

Hayrapet Margaryan



Collection of Articles

Pages from H. Margaryan's Scholarly Legacy

The complete panorama of modern Armenian Studies would be incomplete without the name of Doctor of Historical Sciences, Professor Hayrapet Margaryan, one of today's recognized classical Armenologists and Kartvelologists, and an exceptional benefactor in the fields of Source Studies and Epigraphy. His scholarly contribution and legacy are a lasting investment in modern Armenian and Georgian historiography.

Professor Hayrapet Margaryan's scholarly research marked a new stage in the fields of Armenian Studies and, particularly, Kartvelian Studies (Georgian Studies) in our time. His scientific investigations are characterized by the skillful coupling of the traditions of classical Armenian Studies and Kartvelian Studies with modern historiographical innovations. Thanks to his research, numerous complex and problematic issues in medieval Armenian and Georgian historiography received their new interpretations, offering original, "Margaryan-esque," unequivocally reasoned, and evidential solutions.

The encyclopedic knowledge of Doctor of Historical Sciences, Professor H. Margaryan, and his unique ability to analyze material with profound insight, allowed the experienced scholar to meticulously unearth the voluminous medieval archaeological, epigraphic, and source-study material of Armenia and Georgia. Based on the scholarly critical analysis of this material, H. Margaryan not only outlined new

perspectives for the development of Armenian-Georgian political past relations and presenting them in a new light, but also made an undeniable contribution to the study of the literature and epigraphy, national identity, ecclesiastical, and social relations of medieval Armenia and Georgia. He succeeded in revealing their invisible layers, comparing the complementary, and often contradictory, facts and testimonies from various sources, making fundamental and valuable generalizations.

H. Margaryan's scientific research is summarized in his two voluminous works and over 200 scholarly articles. These are profound, interconnected studies with an internal content and logical structure, which highlight Armenian-Georgian relations in the 11th-13th centuries and the history of Armenian princely houses in the context of the realities unfolding in the Near East during the 12th-14th centuries. In 1979, the renowned scholar defended his dissertation on the topic, "Northern Armenia and Georgia in the 1120s-1170s," which was published as a monograph in 1980. In 1996, H. Margaryan defended his doctoral dissertation on the topic, "Military-Political Shifts in the Near East and the Armenian Feudal Nobility (12th Century – First Half of 14th Century)," which, fortunately, was published posthumously through the efforts of the Institute of Oriental Studies of the National Academy of Sciences. It is worth noting that much of the material included in this

work had been published in local and foreign scientific press over the years, serving as a basis for numerous scholarly innovations.

This collection, presented to the scholarly and general readership, includes four of the gifted scholar's articles in translation: "The Tradition of the Zakarians' Origin in Medieval Armenian Historiography" (Historical-Philological Journal 1992, 2-3, pp. 139-152), "The Origin of the Zakarians" (Historical-Philological Journal, 1994, 1-2, pp. 156-175), "The 'Tiezerakal' (World-Ruler) Title of the Bagratid Kings" (Issues of Armenian History, Collection of Scientific Articles, No. 6, Yerevan 2005, pp. 98-110), and "The Caucasian Cultural World and the Mongols: On the Issue of Interrelations between Sedentary and Nomadic Civilizations" (Polyhistory), 2010, 3-4, pp. 627-638).

The selection of the aforementioned articles is not accidental. The fundamental issues discussed in these articles are crucial not only from the perspective of revealing various key problems in the history of the Armenian Middle Ages but also have contemporary resonance for the analysis and interpretation of numerous scientific-theoretical and political issues.

The first two of these are dedicated to the problem of the origin of the Zakarians, the most notable princely house operating in North-Eastern Armenia during the 13th-14th centuries. The high scholarly value of these, as well as all the aforementioned articles, is characterized by

the correlation and verification of diverse source-study materials and the combination of concepts from the preceding historiographical school, typical of H. Margaryan's research.

In the first article, "The Tradition of the Zakarians' Origin in Medieval Armenian Historiography," H. Margaryan examined the fundamental issue against the backdrop of the unique cult of archaism prevailing in medieval Armenian historiography. In this connection, H. Margaryan points out four versions present in the primary sources, indicating the first two in Armenian and Arabic sources, and the next two in Armenian and Georgian sources.

Bringing together the viewpoints on the origin of the Zakarian princely house, H. Margaryan singles out two chronological periods in medieval historiography: represented by the works of Kirakos Gandzaketsi and Vardan Areveltsi in the 1260s, and the author of Zacharia Sarkavag's "History of the City of Ani" in the 1680s-1690s.

Having a deep command of medieval source material, H. Margaryan notes in the article that: "The time has come to renounce the illusion of infallibility of the Armenian historians of the 13th century on the question of the Zakarians' origin and to undertake a structural analysis of the traditions they transmitted."

Undertaking the analysis of the traditions, H. Margaryan noted that one of the important features of the Armenian worldview played a certain role in these legendary narratives. "The issue is that, according to

the concept of Armenians and Indo-Europeans in general, the ancient contradiction between the North, 'us,' and the South, 'them,' exists, and the North is considered the cradle of Armenians," writes the author.

The shift towards the North is repeatedly depicted in various episodes of M. Khorenatsi's History and in Sasna Tsrer (Daredevils of Sasun). Hayrapet Margaryan rightly records that Armenian historians abstracted from the legal realities of the Zakarians' origin and simply created the pre-history of this princely house, remaining fully faithful to the spirit and even the pathos of M. Khorenatsi's History.

The article "The Origin of the Zakarians" examines different viewpoints and interpretations of the Zakarians' genealogy, which are sometimes not only far from reality but were also conditioned by political expediency.

As H. Margaryan concludes: "The first propositions of a glorious origin for the dynasty could only emerge in the last decade of the 12th century and the beginning of the 13th century, when the sons of Sargis Mets (the Great) had gained a high position in the Georgian court."

The series of the renowned scholar's articles is continued by "The 'World-Ruler' Title of the Bagratid Kings." Armenian historiography, as Hayrapet Margaryan notes, addressed the question of the king bearing the "World-Ruler" title with considerable delay.

Through the comparison of sources and profound research, H. Margaryan arrived at the undeniable conclusion that the "World-Ruler"

title appeared in the Bagratid list of titles in the early years of the second decade of the reign of that royal house's second monarch, Smbat I, and maintained its honorary place for more than a century. This title was considered so traditional for the Bagratids that at the beginning of the 13th century, the Zakarians, who for some time declared themselves successors to the Bagratids, also included it in their title sequence.

In H. Margaryan's scholarly legacy, his article "The Caucasian Cultural World and the Mongols" stands out for its significance, new generalizations, and summaries. Chronologically, this article covers the complex, pivotal historical phase in the historical development of the region's peoples, which had fundamental and mostly disastrous consequences for the lives of all indigenous peoples of the Transcaucasia.

In H. Margaryan's scholarly research, there is an evident balanced, restrained, and impartial assessment of realities, free from manifestations of national boastfulness, consistent adherence to scholarly ethics, and a distinctly objective, fact-based, and evidential approach.

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THE CAUCASIAN CULTURAL WORLD AND THE MONGOLS

On the Issue of Interrelations Between Sedentary and Nomadic Civilizations

One of the most characteristic aspects of the modern Caucasus is the region's pronounced interconnected nature. Located between Asia and Europe, the Caucasus is a transitional region where diverse state and political traditions, social relations, economic systems, ethnic groups, and religions have constantly interacted and influenced one another. Therefore, differences and diversity are most noticeable in the region.

Researchers have also often noted the presence of historical common mentalities, psychological perceptions, and elements of everyday culture among the peoples and countries of the Caucasus. Various hypotheses have been proposed to characterize this.

In Caucasian studies, it was academician Nicholas Marr who first proposed to call these commonalities and similarities by the collective name "Caucasian cultural world." The renowned scholar primarily had in mind the early medieval era when Armenia, Georgia, and Caucasian Albania jointly confronted the pressure of powerful adversaries—the Roman Empire and Sasanian Persia—to preserve their unique identity¹.

¹ MARR, N. Y., *The Caucasian Cultural World and Armenia*, Yerevan, 1995, pp. 15-103, MURADYAN P., *The Caucasian Cultural World and Armenia*, "Historical-Philological Journal", 1996, 1-2, pp. 117-135.

The arrival of the Arabs in the region, which laid the foundation for the spread of Islam and made the Caucasian mosaic even more diverse, nevertheless did not fundamentally change the unified development of the Christian peoples of the South Caucasus. The revival of statehood in Armenia and Georgia, led by the two branches of the Bagratid dynasty, also marked a return to times of coexistence and close cooperation.

New phenomena began in the Caucasian cultural world in the 11th century². More than a millennium and a half later, the region was again subjected to a new mass invasion of nomads. It is no coincidence that the Armenians and Georgians, with a memory of ancient times, called them "Scythians" and only later "the nation of Seljuk Turks."³ The local authors, caught by surprise, described with astonishment the tactics, as well as the appearance and economic management of the nomads.

However, from the reality of the following centuries, it became clear that the influx of nomads into the region not only did not stop but gradually intensified. It continued at least until the end of the 15th century, with newer regions of Central Asia gradually becoming involved in the westward movement. Iran, which for centuries had been stopping the movement of nomads from Central Asia to the Caucasus and Asia Minor, had become so weakened after the Arab conquest that it could only later act as a buffer, and that only in the case of the Seljuk

² MURADYAN, P. M., *New Developments in the "Caucasian Cultural World" in the 11th-13th Centuries*, "The Caucasus and Byzantium", vol. 4, Yerevan, 1984, pp. 142-158. (in Armenian)

³ MKHITAR ANETSI, *Book of Worldly Events*, edited by H. Margaryan, Yerevan, 1983, p. 104. (in Armenian)

Turks. Therefore, the Caucasian cultural world could not recover from the catastrophes it suffered, and the civilizational potential of the Caucasian peoples gradually decreased. Only the unification and strengthening of Iran at the beginning of the 16th century put an end to the westward movement of the nomads.

A quick analysis of the ethnic composition, and the political, social, economic, and cultural development of the nomadic groups reveals that each new invasion involved new tribes from the deeper regions of Central Asia, which had previously been completely isolated from any interaction with sedentary agricultural civilizations. At the same time, the frequency of nomadic invasions increased, depriving the local populations of the opportunity to recover. Consequently, the assimilation of the newcomers into the Caucasian cultural world faced insurmountable obstacles. As a result, the confrontation between the sedentary agricultural civilization and the nomadic masses intensified, leaving its mark on the future development of the Caucasian cultural world.

The appearance of the Mongols dramatically worsened the geopolitical situation in the Caucasus. It became a common phenomenon for new groups of both Mongols and Turkic-speaking nomads to penetrate and settle in the Caucasus, further strengthening the political positions of the Seljuk Turks and their related tribes. These new waves of nomads also dealt devastating blows to the economy. The seasonal

destructive movements of their herds brought the leading sectors of the local economy, especially agriculture and viticulture, to the brink of ruin. The most important characteristic feature of the region's geopolitical situation became the fact that the Caucasian cultural world was forced to confront the pressure of empires created by nomadic peoples. These were young, ephemeral states that were created with lightning speed as a result of the turbulent movements and invasions of numerous and diverse nomadic masses. They disintegrated and disappeared with the same force with which they had been formed. The positions of the central authorities in these states were precarious and largely dependent on the personal qualities and charisma of the leader. For example, the Mongol state—the Ilkhanate—which encompassed the South Caucasus, Iran, and adjacent vast regions, was internally weak because the Ilkhan was forced to tolerate the autonomy of various nomadic tribes. As a result, the Ilkhanate collapsed in the mid-14th century, due in large part to internal political turmoil and dynastic struggles. A greater danger for the Caucasian cultural world was not the unified nomadic empires, which to a limited extent contributed to the establishment of “peace and prosperity” in vast territories, but rather the collapse of these newly formed empires and the subsequent political chaos.

Therefore, the more than century-long era of Mongol political dominance must be divided into several stages, which sometimes

differed significantly in terms of the relationship between the newcomers and the local population. The years following the main Mongol campaign, particularly 1236–1244, were tragic for the fate of the sedentary Caucasian civilization. During this decade, plunder and looting became widespread, flourishing cities were destroyed, and countless cultural treasures were irrevocably lost.

For most of the conquered peoples, including the Armenians and Georgians, an even heavier disaster was the establishment of the Mongol yoke itself and the prolonged existence of a grueling system of exploitation. However, the Mongols did not immediately establish their harsh rule over the newly conquered territories. Hindering factors included ongoing wars and the state apparatus—the administrative and tax bureaucracy—which was still in its formative stage. Thus, the first decade of the Mongol invasions was followed by relatively milder years, when the oppression of the conquered countries had not yet become so comprehensive as to irrevocably ruin the economy of the occupied territories and deepen the crisis of the sedentary Caucasian civilization. After the arrival of the Mongols, there were no revolutionary changes in northeastern Armenia during the initial period. The situation of the feudal lords in northeastern Armenia did not change drastically during the first decades of Mongol rule, because, unlike in southern Armenia, the collection of taxes was concentrated in the hands of local princes⁴. In

northeastern Armenia, construction work even continued, and economic activity was quite high.

For the Christian states of the South Caucasus, the most favorable period was the brief time from the second half of the 1240s to the 1250s. The terrible devastation of the Mongol conquests had ended, and the Mongols had now embarked on conquering primarily Muslim countries. During this period, the military and political cooperation imposed by the newcomers on the Armenians and Georgians deepened, which can be considered a rare example of interaction between nomadic and sedentary civilizations. The Mongol policy of tolerating the former rulers of the conquered lands and using them for their own purposes was a stark contrast to the approach adopted by previous nomadic conquerors, the Seljuk Turks, which ruled out even partial preservation of influence for the local rulers. Furthermore, until the adoption of Islam during the reign of Ghazan Khan (1295–1304), the Mongol elite showed a sympathetic attitude towards their Christian subjects, while their position towards Muslims was often one of intolerance⁵. It is known that Christian clergy held high positions at the courts of various Mongol rulers, and Armenians were particularly notable in this regard. They were active in the Mongol capital, Karakorum, as well as at the courts of Golden Horde rulers Batu Khan (1227–1253) and his son Sartaq (1255–1256)⁶. Of course, the preparatory work of diplomats, princes, and clergy was only

⁴ HOVHANNISYAN, A., *Episodes from the History of Armenian Liberation Thought*, Book 1, Yerevan, 1957, p. 228. (in Armenian)

⁵ BAUSANI, A., "Religion under the Mongols" in *The Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. 5. Cambridge, 1968, p. 538.

⁶ KHACHIKYAN, L., "The Armenian Principdom of Artaz and the School of Tsortsor," *The Bulletin of Matenadaran*, No. 11, Yerevan, 1973, pp. 126–130. (in Armenian)

one side of the coin. All these efforts could have been in vain if they had not fit into the military-political plans of the Mongol conquerors. While it may seem an exaggeration, it is probably not unfounded to suggest that among all their subject peoples, the Mongols adopted a more benevolent position towards the Armenians⁷. Especially during the initial phase of Mongol rule, the long-term goals of the conquerors sometimes created opportunities for Armenian-Mongol cooperation, and in the case of Cilician Armenia, for an alliance as well.

The most prominent position in the Mongol milieu belonged to the military-nomadic aristocracy. Therefore, the only way for the elites of the subject peoples to rise was through successful military service. Armenian and Georgian princes first participated in Mongol campaigns in 1242–1243, when the Seljuk Sultanate of Rum was dealt a devastating blow under the command of Baiju Noyan. The next phase of Mongol conquests, which began in 1256 with the arrival of Ilkhan Hulagu (1256–1265) in Iran and the South Caucasus, was also carried out with the participation of Armenian and Georgian military detachments. The Armenian prince Sadun II Artsruni gained such fame in the battles for Aleppo that Rashid al-Din specifically mentioned it⁸. The military service of Armenian princes in the Ilkhanid army had become a regular occurrence, and contemporaries, when describing the Armenian princes they favored, emphasized the size of their armies and their military

prowess⁹. It was these qualities that, in the new circumstances, allowed them to earn the favor of the Mongol conquerors. The military aristocracy that had seized power in the Ilkhanate, which was hostile to a sedentary lifestyle and, unlike in the Seljuk period, had completely severed ties with the past,¹⁰ naturally supported elements that were kindred to them in terms of social belonging and role.

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With the intensification of the Mongol tax yoke and the ruthless exploitation of the population, the true clash between nomadic and agricultural civilizations began. By the 1260s and 1270s, many local feudal lords were forced to sell their hereditary estates, and the economic crisis in the region deepened. In the 1280s and 1290s, the Ilkhanate suffered notable military failures, and signs of its impending decline appeared. The turn of the 13th to the 14th century was a fateful moment in the history of the Ilkhanate. Shortly after the ten-year reign of Ghazan Khan, and following the failure of attempts to stabilize the external and internal situation, the Ilkhanate began its steep decline, which continued until the middle of the 14th century. In this new, final stage of the Ilkhanate's history, while the rise of transit trade continued for some time, the conflict between the main body of the local population of the South Caucasus and the conquerors reached its climax.

⁷ CAHEN, C., *Pre-Ottoman Turkey*, London, 1968, p. 326. The author's assertion that the Armenians "consciously became agents of the Mongols from the very beginning" has no basis in fact.

⁸ RASHID AL-DIN, *Jami' al-tawarikh (Compendium of Chronicles)*, vol. 3, Moscow-Leningrad, 1946, pp. 49-50.

⁹ KHACHIKYAN, L., *Colophons of Armenian Manuscripts of the 14th Century*, Yerevan, 1950, p. 65. (in Armenian)

¹⁰ LAMBTON, A., *Continuity and Change in Medieval Persia. Aspects of Administrative, Economic and Social History. 11th-14th Century*, London 1988, pp. 25-26.

During this rather long period of death throes, the endless battles between various contenders for the throne and the Ilkhanate's futile wars against the Golden Horde and the Mamluk Sultanate of Egypt had an extremely heavy impact on the vitality of the Caucasian cultural world. Most of the Armenian princely houses were forced to permanently leave the historical stage, and the Kingdom of Georgia, after a three-decade period of stabilization, effectively fragmented into so-called "provincial kingdoms."

Let us also look at the role played by social, economic, and cultural factors in the interaction between the two civilizations. After the arrival of the Mongols, significant changes also occurred in the system of social relations. The main reason was that land, which had been considered the principal wealth in previous centuries, had lost its former value. In this new, "bitter time," the saying "the homeland was cheap, and gold was expensive" became widespread¹¹. Consequently, large merchants who played a significant role in international trade and also engaged in tax farming and usury greatly strengthened their positions in the region's

traditional social structure. In particular, powerful merchant-usurer dynasties acquired vast estates and even established marital ties with influential princely houses, an unprecedented phenomenon. The prominent Armenian merchant, Shadun, played such a remarkable role in international transit trade that he even gained a political position. During the second Armenian-Georgian rebellion against the Mongols from 1259 to 1261, the Mongols entrusted Shadun with the administration of Tiflis, as well as the entire Kingdom of Georgia. Because the Mongols kept its ruler, King David Ulu, under strict control even after the suppression of the rebellion until 1265, Shadun was the head of the civil administration of the province of Gurjistan—Eastern Georgia and Northeastern Armenia—from 1259 to 1265¹².

It was expected that the nomadic and sedentary civilizations would enter into close interaction in the economic sphere, since for the first time in medieval history, vast regions spanning from the Pacific Ocean to the Mediterranean Sea and Europe were encompassed within the borders of a single state. Indeed, as a result of the so-called "Mongol globalization," the role of Armenian merchants increased dramatically. The geographical scope of their activities expanded to an unprecedented scale, stretching from Central Asia and Volga Bulgaria to Crimea and European countries. It should be noted, however, that the Armenian merchant-usurer and even the aristocratic noble classes entered into

¹¹ AVAGYAN, S., JANPOLADYAN, H., *Corpus of Armenian Lapidary Inscriptions*, part 6, Yerevan, 1977, p. 71. (in Armenian) In an inscription from 1283, Jar, the son of Umek, states that his father had once purchased "Getik for 400 red ducats," while he himself had acquired "Hovs with all its boundaries... for 4,000 red ducats." According to H. Manandyan's observation, the inscription refers to Italian gold ducats (see MANANDYAN, H., *A Critical History of the Armenian People*, "Works," vol. 3, Yerevan, 1977, p. 277, (in Armenian)), while it is well-known that the first gold ducats were minted in Venice only in 1284. As S. Avagyan has shown, the purchase and sale of Getik took place in 1242–1250 (see AVAGYAN, S., "A Newly Discovered Lapidary Inscription about the Umekyan Family," *Epigraphic Investigations*, Yerevan, 1986, p. 107). Therefore, the mention of Italian ducats in the 1283 inscription of Nor Getik is ruled out. It is evident that Jar meant the gold coin minted by Emperor Constantine X Doukas (1059–1067), the Byzantine ducat, which is mentioned as early as in Grigor Pahlavuni's famous "Typikon" (see SHANIDZE, A., *The Georgian Monastery in Bulgaria and Its Typikon*, Tbilisi, 1971, p. 334). The devaluation of land had already begun in the 1250s. The Georgian equivalent of the phrase "the homeland was cheap, and gold was expensive"—"gold was expensive, and the village was cheap"—is found in a Georgian document from 1250. See *Sketches of Georgian History*, vol. 3, Tbilisi, 1979, p. 588 (in Georgian).

¹² MARGARYAN, H. G., "On the Personality and Activities of 'A Certain Shadun'," *The Caucasus and Byzantium*, vol. 3, Yerevan, 1982, pp. 64–72. (in Armenian)

close contact and interaction not with the Mongol military-nomadic elite, but with Uyghur and Persian merchants and high-ranking officials¹³. In these new circumstances, multilingualism emerged in the South Caucasus, with the inclusion of languages that were absolutely new to the region. The historian Stepanos Orbelian's uncle, Smbat, was a true polyglot, fluent in Armenian, Georgian, Persian, Uyghur, and Mongolian¹⁴. Moreover, while knowledge of Mongolian was necessary for maintaining relations with military commanders, it was impossible to protect the interests of the Orbelian princely house in legal disputes without Persian and Uyghur. A brilliant command of languages and being a good wrestler (wrestling was a favorite sport of the Mongols) also played a decisive role in the rise of the Armenian prince Sadun Mahkanaberdtisi, making him the de facto ruler of the province of Gurjistan¹⁵. It is understandable that the learning of different languages would be of greater interest to merchants in particular. It is no coincidence that Sarkis, the son of the Armenian merchant Aslan, left a quadrilingual (tetralingua) inscription in the David Gareja Monastery in

¹³ The following facts are characteristic of this new trend. The powerful ruler of Artsakh, Hasan-Jalal, married his daughter to the son of the leader of the main Mongol campaign, Chormaghyan Noyan (KIRAKOS GANDZAKETSI, *History of the Armenians*, edited by MELIK-OHANJANYAN, Yerevan, 1961, p. 391) and received his paternal domains back from the Mongols "with an addition" (ibid., p. 269). However, his conflict with the chief Mongol tax collector, Arghun, in 1261, had a tragic outcome for Hasan-Jalal. Kirakos Gandzaketsi emphasizes that Arghun was incited against Hasan-Jalal by the "Tajik believers," that is, the Persian officials serving Arghun. Therefore, the Zakarian princess Khoshak hastened to marry the head of the entire Mongol officialdom, the Persian Sahib-Divan Shams ad-Din Juwayni (see MARGARYAN, H., "Khoshak-Khatun: An Armenian Princess in Iran," in *Iran & Caucasus*, vol. III-IV, Tehran 1999-2000, pp. 157-158, MARGARYAN, H., *History of Armenian-Iranian Relations in the 11th-14th Centuries* (Sahib Divan Shams ad-Din Juwayni and Armenia), "Oriental Studies Collection," vol. 5, Yerevan, 2004, pp. 111-125).

¹⁴ ORBELIAN, S., *History of the House of Sisakan*, (publ. EMIN, M.), Moscow, 1861, p. 297. (in Armenian)

¹⁵ MARGARYAN, H., "The Princely House of the Mahkanaberdtis (Sadunians) in the 12th-14th Centuries," "Haigazian Armenian Studies Journal", vol. 18, Beirut 1998, pp. 22-25. (in Armenian)

Georgia in 1352, written in Armenian, Georgian, Persian, and Uyghur¹⁶. During the Ilkhanate era, multifaceted ties, especially with the Persian milieu, became closer. In particular, eloquent facts have been preserved about the increase in interethnic marriages, the expansion of joint activities in trading companies, and the spread of Persian folklore in Armenian and Georgian circles.

Beyond the realm of transit trade, it is difficult to point to another area where the positive results of "Mongol globalization" were so clearly expressed. The destruction of commodity production and the decline of urban centers gradually took on threatening proportions. The situation was further complicated by the sharp internal political conflicts that began in the Ilkhanate in 1344 and the terrible plague epidemic, the "Black Death," that spread throughout the Ilkhanate in 1348, which drastically reduced the population. In the 14th and 15th centuries, the decline of the Caucasian cultural world was deepened by the interruption of urban life traditions, the negative influence of the nomadic economic system, and mass emigration of the population. Thus, extremely unfavorable political, economic, and demographic factors determined the victory of the nomadic society over the sedentary agricultural civilization.

"Polyhistory: Journal of Armenological, Philological, Literary Studies," 2010, Volume 176, Issue 3-4, pages 627-638:

¹⁶ MURADYAN, P. M., *Armenian Epigraphy of Georgia (Kartli and Kakheti)*, Yerevan, 1984, pp. 184-186. (in Armenian)

THE TRADITION OF THE ZAKARIDS' ORIGIN IN MEDIEVAL ARMENIAN HISTORIOGRAPHY

As is known, a unique veneration for antiquity was one of the characteristic features of the medieval worldview and intellectual outlook. In the public consciousness, the rights of princely dynasties were considered unconditionally legitimate only if they were sanctified by a tradition formed in previous centuries. In the 12th-13th centuries, when the composition of the princely dynasties representing the feudal aristocracy had fundamentally changed in Armenia, a need had once again arisen to justify the rights of the influential feudal families of the period, also in a genealogical sense. It is natural that when developing theories about the dynastic affiliation of these families, the authors of the 12th-13th centuries turned to the classical Armenian historiography of the 5th century, and, first and foremost, to the History of the Armenians by Movses Khorenatsi, the "historian of the nakharars."¹⁷

Regarding the origin of the Zakarids, the most prominent princely house operating in Northeastern Armenia in the 12th-14th centuries, four different versions have been preserved in primary sources. Two of these were developed directly by the Zakarid princes themselves, are reflected in Armenian and Arabic epigraphic monuments from the late 12th and early 13th centuries, and are the product of specific historical conditions and political programs. The other two are reflected in Georgian and

¹⁷ See H. Adontz. Armenia in the Age of Justinian., Yerevan, 1971, p. 427. (in Armenian)

Armenian historiography and bear the obvious influence of historiographical tradition. It is undoubted that each of these versions requires comprehensive analysis. Moreover, it is also obvious that historical examination must be preceded by a meticulous source-critical investigation, and, in turn, when analyzing the testimonies of the primary sources, it is necessary to take into account not only their degree of authenticity and originality but also the tangible influence of the preceding historiographical school.

In this article, we will only address the tradition that is presented in four monuments of Armenian historiography from the 13th-17th centuries and, despite certain reservations, is regarded as reliable in modern studies. We will begin by clarifying the issue of the interrelation of these four primary sources: Kirakos Gandzaketsi, History of the Armenians; Vardan Areveltsi, Universal History; Zakaria Sarkavag, Kondak; and the Anonymous Author (Minas Hamretsi), History of the City of Ani. Researchers have traditionally considered the sections dedicated to the Zakarid dynasty¹⁸ in the histories of the 13th-century authors Kirakos Gandzaketsi and Vardan Areveltsi as primary, though they have also consistently turned to the testimonies¹⁹ of the 17th-century historian Zakaria Sarkavag, recognizing their importance²⁰ as well. Since the

¹⁸ See Kirakos Gandzaketsi. History of Armenia. Edited by K. A. Melik-Ohanjanyan, Yerevan, 1961, pp. 162-163. Vardan Areveltsi. Universal History. Moscow, 1861, pp. 181-182. (in Armenian)

¹⁹ Zakaria Sarkavag, Patmagrutyun, vol. III, Vagharshapat, 1870, pp. 11-12. (in Armenian)

²⁰ See A. Shahnagaryants, "The Origin of the Zakarian (Erkaynabazuk) Dynasty, Their Migration to Dzoraget and Predecessors." - Shoghakath, Etchmiadzin, 1913, pp. 66-68. H. Manandyan, Works, vol. 9, Yerevan, 1977, pp. 132-134. (in Armenian)

latter directly points to his source, the History of Kirakos Gandzaketsi, it is noteworthy to consider the following remark by A. Hovhannisyan: the author from Kanaker also had a “fragment written before Zakaria” at hand, based on which he expanded his narrative and deviated from the text of the historian from Gandzak²¹. The bibliographical fragment pointed out by the researcher (Matenadaran named after Mashtots, manuscript No. 7584) is now the work History of the City of Ani, published in comparison with other manuscripts. This work contains sections on the Zakarids and the Vachutians and generally compiles various texts related to the history of Ani and its inhabitants. If the prominent Armenologist’s view were indeed justified, it could be considered that we have another old and reliable source on the origin of the Zakarids. However, tempting the proposed hypothesis may seem, we are forced to admit that it was formulated without proper textual analysis and is based on a simple chronological calculation. If Zakaria Sarkavag finished his History in 1699, then, naturally, the anonymous author of the History of the City of Ani²², copied in Constantinople in 1698, could not have used his work. Is this argument, however, undeniable? To answer the question, let us clarify the key dates.

First, about the year 1699. We should clarify that the section of Zakaria Sarkavag’s History concerning the Zakarids is part of the work

²¹ See A. G. Hovhannisyan, Episodes from the History of Armenian Liberation Thought, vol. A, Yerevan, 1957, p. 153. (in Armenian)

²² See Mkhitar Anetsi, Book of World-Epic Spectacles, edited by H. G. Margaryan, Yerevan, 1983, Appendix, pp. 107-122. (in Armenian)

Kondak, which is considered the third book of the work but is essentially a self-contained text. Moreover, it has long been an established fact in Armenology that Zakaria Sarkavag first wrote the Kondak and only then the first two²³ books of the History. Although the exact date of the completion of the Kondak is not known, we know for certain that the author personally restored manuscript No. 1522 of the Matenadaran named after Mashtots in 1682 and placed the Kondak²⁴ within its composition. Therefore, the traditional dating of the Kondak (1687)²⁵ is not accurate, and the year 1682 is only the terminus post quem for that work. It is clear that the author could have finished it even earlier. Thus, it turns out that there is no chronological obstacle to rejecting A. Hovhannisyan’s hypothesis. This is all the more so when we consider who the author-compiler of the History of the City of Ani could have been. As Yu. Vardanyan has shown, the manuscript tradition of the History of the City of Ani begins in the late 17th century and is linked to Armenian circles in Constantinople. The stylistic method suggests that this work, perhaps, belongs to the pen of Minas Hamretsi²⁶. To further argue for this completely acceptable point of view, let us also mention the following facts. While serving in Jerusalem and Etchmiadzin from

²³ See M. Abeghyan, Works, vol. D, Yerevan, 1970, pp. 526-527. (in Armenian)

²⁴ See G. Ter-Mkrtychyan, Armenological Studies, vol. A, Yerevan, 1979, pp. 316-321. (in Armenian), Yu. H. Vardanyan, “About the Jarntir Manuscript of Hovhannavank.” - Historical-Philological Journal, 1986, No. 4, pp. 173-181. The original manuscript of the “Kondak,” which was overlooked by both the History’s publishers and the Russian translator, was studied and its valuable readings presented by K. Basmajian (see K. Basmajian, “Zakaria Sarkavag’s ‘Kondak’.” - Monument, Vienna, 1911, pp. 353-360). (in Armenian)

²⁵ See M. Abeghyan, cited work, p. 526. (in Armenian)

²⁶ See Yu. H. Vardanyan, “On the Author and Time of the ‘History of the City of Ani’ Excerpt.” - Historical-Philological Journal, 1985, No. 2, pp. 212-225. (in Armenian)

1666-1691, Minas Hamretsi had opportunities to visit Hovhannavank and could have been one of the first to become acquainted with the Kondak. For example, it is a known fact that he was in Hovhannavank²⁷ in April 1696. Thus, if not between 1682-1696, then at least during 1696-1698, Minas Hamretsi could have fully completed his stylistic work dedicated to Ani and its people and commissioned the copy of this work by Khachatur Stamboltsi.

Let us add one more notable fact. Besides copying²⁸ numerous historical works—many of which are extensively excerpted in the History of the City of Ani²⁹—he also commissioned Grigor Narekatsi's Book of Lamentations in 1691. This fact is particularly noteworthy, as some expressions from the Book of Lamentations³⁰ were used in the History of the City of Ani. And finally, the textual evidence also testifies that the author-compiler of the History of the City of Ani³¹ used Zakaria Sarkavag's work and not the other way around. For example, in some cases, the compiler omitted details³² that are essential from a logical point of view; it is particularly bizarre that he misinterpreted Zakaria

Sarkavag's testimony and proclaimed Shahanshah I Zakarid³³ to be the son of Kurd I Vachutian. By all accounts, it is clear that Zakaria Sarkavag, when writing the history of the Zakarids, did not have another old source at hand besides the History of Kirakos Gandzaketsi³⁴.

A general picture is outlined as follows. The problem of the Zakarids' origin was discussed twice, chronologically, in medieval Armenian historiography. The first time, in the 1260s, the issue was addressed first by Kirakos Gandzaketsi and then by Vardan Areveltsi. The second time, in the 1680s and 1690s, the mystery was attempted to be solved by Zakaria Sarkavag and the author-compiler of the History of the City of Ani. It is clear that we are dealing with two groups of primary sources, each of which, and each within the groups, requires a unique approach. As we shall see, each of the four authors was guided by his own principles of historical writing and sought to uncover the truth to the best of his ability.

From the perspective of the problem that concerns us, the "historical canvas" is also important. What is the historical context of the Zakarid dynasty's history in the works of the authors of the first

²⁷ See N. Akinyan, "Minas Amtetsi, Patriarch of Jerusalem of the Armenians." - Handes Amsorya, 1960, p. 328. K. Amatuni, "Minas Vrd. Amdetsi, Patriarch of Jerusalem (1630-November 24, 1704)." - Handes Amsorya, 1983, p. 39. (in Armenian)

²⁸ In 1687, Minas Hamretsi commissioned the manuscripts of the historical works of Movses Khorenatsi, Samvel Anetsi, and Michael the Syrian (see the reference in the previous footnote).

²⁹ See Mkhitar Anetsi, pp. 123-124.

³⁰ See N. Akinyan, cited work, pp. 325-326, K. Amatuni, cited work, p. 49.

³¹ See Mkhitar Anetsi, p. 124, note 9.

³² When describing the supposed migration of the Zakarians, the excerpt's author omitted the phrase "comes softly and enters the borders of Armenia." This resulted in the text implying that the Zakarians, after leaving Babylon, went directly from Persia to Georgia.

³³ Zakaria Sarkavag's clear account, "Prince Vache died and was buried in the church... his place was taken by his son Kurt by the command of Shahanshah" (see Zakaria Sarkavag, pp. 13-14), was rendered by the excerpt's author as follows: "Vache died and was buried in the church... and the son of K'urt is called Shahanshah" (Mkhitar Anetsi, p. 120). By the way, while following Zakaria Sarkavag's text almost entirely, the author of the excerpt took the phrase "Babylonian fool" from the History of Kirakos Gandzaketsi, with whom his acquaintance is evident from other parts of the excerpt (see Mkhitar Anetsi, p. 123, note 4, p. 124, note 12).

³⁴ A. Hovhannisyan's unjustified hypothesis was in fact accepted (the expected reference is missing) and developed by A. I. Shahnazaryan, who considered the author of the "History of the City of Ani" excerpt to be an Anonymous author of the 13th century and even an older contemporary of Kirakos Gandzaketsi and Vardan Areveltsi (see A. I. Shahnazaryan, The Principality of the Vahramyans, Yerevan, 1990, p. 21, note 4, p. 39). (in Armenian)

group, and what place does the tradition of the dynasty's origin occupy in this overall structure?

The historians begin their account of the Zakarid history with a brief introduction. Emphasizing the unprecedented rise of the brothers Zakare and Ivane during the reign of Queen Tamar, they immediately provide the family tree of the Elder (First) Zakarids. In these accounts, only minor differences are observed. The most significant difference is the following: while Kirakos Gandzaketsi is content with mentioning the representative of the third generation of the Zakarids (starting the count from the brothers Zakare and Ivane), Vardan Areveltsi takes the lineage down to the fourth generation.

The next part, which describes the origin of the subsequent dynasty, is, from our point of view, the pivotal section. It is here that the first and last major discrepancy appears in the otherwise parallel narratives of the two works. Vardan Areveltsi's narrative unexpectedly becomes more detailed, and the historian develops a theory of independent significance.

The diversity of the historical perspectives of the authors of the first group is also clearly expressed in their presentation of the most glorious chapter in the dynasty's history: the activities of the brothers Zakare and Ivane. Kirakos Gandzaketsi provides more comprehensive and rich information about the liberation struggle led by the brothers, their constructive and reformist activities, and their ecclesiastical and

confessional policies³⁵. At the same time, however, Vardan Areveltsi's History in some cases contains unequivocally notable testimonies and additional details³⁶.

Confirming the diversity of the historical perspectives of the first group of historians, let us return to the sections that shed light on the dynasty's origin. As mentioned, the corresponding episode in Vardan Areveltsi's work, unlike Kirakos Gandzaketsi's documentary narrative, is endowed with internal harmony and completeness. It unfolds according to a classic plot and successively clarifies the following questions: who were the Zakarids? Where did they live before? What was the reason for their relocation? What was the direction of their movement? Where did they find refuge? What kind of confessional shift did they adopt? How did the gradual rise of the newcomers proceed?

The detailed clarification of these issues is beneficial in the sense that, besides Vardan Areveltsi, Kirakos Gandzaketsi and the late 17th-century authors of the works constituting the second group of primary sources have also essentially answered the questions raised. This quartet

³⁵ In Kirakos Gandzaketsi's History, the description of the struggle against the Ayyubids of Khlat is incomparably more extensive (pp. 164-166). Vardan Areveltsi records all this in one sentence (pp. 181-182). If the first historian presents the councils of Lore and Ani in a separate chapter (pp. 166-178), the second one refers to these events with a single expression, briefly outlining Zakare's demands (p. 182). Kirakos Gandzaketsi also tells in detail about the marriages of Ivane's daughter Tamta and the Ayyubids of Khlat's somewhat protective policy towards Christians (pp. 165-166), while Vardan Areveltsi is satisfied with half a sentence, and moreover, he incorrectly mentions the name of Tamta's first husband (p. 182).

³⁶ Thus, Vardan Areveltsi provides his brief account of the liberation struggle led by the Zakarians with clear and mostly accurate chronological indications (p. 181). As for Kirakos Gandzaketsi, he also reports on the battles led by Zakare and Ivane, in more detail, but chronological indications are completely absent from that episode of his History. Kirakos Gandzaketsi also dedicated a separate chapter to the death of Amirspasalar Zakare (pp. 185-187), but on this matter as well, Vardan Areveltsi makes two important additions: he reports the year of the general's death and then notes the age of Shahanshah I at that time (p. 183).

of historians essentially set a research task for themselves: to delve into the origins of the Zakarids and found themselves in the position of Movses Khorenatsi. Like the Father of History, they also built their conclusions on the basis of fragmented references³⁷. It is enough to say that not one of the historians was able to clarify the accurate family tree of the Zakarids. It has long been known that from the perspective of reconstructing the Zakarid genealogy, the Armenian epigraphic inscriptions and the work of the first historian of Queen Tamar are more reliable primary sources than even the histories of Kirakos Gandzaketsi and Vardan Areveltsi³⁸. Therefore, it is time to abandon the illusion of the infallibility of the 13th-century Armenian historians on the issue of the Zakarids' origin and undertake a structural analysis of the traditions they reported.

As one might expect, the historians who wrote centuries after Movses Khorenatsi followed the path paved by the Father of History and directly revitalized Khorenatsi's ready-made archetypes. The Father of History, in his time, created these archetypes on the basis of the generalization and theorization of popular culture; therefore, in medieval reality, they were not just historical facts.

As one might expect, the historians who wrote centuries after Movses Khorenatsi followed the path paved by the Father of History and directly revitalized the ready-made Khorenatsian archetypes. The Father

³⁷ N. Adontz. Cited Work, p. 489. (in Armenian)

³⁸ See A. Shahnazaryan, Cited Work, pp. 76-77. A. I. Shahnazaryan, "On the Question of the Zakarian Family Tree." - Historical-Philological Journal, 1985, No. 3, pp. 203-209. (in Armenian)

of History, in his time, created these archetypes on the basis of the generalization and theorization of popular culture; therefore, in medieval reality, they were not viewed as dry and sterile literary templates but, due to a common worldview, were always considered in wide popular circles as eternally functioning systems. Thus, a remarkable unity of views is observed among the historians when answering the questions posed by Vardan Areveltsi on the one hand, and in the popular epic Daredevils of Sassoun on the other.

So, who exactly were the ancestors of the Zakarids? What was their "pre-homeland," and what prompted them to leave their traditional places of residence? In revealing the identity of the Zakarids' ancestors, researchers have focused on the issue of the Zakarids' ethnic and confessional affiliation, ignoring a no less important question: what was their social standing in their "pre-homeland"? It is a common, and one might even say mandatory, feature for traditions about the origins of prominent dynasties to ascribe a high social standing to their ancestors (or heroes in the popular epic). Thus, in Movses Khorenatsi's History, such an origin is attributed to the Bagratids, Artsrunis, Ggunis, Mamikonians³⁹, and many other influential dynasties. It is entirely natural that Sanasar and Baghdar are considered princes in the Daredevils of Sassoun. Therefore, Zakaria Sarkavag, who was the first among researchers to be preoccupied with the question of the Zakarids'

³⁹ See Movses Khorenatsi, The History of Armenia, critical text and introduction by M. Abeghyan and S. Harutyunyan, additions by A. Sargsyan, Yerevan, 1991, pp. 68, 70-71, 221-223. (in Armenian)

ancestors' "whence and how they came to be," concluded without hesitation: "a certain Christian man, by the name of Zakaria, was appointed a prince from the tribe of the Medes."⁴⁰ Thus, the historian expresses himself more specifically about the Zakarids' origin than the authors who wrote more than four centuries before him. Nevertheless, it seems there are no fundamental disagreements between the two groups of primary sources (Zakaria Sarkavag's testimony is repeated by the author of the History of the City of Ani in the second group)⁴¹. The problem is that each of the historians sought to answer a completely logical second question: why did the ancestors of the Zakarids leave "foreign lands"? And in this case, too, we must note that they were guided by a common trope.

In the works of Movses Khorenatsi and his followers, as well as in the popular epic, prominent dynasties leave their homeland due to internal conflicts, primarily rebellions. Hayk takes the road from Babylon to Armenia after refusing to obey Bel—in other words, after rebelling. Sanasar and Baghdar leave after killing the Caliph of Baghdad. The ancestors of the Artsrunis, Gnunis, and Mamikonians are also rebels and even state criminals.

In light of all this, the phrases "hatsuatsyal" or "hatsuats eghyal" ("separated" or "cut off"), used by both historians to record the Zakarids' migration, acquire meaning. The meanings "migrated" and

⁴⁰ Zakaria Sarkavag, p. 11. (in Armenian)

⁴¹ See Mkhitar Anetsi, p. 119. (in Armenian)

"separated," which H. Manandyan⁴² gave to the identical expressions of these related authors, do not exhaust the full content of the verb and fail to encompass the most important thing: they do not explain the root cause of the phenomenon. While Kirakos Gandzaketsi's brief testimony offers no opportunity for any hypothesis on this matter, Vardan Areveltsi seems to express himself quite specifically. According to his account, the Zakarids were of a different faith and adopted Christianity in the kingdom of the Kyurikyans ("separated and went to the king of the Valley of the River, who is of the Bagratid clan; they believed in Christ and were honored")⁴³. Therefore, the root cause of the Zakarids' migration was political in nature⁴⁴.

What was the direction of the Zakarids' ancestors' migration? Researchers have so far given only one answer to this question: it has been confirmed that the Zakarids migrated from the south to the north. The surprising thing is that none of the historians from the first group mention the direction of the Zakarids' migration. So what is the basis for the truly remarkable unanimity of researchers on this matter?

⁴² See H. Manandyan, cited work, p. 133. (in Armenian)

⁴³ Only the researcher A. Shahnagaryants understands the phrase "they believed in Christ" to mean that the Zakarians, having already been Christians (Nestorians), only accepted the creed of the Armenian Church upon their arrival in Armenia (see A. Shahnagaryants, cited work, pp. 73-74). This opinion, however, is based on the completely unfounded hypothesis of the Zakarians' Chaldean origin (see H. Manandyan, cited work, p. 132) (in Armenian).

⁴⁴ Zakaria Sarkavag, and subsequently the author of the "History of the City of Ani," suggested that the motive for the migration was a religious conflict. According to their belief, Zakaria was a Christian, but the Medes were not, and therefore the progenitor of the Zakarians was subjected to unbearable pressure from his environment: "distressed by them, he could not live there." Thus, the historian did not take on the burden of proving the "Armenianness" of the Zakarians, as A. Hovhannisyan thinks (see A. Hovhannisyan, cited work, p. 152) (in Armenian), but instead tried to explain the events according to his own perceptions.

It may seem that this conviction arose only as a result of As. Shahnalzaryants' attributing a Chaldean origin to the Zakarids or K. Ter-Mkrtychyan's connecting them to the Bagratids of Southern Armenia.

At the same time, we believe that one of the important features of the Armenian worldview played a certain role. According to the worldview of Armenians, and Indo-Europeans in general, the north (us) and the south (them) form an ancient opposition, and the north is considered the cradle of the Armenians⁴⁵. It is the movement towards the north that is repeatedly depicted in various episodes⁴⁶ of Movses Khorenatsi's History and in the Daredevils of Sassoun epic.

You can have no doubt that both Kirakos Gandzaketsi and Vardan Areveltsi⁴⁷ also imagined the Zakarids' arrival in Armenia as a consequence of a movement from south to north. As for the second group of primary sources, the picture is clear enough. From the enumeration of the countries on the Zakarids' path (Babylon-Persia-Armenia-Georgia)⁴⁸, it is evident that this pair of authors also posited the dynasty's origin as being from the south.

The clarification of where the Zakarids' ancestors moved from—that is, their “pre-homeland”—is incomparably more complex. Of the

⁴⁵ See A. A. Stepanyan. *RaThe Development of Historical Thought in Ancient Armenia*. Yerevan, 1991, pp. 53-54. (in Armenian)

⁴⁶ See Movses Khorenatsi, pp. 33-41, 70, and so on. (in Armenian)

⁴⁷ This becomes obvious if we understand Kirakos Gandzaketsi's phrase “Babirakan (Babilakan) fool” to mean the “land of Babylon” (see below, pp. 149-150). In the case of Vardan Areveltsi, the following argument can be made: the historian, on two other occasions (regarding the Shaddadids and the Chorepiscopus of the Tsnars), explains the appearance of new dynasties by migration and considers their “ancestral homeland” to be countries located in the south (see Vardan Areveltsi, pp. 134-135). The fact that he remained faithful to his perceptions in the third case, concerning the Zakarians, is evident from the historian's views on the city of Babylon-Baghdad (see pp. 149-150).

⁴⁸ See Zaqaria Sarkavag, p. 11; Mkhitar Anetsi, p. 119. (in Armenian)

13th-century historians, Kirakos Gandzaketsi, after noting that the Zakarids were “cut off,” states that this happened “from the Kurds in the Babirakan gorge,” while Vardan Areveltsi is content with the description “from the Kurdish nation.”⁴⁹ The historians, therefore, attribute a foreign origin to the Zakarids, which, again, fits completely within the framework of Khorenatsi's and, more generally, medieval conceptions.

A significant fact is that the Father of History decisively rejects the hypothesis of the Bagratids' descent from Hayk and emphasizes the “foreign (Jewish)” origin of that dynasty⁵⁰. By viewing the Zakarids as descended “from the Kurds” or “from the Kurdish nation,” Movses Khorenatsi's followers put researchers in front of the necessity of clarifying the correct meaning of the ethnonym “Kurd.” The problem is that this ethnic name becomes frequent precisely in 13th-century Armenian historiography and presents certain difficulties in its interpretation.

Indeed, the history of the use of the ethnonym “Kurd” is noteworthy and calls for a separate examination. Without claiming to exhaust this issue, let us focus only on certain facts and realities. This name is unfamiliar to 5th-century Armenian historians, to the 7th-8th century authors Sebeos and Ghevond, and even to the 10th-11th century chroniclers Hovhannes Draskhanakerttsi and Asoghik, Tovma Artsruni, and Aristakes Lastivertsi. All this is despite the fact that the Kurdish

⁴⁹ See Kirakos Gandzaketsi, p. 162; Vardan Areveltsi, p. 181. (in Armenian)

⁵⁰ See Movses Khorenatsi, pp. 68-69. (in Armenian)

ethnic group, at least during and after the Arab period, was unconditionally familiar to Armenian authors. Therefore, the opinion has been expressed that to refer to the Kurds, Armenian historians, particularly Movses Khorenatsi, used the ethnonym “Mede” (mar)⁵¹.

The situation, however, began to change in the 12th-13th centuries, when the ethnonym “Kurd” started to penetrate into historiography that was conservative in its ethnic terminology. At the same time, the traditional name “Mede” still held its ground. The Armenian historian Mattheos Urhayetsi, though mentioning the ethnonym “Kurd” and, correspondingly, the toponym “Kurdistan,”⁵² also uses the name “Kurd” in a broad and inclusive sense. For example, when recounting the assassination of Sultan Alp Arslan, the historian adds: “Sultan Alp Arslan died by the hands of an inglorious and Kurdish man,”⁵³ thus giving the ethnic name a nuance of moral characterization⁵⁴. The inclusiveness of the ethnonym “Kurd” is also evident from the Canons of the 12th-century author David Alavkaordi. In a number of articles of this legal monument, “Kurd” appears as a necessary element of the “Kurd”- “Christian”⁵⁵ opposition, acquiring the additional meanings of “Muslim,” “foreigner,” and “alien.”⁵⁶

⁵¹ See V. Minorsky. *Studies in Caucasian History*. London, 1953, pp. 127-128. (in Armenian)

⁵² See Mattheos Urhayetsi, *Chronicle*, Vagharshapat, 1898, pp. 60, 91, 144. (in Armenian)

⁵³ See *ibid.*, p. 205.

⁵⁴ The semantic transition is accurately conveyed in the modern Armenian translation of the chronicle: “Sultan Abaslan died at the hands of a vile and Kurdish-mannered man” (see Mattheos Urhayetsi, “The Chronology”, translation, introduction, and notes by Hrach Bartikyan, Yerevan, 1973, p. 135). (in Armenian)

⁵⁵ See A. Abrahamyan, “The Canons of David Alavka Vordi.” - *Etchmiadzin*, 1952, No. 11-12, pp. 57, 66.

⁵⁶ For instance, Mkhitar Gosh incorporated the article concerning the punishment of thieves from David Alavka Vordi's Canons verbatim into his “Book of Judgments,” changing the phrase “whether a Kurd or an Armenian” to

Correspondingly, in some narratives of the Armenian popular epic, the name “Kurd” replaces the usually encountered equivalents “foreigner,” “pagan,” “Muslim,” “Arab,” and “Vachik” and is contrasted with the descriptions “Armenian,” “Christian,” and “cross-worshipper.”⁵⁷ Thus, in the 12th century, when the penetration of the Kurdish ethnic element into Armenia had intensified and the authority in certain territories belonged to Kurdish dynasties (Shaddadids, Ayyubids, etc.), the ethnonym “Kurd” was already being passed down in Armenian primary sources.

So, what was the picture in the next century, when historiographical tradition and the reality of the period clashed with new force? What kind of relationship was to be established between the old (Mede) and new (Kurd) names?

From an examination of the works of the 13th-century historians, and first and foremost Kirakos Gandzaketsi and Vardan Areveltsi, it becomes clear that the authors followed certain principles regarding the old and new ethnic nomenclature. When narrating events that took place before the 12th century, they used the ethnonym Mede, while subsequently, on the occasion of events of their own era, they turned to the name Kurd, which was more familiar to them⁵⁸. Thus, the

“whether a foreigner or a Christian” (see Mkhitar Gosh, *Book of Judgments*, edited by Kh. Torosyan, Yerevan, 1975, p. 128, cf. p. 583, note 134). (in Armenian)

⁵⁷ See Sasna Tsrer (*Daredevils of Sassoun*), Vol. A, Yerevan, 1936, pp. 252, 415, 608, 759-760, 1049-1050; Vol. B, part one, Yerevan, 1944, pp. 236-237. (in Armenian)

⁵⁸ Kirakos Gandzaketsi mentions the land of the Medes when recording the Arab conquests (see Kirakos Gandzaketsi, p. 59), but in connection with events of the 12th-13th centuries, he uses the ethnonym “Kurd” (see *ibid.*, pp. 150, 162, 376, 378). Vardan Areveltsi, whose work allocates a significantly large space to ancient history,

terminological confusion that became widespread in late medieval Armenian historiography was not at all characteristic of the 13th-century historians. For example, in the histories of Arakel Davrizhetsi and Zakaria Sarkavag, the ethnonyms Mede and Kurd, which are used extensively, appear as synonyms and are completely interchangeable⁵⁹.

The clarity observed in the use of ethnic terms does not, however, mean that 13th-century historians denied the identity of the Mede and Kurd terms or that they did not attribute to the Kurds those episodes of Median history reflected in early Armenian sources, particularly in the History of Movses Khorenatsi, who enjoyed unquestionable authority.

To prove this, it is sufficient to look at the account of a very important fact in the works of Vardan Areveltsi and Kirakos Gandzaketsi. From Armenian and Arab sources that corroborate each other, it is known that Salah ad-Din, who was a Kurd by nationality, came from a family that lived near Dvin⁶⁰. When recounting the story of this notable figure, Vardan Areveltsi is content with mentioning the place of residence of his ancestors: "His name was first Usuyt, son of Eyub, a man from Dvin, who, when he grew up, was called Salah ad-Din,"⁶¹ bypassing the issue of his ethnic affiliation. This fact is noteworthy, as he, surely having Kirakos Gandzaketsi's more detailed

repeatedly mentions the "Meds" (see Vardan Areveltsi, pp. 21-22, 40-41, 44-45), but only uses the ethnonym "Kurd" in connection with the Zakarians. (in Armenian)

⁵⁹ "The lineage of the Medes, which is Kurd," writes Zakaria Sarkavag, and in the following lines, he uses both terms interchangeably without distinction (see Zakaria Sarkavag, cited work, Vol. I, pp. 60-61). Cf. Arakel Davrizhetsi, *Book of Histories*, edited by L. A. Khanlaryan, Yerevan, 1990, pp. 63, 487. (in Armenian)

⁶⁰ See V. Minorsky. *Op. cit.*, pp. 107-129.

⁶¹ Vardan Areveltsi, pp. 171-172. (in Armenian)

account at hand, nevertheless found it necessary not to duplicate his fellow historian. Kirakos Gandzaketsi, who wrote earlier, not only writes about Salah ad-Din being "Kurd by nation" but also notes that he was descended "from Masyatsotn."⁶²

The difference between the geographical indications of the two historians is obvious. If Vardan Areveltsi had been consistent and also mentioned in which province the ancestors of Salah ad-Din lived, he would have certainly noted the province of Vostan, where Dvin was located⁶³. The emergence of the Masyatsotn-Vostan disagreement is impossible to understand without reconstructing the basis of the conclusion made by Kirakos Gandzaketsi. As we saw, he emphasizes Salah ad-Din's being a "Kurd," and therefore would have sought to clarify the initial province of his residence. If the historian was not aware that Salah ad-Din was from Dvin—which is by no means ruled out⁶⁴—then he was left to follow the Mede-Kurd identification and try to clarify where Salah ad-Din's ancestors were from based on historical information.

In that case, it turns out that the mention of "Masyatsotn" is by no means accidental. According to Movses Khorenatsi, after defeating King Azhdahak of the Medes, King Tigran settled the Medes in Masyatsotn:

⁶² See Kirakos Gandzaketsi, p. 251. (in Armenian)

⁶³ See S. Yeremyan, *Armenia According to the "The Geography"*, Yerevan, 1963, pp. 49, 74, 111. (in Armenian)

⁶⁴ The ethnic origin of Saladin, much less the location of his ancestors' settlement, was unknown to his Armenian contemporaries, even to such a prominent person as Nerses Lambronatsi. The latter calls him "Joseph the Ismaelian king, who were called Turkomans" (see *Colophons of Armenian Manuscripts, 5th-12th centuries*, edited by A. Matevosyan, Yerevan, 1988, p. 249), while another memorialist calls him "a certain Hakarean named Saladin" (see *ibid.*, p. 272). (in Armenian)

"And the many maidens from the lineage of Azhdahak, along with the youths and a multitude of captives, more than ten thousand, he settled on the eastern side of the great mountain up to the borders of Goghtn."⁶⁵ The Medes, "the descendants of Azhdahak, who possess all that is at the foot of Masis,"⁶⁶ also lived here during the reign of King Artashes.

Thus, the 13th-century author gave unquestioning faith to Movses Khorenatsi's History and, under the influence of historiographical tradition, even sinned against the truth by locating the place of residence of Salah ad-Din's ancestors in a different province. Therefore, in 13th-century Armenian historiography, attributing a "Kurdish" origin to any dynasty meant affirming the existence of that family's origins in ancient "Median" times. Moreover, such an attribution simultaneously "proved" the extremely high origin of that princely house. To be considered a "Mede" in the Armenian milieu meant being from the royal line of Azhdahak and, most importantly, being ordained into the "second kingdom" during the reign of King Vagharshak⁶⁷.

Considering the factual influence and weight of the Zakarids in the Georgian kingdom in the late 12th and early 13th centuries, it also becomes clear that the theory of "Median" origin had a political purpose. The impression is created that this theory was intended to substantiate the "historical foundations" of the well-known ambitions of the Zakarids. Therefore, the Armenian historians abstracted themselves from

the real facts of the Zakarids' origin and simply "sculpted" the prehistory of that princely house, remaining completely faithful to the spirit and even the letter of Movses Khorenatsi's History.

First and foremost, the presence of the hypothesis that the Zakarids were brought to Armenia "from the Babylonian gorge" in Kirakos Gandzaketsi's History⁶⁸ must also be explained by the influence of the Father of History.

The issue isn't just that certain figures appearing in Movses Khorenatsi's History depart for Armenia from that very city. More importantly, in the works of both Movses Khorenatsi and the historians who followed him, Babylon was considered the oldest capital of the "world" from primordial times.

"And the Hebrew writings consider the first building of Babylon to be of Nimrod, and they say that he was the first king among all... and the

⁶⁸ Most of the manuscripts of Kirakos Gandzaketsi's History contain the reading "Babirakan k'el" instead of "Babilakan k'el," which is, however, unintelligible. To explain it, some propose understanding the word "k'el" from the Kurdish word for "tribe, clan" and identify "Babirakan" with the Kurdish tribes "Ba-pir," "Babirakan," or "Bapir" (see H. Manandyan, cited work, p. 132; V. Minorsky, Op. Cit., p. 102). But, as we have seen, the Armenian historians were interested in the question of the Zakarians' ancestral homeland; the question of the tribal or clan affiliation of the family's ancestors did not occupy them. It is not excessive to note that looking for an indication of tribal origin in the historians' accounts is a clear exaggeration, as they do not even have a grasp of the Zakarian genealogy. In turn, the identification of "Babirakan" with any Kurdish tribe (researchers mention it in various ways, without explaining its place of residence, and it is not even clear if they are referring to the same tribe) represents a coincidental fit, and its existence in the distant 11th-12th centuries is an unsubstantiated assumption. Thus, the more probable variant remains the understanding of "Babirakan" or "Babilakan" as a toponym or simply in the sense of a regional indicator for "k'el" (see H. Adjarian, Dictionary of Armenian Roots, vol. 2, Yerevan, 1973, p. 362 (in Armenian)). In that case, the "Babilakan" reading present in two of the manuscripts gains a certain advantage over the more frequent "Babirakan." The first variant is not inferior to the second in terms of antiquity, since the form "Babilakan" is also attested by Zaqaria Sarkavag, who may have used a manuscript written earlier than the 16th century. By the way, the manuscripts that preserve the "Babilakan" form are also among the oldest of the extant manuscripts (17th century) that were copied not long after the 16th century (see Kirakos Gandzaketsi). Furthermore, and this is also of significant importance, the "Babilakan" reading is justified by the data from Vardan Areveltsi's History.

⁶⁵ Movses Khorenatsi, p. 83. (in Armenian)

⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 176.

⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 112.

beginning of the kingdom was in Babylon,” writes Stepanos Asoghik⁶⁹, the author of the first “universal” history among Armenians. Vardan Areveltsi fully agrees with him; when listing the descendants of Ham, son of Noah, he mentions Nimrod-Bel as the first king.⁷⁰

As one would expect, in medieval historiography, Babylon was considered a symbol of the most ancient capital, which is why Byzantium-Constantinople in the 10th century could be considered “the New Rome, the second Babylon.”⁷¹

In subsequent centuries, however, the name Babylon acquired an additional layer of meaning. When the first Abbasid caliphs built Baghdad, the new capital of the Caliphate, in the vicinity of that city, Babylon began to be mentally associated with Baghdad, the bastion of Islam. This makes it clear why Vardan Areveltsi notes that the ancestors of the Zakarids “believed in Christ.” According to his conception, the Zakarids’ ancestors had a high and ancient origin, but they were not Christians, and therefore felt the need to convert to Christianity.

That Vardan Areveltsi unfailingly envisioned the inhabitants as Muslims when speaking of Babylon-Baghdad is evident from another section of his History. While trying to explain the origin of the rulers of the Tzanar principedom, the historian proclaims their ancestors to be “certain Chaldean men”—that is, again, Babylonians—and considers their conversion to Christianity to have taken place in Gardman. Upon

⁶⁹ Stepanos Taronetsi Asoghik, *Universal History*, Saint Petersburg, 1885, p. 24. (in Armenian)

⁷⁰ Vardan Areveltsi, p. 23. (in Armenian)

⁷¹ See Colophons of Armenian Manuscripts, 5th-12th centuries, p. 58. (in Armenian)

hearing of their conversion, the author continues, “the amir of Baghdad greatly threatened [them],” so the newcomers moved to the “foot of the Caucasus” and “called the province Tzanark, for there they came to know [tzanetsan] their place of residence.”⁷²

The identification of Baghdad with Islam, which is found in historiography and was dictated by historical reality, is also characteristic of the Armenian popular worldview. It is enough to recall that in the *Daredevils of Sassoun*, it is the Caliph of Baghdad who appears as the polarized embodiment of foreign rule and foreign faith.

Based on the analysis of the hypotheses about the Zakarids’ origin expressed in medieval Armenian historiography, it can be confirmed that we are dealing with a refined and polished literary archetype. The Armenian historians of the 13th-17th centuries narrated the Zakarids’ ancient history based on their own conceptions and assumptions. The true history of the Zakarids’ ancestors was unknown to Kirakos Gandzaketsi, Vardan Areveltsi, and the authors who followed them. In such circumstances, Armenian historians resorted to the literary archetypes known from the early medieval period. This is why the authors of the 13th-17th centuries, when developing the theory of the Zakarids’ origin, were deeply influenced by the Father of History, Movses Khorenatsi.

⁷² See Vardan Areveltsi, p. 135.

Therefore, when discussing the social and ethnic origins of the dynasty, facts known from various sources and thus mutually verifiable remain a more reliable basis.

From the beginning of the 1160s, when mentions of the Zakarids become continuous in the sources, and up until the middle of the 1170s—that is, before they became the most influential dynasty in Armenia and Georgia—the family had an Armenian profile. While oriental personal names were a common phenomenon among many surrounding Armenian families, the Zakarids almost exclusively bore Armenian names or names that had long been perceived as such. They belonged unconditionally to the monophysite Armenian Church and were in marital alliances (at least in all known cases) with Armenian princely houses of Northern Armenia and Artsakh. During this phase of their history, as far as sources reveal, they had not yet shown any desire to seek an ancient and high origin.

Certain Georgian influences in the dynasty's ethno-confessional profile only begin to appear in the late 12th and early 13th centuries, during the time of the sons of Sargis the Great. This includes the Georgianization of personal names, marriages to Georgian princesses, the adoption of Chalcedonianism, and similar phenomena. This period is also a turning point in another sense: for the first time, certain signs of attributing an ancient and brilliant origin to the dynasty appear in epigraphic monuments.

As it seems, shifts in the understanding of the dynasty also took place during the 13th century. In the mid-1260s, the theory of the Zakarids' "ancient" and "foreign," as well as "high" origin, was finally developed—a theory that has been preserved in the pages of Armenian medieval historiography.

Historical-Philological Journal, 1992, No. 2-3, pp. 139-152.

THE ORIGIN OF THE ZAKARIDS*

* See the beginning in *Historical-Philological Journal*, 1992, N 2-3.

The second hypothesis on the origin of the Zakarids, that they are descended from the Bagratids, is reflected in a greater number of primary sources, but was enthusiastically promoted for a relatively short period and did not find a response in medieval Armenian and Georgian historiography.

When examining this theory, it is first necessary to clarify which of the Zakarids were called Bagratid, and then to find out which branch of the Bagratid dynasty the newly emerged rulers of Armenia sought kinship with. It is traditionally believed that Ivane Atabek and his sister Vaneni (Naneh)⁷³ called themselves Bagratid. Therefore, let us turn again to the primary sources and ascertain who among the Zakarids and when mentioned his or her kinship with the famous royal dynasty. Chronologically, perhaps the earliest and most well-known mention belongs to Princess Vaneni⁷⁴. In the opinion of the researcher As. Shahznazaryants, "Naneh considered herself to be from the Bagratid clan, probably with the thought that she was married to the Bagratid king

⁷³ See As. Shahznazaryants, *The Origin of the Zakarid (Erkaynabazuk) Dynasty, the Migration to Dzoraget and the Predecessors*. - "Shoghakath", Erevan, 1913, pp. 69-70. Sh. Meskhia, *The Domestic Situation and Official Structure in 12th-century Georgia*, Tbilisi, 1979, pp. 223-224 (in Georgian).

⁷⁴ K. Ghafadaryan, *The Monastery of Sanahin and its Inscriptions*, Yerevan, 1957, pp. 185-186; It must be confessed that the inscription is partially damaged and it is difficult to conclude without reservation that the words "[a]zgin Bagratuneats" refer specifically to Vaneni. (in Armenian)

Abas"⁷⁵. But was it enough to be married to a man to be considered a member of his clan? Marriage ties with the Kiurikians were not unusual for Armenian princely houses of the 12th century, but none of these dynasties began to call themselves Kiurikian or Bagratid. If the two-year marriage of Vaneni and Abas could not be considered an acceptable argument for classifying Naneh with the Bagratids, then even more so the single kinship link with the Kiurikians⁷⁶ could not serve as a starting point for proclaiming other Zakarids as Bagratid either⁷⁷.

The most noteworthy fact, however, is the following: besides Vaneni and Ivane, a royal origin has also been attributed to their sister. Nrejis, and, most importantly, to Zakaria Amirspasalar.

Let us turn to the corresponding facts.

The famous inscription in the narthex of the St. Gregory Church of Haghartsin is the most important document emphasizing the kinship of the Zakarids and the Bagratids. The first part of the lapidary inscription. "This our writing is for a perpetual memorial and monument of the sons of the great Sargis, from the Bagratid lineage, Ivane and Zakare, when God's providence reached the creation and gave... us dominion over the

⁷⁵ As. Shahznazaryants, op. cit., p. 70: Earlier, the same viewpoint was expressed by M. Brosset (see M. Brosset. *Additions et éclaircissements à l'Histoire de la Georgie*. S.- Pet., 1851, p.270).

⁷⁶ A. Hovhannisyan's assumption, according to which "such a kinship link (he means the marriage of Ivane and the supposed Bagratid Khoshak - H. M.) with the Bagratids could have also been had by the ancestors of Ivane and Zakare" (see A. Hovhannisyan, *Episodes from the History of Armenian Liberation Thought*, b. I, Yerevan, 1957, p. 155), remains not only unsubstantiated, but also unlikely. The family trees and kinship ties of the Kiurikians and Zakarids in the second half of the 12th century are well known, but as for the first half of the century, those dynasties still occupied sufficiently different positions in the feudal hierarchy to establish a kinship relationship.

⁷⁷ In this regard, K. Ter-Mkrtychyan's legitimate question remains fully in force: "Why should kinship with the Kiurikians give the Zakarids the right to be called Bagratid?" (K. Ter-Mkrtychyan, *Materials on Armenian Melikdoms*, vol. B, *Dop'yants and Melik-Shahnaqaryants*. Erevan, 1914, p. 22). (in Armenian)

private inheritance of our ancestors, giving into our hands the impregnable fortress of Amberd”⁷⁸, was actually written by Ivane shortly after Zakaria’s death⁷⁹. This fact, however, does not yet mean that the viewpoint attested in the inscription belongs only to Ivane.

The quoted passage from the Haghartsin inscription is comparable to one of the important lapidary inscriptions of Haghpat, which was written “in the years of God’s anointing of the king of kings George, son of the great queen Tamar, in whose time God gave into the hands of us two brothers, Zakare and Ivane, our own fortress of Amberd, built by our ancestors, and many other fortresses”⁸⁰. It is not difficult to see that the emphasized sections have a formulaic nature and the Bagratid-Zakarid kinship theory was put forward by both brothers.

Furthermore, there are grounds to believe that Zakare was proclaimed a Bagratid first, and only during the minority of Shahanshah was Ivane’s royal origin separately emphasized. For instance, in the 1215 inscription of the main church of Geghard, only Zakare Amirspasalar is called “t’agavorazn,” that is, Bagratid. “In the time of the king’s son Zakare and Ivane, his brother, and their sons Shahanshah and Avag,” says the lapidary inscription⁸¹, although it was carved three years after the commander’s death.

⁷⁸ See Corpus of Armenian Lapidary Inscriptions, VI, Yerevan, 1977, p. 22 (emphasis is mine - H. M.). See also *ibid.*, p. 24. Knowledge. (in Armenian)

⁷⁹ See also *ibid.*, p. 24. knowledge

⁸⁰ See K. Ghafadaryan, Haghbat, Yerevan. 1963, pp. 168-169 (emphasis is mine - H. M.). (in Armenian)

⁸¹ See G. Hovsepyan, Khaghbakyan or Proshyank in Armenian History. Antilias, 1969, p. 299. (in Armenian)

In the same spirit, the scribe of the colophon of a manuscript copied in Ayrivank in 1217 expresses himself: “And after the passing of three years, the king’s son, the great, successful, and brave wrestler Zakara, son of Sargis, the commander-in-chief of the king of Georgia, was raised from the stars by a sorrowful death”⁸². Consequently, it is by continuing the tradition that Ivane calls himself “tagazn” (son of a king) in one of the inscriptions of the same Ayrivank⁸³.

In light of the above-mentioned facts, the 1223 inscription of Aygehat is also given meaning, where the “named Grigor,” son of “Queen Nrejis and Mamqan,” reports on his construction activity⁸⁴. It turns out that Nrejis Zakarid was also considered a “queen,” and therefore a Bagratid. It is not excluded that the consideration of Zakaria, son of Shahanshah I, as a Bagratid is alluded to in the 1232 colophon of Bagrat’s Gospel, where he is called “t’agatsin” (crown-born)⁸⁵. Thus, the Zakarids emphasized their descent from the Bagratids for about half a century, and the theory of their “Bagratid” origin was reflected in two different groups of primary sources: in lapidary inscriptions and in the colophons of manuscripts. And yet, this is still not all. The Zakarids’

⁸² See Colophons of Armenian Manuscripts. 13th century. compiled by A. Matevosyan, Yerevan. 1984, p. 105. (in Armenian)

⁸³ See G. Hovsepyan, *op. cit.*, p. 299: Judging by the chronology of Ivane’s recorded conquests, the lapidary inscription was made in 1219 or later.

⁸⁴ See S. Jalalyants, Journey to Greater Armenia, part I, Tiflis, 1842, p. 103: (in Armenian) That the Nrejis mentioned here is a Zakarid is evident from the inscription left by the same Grigor in Haritch in 1235: “I, Grigor, nurtured by the great Sargis’s daughter Nrejis” (see S. Avagyan, Lexical Analysis of Lapidary Inscriptions, Yerevan. 1978, pp. 83-84). (in Armenian)

⁸⁵ See Colophons of Armenian Manuscripts. 13th century, p. 178. It is possible that Zakare also had another basis for being called “t’agatsin.” The question is that in the colophon, Shahanshah’s position is already considered royal.

claims to be considered the successors of the Bagratids had a multifaceted and extensive ideological justification.

First, in their inscriptions, the Zakarids appropriated many important components from the Bagratid series of titles, including the honorary titles “Shahanshah” and “Tiezerakal” (cosmic ruler or ruler of the universe). In scholarly literature, the titles of the Zakarids have, of course, always been recorded, but this has been done purely from the perspective of modern standards. Historians have used these facts to indicate the degree of the Zakarids’ power and to demonstrate the justification of their claims to restore the Armenian kingdom. And some researchers have objected with all seriousness and concluded that the Zakarids and their close associates had clearly fallen into exaggeration when describing their rule. The modern perception of medieval testimonies, however, is not only unjustified, but also simplistic and one-sided. The Bagratid kings, and then the Zakarids, thought least of all about misleading their contemporaries (and along with them, future researchers) and pursued entirely real and worldly goals. Titles were one of the most important elements of their official ideology, justifying, legitimizing, and sanctifying the rule of these dynasties.

Among the honorary titles of the Bagratids of Ani, the most famous was, without a doubt, the title Shahanshah, which all Bagratid rulers had borne since the time of Ashot II (914-928)⁸⁶. Therefore, the

⁸⁶ See S. Ter-Ghevondyan, The Arabic inscription of Haghat and the titles of the Bagratid kings. - “Journal of Social Sciences”, 1979, N 1, pp. 73-78. (in Armenian)

Zakarids’ aspiration to be recognized as the successors of the Bagratids was clearly expressed, first and foremost, when they appropriated the honorary title Shahanshah. For example, Zakare Amirspasalar is called Shahanshah as early as 1191-1196, before they became masters of the Bagratid capital of Ani in 1199⁸⁷. He gave so much importance to that title that he chose the second name Shahanshah for his son. Moreover, the latter became so common that the child’s original name “Sargis” was almost forgotten⁸⁸. The importance of the step taken by Zakare Amirspasalar will be further emphasized if we take into account that the title Shahanshah had been part of the official series of titles of the rulers of Georgia, perhaps since the first quarter of the 12th century, beginning with the time of David IV the Builder (1089-1123)⁸⁹, and, naturally, should have been of a monopolistic nature.

After the title “Shahanshah,” the Zakarids had also adopted the honorary title “Tiezerakal,” which was also one of the titular components of the Bagratids of Ani. Although in Armenian historiography Smbat II (977-990) is traditionally recognized as “Tiezerakal”⁹⁰, all available data, however, indicates that the first of the Bagratid rulers to bear the title “Tiezerakal” was Smbat I (890-914)⁹¹.

⁸⁷ See A. Shahinyan, The pillar of Kosh and its inscription. - “Historical-Philological Journal”. 1968, N 2, pp. 198-201; P. Muradyan, Georgian inscriptions of Armenia, Yerevan, 1977, pp. 105-106. (in Armenian)

⁸⁸ See H. Adjarian, Dictionary of Armenian Personal Names, vol. D, Yerevan, 1943, p. 110. (in Armenian)

⁸⁹ See Outlines of the History of Georgia, vol. 3, Tbilisi, 1979, p. 256 (in Georgian).

⁹⁰ See H. Adjarian, op. cit., p. 548; History of the Armenian People, vol. III, Yerevan, 1976, p. 134. (in Armenian)

⁹¹ See A. Ter-Ghevondyan, op. cit., p. 75; History of the Armenian People, vol. III, p. 269 (the author of the section is A. Ter-Ghevondyan). Besides the Kotuk of Sanahin cited by A. Hovhannisyan (see K. Ghafadaryan, The Monastery of Sanahin and its inscriptions, p. 190) and a colophon pointed out by A. Ter-Ghevondyan (see G. Hovsepyan, Colophons of Manuscripts, vol. I, Antilias, 1951, p. 172), the historians Samvel Anetsi (see Samvel

The fact that Smbat I is called “Tiezerakal” in the “Chronicle of Kartli,” which is part of “Kartlis Tskhovreba”⁹², proves that this title of the Bagratids had also gained international recognition⁹³. It was also present in the Bagratid series of titles during the time of Gagik I⁹⁴ (990-1020) and Hovhannes-Smbat⁹⁵ (1020-1041)⁹⁶.

To demonstrate the effectiveness of the aspiration to emphasize the Bagratid-Zakarid succession, let us quote two lapidary inscriptions in parallel: the first left by the Catholicos of the Armenians of the time, Petros Getadardz, and the second by the famous “medzatur” Tigran Honents.

In the Armenian year 1036 and in the glorious kingship of the mighty and Tiezerakal Smbat, son of Gagik, Shahanshah of the

Armenians and Georgians, by the will of me, Lord Petros, Catholicos of the Armenians...⁹⁷

In the year 1215, by the grace and mercy of God. When the city of Ani was ruled by the mighty and Tiezerakal amirspasalar and mandaturtukhuts'es Zakaria, and his son Shahanshah, I, Tigran, servant of God...⁹⁸

Thus, about two centuries later, the next ruler of Ani adopted the title “Tiezerakal” in addition to “Shahanshah.” The study shows that “Tiezerakal” had a noteworthy characteristic in its usage. In the quoted inscriptions, it appears in conjunction with the epithet “hzavur” (powerful), and the two were used together so frequently that they became commonplace and took on a descriptive shade for authority. This trend is evident in the charter-inscription of Gagik I, in the formulaic part of which—“it was also for me, Gagik, the mighty and Tiezerakal Shahinshah”⁹⁹—the stable pairing of the titles “hzavur and Tiezerakal” clearly has a secondary importance.

Another common descriptive feature can be observed between the titles of the Bagratids and the Zakarids. In the above-quoted Ani inscription dated 1036, Catholicos Petros Getadardz describes the “kingship” of Hovhannes-Smbat with the epithet “medzapar.” According to P. Muradyan's keen insight, it is this Armenian title that is reflected in the Georgian inscription of Tegharuyk' in the form “bark’-

Anetsi, Compilation from the Writings of Historians, Vagharshapat, 1893, pp. 102-103) and Mkhitar Ayrivanetsi (see Mkhitar Ayrivanetsi, History of Armenia, Moscow, 1860, p. 56) also call Smbat I “Tiezerakal” in Armenian historiography. (in Armenian)

⁹² See Kartlis Tskhovreba, vol. I, Tbilisi, 1955, p. 262 (in Georgian).

⁹³ A. Abdaladze considers the possible basis for the use of the title “Tiezerakal” in Georgian historiography to be Armenian written or oral sources (see A. Abdaladze, Kartlis Tskhovreba and Armenia-Georgia Relations, Tbilisi, 1982, pp. 208-209). However, the episode reported by the Georgian historian is generally unknown to Armenian sources. Since the Georgian historian does not question the legitimacy of the title “Tiezerakal” in the slightest, even though he is well aware of the tragic end of Smbat I and it is unlikely that the author misunderstood the meaning of the Armenian word, only one conclusion remains to be made: the Georgian chronicler recorded a fact belonging to the field of interstate relations, for which it was not at all necessary to have an Armenian primary source.

⁹⁴ See S. Saghumyan, The newly discovered inscription of King Gagik I. - “Journal of Social Sciences”, 1989, N 9, pp. 91-92. (in Armenian)

⁹⁵ See Corpus of Armenian Lapidary Inscriptions. I, Yerevan, 1966, p. 48. (in Armenian)

⁹⁶ From the 965 colophon of the priest Pandaleon (see Colophons of Armenian Manuscripts. 5th-12th centuries, compiled by A. Matevosyan, Yerevan, 1988, pp. 57-58) it is evident that for some time the titles “Tiezerakal,” as well as “King of Kings,” were also borne by the rulers of the Artsruni Kingdom of Vaspurakan. The second of these corresponded to the Byzantine honorary title “archon of archons,” which had been bestowed upon the first three Bagratid kings, and after the death of Ashot II in 929, was given to Gagik I Artsruni (929-943), forming a monopoly for the rulers of Vaspurakan until the mid-70s of the 10th century (see K. Yuz-bashyan, Armenia of the “Bagratid Period” from the viewpoint of international law. - “Historical-Philological Journal”. 1975, N 1, pp. 45-47).

Probably, it was during this very period that the title “Tiezerakal” also passed to the Artsrunis. See A. Hovhannisyanyan, op. cit., p. 132; V. Vardanyan, The Artsruni Kingdom of Vaspurakan. Yerevan. 1969, pp. 176-177; V. A. Arutyunova-Filanyan. The commemorative note of the priest Panlaleon. - Vizantiyskiy Vremennik, vol. 51, M., 1990, pp. 112-118. (in Armenian)

⁹⁷ Corpus of Armenian Lapidary Inscriptions. I, p. 48.

⁹⁸ Ibid., p. 63.

⁹⁹ See S. Saghumyan, op. cit., pp. 91-92.

didit” (barq = glory + great), as a description of Zakare Amirspasalar’s rule¹⁰⁰.

As might have been expected, the Zakarids bore the honorary titles “Shahanshah” and “Tiezerakal” as long as their actual power and influence corresponded to their series of titles to some extent. The last of them was Avag, who was considered “Tiezerakal” until the late 1240s¹⁰¹.

The Zakarids also emphasized their succession through such an impressive undertaking as turning the Kyurikyans’ dynastic cemetery in Sanahin into their own family burial ground¹⁰². The Bagratid-Zakarid lineage was also emphasized by the renovations carried out by the Zakarids at the monastery¹⁰³.

In concluding the examination of the direct and indirect data supporting the hypothesis of the Zakarids’ descent from the Bagratids, it is necessary to emphasize that the theory of a “Bagratid” origin is, without a doubt, the most politicized. It was brought to life at the end of the 12th century, when the Zakarids were in actual control of a significant part of the inheritance of various branches of the Bagratid royal dynasty and were soon to expand their territories even further. It is

¹⁰⁰ See P. Muradyan, *op. cit.*, pp. 117-119.

¹⁰¹ See G. Sargsyan, The “Bardzrakash” monastery and its lapidary inscription. - “Etchmiadzin,” 1951, N 11-12, p. 50; H. Yeghiazaryan, The Bardzrakash St. Grigor and Forty Martyrs monasteries of Dsegh and the other, more important monuments of the village and their lapidary inscriptions. - “Etchmiadzin,” 1971, N 3, p. 45. (in Armenian)

¹⁰² The Kyurikyans themselves, starting from the end of the 11th century, were buried in Haghbat (see D. Movsesyan, History of the Kyurikyan Kings of Lori, Vienna, 1923, p. 55; R. Matevosyan, Tashir-Dzoraget. Yerevan, 1982, p. 100). (in Armenian) Among the Zakarids, Sargis the Great and Zakare II were buried in Sanahin, and later, different branches of the Zakarids established burial grounds in various monasteries.

¹⁰³ See H. Khalpakchian, Le tombeau des Zakarides a Sanahin, - Etudes Armeniennes in memoriam H. Berberian, Lisbon, 1986, pp. 357-374. (in Armenian)

evident from the examination of the Zakarids’ titles that during that period they were aspiring to become the political heirs not of the Kyurikyans, but of the Bagratids of Shirak. Therefore, in declaring themselves Bagratids, they were first and foremost also proceeding from the weighty argument of having become the rightful successors of the Shahanshahs of Ani.

In light of our entire narrative, it becomes clear that to insist on a real kinship between the Bagratids and the Zakarids would mean to abstract oneself from medieval realities and literally interpret the attestations of some of the primary sources. It is a characteristic fact that so far only K. Ter-Mkrtychyan among researchers has tried to substantiate the hypothesis of the Zakarids’ descent from the Bagratids¹⁰⁴, but this viewpoint has not found acceptance in scholarly literature.

In 1196, when Amberd was liberated, monuments in honor of that victory were erected in both Armenian¹⁰⁵ and Arabic¹⁰⁶. In the Arabic inscription of Amberd, after the names of Zakare amirspasalar and Ivane, the word “As-Saruni” is read, which is assigned the role of a dynastic name. Thus, a third hypothesis of the Zakarids’ origin is attested, and by the distinguished representatives of the dynasty

¹⁰⁴ See K. Ter-Mkrtychyan, *op. cit.*, pp. 18-31.

¹⁰⁵ See A. Shahinyan, *op. cit.*, pp. 198-201.

¹⁰⁶ See A. Ter-Ghevondyan, The Arabic-lettered inscription of Zakaria and Ivane at Amberd. - “Historical-Philological Journal”, 1971, N 1, pp. 185-187; A. A. Khachatryan, Corpus of Arabic inscriptions of Armenia, Vol. I, Yerevan, 1987, p. 47. (in Armenian)

themselves. A. Ter-Ghevondyan explains their being called Artsruni by a desire to be associated with prominent dynasties. According to the researcher, a decisive role in this matter was played by the circumstance that Sargis the Great was married to Sahakdukht, the sister of Amir-Kurd Artsruni. Furthermore, if the Zakarids were called Bagratid based on their kinship with the Kyurikyans, then Zakare and Ivane could also be called Artsruni, this time by being connected with the Artsruni dynasty¹⁰⁷. This entirely logical explanation would be considered plausible if the Zakarids had truly been considered Bagratid solely on the basis of their kinship with the Kyurikyans, and also in the case of the undeniable tribal connection between the Mahkanaberdtsi and the Artsrunis. However, the issue is that the rulers of the province of Mahkanaberd in the second half of the 12th century did not yet associate themselves with the Artsruni dynasty. Signs of this hypothesis spreading only appear in the second half of the 13th century, as a result of the activity of Atabek Sadun II¹⁰⁸. Therefore, the Zakarids could not have been called Artsruni by exploiting the kinship with the Mahkanaberdtsi.

The fact attested in the Arabic inscription of Amberd can more likely be interpreted against the backdrop of political events at the end of the 12th and beginning of the 13th centuries. The Zakarids' claims to be called Artsruni are, apparently, a unique reflection of the political programs of Zakare and Ivane. The last years of the 12th century and the

beginning of the next century constitute a period in the history of the Shah-Armen state, which occupied a large part of Southern Armenia, when that emirate was desperately fighting for survival. The Zakarids sought to take advantage of the situation, launching repeated campaigns towards Manazkert, Arjesh, and Khlat. The Zakarids' southern policy encountered insurmountable obstacles only after 1207, when the Ayyubids¹⁰⁹ were established in Khlat. It can be assumed that declaring themselves Artsruni was one of the measures aimed at ensuring the success of the Zakarids' plans. By calling themselves Artsruni, they could adopt the position of the legitimate rulers of Vaspurakan and adjacent territories and undertake corresponding military operations, anticipating the support of the population of the emirate, which was mainly inhabited by Armenians. As is known, after the setback at Khlat in 1210/1211, the Zakarids' advance to the south came to a halt, and consequently, the aspiration to become the successors of the Artsrunis could not be maintained for long. As was shown above, the Zakarids are most often called Bagratid outright in the second decade of the 13th century. We are inclined to believe that this circumstance is also a result of the "Artsrunian" theory of the Zakarids' origin being forgotten forever.

¹⁰⁷ A. Ter-Ghevondyan, *Zakaria and Ivane...*, pp. 186-187.

¹⁰⁸ See Grigor Vardapet, *History of the Tatars*. Jerusalem, 1974, pp. 42, 48; Mkhitar Ayrivanetsi, p. 68.

¹⁰⁹ See H. Margaryan, *The political situation in the Near East and the prospects for the liberation of Armenia (12th-13th centuries)*. - "Historical-Philological Journal", 1989, N 1, pp. 36-43. (in Armenian)

The issue of the Zakarids' dynastic origin is also addressed by an author well-acquainted with their activities, the first chronicler of Queen Tamara. On the occasion of describing Zakare Amirspasalar, the chronicler notes that he was a descendant of Artaxerxes Longimanus and explains the eminent commander's merits by this circumstance. It is evident that this information is not historical, and any attempts to substantiate an Achaemenid-Zakarid kinship are doomed to failure from the outset. Nevertheless, the Georgian chronicler's report is not devoid of importance, both from the perspective of the influence of historiographical tradition and from being a reflection of a certain political mindset. It is known that the Georgian author is well-acquainted with the realities of the ancient world and the prominent figures of classical antiquity. The mention of one of the distinguished Achaemenid kings, in the Greek form of the name, is one of the attestations of that knowledge¹¹⁰.

Attributing an Achaemenid origin to the Zakarids also shows the place that the chronicler assigns to the Zakarids in the unique hierarchy of the dynasties of the Georgian Kingdom. He considers the Georgian Bagratids to be descended from the distinguished biblical King David (Davitiani), while Queen Tamara's husband, David Soslan, is considered to be descended from Ephraim, the holy king's nephew (Epremani). The Georgian chronicler thus wanted to emphasize the superiority of the

Georgian Bagratids over the Ossetian royal dynasty. Since the biblical tradition clearly ranks David's descendants higher than those of Ephraim, it is clear that the names "Davitiani" and "Epremani" are reflections of specific political-ideological theories¹¹¹. According to the Georgian author's conception, the Zakarids also had a royal origin, but in terms of nobility, they nevertheless yielded to the royal couple¹¹². At the same time, the Georgian chronicler followed the viewpoint of giving preference to "ancient" and "foreign" origins¹¹³, to which, as shown in our previous article, Armenian authors also gave preference when illuminating the Zakarids' dynastic origin.

A satisfactory clarification of the problem of the Zakarids' origin is impossible without analyzing the realities of the 11th-12th centuries that are directly related to the early history of the dynasty. From an examination of the scholarly literature, however, the impression is created that researchers have been satisfied with merely restating the hypotheses presented in the preceding pages, often disregarding information from other primary sources that contradicts their preferred

¹¹⁰ Armenian primary sources call Artaxerxes Achaemenid (465-424 BC) Artashes Yerkeynabazuk, thus Armenizing his nickname (see Stepanos Taronetsi Asoghik, *Universal History*. St. Petersburg, 1885, p. 23; Mkhitar Ayrivanetsi, p. 40; Vardan Areveltsi, *Universal History*, Moscow, 1861, p. 41). For this reason, the name "Yerkeynabazuk" (Longimanus) gained currency in Armenian historiography as an Armenized translation of the Georgian "Mkhrdzeli" (literally "long-shouldered") for the Zakarids.

¹¹¹ See K. Kekelidze, A case of Georgian political thought in the literature of the classical period. - *Etudes from the history of old Georgian literature*, vol. 1, Tbilisi, 1956, pp. 312-318 (in Georgian).

¹¹² On the influence of such ideas in the Georgian environment, see Sh. Meskhia, *op. cit.*, pp. 209-210; K. Kekelidze, The author of *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* and the time of its writing. - *Etudes from the history of old Georgian literature*, vol. 12, Tbilisi, 1973, p. 54 (in Georgian).

¹¹⁰ See *Kartlis Tskhovreba*, vol. 2, Tbilisi, 1959, p. 110 (in Georgian).

theory. It is surprising that historians have not at all been concerned with the likelihood of the Zakarids' migration, the real prospects for their military and political advancement in Kyurikyan Armenia, or the expediency of their conversion to Christianity. In a word, the verification of the authenticity of events has, as a rule, remained outside the researchers' field of view. Instead, they have generously borrowed elements from other theories that completely rule out their preferred hypothesis of the Zakarids' origin. In particular, the proponents of the "Bagratid" and "Artsruni" theories of the Zakarids' origin have accepted the key ideas of the "Kurdish" descent viewpoint: concerning the migration, the movement from south to north, and the adoption of the Armenian faith after settling in the Kyurikyan kingdom. That is the reason why, when presenting the ancient history of the Zakarids, scholars have often combined the real with the fictitious, allowing for obvious slips.

Let us demonstrate the validity of our arguments with just one, but a key, issue: the question of the timing of the Zakarids' ancestors' migration. Clinging to the viewpoint that the dynasty was migratory, most researchers have inevitably faced difficulties in solving this mystery. And yet, the solution to the problem they faced was not, in principle, insurmountable. Indeed, if the Zakarids' ancestors moved to Tashir-Dzoraget two (according to Kirakos Gandzaketsi)¹¹⁴ or three

¹¹⁴ See Kirakos Gandzaketsi, *History of Armenia*, Yerevan, 1961, p. 162. (in Armenian)

(according to Vardan Areveltsi)¹¹⁵ generations before Sargis II the Great, then, by first clarifying the average life span of one Zakarid generation, fairly accurate calculations can be made. But, strangely enough, it may seem, researchers have not followed this one logical path. The calculations were made "by eye," and the Zakarids' migration was presumed to have occurred during the reign of this or that Kyurikyan king. In this regard, the following judgment by As. Shahnazaryants is particularly eloquent: "Khusrov, Avag Sargis, Zakare I, and Sargis II the Great; attributing to each a life of even 40-45 years, if not more, we will come to the conclusion that the Zakarids may have migrated in the first half of the 11th century"¹¹⁶. Some researchers have gone even further and calculated the activities of a certain number of the Zakarid ancestors based on the reigns of the kings of Georgia, when the latter had no connection with the Zakarids during that historical period¹¹⁷.

Thus, regardless of how reliable we consider the theory of the Zakarids' migration, we are compelled to clarify two essential chronological issues related to the specific Zakarid dynasty: What was the average life span of a generation in the Zakarid dynasty, and for how many years did each generation engage in active military and political activity?

To answer the first question, let us present the data we have on the first Zakarids—Sargis II the Great, Zakare II, and Ivane I—and only

¹¹⁵ See Vardan Areveltsi, p. 181.

¹¹⁶ As. Shahnazaryants, *op. cit.*, p. 73 (emphasis is mine - H. M.).

¹¹⁷ See M. Brosset, *Op. Cit.*, p. 267.

two main branches of the dynasty, the Shahanshahyan and the Avagyan, by presenting them in the form of a table¹¹⁸.

Name	Birth	Death	Average Life Span	Generation
Sargis II	1120s-1130s	1187	57-67	1
Zakare II	2 nd half of 1150s	1212	57-62	2
Ivane I	Same, 1 st half of 1160s	1233/34	78/79-88/89	2
Shahanshah I	1197	1261/62	64-65	3
Avag	1180s-1190s	1250	60-70	3
Ivane II	1220s-1230s	1284-91	54/61-64/71	4
Shahanshah II	1260s	1320	60/65	5

Thus, our calculations concern 5 generations, and we only take into account the data related to the first-born sons. The only exception we make is for the short-lived Zakare III, for whom we provide the data concerning his brother, Ivane II. The 1st and 5th generations have served as the starting and ending points for the table. The choice was not accidental. At the very beginning, we placed the information about Sargis II the Great, the father of the true founders of the two dynastic

¹¹⁸ See Sh. Meskhia, *op. cit.*, p. 229.

The chronological data are taken from the questionnaires we have compiled about all members of the Zakarid dynasty (see H. Margaryan, *The Ruling Class in Armenia in the 12th-13th centuries*, - "Historical-Philological Journal," 1990, N 4, pp. 44-45). (in Armenian)

branches, Zakare II and Ivane I. At the very end is the data for Shahanshah II, because the great-grandchildren of the two brothers, Shahanshah II and Khuandze, married each other at the end of the 13th century, and thus a unique circle was closed again, with the main dynastic branches of the Zakarids reunited in that couple. The intermediate 2nd and 3rd generations are represented by two members each, making the summary table more representative. From the 4th generation, we have taken only Ivane II's data, as the only member of the Avagyan dynastic branch, Khoshak, being of the female sex, cannot serve as a typical example for such calculations. As a result, it was found that the average life span in the Zakarid dynasty was between 61/62 and 68/69 years, which cannot be considered a particular surprise.

However, we can obtain more reliable chronological anchors if we calculate the average duration of the Zakarids' military and political activity. The issue is that the birth dates of medieval figures are much less known than their death years. In the case of the Zakarids, for example, from the entire table, we have specific knowledge of only one person's birth year, while the opposite data presents a completely different picture, with only one death date not being precise. Furthermore, let us not forget that the Zakarids, almost without exception, were military figures, and the data associated with their names is comparatively well-reflected in primary sources. In addition, the beginning and end of their military lives were limited by certain

biological possibilities. When necessary, an aging commander would have been forced to leave the arena. (Indeed, this is what happened with Ivane I, who, after 1225, had yielded the management of state and military affairs to his son.) A table compiled with the same principles reveals the following picture.

Name	Beginning of Independent Activity	End of Activity	Average Duration of Activity	Generation
Sargis II	no later than 1161	1187	26	1
Zakare II	1184/5	1212	27/28	2
Ivane I	1190/91	1225	34/35	2
Shahanshah I	no later than 1220	1261/2	41/42	3
Avag	1225	1250	25	3
Ivane II	no later than 1259	1284-91	25/32	4
Shahanshah II	no later than 1291	1320	29	5

It turns out that each generation actively and independently participated in the unfolding events for an average of 29/30 years. Considering that the data for a part of the Zakarids does not reflect the real beginning of their activity (four cases), the average number can be taken as 30. Our approximate but more confidence-inspiring data suggests that each Zakarid generation began active independent activity from the age of 31/32 to 38/39. If we consider the full responsibility of an issue related to the dynasty's migration, it seems that this age is the

threshold below which a man would find it difficult to assume the burden of the consequences of such a move.

Now, let us take the next step and clarify in what chronological periods each of the three generations preceding Sargis the Great carried out their activities. The following chronological markers will be obtained:

- 1st generation: born in the 3rd-4th decades of the 11th century, was active around 1070-1100.
- 2nd generation: born in the 6th-7th decades of the 11th century, was active around 1100-1130s.
- 3rd generation: born in the late 11th - first decade of the 12th century, was active around 1130-1160s.

It becomes clear from the calculations that Sargis II the Great's father, Zakare I known from scholarly literature or Vahram as mentioned by Armenian historians, may have had no connection with the Kyurikyans at all. He was active during a period when the Georgians had long since taken control of Tashir-Dzoraget. Sargis the Great's grandfather, Avag Sargis known from inscriptions or Zakaria mentioned in Armenian medieval historiography, was probably the first to establish a connection with the new rulers of the region, the Orbelian princes. His activity was divided into two phases (around 1070-1113 or 1118 - around 1130), during which only the first phase could he have served the Kyurikyans. Therefore, the main connections between the Kyurikyans

and the Zakarids are attributable to the last thirty years of the 11th century, when the father of Sargis the Great's grandfather, the Sargis named by Vardan Areveltsi or, as scholars for a long time mistakenly called him, Khusrov, was on the scene¹¹⁹.

After these initial calculations, it is necessary to clarify the extent to which the viewpoints of researchers on the time of the Zakarids' ancestors' migration correspond to these chronological markers. In this regard, the most specific and most vulnerable date is noted by S. Yeremyan, a follower of the "Artsruni" theory of the Zakarids' origin. In his opinion, the Zakarid ancestor Khusrov, after the victory of the Byzantine army against the Seljuks in the canyon of the Great Zab River in 1048, crossed into Gugark with his family and recognized the suzerainty of the Lori king¹²⁰. The scholar does not explain why the Zakarids should have migrated at that specific time, or what connection there is between the battle of the Seljuks and Byzantines and the Zakarids' migration, but it is clear even without that that the date he indicated cannot be correct. The supposed Khusrov must have still been a child or a youth at that time, and therefore far from the political arena.

As. Shahnazaryants places the Zakarids' migration to Armenia in 1044-1050, and their settlement in Tashir-Dzoraget in 1050-1063.

¹¹⁹ See A. I. Shahnazaryan, On the issue of the Zakarid family tree. - "Historical-Philological Journal", 1985, N 3, pp. 204-209. (in Armenian)

¹²⁰ See S. Yeremyan, "Zakarids" entry. - Armenian Soviet Encyclopedia, vol. 3, Yerevan, 1977, p. 676. (in Armenian)

Relying on Vardan Areveltsi's phrase "to the kings of Dzoraget"¹²¹, the researcher believes that the Zakarids' relocation took place during a period when two kings simultaneously reigned in Tashir-Dzoraget, and that the brothers Kyurike and Smbat definitely reigned in the region during 1050-1063¹²². First, on the basis of these calculations, and then, on their probability: As. Shahnazaryants demonstrates inconsistency when interpreting the aforementioned phrase of Vardan Areveltsi by not first relying on the other information from the historian himself. The reality is that Vardan Areveltsi testifies that Kyurike reigned alone. Instead, the chronicler considers that Kyurike's sons, Abas and Gavit, reigned together¹²³. Therefore, the interpretation of the word "kings" that As. Shahnazaryants offers is dismissible from the outset. It is obvious that the chronicler used it vaguely; otherwise, he would not have hesitated to name the specific Kyurikyan ruler, all of whose names, by the way, were well known to him. Even if we interpret the phrase in question literally, then, based on the author's own testimonies, we are obligated to attribute it to the brothers Abas and Gavit, who ruled in Tashir-Dzoraget approximately from 1090-1113.

Now, on the probability of As. Shahnazaryants' calculations. We have already seen that he grants each Zakarid generation a life of 40-45 years and places their migration in the first half of the 11th century. But if, following the researcher, we take the year of Sargis the Great's death

¹²¹ See Vardan Areveltsi, p. 181.

¹²² See As. Shahnazaryants, op. cit., pp. 73-74.

¹²³ See Vardan Areveltsi, pp. 141-142.

(1187) as the starting point and calculate the duration of life for the four generations indicated ($4 \times 40-45=160-180$), we get the years 1027-1007, which are quite distant from the 1044-1050 years belonging to the end of the first half of the century. But the researcher has also not been consistent in his later calculations. After arbitrarily setting the beginning of the Zakarids' migration to 1044, he takes the year 1063 as the upper limit for the dynasty's relocation. But 1063 is merely the year of the stone inscription where the kingly pair preferred by the researcher, Kyurike and Smbat, are mentioned together¹²⁴. However, their joint reign is by no means excluded from having continued later. A fact that was well known to As. Shahnazaryants as well. The surprising thing is that he even quotes one of the inscriptions from Haghpatadzor, where Kyurike and Smbat are mentioned together as late as 1089¹²⁵. But that did not prevent the researcher from abruptly stopping the joint reign of Kyurike and Smbat at 1063 on the very next page. The reason, undoubtedly, is that he feared straying too far from his arbitrarily pre-marked chronological markers. Therefore, we can conclude that As. Shahnazaryants' arguments and calculations are far from convincing.

Sh. Meskhia also dated the Zakarids' relocation to the 50s-60s of the 11th century, but for him, other circumstances served as the basis. The researcher gave decisive importance to one of the Haghpat

¹²⁴ See K. Ghafadaryan, *The Monastery of Sanahin and its Inscriptions*, p. 187.

¹²⁵ See As. Shahnazaryants, *op. cit.*, p. 73.

inscriptions¹²⁶, where, according to a widely accepted opinion in scholarship, the Zakarid ancestors Avag Sargis and Khusrov are mentioned. Dating the leadership of Bishop Hovhannes mentioned in that inscription to the 50s-60s of the 11th century, the Georgian scholar supposed that the Zakarids' ancestors could not have relocated to Tashir-Dzoraget¹²⁷ later than the 60s of that century. However, as A. I. Shahnazaryan recently showed, the aforementioned Haghpat inscription has no real connection with the Zakarids and was carved in the 13th century¹²⁸. Therefore, Sh. Meskhia's conclusion, being based on unreliable facts, cannot be considered acceptable either.

The clarification of the supposed time of the Zakarids' migration, which acquires a fundamental significance when discussing the problem of the dynasty's subsequent complex ethno-cultural transformation, has unfortunately escaped the attention of most researchers who believe in the family's "Kurdish" origin and "Armenianization." Among them, only V. Minorsky fleetingly suggested that the generation preceding Sargis II the Great—Avag Sargis I and Zakare I—"will not take us back farther than the year 1100"¹²⁹. The remaining researchers were more

¹²⁶ See K. Ghafadaryan, *Haghpat*, p. 161.

¹²⁷ See Sh. Meskhia, *op. cit.*, pp. 231-232.

¹²⁸ See A. I. Shahnazaryan, *op. cit.*, pp. 208-209. It is characteristic that despite convincingly clarifying the true date of the Haghpat inscription in question, the author himself also supposes the migration of the Zakarids' ancestors to have occurred in the mid-11th century (see *ibid.*, p. 209).

¹²⁹ See V. Minorsky, *Studies in Caucasian History*, London, 1953, p. 102.

cautious about indicating the precise timeframe of the Zakarids' migration and presumed a more encompassing phase¹³⁰.

Nevertheless, almost all researchers, even those who follow different hypotheses of the Zakarids' origin, have agreed on one matter: they, even the proponents of the "Bagratid" and "Artsruni" theories, are convinced that the Zakarids' ancestors migrated to Dzoraget, having previously had a foreign ethnic or religious origin, only to become Armenian or to rediscover their true origin there. Thus, even modern-day researchers have found it difficult to deviate from the path predetermined by Movses Khorenatsi and have remained faithful to the spirit of medieval historiography.

For example, while rejecting the theory of the Zakarids' "Kurdish origin," S. Yeremyan fully followed the Khorenatsi-style forms. He was even forced to assume a "Kurdicized branch" of the Artsrunis and only then migrate that family to Tashir-Dzoraget¹³¹. Or, K. Ter-Mkrtychyan made efforts to prove that the Zakarids' ancestors were Bagratids, but for some reason, they were necessarily from Southern Armenia and were unconditionally moved from south to north¹³². And finally, even the basis of As. Shahnazaryants' research and his attribution of a

¹³⁰ In this regard, H. Manandyan's characterization is notable: "They (the Zakarids - H. M.) had migrated to Dzoraget, probably in the 11th century ... here they had adopted Christianity according to the creed of the Armenian Church. They, by establishing kinship through marriages with Armenians, had gradually become Armenian" (see H. Manandyan, Works, vol. 3, Yerevan, 1977, p. 132, emphasis is mine - H. M.). (in Armenian)

¹³¹ See S. Yeremyan, op. cit. The author was not concerned by the fact that the Artsrunis continued to remain fully Armenian in the second half of the 11th century and in the subsequent centuries, without becoming Kurdish or Muslim. As for the province of Kartuniq in Korchayk, where the scholar writes about a "Kurdicized" branch of the Artsrunis, the factual foundations for such a decisively expressed viewpoint are completely unknown to us.

¹³² See K. Ter-Mkrtychyan, op. cit.

"Chaldean" origin to the Zakarids was, again, the desire to necessarily consider the dynasty as "migratory"¹³³.

When discussing the problem of the Zakarids' ethnic and social origin, in addition to clarifying chronological issues, it is necessary to address the historical-geographical environment in which the events unfolded. Even if we unconditionally believe the accounts of Armenian historians and genuinely consider the Zakarids' ancestors to have been Kurds who migrated to Tashir-Dzoraget, we still cannot avoid clarifying a number of questions, which will be discussed below.

As we have seen, the period of the Zakarids' relocation is considered to be the approximately sixty-year period from the mid-11th century to the beginning of the 12th century. How is it possible to evaluate that phase in the context of the history of the Kyurikyan Kingdom of Tashir-Dzoraget, and what was the direction of the ethno-confessional and linguistic-cultural processes of the time?

It can be asserted without hesitation that those decades were the years of the Kyurikyans' political decline. It is known that in the last quarter of the 11th century, that kingdom was subjected to the increasing pressure of the Seljuk-Turks, the Eretnians, and the Shaddadids of Ganja. In 1118, Eretna captured Lori, and in this part of Northern Armenia, political dominance passed from the Armenians to the

¹³³ See As. Shahnazaryants, op. cit.

Georgians¹³⁴. In Tashir-Dzoraget, the necessary preconditions for a change in ethnic affiliation, which is an exceptionally complex and long-term process, did not exist, also in terms of a homogeneous ethnic and cultural environment. In the Kyurikyan kingdom, especially after 1065, when the capital was moved from Samshvilde to Lori, Georgians constituted a significant number. The Georgian Church had a noticeable influence in this area. It is enough to say that even during the period of the Kyurikyans' greatest power, under David Anhoghin (989-1048), the marzpan of the fortress of Gaz, Dimitre, "abandoned the faith of his Armenian forefathers and, making the Georgians his assisting buttress, was washed in the water of their 'twice-dead' (double-dipping) ritual and put his son, Mamphugh of Tashir, in the monastery of Hiuneh"¹³⁵. Thus, a Georgian diocese was founded even in Tashir, and the positions of the Georgian Church were continuously strengthened in the 11th-13th centuries. This assertion is attested to by both narrative sources and the Georgian inscriptions from those centuries that are known and predominantly preserved in Northern Armenia¹³⁶. Therefore, the ethnic and confessional environment in Tashir-Dzoraget was not such that one could place unconditional faith in Vardan Areveltsi's theory of the Zakarids' ancestors' "Armenianization."

¹³⁴ See *History of the Armenian People*, pp. 471-473. R. Matevosyan, op. cit., pp. 90-102. H. Margaryan, *Several Questions on the History of Northern Armenia and Georgia in the 12th Century*, Yerevan, 1980, pp. 48-50. (in Armenian)

¹³⁵ *Asoghiik*, p. 257.

¹³⁶ See P. Muradyan, op. cit., pp. 18-24, 63-64, 185-189.

The available data is also sufficient to cast doubt on the probability of the Zakarids' religious conversion. It is known that the Seljuk invasions that began in the 40s of the 11th century brought about significant shifts in the political, as well as the confessional and cultural life of the Near East. Cases of religious conversion and intermarriage with immigrant rulers became frequent. Moreover, these phenomena had a unilateral direction. In cases of religious conversion, it was Christians who were converting to Islam, while the basis of kinship ties was the increasingly common custom of giving daughters to Muslim rulers¹³⁷. It is no secret that both phenomena were conditioned by the political and economic interests of the local feudal lords. In this regard, the facts directly related to the Kyurikyans are eloquent. In 1064, one of the Kyurikyan princesses married Sultan Alp Arslan¹³⁸, and four years later, Aghsartan, from the Kakhetian branch of the Kyurikyan dynasty, renounced his ancestral faith. When the Seljuks once again invaded Transcaucasia in 1068, Aghsartan, who was the grandson of David Anhoghin on his paternal side, joined them to preserve his domains and converted to Islam¹³⁹. Therefore, the real facts show that it is difficult to talk about the religious conversion and becoming Armenian Orthodox of

¹³⁷ As Mkhitar Gosh notes, Armenian princes "gave their daughters to foreigners in marriage" in the expectation of receiving military assistance from them (see Gh. Alishan, *Hayapatum*, vol. B, Venice, 1901, p. 387). (in Armenian)

¹³⁸ See Matteos Urhayetsi, *Chronology*, Vagharshapat, 1898, p. 145. (in Armenian) *Kartlis Tskhovreba*, vol. 1, p. 307.

¹³⁹ See *Kartlis Tskhovreba*, vol. 1, p. 309. Sadr ad-Din al-Husayni, *Akhbar ad-dawlat as-Saljuqiyya*, M., 1980, pp. 54-55.

the Zakarids' ancestors precisely during a period when processes with the opposite direction were taking place.

When speaking of ethno-confessional processes, one should not overlook the specific characteristics of the participating ethnic groups. So far, the discussion has been about the Armenian ethnic group, its positions in Tashir-Dzoraget, and its interactions with neighboring peoples. Now, let us discuss the presence and ethnic distinctiveness of the Kurds in Armenia.

It is well-known that among the Kurdish dynasties, the Marwanids had influential positions in Southern Armenia in the 10th-11th centuries, the Ayyubids at the end of the 12th and beginning of the 13th centuries, and in Northern Armenia in the 10th-12th centuries, the Shaddadids. The latter ruled in Dvin and in Ani, which was in the immediate vicinity of the Kyurikyans. As the place name "Kurdwachar"¹⁴⁰ preserved in Georgian sources shows, it is possible that a Kurdish ethnic group also lived in the Debed-Dzoraget valley, which belonged to the Kyurikyans. A significant number of Kurds, no later than the 10th century, also lived in various parts of Transcaucasia, particularly in Dvin, on the banks of the Araks, in Arran, and in Derbend¹⁴¹. Thus, the Kurdish element could not have been isolated in any part of Armenia, as it was present in different parts of the country, including in Tashir-Dzoraget and its approaches. In addition, it was sometimes more politically powerful and

organized than the indigenous Armenian population. In the Armenian environment, Kurds were regarded as devoted bearers of Islam, and thus their "foreign" nature was further emphasized.

When comprehensively discussing the issue of the likelihood of the Zakarids' ancestors becoming Armenian, it is necessary to pay due attention to the distinctiveness of the Kurdish ethnic group. It is well-known what a huge role tribal organization, as well as a specific type of economic management, has played in the life of Kurdish society over the centuries. These ethnic peculiarities have served as an extremely important ethno-preserving factor in a foreign environment. The example of the Shaddadids, whose odyssey in Armenia can serve as a perfect historical parallel, convincingly shows how influential the traditions of not separating from one's tribe and engaging in military affairs were, if we attempt to theoretically model the subsequent fate of an influential Kurdish family.

The Shaddadids, as is said of the Zakarids' ancestors, had migrated to Armenia and entered the service of an Armenian ruler. According to completely consistent and mutually complementary Arab and Armenian accounts, Lashkari, one of the first Shaddadids, was in the army of an Armenian prince of Dirzur (Vayots Dzor) from 955-965¹⁴². Earlier, when his father's attempt to capture Dvin failed, Lashkari and his brothers had lived for some time with the Artsrunis of Vaspurakan.

¹⁴⁰ See Kartlis Tskhovreba, vol. 2, pp. 50-51.

¹⁴¹ See The Encyclopaedia of Islam, Vol. V, Leiden, 1981, p. 450.

¹⁴² See V. Minorsky, op. cit., p. 12; A. Ter-Ghevondyan, The Anonymous Source of Munajjim-Bashi on the Shaddadids of Dvin and Ganja, in "Banber Matenadarani," No. 6, Yerevan, 1962, p. 478, (in Armenian) cf. Vardan Areveltsi, p. 134.

Thus, Lashkari had spent many years in an Armenian environment, but it is a fact that he had changed neither his religion nor his ethnic affiliation. The eloquent testimonies of a contemporary Arab author help to clarify the reasons for the un-fading of his ethnic self-awareness. The point is that the Shaddadids had not severed their ties with their tribesmen. According to the historian, Lashkari's father began to rule in Dvin in 951 "with his family, clan, and a small group of followers." In 954, he "rejoined his family, sons, and clan" in Vaspurakan, and the duration of Lashkari's "rule was 24 years only over his tribe, and 8 years over his tribe and the city of Ganja and all its provinces."¹⁴³ If we consider that the aforementioned 24 years also include the years spent with the Armenian prince, then it becomes clear that the group of tribesmen constantly accompanied their leader, and the Shaddadids formed an indissoluble unity with their own tribal group. Being an organization of warriors, it was in opposition to the local settled farming population. From the perspective of characterizing the situation, the words with which, according to the Arab author, Lashkari's younger brother addressed him when persuading him to leave the service of the Armenian prince are characteristic: "O my Amir brother, is it not time for you to give up serving the farming infidels and to spend morning and evening with pigs and to listen to the sound of bells instead of the call to prayer?"¹⁴⁴ Thus, as can be seen from the example of the Shaddadids

¹⁴³ See V. Minorsky, *op. cit.*, pp. 8-16. A. Ter-Ghevondyan, *op. cit.*, pp. 476-480.

¹⁴⁴ See V. Minorsky, *op. cit.*, p. 14. A. Ter-Ghevondyan, *op. cit.*, p. 479.

who ruled in Dvin and Ani from the mid-10th to the end of the 12th century, a Kurdish family was fully capable of successfully resisting the influence of the Armenian environment even for such a long period.

Returning to the ancestors of the Zakarids, let us once again address the expression "Babirakan k'el" and the attempts to perceive it as a Kurdish clan name. When attempting to trace the Zakarids to a specific Kurdish tribe, it would seem there should be no difficulty, as Kurdish clan names are well-preserved, have long been cataloged, and have been studied in a sufficiently exhaustive manner. Therefore, the identification of "Babirakan k'el" with a historical or present-day Kurdish tribe should have been easy. However, this problem has caused difficulties even for an authority such as the distinguished Kurdologist and Orientalist, V. Minorsky. In support of the tradition of the Zakarids' Kurdish origin, the scholar cites the fact that the name "Bapiran" is widespread among Kurds, and then adds that a "Piran" clan exists within the Mangur tribal confederation¹⁴⁵.

Are the facts pointed out sufficiently convincing? First, "Bapiran" is not a clan name, but merely a personal name, and it is not identical to "Babirakan." Furthermore, if V. Minorsky had not subtly transitioned from the name "Bapir" to "Piran," then the "Piran" parallel for "Babirakan" could have seemed much more unconvincing. Continuing the examination of V. Minorsky's viewpoint, it is not difficult to notice

¹⁴⁵ See V. Minorsky, *op. cit.*, p. 102.

one more inconsistency. While considering the Zakarids' ancestors to be "Mesopotamian Kurds," on the same page he considers the Piran clan to be the source of "Babirakan k'el," which, as is known, is located in Iranian Kurdistan¹⁴⁶.

It is also difficult to agree with V. Minorsky on the translation of the second component of the expression "Babirakan k'el." Expressing the meaning of the Kurdish word "k'el" with the word "tribe" can lead to a certain semantic confusion. However difficult it is to convey the unique concepts characteristic of Kurdish society in other languages, the following is nevertheless beyond doubt. Usually, a Kurdish tribe or "ashira" is composed of a certain number of "t'iradz" or "t'ayfa" units, and the latter, in turn, are divided into numerous "k'el" units. Each of the latter consists of 20-30 tents or households, which are united by both economic and familial ties¹⁴⁷. Thus, "k'el" is the smallest unit in the structure of Kurdish society, and it is impossible to consider it a tribe.

It turns out that if we interpret "Babirakan k'el" as the name of a tribal subdivision, we face a highly improbable situation. Armenian historians present the Zakarids' ancestors' lineage incorrectly and confusedly; they do not clearly imagine the timeframe of their migration to Armenia, but they show a mysterious precision in pointing out the most elementary economic-familial community of the dynasty's ancestors. Is it possible to explain this clarity by the Zakarids' family

traditions? The answer to this question is clearly a negative one. If in the 60s of the 13th century, that is, only a century later, the Zakarid generations were unable to correctly remember the names of their most notable ancestor, Sargis the Great, his father, and grandfather, then how were they to faultlessly indicate the name not of their distant ancestors' tribe or "t'ira-t'ayfa," but simply of their "k'el?" The sole testimony of the word "k'el" in all of Armenian historiography seems to show clearly enough that we are dealing with a manifestation of authorial originality. Wishing to emphasize the Zakarids' Kurdish roots, Kirakos Gandzaketsi, in all likelihood, consciously resorted to the word "k'el." In turn, even his classmate Vardan Areveltsi found it difficult to grasp this concept, and he simply omitted the expression "Babirakan k'el." As for Zakaria Sarkavag, who rewrote Kirakos Gandzaketsi's account, he, based on the structure of the tradition and the logic of the plot, understood the word "k'el" in the sense of "land, region".

Concluding the examination, the following can be recorded: None of the four hypotheses regarding the origin of the Zakarids is a contemporary, reliable, or impartial verification of the facts. The political tendencies and ideological historiographical sources of these theories are very evident. Researchers are left to draw conclusions based on unquestionably accurate facts, freeing themselves from the influence of medieval traditions.

¹⁴⁶ See Encyclopaedia Iranica, Vol. III, London and New York, 1989, p. 234; A. M. Menteshashvili, *The Kurds*, M., 1984, p. 82.

¹⁴⁷ See *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Vol. V, pp. 470-471; A. M. Menteshashvili, *op. cit.*, pp. 72-73.

In the 12th century, when the Zakarid dynasty first began to play an influential role in the political life of Armenia and Georgia, it had a distinct Armenian character (personal names, monophysitism, family ties, etc.). In addition, the family members were considered by their contemporaries to be the continuators of Armenian statehood—princes “of the Armenian lineage”¹⁴⁸—as well as patrons of the Armenian Church. According to the characterization of one contemporary, “after the untimely passing to Christ of the great Zakaria, which brought darkness upon the land of the Armenians, his well-fated scion, the prince, the remnant of the lineage... enlightened with faith the darkness that had covered the churches of Armenia due to the loss of his father”¹⁴⁹. Despite Ivane’s Chalcedonian affiliation, Mkhitar Gosh appealed to both brothers as protectors of the Armenian Church¹⁵⁰.

No less important are the testimonies that, in addition to the Zakarids’ Armenian religious identity, emphasize their ethnic Armenianness. “Two princes of Armenian descent, brothers to each other”—this is how the scribe of a manuscript written in Hromkla in 1204 describes Zakare II and Ivane I¹⁵¹. When speaking of the glorious brothers, the author of a chronicle attached to the Armenian translation

¹⁴⁸ See Corpus of Armenian Lapidary Inscriptions, I, p. 14.

¹⁴⁹ Colophons of Armenian Manuscripts, 13th Century, p. 178.

¹⁵⁰ See Ararat, 1900, p. 497.

¹⁵¹ See Colophons of Armenian Manuscripts, 13th Century, p. 39.

of Michael the Syrian’s work also draws attention to the same circumstance: “who were Armenians by lineage”¹⁵².

We consider the testimonies of the prominent historian Stepanos Orbelian to be even more important. He writes the following about the Zakarids of the late 12th century: “But after the passing of King George. Tamar exalted the sons of Sargis, son of the prince Zakare, who were Armenian by lineage and of Orthodox faith—Zakare and Ivane—and elevated them to honor”¹⁵³. As can be seen, with this highlighted expression, the medieval author clearly delineates ethnic and religious affiliation and emphasizes the Zakarids’ complete Armenianness in both respects. Thus, the ethnocultural profile of the first known generations of the Zakarids, as well as the direct statements of their immediate contemporaries, provide no basis for doubting the dynasty’s Armenian origin and affiliation.

Based on the facts available at this stage of the study, the following probable conclusion can be made about the Zakarids’ social origin. It is clear from the dynasty’s chronology that before the rebellion led by the Orbelis in 1176-1177, which was the turning point for the Zakarids’ spectacular rise, the lineage of Sargis II the Great belonged to the upper stratum of the middle feudal class. Moreover, while Sargis the Great was

¹⁵² See Michael the Syrian, Chronology, Jerusalem, 1870, p. 526.

¹⁵³ See Stepanos Orbelian, History of the House of Sisakan, Moscow, 1861, p. 287. The structure of the sentence is such that it is difficult to say to which of the three mentioned generations of the Zakarids the highlighted words refer. The most probable thing is that with that characterization, the historian returns to the beginning of the sentence and speaks again about the sons of Sargis II. On the other hand, it is difficult to assume that an author who was so sensitive about confessional matters could have forgotten Ivane I’s religious conversion. Therefore, we believe that the characterization applies equally to all three generations of the dynasty.

a notable figure in Northern Armenia and Georgia as early as the 1160s and could be “considered a prince”¹⁵⁴, the descendants of his brother Vahram continued to be recognized as “common vassals” even in the early 1190s¹⁵⁵. The first statements about the dynasty’s ancient and glorious origin could have only appeared in the last decade of the 12th century and the beginning of the 13th century, when the sons of Sargis the Great had acquired high positions at the Georgian court. It was during this period that the desire to bypass the dynasty’s past must have begun, which is reflected, for example, in the work of the second chronicler of Queen Tamar. Speaking about the rise of Zakare II and Ivane I, he writes, “Faithful to the kings by lineage, which is why they were greatly loved by Tamar’s very grandfathers and fathers”¹⁵⁶. That is he emphasizes the Zakarids’ direct ties with the Georgian kings. The biased nature of the chronicler’s assertion is obvious. How is it possible to speak of the dynastic loyalty of participants in a major rebellion directed against George III, Tamar’s father? Or, how could Sargis II, the “brother and beloved of the Orbelis”¹⁵⁷, have bypassed his all-powerful “patron” and, by violating the feudal hierarchy, established ties with the King of Georgia? The family’s positions must have been more modest at the beginning of the 12th century, when the Zakarids ruled the provincial

¹⁵⁴ See Vardan Areveltsi, p. 166. Stepanos Orbelian also calls Zakare I a “prince” (see Stepanos Orbelian, History, p. 287), but it is difficult to assert that this characterization is accurate.

¹⁵⁵ See Kartlis Tskhovreba, vol. 2, p. 51.

¹⁵⁶ See *ibid.*, p. 123.

¹⁵⁷ See *ibid.*, p. 19.

fortress of Khojorni¹⁵⁸. Consequently, by social origin, the Zakarids were simple Armenian nobles, vassals first to the Kyurikyans and then to the Orbelis.

Historical-Philological Journal, issue 1-2, 1994, pages 156-175.

¹⁵⁸ See Vardan Areveltsi, p. 181.

THE “TIEZERAKAL” TITLE OF THE BAGRATID KINGS

In Armenian historiography, the issue of the Bagratid kings' titles has rarely been the subject of special examination. In particular, the history of the “tiezerakal” (cosmic ruler or ruler of the universe) component, which is part of the Armenian Bagratid's set of titles, has received almost no attention. The time of its appearance, the circumstances of its adoption, its propagandistic goals, and its fate have not been clarified.

In Armenian studies, it has been tacitly assumed that “Tiezerakal” should refer to Smbat II (977-990)¹⁵⁹, although researchers have simultaneously been somewhat bewildered by the discrepancy between this venerable title and the actual influence and military-political achievements of the mentioned Bagratid king¹⁶⁰. Leo, for example, writes the following in this regard: “Smbat is the only one among the Armenian kings who bears the loud title of Tiezerakal, which should mean ‘conqueror of great worlds.’ This, in itself, is a misconception that has arisen from not looking at historical sources and events with a sufficiently deep critical eye. Smbat has a very modest name in history,

¹⁵⁹ H. Acharyan, *Dictionary of Armenian Personal Names*, vol. D, Yerevan, 1948, p. 548. B. Arakelyan, *The Bagratid Kingdom at the End of the 10th and Beginning of the 11th Centuries*, “History of the Armenian People,” vol. III, Yerevan, 1976, p. 134. “Armenian Soviet Encyclopedia,” vol. 10, Yerevan, 1984, p. 452. (In Armenian)

¹⁶⁰ See, for example, H. Harutyunyan, *Armenia in the 10th-11th Centuries*, Y., 1959, p. 106. (In Armenian)

where he can boast of building the walls of Ani. And to call such a peaceful builder a conqueror is even to mock him.”¹⁶¹

Incidentally, the famous historian was well aware of the testimonies of chroniclers who recorded the “tiezerakal” title and came very close to clarifying the issue. However, the whole point is that, like other researchers, Leo, while accusing “historical sources and events” of not being “sufficiently critically examined,” was captivated by unnecessary trivial details. In his opinion, the “tiezerakal” title “was a common compliment presented to the king in the everyday sense of ‘master of the world.’”¹⁶² In reality, this title had gained international recognition and was present in the set of titles of the Armenian Bagratids also in later times, even during the reign of Hovhannes-Smbat.

It is interesting to note with surprise that Armenian historiography addressed the question of which kings bore the “tiezerakal” title quite late. Aram Ter-Ghevondyan was the first to pay special attention to the fact that among the Bagratid rulers, the first to bear the “tiezerakal” title was Smbat I¹⁶³. Later, in a special article, the scholar further substantiated this observation and expanded the range of sources that

¹⁶¹ Leo, *History of the Armenians*, vol. 2, book 1, *Collected Works*, vol. second, Yerevan, 1967, p. 600. (In Armenian)

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, note.

¹⁶³ A. Ter-Ghevondyan, *The Arabic Inscription of Haghpap and the Titles of the Bagratid Kings*, “Herald of the NAS RA” (Soc. Sci.), 1979, N 1, p. 75. (Armenian) Earlier, M. Ormanian and Leo mentioned the fact that Samuel of Ani calls Smbat I a “tiezerakal,” but the first researcher considered the “tiezerakal” characterization a nickname (see M. Ormanian, *Azgapatum*, vol. A, St. Etchmiadzin, 2001, column 1170), while the second interpreted this fact as a manifestation of flattery (see the previous footnote). A. Hovhannisyan also perceived the facts in the same way, considering the “tiezerakal” title a “designation” initially assigned to Smbat I and generally an “epithet” used to honor the Armenian Bagratids (see A. Hovhannisyan, *Essays on the History of Armenian Liberation Thought*, book A, Yerevan, 1957, p. 126, note 2). (In Armenian)

consider this Bagratid monarch specifically as a “tiezerakal.”¹⁶⁴ On a completely different occasion, while discussing the issue of the Bagratid-Zakarid kinship, the author of these lines brought new evidence from sources to confirm the fact that Smbat I was the first to appear with the “tiezerakal” title¹⁶⁵.

However, the recording of the facts cannot be considered final. There is a need for new observations to clarify the military and political basis and the timing of Smbat I’s adoption of a new title for the Bagratids. Additionally, to the extent possible, it is necessary to address the ideological means of legitimizing and sacralizing the Bagratid kings’ power, the sharp shifts in the history of Armenian statehood and political thought since the Arsacid era, and the efforts made by the Armenian court and church to respond to the new challenges of the period.

The issue of raising the authority of the royal power, it seems, became relevant from the moment of Ashot I’s coronation. Malachia Ormanian rightfully drew attention to the fact that after Ashot I received the symbols of royal power from the Caliph and was “clothed” with them, “The Armenians were not satisfied with only the political ceremony of investiture; they added an ecclesiastical ceremony, and

¹⁶⁴ A. Ter-Ghevondyan, *The State System of the Bagratid Kingdom*, “History of the Armenian People,” vol. III, p. 269. (in Armenian)

¹⁶⁵ H. Margaryan, *The Origin of the Zakarids*, “Historical-Philological Journal,” 1994, N 1-2, pp. 159-160. (in Armenian)

with the catholicos blessing, they renewed the restoration of the Armenian kingdom.”¹⁶⁶

Indeed, the Arabic ritual of crowning a ruler was so clearly different from Armenian traditions and perceptions that certain steps had to be taken to make it acceptable to the local environment. It is completely logical that this problem should have first faced the Armenian Church¹⁶⁷. Let us not forget that the Arsacid kings had unconditionally accepted Christianity at the time, based also on the consideration that the new religion “declared the king’s power sacred, given by God’s grace, and the kings as God’s anointed.”¹⁶⁸ Moreover, according to ancient tradition, the rights of the crown-bestowing knight belonged to the Bagratids themselves. Therefore, under the new conditions, the old coronation ceremony, with the prominent participation of the Bagratids, could not have been preserved.

However, the tradition of sanctifying the king’s power through a ceremony of anointment, declaring it sacred and divinely protected, was not immediately accepted in the Armenian reality. Malachia Ormanian’s convincing observations show that the custom of anointing the king in Bagratid Armenia was in use starting from the time of Ashot III¹⁶⁹. For comparison, let us note that even in the most powerful Christian state in

¹⁶⁶ M. Ormanian, *ibid.*, column 1155.

¹⁶⁷ L. Jones, *The Visual Expression of Bagratid Kingship: Ceremonial and Political Culture*, *Revue des Études Arméniennes*, t. 28, Paris, 2001-2002, p. 341-398.

¹⁶⁸ S. Yeremyan, *The Official Recognition of Christianity in Armenia During the Reign of Trdat III*, “History of the Armenian People,” vol. II, Yerevan, 1984, p. 72, cf. R. Manaseryan, *Armenia from Artavazd to Trdat the Great*, Yerevan, 1997, pp. 185-189. (in Armenian)

¹⁶⁹ M. Ormanian, *ibid.*, columns 1293-1294.

the East, the Byzantine Empire, which had deep-rooted traditions of state life, the ceremony of consecrating the emperor's power through anointment was accepted quite late.

The custom of holding a coronation ceremony with the participation of the Patriarch of Constantinople was adopted in Byzantium from the beginning of the 7th century, during the time of the emperors Phocas (602-610) and Heraclius I (610-641). Moreover, the performance of the coronation ceremony had a significant role in the recognition and establishment of the rights of Heraclius I's heirs, contributing to the founding of the Heraclian dynasty¹⁷⁰. High-ranking clergy participated in the coronation ceremony both in Byzantium¹⁷¹ and in Western European countries, particularly in France and Spain¹⁷².

It can be assumed that involving the Catholicos of Armenia in the coronation of the Bagratid kings served a similar purpose. From the surviving description of the Bagratid coronation ceremony, it appears that the Armenian Catholicos robed the king in a purple garment, anointed him with myrrh, and finally crowned him¹⁷³. Mkhitar Gosh

¹⁷⁰ Culture of Byzantium. Second half of the 7th-12th centuries, M., 1989, p. 62. Theophanes the Confessor, Translation from the original text, foreword and notes by Hrach Bartikyan. Foreign Sources on Armenia and Armenians, 13, Byzantine Sources, D, Yerevan, 1983, pp. 14, 16, 227, note 109. (in Armenian)

¹⁷¹ G. Ostrogorsky, Evolution of the Byzantine Coronation Rite., Coll.: Byzantium, Southern Slavs, Ancient Rus' and Western Europe, M., 1973, pp. 35-40. (in Russian)

¹⁷² J. M. Thierry, The Kingdom of the Bagratids of the 10th Century: between Byzantium and the Caliphate (884-1045), In: Ani, capital of Armenia in the year 1001, Paris, 2001, pp. 82-83. K. Manaserian. The establishment of a royal sovereignty in Bagratid Armenia: The king and God, *ibid.*, pp. 125-129. (in Armenian)

¹⁷³ Gh. Alishan, Mementos of the Armenian Homeland, vol. A, Venice, 1869, pp. 439-442. (in Armenian)

asserts that "a king should not be crowned without the command of the Patriarch."¹⁷⁴

The consideration of transferring royal power without upheaval must also have compelled the Bagratids to take appropriate steps. The recognition of Ashot I's royal rights did not at all mean that after his death, the throne would pass to his elder son, the future Smbat I, without any turmoil. However ancient the traditions of inheriting the crown by the eldest son may have been in Armenia, the events that followed Ashot I's death showed that the rights of the elder son could be challenged even by powerful and influential members of the Bagratid family.

Therefore, the vigorous efforts of Hovhannes Draskhanakerttsi to substantiate the principle of Arsacid-Bagratid legal succession are understandable. This idea even became a central tenet of his historical concept¹⁷⁵. Three centuries later, Mkhitar Anetsi also consistently came forward with the ideological justification of the Bagratids' rights¹⁷⁶.

As is well known, Smbat I was only able to establish himself on his father's throne after overcoming significant difficulties through a two-year military conflict. However, for the justification of the rights of the new king and his son Ashot II, a convincing basis already existed in the form of their titles "son of the king" and "king-born offspring." It

¹⁷⁴ Mkhitar Gosh, The Book of Judgements, edited by Kh. Torosyan, Yerevan, 1975, p. 29. (in Armenian)

¹⁷⁵ M. Darbinyan-Melikyan, The Historical Conception of Hovhannes Draskhanakerttsi, "Historical-Philological Journal," 1983, N 3, pp. 119-125. (in Armenian)

¹⁷⁶ Mkhitar Anetsi, Book of Worldly Events, edited by H. Margaryan, Yerevan, 1983, pp. 88-89. (in Armenian)

was precisely this point that his contemporary and close associate, Hovhannes Draskhanakerttsi, emphasized¹⁷⁷.

Yet, the Armenian court considered it necessary to emphasize Smbat I's high status, starting from the time of Ashot II, by introducing the new "tiezerakal" title for the Bagratids into a Christian context. According to Malachia Ormanian, Smbat I began to be called "tiezerakal" from the moment he subjugated the capital Dvin and established his rule over the territories to the north¹⁷⁸.

This view is based on the testimonies of Hovhannes Draskhanakerttsi regarding the expansion of the borders of the Armenian kingdom during Smbat I's reign. According to him, "...he brought all his dominion from the west of the north up to the city of Karin, and beyond Kars to the shore of the great sea, and up to the borders of the Iberians and to the foot of the great Caucasus mountain, taking Gudars and Tsanars up to the gate of Aghuank, and also the fortress of the gate-keeper there. And from there to the south, along the Kura river, up to the city of Tifkhis. And the province of Utik up to the city of Hunarakert and up to Tajk and Shamkhor."¹⁷⁹

However, the chronicler did not address the issue of the southern borders of Bagratid Armenia here, while Smbat I's main actions in this direction were carried out later. Furthermore, it is clear that the first half

of the 990s was less favorable for Smbat I in terms of foreign policy as well. The control of the Arab Caliphate was not fully eliminated; he had only recently granted the right to collect taxes from Armenia to the emir of Atropatene, Afshin, and this circumstance constantly created an interference and threat to Smbat I's internal affairs.

It is also difficult to assume that Smbat I could have taken the step of being called "tiezerakal" in the second half of the 990s, when the Armenian king suffered one internal and external failure after another. For example, in 896, he was defeated by the troops of Ahmad Shaybani, which at the same time revealed the complete bankruptcy of Smbat I's policy in Vaspurakan. Smbat I's next venture, proclaiming Prince Atrnerseh "king of the land of the Georgians and the second in his weakness,"¹⁸⁰ aimed at strengthening his positions in Armenia and Georgia, became a prelude to new foreign policy trials. The actual power of Atrnerseh extended to Tayk and Klarjeti¹⁸¹, and other parts of Georgia were by no means included within the borders of his kingdom, let alone the entire country¹⁸².

A study of the chronology of Smbat I's activities shows that the most favorable period for his undertakings was between the years 902 and 908, when he achieved remarkable internal and external successes.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 188.

¹⁸¹ "Essays on the History of Georgia," vol. II, Tbilisi, 1973, pp. 445-474 (in Georgian).

¹⁸² In Armenian studies, the issue of locating Atrnerseh's domains is usually bypassed (see, for example, M. Ormanian, *ibid.*, columns 1189-1190, Leo, *ibid.*, p. 524, S. Poghosyan, *History of the Armenian People*, vol. 2, Yerevan, 1965, pp. 22-23). B. Arakelyan expresses himself more specifically. From his account, it can be concluded that Atrnerseh was appointed king in Eastern Georgia (see B. Arakelyan, *The drive to unify the country and the fight against foreign invasion*, "History of the Armenian People," vol. III, p. 33). (in Armenian)

¹⁷⁷ Hovhannes Draskhanakerttsi, *History of Armenia*, Yerevan, 1996, pp. 146, 286. V. Harutyunova-Fidanyan, *Byzantium and Armenia in the 10th-12th centuries: a zone of contact.*, Coll.: Byzantium between West and East. An Attempt at a Historical Characterization, Saint Petersburg, 2001, pp. 392-393. (in Armenian)

¹⁷⁸ M. Ormanian, *ibid.*, column 1170.

¹⁷⁹ Hovhannes Draskhanakerttsi, p. 164. (in Armenian)

He could genuinely lay claim to creating a regional power and being proclaimed "tiezerakal" by medieval standards.

First, during those years, the Caliph al-Muktafi was in power in Baghdad, and he was keen to prevent the further strengthening of Yusuf, who had succeeded Afshin. Therefore, he sought to create a counterbalance against the Sajid emir, in the person of Smbat I. On the other hand, Yusuf had not yet gained the former power of his brother and, at the same time, was forced to refrain from overt actions against Smbat I. In this regard, the events of the year 902 are significant, when Smbat I, with the decisive support of the Artsrunis, re-established control over the Kaysik emirate.

Thus, the Armenian king simultaneously acted as a unifier and coordinator of all Armenian forces, which was extremely important for demonstrating the growing power and authority of the central government. He also asserted his rights as a supreme suzerain over foreign rulers.

It is a characteristic fact that Yusuf made no attempt to thwart the implementation of Smbat I's planned actions. The same can be said about the events concerning the fate of Nakhijevan, when the emir of Atropatene could not profit from the disagreements between the Artsrunis and Syunis, which had not yet turned into an open conflict. The handover of Nakhijevan to Ashot Artsruni only took place after a demonstration of the superior power of the Bagratids and Artsrunis over

Smbat Syuni. Finally, the premature death of Ashot Artsruni around 904 and the handing over of Nakhijevan to the Syunis once again proved that Smbat I was not meeting resistance when carrying out his undertakings within the country.

Yet, it is not difficult to see that Smbat I's main actions were still unfolding within the boundaries of Armenia. Smbat I undertook decisive steps to extend the influence of the Armenian Bagratids to Central Georgia, strengthen his rights over the southern foothills of the Greater Caucasus mountain range, and thereby be proclaimed "tiezerakal," approximately in the year 904¹⁸³, by resuming the struggle for Kartli, the heart of Georgia, that Ashot I had initiated.

Smbat I's successes in this arena have been recorded by both Armenian authors¹⁸⁴ and the Georgian chronicler who wrote the "Life of Kartli." It is noteworthy that precisely in connection with these events, the Georgian author calls Smbat I "tiezerakal" without any reservations, thus recording the Armenian king's title that had earned international recognition¹⁸⁵.

As is known, with the support of "Atrnerseh, King of the Georgians," Smbat I was able to defeat his opponent, "Konstantin, King of the Egerians," and consolidate his position in Kartli¹⁸⁶. However, after taking Konstantin captive, Smbat I "held him in honorable custody for

¹⁸³ "Essays on the History of Georgia," vol. II, Tbilisi, 1973, pp. 518-519.

¹⁸⁴ Hovhannes Draskhanakertsi, pp. 202-204, Anonymous Chronicler, pp. 187-193. (In Armenian)

¹⁸⁵ Kartli Tskhovreba, vol. I, Tbilisi, 1955, p. 262 (in Georgian), cf. H. Sargsyan, *ibid.*, pp. 159-160, note 21.

¹⁸⁶ Kartli Tskhovreba, vol. I, p. 262. Cf. The old Armenian translation of "Kartli Tskhovreba" or the History of Georgia, published by Ilya Abuladze, Tbilisi, 1953, p. 115. (in Armenian)

only four months.” After receiving reliable information that the “Egerians” “are preparing to appoint another tyrant, more powerful than Konstantin, as their king,” the Armenian king hurried to release Konstantin¹⁸⁷.

Evidence of Smbat I’s successes are his fresco preserved in the Ateni Sioni Church and the Armenian inscriptions written around 904 or shortly after. One of them was discovered relatively late in 1986 and was not included in the studies summarizing the Armenian inscriptions of Ateni Sioni. The author of the inscription, Hrahat, testifies that he came to Ateni for a visit “to the holy churches, and to Lord Smbat Bagratid.”¹⁸⁸ Thus, it can be recorded that Smbat I’s political influence in Kartli was not limited to the few months when he had not yet handed over that region to the “King of the Egerians.”

Among the Armenian chroniclers who mention Smbat I, Samuel of Ani refers to him as “tiezerakal” twice¹⁸⁹. The fact that Smbat I was honored with the “tiezerakal” title was also recorded by the anonymous chronicler, Shapur Bagratid, who was particularly sympathetic to the Bagratids.

According to his account, Smbat I, being “a father who worked and fought and was generous,” “ruled over all the land of the

Armenians, and with a strong hand he brought under his sway Armenia and Tayk, Georgia and Aghvank, and the plain of Georgia, and Parissos, and Azornis, and Arevis, and the city and province of Partav. And he took and ruled over Paytakaran, which is in Tiflis, Vagharshapat, and Dvin, and Vayots Dzor, and Nakhijevan. And he captured the fortresses of Yerrnchakay and Aghaskert, and Vagharshavan, which is in Baskan, Apahunik, Hark, and Taron. And he built the fortress of Khlatay, and he built the fortress and captured all the land of Arrberan... And he became proud and named himself Smbat “tiezerakal”.”¹⁹⁰

It is also interesting that the chronicler explains the adoption of the new title for the Bagratids with the fact that Smbat I also disposed of the fate of several regions of Southern Armenia. His words refer to the cities of Arches, Berkri, and the province of Tsaghkotn¹⁹¹. Thus, Smbat I had indeed significantly strengthened the position of the central government within the borders of Armenia and was taking steps aimed at making his dominion the political center of the South Caucasus.

Particular attention should be paid to the fact that the propaganda efforts of the Armenian king and the court, which would fully reflect the specific period of the adoption of the “tiezerakal” title, its spread, and its entrenchment in Armenia and the international arena, have found only a

¹⁸⁷ Hovhannes Draskhanakertsi, pp. 202-204, Kartli Tskhovreba, vol. I, p. 262.

¹⁸⁸ Z. Alexidzé, Le graffiti récemment découvert dans l’église Sioni d’Ateni, *Revue des Études Arméniennes*, t. XXIII, Paris, 1992, pp. 309-313.

¹⁸⁹ Samuel of Ani, *Compilations from Historical Writings*, with a foreword, comparison, additions, and notes by L. Ter-Michelian, Vagharshapat, 1893, p. 96, note 1, p. 98. Among the Bagratid kings named Smbat, Mkhitar Ayrivanetsi also recognizes the first one as “tiezerakal” (see Mkhitar Ayrivanetsi, *History of Armenia*, 1860, p. 56) (in Armenian).

¹⁹⁰ The History of the Anonymous Chronicler: Shapur Bagratid, Yerevan, 1971, pp. 160-161. The chronicler’s testimonies, of course, require a detailed study and cannot be accepted unconditionally. At the same time, there is no doubt that it would be equally wrong to abruptly reject the authenticity of these accounts. The work of clarifying the veracity of the Anonymous Chronicler’s data and dating Smbat I’s territorial acquisitions could become the subject of a separate article. Incidentally, Minas Hamtetsi (Hamdatsi), a late-period author, also characterizes Smbat I with similar tones (see Minas Hamtetsi, *Genealogy of the Armenians*, Vagharshapat, 1870, pp. 30-31). (in Armenian)

¹⁹¹ The History of the Anonymous Chronicler, p. 161.

distant echo in historiographical works. The official messages sent by and received by the Armenian king have not been preserved, which could have provided a more complete and accurate understanding of the second Bagratid monarch's new title. For now, apart from the mentions in narrative works, only two primary sources are known that have preserved fleeting evidence of Smbat I's "tiezerakal" title¹⁹².

Smbat I's subsequent fate and the harsh conditions of Armenia in the years following his death should, it seems, have consigned the "tiezerakal" title to oblivion. It appears that for a time, this was indeed the case, especially since Ashot Yerkat had adopted the honorary title of "shahanshah," which was fully consistent with the situation and realities that had emerged in the country. The subsequent spread of the "shahanshah" title among other branches of the Bagratids, and even more so it is becoming a traditional¹⁹³ title among the Bagratids of Ani, also had its justification: Armenia had become a land of small kingdoms.

The revival of the "tiezerakal" title during the reign of Smbat II should probably be explained by the Bagratids' persistent efforts to emphasize their role. An analysis of the testimonies of the authors who mention Smbat I and Smbat II with the "tiezerakal" title leads to the conviction that the first chroniclers to call Smbat II "Tiezerakal," namely

Matthew of Edessa¹⁹⁴ and Vardan Areveltsi¹⁹⁵, did not make a mistake or confuse the honorifics of the kings with the same name, but rather recorded an undeniable fact.

In addition to being "shahanshah," Smbat II was indeed also a "tiezerakal," which should be considered quite a normal occurrence. Finally, Gagik I¹⁹⁶ and even Hovhannes-Smbat¹⁹⁷ also appear with these two traditional titles for the Bagratids, which should make his actual military-political achievements all the more questionable. The facts show that the "tiezerakal" title also gained widespread use. From the 965 colophon¹⁹⁸ of the priest Pangagheon, it is evident that for a time, the rulers of the Artsruni kingdom of Vaspurakan also bore the "tiezerakal" title¹⁹⁹. Thus, the "tiezerakal" title appeared in the list of Bagratid titles probably in the beginning of the second decade of the reign of the second monarch of that dynasty, and it maintained its honorary place for more than a century. This title was considered so common for the Bagratids that in the beginning of the 13th century, the Zakarids, who for a time declared themselves the successors of the Bagratids, also included it in their set of titles. "Issues of Armenian History: Collection of Scientific Articles", 2005, 6, pages 98-110.

¹⁹² A. Hovhannisyán (see A. Hovhannisyán, *ibid.*, p. 126, note 2) had at the time drawn attention to the fact that Smbat I is mentioned as "tiezerakal" in the *Kotuk* of Sanahin (see K. Ghafadaryan, *The Monastery of Sanahin and its Inscriptions*, Yerevan, 1957, p. 190), and A. Ter-Ghevondyan (see A. Ter-Ghevondyan, *ibid.*, p. 75) pointed to a colophon (see G. Hovsepyan, *Colophons of Manuscripts*, vol. A, Antilias, 1951, p. 172). (in Armenian)

¹⁹³ A. Ter-Ghevondyan, *ibid.*, pp. 76-78.

¹⁹⁴ Matthew of Edessa, *Chronicle*, Yerevan, 1991, p. 162. (in Armenian)

¹⁹⁵ Vardan Areveltsi, *Universal History*, Moscow, 1861, p. 116. (in Armenian)

¹⁹⁶ S. Sadumyan, *The Newly Discovered Inscription of King Gagik I. "Herald of the NAS RA"* (Soc. Sci.), 1989, N 9, pp. 91-92. (in Armenian)

¹⁹⁷ *Corpus of Armenian Lapidary Inscriptions*, fasc. I, compiled by H. Orbeli, Yerevan, 1966, p. 48. (in Armenian)

¹⁹⁸ *Colophons of Armenian Manuscripts. 5th-12th centuries*, edited by A. Matevosyan, Yerevan, 1988, pp. 57-58. (in Armenian)

¹⁹⁹ A. Hovhannisyán, *ibid.*, p. 132. V. Vardanyan, *The Artsruni Kingdom of Vaspurakan*, Yerevan, 1969, pp. 176-177. (in Armenian)

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