that one gets when reading this correspondence is that following the “anti-Chalcedonian” decrees of the blessed emperors, nothing happened either in the Empire or, which is more astonishing in Armenia proper.

The above-quoted letter by Movsēs, one of the very first in the *Book of Letters*, written over one hundred years after the first documented attestation of the doctrinal position of the Armenian Church by Katholikos Babgēn in 506, can be considered as symptomatic.³³ Throughout over a decade of disputation between Georgians and Armenians (c.595–608), reminding and forgetting became leitmotifs in the debates. Remembering, or rather its lack, of the very beginnings of the Chalcedonian controversy, the nature of union of the “brotherly” Churches and people during some “one hundred years” was the cornerstone of a contention that was never to be overcome between Georgians and Armenians.³⁴ Despite numerous references to the old days of brotherly union between the two people, there is not a single mention of any common activity or decision, or of knowledge, of how the “Chalcedonian heresy” penetrated the region. The only point of reference is one rather mysterious document, an “Act” of an equally mysterious council, which is cited regularly in the debates and was allegedly composed over one hundred years before the controversy as an affirmation of the pan-Caucasian unity in faith.

1.2. ‘THE DAYS OF OUR BLESSED FATHERS’

Understandably, for there to have been a schism or a separation there must also have been a prior union. But just as the concept of *schism* became an ideological construct, so was the same fate shared by the concepts *union*, or *unity* or even *oneness* of the Armenian and Georgian Churches. The Georgian and Armenian sources differ radically in this matter. The same applies to modern scholarship – Armenians try to assert perpetual superiority of their Church over the Georgian and the Georgians attempt to reject completely

³² GT¹ I, 141-145; GT¹ II, 44-52; GT¹ III, 285-291. See also Garsoïan, *L'Église*, 540-544.

³³ For Babgēn's letters and the so-called First Council of Dwin, see *infra* pp. 33-46

³⁴ See *infra* pp. 33-35.

any dependence upon the Armenian at any point in history.³⁵ During the controversy the basic argument or instrument employed by both sides, and especially by the Armenian, was remembrance – remembrance of the days of “our blessed fathers” when Georgians and Armenians lived in peace with each other and professed a single faith, remembrance of unity and of accord. But the nature of this “union” lacked precision; tokens of this unity failed to appear for at least one century. The main framework within which the debates developed was – “do you remember?” and “we do remember”, often by alluding to common *loci memoriae*, places of both memory and of forgetting, such as the martyrion of St Šušānik, who had allegedly established a common service for both Armenians and Georgians, the Holy Cross of Mcxeta, where the Armenian pilgrims would travel worship; and the Holy Cathedral in Dwin, where the Georgians would do the same, and so on.³⁶ Problems arose when it turned out that both parties remembered the same thing, that is to say, that there once was a union, but the recollection of its nature differed radically. For the Armenians it was a long history of an anti-Chalcedonian stand while for the Georgians it was the union with the five patriarchates.

The disputes between Georgians and Armenians took on the form of accusations and responses. The Armenian side initiated the correspondence while the Georgian side, specifically Katholikos K‘yron, responded. The accusations that the Armenians set forward were manifold and diverse: They claimed that K‘yron had expelled an Armenian bishop from the bilingual and multiethnic Diocese of Curt‘avi, the main city of the long-disputed land of Gugareti/Gugark‘, and thus betrayed the centuries of union with the Armenians; that K‘yron had accepted a *Xužik* Nestorian in his church and even installed him as bishop;³⁷ that K‘yron was a latent Chalcedonian; and finally, K‘yron had betrayed his loyalty to the Persian king thus committing a major political offence. The Armenian hierarchs were accusing K‘yron of betraying the existing brotherhood, in the first place by expelling an ethnic Armenian bishop. But such accusation raise some insurmountable difficulties, for example, when the opponents speak of former brotherhood, of mutual love and respect, did they speak about a union or unity in terms of hierarchy or in terms of confessional union? If

³⁵ Babian’s book is to my mind an apt example. See Babian, *Relations*, 1-30.

³⁶ GT‘ I, 164, 178-179; GT‘ II, 66-67, 88-90; GT‘ III, 316-317, 336-337. The Cross of Mcxeta, also known as the Cross of Nino, remained as a *locus memoriae* in subsequent traditions as well. For discussion, see *infra*, pp. 181-188.

³⁷ This accusation is the first if we take into consideration the letter of Katholikos Movsēs to K‘yron, which was allegedly discovered by Uxtanēs in Tbilisi. Otherwise the controversy broke out with the expulsion of the Armenian Bishop Movsēs from his diocese in Georgia.

it were a confessional union, was it in terms of opposition to Chalcedon? These allegations of Katholikos Movsēs and later Abraham triggered off an impetuous exchange of letters between the Armenian authorities and K‘yron. The first letter of Katholikos Abraham to Katholikos K‘yron reminded him that:

Earlier our blessed patriarch Movsēs wrote you a blame for your communion with those, with whom it is not permissible. You took an oath in letters and by law that you would not separate from the communion with our land. And now most evil and gravest news has reached us. The Church of C‘urtaw was protecting the unity of faith and was hosting both of our lands and with firmness kept it ... where love, kinship and spiritual communion was performed ... From here people would travel to the Cross of Mxeta and from there – to the holy Cathedral. And now the Bishop of C‘urtaw is persecuted, [they say] why are you confessing the orthodox faith?! And I also heard that you have altered the Armenian service [*paštawn hayeren*], established by Saint Šušanik. We considered this greater evil than death itself.³⁸

This letter, similar to many others, raised a significant problem and certainly the most controversial, that is the relations between the Armenian and Georgian Churches before the early seventh century. The Armenian tradition, much more sensitive about the issue, and also more eager than the Georgians to keep alive the memory of the “schism”, elaborated a number of explanations for the separation. These became more and more widespread after the tenth century. By this time, the Armenians had to argue that not only the Georgians left the communion with the Armenians but, moreover, they, being hierarchically subject to the Armenian Church, rebelled against them. This argument, formed and augmented throughout the tenth to thirteenth centuries, became the banner of the Armenian position, and especially in the northern parts of the country.³⁹ Such a reading of the events was seemingly supported by the correspondence itself. At one point Katholikos Movsēs reminded K‘yron that not only the Georgians and the Armenians held the same faith, but K‘yron himself was partly educated in Armenia and from there he was sent to occupy the throne of the Katholikos of Iberia:

³⁸ GT‘ I, 164; GT‘ II, 66-67; GT‘ III, 316-317: Յառաջագոյն երանելի հայրապետն մեր Մովսէս գրեաց առ ձեզ մեղադրութիւն յաղագս հաղորդելոյն ձեր ընդ այնոսիկ՝ ընդ որս չէր պարս. Եւ ձեր գրով և պատգամաւորաւ յանձն էր առեալ, չհեռանալ ի միաբանական հաւատոյ հաղորդութենէ աշխարհիս մերոյ: Այժմ՝ զչարագոյնն և զձանրագոյնն մեզ եհաս լսել, զի միաւորութիւն հաւատոյ, և զասպնջականութիւն զերկուցունց աշխարհաց Յուրտաւայ եկեղեցին անշարժ միջնորդութեամբ պահէր, ուստի սէր և խնամութիւնք մարմնաւորականք և հաղորդութիւնք հոգևորականք կատարէին ցնծալից ուրախութեամբ: Աստի, ի Մծխիթայի ի Խաչն գալով. և այտի՝ ի Սուրբ Կաթողիկէ: Այժմ՝ զՅուրտաւայ զեպիսկոպոսն հալածեալ, թէ ընդէ՞ր խոստովանել հրամայես [GT‘ I: հրամայեն], զհաւատ ուղղափառութեան, և զպաշտանն հայերէն սրբոյ Շուշանկան զկարգաւորեալն՝ լսեմ, թէ ի բաց փոխեցէք: Մեզ մահուչափ և ևս չարագոյն թուեցաւ գործդ այդ: The former love and peace is also brought up by Marzpan Smbat in his letter to K‘yron with a plea to live as “our fathers used to live”. See GT‘ I, 169; GT‘ II, 74; GT‘ III, 74.

³⁹ See *infra* e.g. the subchapter on Movsēs Kałankatwac‘i’s testimony, pp. 115-128.

Remember that you came to stay under the protection of our Holy Cathedral and that you have served with fidelity and spiritual service and we, having confidence in you, through love towards you, have fulfilled your wish having installed you as the leader [*arajnord*] there, in your land. For even though you were originally by race and living from that land, you separated from it long time ago and alienated, living in the land of the Romans.⁴⁰

K'yron does not reject this argument; on the contrary, at the outset of the correspondence he behaves most humbly. But K'yron never admitted to a unilateral reverence and every time he was reminded of his position, he would raise a counter-argument. For example as soon as he was reminded that Georgians used to worship in Dwin, he reminded Marzpan Smbat Bagratuni that he was nurtured and raised in the presence of the Holy Cross of Mxeta and such was the tradition.⁴¹ K'yron repeated with a firm persistence over and over again:

Now as what concerns that which has been written on the subject of faith, that both your fathers and ours held the same faith from the time when Saint Gregory established the Orthodox religion, which he had learned in Jerusalem, this indeed remains both your faith and ours without error. But if that Movsēs understands it in a different way and you wish to trust him and introduce novelty, we shall not listen to him for we shall not abandon what we had learned. For our churches are established in this way, just as the Church of C'urtaw was, is and will be. Nor have we altered the Church service in any way.⁴²

⁴⁰ GT^c II, 128; GT^c III, 225: Յիշեալ՝ զի եկիր, բնակեցար ընդ հովանեաւ սրբոյ Կայթուղիկէիս, և ծառայեցեր միամտութեամբ սրտի քո ի ձեռն հոգևոր ծառայութեանն՝ որ քեզ հաւատացաւ ի մէջ. և մեր վստահացեալ ի կեանս քո՝ առ սեր քո՝ արարաք զկամս քո՝ Առաջնորդ զքեզ կացուցանելով աշխարհիդ այդմիկ, զի թեպէտ և էիր ազգաւ և բնակութեամբ յաշխարհէդ, այլ վաղ ուրեմն հեռացեալ և աւտարացեալ ի Հռոմայեցոցն վարեցար աշխարհ: Uxatnēs's claims that he had discovered in Tbilisi two letters missing from the original *Book of Letters* kept by Priest Kirakos and had translated them from the Georgian: the very first letter of Katholikos Movsēs to Katholikos K'yron and the response by the latter. See US-Eng, 48. The alleged discovery of the missing letters in Tbilisi in the Georgian language in the tenth century remains dubious. As we shall see, memory even of K'yron's personality was very vague in medieval Georgia. Furthermore, the letters somewhat too conveniently contain some of the most polemical passages from the whole of the *Book of Letters*, which are not to be found anywhere else. These letters are indeed missing from all redactions of the *Book of Letters*, but the question of, whether to trust Uxatnēs or not, is to my mind still open. The charges of forgery have been expressed also because of alleged anachronisms in the letters and due to the fact that Uxatnēs could hardly have discovered letters in Georgian that would "undermine the Orthodoxy of the Georgian Church". Tarkhishvili, *Sources*, 43. The editor of GT^c II, Z. Aleksidze does not doubt the authenticity of the letters and includes them as addenda to his edition of the *Book of Letters*. GT^c II, 123-131. Z. Aleksidze bases his argument on a detailed and in depth study of Uxatnēs's editorial technique and polemic aspirations and concludes that he had no reasons to falsify these letters. See GT^c II, 015-025. The 1994 edition also kept the letters. Also J.-P. Mahé does not suspect the letters having been forged. See Mahé, *Rupture*, 939. For a discussion on Movsēs's letters, see also Garsoïan, *L'Église*, 309-310. Indeed doubts are raised but they are not enough to support the claim that the letters are falsified. Therefore, with a reasonable degree of caution, they will be included in the present study. On the date of Uxatnēs's travel to Georgia, see Muskhelishvili, "Uxatnēs's Visit", 20-25.

⁴¹ GT^c I, 171; GT^c II, 79, GT^c III, 327.

⁴² GT^c I, 171; GT^c II, 77-78; GT^c III, 326-327: Եւ այնք, որ վասն հաւատոյ գրեալ էր, թէ հարքն մեր և ձեր միաբան էին յորմէհետէ և սուրբն Գրիգոր զուղղափառ հաւատ կարգեաց, որ յԵրուսաղէմին ուսաւ, զորոյն հաստատեաց, և անսխալ մեր և ձեր հաւատ այդ է: Իսկ եթէ Մովսէսդ այդ այլազգ ընդունի, զոր ոչ ընդունէաք մեք և դուք կամիք դմա հաւանել և նորաձևս առնել. մեք այդմ ոչ հնազանդիմք. վասնզի զոր ինչ ուսաքն ոչ թողումք. քանզի մեր եկեղեցիքս այսպէս հաստատեալ են, նոյնպէս և Յուրտաւայ եկեղեցին,

In almost every single letter exchanged between K‘yron and the Armenians, it is evident that there used to be doctrinal accord between Armenians and Georgians such that it would never be questioned on either side. Whenever K‘yron speaks about his doctrinal position, he never accuses the Armenians in defiance. On the contrary, he maintains that both Georgians and Armenians had and still have the same faith, at the same time affirming the Chalcedonian creed as the cornerstone of his faith. K‘yron stresses the fact that the Georgians hold the “faith of Jerusalem”, but the difference was that for K‘yron this meant allegiance to the five patriarchates whereas for the Armenians it meant the source of faith. For them the Patriarchate of Jerusalem was occupied by heretics.⁴³ K‘yron’s allegiance to the “Oecumenical Church” is attested in his correspondence with Pope Gregory the Great (540–604) and the Patriarch of Jerusalem.⁴⁴ Only in his second letter is his tone much one of irritation and he wonders with what authority the Armenian *katholikos* presumes to have to instruct him on matters of faith. This letter is important in that it epitomises the remembrance of unity on the Georgian side:

As for that Movsēs, when we decided to ordain him as Bishop of C‘urtaw, he should have said: ‘I do not want to be consecrated by you, since you are not Orthodox’. But since he has been consecrated by us, why must he now examine us? Have we since then changed our faith in any way? And those bishops before him in C‘urtaw since the days of St Šušanik [list of the bishops] ... some were from among the Armenians, and some from among the Georgians, who were educated in Armenia, and they were learned scholars and *vardapets*. They and our *vardapets* lived in peace with each other. They learned from each other and taught each other, and we have neither diminished anything from the faith of our forefathers nor have we added anything to it. As for those Armenian noblemen who have entered marriage alliances with the Georgians, they used to arrive to attend the service of St Šušanik and to pray and to receive the Holy Communion in the Holy Cross of Mxeta. In the same way, those who would go from here there, to pray in the Holy Cathedral and in your other churches, they used to receive Holy Communion from each other. And there was unity between Armenians and Georgians, and the unity of this whole lot of the holy lord Gregory⁴⁵ was in accordance with the faith of Jerusalem, by which the Romans are led; and there were no other words or disputes in this. What has given rise to them now? [List of the World Patriarchs and their Sees].⁴⁶

որպէս են և կայր և կայ, և պաշտաւն եկեղեցոյն չէ ինչ փոխեալ կարգն. This passage is corrected according to GT‘ II, whilst GT‘ I and GT‘ III are truncated. For a justification of such reading, see Garsoïan, *L’Église*, 322, fn. 101.

⁴³ Uxtanēs offers an explanation of this paradox. See US II, 132; See also Abraham’s objection to that argument, GT‘ II, 82-88.

⁴⁴ K‘yron apparently wrote a letter to the Patriarch of Jerusalem, which he quoted in his final letter to Abraham.

⁴⁵ Translating the word *vičak* is problematic here as it has various meanings, from a rather general *lot* to a specific *diocese*. An interpretation is dependent on a scholar’s taste. Garsoïan translates it as *jurisdiction* in *L’Église*, 563; Muradyan prefers *diocese* in “Caucasian World”, 17. I think *lot* is contextually a more accurate translation.

⁴⁶ GT‘ I, 178-179; GT‘ II, 88-90; GT‘ III, 336-337: Եւ զայդ Սովսէս, մինչ Յուրտաւայ եպիսկոպոս կամեցաք առնել, դմա պարտ էր ասել, թէ ես ի ձէնջ չարհնիմ, զի չէ[ք] ուղղահաւատ: Մինչ յայնժամ արհնեցաւ ի մէնջ, արդ զի պարտի մեզ քննել. Մի թէ յետ այնր ինչ փոխեցաք զհաւատս: Եւ յառաջ քան զդա եպիսկոպոսունք որ ի Յուրտաւ լեալ են, ի սրբոյն Շուշանկանէ և այսր...այլ եպիսկոպոսունք ի հայոց և

Indeed, how was it possible for all Iberia suddenly and at a single strike, to become Chalcedonian and that this should happen in one or two years? Based on testimonies that we possess, it would have been effortless to present Caucasian ecclesiastical history as a development opposed to the Chalcedonian definitions and as a sudden change of allegiances by the Georgian Church. If we trust Movsēs, it appears on the one hand that the severance of the Georgians was a sudden and unexpected event, that they were “Orthodox” when Movsēs was elevated to the rank of a bishop, but shortly thereafter they deviated from the true path. On the other hand, however, they were always suspected of heterodoxy.

A substantial number of later sources that will be discussed in the following chapter interpret the separation of the Armenians and the Georgians in a hierarchical way. N. Garsoïan has already convincingly pointed out the anachronistic nature of the Armenian claim of the existence of nine degrees in the Armenian Church of the early seventh century. Garsoïan concludes on the issue of the hierarchy, saying:

Mais cette hiérarchie livresque avec ses précisions probablement fictives – malgré la grande popularité dont elle devait jouir par la suite dans les sources arméniennes qui s’appuient invariablement sur elle à une époque où elle servira à soutenir les revendications de L’Église arménienne en Transcaucasie – n’a rien a voir avec la situation de la fin du VI^e ou même du début de VII^e siècle à laquelle elle a été transportée. La *Lettre* de Sołomon de Makenoc’ datant du VIII^e siècle ne pouvait évidemment pas être connue en Persarménie à l’époque d’Abraham Ier, au siècle précédent ni, *a fortiori*, auparavant. Pas un des documents de la période qui nous intéresse ici ne la cite et aucun écho ne s’y retrouve.⁴⁷

The Armenians saw the reasons behind K’yron’s “apostasy” to be his mere vanity – to be hierarchically higher than the Church of Albania.⁴⁸ This implies, therefore, that the See of Mcxeta was hierarchically inferior to the Armenians. But the correspondence between Georgians and Armenians does not testify a hierarchical inferiority of the Church of Iberia to the Armenian Church. The only possible instance could be the letter of Katholikos Movsēs to K’yron, cited earlier, which reminded him of being “installed” in Mcxeta

ումանք ի վրաց էին ի հայս ուսեալք, գիտունք և վարդապետք: Նոքա և մեր վարդապետք ընդ միմեանս խաղաղութեամբ կեցին. ի միմեանց ուսանէին և զմիմեանս ուսուցանէին, և մեր քան զմեր հարանցն ոչ թողեալ ինչ է, և ոչ յաւելեալ ի հաւատոց: Եւ ազատ մարդիկն, որ ի Հայոց ի Վիրս ինսամութիւն արարեալ էր, ի սրբոյ Շուշանկայ պաշտանն գային, և ի սուրբ Խաչս Մծխիթայի աղաթել և արինաց հաղորդէին: Նոյնպէս և որ աստի այդր գային ի սուրբ Կաթողիկէ և յայլ եկեղեցիսդ աղաթել. անխիղճ ի միմեանց արինաց հաղորդէին: Եւ միաբանութիւն էր Վրաց և Հայոց ընդ միմեանս, և ամենայն իսկ վիճակիս սրբոյ տեառն Գրիգորի միաբանութիւն էր ընդ հաւատոյն Երուսաղէմի, որով Հռոմս վարին . և այլ ինչ բանք և խաւսք չէին ուրուք եղեալ ի ներքս, իսկ այժմ ու՞ ստի եղէն: See also, Babian, *Relations*, 360-362.

⁴⁷ Garsoïan, *L’Église*, 288.

⁴⁸ See *infra*, chapter 2.

by Movsēs himself. That the ordination does not constitute an argument for a hierarchical subordination has already been exhaustively argued by I. Javakhishvili,⁴⁹ Z. Aleksidze⁵⁰ and N. Garsoïan, who provided additional historical explanations for K‘yron’s possible ordination by Movsēs.⁵¹ Moreover, there are no contemporary indications of common practice for Armenian katholikoi to consecrate katholikoi of Iberia. N. Akinean has also argued that the consecration of K‘yron by Movsēs cannot have the value of a proof that such was the custom.⁵² The reverent attitude of K‘yron towards Movsēs and Abraham, as revealed in the letters, is even less of a proof.⁵³ In fact, a close look at the correspondence shows that at no point does K‘yron accept his lower rank, neither does the Armenian side try to take the upper hand.⁵⁴ If K‘yron had indeed been hierarchically inferior, why would the Armenian Katholikos not simply depose him? The Armenian Katholikos could not even officially summon K‘yron to Dwin for explanations, but instead proposed a neutral place for the meeting

a place in your borders or in our borders where we can meet each other after the holy Easter; and if some heterodoxy is discovered, let it be publicly exposed!⁵⁵

But K‘yron boldly refused any meeting. Furthermore Vrt’anēs K‘erdoł, the locum tenens of the Armenian katholikos,⁵⁶ suggested to travel to Iberia in order to negotiate with K‘yron in person, because K‘yron would never consider Vrt’anēs as equal to him. Moreover, so far as we know, K‘yron never replied to Vrt’anēs.⁵⁷ On

⁴⁹ Javakhishvili, *History* I, 313-329.

⁵⁰ GT^c II, 047-066.

⁵¹ Garsoïan prefers to call the process “desolidaration” of the Caucasian Churches, which, to my mind is a better word than *schism*. Garsoïan, *L’Église*, 289.

⁵² Although without sufficient proof, Akinean argues that after the death of Georgian Katholikos Gabriel, because Antioch was occupied by the Persians, the Georgians were forced to ask either the Armenians or the Albanians for Patriarchal consecration. Consequently, they addressed Armenians “according to the old custom”, for such was the tradition in the fourth century. Akinean, *Kiwriion*, 128.

⁵³ Garsoïan, *L’Église*, 319: “Le fait de la consécration de Kiwriion par Movsēs II n’indique nullement par lui-même la dépendance du catholicos de Mxet‘ay envers celui de l’Arménie et il faut probablement se garder d’exagérer la portée des expressions déférentes de la Réponse de Kiwriion a son “père spirituel” Movsēs II qui peuvent n’être que les formules d’usage exigées par la politesse de l’époque”.

⁵⁴ Based on the same testimonies M. Krikorian accepts the thesis that the Armenian katholikos enjoyed no hierarchical superiority over the neighbouring Churches, but instead had a notable precedence in traditional authority and priority in honour. Although this might in principle have been the case in certain periods of history, from the documents that we possess this theory is not deducible. Besides “priority in honour” in this context is a rather loose expression. See Krikorian, “Autonomy”, 125-127.

⁵⁵ GT^c I, 177; GT^c II, 87-88; GT^c III, 335: տեղւոյ ի քո սահմանի, կամ ի մեր, որ յետ սրբոյ Զատկին զմիմեանս տեսանենք և եթէ առ սմա ինչ թիրութիւն գտանի, թող զի աշխարհաւ յանդիմանի:

⁵⁶ On Vrt’anēs, see Akinean, “Vrt’anēs”, 8-11, 37-46.

⁵⁷ GT^c I, 138-139; GT^c II, 40-43; GT^c III, 280-282.

the basis, therefore, of the aforementioned evidence, there are no reasons to affirm any hierarchical dependence of the Georgian Church on the Armenian.

It is apparent that Movsēs, the first source and perhaps even the provoker of the controversy, did not know anything about the medieval explanations of the schism or about the personal apostasy of K‘yron. Nor is there any evidence that this scandal, if such there was, was a painful episode in Georgia and that K‘yron’s actions had met any opposition from either the Church or lay officials, as it happened in neighbouring Albania.⁵⁸ Quite the contrary; from the entire correspondence there surfaces the impression that this was a coherent action on the part of the Georgian side, including the Georgian *katholikos*, all of the clergy and the lay authorities. It was indeed a political move. It is for this reason that Bishop Movsēs wrote an encyclical letter to the Armenian speaking population of the region of Curt‘avi but not to the entire diocese, which included the Georgians. At some point the Armenian pro-Sasanian general Smbat for the same reason was involved in the controversy.⁵⁹

The hierarchical superiority of the Armenian prelate does not surface even in the much earlier documents – the letters of *Katholikos Babgēn* to Orthodox Persians (506/9). The listing of the Georgians and Albanians together with the Romans suggests a united attitude and policy towards the problem in question, namely, the Antiochene diphysitism. Neither the Albanian nor the Georgian Church is referred to in these letters as lower in rank than the Armenian *katholikos*; they seem to be completely equal in rank. All three churches wrote their own letters to the Persians but in accord. Even a century later, when *Katholikos Abraham* refers to the council of *Babgēn* and speaks about attendance at the council by the Georgian *katholikos*, he mentions him with his full title, listing all the dioceses under his jurisdiction.⁶⁰ Sadly, between the productions of these two sources no Armenian or Georgian source speaks about mutual relations. The Council of *Dwin* (555) and the documents emanating from it are completely silent about the Georgians. There is no direct evidence that Georgians were in one way or another affected by the decisions of that council. Nothing is known that would

⁵⁸ See *infra*, pp. 27-33.

⁵⁹ See the correspondence with Smbat: GT‘ I, 168-171; GT‘ II, 72-9; GT‘ III, 322-327. Smbat is much more explicit in demonstrating the political underpinning of the issue and states clearly that he is commissioned by the Persian King to settle these kinds of ecclesiastical disputes.

⁶⁰ GT‘ I, 178-179; GT‘ II, 88-90; GT‘ III, 336-337. See *supra*, p. 19.

suggest Georgian reaction against the council, and in general, the religious situation in Georgia in the second half of the sixth century.⁶¹

1.3. THE 'NATIONAL' PROBLEM

Beginning from the fifth century and the reign of Vaxt'ang Gorgasali, the See of Mcxeta was apparently trying to centralise its power and elevate its own prestige. The *Conversion of Georgia* does certainly reflect the process of the elevation of the See of Mcxeta in the fifth to seventh centuries.⁶² The correspondence between the Armenian and Georgian hierarchs is also sufficiently precise in describing the "national" character of the separation, rather than internal ecclesiastical. Unlike later historiographers, who would like to blame the instigation of the controversy on K'yron or his internal and external allies, the immediate Armenian participants in the controversy did not view the "separation" of the Georgians as the whim of one ambitious person, but as the defiance of Georgians as a whole. The beginning of the troubles was declared by Movsēs in his very first letter to Vrt'anēs K'erdol:

After so many years [of service in C'urtaw] only now I realized that the Georgians had leaves merely dyed in green with barren twigs, just as that barren fig, where the Lord found no fruit except for leaves. In a similar fashion, they tried to present their service in its fullness to popular eyes. But when we were notified of the exaltation of the Jewish definitions of the Council of Chalcedon and blasphemy against the Son of God, then even the green leaves were not left on them. I raised my voice and became an enemy of the so-called Katholikos and of all the princes of that land and finally I was persecuted, perhaps because of my sins. In these days, when this land of the Armenians is deprived of a leader, I deemed it worthy to come and inform your holiness of the perdition of that land and of my misfortunes.⁶³

⁶¹ A document that could raise questions concerning the Armeno-Georgian dogmatic accord is a florilegium of anti-Julianist texts and the anathemas against the ordination of the Julianists. According to one of the letters which is dated to the second half of the sixth century a Severan monk declares anathemas from the monastery of Tana (At'eni) in central Iberia against the Julianites in Armenia. Such a possibility is rather difficult to imagine in case of a doctrinal unity and accord between Armenians and Iberians. See Draguet, "Antijulianiste 3", 59-89.

⁶² B. Martin-Hisard is certainly right to note that the *Conversion of Georgia* might have been "un des premiers efforts des pasteurs de Mcxeta de garder la mémoire des origines de leur Eglise, de rédiger ou de faire rédiger une sorte d'*Histoire Ecclésiastique* ou de *Liber Pontificalis*, surtout lorsque, devenue métropole, Mcxeta dut imposer sa primauté a une série d'évêchés qui ne lui déviaient rien". Martin-Hisard, "Sainte Nino", 70 ; on the subject, see also, Shurgaia, "Mcxeta", 69-99.

⁶³ GT' I, 110; GT' II, 2; GT' III, 244-245: քանզի այսչափ անցելոց ժամանակաց ապա ևս հասի ի վերայ. թէ որպէս Վիրք զկանաչագեղ տերևն միայն ունէին. ոսոս առանց պտոյոյ ունելով յինքեանս, ըստ արինակի սաղարթալից թզենույն՝ յորում ոչ եգիտ պտուղ Տէրն, այլ տերև միայն. ըստ որում և այսոքիկ ի հաճոյս մարդկան, զամենայն պաշտաւանն լի և կատարեալ կարծեցուցանէին ցուցանել: Իսկ յորժամ ծանեաք զմեծարանսն հրէական սահմանի ժողովոյն Քաղկեդոնի, և զհայհոյութիւնս՝ որ յՈրդին Աստուծոյ. նա և ոչ տերևն կանաչ գոյր ի նոսա, վասն որոյ զբանն ի վեր առեալ՝ թշնամի եղեաք կաթուղիկոս անուանն, և

On all possible occasions bishop Movsēs makes a clear distinction between them – the Georgians and us – the Armenians. This distinction is not made solely on confessional grounds. In Curt‘avi he was bishop of both ethnic Armenians and ethnic Georgians but the very fact that the See of Curt‘avi was alternatively occupied by both Armenians and Georgians meant that it was a place of compromise, both a symbol and a practical site of close Armeno-Georgian cultural relations. The cult of St. Šušanik, which originated in Curt‘avi, also underlined and symbolized the close ties between the two people.⁶⁴ By virtue of the fact that a venue was needed where Georgians and Armenians would gather together, indicates that the two Churches were separate with their own traditions. Occasions such as intermarriage were held where cultural ties were the closest between Armenians and Georgians.⁶⁵ The subsequent expulsion of Movsēs from his diocese was regarded by the Armenian side as an offence against the Armenian positions in the region both ecclesiastically and politically. Evidently the See of Curt‘avi in Iberia was a stronghold of the Armenian position in Georgia, which sabotaged Georgian state policy that K‘yron was going to initiate. Thus, in the narrative of the schism, Curt‘avi and the region of Gugark‘ in general indeed became a virtual *chronotope*.

The ethnic character of the controversy is also evident from other sources. The testimony of the *Narratio de Rebus Armeniae*, a seventh century Chalcedonian account of the Late Antique Caucasian Church history, may well reflect the forgotten origin of tensions. According to the *Narratio*, after the unification of the Church of Persarmenia, many Armenian bishops obeyed Katholikos Abraham’s call to convene in Dwin and anathematize Chalcedon, but some did not, mostly those “who are in lands called in Armenian language Tašir, Jorapor and Kartman, also some from Arcax”.⁶⁶ These lands, except of Arcax, constituted parts of

ամենայն իշխանացն և աշխարհին: և վախճան՝ հալածեցայ. և թելլետ վասն իմ մեղացն. ի ժամուս յառաջնորդութենէ գրկեալ է աշխարհս Հայոց, հարկ համարեցայ զալ ծանուցանել սրբութեանդ ձերուս զկորուստ աշխարհին, և զիմ տառապանս.

⁶⁴ See *JC-MartŠ*, 051-052; Janashia, “Lazar P‘arpei”, 174; Berdzenishvili, “Bolnisi”, 25-27; Bíró, “Shushanik”, 121-132; Rapp, *Imagining History*, 748; Muradyan, *Šušanik*, 108-123; Peeters, *Saint Šušanik*, 5-48, 245-307.

⁶⁵ Compare with K‘yron’s letter, where he describes the role of the Eparchy of Curt‘avi and lists the ethnic Georgians and Armenian bishops. GT‘, 178-179; GT‘ II, 88-89; GT‘ III, 336-337.

⁶⁶ *Narr-Fr*, 435; *Narr*, 38: *μόνοι οὗτοι οἱ λεγόμενοι κατὰ τὴν τῶν Ἀρμενίων διάλεκτον Τασίρ, Τζοραπόρ καὶ Καρτμάν, αἱ εἰσι χῶραι, καὶ τινες ἀπὸ τῆς Ἀρτζάχ.*

Gugark', an Armeno-Georgian marchland, the centre of which was Curt'avi.⁶⁷ Although the *Narratio* does not elaborate on the reasons why precisely these regions rebelled, we might expect that this source is the reflection of the tensions in Curt'avi. Gugareti/Gugark', the often disputed borderland between Georgia and Armenia, was bilingual and bicultural. Apparently the earliest tensions between the two churches developed around the person of Bishop Movsēs and his expulsion from the Diocese of Curt'avi.

Another issue, that takes the controversy well beyond the mere theological and ecclesiastical controversy, was the language or more precisely the liturgical language. As a national marker, the language of Church services was of a central importance for the disputers and in fact, apparently, the problem of language was one of the arch-reasons of the controversy: On all possible occasions the Armenians would protest that K'yron had expelled an Armenian bishop and changed the language of the service, which was "worse than death". Katholikos Abraham further claimed that the Armenian liturgy, which was established by Saint Šušānik, had been changed: yet another offence against Orthodoxy. The expression "Armenian service" poses a problem. Does Armenian (*hayeren*) simply mean the Armenian language, or does it refer to an Armenian type of liturgy? And if the latter, does this mean that the liturgy differed? Sometimes it seems that the problem was linguistic and sometimes liturgical. This dichotomy is also found in K'yron's response. Together with his emphasizing of the Armenian and Georgian teachings *usumn*, K'yron's response suggests the existence of a difference between the two Church traditions that created a kind of a mismatch between the two. If *usumn* means teaching, this would mean that K'yron was trying to impose the Georgian tradition over and against the Armenian.⁶⁸ But considering the entire context, I believe that, initially, the disputers were referring to the language of the service. It was the supposed "Georgianization" of a legitimately bilingual land that was perceived as a threat by the Armenians. Only later on did Uxtanēs and others, such as the famous representative of the Haxpat-Sanahin school, Anania Sanahinec'i,⁶⁹ interpret it as a type of liturgical celebration. The "establishment" of this service was traditionally attributed to St Šušānik, the great Armeno-

⁶⁷ On the historical geography of Gogarene, see Allen, "March-Lands", 150-156. For a more detailed discussion on the role of this region in the history of the Armeno-Georgian relations and on the "march-lands of memory", see *infra*, pp. 155-167

⁶⁸ The interpretation of *usumn* in this context remains questionable. The traditional and most appropriate translation is *doctrine* as the *Nor Bargirk'* suggests (*NBHL* II, 555). For a short discussion, see Garsoïan, *L'Église*, 548, fn. 113, 114.

⁶⁹ On Anania's life and works, see Melikset-Bek, *Teachers*, 100-110.

Iberian saint.⁷⁰ Later historians, for whom the cultural, linguistic and even political borders between Armenia and Georgia were already more or less clearly demarcated, began to confuse the meaning of the “Armenian service” and interpreted the linguistic change in a theological way. For example, Anania Sanahinec‘i claimed that K‘yron “changed the shape of the rule against us by receiving alien image and form”.⁷¹ Uxtanēs, in his edition, regularly renders հայերէն (Armenian) with հայրենի (paternal, ancestral) apparently to stress the defiance of the Georgians to the tradition.⁷² The expulsion of the Armenian bishop, his replacement by a Georgian, and the introduction of the Georgian language in a traditionally bilingual territory, raised the suspicions of the Armenians. To this K‘yron responded that the new bishop was well versed in both Georgian and Armenian, as it should be. He persistently emphasized that the Georgian language enjoyed no less legitimacy in Curt‘avi than Armenian.⁷³

Concerning that which was written about the Church of C‘urtaw, that it had been established for the spiritual communion and bodily love between our two lands and that the Bishop of C‘urtaw is now persecuted for his Orthodoxy and also that the Armenian service is altered. We have not altered the service. He who has become the bishop [instead of Movsēs] knows both the Georgian teaching [*usumn*] as well as the Armenian, and the service is conducted in both of these letters [*paštawnn*]. As for the persecution of the Bishop of C‘urtaw, his own deeds narrate whether he was expelled for his honest faith or for some other reasons ... I have not persecuted him, but there was something I had heard about his impious deeds, so I wanted to admonish him and teach him as it befits a pupil. But he did not obey my call and abandoned the church and left furtively at night.⁷⁴

⁷⁰Garsoïan slightly alters the traditional translation of the following phrase “...և զպաշտաւնն հայերէն սրբոյ Շուշանկան զկարգաւորեալն լսեմ թէ ի բաց փոխեցէր” – I heard that you have changed the Armenian service established by St. Šušanik” with “Armenian service established for St. Šušanik”. Garsoïan, *L’Église*, 548, fn. 114. GT‘ I, 164; GT‘ II, 66-67; GT‘ III, 316-317. For the quote, see *supra*, p. 21. I do not see the need for such a correction because the problem was indeed linguistic. Tradition had it that performing the service in Armenian rather than in Georgian was prescribed by St Šušanik. Armenians refer to the service established by Šušanik on several other occasions: GT‘ I, 194-195; GT‘ II, 120-121; GT‘ III, 362-364. Arseni Sapareli also speaks of the bishopric established by Šušanik. See AS, 81; AS-Fr, 107.

⁷¹AnSan, 113: Եւ ընդդէմ մեր փոխարկեալ զձև կարգին, յետս ընդդէմ դարձուցեալ զամենայն զկերպս և օտարաձև զգեցեալ:

⁷²See Aleksidze’s comment in GT‘ II, 152, n. 2.

⁷³GT‘ I, 170; GT‘ II, 78; GT‘ III, 326.

⁷⁴GT‘ I, 166-167; GT‘ II, 70-71; GT‘ III, 320: Եւ որ գրեալ էր, թէ վասն հոգևոր հաղորդութեան և մարմնաւոր սիրոյ եկեղեցին Յուրտաւայ հաստատեալ էր ի մէջ երկուց աշխարհացս, և այժմ Յուրտաւայ եպիսկոպոսն վասն ուղղափառութեան հալածեալ է, և զպաշտաւնն հայերէն ի բաց փոխեալ է. մեր զպաշտաւնն չէ փոխեալ: Բայց զի որ եպիսկոպոսն եղև՝ վրացի ուսումն գիտէ և հայ նոյնպէս, և երկուքումբ դպրութեամբբ պաշտաւնն կատարի: Այլ վասն Յուրտաւայ եպիսկոպոսին հալածման, գործք իւր ծանուցանեն եթէ վասն ուղիղ հաւատոյ գնացեալ է, թէ վասն այլ իրիք: ... Ես գնա ոչ հալածեցի, այլ էր ինչ, որ լսեցի վասն նորա յետին գործոց, և կոչէի առ իս և կամէի խրատ տալ, և ուսուցանել որպէս պարտ էր աշակերտի. իսկ նա յիմ կոչ չեկն, այլ զեկեղեցին եթող և ի գիշերի գաղտ գնաց:

K'yrion was not alone in his policy, nor did he face any opposition in Georgia, at least we are not aware of any internal struggle. Moreover both clergy and laity seem to be in accord with K'yrion, a fact that is continually stressed by the Armenians. There was no trace of schism inside the Iberian Church as occurred some years earlier in Albania.⁷⁵ Nor can we say, solely according to the surviving correspondence, that K'yrion either initiated, or provoked such a scandal. "Suddenly" all Georgian noblemen speak in one accord and no attempt from the Armenian side to find sympathizers among the Georgians was successful. Vrt'anēs noted this in a rather enigmatic report of the position of the Georgian nobility:

They [the Georgian princes] say, we have this [our faith] and the other [your] faith as well; we commune in Faith both here and there. If Movsēs wishes, let him come and be obedient to our katholikos, for this is agreeable to us, and let him occupy his place.⁷⁶

Hence there are no signs of a cataclysmic change in early seventh century Iberia, neither in the correspondence nor in Georgian chronicles. No source refers to an "internal upheaval" in Iberia or to a drastic, painful switch. Such a cataclysmic evaluation of early seventh century events was the prerogative of the centuries to come and to a certain extent of modern scholarship, when the concept of a "Caucasian schism" surfaced.

⁷⁵ Without the benefit of evidence Babian suggests that "Kiwriion found the country in some kind of internal upheaval ... which could have been, on the one hand, a political struggle between the Iranophile and Romanophile princes, and on the other, a religious dispute between the Chalcedonian and the anti-Chalcedonian factions within the Georgian Church". Babian, *Relations*, 176. No such struggle is in any way documented in the sixth or seventh century Iberia. Further the scholar equally without support claims that "It has already been underlined that Kiwriion came to the throne as an exponent of the anti-Chalcedonian cause. This itself proves that at the close of the sixth century the traditionally anti-Chalcedonian and "anti-unionist" church fraction in Georgia had still enough supporters among the nobility to impose its will in the election of a new catholicos. Yet it is very probable that when Kiwriion arrived in Georgia he discovered that his position was hardly tenable. For he soon became painfully aware that the Georgian Church itself was divided between the Chalcedonian and anti-Chalcedonian factions. It is my opinion that long before his accession under the Grecophile Guaram (Gorgenes), more precisely in the last decade of the sixth century, sufficient ground had already been prepared in Byzantine Georgia for union with the Imperial Church; it is also possible that actual communion may already have been established in several dioceses". Babian, *Relations*, 181-182. None of this is historically transparent, especially the last claim. Compare this view with the labelling of the period by S. Rapp as "exhilarating times". See *infra*, p. 182.

⁷⁶ GT^c I, 141; GT^c II, 45; GT^c III, 285: Ասէն, մեք և զայս ունիմք հաւատ և զայդ, արբինաց աստ հաղորդիմք և այդդ. Մովսիսի եթէ կամք են եկեացէ կաթողիկոսի հնազանդ լիցի, զի մեզ այս հաճոյ, և զիւր տեղի կալցի: Uxtanēs points out that the letters of the Georgians had not been included in the actual correspondence for polemical reasons, because they were "impious". US II, 28.

1.3.1. THE ALBANIAN QUESTION

For the sake of contrast let us see how the situation had been developing in neighbouring Albania.⁷⁷ The situation in sixth century Albania, as the lamentably scarce sources present it, is even more contradictory.⁷⁸ If there were no signs of some internal ecclesiastical tension in Iberia, the same was not true for Albania. This was also reflected in later sources, when both Chalcedonian and anti-Chalcedonian sides tried to interpret the events, and also the documents at their disposition, in their own ways. Movsēs Kałankatwac‘i, the most ardent defender of the perpetual anti-Chalcedonian Orthodoxy of Albania, asserted that the Albanian Katholikos Abas (c.552–96)⁷⁹ was a fervent guardian of the non-Chalcedonian faith:

Kinds of this malady have entered our land of Albania. So Lord Abas, the Katholikos of Albania, together with his bishops having held a great inquiry, chased away the teachers of this sect [Chalcedonians] from this land of Albania: Thomas the hypocrite and Elias the psalmist and Bnton and Ibas and their other companions similar to them. And he exiled them to distant lands. At this time, the Church community was at peace with God’s almighty grace.⁸⁰

It is difficult to imagine a testimony that contradicts Kałankatwac‘i as diametrically as the following paragraph from the Chalcedonian *Narratio de Rebus Armeniae*:

[Armenians] wrote the following letter to Abas the Katholikos of the land of Albania: Come and join us in faith in confessing one Nature of Christ God and in adducing the ‘Who were crucified for us’ to the *Trishagion* hymn. But he did not obey.⁸¹

⁷⁷ The documents elaborating on the doctrinal situation and hesitations in Caucasian Albania and in the neighbouring region of Siwnik‘ are equally preserved in the *Book of Letters*. These are “The Letter of Yovhannēs, Katholikos of the Armenians to the Bishops and Lords of Siwnik‘”, “Letter Composed by Yovhannēs, Katholikos of the Armenians to the Bishops of Ałuank‘”, GT‘ I, 76-84; GT‘ III, 204-214; French translation: Garsoïan, *L’Église*, 479-490; “Letter of Patriarch John of Jerusalem to Abas, Katholikos of the Albanians”. For the Armenian text, see *EpistJohan*, 214-215, 252-256. For the Latin translation, see Vardanean, “Johannes”, 64-79; For the French translation, see Garsoïan, *L’Église*, 490-501. This letter not included in the *Book of Letters* as it defends the Chalcedonian position. The letter and the problems emerging from it are studied below. For a partial English translation, see also Frivold, *Incarnation*, 66-120.

⁷⁸ There is a strong deficiency in Albanian scholarship and many of the studies are not of a particularly high quality. For some important studies of Late Antique Albanian Church history see Bais, *Albania*, 103-169; Geyushev, *Christianity in Albania*, 37-48, 74-81; Hewsen, “Ethno-History”, 27-40; Hitchins, “Caucasian Albanians”, 235-245.

⁷⁹ This date is very tentative and is taken from AS-Fr, 105.

⁸⁰ MK I, 142-143; MK II, 126: Եհաս որոմնաբոյս արմատս այս յաշխարհս Աղուանից: Եւ նոյն ժամանակս տեառն Աբասայ Աղուանից կաթողիկոսի յոյզ քննութեան առնելով իրովք եպիսկոպոսօք, որ վերագոյնդ կան ի գրի, նոքօք հանդերձ հալածեաց ի տանէ Աղուանից զպիղծ վարդապետս աղանդոյն այնորիկ՝ զԹումասն կեղծաւոր և զփսաղոն Եղիա և զԲնտոն և զԲբաս և զայլսն ընդ նոսա, զմանտղս նոցին արար տարաբնակ ի հեռաւոր վայրս. Եւ այնու եղև իսաղաղութիւն ուխտի եկեղեցոյ ի ժամանակին յայնմիկ ողորմութեամբ տեառն ամենակալի.

⁸¹ *Narr-Fr*, 435; *Narr*, 38: “Ἐγραψεν τοίνυν ἐπιστολήν πρὸς τὸν Ἀπᾶς τὸν καθολικὸν Ἀλβανῆς χώρας περιέχουσαν οὕτως. Ἐλθὲ μεθ’ ἡμῶν ἐνοθεῖς τῇ πίστει ἐν τῷ λέγειν μίαν φύσιν Χριστοῦ τοῦ Θεοῦ, καὶ εἰς τὸν τρισάγιον ὕμνον τὸ Ὁ Σταυροθεῖς προστιθεῖς. Ὁ δὲ οὐ συγκαθέδετο.

Arseni Sapareli also likes to present Abas as K'yron's sympathiser and champion of Chalcedonian Orthodoxy in the region, although he admits that the Albanians were finally coerced to succumb.⁸² Chalcedonian and non-Chalcedonian voices, or rather pro-Byzantine and pro-Armenian voices were both audible from the same milieu, reflecting the uncertainties and tumults of Late Antique Albania. Such mutually exclusive documents are *The Letter of John the Patriarch of Jerusalem (575–94) to Abas the Katholikos of the Albanians*,⁸³ a letter of Katholikos Yovhannēs Gabelean to the Albanians written around the same time⁸⁴ and finally a letter written over a decade later – *the Answer of the Armenians to the Letter of the Albanians*, sometimes attributed to Vrt'anēs K'erdoł but probably belonging to Katholikos Abraham.⁸⁵ The three letters present a noteworthy picture of a historical development.

The letter of the Patriarch of Jerusalem is addressed to Abas. It is an admonition and a eulogy to the Katholikos for staying true to Orthodoxy and for not yielding to the demands of the Armenians and to the decisions of the “Armenian council”.⁸⁶ Further, near the end of the letter, the Patriarch reproached Abas for tolerating heresy among laymen and for ordaining heretics. The image conveyed is that Abas does not enjoy the support of the majority of those under his jurisdiction in his actions. But, surprisingly enough, as there was no mention of this kind of activity by the Council of Dwin in the documents stemming directly from it, John's letter is addressed precisely against a “council that was united in Armenia against the Holy Church.” Almost universally the “Armenian council” that John mentions is considered to be the Council of Dwin convened by Nersēs and Neršapuh of Taron (555). This letter also fits surprisingly well into the general image of the events as told by most of the posterior sources, especially Chalcedonian – that the Albanians, under the leadership of Abas, left the union with the Armenians after the Council of Dwin. As in the

⁸² AS, 81; AS-Fr, 105-106. For the quotation, see *infra*, p. 128.

⁸³ *EpistJohan*, 252-256. For a Latin translation, see Vardanean, “Brief”, 64-77.

⁸⁴ GT^c I, 81-84; GT^c III, 210-214; Also quoted by MK-Eng, 122-126 and partially quoted in *KH*, 136-139.

⁸⁵ GT^c I, 196-211; GT^c III, 365-396. Kałankatwac'i partially quotes this letter, MK-Eng, 276-279. For discussion on the textual difficulties and of attribution of this letter, see Garsoïan, *L'Église*, 501, fn. 46.

⁸⁶ *EpistJohan*, 254: Իսկ զսուրբ և զսիեզերական ժողովն Քաղկեդոնի, զոր նզովեցին Հայքդ, որք մոլորեցան ի ձեռն Աբդեղոյի ասորոյ և ելին արտաքոյ սուրբ և կաթուղիկէ եկեղեցոյ'. The Holy and Ecumenical council of Chalcedon was anathematized by those Armenians who were distressed by the Syrian Abdišo and left the holy and Ecumenical Church.”. *EpistJohan*, 252: յորում և ուսոյց զմեզ վասն բարեւեր կամաց Երանուրեան Քում, եթէ ընդ բարուք ճանապարհ հաւատոյ և գործոյ ընթանաս. զոր մեր լուեալ' յոյժ ուրախ եղաք: Through him [the monk Thomas] we were informed of the favourable disposition of your beatitude and that you walk on the right path in faith and in writings. And having heard this, we rejoiced greatly.

Narratio, it presents Abdišo as the initiator of the council and of the entire apostasy of the Armenians. The letter also accords with the testimonies that claim that Albania and Iberia did not accept the decrees of the council and separated from the Armenians.⁸⁷ The letter matches perfectly, and I would think rather suspiciously, with the general image drawn by the ideologized Middle Ages.⁸⁸

When Bishop Neršapuh notified Katholikos Nersēs of Aštarak and other bishops and *azats*, they decided to hold a great council in the city of Dwin on the twentieth year of the same Katholikos Nersēs, the thirteenth year of Emperor Justinian and twenty-fourth year of Xosrow, King of Persians, in the year when Yizidbozid was martyred and at the beginning of the Armenian era. They anathematized the holy Council of Chalcedon following Abdišo's letter.⁸⁹

If John's letter suggested that the Albanians, or at least those following the *katholikos*, did not yield to the Armenians, the letter of the Armenian Katholikos Yovhannēs has been considered as a counter argument. Moreover the tone of the correspondence between Armenians and Albanians and Siwnians reveals a radically different attitude from the Georgian situation. By the second half of the sixth century the Church of Albania was already succumbing to the overwhelming influence of the Armenian Church, hence the patronizing tone of the Armenian Katholikos Yovhannēs which was even emphasised at an official level in the address. Abas the Katholikos of the Albanians is "honoured" with the mere title of Bishop of Partaw.⁹⁰

to our beloved, excellent, true and pious brothers and sharers of the throne [*at'orakc'ac'*], to Abas the Bishop of Partaw [followed by the list of the Albanian bishops].⁹¹

Such a manipulation with hierarchical terms will become common in the Armeno-Georgian discourse too, but only much later. Also the expression "sharer of the throne" is a direct indication of hierarchical

⁸⁷ Cf. AS, 81; AS-Fr, 105. For discussion, see *infra*, p. 128.

⁸⁸ Although at this stage I do not possess sufficient proofs, I would nevertheless approach the matter of the letter's authenticity with a certain amount of doubt. Some of the inconsistencies have already been noted by N. Garsoïan in *l'Église*, 260-261. However Garsoïan's main argument for doubting the letter's authenticity does not convince me: "Exagérant le caractère officiel de la correspondance pré-conciliaire entre Abdišoïy at Nersēs II, il l'attribue à tort au deuxième concile de Duin, dont le *Pacte* ne contient manifestement aucune condamnation de Chalcedoine". Discarding the letter simply because it does not match with the known documents that originated from the Council of Dwin is unjustifiable first of all because it has yet to be proven that the Council of Dwin, discussed above, including the *Pact of Union* and other related documents, and the "Armenian Council" referred to in these letters are one and the same event.

⁸⁹ Cf. *Narr-Fr*, 429-438; *Narr*, 35-36: Ἄ ἐπεὶ ἐγνώρισε Νερσαπὺς ὁ ἐπίσκοπος Νερσέση τῶ καθολικῶ τῶ ὄντι ἀπὸ Ἀσταράξ καὶ ἄλλοις ἐπισκόποις καὶ τοῖς Ἀζάτοις, ὤρισαν γενέσθαι μεγάλην σύνοδον ἐν πόλει Τιβίν τῶ εἰκοστῷ ἔτει τοῦ αὐτοῦ καθολικοῦ Νερσέση καὶ τῶ 13' ἔτει Ἰουστίνου καίσαρος καὶ τῶ 24' ἔτει Χοσρόου τοῦ Περσῶν βασιλέως καὶ τῶ ἐνιαυτῷ ᾧ ἐμαρτύρησεν Ἐστιποστὶ καὶ ἐν ἀρχῇ τοῦ ἀριζμοῦ τῶν Ἀρμενίων, ὅτε καὶ τὴν ἁγίαν σύνοδον τὴν ἐν Χαλκηδόνι ἀνεθεμάτισαν ὡς νεστοριανήν κατὰ τὸν λόγον Ἀπτιίσω.

⁹⁰ The Patriarch of Jerusalem, John, also addressed Abas as bishop, but this is normal, as for the western Patriarchates the notion of *katholikos* was alien.

⁹¹ GT^c I, 81; GT^c III, 210: Լուսաբ և Ճշմարտից աստուածասիրաց, Սիրելի եղբարց և աթոռակցաց սերոց, Աբասու Պարտաւայ եպիսկոպոսի.

subordination and used exclusively to refer to one's own bishops. The address "to our brothers and colleagues in episcopacy" instead of "your colleagues in episcopacy" also indicates that Yovhannēs claimed his rights over the Albanian bishopric. This indicates the Armenian attitude, whether of the actual author or of the letter's copyists. The salutation of the Armenian katholikos was friendly and void of any hostility, which makes N. Garsoïan believe that there was no apparent discord between the Armenians and Albanians by that time.⁹² But this rather amicable tone cannot be a sufficient argument demonstrating that the state of affairs was stable and that there was no controversy between the Albanian and Armenian hierarchs. The same polite tone, which was a matter of courtesy, recurs in the opening of almost every letter exchanged between Georgians and Armenians two or three decades later, when relations between the two could scarcely be called amicable. An important aspect that the letter of Yovhannēs reveals is the lack of uniformity in the ecclesiastic or doctrinal situation in Albania:

Grave news reached us that 'ravaging wolves in sheep's clothing' who had come to your parts from the community of infamous Peter, who by name is called the lover of the poor but who in his actions is the hater of Christ and the rejecter of the Holy Trinity. Without any obstacle they sow the evil leaven of cursed Nestorius and the Council of Chalcedon in innocent souls. By deflecting them from the orthodox faith they lead them to eternal perdition. Heaving heard this, incurable pain was inflicted upon my body and soul, so I hastened to be clement and to write to you.⁹³

That Yovhannēs did not accuse Abas in person of heresy does not constitute an argument proving that he was not suspected of any. Later, both Katholikos Movsēs and Katholikos Abraham would "admonish" K'yron to be aware of heretics, although they knew very well that K'yron himself was the instigator of the "heresy" in Iberia. Even less conciliatory was another letter by Katholikos Abraham to the Albanians, where the separatism of the addressees is made evident:

To you lord Mxit'ar Bishop of Amaras and Simon of Mec Kołmank' and to other bishops who share your opinions and to the community of your holy Church, to the nobles and to others who are in accord with you among the laymen ... We heard from the *naxarar* of Siwnik' called Gregory what you told us in writing: about your situation and desires and that those who were not opposing have [now]

⁹² Garsoïan, *L'Église*, 291-292.

⁹³ GT' I, 81; GT' III, 211: Քանզի եհաս առ մեզ լուր դժնդակ համբաւոյ, եթէ են ոմանք գայլք յափշտակողք զգետսոս նշխարաց, որք եկին յաշխարհ ձեր ի վանաց պղծոյ Պետրոսի, որ անուամբ Աղքատասեր կոչի, և գործով Քրիստոսատեաց և ուրացող զսուրբ Երրորդութիւնն. զչար որոմն անիծելոյն Նեստորի և զժողովոյն Քաղկեդոնի անարգելաբար սերմանեն յոգիս անմեղաց, թիւրելով զնոսս յուղղափառ հաւատոյ. մատնել ի յախտենական կորուստն, զորմէ լսելով առհասարակ ոգւոյ և մարմնոյ եղեն անբժշկելի ցաւք, վասնորոյ ամենայն հարկաւորութեամբ փութացաք կարեկից լինել և գրել ձեզ...

probably created an opposition. He also said that one of your servitors has averted from the true path ... we were equally informed by him of the novel controversies.⁹⁴

The letter appears to be an answer to the letter of the Albanians and it can be said with a considerable degree of certainty that, as an addressee, it excludes the Katholikos of Albania. The letter makes it clear that the situation in Albania was not uniform, as it was in Iberia, where the Armenians faced co-ordinated opposition from the whole land and Armenians had been imposing on the Albanians. As for Albania, different parties and factions can be noticed in the letters, describing the complicated process of both Armenian and Chalcedonian sides trying to gain the upper hand in the internal affairs of the land and thus provoking schisms in the Albanian Church. The Chalcedonian patriarch had similar pretensions to Abas:

But we also heard that some under your jurisdiction had accepted these words, vain, deceptive and erring and that your holiness has not spoken out against them.⁹⁵

It has been observed that Armeno-Iberian and Armeno-Albanian relations were not super-imposable, whereas later historiography attempted to project them on each other. We can see that matters of hierarchy were not an issue in the Armeno-Iberian context while the Armenian pretensions are already visible in the Armeno-Albanian correspondence. It will be useful to keep this in mind in order to see how these uncertainties were used in medieval and modern scholarship.⁹⁶

The events described above marked the beginning of the end of Albania as a nation. Everything seemed to be aligning against Albania and the geo-political location was all but deplorable. The Arabs were taking over, Byzantium was too far to support Albania and Iberia was still too weak. There was no charismatic leader such as K'yron who would be unyielding to anything apart from the country's interests. Furthermore, there was no unity and accord among either lay or ecclesiastical authorities of the land. Soon the Albanians were to disappear both as a state and as a culture and remain a tiny Caucasian ethnic enclave.

⁹⁴ GT^c I, 196-197; GT^c III, 365-366: Տէր Մխիթար Ամարասոյ եպիսկոպոս, և Սիմոն Մեծ կողմանց, և թէ այլ եպիսկոպոսունք նմին համախոհակք, և ուխտ սրբոյ եկեղեցոյ, և ազատ մարդիկ կամ այլ ի ժողովրդեան միաբանակք ... Քանզի գրով ի ձէնջ պատմեցէք մեզ, զձեր զորպէս պաշտութիւն և զկամս. Թէ անհակառակ արդէք զգործեալ հակառակութիւն զոր ընկալաք ի նախարարէ միոյ Սիւնոյ Գրիգոր անուն: Քանզի և զարբանեկէն ձերոյ ասաց. ի կէր ուղոյ հրաժարի ... Թէպէտ և զլուրս ի նմա զանազանեալ տեղեկացաք.

⁹⁵ *Epist.Johan*, 252-256: Բայց լուաք, թէ ոմանք յիշխանութենէդ Քումմէ ընկալան զայնպիսի սնոտի և ստեղծական բանս խաբէութեան.

⁹⁶ For discussion see *infra*, pp. 115-129.

1.4. ‘THE BOOK OF UNION’

The early seventh-century disputers regularly alluded to a certain “book of union” composed by Katholikos Babgēn and his Georgian colleague Gabriel, one hundred years earlier than the rule of K’yron, where the fathers of both Churches confessed the same faith. In his first letter to K’yron, Abraham wrote:

During the reign of the King of Kings Kawad (488–96, 498–531), there was an enquiry between our land and the land of the Romans, who accepted the Council of Chalcedon and the *Tome* of Leo. teachers and princes of our and your lands separated from their communion, which is kept with unity and in written among us until our days. Now it is inappropriate for your holiness to introduce alienation between these two countries and deprive of love, bodily friendship and spiritual communion, so that no one goes to pray at that Holy Cross and from there to the holy Cathedral.⁹⁷

Furthermore in the second letter of Abraham to K’yron is written:

This aberration also penetrated our land, as we wrote earlier, in the days of Babgēn the Katholikos of Armenia and Gabriel the Katholikos of Iberia.⁹⁸ And the bishops and princes unanimously anathematized and expelled far from their community those who exalted this council [of Chalcedon] and the Jewish *Tome* [of Leo]; and this is still preserved among us in writing.⁹⁹

The document in question takes us back to the beginning of the sixth century, to the so-called first Council of Dwin and the aforementioned letters of Babgēn. On the one hand it specifies its date of writing but on the other hand, as we shall see, it contradicts both the survived letters of Babgēn as well as the historical state of affairs of that period. It claims that a separation, namely of Albanians, Armenians and Iberians from the “Roman Church” had already taken place, whereas the letters of Babgēn affirm the contrary, namely that a union was established among all these churches during the reign of Emperor Anastasius (491–518).

⁹⁷ GT¹ I, 164; GT¹ II, 67; GT¹ III, 316-317: Զի թեպէտ և յամս Կաւաստայ՝ արքայից արքայի եղև խընդիր քննութեան մեր աշխարհիս և Հռոմոնց, որք զժողովն Քաղկեդոնի ընկալան, և գտումարն Լևոնի, մեր և ձեր աշխարհիս վարդապետք և իշխանք հեռացան ի հաղորդութենէ նոցա, և միաբանութեամբ և գրով պահի ի միջի մերում մինչև ցայժմ: Այժմ ոչ է պարտ սրբութեանդ ձերում աստարութիւն ի մէջ արկանել երկուցունց աշխարհացս, և հեռացուցանել զսէր և զխնամութիւն զմարմնաւորական և զհաղորդութիւն հոգևորական, զի մի ոք եկեսցէ աղաւթել աստի ի սուրբ Խաչը. և այտի ի սուրբ Կաթողիկէ: This document was previously mentioned with almost exact wording by Katholikos Movses in his letter to K’yron, which Abraham quotes and which Uxtanēs added to his edition: GT¹ II, 126; GT¹ III, 225. Later Abraham once again quotes himself in his second letter to K’yron.

⁹⁸ For discussion on this person, see *infra*, pp. 101-103.

⁹⁹ GT¹ I, 177; GT¹ II, 86-87; GT¹ III, 334: Եկն մոլորութիւնս այս, որպէս յառաջագոյն գրեցաք և ի մեր աշխարհս առ Բարգենաւ Հայոց Կաթողիկոսաւ և առ Գաբրիէլիւ վրաց Կաթողիկոսիւ, և միաբանութեամբ եպիկոպոսաց և ազատ որերոյ, նզովեցին ի բաց հեռացան ի միաբանութենէ մեծարաւոյցն զժողովն և գտումարն հրեական և այժմ գրով պահի առ մեզ:

Vrt'anēs K'erdot also refers to this united pan-Caucasian “canon” in his letter to the Armenian population of Curt'avi:

Because some unpleasant news has reached us that the heresy of Nestorius and of the Council of Chalcedon, which had been eradicated as something not to be remembered through a terrible anathema pronounced by common canon of the bishops and princes of the Armenians, Georgians and Albanians, now that so-called katholikos, together with his bishops and princes, is accepting and professing that heresy.¹⁰⁰

The third letter of Abraham to K'yron sheds more light onto the character and history of this statement of unity. It even provides a list of the Georgian participants at the Council.

And now if you have not strayed from the faith of the fathers, as you wrote to us many times, you too, come and condemn the cursed council of Chalcedon and the filthy *Tome* of Leo, just as your forerunner blessed Gabriel the Katholikos of Georgia [did] together with our blessed fathers and with his sharers of the throne [the list of the Georgian bishops]. These blessed bishops, who were from your land, gathered in the times of Babgēn the Katholikos of the Armenians together with the Albanians and Siwnians at the council, where they unanimously cursed the Council of Chalcedon and the filthy *Tome* of Leo. For the letter of oath, which was written in Armenian, was lost during the unrest, but was then translated in the town of Edessa from Greek, for they also had it from us. But they could not translate it faithfully and truly as appropriate. For if there were the well-known names of your bishops and Episcopal Sees, there were others [names] extremely obscure and deformed. But if you wish to find out the names of the bishops, according to the Sees and other names of the bishops, as they are written, you can find out the real names of the episcopates because that was the way we found it ourselves, moreover that you can find the letter of oath also in your language.¹⁰¹

K'yron also acknowledged the existence if not of such a document, at least of an established unity:

That you have written about the times of Kawad King of Kings, we know it, for it was indeed so, as we have heard numerous times. Whatever you have written about the unity, oath and faith of our fathers and yours, we keep the same unchanged. Concerning what you have written on the unity of

¹⁰⁰ GT' I, 130; GT' II, 32; GT' III, 270: Վասն զի եհաս լուր չախորժելի, եթէ զհերձուածն Նեստորի և զժողովոյն Քաղկեդոնի՝ զոր Հայոց և Վրաց և Աղուանից միաբան կանոն եպիսկոպոսաց և իշխանաց սուկալի նգովիւք անյիշատակութեամբ էր ի բաց բարձեալ, արդ կաթողիկոսդ անուանեալ եպիկոպսակցաւքդ, հանդերձ իշխանաւք ընդունելութիւն և մեծարանս առնեն հերձուածոյդ:

¹⁰¹ GT' I, 182-183; GT' II, 96-98 ; GT' III, 342-343: Արդ՝ եթէ չէք փոխեալ ի հայերենի հաւատոյ, որպէս բազում անգամ գրեցեր առ մեզ, Ե՛կ նգովեա՛ր և դու զանիծեալ ժողովն Քաղկեդոնի և զպիղծ տումարն Լևոնի, որպէս նախնին քո երանելին Գաբրիէլ կաթողիկոսն Վրաց նգովեաց ընդ երանելի հարսն մեր հանդերձ աթոռակցաւք իւրովք, որոց անուանքն են այսոքիկ ... Արդ՝ այս երանելի եպիսկոպոսունքս, որ յաշխարհէ մերմէ էին, և ընդ Աղուանիւք և ընդ Սիւնիւք ի Հայս դիպեցան յաւուրս Բարգենայ Հայոց կաթողիկոսի, յայն ժողովի յորում անիծան ի նոցանէ միաբանութեամբ ժողովն Քաղկեդոնի և տումարն Լևոնի: Եւ զի պայման նամակն՝ որ հայերէն գրով էր, յապստամբութեանն կորեաւ, և թարգմանեցաւ այս յԱրհայ քաղաքի ի հռոմ գրոյ. քանզի և նոքա ունէին ի մէնջ. և ստոյգ և սուրբ, որպէս արժան էր, չկարացին թարգմանել, զի են որ քաջ յայտնի են եպիսկոպոսացդ և եպիսկոպոսարանցն անունաք, և են որ կարի ի ծածուկ և այլաձևք: Բայց թէ կամիք անուամբք եպիսկոպոսացն և յաջորդաւք տեղեացն և այլաձև անուամբք եպիսկոպոսացդ՝ որպէս գրեալ են, կարէք զստոյգ անուանս եպիսկոպոսարանցն գտանել. և զայլոցն ևս, քանզի և մէք զմերս, այդ տարազու մարթացաք գտանել, և մանաւանդ թէ զպայման նամակն իսկ գտանիցէք գրով ձերով:

your lands, which is still preserved in our days, we are committed to the same unity and we shall not change it.¹⁰²

The document and the council alluded to by the participants were long held as unknown in scholarship, until the two letters written by Katholikos Babgēn in 506 and 509 were published. As a result, either of these letters was regularly considered as to be that mentioned by the two *katholikoi*. As for the council referred to, this was considered to be the so-called first council of Dwin in 506.¹⁰³ But as demonstrated below, neither of the two letters by Babgēn matches the description of the disputers. Nor were the two letters dedicated to the “inquiry [of faith] between our land and the land of the Romans.” Furthermore, not only do the two letters of Babgēn not reject the union with the Imperial Church, but on contrary, they affirm dogmatic unity with the Romans. Finally, the letters of Babgēn are in fact not a “unanimous condemnation of the Council of Chalcedon.”¹⁰⁴ Indeed in failing to provide any list of either Georgian or Armenian bishops, the letters of Babgēn could not even reflect the proceedings of a council.

1.5. THE COUNCIL OF BABGĒN

The so-called first Council of Dwin, whence the document supposedly emanated, was the first event that was remembered as having treated the doctrinal issues of the whole South Caucasus. The correspondences that detail this supposed council are the *First Letter of the Armenians to the Orthodox in Persia* and the *Second Letter of the Armenians to the Orthodox in Persia*, both of which are preserved in the *Book of Letters*.¹⁰⁵ These texts were, in fact, brought to the attention of the scholarly community only a century ago, together with the publication of the *Book of Letters* in Tbilisi and it was due to these letters that the Council of Babgēn acquired such a decisive role in Late Antique Armenian Church history. It was therefore felt

¹⁰² GT‘ II, 130; US II, 12: Եւ որ զԿաւաստայ արքայից արքայի ժամանակն էիք գրեալ, զիստեմք՝ զի այնպէս եղև նրպէս բազում անգամ լսեալ եմք, և որ վասն հարցն մեր և ձեր միաբանութեան և ուխտի և հաստատութեան հաւատոյ էիք գրեալ, մեք անշարժ ունիմք զնոյն: Եւ որ վասն մեր և ձեր աշխարհաց էիք գրեալ և ասացեալ յաղագս միաբանութեան՝ զոր ի մերում ժամանակիս է, մեք ի նոյնս ունիմք միաբանութիւն և ոչ փոխիմք:

¹⁰³ On the debates concerning the dating of the councils, see Garsoïan, *L’Église*, 135-241. Before the discovery and publication of the letters of Babgēn, the accepted date for the Council by scholars was 491: Čamčean, *History*, 223-225; Tournebize, *Histoire de l’Arménie*, 90; Ter-Mikelian, *Armenische Kirche*, 54; Ter-Mkrtčean, *Die Paulikianer*, 54.

¹⁰⁴ It is conceivable that the document held by the Armenians was a somewhat altered version of the letter of Babgēn, similar to that preserved in the *Seal of Faith*. But again, even this document affirms the union in faith between the Caucasian churches and the Byzantine church. See *KH*, 134.

¹⁰⁵ For the two letters of the Armenians, see GT‘ I, 41-52; GT‘ III, 147-156, 157-162. French translation: Garsoïan, *L’Église*, 438-450; A partial English translation: Babian, *Relations*, 89-99; Frivold, *Incarnation*. 79-87.

necessary to make sound connections between the first Council of Dwin, the letters of Babgēn and the “Book of union”. As a result, nowadays most scholars consider the so-called council of 506 to be of crucial importance to the history of the Armenian Church and of Caucasian churches in general.¹⁰⁶

Most scholars of the previous century considered that the council of Babgēn, supposedly convened in the city of Dwin in 506, was an opportunity for the Armenian Church – and according to some other scholars, for all Caucasian churches – to condemn the definitions of the Council of Chalcedon and formulate their position *vis-à-vis* the Chalcedonians. The introduction of the letters of Babgēn to scholarly discourse strengthened this unsubstantiated theory behind the council of Babgēn and presumably supported other medieval testimonies. Thus speculations surrounding this council multiplied. The Council of Dwin has also at times been considered as the first united Caucasian church council that maintained dogmatic unity over the region for yet another century.¹⁰⁷ It is also often connected to the political events of the period and to the struggle of the Persian and Roman empires over the region.¹⁰⁸ Another, more recent theory is that the council of Babgēn was convened to accept the *Henotikon* of Zeno by the Caucasian Churches.¹⁰⁹ According to Cowe,¹¹⁰ Garsoïan and Zekiyān,¹¹¹ whose views I partly endorse, the Council targeted Persian Nestorians and was still far from formulating anti-Chalcedonian Christology.¹¹² As N. Garsoïan has convincingly demonstrated, to speak of Armenian anti-Chalcedonism at any time during the sixth century is an anachronism.¹¹³ The fact is that the Council of Babgēn was a point of departure whenever discussion or debate might arise among the Caucasian churches. The way in which it was remembered is another issue, but what concerns us now is that the council was remembered as the beginning.

¹⁰⁶ For a number of the main studies of the Council of Dwin, see: Aleksidze, “Materials”, 145-160; “Religious Situation”, 103-110; Babian, *Relations*, 75-103; Janashia, *Feudal Revolution*, 357; Javakhishvili, *History* 1, 313; Garsoïan, *L’Église*, 135-241; Sarkissian, *Council*, 196-214; Ter-Minaseants, *Armenische Kirche*; van Esbroeck, “Impact”, 301-319; Zekiyān, “Rupture”, 162.

¹⁰⁷ Ter Mkrtē‘ean, *Die Paulikianer*, 55-56; Inghissian, “Chalcedon”, 364; Sarkissian, *Council*, 206; Javakhishvili, *History* 1, 313; also see Garsoïan, *L’Église*, 137; Zekiyān, “Rupture”, 158-160; Aleksidze, “Materials” 160.

¹⁰⁸ S. Janashia, for example, suggests that the council was called under the instructions of the Persians with the intention to accept anti-Chalcedonian Christology, that is to say, a pro-Persian political side: Aleksidze, “Materials”, 160; Janashia, *Feudal Revolution*, 357.

¹⁰⁹ Aleksidze, “Materials”, 146-160; Nersoyian, “Christological Position”, 130; Ter-Minaseants, “Babgēn”, 31-44.

¹¹⁰ Cowe, “Philoxenus”, 115-117.

¹¹¹ Zekiyān, “Rupture”, 158-160.

¹¹² On the presence of the “Nestorians” in Armenia of the fifth century, see Garsoïan, “Dyophysites”, 73-85.

¹¹³ An entire chapter is dedicated to this issue in Garsoïan, *L’Église*, 135-241.

Medieval Armenian authors were especially keen on presenting the Council of Babgēn as an opportunity to formulate Armenian Orthodoxy.¹¹⁴ Although the contradictions and uncertainties of the sources are blatantly evident, it is obvious that most of them agree upon the anti-Chalcedonian motivation of the council of Babgēn. Other sources claim that representatives from all three Caucasian Churches were present at the Council. These two features were remembered and became leitmotifs in the anti-Georgian position formulated by the Armenian Church. Moreover, it was also through the prism of these sources that, following their publication, the two letters of the Armenians were analyzed. For the medieval authors, the emperors Zeno and Anastasius were strict anti-Chalcedonians with whom the Armenians were in agreement.¹¹⁵ This direct correlation of the later sources with the letters of Babgēn, as with the enigmatic “Book of Union” and consequently with the council of Dwin of 506 led, as I understand it, to the subsequent erroneous interpretation both of the letters and of the later explanations by historiographers. Indeed, I fail to see any tangible grounds for supposing that the letters of the Armenians to the Persians are at all related to the council of Babgēn, whether actual or a phenomenon perceived by the middle ages, or that these later sources actually refer to this particular council. Furthermore, I think that gathering in Dwin, as referred to in the first letter of the Armenians, was not a united Caucasian synod, although most probably there was one earlier.¹¹⁶ Finally as N. Garsoïan has convincingly argued, at the time of the writing of these letters the Armenian Church had not yet formulated its anti-Chalcedonian teaching.¹¹⁷ On this final point I shall elaborate the least, as it has been sufficiently argued by most distinguished scholars.

Virtually no-one has doubted that the letters of Babgēn, together with other Armenian sources, speak about the 506 council of Dwin. I would prefer to argue that textual evidence in the *Letters of the Armenians*

¹¹⁴ On this position, see Tournebize, “Armenie”, col. 303; Inglisian, *Chalcedon*, 361-417; Sarkissian, *Council*, 186-213; Babian, *Relations*, 75-103; Only M. Ormanian takes a more neutral stand by viewing the anti-Chalcedonianism of the letters of Babgēn only along the lines of the official policy of the Empire. Ormanian, *Church*, 24-28; H. Chakmakjian affirms the Council as having been convened to condemn the Chalcedonian definitions. Chakmakjian, *Christology*, 16-17; Archbishop M. Krikorian considers that the *Acts of the Council of Chalcedon* reached Armenia by the beginning of the sixth century at which time the Armenians were introduced to Chalcedonian theology. The Council of Chalcedon itself was condemned only at the Second Council of Dwin in 555. Krikorian, *Armenische Kirche*, 73-74.

¹¹⁵ The controversial evaluation of Anastasius’s religious policy was inherited by contemporary scholarship. For some discussion, see Charanis, *Church and State*, 10-51, 66-77;

¹¹⁶ Garsoïan, “Vaġaršapat”, 497-506.

¹¹⁷ This stand is, more or less, already widely accepted in the international scholarly community. On the same argument see Zekiyian, “Rupture”, 165-168.

makes no suggestion that either the first or the second letter directly reflect the council's activity. That the letter could be the product of the council is not at all evident. First of all, in the first letter Babgēn makes it clear that the council, or whatever was the nature of the assembly, had already begun when the Persians arrived whose purpose was to receive a letter of confirmation of faith. A council is mentioned only once at the very beginning of the letter:

In the eighteenth year of the reign of Kawad the King of Kings, when we were assembled in the region of Ayrorat, in the town of Dwin, which is the capital of this land of Armenia, I, Babgēn, head of the bishops of Armenia, together with all the bishops, monks and *naxarars*, some people came to us and told us that they were from your parts.¹¹⁸

Therefore, the arrival of the Persian delegates could not have been the rationale behind the gathering of bishops in Dwin.¹¹⁹ As for the second letter, while it does reiterate the contents of the first letter and refers to it, it fails to mention any previously held Church council or in any way reiterate the decrees of that Council. Arguably, one would have expected some kind of reference to such an important council called to deliberate on such liminal decisions. There are even fewer grounds for calling this first letter a *Synodal Act* as it is sometimes described, stressing, accordingly, the differences between the first and the second letters. These differences include the first being an official decree of the council whereas the second, was written two or three years later, and did not have direct connection with the council.¹²⁰ Garsoïan suggests further that the second letter is neither an official document, nor does it represent the official decisions of a council but is mere a dogmatic letter.¹²¹ I do not see that there are any impelling reasons for classifying the first letter of the Armenians as a *Synodal act*, and this because of the content of the letter itself. At no point does Babgēn make reference to the decisions or about the nature of the council. The list of the bishops does not even identify the participants at the council. The letter does not say that the bishops and *išxans*, mentioned in the opening of

¹¹⁸ GT^c I, 42; GT^c III, 149: Վասն զի ութևտասներորդ ամի Կաւատայ առքայից արքայի, մինչդեռ ես Բաբգէն Հայոց եպիսկոպոսապետ, ամենայն եպիսկոպոսաւք և վանականաւք և նախարարաւք ժողովեալ էաք յԱյրարատ գաւառ, յոստանն Հայաստան աշխարհիս ի Դուին քաղաք, եկեալ հասին առ մեզ արք ոմանք, որք ասացին զինքեանս լինել ի կողմանցդ յայդցանէ:

¹¹⁹ As noted by Z. Aleksidze, the council of Dwin could not have been convened by order of the Persians as S. Janashia argues, because the Persian delegates arrived to Dwin when the Council was already in progress. See Aleksidze, "Materials", 150-60. N. Garsoïan also notes that the council could not have been initiated by the Persian delegates: Garsoïan, *L'Église*, 156-168.

¹²⁰ Sarkissian, *Council*, 197-202

¹²¹ Garsoïan, *L'Église*, 150; Sarkissian, *Council*, 205.

the letter, were participants at a synod, but represent those in whose name Babgēn is authorized to write as Katholikos.¹²² This was a standard way of addressing another Church, namely, appealing to one's own *synthronoi*.¹²³ The delegates from Persia inquired about a confession of the faith of the Armenians and also requested a written statement from the Armenian Church regarding the Nestorians. Thus the letters of Babgēn represent a position that the Armenian Church already held, a doctrinal *status quo* of the Church; they not necessarily identify decisions of a council. The letter says:

And they were standing in front of everyone's jury, holding your letter in their hands, in which they confessed the true faith, to which they had applied with much effort in order to find the true and orthodox beliefs about the Holy Trinity. Because of their braveness, they [the Persian delegates] received the king's edict from Kawad, the King of Kings, by which he gave them the power to be fortified in faith according to the canons and the knowledge of the lands of the Romans, Armenian, Iberians and Albanians, so that the definitions of the faithful in Christ are not destroyed by vain words and superfluous concepts.¹²⁴

¹²² One passage from the first letter of the Armenians in GT^c I, 47; GT^c III, 155-56 requires special attention, because it is important for understanding the letter's general scope: Թէ այդ այդպէս է: Լսեն հաղագս այդ իրաց և ի Խոստատանի հերձուածք են, և յայսմ հաւատոյ, ինձ հաւատոյ նամակ պիտի, և հաւատոյ նամակ հաստատ և ճշմարիտ և զանշարժ արարէք: Եւ ես Բարգէն Հայոց կաթողիկոս և ամենայն եպիսկոպոսունք, և Վարդ Մամիկոնեան: և այլուր միանգամ իշխանք, և նախարարք էաք, գրեցաք հայերէն և պարսկերէն, և կնքեցաք մերով մատանէաւ. Garsoïan translates the passage in the following way: "Voici [comment] il en est. J'entends à propos de ces choses qu'il y a des dissidences au Xuzastan et il me faut une lettre dogmatique sur cette foi, composez-moi donc une lettre dogmatique solide, véridique et immuable. Et moi, Babgēn, catholicos des Arméniens, et tous les évêques, et Vard Mamikonean, ainsi que les princes et *naxarars* d'ailleurs qui étions [réunis] ensemble, nous avons écrit [une lettre] en arménien et en persan et nous l'avons scellée de nos anneaux". Garsoïan, *L'Église*, 446. In her translation, Garsoïan interprets the Armenian text in such a way that the passage seems to refer to those who were assembled in Dwin and the letter is written in the name of those present at the council. As such, the impression made is that the letter is a conciliar act. Such interpretation is problematic because the Armenian text does not imply this. In fact the last sentence, where Garsoïan mentions a meeting or a council, is not in the Armenian text at all. Even if the text is deemed incomplete there is no proof that *zoliveal*, or a synonym, had been used. The Armenian text can also be translated in the following way: "And Vard Mamikonean and the *išxans* and *naxarars*, wherever we might be, we wrote in Armenian and in Persian and we sealed with our seals." (*ew aylur miangam, ew išxank', ew naxarark' eak', grec 'ak'*). If we read the text this way, the implication of the letter changes: It is not necessarily a decision of those who gathered at the council, but rather an agreed statement of all *išxans* and bishops and *naxarars*. Babgēn as the Katholikos of all Armenians, is writing in the name of all Armenians. Following Sarkissian's same argument, Garsoïan notes here that the formula "signed and sealed" indicates at a very formal act. This kind of expression is only in the Pact of Union of 555 and in the statement of the Faith of 608 which anathematize the Council of Chalcedon. Garsoïan, *L'Église*, 446; Babian, *Relations*, 98; Sarkissian, *Armenian Church*, 205. This is quite true and the letter is indeed official but the fact that the letter was sealed does not necessarily mean that it is the act of the council; it might equally well have meant that the letter is an official confession of faith of one Church sent to another.

¹²³ Cf. the correspondence of the Armenians with the Iberians in the *Book of Letters*. GT^c I, 81-189; GT^c III, 224-356.

¹²⁴ GT^c I, 42-43; GT^c III, 149-150: Եւ կացեալ յատենի յանդիման ամենեցուն, ունէին գիր ի ձեռս՝ որով խոստովանէին ի վերայ ուղիղ հաւատոյ. ընդ բազում աշխատութեամբ զանձինս արկեալ, առ ի գտանել զճշմարիտ և զուղղափառ հաւատ սրբոյ Երրորդութեանն: Եւ վասն նորին համարձակութիւն առեալ թագաւորական հրովարտակ, զԿաւաստայ արքայից արքայի, յորում առեալ իշխանութիւն զի ըստ կամաց և խնդրոյ ստուգութեան քրիստոնէութեան, հաւատ յանձինս հաստատեցի ըստ կանոնի գիտութեան

Babgēn's response, therefore, is not a *Synodal Act* but a *Confessio Fidei* of the Armenian Church. The letter closes in this way: "We have written and sealed this inquiry of the true faith ...We have written this in Armenian and Persian and sealed with our seals" and "they [the messengers] will bring this dogmatic letter together with them to their land."¹²⁵ Further the first letter of Babgēn states:

As your messengers, the brothers Samuel the monk and Priest Simeon and their other companions, told us, Babē the Katholikos of Asorastan and the others, who are Nestorian bishops, say this. They say that God has two sons – one God-Logos equal to the Father, who descended from heavens and the other – Jesus, a mortal man like us, who was born from Mary.¹²⁶

This is the sole reference to the Persian Katholikos Babai (497–503)¹²⁷ and it is clearly stated that the Armenians heard of him and his activities from the Persian delegates.¹²⁸ In the first letter, Babai is not explicitly anathematized, whilst in the second he already is. This fact provides a further argument in favour of the view that the council of Dwin, which according to the letter was in progress, was not the place where the definitions of the Armenian faith were promulgated. If the council was convened to condemn the "Nestorians", how is it possible that they heard about the main "Nestorian" only in the middle of the council, when the Persians arrived? Knowledge of the councils and other activities of the Nestorians is drawn from the letter of the Persians and a considerable part of the letter of the Armenians quotes from this letter. The second letter although declaring the anathemas, does not suggest that these anathemas were declared at the council:

We anathematize Nestorios, Arios, Theodoros, Diodoros, Theodoritos, Eutychios, Paul of Samosata, Ibas, Akakios, Barcume, Babē, who are in the land of the Persians, their canons and their faith.¹²⁹

աշխարհին Հռոմոնց, [GT՝ III, և Հայոց] և Վրաց և Աղուանից, և մի՛ վայրապար բանիւք և աւելորդ իմացուածովք իրամատեցի և սահման առ ի Քրիստոս հաւատացելոց:

¹²⁵ GT՝ I, 47; GT՝ III, 156: ... Եւ զայս խնդիր ճշմարիտ հաւատոյ գրեցաք և կնքեցաք...գրեցաք հայերէն և պարսկերէն, և կնքեցաք մերով մատանեաւ...և զայս հաւատոյ նամակ ընդ իւրեանս առին յաշխարհ իւրեանց:

¹²⁶ GT՝ I, 45; GT՝ III, 154: Բայց որպէս ասացին առ մեզ առաքեալքն առ ի ձեռնջ եղբարք Սամուէլ վանական, Շմաւոն երէց, և այլ նոցին ընկերք, եթէ Բաբէ՝ Ասորեստան կաթուղիկոս և այլ որ եպիսկոպոսք են նեստորիանոսք՝ զայս խաւսին. երկուս Որդիս ասեն լեալ Աստուծոյ. զմին Աստուածն Բանն հաւասար Հաւր՝ որ էջն յերկնից. և այլն Յիսուս՝ մարդ մահկանացու նման մեր, որ ծնան ի Մարիամայ.

¹²⁷ On the Persian councils in the late fifth century, see Macomber, "Seleukia-Ctesiphon", 142-152.

¹²⁸ GT՝ I, 41-43; GT՝ III, 147-149.

¹²⁹ GT՝ I, 50; GT՝ III, 160: Եւ նզովեմք զՆեստորիոս, և զԱրիոս, զԹեոդորոս, զԴնոդորոս, զԹեոդորիտոս, զԵւտիքոս, զՊաւղոս Սամուստացի, զԻբա, զԱկակ, զԲարծումբ, զԲաբէ, որք ի Պարսից աշխարհի գնոցուն զկանոն և զհաւատ:

As such, it is highly likely that the letters of Babgēn have nothing to say about the activities of a Church council. Were we to approach the letters of Babgēn and the later sources in this way, that is to say separately and without correlating them to the “council of Dwin”, we would be able to resolve some of the inconsistencies that have troubled modern scholars, such as for example the participation of the Georgians and Albanians at the council.

The other problem that the letters of Babgēn present is how widely they were disseminated and how well were they known and quoted in the Armenian tradition. Consequently, what can we say about the authenticity of these letters and how can we be certain that dogmatic letters of such importance would have survived untouched? As suggested by Adontz and Akinean, they might have been strongly interpolated.¹³⁰ That Babgēn’s letters have been subject to considerable revision is evident from the version of these letters attested in the *Seal of Faith* attributed to Katholikos Komitas. A chapter is entitled *First Letter of Blessed Babgēn Written to the Persian Orthodox, Together with his Sharers of the Throne*. The claim that the document is a reproduction of Babgēn’s letter is misleading. Rather it is a fusion of Babgēn’s two letters:

Such is the faith that the Romans, we the Armenians and the Iberians and the Albanians have. And we shun and curse Chalcedon. For we well know the lies of Chalcedon, of Nestorius and of all in league with them, who hypocritically follow the errors of the pagans and the Jews (for we know that they also confess the same paganism and Judaism) in order to bring into error the souls of the innocent by detracting the blind from the true path.¹³¹

1.6. A ‘PAN-CAUCASIAN’ COUNCIL?

A number of later source claims that Georgians and Albanians participated at a Church council convened by Katholikos Babgēn. The most important evidence is the early seventh-century Armeno-Georgian

¹³⁰ Garsoïan, *L’Église*, 164. Z. Aleksidze also argues that the second letter has at least been interpolated being different from the first in style, language, the way proper names are written and so on. As such he also questions the authenticity of the letter. Note the varied orthography of the names of the “heresiarchs”: Šmawon/Simon, Pawlos/Pawle, Nestorios/Nestor, Teodoritos/Teodorit, Haba/Iba and so on. These indicate at least to the fact that the two letters had separate textual traditions. Aleksidze, “Materials”, 150.

¹³¹ *KH*, 134: Ջայս հաւատ շոռոմք և Հայք և Վիրք և Աղուանք ունին, և փախչիմք ուրացեալ ի Քաղկեդոնէ: Ջի Քաղկեդոնի ստութիւնն զՆեստորի զնոցունց նմանեացն, զոր զիտեմք կեղծաւորութեամբ փախուցեալք ի հեթանոսութենէ և ի հրէական մոլորութենէ. զի և զնոյն խոստովանին հեթանոսութիւնն, միանգամայն և հրեութիւնն պատրել ի մոլորութիւն զմիտս անմեղաց, որ է տգիտաց, վրիպեցուցանելով ի ճանապարհէ զկոյրն. It is also quoted by Garsoïan, *L’Église*, fn. 141, 337. Note that the title of the letter in the *Seal of Faith*, itself an encapsulation of it, fails to mention a council and, moreover, does not consider the letter as a conciliar act. See *KH*, 131.

correspondence and a number of other medieval sources. The letters of Babgēn claim nothing of this kind.

The letters merely say:

And because you [the Persians] wished to be instructed by us on these matters, we declare to you that neither the Romans, nor the Armenians, nor the Iberians, nor the Albanians, have received these blasphemies [Nestorianism] and we do not accept them and we do not communicate with them and we do not believe in them, but on the contrary, we anathematize those who say that and who teach it.¹³²

The second letter of Babgēn also mentions Albanians and Iberians on several occasions. According to Babgēn,

This is our faith which we profess, just as we have written to you before in accord with the Iberians and the Albanians, in the writing of each land.¹³³

This sentence is highlighted by L. Zekiyan and Z. Aleksidze as an argument that both the Georgians and the Albanians who participated at the council of Dwin composed a similar letter as Babgēn's, but in their own respective languages.¹³⁴ It is further suggested that this Georgian version of the letter might be the one to which Abraham had alluded.¹³⁵ This may seem logical, but to my mind Babgēn refers to three different letters, each written in accord one with the other. Nevertheless this does not necessarily mean that the letters were composed at a single council. The Persian delegates may also have inquired about the faith of the Albanian and Iberian Churches from whom they may have received other letters confirming the faith. We can never know for certain whether Babgēn actually refers to the first letter preserved in the *Book of Letters* or to some other document. The "Book of Union", alluded to by the early seventh-century polemicists, was composed in Armenian, then translated into Greek, and was apparently also preserved in Georgian. Garsoïan argues that this cannot be either the first or the second letter of the Armenians, because it does not contain a list of the Georgian participants at the council.¹³⁶ It is in fact difficult to know what Abraham is referring to. It

¹³² GT' I, 46; GT' III, 155: Եւ զի կամեցայք ի մենջ վասն նորին իրաց ուսանել. ծանուցանենք մեզ եթէ Հռոմք և մեզ Հայք, և Վիրք, և Աղուանք, զհայհոյութիւնս զայս ոչ ընկալաք, և ոչ ընդունիմք, և ոչ հաղորդիմք, և ոչ հաւատամք, այլ և նգովենք որ այսպէսն ասեն և ուսուցանեն:

¹³³ GT' I, 51; GT' III, 161: Այսուիկ վարիմք հաւատովք զոր և գրեցաք իսկ ձեզ յառաջագոյն, Վրաց և Աղուանից միաբանութեամբ իւրաքանչիւր աշխարհի գրով:

¹³⁴ Aleksidze, "Materials", 160; Zekiyan, "Rupture", 165.

¹³⁵ Aleksidze, "Materials", 160.

¹³⁶ Garsoïan, *L'Église*, 569, fn. 207. Garsoïan argues that it might be Babgēn's second letter, but states that it can not be the first, which she calls a "councilar act".

might be the Georgian version of the letter, simply because he quotes Babgēn's letter and confuses it with some other document that also lists the Georgian participants.

The presence of Georgians in a united Caucasian church synod is also confirmed in a letter of Simeon Beth-Aršam (early sixth century).¹³⁷ The letter does not reveal the council to which Simeon refers. Hence, according to most of the testimonies, Georgians and Albanians both participated in the council, but none of the sources identifies this council with that of Dwin.

Having invented various canons for their novel doctrine at these synods, they separated from the true faith of the Holy Fathers, from the faith which they received from the Apostles, preached in Nicaea by one hundred and eighteen bishops, gathered together with Constantine the orthodox Emperor of the Romans with whom the one hundred and fifty most pious and most holy bishops agreed, who gathered in Constantinople, together with Emperor Theodosios the Great and two hundred and three bishops in the city of Ephesus under Emperor Theodosios the Younger with whom the 435 bishops of great Alexandria, Antioch of Syria, Cappadocia and Galatia agreed, together with Emperor Zeno through the edict called *Henotikon*, or the *Union*. Later, who confirmed, were forty bishops of the Persian jurisdiction under Maruta who was sent by Caesar [Theodosios] Emperor of the Romans¹³⁸ to the King of Kings Yazdigird I in the eleventh year of his reign and finally was soon followed and ratified by thirty-three bishops of Gurzan [Iberia] together with their kings and princes, also thirty-two bishops of Greater Armenia of Persia together with their *marzpan*s and other Orthodox bishops and also Christian kings from Constantine till Anastasius the Joyous.¹³⁹

Indeed the last two decades of the fifth century were of transformational importance for the Church of Persia.¹⁴⁰ Simeon's letter speaks about the united Georgian and Armenian Council in the context of the rising Nestorianism in Persia on the one hand and in the context of the *Henotikon*.¹⁴¹ The testimony by Pseudo-

¹³⁷ It is widely accepted that Simeon was one of the delegates in Dwin (506). I have not studied the prosopography of the matter, so will not discuss the issue of Simeon's identification here. For the edition and the Latin translation of the letter, see Assemani, 346-361; for the French translation see Garsoïan, *L'Église*, 450-456.

¹³⁸ In her translation Garsoïan states "Arcadius" which is not correct; it was Theodosios II who allegedly sent Maruta.

¹³⁹ *The Letter of Simeon of Beth-Aršam on Baršawma the Bishop of Nisibis and on the Heresy of the Nestorians* Assemani, 354-56; See also Hainthaler, "Disputator", 262-278; "Simeon", 189-204. Simeon's information is in some degree anachronistic, bringing the story of Maruta after the adoption of the *Henotikon*, but still it is noteworthy that according to him, the Georgians and the Albanians acknowledged the *Henotikon* soon after its issue. Thus, even so ardent an anti-Chalcedonian as Simeon did not speak of the condemnation of Chalcedon because the appropriation of the *Henotikon* was for him sufficient confirmation of Orthodoxy.

¹⁴⁰ Baršawma the Metropolitan of Nisibis (457–95) and the patriarchs Akak (485–96) and Babai (497–502) were the restorers of Nestorianism in Persia. Baršawma initiated a council that convened in Xužastan in the city of Beth Lapat in 484, where Theodore of Mopsuestia was canonized. Another council was held in August 485 by Baršawma and Akak which confirmed the decisions of the council of Beth Lapat and, finally, another council was convened by Katholikos Babai in Seleukia-Ktesiphon in 497: Braun, "Barsaumā", 83-101; Brock, "Christology", 159-179; Bruns, "Barsauma", 1-42; Garsoïan, *L'Église*, 184-198; Macomber, "Seleucia-Ctesiphon", 143-154. Gero, *Barsauma*.

¹⁴¹ Although Garsoïan lists the letter of Simeon as a document concerned with the first council of Dwin, it is less probable that it actually has anything to do with this council, owing to the same reasons outlined earlier.

Yovhannēs Mamikonean although indeed very obscure, offers a good perspective to the later perception by the Armenians of their historical attitude towards Chalcedonian Diphyisitism:

He [bishop Kiwrel] went with the Katholikos of the Armenians Vardan to the council in Rome, at which all of Armenia, Georgia and Greece along with Emperor Zeno professed faith in Christ in His one nature.¹⁴²

These sources needed to be readjusted by later Armenians by retaining two of its main aspects: the condemnation of Chalcedon and repeated statements about the unity of the Caucasian Churches. Both of these aspects in the letters would be endlessly recapitulated by later authors for polemical purposes. As for the authenticity of these letters, all that can be said for the present is that no one knows.

It is indeed striking that none of the medieval sources suggests that the Council of Babgēn took place in Dwin. Drasxanakertc'i affirms that it was convened in Nor-K'ālak', that is Vałaršapat:

During the God-pleasing work of the king of the Romans, the patriarch of the Armenians, Babgēn, convened a council of bishops of the Armenians, Georgians and Albanians in Nor-K'ālak' [i.e. Vałaršapat], in the holy cathedral which condemned the Council of Chalcedon. And they stood firm on the same foundation of Saint Gregory. Thus, in the lands of the Greeks, Armenians, Georgians and Albanians a single faith and a common service were established ... and the Council of Chalcedon was expurgated.¹⁴³

Gagik does not specify the location at all,¹⁴⁴ neither do Movsēs Kałankatwac'i nor Pseudo-Yovhannēs Mamikonean.¹⁴⁵ Moreover, according to Kałankatwac'i, the council took place 180 years after the conversion of Armenia. Movsēs Kałankatwac'i envisages the Council of Babgēn as an opportunity for the formal

¹⁴² YM-Avd, 105; Garsoian, *L'Église*, 165.

¹⁴³ YD-Eng, 91; YD, 62: Իսկ ապա զկնի ի սմին յայսմ ժամանակի բարեպաշտութեան աշխարհին Հոռոմոց՝ մեծ հայրապետն Հայոց Բաբգէն առնէ ժողով եպիսկոպոսաց Հայոց, Վրաց և Աղուանից ի նոր քաղաքի ի սուրբ կաթողիկէի ի մայրն եկեղեցեաց Հայոց, որք նմանապէս ... խոտեցին զժողովն Քաղկեդոնի ... ի նմին հիման սրբոյն Գրիգորի հաստատեալ կային: Եւ այսպէս յայսմ ժամանակի մի հաւատ բարեպաշտութեան առհասարակ հաստատեալ լինէր յաշխարհին Հոռոմոց, Հայոց, Վրաց և Աղուանից՝ հաւասար ամենեցունց ... ի բաց ընկեցեալ զժողովն Քաղքեդոնի:

¹⁴⁴ GT' I, 300; GT' III, 548: Հայք և Վիրքք և Աղուանք միաձայն խոստովանութեամբ, ի ժամանակս Բաբգէն Հայոց կաթողիկոսի, ժողովեալ ի սուրբ կաթողիկէն Հայոց, ընդ որս Գաբրիէլ Վրաց կաթողիկոս և ընդդէմ ժողովոյն միախորի եղին ընդդիմակս. մինչև զԿիւրիոն Վրաց կաթողիկոս: The Armenians, Georgians and the Albanians with unanimous confession gathered during the rule of Babgēn in the Holy Cathedral of the Armenians. Gabriel the Katholikos of the Georgians was also present and they made a common statement against the Council [of Chalcedon] until Kiwrión the Katholikos of the Georgians.

¹⁴⁵ YM-Eng, 105.

condemnation of Chalcedon and the *Tome* of Leo albeit with apparent exaggerations and anachronisms, and with an erroneous but traditional claim that Emperor Zeno (425–91) has ever anathematized Chalcedon:

One hundred and eighty years after the conversion of Armenia, in the days of Babgēn katholikos of Armenia, a council was convened concerning the world-destroying Council of Chalcedon. Greece, [all] Italy, Armenia, Albania and Iberia unanimously cursed the infamous Council of Chalcedon and the *Tome* of Leo at the command of the pious kings Zeno and Anastasius. Eighty-seven years later, in the days of Abraham, katholikos of Armenia, the Georgians separated from the Armenians through the accursed Kiwrion, and Greece and Italy with them.¹⁴⁶

None of the two generally accepted dates of the conversion of Armenia (301, and more recently 311/4) is early sixth century but rather the end of the previous.¹⁴⁷ Information provided by Yovhannēs Awjnec‘i (d. 728) is perhaps the most curious. On the one hand, his statement accords with the letters of Babgēn; also the date of the council (the eighteenth year of the reign of Kawad) corresponds to the date given in the letter. On the other hand, however, Awjnec‘i claims that the council was convened in Vałaršapat, in spite of the fact that Babgēn’s letter itself is clear about the venue of the assembly and if Awjnec‘i has seen these letters he must have known where the venue was:

The fifth council was called by Babgēn in Kałakudašt’ in the eighteenth year of Kawad’s reign, on the occasion of the evil teachings of Akak and Barcouma, who were trained in the filthy heresy, cursed disease of Nestorius and tried to ruin the Orthodox faith in the East ... because of which Babgēn wrote a letter and clearly defined how their word deceive you. For we, the Armenians, Greeks, Georgians and Albanians are strengthened by a single confession of the faith, which we inherited from the holy fathers of the three councils.¹⁴⁸

Evidently Awjnec‘i possessed the letters of Babgēn and from their content he came to the conclusion that the council was called in reaction against the growing Nestorianism near the Armenian borders. Why, then,

¹⁴⁶ MK I, 306; MK II 269-270; MK-D, 173: Քառասներորդ երրորդ էր թուականին Հռոմոնց, յորժամ լուսաւորեաց Հայք ի հաւատս, և Աղուանից լուսաւորութեանն ՄՀ ամ յառաջ: Յետ ճՁ ամի լնլոյ հաւատալոյն Հայոց յաղագս տիեզերակործան ժողովոյն Քաղկեդոնի եղև հանդէս ժողովոց ի ժամանակս Բարգէնայ՝ Հայոց կաթողիկոսի: Յոյնք և ամենայն Իտալիա, Հայք և Աղուանք և Վիրք միաբանեալ նգովեցին՝ զչարսփառ ժողովն Քաղկեդոնի և գտումարն՝ Լևոնի հրամանաւ բարեպաշտ թագաւորացն Հռոմոնց Ջենոնի և Անաստասայ:

¹⁴⁷ This has also been noticed by N. Garsoian in “Vałaršapat”, 497-506.

¹⁴⁸ GT‘ I, 220-221; GT‘ III, 474: For the German translation, see van Esbroeck, “Johannes von Odzun”, 41-42: Հինգերորդ ժողով՝ արար Բարգէն ի Քաղաքուղաշտի, ի յԸԺ երորդ ամի թագաւորութեանն Վաւատայ արքայի, յաղագս չար հերձուածոյն Ակակայ և Բարսումայի, որք պէղծ աղանդան վարժեալ անիծեալ ախտինն Նեստորի, ջանային շիջուցանել զուղղափառ հաւատս կողմանց արևելից, ... Վասն որոյ զիր արարեալ Տեր Բարգէն, սահման կապելով, թէ ի՛ւ պատրեալ իսբեցեն զձեզ բանք դոցա, քանզի մեք Հայք և Հռոմք, Վիրք և Աղուանք մի խոստովանութեամբ եմք հաստատեալ ճշմարիտ հաւատով ի լաւ անդր, զոր աւանդեցին մեզ սուրբ Հարքն յերիս ժողովսն:

does he not simply declare that the council took place in Dwin, as the letter indicates just before the date and claim that it happened in K‘alak‘udašt, which is identified with Valaršapat?¹⁴⁹ Perhaps Awjnec‘i possessed yet another document which marked the council’s venue; if so, perhaps this is the same document which Abraham quotes in his letter to K‘yron? Furthermore according to Awjnec‘i’s perception of doctrinal developments in Armenia, the condemnation of Chalcedon and separation from the Byzantine Church would happen at the next stage that is the Council of Dwin (555).¹⁵⁰ In face of this, modern scholarship almost unanimously connects these sources with the Council of Dwin, mentioned in the first letter of the Armenians.

1.7. REMEMBERING THE *HENOTIKON*

Notwithstanding Babgēn’s mentioning of the Council of Chalcedon in his second letter, there is no expression of an explicit condemnation of the Council. It is definitely criticized but not anathematized. Hence the phrases in the second letter: “And the tumults of the Holy Church at the Council of Chalcedon still is not pacified” and “we flee from and deny the lies of Nestorius and of others like him [whose teaching was] confirmed at Chalcedon”¹⁵¹ are not declarations that anathematize of the Council itself. Were it condemned officially and condemned at the council of Dwin, this ought to have been mentioned in the first letter, which is much more official in its composition. Assuming the second letter had not been tempered with in those parts, where Chalcedon is mentioned explicitly (not an assumption widely held), this still does not have the authority it as official decree from the Council. The traditional objects of condemnation, most importantly the *Tome* of Leo or Flabian of Constantinople,¹⁵² are not mentioned at all, nor are the traditional pejorative epithets used for Chalcedon. Contrary to this is the letter of Katholikos Abraham to K‘yron which affirms that the *Tome* was also condemned by Babgēn, as shown above.¹⁵³ In fact several later authors such as Awjnec‘i, do not attribute the condemnation of Chalcedon to the council of Babgēn and consider the Synod as an action against the Persian Nestorians. Step‘anos Orbelean concurs.

¹⁴⁹ See *HTB* 5, 292, Քաղաքուղաշտ.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁵¹ GT‘ I, 48-49; GT‘ III, 158: Եւ ոչ դադարեաց մինչև ցայսար ժամանակի, ալեկոծեալ սուրբ եկեղեցի, ի ժողովոյն Քաղկեդոնի զարացեալ: Սկիզբն առնելով ի Նեստորէ չարիմաց խորհեցաւէ ... Եւ փախչիմք ուրացեալ զ ի Քաղկեդոնի ստութիւն Նեստորի.

¹⁵² For the Armenian attitude towards the *Tome*, see Cowe, “Tome”, 1-20. See also Hainthaler, “Simeon”, 190-191.

¹⁵³ GT‘ I, 182-183; GT‘ III, 342-343.

The next council of the Armenian and Syrian orthodox was convened by Babgēn the Armenian Katholikos with whom was the blessed Muše, the metropolitan of Siwnik' in Nor-K'alak' because of the evil leaven of the Nestorians who are from among the *Xužiks* and because of the Church regulations, where Muše Metropolitan of the Siwnians was also present.¹⁵⁴

In both of his letters Babgēn lists those who were traditionally anathematized by the Armenian Church: these are Nestorius, Arius, Theodore of Mopsuestia, Diodore of Tarsus, Theodoret of Kyrrhus, Eutyches, Paul of Samosata, Ibas, Akak, Baršawma and Babē, but there is no mention of Pope Leo or of his *Tome*. The key to this blatant contradiction must be the *Henotikon* of Zeno, because both the first and the second letter were composed more or less in harmony with the *Henotikon*; they do not surpass it in evaluating Chalcedon.¹⁵⁵ Of singular interest is that the *Henotikon* eschews reference to Chalcedon and avoids initiating a debate over the person of Christ. As such, the appropriation of Cyril's theology in the *Twelve Anathemata* and the adherence to Zeno's *Henotikon* constitute no evidence for traditional anti-Chalcedonianism.¹⁵⁶

The importance of the *Henotikon* for the Caucasian Churches is yet to be studied fully but at this stage several significant parallels can be drawn between the letters of the Armenians and the *Henotikon*.¹⁵⁷ For example, the first letter of the Armenians and the *Henotikon* see first two Ecumenical councils as their primary authorities.

The *Henotikon*

Being assured that the origin and constitution, the mighty and invincible defence of our sovereignty is the only right and true faith, which, through divine inspiration, the three hundred holy fathers assembled at Nicaea set forth, and the hundred and fifty holy fathers, who in like manner met at

First Letter of the Armenians

The same faith was affirmed by the three hundred and eighteen blessed Fathers of the Council of Nicaea, themselves being filled with the divine grace. To the same rule of faith adhered the hundred and fifty orthodox bishops who were assembled at Constantinople for the same issue and whom we join and anathematize the foes of

¹⁵⁴ SO II, 453-454: Բ. Դարձեալ ժողով ի Նոր Քաղաքի՝ Հայոց և Ասորոց ողորպառաց վասն չար աղանդոյն Նեստորականացն որ ի Խուժիկս, և վասն կարգաց եկեղեցոյ Բարբեճի կաթողիկոսի Հայոց. ընդ որում էր երանելին Մուշէ՛ Մետրոպօլիտ Սիւնեաց:

¹⁵⁵ On the *Henotikon* and its reception in the East, see Grillmeier, *Jesus* 2/1, 279-359.

¹⁵⁶ Besides, there are important differentiations made in the early church between the condemnation of a Council, or of a person, or the writings of a person. This was made quite explicit at the Fifth Ecumenical Council of Constantinople, where Theodore of Mopsuestia was condemned in person together with his writings, while only certain writings by Theodoretos were condemned and only one letter of Ibas. On the *Three Chapter* Controversy, see Grillmeier, *Jesus*, 431-502.

¹⁵⁷ The similarities have also been noted by N. Garsoïan. See Garsoïan, *L'Église*, 153-157. Zekiyan also argues that the first letter of Babgēn does not surpass the *Henotikon* remaining within its frames. Zekiyan, "Rupture", 163.

Both the *Henotikon* and the second letter of the Armenians condemn Eutyches together with the Nestorian heresiarchs.

The *Henotikon*:

And these things we write not as setting forth a new form of faith, but for your assurance: and everyone who has held or holds any other opinion, either at the present or another time, whether at Chalcedon or in any synod whatever, we anathematize; and specially the before-mentioned Nestorius and Eutyches, and those who maintain their doctrines.¹⁶⁰

Second Letter of the Armenians:

We shun the lyings of Nestorius in Chalcedon and others similar to him ... We curse Nestorius, Arius, Theodore, Diodore, Theodoret, Eutychius, Paul of Samosata, Ibas, Akakius, Barsouma, Babē who is in the land of the Persians...¹⁶¹

Despite these notable parallels, they nonetheless do not support the view that the letters of Babgēn reflect the activities of a Council that gathered for the adoption of the *Henotikon*.¹⁶² The first letter of Babgēn lists the *Henotikon* together with other dogmatic texts and councils which together form the core of Armenian dogma, without appealing to the *Henotikon* as to a novel document.¹⁶³ But to call upon the authority of the *Henotikon* was a commonplace in Armenian Church writing and Zeno has for the Armenians always remained a most revered Emperor. Despite the diverse views on the date of its adoption in the Armenian

¹⁵⁸ Evagr, 155: Ἀρχὴν καὶ σύστασιν δύναμιν τε καὶ ὄπλον ἀκαταμάχητον τῆς ἡμετέρας εἰδότες βασιλείας τὴν μόνην ὀρθὴν καὶ ἀληθινὴν πίστιν, ἣντινα διὰ τῆς θείας ἐπιφοιτήσεως ἐξέθεντο μὲν οἱ ἐν Νικαίᾳ συναθροισθέντες τριακόσιοι δέκα ὀκτὼ ἅγιοι πατέρες, ἐβεβαίωσαν δὲ καὶ οἱ ἐν Κωνσταντινουπόλει ἑκατὸν πενήκοντα ὁμοίως ἅγιοι πατέρες συνελθόντες.

¹⁵⁹ GT^c I, 46; GT^c III, 155: Եւ զնոյն հաստատեցին աստուածային շնորհաբն լցեալ երանելի հարքն ՅՅԸ եպիսկոպոսունքն ժողովեալ ի Նիկեայ: Միաբանեցին նմին կանոնիս և Ճ և Ծ եպիսկոպոսունքն ուղղափառք վասն նորին խնդրոյ ի Կոստանդնուպոլսոս քրոց մեք միաբանեալ նզովելք զհակառակորդս այն ճշմարիտ հաւատոյ և կատարեալ աստուածաշնորհ կանոնի:

¹⁶⁰ Evagr, 155: Ταῦτα δὲ γεγράφαμεν οὐ καινίζοντες πίστιν, ἀλλ' ἡμᾶς πληροφοροῦτες. Πάντα δὲ τὸν ἕτερόν τι φρονήσαντα ἢ φρονοῦντα, ἢ νῦν ἢ πρόποτε, ἢ ἐν Καλχηδόνι ἢ οἴᾳ δὴ ποτε συνόδῳ, ἀναθεματίζομεν, ἐξαιρέτως δὲ τοὺς εἰρημένους Νεστόριον καὶ Εὐτυχέα καὶ τοὺς τὰ αὐτῶν φρονοῦντας.

¹⁶¹ GT^c I, 175; GT^c III, 160: Եւ փախչիմք ուրացեալ զ'ի Քաղկեդոնի ստութիւն Նեստորի և այլոց նմանից ... Եւ նզովելք զՆեստորիոս, և զԱրիոս, զԹեոդորոս, զԴեստորոս, զԹեոդորիսոս, զԵւտիքոս, զՊաւղոս Սամոսատացի, զԻբաս, զԱկակ, զԲարծուսէ, զԲարբէ, որք ի Պարսից աշխարհի...

¹⁶² Garsoïan also notes that it is rather improbable that the council was called for the adoption of the *Henotikon* mainly because it is not mentioned in the first letter, although the second letter does mention it as a primary authority. Garsoïan, *L'Église*, 167

¹⁶³ Garsoïan, *L'Église*, 161.

tradition, the *Henotikon* still remains important for understanding not only the letters of the Armenians, but also the later evaluation of these letters and of the Council of Dwin.

I would suggest that it is the *Henotikon* that explains the letters of Abraham and K'yrōn, where both say that in the time of Babgēn, Georgian and Armenian churches condemned Chalcedon yet K'yrōn does not reject that the Armenians have the same faith. Acceptance or rejection of the *Henotikon* could have been understood by Chalcedonians and anti-Chalcedonians in their own ways.¹⁶⁴ The Armenian side evidently interpreted the *Henotikon* in a miaphysite way (we do not know the officially decreed position of the Georgian and Albanian churches) but this did not result in a condemnation of the Council of Chalcedon or a schism with the Church of Constantinople. The logic of K'yrōn's action is otherwise incomprehensible and it indeed was such for the Armenians. By that time the Armenians had already overtly condemned Chalcedon and were fervent anti-Chalcedonians. There was no communion between the Church of Armenia and the Greek Churches. This is very strictly stated in almost every letter of the Armenians to the Georgians. The case of K'yrōn is quite the opposite. While correspondence between Georgians and the Armenians was continuing, K'yrōn became outraged at one of the letters of the Armenians and refused to write an answer. Instead, he said, he would send a letter to the Patriarch of Jerusalem whose answer he would forward to the Armenians.¹⁶⁵ This shows that the patriarch of Jerusalem, who by that time was probably Isaac (601–9), was a prime authority for K'yrōn and therefore in communion with him. Moreover, even before the scandal with the Armenians, K'yrōn was actively corresponding with the Western Church, particularly with Pope Gregory the Great (540–604) and the Patriarch of Jerusalem. The two exchanged letters on ecclesiastical matters and K'yrōn apparently obeyed the Pope's instructions.¹⁶⁶ In his letter, Pope Gregory I answers K'yrōn's letter on how to deal with the Nestorians who repent, and how to receive them in communion – whether it is enough for them to accept the creed of Chalcedon or whether they should be re-baptized, also how in general to deal with the growing number of Nestorians in Iberia. Gregory's answer was that if Nestorians repent, accept the

¹⁶⁴ In fact, similar documents were issued by Emperor Heraclius and Patriarch Kyros of Alexandria during the Monoenergist and Monothelete controversies, each aimed at reconciling the opposing parties, but as with the *Henotikon*, both were interpreted by rivalling parties in their own ways, thereby provoking further controversies.

¹⁶⁵ GT' I, 130-131; GT', 101-102; GT' III, 246.

¹⁶⁶ Migne, PL77. col. 1204-1208; also Tamarati, *Catholicism*, 575-577.

Ecumenical Councils, and anathematize Nestorius, K'yron should receive them in communion and return to them all of the privileges and ranks that they had had. And finally, in his last letters, K'yron made clear his doctrinal affiliation and listed all four Councils which he accepted, providing a short historical account for each. He also admitted that he did not compose them himself, but copied from the acts of the councils; thus they possessed these acts before as well. These facts indicate that K'yron was in communion with the Chalcedonian Churches, something that could not have occurred as abruptly as the Armenians maintained.

The "anti-Chalcedonian" character of the Council of Babgēn has been unfailingly rejected by contemporary scholars such that no further elaboration is necessary. Indeed to speak of a formulated anti-Chalcedonianism in the reign of Anastasius, when the Council of Babgēn was convened and to date this to the early sixth century is an anachronism. Even if the letters of Babgēn were authentic, and this can be doubted, there is no explicit or unambiguous condemnation of the Council of Chalcedon. Where mention of Chalcedon is made, these are not statements of condemnation or anathematization. Nevertheless, K. Sarkissian argues that the aim of the council was to ensure the stand of the Caucasian Churches *vi-à-vis* the Nestorian movements in Persia. It also aimed at anathematizing Chalcedon, as made clear in the second letter of the Armenians to the Persians.¹⁶⁷ The Council of Chalcedon is mentioned twice in the second letter: "[Their lies] were strengthened at the Council of Chalcedon, taking as a starting point the evil thoughts of Nestorius". G. Babian reiterates Sarkissian's theory that the council condemned Chalcedon and sets forward several conclusions from his study of Babgēn's letters: 1. A strong emphasis on the sufficiency of the Council of Nicaea, which had a supreme authority for all Monophysites. 2. Acceptance of first three Ecumenical councils. 3. An unyielding opposition to Antiochean and Nestorian theologians. 4. Appropriation of Cyril's theology, as presented in the *Twelve Anathemata*, accompanied by an adherence to Zeno's *Henotikon*. 5. An explicit rejection of the Council of Chalcedon.¹⁶⁸

The conclusions drawn by Sarkissian and Babian are not altogether convincing. The sufficiency of the Council of Nicaea is not explicitly a characteristic for established anti-Chalcedonian theology. Moreover, the

¹⁶⁷ Sarkissian, *Council*, 186-213.

¹⁶⁸ Babian, *Relations*, 98.

letter does not actually say that the Nicene Council was sufficient; it only refers regularly to the Nicene creed, which is common for both Chalcedonians and non-Chalcedonians. For the same reasons, the three remaining arguments equally fail to support the theory that the letters of Babgēn are anti-Chalcedonian.

As Garsoïan has demonstrated, the letters of Babgēn are a reaction to the Nestorian regroupings near the Armenian border. Without naming Chalcedon (due to the *henotikonean* restriction), this attitude is nevertheless felt in Babgēn's second letter and is also stated definitively some forty-five years later in the letter of Katholikos Nersēs to the Syrians. This, too, does not expose the official position of the Georgian and Albanian Churches. Scholars generally agree that the second letter must have been written two or three years after both the council and the first letter.¹⁶⁹ In around 510, Emperor Anastasius was all but forced by Severus of Antioch to issue a *Typos* that would prescribe an anti-Chalcedonian interpretation of the *Henotikon*.¹⁷⁰ This edict almost coincides chronologically with the writing of the second letter. N. Garsoïan must be close to the truth by saying that the council was called as a reaction to the Nestorian movements in the Church of Persia;¹⁷¹ but this is still a hypothesis, for evidence is lacking from the letters, although they require further study.

The exact nature of Chalcedonian diphysitism in and of itself was no real concern, it was diphysitism itself really that mattered. If, throughout the sixth century, the Nestorian threat from Xužastan needed to be quelled, from the end of the sixth and beginning of the seventh century it was the Chalcedonian menace from neighbouring Iberia and Constantinople proper. The later authors already tend to combine their adherence to the *Henotikon*, their confession of one nature of Christ after union, the condemnation of Chalcedon and the condemnation of Nestorians, into one fixed statement of faith. All these were considered as a single event and as equivalent, hence the constant mixing in these sources.¹⁷² The memory of Zeno was so holy for the

¹⁶⁹ Garsoïan, *L'Église*, 167; Aleksidze, "Materials", 160.

¹⁷⁰ On the relations between Anastasius and Severus, see Horn, *Asceticism*, 110;

¹⁷¹ Garsoïan, *L'Église*, 194.

¹⁷² Alluding to one and the same authority and simultaneously interpreting authority in two contradictory ways was a common trait of doctrinal polemics. Throughout the sixth century, the Chalcedonian controversy for the anti-Chalcedonians was defined by the early Cyril who needed to stress the "One" formula in order to abate Nestorius. On the other hand, for the Chalcedonians it was the later Cyril who was an authority, when, after union with the Antiocheans in 433, he spoke of "two natures". On this subject see Gray, "Forgery", 287.

Armenians, just as for other non-Chalcedonians, that they generously attributed to him a strict anti-Chalcedonianism. When the Armenians realized that they had no tools for proper anti-Chalcedonian propaganda, this was too late and K'yrōn used the confusion forcefully.

The only council at the times of King Kawad (488–96, 498–531) and of Katholikos Babgēn was the still hypothetical 491 Council in Vałaršapat, which most probably adopted the *Henotikon* and confirmed the unification of the three Caucasian people with the Romans.¹⁷³ This council might have also issued a document of unity that is now lost. The decisions of the council, if it was called to adopt the *Henotikon*, would certainly have been in the terms of the *Henotikon*. It was usual for such a document to be interpreted by both Chalcedonians and anti-Chalcedonians in their own ways. Just as the memory of Emperors Zeno and Anastasius is a curious instance of how both sides considered these two emperors to be blessed defenders of Orthodoxy, the *Henotikon* was also remembered and interpreted in two radically opposite ways. Therefore, for Abraham, Movsēs, Vrt'anēs and all Armenians, this was a confirmation of faith against the Council of Chalcedon while for K'yrōn and his companions the *Henotikon* did not prescribe rejecting this council at all, and to my mind, justly so. By the beginning of the seventh century, union with the Romans was intentionally forgotten for very soon after its pronouncement, Emperors Justin and then Justinian “deviated” from the union and revoked the *Henotikon*.

The first letter of the Armenians to the Persians was created in the terms of the *Henotikon* and only later was it interpreted by the Armenians (and not by the Georgians) in an uncompromising anti-Chalcedonian fashion. What K'yrōn alludes to, therefore, when he asserts the former unity of the Georgian and Armenian churches, is most likely unity in accepting the *Henotikon*, projected in a “diphysite”, or more precisely, pro-Chalcedonian, interpretation. The *Henotikon* does not condemn Chalcedon, but only those statements of Chalcedon which would contradict the *Henotikon* itself. The original characteristic of the *Henotikon* was such that both Chalcedonians and anti-Chalcedonians could have subscribed to it and this is exactly what happened in the early seventh century Caucasus. Hence, historically speaking, it is not appropriate to consider the *Henotikon* as a “Monophysite” document since it was rejected and accepted by both Chalcedonians and anti-

¹⁷³ For a brief study of the problem, see Garsoïan, “Vałaršapat”, 496-506; Garsoïan, *L'Église*, 160-166,

Chalcedonians. Even in Constantinople attitudes towards the *Henotikon* were not uniform.¹⁷⁴ *Henotikon* of Zeno was at the height of its influence at that time and in his letters Babgēn did exactly what the *Henotikon* prescribed – he did not mention Chalcedon (except in relation to the Nestorianism), neither accepting, nor condemning it. This obviously does not mean that Armenians formally accepted Chalcedon, only that there was no practical reason for condemning Chalcedon. This double interpretation and so to say an “implied” non-Chalcedonianism of the Armenian Church became a problem during the debates with the Georgians, therefore, when Katholikos Movsēs died and Abraham was elected, the very first decree he issued at the same council of Dwin that elected him was that all prelates had to formally and explicitly anathematise Chalcedon and the *Tome* before being integrated or re-integrated into the Armenian Church.¹⁷⁵

1.8. THE ‘SECOND COUNCIL OF DWIN’

The silence of the sources remains undisturbed until the second focal event in the religious history of the Caucasus occurred, an event considerably better described in contemporary and later sources than any other in the whole of the sixth century – the Council of Dwin convened by Katholikos Nersēs II Bagrewand (548–57) in 554/5.¹⁷⁶ As we shall see in the next chapter, despite the existence of several documents emanating from the council itself, and of numerous later narratives describing this council, its nature and aims are still heavily contested. The gap between the letters of Babgēn and these documents is almost fifty years, with an

¹⁷⁴ Patriarch Makedonios II (496–511), for example, did subscribe to the *Henotikon* but he never rejected Chalcedonian diphytism. So did his precursor Patriarch Euthymios (489–96), who also accepted Chalcedon and the *Tome* of Leo. Emperor Anastasius (491–518) was a fervent adherent to the *Henotikon* of Zeno and tried to suppress any mention of Chalcedon, although formally he never condemned it either. See Draguet, *Julien*, 3. On the reception of the *Henotikon* in various traditions, see Menze, *Justinian*, 15-16.

¹⁷⁵ See GT‘ I, 151-152; GT‘ II, 59-61; GT‘ III, 298-299. For a discussion see Garsoïan, *l’Église*, 362-363. In Garsoïan’s view this was the first official and sealed condemnation of the Council of Chalcedon. The testimony by the *Narratio* although antedating the event must also be a reflection of this edict. On the Council, see also, Ananean, “Dwin”, 111-121.

¹⁷⁶ The council convened by Nersēs is known by scholars as the Second Council of Dwin. Because I do not believe that there was a proper council convened in Dwin in 506, I shall refer to it as 555 Council of Dwin. The *Pact of Union* by Nersēs is not unanimously considered in modern scholarship to be the only surviving document from the Council of Dwin. There is a subchapter in the *Kanonagirk’ Hayoc’* entitled *Canons of Katholikos Nersēs and of Neršapuh Bishop of the Mamikoneans*, which would suggest that the council adopted a range of canons. This view is accepted by Mardirossian, *Le livre*, 623-627. Although Mardirossian does not doubt that the canons are authentic and were indeed promulgated by Nersēs and Neršapuh no such canons are known in any Armenian source before the composition of *Kanonagirk’ Hayoc’*. Neither is any mentioned in the documents from the Council of Dwin of 608. It is unlikely that the canons that were supposed to make an everlasting impact on the Armenian Church were lost for over a century, were unknown to the Church, and later were retrieved by Yovhannēs Mayragomec’i, as A. Mardirossian argues. Moreover, it would be strongly misleading to accept the titles and subtitles of *Kanonagirk’* at face value, as there are canons attributed to Sahak Part’ew himself, and these are acknowledged as a forgery.

almost undisturbed silence in between. The abundance of sources touching upon the council of Dwin is both an opportunity and in some sense a hindrance for a proper understanding of all the complexities of the development of the Armenian doctrinal position, as most of the sources anachronistically try to attribute to the council decisions that it could not yet possibly have taken. The renewal of doctrinal alertness in Armenia was once again connected to external influence and to the threats beyond its borders, this time emanating from Syria. Several documents are incorporated into the *Book of Letters*, the absolute majority of which are official or less official correspondences, which reflect the ecclesiastical and dogmatic situation in Armenia in the middle of the sixth century.¹⁷⁷

The problem, is once again, just as in case of Babgēn's council, raised by the high degree of incompatibility between the sources immediately contemporary to the council and the testimonies of later writers. The general spirit of the medieval historians is that the council of Dwin represented the liminal point in the development of the Armenian Church, when it anathematized the Council of Chalcedon and rejected communion with the Church of Constantinople. Both the Chalcedonian (*Narratio de Rebus Armeniae, On the Severance of the Georgians and Armenians* by Arseni Sapareli) and anti-Chalcedonian sources agree with each other in their liminalist reading of the Council, although in many cases they are mutually dependent and far from being unanimous. Another major event that is often associated with the Council of Dwin is the separation of the Georgians and Albanians from communion with Armenians, thus antedating the schism among the Caucasian Churches by almost a half a century. But this would happen only later, as in the seventh-century polemic, the 555 Council of Dwin is entirely absent. Indeed there is not even the slightest mention of the Council of Dwin in the correspondence between the Armenians and the Georgians or in other

¹⁷⁷ Most of these letters are included in the *Book of Letters*: "The letter of the Orthodox Syrians to the Armenians", "The response to the letter of the Syrians by Nersēs, Katholikos of the Armenians and Meršapuh Bishop of the Mamikoneans", "by Abdišo to Nersēs the katholikos of the Armenians: a letter of salutation", "by Abdišo the Bishop of the Syrians orthodox to Lord Nersēs Katholikos of the Armenians and to his Colleagues on the Subject of the Anathematization of the Nestorians", "By the same Abdišo on the anathematization of the Nestorians and of all heretics", "By the same Abdišo on the anathematization of all heretics who oppose the orthodox". Two letters, both composed by Katholikos Nersēs, elaborate upon the immediate cause and consequence of the council of Dwin: "The letter of blame of Lord Nersēs, Katholikos of the Armenians to the bishops", "The *Pact of Union*, written by Nersēs, katholikos of the Armenians and by Meršapuh Bishop of the Mamikoneans, and by Peter, Bishop of Siwnik". This letter is followed by a text titled: *On the separation of the Nestorians from the Holy Church*, which, as N. Garsoïan showed it, is clearly a later interpolation. The remaining documents represent events in the aftermath of the Council of Dwin and the general dogmatic situation in the Caucasian region. GT' I, 52-75; GT' III, 172-203; French translation: Garsoïan, *L'Église*, 457-479.

epistolography related to the controversy and the whole of the previous century is retained as a glaring gap as if nothing happened then. Instead, the polemicists persistently allude to some ancient era during the reign of King Kawad of Persia, when both Georgians and Armenians anathematized the Council of Chalcedon and the *Tome* of Leo. As for the following period, the entire sixth century, as we saw, the Armenians complained that there were insufficient documents from that period to support the Armenian case in defending an anti-Chalcedonian position against the Georgians.¹⁷⁸

The documents that emanate from the 555 Council are usually divided into two groups: the first reflects events immediately before the Dwin council and also the crisis that triggered the need for a synod. This correspondence probably dates to the 550s, that is to say, to the pontificate of Nersēs Bagrewand, and reflects the doctrinal and ecclesiastical hesitations of the period of the council of Dwin.¹⁷⁹ The letters are correspondences between Syrian monks and the Armenian Katholikos, although the Armenian voice is restricted to only one letter, that by Katholikos Nersēs II. Therefore, the paucity of the Armenian witness leads us to the danger of confusing Syrian theological experience with Armenian. On the Armenian side nothing else than the letter of Nersēs can be referred to for study of the Armenian Church position in the mid sixth century. Three major issues emerge from the letters that stem from the Council: the Nestorian question, the validity of the Council of Chalcedon and the Julianite-Severan controversy. The correspondence began with a request from the Syrians to ordain Abdišo, leader of the Monastery of Sareba, as bishop. For this the Syrians needed to be assured that they were of the same faith as the Armenians.¹⁸⁰ The initial inquiry from the Syrian side was the request for a letter that stated Armenian beliefs. Having opened it with a traditional formula of salutation, then a complaint ensued about their being surrounded by heretics. Finally, a statement of the creed followed, and this was no less than a classical anti-Chalcedonian *confessio fidei*. The *Letter of the Syrians* openly condemned both the Council of Chalcedon and the *Tome* of Leo.¹⁸¹

¹⁷⁸ GT^c I, 140; GT II, 44; GT^c III, 284.

¹⁷⁹ N. Garsoïan dates them all to 552–4.

¹⁸⁰ Although other sources claim that this has already been a practice even earlier and Armenian katholikos Kristap'or (539–45) had consecrated several Syrian bishops. See Hainthaler, "Simeon", 191, fn. 16.

¹⁸¹ GT^c I, 53; GT^c III, 173–174.

Despite the clear anti-Chalcedonian spirit of the letter, the immediate concern of the Syrians at this point was not Chalcedonianism but the Severan wing of the anti-Chalcedonian Church, which by that time had developed into a *cause célèbre* in hierarchical matters. Emphasis was laid on the apthartodocetist formula of the incorruptibility of Christ's flesh whereas Chalcedonian theology was seemingly put aside. Because of this letter the Armenians were introduced to, and had to react to, two Christological positions, anti-Chalcedonianism and Julianism, at one grasp. Initially the Armenians handled the problem with a large degree of inconclusiveness. Only one letter stated the Armenian position composed in the correspondence with the Syrians – the answer by Nersēs to the Syrians. Despite the dogmatic and official character of Nersēs's treatment of dogmatic matters it is a mechanic repetition of the statements by the Syrians. It does not testify to clear insight in the problem. No specific miaphysite teaching exists in this confession of faith, except the *Who were crucified for us* (*xač'ec'ar*) interpolation in the Thrice Holy Hymn. Otherwise it repeats the statements of the Syrians word for word and without elaborating a miaphysite Christology. It has been also suggested that Nersēs did not have enough time to study the question so as to give a competent answer.¹⁸² The doctrine of the Incarnation is presented in very basic terms thus that without contextualizing it, which renders it almost impossible to identify a concrete system behind the statements:

We confess and believe in His complete Incarnation, that He was nurtured and nourished, we believe in His sufferings on the Cross, and in His death, in His buried and in His resurrection on the third day, as He wanted so according to His Divinity, in His ascension in Glory in Heaven in the same body, in Him seated on the right of His Father, in His [second] coming in the same flesh to judge the living and the dead and in his eternal reign. And with the same faith and same hope, we adore and glorify the Divinity in the Incarnation and Incarnation in Divinity and we confess His Crucifixion by the *Trishagion*. And we constantly anathematize the renegades: Nestorius, the evil inventor of the heresy, and those similar to him, Theodore and Eutyches and Areios, and all their writings of corruption,¹⁸³ and Apollinarios and the *Tome* of Leo, Paul of Samosata, and Mani, and Markion, and Baršauma, and Severos, and Ibas, and Akakios and their filthy councils and their erring canons, and Theodoret [of Kyrros], and the unholy Council of Chalcedon and the outraging canons promulgated by them, which we must not remember, those who the Council of the holy 318 in Nicaea and the 150 in Constantinople, and the 200 in Ephesos have anathematized.¹⁸⁴

¹⁸² Garsoïan, *L'Église*, 214, fn. 232.

¹⁸³ Curiously Nersēs misplaced the expression “writings of corruption”, which traditionally refers to Severus, apparently thinking that the writings are corrupting or erring and not that the writings were about corruption as it was actually the case. This also testifies to the lack of knowledge of the subject matter.

¹⁸⁴ a.) GT^c I, 56-57; GT^c III, 177-178: խոստովանիմք և հաւատամք իսկապէս զմարդանալն կատարելապէս ամենայնիւ, զկարթնաբոյծ լինելն, զսնանիլն, զչարչարանս ի վերայ խաչին, զմահն, զթաղումն զերեքարեայ յարութիւնն՝ որպէս կամեցաւ աստուածաբար, նովին մարմնով փառաւք համբարձումն, զնստելն ընդ աջմէ Հաւր. յաղագս ամենայն տիեզերաց. զգալուստն նովին մարմնով և փառաւք, դատել զկենդանիս և զմեռեալս

On the one hand, we possess the acts of the council, directly expounding about the aims and decisions of the council. These acts do not utter a single word about the Chalcedonian problem but tackle only concrete issues. On the other hand, we have the almost unanimous testimony of the posterior sources and also of certain contemporary ones (*The letter of Patriarch John to Abas*) that at around the same time an Armenian council anathematized the Council of Chalcedon.¹⁸⁵ N. Garsoïan's solution to the problem is that these posterior testimonies are exaggerations and oversimplifications, and that the council of Dwin was nothing more than a reaction to the Nestorian threat from Xužastan.¹⁸⁶

Two documents, both written by Katholikos Nersēs, reflect directly the reasons and the results of the Council of Dwin: the *Letter of Blame* and the *Pact of Union*. But neither of the two surviving documents offers a single word either about Chalcedon or about the *Tome*. This is understandable in the case of the *Letter of Blame* because it was aimed at calling the council and explains the reasons why the council was to be convened. It was not meant to be a statement of faith. The Katholikos reproached the bishops for not appearing at the council on time and, as a result, demanded that they strictly observe punctuality. According to the letter, the reason for the gathering was:

To anathematize the *Xužik* Nestorians, who came and established themselves in our land under the pretext of commerce and who are subduing our souls with their evil, filthy and execrable artifices, who even brought a leader and a false bishop of their infamous faith, in order to put an obstacle into our bright, orthodox and solid faith. Unanimously, together with the *tanuters* and noblemen of our country, we have already addressed you on these matters with a written order to ask you urgently to

յախտեանական թագաւորութեամբ, և նովին հաւատով և յուսով երկրպագեմք և փառաւորեմք զԱստուածութիւնն հանդերձ մարմնաւորութեամբն, և զմարմնաւորութիւնն հանդերձ Աստուածութեամբն. և երիցս սրբասացութեամբ զխաչիլն խոստովանիմք: Եւ նզովեմք և մեք հանապազ զուրացողսն. և զՆեստրիոս զչարագտաւղն հնարաւորութեան հերձուածողութեան, և զմանս նորին, և զԹէոդորոս, և զԴեոդորոս, և զԵւտիքիոս. և զԱրիոս, և զամենայն զիրս ապականութեան, և զԱպողինարիս, և զտումարն Լևոնին, զՊաւղոս Սամուսատցի, և զՄանի, և զՄարկիոլն, և զԲարծումա, և զՍևերիոս, և Իբր [sic.], և զԱկակ. և զպիղծ ժողովն նոցա և զստանուն կանոն նոցա, և զԹէոդորիտոս և զանաւրեն ժողովն Քաղկեդոնի, և թշնամանաւղ և զանյիշելի բռնադատեալ կանոնսն ի նոցանէ՝ զորս նզովեաց և ժողով սրբոցն ՅԺԸ . իցն ի Նիկիա. և Ճ և Ծ . իցն ի Կոստանդինուպալիս և Մ-ոցն յԵփեսոս:

b.) The Monophysite formula of the *Trishagion* is not repeated here as it is in the *Letter of the Syrians* but rather paraphrases it.

¹⁸⁵ *EpistJohan*, 252-256.

¹⁸⁶ Garsoïan, *L'Église*, 214-220.

gather in Dwin in this holy Church and to hold here a council agreeable to God and to find a means to suppress the calamity so intolerable and of constant lamentations to our souls.¹⁸⁷

Once again the archenemies of the Armenians, the Nestorians from Xužastan, were seen as a menace that required counter-action from the Armenian side. The *Pact of Union* is in full accord with the *Letter of Blame*. It states the conclusions of the council and also sets out prescriptions on how to act towards the Nestorians – listing all stern consequences that one could bring upon oneself by communing with them:

Because the danger of a spiritual accident, which is a permanent malady, had reached us, we gathered at a united council in order to lift from our souls and our minds the lamentable seeds of this evil, and by [mutual] advising to escape the alien sins, in which there has never been a hope. And because this still took place, we, all Armenians, were forced to establish this general pact of union, on the twenty-fourth year of [the reign] of Xosrow, the King of Kings, on holy Palm Sunday [March 21, 555], because of the evil heresy of the *Xužik* Nestorians, that was anathematized through the Holy Spirit by the 318 bishops gathered in Nicaea, 150 in Constantinople and 200 in Ephesos. They expelled far accursed Nestor.¹⁸⁸

The so called *Pact of Union* is a very precise document that targets a very practical issue: to warn the country of possible Nestorian intrusion from Xužastan, who “bring together with them their *vardapets*, the guides of their perdition, trying to introduce their corruption into our true and real faith.” Therefore they “unanimously composed this written agreement and confirmation, with everybody’s support.” The *Pact* does not declare any anathemas towards anyone or any council, although we do know the list of anathematized persons and ideas, by the Armenian Church.¹⁸⁹ The problem that emerges, as in case of the first letter of

¹⁸⁷ GT^c I, 70; GT^c III, 196-197: Վասն անիծեալ խուժկաց նեստորականաց՝ որ եկեալ բնակեցան յաշխարհիս մերում պատճառաւ վաճառաշահութեան, և այժմ չարահնար պղծալից անիծաբեր արուեստիս իւրեանց ցոզիս մեր ազդեցին, մինչև իւրեանց պղծութեան հաւատոյ առաջնորդ չեպիսկոպոս ածեալ, և մեզ լուսաւոր և ուղղափառ հաստատուն հաւատոյս խոչընդակն կացուցանել, յառաջագոյն վասն նորին իրաց, մեք և աշխարհիս մերոյ տանուտեարք, և ազատք միաբանութեամբ ի ձեռն գրոյ հրաման արարաք վասն ձեր, փութապէս ի Դուին ի սուրբ եկեղեցիս ժողովելոյ. և աստ միաբանութեամբ ըստ հաճոյիցն Աստուծոյ առնել խորհուրդ. և հնար լինել բառնալ զայսպիսի անհնարին աղէտս, և զհանապագորդ հեծութիւն հոգւոց մերոց:

¹⁸⁸ GT^c I, 72; GT^c III, 199: Վասն զի եհաս մեզ վտանգ հոգևոր դիպուածի, որ եղև հանապագորդեան հիւանդութիւն. եկաք ի խորհուրդ միաբանական, զի բարձցուք զհառաչագին հեծութիւն ցաւոյս այսորիկ հոգւոց մերոց և զխիղճ ի խորհրդոց փախչել ի մեղաց աւտարոտեաց, որում լինել երբեք չէր ակնկալութիւն: Եւ վասն զի եղև, այնորիկ հարկեցաք առնել զմիաբանութիւնս զայս համաշխարհական, մեք ամենայն Հայք, ի քսան և չորորդ ամի Խոսրովու արքայից արքայի, ի սուրբ ի քառասներորդսն, ի կիրակելի իւղոգումենին, վասն չար աղանդին խուժկաց նեստորականաց, զորս նզովեաց սուրբ Հոգին ի ձեռն սրբոց ուղղափառ եպիսկոպոսաց ՅԺԸ. իցն ժողովելոց ի Նիկիայ: և ՃԾ. իցն ի Կոստանդիանուպալիս: և Մ. ոցն Յեփեսոս, որոց անիծեալ զՆեստոր խղեցին ի բաց ընկեցին: Note that Nersēs attributes to all three councils the condemnation of “Nestorianism” thereby revealing the attitude of the Armenians towards Nestorianism as to an arch-heresy.

¹⁸⁹ Another document has survived in a 14th century collection that claims to have been created at the Council of Dwin but as N. Garsoïan has already sufficiently proven this is a clear forgery and neither the form nor the content suggests authenticity. See Garsoïan, *L'Église*, 141-145, 481-483; *Col-Ananean*, 112-113; *Narr- Fr*, 431-432.

Babgēn, is to determine to what extent can this document be called a *Counciliar Act*? By going back to the first letter of Babgēn and comparing it with the *Pact of Union* of Nersēs, a number of differences can be identified. First of all, and most importantly, the letter of Babgēn was a statement of faith and therefore treated all aspects of the dogmatic position of the Armenian Church. Contrary to this, the *Pact of Union* was a document targeting a concrete case. It was also an encyclical letter, having been sent to the entire community of the Armenian Church but not to another Church as were the letters of Babgēn. Therefore it does not recapitulate all aspects of the faith of the Church but gave concrete instructions for a specific case. The same could be said about the decisions of the so-called Third Council of Dwin of 607. The *Act* of the council states univocally:

Because the heretics have already been rejected and expelled a long time ago by the powerful anathemas of the Holy Fathers and Orthodox teachers [the list of the anathematized people and doctrines including the Council of Chalcedon and the *Tome* of Leo], and because many people of our country now are in communion with those who confess and accept the council of Chalcedon and the *Tome* of Leo, some voluntarily because of the vain love of glory and flattery and some forced by them against their own will and some because of their ignorance or incompetence. Because of this we, these bishops, have gathered in this cathedral church of Dwin [the list of the participants] in order to establish canonical limits for those who come for confession [and] repent because of the evil and sins that they have committed, voluntarily or involuntarily, in order to know how to attain salvation for their own selves from the Lord.¹⁹⁰

In its nature the act of 608 is closer to the decisions of 555, because, presumably for the first time the Armenians encountered a Chalcedonian influx from neighbouring Iberia, which in turn was backed by the Roman Empire. The necessity of tackling Nestorianism and Chalcedonianism separately was finally realized by the Armenian Church and therefore brought it closer to the finalization of its stand *contra haereticos*. The *Act* has a logical sequence: The enumeration of those anathematized by the Armenian Church (including Chalcedon); the declaration of the immediate reason for gathering; instructions on how to act if a heretic repents and instructions on how to deal with those who do not accept the conditions listed before. As such I

¹⁹⁰ GT^c I, 146-147; GT^c II, 53-54, GT^c III, 292-293: Վասն զի յառաջագոյն սուրբ Հարցն և ուղղափառ վարդապետացն՝ մերժեալ էր և ի բաց ընկեցեալ սուկալի նգովիւք զամենայն հերձուածողս...և այժմ բազումք ընդ խոստովանողս և ընդ ընդունաւորս ժողովոյն Քաղկեդոնի և տումարին Լևոնի հաղորդեցան յաշխարհէս մերմէ. ոմանք կամաւորութեամբ յաղագս սնտի փառասիրութեան և աշարութեան, և կէտք ակամայ բոնադատեալք ի նոցանէ. և այլք առ սգիտութեան և կամ անձեռնհաս լինելոյ. վասն որոյ ժողովեցաք եպիսկոպոսքս այս ի մայրաքաղաք եկեղեցիս Դունեայ ... հաստատել սահմանս կանոնականս յաղագս այնպիսեացն, որք զան ի խոստովանութիւն գղջանալով զվնաս և զմեղս զոր գործեցին կամաւ և ակամայ, զի զիտացեն պատրաստութեամբ գտանել անձանց փրկութիւն ի Տեառնէ:

do not think that we should necessarily expect to find all the decisions made by the Council in this single document (the *Pact of Union* of Nersēs), because the possibility of the existence of another council, or of another session of the same council cannot be excluded. As we shall see below, all of these possibilities still stand.¹⁹¹

A striking fact that remains, namely, that this council, whatever its nature, was not mentioned at all in the correspondence between Armenians and Georgians. Moreover, this correspondence cannot be seen as simply providing an *argumentum ex silentio*, for if there were such a grandiose council, and if it had actually established ecclesiastical canons, and if the Iberian Church were by that time somehow dependent upon the Armenian Church, this ought to have been mentioned in one or another way as an argument supporting the Armenian case. Instead, both sides refer to that rather mysterious “Book of Union” yet with no immediate historical or canonical arguments being set forward. Neither are the activities of the Council of Dwin as a specifically anti-Chalcedonian event mentioned in the correspondence between Georgians and Armenians. Unlike the mysterious united council to which they constantly allude, the Council of Dwin did not by that time carry the role of such transitional importance. Such importance it would acquire only much later when some fifty years of Caucasian Church history would be fused into one single event and the Council of Dwin would remain as the emblem of Armenian Orthodoxy and of the schism in the Caucasus. But by the end of the sixth century this was not yet the case since the “national” image of unity and separation in the Caucasus had not yet been forged.

¹⁹¹ It has occasionally been suggested in scholarly literature that the 555 Council of Dwin was in some way related to the Fifth Ecumenical Council of Constantinople. Nersoyan, *Studies*, 130. One could easily have drawn the inference that the Council of Dwin was a reaction to the neo-Chalcedonian Council of Constantinople and a confirmation that the condemnation of the “Nestorian heresiarchs”, or their writing, would not be a trap good enough for the Armenians. But, unfortunately, we do not possess any contemporary or even later source that would support this argument. Moreover, knowledge of contemporary developments in Constantinople seems to be rather obscure in the Armenian tradition as Movsēs’s third letter to Vrt’anēs made clear. Nersoyan goes even further in his judgment: “After considering the position taken by the Council of Justinian in 553, in which a supposed reconciliation of Cyril and Chalcedon was affected through the labours of the Emperor and the ‘first scholastic theologian’ Leontius of Byzantium, [the Council of Dwin] affirmed its anti-Chalcedonian attitude and broke off relations with the Diophysite sees. This council of 554 considered the decision of Justinian’s Council nothing but a sugar-coating on the old bitter pill.” Apart from its over-simplistic approach towards both the Council of Dwin and of Constantinople, Nersoyan conjures a completely new story, not attested in any source whatsoever.

But to what degree do we need to take Church councils as liminal stages in the development of doctrine? That is to say, should we be searching for a council in the South Caucasus that had convened and accepted the *Henotikon* of Zeno? We suspect the existence of a council of Vałaršapat (c.490), but the decisions it took are unknown. The same is pertinent for the council of Dwin of 555: should we look for an explicit condemnation of the Council of Chalcedon, one stated in the *Act* of the council, in order to infer the anti-Chalcedonian position of the Church? Unlike Garsoïan and Garitte, I would not place so heavy a burden on the two councils held in Armenia between 490 and 555. I suppose that an explicit condemnation of a person or a teaching by a council was not of an utmost necessity if there was no direct “threat” from their side. The Council of Dwin of 555 was convened for a specific aim and targeted the Nestorians. It was called to abate the intrusion from Xužastan therefore an *Act* of such a council cannot and in fact did not render a formulated attitude against Chalcedon. Nor do I think that the fact that Chalcedon was not condemned in written form by the council means that it was not actually rejected by the Church. When the Chalcedonian threat was felt from Iberia in the north, then a strategy of action by the Armenian Church had to be developed and the anti-diphysite discourse had to be reformulated into an explicitly anti-Chalcedonian one. In short, this type of council aims at developing a concrete stand and strategy of action by a Church with regard to a concrete menace. Therefore, in the quest for a doctrinal affiliation of the Armenian Church, methodologically stressing the importance of *synodal acts* can be, and in this concrete case, is misleading. Having all these arguments in mind I argue that we can still think that there had been another united Caucasian council before 506, maybe in Vałaršapat, which adopted the *Henotikon* of Zeno and also condemned the Nestorian heresiarchs – Diodorus of Tarsus, Ibas and Theodore of Mopsuestia and the Nestorians in Persia as well. The reason for calling this council could have been either the adoption of the *Henotikon* or the reaction to Persian Nestorianism, or both. I consider the first theory more plausible, because of the frequent appeal to the unity of the faith with the Greeks. Later on this council was confused with the council of Dwin, mainly due to the letters of Babgēn which must have misled the historiographers. As for the council of Dwin, it was a local Armenian council which did not aim at dogmatic decision, at least not any known to us.

The entire status of the question of whether or not the Armenians condemned Chalcedon in the beginning of the sixth century is misleading. The Armenians, as the letters of Babgēn indicate, were in communion with the Imperial Church and this would certainly have been the case at least until the death of Anastasius (518).¹⁹² Armenians, Georgians and Albanians were together in agreement with the *Henotikon* and its current interpretation. At the time when the interpretation of the *Henotikon* began to differ drastically and ultimately by the early seventh century, it remained an authority for both opposing parties. We can suppose that Armenians leaned even more towards the rejection of Chalcedon after the death of emperor Anastasius and the pro-Chalcedonian policy of Justin, a process which eventually culminated at the council of Dwin of 554/555, although it is still debatable whether this council actually anathematized Chalcedon.¹⁹³ This indeed sounds logical, but we possess virtually no source, contemporary or posterior, that defines the position of the Armenians *vis-à-vis* the policy of Justin or even early Justinian. This, to my mind, is the reason that, on the one hand, K'yrōn could insist that Georgians had not betrayed their unity with the Armenians and, on the other, that he could present Chalcedon along with other Oecumenical councils as the core of his faith. Evidently this was not something novel and it was not K'yrōn in particular who initiated such an interpretation of the union. In one of the letters Vrt'anēs K'erdoł wonders:

I understood the reason for not having received the answer. As for what was actually there from certain noblemen was akin to ravings of those fallen in some sickness, who [do not know] what they are speaking about. They say: 'We have this faith as well as that. We follow both these canons and also your canons'.¹⁹⁴

From the Armenian doctrinal point of view such a statement from the Iberian nobility did indeed sound absurd, but the only way to explain this puzzling passage would be to consider a twofold, Chalcedonian and anti-Chalcedonian, interpretation of the *Henotikon* of Zeno. Therefore, what the Georgians were in fact saying was that they kept the union established or reaffirmed at a certain point together with the Armenians and Romans and there had been no further development thereafter. This silence throughout the sixth century

¹⁹² For the ecclesiastical policy of Anastasius, see Charanis, *Church and State*, 10-51, 66-81; Haarer, *Anastasius I*, 115-184.

¹⁹³ Garsoïan, "Precisions II", 105.

¹⁹⁴ GT^c I, 141; GT^c II, 45; GT^c III, 285: Ծանեայ և զպատճառսն թղթոյն պատասխանի չառնելոյ, և զոր արարեալն իսկ է առ իս ազատ արանց ոմանց այնպէս է՝ որք ի հիւանդութեան ինչ ընդ բարբաջ անկեալ [GT^c I omm: ոչ գիտեն] զինչպէս խաւսին: Ասեն, մեք և զայս ունինք հաւատ և զայդ, արիինաց աստ հաղորդինք և այդր.

became a real problem during subsequent debates, especially when the need arose among the Armenians to evoke new memories in order to fill out the lacunae in the received tradition of the continuity of Orthodoxy on the Armenian land.¹⁹⁵

1.9. THE INTOLERABLE XUŽIKS

Considering the Armenian experience with the Nestorians, it is understandable that the central accusation was the alleged ordination of someone whom the Armenian sources call a “Xužik Nestorian” by K‘yron. It is an accusation that will be repeated over and over again by all Armenians involved in the controversy, although its source is certainly Movsēs. Following the report of Bishop Movsēs, Katholikos Movsēs II was the first to accuse K‘yron of consecrating a Nestorian Xužik. He had “heard this from trustworthy sources that a Nestorian Xužik came to [K‘yron] and received Episcopal ordination.”¹⁹⁶ K‘yron did not deny that the Nestorian in question had indeed been accepted in the Georgian Church but of course K‘yron would have never confirmed that he had received a Nestorian without his or their conversion to Orthodoxy, which is probably the truth. In response to Katholikos Movsēs, he stressed two points, first he underlined that these decisions should be made within the Church, not dictated from outside, and secondly, that this was a canonical decision. In another letter, this time addressed to Katholikos Abraham, K‘yron was more explicit:

As for what you have written that before our blessed patriarch Movsēs accused me of being in communion with those with whom it was not righteous, if you refer to *Xužiks*, then we deliberated with our people, with my *synthronoi* bishops and princes as our law orders us, not to expel but to receive those who convert from their evil ways and heresy, so we indeed received them. But when we were informed that their confession had been a lie and [that they] turned back to the swamp of their evil-doing, we rejected, anathematized and expelled them from the Oecumenical Church and from among us, the Christians. Nobody will dare to greet them.¹⁹⁷

¹⁹⁵ See *infra*, chapter 3 on “march-lands of memory”.

¹⁹⁶ GT II, 124; GT III, 123-124. US II, 8-12.

¹⁹⁷ GT I, 166; GT II, 69-70; GT III, 319: Եւ որ գրեալ էր թէ յառաջագոյն երանելի հայրապետն մեր Մովսէս գրեաց առ ձեզ մեղադրութիւն յաղագս հաղորդելոյ ձեր ընդ այնսպիկ ընդ որս չէր արեւն, եթէ վասն Խուժկացն ասեք, մեք յայնժամ ընդ աշխարհի խորհելով հանդերձ եպիսկոպոսաւքս աթորակցովքս իմովք և լաւաւք աշխարհիս, և որպէս արեւնք հրամայեն ոչ ի բաց ընկենալ, այլ ընդունել՝ որք դառնան ի չարութենէ ինչ և կամ ի հերձուածոց յապաշխարութիւն, այն իրաւք ընդունելութիւն արարաք: Այլ յորժամ գիտացաք, թէ նոքա զխոստովանութիւնն ստութեամբ արարին և անդրէն յիւրեանց ի տիղմն չարութեան դարձեալ՝ կործանեցան, նզովեցաք զնոսա, և ի բաց կործանեցաք ի կաթողիկէ եկեղեցոյ, և ի մենջ քրիստոնէից: Այժմ նոցա ողջոյն ոք չիշխէ տալ:

This repeated reference to the Nestorian could be associated with the Armenians' "confusion" of the Nestorians and Chalcedonians. This theory is also supported by Uxtanēs's testimony, which even locates the provenance of this "Nestorian". I think this is an important point because the ordination of the Nestorian by K'yron and the subsequent allegations of Chalcedonianism are not as interconnected as accepted by the medieval historians or by Uxtanēs himself. Uxtanēs is eager to create probably an artificial logical sequence from the close ties of K'yron with a Nestorian to the former's Chalcedonian apostasy:

Upon his arrival in his jurisdiction, in the called Mxeta, K'yron called upon the bishops, the aristocrats [*išxans*] and the princes [*naxarars*] to a meeting and through them he confirmed his authority to be exercised over the entire country. And when he saw that everything was going well as he wished, he conceived and executed the perfidious plan to ordain as bishop a certain Nestorian *Xužik* whose name was Kis, meaning harshness, as he really was a harsh man, who conducted himself harshly toward the patrimony of the Lord and roused up dryly the wrath of the Lord. This man had come to K'yron from the province of Koloneia, a Greek territory, where he dwelled in village named Zutarim, near Nikopolis, where both of them lived near the bank of the River Gayl, as mentioned above. I believe that not only were they from the same district and village, but they were also adherents to the same heresy, being disciples of evil teachings preached by evil doctors. K'yron ordained him as overseer of foreigners [*otaratesuč*], which meant a heretic bishop.¹⁹⁸

Yet there is no need to make such connections and accept the two as resultative. The correspondence between Armenians and Georgians lasted for over ten years, and not everything was happening at once. The resultative character of these facts and an attempt to squeeze all developments of two centuries into a single event were strongly advocated by medieval polemicists. The letters of Katholikos Movsēs were dispatched prior to Bishop Movsēs's expulsion and the letters of the latter do not seem to be connected with the Nestorian's ordination. The main reason was K'yron's unilateral action, by which K'yron stressed that whether or not he accepts someone in communion is his and his church's business and the Armenians are not authorized to interfere.¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁸ US-Ar, 42; US II, 22: Իսկ յորժամ եհաս Կիւրոն ի վիճակ իւրոյ իշխանութեանն և ի քաղաքն իւրեանց՝ որ կոչի Մցխիթայ, ժողովէ առ ինքն գեպիսկոպոսունսն հանդերձ լաւաք աշխարհին և զիշխանս և գնախարարս, և նուաճէ նոքաք հանդերձ առհասարակ զամենայն աշխարհն ընդ իւրով իշխանութեամբ: Իսկ ապա յորժամ տեսանէր զամեայն յաջողեալ ըստ կամաց իւրոց, այնուհետև խորհուրդ նենգութեան ի միտ արկեալ ձեռնադրէ եպիսկոպոս մի խուժիկ նեստորական. որում անուն Կիս կոչիւր, որ է խստութիւն: Քանզի և էր իսկ խիստ, և խստութեամբ վարեցաւ ի տեառնակողմն կոյս, և ի ցամաքութիւն ցասմամբ բարկացոյց զՏէր: Սա եկեալ առ նա յաշխարհէն Հոռոմոց՝ ի գաւառէն Կողոնիայ՝ բնակութեամբ ի գեղջէն՝ որ կոչի Ջուտարիմայ, մերձ ի Նիկոպոլիս: Եւ են երկոքեան յեզր Գայլ գետոյ, որպէս նախասացեալ եղև. որ կարծեմ ոչ միայն գաւառակից միմեանց լեալ՝ կամ գեղակից, այլև աղանդակիցք և ուսումնակիցք չար ուսմանց ի չար վարդապետաց. և ձեռնադրէ զնա ատարատեսուչ՝ այսինքն աղանդաւոր եպիսկոպոս:

¹⁹⁹ GT՝ I, 166; GT՝ II, 130; GT՝ III, 319

A problem that Uxtanēs offers, is the term *Otaratesuč* ‘“overseer of foreigners” is a problematic term. *Nor Bargirk*‘ defines it as *Alienarum rerum inspector*.²⁰⁰ The meaning of the word is dubious and derives from 1 Peter 4:14, where it simply stands for a meddler. *Allotrioepiskopos* is a very rare word in Greek corpus and is attested only sporadically. Even in those cases the meaning the word conveys is not the same as in Uxtanēs. It might be the case that Uxtanēs refers to a practice common in early Christianity where a separate bishop was installed for newly converted individual ethnic groups.

The confusion between Nestorianism and Chalcedonianism is apparent in the personality of this *Xužik* as presented by Uxtanēs. He was from Koloneia, where K‘yron himself was educated, and was close to being K‘yron’s childhood friend. But why would a person from eastern Anatolia, from the Roman provinces, be called a *Xužik*, a person from Xužastan?²⁰¹ Is it likely that Uxtanēs and contemporary sources are referring to different cases? It is quite possible that K‘yron might have also summoned one of his Chalcedonian friends from Byzantium and entrusted to him a diocese close to his own Eparchy.²⁰² Even though, from the Armenian perspective, Nestorians and Chalcedonians were implicitly the same, this was certainly not so for the Iberians; Nestorians and Chalcedonians were not just two different diphyssite groups as Garsoïan sometimes puts it.²⁰³ The difference between the Chalcedonians and the Nestorians was determined by a need for separate approaches towards the two. Even so, Armenians do not treat the two questions separately but are convinced that the “evil leaven” of Nestorius led to the appropriation of Chalcedon and to the impious *Tome* by the Georgians. Vrt’anēs K‘erdoł wrote the following to the Armenian bishop Peter who served in Iberia:

As before our blessed patriarch Movsēs wrote to your land, to stay away from the lies of the *Xužik* non-bishop, even more must we escape the obscenity of the impious Council of Chalcedon, for it is equivalent to Jewishness. Some grave news reached us: that that Council was being glorified in your

²⁰⁰ *NBHL* 2, 1050.

²⁰¹ N. Garsoïan does not see a problem here but accepts the possibility of the existence of Nestorians in those regions. See Garsoïan *L’Église*, 329. Garsoïan concludes by saying that “Le “nestorianisme” venu de Perse, qui avait tant inquiété L’Église arménienne était encore une présence réelle, et non un souvenir anachronique, en Transcaucasie. Il n’y a donc pas de raison de faire un fantôme du Xužik de nos sources. Même Uxtanēs ne nie pas son existence et donne des détails précis sur sa rencontre avec Kiwrion dans une région vraisemblable de l’Empire byzantine. Les écrivains ecclésiastiques de Persarménie au VIIe siècle n’avaient pas encore oublié le danger passé et ils en reconnaissaient les manifestations tout comme leur collègue ibère, qui le distingue et le condamne également, tout en refusant le moindre compromis sur la question chalcédonienne.” Garsoïan, *L’Église*, 331.

²⁰² Garsoïan, *L’Église*, 331.

²⁰³ *Ibid*, 329.

country, because of which one bishop of your land fled when he heard of this bitter and incurable disease of that Council.²⁰⁴

The presence of a Nestorian community in Georgia can be considered as a more or less established fact, unanimously attested by the Armenian side, which claimed that not only the *Xužiks* lived in Georgia, but moreover, they lived close to the capital of Tbilisi as a separate community. But what did ordaining a Nestorian *Xužik* mean? That K‘yron ordained a bishop for the Nestorian community? That he ordained a Nestorian bishop over the Orthodox diocese? Or that he accepted the Nestorian and ordained him as an Orthodox bishop as he claimed to have done? Katholikos Movsēs stated in his letter that he heard that “certain Nestorian *Xužik* came to [K‘yron]” and from him received Episcopal ordination.²⁰⁵ This is further supported by Pope Gregory’s letter to K‘yron, or rather by his answer to K‘yron’s enquiry, which might also be understood as a solution to the problem of why the Armenians protested so vehemently against K‘yron’s act.²⁰⁶ In his letter, Pope Gregory I replied to K‘yron’s enquiry on how to deal with the Nestorians who repent, and how to receive them in communion; whether it was enough for them to accept the creed of Chalcedon or whether they should be re-baptized; finally how to deal generally with the growing number of Nestorians in Iberia. Gregory’s answer was that were the Nestorians to repent, accept the Oecumenical Councils, and anathematize Nestorius, they should be received in communion with all the privileges and

²⁰⁴ GT‘ I, 136; GT II, 38-39; GT‘ III, 278: Զի որպէս յառաջագոյն երանելի հայրապետն մեր Մովսէս գրեաց յաշխարհոյ հեռանալ ի Խուժիկ չեպիսկոպոսէն խաբեութեանց. առաւելագոյն ևս պարտինք փախչել [GT‘ I omm. փախչել] յանարէն ժողովոյ Քաղկեդոնի հայիոյութեանցն. զի հաւասար հրէութեան է. զոր համբաւ չախորժելի այժմ եհաս մեզ լսել. թէ յաշխարհիոյ ձերում մեծարանս մատուցանեն ժողովոյն այնորիկ. վասն որոյ եպիսկոպոս մի [GT‘ I omm. Մի] աշխարհիոյ փախստական գնացեալ է, զդառն և զանբժշկելի վիրաւորութիւն ժողովոյն այնորիկ ճանաչելով:

²⁰⁵ GT‘ II, 124; GT‘ III, 222; US II, 9: Այր մի խուժիկ նեստորական էկն առ քեզ, և ի քէն առեալ ձեռնադրութիւն. Babian apparently implies that he was ordained as the overseer of the Nestorian community. “The Catholicos of the Georgian Church had not only entered into communion with the Nestorians, but had also consecrated a bishop named Kis for them”. Babian, *Relations*, 177. This is a misinterpretation of Movsēs’s letter, where nothing of this sort, namely of K‘yron establishing a bishop for a Nestorian community, is to be found.

²⁰⁶ The creation of the compendium *Dogmatikon*, which includes several anti-Nestorian treatises, could have suggested that Nestorianism was an issue in Georgia, but the character of the compendium indicates that it was created for educational purposes and not for immediate cases. I would think that a group Nestorians, maybe even from Xužastan could have indeed migrated to Georgia at some point, but we cannot know whether they stayed there as a separate non-Chalcedonian community. For the study of the *Dogmatikon* and the anti-Nestorian works, see Chantladze, *Anti-Nestorian treatises*; Outtier, “Dogmatikon”, 217-226.

ranks they possessed. The letter makes evident that K'yrōn was concerned with the technical side of accepting converted heretics, and in this case Nestorians into communion with the Church.²⁰⁷

From the perspective of the participants in the schism, the Nestorians constituted a major difficulty. Indeed, the Nestorian question was a leading factor in the formation of the Armenian doctrinal and political position. It was the threat from Xužastan that led to the writing of the dogmatic letters by Babgēn and also to the series of events in the middle of the sixth century, such as the convocation of the 555 Council of Dwin. As in the case of Babgēn, the formulation of a position was forced by the influx of Nestorianism and by the teaching of Baršauma that had infiltrated to the Armenian borders. Starting with the period of Babgēn, including both the 555 Council of Dwin and now the scandal with the Georgians, these enigmatic Xužiks were seen as the main culprits. It was the result of confusion, both accidental and intentional, that resulted later in the debates with the Georgians wherein the Armenian position was rather weak. During the first encounters with the Nestorians, the Armenians, as did all anti-Chalcedonians, held them to be the same as Chalcedonians. But unlike others, the Armenians were not exposed to any specifically Chalcedonian “threat” until the polemical encounter with the Georgians. Thus, when on the one hand K'yrōn proved himself to be an anti-Nestorian, although on the other adhered to Chalcedon, this became a problem. The situation was not that at the philosophical and Christological levels the Armenians were unaware that Chalcedon and Nestorians professed the same position, it was simply not the immediate concern of the Armenian Church and of its councils until the beginning of the seventh century, when according to the Armenians, Nestorianism, now camouflaged in Chalcedonian teaching, tried to infiltrate Armenia from the west and from the north, in other words, from Iberia. The identification of the Nestorians and Chalcedonians was so strongly embedded among the Armenians that at least by the sixth century there was no need to combat the Chalcedonian theology separately as it was already considered as overcome with the repulsion of Persian Nestorians.²⁰⁸ The historical unawareness of the Chalcedonian threat from the west and north resulted in the fact that throughout the whole century a proper anti-Chalcedonian argument had not yet been formulated in the Armenian

²⁰⁷ Migne, PL 077, col. 1204-1208; The document was for the first time studied in Tamarati, *Catholicism*, 575-577.

²⁰⁸ Knowledge about the person of Nestorius was almost nonexistent in the sixth-century Armenia. Cf. with Katholikos Nersēs's narrative on Nestorius's alleged journey to Nisibis and his confusion with Barsauma. GT' I, 72-73; GT' III, 199-200.

Church.²⁰⁹ It was exactly this weak anti-Chalcedonism that legitimized the claims of the Georgian Katholikos K‘yron at the end of the sixth century.

1.10. THE GEORGIAN CHURCH BEFORE THE SEPARATION

The reason behind such claims also resides in the obscurity of the situation in sixth century Iberia where doctrinal matters and the ecclesiastical situation can be restored only hypothetically. There are no contemporary sources that provide details of the ecclesiastical history at that time. As for the later medieval sources, they are mere evocations of reminiscences rather than “real” knowledge. It is not an exaggeration to say that the confessional stand of the Georgian Church in that ultimate century of Late Antiquity is probably one of the most obscure pages in Caucasian Church history. The only facts available emanate from the *Chronicle* section of the *Conversion of Georgia*; it provides but a rather dry list of the katholikoi and rulers of the period.²¹⁰ Hypotheses concerning Iberia range from affirming its perpetual Chalcedonian Orthodoxy and opposing Armenian non-Chalcedonism to the hierarchical subordination of the Georgian Church to the Church of Armenia.²¹¹ L. Zekiyān expresses an interesting view in considering that the Council of Babgēn

²⁰⁹ As simplistic as it might sound, the future of the Armenian theological experience depended upon who would be the first to reach Armenia and how the creed of the opposing parties would be presented. The letters of Abdišo written to Katholikos Nersēs II are full of allusions to the Severans and to their “writings of corruption.” Nersēs’s reply is a mere repetition of Abdišo’s statement without any original treatment of the subject or even reformulation of the statements. In his reply on Nersēs’s letter Abdišo reiterates his position, thanking Nersēs for “piercing the heretics with his anathemas.” This was noticed by P. Cowe, who, to my mind, justly says that claiming a firm commitment of the Armenians to the Julianite position “is as premature as the attempt to locate the final Armenian condemnation of Chalcedon at the Synod of Dwin of 505/6.” As I fully share P. Cowe’s evaluation of the appropriation of aphotodocetism in sixth century Armenia, I shall fully quote the corresponding passage from the article: “The verbatim reproduction of their creed by Catholicos Nersēs II becomes all the more suspicious in light of his remark that he had heard of their orthodoxy for a long time and only now had an opportunity to examine it. As the group derived from the region of Sasun, we should probably accept the account of the Chalcedonian *Narratio de Rebus Armenaie* that their reception was facilitated rather by the personal intervention of Meršāpuh, influential incumbent of the neighbouring see of Taron. To the Armenians, preoccupied with Nestorian propaganda emanating from Nisibis, the most persuasive aspect of their creed would have been its anti-diophysite language. What the hierarch made of the confession that “no corruption was found in Him (God the Word incarnate); for the flesh which he assumed from us was incorruption and glorious from its union with Him” is a moot point. ‘Abdišo’s solicitude that the Armenian hierarchy preserve their flock from heresy emerges in no less than four doctrinal epistles over the next few years, warning also of the threat of a Severan delegation equally desirous of Armenian patronage, a mission that he would hardly have bothered to undertake had the latter’s firm Julianist position been widely recognized.” Cowe, “Philoxenus”, 115-116.

²¹⁰ *Conlber*, 93-97.

²¹¹ M. Tamarati for example never doubted that the Georgian Church was Chalcedonian from the beginning. It separated from communion with the Armenian Church once the Georgians realized its anti-Chalcedonian stand. See Tamarati, *Catholicism*, 242; R. Janin, on the contrary, expressed the following view: “Les Georgiens, sans doute dans le but louable de protester qu’ils ne sont jamais tombés dans les erreurs monophysites, ont nié systématiquement toute dépendance de leur Église vis-à-vis de celle d’Arménie. La vérité se trouve peut-être entre des deux affirmations extrêmes. La conclusion qui semble s’imposer c’est que la Géorgie orientale a très probablement dépend pendant un

was not a condemnation of the Chalcedonian definitions by Caucasian Churches, but on the contrary, was an indication of the Georgian Church's switch from anti-Chalcedonian practices to the Constantinopolitan by accepting the *Henotikon*.²¹² As it often happens Zekiyan also considers the role of Peter the Iberian and the Georgian anti-Chalcedonian diaspora in the Holy Land, which had presumably affected mainland Georgia.²¹³ The problem here is that there is virtually no evidence that Peter the Iberian had exercised any important influence on his homeland. Only a late Georgian hagiography deals with Peter and presents him as an ardent Chalcedonian.²¹⁴ Furthermore I find it rather anachronistic to speak of anti-Chalcedonian (or explicitly even Chalcedonian) practice of the Georgian Church during the second half of the fifth century.

During the reign of Anastasius, as noted in the letter of the Armenians, Iberia, together with the Albanians and the Romans, held the "same faith". Later on, after the victory of Chalcedonian (or neo-Chalcedonian) Orthodoxy at the imperial court and during the reign of Justinian, Iberians are still considered to be the "most orthodox people" of the region.²¹⁵ Procopius, who knew the situation in the east quite well, had no reasons to suspect Iberia of heterodoxy between the years 523 and 550. The sources are almost unanimous in speaking about the close ties between Iberia and Constantinople during the reign of Justinian. Certainly this source can be interpreted in multiple ways, but both Georgian and Byzantine historical accounts indicate that there was a certain alliance between the Georgians and Constantinople. According to Theophanes the Confessor, the Iberian king Zamanarzos was received by Justinian with honours and the former pledged allegiance to the Emperor.²¹⁶ The *Life of Šio Mghvimeli*²¹⁷ tells an analogous story but in

certain temps du catholicos arménien et qu'elle laissa alors entrainer dans le monophysisme". Janin, col, 1251. (Missing in the biblio) The author never explains specifically the sources that reject the former dependence of the Georgian Church on the Armenian, which is understandable as there is no medieval Georgian source that elaborates on the issue of Late Antique Armenian and Georgian Church relations. Furthermore, the author does not explain what "dependancy" denotes in this context.

²¹² Zekiyan, "Rupture", 169.

²¹³ *Ibid.*

²¹⁴ See *VitaPet-Geo*, 213-266. The relations of the Georgians in the Holy Land and in mainland Georgia still have to be studied as no tangible connections have yet been revealed. On the subject see for example, Peradze, *Georgian Monks and Monasteries*.

²¹⁵ Cf. with Prokopios's testimony. Procopius, 97: "Ἰβηρες, οἱ ἐν τῇ Ἀσίᾳ οἰκοῦσι πρὸς αὐταῖς που ταῖς Κασπίαις ἰδρουνται πύλαις, αἶπερ αὐτοῖς εἰσι πρὸς βορρᾶν ἄνεμον. καὶ αὐτῶν ἐν ἀριστερᾷ μὲν ἐχομένη πρὸς τὰς ἡλίου δυσμᾶς Λαζική ἐστίν, ἐν δεξιᾷ δὲ πρὸς ἀνίσχοντα ἡλίον τὰ Περσῶν ἔθνη. οὗτος ὁ λεῶς Χριστιανοί τε εἰσι καὶ τὰ νόμιμα τῆς δόξης φυλάσσουσι ταύτης πάντων μάλιστα ἀνθρώπων ὧν ἡμεῖς ἴσμεν, κατήκοοι μὲντοι ἐκ παλαιοῦ τοῦ Περσῶν βασιλείως τυγχάνουσιν ὄντες.

²¹⁶ Theoph, 216: Τουτῶ τῷ ἔτει ὁ τῶν Ἰβήρων βασιλεὺς Ζαμαναρθζὸς ἀνήλθεν ἐν Κωνσταντινουπόλει πρὸς τὸν εὐσεβέστατον βασιλέα Ἰουστινιανὸν μετὰ τῆς γυναικὸς καὶ τῶν συγκλητικῶν αὐτοῦ, παρακαλῶν αὐτὸν τοῦ εἶναι αὐτὸν σύμμαχον Ῥωμαίων καὶ

greater details.²¹⁸ Thereafter, as a result of this cooperation, Iberian statehood was restored under the rule of the *Erismtavaris*.²¹⁹

Indeed, the most dangerous accusation actually set forth by the Armenians against the Georgians was political – treason by the Georgians against the King of Kings.²²⁰ This accusation reminded K‘yron of his and his country’s servitude to the Persian king. But now

There is something else that seems unbelievable to us: For a servant of the King of Kings to establish union with an alien king and to separate from the kin by nature, is truly very grave.²²¹

It was to fortify precisely this argument that Marzpan Smbat stepped into the controversy. K‘yron apparently realized this threat and dedicated most words to this case, while avoiding the matters of doctrine. In almost every case it seemed at some point that he will tackle the doctrinal matters, but suddenly and quite unexpectedly, every time he diverges towards political issues. His second letter, which is a reply to Smbat’s letter, equally avoids the matter when appearing to begin a discussion on doctrinal matters, even mentioning the *Tome* but then suddenly straying into technical, political and diplomatic matters:

Now as what was written concerning the faith, the council [of Chalcedon] and the *Tome*, it was written that it is unimaginable to you that servants of the King of Kings have common faith with the servants of an alien king and reject his kinsmen. Our and your fathers were the servants of the King of Kings but meanwhile had the faith of Jerusalem. Also we and you, while servants of the King [of Persia], yet held the Faith of Jerusalem. Also we and you, although we are servants of the King of Kings, we have the Faith of Jerusalem and we shall always have it. For if until now the lords [*Teark*] were satisfied

φίλον γνήσιον. ὁ δὲ βασιλεὺς τὴν τοιαύτην προαίρεσιν ἀποδεξάμενος πολλὰ αὐτὸν ἐφιλοτιμήσατο καὶ τοὺς αὐτοῦ συγγλητικούς ὁμοίως καὶ ἡ ἀγούστα τῆ αὐτοῦ γυναικὶ κόσμια παντοῖα διὰ μαργαριτῶν ἐχαρίσατο. καὶ ἀπέλυσεν αὐτοὺς ἐν εἰρήνῃ εἰς τὴν ἰδίαν βασιλείαν. Goiladze, “Autocephaly”, 406-416.

²¹⁷ The earliest surviving redaction of the *Vita* is dated to the tenth century.

²¹⁸ *VitaŠE*, 108-109: უამსა მას ოდეს თვთმჰყრობელი იოსტინიანოს მეფე ბერძენთაჲ ჰბრძოლა კერძოთა ოვსეთისათა საზღვარს ავაზგიასას ნათესავთა ტასკუნთა, რამეთუ ექმნა მათ განდგომილება, მაშინ მოუძღუნა ნიჭი ღიღი იოსტინიანოს ფარსმანს ქართველთა მეფესა და ევეღრა, რათა შეეწიოს მჰვეღრობასა მისსა ყოვლითა ძალითა თვისითა და ბრძოლა უყოს ტასკუნთა.

²¹⁹ *VitaV*, 217-218. For the political developments in the late sixth century Iberia, see also, Goubert, “Évolution”, 113-127; Toumanoff, *Studies*, 382-416.

²²⁰ The Armenian Church was traditionally loyal to the servitude of its eastern patrons. Thus Sahak the Great and his sixth and seventh century successors all went to plead the Armenian cause at the court of the King of Kings and acknowledged the secular jurisdiction of the Persian rulers. Even during Muslim rule the Armenian katholikoi Sahak III (677–703) and Yovhannēs Awjnec‘i (718–29) appealed to the caliph. Equally favoured were the much later Armenian ecclesiastical rulers of Armenia at the Safavid court. On the relations of the Armenian Church with the the Persian king, see Garsoïan, “Secular Jurisdiction”, 239-241; also Papazyan, *Persian Documents*, 147.

²²¹ GT⁺ II, 68: ...ღი է ինչ որ չաւստալի իսկ թուեցաւ մեզ. զի ընդ աւստար թագաւորութիւն արքայից արքայի ծառայից սիրոյ միաբանութիւն առնել և զբնական հաղորդակիցս որոշել, կարի իսկ դժուարին է:

[*xonsund*],²²² how much more blessed are we now, to have been deemed worthy of serving the King of Kings, because for as long as the sky and the earth exists there has been no ruler who would have given [the right] to each people to stay with their own laws as this King, and especially to us – the faith of the Christians. And to our free country he entrusted more than to any other country and especially to me more than to any of my colleagues.²²³ The King of Kings is the lord of the Romans just as of the Arians [*tireac*] and it is not like as you wrote that they are separate kingdoms.²²⁴

Is it possible to find a very rational explanation to K'yron's words? The political and ecclesiastical situation in the Caucasus was truly turbulent. And neither of the claims can be fully justified, that Armenians and the Georgians had always been on the same side of the barricade, or that they had always been separate. For example, after the rule of Nersēs, Katholikos Yovhannēs Gabelean, for political reasons, had to flee to Constantinople and enter into communion with the Chalcedonians.²²⁵ Katholikos Movsēs, being summoned to Constantinople, refused to participate by his celebrated proclamation,²²⁶ although over twenty Armenian bishops took part in the Council in Constantinople and agreed to the union. As a result of this union an anti-Katholikos, Yovhannēs Bagaranec'i was established in Awan, in Armenia Minor, very close to Dwin.²²⁷ It was important for K'yron to assert two points: having the faith of the Romans did not imply treason against

²²² Here I am following the interpretation of the word *xonsund* given by N. Garsoïan, that is, that the word derives from Parthian *hunsand* and modern Persian *xursand*, meaning “happy, content”. See Garsoïan, *L'Église*, 551, fn. 128. In general this passage just as most of K'yron's letters are highly confusing.

²²³ It is curious that Uxtanēs omits this sentence, although it could have been a good argument for K'yron's ungirdled boldness.

²²⁴ GT' I, 167; GT' II, 71; GT' III, 320-321: Իսկ այն որ վասն հաւատոց և ժողովոյն և տումարին գրեալ էր, և զայս գրեալ էր, թէ արքայից արքայի ծառայից ընդ աւտար թագաւորաց ծառայս հաւատի ի զուգաց ունել և զբնական հաղորդակիցս ուրանալ յոյժ անհնարին թուի: Մեր և ձեր հարքն արքայի ծառայք էին, և զհաւատ զԵրուսաղեմի ունէին, և մեր և դուք նոյնպէ: Թէպէտ և ծառայիք արքայից եմք, զհաւատ զԵրուսաղեմի ունիմք և կալցուք. Ձի թէ ցայժմ խոնսունդ էին Տեարք, այժմ որչափ ևս առաւել երանելի եմք, որք յարքայից արքայի ծառայութեան հասեալ եմք: Ձի մինչ երկինք և երկիր լեալ էին, չէր եղեալ և ոչ մի տէր, որ ամենայն ազգի զիր աւրէնս ի վերայ թողեալ էր, որպէս այս տէր էթող, և մանաւանդ զմեր քրիստոնէից հաւատս. իսկ ազատի աշխարհի մերոյ աւելի քան զամենայն աշխարհաց, և բարի անձինս իմոյ լաւագոյն քան զամենայն ընկերաց իմոց. և արքայից արքայ նոյնպէս տէր է Հռոմոց, որպէս և տիրեաց աշխարհի. և չէ այսպէս. որպէս դուք գրեցէքս, թէ որիչ որիչ թագաւորութիւնք են: The awkward syntactic construction of the sentence was apparently noticed by Uxtanēs or by the edition he possessed, which formulates the same passage in the following way: Իսկ այն, որ վասն հաւատոց և ժողովոյն և տումարին գրեալ էր, և դարձեալ թէ արքայից արքայի, thus making it stylistically more plausible. Cf. with US II, 126. The only instance where K'yron elaborates a proper argument and is not extremely laconic is when the issue becomes political. Yet again these passages raise suspicion and I am well aware, just as Uxtanēs, that the answer by K'yron might have deliberately been abridged by the editors. For example, in the beginning of the passage, where K'yron lists the arguments, the abrupt leap from the first two arguments to the third is striking. It seems, in terms of context, that K'yron plans on discussing the first two issues but he does not actually do so. The question as to whether this was the way he wrote it or the letter was subject to interpolation, will probably remain open.

²²⁵ *Narr*, 190-253.

²²⁶ *Narr*, 163-164; *Narr-Fr*, 435.

²²⁷ See Garsoïan, *l'Église*, 268-272; Mahé, “l'Identité”, 61-62; Garitte's commentary in *Narr*, 175-254.

the Persians, as the Roman Empire was also a legal domain of the King of Kings and besides the King of Kings had given each Christian nation freedom of choice.

A political explanation for K'yrón's activities is plausible. In the course of the sixth century Armenian and Georgian aspirations began to vary both politically and religiously. Iberia and Armenia fought side by side in the revolt against Iran in 571, but this unity belongs solely to the political side of the question. The attitude of the Roman Empire towards Iberia was much more liberal than it was towards Armenia, because in historical terms it saw Iberia as a natural base for dominance over Armenia. Probably, and for the same reason, Rome allowed the restoration of centralized power in Iberia. As a result of the 571 uprising, the country was once again brought under single rule with an *Erismtavari* in charge.²²⁸ On the contrary, the Armenian Church was establishing tighter ties with Iran as a result of which the Armenian Church soon became the main base of Iranian dominance in the Caucasus. In 614 this policy of the Persians became official; all Iranian subjects were asked to accept the "Armenian faith". The Georgians apparently refused. K'yrón's almost unlimited ecclesiastical and political power in Iberia was manifest in the correspondence. The political motivation of K'yrón's activity was also noted by Uxtanēs, such that

upon his arrival in his jurisdiction, in the city called Mxeta, K'yrón gathered the bishops, together with the lords [*išxans*] and the princes [*naxarars*] and through them he confirmed his authority to be exercised over the entire country.²²⁹

With all these facts in mind, we encounter a complication, namely that K'yrón had apparently been ordained by the Armenian Katholikos, a circumstance which appears to be in direct contradiction with the aforementioned sources. The Georgian tradition, supported by several Byzantine sources claimed an Antiochene origin for the Georgian Church, and held that it had been subjugated to Antioch before it received full autonomy.²³⁰ One such work is the ever debated *Life of Vaxt'ang* by Žuanšer, which testified that the

²²⁸ Note that the Georgian tradition remembered the *Erismtavaris* as kings of Georgia, thus Žuanšer calls the first *Erismtavari* of Iberia Guaram "thirty ninth king of Kartli". *Vita Vax*, 218. On the institution of the office of *Erismtavari* and accompanying political events, see Bíró, "Bahrām Čōbīn", 177-185; Toumanof, *Studies*, 386-390.

²²⁹ US II, 22: Իսկ յորժամ եհաս Կիրոն ի վիճակ իւրոյ իշխանութեանն և ի քաղաքն իւրեանց՝ որ կոչի Մցխիթայ, ժողովէ առ ինքն զեպիսկոպոսունսն հնդերձ լաւաք աշխարհին և զիշխանսն և զնախարարս, և նուաճէ նոքաք հանդերձ առհասարակ զամենայն աշխարհն ընդ իւրով իշխանութեամբ:

²³⁰ a.) After speaking about how the Bulgarian Church and Church of Cyprus acquired their autocephaly, Theodore Balsamon says: *Λέγεται γὰρ ὅτι ἐπὶ τῶν ἡμερῶν τοῦ ἁγιοπάτου πατριάρχου θεουπόλεως μεγάλης Ἀντιοχείας, κυροῦ Πέτρου*

Georgian Church was granted autonomy by Antioch during Vaxt'ang's reign, probably c.485.²³¹ The Antiochene background of the Georgian Church was also known to some Armenian sources that were probably indebted to the Georgian narratives.²³² Furthermore, according to the *Conversion of Georgia* and to the *Life of Vaxt'ang*, the Georgians were allowed to install native Georgians as *katholikoi*:

The Georgians requested from Justinian that he may allow Georgians by ethnicity to be consecrated as *katholikoi*, for the *katholikoi* were sent from Greece. So Justinian wrote and sealed with his seal the letter that from then on the Georgians would occupy the throne of the *Katholikos* and preside over the entire Church and bishops.²³³

A treatise by a twelfth century Georgian scholar Ephrem Mcire in a way overcomes this contradiction.²³⁴

In this treatise on the apology for Georgian autocephaly, Ephrem also provided the explanation as to why the tradition of the Georgian *katholikoi* being ordained by the Antiochene patriarch had been halted:

In the days of Constantine, the dung-named [*Kopronymos*] (741–75), during the reign of Patriarch Theophylaktos in Antioch (744–51), two monks arrived as delegates from Iberia and narrated to blessed Theophylaktos that the Christians are deeply in trouble in the Georgian villages, for since the days of blessed Anastasius the Martyr (561–71, 593–9) no *Katholikos*-Archbishop had been consecrated by the Patriarch of Antioch because of the difficulty of the road. Fearing the Hagarites, nobody would dare to travel. After holding a council with his archbishops, metropolitans and bishops handed a *protreptikon* to the Georgians, which is a release that allows them to consecrate the bishops by their own selves.²³⁵

γέγονεν οἰκονομία συνδική ἐλευθέραν εἶναι καὶ ἀποκεφάλον τὴν ἐκκλησίαν τῆς Ἰβηρίας, ὑποκειμένην τότε τῷ πατριάρχει Ἀντιοχείας. PG, 137-138; It is not clear to which Peter Balsamon is actually referring to. S. Kauhchishvili thinks that this is Peter III (1053–7). *Georgica* 8, 18. E. Honigmann is more inclined to think that Peter the Fuller is actually meant here. Honigmann, *Ostgrenze*, 211. Fourteenth century Matthew Blastaris apparently uses the same source as Balsamon. See *Georgica* 8, 119-120. The problem of the date when the Georgian Church acquired autonomy or autocephaly is a complicated and a separate subject, which will not be treated in the present thesis, except for these instances where autocephaly and autonomy are intertwined with the issues of medieval remembrance and rhetoric.

b.) See Martin-Hisard, “Christianisme”, 554-556.

²³¹ *VitaV*, 197; On the subject see also, Aleksidze, “Autocephaly”, 307-323; Tarchnishvili, “Autokephalie”, 107-126 Nasrallah, “Nicon” 150-161.

²³² See MA, 49: Սաբայ նստի կայսրիկոսի ի Վիրս առանց պատրիարքին Անտիոքու. “Saba became *Katholikos* in Iberia without [the consent] of the Patriarch of Antioch.”

²³³ *VitaV*, 207: ხოლო ითხოვეს იუსტინიანესგან ქართველთა, რათა დასხდებოდენ კათალიკოსად ნათესავნი ქართველთანი. რამეთუ მოვიდოდნან კათალიკოსნი საბერძნეთით. ხოლო იუსტინიანე დაწერა წიგნი და დაბეჭდა თვისთა ბეჭდითა ესრეთ, რათა დასხდებოდნენ კათალიკოსად ნათესავნი ქართველთანი, და აქუნდეს უაღრესობა ყოველთა ეკლესიათა და მღვდელთ-მთავართა ზედა. *The Conversion of Georgia* attributes same activity to king Parsman who reigned in the first half of the sixth century.

²³⁴ For studies on Ephrem and his treatise, see Aleksidze, “Autocephaly”, 307-323;

²³⁵ EM, 9-10, დღეთა კოსტანტინე სკორის მოსახელისათა, ანტიოქიას პატრიარქობას ნეტარისა თეოფილაქტესსა, მოვიდეს ქართლით მოციქულად მონაზონნი ორნი და მოუთხრეს ნეტარსა თეოფილაქტესს, ვითარმედ დიდსა ჭირსა შინა არიან ქრისტიანენი მკვლრნი ქართველთა სოფლებისანი, რამეთუ დღითგან ნეტარისა ანასტასი მღვდელ მოწამისა ანტიოქელ პატრიარქისა არა კურთხეულ არს მათდა კათალიკოსი მთავარეპისკოპოსი სიმნელისათვს გზისა, რამეთუ აგარიანთაგან ვერვინ იკადრებს სლვად. ხოლო მან ბჭობითა კრებისადთა მთავარეპისკოპოსთა, მიტროპოლიტთა და ეპისკოპოსთა თვისთა თანა მისცა ქართველთა პროტრეპტიკონი, რომელ არს განკსნითი, რადთა თვთ მათისა საზღვრისა ეპისკოპოსთაგან ველნი დავსხმოდინ უამად-უამადსა კათალიკოსსა ქართლის[ა]სა.

In this treatise among the many interesting details pertaining to the question of the apostolicity of the Georgian Church and its autonomy, the issue of the relations of the Georgian Church with the See of Antioch is of a particular interest. The details even shed more light on what actually happened at the beginning of the seventh century and how the events were remembered in the eleventh century. Ephrem bases himself on Theodoret's account and gives further details from other sources which he does not specify.²³⁶ He explains further that the representative from Constantinople was the future patriarch of Antioch, Eustathios.²³⁷

The name of the delegate was also discovered, for it was the Antiochene Patriarch Eustathios (324–30) himself, who consecrated the Church built by Mirian in Mxeta and he ordained the Katholikos-Archbishop for them. From that point the conversion is counted, for they were subject to the See of Antioch and the *katholikai* of Iberia were ordained by the same.²³⁸

Although this remains a field of speculation, the reason that Georgians could not approach the Patriarch of Antioch this time can be historically justified. Certainly in the late sixth century the Arabs could not have been a threat for travel to Antioch. The reason might have been internal unrest in Antioch itself.²³⁹ This turmoil in the Church of Antioch could have well affected the Georgians and hindered their travel to Antioch, for which reason they might well have addressed the neighbouring Armenian Church. Whatever the exact reasons were, the break of the tradition of consecration in Antioch as presented by Ephrem coincided perfectly with the rule of K'yron, although neither K'yron nor the relations with the Armenian Church are mentioned in Ephrem's narrative.

²³⁶ Theodoret, 76: *ἐπειδὴ δὲ ἐτελέσθη τὸ οἰκοδόμημα καὶ ὁ ὄροφος ἐπετέθη καὶ μόνων ἐδέϊτο τῶν ἱερέων, εὔρε καὶ τούτου πόρον ἡ Σαυμασία γυνή. ἔπεισε γὰρ τὸν τοῦ ἔθνους ἡγούμενον πρὸς τὸν Ῥωμαίων πρεσβεύσασθαι βασιλέα καὶ αἰτήσασθαι πεμφθῆναι σφίσι διδάσκαλον εὐσεβείας. ὁ μὲν οὖν δεξάμενος τὴν εἰσήγησιν τοὺς πρεσβευσομένους ἐξέπεμψεν· ὁ δὲ βασιλεὺς, τῆς αἰτήσεως τὴν αἰτίαν μαθὼν (Κωνσταντίνος δὲ ἦν ὁ τῆς εὐσεβείας θεομώτατος ἐραστής), φιλοφροσύνῃς μὲν παμπόλλης τοὺς πρέσβεις ἠξίωσεν, ἄνδρα δὲ πίστει καὶ συνέσει καὶ βίῳ κοσμούμενον καὶ τῆς ἀρχιερωσύνης ἠξιώμενον κήρυκα τῷ ἔθνει τῆς θεοργασίας ἐξέπεμψε μετὰ δώρων ὅτι μάλιστα πλείστον. See also, *Georgica* I, 213.*

²³⁷ Eustathios was Bishop of Beroea and became patriarch of Antioch shortly before the Council Nicaea.

²³⁸ EM, 8, ეგრეთვე სახელიცა მივლინებულისა მის ეპისკოპოსისაჲ ესერეთ პოვნილ არს, ვითარმედ თვთ ევსტათე იყო ანტიოქიელი პატრიარქი, რომელმან დაამყარა ეკლესიაჲ იგი მირიანის მიერ მცხეთას აღშენებული და უკურთხა მათ კათოლიკოსი მთავარეპისკოპოსი ... ამიერ იცნობების უამი მოქცევისა და ვითარმედ ანტიოქიის საყდრისა მომდგომ იყვნეს და მიერ ველდასმულ იქმნებოდეს ქართლის კათალიკონნი.

²³⁹ Patriarch Anastasius (561–71, 593–9) was deposed, exiled and then restored again after the death of Justinian. His successor Anastasius II (599–609) was murdered presumably by a Jewish mob and was canonized as a saint. On Patriarch Anastasius, see Devreesse, *Patriarcat*, 77-99; Weiss, *Studia Anastasiana*, 1-48.

1.11. CONCLUSIONS

The late sixth-century correspondence between the prelates of the Caucasian Churches constitutes the first quest for remembrance in the Caucasian traditions. For the first time forgetting and remembering became an ideological weapon. The protagonists of these polemics, however, probably knew even less than we do about the events throughout the whole of the previous century. The Fifth Oecumenical Council took place only two years before the mysterious Synod of Dwin of 554/555, where, apparently, the breach between Armenian and Georgian aspirations grew deeper, culminating finally in a mutual separation at the beginning of the seventh century. In spite of this, neither the Three Chapter controversy nor the Fifth Oecumenical Council was in any way recorded in the Armenian tradition, nor was there any parallel drawn between Justinian's Council of Constantinople and Nersēs's Council of Dwin.²⁴⁰

The remembrance of the *Henotikon*, Nestorian relations and the associated events resulted in serious blunders by the early seventh century. The absence of specific Christological experience resulted in the fact that the Armenians were easily abated by the Chalcedonian Georgians. Only then did the Armenians begin devising polemical tools against the Chalcedonians by actively translating and compiling dogmatic works. Despite the abundance of sources, it is still difficult to determine the origin and the actual nature of the schism between the Georgian and Armenian churches. It was apparently a finalization of years of divergence of the political, cultural and confessional aspirations of the two peoples – not a sudden event or a single moment in history. The views on the schism were radically different from the Georgian and Armenian perspectives – both sides claiming their perpetual orthodoxy and both accusing the other side of defiance. Once again, as in earlier situations the Armenian voice was much stronger than the Georgian. There is almost no contemporary Georgian record of these events, although, as shown above, we know that such documents existed. As for the later sources, the Armenians were once again much more concerned with the period around the “schism” than the Georgians.

²⁴⁰ For discussion on this detail, see Garsoïan, *L'Église*, 197.

In the final centuries of Late Antiquity, when political and confessional divergences in the Caucasus were running to their inexorable culminations, memory was the principal tool of argument between the opposing sides. Both Armenian and Georgian sides evoked remembrance of times past, when unity and peace had flourished between the two nations and which used remembrance and forgetting as the chief mechanism of debates. Despite this frequent allusion to diverse reminiscences, neither side could clearly formulate what the essence of this union was. It was necessary to argue the “perpetual orthodoxy”, but as soon as the essence of the “Orthodox union” was touched, both sides would stumble. The fatal paradox remained that both parties remembered the “union” in diametrically opposite and mutually exclusive ways. For the Armenians the “union” meant unity against the Chalcedonian definitions and the Byzantine Church, whereas for the Georgians the same concept was an argument for an uninterrupted (Chalcedonian) Orthodoxy and allegiance to the “five patriarchates”.²⁴¹ The reason for such an ambiguity must reside in the *Henotikonean* tradition, prescription and interpretation of doctrinal developments. The surviving sources that claim contemporaneity are just as equivocal as the later testimonies. The reason for such a mismatch was the absence of an uninterrupted continuity of memory. The memory of common religious experience did not persist in the traditions of these Churches; they needed to be evoked on the basis of the dubious and possibly heavily interpolated sources they possessed. As A. Cameron puts it, it was “the imaginative reinvention of the past in the absence of real historical knowledge”²⁴² In short, we do not possess for the moment any valid means of knowing actual historical developments without risking of falling into the trap of medieval smoke and mirrors.

“Schism” in the Caucasian Churches was yet another stage in the regrouping of ethnic and confessional identities in the region. Throughout the sixth century we see that the Bishop of Tayk’ did no longer appear in the list of Armenian eparchies. Furthermore, the *Narratio de Rebus Armeniae* explicitly mentions that Tayk’ became a place of exile for those who would not accept the prescriptions of 555.²⁴³ The antagonism went far beyond clerical circles; it became a national phenomenon between two ethnic and confessional groups in the

²⁴¹ See *infra*, K’yron’s final letter.

²⁴² Cameron, “Past,” 209.

²⁴³ *Narr*, 42; *Narr-Fr*, 436.

region. The souvenir of the last stages of the severance between Georgians and Armenians would be reactivated in three centuries time following the events described above. New ethnic and religious realia that were only to be shaped by the end of Late Antiquity emerged with all dramatism from the tenth century onwards and affected the formation of ideology as we still know it. The following chapter will be devoted to the question of the role played by remembrance of the events described in the first two chapters in the formation of nationhood of two peoples and of the perceptions of each other as ethnic and religious entities. This will lead us to the next and final chapter where the projection of these memories on modern scholarship will be studied and where uses and abuses of memory will be evaluated.

CHAPTER TWO: CONSTRUCTING THE SCHISM

2.1. TWO TYPES OF REMEMBRANCE

The second question we need to ask ourselves is, how was the schism remembered by the medieval authors and, how did they want us to remember the elusive period of doctrinal transformations in the Caucasus in general? Remembrance of the period of separation prevailed as all but sacred in the Armenian tradition. Almost no author, whatever his intention or subject, would avoid mentioning the Georgian apostasy and follow this with one or two furious words towards Katholikos K‘yron. While this is true for the Armenian tradition, in the Georgian narratives all that remains is a total and undisturbed silence. Neither the separation nor Katholikos K‘yron is in any way commemorated in medieval Georgian literature.²⁴⁴ Moreover, in no way are the doctrinal tumults of Late Antiquity reflected in the medieval Georgian tradition and, if they are, it is in a very peculiar way. While Armenians were keen to record, assert and disseminate the remembrance of what they perceived as a cataclysmal period of the sixth and seventh centuries, Georgians were more preoccupied with describing the placid and serene lives of holy ascetics, martyrs and monastics of the same period.²⁴⁵

To the non-specialist it is often difficult to tell where Georgia ends, where Armenia begins and what differences define these two medieval cultures. This rather schematic and superficial view is not even alien to the scholarship. As a result a “liminalist” reading of the medieval Caucasian cultures in frames of the traditional narrative of unity and separation became convenient. But for a student of Caucasian studies, equally well informed about the Georgian and the Armenian heritage, the deep differences are striking. These two south Caucasian cultures of Georgia and Armenia, although having co-existed and co-developed in various forms for several millennia, in many ways differ in their essence. And these differences did not emerge as a result of the seventh century ecclesiastical separation as is frequently heard.

²⁴⁴ Apart from Arseni Sapareli’s narrative where K‘yron is mentioned only three times and even there known mainly from Armenian sources. See *infra* Arseni’s testimony, pp. 91-101.

²⁴⁵ For study of the Late Antique Georgian hagiography, see Martin-Hisard, “Hagiography”, 285-299; For an overview of Late Antique Georgian polemic, see Aleksidze, “Polemical Literature”; Martin-Hisard, “Controverses”, 171-190.

The modes of remembrance were expressed by these two peoples in radically different ways – and this is not the sole difference that a comparative study reveals of these neighbouring cultures. As J-P Mahé very aptly puts it:

Les deux royaumes sud-caucasiens d'Arménie et de Géorgie, apparus l'un et l'autre à l'âge hellénistique, aux marges de l'empire séleucide, ont connu des évolutions parallèles jusqu'à l'arrivée des Seldjoukides dans la seconde moitié du XI^e siècle. Satellisés par Rome après les campagnes de Pompée, ils sont devenus chrétiens au IV^e siècle et ont traduit la Bible au début du siècle suivant. Ils ont affronté les Perses sassanides et ont été soumis au califat vers le milieu du VII^e siècle; ils s'en sont délivrés deux cents ans plus tard, sous la conduite de la dynastie bagratide, dont les représentants ont régné en Arménie jusqu'au milieu du XI^e siècle, et en Géorgie, jusqu'au XIX^e siècle. Il est vrai qu'en 610, une rupture religieuse se produit, opposant les Géorgiens, partisans du concile de Chalcédoine, aux Arméniens, qui le rejettent. On pourrait croire néanmoins que l'enracinement caucasien des deux états, tout comme leur communauté de destin, ont favorisé une grande proximité culturelle. Il n'en est rien.²⁴⁶

In line with Mahé's argumentation, reference will be made not so much to the material or literary culture but to the way historical memory was enacted by the two peoples, and how the conception of the national and religious destinies of medieval Armenians and Georgians differed from each other.²⁴⁷ The memory of the religious past, or more precisely, of "conversion history", or of the history as the religious destiny of the nation, differed essentially among the Armenians and the Georgians. What we know, therefore, of Late Antique Caucasian history is partially the result of this general conception of the destiny of a nation and, on the other hand, the result of an ideological framework gradually constructed in the Middle Ages. This latter theme will be discussed in the following chapter. For now the first characteristic will hold our attention.

A feature that is common to both medieval cultures is a *chronophagous* perception of history. The term "*chronophagous* discourse" was coined in order to describe the medieval Islamic approach to salvation history writing.²⁴⁸ But as I find the terms *chronophagous* and *chronophagy* very useful in this discussion, I shall adopt them in this study and adapt it to describe the modes of Armenian and Georgian history writing when dealing with "conversion history". By *chronophagy* I mean the condensation of chronology for event's sake, when chronology becomes secondary *vis-à-vis* a major event which is perceived as cataclysmal or

²⁴⁶ Mahé, "Chronique et icône", 210-211.

²⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 210-224.

²⁴⁸ The term is borrowed from Al-Azmeh, *Times*, 67-100. See also Al-Azmeh, "Coherence", 62-63, especially chapter entitled "Chronophagous Discourse". Al-Azmeh stresses the importance of *chronophagy* especially in the *awā'il* (first occurrences of history). My usage of the expression is slightly different from that by Al-Azmeh.

liminal by the historical narrative, when an event or series of events overtake the dating function and dismiss or ignore date or chronology. This feature is certainly not unique to medieval Georgia and Armenia but understanding this character of medieval Caucasian historiography is crucial in order to overcome some of the difficulties posed in the previous chapter, namely the anachronisms connected with the 555 Council of Dwin and the difficulties of its interpretation, the rather schematic understanding of its own history by early medieval Georgian historiography and the controversy surrounding the “Caucasus schism”.²⁴⁹ Although at risk of being accused of using sweeping generalizations, I believe we can still speak of three main aspects of the Armenian and Georgian modes of historical remembrance.

2.1.1. HISTORIOGRAPHY VS. HAGIOGRAPHY

This first aspect is probably most commonly pointed out in comparative Armenian and Georgian studies.²⁵⁰ It is true that neither Georgians nor Armenians perceived their own conversion as a single act in history. Conversion did not begin or end with a king or even with the entire nation being converted, it was always a continuity. But this continuity is expressed in different ways in the surviving Georgian and Armenian writings.²⁵¹ For the Armenians, who developed historical writing from the very first years of their literacy, historiography was the predominant genre. Revealing chronology and asserting continuity was the ultimate purpose of history-writing and the task of every consecutive historian was keep up his predecessor’s work. Meanwhile, as for the Georgians, for whom hagiography was of prevalent interest for the first five centuries and probably during the entire medieval period, history was indeed conceived as an icon. Rarely did historical writing serve to establish transparent chronology, but rather it aimed at contrasting everything to sharpen the image of a holy person or an event. Later (11th–14th cc), when Georgians were actively engaged in history writing, history still continued to serve hagiography. Thus the earliest narrative of this kind, the *Conversion of Georgia*, is not strictly speaking a historical chronicle but rather a historical canvas that concentrates on the actual act of conversion. It is striking that although the *Conversion*, apart from including

²⁴⁹ R. Brague discusses this very general trait of human consciousness and of the national narrative, and criticises the classification of epochs and their further conceptualization without “considering the “ternary schema” of the national narrative: a hollow between two summits”. Brague, *Legend*, 27-28.

²⁵⁰ For example, see Thomson, “Writing of History”, 493-521.

²⁵¹ For a “phenomenology” of conversion in the Caucasus, see Calzolari, “Apochryphe”, 9-18; Mahé, “Bekehrung”, 107-125; Zekiyan, “Christianisierung”, 189-199.

the *Life of Nino*, is a chronicle of kings and *katholikoi*, there is no spirit of resultativeness but the whole canvas is created to highlight the conversion and the results of St Nino's deeds.²⁵² The same refers to the *Life of Vaxt'ang*, later histories and different *Lives* of the great kings, where historical narrative revolves around the holy image of a king rather than there being a vision of the destiny of the nation.²⁵³ Unlike the Armenians, for whom historical writing was a kind of a mnemonic exercise, an act of remembrance, the Georgians did not develop such an acute historiographical sense of being in a direct continuity with their past.

2.1.2. 'OECUMENICAL' VS. 'NATIONAL'

The second principal difference is the role of the state and the perception of statehood in the respective memories: for Georgians, each cultural achievement or innovation, and more than others Christianisation, was inextricably tied with the history of statehood. In case of medieval Armenia historical thinking, the Church and its leaders were the bearers of nationhood,²⁵⁴ whereas such an attitude never transpires in the medieval Georgian literature. According to the Georgian conversion narrative, the process of Christianization began much earlier and is connected to the formation of the first Georgian kingdom of Iberia. Although not explicitly, but rather implicitly, in both the narratives of the *Conversion* and the *Lives of the Kings*, the process of Christianization was started by King Parnavaz, who established the first "national" cult, created "national" literacy, promulgated "national" language and set clear limits to what Georgian statehood meant.²⁵⁵ Slightly before that, Alexander the Great imposed monotheism in Iberia which was seen by authors of the *Conversion* as a preparation for the acceptance of the Gospel by the Georgians.²⁵⁶ The role of an oecumenical King would persist as all-important in the Georgian conversion narrative. Unlike the Armenian

²⁵² See Mahé, "Chronique et icône", 210-211, 218.

²⁵³ The same holds true to almost all other medieval Georgian *Histories*: They all revolve around the holy images of a king (*Vaxt'ang*, *Davit IV*, *Tamar*, etc.) while everything else, time, fate, destiny or Divine Grace are rather peripheral concepts, unlike Armenian historiography. Even in the later historiographies, according to Mahé, "à tout moment l'icône tend à éclipser la narrativité". Mahé, "Chronique et icône", 218; See, also, Martin-Hisard, "Vaxt'ang", 205-242; Tvaradze, "Lobpreisungen", 183-213.

²⁵⁴ a.) This is, in fact, understandable as probably for the whole of Late Antique and Medieval Armenian history, the Armenian *Kathlikos* was the strongest political figure, and especially so during the Arab dominance, as Mahé puts it, "the sole privileged interlocutor of the Caliphate". Mahé, "L'église", 458. On the policy of *Yovhannēs Draxanakertc'i* and his influence, see *ibid*, 497-505. See, also, Ter-Ghewondyan, *Arab Emirates*, 20; especially, Jinbashian, *Church-state*, 93-124, 163-188. Especially, Mahé, "l'Identité", "Fonction du *Catholicos*", 79-102.

²⁵⁵ *Conlber*, 82; *VitaReg*, 8-10.

²⁵⁶ The sojourn of Alexander in Iberia is claimed only by the *Conversion* and the *Life of the Kings* and is unknown by any other parallel sources. *Conlber*, 79-80; *VitaRegn*, 17-20. On the subject matter, see Rapp, *Studies*, 10-11, 118-120, 249-251.

counterpart, where a national “validation” was required for each “oecumenical” achievement, the Georgians saw the process as a mirroring of “oecumenical” developments. Hence the next and central stage in this history of conversion after the invasion of Alexander, according to all medieval texts dealing with the issue, is the evangelisation of the Georgian royal family and the establishment of strong ties of King Mirian with Emperor Constantine. Even here the subsequent conversion of mountainous Georgian people is an assertion of the political boundaries. The third stage can be considered the reign of King Vaxt‘ang Gorgasali and the introduction of the office of *katholikos*.²⁵⁷ Once again the story of statehood is overlapping with the history of conversion. This part in the *Conversion of Georgia* is especially noteworthy, as it deals specifically with our period of interest and the *chronophagy* of the Georgian historiography is revealed in its fullness. Only three sentences are dedicated to these very crucial times reflecting the way medieval Georgian tradition remembered its religious past:

And after [Vaxt‘ang] reigned Parsman and *katholikos* was Saba, native of Mcxeta. Since then two others that were native of Mcxeta occupied the patriarchal throne. Then Ioane Zedazadeneli²⁵⁸ came from Mesopotamia together with his twelve disciples on the two hundredth year from the conversion of Georgia. And then Bak‘ur reigned and *katholikos* was Mak‘ari and during his reign Šušanik‘ was martyred in Curt‘avi and the kingship came to an end in Kartli.²⁵⁹

This passage from the *Conversion* covers a period of roughly forty years but in a highly condensed way. The chronology of the events is heavily confused and each sentence presents its own anachronisms,²⁶⁰ but what matters for this study is the same *chronophagous* approach towards the conversion history – all major events that were remembered as of a crucial importance for the religious and national identity of the Georgians are presented as a single event: the patriarchal see was occupied by a local person, that is to say by a Georgian; the Syrian fathers came to (re-)enlighten Georgia;²⁶¹ St Šušanik was martyred and finally

²⁵⁷ *Conlber*, 93. On Vaxt‘ang’s reign, see Martin-Hisard, “Vaxt‘ang”, 207-227; Kekelidze, “Vaxt‘ang”, 187-201.

²⁵⁸ *Zedazadeneli* is a derivative from *Zeda Zadeni*, meaning Upper Zadeni. *Zadeni* was the name of one of the main pagan deities in Mcxeta. *Conlber*, 82. The toponym *Zedazadeni* refers to the site where the idol was erected.

²⁵⁹ *Conlber*, 94. და მეათონხმეტე სსუად ფარსმან და კათალიკოზი იყო საბა, მკვდრი მცხეთისა. აქათგან ორთა სსუათა დაიპყრეს კათალიკოზობად მკვდრთა მცხეთისათა. მაშინ მოვიდა იოვანე ზელა-ზადენელი შუა მდინარით, იგი და თორმეტნი მოწაფენი მისნი, ქართლის მოქცევითგან მეორასესა წელსა. და ამის შემდგომად მეფობდა ბაკურ და კათალიკოზი იყო მაკარი. და ამის ზე შუშანიკი იწამა ცურტავს. ამის ბაკურის ზე დაესრულა მეფობა ქართლისა.

²⁶⁰ For example Šušanik was martyred some ninety years before kingship was abolished in Iberia.

²⁶¹ For a more detailed overview, see *infra*, pp. 87-91.

kingship was abolished in Iberia, thus closing a chapter of Georgian history. All these events and most of all the arrival of Ioane Zedazneli are dated from the “actual conversion” of Georgia.²⁶²

The fourth focal point in the history of the “conversion” of Georgia is the invasion of Emperor Heraclius.²⁶³ Not only the whole story of the siege of Tbilisi by Heraclius, but the whole of the sixth-early seventh century is encapsulated in one single phrase:

And the Emperor cleansed the Christian faith and left and *Erismtavari* was St'epanoz and katholikos was Bartholomew the second (for the second time?).²⁶⁴

Heraclius cleansed the faith but it is not said from whom or from what, for it was irrelevant, just as a century before the “cleansing” of the faith by Ioane Zedazneli and two centuries earlier by St Nino. Of course this perception has to be read in line with the general apocalyptic vision of Heraclius’s campaigns, but it is still noteworthy that this Emperor fits extremely well into the Georgian memory of their conversion. What was initiated by Alexander was finalized by Heraclius, and that is the perpetual “conversion” of the Georgians.²⁶⁵ Everything worth mentioning in between was recapitulations of conversions. The first decade of the seventh century, preceding the Herakleian campaign, is entirely ignored as having no transitional importance. A huge chunk of Georgian history is omitted, the period which must have had a tremendous impact on Georgian consciousness; instead the invasion of Heraclius is highlighted. So, could we suggest that

²⁶² On Ioane Zedazneli, see Martin-Hisard, “Pères”, 141-146, 154-158;

²⁶³ On the role of Emperor Heraclius in medieval Georgian historiography, see Aleksidze, “Heraclius”, 46-62; Bíró, “Caucasian Campaign”, 121-132; Lomouri, “Heraclius”, 111-122; On Heraclius’s Georgian and Caucasian campaign in general, see Chichurov, “Caucasian Campaign”, 261-266; Kaegi, *Heraclius*, 122-156.

²⁶⁴ *Conlber*, 96: განწმინდა ერაკლე მეფემან სჯული ქრისტესი და წარვიდა. ერისთაობდა სტეფანოზ და კათოლიკოსი იყო ბართლომე. The “cleansing of faith” has been interpreted by some scholars as an action against the Armenian anti-Chalcedonians who lived in Georgia. Maisuradze, *Studies*, 75. This might be possible considering the general trend of the Georgian historiography of indirectly presenting polemical aspirations, although the text itself clearly says that Heraclius targeted the magi and fire-worshippers.

²⁶⁵ The Alexander-Heraclius typology is a common topos in the Byzantine tradition. The Alexander tradition was actively addressed by the Byzantine propaganda beginning from Heraclius’s Persian campaigns. The Georgian perception of the role of Georgia in the “oecumenical salvation history” is a reflection of similar motifs widespread in Late Antique Caucasus. Equally, Alexander’s hanging of the great gates in the Caucasus is the metaphor for the conception and of the establishment of the northern limits of the Christian and later Byzantine oecumene which was reflected in the Georgian legend of Alexander’s sojourn in Iberia. See Reinink, “Alexanderlegende”, 270-275. From the same motifs stems the frequent Georgian self designation – “this northern land”, which, as a matter of fact, is also an Armenian self-designation. But in Georgian *črdilo* stands for both north and shaded part. For studies, see Gleixner, *Alexanderbild*; Reinink, “New Alexander”, van Bekkum, “Messianic Expectations,” 95-112; Frend, *Monophysite Movement*, 343. For a study of the Georgian tradition, see Aleksidze, “Heraclius”, 46-62; Rapp, *Studies*, 118-127, 148-149.

the Herakleian campaign in Iberia (620s) was yet another *chronophagous* moment and the sentence, “the Emperor cleansed the Christian faith and left”, became so cataclysmal that it left no space for other major tangential events in the period? Did the figure of Katholikos K’yron fade *vis-à-vis* Heraclius’s tremendous apocalyptic image? This might well be the case. Considering the Georgian conception of history, where national history is a mirror of “oecumenical” history, where no religious development could take place without imperial interference and sanction, this hypothesis seems plausible. Mxit’ar Ayrevanec’i’s chronicle, which is influenced by the Georgian narratives, is also a noteworthy testimony that Heraclius’s campaign contaminated the adjacent events in the Georgian and partially Armenian memory, for being influenced by the Georgian historiography, Mxit’ar locates the separation of the Armenians and Georgians immediately after Heraclius’s invasion, apparently making a cause-effect inference between the two events:

The Caesar Heraclius decided to fight Muhammed. A man came to him and brought him books of Hemindros and ĵemindros [sic.], where it was written that 240 years were allocated for their rule. [Heraclius] took Arčeš from the Tačiks. And Georgians separated from the union with the Armenians.²⁶⁶

Where is the Caucasian schism in the Georgian narrative? One possible way of explaining its absence could be the fact that it does not fit into the narrative.²⁶⁷ There is almost not a single record in Georgian historiography where Church history would be a separate event or narrative. There was no turn in history, in its historiographical consciousness, without it being initiated and carried out by a “lay” sovereign. Therefore, the period of Georgian history where a patriarch would be a political leader and hero was unimaginable and nonexistent. K’yron’s actions were not a state-initiated activity and, in so far as the medieval Georgians were concerned, they did not affect the political course of the future kingdom. Perhaps it may sound rather lyrical, but “Heraclius cleansed the faith” might be the only trace that reminds us of religious upheaval of the early seventh century Caucasus. The oecumenical concerns and messianic expectation of the age of Heraclius left a deeper imprint in medieval Georgian historical memory than the local developments. The turbulent years of religious controversies and political struggle are otherwise not reflected in any way in the placid and

²⁶⁶ MA, 49-50: Կամեցաւ կայսրն Հերակլ կռուել ընդ Մահմետի: Եկն այր մի առ նա և եբեր նմա գիրս Հեմինդրոսի և Ջեմինդրոսի, յորս կայր գրեալ, թէ 240 ամ տուեալ է նոցա իշխանութիւն: Արճէշ առաւ ի Տաճկաց: Վիրք ի բաց կացին ի միաբանութենէ Հայոց:

²⁶⁷ For the political explanation, see *infra*, the subchapter on inclusivism, p. 146.

undisturbed lives of martyrs and holy ascetics who dominated the whole of sixth century Georgia. In a very symptomatic paragraph the whole period between Vaxt'ang and Heraclius, that is to say the whole of the sixth century, is described thus:

[After Vaxt'ang's reign] numerous calamities were inflicted upon the Georgians by the Persians. Many souls perished and many lands were captured by the Persians and many were martyred in Christ's name. Some are described, but much is left without description. Yet all are described in the books of the living and rejoice into the presence of God.²⁶⁸

The period roughly coinciding with K'yrion's rule is described in several historical narratives, but Church politics is entirely neglected and the entire period is very scarcely presented. Just as the *Conversion*, Sumbat' Davit'sze has almost nothing to say about that period, that is to say, before the invasion of Heraclius, on which he elaborates in detail. Here he merely speaks about the provenance of the Bagrat'ionis, which indeed was of his primary concern.²⁶⁹ The same pattern is seen in all other Georgian *Histories* or other quasi-historical narratives. Therefore medieval Georgian historical remembrance of Late Antiquity and the first centuries of Christianity presents each major event as a reiteration of the conversion, each event including the deeds of Alexander the Great, Kings Parnavaz, Mirian, Vaxt'ang Gorgasali, the Syrian fathers, Emperor Heraclius are reminiscences or flash-forwards of the conversion and reaffirmation of the conversion. This is why after two hundred, and even three hundred years after the arrival of St Nino, the Syrian fathers and Emperor Heraclius are again credited for converting Georgia or for cleansing the faith.²⁷⁰ The first three or four centuries of Christianity are presented not as a process that would lead to a certain culmination, but rather as a series of circular events, where each cycle reaffirms the previous one.

²⁶⁸ AS-*VitaNino*, 48: ამის შემდგომად ფრიაღნი ჳირნი მოიწინეს სპარსთაგან ქართველთა ზედა და ფრიაღნი სულნი მოსწყვდნეს და ქუეყანანი დაიპყრნეს და ფრიაღნი იწამნეს სახელისათჳს ქრისტესისა. რომელთაჲ-მე აღწერილ არს ჩუენ შორის და რომელთაჲ-მე აღუწერელად დამთა, სოლო ყოველნი აღწერილ არიან წიგნსა მას ცხოველთასა და წინაშე ღმრთისა იხარებენ.

²⁶⁹ SD, 374-380.

²⁷⁰ As the two Sinaitic redactions of the *Conversion of Georgia* have revealed, a single treatise entitled *Conversion of Georgia* was a rather late creation which had united in itself different "books of the conversion of Georgia" that included work by Gregory the Deacon, the *Chronicle of the Conversion of Iberia*, *The Book of Nino* and the *Lives of the Syrian Fathers*. For a study of the Sinaitic redactions and the initial composition of the *Conversion of Georgia*, see Aleksidze, "Nino", 132-137. For other studies of the oldest structure of the *Conversion*, see Parulava, "Initial Redaction", 352-378.

Finally, I believe we can securely claim that the Armenian historical experience perceived religious developments as a history of a “nationalisation” of Christianity.²⁷¹ In the case of Georgia, conversion history did not lead anywhere, whether to nationalisation or to formation of a certain Georgian “selfhood”. In this way Georgian historical memory differs from the Armenian understanding of its religious experience and in some sense we can claim that the hallmark of medieval Georgian historiography is absence of remembrance rather than its presence. Hence we would not expect K’yrion to play a decisive role in such a narrative. There was no turn, no novelty that needed to be recorded and no breakthrough in the history of the Georgian statehood that would be inextricably tied to a religious “reform”. And, in general, reform as such was a completely unacceptable phenomenon for the medieval mind.

As said, Armenians did not see such a direct correlation between statehood and religion. Religion, national faith and national Church were substitutes to elusive statehood.²⁷² In Armenian historical narrative the process of “conversion” led, so to say, from general to specific and the destinies of nation and of faith were strongly interwoven. Armenian historical memory preserved the history of conversion and history of Doctrine as a chronological sequence, as a process of the nationalization of the Armenian Church, a path from oecumenical to national, whereas the Georgian tradition does not and could not have claimed the same and “nationalisation” as such was unknown in the Georgian narratives until the beginning of the second millennium. For the same reason the events of the early seventh century were not reflected in historiography as it was not considered to be a decisive moment in history. Unlike Armenian historiography, on the contrary, was strongly sensitive towards the issue, because what allegedly happened due to K’yrion’s activities was perceived as a fatal deterioration of a certain “order”.

In the case of Armenia, just as historiography served the needs of preserving the memory of continuity, so religious history was viewed as a series of Church councils, where national Church tradition was reaffirmed over and over again. For example, the *History of the Councils* by Katholikos Yovhannēs Awjneg’i

²⁷¹ The formation of the Armenian national Church and identity has been studied multiple times in modern scholarship. Of the numerous studies, see, for example, Garsoïan, *L’Église*, 355-399; also Mahé, *Confession religieuse*, 60-78; “Identité”, “Fonction du Catholikos”; van Lint, “Identity”, 272-276.

²⁷² For the ideological rhetoric in the medieval Caucasus, see *infra*, chapter 3.

highlights the Armenian councils by placing them on the same level as oecumenical ones and sometimes even higher.²⁷³ Awjnec‘i, who discusses the first six councils in a rather schematic way, does so in a fashion that presents a clear chronological development of Armenian Church tradition.²⁷⁴ According to the traditional narrative and Awjnec‘i, the first Armenian council was called by St Gregory when the Nicene canons were adopted, and more importantly, adapted by St Sahak. Adaptation rather than adoption of canons was the key role of an Armenian council.²⁷⁵ The second council was called by Nersēs I the Great as a reaction to the Second Council of Constantinople. The third Armenian Council was of high importance as it was an Armenian response to the anti-Nestorian policy of the Council of Ephesus, the last ecumenical council recognized by the Armenian Church.²⁷⁶ The fourth council was dedicated to the adoption of the Armenian Church canons at Šahapivan.²⁷⁷ The fifth council was convened by Babgēn, in K‘alak‘udašt, to target Persian Nestorians. It was dedicated to strengthening the Armenian limits of Orthodoxy and keeping the Nestorians at bay.²⁷⁸ The sixth council was convened by Katholikos Nersēs to combat the Chalcedonian definitions, “where the unity of Baptism and Nativity was established, one nature of Christ confessed and the *Xač‘ec‘ar* introduced”. And finally Yovhannēs himself convened the seventh council, which reaffirmed the definitions of Dwin of 555 and sealed the national Church.²⁷⁹ In this sequence the central role is occupied by the council that has preoccupied us the most and through which knowledge of the common history of the Caucasus was refracted – the semi-legendary Council of Dwin of 555.

2.2. THE ‘MARKERS’ OF THE AGE: THE SYRIAN FATHERS

After having discussed a rather broad nature of *chronophagy*, it remains to ask ourselves, what were those makers of the age, the chronophagous phenomena that distort a proper view of the historical period? After all, how was the sixth century important for the medieval Georgian narrative, if it was at all? The Georgian sixth century was marked by a significant event that became embedded in the Georgian memory as

²⁷³ GT‘ I, 220-234; van Esbroeck, “Konziliengeschichte”, 31-60.

²⁷⁴ On similar subject, see the *History of the Councils* by Vardapet Abraham.

²⁷⁵ For discussion on the appropriation of the Nicene canons by the Armenian Church, see Thomson, “Armenian Adaptation”, 453-457; For the texts of the *Canons*, see Mercier, “Canons”, 187-262.

²⁷⁶ See Aleksidze, “Heraclius”.

²⁷⁷ See Akinean, “Šahapivan”, 79-170; Arevšatyan, “Canons”, 334-348; Mardirossian, *Livre*, 533-562.

²⁷⁸ Knowledge of Yovhannēs concerning this council is dependent on the letters of Babgēn.

²⁷⁹ See Mardirossian, *Livre*, 268-281.

yet another turning point in the long conversion history of the nation. According to a very persistent Georgian tradition, a group of Syrian monks arrived in eastern Georgia and established a number of monastic communities all over the land. The arrival of the “Syrian” Fathers in Georgia is described with all possible detail both in historiographic and, most importantly, in the hagiographic literature where they are presented as missionaries who were to enlighten “this northern land of ours”. Some of them even became bishops as well as martyrs. The Syrian Fathers were canonized by the Georgian Church and remain highly popular saints to this day.²⁸⁰

Not only has the authenticity of these narratives ever been doubted, but even the confessional affiliation of the Syrian monks has never been questioned in the medieval tradition. Not even does a part of modern scholarship doubt the trustworthiness of the *Vitae*, and as a result, the role of the Fathers is evaluated in all possible ways. Most curious is the fact that the remembrance of the role of the Syrian Fathers in Georgia has remained vital in the consciousness as establishers of the first monastic communities and, more widely, of the introducers of organized monasticism.²⁸¹ This vision is also guided by a need to mark the “beginnings”, in this case, the beginnings of Georgian monasticism. Despite this popular belief, the *Vitae* themselves do not necessarily present the Fathers as monastic authorities or founders and, unlike the *Life of Saint Grigol Xanzteli* (951), where the spread and flourishing of monasticism in late eight–early ninth century Georgia is the key *leit motif*, here the fathers are missionaries, martyrs or ascetics.²⁸² Unlike Grigol (759–861) and his companions, the Syrian fathers are not considered in the medieval tradition as establishers of coenobial monasticism or even less as teachers of a specific theological position. But they are taken as “illuminators” of Georgia; Ioane Zedazneli arrived in Georgia exclusively to illuminate “this northern land of ours”. The *Vita of Ioane Zedazneli* presents numerous curious instances that are beyond the scope of the present study. For example, it emphasizes several times that the basic role of Ioane was missionary, and he even stated that the Georgians were newly converted [*axalnerg*]. The very first spot that Ioane reaches upon his arrival in Mcxeta was the same where

²⁸⁰ On Syrian fathers, see Martin-Hisard, “Christianisme”, 567-570; “Pères”, (1) 141-168, (2) 76-111.

²⁸¹ See, for example, Peradze, *Die Anfänge*, where the author engages with the study of Georgian monasticism with the arrival of the Syrian fathers.

²⁸² Martin-Hisard, “Christianisme”, 570-572.

one night the reason for all our goodness, our radiant mother, St Nino, stood in prayers, imploring our mighty Lord Christ [to erect the Living Pillar] and straight away the captive one captivated all powers of the king and his workers and by prayer she received the Living Pillar and hung it in the void of the air.²⁸³

Thus Ioane's task to re-enlighten Georgia was validated. He was supposed both to re-enlighten and to remind. The case of the Syrian Fathers is yet another example of a *chronophagous* perception of Late Antique Georgian religious history through the spectrum of medieval historiography. Medieval memory kept alive the sixth century as a turning point, which indeed it was, but exactly how it was a turning point is not remembered. Hence the Syrian Fathers received the burden of being the re-enlighteners of Georgia, in spite of the fact that Iberia had already been Christian for over two centuries. Historically speaking this claim makes no sense but the sixth century was and is the age of the Syrian fathers in Georgian historiography. As a consequence, some of the most prominent spiritual authorities of the fifth, sixth and possibly even of the seventh centuries, bore a generalized name of "Syrian Fathers". In fact, the actual number of the Syrian Fathers, according to the different redactions, exceeds thirteen, which is surely a sacral number. Examination of a map of Iberia from that period reveals that the foundation of almost all major eparchies and monastic centres were attributed to these "thirteen" Syrian Fathers.²⁸⁴

Unlike most scholars who have dedicated numerous publications to the problem of identifying the Syrian Fathers, I do not believe that there is any secure means of taking the information about the Fathers provided in the *Vitae* at face value. Neither the chronology nor the names or events described in the *Vitae* give us sufficient grounds to believe that what we are dealing with, are fully trustworthy historical narratives.²⁸⁵

²⁸³ *VitalZ*, 22-24: მასვე ლაშქარს ყოველთა მათ ქართლისა კეთილთა მიზეზი იგი წმიდად და აღყვავებული ღედა ჩუენი ნინო დაადგრა ლოცვასა ცრემლით და ყოველთა ვედრებით ითხოვდა ძლიერისაგნ ქრისტეს, ღმრთისა ჩუენისა, [შეწევნასა] და მსწრაფლ ტყუე-ქმნიდა ყუე იგი ყოველსა მას ძალსა მეფისასა და სიველოვნესა ზურთასა. ლოცვითა მიიღო სუეტი იგი ცხოველი და დაჰკიდა ზედა აერთა აღმორებულად ხარისხისაგან წყრთა ერთ, მართლ ზე იღვა.

²⁸⁴ For sixth century Georgian eparchies and monastic centres, see, *HAG*, 15.

²⁸⁵ In spite of this, one reads some astonishing conclusions of modern scholars who, more or less have looked into the question. Babian, for example, has established "unequivocally" that: "Firstly, close examination of these biographies shows quite clearly that these monks must have arrived in Georgia 'at various times between the end of the 5th and the mid 6th centuries'. Secondly, one of the main reasons for their arrival in Georgia was that, in belonging to the 'Monophysite' Syrian Church, they had escaped from the persecutions by the Chalcedonian Emperors. Thirdly, and finally, in the words of Prof. Lang, these 'Syrian Fathers were indeed Monophysite refugees anxious to continue their religious work in the more tolerant and congenial atmosphere of Georgia'. In the light of this evidence, it is only reasonable to assume that, at least throughout the first half of the sixth century, the Georgian Church had remained faithful to the anti-Chalcedonian pronouncements of the Council of Dwin". Babian, *Relations*, 163. (Quoted from Lang, *Georgian Saints*, 82). Leaving aside the lamentable fact that Lang would appear to be Babian's almost sole authority in

Nevertheless, some serious discussions have arisen in Georgian scholarship concerning even the ethnic origin of the Syrian Fathers and various arguments have been advanced which question whether or not they were actually Syrians or Georgians or of some other ethnicity. But the answer is simple: according to the authors of the *Vitae*, the monks were by origin Syrian and that is all we can know.²⁸⁶ Thus, at this stage it is wiser to avoid pursuing a positivistic study of the question and more rewarding to treat the *Vitae* as a “phenomenon” of medieval Georgian remembrance.

This leads one to another question that has tormented Georgian scholarship even more than the question of chronology, namely, the confessional affiliation of the Syrian Fathers.²⁸⁷ This question is certainly not trivial, as the *Vitae* ought to have disclosed, or at least hinted at the religious situation in Georgia at that period. Moreover, one would have expected at least some basic information, but there is in fact none, and the texts are totally silent on this matter. This epoch coincides exactly with the legendary “one hundred years” so often alluded to in the Armenian tradition. The theories range from considering the Syrian Fathers to be “monophysite” missionaries or refugees who had escaped the imperial persecutions of the fifth and sixth centuries,²⁸⁸ to taking them as the enforcers of Chalcedonian Christology over and against Armenian influence that eventually led to the schism. But neither of these theories is deducible from the *Vitae*

Georgian history, we can only wonder which the sources for all of these generalized conclusions were. Are these the *Vitae* edited in the ninth century the earliest and not giving any hints whatsoever at confessional background of the Fathers?

²⁸⁶ The chronology of the Syrian Fathers is equally unclear. The *Conversion* dates their arrival to the two hundredth year after the conversion of Georgia. According to the *Conversion*, Nino died in 338, in the thirty-fifth year after her coming to Iberia, that is to say she arrived in Iberia in 302, hid in a bush for three years, and in the fourth year she started preaching. In the sixth year she converted Queen Nana and in the seventh year King Mirian. In other words, Georgia was converted in 309-310. Therefore the Syrian Fathers should have arrived around 506-510. For chronology, see, Aleksidze, “Ethnic Provenance”, 212-215.

²⁸⁷ For discussion, see Aleksidze, “Ethnic Provenance”, 212-215.

²⁸⁸ Lang, *Georgian Saints*, 82.

themselves.²⁸⁹ As for the confessional affiliation of the Fathers, their only concern, according to the *Vitae*, was with various pagan practices and “barbarians”, rather than other Christians.²⁹⁰

2.3. THE MYSTERIOUS ‘ARMENIAN COUNCIL’

According to almost all medieval Armenian narratives, the event that marked the sixth century, the ultimate transitional point in Armenia’s “salvation history” was the “Armenian Council”. What we have come to call the Second Council of Dwin is in fact one of the most elusive events in both medieval and modern Armenian historiography. In seeking to discover what is actually known about this “Armenian Council” as a phenomenon perceived by the medieval intellectuals, and not just simply another council, there is very little to depend upon. What we possess are several letters discussed above with a very low Armenian voice and that is all. The rest of the sources are strongly confusing. Falling prey to the general trend of medieval memory – the quest for liminality – this council became yet another *chronophagous* phenomenon in medieval Armenian identity formation and remembrance. It has shaped our total understanding of the Late Antique Caucasian history too. Armenian historiography sought an absolute point of transition in this council, a *terminus post quem* when the “national” Church emerged, hence the generalizing name, the “Armenian Council”, for the Council of Dwin. Ultimately this council became axis of the sixth and partly seventh-century religious history that affected an extensive range of events. The varied and contradictory understanding of the role and function of the Council of Dwin can be explained by the need to attribute to it a number of crucial achievements within Armenian Church tradition. Another trait that the generalized designation “Armenian Council” underlines is the fact that it was not easily located in time. It was the phenomenon of the Council of Dwin that was first remembered and only later was it allocated a time slot. It was one of the “beginnings”, hence the *chronophagy*. The Armenians took it as a watershed between national orthodoxy and Roman (and Georgian) heterodoxy. Just as, according to the Georgian narratives, the arrival of

²⁸⁹ Even if we were to reject each and every bit of historical information in the *Vitae*, we would still have to explain, why Syrian? Are we to assume that this reflects certain very ancient ties with the Syriac speaking world? Can the foundation of Georgian monasticism be connected to Late Antique Syria? Even if hypothetically so, we do not possess either literary, or more importantly, linguistic data that would reflect close ties between Georgia and the Syriac speaking communities.

²⁹⁰ In one single instance there is a slightly polemical or ironic attitude that lurks through the *Life of Davit Gareželi*, when the “barbarian” conversed in Armenian with David. See *VitaDG*, 234-35.

the Syrian Fathers reaffirmed Orthodoxy, so did the “Armenian Council” re-establish Armenian Orthodoxy. Such was the council also in the Georgian and Chalcedonian traditions, where it remained the symbol and the beginning of the Armenian apostasy. For this very reason the Council of Dwin became a strongly controversial event both in medieval historiography and in modern scholarship. With a date not precisely known, uncertainty as to whether there were one or two councils, with ignorance of its decisions and even of its convenors, there is no agreement.²⁹¹

A fourteenth century colophon in MS Venice N. 239 makes reference to the Council of Dwin, attributing to it every possible achievement of the Armenian Church. The narrative starts with typical references to Emperor Marcian and the Council of Chalcedon. This is followed by equally conventional chronological lacuna. Suddenly the “news” of “Nestorianism” of Chalcedon reaches Armenia in the following way:

Then news of the Council of Chalcedon reached Armenia and the definition of their faith was read, which was brought by Peter of Antioch (471–88), by Abdišo and by other Orthodox who did not accept the innovations of Chalcedon. Thus, in the days of Nersēs the Katholikos of the Armenians and Peter the Teacher [*k’ert’ol*], the bishop of the Siwnians²⁹² and other Armenian bishops, it was ordained that a great council be convened in Dwin. It was the fourth year of the katholikosate of Nersēs and fourth year of the reign of Xosrow (531–79), in the fourteenth year of the reign of Justinian and from the death for Christ of St Yizbuit [*sic.*]. And they repudiated the Council of Chalcedon with severe anathemas. The same year they translated into Armenian the *Commentary* on the Second Epistle by Timothy [Aeluros] and the [writings] of Philoxenos [of Mabbug] and they composed different books against Chalcedon. And they introduced the *Who were crucified* against their separation of one nature of Christ.²⁹³

Therefore, according to both Chalcedonian and anti-Chalcedonian sources, the following innovations are attributed to the Council: formal condemnation of the Council of Chalcedon, establishment of the national calendar, introduction of the fast of *Araġawork’*, addition of *Who were crucified for us* in the *Trishagion*,

²⁹¹ See the passage from Step’anos Orbelean, quoted in the introduction of the present thesis.

²⁹² On Peter, see Akinean, “Petros”, 245-252

²⁹³ *Col-Ananean*, 112-113: Եւ ժամ տուեալ համբաւ ժողովոյն Քաղկեդոնի ի Հայս, և ընթերցեալ զսահմանադրութիւն խոստովանութեան նոցա, զոր զեկոյց Պետրոս Անտիոքացի և Աբդիշոյ և այլք բազումք յուղղափառացն, որ ոչ հաւանեցան նորաձայնութեան Քաղկեդոնի: Իսկ ի ժամանակս Ներսիսի Հայոց կաթողիկոսի և Պետրոսի Սիւնեաց քերթողի և եպիսկոպոստի, և այլոց եպիսկոպոսաց Հայոց՝ հրամայեցին ժողով մեծ լինել ի Դունիս: Այս ի չոր(ր)որդ ամի Ներսիսի կաթողիկոսութեան եղև [ի քսան] և չորք Խոսրովու արքայի, և ի տասն և չորք Յուստիանոսի կայսեր, և կատարմանն ի Քրիստոս սուրբն Յիզբուիս: Եւ ի բաց մերժեցին զժողովն Քաղկեդոնի նզովիք չափ. յորում ամի և զգիրսն իսկ թարգմանեցին զՏիմոթէոսի երկրորդ թղթին մեկնութիւն ի հայկական բառ, և Փիլակսոնին. և հակառակ Քաղկեդոնի ժողովոյն ճառս ոչ սակաւս կարգեցին: Գրեցին և զարբասացութիւնսն զԵւաջեցարդ կցուրդս ընդդիմակս նոցա բարձանմանցն զՔրիստոսի միաւորեալ բնութիւնն: See, also, Garsoian, *L’Église*, 141-144, 481-483; *Narr-Mahé*, 431-432.

translation of some of the major anti-Chalcedonian authors and finally separation from the communion with the Albanian and the Georgian Churches. Medieval polemic would thereafter refer to the Council of Dwin as the point of divergence from the Armenians. To a certain degree the same holds true for the Council of Babgēn, though much more to that convened by Nersēs II.

Some scholars argue that there existed two councils in Dwin, both between 553 and 555. J.-P. Mahé bases his judgment on the information by Arseni Sapareli, who seemingly talks of the existence of two councils in a row under Nersēs II:

Il y eut deux synodes, ou deux sessions d'un même synode, sous Nersēs II en 552/553 et en 555. La première fois, on consacra à l'épiscopat le Syrien Abdišoṽ après avoir condamné le chalcedonisme; la seconde, on prit des mesures de répression contre les Nestoriens du Khujastan (Susiane), qui s'étaient établis en Arménie comme simples commerçants dans les années 480, puis avaient, à la génération suivante, fondé leur propre Église et pratiquaient un certain prosélytisme.²⁹⁴

It should be noted that the statement that Chalcedon was condemned before Abdišo's consecration is the author's deduction rather than a fact. A. Mardirossian develops the theory even further and attributes the formulation of the *Canons of Nersēs and Neršapuh* to the first council of 552/553. Mardirossian argues further that the council of 553 was later on confused with the council of 555 and thus both the synod and its acts were lost and forgotten, until revitalized by Yovhannēs Mayragomec'ī.²⁹⁵ Thus, according to this position, not had only the Armenian Church formulated an anti-Chalcedonian position at the Council of Dwin sometime in the first years of the sixth decade, but it also created a set of canons that would enforce this position as law. The idea that there were actually two consecutive councils had already been set forward by E. Ter-Mkrtč'ean even before the introduction of the work of Arseni into the scholarship. He argues that there was indeed a council convened in 552/3 where the national calendar was adopted. This was probably the first session of the council, and since there was insufficient number of bishops at this session, they called another one in 554/5 in order to condemn the Nestorians. The same position was taken by I. Javakhishvili, who considered the existence of diverging sources on the council inexplicable otherwise. According to him, at the

²⁹⁴ Mahé, *Gregoire*, 23, fn. 79; For the original idea expressed by the editor of Arseni Sapareli, see AS, 50.

²⁹⁵ Mardirossian, *Canons*, 624. Mardirossian admits that the so-called *Canons of Sahak Partew* is a forgery by Mairagomec'ī while he is much less critical about the *Canons of Nersēs and Neršapuh*.

first council in 552/3 when the *Pact of Union* was adopted, the Nestorians were condemned, whereas the council of 554/5 aimed exclusively at condemning the council of Chalcedon.²⁹⁶

The cause of misconceptions over the Council of Dwin and the reason for taking it as a “beginning” was the Armenian national calendar, which began in the year 551. Because it was quite close in time to the actual council of Nersēs, psychologically it was easy to assume that this very council introduced the calendar.²⁹⁷ But this was not enough for the establishment of absolute chronology. This spirit of the “beginning” attracted certain other innovations, some of which might well have taken place, while some must be considered later attributions. Just as the journeys of Thaddeus and Bartholomew and later St. Gregory’s illumination are the beginnings of Christianity in Armenia, so was the beginning of the Armenian calendar heavily associated with the “national” Christianity, with the official rejection of the Council of Chalcedon.²⁹⁸ I would suggest that as a result of these misunderstandings a hypothesis was formed in scholarship that there were two councils of Dwin or rather two sessions of the same council.

2.3.1. AFTER ALL, HOW MANY COUNCILS?

The theory of the existence of two councils or of two sessions of the same council of Nersēs II was seemingly supported by Arseni Sapareli who, at first sight, does indeed speak of two councils of Dwin. In fact, Arseni mentions the council three times and all three instances are almost completely independent.

The King [of Persia] obeyed [the Armenians] and brought nine evil Jacobites,²⁹⁹ sly as foxes, as said by the Divine wisdom through Solomon. And they corrupted the land of Armenia, cultivated by St Gregory, watered by his numerous tears and work. Their names are: Abdišo, Peter the Fuller, Simeon the Evil and Jacob. They also had books of Philoxenos and of Julian of Halikarnassos, of Timotheos the Cat and of Severos of Nashik [sic.]. And they called a council in Dwin and added *xač’ecar*, that is to say they inserted ‘crucified’ into the *Trishagion*, and ascribed passion to the impassable divinity and death to immortal and separated from the truth and from the true faith and were alienated by separating from the holy and great apostolic Church, which is the source of all faith from the Word of God...Truly were they alienated by their sins from the Mother of God and established *arajor* [*arajawork’*] there in Dwin, for they said: ‘This is the first day of our faith,’ and added evil to evil and

²⁹⁶ Javakhishvili, *Armenian Literature*, 62.

²⁹⁷ See ST-Ger, 58-59; Samuel Anec’i and Mxit’ar Goš associate the calendar with Katholikos Movsēs with varied dates. See SA, 74-75. For a brief discussion by R. Thomson, see VA-Eng, 172, fn. 12.

²⁹⁸ As A. Schmidt demonstrates it, later in the thirteenth century the Noah legend was also added to the national motifs. Schmidt, “Petrus der Iberer”, 266-267.

²⁹⁹ For commentary, see AS II, 67-72.

cursed themselves by anathemas, by not communicating with the Council of Chalcedon and by diverging.³⁰⁰

After several paragraphs, the council is mentioned again. Oddly enough here it is stressed that this was the first council in Dwin:

King Xuasro pledged many privileges to Katholikos Nersēs, who was called *šua* [middle] that is in Armenian *mijin*, by which he shattered his heart, he called the first council in Dwin and separated from the faith of the Greeks and Jerusalem. But all Kartli and Armenia four [*meotxedi somxitisay*] separated from the communion with the Armenians. The Hers [i.e. Albanians] and the Sivnians separated for a while but then again entered into communion with them.³⁰¹

This rather small paragraph is chronologically misplaced. It follows the narrative about Katholikos Abraham being followed by Komitas (615–28), Yovhannēs Mayragomec‘i and K‘ristap‘or, then an interlude follows, which mentions the vision of St Gregory and Sahak Part‘ew, followed directly by the above quoted passage. After this passage the story continues with the council of Manazkert by Yovhannēs Awj nec‘i. After a couple of paragraphs, the Council of Dwin is mentioned again in a paragraph copied word by word from the *Narratio*:

Narratio de Rebus Armeniae

Arseni

When Bishop Neršapuh notified Katholikos Nersēs of Aštarak and other bishops and *azats*, they decided to hold a great council in the city of Dwin on the twentieth year of the same Katholikos Nersēs, the thirteenth year of Emperor Justinian and twenty-fourth year of Xosrow, King of Persians, in the year when Yizidbozid was martyred and at the beginning of the Armenian era. They anathematized the holy Council of Chalcedon following Abdišo’s letter. The same year they translated the already mentioned writings brought by Abdišo, of Timothy and Philoxenos the Syrian against the Council of Chalcedon and the confessors of two natures in Christ or God. Convinced by these writings, during the synod which took place in the city of Dwin, they decided to profess one nature of God Logos and of the flesh and that Christ was crucified and

When the ordination was taken away from the house of St Gregory, bishop Neršapo informed Katholikos Nersēs who was *ašxarakeli*³⁰³ (he was an evil heretic) and to someone called Peter *kerdol* and other bishops and other noblemen [*aznauri*] and ordered to call another great council in the same [city of] Dwin [*munve dvins*] in the second year of the same Nersēs and on the fourteenth year of emperor Justinian [sic.] and in the second year of Xuasro king of the Persians, in the year when Izidbuzit was martyred and again [*kualad*] they condemned the council of Chalcedon and called it Nestorian according to the words of ungodly Abdišo and in the same year they brought [*ganacxades?*] books translated from Timothy and Philoxenos the heretics, who were Syrians, which they composed against the Council of Chalcedon and two natures of Christ God, and became obedient to the writings of the cat [*kuerna*] and professed one nature of God’s

³⁰⁰ AS, 80; AS-Fr, 103-104: ხოლო მეფე დაჯერებულ იქმნა და მოუვლინა მოძღუარნი იაკობნი ბოროტნი ცხრანი, ვითარცა მელნი მცბიერნი, ვითარცა თქუა სიბრძნემან ღმრთისამან სოლომონის მიერ. და მათ განრყუნეს ქუეყანად სომხითისად, შრომილი წმიდისა გრიგოლისი, მრავლითა ლუაწლითა და ცრემლითა მისითა მორწყული. რომელთა სხელები ესე არს: აბდიშო, პეტროზ მკაწრველი, სუმონ ბოროტი, იაკობ, და თანა ჰქონდეს წიგნნი ფილაქსოსისინი, ივლიანენსი ალიკარნელისნი, ტიმოთე კუერნი და სევეროს ნაბიკელი.

³⁰¹ AS, 84; AS-Fr, 103: ხოლო არამცირელი აღთქუამად ყო ხუასრო მეფემან ნერსე კათალიკოზისა მომართ, რომელსა ეწოდა „შუა“ (ესე არს სომხურად „მიჯინ“), რომლითა შეარყია უგულისვმო გული მისი, ქმნა კრებად პირველი დეინს და განეშორნეს სჯულითა ბერძენთა და იერუსალემსა, ხოლო ქართლი ყოველი და მეოთხედი სომხითისა განეყენეს ჯელი-დასხმასა მღვდლობისასა სომეხთაგან, არამედ ჰერნი და სივნიელი ჟამ ერთ განეყენეს და კუალად შეერინეს ნერსეს ვისმე, რომელი წუერთა ოქრო-ცხებულ ჰყოფდა.

had died in one immortal nature. This is why they adduced ‘Who were crucified’ to ‘Holy God’ following Peter Fuller, who had the illness of Sabellius.³⁰²

Word and flesh and professed Christ as dead and resurrected in immortal nature. That is to say they added “who were crucified” to “Holy God” – the so called *xacēcar*, according to the words of Peter of Antioch who had the disease of Sabellios.³⁰⁴

This section from the *Narratio* is presented by Arseni as if there had been a second council during the “same Nersēs” in the “same city of Dwin.” But I cannot take Arseni’s testimony as proof of the existence of either two councils or two sessions of the Council of Dwin. He also does not mention the “beginning of the Armenian era,” but transposes this information to the alleged first council, as shown above. Arseni slavishly copies the *Narratio* and having already discussed the council of Dwin several paragraphs earlier, the author himself got confused and added words like “again”, “same” and so on in order to give a coherent image to the events.³⁰⁵ The section in Arseni’s treatise dealing with the council of Dwin, besides being misplaced, also lacks contextualization. The aims of these “two” councils and the decisions they made are almost identical: 1st Council: Adoption of the *xacēcar*, separation from the Oecumenical Church, anathematization of the Council of Chalcedon, establishment of the Armenian calendar, separation of the Albanians and Georgians

³⁰³ The text by Arseni says *ašxarakeli* instead of *ašt’arakeli*. Armenian *aštarakal* stands for the “ruler of the land” although his epithet was never used for Nersēs. The reason for the mistake is the common confusion of the Georgian capitals T and X. In fact Nersēs was from the village of Aštarak (Arm: *aštarakac’i*, Geo: *ašt’arak’eli*).

³⁰² *Narr*, 35-36: Ἄ ἐπεὶ ἐγνώρισε Νερσαπῶ ὁ ἐπίσκοπος Νερσέση τῶ καθολικῶ τῶ ὄντι ἀπὸ Ἀσταράξ καὶ ἄλλοις ἐπισκόποις καὶ τοῖς Ἀζάτοις, ὥρισαν γενέσθαι μεγάλην σύνοδον ἐν πόλει Τιβίν τῶ εἰκοστῶ ἔτει τοῦ αὐτοῦ καθολικοῦ Νερσέση καὶ τῶ ιγ’ ἔτει Ἰουστίνου καίσαρος καὶ τῶ κδ’ ἔτει Χοσρόου τοῦ Περσῶν βασιλέως καὶ τῶ ἐνιαυτῶ ᾧ ἐμαρτύρησεν Ἐστιποστὶ καὶ ἐν ἀρχῇ τοῦ ἀριζμοῦ τῶν Ἀρμενίων, ὅτε καὶ τὴν ἀγίαν σύνοδον τὴν ἐν Χαλκηδόνι ἀνεθεμάτισαν ὡς νεστοριανὴν κατὰ τὸν λόγον Ἀππιῖου. ὅτι αὐτῶ τῶ χρόνῳ τὰς γραφὰς ἠρμήνευσαν τὰς ἐνεχθείσας ἀπὸ τοῦ Ἀππιῖου τὰς μνημονευθείσας τὰς γραφεύσας παρὰ Τιμοθέου καὶ Φίλικου τοῦ σύρου τὰς κατὰ τῆς ἐν Χαλκηδόνι συνόδου καὶ τῶν ὁμολογούντων δύο φύσεις ἐπὶ Χριστοῦ Θεοῦ ἡμῶν. ἐπέισθυσαν δὲ ἐκεῖνοις τοῖς γράμμασι καὶ ἐν τῇ αὐτῇ συσόδῳ τῇ γενομένῃ ἐν τῇ πόλει Τιβίν ἐδογματίσασιν μίαν φύσιν λέγειν τοῦ Θεοῦ λογοῦ καὶ τῆς σαρκὸς καὶ ἀδιανάτω φουσι αὐτὸν ἐσταυρῶσθαι καὶ τεθνήσκειν.

³⁰⁴ AS, 85-86; AS-Fr, 113: და აუწყა ნერშაპო ეპისკოპოსმან ნერსე კათალიკოსსა, რომელი იყო აშხარაკალი (ესე იყო ბოროტად მწვალებელი) და პეტრეს ვისმე ქერდულსა, სხუათაცა ეპისკოპოსთა და აზნაურთა, და ბრძანეს, მეორედ კრებად დიდი ყოფად მუნვე ღვინს მისვე ნერსეს ზე წელსა მეორესა, და მეთათხმეტესა წელსა ისტვნიანე მეფისასა წელიწადსა მეორესა ხუასრო სპარსთა მეფისასა, წელიწადსა მას, რომელსა ეწამა იზიდ-ბუზიტი და კუალად შეაჩუენეს წმიდად იგი კრებად ქალკედონისად, სანელ-სდევს ნესტორიანი სიტყვსაებრ აბდიშო უღმრთოჲსა, და მასვე წელს განაცხადეს წიგნი იგი, თარუმნილი ტიმოთეს და ფილაქსონ მწვალებელთანი (რომელნი იყვნეს ასურ), რომელნი პირველვე აღწერნეს წინა-აღსაღვომელად ქალკედონისა და ორთა ბუნებათა ქრისტეს ღმრთისათა, და კუენისა წერილთა მორჩილ ექმნეს სიკუდილად თავთა მათთა, და თქუეს ერთი ბუნებად სიტყვსა ღმრთისად და ჯორცითა და უკუდავითა ბუნებითა ქალაგებდეს ქრისტეს ჯუარცემულად და მომკუდარად. (ესე არს: შეჰმატეს ჯუარცემული ‘წმიდად ღმრთოსა’, რომელ არს ხაჩეცარი, სიტყვსაებრ პეტროზ ანტიოქიელისა, რომელსა საბელისი აქუნდა სენი) და განსაზღვრეს შეჩუენებით კიდე-განდგომა მართლისაგან სარწმუნოებისა.

³⁰⁵ This is not the only instance where Arseni verbatim copies the information from the *Narratio*. He does the same when speaking of fugitive bishops: first he claims that this happened under Abraham and then under Movsēs, although the sequence of the *katholikoi* is confused. See AS-Fr, 118.

from the communion with the Armenians. The council was initiated by Abdišo. 2nd Council: The council of Chalcedon was condemned again (!), the translations of Philoxenos and Timotheos were brought again (!), it adopted the *xač'ecar*.

The separation of the Georgian and Albanian Churches from communion with the Armenians is also dated to the council of Dwin by most Chalcedonian sources. In order to fit a narrative into this general perception, Arseni Sapareli antedates the rule of Katholikos K'yron by half a century. The antedating of the separation from the early seventh to the mid sixth century was a reflection of the confusions surrounding the Council of Dwin and the theoretical anti-Georgian councils. As with most of the Armenian sources, Arseni takes the second Council of Dwin as a point of departure and constructs the myth of an abrupt rejection by the Georgian and Albanian Churches of the anti-Chalcedonian policy of the council. The chronological lacuna into which Arseni falls is typical – the entire second half of the sixth century and beginning of the seventh was shrunk into one date, namely, the council of Dwin.

It is worthy of note that Arseni is not the only author who, when speaking of two councils held in Dwin, separated the decisions of these two councils. Very rarely do medieval authors speak of two councils – one convened by Nersēs and the other by Movsēs or Abraham, usually they mention either one, or the other. A rare exception is Step'anos Orbelean, who actually speaks about three consecutive councils: the Council of Nersēs, which had been convened in Dwin against the Chalcedonians and Nestorians, where Peter the Metropolitan of Siwnik' was present; a council convened by Movsēs in the same Dwin, once again against Chalcedon where Petros was present and where the Armenian era was established and the *xač'ec'ar* added; and finally, the Council of Abraham, which was convened against K'yron and his comrades.³⁰⁶ Note below the similarity of wording by Step'anos and Arseni and of the usage of “again”:

Then a council was held in the times of Katholikos Nersēs, concerning the definitions of the Council of Chalcedon and the heresy of the Nestorians, which [was] in the filthy monastery of Syrian Grigor Manažih. [The Council] was attended by the blessed Metropolitan of Siwnik' Petros, disciple of Movsēs *k'ert'olahor*. Then a council was held in the same city (!) of Dwin, held by Katholikos Movsēs concerning the same (!) heresy of the Chalcedonians. It was also attended by our [Bishop]

³⁰⁶ On Peter bishop of Swinik', see Akinean, “Petros”, 245-252; See also Garitte's commentary in *Narr*, 141.

Petros; There the Armenian era was fixed and the “Holy God, who were crucified for us” was established and during this council Yizdbozid was martyred.³⁰⁷

Is Step‘anos speaking about and confusing the councils of 555 and of 607? This is not the first reference to this council by Step‘anos. Earlier he spoke of the same great council convened by Movsēs, where the Armenian calendar was established and the *xač‘ec‘ar* adduced.³⁰⁸ The problem is that medieval Armenian historical memory did not retain both the councils and then the decisions taken, but quite on the contrary, they remembered that certain actions were made towards orthodoxy and nationalization of the Church. Their distribution in time and among the various councils was quite conventional. Yovhannēs Awjnec‘i is one of the rare authors who directly attributes the Council to Nersēs and is consistent in his chronology. He explicitly says that Nersēs’s council was the first council against the Chalcedonians, and that it took place at the beginning of the Armenian era, when the unity of Baptism and Nativity was established and *xač‘ec‘ar* added to the Thrice Holy Hymn.³⁰⁹ However, Awjnec‘i knows nothing about the 607 Council of Dwin and makes no mention of any council when he turns to Movsēs and then to Abraham. It appears that modern scholarly misunderstanding about the two councils, or two sessions during Nersēs’s *katholikosate*, is also a result of these confusions. The medieval liminalist remembrance could not tolerate the existence of two councils, one under Nersēs and the other under Abraham, in that both were so decisive. For the same reason modern scholarship was also tempted to seek another council somewhere near the same time. Yovhannēs Drasxanakertc‘i for example does not even mention the Council of Dwin (555) and from the Council of Babgēn he skips directly to the 607 Council of Dwin, which according to him, anathematized K‘yron.³¹⁰

³⁰⁷ SO II, 454: Գ. Դարձեալ ժողով ի Դվին յաւուրս Ներսիսի կաթողիկոսի, որ վասն քաղկեդոնական սահմանին, և Նեստորի աղանդոյն որ ի պղծալից վանքն Գրիգորի Մանածիիր Ըռածկի. ընդ որում էր երանելի մետրոպոլիտն Սիւնեաց Պետրոս՝ աշակերտ Մովսիսի քերթողաօրն: Դ. դարձեալ ժողով ի նոյն Դվին Մովսիսի կաթողիկոսի վասն նոյն աղանդոյ Քաղկեդոնականաց. ընդ որում էր և մերն Պետրոս. յորում թուական Հայոց եղաւ՝ և սուրբ Աստուած իսպէցարն սահմանեցաւ. և Յիզբոզիդ վկայեաց:

³⁰⁸ SO II, 96. On this passage, see also Garsoïan, *L’Église*, 297- 298. For studies on the calendar, see Badalyan, *Armenian Calendar*, 135-136; Dulaurier, *Chronologie Armenienne*, 51-55, 101-108, 173-178.

³⁰⁹ GT‘, 221; van Esbroeck, “Konziliengeschichte”, 42.

³¹⁰ The anathematization of Kyrion is often ascribed to the 607 Council of Dwin which is wrong. 607 Council elected *Katholikos Abraham* and set down explicitly anti-Chalcedonian definitions but the correspondence with Kyrion continued for three or four years. Contemporary scholarship also often erroneously takes 607 Council as a date of the separation of Georgians and Armenians. See S. Rapp’s conception of Dwin III, in Rapp, *Studies*, 169-171, 245-299. For discussion, see *infra*, p. 182.

Concerning Katholikos Nersēs, he merely says that he transferred the relics of Saint Yizidbozid to Dwin.³¹¹ According to him, it was not Nersēs but Movsēs who created the calendar.³¹² Asolik, for example, is quite precise in his chronology. He dates the Council to 553 by the martyrdom of St Yizidbozid, and attributes it to Nersēs. He also claims that it established the Armenian calendar and separated from communion with the Greeks.³¹³ The existence of two chronologically consecutive acts by Nersēs is indirectly confirmed by Vardan Arevelc‘i:

In Basil’s time was Photius, who wrote the letter, also said that there was no opposition [between Constantinople and Armenia] down to the last Nersēs, in whose time was fixed the Armenian era, 104 years [after Chalcedon]. It was he who then convened a council in Dwin through Bardiso [sic.], the Syrian who had come from Sasun. And they translated the writings of Philoxenus, bishop of the city of Mabbug, and those of Timothy the Cat.³¹⁴

Despite his indication of two consecutive actions taken by Nersēs, Vardan fails to speak of two councils. Hence it cannot be used as proof of the existence of another session or council. As with other historians, Vardan confuses the beginning of the Armenian era with its actual introduction supposing that in 553 Nersēs called a council and established the beginning of the Armenian era. Kirakos Ganjakec‘i has nothing better to say about Nersēs II other than he was in office for nine years.³¹⁵ Samuel Anec‘i also mentions Nersēs II with only a single word.³¹⁶ In agreement with Orbelean, the convocation of the Council of Dwin, as the entire issue with the Georgians, is attributed to Movsēs, whom Kirakos located in the mid sixth century. Kirakos also contaminates the events of almost one century and squeezes everything into the council when the Armenian era was established. The lacunae in the knowledge are filled up with pious legends about various fires, miracles and divine signs:

³¹¹ On St Yizidbozid, see Peeters, “Izbozeta”, 191-216; See also Garsoïan, *l’Église*, 228-231.

³¹² YD, 61-65. Mxit‘ar Ayrevanec‘i also ascribes the introduction of the Armenian calendar to Katholikos Movsēs, see MA, 48: Սրբոյն Մովսէսի կաթողիկոսի հրամանան՝ Տարոնացին Աթանասսի Գլակայ վանաց արար գտումար Հայոց:

³¹³ ST, 82-83; ST-Ger, 58-59.

³¹⁴ VA, 84: Վասիլ առ որով Փոտոս որ գթուղթն գրեաց, և ասաց թէ չկայր հակառակութիւն մինչև ի վերջին Ներսէս, առ որով եղաւ թուականն Հայոց, զամս հարիւր և չորս. որ նա ապա արար ժողով ի Դուին ի ձեռն Բարդիսայ Ասորոյ, որ ելեալ էր ի Սասնոյ: Եւ զՓիլաքսիոսի եպիսկոպոսի Նաբուկ քաղաքի և զՏիմոթէի Կզուն գրեանն թարգմանեցին: There is no such sentence in Photios’s letter. See, also, AS, 51.

³¹⁵ KG, 40.

³¹⁶ SA, 73.

After Nersēs, lord Yovhannēs received the katholikosate for fifteen years ... After Yovhannēs, lord Movsēs received the katholikosate. In his first year, the blessed Manačir, who was named Grigor, a Syrian (*ražik*), underwent martyrdom. And in his third year, the 553rd anniversary of the Birth of Christ occurred, and the two hundred canons (which the learned Andreas, brother of Bishop Mangnos arranged at the order of Emperor Constantine) were compiled, to complete the Feast of Easter and other feasts ... Patriarch Movsēs convened the wise men of that period (among them At‘anas from the monastery of Saint Karapet, and they established the Armenian era, by which they corrected the date of Easter of our Lord, as well as other feasts ... After Mežež, Persian *marzpan*s ruled Armenia for thirty-six years.³¹⁷

An eleventh century Georgian text, the *Debate with Sostene and Ekvtime* that allegedly took place at the Council of Artanuži, also alludes to that “evil” council convened by Nersēs by probably the most blatant confusion ever made concerning the question, introducing the arch-nemesis Sargis into the narrative:

When you betrayed your king and separated from the Greeks and joined the Persians, in the days of Xuasro and his son Sabur, and made a council in Dvin and scribbled apostatized faith through the plotting of Abdiba [Abdišo] who was a *vezir* of the King of Persia and of the heresy of Jacob Brt‘aneli [sic.]. For so he said to the Persian King, that if the king abandons fire worship, the Armenians will abandon the faith of the Greeks. Such was the will and intention of your Katholikos Nersēs, who would dye his beard in gold³¹⁸ and also through the will of his *ikonomos* Sargis, who was possessed by the same heresy. And so you followed the devil’s will and to bribe common people you allowed them Saturday and Sundays of the Lent to eat dairy and meat on cheese fare, so you united with the Persians.³¹⁹

One document that to my mind might with a degree of possibility argue for the existence of some other council near the same time is the letter by Katholikos Yovhannēs Gabelean to the Bishops of Siwnik‘:

Being incapable of tolerating blasphemies as execrable and bitter, we were forced to face it, so we and other bishops of this land of Armenia, among who was also your Bishop Peter, and the priests and the community of the holy Church and the heads of the monasteries, noblemen and all Orthodox people, we gathered in this Church and unanimously expelled with anathemas the filthy Nestorians and Chalcedonians and other heretics from our Holy Church and in front of the holy and glorified altar, the

³¹⁷ KG, 41-44. Իսկ յետ Ներսիսի առնու զկաթողիկոսութիւնն տէր Յովհաննէս ամս հնգետասան: ... Եւ յետ Յովհաննիսի առնու զկաթողիկոսութիւնն տէր Մովսէս: Յատաջին ամի տորս սուրբն Մանաճիիր, որ անուանեցաւ Գրիգոր, ազգաւ ռաժիկ, մարտիրոսութեամբ կատարեցաւ: Եւ յերրորդ ամի նորա լցեալ լինի ի ծննդենն Քրիստոսի ամբ ՇԾԳ, և բովանդակեցաւ կանոնք երկերիւրեկին, զոր կարգեաց իմաստասէրն Անդրէաս, եղբայր Մանգնոսի եպիսկոպոսի, հրամանաւ Կոստանդնի կայսեր վասն լրմանցն զատկաց և այլ տօնից ... Ապա հայրապետ Մովսէս ժողովեաց զիմաստունսն, որ էին ի ժամանակին, յորս էր և Աթանաս ի վանաց սուրբ Կարապետին, և կարգեցին, թուական հայոց, որով ուղղեսցեն զգատիկ տեսան այլովքն հանդերձ: ... Իսկ յետ Մեծեժայ մարգարանի պարսիկք տիրեն Հայոց ամս երեսուն և վեց:

³¹⁸ Usually this was said of Yovhannēs Awjnc‘i who would sprinkle gold dust in his beard, not Nersēs.

³¹⁹ a) See Zhordania, *Chronicles* 1, 125-128. *DispES*, 617: Խոլո ռաւաթս օգի ցանցիտ մեղք տէրքնի և յէրրորդ սարսո և ցանկեցիտ Բերթենտ և Մերթենտ սարսո, և զլեա շաւարսո և զիս միսիս սաբորիս և Մեքրեքիտ կրքա զքն և զաւանդիտ ցանդրեքիտ սարմբնոքա ցանձնեքիտ անծանոթ, ըրթելի օլո յեքորի սարսո մեղքիս ֆալեքիսցան օլոք Բրտանելիս, ըրթելոյ ցսրտ աւրան սարսո մեղքս, ըրտա զալեքիտ ցեքսլոս մասնոքա և ըրթելոյ զալեքիտ քսքչելի Բերթենտ, ըրթելոյ ցս օլոքն ցանձնեքա և տան ցրտ նեքա յմնիտա կատալիկոսիս տէրքնիս ներսեքիտ, ըրթելի ֆքերտա օլեքա օլորտա և օլոնոմոսիս միսիս սերցիսիտա, ըրթելի միտք ֆալեքիտ Մեքրոքիտ օլո. և ցսրտա զաւանդելոյ նեքա ցսքիս և մոմալեքիտ ցրտ ցրտ ցանքսնիտ մարքաւտա Մաթ ցրտաքեքիտ ֆալեքիտ և ցսքիտ ցրտ օլոքնիտ սարսո տան.

life giving Gospel and the holy salvific Cross, we took an oath to wholly distance ourselves from their communion and not to listen to their deadly words.³²⁰

Yovhannēs speaks of himself as a convener when he refers to the gathering of the council. He does not say that it took place in the days of his precursor Nersēs as was the usual formula. Could this be a hint that there was another council that addressed the issues listed by the Katholikos and which took place one or two decades after the Council of 555? Unlike N. Garsoïan, I would not exclude the possibility of another council that took place around the same time. It may very well be that there was another gathering in the middle of the second half of the sixth century that took the groundbreaking decisions for the formation of the Armenian national church. Otherwise one has to prove that the letter of Katholikos Yovhannēs is corrupted or completely forged. If one argues in favour of such a council, nothing has been preserved from it: already at the beginning of the seventh century no documents survived that could stem from such a council.

2.4. ‘ONE HUNDRED YEARS OF UNITY’: THE LOCI MEMORIAE OF THE SCHISM

Traditionally, Armenian memory counted one hundred years of union between Georgians and Armenians. Armenian sources have highlighted only two Georgian *katholikoi* from the sixth century; they were ignorant of any others. These were Gabriel, who stayed as a symbol of unity of the two Churches and the *pilc* K‘yron, the betrayer of this unity. Depending on the author’s predilections these *katholikoi* were sometimes called archbishops, sometimes metropolitans and sometimes mere bishops.³²¹ As for the Georgian

³²⁰ GT^c I, 79; GT^c III, 206-209: Եւ ոչ կարացեալ մեր տանել այսպիսի չարաչար և դառն հայհոյութեան, փութացաք մեր՝ և այլ աշխարհիս Հայոց եպիսկոպոսունք, ընդ որս էր և երանելին Պետրոս եպիսկոպոսն ձեր, և քահանայք և ուխտ սրբոյ եկեղեցոյ, և վանաց երիցունք, ազատք և համարեն ժողովրդականք ուղղափառք ժողովեալք ի սուրբ եկեղեցիս. և միաբանութեամբ զպեղծ Նեստորիանոս. և զՔաղկեդոնիտոս, և զայլ հերձուածողս ի մեր սուրբ եկեղեցոյս, նզովիք հալածական արարաք, և սուրբ և փառաւորընկալ սեղանոյն և կենստուր սուրբ աւետարանիս ի փրկչական սուրբ խաչիս առաջի՝ պայման արարաք ամենևինք հեռանալ ի հաղորդութենէ նոցա, և չլսել բանից նոցա մահաբերաց:

³²¹ a.) See, for example, Kirakos Ganjakec‘i who calls Kyron, bishop of Iberia: During those years, the bishop of the Georgians died; coming to lord Movsēs, they asked him to give them a bishop. So he ordained a certain warden of his church named Kiwrion and gave him to them, trusting him to keep love and unity with the throne of Saint Gregory—for to that time, the Georgians received ordination from the Armenians ... From that time forth [after Kyron’s apostasy], Georgian ordination, which had been received from the Armenians, ended, since they started to follow the Greeks: Ընդ ժամանակս ընդ այն վախճանի եպիսկոպոսն Վրացն. և եկեալ առ տէր Մովսէս, զի տացէ նոցա եպիսկոպոս: Եւ նա ձեռնադրեալ զոմն փակակալ իւրոյ եկեղեցոյն Կիրոն անուն, տայ նոցա՝ հաւատացեալ ի նա, եթէ պահեսցէ զսէր և զմիաբանութիւն առ աթոռ սրբոյն Գրիգորի, զի մինչև ցայնվայր ի հայոց առնուին վիրք զձեռնադրութիւնսն ... Եւ յայնմ հետէ բարձաւ ձեռնադրութիւնն վրաց՝ որ ի հայոց, զի սկսան նոքա զյունօք թևակոխիլ: KG, 44-46.

tradition, it knows no Katholikos Gabriel.³²² The best and most characteristic example of medieval Armenian remembrance of unity and schism between Georgians and Armenians is provided by Anania Sanahinec‘i of the thirteenth century:

What shall we say of the severance of the Georgians from our faith that had not yet reached us? For one hundred years they were cursing the council of Chalcedon with us until the Armenians gathered in Dwin and Manazkert and threw away the council of Chalcedon and established the same faith that they received from St Gregory and three holy Councils. Gabriel Hałatac‘i, the Archbishop of Mxeta, was together with us and thus united with us. They separated from us when Gabriel died and a certain Kiwrion was established in his place, who latently had the poison of Chalcedon and being ill of the longing for supremacy and enraged because of the establishment of the Albanian and Siwnian in front of him, that was decided among us in the times of Katholikos Abraham and he was summoned once and twice and he did not obey. Then the bishop of the Katholikos Peter was sent to him and was ordered to depose him if he would resist. But he [Peter] could not convince him and decided to depose him. And he [Kiwrion] being stripped of the grace by his own will gave him the patriarchal clothing. And he changed the rule of the service against us and dressed in a different way. Peter returned to Patriarch Abraham, but Kiwrion sent bandits after him to kill him and when they reached Kanguark‘ [sic.] they stoned Peter. And thus Kiwrion became blood guilty turning back to the Chalcedonian faith, which they were cursing together with us for one hundred years. And they returned to what they had changed. Such was the reason of separation of the Georgians from us.³²³

b.) Pawłos Taronec‘i’s testimony in *Against Theopistis*, where Katholikos Gabriel is called “Georgian metropolitan”. For the quote, see Melikset-Bek, *Teachers*, 161.

³²² According to the chronicle of the *Conversion* it was during the reign of Vaxt‘ang Gorgasali that the archbishops of Mxeta received the title of katholikos, and the first being Peter (The quoted text is from the Sinaitic manuscript N/Sin 50 of the yet unpublished redaction of the *Conversion of Georgia*): And this happened one hundred and seventy years after the conversion of Kartli. Ten kings had died since and thirteen archbishops. And hereafter the katholokoi became the *mamantvaris* (patriarchs) and herded the flock. The first katholikos was Peter during the reign of Vaxt‘ang Gorgasali. And the eleventh [king] was Dači Użarmeli and the katholikos was Samoel and during [his rule] people were appointed in Tbilisi and built the Church of Holy Mary. And the third katholikos was Peter. Twelfth was Bak‘ur son of Dači and the fourth katholikos was Samoel. და ესე იყო ქართლის მოქცევითგან მესამეობითა წელსა, მეფენი გარდაცვალებულ იყვნეს ათნი და მთავარებისკოპოსნი ათცამეტნი. და აქამთგან იწყეს კათალიკოსთა მამამთავრობად და მწყეს ერისა. პირველი კათალიკოსი იყო პეტრე ვახტანგ მეფისა ზე. და მეათერთმეტე მეფობდა დაჩი უჯარმელი და კათალიკოსი იყო სამოელ. და მისსა ზე ქალაქსა ტფილისს კაცნი დასხდეს და მარიამ-წმიდად ეკლესიად აღამცნეს. და კათალიკოსი იყო პეტრე მესამე. მეათორმეტე მეფობდა ბაკურ, ძმე დაჩისი და კათალიკოსი იყო [სამოელ] მეოთხე. It is evident that the list is greatly distorted. The two other redactions of the *Conversion of Iberia* give other data, but according to recent research, the Sinaitic redaction must be the most reliable. The *Conversion* states that the katholokoi were: Peter, Samoel, Peter II and Samoel II. Although not improbable, such a coincidence is still suspicious. Probably Gabriel’s name was lost during numerous re-writings and he may have been katholikos by the end of the fifth century – that is to say, during the reign of Vaxt‘ang Gorgasali (446–502?) or Dači (502–14?). The reign of Vaxt‘ang was long enough for two katholokoi to be on the throne consecutively. The historiographer could have assigned one katholikos to each king, therefore missing the one who may have held the position during the reign of Vaxt‘ang, but after the death of Katholikos Samoel. That is to say, a katholikos may be missing between Peter and Samoel. This feature of omitting a name is not exceptional, because the name of K‘yron himself is also missing or strongly misplaced in the *Chronicle of the Conversion*.

³²³ AnSan, 112: Իսկ ի նչ ասացից վասն Վրաց որոշելոյն ի մերոյ հաւատոյս, և ի ձենց ոչ ընկալեալ Ճ ամ ընդ մեզ նզովեցին զժողովն Քաղկեդոնի. և մինչև ժողովեցան Հայք ի Դուին և ի Մանազկերտ և որոշեցին զհաւատն Քաղկեդոնի և հաստատեցին զնոյն հաւատ, զոր ընկալան ի սրբոյն Գրիգորիոսէ և յերից սուրբ ժողովոյն. ընդ մեզ էր և եպիսկոպոսապետն Սցիսիթայի Գաբրիէլ Խաղաղացի: Եւ այսչափ ընդ մեզ միաբանեալ հետոյ որոշեցան ի մենց, մինչ վախճանեցաւ Գաբրիէլ Խաղաղացին: Եւ կացուցին ի տեղի նորա զԿիրիոն ոմն, որ ունէր զսերմն քաղկեդոնական հերձուածոյն ի գաղտնի. և վասն գահերիցութեան ախտացեալ և զչարեալ վասն վեհագոյն դնելոյ քան զնոսայն զԱղուանիցն և զՍիւնեացն աթոռակալութիւն,

Each segment of this narrative presents a noteworthy image of how medieval Armenian and also Georgian remembrance worked and how the Armenian narrative perceived Caucasian unity and separation. Historical knowledge of the events has been distilled into several cornerstones of memory. The legendary “one hundred years” of unity, the immediate reasons of separation, the legend of Peter and Mt Kangar, were widely spread in both traditions at various levels. As noted in the first chapter, remembrance of the sixth century, of the period immediately preceding the separation, was a blank spot for the participants in the controversy. Later historians were equally unaware of actual events and the causes that led to the separation. Despite this, the “separation of the Georgians from the Armenians” became a sound historical concept in the Armenian tradition. Accordingly, the two Georgian *katholikoi* became symbols of this unity and divergence. This happened to such an extent that sometimes Gabriel and K‘yron were also confused as were entire narratives of unity and separation and entire one hundred years were equally shrunk into one single event. For example Mxit‘ar Goš narrates:

The Georgians were cursing the council of Chalcedon together with us during one hundred years, until the Council of the Armenians in Dwin and in Manazkert, where they separated from the faith of Chalcedon and established the [faith] of three Holy Councils and Gabriel *Xaxewac‘i* [Xaxuli?] the Bishop of Mxeta and then they separated from us. Gabriel died and K‘yron, who secretly had the heresy of Chalcedon, occupied his throne.³²⁴

A sixteenth century anonymous historian claims that the Georgians separated from the Armenians by the hand of “K‘yron and Gabriel – the Georgian leaders”.³²⁵ Much earlier Pseudo-Yovhannēs Mamikonean, for

որոշեցաւ ի մէնջ յաւուրս Աբրահամու Հայոց կաթողիկոսի. և կոչեցեալ միանգամ և երկիցս՝ ոչ հնազանդեցաւ: Եւ ապա առաքեաց զդրան եպիսկոպոսն Պետրոս, զի թէ ոչ հաւանեցի հնազանդեալ, լուծցի ի կարգէն: Եւ նորա եկեալ՝ ոչ կարացեալ հաւանեցուցանել, կամեցաւ լուծանել ի կարգէն: Իսկ նա իւրով կամաւ մերկացեալ ի շնորհացն, տայր ցնա զգեստ հայրապետութեան: Եւ ընդդէմ մեր փոխարկեալ զձև կարգին, յետս ընդդէմ դարձուցեալ զամենայն զկերպս և օտարաձև զգեցեալ: Եւ Պետրոսի առեալ տանէր առ հայրապետն Աբրահամ: Իսկ Կիրիլոն աւագակս առաքեալ զկնի նորա՝ սպանին զնա և հասեալ ի Կանգուարս, քարկոծ արարին զՊետրոս: Եւ այսպէս արիւնապարտ եղեալ՝ դարձաւ ի հաւատն Քաղկեդոնի. զորս ճ ամ ընդ մեզ հոմեալ նգովեցին. և դարձեալ ի նոյն փոխած վերստին դարձան: Այս են պատճառք Վրաց որոշելոյն ի մէնջ:

³²⁴ *MG-DeGeo*, 351-352: Եւ Վրաց ազգն ընդ մեզ նգովեցին զժողովն քաղկեդոնի զամս հարիւր, մինչև ի ժողովն Հայոց ի Դուին եւ ի Մանագկերտ, ուր որոշեցին զեղեալ հաւատն ի Քաղկեդոնի և հաստատեցին զերից սուրբ ժողովոցն, և Գաբրիէլ Մծխիթայի եպիսկոպոսն ընդ մեզ, որ էր Խախուացի, և յետոյ բաժանեցան ի մէնջ: Մեռաւ Գաբրիէլ, և եկաց ի տեղին Կիրիլոն, որ ունէր ի ծածուկ զաղանդ Քաղկեդոնի.

³²⁵ *Anonym XVI*, 147: ի բաց կացին Վրացիքն ի միաբանութենէ Հայոց ի ձեռն Կիրոսնի և Գաբրիէլի Վրաց առաջնորդի.

whom K'yron is a mere bishop of the Armenian katholikos, also confuses affirmation of unity with its rejection, so closely were the two tied in the general perception of the age:

He [Bishop Kiwre] went with the Katholikos of the Armenians, Vardan, to the council in Rome, at which all of Armenia, Georgia and Greece, along with Emperor Zeno, professed faith in Christ in His one nature.³²⁶

Nothing before or in between is mentioned and the rather legendary one hundred years became a symbol of unity of the two Churches. Yovhannēs Sarkavag (12th c.) renders the events in similar fashion:

In the 73rd year after lord Abraham and in the 43rd year after lord Yovhannes, Georgians fully separated from the union with the Armenians and confessed Chalcedon, receiving the bile, which they had been cursing for 114 years together with us.³²⁷

This attitude was so persistent in Armenian memory that, down to our days, contemporary scholarship affirmed that the “schism” between the Georgian and Armenian Churches allegedly resulted in attempts on the Georgian side to reject everything that reminded them of this unity. Nothing can be further from the truth. Not only was it not in the interest of the Georgians to forget the union but quite on the contrary, the entire Georgian polemic, was based on accusing the Armenians of betraying and forgetting, while the Armenian side accused the Georgians of the same.

2.4.1. *EVIL K'YRON, STONED PETER, VENGEFUL SARGIS AND A DOG: 'POPULAR MEMORIES'*

The remembrance or rather the forgetting of the schism and the entire narrative of unity and separation was embodied in several quasi-historical figures in Late Antiquity. The series of blunders was indeed spectacular. Central stage in the whole issue was held by the legendary Iberian Katholikos K'yron. This persona became the ultimate scapegoat in traditional Armenian narratives and, as already pointed out, the entire story of the Armeno-Georgian union and schism was shrunk into the famous alleged affirmation of unity by Katholikos Gabriel and rejection of union by K'yron. The figure of K'yron was so mythologized, and to some extent still is, in the Armenian tradition that no medieval author avoided mentioning him as the

³²⁶ YM-Avd, 105; Garsoïan, *L'Église*, 165.

³²⁷ See Melikset-Bek, *Teachers*, 151-152: Եւ յՀԳ թուականին զկնի տէր Արքայաւանու ի ԽԳ ամին տէր Յովանիսի բնաւին ի բաց կացին Վիրք ի Հայոց միաբանութենէ և հաւանեալ Քաղկեդոնի՝ զորոմն ընկալեալ ի Կ[ի]ւրիոնէ, զոր ճԺԴ ամ ընդ մեզ նզովեցին զՔաղկեդոնի ժողովն:

cause of all trouble and calamities that subsequently befell the two people. For example, Yovhannēs Drasxanakertc‘i complained:

Thereupon, at the order of the valiant Smbat and the other *naxarars*, the great Patriarch Abraham held a council of many bishops in the city of Dwin. Applying their minds to the Divine Scriptures through flawless [divine] visitation that leads one to God and comprehending with a thorough understanding the true profession of faith of the holy fathers, they anathematized Kiwrion who had disunited the Church of Christ and all of the followers and adherents of his wicked heresy. They also threatened our Orthodox believers [living] in that province with painful curses so that they would not congregate, communicate, have business negotiations and establish marital ties with those who had gone astray by following Kiwrion, the heterodox, lest through such relationships they might meet each other and consequently the flawless and Orthodox profession of our doctrine might be contaminated and the apostolic bastion be torn down.³²⁸

For the greater part of our knowledge about K‘yron we are indebted to Uxtanēs of Sebastia.³²⁹ Generally speaking, Uxtanēs can be considered as the beginner of the commemoration of the schism, or better to say of the traditional narrative of the schism and of the role of K‘yron in that narrative.³³⁰ It was after Uxtanēs when Katholikos K‘yron became a *locus memoriae* in the Armenian tradition and the symbol of Georgian apostasy. According to Uxtanēs, K‘yron was Georgian by ethnicity, from the region of Չավաքետի and a village called Skutri.³³¹ He was educated both in Georgian and Armenian scholarship and at a young age moved to Koloneia, a Roman province, in a town called Nikopolis, and lived there for fifteen years.³³² Uxtanēs suspects that it was exactly in Nikopolis where K‘yron was introduced to the “evil scholarship” by means of which he

³²⁸ YD-Eng, 96; YD, 72: Եւ այնուիւետն բազում եպիսկոպոսաց ժողով արարեալ մեծի հայրապետին Աբրահամու ի Դվին քաղաքի հրամանաւ քաջին Սմբատայ և այլոց ևս նախարարացն՝ աստուածամերձ և ամբիժ այցելութեամբ ուշ եղեալ Աստուածային Գրոց, և ստուգագէտ իմացուածիւ ծանուցեալ գուղիղ դասանութիւն սուրբ Հարցն՝ նգովեցին զԿիրիոն զպառակտիչն եկեղեցոյ Քրիստոսի, և զամենայն հնազանդեալս և զհամախորհս չար հերետիութեան. և անէծս ցաւագին ուղղափառ դասանողաց մերոց նահանգիս ի վերայ եղին՝ ոչ բնաւին իսկ ընդ նոսա միաբանիլ, որք զկնի Կիրիոնի չարափառի շեղեցան, և ոչ հաղորդակից նոցա լինել, և ոչ ի տուրևառիկ վաճառս ընդ նոսա բերիլ, և ոչ խնամութեամբ իւրք ազգակցիլ. զի մի՛ ի ձեռն այսպիսեաց ինչ մերձաւորութեանց ընդ միմեանս հարեալք՝ և վասն այդորիկ վրդովեալ շփոթեցի ամբիժ և ուղիղ հաւատ խոստումնութեան մերոյ դասանութեան և իրամատեցի ցանկ առաքելական:

³²⁹ On Katholikos K‘yron, see GT‘ II, 167-273; for my own evaluation, see Aleksidze, *Identifying Kyros of Alexandria*, MA thesis, 2009. http://www.etd.ceu.hu/2009/aleksidze_nikoloz.pdf (28.11.2012); N. Akinean dedicated an entire book to Kyron. See Akinean, *Kiwrion*.

³³⁰ Below we shall see how the Uxtanēsian interpretation affected the reading and rewriting of other authors like Movsēs Kałankatwac‘i, who is Uxtanēs’s source.

³³¹ A southern region of Georgia bordering with Armenia and historically having a considerable population of and contested by Armenians. Of interest is the fact that certain scholars suggested that *Skutri* might be a phonetic alternative to “Iscariot”. This would stress K‘yron’s betrayal. Melikset-Bek, *Georgian Sources*, 17. See also commentary to GT‘ II, 209. But now the village is geographically identified and the need for such a theory has been dismissed.

³³² It has been proposed that K‘yron was probably taken as a hostage at a young age, during the 570–8 wars. See Akinean, *Kiwrion*, 167. This further suggests that K‘yron must have been of noble descent: GT‘ II, 209-210.

separated from the Armenians.³³³ Uxtanēs certainly means Chalcedonian theology, which must have been a mainstream doctrine in that region. What remains enigmatic and difficult to explain was K’yron’s transfer from Nikopolis to Dwin and his being so easily trusted by the Armenians.³³⁴ The story is dramatized to the limit when Uxtanēs claims that straight from the hub of Chalcedonianism K’yron was established by the Armenian Katholikos Movsēs as the superior of the Community of the Holy Cathedral [*vanac erēc’ katulikein*] and *chorepiskopos* of the region of Ayrarat. He spent five years in this position, until the katholikos of the Georgians died, when the noblemen and bishops of Iberia requested a leader from the Armenian katholikos. After this, Uxtanēs presents the situation in such a way that Movsēs sent his beloved and most trusted K’yron to Iberia, who, having reached the capital city of Mcxeta, gathered the rulers and the bishops and brought them under his obedience. Once he realized his full power, he decided to bring into action the evil plan that he had cherished for a long time to betray the Armenians.³³⁵

Considering the important historical role Katholikos K’yron bore one would have expected him to be the major protagonist of the Georgian narratives. He was, after all, recognized as a person responsible for enforcing the “national” policy of Iberia and who could have justly been considered as the first ecclesiastical and political leader who fought for ways of unifying the land. Instead, his figure was surrounded by total and unanimous silence. I imagine that I shall not be accused of arguing from silence, if I were to say that K’yron was truly forgotten. There are only three instances when he is mentioned in medieval Georgian narratives. The first is a mere list of the katholikoi in the *Chronicle of the Conversion of Georgia*, where K’yron is named among the eight married katholikoi, and after all, is chronologically strongly misplaced.³³⁶ The second instance is the much discussed treatise by Arseni Sapareli, the *Severance of the Armenians and the Georgians*. Throughout the entire treatise, which is dedicated to the problem of the separation of these two people, K’yron is mentioned in one single context. Even then Arseni’s knowledge about his distant

³³³ Interestingly Step’anos Orbelean provides the additional information that K’yron served as a deacon with a certain “diphysite priest”, although it is improbable that Step’anos was informed to such detail about K’yron’s background. SO II, 104.

³³⁴ This was also pointed out by N. Akinean in, *Kiwriion*, 170. This also contradicts Katholikos Movsēs’s address to K’yron, asking him “not to forget the education of his youth”

³³⁵ US II, 20-22.

³³⁶ *Conlber*, 97: ხოლო კათალიკოსნი, რომელნი თვობითგან იყვნეს: თავფარაგ, ავლალი, იოველ, სამოელ კდ, გიორგი კე, კვრიონ კე. იზიბოლ კზ, თ კც, პეტრე კო. The colophon says further: ...ესენი ცოლოსანნი იყვნეს. “These were married”.

predecessor is derived from Armenian sources; it is not the result of an unabridged Georgian tradition. The third mention of K'yron is much later and belongs to Vaxušt'i Bagrat'ioni (1697–1757) who possessed no source to apply to other than Arseni and based himself on his own research and not on a national tradition. The reasons for this can be numerous, but to my mind the reason is that the “schism” did not occupy any tangible place in medieval Georgian consciousness. Whatever was the nature of the events of the early seventh century, the medieval Georgian tradition did not perceive it to be of sublime importance.³³⁷

In a situation of absence of clear knowledge about events during the schism, both sides needed to attach the causes of the schism to specific persons. The official records are ignorant of anything concerning the separation but popular memory preserved some very obscure reflections about the dramatic events. The Georgian and the Chalcedonian Armenian tradition have transmitted a story that reflects a very blurred remembrance of the dramatic events of the final years of the sixth century that involved Katholikos K'yron, although in a very peculiar way. This legend had apparently been quite widespread in the Caucasus and has been popular among Georgians. It penetrated Armenia as well and took a very interesting turn that marked the general tendency of the tenth to thirteenth-century Armenian ideology. In his own words, Uxtanēs recorded a curious sample of popular memory in Georgia, a tradition which was apparently very strongly persistent even down to the eighteenth century, as Vaxušt'i also knew about it. The legend had it that the Georgians led by Katholikos of Georgia stoned to death a certain Peter, who, according to the Georgian tradition, was the famous Antiochean Patriarch Peter Fuller himself.³³⁸ According to the Armenian version, it was Bishop Peter, the envoy of Katholikos Movsēs to K'yron, who is also known from the *Book of Letters* and whose letters have also survived.³³⁹ In Uxtanēs's view, this Bishop Peter is a symbol of mediation between the Georgians and Armenians and a kind of a martyr who died for the cause. Uxtanēs noted the

³³⁷ Z. Aleksidze suggested that the reason might have been the hypothetical future career of K'yron, who supposedly became Bishop of Phasis and later Patriarch of Alexandria. For discussion, see GT' II, 167-252. It is worth noting that as a result of the publication and study of the Armeno-Georgian correspondence of the *Book of Letters*, Katholikos K'yron re-emerged in twentieth century Georgia as a national hero. Such a study was carried out by I. Javakhishvili and later by Z. Aleksidze. Nowadays a national narrative has been formed and promulgated by the Georgian Orthodox Church, namely that K'yron was the champion of Georgian Orthodoxy, an “uncompromising opponent of Monophysitism”, the “fighter for Georgianness”, and so on. <http://qim.ge/kirion%20I.html> (30.01.2013)

³³⁸ On Peter and his innovation, see Grillmeier, Hainthaler, *Jesus* 2/3, 295-303.

³³⁹ GT' II, 38-40.

discrepancy between the Armenian and Georgian traditions, saying that we, the Armenians, know nothing about the killing of Peter by the Georgians and that the Georgians are confusing Peter Fuller with Bishop Peter.³⁴⁰ But it is of interest that other Armenian authors were eager to repeat this story as a truth, apparently having heard it in Georgian milieus. To stress how criminal K'yron and his rule and how perverse the Georgians were, this legend found sound resonance in the medieval Armenian tradition. For example Mxit'ar Goš lamented:

He was envious of the priority of the thrones of Siwnians and Albanians over his throne and he separated from us during Abraham the Katholikos of the Armenians. He was summoned over and over again but he would not obey. Then [Abraham] sent his bishop Peter to depose Kiwron if he would still refuse to conform. Kiwron stripped his own garments willingly and handed them over [to Peter]. But then he secretly sent [assassins] after him for he craved to stone him to death. After this he went to confess the heresy of the Council of Chalcedon. The evil mind mingled with an evil will and Peter was stoned together with two other believers at Mt. Kangar' [Kangar].³⁴¹

In the Georgian version, aside of Bishop Peter being presented as the Antiochene Patriarch Peter Fuller, the Georgian patriarch is not K'yron but Katholikos Michael of the late fifth century. The narrative as presented by the *History of Sumbul Son of Sargis* is extremely curious:

Then the bold one [Peter Fuller] arrived in K'angar and summoned blessed Michael the Katholikos of Kartli, to either join him in faith or, if he resists, to leave his throne ... Michael left Mxeta together with his bishops and priests and common believers and reached the land of K'angar. There the angel appeared [to Michael] and ordered him and his companions to gather sharp stones from the nearby valley and to hide them in their hats ... So Michael reached Peter and honoured the throne of Peter Fuller. The latter stretched his sleeve for [Michael] to embrace it, as it was the rule. But through Lord's order Michael dragged his sleeve and threw him on the ground and tossed the stones at him that he had hid in the hat. So the ungodly bold one died and left his deadly illness behind. Then other bishops and companions also stoned him and so they killed the wolf.³⁴²

³⁴⁰ US II, 22, 147.

³⁴¹ MG-DeGeo, 351-352: *և նախանձեալ ընդ պատուոյ աթոռոյն Սիւնեաց և Աղուանից քան զիւրն՝ որոշեցաւ ի մենջ յաւուրս Աբրահամու Հայոց կաթողիկոսի և այլ կոչեցաւ, և ոչ հնազանդեցաւ: Ապա Աբրահամ կաթողիկոսի առաքել գղրան Պետրոս եպիսկոպոս իւր, զի թէ ոչ հնազանդեցի՝ լուծցէ զնա: Իսկ նա կամաք զզգեստն մերկացեալ տայ ցնա և ապա ի գաղտի զկնի առաքեալ զի մախայր սպանանել զնա քարամբք, և ինքն երթայ ի հաղորդութիւն առ աղանդն Քաղկեդոնի՝ չար մտաց հաղորդեալ ի կամս չարին: Եւ քարկոծի Պետրոս ի լեանն Կանգուար հանդերձ երկու կրանաւորաք:*

According to the anonymous Armenian *Geography*, the land of Kangar was one of the provinces of Iberia, one of the nine regions of the Bdeasxy of Gugark'.

³⁴² *NarrPA*, 94-96: *მაშინ მოვიდა ზუავი იგი კანგარს და მოუწოდა მან ნეტარსა მიქელს კათალიკოსსა ქართლისას რადთა ანუ სჯულსა მისსა ეზიაროს ანუ თუ ურჩ ექმნეს, საყდრისაგან განიყვანოს ... და წარვიდა მცხეთით მის ქუცშეთა ებისკოპოზთა და მღუღელთა თვისთა და ერისა მორწმუნისა და მოიწივნეს ქუცყანასა კანგარისას. ეუწყა ჩუცნებით ანგელოზისა მიერ, რადთა მან თავადმან და მისთანათა გამორჩიონ ქვები მასვლი მასლობლისა ვეკისაგან და მიეახლონ რად, მოიჯაღონ ქუდები და შთადგან მას შინა ქვები ... მაშინ მოვიდა მიქელ კათალიკოზი და თაყუანისცა წინაშე საყდრის მის პეტროზ მკაწრვადისა, ხოლო მან შთაუგლო საველი*

Again, K'yron is simply dismissed even from popular tradition. It might, of course, be the case that this legend had in reality nothing to do with K'yron, but it is still noteworthy that even here the Armenian and Georgian memories diverge. For the Georgians the legend of Peter Fuller's death was a further argument for the perpetual Orthodoxy of this land and of the everlasting opposition to Armenian heterodoxy; hence the events were projected back onto the fifth century.³⁴³ This version of the legend even reached down to the eighteenth century and was reproduced almost verbatim in Vaxušt'i Bagrat'ioni's history.³⁴⁴

Of interest is the fact that this is not the first instance that a *katholikos* Michael is noticed of aggressive behaviour. Archbishop Michael is famous for attacking King Vaxt'ang himself by kicking the king in the face, as a result of which Vaxt'ang expelled him and asked for a *katholikos* from Constantinople.³⁴⁵ Thus yet another Peter appears who was sent as *katholikos* to Iberia.³⁴⁶ I think the confusion of names and the formation of this legend descends even deeper and is in fact some kind of a reflection on the doctrinal controversies and scandals of the region. It is noteworthy that remembering the fierce character of Michael, popular memory by yet another *chronophagy* attributed to him another similar act of "justified" homicidal violence. Violence from the Georgian side is also recorded by the *Narratio*. When the Armenian delegates went to the Albanians, the latter simply refused to participate, whereas the Georgians very aggressively chased them away. Interestingly all sides speak of a certain aggressive behaviour of the Georgians. Uxtanēs paints K'yron as a ruthless character, which is typical to a polemical rendering, but the Chalcedonian and Georgian sources also indirectly confirm this and it might well have been the case that K'yron was not, strictly speaking, a nice person.

შსამოსლისა მის, რადთა ემთხვოს იგიცა ჩუცულებისებრ მისისა, ხოლო ლეთიკვანმუნობილმან მიქელ უპყრა საველსა მისსა და შთამოზინა ძლიერად და შთამოითრია და ქუცყანად დააკუცთა და სცა ქვითა მით, რომელი აქუნდა ქუდსა შინა მისსა. განტყვნა უღმრთო იგი და ზუავი და დასდვა წყლულებად სასიკუდინე. მაშინ ყოველთა მის თანა მყოფთა ებისკოპოზთა და მოყუასთა დაჰკრიბეს მის ზედ ქვა და დაზუნეს ქვთა, და ესრეთ მოკლეს მგელი იგი.

³⁴³ See van Esbroeck, "Sahak", 351-352.

³⁴⁴ See VB-*Descr*, 101, fn. 1: Vaxušt'i also adds the story of *Xaçecar* to the narrative.

³⁴⁵ *VitaVaxt*, 196-197.

³⁴⁶ See van Esbroeck, "Vakhtang", 9-23.

2.4.2. *THE FAST OF ARAJAWORK*⁴

But there is another version to the story, recorded by an earlier Georgian treatise, or at least a text preserved in Georgian. The story was contaminated even further and was merged with the general narrative of the orthodoxies in the region. The entire legend of Peter, of Katholikos Michael and St Sargis is told as follows:

There was a very pious and holy patriarch called Peter who was seated in Constantinople and both the Emperor and Empress served him during the liturgy. One day, as usual, the Empress was present at the service when she had menses. And, miraculously, Peter's bowl was filled with blood. When the Patriarch saw this, he was shocked and he cursed the queen and all women. The Empress objected that Holy Mother of God was also a woman and everything natural to women was natural to her too. On which Peter replied: And Mary too! The Empress was outraged and she ordered to take the Patriarch out of the Cathedral and to cast him away. From that day on, Peter sought for vengeance against the entire Christian religion and all of the Churches. So he went to the land of the Armenians and preached against the Roman faith and they all believed him and proclaimed him as a saint. So Peter was performing all kind of magic and ordered the Armenians to fast for five days during Great Lent, while on Saturday and Sunday to eat eggs and dairy products. As for the bishops and monks, they could eat meat even on the other five days, for, according to the apostles, meat is herb. So Peter misled the naive Armenians. Then Peter met a dog and trained him in a magical way and called him Alaj. Once, Alaj was sent to Kurmux, [in Georgia] to a priest's house. The dog was killed at the priest's order and thrown into a ravine. Peter went after Alaj but could not find him and therefore instituted a lent to commemorate the dog, from Monday to Friday.³⁴⁷

One of the main elements is the fast of *Arajawork*⁴.³⁴⁸ The fast was also known in other traditions as the Fast of Heraclius or Fast of Nineveh, and was kept for five days before Great Lent.³⁴⁹ The nature, origin and

³⁴⁷ Curiously the apocryphal narrative in its "misogynic" tendencies reveals close affinities with the anti-Chalcedonian propaganda *Story of Nestorius the Wicked*. See Goeller, "Nestorius", 276-287; Witakowski, "Propaganda", 59.

³⁴⁸ Several anti-Armenian pamphlets *Orations against the Armenians*, erroneously attributed to a Chalcedonian Katholikos Sahak, who later allegedly became bishop of Nicaea, have survived against the *Arajawork*⁴ and were also popular in Georgia. According to pseudo-Isaac, the Armenians did not remember exactly the origins of the fast and had various explanations for it: Some said that it was introduced in the memory of "their teacher" Sargis, others identify it

explanation of this fast were forgotten in the Armenian tradition proper from early on. The Chalcedonian polemicists also did not know exactly what it was and created their own “pious” version of the fast. Following the Byzantines, the Georgians also engaged in a number of attacks against the practice. *Araġawork’* is mentioned in the treatise *On the Heresy of the Armenians*, where it is said that the “Armenians added *Araġawork’* to other fasts at the heretical Councils of Manazkert, Tarsun and Dwin”.³⁵⁰ The narrative on the legendary origins of the fast of *Araġawork’* ends by saying that “such was the law of Peter [the Fuller], cursed by the Apostles and condemned by the councils and may all fasters for [the dog] Alaž and for Surpsarkis [sic.] be cursed”.³⁵¹ The Georgian version of the acts of the Sixth Ecumenical Council also mentions the *Araġawork’* as an unacceptable practice common among the Armenians.³⁵²

Although the fast itself, in different forms, is a canonical practice in various churches, the Armenian tradition held it as its own “national” observation, meanwhile the opponents took it as one of the symbols of the Armenian “heresy”. The fact that the Armenians themselves felt insecure in explaining the origins of the fast, gave impetus to fierce attacks on its practice. The remembrance of the fast of *Araġawork’* was not uniform in the Armenian tradition. The fast coincided with the feast of Saint Sargis in the Armenian Church, which is the Saturday of the same week.³⁵³ For this reason the fast was often called the fast of Saint Sargis. On the one hand the Armenian tradition needed to argue that the fast of *Araġawork’* is a national Armenian phenomenon, as it could not be explained by any canonical means, but on the other hand it tried to argue that the fast was an oecumenical practice. So, for example, Mxit’ar Goš provides three different explanations for the emergence of this fast. First he says that the fast was instituted by Gregory the Illuminator to

with the Fast of Nineveh, others connect it to the expulsion of Adam from Eden, while some others – to the conversion of the Armenians by Gregory the Illuminator and some even to the baptism of Constantine the Great by Pope Sylvester. On this treatise, see Grumel, “Invectives”, 174-194; Melikset-Bek, “Pseudo-Isaac”, 208-22; Thomson, “Defence of Orthodoxy”, 337-340; van Esbroeck, “Sahak”, 323-454; see also PG, CXXXII, col. 1197-1204, 1233, 1234.

³⁴⁹ For discussion on the *Araġawork’*, see Renoux, “Samuēl Kamġajorec’i”, 379-382; *Le lectionnaire*, 433-434; Scharf, “Preliminary Fast”, 649-672; Thomson, “Constantine and Trdat”, 283; van Esbroeck, “Sahak III”, 351-352.

³⁵⁰ Sabinin, *Samotxe*, 634.

³⁵¹ *NarrPetrAlaj*, 90: ესე არს სჯული მოციქულთა მიერ შეუქმნებულისა პეტროსისი და კრებათა მიერ განგლებულისა, და შემცა-ჩუქნებულ არს ყოველი მმარხველი ალაჯის-თვს და სურფსარგისის-თვს.

³⁵² See *infra*, pp.13-115.

³⁵³ On the Armenian passion of St Sargis, see Peeters, “Serge”, 25-36; Ch. Renoux further argues that the cult of St Sargis became known in Armenia after Nersēs’s Šnorhali’s redaction of the Saint’s *Passion* and that it was only since the thirteenth century that the week of araġawor was called “the week of Sargis”. Renoux, *Samuēl Kamġajorec’i*, 381, fn. 21.

commemorate the healing of King Trdat, then he claims that it was once again introduced by Gregory but when he was leaving for Rome and finally he justifies the fast by referring to Syrians, who also practice it.³⁵⁴ Earlier than Mxit'ar, pseudo-Yovhannēs Mamikonean gave an even more global explanation of the emergence of the fast, claiming that it used to be practiced even in Constantinople:

This was the first fast which was established in the Holy Grigor's days, which pope Selbestros in Rome accepted, and which he himself and the Emperor Konstandianos and all the cities in Egypt observed and which we call *Araġawork'*. And when the days of their fast were fulfilled, Trdat's skin of wild boar was cast off and their possessed bodies were cured.³⁵⁵

Another person who periodically turns up in the narratives of the Caucasian schism is a certain Sargis.³⁵⁶ He was subject of the most eager condemnation from the Georgian side, although Georgians had no knowledge at all who this Sargis was.³⁵⁷ In addition the Georgian tradition also retrojected St Sargis, a nemesis for the Caucasian Chalcedonians, on the council of Dwin and "appointed" him as Nersēs's *oikonomos*.³⁵⁸ Another polemical tradition, also known to the Slavonic tradition and to Mxit'ar Goš claims that the dog Alaj belonged to St Sargis.³⁵⁹ Mxit'ar comments on this and explains why the lent of *Araġawork'* was also called after Saint Sargis:³⁶⁰

And those who are lovers of evil deem it true that someone called Sargis, a sorcerer according to his heresy and Armenian by race, had a dog that would lead him everywhere he would go. This is for them the fast of *Araġawork'* that some of the story tellers refer do dogs and wolves. And Sargis was a general in Constantine's days and he was terribly martyred together with his son Martyros on 31 January ... The fast is of *Araġawork'* while the feast is of general Sargis, that is why they think the fast is of Sargis ... Because of the coincidence that after the five day fast comes [the commemoration] of Sargis it was considered as fast of Sargis. Earlier than that, on the same week, the [feasts] of king

³⁵⁴ Nersēs Šnorhali, in his brilliant apology for the Armenian faith, also explained the provenance of this preliminary fast, stressing that the fast of *Araġawork'* and the feast of Saint Sargis were mere coincidences, hence their contamination. Keshishean, *Saint Nersēs*, 132-134.

³⁵⁵ YM-Eng 73. For a discussion, see Melikset-Bek, *Araġawor*, 74.

³⁵⁶ Saint Sargis was persecuted by Julian the Apostate and went first to the Persian Shah Šapuh and then to the Armenian King Tiran. Eventually he was killed by Šapuh. For the cult of Sargis or rather of several Sargises, see Fowden, *Barbarian Plain*, 101-130.

³⁵⁷ See Melikset-Bek, *Araġawor*, 109-111; Lalayanc', "Surb Sargis", 350-353.

³⁵⁸ *DispEkvSos*, 617.

³⁵⁹ According to this version, someone called Sergius, the teacher of the Armenian heresy had a dog who was called Ardzivur. Sergius used the dog as a messenger to his students and the plotters of his evil heresy. When they would see the dog, they would all come out and meet the teacher. But once, when Sergius was on his usual mission, the dog was killed by wolves. The next day, Sergius went where the dog was sent. When he found out what had happened to the dog, and when he realized from the bones that he was torn by wolves, Sergius gave an order that all Armenians fast during a certain period of the year to commemorate the dog's death and called this fast *Ἀρτζιβούριος*. See, e.g., *NS*, 235.

³⁶⁰ This legend was well known in Byzantium and other Chalcedonian traditions. Nersēs Šnorhali was particularly outraged by this legend as shown in his letters. Keshishian, *Nersēs*, 105-106, 141-143. See also Augé, "Rapports", 337-353; Grumel, "Invectives", 174-194.

Constantine and Trdat was observed, because of their five-day fast, later it was called St Sargis's fast because of this coincidence.³⁶¹

It is obvious that neither the Armenians nor the Georgians had real knowledge of the origins and meaning of this fast although for both it became one of the cornerstones of orthodoxy and heterodoxy. This fast is often taken as another symbol of the divergence of the Armenians and the Georgians. Some scholars have claimed that *Araġawork'* was canonical practice in the Georgian Church, too. It is assumed that *Araġawork'* was a common practice in the Georgian Church before the separation and was only after this that the Georgians either tried to suppress the memory of such practice or forget it altogether. On this point L. Melikset-Bek appealed to linguistic argument. One of the articles of the Georgian translation of the *Nomokanon* of Patriarch John the Faster (582–95) stated: “Similarly, Araġvor [sic.] is lentals are free for the monks and dairy and meat for the laymen”.³⁶² The rendering of the Greek equivalent by *Araġawor*, and moreover the absence of polemicity in this rendering, suggests, according to Melikset-Bek, that the practice once existed in the Georgian tradition, which meant that Georgians had not yet fully effaced common features with the Armenian Church.³⁶³ I disagree with this inference, and this for four reasons: First, the presence or absence of such a fast was not a direct indicator of a specific tradition, nor would it necessarily differentiate Chalcedonian from non-Chalcedonian traditions. It would have been highly improbable for the Georgians to abandon this practice as heretical immediately after the schism. Secondly, as for the linguistic argument, the Georgian tradition uses the Armenian word to describe not the fast itself, but the week before Great Lent. *Alajori* simply stood for a specific time, not a practice. Only a few paragraphs earlier the same *Nomocanon* prescribes:

³⁶¹ MG-DeGeo, 373: Եւ նորա, զի սիրողք չարի են, ճշմարիտ կարծեն լինել, թէ Սարգիս ոմն արուեստի հալաճ, աղանդի կախարդ, ազգաւ Հայ, շուն ունէր և ուր երթալն կամէր՝ շունն յառաջէր: Եւ այս է նոցա առաջաւորաց պահքն. գոր ընդ շունս և ընդ գայլս եղիցի բաժին ասողացն: Այլ Սարգիս գաւրավարն յաւուրս Կոստանդինոսի էր ... Եւ նորա չառեալ յանձն վկայեաց որդովն, որ անուանեալ կոչիւր Սարտիրոս, յամսեանն յունվարի որ արւ ԼԱ էր: ... Պահքն առաջաւորաց է և տաւնն Սարգիս գաւրավարի և վասն այն պահք Սարգիս կարծեն ... Յառաջագոյն յայն շաբաթն թագաւորացն տաւնէին՝ Կոստանդինոսի և Տրդատայ վասն Ե-արեալ նոցա պահոցն, և յետոյ Սարգիս՝ վասն անդ պատահելոյն անուանեցաւ:

³⁶² *NomCan*, 110: ვგრეთვე მსგევესი იგი არაჯვკოროთა და აღებათა უსნილნი არიან მონაზონთათვის წუეულად და ერისგანთათვის - ვორცი.

³⁶³ Melikset-Bek, *Araġawor*, 75.

In the week of cheese-fare, although it is not allowed to take meat, for it is a preparation for the entrance into Lent, it is not appropriate to consider it as a preliminary [*cinamsrboli*] fast, nor is the fast of *Aražor* [sic.] allowed.³⁶⁴

The fact that the author differentiates between a preliminary fast and the fast of *Arařawor*, which in principle are the same, indicates that it targets both the actual practice and also the loosely remembered tradition. The only mention of the so-called fast of Nineveh as an actual practice is the Georgian liturgical calendar. On 28 February it says:

On the week when meat is allowed, the Friday of the conversion and penitence of the Ninevites is a fast.³⁶⁵

But a tenth-century *Iadgari* (Sin. 1), while also mentioning the feast of the Ninevites, does not speak of a fast but only of the commemoration:

On the meat-free Friday and cheese-fare Saturday, the hymns of the Ninevites... For God, through his love towards mankind, gave as a reason to repent.³⁶⁶

Therefore the source cited by Melikset-Bek cannot be a guarantee that the same practice existed in the Georgian Church.³⁶⁷ Thirdly, when Arseni Sapareli elaborated on the decisions of the Council of Dwin, he confused the beginning of the Armenian era with the fast of *Arařawork*'. Knowing Armenian, he tried to provide his own interpretation of the word:

Truly they became alien by their sins from the Mother of God and established *Alažor* [sic.] for they said: This is the first day of our faith.³⁶⁸

Apparently Arseni knew this word but not its exact meaning. Therefore he understood *Arařawor* to mean *beginning* and not *preliminary*. He did not even know that *Arařawork*' referred to a fast and not to a calendar. It is possible that Arseni had no source that could explain the fast of *Arařawork*', and he simply improvised

³⁶⁴ *NomCan*, 32: ხოლო შვედულს მას ყველიერისას, დაღაცათუ ვორცის ჭამად აკრების, რამეთუ განმზადებად არს მარხვათა შესვლისად და რეცა წინამსრბოლი ხოლო მარხვათა თანა შერაცხვად არა ვჯერ-არს. არცა არაჯვორთა მარხვად წეს-არს.

³⁶⁵ *Calend-Geo*, 52: ვორცითა აღების პარასკევსა, მოქცევადა და სინანული ნინეველთადა, მარხვად. For Garitte's comment, see *ibid*, 167.

³⁶⁶ *DescrManu* 1, 19: ვორციელსა პარასკევსა ანუ ყველიერისა შაბათსა დასდებელნი ნინეველთანი ... მოგუანიჭა ღმერთმან ჩუენმან კაცთმოყუარებისათვის მიზეზი სინანულისა.

³⁶⁷ K. Kekelidze, for example, also without any solid evidence, claims that the Georgians condemned this practice in the eight or ninth century. Kekelidze, "Calendar", 248-249; "Eortological Year" 126-127; *Geschichte*, 383-384;

³⁶⁸ AS, 80: AS-Fr, 104: ჭეშმარიტად უცხო იქმნეს ცოდვითა მათითა დედისაგან ღმრთისა და განაწყეს არაჯვორი მუნვე დვინს, რამეთუ თქუეს: ესე არს დღე პირველი სარწმუნოებისა ჩუენისაო.

with the root *araġ*-. Finally, the attack on the fast of *Araġawork*' was not necessarily an implicit Georgian anti-Armenian phenomenon that arose following the schism, but was the result of Byzantine influence, whom the Georgians eagerly joined in classifying the *Araġawork*' as a heretical practice.

Peter Fuller, Katholikos Michael, King Vaxt'ang, Katholikos K'yron, Bishop Peter, Katholikos Peter, Patriarch Peter, several St Sargises are all intermingled in the narratives of the unity and separation. Is this a reflection of an action that survived as a shock in popular memories, or does it reflect the entire aggressive *longe durée* of alienation and mutual antagonism that existed in Late Antique Caucasus? In consideration of the above, one could have suggested that the Armenian tradition tried to commemorate this event immediately after the schism occurred. One would have expected an outburst of polemical literature from both the Armenian and Georgian sides, but in fact there is nothing, at all until the tenth century and when a completely new era began in the Armeno-Georgian relations. This was the era of a past re-enacted, a period of intensive polemic and mutual antagonism. Such antagonism did not burst directly after the schism; it took centuries of co-existence of two ethnically and religiously heterogeneous groups. The schism as we know it was a construct of precisely those transformative centuries.

2.5. ONE THOUSAND YEARS OF REWRITING: THE CASE OF MOVSĒS KALANAKATWAC'I

We have seen extraordinary variance in the remembrance and transmission of the nature of the Caucasian separation. Chronology, date, oponents, reasons, geography and results: everything was confused and ideologically determined. Both Chalcedonians and non-Chalcedonians vigorously defended their own positions. The former almost fully neglecting existence of a schism and the latter nailing down the memory of the events connected with K'yron and Abraham. On a general level this is perfectly understandable: for the Georgians there was no such diversion, no change, whereas for the Armenians it remained a major catastrophe that undermined the authority of the local Church. Therefore, the Armenian side, which had documented the separation process, was especially keen to present the entire story as a whim of defiant Georgian and Albanian prelates, as the undermining of hierarchical order by a rebellious Georgian katholikos. Moreover, very often, as we shall see below, they try to construct a coherent narrative involving Armenians,

Albanians and Georgians, as if the reason behind the schism was a hierarchical quarrel between the latter two. Meanwhile the Georgian and other Chalcedonian sources prefer to view the estrangement as an apostasy of the Armenians from Chalcedonian Orthodoxy, as a result of which the Georgians refused communion with the Armenians.

As discussed in Chapter 1, one group of sources, and indeed part of modern scholarship, interpreted the schism in a hierarchical way. That is to say the reason behind the separation was not theological but merely hierarchical. To put it another way, K'yrōn's *hairesis* was the result of his *schisma* and not the other way around. Despite this, the testimonies of the immediate participants of the separation pointed at the opposite and hierarchical relations were not referred to at all. Uxtanēs also notes that the *Book of Letters* does not elaborate on practical reasons behind the schism and discusses K'yrōn's heretical, not necessarily schismatic, inclinations and his alleged communion with the Nestorians. There existed several ways of presenting the story as a controversy over the offices. One such way was to reject the very fact of the existence of the office of *katholikos* in Iberia before the schism. Very often the Georgian *katholikos* was "honoured" simply as an archbishop or in some cases even as a metropolitan of the Armenian Church in Georgia.³⁶⁹ In medieval period, a certain legend persisted, especially in the form provided by Uxtanēs who addressed oral tradition extensively, although he never declared the tradition to be *a priori* authentic.³⁷⁰ Uxtanēs named two possible reasons for the separation of the Georgians, both of them way connected to the issue of the nine rank ecclesiastical system.³⁷¹

According to popular tradition, as Uxtanēs puts it, when the *katholikoi* of the Albanians and the Georgians came to congratulate *Katholikos Abraham*, for then they were still archbishops of the throne of St Gregory, Abraham received them with great honour and sat them on the thrones as was the rule. During the feast, Abraham blessed and gave the first bowl to the Albanian *katholikos* and only after him to the *katholikos* of the Georgians. Outraged by being served second after the Albanian *katholikos*, K'yrōn rejected the offering, for it was his throne that accepted Christianity before the Albanians. Abraham tried to avoid a

³⁶⁹ Cf. with other claims contemporary to Uxtanēs, e.g. YD, 65-66. Also, KG, 41. For the full quote, see *supra*, p. 100.

³⁷⁰ See US II, 180-182; US-Arz, 118-125.

³⁷¹ On the nine rank hierarchy in the Caucasian context, see *supra* Garsoïan's quote.

conflict and agreed, saying that by such gesture he simply honoured the elderly age of the Albanian katholikos. But K‘yron remained completely immoveable, searching for a reason to quarrel, so he stood up and left “selling for a bowl his priority”. This, according to Armenian oral tradition and also Uxtanēs, was the reason for the schism.³⁷² There transpires an important nuance in the story: K‘yron accepts Abraham’s superiority but he cannot tolerate being lower in rank than the Albanian. This, in fact was the subtle message, that the Georgian prelate accepted Armenian superiority but rejected the Albanian. In my view, this storyline has an interesting history and can be traced back to Movsēs Kałankatwac‘i, the Albanian historian to whom Uxtanēs often refers to in this part of his narrative.

The author of the *History of Albania* had a very specific agenda: on the one hand he needed to argue for the oldest age of the Albanian Church and on the other, to demonstrate the low rank of the Georgian katholikos. This estimation became a source of blunder after blunder both in medieval polemics as well as in twentieth century scholarship. Here is an instance of how history had been rewritten over and over again and sources had been misunderstood or deliberately forged by writers who recorded one of the most sensitive issues in Caucasian Church history – the “national” beginnings. It is essential to keep in mind that Movsēs was a pro-Albanian writer. His agenda was emphatically super-patriotic; apart from many other details he aimed to prove the perpetual Orthodoxy and the antiquity of the Albanian Church.³⁷³ Regrettably, this could not be tolerated by Armenian editors of his *History*, either medieval or modern. As a result Movsēs’s text became the target of mutilation and fierce interpolations.

One sentence from the *History of Albania* which dealt with the conversion of Albanians and Armenians stands as follows:

It was the forty-third year of the Roman era that Armenia was converted to the faith, and Albania’s conversion had occurred two hundred and seventy years previously.³⁷⁴

³⁷² US II, 179-185.

³⁷³ See Yuzbachian, “Bewusstseinsbildung”, 181-187.

³⁷⁴ MK I, 306.

This is how it stands in the 1913 edition of *Kaḷankatwac‘i*, and such reading was accepted with understandable eagerness by Azerbaijani scholars, but, correspondingly was be tolerated by the Armenian editors and translators. As a result, in the 1983 critical edition one reads:

It was the forty-third year of the Roman era that Armenia was converted to the faith and two hundred and seventy years before the conversion of the Albanians.

Note the changes in the text:

1913 edition:

Քառասներորդ երրորդ ամ էր թուականին Հռոմոնց, յորժամ լուսաւորեցան Հայք ի հաւատս. և Աղուանից լուսաւորութիւնն երկու հարիւր և եօթանասուն ամ առաջ էր.³⁷⁵

1983 edition:

Քառասներորդ երրորդ ամ էր թուականին Հռոմոնց, յորժամ լուսաւորեցան Հայք ի հաւատս. և Աղուանից լուսաւորութեանն ՄՀ ամ յառաջ.³⁷⁶

The difference is in just in the case of one word: *lusavorut‘iwn*. Both cases are attested in the textual tradition, but in choosing *lusavorut‘ean* instead of *lusavorut‘iwn*, the 1983 editors changed the entire sense of the sentence. The Russian translation that appeared soon after the critical edition, accepted the revised reading:

Был сорок третий год греческого летосчисления, когда просветились армяне (приняв христианскую) веру, на двести семьдесят лет раньше просвещения Алуанка.³⁷⁷

The translator has provided a footnote to justify his choice, arguing that the oldest manuscript (1289) has *լուսաւորութեան*. Reference to the oldest manuscript is most reasonable, but the translator continues to argue further about the historical validity of the source, saying that Albanians were “obviously” not converted before the Armenians, therefore the correct reading should be according to the new critical edition. In addition, the translator is convinced that *լուսաւորութիւն* is a result of a copyist’s error.³⁷⁸ Yet both the editor and the translator have apparently forgotten who the author of the text was. *Movsēs Kaḷankatwac‘i*’s main agenda was to argue the supremacy of the Albanian Church over the Armenian, and his work, at least

³⁷⁵ MK I, 306.

³⁷⁶ MK II, 269-270.

³⁷⁷ MK-Rus, 136.

³⁷⁸ MK-Rus, 215, fn. 174.

the part that can safely be attributed to him, is a patriotic treatise.³⁷⁹ Let us leave the question open of whether we are dealing with a scribal error or with an intentional interpolation. Although, it is nonsensical to suppose that Armenian copyists would intentionally change the text so that it would stem that Albanians had been converted before Armenians. Surely, the other way around is a more plausible hypothesis. But there is no need to hypothesize as Kałankatwa‘ci’s text itself provides a clue as to which reading is correct. The alteration provided by the 1983 editor and 1984 translator is untenable, due to Movsēs’s relative chronology, where the author is quite explicit. If the 1983 reading were true, according to Movsēs’s chronology, overlooked by the editors, the conversion of the Albanians must be dated to 560/561, which is absurd.³⁸⁰

Twentieth century editors were not the first to edit Movsēs’s text according to their taste. To justify their reading, the editors addressed Uxtanēs, another interpreter of Movsēs’s text. The passage where Uxtanēs quoted Movsēs is identical to the latter: Քառասներորդ երրորդ ամ էր թուկանիին Հռոմոնց՝ յորժամ լուսաւորեցան Հայք ի հաւատս. և Աղուանից լուսաւորութեանն երկերիւր եւթանասուն ամ յառաջ.³⁸¹ Earlier than that, the medieval copyists also changed this passage but failed to notice Uxtanēs’s chapter heading: *As to when the Albanians believed prior to the Armenians according to their own history.*³⁸² Beyond doubt, this is a paradox and whether or not the chapter heading is a later addition, the fact remains that when the headings were adduced the text had *lusavorut‘iwn*. Uxtanēs refers to what the Albanians, i.e. Movsēs Kałankatwa‘ci, had to say about themselves; he does not claim that it is his own position nor that this information is historically accurate. But the medieval copyists, like the 1983 editors, were apparently unhappy with this passage and changed it, though left the title as it was.

This example leads us to another, more complex case. The following passage demonstrates another curious textual amendment, this time made by the author of the *History of Albania*. Dowsett’s translation is as follows:

³⁷⁹ For a detailed discussion on the issue, see Aleksidze, “Criticism”, 66-91.

³⁸⁰ This was pointed out in Aleksidze, “Criticism”, 66-91. On the problem of Movses’s chronology, see also Hewsen, Clauson, “Chronology” 151-156.

³⁸¹ US II, 202.

³⁸² *Ibid.*

Abraham, in an encyclical concerning Kiwrión's disobedience, denounced him to all peoples and cut him off with the sword of the spirit. He first informed Albania and wrote a letter to the following effect: 'The see of Albania was established before that of Armenia and agrees with us. We, with their support, have cursed and rejected Kiwrión in accordance with the command which the fathers gave to Rome and which shall be valid forever'.³⁸³

This passage is taken from the encyclical letter by Abraham included in the *Book of Letters*, where the *katholikos* said:

I deemed it to be my duty to write, just as those who were before me on the throne of the *Katholikos* wrote to the Albanians and we wrote to Iberia to K'yron who is called *katholikos* and to his *synthronoi*.³⁸⁴

Here apparently Abraham meant the letter of *Katholikos* Yovhannēs Gabelean to the Albanians.³⁸⁵ N. Aknecian noticed that Kałankatwac'i intentionally changed this passage to suit his own needs.³⁸⁶ The *Book of Letters* positively states that the order not to commune and to avoid Georgians at all cost concerned the Albanians too, so that they might be ashamed and turn back from the false path.³⁸⁷ Movsēs apparently was not happy with this detail so he twisted the story in such way that the Armenians and the Albanians both cursed the Georgians, meanwhile presenting the Albanians as older Christians than Armenians. The curious fact is that the 1983 editor and 1984 translator once again decided to "correct" the text by changing a "patriotic" Albanian author's claims with the claims of an Armenian patriot. The 1983 editors were not pleased with Movsēs's interpretation because it would again denote that Movsēs claimed superiority over the Armenian Church and this would contradict the very general claim that Movsēs was essentially an Armenian author and not Albanian. The following alterations are noteworthy:

GT'/US

MK I

MK II

Because of this, they deemed it necessary to write Those who held the *katholikosate* before me [wrote] to the Albanians, while we [wrote] to the so-called *Katholikos*

He first informed Albanians and wrote the following letter that before the Armenians, *katholikosate* was established

He first informed Albanians and wrote the following letter: those who were on the throne of

³⁸³ MK-D, 174; For the corresponding passage from the critical edition, see MK II, 270. For the quote, see *infra* fn. 391.

³⁸⁴ GT' I, 193-194; GT' II, 120; GT' III, 362-363. For the Armenian text, see *infra*, fn. 388.

³⁸⁵ See *supra*, p. 29.

³⁸⁶ Aknecian, "Movsēs", 162-163.

³⁸⁷ GT' II, 120.

Kiwron and to his sharers of the throne.³⁸⁸

among the Albanians and were in accord with us. In agreement with them we and the Albanians cursed and cast away Kiwron according to the command of the Fathers.³⁸⁹

the Albanian katholikos and his sharers of the throne and were in agreement with us and in agreement with them we cursed and expelled Kiwron according to the canonical ordinances of the Fathers for the Romans and is still preserved unblemished.³⁹⁰

Instead of mechanically correcting the author, it would have been better to think how and why these changes appeared in the text. It is true that the passage is nonsensical in itself, but Movsēs had strong reasons to change it according to his taste.³⁹¹

The examples provided above are illustrations to similar and more serious amendments done to Movsēs relating to our specific issue. Once more the text of the 1983 edition was interpreted according to the editor's patriotic aspirations, not Movsēs's:

MK II

Եւ սակս ինն դասակարգութեան գլխաւորք եկեղեցական անձնահաճ կամօք ըստ նպերտ բարուց՝ Հայաստանեայցն՝ կարգեն զԱբրահամ պատրիարք և զԱղոանիցն՝ արքեպիսկոպոս, և զՎրացն մետրոպոլիտ: Խեռեցաւ Վրացն, որում Կիւրոն կոչէին, և զհակարակութեան բերէր վճիռ: Իսկ հայրապետն Աբրահամ ասէր լինել յարաջահաւատ քան զՎիրս, զԱղուանս, և նոցա անկ է եպիսկոպոսապետութիւն: Յաիսմ

MK-D

As what concerns the nine ranks, the heads of the Church, according to their own will and ... established in Armenia – Abraham with the rank of patriarch, in Albania – an archbishop and in Iberia – a metropolitan. The head of the Georgian Church, Kiwron by name, rebelled and declared his opposition, but the patriarch Abraham stated that the Albanians had preceded the Georgians in the faith and that the rank of archbishop fell to them. As a result of this dispute the Georgians turned from the orthodox faith and became Chalcedonians. The Greek generals at first

³⁸⁸ a.) GT¹ I, 193-194; GT¹ II, 120; GT¹ III, 362-363: Վասն այսր հարկաւոր համարեցայ գրել: Յառաջագոյն քան զմեզ կացեալքն յաստիճանի կաթողիկոսութեան՝ յԱղուանս, իսկ մեք ի Վիրս առ Կիւրովն՝ որ կաթողիկոսն անուանի, և նորին աթոռակիցս: Dowsett provides an erroneus interpretation of this passage: Before us [they were] established in the rank of katholikos in Albania. See, also, Dowsett's comment in MK-D, 174, fn. 2.

b.) Uxtanēs's text is essentially the same as GT¹ except of minor differenes in punctuation and grammar. US II, 210: Վասն այսր հարկաւոր համարեցան գրել յառաջագոյն քան զմեզ կացեալքն յաստիճան կաթողիկոսութեան՝ յԱղուանս, իսկ մեք՝ ի Վիրս առ Կիւրոն, որ կաթողիկոս անուանի, և ի նորին աթոռակիցսն:

³⁸⁹ MK I, 307: ազդէ նախ յԱղուանս, տայ գիտութիւն և գրէ այսպէս ի թղթին, եթէ յառաջագոյն քան զՀայոց աթոռակալութիւն կացեալ աթոռակալութեան Աղուանից, ընդ մեզ համաձայն գոլով, նոցա կամակցութեամբ նզովեցաք և ընկեցաք զԿիւրիոն ըստ հրամանի հարցն՝ մեք և Աղուանք՝:

³⁹⁰ MK II, 270: ազդէ նախ յԱղուանս, տայ գիտութիւն և գրէ այսպէս ի թղթին. 'Յարաջագոյն քան զմեզ կացեալքն յաստիճանի կաթողիկոսութեան Աղուանից և նորին աթոռակիցս ընդ մեզ համաձայն գոլով և նոցա կամակցութեամբ նզովեցաք և արտաքս ընկեցաք զԿիւրոն ըստ կանոնական հրամանի հարցն զոր հատին ի վերայ Հռոմին և կացցէ մինչև ցբուն մեք և Աղուանք':

³⁹¹ See discussion on this passage in MK-Rus, 216, n. 179.

մաքառմանն և ի խնդիր ուղղափառ հաւատոյ դարձան Վիրք և եղեն քաղկեդոնիկ: Իսկ յունական զորավարացն գրգռեալ զնա՝ խնդրել զգահերիցութիւնն ի վերայ Աղուանից՝³⁹² որում ոչ հաւանեալ Աղուանից՝ զայլ ոմն երևեցուցին՝ կանխաւ առաքեալ եկեալ յաշխարհն Աղուանից՝ Եղիշայ անուն՝ յաշակերտացն տեառն, ձեռնադրեալ ի սրբոյն Յակոբայ՝ եղբօր տեառն, քարոզեալ անդ և եկեղեցիս շինեալ նախկին քան ի Հայս: Առաջինն մայր եկեղեցեացն արևելեայց Գիսայ եկեղեցին նորին հիմնադրեալ և զինքեանս նմա աւանդեալ, դարձան ի Հայոց առ ինքեանս՝ չինել ընդ ումեր իշխանութեամբ:՝³⁹³ Ապա Հայք վասն մեծաբանութեանն Յունաց, որ փոքր կացուցանել ջանային զկայս հանգստեան Թադէոսի առաքելոյ՝ չունել եպիսկոպոսապետ և մետրոպօլիտ՝ խորհեցան առնել մետրոպօլիտ զՄարդապետականն եպիսկոպոս՝ տալ նմա խաչ և պատիւ միայն և ոչ առնել ձեռնադրութիւն եպիսկոպոսի:՝³⁹⁴

encouraged **them** to seek precedence over the Albanians, but the latter would not yield and pointed to a certain apostle who came in ancient times to Albania, Elisha by name, one of the disciples of the Lord who was consecrated by James, brother of the Lord, and who preached there and built there a church before there was one in Armenia, namely, the church of Giš‘, the first metropolis of the east. So [the Albanians] turned from the Armenians in order not to be under anyone’s authority. Then the Armenians, on account of the arrogance of the Greeks who would belittle the resting-place of the apostle Thaddeus for having no archbishop or metropolitan, decided to make the Bishop of Mardpet a metropolitan, but gave him only cross and the title with no power to consecrate bishops.³⁹⁵

Two passages are of key importance here: Իսկ յունական զորավարաց գրգռեալ զնա՝ խնդրել զգահերիցութիւնն ի վերայ Աղուանից: “The Greek generals then encouraged *him* to seek precedence over the Albanians”.³⁹⁶ One of the variant readings has *Hayk* ‘(Armenians) instead of *zna*: Իսկ ՚ի յունական զորավարացն գրգռեալ Հայք խնդրել զգահերիցութիւնն ՚ի վերայ Աղուանից,³⁹⁷ (The Armenians were incited by the Greek generals to seek precedence over the Albanians). But the editor, contrary to the previous edition that reads *zHayk* ‘, chose *zna*, claiming that it refers to K‘yron, not Armenians. The justification for this choice is provided in the Russian translation, where the translator affirms that *Haik* ‘ is “an apparent copying mistake” and there should be *zna*.³⁹⁸ Leaving aside the theoretical possibility of such a mistake, even if there was *zna*, “him”, it would rather refer to Abraham, not to K‘yron or to the Georgians since Abraham was the

³⁹² MK-Rus, 138: “Греческие полководцы подстрекали *его* [Кюриона] потребовать верховенства над Алуанком, с чем алуанцы не согласились”.

³⁹³ MK-Rus, 138: “Они [иверцы] отбились от Армении, чтобы не подчиняться ничьей власти”.

³⁹⁴ MK II, 274-275.

³⁹⁵ MK-D, 176-177.

³⁹⁶ MK II, 274.

³⁹⁷ MK I, 311. In any case both texts are grammatically problematic as there does not seem to be a predicate. At least խնդրել must be in an active form, for the sentence to make sense. MK II version is equally flawed, because in this case “Greek generals” must stand in nominative and գրգռեալ in an active form, in order to translate: “The Greek generals encouraged...”

³⁹⁸ MK-Rus, 222-223, n. 193.

last person to be mentioned before that sentence. Dowsett’s translation is misleading in that rendering *zna* as *them* leaves the impression that it actually refers to people, in this case to the Georgians when in fact it refers to a person.³⁹⁹ The Greeks incited Abraham, not K‘yron, as the paragraph before substantiates.⁴⁰⁰

Unfortunately the English translation offers further ambiguities by translating *isk* as ‘at first’, instead of ‘but’, ‘now’, ‘then’, or as any other conjunction. This is misleading because it stems that this sentence begins a new idea, whereas in fact it continues the previous. This passage with the Greeks instigating Abraham was also “misunderstood” by Uxtanēs, who elaborated on the word “to instigate”:

As a result of this quarrel and in search of the Orthodox faith, the Georgians went astray and became chalcedonians upon the instigation of the Satan and Kiwron, as well as following the will of Emperor Maurice and the Greek generals whom the infamous Kiwron instigated, seeking their support for his supremacy over the Albanians.⁴⁰¹

Once again we meet the word *to instigate* in Step‘anos Orbelean’s narrative and again the subjects and objects of instigation are confused and the reasons that triggered the schism are proven to be unclear:

[Numerous tumults arose], sometimes because of the nine ranks of the Church, sometimes because of the Iberian claims and their instigation of the Albanians to distance themselves from the Armenians and also because of the pride of the Bishop of Mardpetakan.⁴⁰²

The second sentence in question is the following: դարձան ի Հայոց առ ինքեանս՝ չլինել ընդ ումեք իշխանութեամբ. In the 1984 Russian translation this passage is rendered thus: “They [the Iberians] broke off from the Armenians in order not to be under anybody’s supremacy”.⁴⁰³ This translation, or rather the implication in brackets, is simply wrong, because in fact the sentence refers to the Albanians, not to the Georgians. Again the translator corrupts the text to suit his needs. If reference was being made to the Georgians, then the whole sense of the passage would be lost, because what Movsēs wanted to convey was

³⁹⁹ MK-D, 177.

⁴⁰⁰ Garsoïan’s rendering is equally misinterpreted. See Garsoïan, *L’Église*, 287: “Les généraux grecs l’excitaient [Kiwron] afin qu’il réclamât la préséance de son siège sur [celui] des Ałuank’.” See also *ibid* fn. 15, where Garsoïan justifies the 1983 choice by the context, although I think that it is quite the other way around, the context does not allow us to justify such a rendering. Although in fn. 16 Garsoïan acknowledges that the final sentence refers to the Albanians and not to the Iberians, as Smbatyan likes to see it.

⁴⁰¹ US-Eng, 123; US II, 186-188: ... յայսմ մաքառման և ի խնդիր ուղղափառ հաւատոյ, դարձան Վիրք և եղեն քաղկեդոն ի սաղրելոյ սատանայի և Գիւրոնի, միանգամայն և ի կամաց կայսերն Մորկայ, և Յունական զարավարացն գրգռեալ լինէր իրքն այն Գիւրոն՝ խնդրել զգահերեցութիւն իւր ի վերայ Աղուանից:

⁴⁰² For the full quote, see *supra*, pp. 29-30.

⁴⁰³ MK-Rus, 139: Они [иверцы] отбились от Армении, чтобы не подчиняться ничьей власти.

the following: Greeks were accusing the Armenians of not having a nine-grade system, so the Armenians “out of pride” decided to compensate this lacuna and install Abraham as patriarch, the Albanian prelate as archbishop and the Georgian as metropolitan. The Georgians were unhappy with this decision; they also inquired after the faith and became Chalcedonians. Now the Armenians wanted to subjugate the Albanians to which the latter reacted vehemently and demonstrated that the Albanian Church was in fact older than the Armenian. As a result, the latter broke off relations with the Armenians in order not to be under anyone’s jurisdiction. When this happened, the Armenians decided to install as metropolitan the Bishop of Mardpetakan (instead of the Albanian). Thereafter the Albanian Church continued to exist independently and as an equal to the Armenian counterpart. In fact, the Georgians are mentioned only once because the essential issue was the Armeno-Albanian controversy and not Armeno-Georgian. So the main subject of this quite a coherent narrative is Albania, not Georgia but the 1983 editors and, as we shall see, not only them, twisted the story in favour of the Georgian apostasy. The editors decided to “correct” Movsēs’s text according to Uxtanēs, the earliest manuscript of which is from the eighteenth century, in order to render the story of the controversy between Georgian and Albanian prelates. However, the very title of this chapter in the *History of Albania* says clearly what the content is:

*On the controversy [of the Armenians] with the Greeks on the subject of the nine-grade system: The Armenian attempt to subjugate the Albanians to their archbishop, to which the Albanians did not obey. Siwnians switching sides and receiving ordination from the Albanians.*⁴⁰⁴

But the Russian translator rejected and dismissed the chapter heading as a later addition and suggested that instead of Armenians there must be Georgians.⁴⁰⁵ “Misunderstanding” Movsēs’s text is not new. Surviving editions of other authors who are fully indebted to Movsēs accept the same information. For example, Uxtanēs’s rendering of the same events is highly curious and noteworthy. He divided the reasons for the apostasy of the Georgians into two – the legendary and the historical.⁴⁰⁶ But even Uxtanēs apparently

⁴⁰⁴ MK II, 272: Յաղագս Յունաց առ Հայս վասն ոչ ունելոյ զինն դասս եկեղեցական կարգաւորութեան, և Հայոց ջանք՝ Աշուանից լինել ընդ նոքօք արքեպիսկոպոս, որում ոչ հաւանեալ Աղուանից. և զդառնալ Սիւնեաց ի Հայոց յԱղուանս և առնուլն զձեռնադրութիւն և զձէթ:

⁴⁰⁵ MK-Rus, 220, fn. 180.

⁴⁰⁶ US II, 186-188: Ընդ յայնու ժամանակս մինչ բաժանեալ ունէին Պարսիկք և Յոյնք ի միջի իւրեանց զաշխարհս Հայոց, եղև քննութիւն ի մեջ Հայոց և Յունաց վասն դասակարգութեանն եկեղեցոյ նման ինն դասուցն վերնոց. զի վիճէին Յոյնք և մեծաբաներին ի վերայ Հայոց, եթէ՛ զի մեր ասէին ինն

noticed certain discrepancy in the tradition, because he further divides the historical explanation of the schism in two. In the first version the Georgians are present, whereas in the second only Armenians and Albanians transpire. Uxtanēs tries to justify this by claiming that the second story continues the first one although the heading claims that it is essentially the same story.⁴⁰⁷

The “historical” interpretation, seemingly based on Movsēs, was rendered in such a way that the original Graeco-Armenian, and then Armeno-Albanian issue was transformed into the Armeno-Georgian or rather Albano-Georgian affair, just like the modern editors did. Thus, according to this interpretation, when Armenia was divided into two, between Greeks and Persians, Greeks reprimanded the Armenians for not having the nine grade system. The Armenians replied that they did have such a system. At that time (591–618) the Armenian katholikosate was divided into Chalcedonian, with an anti-Katholikos installed by the Greeks, and non-Chalcedonian parts, presided by Katholikos Abraham. The Siwnians, under Bishop Peter’s leadership, refusing to be subject to a divided throne, were receiving ordination from the Albanians before the Armenian see was restored. It was for this reason that the Albanian bishop was not present at the council where Abraham was elected and when the Patriarchal throne was once again united. At this council they

դասակարգութիւնք եկեղեցոյ՝ և ձեր ոչ ... Եւ յայնժամ զՀայք, Պարսիկք և Յոյնք ունէին՝ որպէս բազում անգամ ասացեալ եղև՝ բաժանեալ ի միջի իւրենաց, և տէր Մովսէս յաթոռ սրբոյն Գրիգորի նստեր ի Դուին: Եւ ի կողմն Յունաց հակառակաթոռ նմա նստուցին զՅոհան ոմն մերձ առ նա: Իսկ զերկուեալն աթոռ հայրապետութեան խոտեցին տեարքն Սիւնեաց և ոչ հաւանեցան ընդ հակառակութեան հնազանդել ումէք հրամանաւ եպիսկոպոսին առաքինոյն Պետրոսի. որ հասեալ ի վախճան՝ պատուէր ետ վիճակին իւրոյ առնուլ ձեռնադրութեան յԱղուանից և զմեռոնն՝ արհնութեան՝ մինչև միասից աթոռ հայրապետութեան սրբոյն Գրիգորի: Եւ յայնմիտէ և առ յապայ առնուին ձեռնադրութիւն և մեռն Սիւնք ի յԱղուանից՝ մինչև բարձաւ հակառակութիւն՝ ասէ պատմագիրն: Վասն այնորիկ ոչ եկն կաթողիկոսն Աղուանից ի ժողովն ձեռնադրութեան Աբրահամու՝ մինչև միապետեաց Աբրահամ զԱթոռ հայրապետութեան իւրոյ: Եւ սակս ինն դասակարգութեանն եկեղեցական կարգաց գլխաւորեցին և կարգեցին զԱբրահամ պատրիարգ, և զԱղուանից՝ արքեպիսկոպոս, և զՎրացն՝ մետրոպալիտ. որում ոչ հաւանեալ Վրացն Կիւրոն կալ ի կարգին յայնմիկ՝ յորում կացուցին, խեռացաւ և զհակառակութեան բերէր վճիռ: Իսկ հայրապետն Աբրահամ լինել ասէր՝ յառաջահաւատ քան զՎիրս [Աղուանս], և նոցա անգ է արքեպիսկոպոսութիւն. յայսմ մաքառման և ի խնդիր ուղղափառ հաւատոյ, դարձան Վիրք և եղեն քաղկեդոն ի սաղրելոյ սատանայի և Կիւրոնի, միանգամայն և ի կամաց կայսերն Մուրկայ, և Յունական զաւրավարացն գրգռեալ լինէր լիրբն այն Կիւրոն՝ խնդրել զգահերեցութիւնն իւր ի վերայ Աղուանից: Որում ոչ հաւանեալ Աղուանից, զայլ ոմն երեւեցուցանեն կանխաւ եկեալ առաքեալ յաշխարհին Աղուանից՝ Եղիշայ անուն. զորոյ որպիսութիւնն ասել կամէի զառաքջին: Սա լեալ յաշակերտաց Փրկչին, ձեռնադրեալ ի Յակոբայ յեղբարէն Տեռն և հաւանեալ այնմ, ետուր զարքեպիսկոպոսութիւնն տանն Աղուանից՝ իրաւունս համարելով, և զմետրապետութիւնն տանն Սիւնեաց: Իսկ Կիւրոն ի բաց գնացեալ և այն անգամ, և մեծի հայրապետին Աբրահամու միապետեալ ընդ յինքեամբ զԱղուանս և զՍիւնիս, և յայնհետէ եղեն մի հաւտ և մի հովիւ, և հնազանդ սուրբ երկնայրակի աթոռոյ սրբոյն Գրիգորի:

⁴⁰⁷ US-Ar, 122-124.

established nine ranks and ordained the Albanian [katholikos] as archbishop and the Georgian as metropolitan. The Georgian katholikos rebelled against such a decision and turned towards the Chalcedonian faith. This was happening by the instigations of the Romans and Emperor Maurice.⁴⁰⁸ Both Uxtanēs and 1983 editors and translators present the state of affairs as if K'yron aspired for the title of archbishop and this was the reason for his rebellion, from this claim it would stem that the Georgian katholikos was always lower in rank and the apple of discord was only how lower.⁴⁰⁹ As shown above, the narrative attributed to Kałankatwac'i tells a different story. But even this interpretation is not supported by the immediate sources, which show that there was an even larger chronological gap between all these events squeezed into one.

Later authors, such as Drasxanakertc'i, an even more ardent opponent of the Georgian cause, extensively used Movsēs:

In accordance with former practice, this Movsēs ordained Kiwrion, the elder of the rectory of the Holy Cathedral [of Dwin], as archbishop over the province of Iberia, Gugark' and Egrisi. But shortly before Movsēs's death Kiwrion repudiated the right path of true order and religion that [the people of] those regions had learned from our orthodox fathers and, allured by his presumptuous ambition, he adhered to the impious Council of Chalcedon, betraying the forefathers of the land. Immediately thereafter, however, the treachery that he had devised came to naught. Movsēs greatly disputed and admonished him with graceful words of advice familiar to God so that he would abandon the heterodox Hebraic aberration and turn to the true knowledge in accordance with the doctrine of the Holy Fathers. But he did not wish to receive [medication] from the wise physician.⁴¹⁰

Here Drasxanakertc'i goes even further and claims Armenian superiority over all Georgia. Looking back from the tenth century, when the Georgian church was already united (both east and west), he argued for the dependence of the entire Georgian Church (Iberia and Egrisi) on the Armenian patriarch: it is now possible to see how the legend evolved and soon encompassed all of the South Caucasus. Anania Sanahinec'i is directly

⁴⁰⁸ US II, 187-189.

⁴⁰⁹ MK-Rus, 220, fn. 180.

⁴¹⁰ YD-Eng, 93; YD, 65-66: Այս Մովսէս զԿիրիովն՝ սրբոյ Կաթողիկէի վանաց երէց, ձեռնադրէ յարքեպիսկոպոսութիւն Վրաց նահանգին և Գուգարաց և Եգերացոց՝ ըստ օրինակի կարգացն առաջնոց: Իսկ ապա մերձ ՚ի վախճանն Մովսէսի՝ Կիրիոն զճշմարիտ կարգաց և զկրօնից ուղղութիւնն ՚ի բաց խզեալ, գոր ՚ի Հարցն մերոց ուղղափառաց աշակերտեալ էին կողմանքն այնորիկ՝ միտեր զհետ[...]

ժողովոյն Քաղկէդոնի, զկնի փառամոլ ամբարհաւատճութեանն իւրոյ ձգեալ դաւաճանալ գնախահարս աշխարհին: Ապա վաղվաղակի իսկ ի դերն ելանէր իոկացեալ նորայն դաւաճանութիւնն: Իսկ Մովսէս բազում մաքառումն ընդդէմ նորա եղեալ՝ աստուածամերձ իրատու բանից բարեզոհեաց գնա կշտամբեր՝ դառնալ ի չառափար հրէական մոլորութենէ հայիոյութեանց ի ճշմարիտ գիտութիւնն ըստ Հարցն սրբոց դաւանութեան: Այլ գնա ոչ ախորժեալ առնուլ զդէղ ի գեղատունէ իմաստնոյ՝

indebted to Uxtanēs who, on his part, altered Movsēs, thus the Albanian controversy raised by Movsēs spread into Armenian circles as a Georgian issue:

[Kiwriion] latently had the seed of the heresy of Chalcedon and being ill of the longing for supremacy and furious because of the establishment of the Albanian and Siwnian prelates in front of him, he separated from us in the days of Katholikos Abraham. He was summoned once and twice but he did not obey.⁴¹¹

Furthermore, Step‘anos Orbelean also contorted the story and presented the initial Armeno-Albanian controversy as Ibero-Albanian:

Now it came about that when the Iberians asked Movsēs, *kat’olikos* of the Armenians, for a leader, he ordained that precursor of the antichrist, Kiwriion, and gave him to them. As soon as the Albanians heard about such an elevation of the Georgians, they too represented that a certain disciple named Elišē who had come to Albania even earlier than to Armenia, that he had built a church and ordained a bishop. For a while, [the Albanians] also turned from the Armenians. The Georgian [K‘yron], too, split away and ..., because [K‘yron’s] request for the [title] of archbishop had been refused by Abraham. Despite the fact that through the agency of Bishop Petros many times had [Kiwriion] requested and even been promised this, [Abraham] did not consent. At last Abraham excommunicated him.⁴¹²

Further,

Because of the nine ranks there was an enquiry in Armenia. Kiwriion, because of his pride, separated from the Armenians and became Chalcedonian. After this the Albanian [katholikos] also separated having concocted a reason.⁴¹³

Reflection on the hierarchical tensions as the reason behind the schism is also visible in the Chalcedonian sources:

And when the Katholikos of the Georgians Kyrion of Mxeta and the Katholikos of the Hers [Albanians] saw that by the hand of Abdišo the Syrian the Armenians called a council in Dwin and by anathematization separated from the four patriarchates and changed the oath of the Church of Caesaria, which was established by Saint Gregory, never to separate from the consecration of Caesaria. And as

⁴¹¹ AnSan, 113: ... ունէր գտերմն քաղկեդոնական հերձուածոյն ի գաղտնի. և վասն գահերիցութեան ախտացեալ և գշարեալ վասն վեհագոյն դնելոյ քան զնոսայն զԱղուանիցն և զՍիւնեացն աթոռակալութիւն, որոշեցաւ ի մէնջ յաւուրս Աբրահամու Հայոց կաթողիկոսի. և կոչեցեալ միանգամ և երկիցս՝ ոչ հնազանդեցաւ:

⁴¹² SO II, 104: Ապա ի խնդրել Վրաց ինքեանց առաջնորդ ի Մովսիսէ՝ կաթողիկոսէ Հայոց, ձեռնադրեաց զկարապետ Նեոնին զԿիւրիոն և ետ նոցա: Իբրև լուան Աղվանք զՎրաց մեծաբանութիւնն՝ երևեցուցին և նոքա գառաքեալ ոմն եկեալ կանխագոյն քան ի Հայս յԱղվանս Եղիշէ անուն, և շինեալ եկեղեցի և ձեռնադրեալ եպիսկոպոս: Դարձան և նոքա առ ժամանակ մի ի Հայոց. ճեղքեցաւ և Վրացն բաղբաղելով զԱղվանս զի ի խնդրելն զարքեպիսկոպոսութիւն յԱբրահամէ՝ սաստեաց նմա:

⁴¹³ SO II, 279: Վասն ինն դասուցն ի Յունաց խնդիր լինէր առ Հայս. և Կիւրիոն՝ Վրաց կաթողիկոս, վասն փառամոլ ախտի ի բաց եկաց ի Հայոց և քաղկեդոնիկ եղել: Այնուհետև բաժանեալ ի բաց եկաց Աղվանիցն պատճառելով և նա պատճառս ինչ.

Armenia received an order from the Persian King to consecrate the bishops by themselves, as Katholikos K'yron and Abas the Katholikos of the Hers [Albanians] and Grigol the Bishop of Siwnians heard this, a serious argument arose between Armenia and Iberia. The Georgians said that: "Saint Gregory gave us faith from Greece, which you abandoned and obeyed Abdišo the Syrian and other evil heretics."⁴¹⁴

It is evident that this testimony is a reflection of the same story. The immediate documents have nothing to do with such interpretations which apparently are deliberations in popular tradition that evolved both in Armenia and Georgia. It appears that internal tensions in the Armenian Church, during the controversies between the katholikos and the anti-katholikos and the accompanying hierarchical discords, were later projected onto Albania, and even later, in specific historical circumstances, on Iberia.⁴¹⁵

Medieval authors, who possessed the *Book of Letters*, in particular Uxtanēs, apparently saw the strong political undercurrent of the controversy, especially when Smbat stepped in threatening with political consequences.⁴¹⁶ Having this in mind, the aforementioned interpretation of Kałankatwac'i was more than convenient. Besides, frequent reference to the Greeks could make a good argument that the Georgians were instigated by them. It is curious that in similar cases one would normally expect an actual hierarchical and political issue to be remembered as a theological problem. But in this case opposite is true. The Armeno-Albanian agenda turned into an Armeno-Georgian agenda. Indeed, Uxtanēs was not so greatly concerned with the Albanians and in some instances he even omitted them, whereas in the original the Albanians are mentioned. In the tenth century Albania was no longer an issue, but was more or less under Armenian

⁴¹⁴ AS, 81-82; As-Fr, 105-106: და ვითარცა იხილეს კათოლიკოსმან ქართველთა კვრონ მცხეთისამან და კათოლიკოსმან ჰერთა აბაზ, რამეთუ ველითა აბდიშო ასურისადთა კრება ყვეს სომხეთა ქალაქსა დვინსა და შერყუნებით განდგეს აღსარებისაგან წმიდისა კათოლიკე ეკლესიისა და განეყენეს ოთხთა საპატრიარქოთაგან და გარდააქციეს აღთქუმა იგი, რომელი დაუღვა წმიდამან გრიგოლ კესარია ეკლესიისა, უკუნისამდე არა განშორებად ებისკოპოსებისა სომხითისა და რამეთუ სომხითმან ბრძანებად მიიღო სპარსთა მეფისაგან ველთ-დასხმად ებისკოპოსებისა თავით თვისით, ესე რად ცნეს ჭეშმარიტად კვრონ კათალიკოსმან, აბაზ ჰერთა კათალიკოსმან და გრიგოლი სივნელთა ებისკოპოსმან, და იქმნა ცილობად დიდი შორის სომხითისა და ქართლისა. ქართველნი ეტყოდეს ვითარმედ: „წმინდამან გრიგოლი საბერძნეთით მოგუცა ჩუენ სარწმუნობად, რომელი თქუენ დაუტევეთ აღსარებად მისი წმიდად და დაემორჩილენით აბდიშოს ასურსა და სხუათა ბოროტად მწვალებელთა, და სერაბინთა იგი სამწიდაარსობით დიდების-მეტყუელებად შეაშფოთეთ და უკოცოსა, გამოუთქმელსა წმიდასა სამებასა შორის ჰქადაგეთ ჯუარი და ვნებად ვითარცა საბელიანოზთა, და იქმნენით მოწაფე ბოროტთა მოძღუართა და არა დაემორჩილენით სარწმუნობასა წმიდისა გრიგოლისსა, დაჩემეთ ვნებად უვნებელსა სამებასა, ვითარცა მოცა განცოფებულმან მკაწვრალმან პეტროზ ანტიოქელმან.

⁴¹⁵ Garsoïan must be close to the truth when she refers to two testimonies, one by Sebeos and the other by Kałankatwac'i. See Garsoïan, *L'Église*, 302-303: Seb-Eng, 6: "At that time, before this event, a certain prince Vahan, prince of the land of Siwnik', had rebelled and seceded from the Armenians. He requested Khosrov, King of Persia, that they might move the divan of the land of Siwnik' from Dwin to the city of P'aytakaran, and that he might set that city in the census of Atrpatakan, so that the name 'Armenians' would no longer be applied to them".

⁴¹⁶ See *supra*, pp. 18-22.

ecclesiastical domination. There was no need to argue for Armenian supremacy over Albania as all was “crystal clear”. On the other hand, there was a strong need to argue in favour of cultural superiority over the Georgians, first of all due to the political dominance of Georgia and also due to strong Georgian Chalcedonian influence. For this reason an explanatory legend had to be developed both on the “intellectual” and popular levels.⁴¹⁷

The intentions of the editors of *Kaḷankatwac’i* become apparent through their conception of the ecclesiastical state of affairs in the late Antique Caucasus – a conception for which they changed the texts and provided misinterpretations:

The Armenian *katholikoi* have always been superior and not having a formal patriarchal title, they were in charge of the Armenian Monophysite Church, ruling peacefully over smaller and greater eparchies of the Armenian Church, including the eparchy of Siwnik’, Iberia and Albania. They ordained the prelates of Siwnik’ and other eparchies, [and] the *katholikoi* of Iberia and Albania.⁴¹⁸

Unfortunately, this is an axiom for the scholar and any interpretation depends upon whether or not it fits this axiom. But such an interpretive schema is not novel and this conceptualization is in many ways the same as the medieval Armenian understanding of the state of affairs in Late Antiquity.

2.6. CONCLUSIONS

The schism itself has not been the sole target of medieval and contemporary scholarship. Remembering, forgetting, interpreting and abusing the events that later bore the name of the ‘schism’ happened and still continues. The schism became a lens through which the Middle and Modern Ages viewed Late Antiquity. The Middle Ages sought the reasons behind everything in the schism, as do some modern scholars. Those very Middle Ages, and the narrative that was formed in them, constitutes the lens through which we are forced to gaze. We can only wonder how many similar *faux pas* have occurred and how deformed are the already tendentious stories that have reached us. In addition, we shall see in the following chapters that the expansion of memory did not extend only onto the schism but included numerous aspects of common, Armenian and Georgian, history.

⁴¹⁷ See *supra* on Sargis and Peter.

⁴¹⁸ MK-Rus, 223, fn. 193.

CHAPTER THREE: THE MARCH-LANDS OF MEMORY

*There was no family left where
one member would not be Armenian and another Georgian,
and the children were divided accordingly.*
Anania Mokka'ec'i

Lieux de memoire exist
because there are no longer
any *milieux de memoire*,
settings in which memory is
a real part of everyday experience.
P. Nora⁴¹⁹

3.1. STATUS QUAESTIONIS

The third question, which results from the second, is in what circumstances were the remembrances of the celebrated events of the sixth and early seventh centuries forged and disseminated? Through whose spectacles are we too forced to read the final centuries of the Caucasian Late Antiquity? If we claim, that the schism, as we perceive it, was a construct, who constructed it, when, where and why?

Recollection of the schism was one of the major ideological concepts formed during the Armeno-Georgian relations in the Middle Ages. There existed certain dialectic of union and separation in the medieval Armeno-Georgian discourse. The Armenians were especially concerned to preserve, forge and disseminate the memory of this unity and divergence, as a result of which the Schism became a certain interpretive schema for the entire Armeno-Georgian relations. While Georgians, quite on contrary, did not retain any documented memory of the exact process of separation: nowhere and at no Church council, neither in any historical record, liturgical text, nor polemical treatise was the memory of K'yron's rule evoked, nor were accompanying events and results of the separation attested or even less, celebrated. According to the medieval Georgian narrative, there was no radical change, nor were there any protagonists of these struggles. Quite simply the Armenians apostatized from the true faith while the Georgians stood firm on Orthodoxy. If K'yron remained as a notorious villain in the Armenian tradition, he was no hero in the Georgian narratives

⁴¹⁹ Ricoeur, *Memory*, 404.

either – he was simply absent only to appear as a hero in the twentieth century Georgian historical narrative. The gradual or abrupt removal of a saint or other important figure from commemorative practices for reconciliation's sake is not an alien phenomenon either to the medieval or to the modern "oecumenical" aspirations. Therefore, one could also suppose that the silence concerning K'yrion in the Georgian tradition and commemoration is an attempt of, what Fr Maksoudian calls, "reconciliation of memories".⁴²⁰ Georgians might have very well known the hateful remembrance of K'yrion among the Armenians and might well have abstained from commemorating him, which eventually led to his fall into oblivion.⁴²¹ But this remains a field of speculation.

The following question transpires once again: was the separation between Armenians and Georgians ultimately a mere religious phenomenon or was it nurtured by national sentiments and resulted in a national antagonism on all levels, whether ecclesiastical, ethnic, political or intellectual? It is a commonplace in modern scholarship to refuse to speak about medieval or Late Antique national loyalties. Some historians recommend avoiding the terms *nation* and *national* altogether in the medieval context.⁴²² The same, needless to say, refers to *identities* or *national identities*, concepts that are considered as too modern in French scholarship and anachronistic for medieval studies. Nora even claimed that

il y avait autrefois une histoire nationale et des mémoires particulières; Il y a aujourd'hui une mémoire nationale, mais dont l'unité est faite d'une revendication patrimoniale divisée, en permanente démultiplication et recherche de cohésion.⁴²³

This view found a sound resonance in modern Georgian liberal academic and intellectual circles and became somewhat akin to what I claim medieval Georgian "forgetting" was like. According to this

⁴²⁰ Compare, for example, with the gradual removal of Patriarch Dioskorus from the Armenian liturgical books. See Maksoudian, "Dioscorus", 37-44.

⁴²¹ For an alternative explanation of K'yrion's absence from the Georgian narratives and liturgical commemorations, see the study of K'yrion's life in the addendum to GT: II. 167-273, where for the first time the hypothesis of possible identification of K'yrion of Mxeta with Kyros of Phasis was set forward and ultimately with patriarch Kyros of Alexandria (631-41). His subsequent condemnation could be a plausible explanation for K'yrion's absence from the Georgian commemorative practices and history. For the theological argument, see Aleksidze, "Crypto-Nestorianism", 349-364.

⁴²² See Reynolds, *Kingdoms*, 255. See also Zekiyan's remarks in the Caucasian context, in "Subcaucasian Region", 333-334, especially fn. 5. For parallel material concerning medieval Europe and "nationalisms" in frontier regions, see Abulafia, "Nation", 39-47; Galbraith, "Nationality and Language", 113-128; Hoffmann, "Outsiders", 1-34. Just as in case of the Armeno-Georgian marchalnds, the case of self-identity and political loyalties were extremely complex in the European frontier regions where the awareness of nation was strongly present.

⁴²³ Nora, "Commemoration", 1010.

contemporary discourse, the separation between Armenians and Georgians and the subsequent anti-Georgian and anti-Armenian feelings were not so much ethnic or national phenomena, but rather religious. If we speak of any remnants of anti-Armenian feelings in Georgia, it is all due to “superfluous” religious reasons and not ethnic. For the same reason, one often reads that the late sixth century Caucasian scandal was not so much a discord between Georgians and Armenians, but merely between Chalcedonians and non-Chalcedonians. The same discourse claims that medieval loyalties in the Caucasus were not national but rather royal and religious and nationalistic “anti-Armenianism”, at least in Georgia, is the result of the nineteenth century emergence of nationalism *strict sensu*, triggered by social and ethnic clashes in the Georgian capital.⁴²⁴ It follows, therefore, that it is an artificial construct and inorganic to Georgia as a state and was previously unknown. This perception is indeed a noble endeavor as an attempt to strengthen the integrity of modern multiethnic Georgian nation-state and to propagate tolerance as a value, but to my mind, is not based on the actual historical state of affairs.

In general, the identification of religious and ethnic identities is too far-fetched. S. Brock is certainly right to point out that the national identities in Sasanian Iran and also in the Roman Empire were associated with religious identities.⁴²⁵ But I believe that, and in agreement with Brock, in case of Armenia and Iberia it was much less so. We already saw that the seventh century conflict was not merely a clash of Christian denominations, not an internal split between Chalcedonian and non-Chalcedonian fractions, as it happened in Albania, but was indeed a quasi-national phenomenon, where the ethnicity of a bishop and the language of Church service were deeply controversial. The same holds true to the later Middle Ages: as a result of ethnic, cultural and religious shifts in the Armeno-Iberian marchlands, certain ethnic and religious substrata were being formed which contributed greatly to the very remembrance of the common past and to our own knowledge of the same past.⁴²⁶

⁴²⁴ The discussion developed on various internet blogs rather than scholarly literature. See, for example, the discussion around this very popular topic on Georgian *Radio Liberty* blog: <http://www.radiotavisupleba.ge/content/blog/24244905.html> (12.06.2012). One has to note that this refers to secular liberal intellectuals and not necessarily to traditional scholarship. For a radically different view, see Maisuradze, 139-279.

⁴²⁵ Brock, “Christians”. 1-21.

⁴²⁶ See *infra* the final chapter of the present thesis.

As a radically different view, there exists a second trend in Caucasian historiography which remains of our prime interest and which tries to ascertain that the schism triggered off the eruption of respective “nationalisms”. That is to say, from then on, Georgians and Armenians sat down and started to devise a history of the *self* as opposed to the *other*, e.g. of Georgian i.e. not Armenian history.⁴²⁷ According to this view, such is, for example, the *Conversion of Georgia*, a kind of a national *Liber Pontificalis* which after the separation was designed to highlight the Georgian distancing from the Armenians. This perception I hold equally invalid. We shall see further that a good historical counterbalance to both of these arguments, to the rejection of a national/ethnic component in the schism and to the absolutisation of the role of the Schism, is the very peculiar form of ethno-religious nationalism formed in frames of medieval Byzantine-Georgian relations. Here, much stronger than in the Armeno-Georgian case, we can see the idea of “Georgianness” surfacing the literature.⁴²⁸ And in fact, the definition of *Georgianness* saw a path from “Orthodox but not Greek” to “more Orthodox than Greeks” as revealed in a number of hagiographic and historical texts. But in the medieval Armeno-Georgian discourse such a view all but nonexistent.

3.2. THE RHETORIC OF REMEMBRANCE: THE ARMENIAN WAY

When studying the dialectic of remembrances in the Caucasus, the political aspects that need to be considered are manifold. They include: The initial Armeno-Georgian debates and the political turbulences by the end of Late Antiquity; the first stages of the struggle for domination in the central Caucasus in the last two centuries of the first millennium and the first century of the second, followed by the creation of a multi-ethnic Kingdom of the Georgians by the Bagrat‘ionis in T‘ao and K‘laržeti;⁴²⁹ the inclusion of northern Armenia into the Kingdom of Georgia in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries;⁴³⁰ and religious and ecclesiastical controversies that consequently broke out.⁴³¹ Of equal importance is the formation in the same period of the Georgian “nationalistic” rhetoric in order to imitate and emulate the Byzantines and this in their

⁴²⁷ For the most substantial exposition of such view, see Rapp, *Studies*, 169-171.

⁴²⁸ Virtually in every piece of Georgian literature, historical and hagiographical, stemming from Middle Ages, there is transparent a certain kind of arrogant attitude towards the Byzantines. See Martin-Hisard, “Hilarion”, 101-138; “T‘ao K‘lardzheti”, 34-46.

⁴²⁹ Allen, “March-Lands“, 135-146; Janachian, *Kouropalate*; Martin-Hisard, “T‘ao K‘lardzheti”, 34-46;

⁴³⁰ On the political situation in northern Armenia, see Margaryan, *North Armenia*; Maisuradze, *Studies*, 163-271; Especially Melikset-Bek, *Teachers*, 11-80. Rogers, “Mxargrdzelis”, 315-326;

⁴³¹ See *ACRU*. Melikset-Bek, *Teachers*; Chantladze, *Mxitar Goš*, 25-42; Maisuradze, *Studies*, 15-95; 139-246.

anti-Armenian sentiments too. If we were to consider all of these aspects, the conceptualization of a radical separation would fade.

In this struggle, remembering the “beginnings”, of what we now call Late Antiquity, played a crucial role. Following the first attempts to recall a common past by the Caucasian polemicists of the early seventh century, remembrance would gain an even more significant cultural and social dimension in the period between tenth and thirteenth centuries. In such circumstances, both long and short term recollective functioning was a *raison d'être* for an ethnic or religious group. The creation of new memories and commemorations from the Georgian side aimed at establishing stable social and political units in otherwise ethnically diverse regions on the one hand and, on the larger scale, at creating a shared memory for two nations that were to co-exist under a single Bagrat'ioni crown. I believe that such a political dimension of memory worked both on the macro and micro levels among Armenians as well as Georgians. The questions that arise are the following: what kind of communities were these? What source of knowledge provides evidence for the existence of such groups? How did they perceive each other and how did they differentiate between *us* and the *other*? What role did the remembrance of unity and separation play in the ideological battlefield of the Middle Ages and what today? Have modern historians broken away, or have they in principle been able to break away from the images drawn by centuries of polemic and of the polemical conceptualization of Late Antique Caucasus? In the first instance, the answer to these final questions is – hardly so.

The struggle for political leadership in the region was accompanied by an equally ardent ideological battle. Both Georgian and Armenian parties developed specific rhetoric with regard to the perception both of the political *status quo* and the history of the Caucasus. This was made explicit both on a major scale and on a rather minor one. To a certain extent the idea of unity before the separation, discussed in previous chapters, could be considered in a larger “messianic” conception of history by medieval Armenian narratives, as that of a state requiring in principle to be restored. The evaluation of this kind of ideology *vis-à-vis* Georgia can be divided into three chronological periods: the initial early seventh century debates; the struggle over the political control in the Caucasus and the so-to-say revanchist feelings developed among the Armenians

during the supremacy of the Georgian Bagrat'ionis in the region. This third period is particularly highlighted by the intellectuals of northern Armenia, who had to maintain cultural autonomy in terms of Georgian dominance.⁴³²

One of many attempts of creating a long term “collective” memory was the elaboration of foundation myths by the medieval Georgian and Armenian historiographies. The most vivid examples of such foundation myths are preserved, in the Armenian case by Movsēs Xorenac'i and, in the Georgian case, by the *Lives of the Kings* (Leont'i Mroveli?). The initiation of an ethnocentric approach towards the Caucasus and towards the history of the Caucasus can safely be attributed to Movsēs Xorenac'i. For Xorenac'i, the Caucasus was historically united under the Armenian aegis and, moreover, was supposed to be such in the future. He goes further than anyone before or after in magnifying the cultural and political role of Armenia in the region and argues for perpetual supremacy of Armenia over all neighbours, most of all over Albania and Georgia.⁴³³ The claims that Xorenac'i advanced were manifold, encompassing both cultural and political aspects: For example, not only were the Georgians indebted to the Armenians for being evangelized, but even the pagan pantheon was earlier borrowed from Armenia. It was, after all, the Armenian epic hero Vahagn who was deified in Georgia with his idol being erected.⁴³⁴

The story of the Georgian evangelizer St Nino is also narrated in a way that would glorify Armenia and present the entire process of conversion of Georgia as initiated and supervised from the Armenian Holy

⁴³² L. Melikset-Bek has dedicated a thorough study to the cultural life in Northern Armenia and to individual authors during the Georgian dominance. See Melikset-Bek, *Teachers*. On the status of the northern Armenian in the Georgian kingdom, see Maisuradze, “Status”, 24-284; Margaryan, *North Armenia*.

⁴³³ For discussion on Xorenac'i's ideology, see e.g. Zekiyan, “L'idéologie”, 471-485.

⁴³⁴ Along the same lines of absolutizing the role of the Armenians in process of Christianization, must be read the legend of King Abgar as presented by Xorenac'i and the way Abgar suddenly becomes an Armenian king. See Carrière, *Abgar*; Drost-Abgarjan, “Abgar-Legende”, 69-74. In one of the narratives on Abgar, the king is said to have united the Armenian and Albanian armies to revenge Christ's death. Outtier suggests that it might be an Albanian addition if the manuscript was copied in Albania and reflects the remaining “Albanian consciousness among the Armenians well after the last ethnic Albanian katholikos”. Constant nationalization is typical to the Abgar legend and expecting Abgar to be the leader of the “oecumene” over which the Armenians had pretensions, is quite possible. For the passage from the text, see Outtier, “Abgar”, 142; for discussion, see *ibid.* 131.

Fathers. Nunē is presented as another companion of St Hrip'sime who was merely acting on behalf of St Gregory the Illuminator in following his assignments:⁴³⁵

Blessed Nunē sought out trustworthy men and sent them to St Gregory, asking him to command her, what to do from then on, for the Georgians had happily accepted the preaching of the Gospel. She received a command to destroy the idols, just as he had done himself, and to set up the honourable sign of the Cross until the day when the Lord would grant them a pastor as guide.⁴³⁶

Interestingly, Xorenac'i amended the story by claiming that after baptizing the Georgian royal family, the embassy was sent to Gregory, while Socrates Scholastikos, who is Movsēs's primary source, asserted that the delegates were sent to Constantinople to request an archbishop.⁴³⁷ Moreover, Movsēs claimed that Nino spread the Gospel in the regions between

Klarjk' (K'laržeti) to the gates of the Alans (Darial) and the Caspians, as far as the borders of the Massagetae, as Agathangelos informs us.⁴³⁸

In this way Movsēs revealed his contemporary geo-political aspirations rather than fourth century state of affairs. Besides, Agathangelos does not mention Nino at all, at least in none of the survived versions, and all this was credited to Gregory himself. Xorenac'i presented Georgia not only as being dependant culturally on Armenia, but politically as well. Numerous examples of his description of united Armenian and Georgian military endeavours show the Georgians as Armenian vassals and, furthermore, the Georgian King Mirian was honoured simply as a leader or a general (*arajnord*), not as a king.⁴³⁹

According to the idea of the *Caucasus*, as presented by Movsēs Xorenac'i and which became the dominating ideological framework in medieval Armenia, all Caucasian lands and people were to be subjected to the Armenian crown, because such was Divine predestination from the age of the epic founding fathers.

⁴³⁵ See Martin-Hisard, "Sainte Nino", 66-67. Aharon Vanandec'i, just as many others who follow Xorenac'i, also stresses that everything that Nino did, was supervised by St. Gregory. See *infra* for a more detailed discussion on the role of Nino in Armenian and Georgian traditions.

⁴³⁶ MX-Thom 239; MX, 237: Իսկ երանելոյն Նունէի խնորեալ արս հաւատարիմս՝ յղեաց առ սուրբն Գրիգոր, եթէ զինչ հրամայեացէ նմա գործել այնուհետև. Քանզի յօժարութեամբ ընկալան Վիրք զքարոզութիւն Աւետարանին: Եւ հրաման ընդունի՝ կործանել զկուռսն, որպէս ինքն արար, և կանգնել զպատուական նշան խաչին մինչև ցօր տալոյ Տէառն հովիւ յառաջնորդութեան նոցա:

⁴³⁷ Socr, 21.

⁴³⁸ MX-Thom 239; MX, 239: Զոր համարձակիմք ասել, առաքելուհի եղեալ քարոզեաց ի Կղարջաց սկսեալ առ դրամբք Ալանաց և Կասբից մինչև ի սահմանս Մասքթաց, որպէս ուսուցանէ քեզ Ազաթանգեղոս:

⁴³⁹ *Ibid*, 238.

Consequently, the foundation myth, as presented by Xorenac‘i, served the same ends. The story of the ethnarch-eponyms differed drastically from the Georgian tradition both in content and ideologically.⁴⁴⁰ In the process distribution of the Caucasian lands, Georgians were almost fully ignored at the beginning and together with other Caucasian people were called “northerners”. Briefly put, Movsēs Xorenac‘i presented the history of the Caucasus as a history of the Armenian nation, the Southern Caucasus was a promised land that belonged and belongs to the Armenian nation while all other nations were subject to it. Unlike the Georgian counterpart, group solidarity was ethnic, not regional.⁴⁴¹

A vivid example of such rhetoric formed during the formation of kingdoms in the Caucasus is, I believe, the letter that, according to Yovhannēs Drasxanakerc‘i, Patriarch Nikolaos Mystikos of Constantinople (852–925) allegedly sent to the Katholikos, reflecting both the position of the Byzantine Empire *vis-à-vis* the Caucasus and the situation in the Caucasus proper:

At that time, the great patriarch of Constantinople, Nikolaos, hearing of the calamities and the hardships that had come upon us, wrote to me [Yovhannēs] the following letter: “To the ever beloved brother Lord Yovhannēs, Katholikos of Greater Armenia, from Nikolaos ... I think that your God-loving lordship is not aware of the deep sorrow and ceaseless grief of our heart on behalf of the Armenians, the Iberians, and the Albanians, who collectively comprise your faithful flock upon whom the Ishmaelite Saracen tyrants have inflicted severe travail and afflictions ... Now, if it seems proper to your Holiness, first of all, it is necessary to call upon the divine Providence and succour at all times, and lifting up your arms, ask the Lord God with all your heart to have mercy on your flock, namely the Armenians, the Iberians, and the Albanians ... Do not let them remain in their wild, beastly state, whereby they fall upon one another in rage in order to kill. Let them return to human rationality and Christian serenity, where with salvation will be granted to the rest of the people in the lands of Armenia, Iberia, and Albania.”⁴⁴²

⁴⁴⁰ See Gulbekian, “Traditional Origin”, 365-375.

⁴⁴¹ For Xorenac‘i’s understanding of Armenian identity, see van Lint, “Identity”, 256-258; On the Armenian origins, see also Russel, “Formation”, 19-36.

⁴⁴² YD-Eng, 189-190; YD, 266-267: Ապա սակս սասանութեանց և վրդովմանց մերոց՝ լուեալ մեծի պատրիատգին Կոստանդնուպօլսի Նիկողայ, գրէ թուղթ առ իս օրինակ գայս. Տեսոն և յաւետ սիրելի եղբօր մերում՝ Յովհաննու կաթողիկոսի Հայոց Մեծաց, ի Նիկողայոսէ ողորմութեամբն... Կարծեմ ոչ ինչ զանխուլ է՝ տէր իմ, ի քոյոյ յաստուածասիրութենէդ յոյժ տրտմութիւն և անպակաս ցաւք սրտից մերոց յաղագս Հայոց և Վրաց և Աղուանից միահամուռ քոյոյ հաւատացեալ հօտից, որ եհաս ի վերայ դառն տագնապ չարչարանց և նեղութեանց Սարակինոս Իսմայէլեան բռնակալացն: Արդ եթէ պատշաճ թուեսցի սրբութեանդ ձերում, պարտ է նախ զաստուածային այցելութիւնն և զօգնականութիւնն յամենայն ժամ վերակարդալ, և ձեռս՝ ի վեր ամբառնալ և բոլորով սրտիւ ի գոյթ ողորմութեան կոչել զամենակալն Աստուած քոյոյոյ հօտիդ Հայոց և Վրաց և Աղուանից ... և մի տալ թոյլ մնալ ի վայրենի զազանութեանդ, որք բարկացեալք և դիմեալք են ի սպանումն միմեանց, և դառնալ ի մարդկային մտածութիւնս և ի քրիստոնէական հանդարտութիւնս, որով բերի իսկ ի փրկութիւն մնացելոցդ մասանց մարդկան Հայոց աշխարհիդ և Վրաց և Աղուանից: The genuine

If we believe Yovhannēs, the Constantinopolitan patriarch holds Chalcedonian Georgians and also Albanians as the flock of the Armenian katholikos and this in the tenth century, moreover the Armenian katholikos is held as the sole guarantee for peace in the region. Whatever the level of genuineness the letter might sustain, it certainly exhibits Armenian aspirations. This claim reminds us of similar assertions by the same Yovhannēs, that K‘yron was appointed as metropolitan of the Armenian Church in Iberia and Egrisi, thereby trying to historically justify his contemporary aspirations to stretch the jurisdiction of the Armenian Church over the entire Caucasian region,:

In accordance with former practice, this Movsēs ordained Kiwrion, the elder of the rectory of the Holy Cathedral [of Dwin], as archbishop over the province of Iberia, Gugark‘ and Egrisi.⁴⁴³

This claim is above all substantiated by mythical “former practices” thus creating a transitional bridge between his contemporary times and the former, pre-schismal, state of affairs that must be restored through the reminiscence of the Schism.

Concerning such, so to say, territorial expansion of rhetoric, the different versions of the *Life of Saint Gregory* are noteworthy, as they reveal how the tradition evolved according to the changes in the region’s political geography. St Gregory ranges from being the illuminator of Armenia alone to being the pan-Caucasian and even the “pan-East” enlightener.⁴⁴⁴ Especially diversified are the testimonies concerning his missionary activity outside of Armenia proper and the distribution of the eparchies allegedly founded by him.⁴⁴⁵ It is possible to trace a pattern of St Gregory’s evolving status with regard to other Caucasian people,

character of the letter can be doubted mainly because it fits too well in the general Armenian agenda of the period. Secondly no such letter is extant in Greek or is there any mentioning of Nikolaos Mystikos writing to the Armenians.

⁴⁴³ YD, 65; YD-Eng, 93. Note the dubious differentiation between the bishopric of Gugark‘ and of Iberia. For discussion, see *infra*, on Gugark‘, pp. 167-176.

⁴⁴⁴ N. Marr thought that there is a gradual expansion of the geographic boundaries of Gregory’s missionary work and Gregory’s cult was much more prominent from the seventh century on than before. See Marr, “Baptism”, 154-155. Compare with the acclaimed *Letter of Love and Concord* a late twelfth century forgery, allegedly signed by Pope Sylvester and Gregory the Illuminator that divided almost the whole of the Christian East between the Armenian and Roman governance. For a new study, see Pogossian, *Letter*. See, also, Halfter, “Constantinus”, 399-428; *Papsttum*, 204-220; Shirinian, “Letter”, 79-99;

⁴⁴⁵ Agathangelos’s work has been much criticized in scholarly writings. Differing strata of what we now know as the *Life of Gregory* have emerged. For different versions of the list of the bishops, see Agath-Thom II, 449-459.

such as the Albanians and Georgians (both western and eastern).⁴⁴⁶ Note the expansion of the number of eparchies founded by Gregory:

The Greek version of Agathangelos claims that Gregory's first student was a certain Irenark⁴ appointed in Sebastia,⁴⁴⁷ whereas the Arabic version purports that the same person was a Sebastian Georgian who was sent as a metropolitan to Iberia, which reminds of the already discussed claims that Iberia was a metropolity of the Armenian Church.⁴⁴⁸ As for the Armenian version, it makes no reference to such a person. Further, the Greek version claims that Gregory sent a Cappadocian Sophronius to Lazika as bishop,⁴⁴⁹ but the Arabic version calls the same land Apxazeti.⁴⁵⁰ Again the Armenian version is silent about either this person or this diocese. It is certain now that the Christianization of western Georgia experienced completely different situations. The legend of Gregory as enlightener of western Georgia must have emerged during the period of pan-Georgian unity when "Georgia" stood for a relatively large territory from east to west of the Caucasus.⁴⁵¹ The Greek and Arabic versions further claim that Gregory sent Bishop Thomas to Albania.⁴⁵² Again, the Armenian version makes no reference to this. Another bishop that is absent from the Armenian version of the list of bishops is that of Tayk⁴. Therefore, the Greek and Arabic versions assert that the total number of bishops was sixteen. The Armenian has twelve. The four added bishops are precisely those of Iberia, Lazika, Albania and Tayk⁴. This gradual addition of the controversial regions to the list of the bishops is evident.⁴⁵³ Just as in the case of the number of the Syrian fathers, which was sacral and was thirteen in total and gradually added

⁴⁴⁶ For this observation, see Aleksidze, "Bishop", 16-18.

⁴⁴⁷ Agath-Thom II, 457-458.

⁴⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 458-459.

⁴⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵⁰ *Ibid.* The name Apxaz, as opposed to Lazika is a very late phenomenon, when the designation Apxazeti referred to all of Western Georgia and, in a short time, the whole of Georgia.

⁴⁵¹ *Cf.*, YD, 65.

⁴⁵² Agath-Thom II, 457.

⁴⁵³ This broadening of the role of St Gregory and King T'rdat is very similar to another expansion of tradition. The Armenian version of the *Life of Gregory* claims that T'rdat heard of Constantine's conversion, rejoiced, and went there together with Gregory, while the Greek and Arabic versions claim that it was the other way around: Constantine heard of the Armenian conversion and summoned T'rdat. Besides T'rdat had to pay tribute. Sebeos even adds that Constantine prostrated himself in front of St. Gregory. As a result, the two established a pact of friendship which was destined to re-emerge throughout the medieval Armenian literature as documented proof for Armenian domination in the region. All of this later culminated in the famous forgery called the *Letter of Love and Concord*. For detailed discussion, see Thomson, "Constantine and T'rdat", 273-289.

“new” members, so did the number of the bishops installed by St Gregory, “beginning” with symbolic twelve and reaching sixteen.⁴⁵⁴

The Armenian translation of Michal the Syrian produces a further fabrication of the original text concerning the Georgians; it once again aims at reaffirming Armenian supremacy.

Famous throughout the world, martyr Gregory, becoming equal to the apostles Thaddeus and Bartolomew, restored their deficiencies and enlightened, from one end to the other, Armenia, the house of the Georgians and the land of the Albanians and filled all regions near Armenia with the knowledge of truth.⁴⁵⁵

In a later period, during the Georgian domination in the region, in a situation of a lost statehood, the northern Armenians had to maintain the memory of the state and consolidate the nation in the act of remembrance.⁴⁵⁶ The eloquent introductory words of Mxit'ar Goš to his *Laws* reflect the contemporary feelings of the Armenian nation:

People, who will read my laws, will laugh at them, and compare me to someone who dreams of a kingdom in his dreams and of many similar pleasant things, but as soon as he wakes up, he finds himself devoid of all this. But may they know, what we do not forget, how temporary all earthly kingdoms are, and our kingdom even more; past is not among us anymore and we do not possess the present either nor shall witness it in the future ... may they, who ever see this kingdom, forgive me.⁴⁵⁷

In an equally expressive manner, Mxit'ar Goš further writes:

Lest this [forgetting] occur we have composed this law code for the sake of remembrance. What at that moment we cannot recall, on taking it into our hands we shall recall; and we shall indicate to foreign races that we live by a law code, so that being put to silence thereby, they may not become reproachful of us.⁴⁵⁸

⁴⁵⁴ a.) The number of Gregory's bishops expanded even further: For example, Uxtanēs speaks of 30 dioceses, US I, 100; Whereas Step'anos Orbelean enumerates 36 bishops. SO, 23; See also Aleksidze, “Bishop”, 16-17, fn. 28.

b.) The Georgian version of the *Life of Gregory*, which is derived from the Greek, speaks about ten bishops. *VGreg-Geo*, 496; For the dioceses in St Gregory's time, see Harutunyan, “Diözesan-Gliederung”, 81-94; For G. Babian's views, see Babian, *Relations*, 14-29. We witness a similar expansion of Maštoc's contribution to the Armenian culture: From being a translator and inventor of the alphabet, he became author of almost all aspects of Christian Armenian culture. See Arevšatyan, “Maštoc”, 153-157.

⁴⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵⁶ An objection might arise that in the twelfth and thirteenth century, there were several Armenian kingdoms in Anatolia, but I need to stress once again that we are discussing Armenian rhetoric in the Armeno-Georgian context. But even in Cilician Armenia the nationalistic rhetoric were not too different from the northern Armenia, although triggered by different needs and by the Crusader-Armenian relations and antagonism against the Byzantines.

⁴⁵⁷ See *MG-Can*,

⁴⁵⁸ *MG-Can-Thom*, 73.

The foreign race that was constantly accusing Armenians of all mortal sins, was in those days the Georgian to Mxit'ar. Hence establishing and enforcing remembrance of cultural continuity of the Armenian nationhood *vis-à-vis* the Georgians was essential.⁴⁵⁹ This continuity was supposed to be both cultural and also intellectual. Thus intellectual élite such as Mxit'ar Goš was himself a reminder of the cultural dependency of the Georgians on the Armenians. The medieval genre of the so-called *Gavazanagirk'* constructs an ideological line of continuity between Mesrop Maštoc' and the contemporary intellectuals, centered especially around Mxit'ar Goš and his school:

Mesrop, who devised letters for Armenians, Georgians and Albanians – his student Movsēs K'erdoł – David the Invincible philosopher – Eznik – Mambre – Łazar P'arpec'i – Paul (?) – Abraham the Grammarian – Nersēs Mecop'ec'i – his student Yovhannēs Mayragomec'i – his student Nersēs Klaec'i – his student Grgory – his student great and blessed teacher of teachers Mxit'ar nicknamed Goš – Yovhannēs Vanakan – Vardan etc.⁴⁶⁰

These last persons listed were those involved in active debates with the Georgians. What also needed to be done, as Vanakan Vardapet puts it, is to argue on all possible occasions that Georgians owed the Armenians and it was the Georgians who were forgetful, not the Armenians.⁴⁶¹ Or, as the translator of the *Chronicle* of Michael the Syrian tries at all possible occasions, to remind Georgians that they used to be Armenian slaves and one day unlawfully rebelled against them. At a certain point, he completely conjures an entire story, claiming Georgian servitude to the Armenians, whereas in the Syriac original there is no mention of Georgians at all:⁴⁶²

In the ninth year of the rule of Constantine, the Greek armies came and established themselves on the mountain of Libanan and they were called rebels and the Syrians called them Čurčans and they occupied the lands from the mountain of Libanan to the Black Mountain and it is supposed that the Georgians are called Čurčans for exactly the same reason, for they rebelled against the slavery of the Armenians and the union in faith. And the Tačiks came and destroyed the rebels.⁴⁶³

⁴⁵⁹ Mxit'ar dedicated a separate treatise to Georgians. See *MG-AdGeo*; See also the recently appeared Georgian translation and detailed commentary by N. Chantladze, *Mxit'ar Goš*.

⁴⁶⁰ Quoted from Melikset-Bek, *Teachers*, 78-79.

⁴⁶¹ See *infra*, p. 170.

⁴⁶² On the Armenian version of Michael the Syrian, see Haase, "Chronik", 60-82, 271-282; Schmidt, "Armenische Rezension", 299-321; For the adaptation and usage of the *Chronicle* by the Armenians, especially for the anti-Chalcedonian forgeries in Syrian and Armenian traditions see Schmidt, "Armenische Adaptation", 359-371. Forgery and interpolation in the texts for polemical and propagandistic reasons was widely practiced in the Middle Ages. For discussions, see Gray, "Forgery", 284-289; Witakowski, "Monophysite Propaganda", 57-66.

⁴⁶³ MS-Arm, 324-325: Ի յինն ամի Կոստանդիայ ելին 'ի Յունաց զօրք և բնակեցան 'ի լեառն Լիբանանու և կոչեցան ապստամբք, և Ասորիք կոչեցին զնոսա ճուռճանք. և առին 'ի Լիբանանու լեռնէն՝ սինչեւ ի սեաւ

These are only several out of numerous examples that back in the day the Georgians committed a major offence by undermining the Caucasian unity, a unity that certain medieval Armenian intellectuals, such as brilliant Mxit'ar Goš, hoped one day would be restored. The schism did in fact become an interpretive scheme for all political processes in the region. Therefore, to the *vardapets* of northern Armenia the following statement by P. Nora is applicable: “when memory ceases to be omnipresent, it ceases to be present at all unless some isolated individual decides to assume responsibility for it.”⁴⁶⁴

3.2.1. THE GEORGIAN APPROACH

Georgian historiography developed a completely different method of authenticating its present. The difference between the Armenian and the Georgian ideological frameworks was that, while in its Caucasian policy Armenians as a cultural entity remained rather exclusivist, claiming perpetual political and cultural superiority, the surviving samples of Georgian rhetoric can be viewed as a path from unsuccessful exclusivist attempts to a successful inclusivist policy. There was a principle difference between the two ways in which Georgian and Armenian remembrance operated. This difference was paradigmatic and shaped not only the content of the literature produced but even the genres.

Equally different was the Georgian ideological platform. Even during the Schism, the Georgian side avoided exclusivist policies and Katholikos K'yron was not remotely interested in alienating the Armenians. If Katholikos Abraham declared anathemas on K'yron, there is no evidence that K'yron responded in a similar fashion. Non-Chalcedonian ethnic Armenians constituted a considerable minority both in Late Antique Iberia and in the Medieval Georgian Kingdom and political rhetoric could not have been and indeed was not entirely exclusive, just the opposite. In subsequent centuries we know that not only ethnic Armenians held high administrative positions in the Georgian Kingdom but even non-Chalcedonians, such as, e.g.,

լեանն. և թուի թէ՛ այսու պատճառաւ կոչին Վրացիք ճուռճանք, զի ապստամբեցին 'ի Հայոց ծառայութենէ և 'ի հաւատակցութենէ: Եւ ելին Տաճիկք և ջնջեցին զապստամբսն: For discussion on this passage, see Chantladze, “Michael”, 469.

⁴⁶⁴ Nora, *Realms of Memory*, 2-3.

Zakaria Mxargrzelis (d. 1212), were made highly-ranked officials and probably many more at the court of Davit II Kouropalates (c.930–1001).⁴⁶⁵

Before embarking upon the study of various sources that narrate about such inclusivism, one has to note that it is certainly wrong to claim that the Georgians were not concerned with polemicizing with the Armenians. In fact just as the Armenians debated with the Chalcedonians, the Georgians have also created and translated a number of anti-Armenian and anti-Monophysite polemical works.⁴⁶⁶ In surveying the so-to-say Armenian policies of the Georgians and the subsequent recollections concerning the Armenians, it must be remembered that these were never uniform. For example, the monastic centres beyond Georgia and under Byzantine influence were much less reconciliatory than the official royal policy. The same apparently refers to certain social strata, where full social solidarity in the Armeno-Georgian marchlands was never achieved and in fact the antagonism remained constantly alive in popular narratives. Therefore, the study of Georgian anti-Armenian polemical literature and of Armeno-Georgian dialogue of the Middle Ages in general, reveals two trends. The first trend is more irreconcilable, emanating from mainly monastic milieux of the school of T'ao and the Georgian monastic centres in Byzantium and generally abroad, particularly those that were following Byzantine mainstream anti-Armenian policy such as the Georgian monastery on Mt. Athos, the Georgian community on Mt. Sinai, the monastery of Petric'oni in Bulgaria and others. Understandably theological polemics were strongly affected by political and national antagonism as well. This is why the anti-Armenian literature is possibly the only polemical genre that developed in Georgia, while other *contra*

⁴⁶⁵ See, e.g. Rogers, "Mxargrdzelis", 315-326.

⁴⁶⁶ For an overview of medieval Georgian anti-Armenian literature, see Aleksidze, "Polemical Literature"; Some of the major anti-Armenian treatises were also incorporated in the collection called *Dogmatikon*. See Outtier, "Dogmatikon", 217-226. Especially popular in the Georgian tradition were pseudo-Sahak's (the Armenian katholikos who allegedly later became a Chalcedonian bishop of Nicaea) pamphlets against the Armenian heresy – the *Ἀπόταξις τῶν Αἰρετικῶν Ἀρμενίων*. (PG 132, col. 1237-1266). These pamphlets were heavily edited and shaped in three main texts: *Thirty Chapters of the Armenian Heresy*, *The Interpretation of the Heresy of the Armenians* and *The Anathematization of all Jacobites among whom are the Armenians*. See Melikset-Bek, "Pseudo-Isaac", 208-222. Another tradition noteworthy of mention and that became an integral part of the polemical discourse in the Caucasus was that of Peter Fuller and the origins of the fast of *Araġawork'*. A specific work was translated and adapted in Georgian – the anonymous *On Peter Fuller and the Lent of Araġawork'*. The tradition of Peter Fuller being the introducer of this fast was quite widespread in the Chalcedonian Caucasus and gave birth to a number of legends on the co-existence of the Armenians, Greeks and the Georgians in the region. *Thirty Chapters of the Armenian Heresy* was also translated and incorporated into the *Dogmatikon*. For the edition, see Aleksidze, "Anti-Monophysite Treatise", 133-158. The original must have been created in the middle of the eighth century, while the Georgian translation reflects the practical problems that arose between the Armenians and the Georgians in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, including liturgical issues and problems of baptism. *Thirty Chapters* were also later translated from Georgian into Armenian.

haereseos literature was mostly ignored or translated solely for educational purposes. Most of the surviving polemical texts are translations and adaptations of various dogmatic, homiletical and other theological works, adapted to specific polemical needs. The original anti-Armenian pieces are not numerous either. These are mostly records of various Church councils such as the *Dispute of Monk Ephrem with Sostene the Teacher of the Armenians*,⁴⁶⁷ a record of a debate between the Armenian and Georgian theologians that allegedly took place at the 1046 council of Artanuži,⁴⁶⁸ convened by King Bagrat IV (1027–72). Polemical articles are also included in the *Acts of the Council of Ruisi and Urnisi* (1103), convened by King Davit IV the Builder, aiming at the radical reorganization of the Church.⁴⁶⁹ The *Lesser Nomokanon* by Euthymios the Hagiorite (955–1028) also includes some original polemical paragraphs, targeting mainly the Armenian cause.⁴⁷⁰ The *Nomokanon* expands predominantly on the *Acts of the Council of Trullo* (691) and its anti-Armenian decrees. A separate and already discussed treatise has been dedicated to the ecclesiastical and political separation of the Armenians and Georgians: *On the Severance of the Armenians and the Georgians* by Katholikos Arseni Sapareli (10th–11th c.).⁴⁷¹ The main bulk of polemical literature is dated to a much later period, namely to the eighteenth century, when the Georgian Patriarch Anthony (1720–88) created a massive anti-Armenian treatise *Mzamet ‘q ‘ueleba*.⁴⁷²

Hagiography was equally used as a polemical tool to argue for a particular case against the Armenian position. The earliest *Vitae* and martyrdoms that we possess do not reveal any polemical anti-Armenian hints,

⁴⁶⁷ See *DispES*, 615-621. The treatise was written by an anonymous representative of the Gelati literary school in the twelfth century and is an account of the council of Yrt’ila that took place during the reign of King Bagrat IV. An Armenian called Sostene came to the Council and started arguing against the Georgians on the matter of faith. As the council was more military than Church, no one was to be found to object to Sostene, so the King was suggested to summon Ekvtime Grzeli, who apparently arrived from Jerusalem and stayed at the court of the Bishop of Anči. The main argument developed around the interpretation of various scriptural passages, on the nature of the Incarnation of the Logos and the two natures of Christ. An important argument for our case, put forward by Ekvtime, is the claim that before the Fourth Ecumenical Council the Armenians also recognized two natures in Christ, but later at the Council of Dwin, under the pressure of the Persians they separated from “the true faith” and joined the Jacobites. The text presents numerous notable historical details on the nature of Georgian and Armenian relations at the time and even before. First of all the author claims that the council in Art’anuži was not the first such council convened on matters of Armenian and Georgian ecclesiastical relations. The anti-Georgian treatise by Anania Sanahinec’i, which is contemporary to this council might reflect the renewed theological controversy between the two people. See Melikset-Bek, *Teachers*, 112.

⁴⁶⁸ A city in the T’ao-K’laržeti region, renovated by Ašot I Bagrat’ioni in the ninth century.

⁴⁶⁹ See, *ACRU*; For Davit’s ecclesiastical policy, see Lordkipanidze, *Georgia*, 80-118; Metreveli, *Golden Age*, 54-65.

⁴⁷⁰ For the editions see: *NCM*,

⁴⁷¹ AS, 77-93; AS-Fr, 59-132.

⁴⁷² On Anthony’s treatise see, Melikset-Bek, “Anton I”, 97-112;

although the later ones certainly do. This was not exceptional either for the Byzantine or for the Syriac traditions and we could have expected layers of polemicity in the Georgian hagiography too, where the tradition is so strong.⁴⁷³ The most antagonistic piece of literature towards the Armenians was created in the mid ninth century by bishop St‘epane of T‘beti, the *Martyrdom of Gobron* produced symptomatically in the T‘ao-K‘laržeti region.⁴⁷⁴ Apparently the relations between lower classes were somewhat more strained and were not carefully overseen by the state, therefore the popular or better to say unofficial tradition presented a different memory of the history of the Armenian and Georgian relations. The remnants of these popular traditions can be found both in oral history and in such genres as hagiography, which was less than other genres tied to the official policy.⁴⁷⁵ This attitude was the most irreconcilable one, blaming the entire Armenian nation, the “house of the Armenians”, of trespassing the Divine commandments and for this reason being punished.⁴⁷⁶ It is probably the only example of such an attitude emanating from Georgia proper. It was also claimed, whether rightly or not by the Armenian sources, that the troops of the Georgian King Davit II Kouropalates turned the Armenian churches into stables and that they even said: “An Armenian Church and one of your mosques are one and the same for us.”⁴⁷⁷ The antagonism and mutual disrespect even went as far as rebaptizing each other. We know of several cases of mutual re-baptismal. For example, according to Asolik, the

marzpan Demetr who was ruler of the fortress of Gag ... apostatized from the beliefs of his fathers’ [Armenian] faith, and gained assistance of the Georgians. He bathed in their twice lethal waters.⁴⁷⁸

The following sentence from the *Acts of the Iviron Monastery* is a classic example of such an aggressive attitude towards everything Armenian:

⁴⁷³ Cf. Stallman, “Past”, 347-365. Stallman’s concluding paragraph is also relevant for our case: “The hagiographer did not simply indulge in a pious activity which happened to reflect contemporary problems, but rather addressed contemporary problems and tensions and sought their resolution through the representation of the past. He used past to manipulate and to structure the present ... It was his very ignorance of the past which made it so useful and enabled the Byzantine hagiographer to use the past as an instrument of change to create the future”.

⁴⁷⁴ For French translation and study, see Martin-Hisard, “Brebis”, 220-233.

⁴⁷⁵ Cf. *supra* the stories on Peter and Sargis.

⁴⁷⁶ *SMMartG*, 173-174.

⁴⁷⁷ ST, 268: Մեր զՀայ եկեղեցին և զձեր սգկիթն միապէս ընդունիմք:

⁴⁷⁸ ST, 257: Յայնժամ մարգպանն Դեմետր, որ էր իշխան ի Գագ բերդին ի սահմանս յայնոսիկ՝ կասկածեալ ի նմանէ՝ թողու զհաւատս հայրենի հայութեան և թիկունս օգնականի ի Վիրս արարեալ՝ ի նոցին կրկնամետ լուանայ ջուր; ST-Ger, 195-196.

The most terrible race of the Armenians is most deceitful and evil to the extreme, mad and capricious and slanderous, and full of deceit, being greatly so by nature.⁴⁷⁹

Therefore when one speaks of a certain kind of Georgian “anti-Armenianism”, in the absolute majority of cases these sentiments were nurtured by the Byzantine-Georgian relations and by the attempt to surpass the Byzantines in their zealotry, and the overwhelming majority of anti-Armenian texts, except of only individual exceptions, are translations and the most irreconcilable feelings emanate from the Georgian cultural milieu in Byzantium.⁴⁸⁰

3.2.2. *INCLUSIVISM*

In such circumstances there was a need to support inclusivist policy in the Georgian kingdom towards the Armenians. I believe such policy can be traced in two consecutive historical epochs and on two levels: the first stage was the formation of the Georgian Kingdom of T’ao in the ninth and tenth centuries, when the local Armenian population had been integrated into the Kingdom, and secondly the unification of the entire Caucasus under the rule of Apxaz-T’aoian Bagrat’ionis in the eleventh century. At that time, northern Armenia was incorporated into the Kingdom and Georgian political and religious domination met with strong Armenian ethnic presence. As a result, these marchlands “suffered” a kind of dichotomy: On the one hand, the monasteries in T’ao were the fiercest centres of anti-Armenian sentiments, and on the other, most of the state inclusivist policy was carried out in T’ao. Similar processes developed in so called northern Armenia, where local monastic circles shaped the strongest anti-Georgian front and meanwhile carried out attempts to be included into the Georgian state, as the quoted treatise by Mxit’ar Goš illustrates it.

Unlike the Armenian position, any ethnocentric approach towards history-writing was absent in Georgian writing, only to emerge in early and later modern times. When the destiny of a nation was juxtaposed onto the destiny of a kingdom, the second one was to prevail in the newly formed geo-political realia. For Georgia this is understandable and its literature has almost always been “royal” and has served the ends of the crown. If the Armenian myth of origin can safely be called ethnocentric, that of the Georgians evolved from

⁴⁷⁹ *ActIvir*, 123.

⁴⁸⁰ For the Byzantine perceptions of Armenians, see Vryonis, “Images,” 65-83.

ethnocentric to regional, where the subject and main actors were regional players, and not ethnic. As in Armenia of the same period, so in Georgia was there a specific ideological framework slowly taking shape. Although the historiographical voice is more subdued in early medieval Georgia, it is still possible to elucidate two trends in the vision of Antique and Late Antique Caucasian history.

The *Life of Vaxt'ang* is one of the most controversially dated texts with dating ranging from the early sixth to the eleventh century. It is both chronologically and ideologically comparable to the *History* of Movsēs Xorenac'i in the sense that it presents King Vaxt'ang Gorgasali and Iberia of his time as the ultimate leader of the Caucasus. The credibility of the *Life of King Vaxt'ang* has long been debated in both Georgian and western scholarship and surely it aims at creating an image of a holy king rather than at writing a chronicle.⁴⁸¹ But this question is of secondary importance here. The main resemblance of the *Life* with Xorenac'i's *History* is the former's attempt to overlook almost all other political factors and instead foster the claim to be a regional superpower under the Georgian king as in virtually the same period as that treated by Xorenac'i. The *Life of Vaxt'ang* was probably created under similar circumstances as the *History* of Movsēs, that is to say, during the period of the interregnum. But unlike Xorenac'i, ჯუანშერ does not attempt to serve the needs of a contemporary ruling elite, but rather to glorify a specific Georgian king of the past.

But the historiographical work that has puzzled Georgian scholars for centuries is the *Life of the Georgian Kings*, traditionally attributed to Leont'i Bishop of Ruisi (11th c.), but probably shaped much earlier (eighth century?). At least it can securely be said that the *Life of the Kings* was edited by Leont'i in the eleventh century. The narrative reflects not only the current ideological state of affairs in Georgia but also explains some of the burning questions concerning Georgian historical memory. Furthermore, it sheds some light on the question of a somewhat negligent attitude of the Georgian ruling elite towards the "Armenian problem". Another reason that the *Lives of the Kings* ought to be treated with a greater care is that it is a direct, or indirect, response to Xorenac'i's understanding of Caucasian unity and of a geopolitical conceptualization that, from the Georgian perspective, were dangerously becoming widespread and well

⁴⁸¹ See Martin-Hisard, "Aristocratie", 13-34, "Roi georgien", 129-139, "Vaxt'ang", 207-242; Rapp, "Bumberazi", 101-116; *Studies*, 197-245.

known in the region. But the author of the *Lives of the Kings* was not interested in glorifying the Georgian Bagrat'ionis in opposition to the Armenian Bagratunis, as does Xorenac'i. Moreover, there is no mention of any Bagrat'ioni ruler at all.

In the eleventh century the danger of Armenian expansion was completely eradicated and nothing was threatening the complete occupation of the Caucasus by the Bagrat'ionis. It was only the ideological basis that had to be changed. An exclusivist policy, traces of which are visible in the *Life of Vaxt'ang*, would not work in the new political setting; hence an inclusive policy had to be adopted. The solution upheld by Leont'i was ingenious: he did not reject the theory of Armenian supremacy, as developed by Xorenac'i, but twisted it into something completely different and with a new angle. Unlike Xorenac'i or even Žuanšer, he argued not for monoethnic dominance of the Georgians in the Caucasus, but on the contrary, he presented all the Caucasian peoples as blood relatives and the Armenian ethnarchs as their leaders.⁴⁸² In contrast to Movsēs, who presented the myth of Armenian expansion as a series of aggressive conquests, Leont'i perceived the idea of Caucasian unity as a brotherly union just as the very beginning of the narrative states:

First let us recall that for the Armenians and Georgians, Ranians and Movak'anians, Hers and Lek's, Megrels and Caucasians, there was a single father, called Targamos.⁴⁸³

The distribution of the lands which the brothers occupied fits equally well into the contemporary balance of power and political and ethnic geography in the Caucasus.⁴⁸⁴ Leont'i even claimed that the language of the Georgians was Armenian before it “became Georgian”, the latter being a mixture of various languages, and that for a long period the Armenian Aršakuni dynasty had occupied the throne of Iberia. This understanding of the Caucasus as formulated by Leont'i was ideally concomitant with the political aspirations of the Georgian ruling elite, and the Leont'ian model became widely adopted.⁴⁸⁵ Finally, I believe one of the most grandiose examples of the attempt to integrate the two possibly exclusive traditions, is the famous fresco

⁴⁸² For discussion, see Aleksidze, “Story of Kartli”, 79-83; Rapp, *Studies*, 427.

⁴⁸³ *VitaGeo-Thom*, 2; *VitaReg*, 3: პირველად ვაკუნოთ ესე, რამეთუ სომეხთა და ქართველთა, რანთა და მოვანელთა, ჰერთა და ლეკთა, მეგრელთა და კავკასიანთა - ამათ თვისთა ერთი იყო მამა, სახელით თარგამოს.

⁴⁸⁴ *VitaGeo-Thom*, 4-6.

⁴⁸⁵ S. Rapp rejects such a reading of the *Life of the Kings*. He dates the treatise to a pre-Bagratid period and sees very old layers in it. Rapp, *Studies*, 160-168. But even if this were the case and even if Leont'i had been only an editor of the *Lives of the Kings*, why would the *Lives* incorporated in the *Life of Georgia*, in the royal annals, and how did it become so dear to the Georgian tradition?

composition of the cathedral commissioned by Tigran Honenc' in Ani (1215), where both Gregory and Nino are depicted in their full honour.⁴⁸⁶

3.2.3. SHARING MEMORIES

Leont'i Mroveli's political outlook did not stay unnoticed in Armenian intellectual circles and the *Life of Georgia* soon, in the second half of the twelfth century, was translated into Armenian.⁴⁸⁷ Some of the historians of the period, such as Mxit'ar Ayrevanec'i were influenced by Leont'i's ideas of a common ancestry among the Caucasian peoples. Mxit'ar even supported Leont'i in his claim that king Parnavaz who laid the foundation of Georgian statehood, also created writing and literacy for the Georgian language.⁴⁸⁸ Vardan Arewelc'i also alluded to the "Books of the Georgians" and elaborated on the Georgian legend of the seven brothers and eponyms of the Caucasian peoples.⁴⁸⁹

Similarly, a number of stories about a common ancestry of Armenian and Georgian Bagratids was devised in order to claim that the Georgian Bagratids were also the legitimate owners of Armenia.⁴⁹⁰ These ideas were not unilateral and did not emanate only from Armenia. Georgian royal historiography also supported the idea of the Georgian Bagrat'ionis being related to the Armenian Aršakunis, thus legitimizing their rule over the Caucasus from the Armenian point of view. For example, Submat' Davitisze stressed that the mother of King Bagrat' IV was a descendant of the "illustrious, mighty and great" Aršakunis,⁴⁹¹ although we know that she was Arcruni from her father's lineage and Bagratuni by her mother's.⁴⁹² The same argument for the unity of the Georgian and Armenian Bagratids is advanced by the tenth century chronicle *Mat'iane Kartlisa*.⁴⁹³ Leont'i Mroveli goes even further by claiming that the throne of Iberia was for some

⁴⁸⁶ On the subject, see Thierry, "Ani", 68-70; "Sainte Nino", 151-158; *Tigran Honenc'*, 60-62; Skhirtladze, "Wall Painting", 333-335;

⁴⁸⁷ See, Abuladze, "Armenian Translator", 109-119; For some remarks on the political and cultural aspect of this translation, see Watschnadze, Tscheischwili, "Kartlis Cxovreba", 14-27.

⁴⁸⁸ MA, 39: Վրաց առաջին թագաւոր Փառնասագ, որ ի վեց լեզուէ արար գլրացերէնն, նա և զգիր նորա:

⁴⁸⁹ VA, 1-30; VA-Eng, 131.

⁴⁹⁰ See for example, VA-Eng, 184.

⁴⁹¹ SD, 386: ...რამეთუ ნაშობი იყო ბრწყინვალეთა მათ ძლიერთა და ღიღთა მეფეთა არშაკუნიათა...

⁴⁹² Maisuradze, *Historiography*, 54.

⁴⁹³ *MatKar*, 249-251.

time occupied by the Armenian Aršakunis although such a claim is not supported by any parallel source.⁴⁹⁴

Evidently Leont'ı's intention to connect the two houses with each other underlined the brotherly ties between the Armenian and Georgian nations and eventually justified the legitimacy of the Georgian Bagrat'ionis' rule over the Armenian lands.⁴⁹⁵

Nowadays it often happens that both Armenians and Georgians reject each other's role in their own history and culture. This was very much less the case in the medieval period and there was no "shame" in acknowledging role of Armenians in the life of Georgia. For example, in the *Life of Saint Nino* by Leont'ı Mroveli, once the idols of Mxeta were destroyed by Nino's prayers, some of the inhabitants of Kartli said:

The same God did this, who made King Trdat turn into a boar and through the same God he was turned back into a man. For no other god can do such a thing. They were saying such things, for through Christ's power, King Trdat was made into a boar and though the power of the same Christ was turned back into a man. For thereafter, the glory of Christ was not only hiddenly proclaimed in Kartli, for the Lord's Grace spread to the east too.⁴⁹⁶

Such an understanding of continuity accommodated the Georgian royal project perfectly well.⁴⁹⁷ Appealing to the Armenian memory of their legendary Aršakuni heritage, which thanks to the Armenian historiography, and notably Xorenac'ı, has remained a part of the glorious legacy of the Armenians, turned out to be highly useful. The Armenians apparently accepted the idea that the Georgian throne inherited Aršakuni glory with eagerness. Thus, for example, according to Kirakos Ganjakec'ı, the Georgian royal insignia, the throne and the crown, were inherited from the Aršakuni King T'rdat:

[The Mongols received] the venerable and priceless throne and the marvelous crown (the likes of which no other kings possessed and which, they say, belonged to Xosrov, father of Trdat the Great,

⁴⁹⁴ *VitaReg*, 30-51.

⁴⁹⁵ a.) For a discussion, see Maisuradze, *Historiography*, 54. Cf. with the similar eagerness of Byzantine rulers to seek Armenian royal blood in Emperor Basil I (867–86) in order to justify their rule over Armenia in Armenian eyes. Yuzbashian, *Armenian States*, 100-105. b.) There were numerous cases of attempts to legitimize power through invented lineage in the Caucasus. For example in the late twelfth century the Orbeleans created an alternative myth of their descent to challenge the power of Giorgi III Bagrationi of Georgia(1156–84). See La Porta, "Lineage", 127-165.

⁴⁹⁶ LM-*VitaNino*, 92: ხოლო რომელნიმე იტყოდეს: „რომლისა ღმრთისა ძალითა თრდატ მეფე ეშუად იქმნა და მისვე ღმრთისა ძალითა კაცად იქმნა, და მან უკუე ღმერთმან მოაწია ესე. რამეთუ სხუა ღმერთი ვერ შემძლებელ არს ესევეითარისა ქმნად“. ესევეითარსა ამას იტყოდეს, რამეთუ ვინათგან თრდატ მეფე ქრისტეს ძალითა ეშუად ქმნილ იყო, და ქრისტეს ძალით-ვე კუალად კაცად მოქცეულ იყო. მიერთგან ქება-დიდება ქრისტესი არღარა ფარულად ითქმოდა ქართლს შინა, რამეთუ მადლსა ღმრთისასა ეწყო მიფენად აღმოსავლეთს.

⁴⁹⁷ The same rhetoric was assumed by Sumbat' Davitisze (11th c.), who argued for the common ancestry of the Georgian and Armenian Bagratids. SD, 373-374, and by another eleventh century anonymous chronicle: *MatKar*, 249-251.

king of the Armenians). [This crown] had remained there secretly due to the fortification of the place, had [subsequently] fallen to the kings of the Georgians and remained there until recent times.⁴⁹⁸

Not only had certain Armenian intellectuals appropriated Georgian rhetoric, but the reverse was also true. There are hints in medieval Georgian literature that Armenian political messianism was in fact used by Georgian royalty for its own ends. To a certain extent this turned out to be successful in that, despite the rejection of the confessional union with the Georgians, the Armenians accepted the Georgian monarchy without forced imposition as their own crown. The notion of a united Caucasus required historical endorsement and a spirit of continuity. It is no wonder that Armenians would insist that all aspects of Georgian culture or statehood had been inherited from the Armenians.

Under these circumstances, forgetting became the major hallmark of Georgia's remembrance of union and separation between Georgians and Armenians and of all the accompanying scandalous events. The Georgians, so to say, enjoyed the luxury of not remembering. This precisely was the rationale of most historiographical works that were produced between eleventh and thirteenth centuries. These did not go deep into the past but rather glorified contemporary monarchs and indeed considered themselves to be living in a "Golden Age"; as if there was no need to validate the present, even less to justify it.⁴⁹⁹ The Armenians, on the other hand, needed to preserve, expand and promulgate the memory of a "Golden Age". This approach was supported by the official policy of the ruling Georgian élites since the Armenian policy of almost all Georgian rulers at that time was one of tolerance. The objective of the ruling élite was apparently to eradicate the less tolerant feelings of the Georgian population. The Armenians, on the other hand, who were left without a strong ruling class, could not and would not restrict aggressive anti-Chalcedonian and anti-Georgian feelings. As such could one speak of a state policy of tolerance? Forgetting, even institutionalized forgetting, is no novelty in medieval history. As an act for bearance, forgetting was a common practice

⁴⁹⁸ KG, 316-317: Եւ զգանձս թագաւորութեան յերիս բաժանեալ, գտախտն պատուական և զանգին և զթագն հրաշալի, զոր ոչ ունէին այլ թագաւորք, զոր, ասեն, Խոսրովու լեալ՝ հօրն Տրդատայ մեծի, հայոց արքայի, և անդ մնացեալ գաղտականութեամբ վասն ամբութեան տեղւոյն, և ի թագաւորսն վրաց անկեալ և մնացեալ մինչև ցայսօր.

⁴⁹⁹ See numerous encomia to the Georgian kings and of the idea of the golden age being here and now. For discussion, see Eastmond, *Imagery*, 93-187; Tvaradze, "Lobpreisungen", 183-213; Rayfield, *Literature*, 80-90.

among western European kingdoms.⁵⁰⁰ Naturally, it is wrong to speak of tolerance among heterogeneous communities on one's territory as a modern, self-sufficient moral and ethical value that can be projected as a feature of medieval civilization.⁵⁰¹ In the period under discussion, tolerance and forgetting were both yet other tools dedicated to ideological ends. The policy of the Georgian royal court concerning the Armenians could indeed be called reconciliatory.⁵⁰² For example, a passage from the *Life of Davit, King of Kings* describes a certain debate that broke out between Armenian and Georgian churchmen at the royal court:

There gathered once in the presence of the king that perverse nation, a large number of the bishops and abbots of the totally wicked Armenians, who imagined that they themselves had attained the summit of all learning and science. They requested that by his command a council be summoned and a debate and an enquiry held about religion. If the Armenians were defeated, they would accept unity of religion and would anathematize their own religion. But if the Armenians were victorious, they would only ask that we no longer call them heretics or anathematize them. Then the king summoned John, the Katholikos of Kartli, the bishops under him, the hermits, Arseni Iqaltoeli – the translator who knew both Greek and Georgian languages and who illuminated all the churches – and other knowledgeable and wise men. They conducted a mutual debate from dawn until the ninth hour and they were not able to reach a conclusion, because on both sides there were merely a desire for victory and a disputation of vain words. For they entered into impenetrable questions difficult to resolve, which irritated⁵⁰³ the king.⁵⁰⁴

⁵⁰⁰ Forgetting, as a royal prescription is a curious, albeit common phenomenon in the medieval world. P. Ricoeur famously calls this kind of forgetting “commanded forgetting”. An almost similar prescription was given by Henry IV in the *Edict of Nantes*: “Firstly, let the memory of all things that have taken place on both sides from the beginning of the month of March 1585 up to our arrival on the throne, and during the other preceding troubles and on their occasion, remain extinguished and dormant as something that has not occurred.” Ricoeur, *Memory*, 455. Although no such direct orders are present in the Georgian documents the general spirit is the same – to forget as if it has never existed.

⁵⁰¹ As. R. Brague puts it “we should also avoid making too swift an analogy with our own secular Western societies. Two cities in Spain can serve to give a title to symmetrical dreams, and what we might call “the Córdoba dream” seems to me just as mythical as the “Compostela dream”. Brague, *Legend*, 34.

⁵⁰² On this subject, see Tvaradze, “Lobpreisungen”, 183-223. We should certainly avoid using “tolerance” in the modern sense and consider the fact that twelfth-thirteenth century Georgia had local, imperial pretensions, hence the King though “Sword of the Messiah” was still above religion.

⁵⁰³ The more correct translation is probably “the king was bored by the words”.

⁵⁰⁴ *VitaGeo-Thom*, 346-348; *VitaDav*, 356-357: ხოლო შემოკრბა ოდესმე წინაშე მეფისა ნათესავი გულარძნილი, ყოვლად ბოროტთა სომეხთა ეპისკოპოსები და მონასტერთა მათთა წინამძღურები მრავალი ფრიად, რომელნი აზმნობდეს თავთა თვისთა მიწევნად თავსა ყოვლისა სწავლულებისა და მეცნიერებისასა. და მოავსენეს, რათამცა ყო ბრძანებითა მისითა კრება და ყვესმცა სიტყვს-გება და გამოძიება სჯულისა: უკეთუ იძლივნენ სომეხნი, და იქმნენ თანაერთვმა სჯულისა და თვისნი სჯული შეაჩუენონ; ხოლო უკეთუ სძლონ სომეხთა, ესეოდენ მიემადლოს, რათა არღარა გვწოდდეთო მწვალებელად და არცა შეგუაჩუენებდეთ. მაშინ მოუწოდა მეფემანცა იოვანეს, კათალიკოსსა ქართლისასა, და მის ქუეშეთა ეპისკოპოსთა და მეუღაბნეთთა, და არსენის იყალიოელსა, თარგმანსა და მეცნიერსა ბერძენთა და ქართველთა ენათასა, და განმანათლებელსა ყოველთა ეკლესიათასა, და სხუათა მეცნიერთა და ბრძენთა კაცთა. ყვეს უკუე სიტყვს-გება ურთიერთას ცისკრითგან ვიდრე ცხრა ჟამამდე, და ვერას უძლეს დაბოლოებად. რამეთუ იყო ორკერძოვე ძლევის მოყუარება ოდენ და ცუდ სიტყუათა პაექრობა; რამეთუ შევიდიან შეუვალთა საქმეთა და ძნიად გამოსავალთა, რომელი ესე შეეწყინა მეფესა...

The king figured as someone above theology, someone who can be irritated or bored by theological dispute and whose knowledge of divine wisdom is implicit to his office.⁵⁰⁵ Most importantly, Davit had the role of a reconciler and not of an inquisitor. Compare further the Georgian original and the Armenian translation:

He also wished to unite Armenians and Georgians. So he summoned Ioane, Katholikos of Kartli and Arseni of Kartli, translator of the Georgian and Greek languages, and Armenian bishops and vardapets; and he held a council.⁵⁰⁶

Davit was a Holy King for both people and for both he was a contested *site of memory*. The Armenian translation of the same passage presents strikingly different perspective: “From dawn to dusk they examined the matter, but did not reach mutual agreement. Then the king said: “We are unversed in these profound questions which you have introduced and are unable to resolve. He himself in simple and clear language pacified the two parties and dismissed the council”. The next paragraph introduces entirely new information:

Now he loved the Armenian nation and their churches and a certain scholar, the vardapet at Halbat called Sarkawag. He used to confess his sins to him; and lowering his venerable head he would be blessed by him. He would sit with him and embrace his neck, and he would say: ‘I am wasting away and smell badly from my old age; remove yourself from me lest you be bothered’. But the king would kiss him and say: ‘May this odour never fail me, honourable father’. He bestowed on him a village near the monastery to support him. When the latter blessed the king, placing his hands on his head he would say: ‘I have found Davit my servant, and with holy oil I have anointed him”, as far as ten verses. And the king was delighted. He used to praise the beautifully-fashioned Armenian translation of the Bible. In truth we saw fulfilled with regard to the king the saying of the psalm; and many of its words were appropriate to him. For he was saved from many traps by God – inconceivable for me.⁵⁰⁷

⁵⁰⁵ Compare with the role of the King of France during the ardent theological debates. As P. Ricoeur puts it, “the novelty...lies in the agency that forbids and in its motivation: it is the King of France who intervenes in a religious controversy and a civil war between Christian sects, at a time in which those involved in the dispute were incapable of producing a spirit of concord regarding the religious conflicts. The statesman here has the advantage over the theologians, in the name of a prerogative no doubt inherited from the kingly right of clemency, but in the name of a political conception itself marked with the stamp of the theological, as it is forcefully affirmed in the preamble: it is the most Christian king who proposes, not to re-establish religion, but to establish the public order on a more healthy religious foundation”. Ricoeur, *Memory*, 455.

⁵⁰⁶ *VitaGeo-Thom*, 346-347; *VitaGeo-Arm*, 254: Այլ ևս կամեցաւ միաւորել զՀայս և զՎիրս. և կոչեաց զՅովհաննէս կաթողիկոսն Քարթլայ և զԱրսենիոս Քարթլեցի՝ զՔարգմանն Վրաց և Յունաց լեզույն, և զԵպիսկոպոսս և զվարդապետս Հայոց, և արար ժողով:

⁵⁰⁷ *VitaGeo-Thom*, 346-349. *VitaGeo-Arm* 254-256: Այլ ևս կամեցաւ միաւորել զՀայս և զՎիրս. և կոչեաց զՅովհաննէս կաթողիկոսն Քարթլայ և զԱրսենիոս Քարթլեցի՝ զՔարգմանն Վրաց և Յունաց լեզույն, և զԵպիսկոպոսս և զվարդապետս Հայոց, և արար ժողով. և քննէին յառաւատէ մինչև ցերեկոյ, և ոչ հաւանէին միմեանց: Ապա ասէ թագաւորն. ‘Մէք անվարժ ենք ի խորագոյն բանսդ, զոր արկեալ էք առաջի և ոչ կարէք դուք ելանել ի դուրս’: Եւ ինքն պարզ և յայտնի բանիւ իսաղազացուցեալ զերկոսին կողմանսն՝ արձակեաց զժողովն: Այլ ինքն սիրէր զազգն Հայոց և զԵկեղեցիսն և զոմն հոռետոր վարդապետ ի Հաղբատ՝ Սարկաւագ անուն. խոստովանէր նմա զյանցանս իւր. և կորացուցեալ զպատուական զլուխն՝ արհնէր ի նմանէ. և

The reign of Davit and of his successors was by no means guided by a *cuius regio, eius religio* principle, as numerous Armenian sources confirm.⁵⁰⁸ Davit was not only held up as a supra-ecumenical ruler, but was also remembered as such in the Armenian narratives, in which not by a single word was he or his rule derogated. In general, Armenian historiographers, especially those from northern Armenia, tried to have the Georgian kings accepted as legitimate rulers over their own selves and as supporters of the Armenian Church.⁵⁰⁹ This conception was devised and fostered both by Georgians and Armenians. Recollection of the Georgian kings as latent sympathizers of the Armenian confession is further reflected in pseudo-Mxit'ar Goš's testimony:

And when Demetre, the King of Georgia, died, his son Dawit' reigned in his stead, a well-intentioned man, especially towards the princes of Armenia who were under his authority. He greatly honoured the satrap of the city of Tiflis, Vasak, son of prince Vahram and his brothers, called K'urd and Sargis, and showed such benevolence as to send for the King Kiwrike, son of King Dawit' Bagratuni, and promises to return to him his patrimony which his ancestors had taken from him; and thus he sent him back with presents, and arranged a meeting. He intended to convene a council and learn the truth about the faith and thus honour Orthodoxy. When they learned of such a desire, the princes of Georgia became jealous, above all the family called the Orbeleank', and giving him a deadly drug to drink,

նստեր ընդ նմա և փառէր զպարանոցսւ նորա. և նա ասէր. “Լուծեալ եմ և հոտեալ ի ծերութենէս. ի բաց գնա յինէն, զի մի աշխատ լիցիս”: Եւ թագաւորն համբուրէր և ասէր. “Անպակաս լիցի հոտս այս յինէն, հայր պատուական”: Եւ պարգևեաց նմա գեաւղ առընթեր վանացն՝ ի ծառայութիւն նմա: Եւ յարհնելն զթագաւորն՝ զայս ասէր եղեալ զձեռս ի վերայ գլխոյն. “Գտի զԴաւիթ ծառայ իմ, և եղով սրբով իմով աւծի գնա” մինչև ցտասներորդ տունն: Եւ զուարճանայր արքայն, և գովէր զգեղեցկակերպ թարգմանութիւն Հայոց: Եւ տեսաք արդեամբ կատարեալ զբան սաղմսին ի վերայ թագաւորին. և յովմք ի բանից անտի վայելէին նմա. քանզի ի բազում որոգայթից Աստուծով զերծեալ ասարէր անկարծելի մարդկան:

Compare this presentation of King David with an equally polemical and certainly tendentious view of Katholikos Nersēs Šnorhali by the Byzantine *Θεωριανοῦ ὁρθοδόξου διάλεξις πρὸς τὸν καθολικὸν τῶν Ἀρμενίων*. Šnorhali is described as a weak, ignorant ruler who easily conceded to the Chalcedonian arguments and with tears and sighs accepted the Chalcedonian definition. Keshishean, *Nersēs*, 60.

⁵⁰⁸ Compare the Armenian perception of the rule of Davit with the remembrance and role of Empress Theodora among the sixth century and also later non-Chalcedonians Syrians. See Menze, *Justinian*, 195-246.

⁵⁰⁹ The creation of shared memory was, according to the later Armenian historiography, successful even down to the nineteenth century. Maisuradze, *Relations*, 93-94. This view of a strong non-orthodox sovereign was also popular among the Armenians with regard to the Byzantines, depending on who would be militarily superior in the region. Despite the fact that the Byzantine emperor was a heretic his office still had an eschatological significance. See, Hultgård, “Byzantine Impact”, 67-74. During the rule of Nersēs Šnorhali and the famous attempts of union between Constantinople and Cilician Armenia, the rhetoric was very reconciliatory. Armenians were eager to accept the divine nature of the Byzantine Emperor but claimed their own spiritual superiority. Keshishean, *Nersēs*, 147. The hope of a unity of Christians under a common non-Christian enemy is declared in another letter to the Emperor by Nersēs Šnorhali. For a secondary literature on the subject, see Augé, “Rapports”, 348-352; Zekiyan, “Dialogue”, 420-441. Such, for example, was Emperor Manuel Komnenos (1143–80) who “in his love towards Christ, decided to destroy the malady of discord between the Armenians and the Greeks and to establish an accord between them”. Bayan, *Synaxaire*, 604. Equally Nersēs Lambronac'i (1153–98) laments Manuel's death aying that “his [Manuel's] intention to establish peace in the Church was not achieved, and there is no hope left for anyone who would continue his work”. Following the decline and fall of the Byzantine Empire, this attitude further persisted with respect to the Georgian kings.

they killed King Dawit', and a great and prolonged mourning fell upon the land of Georgia and Armenia; and they made Giorgi his brother king in his stead.⁵¹⁰

Mxit'ar Goš's works are classical examples of attempts at such reconciliation. For example, his *On Georgians* is certainly a defensive work against often unsubstantiated Georgian claims and attacks.⁵¹¹ One of the main concerns of Mxit'ar was the fact that the Georgians would rebaptize the Armenians. Unlike many other authors, Mxit'ar holds a defensive position rather than an attacking one. He explicitly states his reason for writing this treatise, namely, to protect the Armenians from Georgian offence that had become so common in those days (12th–13th cc.). Most importantly, and once again, unlike many of his contemporaries, Mxit'ar does not try to deepen even more the abyss between Georgians and Armenians, but instead he wanted to show "how minor the differences are among the worshippers of the Lord".⁵¹²

3.3. THE GEO-POLITICS OF MEMORY

Aside from their inherently varied literary aspirations discussed in the previous chapter, Armenian and Georgian authors, both medieval and modern, remembered their nation's religious past in the light of the gradual geopolitical and ideological transformations in the Caucasus at the end of the first millennium. With the decline of the Arab Caliphate, the South Caucasian kingdoms and other state entities emerged but in a new light. The Georgian kingdoms managed to rid themselves comparatively easily of the Arab yoke and were able to develop rapidly both economically and culturally. Broadly speaking, the process of political unification went much faster among the Georgians than in Armenia, where the process eventually led more towards political disintegration than to unification.⁵¹³ Georgian success was equally guaranteed by strong Byzantine backing, beginning from the times when the *Erismtavari* of Iberia, Ašot' (786–809), was forced to flee from Iberia and settle in Šavšet-K'laržeti, where temporarily transferred all of his power and, "by the will of the Greeks", created a more or less independent political unit. Here he received the title of *Kouropalates*⁵¹⁴ and became King of the Kingdom of Georgia in T'ao K'laržeti (809–26), thus being honoured by the

⁵¹⁰ MG-*Alb-Eng*, 488.

⁵¹¹ For a detailed commentary, see Chantladze, *Mxit'ar Goš*, 9-86; For an overview, see Abuladze, "Mxitar Goš", 5-16; Melikset-Bek, *Teachers*, 214-237.

⁵¹² For a similar argument by Nersēs Šnorhali, see Keshishean, *Nersēs*, 123.

⁵¹³ See Yuzbashian, *Armenian States*, 67-69. For the relations of the Caucasian kingdoms with the Caliphate, see Maisuradze, *Studies*, 14-146; Tskitishvili, "Arab-Georgian", 127-140; Martin-Hisard, "Moines et monastères", 5-66.

⁵¹⁴ On the title and the origins of the Georgian Kouropalate (*kartvelta sakuropalat'o*), see Martin-Hisard, "Archontes", 437-452.

Byzantines for his fervent opposition to the Arabs.⁵¹⁵ In time, this land eventually became the cradle of a new united Georgian Kingdom and, for subsequent Georgian consciousness, the cradle of Georgian unity. This triggered off the beginning of the unification of the entire Caucasus, since Ašot‘ and his descendants now were legitimate heirs of T‘ao, Apxazeti, K‘laržeti, Tpilisi and Bardav, that is to say, of a part of Albania.⁵¹⁶

The situation in Armenia was considerably different from that in Georgia, as its unification and centralization was more nominal than actual and the Bagratunis enjoyed much less power in their dominions than the Georgian Bagrat‘ionis. In spite of this, the Armenian Kings, such as Ašot I (862–84), Gagik I (989–1020) and Ašot II (914–928) were actively involved in the fight for the control over the entire Caucasus.⁵¹⁷ This struggle between various kingdoms in the Caucasus was always temporary, for example the Armenians managed to occupy Gugareti for a short period of time and establish the Kingdom of Tašir-Joraget.⁵¹⁸ Following these confrontations, in the first half of the tenth century it became evident that the Georgians would prevail. The processes were closely watched by the Byzantines and other powers around the Caucasus. In the first quarter of the tenth century, the Arab Emirates were becoming more and more active in the south-eastern Caucasus and were becoming a true threat to Byzantium in its Caucasian politics. The emirs of Azerbaijan managed to take over a notable territory and some of the Christian rulers, such as king of Varspurakan Gagik I Arcruni and the *sparapet* of the Armenians Ašot Bagratuni, also sided with them.⁵¹⁹ Therefore Byzantium was more than interested in uniting the Christian Caucasian kingdoms against a common Muslim enemy. Hence, the beginning of the tenth century was marked by an unusually novel development in the Caucasus: To the best of my knowledge, for the first time in the Caucasian history all three major regional powers, Byzantium, the Georgian kingdoms and the Armenian kingdoms were interested in the political unification of the Caucasus. The first decades of the tenth century was the period when the

⁵¹⁵ See Martin-Hisard, “Moines et monastères” 51-61; Rapp, *Studies*, 356; Suny, *Georgian Nation*, 29-30; Toumanoff, “Ashot”, 83-85.

⁵¹⁶ Shaginyan, *Transcaucasia*, 71-74.

⁵¹⁷ Yovhannēs Drasxanakertc‘i eloquently describes the processes. For the first see Chahin, *Kingdom*, 264-273; Garsoïan, “Independent Kingdoms” 143-187; Laurent, *L’Arménie*, 121-175; For the periodization of the Arab rule in the Caucasus, see Shaginyan, *Transcaucasia*, 78-79. For discussion on the Bagratid royal ideology, see e.g. Cowe, “Ani”, 73-85. See also B. Arakelyan’s monograph *Restorian*, dedicated to the issue.

⁵¹⁸ Shaginyan, *Transcaucasia*, 74-78.

⁵¹⁹ See Chahin, *Kingdom*, 266; Dadoyan, “Political Strategies”, 305-327; Garsoïan, “Independent Kingdoms”, 143-185; Ter-Ghewondyan, *Arab Emirates*, 93-110;

Caucasus or South Caucasus was taken as one geo-political entity and all key players of the region would contribute to the emergence of the Caucasian politics. Of course the reasons behind this were incompatible but what matters for us is the fact that both internally and from the outer perspective the Caucasus was considered as a single geo-political entity.⁵²⁰ This was reflected in the *realpolitik*, political rhetoric and historical rhetoric of Armenians and Georgians but for each under their own aegis. I believe that in such circumstances, when the Caucasus was taken as a single entity, the remembrance of the region as of a whole was especially needed. And where there was no remembrance, it had to be forged.

3.3.1. T'AO/TAYK'

The co-existence of Armenians and Georgians on common land comprises a long history that stretches back well before classical antiquity. Two regions in the Caucasus and north eastern Anatolia became closest point of meeting for Georgian and Armenian, and later for Chalcedonian and non-Chalcedonian elements. One was the extreme north-eastern Anatolia, the region of T'ao/Tayk', and the other was north of Armenia/south of Georgia, the region of Gugareti/Gogarene/Gugark'. Throughout history, the two regions had almost equal Armenian and Georgian populations and also of Chalcedonians and non-Chalcedonians.⁵²¹ Consequently, many of the problems related to the Armeno-Georgian issues emanated from these two regions.

Assuming there were attempts to integrate ethnically heterogeneous communities into one single community, how was this achieved on a more local scale? The creation of a milieu in which the two nations could co-exist required not only the creation of a specific rhetoric but also the formation of a shared mnemonic field. The process establishing a common remembrance ran on both a greater scale and on a relatively small one. Just as there was a need to create a common memory for the whole region, the same was also necessary on smaller areas where Armenians and the Georgians had to co-exist and indeed co-existed under a single crown. The most fertile ground for such a project, where shared *loci memoriae* could most

⁵²⁰ On the political history of the Caucasus of this period, see some of the following general works: Chahin, *Armenia*, 264-274; *Histoire*, 185-297; Pasternadjan, *Histoire*, 149-180.

⁵²¹ On these Armeno-Georgian marchlands, see Toumanoff, *Studies*, 433-498. For the chronology, see *Ibid*, 498-499. Also Allen, "March-Lands", 150-156; For a study of the role of 'Gugark' in medieval Armenian literature, see Aleksidze, "Ջավաքեթի և Գուգարեթի", 269-272.

effectively be created, was the region of T'ao and K'laržeti, where for centuries Armenians and Georgians lived side by sides and where, by the end of the ninth century, the Kingdom of the Georgians was established. In order to incorporate and include Armenians in forging new political and cultural milieu it was necessary to create and foster a shared memory for both Armenians and the Georgians that eventually must have engendered a new regional identity.

The ethnic, cultural and religious shifts in the region of T'ao at the end of Late Antiquity is among the most obscure pages in Caucasian history. Problems related to ethnic components in the region, their confessional affiliation and cultural and political status are still a matter of intensive debates.⁵²² To be sure there is virtually no direct information that records the formation of these identities on the Armenian and Georgian borders. Neither is it known precisely what happened after the separation of the churches and how the Armenians who remained or became Chalcedonian were incorporated into the Georgian Kingdom of T'ao. On the other hand there exist traces of the transformations in both literary and non-literary material that shall be discussed below.⁵²³

The political and ecclesiastical questions concerning the jurisdiction of T'ao/Tayk' are numerous.⁵²⁴ What we can say with only considerable certainty is that by the end of the sixth century and the beginning of the seventh, T'ao was apparently no longer under the jurisdiction of the Church of Persarmenia and was predominantly Chalcedonian as the *Narratio* substantiates it:

After [Maurice's] death the King of Persia, Khosrow occupied in the Armenian lands when heretical Abraham occupied the throne of the Katholikos. The same year he forced the bishops, priests and higoumens to anathematize the Council of Chalcedon or to leave the land. They anathematized and the dispute was settled. Three years later ... [the Persians] took over many cities and captured Katholikos Yovhannēs who was in Roman Armenia. So the heretical katholikos Abraham also forced the bishops of the parts of John to either anathematize the council of Chalcedon or to leave the lands. But they refused to obey and some fled to Tais, while others to the Roman lands, where they died.⁵²⁵

⁵²² For detailed discussion, see *infra* Chapter 4 of the present thesis.

⁵²³ For brief discussion, see Edwards, "Hamšen", 405-422, "Oltu-Penek", 15-37.

⁵²⁴ For scholarly controversies over the issue, see Aleksidze, "Bishop", 9-18; Maisuradze, *Relations*, 15-95; Muradyan, "Tao", 61-64.

⁵²⁵ *Narr*, 41-42; *Narr-Fr*, 436: Μετὰ δὲ τὴν τούτου τελευταίην, προσελάβετο ὁ Χοσρόης ὁ βασιλεὺς Περσῶν τὴν χώραν Ἀρμενίας, ὅτε καὶ ὁ αἰρετικὸς Ἀβραάμ κατέστη καθολικός. καὶ τῷ αὐτῷ ἔτει κατηνάγκασε τοὺς επισκόπους καὶ πρεσβύτερους καὶ ἡγουμένους ἀναθεματίσαι τὴν ἐν Χαλκεδόνι σύνοδον ἢ ἐκχωρήσαι ἀπὸ τῆς χώρας. οἱ δὲ ἀναθεμάτισαν καὶ ἔπαυσεν ἡ ἀντιλογία. Μετὰ δὲ χρόνους τρεῖς ... παρέλαβον δὲ καὶ ἄλλας πόλεις πολλὰς, ἐν αἷς καὶ τὸν καθολικὸν Ἰωάννην, τὸν ὄντα ἐν τῇ Ἀρμενίᾳ

This passage is noteworthy for several reasons. As Garrite argues, Tais and the Roman lands are clearly differentiated, and by the beginning of the seventh century, T'ao was Chalcedonian but not under Roman jurisdiction, therefore it could have only been under the Georgian jurisdiction.⁵²⁶ I do not believe that a differentiation such as this necessarily meant distinguishing between Church jurisdictions, but rather between different cultural milieux. Besides, for a Chalcedonian Armenian, who most likely was the author of the *Narratio*, Tayk' would not have been considered as a Roman land anyway. What could be argued with certainty is that T'ao became or remained Chalcedonian and, at least for the author of the *Narratio*, it was religiously as foreign a territory for the Armenians as were the parts of the Romans. Therefore, according to the *Narratio*, by the second half of the sixth century T'ao was already an asylum for those who would not accept Armenian faith.⁵²⁷ Another testimony is the fact that the Acts of the Council of Dwin (555) are the last, where an Armenian bishop of Tayk' is listed. Thereafter, no bishop from that region participated in an Armenian council, a circumstance which indicates that Tayk' remained Chalcedonian and by the second half of the sixth century was no longer under the jurisdiction of Dwin.⁵²⁸ Unfortunately, we know very little about the subsequent ecclesiastical situation in T'ao before the Georgians took over.

One of the sources that can indirectly narrate the cultural and literary processes that developed where the Georgians and Armenians cohabitated, is hagiography. Until a certain period the Georgian calendar did not develop the idea of national saints who would stand apart from other saints. In fact the conceptualization of “national sainthood” was a much later phenomenon and again was not connected with the schism in the Caucasus. Rather it had to do with opposition to the Greeks and was developed not in Georgia proper but on Mt Athos. The “Georgian saint” was a concept that would oppose “the Greek saint”, but not the “Armenian saint”.⁵²⁹ Translating hagiographical texts from Armenian, or composing them for Armenians, was especially

ὑποκείμενον δὲ τοῖς Ῥωμαίοις. Τότε οὖν ἠνάγκασεν ὁ αἰρετικὸς Ἀβραάμ ὁ καθολικὸς τοὺς ἐπισκόπους τῶν μερῶν Ἰωάννου ἢ ἀναδεματίσαι τὴν ἐν Χαλκηδόνι σύνοδον, ἢ ἐκχορήσαι ἐκ τῶν μερῶν Ἀρμενίας, οἱ δὲ μὴ πεισθέντες ἀπεληλύθασιν οἱ μὲν εἰς τὸ Τάις οἱ δὲ εἰς Ῥωμανίαν, καὶ ἐτελεύτησαν ἐπὶ ξένης.

⁵²⁶ *Ibid.*, 266-267.

⁵²⁷ Arseni Sapareli also spoke of these ill-affected Armenian bishops who fled to T'ao. AS, 82; AS-Fr, 118.

⁵²⁸ For discussion, see Garsoïan, *L'Église*, 366; *Narr.*, 266; Peeters, *Tréfond*, 200-202. Yovhannēs Awjnc'ī does in fact mention a bishop from Taik' who participated in his Council, which might mean that for a short while a parallel non-Chalcedonian hierarchy must have been created in one of the regions of Tayk'. van Esbroeck, “Konzilientgeschichte”, 45.

⁵²⁹ See for example Menabde, *Seats*, 168-178.

important for including larger populations into the Georgian cultural milieu. As a literary genre it most likely developed in the marchlands, where it was impossible to establish a common faith and the commemoration of common saints would become the most effective ground. This is why the translation of such texts was of higher priority in ninth and tenth century T'ao than of other genres. I. Abuladze has convincingly shown this with samples of Armenian hagiography that were translated into Georgian by the Armenians of T'ao apparently for their own use, when Georgian probably became the literary language at least for the part of the local Armenians.⁵³⁰

A tenth century hagiographic collection (Ath 8), which was created in T'ao and then taken to Athos, includes vitae of vast number of Armenian saints and only two "Georgians" or rather saints of the Georgian tradition: Šušanik' and Abo (d.786).⁵³¹ It can be claimed that the collection was in fact created for the Armenian and Georgian population of the region and only after that carried to Athos just as many other manuscripts created in the schools of T'ao. In these circumstances the commemoration of "common" saints was of paramount importance. The local commemoration of saints is interestingly reflected in the late eleventh century (c.1060s) *Synaxary* (A 97) copied in T'ao and kept in the monastery of Mižnažor.⁵³² Apart from the canonical commemorations, the *Synaxary* also includes an addition of saints: Grigol Xanžteli (5 Oct), Constantine K'axi (10 Nov), Abibos Nek'reseli (12 Nov), Boa of Hierapolis (30 Dec), death of Ioane Č'q'ondideli (7 Jan), Youth of K'ola (12 Feb), Davit of Dwin (23 Feb), Sukias and His Companions (15 Apr), Davit and Tirič'an "who were from Somxiti and were martyred in T'ao" (18 May),⁵³³ Iodasap King of the Hindi (19 May), death of Giorgi the Hagiorite (29 Jun), Nersēs the Armenian Archbishop (1 Jul), Father Lamparios (6 Jul), John of Palavra (26 Jul), Yizidbozid (28 Jul), Eustathios of Mxeta (29 Jul), Ražden (9 Aug), St Šušanik (21 Aug), Bishop Kordov, martyrs Ireneos, Or and Orophsis (23 Aug), Lavrenti and

⁵³⁰ On the subject of Georgian language among the Armenians see, Abuladze, *Relations*, 063-070, 072-080, 0111-0119.

⁵³¹ A number of Armenian hagiographical works were translated into Georgian in the ninth-tenth centuries, including *Martyrdom of Queen Sanduxt*, *Martyrdom of Saint Nersēs Archbishop of Armenia and of Bishop Xadis, his Student*, *Martyrdom of Saint Izidbozid*, *Martyrdom of Saint Atom and of His Son and of His Companions*, *Martyrdom of Vardan and of Other Naxarars of Armenia*, *Martyrdom of David who Died in Dwin* and others. The manuscript is unpublished. For study, see Abuladze, *Relations*, 0119-0199. For parallel Armenian (where extant) and Georgian texts, see *Ibid*, 3-132.

⁵³² On A 97, see *DescrGeoMan* I, 432-448.

⁵³³ On term *Somxiti*, see *infra*, p. 174.

Diomidi (28 Aug).⁵³⁴ The list is important for several reasons: the *Synaxary* was designed apparently for a Georgian monastery also populated by ethnic Armenians and included almost an equal number of saints from the Georgian and Armenian traditions. Despite this, the number of Armenian saints commemorated is already much less than in the earlier Ath 8. Furthermore, St Šušānik is commemorated according to the short version, i.e. to the one translated from Armenian, not the old Georgian version (17 Oct). This would probably mean that in the Georgian tradition St Šušānik was already commemorated in two ways and two traditions – according to the Georgian 5th c. *Vita* and this in central Georgia, in Mcxeta, and according to the Armenian tradition, that is to say the Georgian translation of the Armenian version of the *Martyrdom of Šušānik*.⁵³⁵ Finally and what is most curious, a saint such as Nino is added only much later to the manuscript, and is not included in the contemporary colophons.

There is another connection between Ath 8 and what I claim the official Georgian policy was. The colophons to the manuscript systematically mention a certain Patriarch Arseni as the commissioner of the collection or even the translator.⁵³⁶ In the period in question there were two patriarchs Arseni: Arseni the Great and Arseni Sapareli, who was the author of *On the Severance of the Georgians and Armenians*. Often the two are identified. Indeed the creation of such a collection for local Armenians resonates with the spirit of the treatise by Arseni. In fact, I believe that the treatise is not so much a polemical text as one would easily consider, but on the other way around: it aims at inclusion of the local Armenians and the target audience of the treatise is also Armenians rather than Georgians. Care is taken not to be all exclusive and not to burn all bridges to reconciliation. The Armenians' separation from Orthodoxy, while explained in very dramatic terms, nonetheless is presented as an obligation, the result of fatal circumstances, in most of the cases a whim or a weakness of specific individuals, not a deliberate choice. Therefore the nation remains blameless, because each time they were given a choice, they would stand for Orthodoxy. The Armenians, who swayed from Nestorianism to Monophysitism, were forced by the Persians to choose a path that would contradict the

⁵³⁴ *DescrGeoMan* I, 396-448; Chitunashvili, “Commemoration”, 113-114.

⁵³⁵ On the textual history of the *Martyrdom of St Šušānik*, see Abuladze, “Šušānik”, Bíró, “Shushanik, 187-200; Muradyan, *Martyrdom*.

⁵³⁶ Ath 8: 139r, 194v, 237v, 275v: ქრისტეც, უმეტეს ყოველთა მამათმთავართა აღილე არსენი მამათმთავარი, მადილებელი წმიდათა მოწამეთაჲ, აჲენ. The manuscript is unedited. See also *MartSuk*, 22.

“Melkite” confession of faith. It is not the Armenian nation that apostatized, but individual patriarchs or other leaders were not firm enough in their faith. Symptomatically the last paragraph of the treatise narrates about the Chalcedonian Katholikos Nersēs III, stressing the fact that a considerable part of the Armenians followed him, thus probably addressing the Armenians of T‘ao.⁵³⁷

The methodological appropriation of the “schism” as a watershed also affected the study of these translations and the concepts of unity and separation between the Armenian and Georgian Churches, was even used as a dating tool for all sorts of literary trends. For example, N. Marr, and also to a certain extent K. Kekelidze, dated these translations according to the same framework, which, to my mind, and in this case I agree with I. Abuladze’s dating (10th c.), is methodologically erroneous.⁵³⁸ N. Marr was convinced that all of these texts had been translated before the schism and must have been pre-eighth century. His philological argument was as follows: In the Georgian translation of the Armenian version of the *Martyrdom of Šušānik* the Georgian texts referring to Nersēs I, called him “the reason of our illumination”. Marr thought that the Georgian translator would have used this inclusive pronoun only before the seventh century, at a time when a Georgian could still have said that the Armenian hierarchs were also Georgian illuminators.⁵³⁹ But fortunately Marr soon changed his position into a more plausible one and ascertained that it might have been translated into Georgian for the Armenians to use, hence the first person plural.⁵⁴⁰

There are two further controversial texts that I believe were intended to define common mnemonic fields for Armenians and Georgians: *Martyrdom of the Youths of Kola*⁵⁴¹ and *Martyrdom of Davit and Tirič’an*.⁵⁴² The controversial nature resides in the problem of whether they were originally composed in Georgian or translated from the Armenian and also in their dating. The only reason for supposing that they are Georgian translations of Armenian texts is that the action takes place in Armenia or rather “among Armenians”. Other than this the texts do not reveal any signs of translation. Due to strong textual ambiguities, the dating of the

⁵³⁷ AS, 92; AS-Fr, 120-121.

⁵³⁸ The discussion developed around the so-called Athos Mravaltavi, which included the translations from the Armenian.

⁵³⁹ Marr, “Travels”, 20.

⁵⁴⁰ Marr, *Synaxaire*, 638.

⁵⁴¹ *MartKol*, 184-186.

⁵⁴² *MartDetT*, 178-183.

Life of Davit and Tirič'an ranges from the fifth to the ninth century. Just as in previous cases, I. Abuladze's argument that the *Vita* was necessarily written or translated by an Armenian does not seem convincing to me. I. Abuladze goes slightly too far in his argument by stating that a vast number of lexical and syntactical Armenisms in the translations must indicate that the translator was necessarily Armenian.⁵⁴³ The argument can be turned around by saying that, on the contrary using armenisms such as *zoravar*, *naxarar*, *avan* in Georgian could indicate that the translator was not sure of the exact semantic field of these words so he left them untranslated. For a native speaker of Armenian it must have been easier to explain the meaning of these words. Therefore, I think we should leave the problem of the exact ethnic origin of the translators aside. It is enough to say that they were translated for the Chalcedonian Armenians of T'ao. Despite all the speculations concerning the dating of the text, I think that these texts are products of ninth century T'ao-K'laržeti, most probably intentional creations and re-adaptations of popular local tales into martyrological works in order to forge more common grounds for the cohabitation of Armenians and Georgians. Evoking an Armenian past in the Georgian language for both Georgians and Armenians, (whose cultural language had become Georgian), was an attempt to integrate two ethnic groups. The texts also lack certain sophistication: no references, or historical knowledge and the ambiguous *chronotope* of the narratives is very similar to popular tales. The problem, raised by the Introduction of the *Passion*, is also typically anachronistic:

In the times of the rule of Emperor Heraclius in Greece and of Aršak' in Armenia, and in Persia of Vahram Šapuh in the lands of the Armenians, in the days of the Great Katholikos Nersēs, there was a noble *eristavi*...⁵⁴⁴

This anachronism is typical due to several reasons. The author had no real historical knowledge; he lists all of the great kings that he had heard about and that lived in various epochs. This already suggests an original oral narrative. Even more interesting is the role of Katholikos Nersēs. No other figure has been so confused in both Georgian and Armenian traditions as he. Nersēs the Great (353–73), Nersēs II Aštarakac'i

⁵⁴³ Abuladze, *Relations*, 037-063.

⁵⁴⁴ *MartDetT*, 186: ჟამთა მათ ოღუნ მეფეთა მათ ქუეყანის მპყრობელთას საბერძნეთს ჰერაკლე მეფისა და სომხეთს არშაკ მეფისასა და სპარსეთს ვარამშაპოღსა მეფობასა იყო შეწირვად იგი წმიდათა მათა ჯორცთა მათა მსხუერპლად უფლისა. იყო სანახებთა მათ სოფლისა სომხითისათა, ჟამთა ნეტარისა დიდისა ნერსე კათალიკოზისათა და ადამ არეგაწოტელისათა, ჯეკსა ბასიანისასა, დაბასა, რომელსა პრქვან ონკომ კაცი ვინმე წარჩინებული.

(548–57), Nersēs III the Builder (641–61) and also Bishop Nersēs the Martyr⁵⁴⁵ are often alluded to interchangeably depending on the context.⁵⁴⁶ The epithet *Great* is sufficiently vague for it to be attached to different persons with the same name.⁵⁴⁷ The *Passion* continues that “this story reached our father, the katholikos of Armenia, for he was watching the wonder from Iṣxani.”⁵⁴⁸ Obviously the author refers to Nersēs III, since by tradition it was considered that his episcopal see was in Iṣxani, which he built himself. The expression “Our holy father” does not necessarily mean personally *ours*. It is a common expression that referred to all holy fathers. Besides if “our” were in fact used in a personal sense, the author would be speaking about Nersēs III, whom both Georgians and Chalcedonian Armenians esteemed very highly and who was associated with the region. Obviously the author or authors have confused Nersēs I the Great with the Chalcedonian Katholikos Nersēs III, the legendary figure among both Chalcedonian Armenians and Georgians of the T‘ao-K‘laržeti region.

The Chalcedonian Katholikos Nersēs Šinoḏ became to my mind the ultimate symbol of cultural continuity in T‘ao. Nersēs III as a hero of legend and history was mysterious and equally controversial as he was one of the few Armenian Chalcedonian katholikoi from the middle of the seventh century. I shall not discuss in depth all political and ecclesiastical history that surrounds Nersēs, but instead try to show how this person was remembered by Armenians and Georgians and what role he played in the formation of merged identities. Apart from the above-mentioned *Vita* and the *Severance*, Nersēs is mentioned once again by a roughly contemporary author (951). When describing the building activities of Grigol Xanzteli and his companions in the deserts of T‘ao and K‘laržeti, Giorgi Merčule writes:

Then the Kouropalates arrived in Iṣxani and two blessed men, Father Grigol and Father Saba, accompanied him. And the Kouropalates loved this place ... By Divine will Saba became bishop of Iṣxani, at the Cathedral Church built by blessed Katholikos Nerse and his throne, which was widowed

⁵⁴⁵ AS, 92: AS-Fr, 121: ხოლო შემდგომად ეზრახს ღაიპყრა საყდარი ნერსე იმწნელმან, კაცმან ღირსმან და მართალ-მორწმუნემან, ნებითა ღმრთისათა.

⁵⁴⁶ E.G., Kirakos Ganjakec‘i attributes the consecration of Abdišo to Nersēs III. See KG, 54.

⁵⁴⁷ The same problem exists in the identification of the Georgian Katholikos Arseni the Great the editor of the *Lives of the Syrian Fathers*.

⁵⁴⁸ *MartDetT*, 183: მაშინ ვითარცა ეუწყა საქმც ესე წმიდას მამას ჩუენსა ნერსეს კათოლიკოსსა სომხითისასა, რამეთუ თვთჳსი იგი იმხნით საკვრველებას...

for many years. And now the spiritual wedding took place again and this blessed one built it anew and through the earthly work of those God-serving kings.⁵⁴⁹

Thus, according to this claim, Iṣxani was once the episcopal see of Armenian Bishop and later Katholikos Nersēs III. This view was shared and continues to be shared by most scholars.⁵⁵⁰ Despite this, there is no archaeological or historical evidence of a pre-tenth century cathedral Church in Iṣxani. Moreover, I think there exists no direct evidence that Nersēs had ever been Bishop of Iṣxani.⁵⁵¹ The presentation of Nersēs as Bishop of Iṣxani is yet another example of the attempt to create a memory of continuity with the aim to include Armenians into the nation building project that Grigol and the secular rulers had initiated.⁵⁵² Therefore, I would suggest that the remembrance of both Bishop Nersēs and the Cathedral built by him are examples of yet more constructed memories.

Our knowledge of the biography of the Armenian Chalcedonian Katholikos Nersēs is derived almost entirely from Sebeos's *History*. We know that he was born in Tayk' and was from the village Iṣxan. The very first paragraph of Nersēs's biography needs to be clarified. Thomson's translation reads:

He [Nersēs] was raised from his youth in the territory of the Greeks, had studied the language and literature of the Romans, and travelled through those lands with the army in a military capacity. He firmly agreed with the council of Chalcedon and the *Tome* of Leo. But he revealed his impious thoughts to no one until he reached the episcopate of that land [*haṣṣarhin*], from which he was called to the throne of the Catholicosate.⁵⁵³

In the footnote, the translator indicates that *haṣṣarhin* refers to Tayk', "that land" as viewed from Armenia, which means that Nersēs first became the Bishop of Tayk' and after that occupied the office of the

⁵⁴⁹ GM, 274: ამის შემდგომად კურაპალატი მივიდა იშხანს და ნეტარნი იგი კაცნი მამად გრიგოლ და მამად საბა თანა. და ფრიად შეუყუარდა კურაპალატს ადგილი იგი ... ნებითა ღმრთისადათა იქმნა საბა ეპისკოპოს იშხანს ზედა, ნეტარისა ნერსე კათალიკოზისა აღმენებულსა კათოლიკე ეკლესიასა და საყდარსა მისსა, რომელი წელიწადთა მრავალთა დაქურევებულ იყო. აწ კუალად იქმნა სულიერი ქორწილი და მეორედ აღეშენა ამის ნეტარისა მიერ, ხოლო ჯორციელად მოლუაწებითა ღმრთის-მსახურთა მათ მეფეთადათა. Mahé also alludes to this sole source in "l'Église", 472.

⁵⁵⁰ See, e.g., Maranci, "Byzantium", 105-124.

⁵⁵¹ Such cases of monastic foundations forgetting their past and replacing them with "more venerable pedigrees" were quite common in western European monasticism. Geary, *Memory*, 136. The case of the Cathedral of Iṣxani is still somewhat exceptional as it attributes the foundation to a non-Georgian but highly authoritative katholikos.

⁵⁵² This process is eloquently described in the *Life of Grigol Xanzteli*. For studies, see Martin-Hisard, "Moines et monastères", 5-64

⁵⁵³ Seb-Eng, 140; Seb, 166-167: ... էր նա բնակութեամբ ի Տայոց, ի գեղջէն, որում Իշխանն կոչէն: Եւ սնեալ ի մանկութենէ յաշխարհին Յունաց և ուսեալ զլեզուս և գրպրութիւն Հռոմին, և շրջեալ ընդ աշխարհս զարու կարգաւք զինուորութեան. և հաստատեալ զմիտ իւր ի վերայ ժողովոյն Քաղկեդոնի և ի վերայ տուսարին Լեւոնի: Եւ ոչ ուսեք ի վեր հաներ զխորհուրդս ամբարշտութեանն, մինչև եհաս յեպիսկոպոսութիւն յաշխարհին, և անտի կոչեցաւ յաթոռ կաթուղիկոսութեան:

Katholikos.⁵⁵⁴ But understood in this way, the whole passage makes no sense: why would Nersēs hide his “bitter” plans if he became a Chalcedonian bishop on a Chalcedonian land? It is known that by the middle of the seventh century T‘ao was Chalcedonian.⁵⁵⁵ The entire passage actually suggests that it was only when he became *katholikos* did he reveal his Chalcedonian sympathies:

He kept the bitter poison hidden in his heart, and he planned to convert Armenia to the Council of Chalcedon. Yet he did not dare reveal his intention until King Constans came and stayed at the residence of the *Katholikos*, and the Council of Chalcedon was proclaimed in the church of St Gregory on a Sunday. The liturgy was celebrated in Greek by a Roman priest, and the king, *Katholikos*, and all the bishops took communion, some willingly, some unwillingly.⁵⁵⁶

I believe that the claim that Nersēs was Bishop of Tayk‘, or more precisely, that his Episcopal See was in Iṣxan, is a general misconception, at least there are insufficient sources to argue that Nersēs did actually occupy an Episcopal See in Tayk‘. Besides, had there been such a considerable episcopal centre in Iṣxan, Sebeos would not have referred to it as a mere village. It is possible that a linguistic detail is misleading us here. Nersēs III is called *Iṣxneli* by Arseni Sapareli, which in Georgian means “person from Iṣxani”. But does Arseni use *Iṣxneli* simply as a marker of provenance or does he actually think that Nersēs was Bishop of Iṣxan? Even if the second case were correct, Arseni still confuses provenance with the Episcopal diocese.⁵⁵⁷ Usually this form is also used to refer to a bishop, thus one could understand Arseni’s testimony in a way that

⁵⁵⁴ Seb-Thom, 140, fn. 858.

⁵⁵⁵ In fact the Russian translation skips *haṣxarhin* altogether and merely says: Но никому не открывал эту нечестивую тайну, пока не достиг сана епископа и не был затем призван на патриарший престол. Seb-Rus, 119.

⁵⁵⁶ Seb, 167: Բայց ի արտի իւրում ծածկեալ ունէր զթիւնս դառնութեան, և խորհէր հաւանեցուցանել զՀայս Քաղկեդոնի ժողովոյն, բայց ի վեր հանել զբանն ոչ համարձակեր: Մինչև եկն արքայ Կոստանդին և նստաւ ի տան կաթողիկոսին, և քարոզեցաւ յեկեղեցւոջն արբոյն Գրիգորի ժողովն Քաղկեդոնի յաւուր կիրակէի: Եւ մատեաւ պատարագ հռոմերէն ի հորում երիցուէ, և հաղորդեցաւ թագաւորն և կաթողիկոսն և ամէն էպիսկոպոսունքն, ո՛ր կամաւ և որ ակամայ:

⁵⁵⁷ This theory could be challenged by a sundial discovered in Oltisi, a fortress south-east of Iṣxani and residence of David II Kouropalates in the tenth century. The sundial has a Greek inscription together with some Armenian letters. The Greek inscription reads: ΕΓΩΝΑΡΣΙΣΙΟΕΠΙΣΚΟΠΙ[P/B?]. The sundial was used as a stone in an eleventh century Georgian Church. The publisher of the inscription has suggested that ΝΑΡΣΙΣ must be the seventh century *Katholikos* Nersēs III who was exiled to T‘ao. He also recommends to read the final two letters as “Iberia” (I, Narsis bishop of Iberia). The final two letters were very poorly visible even then, as for now the entire inscription is only barely legible, therefore it is very difficult to say what the last two letters were, which must have been standing for a toponym. Edwards, “Oltu-Penek”, 21-23. Edwards’s theory sounds plausible but I cannot agree that “the epigraph was used so disdainfully as a foundation of the Georgian Church which may be an indication of the Iberian attitude towards this détente”. Besides reading the letters as “Iberia” poses another problem that in the seventh century that part of Anatolia could not have been called Iberia. Therefore I think that the sundial is much later and refers to some other Nersēs.

Nersēs was Bishop of Iṣxani and therefore of Tayk‘, but I believe this is not a necessary implication.⁵⁵⁸ The Armenian sources equally know nothing about the Episcopal see of Iṣxan.

3.4. ŠUŠANIK AND GUGARK‘ AND GRACE DEPRIVED

The practice of alluding to common or shared memories as a polemical tool was not new to the Medieval Caucasus. Even at the outset of the seventh century, certain *loci memoriae* (and if one might say so, *personae memoriae*) existed in Armeno-Georgian discourse. These were the landmarks upon which the otherwise somewhat obscure and forgotten history of unity and dissention survived. One such example is the aforementioned commemoration of St Šušanik in the diocese of Curt‘avi, where Georgian and Armenian noblemen met, interacted and even intermarried. Apparently throughout the sixth century and probably since the death of St Šušanik the place of her martyrdom and her Armenianness was a popular symbol that literally brought together Armenians and Georgians. In the absence of continuous memory, Šušanik’s martyrion became a site of remembrance and a place of commemoration. Even today, the cult of St Šušanik still remains the symbol of close contacts between Armenians and Georgians. Consequently the core and initial reason for the breakout of the ardent controversy among the Georgian and Armenian hierarchs was that the former (from the latter’s point of view) betrayed that unity symbolized by the person of St Šušanik.⁵⁵⁹ During the scandal, the place of Šušanik’s martyrdom was frequently referred to by the polemicising sides, and later, after the separation, Armenians would often lament the betrayal by the Georgians of the memory of this holy site. Such was the first allegation of Katholikos Abraham against K‘yron: “I heard that you altered the Armenian service, established by Saint Šušanik”,⁵⁶⁰ further K‘yron’s response stated “Armenian noblemen who had relatives in Georgia came to the service of St Šušanik and to the Holy Cross”.⁵⁶¹ But to put it in P. Nora’s celebrated words, these places of memory, just as places of memory in general, were “fundamentally vestiges”. No side, either Georgian or Armenian, either in the seventh or in the following centuries was able

⁵⁵⁸ Compare with Katholikos Arseni Sapareli, who was merely from Sapara and not Bishop of Sapara, for there existed no such diocese in Georgia. Also Jacob, the fifth century author of the *Martyrdom of Šušanik*, sometimes traditionally called Curt‘aveli by modern scholarship, lived in Curt‘avi but was not Bishop of Curt‘avi.

⁵⁵⁹ For discussion, see, also, Martin-Hisard, “Sainte Nino”, 69-70.

⁵⁶⁰ GT‘ I, 154-165; GT II, 67; GT‘ III, 317-318. Abraham in his final encyclical letter, where he declares anathemas on the Georgians, repeats the same point concerning Šušanik: GT‘ I, 194; GT‘ II, 121; GT‘ III, 363.

⁵⁶¹ GT‘ I, 178-179; GT II, 89; GT‘ III, 337.

to formulate what the “liturgy established by St. Šušānik” meant. Was this a liturgy in her honour, or liturgy established by her?⁵⁶² The memory of Šušānik was, indeed fundamentally a vestige.

Symptomatically, immediately after the discussion on the reasons for Georgian dissidence, Uxtanēs strays away from the narrative and dedicates a separate chapter to Šušānik specifically as to the site of memory. The central point made in the eloquent passage on Šušānik is the following:

Like Nunē she became a woman who filled the country of Georgia. And those who came to visit her were instructed by her in their piety.⁵⁶³

“Like Nunē” is not a minor detail here and bears double meaning. Like Nunē, Šušānik was Georgia’s enlightener and like Nunē she was a “missionary” from or rather through Armenia. Šušānik’s role in the Armenian rhetoric was more than a mere reminder of unity. It was supposed to remind the Georgians of the entire conversion story. The influence of Xorenac’i is persistent: in Uxtanēs’s writing Šušānik bore the function of not only a reminder that Georgians and Armenians used to live in accord. She was a symbol of the eternal moral dependence of the Georgians on the Armenians. Just as according to Xorenac’i, St Nino was an envoy of St Gregory, so was Šušānik – an Armenian destined to enlighten the Georgians. The story of Šušānik follows common literary strategies of the traditional legend, such as condensing historical periods and linking heroes who were not historically connected in order to highlight the ideological message of the story.⁵⁶⁴ During the debate, both sides alluded to the remembrance of these *loci memoriae* and I would think that this place of memory had more of an ethnic power than a religious one. If during the early Armeno-Georgian polemics Šušānik’s double ethnic and cultural belonging mattered, Uxtanēs needed to stress that Šušānik was ethnic Armenian martyred by her evil Georgian husband. It was Šušānik’s Armenianness that mattered even for the medieval polemicists. From being a symbol of unity and accord she became a reminder for the Georgians of their defiance, just as St Nino (Nunē) and her crosses were.⁵⁶⁵

⁵⁶² See *supra*, pp. 25-27.

⁵⁶³ US-Arz, 129.

⁵⁶⁴ Zerubavel, “Invented Tradition”, 110.

⁵⁶⁵ See *infra*, pp. 181-188.

The argument for Armenia's cultural and spiritual superiority over the Georgians went even beyond Xorenac'i in subsequent centuries. Not only were Georgians indebted to Armenians for all of the cultural and political prestige in their possession, but according to some traditions, Georgians were even deprived of said prestige since the Georgian land was destined to "apostatize". The Holy Cross of Mxeta continued to remain as one of the greatest holy sites in the Caucasus and a symbol of Georgian Christianity. As is attested in the correspondence between K'yrion and Abraham, Armenians used to travel all the way to Kartli to venerate it.⁵⁶⁶ Subsequently, the story of the Cross of Mxeta found a fascinating development in the Armenian tradition. As a result of the deepening alienation between the two nations, a need arose to argue that the holiest sites of memory could not and in fact were not preserved on the heretical lands. Hence, a cycle of legends evolved that explained how and in what condition the Holy Cross left Georgia and was now located in Armenia. One such striking example is the story of the Cross of Nino by Aharon Vanandec'i. Aharon's agenda was twofold. On the one hand he had to justify the name of his own monastery, claiming that it derived from the Cross of Nino, which was kept there. On the other he felt obliged to deprive the Georgians of the rights of owning that sacred Cross.⁵⁶⁷ He created a conglomerate of all possible narratives about Georgia and Armenia, reducing the entire story of the Mamikoneans and the Bagratids around the story of the Cross. Finally he claimed:

But I, Father Aharon ... servitor of the Holy Cross, investigated in many Georgian and Armenian histories about the Holy Cross of Mxeta, which is now established among us. And I found all in exactly in the work by Agathangelos, the *Martyrdom of Šušānik*, and the deeds of St Sahak and of Monk Andreas.⁵⁶⁸

He alluded to Agathangelos once again, claiming that he was the source, yet none of the surviving versions of Agathangelos had anything to say about either St Nino or her Cross.⁵⁶⁹ References to non-existent sources were indeed a common practice, but it is rather unexpected in the case of such a well-known work as

⁵⁶⁶ See *supra*. The same story is recorded by Vardan Arewelc'i. See VA, 111; VA-Eng, 199.

⁵⁶⁷ Akinean, *Einführung*, 113.

⁵⁶⁸ *Ibid*: Իսկ ես հայր Ահարոն ... ապաստոր սրբոյ Խաչին, բազում աշխատութեամբ և խուզիւ քննեալ ի բազում մատենից Հայոց և Վրաց յաղագս սրբոյ Խաչին Մծխիթայի, որ այժմ բնակեալ է յերկրիս մերում ի տեսչութենէ իսաչելոյն Քրիստոսի, թէ ուստի՞ կամ ո՞րպէս առ մեզ լեալ է, և ստուգեալ հասեալ գտի յԱգաթանգեղայ պատմագրէ և ի Վկայութենէ Շուշանկանն և ի Վարուց սրբոյն Սահակայ և ի ճգնաւորէն Անդրէասայ.

⁵⁶⁹ Akinean, *Einführung*, 112. The story of Nino's crosses is also attested in Grigor Xlat'ec'i's *Synaxary*.

Agathangelos's. The same spirit was taken over by probably one of the fiercest anti-Georgian polemicists of all times Yovhannēs Vanakan Vardapet. Outraged by the Georgians he writes:

The last slaves of the Armenians the Georgians curse us and reject us. Mesrop gave them writing and Mesrop blessed the Cross of Varjia. On the right arm [of the Cross] there is an Armenian inscription and they covered it with gold in order to hide it.⁵⁷⁰

The Cross of Mcxeta, the Cross of Manglisi and the Cross of Varjia became strong markers of Georgian orthodoxy. The claim of the national markers went in another interesting direction this time connected to the great fifth century monastic, Peter the Iberian. In the thirteenth century a Georgian version of the *Life of Peter* was created where his Chalcedonian orthodoxy was affirmed. By that period, Peter was a national saint and his Georgianness was a guarantee for his orthodoxy. As we saw above, Peter's authority was used and intentionally or unintentionally misunderstood and abused by the medieval Georgians to argue their perpetual Orthodoxy.⁵⁷¹ The Armenians made a further good usage of Peter's authority. Just as in case of Šušānik, the Cross of Nino and other markers of Georgian Christianity, Peter the Iberian was also used as an argument against the Georgians. Hence a legend was devised that after the condemnation of the Council of Chalcedon Peter wrote to Armenians and praising them for staying true to orthodoxy:

This Peter wrote to the Armenians and praised them joyfully that they did not attend the council and said thus: At Chalcedon they rejected Christ. Stand firmly on your fatherly faith, which was given to you and your land by the Lord. Just as before the seed of humankind had spread into the world from here, similarly the seed of the orthodox faith was kept among you and from you must it spread to many directions. Be well, my children, in the unshaken rock in Christ.⁵⁷²

The creation or elaboration of this legend is connected to Vardan Arewelc'i, another defender of the Armenian case, who dedicated a substantial paragraph to the separation of the Georgians.⁵⁷³ Peter became a

⁵⁷⁰ GT^c 534: GT^c II 534: Եւ ընդ նոսա զի՞ զարմանաս մեր ոչինչքս Հայոց յետին ծառայքս՝ վիրք այլ նախատեն զմեզ և ուրանան. Մեսրոպ ետ նոցա զիր և զՎարծիոյ խաչն Մեսրոպ է արհնել, և յաջ թնին կայ հայ գիր, և զայն ոսկւով ծածկեալ են թէ թող չերևի. On Yovhannēs Vanakan see, Voskean, “Vanakan”, 42-52; Mehrabian, “Vanakan”, 29-32.

⁵⁷¹ See *supra*.

⁵⁷² MS-Arm, 174-175: Այս Պետրոս գրեաց ի Հայս և երանեաց վասն ոչ լինելոյ նոցա ի ժողովն, և ասաց յայտնապէս: ի Քաղկեդոն ուրացան զՔրիստոս. դուք պինդ կացէք ի հայրենի հաւատոյ որ շնորհեցաւ ձեզ ի Տեարնէ և աշխարհիդ ձեր. զի որպէս երբեմն սերմն մարդկութեանս այդուստ սփռեցաւ ընդ աշխարհ, նոյնպէս առ ձեզ պահեցաւ սերմն ուղղափառ հաւատոյ, և ի ձէնջ տարածելոց է ընդ բազումս: Ողջ լերուք յանսասան վէմն Քրիստոս որդեակք իմ:

⁵⁷³ VA-Eng, 172-173.

convenient argument, for he, as a Georgian prince, wrote to Armenians, and not Georgians, and praised them for being consistently orthodox.⁵⁷⁴

Going back to St Šušānik, she symbolized yet another crucial aspect with strong political undercurrent. One has to bear in mind that Šušānik was inextricably tied to Curt'avi, the ecclesiastical and political centre of Gugareti/Gugark' (alternatively Lower Kartli), a stretch of land in the very centre of the South Caucasus that had always been targeted by all key players of the region.⁵⁷⁵ Also in the *chronotope* of the schism, of unity and separation, Gugark' played a pivotal role. According to both Armenian Geography and Movsēs Xorenac'i, Gugark' was a territory of a considerable size and of paramount strategic importance. The latter author made an especially good usage of the remembrance of the land. Almost no aspect of Armeno-Georgian confrontation would avoid, in one way or another, the issue of Gugark'. Inner Kartli had held a geopolitical importance from Hellenistic times, but control over Gugareti in the tenth century would provide a crucial strategic advantage as it was only one step towards the occupation of the last Arab stronghold in the region – the Tbilisi Emirate, which was already gradually declining.⁵⁷⁶ This also meant possessing control over all passages towards the north, the west and towards Albania, as well as through the southern valleys to Armenia.

The study of the medieval and early medieval Armenian historians reveals that very often *Gugark'* and *Virk'* were used interchangeably, which is not always accidental.⁵⁷⁷ Often, when Georgians were mentioned in the Armenian narratives, only Lower Kartli was in fact implied. This would provoke further, intentional or less intentional, errors still persistent today. The interchangeable usage of *Gugark'/Virk'* and other territorial markers for the Georgian lands and, at the same time, the struggle for retaining these very lands, resulted in a confusion that was embedded deep in the memories and distorted them. Note, for example, Movsēs

⁵⁷⁴ For a detailed discussion, see Schmidt, "Petrus", 250-267.

⁵⁷⁵ For historical geography of the region, see Muskhelishvili, *Historical Geography*, 146-153; "Political Relations", 124-139; See also, Aleksidze, "Žavaxeti and Gugareti", 269-272. As Toumanoff puts it, these marchlands were always a battlefield between the two neighbouring monarchies, and the struggle is still going on – on the battlefield of historiography". Toumanoff, *Studies*, 440. For the overview of classical sources describing the region, see *Ibid*, 467-468.

⁵⁷⁶ The first historian to ever mention the region was Strabo, who is also the first historian to record Armeno-Georgian conflict over the region. Strabo, XI, 14, 5.

⁵⁷⁷ Toumanoff also notes this toponymical ambivalence in *Studies*, 467.

Xorenac'i's reference to Georgian King as *Bdeašx* of all Georgia, instead of king, whereas the *bdešx* or *pitaxš* was a ruler of Gugareti/Lower Kartli.⁵⁷⁸

His [Artašes's] sister Artašam he gave as wife to a certain Mihrdat, great *bdeašx* of Georgia, who was from the seed of Mithridates, satrap of Darius, whom Alexander had set over the prisoners of Iberia. And he entrusted him with the government of the northern mountains and the Pontic Sea.⁵⁷⁹

Appealing to the fuzzy semantic boundaries of *Iberia* and *Gugark'*, already in the tenth century, the Armenian princes and kings were generously called Kings of Armenians and Georgians. According to Asolik, Ašot I (855–84; 884–90 king) was the “*išxan* of Armenia and Georgia” and Smbat (890–914) a legitimate owner of Armenia and Georgia.⁵⁸⁰ In an inscription in Ani, King Gagik I (989–1020) is also called King of Armenians and Georgians.⁵⁸¹ Other historians also try to magnify the success of the Armenian kings in the Caucasus: For example, pseudo-Šapuh Bagratuni claims that “Smbat occupied the whole of Armenia and Georgia (*Virk'*) and Ałunk', the valley of the Georgians and the city of Partaw. He also subdued Paytakaran and Tplis”.⁵⁸² Yovhannēs Drasxanakerc'i sometimes speaks of both Iberia and Gugark', but sometimes mentions Gugark' and implies Iberia:

Our neighbours who are around us, Greeks, Egerians [Megrelians], Gugarians and Utians, the northern people, dwelling at the foothills of the Caucasus.⁵⁸³

He does not mention Iberia, apparently taking Gugark' as synonymous to Iberia. The same author also asserts that Ašot

⁵⁷⁸ For the institute of the *Pitaxš* in Georgia, see Farmanfarmaian, “Georgia and Iran”, 15-22; Gamsakhurdia, “Pitaxš”; Toumanoff, “States and Synasties”, 9-16; See also Garsoian's discussion on the term in *Buzandaran*, 516.

⁵⁷⁹ MX, 117: Բայց զդուստր իւր զԱրտաշամայ տայ կին Միհրդատայ, ումեմն Վրաց բդեշխի մեծի, որ էր ի գաւակէ Միհրդատայ, Դարեհի նախարարի, զոր կացուցեալ էր Աղեքսանդր ի վերայ գերութեանն Վերիացոց աշխարհին, որպէս յառաջն պատմեցաք. և հաւատայ նմա կողմնակալութիւն հիւսիսային լերանցն և Պոնտոս ծովու:

⁵⁸⁰ ST, 100; ST-Ger, 120, 124-125. For Garsoian's evaluation of these testimonies, see “Independent Kingdoms”, 146-147, 153.

⁵⁸¹ See Orbeli, *Works*, 5; Maisuradze, *Studies*, 141. For a study of the Armenian and Georgian royal ideology during the Abbasid period, see Jones, “Abbasid Suzerainty”, 144-150.

⁵⁸² Ps-Šapuh, 158-159:

⁵⁸³ YD, 256: ...քանզի դրացիք մեր և ազգք որ շուրջ զմեօք են՝ Յունականք և Եգերացիք և Գուգարացիք և Ուտեացիք, հիւսիսական ազգք բնակեալք առ ոտամբն Կովկասու...

reached towards the north, towards the valleys of the great mountain of the Caucasus. He overran the tribes of its valleys and swamps. In a similar way he quelled the mixed population of Gugark' and the robbers of Utik' and expelled from among them evil of treachery and he ruled all over the law abiding and obedient people and appointed for them rulers and leaders.⁵⁸⁴

Although the rule of the Armenian kings extended for a certain period of time over a portion of Lower Kartli when the Kingdom of Tašir-Joraget (975–1145) had been created, the impression was made that it referred to all of Iberia.⁵⁸⁵ Consequently, reference to Gugareti/Inner Kartli was extended over entire Medieval Georgia. Thus, for example, Smbat, son of Ašot, was claimed to have extended

the boundaries of his domain as far as the city of Karin in the northeast, and to the farther side of Kłarjk' as far as the shores of the great sea and the borders of Egrisi, as well as to the foot of the Caucasus Mountains, that is to say, Gugark', and Canark' as far as the Gate of the Alans, where he also seized the fortress guarding the pass. From there the boundary [ran] southward to the city of Tp'his along the course of the Kur River, and [continued] on to the district of Uti, as far as the city of Hunarakert, to Tus and to Šamk'or. Thus he enlarged the limits of his domain and brought these beneath the yoke of the royal tributes, *bekars* and taxes, and dedicated the weapon he used valiantly in battle as a sign of victory.⁵⁸⁶

The linguistic and semantic factor has always been crucial in many ways in the Armeno-Georgian relations even in Late Antiquity. The confusion of the *ethnika* went into Late Antiquity and is very often a reason for modern confusion. For example *Georgia (Virk')* in Armenian did not always mean entire Georgia but was often designating the Lower Kartli, or Gugark'. Consequently, in the following sentence Mxit'ar Ayrevanec'i does not imply Georgia or even Iberia, but the small kingdom of Tašir-Joraket in southern Georgia:

⁵⁸⁴ YD, 140: Եւ ապա ձեռն զհիւսիսական կողմամբ արկեալ ի ծործորս մեծի լերինն Կովկասու, որ ի հովիտն և ի ձորս երկայնագոգս բնակեալք էին ազգք ընդ իւրեաւ հնազանդեցուցանէր. այլ զաղխատրոյզ բնակիչսն Գուգարաց և զելուզակուտ մարդիկ Ուտի գաւառի առհասարակ ընդ ձեռամբ նուաճէր՝ ի բաց ի նոցանէ հերքելով զաւագակութիւն մարդադաւուրէան, և իբրև օրինակաւորս և հլուս զամենեսեան կազմէր, և առջնորդս և իշխանս նոցա կացուցանէր:

⁵⁸⁵ For some discussion of the same topic of medieval Armenian claims of rule over Georgia, see Eremyan, “Annexation”, 6-8; “Common fate”, 6-7; Mkrtumyan, “Kahketi”, 90. Symptomatically in over 150 pages dedicated to the political struggle in the Caucasus under the Arab emirates, A. Ter-Ghewondyan mentions Georgians only two or three times and is completely silent about extensive Georgian sources on the period.

⁵⁸⁶ YD, 161: Եւ այսպէս ձգտեալ աճեցուցանէր զշաւիղ տէրութեան իւրոյ յարևմտից հիւսիսոյ մինչև ցԿարնոյ քաղաք, և անդր ևս քան զԿղարջս՝ քերէալ մինչև առ ամին ծովուն մեծի, և մինչև ցաահմանս Եգերացոց և մինչև ցստորոտ մեծի լերինն Կովկասու, զԳուգարացիս և զԾանարս մինչև ցԴուռն Ալանաց, առեալ ևս յինքն և զամբոց դրան պահակի նոցա. և անտի ի հարաւակողմն կոյս զԿուր գետով մինչև ի քաղաքն Տփլիսի. և զՈւտի գաւառ մինչև ի քաղաքն Հունարակերտ և մինչև ի Տուս և ի Շամքոր: Եւ այսպէս ընդարձակեալ զսահման տէրութեան իւրոյ, որ ընդ լծով արքունի սակից և բեկարաց և մաքսից կացուցեալ՝ զգէն քաջութեան մարտի իւրոյ նշան յաղթութեան կանգնէր:

This (981) was the beginning of the rule of the Bagratunis Georgia, for Gurgen became king in Georgia and his brother Smbat became king in Armenia.⁵⁸⁷

Even in one single piece of writing, the *History* of Yovhannēs Drasxanakertc‘i the limits of Gugark‘ vary radically. If he was to describe the military success of the Armenian kings, Gugareti was extending up until the Gates of Alans incorporating the whole of central Georgia.⁵⁸⁸ Drasxanakertc‘i used the same ambiguity when referring to K‘yron, when K‘yron was declared as archbishop of the Armenian katholikos of both Iberia and Egrisi.⁵⁸⁹ The attribution to St Gregory the Illuminator of the conversion of the entire South Caucasian region and the confusion of the region of Gugareti and the whole of Georgia are also interrelated.⁵⁹⁰ Along the same lines, the letter of the Armenians to K‘yron where Gregory is mentioned as the illuminator of “this land of the Caucasus” of the Diocese of Curt‘avi, the then centre of Gugareti, can be interpreted and was interpreted in two ways, referring to either entire Iberia or strictly to Gugareti, because in the seventh century Gregory could have been considered as the enlightener of Gugareti too.⁵⁹¹

The same holds true to the Georgian language, where *Somxiti* often meant southern regions of Georgia. For example, when Arseni Sapareli speaks of the relics of St Šušanik in the diocese of Somxiti (*nac‘ilta tana somxitisa*), he does not mean Armenia but the Lower Kartli, i.e. Gugark‘, which in the tenth century acquired the name *Somxiti* as opposed to *Somxeti* (Armenia).⁵⁹² This, as one may have expected, gave rise to series of confusion, some of which are already present in Arseni’s treatise. The reflection of contemporary geo-political aspirations and perceptions can also be seen in the Georgian historiography of roughly the same time.⁵⁹³

⁵⁸⁷ MA, 56: Աստ եղև սկիզբն թագաւորելոյ Բագրատունեաց 'ի վերայ Վրաց, զի Գուրգէն 'ի Վիրսու և Սմբատ եղբայր նորա ի Հայս թագաւորեցին:

⁵⁸⁸ YD, 200, YD-Fr, 253: միանգամայն իսկ և աշխարհն Գուգարացոց և որք մերձ ի Դրունս Ալանաց բնակեալք են, զի և ընդ իւրով ձեռամբ գնուսս նուաճէ:

⁵⁸⁹ See *supra*.

⁵⁹⁰ See *supra*.

⁵⁹¹ For the Armenian text, see *supra*. S. Eremyan also supposed that the legend which claims St Gregory to be also the illuminator of Iberia, Albania, Apxazeti and Alans emerged in the 9th–10th cc., when the above-discussed struggle over the Caucasus was in progress. Eremyan, *Feudal Armenia*, 45. See also, Javakhishvili, *Armenian Literature*, 183.

⁵⁹² For discussion, see AS II, 72-74. See also Berdzenishvili, *Studies*, 137-157; Muskhelishvili, *Historical Geography*, 210-212;

⁵⁹³ See, for example, Martin-Hisard, “Vaxt‘ang”, 225-228.

Therefore the remembrance of Šušanik, of Curt'avi and of Gugareti was interconnected. The same refers to the "Holy Cross of Mcxeta", so many times brought up by the seventh century contestants. If this was the site of the Cross erected by St Nino, where is she in the same debate? Why she is not mentioned at all in the entire correspondence? The place of martyrdom of St Šušanik, Mt Kangar, the Cross of Mcxeta, Gugark' all these landmarks became the places of memory and once again, in Nora's words, they were destined to create "another history" – the history of unity and separation of the Armenians and Georgians.

CHAPTER FOUR: ‘DECONSTRUCTING’ THE SCHISM

*You must care about your nation so that,
by these sorts of traditions
it doesn't mix up with Georgians,
and I shall care for the general,
so that he, just like his brother, does not georgianize.
Mxit'ar Goš*

4.1. THE SCHISM CONCEPTUALIZED

Our final question to address is probably more complex than the previous three. If the second chapter dealt with the reflections of the narrative of the schism in the medieval collective remembrance, this final chapter aims at revealing how the contemporary scholarship conceptualized the idea of religious union and separation in the Caucasus, how this conceptualization determined the reading of the medieval Caucasian history in its entirety and what aspects of medieval Georgian and Armenian history and historiography affects the *chronotope* of the schism. The preliminary answer is – almost all. Whether material, spiritual or literary culture, historical or ethnic geography, political or religious history, all these fields, in one way or another, whether directly or indirectly, are examined along the concept of the Schism. Through the lens of this Schism the Middle Ages, and even more frequently contemporary scholarship, saw almost all tangential events. As a concept, the Schism became all too convenient an explanation for the silence of the medieval Georgian voice on this period of history, for the mismatch with Armenian sources on the interpretation of the very origins of South Caucasian Christianity and Christian cultures, for the formation of “national” historiographies, and ultimately for the formation of “national” cultures. The foundation and early history of the Church and political and social recollections in the Armeno-Georgian context were heavily determined by political, social and, consequently, ideological remembrances created in the Middle Ages.⁵⁹⁴ The filter of this period

⁵⁹⁴ Compare with P. Geary's observation of the same period but in a Western European context: “the raw material of the past was transformed ... to the extent that the past could be made to conform to the present, it was retained. Persons, events, and traditions that eluded contemporary systems of understanding and perceiving were quickly lost or transformed. These transformations, whether kings and princes or of dragons and grandfathers, owed more to

determined in a fundamental way the access that all future generations would have to alternative pasts. All of these aspects were destined to be studied and examined through the lens of the Schism. I propose to argue against the extreme conceptualization of the Schism as I am convinced that instead of looking for various consequences of the separation, it would be more fruitful to study why and how separation and the unity were perceived and transmitted to our days.⁵⁹⁵ For years some of the key problems of medieval Caucasian history have been studied without consideration of the different strata of smoke and mirrors through which the remembrance of Late Antiquity has reached even to the present time. Despite the overwhelming multiplicity of such themes, only several will be discussed below. These are the problems of the spread of Christianity in the region, the creation and spread of “national” literacy and the ethno-religious identities formed in the medieval Caucasus.

Armeno-Georgian studies, studies of the early Caucasian Church and the political history of Caucasian Late Antiquity have always suffered of certain methodological insecurity, with respect to the conceptualization of the Schism in the Caucasus as a kind of a watershed. Scholars have often dated various texts based on assumptions about historical realia and concluding that at a specific point in time, religious and ideological aspirations must have been such and such.⁵⁹⁶ Hence, the danger that one often faces when studying Georgian and Armenian historiography is the ultimate generalization of the historical factors that might have provoked the creation of a certain piece of writing. This method can, in fact, be plausible when supported by philological and linguistic arguments, but when such are absent there is the danger of arguing from utter silence.

superimposed interpretive schemas than to the raw materials by which eleventh-century people encountered them”. Geary, *Phantoms*, 177-178.

⁵⁹⁵ The theoretical question, of course, stands: are fabrications and acts of remembrance phenomenologically on the same level or are they different in their essence? Of course whenever we speak of remembrance, we have to realize that in many cases the narratives were pure fabrications that served polemical ends. In these cases it is not a matter of memory or forgetting but of intentional fabrication. Despite this, I find it extremely difficult to draw a phenomenological line of demarcation between fabrication and act of remembrance, or to indicate at what point fabrication becomes recollection. The rendering of the events around the council of Chalcedon by various Chalcedonian and non-Chalcedonian historians is a good example. See, for example, Mouterde, “Historiens monophysites”, 581-601. For the same problem, see V. Menze’s study on the remembrance of empress Theodora by the non-Chalcedonians, in Menze, *Justinian*, (THINK)

⁵⁹⁶ See, for example, Zekiyan, “Iranian Oikumene”, 239-240.

For example, in his scrupulous study of Medieval Georgian historiography, S. Rapp often divides the *Life of Nino* and the *Conversion of Georgia* as a whole into pre- and post-schismal components and dates them to the eighth or late seventh century because these texts allegedly reflect an attempt to distance from the Armenian tradition of the conversion.⁵⁹⁷

Enduring Armeno-Georgian interplay after Duin III [sic.] had other important literary consequences for the Georgians. In my view, the development of a written (eastern) Georgian historical tradition was in large measure an outgrowth of the Kartvelians thrust to record, embellish, invent, and disseminate their own distinctive history in the wake of decaying Armenian ecclesiastical influence. In the aftermath of 607, emboldened Kartvelian clerics were compelled to write down a single coherent story of how their people had entered the Christian fold.⁵⁹⁸

Our interest lies in this qualification of medieval Caucasian history and of medieval narratives as pre- and post-schismal. The tradition of St Nino is often connected to the assumed existence of a pre-schismal and post-schismal discourse in the Caucasus.⁵⁹⁹ As such, the usual template is that we do not possess early sources on St Nino and they could not have been created before the schism, hence all information about Nino must be dated to the period after the schism. But is the *Conversion* really a Georgian attempt to “disseminate their own distinctive history in the wake of decaying Armenian ecclesiastical influence?” Does the text give us grounds to believe so, or rather our expectations concerning the period in question? Not only do we risk of arguing from silence, but also a vicious circle of argumentation is being created. Very often, once a text is “dated” according to historical circumstances then the same text and the same criteria are subsequently subjected to further dating. For example, it is well known that the dating of Georgian historiographic texts and, in general, of all medieval Georgian sources is extremely problematic. This is especially true of

⁵⁹⁷ See the chapter titled “The Pre-Schism section: The Primary History of Kartli and the Royal List”, in Rapp, *Studies*, 245-299.

⁵⁹⁸ See Rapp, *Studies*, 170. Kekelidze’s entire conception of the medieval Georgian literature is also based on a pre- and post-schismal division. See Kekelidze, *History*, 47-48. Earlier than that, N. Marr upheld the same views. See Marr, “Armeno-Georgian Philology”, 15-29.

⁵⁹⁹ Rapp, Crego, “Shatberdi Variant”, 167-187. The mentioning of Armenian women as recorders of the life of Nino is also considered to be an attempt to demonstrate that Armenians were in fact aware of the Georgian tradition of the conversion. It is striking how, after developing a philological argument from one that is historical, Crego and Rapp further develop a historical argument from the same philological one: “The relative absence of references to Armenia and Armenians in the seventh century *Conversion of Kartli* reflects a time when Kartvelian clerics were elaborating a tradition of their own distinct conversion whereas the ninth/tenth century *Life of Nino* expands that established tradition while subtly addressing the challenges thrown down by Xorenac’i and other Armenian writers”. Crego, Rapp, “Shatberdi Version”, 185. I believe this claim is not entirely true. For instance, the part of the *Conversion of Georgia*, which the scholars date to the seventh century, speaks about Nino as a companion of Hripsime, and relates that they both arrived in the presence of the Armenian king T’rdat. In fact, it is the *Life of Nino* that does not mention T’rdat at all.

historiographic narratives that were later incorporated in the *Life of Georgia*, which has been heavily edited numerous times in order to sustain continuity within the narrative. The division of the texts into constituting parts cannot therefore avoid all kinds of conventions. Furthermore, due to this long history of text-editing, we are quite ignorant of what, e.g. the seventh century Georgian language was like. As such, we are deprived of both a trustworthy linguistic and also historical dating means, for we cannot say for certain what was altered, when and why. Owing to this inconvenience, the texts included in the *Life of Georgia* were subject to every kind of speculation. For example, the dating of the *Life of Vaxt'ang* ranges from the fifth to the eleventh century.⁶⁰⁰ The *Life of the Kings*, is sometimes also dated to the period before or roughly around the schism due to its “non-Bagrat’ioni” and non anti-Armenian and even “armenophile” character.⁶⁰¹ Moreover M. van Esbroeck even takes 506 (Council of Babgēn) as a kind of a landmark, when Armenians and Georgians were writing their histories in concord.⁶⁰² Nevertheless the one and only source we possess concerning the Council of 506 is Katholikos Babgēn’s correspondence with the Persians. For the same reasons, he dates the *Life of Vaxt'ang* to no later than 502.⁶⁰³

To my mind the main reason for this flowering of speculation is the erroneous conceptualization and attribution of our own understanding of a certain period to a specific author or writing. It is true that everything, however non-historical it might be, is a trace of something and must be studied through the prism of historical conditions, but at no cost should one necessarily seek to justify ignorance in assumed historical state of affairs. Although such an approach will indeed lead to, what van Esbroeck calls, a “blank spot on the map of history despite the existence of abundant source material”, yet the texts that we examined should not necessarily be seen “within the context of rivalry between pro- and anti-Chalcedonian interests”.⁶⁰⁴ If one tries to fill out the blank spots of history and interpret sources with preconceived historical suppositions and

⁶⁰⁰ See Goiladze, *Vaxt'ang*; Kakabadze, *Vaxt'ang*; Martin-Hisard, “Vaxt'ang”, 207-242; Rapp, *Studies*, 197-242; Toumanoff, “Historical Literature”, 170; van Esbroeck, “Background”, 6.

⁶⁰¹ Rapp, *Studies*, 143-169; On the textual history of the *Conversion of Georgia*, see Aleksidze, “New Rencensions”, 409-423; “Four Versions”, 9-16; Rapp, Crego, “Shatberdi Variant”, 169-225; Lerner, “Chelishi”, 131-137.

⁶⁰² van Esbroeck, “Background”, 9.

⁶⁰³ *Ibid.*, 6.

⁶⁰⁴ van Esbroeck, “Background”, 5.

then, moreover, create further conceptualizations based on their own interpretation of sources, one shall enter an inescapable vicious circle.

4.2. THE BEGINNINGS

Two vexed questions have tormented Armeno-Georgians studies for at least a century: the history of the Christianization of the South Caucasian kingdoms and the creation of literacy among Armenians, Georgians and Albanians. During the last ten centuries Armenians have raised these two issues at all possible levels, both scholarly and less scholarly, claiming that, beginning from the seventh century, Georgians distanced themselves from the Armenians and began to forget their debt to their southern neighbours, who evangelized them and provided literacy for them. As we saw, Armenian claims of cultural superiority did not resonate in the medieval Georgian tradition until modern times, when nationalism in its modern meaning emerged in the region. Nowadays these two issues remain most sensitive and irreconcilable.

The figures of St Gregory the Illuminator and other founding fathers of Armenian Christianity, as well as St Nino in the Georgian tradition were all involved in the Armeno-Georgian debates. In the circumstances of fading memory of the mutual past, these persons became virtual sites of memory, the hallmarks used and often abused for ideological ends. In a similar fashion, Armenians and Georgians take equal pride in their national writings. National script is a sacred *locus memoriae* for both people and both nations have even dedicated monuments to their respective alphabets.⁶⁰⁵ And indeed no other question of Armeno-Georgian relations has raised so much discussion as the creation of writing. Therefore, abandoning an attempt of a positive historical solution to the problem, I propose to adopt a kind of a phenomenological view, to take Maštoc⁶ and the national alphabets as dialectical phenomena experienced by medieval intellectuals rather than historical realia.⁶⁰⁶ The same refers to the traditions of St Gregory and St Nino the Illuminators, whom we already treated briefly. As a result, we shall discover that the role these hallmarks played throughout history were not uniform at all and gradually changed and acquired various functions depending on the immediate political and cultural needs.

⁶⁰⁵ See, for example, the newly erected Tower of the Georgian Alphabet in Batumi, Georgia.

⁶⁰⁶ For an eloquent exposition of the subject in the Armenian context, see Zekiyan, "Christianisierung", 189-198.

4.2.1. ST. GREGORY AND ST. NINO THROUGH THE LENS OF THE SCHISM

According to the traditional Armenian narrative, which has been gradually amending, St Gregory the Illuminator is responsible for the ultimate Christianisation of the entire Caucasian region, including Georgia and Albania. The Georgian evangelizer St Nino is only occasionally, according to Movsēs Xorenac'i presented as Gregory's representative in Georgia. The Georgian narrative on the other hand is drastically different. Nowadays St Nino is the converter of Georgia and indeed no tangible connections have survived between the Armenian and Georgian versions of the story and the story of the Christianization of the region is indeed a history "mit doppeltem Boden".⁶⁰⁷ The radical divergence of the sources often compels one to seek for historical justifications for the mismatch. Here again a similar explanation transpires: The Armenians and Georgians both accepted that St Gregory was the enlightener of both lands and only after the schism the Georgians wished to distance from the Armenian connections, hence the forging of the national Georgian narrative. But there is a principal difference between the medieval perception of the "founding" saints and the modern nationalistic perceptions. Today the roles of St Gregory and St Nino proper are disputed, the argument swinging from one pole to another, from complete acceptance to the complete denial of the role of either of these illuminators. For the Georgians, Nino is the symbol of Georgian "national" Christianity and the same is the case for the role of St Gregory in the Armenian tradition. But as we already saw, the medieval Armenian and Georgian polemicists looked at the problem from a different perspective: Gregory and Nino were not mutually exclusive; both of them were known, respected and even venerated in both traditions. This is made clear by several version of the *Life of Gregory* created in the Georgian realm and by the fact that his service was well established.⁶⁰⁸ The same refers to Armenia, Nino and her cross were holy symbols for the Armenians as Aharon Vanandac'i's narrative demonstrates it and even earlier *katholikoi* Movsēs and Abraham have substantiated it. Finally, both St Gregory's and St Nino's cycles are present side by side in the famous cathedral in Ani.⁶⁰⁹

On this account, S. Rapp's views on medieval Georgian literature warrant attention:

⁶⁰⁷ For the overview of the two diverging traditions, see Mahé, "Bekehrung", 107-125.

⁶⁰⁸ For the editions, see Abuladze, "Hripsimeans", 73-108; Garitte "Fragment", 89-102; Garitte, "Rhipsimiennes", 233-251. For a general discussion, see Winkler, "Agat'angelos", 125-141.

⁶⁰⁹ For discussion, see *supra*.

Georgian literature was massively transformed by the events of 608/609. Before the schism, original Georgian literary works had been limited to brief hagiographical tracts ... In the aftermath of Duin III, Kartvelian clerics began to write down, and in some cases to invent, a distinct tradition of their 'national' Church. It was in these exhilarating times that the Conversion of Kartli first appeared ... Georgian historiography had ultimately been inspired by the schism with the Armenian Church and subsequent Kartvelian search and written articulation of a distinct tradition.⁶¹⁰

Elsewhere Rapp writes:

Ironically the Kartvelians appropriated elements of the Armenian tradition of Trdat's conversion as the framework for the story of their own special Christianization, which was first put into writing shortly after the beginning of the Armeno-Kartvelian ecclesiastical split in 607. Nino, the holy woman, credited with the conversion of the Kartvelian royal family, is not attested in any extant redaction of Agat'angelos's *History*. However, the seventh-century *Conversion of Kartli* and the subsequent *Life of Nino* make her the companion of Hripsime, the prominent martyr Hripsime of the Agat'angelos cycle. Why should this be the case? We are faced with two possibilities. First, Nino may have actually been the traveling companion of Hripsime, but for whatever reason this fact was forgotten or perhaps suppressed by Armenian copyists (after Duin III?). The inclusion of Nino among the nuns seized by Trdat was incorporated into the Armenian historical canon by later writers such as Xorenac'i and the eleventh-century Aharon of Vanand, author of *A History of the Holy Cross of Nunē, the Leader of Georgia*. But these authors lived after Duin III, and their naming of Nino among the nuns may derive from a post-schism Georgian tradition. Second, a post-schism Kartvelian author or authors may have assumed and/or invented a connection between the Georgian Nino and Hripsime. This explanation is the more likely one, though it need not imply that the 'memory' of Nino as a member of the group of nuns was a complete fabrication."⁶¹¹

"Exhilarating times"? What makes one conclude that those times were so exceptionally exhilarating? Is this not a descent into a typical vicious circle of argumentation? It would seem so. I believe Rapp's reasoning is logically flawed: First it is assumed that the Nino cycle, as we know it, was created by the Georgians after the schism. It is also assumed that Nino was intentionally forgotten by the Armenians after the schism. Then Nino reemerges in Movsēs Xorenac'i, who had the least reason to mention Nino at all. Moreover, it is also assumed that after the schism the Georgians invented a connection between Nino and the Hripsimeans, even though it was earlier claimed that the Georgians would reject any sort of connection with the Armenians. If so why the need to make Nino a companion of Hripsime? Most importantly, it is assumed that the *Conversion of Georgia* is a seventh century text because after the schism the angry Georgians must have sat down to write their own "anti-Armenian" history. I believe such argumentation is not viable.⁶¹² To begin with, how and

⁶¹⁰ Rapp, "Dialogues", 170.

⁶¹¹ See Rapp, *Studies*, 122-24.

⁶¹² To "resolve" this contradiction, N. Akinean declared the whole Nino tradition to be a ninth century fabrication. As for Rufinus's narrative, Akinean considers that this story was not about the Georgian conversion but about the Armenian by St Hripsime and St Gregory. But here again Akinean argues from silence. Akinean, *Einführung*, 348. Babian also rejects Rufinus's testimony as unauthoritative. Babian, *Relations*, 14-29. For a detailed study of Rufinus's narrative, see Thelamon, *Païens et chrétiens*, 13-28, especially, 85-122.

according to which sources is it known that Georgians started to develop their own “national” tradition immediately after “Dwin III”? To my knowledge there is no evidence for this at all; it is based on the concept that they “must have done so”.

Secondly, founded on this common assumption that the “schism” gave rise to the “nationalization” of the tradition, another hypothesis is set forth, namely that the *Conversion of Georgia* must have appeared around the same time. According to this logic, it follows that the “schism” and the seventh century in general are not only the *termini post quem* for the creation of the Nino cycle, of the *Life of Nino* and of the entire *Conversion*, but are even the *termini ante quem*, meaning that the Georgians must have produced such a work immediately after the schism, a fact that is altogether logically unjustifiable. Why not then eighth, ninth or tenth century, or why not the sixth, or fifth? Are there any linguistic or historical tools to date the *Conversion*, apart from the idea that it must be a “post-Dwin III” text? None at all.

Thirdly, and this third assumption contradicts everything that was said before, Rapp claims that the tradition which has Nino as a Hripsimean entered the Armenian tradition from a “post-schism Kartvelian author”. If so, which account is older? That of the *Conversion* or Xorenac‘i’s? Is it likely that Xorenac‘i heard that Georgians were writing about Nino and therefore decided to fit her into his own narrative? Why would he do so, if he had Agathangelos and others to use, where there is no Nino at all? Furthermore, if the *Conversion of Georgia* had been created to suppress the memory of connections with the Armenians, why is in the same narrative the third archbishop of Mcxeta identified as a former deacon of Katholikos Nersēs I?⁶¹³ How can one explain so many other ties with the Armenians in the very same text which no one thought to suppress. Again, how shall one deal with Theodoret’s account of the conversion of Iberia? His story coincides strikingly with the *Conversion of Georgia*: the fugitive woman, the healing of the queen by the same woman, the blinding and healing of the kings and the erection of the first church. All these are present in Theodoret’s story.⁶¹⁴

Finally, after all exactly what is meant by “Dwin III”? This council was convened for a sole reason – to elect Katholikos Abraham several years after Movsēs Elivardec‘i’s death. The council did indeed set forward

⁶¹³ *Conlber*, 324-325.

⁶¹⁴ Theodoret, 74-76.

anti-Chalcedonian decrees but it was not gathered to counter the Georgians, since after Abraham's election, the debates between the Armenian and Georgian *katholikoi* continued afresh and the condemnation of the Georgians happened several years later and not at that council, as Rapp claims.⁶¹⁵ Therefore, to speak of the Third Council of Dvin as of a watershed is equally groundless.

It is striking how a hypothesis can be built upon a previous hypothesis and in the process the earlier hypothesis ("exhilarating times") is presented as a fact. For these reasons I have to disagree both with the methodology and with individual claims.⁶¹⁶ As G. Graham puts it "historical understanding must concern itself with both *a priori* and *a posteriori*, with the conceptually adequate and historically accurate".⁶¹⁷ This is true, but unfortunately the *a priori* conceptualization often projects itself on *a posteriori* conclusions, as in this case.⁶¹⁸

I believe, considering all this, the Caucasian schism is not the best possible explanation for the difficulties concerning the Nino tradition.⁶¹⁹ But the question certainly remains, why is there no reference to St Nino in earlier Georgian texts and why does she emerge only later?⁶²⁰ Is it possible to speak of Nino being forgotten and re-remembered? Or perhaps completely made up, as some scholars have suggested? How could a person of such importance be forgotten at all? Why does K'yrion of Mxeta not mention Nino at all, but does acknowledge the roles of Gregory the Illuminator and of Maštoc'?'⁶²¹ This final fact is usually employed as

⁶¹⁵ Rapp, *Studies*, 169.

⁶¹⁶ Rapp generalizes further when, in discussing the legend of Kartlos and Haos, he unfortunately fails to explain how on the one hand the suppression of the memory of Gregory is possible while, on the other hand, how Haos is held up as the elder brother. Rapp, *Studies*, 169-196.

⁶¹⁷ Graham, *Past*, 20.

⁶¹⁸ A similar position is held by N. Akinean who argues that the Nino story in the Georgian tradition is derived from the Armenian translation of Socrates and Agathangelos. Akinean, *Einführung*, 348.

⁶¹⁹ I believe B. Martin-Hisard's take on the subject is the best argued. Martin-Hisard, "Sainte Nino", 73:

⁶²⁰ G. Babian finds a "solution" also to this problem: Nino simply never existed. Babian, *Relations*, 27. Babian continues the medieval Armenian tradition by considering Gregory to be illuminator of the Caucasus including Georgia. As for Saint Nino, she is mentioned only twice. The testimony by Rufinus Babian is dismissed as "vague and devoid of historical and topographical data". Needless to say, the extensive Georgian tradition of St Nino is not mentioned at all. See his chapter entitled "Saint Gregory the Illuminator, Apostle of Armenia and Georgia" in Babian, *Relations*, 14-29.

⁶²¹ See *supra*. One of the redactions of the *Life of Nino* actually expresses this concern, namely, that Nino was forgotten for centuries and only now was rediscovered. *Conlber*, 163: „წიგნი ქართლის მოქცევისაჲ, რომლითაც ღმერთმან ნათელი გამოხრწყინვა, ... ვითარცა ტალანტი, წინამძღუართაგან დაფარული, შემდგომად მრავალთა ჟამთა და წელთა ვიპოვეთ. In the tenth century Nino also appears in iconography. A relief of St Nino in Ošk'i Cathedral, built in 963–76, is the oldest surviving relief of the illuminatrix. It is curious that the gap between the first and second oldest surviving representation of St Nino is over two hundred years. The fresco in the Church of the Dormition of Vargia dates to the first years of the reign of Queen Tamar (c.1184–6). St Nino became especially popular in the twelfth-thirteenth centuries. See Skhirtladze, "St. Nino and Art", 330-335.

the argument that in the seventh century Nino's cult was not known in the Georgian tradition and the idea of Nino was not yet developed as a counterpart to Gregory.⁶²² Muradyan also notes that K'yrion did not set forth a "counter-argument" against the Armenian "argument" that we all belonged to the lot of St Gregory.⁶²³ But I believe that expecting from a medieval author to present either of these traditions as an argument is a problem, because then there was no need for such "arguments". It must be remembered that the argument during the initial Ibero-Armenian debates was not that "we" converted "you" to Christianity and now you rebel against us but instead, who stayed true to the common foundations. This is a late re-appraisal and scarcely contemporary with the schism. As such, K'yrion did not at all need to mention Nino. Nino was not a counterpart to Gregory because it might well have been that in that period it was much more prestigious to be connected with Gregory rather than with a hostage woman. Moreover claiming the common heritage of St. Gregory was a much more effective polemical move. P. Muradyan suggests that this is due to the close ties between the Armenian and Georgian Churches in the fifth and sixth centuries when the cult of Nino had faded away and was slowly occupied by that of Gregory the Illuminator.⁶²⁴ I sympathize with this suggestion.

Not even in the tenth century, when at least four redactions of the *Conversion of Georgia* existed was the case that Nino was revered as the greatest saint in Georgian piety. Moreover, she is, for example, totally absent from the tenth century *Synaxary* of George the Hagiorite (1009–1065).⁶²⁵ Only one, Sinaitic redaction out of five manuscripts of the *Synaxary*, commemorates St Nino and includes her service. Another related problem is the remembrance of St Nino's evangelism. A Sinaitic (N-Sin, 55) manuscript reads:

The same day [to be commemorated] the death of the holy apostle Nino and enlightener of the Georgians, who undertook great labours and performed innumerable miracles and suffered multiple tortures by Mirian the ungodly king.⁶²⁶

Apart from the fact that the Sinaitic *Synaxary* is the only version that mentions St Nino, it is no less puzzling that the holy King Mirian is called "ungodly" and it is claimed that he had tortured Nino. How can this be so when in the tenth century on Mt Sinai, there were two redactions of the *Conversion of Georgia* that

⁶²² Babian, *Relations*, 14-29.

⁶²³ Muradian, "Caucasian World", 17.

⁶²⁴ *Ibid.*, 10-11.

⁶²⁵ Kekelidze, *Liturgical Monuments*, 228-313.

⁶²⁶ *Synax*, 351: ამასვე დღეს მიცვალებად წმიდის ნინო მოციქულისა და ქართველთა განმანათლებლისა, რომელმან ფრიადნი მოღვაწეობანი და ურიცხუნი სასწაულებანი აღსრულნა და მრავალგზის წამებანი [დათმინნა] მირიან უღმრთოსა ველმწიფისაგან.

have been kept there from at least the tenth century and that none of the surviving versions claim such a thing? The already mentioned codex A 97, of T'ao-K'laržetian origin, includes commemorations of Georgian and Armenian saints in its margins. Almost everyone known to the Georgian tradition is mentioned aside from Nino - and this well after the appearance of the famous Šat'berdi edition of the *Conversion*.⁶²⁷ Should we speak of several independent traditions of St Nino?⁶²⁸ We saw that in St Šušanik's case, there were probably two separate Georgian traditions of commemorating here, T'ao-K'laržetian and Mxetian. For the moment, there is no definitive solution to this problem. The only conclusion to be drawn is that we are far from having a coherent understanding of how the tradition of St Nino was diffused, the role it played in various literary and monastic circles and how exactly she was remembered, when, why and under which circumstances St Nino was highlighted and obscured.

I would suggest to divorce the question from pre- and post-schism conceptualization. It cannot be merely said that at a specific point, the cult of St Nino emerged only to be diffused and absolutized. The case of St Nino is much more complicated than a mere attempt to distance from the Armenians and the Armenian narrative of conversion. The Nino cycle reflects various strata of the formation of Georgian aspirations and ideology, both royal and monastic. It is widely believed that the "cult" of Saint Nino re-emerged in the ninth century, when the so-called Šat'berdi edition of the *Conversion of Georgia* and of the *Life of Saint Nino* was compiled.⁶²⁹ In the same period, Nino was included in the liturgical books and *Iadgaris* (Hymns). Thereafter, i.e. in the 9th–10th centuries, Nino became especially popular in the Georgian ecclesiastical tradition and occupied the central position in Georgian eschatological, hymnographic and liturgical literature.⁶³⁰ I believe that the *Life of Saint Nino* itself, as we now know it, is a compilation of several narratives about various events in Nino's life.⁶³¹ M. Tarkhishvili is in principle correct, when he classifies different legends about St

⁶²⁷ a.) The observation, yet unpublished, belongs to Dr. D. Chitunashvili who orally proposed this idea and provided the relevant material, and to whom I owe special thanks. b.) Arseni Sapareli equally does not mention Nino at all but does in fact mention Gregory the Illuminator and this in early eleventh century.

⁶²⁸ Arseni Sapareli equally does not mention Nino at all but does in fact mention Gregory the Illuminator and this in early eleventh century. This was often seen as a problem. See commentary in AS-Fr, 63-65. Contrary to this I do not see any reasons why Arseni would have elaborated on St Nino in this context.

⁶²⁹ For the chronological layers of the Nino stories, see Lerner, *Wellspring*, 37-59; Tarkhishvili, "Legend", 98-117.

⁶³⁰ Ioane Zosime: "And new Nino and Queen Helen converted, these are two sisters, as Mary and Martha".

⁶³¹ These narratives are headed in the following way: *Narrated by Salome Užarmeli, the student of Nino, on the provenance of the saint; Nino's coming to Georgia and destruction of the statue of Armazi; Narrated by Sidonia, student*

Nino according to different periods. He sees in the *Conversion of Georgia* a reflection of the growth of St Nino's importance in Georgian consciousness.⁶³² For example, the story of the erection of the Living Pillar should have been widespread when Nino was not yet allocated such a central role in the Georgian story of conversion and therefore she is mentioned only once: "Lord Jesus Christ whom we believed through a slave woman".⁶³³ Equally different and unequal are the epithets used to describe St Nino. If in older layers she is called simply Nino or *dedak'aci* Nino (woman Nino), she is later venerated as "*deda*" (mother) or as "*dedaupali*" (queen).⁶³⁴ Nino was "re-remembered", that is to say recalled or brought up in a different fashion, in new splendour. She had to become a "New Nino" as she is called in the *Praise and Glory of the Georgian Language*.⁶³⁵ By the tenth century Georgia would become the "lot of the Mother of God" and therefore, by analogy, women ought to have occupied a central role in conversion history. Needless to say, analogies between the Mother of God, Queen Tamar, St Nino and Queen Helen grew even more popular during and after the reigns of Tamar (1184–1213) and that of her daughter, Rusudan (1223–45).⁶³⁶

As for the role of St Gregory in the Georgian tradition and whether or not his memory was suppressed, nothing at all indicates that there was any such attempt.⁶³⁷ Georgians produced several translations of the *Life of Saint Gregory*, both complete and partial, and according to the accepted dating, this happened around the ninth century.⁶³⁸ Not that the Georgians tried to distance from the Gregory tradition, on the contrary, they accused Armenians of betraying Gregory's legacy and of apostatizing. Consequently he was used as an

of Nino, on the conversion of the king, the building of the first Churches, and the miraculous erection of the Pillar; told by priest Abiatar about his own conversion and the Holy Tunic of the Lord; Story of the reception of three crosses; another story of the erection of a cross; The Book of King Mirian; Mirian's Testament; Prayers to Saint Nino; Nino's death. ConIber, 106-163.

⁶³² For the development and transformation of the Nino tradition, see Gippert, "Nino-Tradition", 126-130; Sterk, "Mission from Below", 286-298; Tarkhnishvili, "Legend", 114; Thelamon, "Païennes et Chrétiens", 85-122; von Lilienfeld, "Apostel und Evangelist", 223-249.

⁶³³ On different stages of the composition of Nino tradition, see Martin-Hisard, "Sainte Nino", 62-63;

⁶³⁴ For aspects of collective memory and variance in remembrances, see Surguladze, "Social Memory, 321-329; For folk versions of Nino tradition, see Ghambashidze, "Folk Tradition", 398-404.

⁶³⁵ Kiknadze, "New Nino", 196-202.

⁶³⁶ See Eastmond, *Royal Imagery*, 119-121; Thierry, "Nino", 155.

⁶³⁷ Only today is St Gregory perceived as an "Armenian" saint among the less enlightened Georgians, not in the Middle Ages, hence the very clumsy labeling of the Armenian Church as "Gregorian" i.e. "Monophysite".

⁶³⁸ Abuladze, "Agathangelos", 73-109; Melikset-Bek, "Georgian Agathangelos"; van Esbroeck, "Martyre Georgien", 129-187. See Muradyan's editions of the Georgian versions of the *Passions of the Hripsimeans* and the *Life of St Gregory: MartRhyphs-Geo*, 13-72; *VitaGr-Geo*, 124-220. On an 11th c. manuscript of the passions of the Hripsime and Gaiane see Garitte, "Fragment", 89-102. The passions of Hripsime have been incorporated into numerous Georgian synaxaria.

argument in the polemic against the Armenians. Such is, for example, the spirit of Arseni Sapareli's entire treatise. As indicated above, many fell into the trap of projecting modern nationalistic aspirations to the Middle Ages. Medieval Georgians and Armenians did not struggle over questions such as who was the first, as one hears today. Greater interest lay in who was the legitimate heir of common aspects of the foundations. Georgians refrained from emphasizing who converted whom, or who created whose literacy, because these were not the important issues they seem to be today. Moreover, the rejection of everything Armenian was not a trait of medieval Georgian culture; translating from Armenian did not stop in the seventh or eighth century. But obsessions such as these have become a commonplace in the contemporary Caucasus. Nowadays most non-specialist Georgians would say that Gregory was an ethnic Armenian rather than Parthian, the Armenian Apostolic Church is even often classed as Gregorian, lamentably meaning non-Orthodox.

4.2.2. *THE MAŠTOC' STORY*

A similar fate was shared by the problem of the creation of literacies in the Caucasian region. Concerning the issue, two traditions persist: According to the Armenian narrative, the creator of the Armenian, Georgian and Albanian writings was *Vardapet* Maštoc' (later called Mesrop). As for the Georgian tradition, it attributes the creation of the Georgian alphabet to the third-century B.C. King Parnavaz.⁶³⁹ It is not my intention to overview the historiography of this question, or to tackle the problem of the Caucasian alphabets, or to suggest any positive solution to the problem but only to relate the issue with our general problematic. Curiously the core of the controversy concerning the subject once again lies in the documents emanating from the schism and in the belief that during the controversy, the Georgians, i.e. K'yron, still have not effaced the traces of their cultural dependency on the Armenians.⁶⁴⁰ Consequently, following the schism, or broadly speaking, following the separation of the Armenians and Georgians and the formation of the pro-Byzantine

⁶³⁹ M. Brosset supported the position of Leont'i suggesting that King Parnavaz might have created the *Asomtavruli* alphabet while the *Xucuri* script was a Christian innovation: Brosset, *Histoire de la Georgie* 1, 43; N. Marr also considered the *xucuri* script to be a Christian invention, without indicating the author, whereas the *Mxedruli* (military) script was a pagan cultural introduction: Marr, *Grammar*, 2; S. Rapp suggests that Parnavaz created a local variant of the Aramaic script. S. Kakabadze considered Maštoc' a reformer of the Old Georgian pagan script: Kakabadze, *Historical Studies*, 28-29; Scholars such as D. Bakradze, M. Janashvili, I. Javakhishvili and S. Janashia all considered the Georgian alphabet to be a creation of pagan times. Bakradze, *Paleography*, 203; Janashvili, *History of Georgia* 1, 70-71; Javakhishvili, *Palaeography*, 194; Janashia, *History* 1, 92-93. See also, Kakabadze, *Studies*, 28-29; Allen, *History*, 310; Tsereteli, "Armazian Writing", 71.

⁶⁴⁰ Babian, *Relations*, 47.

aspirations of the latter, the Georgians began to forget the fact that Maštoc‘ had created a writing for them, just as they treated St Gregory.⁶⁴¹ Such a theory is indeed not too complex but flawed on several levels. The first questionable assumption is how widespread was the “Maštoc‘ theory” after all and the second, more general question is, do we really have any grounds to claim that the Georgian embarked upon such a project of forgetting?

The Armenian tradition, more popular both in Armenian and western scholarship than the Georgian, does not appear to be as uninterrupted and as universally accepted as is usually presented.⁶⁴² It has been noted several times that Koriwn’s *Life of Maštoc‘* is far from being taken without critique. Contemporary tendencies in scholarship are much more critical towards Koriwn and no longer take his testimonies at face value.⁶⁴³ The other sources, apart from Koriwn, that refers Maštoc‘ as to the creator of Caucasian alphabets, is Movsēs Xorenac‘i. At a later time, the same information was repeated by Movsēs Kalankatwac‘i, Yovhannēs Draxanakertc‘i, Kirakos Ganjakec‘i and some of the later *Synaxaries*. As for the earliest period, neither Łazar P‘arpec‘i nor any other historian or text of the sixth or seventh century acknowledge anything of Maštoc‘’s being the creator of the Georgian and Albanian alphabets.⁶⁴⁴ Moreover, although P‘arpec‘i claimed

⁶⁴¹ S. Janashia also explains the narratives of the alphabet and Gregory the Illuminator by the idea of unity and separation but in a reversed prism. He also claims that in the sixth century the Armenians were ecclesiastically dominant in the region when the story of the Caucasian alphabets was forged. Janashia, *Studies I*, 116.

⁶⁴² Oddly enough, G. Babian dismisses completely both the Georgian tradition and the critical approach towards Koriwn, by stating that simply “there has always been a certain reluctance on the part of the Georgian scholars, in particular, to accept the historicity of Maštoc‘’s invention of a Georgian alphabet,” as if the critical approach towards Koriwn is a mere nationalistic whim. See Babian, *Relations*, 47.

⁶⁴³ That *The Life of Maštoc‘* cannot be accepted without criticism was argued first by I. Javakhishvili in *Armenian Literature*, 162-167. G. Winkler states in her translation and commentary of Koriwn that: “Freilich ist es auch möglich, hier an eine früh erfolgte interpolation des Berichts über die Schöpfung des georgischen Alphabets durch Mesrop Maštoc‘ zu denken, denn Koriwns Vita ist nicht immer ganz vertrauenswürdig”. Winkler, *Koriwn*, 291; On a more general level R. Thomson explains in his translation of Łazar P‘arpec‘i: “The various uncertainties about the authors and times of composition of Armenian histories have led to much debate – at times acrimonious. Even the order of witnesses is sometimes uncertain. Was Łazar influenced by Eliše’s description of the revolt led by Vardan Mamikonean in 450/451, or vice versa? Did Łazar use the *History* of Movsēs Xorenac‘i, or vice versa? There are many descriptions of the invention of the Armenian script by Maštoc‘. Who embellished whom, especially in view of the complicated history of Koriwn’s biography?” Łazar-Eng, 5.

⁶⁴⁴ a) N. Akinean argued that the first part Łazar’s *History* is in fact an eighth century work and that until the eighth century there was no such redaction of Koriwn’s work that would speak of the Georgian and Albanian alphabets. Akinean, “Sources”, 459; GT‘ II, 042.

b) I cannot accept the justification presented by G. Babian for the absence of such information in Łazar’s work. Babian, *Relations*, 41. “In his narration, his obvious admiration of the hellenophile Catholicos Sahak has to some extent overshadowed the figure of Maštoc‘. Thus, there is some doubt as to whether his narrative can be given the same value as the two sources which have just been mentioned (Koriwn, Movsēs Xorenac‘i).” Once again Babian is being selective. The only reason that he sees P‘arpec‘i as doubtful is that he does not make reference to Maštoc‘ creating Georgian and

to be basing himself on Koriwn, his narrative is still quite different from that by Koriwn as we know it.⁶⁴⁵

With security it can be said that two more or less early historians speak of Maštoc' as the creator of the Caucasian alphabets – that is Koriwn in the fifth century and Movsēs Xorenac'i in the eighth-ninth centuries. There is no need to deal with details with the question of dating and trustworthiness of Movsēs Xorenac'i as much has already been written on this author and also on his position *vis-à-vis* Georgia.

After Xorenac'i had been post-dated and Koriwn's trustworthiness markedly challenged, the earliest source concerning Maštoc' remained the much-discussed correspondence between *katholikoi* K'yron and Abraham – again a document emanating from the schism. One sentence from the *Book of Letters* could seemingly be considered as a proof for the existence of an uninterrupted tradition that attributed the creation of the Georgian alphabet to Maštoc'. This passage became a subject of controversy and was thoroughly studied together with the publication of the Georgian translation of the *Book of Letters*.⁶⁴⁶ Below is but a summary of the main arguments and conclusions hitherto set forth. The third letter of *Katholikos Abraham* to *Katholikos K'yron* states:

But now let us not be slouthful in renewing the spiritual love which once existed between two people, the teaching which we have received from the same source. First they themselves received the light of the life, as the prophets and the apostles taught us, and then they sowed both for us and for you the same divine service, first the blessed Saint Gregory and then Maštoc', and the knowledge of letters to fortify the faith.⁶⁴⁷

The last phrase was noted to be inorganic with respect to the passage as a whole and, indeed, it appears to be somewhat artificially attached to the paragraph. One might, of course, argue that to consider this part of the passage to be unnatural is simply a matter of point of view but, as it turns out, this is also supported by

Albanian writings, even though the process of the creation of the Armenian alphabet is described in detail. For P'arpec'i's testimonies on Iberia, see Janashia, "P'arpec'i".

⁶⁴⁵ Łazar-Eng, 10-11, 46-53.

⁶⁴⁶ My contribution to the question is minimal and I shall only summarize the position. For a much detailed study, see GT' II, 030-047. The controversy over this passage broke out between Z. Aleksidze and P. Muradyan and was reflected in an active correspondence. See Muradyan, "Third Letter", 41-64. For Aleksidze's argument, see US II, 289-330. G. Babian also brings up this sentence but ignores the entire problematic. Babian, *Relations*, 51, fn. 39.

⁶⁴⁷ GT I, 180; GT' II, 92-93; GT' III, 340: Բայց արդ մի՛ հեղգասցուք, զսէրն հոգեւոր՝ որ կայր ի մեջ երկուց ազգացս՝ նորոգել, զայն որ ի միոջէ աղբերէ առեալ էր զվարդապետութիւն, որ նախ ինքեանք զկենդանութեանն լոյս առին որպէս ուսուցին մարգարէքն և առաքեալքն և ապա մեզ և ձեզ հասարակ սերմանեցին զԱստուածապաշտութիւն, Նախ երանելին սուրբն Գրիգոր, և ապա Մաշտոց, և զգրոց ծանալութիւն ի պնդութիւն հաստոց.

textological evidence, for the Uxtanēsian edition of the correspondence has nothing of the kind and, although he verbatim reproduces the paragraph, the final phrase (‘and knowledge of letters to fortify the faith’) is missing altogether.⁶⁴⁸ Uxtanēs presents Maštoc’ as an enlightener, not a creator of alphabets. If, by the time of Uxtanēs, the phrase in question existed, why did not he use it as yet another argument against the Georgian cause? Uxtanēs’s primary purpose was certainly polemical; he was writing at a time when every argument against the Georgians had to be used and this he actually did. His conventional policy was to edit the text of the *Book of Letters* by removing the sections he considered as irrelevant for his agenda. He would then adduce or highlight all relevant questions connected with Armeno-Georgian controversy in order to strengthen the position of the Armenian Church. Often being more or less truthful to the text, Uxtanēs also added his own comments and notes, which also served a polemical purpose.⁶⁴⁹ But here this is not the case. Even earlier in the text, in a chapter dedicated to the provenance of the Georgians, Uxtanēs described them as Babylonian slaves, who sprouted throughout the region, and then spoke of the Georgian language and writing but he made no mention of the Armenian contribution to the latter.⁶⁵⁰ The only reasonable conclusion to this problem is that, by the time of Uxtanēs, the sentence did not exist but was added later on and can be regarded as yet another medieval forgery.⁶⁵¹

Two further data suggest that the story of Maštoc’ was not as widespread as one might imagine today. The Georgian *Lives of the Kings*, discussed above, being probably the only “armenophile” piece of Medieval Georgian literature, states explicitly that the creator of the Georgian alphabet was the third century B.C. King Parnavaz:

⁶⁴⁸ US II, 136; US-Eng, 98.

⁶⁴⁹ For Uxtanēs’s editorial technique, see study in US, 239-345.

⁶⁵⁰ US, 66.

⁶⁵¹ S. Rapp also notes, and to my mind rightly, that “there is also the claim advanced by Koriwn in his saintly biography of Maštoc’ that the Georgian script had been invented at the direction of Maštoc’. It is within the realm of possibility that this tradition, repeated by many later Armenian historians, may not have been part of the original fifth-century text at all but added after 607. Significantly, all of the extant MSS containing *The Life of Maštoc’* were copied centuries after the split. Consequently, scribal manipulation reflecting post-schism (especially anti-Georgian) attitudes potentially contaminates all MSS copied after the time. It is therefore conceivable, though not yet proven, that valuable information about Georgia transmitted by pre-schism Armenian texts was exercised by later, post-schism individuals. Similarly, the advent of Georgian historiography after Duin III required us to consider the possible tailoring of the Georgian past in order to legitimate the present or to serve as a blueprint for a desired future”. Rapp, *Studies*, 450. Once again, I would rather have expected a longer tradition of rewriting than mere ‘pre’ and ‘post’ schismatic events.

Parnavaz became the first King in Kartli of the seed of Kartlos. He spread the Georgian language and since no other language was spoken in Kartli apart from the Georgian. And he created the Georgian writing [*mc'ignobroba*].⁶⁵²

It is true that *mc'igonroba* could mean many different things, including writing, literacy or indeed alphabet but what really matters is that Leont' i Mroveli, author or the editor of the *Lives of the Kings*, had nothing to say on this account when his narrative reached the fifth century. So early a dating as proposed by Leont' i is unacceptable to current scholarship, but the problem still remains: if the author of the *Lives of the Kings* claimed that almost everything in Georgia including the language was Armenian, before it became Georgian, why would he not mention that the alphabet was also created by an Armenian? Moreover, the Armenian translator of the *Life of the Kings* slavishly follows the Georgian source without questioning the Georgian tradition, even though we know how often the translations' ideological contents were altered.⁶⁵³ Mxit' ar Ayrevanec' i also repeated Leont' i's testimony and did not seem to know the "Armenian theory". Here he merely says that "Armenian literacy was begun by St Mesrop and St Sahak, who together with sixty students translated the Old and New Testaments".⁶⁵⁴ Although this is no place for a proper study of the problem, it is worthwhile noting that the legend of Maštoc' s being the creator of any alphabet is not entirely unchallenged even in the Armenian tradition. For example, an anonymous seventh century Armenian chronicle attributes to Maštoc' the reform of the Armenian alphabet, not its creation,⁶⁵⁵ Vardan Arewelc' i⁶⁵⁶ and Asolik⁶⁵⁷ and one manuscript of Xorenac' i.⁶⁵⁸ There is no mention at all of the Albanian and Georgian writings.

⁶⁵² *VitaRegn*, 26: და ესე ფარნავაზ იყო პირველი მეფე ქართლსა შინა ქართლოსისა ნათესავთაგანი. ამან განავრცო ენა ქართული, და არღარა იზრახებოდა სხუა ენა ქართლსა შინა თვნიერ ქართულისა, და ამან შექმნა მწიგნობრობა ქართული.

⁶⁵³ *VitaGeo-Thom*, 37-38; *VitaGeo-Arm*, 36: Սա և հրաման ամենայն երկին խաւսել զլեզուն Վրաց. և արար զիր լեզուին Վրաց.

⁶⁵⁴ MA, 47: Սկիզբն դպրութեանց գրոց ի ձեռն սրբոյ Սահակայ և Մեսրոպայ, որք վաթսուն աշակերտօք աշխատեալք թարգմանեցին զամենայն Հին և Նոր կտակարանս:

⁶⁵⁵ Anonym VII, 57. The editor of the *Chronicle* dates it to the seventh century, as for the manuscript, it is dated to 971. Marr did not consider Maštoc' as creator of any alphabets but as a reformer of the old Armenian alphabet that had been created according to a Syriac prototype. Marr, *Baptizing*, 157; Similarly L. Melikset-Bek considered Maštoc' to be a reformer of the Armenian alphabet rather than creator: Melikset-Bek, *Old Armenian Literature*, 77-78; also Melikset-Bek, "Alphabets", 52-60.

⁶⁵⁶ VA, 70.

⁶⁵⁷ ST, 139-140.

⁶⁵⁸ On this issue, see Abelean, "Mesrop Maštoc'", 47.

The lamentable nature of similar problems is a unilateral approach and conceptualization that Georgians and Armenians co-existed in a brotherly way until the early seventh century. Gradually, following the schism, the Georgians began to reject everything Armenian and a kind of a national revival took place there. It follows that it was only since that point that Georgians set out to construct their own “national” history, acquiring nationalistic aspirations both cultural and political. It also follows that concepts of a “national illuminator”, “national scholarship” or even “national alphabet” emerged thereafter. That this conceptualization is entirely built on silence is argued further by a stela discovered in the village of Davati in 1980. The stela both artistically and paleographically is dated to the second half of the sixth century.⁶⁵⁹ It depicts two angels carrying a mandorla with the Georgian alphabet inscribed in it. Below the scene of the exaltation of the alphabet there are two other, probably lay figures. This already suggests that the role of the national alphabet was important in the Georgian culture. On the other hand there is the very short *Praise and Glory of the Georgian Language* copied by Ioane Zosime in the tenth century, where the Georgian language is assigned apocalyptic functions.⁶⁶⁰ Even the dating of *Praise and Glory* was determined by the notion that it must have been created during some kind of a hypothetical national upheaval among tenth century Georgians, although Ioane Zosime is most probably the copyist and not the author and the text is much older. Therefore, we should both abandon making ultimate generalizations about the processes of “nationalization” based on these individual testimonies and also take them into account before creating theories.

4.3. GEORGIAN, I.E. CHALCEDONIAN, I.E. ARMENIAN? THE “LINGUISTIC TURN”

The end of Late Antiquity was marked by two developments in the Caucasus that to a certain extent can be considered as conclusive: The two largest Churches of the region, the Georgian and the Armenian, separated from each other’s communion. The latter soon formed what we call today a national Church. Around the same time there transpired the final schism between the Byzantine and Armenian Churches. During the following two to three centuries, shifts in cultural and religious geography in the Caucasus and Anatolia resulted in the formation of new religious, cultural and ethno-religious identities. As we have seen

⁶⁵⁹ Abramishvili, Aleksidze, “National Motif”, 283-292.

⁶⁶⁰ Kekelidze, *History*, 112.

above, such formations were especially sensitive in the Armeno-Georgian marchlands, where Armenian, Georgian, Chalcedonian and non-Chalcedonian elements came to closest contact and confrontation and where specific remembrances of common past were being formed. The new ethno-religious identities forged in the Middle Ages affected the historical perception of the schism itself, as explained above, these were exactly the people who remembered or, better to say, for whom the remembrances were created. The resultative character of these two processes cannot be considered as imperative neither chronologically nor in their essence, despite this they are often viewed and studied in a single discourse of the Caucasian unity and separation.⁶⁶¹

The ethno-confessional transformation of the early Middle Ages is not the best recorded episode of Caucasian history, although these changes were certainly reflected in the language and remained deep in the consciousness of both the Armenian and Georgian peoples. Terminological confusion was actively employed by medieval historians and polemicists, the mutual naming and misnaming resulted in intentional or unintentional misunderstandings as we saw in the initial debates between Armenians and Georgians.⁶⁶² The same process was carried on in the Middle Ages, where semantic shifts went even further. But the problem of the ethnic and confessional affiliations, and indeed the very statement of that problem, are very modern and reflect contemporary ideological aspirations for the modern South Caucasus. Literature of the Middle Ages or pre-modern literature did not consider this question at all. There exists no account of any deliberation on whether someone was Armenian or Georgian based on his or her confessional affiliation. More importantly, nor do we possess any evidence that ethnic and confessional markers were systematized and conceptualized. The abstractions of Late Antique Caucasian Church history, which have been disparaged throughout the thesis, were only projected onto the Middle Ages by contemporary historiography. It is important to understand how these ethnic and religious groups remembered the religious separation and how they perceived their own selves *vis-à-vis* each other, what it meant to be an ethnic Armenian in a religiously and ethnically heterogeneous community. Unfortunately for scholarship, some modern writers on the region,

⁶⁶¹ P. Muradyan, for example, although to my mind erroneously, dates the formation of the new ethnic and religious stratum of Chalcedonian Armenians in Georgia from the period of the Schism, when according to the *Narratio de Rebus Armeniae*, part of the fugitive bishops found asylum in T'ao and perhaps also in Iberia. Muradyan, *Armenian Inscription*, 77-78.

⁶⁶² See *supra*.

starting with the twentieth century, have heavily abused the dilemma. Below are given specific instances of strong misrepresentations of these processes motivated by the ideological platform on which certain scholars stood and still stand.

The polarization of confessional, cultural and sometimes political aspirations was also reflected in language and semantics and the way they named each other. The role of the ethnic and confessional markers and of their respective semantic fields, such as *Georgian*, *Armenian*, *Armenian/Georgian by faith*, *Armenian/Georgian by race*, and other *ethnika* and religious markers are targets of intense scholarly speculation. The singular, disputed thesis was and still is: beginning from the early Middle Ages did the ethnic and confessional markers overlap throughout the entire medieval era? That is to say did *Georgian* ultimately mean *Chalcedonian* for the Armenians? Alternatively, was being *Armenian* equal to being *non-Chalcedonian* to a medieval Georgian? It has been often maintained that in the Middle Ages, together with the dissolution of Armenian statehood in the region, national identity and religious belonging were often confused and were overlapping. Indeed,

en l'absence de tout Etat arménien, l'Église dévient le seul critère de légitimité nationale. Or, du point de vue de la hiérarchie, quiconque ne rejette pas Chalcédoine et la fausse foi des Grecs n'appartient plus à la nation. Du point de vue adverse, quiconque se déclare arménien est nécessairement un impie et un séditieux.⁶⁶³

This theoretical framework has been generalized, as a result of which, a flawed thesis was created, namely, that the ethnic and religious were so strongly identified that *Georgian* and *Armenian* from *ethnika* turned into confessional markers. Consequently, it is maintained that these transformations resulted in a strict differentiation in the Middle Ages Caucasus: *Georgian* i.e. – *Chalcedonian*, *Armenian*, i.e. *non-Chalcedonian*. The pioneer of this theory in the Armeno-Georgian context was N. Marr, whose conclusions became widely disseminated in the scholarship and claimed that ethnic and religious markers were systematically overlapping in the Armeno-Georgian realm.⁶⁶⁴ Later on the argument was taken over by two distinguished

⁶⁶³ Mahé, “L’Identité”, 70; See, also, Mahé, “L’église”, 457, where the author sees a development from a national Church to Church-Nation. Despite the contemporary claims of the Georgian Church, no such process is attested in the medieval Georgian literature.

⁶⁶⁴ Marr was the first scholar who made the initial suggestion in several articles about Chalcedonian Armenians. See “*Arkaun*”, 1-68; “*Problem of Arkaun*”; 277-288; “*Tsats*”, 295-304; “*Agape*”, 141-142; “*Armenian Manuscript*”, 302-

Armenian scholars, P. Muradyan⁶⁶⁵ and V. Arutiunova-Fidanyan⁶⁶⁶ and subsequently often heard in the field.⁶⁶⁷

In contemporary scholarship the problem of confessional and ethnic, or of ethno-confessional, identities over the whole of the region of the Caucasus and Anatolia is a *vexata quaestio*. Regrettably, however, too many concepts of contemporary scholarship have been artificially designed and cannot be related to the actual problematic of the age. The conventionally accepted theoretical framework initially advocated by N. Marr and very popular nowadays suggests that after the separation or schism between the Armenians and the Georgians, and also independently from this, leading to further ethno-confessional transformations, a certain substratum was formed on the Armeno-Georgian borders, such as T'ao and Gugark', which is known in recent studies as Chalcedonian Armenians – ethnic Armenians who remained outside the borders of the jurisdiction of the Armenian Church and were incorporated into the Byzantine or Georgian Church and state(s).⁶⁶⁸ Once again we encounter the Caucasian Schism as an interpretive schema for another major development, based upon the quoted passage from the *Narratio de Rebus Armeniae*, narrating about the dissident bishops who did not hearken to Katholikos Abraham's call and fled to Tais.⁶⁶⁹

The existence of such a group is an undisputed fact and it has strongly contributed to the cultural life not only of this specific region but also of the whole of eastern Anatolia⁶⁷⁰ but the undisputable nature of the

309. Marr's judgment is in many ways inadequate, but I shall not stop on each and every case. One of the most important difficulties is that he projects Byzantine concepts in an Armenian realm. Marr developed his theory having based it on the controversy concerning the ethnic identity of Grigol Bak'urianisze. This occurred before the discovery of the older Georgian version of the *Typikon*, which compromised his entire theory. As a response to this publication, V. Arutiunova-Fidanyan made a Russian translation and a study of the Greek *Typikon*, apparently ignoring the Georgian version. Arutiunova-Fidanyan, *Typikon*. It is noteworthy that, as the publisher herself confesses, her main purpose was to argue that Bakurianisdze was not Georgian but Armenian.

⁶⁶⁵ Muradyan, "Typikon", 103-119; Muradyan claimed further that in the eleventh century Chalcedonian Armenians were called Georgians. Muradyan, "Inscription", 285.

⁶⁶⁶ Arutiunova-Fidanyan, "Iver", 46-66; *Typikon*;

⁶⁶⁷ See, e.g., Der-Nersēsian, *Études*, 311.

⁶⁶⁸ For the discussion on the problematic of the concept in modern scholarship, see Zekiyan, "Subcaucasian Region", 335-339.

⁶⁶⁹ See *supra*, p. 16.

⁶⁷⁰ The Armenians were especially predominant in the eastern provinces of Byzantium, around the Euphrates. The Armenian provinces split by Theodosius I still remained demographically and culturally Armenian. The Armenian populated lands were divided by Justinian into four parts. In subsequent centuries the Armenians migrated westwards into north-eastern Asia Minor. By the tenth century, in east of Sebaste, Caesarea, Podandus and Tarsus the Armenian population was so massive that Leo the Deacon speaks of "Armenian lands", just as the Crusaders considered

existence of such a group was unfortunately generalized by certain modern scholars in a number of ways. There was even an attempt (and, unfortunately, this found its way into received scholarship) to coin a term that was unknown in the Middle Ages. As a result, by some astonishing reasoning, some scholars have suggested that the Armenian *Vrac'i azgaw*,⁶⁷¹ which literarily means “Georgian by provenance, family, race or ethnicity”, in fact meant “Chalcedonian Armenian”. From this assumption a wide range of historical, architectural, art historical and other conclusions were drawn. But this claim was pure assumption, based on the conceptual framework that there were many Armenians, therefore he or she must have been Armenian. Aside from presumption, as we shall see below, there are no tangible reasons for such a claim and in fact it is of a major difference between someone being called *Georgian by race* or *Georgian by faith* and *Armenian by faith* and *Armenian by race*. Ethnic and confessional terms were not easily confused, were not always overlapping and needed further precision. This may sound as a truism, but unfortunately it needs to be argued further because a vast number of problems have been raised from such a conceptualization.

A lengthy passage from N. Garsoïan’s article concerning Armenian minorities in the Byzantine Empire deserves special attention, first because Garsoïan best summarizes the Armenian position *vis-à-vis* the question and secondly, she is clearly the most authoritative scholar who in one way or another has tackled these questions:

A second group that, on the contrary, has been for the most part distinguished from that of the ‘Armenians’ should also be mentioned here. This is the one composed of aristocratic families making their way into imperial society, primarily during the tenth century, sometimes identified as ‘Armeno-Iberians’ or merely ‘Iberians’; the most important for us here are the Phokades, the Vxkac’i/Kexkac’i, in sense the great Bagratid dynast of Tayk’/Tao at the end of the tenth century, David the Kouropalates, and the much disputed figure of Gregorios Pakourianos, Grand Domestikos of the West and loyal supporter of Alexios I. It is not my purpose to address here the *vexata quaestio* of their ultimate ethnic origin, which lies far beyond the scope of this enquiry, but merely to note the degree to which this group pertains to the question of Armenian assimilation and the sense in which the terms ‘Iberian’ and ‘Armenian’ were used in this period. It has also been repeatedly pointed out, primarily by Viaida Arutjunova-Fidanjan, but also, if more guardedly, by Alexander Kazhdan and others, that

themselves to be in Armenian lands beyond Caesarea and Cappadocia. Garsoïan, “Integration”, 53-55. On Armenian minorities in Byzantium, see Charanis, *Armenians*, 19-21; “Ethnic Changes”, 28-29, 34-36; “Transfer”, 146-149; Dagrón, “Minorités”, 178, 208-213; Dedeyan, “Immigration”, 65-70, 99-100; “Mleh le Grand”, 72-102; Kaegi, “Al-Baladhuri”, 273-277; Kaplan, *Byzance*, 449 ;

⁶⁷¹ *Azg* has never been used in a confessional sense in Armenian. *Nor Bargirk’* repeatedly defines it as “genus”. NBHL, 6-8. Acharyan’s etimological dictionary also defines *azg* as synonym for *tohm*, *se*, *zawak*, *zarm*, *groh*, each heaving a familial meaning. All medieval Armenian authors have used this word and in every single case it has the above-listed meaning.

the term ‘Iberos’ in the tenth and eleventh centuries, while unquestionably used as an *ethnikon* much of the time, could also refer to inhabitants of the theme of Iberia created as a result of the eastern conquests of Basil II, or – which is the only excuse for raising the issue here – to Armenian Chalcedonians whose conversion to the doctrine of the imperial church had separated them from their original community. The sole undisputed aspect of the Ibero-Armenian group is that all of its members adhered to the Chalcedonian confession. Beyond that there are the often reiterated facts: that Grigor Vxkac‘i/Kexkac‘i, strategos of Larissa and Macedonia, called himself an Iberian in his Greek inscription of 1006/7 at Egrek/Agarak, whereas his kinsman Bagrat Vxkac‘i, *katepano* of the East, chose Armenian for his 1060 inscription on the cathedral of the former Bagratid capital of Ani, and was apparently called an ‘Iberian by race’ (*Vrac‘ azgaw*) by the Armenian Mathew of Edessa, but an Armenian by the Greeks, Attaleiates and the Continuator of Skylitzes; that Theoktistes του Εσφιγγμενου, protos of Athos, used Armenian, as well as Greek, characters for his signature, as did Grigorios Pakourianos, in the Greek version of the *Typikon* for his foundation dedicated to the Theotokos at Petritzos, in which he admitted to having Armenian relatives even though he called himself an Iberian, as did Matthew of Edessa, at the same time as Anna Komnena identified him as Armenian; that at the end of the eleventh century, William of Tyre could give the composite description of Gabriel the ruler of Melitene as, ‘an Armenian by nation, language and custom, but a Greek by faith;’ that although David Kouropalates indubitably belonged to a junior branch of the Iberian Bagratids, Aristakes Lastivertc‘i included his principality among the contemporary ‘Armenian’ kingdoms,⁶⁷² and Asohik felt that a lengthy elegy on his death should be included at the end of his *History*,⁶⁷³ that the Arabic *Tale of the Brazen City* was translated by his order into Armenian rather than Georgian; and that the many splendid contemporary churches of his principality belong to a hybrid style known as Armeno-Georgian and the Georgian inscription on the chapel of Gurgen next to the great cathedral Church of Iṣḥan has an addition in Armenian characters. All of these are patent contradictions which, pointing toward a conclusion that attempts to enforce rigid categories separating ‘Iberians’ from ‘Armenians’ or to pinpoint ultimate origin, do little to illuminate their roles and ultimately lead to dead ends. The multilingual, multicultural world of the eastern borders of the Byzantine Empire under the Macedonians, from which the families of both groups first made their appearance, is best exemplified by the brilliant court of David the Kouropalates, which belonged simultaneously to the Greek, Iberian and Armenian worlds. After very few generations of intermarriages, such as those between the ‘Iberian’ Phokades and the ‘Armenian’ Skleroi or Kourkouas-Tzimiskai, for example, the question of *limpieza de sangre* could hardly be raised. The numerous translations from Armenian into Georgian dating from this period or the translations of Greek philosophy in Armenian by Grigor Magistros suggest likewise that no watertight cultural partitions should artificially be imposed. Memories of ethnic origins undoubtedly lingered and could at times be used, usually with pejorative, rather than descriptive, intent. The *ethnika* had not vanished altogether from the vocabulary, but neither we, nor seemingly the contemporaries, could define their content with precision. Even a glance at the *cursus honorum* of both groups and at the treatment of their elites within the empire reveals no appreciable differences beyond individual cases or shifts in imperial policy. If so, a sharp distinction between the ‘Iberian’ and ‘Armenian’ aristocracies can hardly be maintained, as long as they shared the same Chalcedonian confession, and any segregation of the Ibero-Armenian group from at least some of their ‘Armenian’ contemporaries does not seem useful or warranted for the purpose of the present investigation.⁶⁷⁴

I agree with the general spirit of Garsoïan’s position – it is indeed extremely difficult and to a certain extent a futile enterprise to identify exact ethnic belonging of an aristocratic family owing to the long histories of intermarriage with families of equal rank but different ethnicities. For a medieval aristocrat, ethnicity was a much less important issue than for a modern person or a scholar and in general, royalty and

⁶⁷² For the relevant passage in Bedrosian’s translation, see <http://rbedrosian.com/a1.htm#1> (11.19.2012).

⁶⁷³ ST, 375-378; ST-Ger, 209-212.

⁶⁷⁴ Garsoïan, “Armenian Integration”, 88-92.

aristocracy were and still are super-ethnic elements.⁶⁷⁵ It is also not helpful for any study to focus solely on discovering the direct ethnic relationships of a certain person or family. It is equally of little help to try to determine, according to the Greek sources, who was who by provenance in the Middle Ages as there are numerous instances in Greek corpus of confusion among Georgians, Armenians and others. Unlike some scholars, we are not looking for “pure bloods” or “half bloods”. What needs to be established is how these two ethnic, cultural and political groups, that is to say the Armenians and the Georgians, named each other; how unity and separation affected the representation of each other, and finally how they perceived themselves: their ethnic, cultural and religious affiliations *vis-à-vis* each other and how they projected their contemporary self-identification back into the what we now call Late Antiquity. These questions cannot be simply dismissed as irrelevant, because if used as markers, they were used for a reason.

Some modern scholars have considered that *Georgian* was so closely identified with *Chalcedonian* by the medieval Armenians that the process went the other way around whereby Chalcedonian Armenians were also called *Georgians by race*. A question that has apparently never occurred to V. Arutiunova-Fidanyan, the most active proponent of the *Vrac'i azgaw* theory, whom Garsoïan also quotes, is why must historians securely accept *Armenian* as an *ethnikon* and do not doubt that *Armenian* means ethnic Armenian, whereas as soon as we discuss Georgia and the Georgians, *Georgian* or even *Iberian* suddenly becomes a cultural or geographic rather than an ethnic marker?⁶⁷⁶ This view can be summarized in a surprising generalization:

The reception of ethnic belonging through the prism of confessional notions, which is common to consciousness in general (?), was expressed among the monophysites (?) as a different *Azg* (tribe, provenance, ethnicity).⁶⁷⁷

The writer makes two assumptions, firstly that such a “prism” belongs to some general “consciousness” and secondly that religious affiliation was expressed by a word which explicitly denotes family or ethnicity.

⁶⁷⁵ For the problems of ethnicity in medieval context, see Hutchinson, Smith, *Ethnicity*, 107-135; For a *status quaestionis* in the Caucasian context, see Zekiyan, “Subcaucasian Region”, 329-361, see also *ibid*, 334, fn. 5.

⁶⁷⁶ In fact ‘Armenian’ was for centuries used to denote a person’s geographical provenance. See Brock, “Christians”, 16-17.

⁶⁷⁷ Arutiunova-Fidanyan, *Chalcedonian Armenians*, 67. Regrettably the scholar does not provide a study of the usage of the word *azg* in the medieval Armenian literature. To the best of my knowledge, there is not even a single instance in the whole corpus of the Armenian literature when *Azg* would stand for anything other than for a marker of ethnicity or provenance. For a study see Tsagareishvili, “Vrac‘i Azgaw II”, 389-431; “Vrac‘i”, 382-389.

Consequently and not surprisingly, many Georgian figures, such as Ioane-Tornik‘e and his relatives, Grigol Bak‘urianisze, Lip‘arit‘, Rat‘i, Zviad and Zakaria of Valaškert, were considered to be Armenians.

The scholar based her argument on a passage of an early modern Armenian historian (17th c.), Yakob Karnec‘i and of Matt‘eos Urhaec‘i, the misinterpretation of which led to the formation of this theory.⁶⁷⁸ Ironically not only conclusions are erroneous but the interpretation of the passage is equally dubious. I believe that on the contrary, Yakob Karnec‘i’s testimony is noteworthy in that it neatly demonstrates that the ethnic and confessional components were not as mixed and blurred as they are nowadays. It is noteworthy that two version of the same passage exist

In the valleys there were large Georgian monasteries in the villages of Xaxul, Ošk and Išxan, and there are no monasteries similar to them, except of Hagia Sofia in Constantinople. The inhabitants of this land were partially Armenian and partially by [race and] faith Georgian, but they spoke Armenian.⁶⁷⁹

The scholar argues that by “race and faith Georgian” was an old term denoting Chalcedonian Armenians. First of all, only one redaction of the text mentions “race” [*azgaw*] at all, and other versions speak only of *kroniwk‘ Vrac‘i*,⁶⁸⁰ secondly, even if the text is correct, race and faith are juxtaposed and are complimenting each other, not being synonymous in any way.⁶⁸¹ As for the passage from Urhaec‘i, it describes the defence of Ani by Bagrat Vxkaec‘i and Bagrat, son of Grigol Bakurianisze, the “unfaithful Roman princes” who were appointed by the Emperor to defend the Armenian land. Bagrat, father of Smbat and son of Grigol Bakurianisze, of a Georgian family (*Vrac‘i azgaw*) began to fortify the upper and lower citadels. When the citizens saw how the “apostate defenders” fortified themselves, they abandoned the walls and fled.⁶⁸² Appealing to the word “apostate”, Arutiunova-Fidanyan concludes that both were Armenian Chalcedonians, that is to say Armenians who received the Georgian or Chalcedonian faith and were hence labelled “Georgians by race”.⁶⁸³ Regrettably, the scholar forgot a textbook fact, that beginning from the seventh century, and throughout the whole history of Armenian and Georgian relations and polemics, both considered

⁶⁷⁸ Arutiunova-Fidanyan, *Chalcedonian Armenians*, 67-68.

⁶⁷⁹ YK, 554: Եւ կայ ի մէջ ձորոյն մեծամեծ վանորայք Վրացի գիւղն Խախու, Ոշկ, և Իշխան, որ յար և նման ոչ գոյ նոցա, բայց թէ լինի միայն սուրբն Սոփի ի Կոստանտնուպօլիս: Եւ էին բնակիչք երկրիս կէսն Հայք և կէսն [ազգաւ և] կրօնիւն Վրացի, բայց Հայի լեզուաւ խօսէին:

⁶⁸⁰ Ironically, in an older article the scholar quotes and elaborates on this version of the text. Arutiunova-Fidanyan, “Iver” 46-66.

⁶⁸¹ For the textual history of this passage, see Tsagareishvili, “Vrac‘i Azgaw II”, 413-415.

⁶⁸² MU, 147-149:

⁶⁸³ See Arutiunova-Fidanyan, *Chalcedonian Armenians*, 60-61; Maisuradze, *Armeno-Georgian Relations*, 179-180.

each other as apostates from Orthodoxy. It was of no concern whether someone apostatised himself or herself, the very fact of being heterodox was an apostasy. Arutiunova-Fidanyan's argument was rejected by Matt' eos himself. When he spoke of the provenance of P' ilaretos Varažnuni, the Byzantine ruler of Antioch, he clearly differentiates between confessional and ethnic terms without confusing the two:

He did not know either Armenian, or Roman ways, but was Greek by faith (*kronk' horomoc'*) and Armenian by father and mother.⁶⁸⁴

There exist further claims that while *Armenian* was an ethnic term, *Georgian* was a cultural marker. Such claims inevitably lead to the inference that everyone called *Georgian* in the region was a Chalcedonian Armenian. The truth is that the expressions “Georgian faith”, “Roman (Greek) faith” and “Armenian faith” are quite common in both Armenian and Georgian literature, but never would a solely ethnic marker suffice, that is to say expressions such as, *Georgian*, *Georgian by race*, *georgianized*, *Georgian monastery*, all these expressions had different connotations in different contexts and were far from being systematic. As we shall see below, the predicate *Georgian* is not enough unless it is followed by a subject or further explanation. Even the way Georgianness or Armenianness was expressed was nuanced. For example Kirakos Ganjakec'i spoke of certain people that: “They were from Xaç'eni by origin, from a noble family, Christians by faith, orthodox, Armenians by ethnicity”.⁶⁸⁵

The chief problem, as I understand it, is wholesale generalization. Another distinguished scholar who tackled the question of religious and confessional identities in the region is A. Kazhdan.⁶⁸⁶ Yet I strongly disagree with Kazhdan's view that one must look for a system in the interchangeable usage of ethnic, religious and territorial markers in the Caucasus.⁶⁸⁷ On contrary, it is advisable to look into individual cases

⁶⁸⁴ MU, 206: Վասն զի էր սա անհաւատ քրիստոնէայ, ոչ Հայ գիտելով ոչ Հռոմի՝ վարքն և կրօնքն զՀռոմոնցն ունէր, և հայերնէօքն և մայերնէօքն Հայ էր.

⁶⁸⁵ KG, 206: Սոքա զաւառաւ խաչնէցիք էին, յերևելի ազգէ, հաւատով քրիստոնէայք, ուղղափառք և ազգաւ հայ:

⁶⁸⁶ See Kazhdan, *Ruling Class*, 47-72, 143-145.

⁶⁸⁷ Kazhdan, *Ruling Class*, 143: To further support his point, Kazhdan mentions John Tzetzes, who calls Abasgs, Alans and Iberians one tribe, but with Iberians being most superiors among them. *Ἰβηρες δὲ καὶ Ἀβασγοὶ καὶ Ἄλανοὶ ἐν γένος· οἱ Ἰβηρες πρωτεύοντες, οἱ Ἀβασγοὶ δευτέρων, οἱ Ἄλανοὶ δ' ἐσχημασι τάξιν τριῶν ὕστεραν.* Tzetzes, *Chiliades*, 190. Kazhdan infers that this would mean that “tribe” in this case is a geographical designation rather than ethnic. But by the time of Tzetzes, in the twelfth century Georgia was already a united kingdom and ethnonym “Georgian”, uniting western and eastern Georgia, had long been coined. Therefore for Tzetzes, who probably knew the Georgian meaning of the words

and try to explain them avoiding generalizations based on assumptions. If a problem concerns one or two noble families, the same judgment cannot and must not be transferred to all other “doubted” families. For certain persons and families there are abundant and relevant sources in all available languages but for others none. Unfortunately A. Kazhdan also bases his judgment on Arutiunova-Fidanyan’s claim that “Georgian by ethnicity” means “Chalcedonian Armenian”. She in turn fully based herself on Marr’s somewhat flawed argumentation.⁶⁸⁸ Furthermore, Kazhdan contradicts himself when he suggests that in the case of Tornik’e, he might have been Georgian by father and Armenian by mother. Even if this were so, from where does one draw such an inference? Indeed, if we are to generalize, if we cannot speak of the immediate ethnicity of medieval nobility, then why and how does one specify in this completely concrete case the precise ethnic origin of Tornik’e?

Returning to the quotation from Garsoïan, I cannot agree that “a sharp distinction between the ‘Iberian’ and ‘Armenian’ aristocracies can hardly be maintained, as long as they shared the same Chalcedonian confession.” If it is difficult for us to maintain this, it was not so hard for their contemporaries. Besides the very statement of this as a “problem” is already an attempt to make a distinction. Nor do I see contradictions between the facts listed by Garsoïan: Of course, one would expect support for Armenian culture by Davit II Kouropalates and one would expect Armenian inscriptions commemorating him or even commissioned by him in a multi-ethnic land.⁶⁸⁹ Equally, it is no wonder that Tornik’e commissioned Armenian stone crosses, or made an inscription in Armenian or the lengthy lamentation created by an Armenian on the occasion of Davit II’s death, or even the commissioning of Armenian translations. If he commissioned one Armenian

“Georgia”, Iberia was a single state, whilst Iberia in narrower sense was a geographical term rather than ethnic, as it was for the Georgians proper. In a paragraph before this claim, Kazhdan states that one cannot simply say that Anna Komnina was mistaken by calling Grigol Bakourianisze Armenian. And here again we meet a surprising contradiction: If for Tsetzes Georgia was a territorial unit with various tribes occupying it, why would Armenian not mean a territorial unit for Anna, when Grigol was in charge of the Armenian lands too? Besides, is it really that unexpected for Anna to make a mistake? For example a Norman Russel is called Celt by Anna, the Normans who were recruited by Gregorios Maniakos are called Italians, the Seljuk commonwealth she usually calls Persian and so on. For commentary on these confusions, see the Russian translation and study of the *Alexiad*. AK-Alex-Rus, 447, fn. 76; also Liubarskiy, “Sources”, 107; Also Gregory Apokap is called Georgian by the continuator of Skylizes (τὸν Ἀποκάπην, ἐξ Ἰβήρων τὸ γένος ἔλκοντα, ContScyl, 131) and Attaleiates calls the same person Armenian. (τὸν Ἀποκάπην, ἐξ Ἀρμενίων τὸ γένος ἔλκοντα Attal, 116). So yes, they did make mistakes.

⁶⁸⁸ Although Kazhdan does acknowledge that his knowledge of classical Armenian does not allow him to elaborate on this topic.

⁶⁸⁹ For a detailed albeit in certain ways flawed exposition of Davit’s rule, see Janachian, *Davit*.

translation, he also commissioned dozens in Georgian on Mt Athos.⁶⁹⁰ Davit II, his predecessors and his descendants, they all ruled over a multiethnic and at least bilingual country with both Georgian and Armenian population.⁶⁹¹ Two centuries later Davit IV the Builder, king of united Georgia, commissioned the building of an entire town for Armenians in central Georgia.⁶⁹² He is reported to have prayed in Armenian Churches and was close to the Armenian clergy, which does not make him Armenian. We also know of his numerous visits to the mosques of T'pilisi, which does not make him a Muslim,⁶⁹³ and the taxes he imposed over the ethnic Georgian population of T'pilisi were higher than those the Jews had to pay. This does not make him Jewish.⁶⁹⁴ The list can become even longer were one to bring up all the lamentations and eulogies that Armenian authors wrote to commemorate or exalt the Georgian kings.⁶⁹⁵ Hence there is no need to accept the instances listed by Garsoïan to be contradictory.

4.3.1. VRAC' AND SOMEXI

It is accurate to say that the use of Georgian (*Vrac'*) in a cultural and confessional sense was not unusual in the Armenian tradition. That depending on the context, *Georgian* carried both cultural as well as ethnic connotations, is further supported by the celebrated formula by Grigol Xanzteli concerning what *Georgia* meant.⁶⁹⁶ *Georgianization* as a synonym for Chalcedonian apostasy was a legitimate term for non-Chalcedonian Kirakos Ganjakec'i:

When [Mxit'ar Goš] heard what had happened at the council, he accused the general, who was not competent to decide this question unilaterally. He addressed the members of the assembly: You protect

⁶⁹⁰ For manuscripts commissioned by Tornik'e on Mt Athos, see Menabde, *Centres*, 191-196.

⁶⁹¹ Following the same logic, all these further inscriptions must be considered as referring to Chalcedonian Armenians simply because they were created in Armenian: "King David King of this land and people" (Axpata 1121), "Georgian King George, [who is] also our King" (Kečaruk 1181-1183), "...in memory of our Queen Rusudan" (Kars 1234), "In the times of *padišax* King Argun, reign of Demetre and patronage of *amirspasalar* Mxargjeli" (Aruč 1285). See Maisuradze, *Relations*, 183-185.

⁶⁹² Metreveli, *David the Builder*, 246-248;

⁶⁹³ *Ibid.* See, also, Minorsky, "Caucasica", 27-35. Note that Theodore Balsamon (12th c.) was also concerned that the Georgians would share meals with the heretics and say that it does not make a difference whether one eats with an unbeliever or not and that they would also marry the Muslims. Balsamon, col. 1145.

⁶⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶⁹⁵ For a discussion of the state tolerance under Davit the Builder, see Rapp, "Dialogues", 173-178; Tvaradze, "Geschichte", 183-213.

⁶⁹⁶ See *supra*,

your nation so that, by these kinds of tradition it does not become confused with Georgians, and I care about the general, so that he does not georganize, as did his brother, who serves the Georgians.⁶⁹⁷

Also and anonymous Sebastian chronicler, paraphrasing Kirakos Ganjakec‘i,⁶⁹⁸ uses *to become Georgian* when he refers to Ivane Mxargrzelı (d. 1227) being converted to Chalcedonianism.⁶⁹⁹ There are also instances when a monastery in northern Armenia was called *Georgian*. Kirakos Ganjakec‘i tells of Ivane Mxargrzelı (d.1227) who

was buried in Pñjak, at the entrance of the Church, which he himself built, which he took from the Armenians and turned into a Georgian monastery [*Vrac‘i vank‘*].⁷⁰⁰

Simeon Pñjahanec‘i, in a colophon to his translation of the Georgian philosopher, Ioane Petric‘i’s (11th–12th cc.) work, stated:

This book [Ioane Petric‘i’s *Commentary* on the *Elements of Theology* by Proclus] was translated by Simeon the Hieromonk from Georgian into Armenian, in the Armenian land, in a Georgian monastery, called Pñjak.⁷⁰¹

Georgian monastery in this context might mean various things, including that it was probably originally founded by the Armenians, entered the jurisdiction of the Georgian Church, was probably administered by the Georgians, was certainly Chalcedonian and most probably had Chalcedonian Armenian monks as well, such as Simeon.⁷⁰² These are the cultural, historical and ecclesiastical reasons for calling the monastery Georgian. Equally, *to georgianize* did in fact mean, in some cases, to become Chalcedonian, just as Mxit‘ar Goš on several occasions uses the term, but this was not full meaning and, moreover, it did not imply that *georgianization* became a concept. It was not uncommon for Armenians to serve in the Georgian army and even to reach high administrative positions. Thus the Mxargrzelis were “georgianized” from being ethnic

⁶⁹⁷ KG, 177: Իսկ նա իբրև իմացաւ զիրսն, որ եղեալ էին առ ժողովն, մեղադիր եղև զօրավարին, թէ իշխանաբար ոչ էր պարտ առնել զայդպիսի իրս: Եւ առաքեաց առ ժողովն և ասէ. Դուք հոգայք վասն ազգիս, զի մի՛ այդպիսի սովորութեամբ խառնեցին ընդ վիրս, և ես հոգամ վասն զօրավարիս, զի մի՛ լիցի սա վրացի, իբրև զեղբայր իւր, որում սպասեն վիրք:

⁶⁹⁸ KG, 166: He became charmed by the queen named T‘amar: զվիանն աստուծոյ հրապուրեալ նա ի թագուհւոյն՝ որ Թամար կոչէր.

⁶⁹⁹ Sebast, 136-137. For this passage, see, also, Tsagareishvili, “Vrac‘”, 385, fn. 1.

⁷⁰⁰ KG, 222: Վախճանեցաւ և Իւանէ, եղբայր Զաքարէի, և թաղեցաւ ի Պղնձահանք, ի դուռն եկեղեցւոյն, ցոր շինեաց ինքն, առեալ ի Հայոց վրացի վանս հաստատեաց:

⁷⁰¹ See Abuladze, “Armenian Literature”, 36.

⁷⁰² N. Akinean suggests that the monastery was restored and turned into a Chalcedonian establishment by Ivane Mxargrzelı. Akinean, “Simeon”, 2.

Kurds both because of their faith and their allegiance. Does it therefore follow as a categorical imperative that “Georgian” meant “Chalcedonian Armenian”? Certainly not. Georgianization as such did actually take place in the medieval Caucasus, but once again, it did not necessarily and not in all cases implied a confessional change. It invariably implied cultural and political change, and also, and probably most importantly, a change of allegiance.⁷⁰³

The much later chronicle by Zak‘aria Agulec‘i equally differentiates

In 1667 [there were] two partners, who lived in Izmir, Georgians by dwelling [*binadars Vrac‘i*], Armenians by ethnicity [*azgaw Hay*], from the city of T‘pilisi, named Šahverdim and Gaspar.⁷⁰⁴

It has never been sufficient simply to mention one’s ethnicity in order to deduce his or her faith, or vice versa. Thus when Zakaria called the business partners *Vrac‘i*, he meant that they were from Georgia proper, probably from T‘pilisi as they were merchants, but stressed that they were Armenians by race. He did not say that they were *Vrac‘i azgaw* which would have been nonsensical. Moreover, this case did not have to do so much with the confessional but rather with ethnic affiliation. In a similar fashion other testimonies have to be studied in their own context and not be generalized. For example, 17th century chronicler Arak‘el Davrijec‘i always needed to specify whether an Armenian was Christian or not.⁷⁰⁵ The conclusion that can be deduced but which, unfortunately is dismissed by the proponents of the *Vrac‘i azgaw* theory, is that first, we should not attempt to coin a term that had no value as a term and secondly, not to generalize when the means to generalize do not exist. Everything has its historical, linguistic, ideological and other immediate contexts.

The Armenians were not short of terms and expressions that denoted the Chalcedonian faith or Chalcedonians: *k‘alkedoni havat*, *davanut‘iwn k‘alkedoni*, Chalcedonian faith/Chalcedonian confession;

⁷⁰³ a.) In a similar context “Greek” or “becoming Greek” did in fact bear a confessional meaning. This was also the case from the Byzantine side with regard to the Armenians. See, for example, Theorianus’s claim that Nersēs Šnorhali said: “I shall be a Greek, in defence of Greeks, or rather fighting against the Armenians in defence of the truth”. *Ἐσομαι Ῥωμαῖος, ὑπὲρ Ῥωμαίων, μᾶλλον δὲ ὑπὲρ τῆς ἀληθείας κατὰ τῶν Ἀρμενίων ἀγωνιζόμενος*. Keshishean, *Saint Nersēs*, 60-61. b.) Armenian also had a clearly confessional meaning in Georgian. See, e.g., *VitaJE-Fr*, 118; *VitaJE* 80: “Gvirpeli arrived, treasurer of Žožik‘, an Armenian who was rebaptized and who took monastic name of Arseni.” კუალდ მოვიდა გვრპელი, ჯოჯიკის მეგანბურთა-უნსუცესი, და მონიხათლა, რამეთუ სომეხი იყო, და არსენი უწოდეს.

⁷⁰⁴ ZA, 72: Թվին ՌՃԺՁ այս տարուսմ Իգվիր բ բինադար որ բքինն մին տէղ ընկերք ին, այս բ բինադարս վրացի են, ազգաւ հայ, ի քաղաքէն Թլիվիսու, անունն Շահվերդի, միուսն Գասպար. See also, ZA-Eng, 79. Tsagareishvili, “Vrac‘i Azgaw III”, 386-387.

⁷⁰⁵ AT, 402-405. See also Tsagareishvili, “Vrac‘i Azgaw II”, 399-400.

erkabnak, diphysite; *k'alkedonit*; *K'alkedonakan*, *K'alkedonik* Chalcedonian *erkabnut'awn*, Diphysitism; *kc'ordakic' č'ar alandwoyn k'alkedoni*, adherent to the evil Chalcedonian heresy; *erkabnak kronk'*, diphysite faith; *hawaneal žolovoyñ ka'lkedoni*, confessor of the Council of Chalcedon; *arand k'alkedoni*, Chalcedonian heresy; *kronk' vrac'*, faith of the Georgians. The Armenian language is quite rich in expressing the “faith” too. *kronk'*, *hawat*, *uxt*, *oren*, *davanut'awn*, *awandut'awn* and so on. Despite all these expressions, still very often it is *Vrac'i azgaw* that is claimed to mean Chalcedonian by faith but Armenian by nation.⁷⁰⁶

One of the typical ways of referring to the Chalcedonian Armenians was *hay-horom*, a perfect example of uniting ethnicity and confessional affiliation in one word. An expression such as *Horom azgaw* would, however, never mean a Chalcedonian Armenian. In his *History*, Mat'eos Urhaec'i spoke of two Byzantine generals, both Chalcedonians, Grigol Bakurianisze – ruler of the Iberian theme, and P'ilaret Varažnuni, ruler of the theme of Antioch. Matt'eos Urhaec'i spoke with outmost disgust about Philaretos Varažnuni:

He was accepted neither by the Romans nor by the Armenians. For his way of life was Roman, while by his mother and father he was Armenian.⁷⁰⁷

Gregory is referred to as *Vrac'i azgaw* – Georgian by race and P'ilaret Armenian by provenance – *hayerenk' ev mayreneok'n Hay*. Arutiunova-Fidanyan, however, claimed that Mat'eos Urhaec'i implied “Chalcedonian Armenian” when the historian says that Gregory was “Georgian by race”. This claim leaves one to wonder why Matt'eos, when speaking simultaneously about P'ilaret Varajnuni and Grigol Bakurianisze, would stress that P'ilaret was “Armenian by mother and father” – and this would mean Armenian – and then declare that Grigol was “Georgian by ethnicity” – which would also imply an ethnic Armenian. Does it follow that in both cases he spoke of Chalcedonian Armenians? Certainly not, for in the case of Grigol, only his ethnicity is mentioned while his faith is implied. And in the case of P'ilaret, the author had to specify – *kronk' horomoc'* – “of the Greek faith”. Again, there were several instances when noble Armenians, even a *katholikos* (Bahan I 967–9), accepted the Chalcedonian confession or were

⁷⁰⁶ For study of Armenian terms denoting faith and ethnicity, see Tsagareishvili, “Chalcedonians”, 367-382.

⁷⁰⁷ MU, 206: Վասն զի էր սա անհավատ քրիստոնէայ, ոչ Հայ զիսելով ոչ Հորով՝ վարքն և կրօնքն զՀորովնցն ունէր, և հայերնէօքն և մայերնէօքն Հայ էր.

baptized, but they would never be called *Vrac'i azgaw*.⁷⁰⁸ But, Ivane Mxargrzeni, the Chalcedonian brother of Zakaria Mxargrzeni, is not named *Vrac'i azgaw* by Step'anos Orbelean, since the Kurdish, or at least, non-Georgian, origin of the Mxargrzeni family was a well known fact.⁷⁰⁹ Kirakos Ganjakec'i also uses expression *Georgian faith* when referring to Ivane Mxargrzeni and not *Vrac'i Azgaw*.⁷¹⁰

The case of Grigol Bakurianisze is one of the most egregious examples. The entire *Vrac'i azgaw* theory was in fact devised around the controversy concerning Grigol launched by N. Marr and then taken over by other scholars. The construction of the origins of Grigol was conducted as follows: First, the fact that Bakouriani was Grigol's father's name was completely dismissed. Arutiunova-Fidanyan simply rejected the detail that his father was called Bakurian and tried to trace his origins back to the Arcruni dynasty.⁷¹¹ Notwithstanding, Kazhdan also argues that

Georgian scholars do not think that Pakourian became a patronym of Gregory, but see in the name only his father's first name. On these grounds they call Gregory Bakourianis-ze and not Bakourian. I do not think that there is any need for such a correction, it was common in Byzantium to make the name of the founder of a dynasty into a patronym of his descendants.⁷¹²

This argument is presented despite the existence of unambiguously opposing testimonies. Kazhdan's argument is groundless because all that the "Georgian scholars" claim is what they read in Georgian, namely, that Grigol mentions his father Bakurian numerous times and called himself *Bak'urian-is ze*, i.e. son of Bak'uriani. Not only did Grigol call himself by this name, but even Matt'eos Urhaec'i does so: Գրիգոր Բակուրյանի որդին՝ Վրաց ազգավ (Grigol, son of Bakurian, Georgian by race).⁷¹³ But this voice is equally and strangely ignored by some scholars. The opening remarks in the Greek and Georgian redactions of the *Typikon* of Bakurianisze clearly states:

⁷⁰⁸ For example, according to Asohik, Demetre, ruler of the fortress of Gag, rejected his own "Armenian faith" and was baptized according to the Georgian rite. Subsequently he installed his son as a *mampal* (a Georgian composite mama + upali) in Tašir. Even after having received the Chalcedonian faith and a Georgian administrative title, Demetre was never called *Vrac'i azgaw*, simply because he was not Georgian. ST, 257; ST-Ger, 195-196. For the Armenian text, see *supra*, p. 145. For discussion, see Tsagareishvili, "Vrac'i Azgaw II", 410.

⁷⁰⁹ SO II, 391.

⁷¹⁰ The same is repeated by an anonymous Armenian thirteenth century historian: *AnonSebast*, 138:

⁷¹¹ Arutiunova-Fidanyan, *Typikon*, 41-42

⁷¹² Kazhdan, *Armenians*, 60.

⁷¹³ MU, 148.

This [typikon] was composed and established for this Georgian monastery through my order, Grigol, Sevastos by the will of God and Great Domestikos of all the West, son of the blessed Duke of Dukes [*Eristavta mtavari*] Bakuriani, of the Easterner and Georgian.⁷¹⁴

Grigol's father is mentioned once more:

On Great and Holy Thursday may the commemoration of our great father, the Duke of Dukes [*Eristavi* *Eristavi*] Bakuriani be proclaimed.⁷¹⁵

And again:

On one day, during holy vespers, my blessed father Bakuriani must be commemorated, and on another day, his brother Xuasrovani, on the third day, his son and my cousin – Bakuriani.⁷¹⁶

Grigol's father is also mentioned several other times.⁷¹⁷ V. Arutiunova-Fidanyan ignores all of these primary remarks, as well as other medieval Georgian testimonies and draws the following inference: “Gregory's father was called Aluz(?) Bakuriani. Bakurian was Gregory's grandfather's name. Beginning from Aluz, the father of Gregory, the first name becomes a family name”.⁷¹⁸ I believe that in this light, Kazhdan's claim that Bakurianis-ze is not Gregory's immediate patronym but his surname, can be rejected.

The only direct source that claimed Grigol's Armenian origin was Anna Komnena (1083–153).⁷¹⁹ But who shall we trust? Anna Komnena, who in a single instance called Grigol *Armenian*? Or Grigol himself who not only called himself Georgian frequently and not only mentioned his father on many occasions, but also

⁷¹⁴ *TypBakur-Geo*, 61. parag. 2: „რომელ-ესე აღიწერა და დაემტკიცა ბრძანებითა ჩემ გრიგოლისითა, ნებითა ღმრთისადთა სევასტოსისა და დიდისა ღმრთესტოკოსისა, ძისა სანატრელისა ერისთავთა მთავრისა ბაკურიანისადთა, აღმოსავლელისა და ქართველისადთა“.

⁷¹⁵ *Ibid*, 107. XXI/11.

⁷¹⁶ *Ibid*, 116. XXI/2.

⁷¹⁷ *Ibid*, 106. XXI/9; 125. XXXVI/1; 129, XXXVII/16.

⁷¹⁸ Arutiunova-Fidanyan, *Typikon*, 42. I cannot avoid mentioning another unacceptable assumption on the part of the same scholar: “The close ties of Gregory with Vaspurakan are proven by the fact that the first abbot of the monastery was a monk from Vaspurakan, named Gregory of Van”. See *Typ-Fid*, 36. *Vani* is a very common toponym in Georgian. Monasteries on the entire territory of Georgia bore the proper name *Vani* or sometimes *Vahani*. But the translator added Vaspurakan to her judgment, apparently knowing about the existence of only one Van. For discussion, see Lomouri, “Petriconi”, 300-301.

Even more, in one of the testaments of Gregory he says that certain lands would belong to “my relatives and my men, even if they were Armenian by faith”. *TypBakur-Geo*, XXXV/11. From this, Muradyan and Arutiunova-Fidanyan have inferred that because Gregory had Armenian relatives, he must have been Armenian. But let us leave the question open to what extent having Armenian relatives means being Armenian. Also obviously no question was raised about that being of the Armenian faith must necessarily mean having Armenian ethnicity. I shall leave aside other arguments by Fidanyan, such as the “Armenian” names of Gregory's relatives. For additional misinterpretations by Arutiunova-Fidanyan, see Lomouri, “Petriconi”, 284-367.

⁷¹⁹ Komnena, 124: τὸν Πακουριάνον (ἀνὴρ δὲ οὗτος μικρὸς μὲν ἦεν δέμας κατὰ τὸν ποιητὴν, πλὴν ἀλλὰ μαχητῆς, γένους λαμπροῦ ἐξ Ἀρμενίων ὀρμώμενος.

provided his own genealogy?⁷²⁰ Are we therefore to suppose that not only in Armenian, “Georgian by race” meant simply Chalcedonian, but also *Kartveli* in Georgian meant the same thing? Certainly not.⁷²¹ If Komnena says that he was Armenian, then he was, but if other Byzantine, Armenian and Georgian sources say that he was Georgian then he still remained Armenian.⁷²² At one point in the introduction Bakurianisze stated: “We Georgians, are fearless and nurtured in warfare and accustomed to tough life”.⁷²³ It would have been truly comical to read here: We the Chalcedonians are such and such. Therefore for Anna Komnena (she was only three years old when Bakurianisze died) who knew that so many Armenians were in the service of the Byzantine crown, could have easily considered Grigol as Armenian. This is even more probable, since Grigol became the “Great Domestikos of all east” and for years served in the Armenian land, having also inherited a great portion of it.

The same applied to Tornike Eristavi (John Tornikios) who was equally declared as a Chalcedonian Armenian solely because of the fact that he was originally from T‘ao although their not a single source confirming this.⁷²⁴ And, as indicated, the ultimate assumption was that there was a considerable Armenian population in T‘ao, hence an aristocrat from T‘ao must have been Armenian. Following this logic, anyone originating from T‘ao could have easily been called a Chalcedonian Armenian. As in case of Grigol Bak‘urianisze, Tornike’s name was also changed by modern historians who declared his first name as his last

⁷²⁰ Confusion between Armenians and Georgians was common in the Byzantine world. For example, according to the *Life of George the Hagiorite* the monks around Antioch were gossiping about the Georgians, saying that because of their language they were not sure whether they were Georgians or Armenians. Well before that, the Roman historian Zosimos also confused Armenians with Georgians when he called the Georgian King Bakourios *ἔλασεν μὲν ἐξ Ἀρμενίας τὸ γένος*. Zosimus, 270; For the English translation see also http://www.tertullian.org/fathers/zosimus04_book4.htm (31.03.2012).

⁷²¹ See Rapp, “Dialogues”, 173, fn. 35. The Georgian word *natesavi* has the same meaning as the Armenian *azg* and is always used as an ethnic marker. For the confessional belonging *sarcmunoebit kartveli* (Georgian by faith) was regularly used. But S. Rapp asserts that Byzantine designation *Iberian* could have denoted either a Georgian or a Chalcedonian Armenian, despite the fact that, to the best of my knowledge, there exists not a single instance of such a usage in the Greek corpus. I fail to see any substantial reason for taking *Armenian* as an *ethnikon*, whereas *Georgian* not.

⁷²² To the best of my knowledge “Armenian” was much more of a territorial marker than “Georgian”. At least this was certainly the case in Byzantine and Syriac tradition. See Brock, “Christians”, 16-17.

⁷²³ *TypBakur-Geo*, 62: ... ქართველნი ვართ ნათესავით მუნენი და მჟედრობით აღზდილნი და მარადის ჭირვეულსა ცხოვრებასა ჩუეულნი.

⁷²⁴ Arutiunova-Fidanyan, *Typikon*, 134:

name but rewritten as *Tornikian* and this despite the fact that there exists not a single source supporting such an alteration.⁷²⁵

In this light, I fully agree with the approach of L. Zekiyan towards this specific issue, namely that

the basic task of the scholar is to decipher this concrete, existential geometry between those components of identity. To achieve this task, the most relevant factor remains, without any doubt, the self-awareness that the individual or the group at issue had or has of his/her/its own being. Nothing forbids that those parameters may concretely have a confused projection in that self-awareness. However, it is this perception, this self-definition of the subject itself that is the definitive criterion for any valuable identity discourse.⁷²⁶

A more or less detailed study of the aforementioned evidence was needed to show how strongly modern nationalistic narrative abuses the ethnic and confessional changes in the early medieval Caucasus and Anatolia. Despite the weighty association of *Georgian* with *Chalcedonian* and *Armenian* with *non-Chalcedonian*, the separation of the seventh century and the gradual deepening of the religious abyss between the two nations did not erase differentiation between an *ethnikon* and cultural or religious marker. As demonstrated above, in the absolute majority of cases whenever someone's provenance and faith were mentioned, the Armenian and Georgian authors needed to specify what they meant by it. And precisely expressions such as a "Georgian monastery" could have been understood as Chalcedonian Armenian, and in several cases it did. There was a need to specify with *azg* someone's provenance. In short, "Georgian faith" did indeed mean Chalcedonian confession, but "Georgian race" meant Georgian ethnicity. Secondly, it is essential for scholars to break out from vicious circle of basing assumptions on assumptions, such as basing oneself on the fact that a considerable amount of the population in the Georgian Kingdom of T'ao was Armenian, and assuming that many representatives of the region could have been Armenian, and finally concluding that there was a need for a special term that described that ethno-cultural component. This "method" does little service to scholarship. Finally, as a more general conclusion, the creation of artificial technical terms and labels should be avoided when there were no such labels in the period under examination and, moreover, to generalize it and use it at every possible case. Such is the term *Vrac'i azgaw*.

⁷²⁵ Arutiunova-Fidanyan, *Typikon*, 134.

⁷²⁶ Zekiyan, "Subcaucasian Region", 332.

4.4. CONCLUSION: ‘NATIONAL’ CHRISTIANITY?

After a study of the Armeno-Georgian relations in Late Antiquity, it is always tempting for a student to search for the “nationalization” of Christianity, or for a “nationalistic” revisionism in Middle Ages and so on, but unfortunately all such attempts are built on sand. There was a revisionism and one probably on a much greater scale than we are able to imagine, but it was a process that was sustained by specific historical reasons. By the eleventh century the Georgian Kingdom and the Church in particular had to overcome two major difficulties – the inclusion of the Armenian Church and the defining of its status in the rapidly expanding Georgian kingdom and the overcoming of the growing menace of Byzantium and Byzantine Church.⁷²⁷ The first partially was achieved at the Council of Ruisi and Urnisi (1103) and was dealt within the boundaries of the Georgian Kingdom. One reason behind this was that anti-Chalcedonian Armenia was no longer a cultural threat, northern Armenia was fully integrated into the Georgian Kingdom and it was only in the early modern era that the problem rose again. But this did not transpire without opposition. The legitimacy of the current status of the Georgian Church and even of the Georgian state was indeed challenged by the Armenian side, but this challenge could have never progressed from the realm of rhetoric. As shown, the defensive position of the Armenian Church in the so-called northern Armenia, a region that was greatly affected by Georgians, triggered the creation of new remembrances for Armenians. Appropriate exercise of remembrance, as proved by the Armenian situation, was of outmost importance for the preservation of a national and a cultural identity.

The question remains: When did the Georgians come to an understanding about “national Christianity” compatible to that of the Armenians? At the risk of opening a totally new chapter of medieval Georgian history, I offer my own position. First of all, the Georgians had never come to the notion of *stricto sensu* “national Christianity” until quite recent times, when Orthodoxy became the symbol of resistance to globalizing processes. The separation between the Armenians and the Georgians had left a much less visible trace on Georgian self-identification than is often presented and the anti-Armenian cause was not as burning an issue as one might have thought looking at the Middle Ages through the prism of contemporary discourse.

⁷²⁷ For discussion, see Tcheisvhili, “Georgian perceptions”, 199-209.

Just as Movsēs Kalankatwac‘i’s patriotic narrative targets the Armenians and aims at strengthening the Albanian positions with respect to the Armenians, so were the Georgians concerned with maintaining their cultural autonomy and integrity *vis-à-vis* the Byzantines. The rather relaxed attitude of the Georgians towards recorded history almost resulted in shattering of the foundations of the Georgian state in the clash with the Byzantines. Not having preserved an uninterrupted tradition and memory of the foundations of the Georgian Church, Georgians had to create a new remembrance and a new official history. L. Melikset-Bek noticed that the real nationalisation of Georgian Church tradition began not from the seventh century, but after the transfer of the centrifuge of Georgian culture to Mt Athos.⁷²⁸ Indeed anti-Armenian sentiments were more nurtured in Georgian cultural centres in Byzantium than in Georgia itself.⁷²⁹ Georgian anti-Armenian polemic literature is highly “indebted” to Byzantine influence and was cultivated in places such as Mt Athos and the Petriconi monastery in Bulgaria.⁷³⁰ But unlike Melikset-Bek, I believe that the process of nationalisation was even more affected by strife in emulating the Byzantines, rather than distancing from the Armenians. All surviving texts, whether hagiographic, historical or liturgical, indicate that the formation of “national” discourse was a response to the Chalcedonian Byzantines. Thus, e.g., the *History* of Sumbat‘ Davitisze is motivated and built

⁷²⁸ L. Melikset-Bek, an eminent specialist of Armenian and Georgian rightly argues that: “Live relations between the churches of the two neighbouring brotherly people – of Georgians and Armenians, continued long after the official break of relations between the highest hierarchs of the Churches in the beginning of the seventh century. But since the end of the tenth century, when the centre of Georgian literary activity was transferred to Athos and through this in the Georgian Church life the influence of Greek, particularly of the Constantinopolitan Church prevailed, the abyss between ecclesiastical relations between Georgia and Armenian grew deeper and was culminated by the famous decision of the local Synod of Ruisi and Urnisi in 1103, as a result of which Armenians being attributed to the ranks of the *Xaç‘ecars*, that is to say followers of Peter Fuller, were declared as heretics. From then on, having entered close relations with the Greek Church, the Georgian Church had to reject Armenians once and for ever. The Armenians, aside from rejecting Chalcedon altogether, also expressed some separatist inclinations, although the primary reason behind the separation of the related Churches was political rather than ecclesiastic and dogmatic”. Melikset-Bek, “Arajavor”, 73.

⁷²⁹ On the subject, see also, Martin-Hisard, “T‘ao-K‘lardzheti”, 34-46.

⁷³⁰ Some translations of Byzantine anti-Armenian treatises are as follows: The *Odygos* by Anastasius Sinaita and *Against the Jacobites among whom are the Armenians*. The longer of the two includes anathemas against the Monophysites followed by instructions on how to accept the heretics into the Church, whereas the shorter dismisses the second part. The longer version is a compilation of two Byzantine texts, the pseudo-Sahak’s *Apotaxis* and an unknown Greek *Euchologion*. Niketas Stethatos: *Five Discourses against the Armenians*. The translation of these works was done by Arseni Iq‘altoeli and is attested in nine manuscripts of the *Dogmatikon*. It is of interest that the translation of these works was commissioned by Davit the Abbot of the monastery of Petriconi. Theodore Abu Kurrah: *The Letter of Thomas of Jerusalem Against the Armenian Heretics; Against the Armenians by Maximos*. S 312 (16th c.). This short treatise is a fragment from pseudo-Isaac’s first treatise but for some reason is attributed to Maximos; *Explanation of the heresy of the Armenians and the reasons for which they are anathematised*. The treatise has survived in a sixteenth century manuscript and is a compilation of various works, including the first treatise of pseudo-Isaac, *Thirty Chapters* and *Against the Jacobites*; The *Patmutiwn* is yet another Georgian version of the *Narratio de Rebus Armeniae* and of both of its parts. The tradition was very popular in Georgia and has reached modern times in various written or oral forms, which will be studied below. Most of the above-mentioned texts are included in the *Dogmatikon*. See Outtier, “Dogmatikon”, 218-226.

around the opposition and struggle of the Georgian Bagrat'ionis against the Byzantines,⁷³¹ as were the *Histories* of King Davit IV and Tamar, which exhibit certain arrogance towards the Byzantines. In fact, David's career began with his bold refusal of all Byzantine honorific titles. Both historiographic and hagiographic works, such as the *Lives* of Grigol Xangteli, Ilarion the Georgian (c.822–75),⁷³² Proxore the Georgian (c.985–1066) the founder of the Holy Cross Monastery in Jerusalem,⁷³³ Peter the Georgian, John (c.920–1005) and Euthymios (955–1028) the Hagiorites⁷³⁴ and George the Hagiorite,⁷³⁵ aimed both to emulate and to antagonise the Byzantines.

When Ioane-Zosime (10th c.) copied (or composed) the *Praise and Glory of the Georgian Language*, he was not juxtaposing the Georgian language against the Armenian but was trying to emulate the role of the Greek language in the Christian oecumene.⁷³⁶ By contrast, no similar work has survived concerning the Armenians. The formation of a national Church calendar, which explicitly included Georgian saints, was a reaction against the Byzantines, not the Armenians. The development of the tradition of the national foundations of the Georgian Church was a response to Byzantine allegations and not so much to the Armenian tradition. The need for “re-remembrance” or for evoking remembrances was also a result of Byzantine arrogance in their dealings with the Georgians.⁷³⁷ The Armenian ecclesiastical expansionist threat did not exist since the final doctrinal separation, and the political threat was overcome in the early eleventh century. The Byzantines were present throughout medieval Georgian history and manifestly so, for no other

⁷³¹ Almost entire historiographical literature of the same period, especially *Mat'iane Kartlisa* and the *History of the Bagrat'ionis* by Sumbat' Davit'sze are explicit against the Byzantines. For discussion, see, e.g. Rapp, “Sumbat”, 570-576.

⁷³² The entire *Life of Ilarion* is dedicated to the emulation of the Byzantines and to the justification of Georgian claims. See Martin-Hisard, “Hilarion”, 101-138; Menabde, *Seats*, 177-185.

⁷³³ See Lerner, *Wellspring*, 35.

⁷³⁴ For the English translation of the *Vitae* and a study, see Grdzeldze, *Georgian Monks*; See also Martin-Hisard, “Jean et Euthyme”, 67-142.

⁷³⁵ The *Life of George the Hagiorite* is especially prominent in its anti-Byzantine sentiments and takes a particularly defensive stand towards the Greek Church. For the French translation and study of the *Life of George the Hagiorite*, see *VitaG-Fr*. Menabde, *Seats*, 152-167, 185-247.

⁷³⁶ On the hymn, see Rapp, *Studies*, 437-438; Rayfield, *Literature*, 32-33.

⁷³⁷ For some discussion on the subject matter, see Walbiner, “Beziehung”, 437-455. One such case was the famous debate between the Byzantines and the Georgians under the leadership of George the Hagiorite and a treatise written by Ephrem Mcire in defence of the canonical rights of the Georgian Church, when, in the middle of the eleventh century, the very independence of the Georgian Church was challenged by the Greek monastic authorities of the Black Mountain. See also the *Life of George the Hagiorite* by Giorgi Mcire that describes the polemic that broke out between the Georgians and Greeks when in 1057 the Greek monks of the monasteries of the Black Mountain complained to the Patriarch of Antioch that the Georgians were taking over. *GM-VitaGH*, 149-152.

Church, other than the Russian, has inflicted so much damage on the Georgian Church, as the Chalcedonian Byzantine.⁷³⁸

The thirteenth century Georgian version of *Life of Peter the Iberian* apparently appeared when the Georgians realized that Peter ought to become a “national” saint. Not only is Peter’s Chalcedonian Orthodoxy not doubted, but he is also presented as a champion of the Chalcedonian cause, although in a highly mythologized way.⁷³⁹ The logic is simple: he was Georgian, therefore he must have been Orthodox, and the whole point of enshrining Peter’s life was to argue for the perpetual Orthodoxy of Georgia. The story behind the entire Chalcedonian issue, as represented in the *Vita*, resembles the way Vrt’anēs K’erdoł represented the beginnings of the controversy in a form of a distorted, pious legend, where the life of a Georgian saint mirrored the life of Georgia:

For the Great apostle had preached the Holy Gospel of Christ in Georgia, as the divine philosopher Nikitas wrote, but later it was Nino who was sent to the same land of Georgia by Christ God. And they learned to worship and have faith in the Trinity and they were baptized in the name of the Holy Trinity and since then they have not averted from the true faith and we shall never avert by the grace of the holy Queen, the Mother of God, our hope and protectress.⁷⁴⁰

⁷³⁸ See the Byzantine expansionist policy on Mt. Athos, Monastery of the Holy Cross in Jerusalem, and others. Menabde, *Seats*, 69-139, 185-249.

⁷³⁹ For a brief discussion, see Schmidt, “Petrus der Iberer”, 253.

⁷⁴⁰ *VPI-Geo*, 215-16: და რამეთუ ვინათგან ექადაგა ქადაგება იგი წმიდისა ქრისტეს სახარებისა წმიდისა და დიდებულისა ქრისტეს მოციქულისა ანდრიას მიერ ქუეყანასა მას ქართლისასა ... და უკუანადსენელ მიივლინა წმიდად ღელად ნინო კერძოსა ერთსა ქუეყანისა მისვე ქართლისასა ქრისტეს ღმრთისა მიერ, და ისწავეს ღმრთის-მსახურებად, და ჰრწმენა წმიდად სამებად და ნათელ-იღეს სახელსა ზედა წმიდიდა სამებისასა ქადაგებითა მით წმიდათა მოციქულთადათა, მიერთგან არღარა ოღეს მიღრეკილ არს ქუეყანად იგი ქართლისად წმიდისა და მართლისა სარწმუნოებისაგან, არცა მივლრკეთ უკუნისამდე...

CONCLUSION: VIEW FROM NOWHERE?

We do not know upon whose recommendation
we are respecting one tradition
and dishonouring the other?!
St Nersēs Šnorhali

The wind of Surp Sarkis,
Blow gently down the street,
May you find my lover
In the gardens of Ortač'ala.
Popular Tbilisi song

Having borrowed the title of the acclaimed book by T. Nagel, I believe we can summarize the rather broad objective of the present thesis in the words of the same author: “How to combine the perspective of a particular person inside the world with an objective view of that same world, the person and his viewpoint included?”⁷⁴¹

The thesis was not an attempt to provide positive solutions to such an ambitious problem and to a vast number of vexed issues emanating from the field of Caucasian studies, otherwise known as Armeno-Georgian philology but now also of Albanian. Instead it aimed at taking one single event in the history of the Caucasus, the Caucasian Schism, and at describing how the Schism worked and still works as an interpretive schema for so vast a number of problematic. How from a historical event the Schism turned into a phenomenon perceived by medieval and contemporary intellectuals. From an object of scholarly study the Schism turned into an interpretive schema and subsequently into a thick veil of interpolations, of smoke and mirrors of misconceptions and mutilations through which the very beginnings of the Christian Caucasian cultures are barely visible. Thus, for example, the abundance of Armenian sources emanating from the sixth

⁷⁴¹ Nagel, *View*, 3.

century theological and ecclesiastical controversies is more confusing than helpful. The spirit of liminality in both medieval Armenian and Georgian historical thinking overshadowed the entire sixth century.

What do we really know about the sixth and early seventh century Christian Caucasus? The role of the so-called Council of Dwin is debatable, equally so the Second Council of Dwin both assuming liminal functions in the Caucasian historical narratives of orthodoxies and heterodoxies. As for the so-called third Council of Dwin, it is so heavily associated with the Caucasian schism that scholars often take it as a watershed despite the fact that the relations between the Caucasian Churches still continued after that event. On the other hand, Christological developments, at least according to the documents at hand, do not attest for a rapid anti-Chalcedonian change in the Caucasus. As a result, we are devoid of solid positive means of reconstructing even such widely studied and indeed crucial events of the sixth century as the councils of Dwin, the reasons and nature of the separation of the Caucasian Churches and ultimately of the formation of national churches.

We have looked at three consecutive stages of reading the past, the end of the so-called Late Antiquity, when the political and ecclesiastical alienation of the Caucasian Churches occurred, the end of the first millennium, when the Caucasus underwent some major geo-political transformation and the contemporary scholarship, shaped throughout the twentieth century. All these periods try to retroject their own aspirations and visions on the previous period. The period of the Schism was the first recorded instance when the South Caucasian people started evoking remembrance of their common past to justify the present. In the process of this remembrance it turned out that remembrance was in fact a mode of forgetting and objects of one and the same memory were used for different ends. Contemporary scholarship tends to follow the steps of these Late Antique polemicists. Our evaluation of the sixth century Caucasian religious history is all too dependent on the early seventh and even more on the medieval perception of the same period. If medieval Georgian and Armenian intellectuals sought for transitional and liminal stages in the history of their nations, thus overlooking the periods between two summits, to a certain extent we also tend to seek for such.

Numerous problems that supposedly can be solved by conceptualizing the schism and the accompanying historical and political experiences are more successfully understood by turning to the modes of historical experience inherent in these cultures from the very beginning of their literary history. Therefore the Schism must not be taken as a watershed in the historical destiny of the two neighbouring peoples. It was not understood as such by the Georgians, whereas the Armenians made a rich ideological use of the notions “separation” and “union”. If the Schism was the first instance of evoking memories and using remembrance for immediate political and ideological ends, the Middle Ages made a similar use of the schism itself. No other event in the common Caucasian history has deserved so much attention of the medieval Armenian authors as the Schism, the ultimate spectacle through which, on the one hand, the rather evasive fifth and sixth centuries were perceived and on the other, contemporary *status quo* was experienced. The primary myth elaborated in the Armenian intellectual circles was that a Georgian apostasy had happened. If there was an apostasy, there used to be a union under the aegis of the Armenian Church. This myth particularly flourished in the so-called Northern Armenia during the fight for the political dominance in the Caucasus and especially so later, when northern Armenia was annexed by the Kingdom of Georgia. Whereas Georgian royal and intellectual circles tried to use the same narrative of union and separation for their own ends, in the attempts to integrate the northern Armenian populations both culturally and “ideologically” into the building of the united Kingdom.

The Middle Ages extensively used remembrance as a tool for building and advancing nationhood. This particularly refers to the remembrance of Late Antiquity, to the transitional or initial stages of the formation of the religious identities in the region. By the end of Late Antiquity, a crisis broke out in the ethnic and religious identities of the region, which became most vivid in the ninth century when new cultural and political realities were built in the Caucasus. Several Caucasian kingdoms and political entities were competing for establishing their own cultural and political dominance in the region. This short struggle ended with the political victory of the Georgian state and the creation of a micro empire in the Caucasian region. As a result, the remembrances were once again re-enacted and took two distinct shapes, that of remembering and of forgetting. Acts of remembrance became central instruments for nation building, for Armenia, or better to

say Northern Armenia, remembering or even creation of memories was of paramount importance, whereas the main mode of remembrance in Georgia became forgetting, which, according to P. Ricoeur's wording, can in a certain sense be read as state tolerance. These two modes of remembering consequently contributed to the ever existing balance of power in the region, which to my belief was a guarantee for the subsequent preservation of ethnic, religious and national identities in the Caucasus. By this everlasting opposition and balance, by alternatively looking towards east and west, Armenia and Georgia managed to avoid the fate of Caucasian Albania, which not only ceased to exist as a state, but lost its own cultural memory and was dependant on the remembrance offered by the Georgians or the Armenians.

On the one hand, the Georgian royal circles were more than interested in incorporating the Armenians and for these ends various myths of common origin were created and endorsed. On their part the leading monastic figures of northern Armenia developed a specific attitude towards the Georgian rule. It is always striking how revered the attitude towards the Georgian royalty is and meanwhile how arrogant the ecclesiastic circles remained: they both acknowledged the Georgian political supremacy and, in order to compensate this, developed a narrative of an uninterrupted Armenian cultural and religious supremacy which goes back to the early centuries of Christianity. In these circumstances, a specific narrative was formed that for centuries, or in a more fixed tradition, for one hundred years, the Georgians and Armenians lived peacefully and only due to the arrogance of one defiant Georgian, the latter apostatized and this followed by a retrospective creation of the legend of the pan-Caucasian hierarchical organization that allegedly existed under the Armenian aegis prior to the Schism.

In these circumstances, medieval Georgian historiography, which was in absolute majority of cases royal chronicles, did not preserve, so to say, a cultural argument against the Armenians. Thus, in no way do we encounter any arguments for the introduction of Christianity, or creation of literacy. According to all sources at our disposal, the Georgians were not concerned with these issues until modernity, when the problems became truly vexed, overlapping with sensitive issues of national foundations. As a result, these issues fell prey to liminalist interpretation of the schism this time in contemporary scholarship, as if before the Schism there was a certain mythical union and accord and Armenians and Georgians wrote same histories and only

after the schism they discovered that after all they are different people and need to write their own national histories and pull their own ends. As we saw, we have no grounds for such a reading. The concept of the schism and of the post- and pre-schismal understanding of the literature produced is flawed and presents some insurmountable methodological problems. Equally futile is the search for a “national awakening” among the Georgians after the Schism, just as it is methodologically misleading to date and interpret the historical texts according to this assumption. If we speak of such a revival it was not a reaction against the Armenians. From the point of view of religion, in the Middle Ages, Armenia was “other” and there were no points of intersection between Armenians and Georgians. Just as Armenian literature stopped being patronizing towards the Albanians as soon as Albania was fully dissolved and partially incorporated into the Armenian cultural sphere, so the Georgians did not see a threat from culturally already heterogeneous Armenia, but instead Byzantium emerged as a true menace.

The lower layers of society have preserved a different kind of memory. Where the official institutional remembrance could not penetrate, various legends were formed reflecting very strained relations between the two people. Apparently attempts were carried out to integrate the two people by means of creating shared places and persons of memory such as the Cathedral of Iṣxani, and Nersēs the Great, also by creating a common mnemonic field by means of hagiography. The language has also preserved some notable data on the ethnic and religious identities among which these narratives were formed and transmitted: *Georgianness* and *Armenianness* was heavily associated with Chalcedonianism and non-Chalcedonianism respectively, but this did not result in confusion of ethnic and confessional markers.

In this mnemonic field the sites of memory of the Armeno-Georgian discourse play an important role. St Šušanik and the entire region associated with her became an important tool in the controversy. Gugareti, the Lower Kartli was a very loose term that expanded gradually depending on immediate political needs. A similar fate was shared by other such *loci memoriae*, the roles of St Maštoc‘ and St Gregory on the one hand and of St Nino on the other were gradually increasing and receiving specific shapes depending on the political circumstances in the region.

Such is the story of that very peculiar tale often heard in the Caucasian region, the story of orthodoxies and heterodoxies, of zealotry and nationalism, of war and peace, of unity and separation, of memory and oblivion, all of which, as it happens, ultimately turned into a love tale of a knight called Sergius and of his lost lover.

ABBREVIATIONS AND BIBLIOGRAPHY

Texts

Armenian

Agath = Ագաթանգեղայ Պատմութիւն Հայոց, *Patmowt'wn Hayots'*, ed. R. Thomson, New York: Caravan books, 1980; Agath-Thom = *The Lives of Saint Gregory, The Armenian, Greek, Arabic, and Syriac versions of the History Attributed to Agathangelos*, tr. and comm. R. Thomson, Ann Arbor: Caravan Books, 2010.

AM = Anania Mokec'i, Յաղաքս ապստամբութեան տանն Աղուանից [*On the Apostasy of the Albanians*], ed. G. TerMkrtchean, in *Ararat* (1897), 129-144.

AnonymXVI = V. Hakobyan (ed.), Անանուն Ժամանակագրութիւն (XVI դ.) [Anonymous Chronicler 16th c], in Մանր Ժամանակագրություններ (XIII-XVIII դդ.) 1, Yerevan. 1951, 140-153.

AnonymVIII = Անանուն Ժամանակագրութիւն [Anonymous Chronography], Venice, 1904.

AnonSebast = V. Hakobyan (ed.), Անանուն Սեբաստացու Ժամանակագրությունը (XVI դ.) [*Chronicle of an Anonymous Sebastian Historian XVI c.*] in Մանր Ժամանակագրություններ (XIII-XVIII դդ.) 1, Yerevan. 1951, 165-177.

AnSan = Անանիա Վարդապետի Սանահնեցոյ, Վասն բաժանման Վրաց, [*Anania Vardapet Sanahinec'i, On the Separation of the Georgians*] in *The Teachers of Northern Armenia*, ed. L. Melikset-Beg, Tbilisi, 1928, 112-120.

ArLast = Aristakes Lastivertc'i, [*History*], Venice, 1901; **ArLast-Rus** = Aristakes Lastivertc'i, *History*, Erevan, 1963; **ArLast-Eng**, Պատմութիւն Արիստակէայ Վարդապետի Լաստիվերցոյ [*History of Vardapet Aristakes Alastivertec'i*], Tiflis, 1912

AT = Պատմութիւն Առաքել Վարդապետի Դավրիժեցոյ Arak'el Davrijec'i, Պատմութիւն [*History*], Valaršapat, 1884; AT-Rus = Arak'el Davrijec'i, *Книга учении*, tr. L. Xanlaryan, Moscow: Nauka, 1973; AT-Eng = *The History of Vardapet Arak'el of Tabriz*, v 1, 2, tr. G.A. Bournoutian, Costa Meza: Mazda Publishers, 2006.

Buzand = N. Garsoïan, *The Epic Histories (Buzandaran Patmut'wnk')*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989.

CanArm = Կանոնագիրք Հայոց [*Book of Laws of the Armenians*], vo. I/II. ed. V. Hakobyan, Erevan, 1964, 1971.

Col-Ananean = Տեր մերոյ Հարցն որ ի Դուին ժողովեալ յաւուրս մեծին Ներսիսի Հայոց մեծաց եւ վասն Քաղկեդոնի [Written by Our Fathers on the Council of Dwin in the Days of Great Nersēs of the Greater Armenia on the subject of Chalcedon], in *Bazmawep* 115, (1957), 112-113.

EpistJohan = “Թուղթ Յոհաննու Երուսաղեմի եպիսկոպոս առ Աբաս աղուանից կաթողիկոս” [Letter of John Bishop of Jerusalem to Abas the Katholikos of the Albanians], ed. G. Ter-Mkrtč‘ean, *Ararat* 1896, 252-256.

KnHav = Կնիք Հաւատոյ Ընդհանուր Սուրբ Եկեղեցոյ Յուղղափառ և Ս.Հոգեկիր Հարցն մերոց Դաւանութեանց, Յաւուրս Կոմիտաս Կաթողիկոսի համահաւարքեալ Catholicos Komitas, *Le Sceau de la Foi*, Louvain: Peeters, 1974.

KG = Կիրակոս Գանձակեցի, Պատմութիւն Հայոց [Kirakos Ganjakec‘i, *History of the Armenians*], ed. K. Melik-Ogandjanyan, Erevan, 1961.

GT‘ I = Գիրք Թղթոց, [Book of Letters], Tiflis, 1901; **GT‘ II** = ეპისტოლეთა წიგნი, სომხური ტექსტი ქართული თარგმანით, გამოკვლევისა და კომენტარებით გამოსცა ზაზა ალექსიძემ [The Book of Letters: Armenian Text with a Georgian Translation, Study and Commentary] ed. Zaza Alexidze, Tbilisi: Mecniereba, 1968; **GT‘ III** = Գիրք Թղթոց [Book of Letters], 1994.

LetterConc = *The Letter of Love and Concord*, a revised Diplomatic Edition with Historical Notes and Comments by Z. Pogossian, Leiden: Brill, 2010.

LP‘ = Ղազարայ Փարպեցոյ Պատմութիւն Հայոց և Թուղթ առ Վահան Մամիկոնեան [Lazar P‘arpec‘i’s *History of the Armenians and the Letter to Vahan Mamikonean*], a photographic reproduction of the 1908 Tiflis edition with a new introduction and critical bibliography by D. Kouymjian, New York: Caravan Books, 1985. LP‘-Eng = *The History of Lazar P‘arpec‘i*, tr. R. Thomson, Atlanta: Scholar’s Press, 1991.

MA = Մխիթարայ Այրիվանեցոյ Պատմութիւն Հայոց, [Mxitar Ayrevanec‘i, *History of the Armenians*] Moscow, 1860.

MG-AdGeo = “Թուղթ առ Վրացիսն՝ յաղագս ուղղափառութեան հաւատոյ” [“Letter to the Georgians on the Orthodoxy of Faith”], *Ganjasar* 6 (1996), 340-402.

MG-Alb = Dowsett, C. J. F., “The Albanian Chronicle of Mxit‘ar Goš”, *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 21 (1958), 472-490.

MG-Can = *The Lawcode of Mxit‘ar Goš*, tr. and comm. by R.W. Thomson, Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2000.

MK I = Մովսեսի Կաղանկատուացոյ Պատմութիւն Աղուանից Աշխարհի [History of the Land of Albania by Movsēs Kalankatwac‘i, Tiflis, 1913; **MK II** = Movses Kalankatwac‘i, Պատմութիւն Աղուանից Աշխարհի [History of the Land of Ałuank], ed. V. Arakelyan, Erevan, 1983; **MK-Eng** = *The History of Caucasian Albanians by Movsēs Dasxuranc‘i*, translated by C.J.F. Dowsett, London: Oxford University Press, 1961; **MK-Rus** = Movses Kalanaktwac‘i, *История страны Алуанк* [History of the Land of Ałuank], tr. S. Smbatyan, Erevan, 1984.

MS-Arm = Ժամանակագրություն Տեան Միխայելի Ասուրոց Պատրիարքի, [Chronicle of Lord Michael the Syrian Patriarch], Jerusalem, 1871.

MX = **Movses Xorenac'i**, Պատմություն Հայոց, [History of the Armenians], Tiflis, 1910; **MX-Thom** = Movses Khorenats'i, *History of the Armenians*, tr. and comm.. Robert W. Thomson, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978.

MU = Մատթեոս Ուռհայեցի, Ժամանակագրություն [Matt'eos Urhaec'i, *Chronicle*], Vałaršapat, 1898.

Nilos = Նեղոսի Դոքսոպատրի կարգագրություն Պատրիարքական Աթոռոյն, [The Order of the Patriarchal Thrones by Nilos Doxopatres], ed. F.N. Finck, Vałaršapat, 1902.

Ps-Š = Պատմություն Անանուն Զրուցագրի կարուցեալ Շապուհ Բագրատունի [History of the Anonymous Chroniclers Pseudo Šapuh Bagratuni], ed. and tr. M. Dabinyan-Melikyan, Erevan, 1971.

SA = Սամուէլի Քահանայի Անեցոյ Հաւաքմունք ի գրոց պատմագրաց, [Historical Writing of Priest Samuel Anec'i], Vałaršapat, 1893.

Seb = Պատմություն Սեբէոսի [History of Sebeos], ed. G. Abgaryan, Erevan 1979; **Seb-Rus** = *История Енуцкона Себеока*, tr. S. Malxasyants, Erevan, 1939; **Seb-Eng** = *The Armenian History Attributed to Sebeos*, tr. and comm. R. Thomson and J. Howard-Johnston. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 199.

SO = Step'anos Orbelean, Պատմություն Նահանգին Միսական արարեալ Ստեփանոսի Օրբէլեան Արքեպիսկոպոսի [History of the Nahang of Sisakan Narrated by Archbishop Step'anos Orbelean], Tiflis, 1911.

ST = Stepanos Taronec'i, Ստեփանոսի Տարոնեցոյ Ասողկան Պատմություն Տիեզերական [History], St. Petersburg, 1885; **ST-Ger** = *Die Stephanos von Taron Armenische Geschichte*, tr. H. Gelzer and A. Burckhardt, Leipzig, 1907.

US I = Uxtanēs Episkopos, *patmut'wn Hayoc', hatuac erkrord. Patmut'wn bažanman Vrac'i Hayoc'*, [Bishop Uxtanēs, History of the Armenians Part two: Severance of the Georgians from the Armenians], Vałaršapat, 1871; **US II** = უხტანესი, ისტორია გამოყოფისა ქართველთა სომეხთაგან [Uxtanes: History of Separation of the Georgians from the Armenians] edition and a Georgian translation by Z. Aleksidze, Tbilisi: Mecniereba, 1975; **US-Eng** = *Bishop Ukhtanes of Sebastia, History of Armenia part II, History of the Severance of the Georgians from the Armenians*, translation, introduction and commentary by Fr. Z. Arzoumanian, Fort Lauderdale, 1985.

VA = Vardan Arevelc'i, Պատմություն [History], a facsimile reproduction with an introduction by R. Thomson, New York: Caravan Books, 1991; **VA-Eng** = Thomson, R., "The Historical Compilation of Vardan Arewelc'i", *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 43 (1989), 125-224.

VitaGeo-Arm = ქართლის ცხოვრების ძველი სომხური თარგმანი, [The Old Armenian Translation of the Life of Georgia], ed. I. Abuladze, Tbilisi, 1953; **VitaGeo-Thom** = Thomson, R.W., *Rewriting Caucasian History. The Armenian Adaptations of the Georgian Chronicles*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996.

YD = Yovhannēs Drasxanakertc‘i, Յովհաննու Կաթողիկոսի Դրասխանակերտեցոյ Պատմութիւն Հայոց [*History of the Armenians*], Tiflis, 1912; **YD-Eng** = Yovhannēs Drasxanakertc‘i, *History of Armenia*, tr. and comm., K.H. Maksoudian, Atlanta: Scholar’s Press, 1987. **YD-Geo** = Ioannes Draschanacertensis, *Historia Armeniae*, Textum armenicum cum versione georgica edidit, introduction indicibusque instruxit E. Zagareišvili, Tvbilisi, 1965; **YD-Fr** = Yovhannēs Drasxanakertc‘i, *Histoire d’Arménie*, intr., trad et notes P. Boisson-Chenorhokian, Leuven: Peeters, 2004.

YK = Yakob Karnec‘i, Շինուած Կարնոյ քաղաքին, որ կոչեցաւ Թեոդոսիոսի, որ այժմ Արգրում վերայձայնիլալ կոչի, in. *Minor Chronicles II*, ed. V. Akopyan, Yerevan, 1956, 548-586.

YM-Eng = Pseudo-Yovhannēs Mamikonean, *The History of Taron*, tr. and comm. L. Avdoyan, Atlanta: Scholar’s Press, 1993.

ZA = Ջաքարիա Ագուլեցու Որագրութիւն [*The Journal of Zak‘aria Agulec‘i*], Erevan, 1938; **ZA-Eng** = *The Journal of Zak‘aria Agulec‘i*, tr. and comm. G. Bournoutian, Costa Meza: Mazda Publishers, 2003.

Georgian

ACRU = Երբնիս-Երբնիսի Կրեմիս Ժեղոսկոյրա [*Acts of the Council of Ruisi and Urbnisi*], ed. E. Gabidzashvili, in I. Dolidze (ed.), *Monuments of the Georgian Law*, Tbilisi, 1970, 176-196.

AI = *Actes d’Iviron, Des Origines au milieu de XIe siècle*, Archives de L’Athos 14, ed. J. Lefort, Paris, 1985.

AS = արսենի Տաթարեւոյ, *Գանձուցիտոյ յարտեւոյ ճառքեւոյ ճառքեւոյ* [Arseni Sapareli, *On the Severance of the Georgians and Armenians*] ed. Z. Aleksidze, Tbilisi: Mecniereba 1980; **AS-Fr** = Aleksidze, Z., Mahé, J-P., “Arsène Sapareli, Sur la séparation des Georgiens et des Arméniens”, *REArm* 32 (2010), 59-132.

Calend-Geo = *Le Calendrier Palestino-Géorgien du Sinaiticus 34 (Xe siecle)*, édite, traduit et commenté G. Garritte, Bruxelles, 1958.

ConIber = *ժոյճեւոյ յարտեւոյ*, [*The Conversion of Georgia*] in I. Abuladze (ed.), *Monuments of Old Georgian Hagiographic Literature* 1 (5th–10th cc.), Tbilisi: Mecniereba, 1964, p. 81-163

DispEkvSos = Տեղեւոյ-Գեթա Երբնիս Երբնիս Գրեւոյ Տեղեւոյ Տեղեւոյ Տեղեւոյ [*Dispute of Monk Ekvtime Grzeli with Sostene, the Armenian Teacher*], M. Sabinin (ed.), *Sakartvelos Samotxe*, St. Petersburg, 1882, 615-621.

EM = Ephrem Mcire, *Երբնիս Երբնիս Երբնիս Երբնիս* [*The History of the Conversion of the Georgians*], ed. T. Bregvadze, Tbilisi, 1959.

GM-VitaGX = Giorgi Merçule, შრომა და მოლუაწება ღირსად ცხოვრებისა წმიდისა და ნეტარისა მამისა ჩუენისა გრიგოლისა არქიმანდრიტისა, ხანციოსა და შატბერდისა აღმაშენებლისა [*Life and Work of our Father Archimandrite Gregory, builder Xanxta and Šat'berdi*], in I. Abuladze (ed.), *Monuments of the Georgian Hagiographic Literature 1 (V-Xc.)*, Tbilisi: Mecniereba, 1964, 248-319.

MartDetT = წმიდათა ყრმათა ორთა ძმათა დავითისი და ტირიჭანისი საკითხავი [*Readings for two Brothers, Davit and Tiričan*], in I. Abuladze, *Georgian and Armenian Literary Relations in 9th-10th cc.*, Tbilisi, 1944, 178-183.

MartGrP-Geo = *Vita S. Gregorii Parthiensis*, ed. L.Melikset-Bek, Tbilisi, 1920.

MartHryps = Abuladze, I., აგათანგელოსის “რიფსიმეანთა მარტვილობის“ ძველი ქართული თარგმანი [*The Old Georgian Translation of the Martyrdom of the Hrypsimeans*], in *Works 4*, 73-105.

MartKol = წამება ყრმათა წმიდათა რიცხვთ ცხრათა, [*Martyrdom of Nine Brothers*], in I. Abuladze, *Georgian and Armenian Literary Relations in 9th-10th cc.*, Tbilisi, 1944, 184-186.

MartSuk = წამება წმიდათა მოწამეთა მესუკავეთა, in I. Abuladze, *Georgian and Armenian Literary Relations*, Tbilisi, 1944, 22-61.

MatKar = *მატიანე ქართლისა* [*The History of Georgia*] in S. Kaukchchishcili (ed.), *Kartlis Cxovreba 1* Tbilisi: Saxelgami, 1955, 249-317.

NarrPetrAlaj = პეტრეს მკაწრუალისა და ალაჯის-თვს თხრობა, [*Narration on Peter Fuller and Alaj*], in Л. Меликсет-Беков, in L. Melikset-Bek, *Грузинский извод сказания о посте ‘Араджавор’*, [Georgian Version of the Story of the Fast of Arajawor], Petrograd, 1917.

NCMin = მცირე სჯულისკანონი [*The Lesser Nomocanon*], ed. E. Giunashvili, Tbilisi: Mecniereba, 1972.

SD = სუმბატ დავითისძე, ცხოვრება და უწყება ბაგრატიონიანთა, [*Sumbat Davitisdze, The Life and History of the Bagrationis*] in S. Kaukchishvili (ed.) *Kartlis Cxovreba* ed. Tbilisi: Saxelgami, 1955, 372-386.

SM = სტეფანე მტბევალი, წამება წმიდის მოწამის გობრონისი [*Stepane Mt'bevari, Martyrdom of Saint Gobron*], in I. Abuladze, (ed.), *Monuments of Old Georgian Hagiographic Literature 1 (V-X c.)*, Tbilisi: Mecniereba, 1964, 172-183

TypBakur = Shanidze, A. (ed.) ქართველთა მონასტერი ბულგარეთში: ტიპიკონის ქართული რედაქცია [*The Georgian Monastery in Bulgaria: the Georgian Redaction of the Typikon*], Tbilisi: Mecniereba, 1971, 60-129;

VitaDav = ცხოვრება მეფეთ-მეფისა დავითისი [*Life of David, King of Kings*], S. Kaukchishvili (ed.), *Kartlis Cxovreba* Tbilisi: Saxelgami, 1955, 318-364.

VitaDG = ცხოვრება და მოქალაქობა წმიდისა მამისა ჩუენისა დავით გარეჯელისა [Life and Work of Our Holy Father Saint Davit Gareželi], in I Abuladze (ed.), *Monuments of Old Georgian Hagiographic Literature*, Tbilisi, 1964, 229-240.

VitaGH = გიორგი მცირე, ცხოვრება და მოქალაქობა წმიდისა და ნეტარისა მამისა ჩუენისა გიორგი მთაწმიდელისა [Giorgi Mcire, *Life and Work of our Fathers George the Hagiorite*], in I. Abuladze (ed.), *Monuments of Old Georgian Hagiographical Literature* 102-208; **VitaGH-Fr** = “La Vie de Georges l’Hagiorite”, intr. and tr. B. Martin-Hisard, *Revue des Etudes Byzantines* 64-65 (2006-2007), 5-204.

VitaIZ = ცხოვრება იოანე ზედაზნელისა, [Life of Iaone Zedazneli], in I. Abuladze (ed.), *Old Georgian Redactions of the Lives of the Syrian Fathers*, Tbilisi, 1955, 2-68.

VitaJE-Fr = Martin-Hisard, B., “La Vie de Jean et Euthyme et le statut du monastère des Ibères sur l’Athos”, *Revue des études byzantines* 49 (1991), 67-142.

VitaPetr-Geo = ცხოვრება და მოქალაქობა წმიდისა და ნეტარისა მამისა ჩუენისა პეტრე ქართველისა [Life and Work of our Father Peter the Georgian], in Ilia Abuladze (ed.), *Monuments of the Georgian Hagiographic Literature* 2, Tbilisi: Mecniereba, 1967, 213-266.

VitaRegn = ლეონტი მროველი, ცხოვრება ქართველთა მეფეთა [Leont’i Mroveli, *The Life of the Georgian Kings*], in S. Kaukhchishvili (ed.), *Kartlis Cxovreba* 1, Tbilisi: Saxelgami, 1955, 1-71.

VitaŠE = ცხოვრება და მოქალაქობა ღირსისა მამისა ჩუენისა შიოხსი და ევაგრესი [Life and Work of Šio and Evagre], in I. Abuladze (ed.), *Monuments of Georgian Hagiographic Literature* 1, Mecniereba, 1964, 217-229.

VitaV = ვუანშერი, ცხოვრება ვახტანგ გორგასლისა, [Žuanšer, *Life of Vaxt’ang Gorgasali*] in *Kartlis Cxovreba* ed. S. Kaukhchishvili, Tbilisi: Saxelgami, 1955, 139-244.

VB-Descr = ვახუშტი ბატონიშვილი, აღწერა სამეფოსა საქართველოსა [Vaxušt’i Bat’onišvili, *Description of the Kingdom of Georgia*] in *Kartlis Cxovreba* IV, ed. S. Kaukhchishvili, Tbilisi: Saxelgami, 1973, 1-894.

Greek

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Balsamon = PG, 137, 138. Reprduced in S. Kaukhchishvili (ed.), *Georgica, scriptorum Byzantinorum excerpta ad Georgiam pertinenta* 8, Tbilisi, 1970, 17-21.

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ContScyll = Tsolakes, E.T. *Ioannes Skylitzes Continuatus*, in *Εταιρεία Μακεδονικών Σπουδών, Ίδρυμα Μελετών Χερσονήσου του Αίμου* 105, Thessalonica, 1968.

Gelasius = Gelasius, *Kirchengeschichte*, ed. M. Heinmann and G. Loeschcke, Leipzig: Heinrich's, 1918.

Komnena = *Annae Comnenae Alexias*, ed. A. Kambylis and D.R. Reinsch, New York: De Gruyter, 2001.

Narr = Garrite, G. *Narratio de Rebus Armeniae*, Louvain, 1952; *Narr-Fr* = "La *Narratio de rebus Armeniae*", French tran. J.-P. Mahé, *ReArm* 25 (1994-1995), 429-438.

Proc = Procopius, *History of the Wars, Books One and Two* 1, trans. H.B. Dewing, in *Loeb Classical Library* ed. T.E. Page and W.H.D. Rouse, London: William Heineman, 1914.

Rufinus = Rufine d'Aquilée, *Histoire ecclésiastique*, éd. Th. Mommsen, GCS 9, 2, Leipzig, 1903-1909, 951-1040.

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Theodoret = Theodoret, *Kirchengeschichte*, ed. L. Parmentier and F. Scheidweiler, in *Die griechischen christlichen Schrifsteller* 44, Berlin: Akademie verlag, 1954.

Tzetzes, Chiliades = Leone, P.L.M., *Ioannis Tzetzae historiae*, Naples: Libreria Scientifica Editrice, 1968.

Zosimus = Paschoud, F., *Zosime. Histoire nouvelle*, vol. 1-3.2, Paris: Les Belles Lettres, (1979-1989)

Slavonic

NS = Новая скрижаль или дополнение къ преждеизданной скрижали съ таинственными объяснениями о церкви, Sankt-Petersburg, 1838.

Syriac

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Electronic and Online Resources

Many of the primary sources, both in original and in translation, quoted throughout the thesis are available online.

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<http://www.vostlit.info/> - Provides Russian translations of many medieval Armenian, Georgian and other eastern or western sources.

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