

GEORGIAN NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES

COMMISSION FOR THE STUDY OF GEORGIAN HISTORICAL SOURCES

KARTLIS TSKHOVREBA

A HISTORY OF GEORGIA

ARTANUJI Publishing

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The Georgian Chronicles of
KARTLIS TSKHOVREBA
(A History of Georgia),
translated and with commentary

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| Leont'i Mroveli, The Lives of the Georgian Kings | <i>Dmitri Gamq'relidze</i> |
| Juansher Juansheriani, The Life of Vakht'ang Gorgasali | <i>Dmitri Gamq'relidze</i> |
| The Martyrdom of Saint Archil | <i>Medea Abashidze</i> |
| Mat'iane Kartlisa (The Chronicle of Kartli) | <i>Arrian Chant'uria</i> |
| The Life of David, King of Kings | <i>Dmitri Gamq'relidze</i> |
| The Chronicle of Giorgi Lasha and His Time | <i>Medea Abashidze</i> |
| The Life and Tale of the Bagrat'ionis | <i>Medea Abashidze</i> |
| The History and Eulogy of Monarchs | <i>Dmitri Gamq'relidze</i> |
| Basili, The Life of Tamar, the Great Queen of Queens | <i>Dmitri Gamq'relidze</i> |
| The Hundred Years' Chronicle | <i>Dmitri Gamq'relidze</i> |

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საქართველოს მეცნიერებათა ეროვნული აკადემია

საქართველოს ისტორიის წყაროების კომისია

ქართლის ცხოვრება

ინგლისური ტექსტის რედაქტორი

სტივენ ჯონსი

ქართული და რუსული ტექსტების მთავარი რედაქტორი

როინ მეტრეველი

გამომცემლობა არტანუჯი

თბილისი 2014

FOREWORD

The history of Georgia and Georgians occupies a significant place in world history. Human society has experienced a long cultural and historic evolution on the territory of Georgia. Historical investigation, from archaeological discoveries to ethnographic analysis, show convincingly that Georgia was an ancient country where land farming and animal breeding was comparable to any place in the more advanced and civilized world at the time. In Georgia, ploughing implements have been used since earliest times, the principle of the wheel was long known, and the vine, which requires sophisticated care and irrigation, was cultivated. The first state on the territory of Georgia appeared three thousand years ago, and over the millennia, Georgians have created an original and highly developed culture.

A civilization represents a cultural unity of high order. It is determined by common characteristics, such as language, religion, common traditions, as well as self-identification by a people, or collection of peoples.

History is unpredictable, but the historian who grasps the depth of history becomes a participant in its creative process. Our task is to offer to the English-speaking reader the most important narrative of the history of Georgia – *kartlis tskhovreba* (*The History of Georgia*). It is a major monument in itself and a source of much of our known history. Georgian civilization, like others, occupies a particular historical niche which is reflected in the writings of *kartlis tskhovreba*.

Georgian history is characterized by multiple wars, which put an utmost strain on the country's physical and moral forces. At the same time, the country enjoyed significant success, such as the political and territorial unification of the country (but only at certain crucial periods), the development of cities and urban life, as well as of a high level of science, education and culture in general. The life of our Georgian ancestors, their struggle, labor, and creativity have found reflection in folklore, including poetry, oral stories, and written legends. The story of Amirani, the myth of the Argonauts, and tales about the foundation of Tbilisi, have passed from one generation to another. Monuments of material culture, such as churches, monasteries, castles, palace ruins, and large settlements, are the evidence that tells us about our own past. A complete reconstruction of the country's history is possible mainly through written sources.

The first manuscript of a historical character in the Georgian language is dated from the fifth century A.D. The collection of historical works known as *kartlis tskhovreba* represents the only coherent written source of the history of Georgia. It embodies the "official" history of the country. It is a brilliant monument of Georgian historical writing. Since ancient times, the Bible, the *Knight in*

the Panther's Skin, and *kartlis tskhovreba*, were considered to be the "fair" and "holy" books which together formed a necessary part of the dowry of a Georgian bride.

In *kartlis tskhovreba*, the historical works of different authors are set in chronological order, which together create a unified history of Georgia. This literary monument is remarkable because besides representing a history of Georgia and the Georgians, it contains much information regarding the history of different countries and peoples (Azerbaijanis, Armenians, Greeks, Romans, Persians, Arabs, Byzantines, Turks, Mongols and many others).

A great contribution to the study of *kartlis tskhovreba* was made by the King of Kartli, Vakht'ang VI (1675-1737), who created a special commission of "learned men" to compile and edit the texts of this literary work. The manuscripts of *kartlis tskhovreba* were copied many times (mainly based on the MS of Vakht'ang's edition), but now we have about twenty such manuscripts. In 1849 the Russian Academy of Sciences published *kartlis tskhovreba*, based on the MS of the post-Vakht'ang period, edited by the French orientalist and Georgian Academician Marie-Félicité Brosset. Brosset translated the text into French and published it. He made this source on the history of Georgia accessible to the world community.

Brosset used three manuscripts of the eighteenth century, which had been reedited and supplemented by the commission of "learned men" under Vakht'ang VI. A new MS of the eighteenth century was later found. Five manuscripts were also discovered going back to the fifteenth to seventeenth centuries, i.e. to the pre-Vakht'ang period.

In 1884 the eminent Georgian historian Dimit'ri Bakradze, uncovered a copy of the MS assigned for Queen Mariam, wife of King Rost'om of Kartli, (1633-1648), dated from the seventeenth century. The manuscript is preserved in the National Centre of Manuscripts (S-30). In 1906, the MS was published by Ekvtime Taq'aishvili. The Queen Mariam MS contained the *Fount of Treasure*, which J. P. Mahe and Ts. Kurtsikidze assume was translated from Arabic; *The Lives of Georgian Kings* by Leont'i Mroveli; *The Life of Vakht'ang Gorgasali* by Juansher; *The Chronicle of Kartli*; *The Life of David, King of Kings*; *The Life and Tale of the Bagrat'ionis* by Sumbat Davidisdze; a manuscript of the first historian of Queen Tamar, *The History and Eulogy of the Monarchs*; and the work of an unknown chronicler entitled *The Hundred Years' Chronicle*.

In 1913, Ivane Javakhishvili discovered an MS of *kartlis tskhovreba* in the house of A. Jambak'ur-Orbeliani, in Lamisq'ana village. According to the colophon of the copyist, the MS was assigned for Anna, wife of Aleksandre, the King of K'akheti (1476-1511), but in fact it was a later copy (sixteenth century) of the MS. The manuscript published in 1942 by S. Q'aukhchishvili is preserved in the National Center of Manuscripts (Q-795).

The MS of Queen Anna contains the writings of Leont'i Mroveli and Juansher, *The Chronicle of Kartli*, *The History of David the Restorer (The Life of David, King of Kings)* and *The Chronicle of Giorgi Lasha and His Time*. In 1923, Ivane Javakhishvili discovered one more manuscript, the so-called Ch'alashvili MS. There are two parts to it: the earlier one was rewritten at the beginning of the seventeenth century; the missing parts (at the beginning and at the end) were written in 1731 by Eraj Ch'alashvili, who supplemented the text according to the MS of Vakht'ang's edition. Now the manuscript is preserved in the National Center of Manuscripts (Q-207).

The following manuscripts are included in the MS of Eraj Ch'alashvili: the manuscripts of Leont'i Mroveli and Juansher, *The Chronicle of Kartli*, *The History of David the Restorer*, and the second history of Queen Tamar (different from the *History and Eulogy of the Monarchs*). I. Javakhishvili considered Basili Ezosmodzghvari (Lord and Steward of the King's Court) to be the author of the second history of Tamar; the story was called *The Life of Tamar, the Great Queen of Queens*. At the end of the manuscript, the new part, or the continuation of *kartlis tskhovreba* is included (fourteenth-eighteenth centuries) composed by the "learned men" under Vakht'ang VI.

In 1942, S. Q'aukhchishvili studied the Machabeli MS, copied by Giorgi Machabeli in 1736. The original was an MS of *kartlis tskhovreba*, which belonged to King Archil, as stated by the copyist. The missing parts of the original (at the beginning and at the end) were taken by Machabeli from Ch'alashvili's MS. Today the manuscript is preserved at the National Center of Manuscripts (H-2135).

The Machabeli MS includes an *Introduction* composed by the Commission of "learned men;" the initial part of *The Chronography of Pseudo-Dorotheus* (sixteenth-seventeenth centuries); *The Lives of Georgian Kings*, *The Conversion of Kartli by Saint Nino*, *The Life of Vakht'ang Gorgasali*, *The Martyrdom of Saint Archil*, *The Chronicle of Kartli*, *The History of David the Restorer*, *The History and Eulogy of the Monarchs*, and *The Hundred Years' Chronicle*. The MS ends with *kartlis tskhovreba* (fourteenth to eighteenth centuries).

In 1959 Ak'ak'i K'limiashvili discovered an MS of *kartlis tskhovreba* in the family of Olga Mach'avariani, in Upper Imereti (western Georgia). The MS was copied in 1697. The date was indicated in the epilogue of the copyist. He also mentioned the original of the copied MS. The manuscript is preserved in Svetitskhoveli Cathedral in Mtskheta. Conceivably, it is the same manuscript mentioned in the Mtskheta Charter in 1546. In the epilogue the name of the person, who ordered the manuscript – Nik'oloz Samebeli, Diocesan of Sameba (Trinity church near Ujarma village, K'akheti) is mentioned. The MS is preserved at the National Center of Manuscripts (Q-1219).

The MS discovered by K'limiashvili includes: *The Lives of the Georgian Kings*, *The Conversion of Kartli by Saint Nino*, *The Life of Vakht'ang Gorgasali*, *The Martyrdom of Saint Archil*, *The Chronicle of Kartli*, *The History of the Bagrat'ids*, *The Life of David, King of Kings*, *The History and Eulogy of Monarchs*, and *The Hundred Years' Chronicle*.

The above-mentioned manuscripts of *kartlis tskhovreba* contain the writings of an "ancient cycle." The Commission of "learned men," convened on the initiative of Vakht'ang VI, and based on different MS versions, edited and supplemented *kartlis tskhovreba*, and added a continuation, called the *New kartlis tskhovreba*. Besides this work, the writings of Vakhushti Bagrat'ioni (S. Q'aukhchishvili published this work in the fourth volume of *kartlis tskhovreba*), of Sekhnia Chkheidze, P'ap'una Orbeliani and Oman Kherkheulidze (together with the work of Vakhushti) were included in the "new cycle" and published by David Chubinashvili in St Petersburg, in 1854, as the second book of *kartlis tskhovreba*.

In its original form *kartlis tskhovreba* was composed in the eleventh-twelfth centuries. Evidently, political integration of the state, and its economic and cultural development, demanded an integrated and complete description of the past of Georgia. The collection aimed not only at describing the history of the state, but also supported ideologically the political integration of Georgia and the reign

of the Bagrat'ioni dynasty. Before that time, notes on the chronicles of Georgia were made "from time to time," as Leont'i Mroveli puts it in his work, *The Martyrdom of Saint Archil*.

Ivane Javakhishvili demonstrated that initially the chronicles contained the history of Georgia from ancient times up to the eighth century. Later, works on the history from the eighth to twelfth centuries, and then the thirteenth to fourteenth centuries, were added. This would include *The Lives of the Georgian Kings and Patriarchs of the Georgians*, *The Conversion of Kartli by Saint Nino*, written by Leont'i Mroveli, *The Life of Vakhtang Gorgasali* by Juansher, *The Hundred Years' Chronicle*, *The Martyrdom of Saint Archil*, by Leont'i Mroveli, *The Chronicle of Kartli*, *The Life of David, King of Kings*, *The Life and Tale of the Bagrat'ionis* by Sumbat Davidisdze, *The History of the Five Reigns* (Life of King Demet're, Life of King Giorgi, Life of Queen Tamar the Great, Life of King Giorgi, the son of Tamar), the work of the first historian of Queen Tamar, *The History and Eulogy of the Monarchs*, the work of Basili Ezosmodzghvari, *The Life of Tamar, the Great Queen of Queens*, and *The Hundred Years' Chronicle*. The last work ends with the accession of Giorgi Brts'q'invale ("The Brilliant") at the beginning of the fourteenth century. The chronicler describes the first steps of the King, but what happened later is not included; it is said that "the tongue is unable to tell such wonderful and awesome (things)," and with this the narrative ends. What these "wonderful and awesome (things)" were, remains a riddle. The so-called "ancient cycle" of *kartlis tskhovreba* ends with *The Hundred Years' Chronicle*.

Perhaps some of the manuscripts of *kartlis tskhovreba* have been lost, and there was no chance to continue the work. However, some notes about the events of that epoch exist. The new cycle of *kartlis tskhovreba*, as we have already noted, was created by "learned men" of Vakht'ang VI's Commission, who collected various historical materials and wrote a history of the fourteenth to seventeenth centuries. It took twenty years to compile the new *kartlis tskhovreba*. The MS of Vakht'ang VI's times provides evidence of the laborious work done by the "learned men." *Kartlis tskhovreba* attracted the attention of Georgian society at that time. New customers and copyists appeared. Vakhushti Bagrat'ioni pointed to the great number of manuscripts of *kartlis tskhovreba*.

The "learned men" used various sources for the creation of the *New kartlis tskhovreba*. They expressed regret over the fact that for certain periods, the history of Georgia was "not written". They had to borrow the material from "ancient books," from the history of Persians and Armenians, chronicles and charters, stories of eyewitnesses, all of which is noted in the introduction to the *New kartlis tskhovreba*. Vakht'ang VI and his commission made a significant contribution to the study, editing and supplementing *kartlis tskhovreba*.

In 1955-59 Academician S. Q'aukhchishvili, examining the critical notes concerning all the manuscripts of that time, published the complete text *kartlis tskhovreba*. This MS played a great role in the investigation of Georgian history, and was also considered a textological and source study. It combined the results of the colossal work performed by I. Javakhishvili and other Georgian scholars. Over the last fifty years *kartlis tskhovreba* has been at the center of scholarly attention and is considered the most important source on the history of Georgia. Many special studies have been published in Georgia and abroad. Some works included in the text before the second half of the twelfth century, have been translated into the Old Armenian language (in 1953 Ilia Abuladze published

a translation with commentaries); E. Taq'aishvili, V. Akhvlediani, G. Tsulaia, M. Lordkipanidze, K. K'ek'elidze, V. Dondua, and M. Shanidze translated some works into Russian; Marie Brosset translated parts into French, G. Patch – into German, and K. Vivian and R. Thomson, into English.

In 1959 the manuscript of the so-called “ancient cycle,” written in “nuskhuri” (an ancient Georgian alphabet) and dated 1697, was discovered. This, along with continuing scholarly interest in *kartlis tskhovreba*, led to the demand for a new publication of a critical text addressing this unique literary monument. The Commission for the study of Georgian historical sources of the Georgian Academy of Sciences started this work at the end of the last century. A group of historians and philologists of the K. K'ek'elidze Institute of Manuscripts, the I. Javakhishvili Institute of History and Ethnology, and Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University, took part in a textological and critical investigation of the text of *kartlis tskhovreba*.

The manuscripts of *kartlis tskhovreba* selected for publication in different editions, are not identical and depend on the objectives of the publishers (as well as the availability of the materials). M. Brosset's publication and the monumental two-volume publication of S. Q'aukhchishvili (1955-1959) are based on several manuscripts well known at the time of publication. The editions of a separate MS by E. Taq'aishvili in 1906 (the MS of Queen Mariam) and S. Q'aukhchishvili in 1942 (the MS of Queen Anna) were designed to introduce earlier texts from the pre-Vakht'ang editions. The selection of the edited manuscripts for publication in *kartlis tskhovreba* are different (see I. Javakhishvili, K. K'ek'elidze, M. Lordkipanidze, M. Shanidze, Ts. Kurtsikidze, R. K'ik'nadze, G. Arakhamia). The manuscripts of the “ancient cycle” are taken as the basis for the present English publication (the manuscripts of Queen Mariam, of Queen Anna, of Ch'alashvili, of Machabeli, and the MS discovered by A. K'limiashvili). The peculiarities of each MS and the result of the editorial work of Vakht'ang VI, and of later times, have been taken into consideration for this publication.

Regarding the titles and authorship of the separate constituent parts of *kartlis tskhovreba*, we wholly share the opinion of I. Javakhishvili. The traditional principles regarding the content and structure of this literary monument, developed by I. Javakhishvili and others, and realized by S. Q'aukhchishvili, were followed in the present edition with some modifications. Thus, *The Lives of the Georgian Kings* by Leont'i Mroveli was considered to be the history of heathen kings, including the reign of Mirian and the story concerning the conversion of Kartli by Nino of Cappadocia. The life and feats of Vakht'ang Gorgasali was considered to be authored by Juansher, while the history of the period after Vakht'ang and up to the beginning of the story of King Archil (before the story of the raids of the Arabs) is regarded as pseudo-Juansherian; the story of the life and martyrdom of Archil is singled out as a separate piece (the author is Leont'i Mroveli).

The success of the presented “lives” depends as a rule on the orderly narration and interpretation of the chronicler. He may use different means to achieve the best effect; often he tries to render the event realistically, builds the plot interestingly, and uses the ideological subtext skillfully.

I. Javakhishvili estimated highly the works that make up *kartlis tskhovreba*, and thought that the most trustworthy among them were: *The Chronicle of Kartli*, the writings of the historian of David the Restorer, *The History and Eulogy of the Monarchs*, *The Life of Tamar, the Great Queen of Queens*, by Basili Ezosmodzghvari, works of the chronicles of the times of Lasha-Giorgi and Sumbat Davidisdze,

and *The Hundred Years' Chronicle* by an unknown chronicler. The scholar made critical notes on the works of Leont'i Mroveli and Junasher; he assumed that their publication with commentaries was necessary.

Among the authors of *kartlis tskhovreba*, the historian of David the Restorer, a highly enlightened person, a connoisseur of Western and Eastern cultures, is the most trustworthy and competent. He considered writing chronicles a proper occupation, and understood that for a responsible and valuable representation of the activity of some person, the author must master the art of rhetoric, that is the skill of an organized and trustworthy narration. At the same time, he believed the chronicler should not exaggerate or distort the events, and he rebuked Homer and Aristobulus, the first for glorifying the heroes of the Trojan War and the second for praising Alexander of Macedon. He thought that due to the lack of sufficient factual material, Homer and Aristobulus were obliged to fill in the narration by "rhetorical digressions."

The work of the historian of David the Restorer is distinguished for its elegance, style, language, artistry and deep sincerity. Comparison of the chronology of the events with other sources confirm the trustworthiness of his works. All this allows us to consider the chronicle to be a primary historical source. Without discussing in detail other manuscripts of *kartlis tskhovreba*, we will just note that all of them are valuable and must be considered vital to the study of the history of the Caucasus.

The main line of Georgian historical thinking developed along with the political development of Medieval Georgia. At the time of the political strengthening and cultural revival of Georgia, Georgian historiography revived and developed as an integral part of Georgian culture. The achievements of Georgian historical writing were to a considerable degree determined by traditionally highly developed philological (particularly hagiographical) and historical-philological schools. This is the context for *kartlis tskhovreba*.

We believe that the current publication of *kartlis tskhovreba* in English is particularly important. This unique historical monument should become available for the global public who speak and read English.

Academician **Roin Met'reveli**

EDITOR'S NOTE

The transliteration system we used for Georgian is the Georgian national system, adopted in 2002 by the State Department of Geodesy and Cartography of Georgia and the Institute of Linguistics of the Georgian Academy of Sciences.*

Georgian does not use capitals, a system we have generally followed, except for names and places, and when a Georgian word begins a sentence. There are spelling inconsistencies between the texts in Georgian, which span the ninth to fourteenth centuries; the texts have undergone many subsequent edits by Georgian chroniclers and scholars. We kept mostly to the original spelling but footnoted or added in parenthesis alternative spellings or names that might be more familiar to the reader. Thus Trabzon will be translated in parenthesis as Trebizond, Tpilisi as Tbilisi, Q'ivchaq's as Q'ipchaks, etc. Plurals we have rendered with an "s." Georgian authors in Russian translation will have no diacritic marks.

For Russian, we use the US Library of Congress transliteration system without the diacritic marks. At times, Russian spelling, such as *Abkhazia*, may be modified instead of Georgian equivalents (*Abkhazeti*), if they are considered more familiar (and thus more understandable) to the reader.

Stephen Jones

* (<http://www.transliteration.com/transliteration/en/georgian/national/>)

Leont'i Mroveli

THE LIVES OF GEORGIAN KINGS

PART ONE

In the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit
I will begin to relate
The stories of the Georgian kings,
The patriarchs of the Georgians, and of their seed

5

Chapter One

The Story of the Eight Brothers

First, let us note that the Armenians, Kartvels, Ranis, Movak'ans, Eris, Lek'is, Megrels and Caucasians, all these kinsmen had one father by the name of Targamos.¹ This Targamos was the son of Tarsh, the grandson of Japheth, Noah's son. And Targamos was a hero.

10

After the splitting up of languages, when Noah's descendants built the tower in Babylon and the languages were divided and the builders were dispersed all over the earth, this Targamos set out together with his tribe, and settled down between the mountains of Ararat' and Masis,² inaccessible to man. His tribe was great and innumerable, because he had sons with many wives, and daughters too; and then there were the children and grandchildren of his sons and daughters. He lived six hundred years. The lands of Ararat' and Masis could not contain them all.

15

The country that fell to the lot of Targamos had these bounds: the Gurgan Sea in the east, the Pontic Sea in the west, the mountains of Oreti³ in the south, and the Caucasian Mountains in the north. Of (all) the sons of Targamos, eight were the powerful and glorious heroes: the first was Haos, the second was Kartlos, the third was Bardos, the fourth was Movak'an, the fifth was Lek', the sixth was Heros, the seventh was K'avk'as and the eighth was Egros.

20

All eight were heroes, but Haos exceeded all the others, for there was no one equal to him either before, or after the Flood, whether in bodily constitution, power, or prowess.

25

As the country of Ararat' and Masis could not contain the whole tribe any more, Targamos divided the country and the tribe between these eight heroes: half of the tribe and the best half of the

country he gave to Haos, and to the other seven he gave each his share. Bringing the seven of them to the north, he divided the land among them according to their merits. He gave to Kartlos his part determining its borders as follows: Hereti and the river of Berduji in the east; the Pontic Sea in the west; the mountain that stretches along the upper reaches of the river of Berduji, and the mountain
5 which extends further to the west, to the place from which the river flows, which then merges with the Mt'k'vari, stretching along the mountain between K'larjeti and T'ao and down to the sea. In the north, Ghado defines the border, and a small mountain which branches off from the Caucasus and follows the edge of Ghado Mountain, and which is now called Likhi. And all the lands that lay within these precincts Targamos gave to Kartlos.

10 To Bardos he gave the lands to the south of the Mt'k'vari from the river of Berduji and down to the sea, to the place where the Mt'k'vari and the Araks merge. Bardos built the town of Bardru and settled down there.

To Movak'an he gave the land on the left side of the Mt'k'vari from the mouth of the Little Alazani and down to the sea. Movak'an built the town of Movak'neti and settled there.

15 To Heros he gave the land on the north side of the Mt'k'vari, from the mouth of the Little Alazani to T'q'et'ba, now called Gulgula. Heros built for the first time a town between the two rivers at the place where both Alazanis merge and gave this town his own name – Hereti. That is why this land is called Hereti. Now the place between the two rivers is called Khoranta.

To Egros he gave a coastal land, defining its borders as follows: a small mountain in the east,
20 which is now called Likhi; the sea in the west; the river of Little Khazaria in the north, which is the Caucasus mountain border. This Egros built a town and called it by his name – Egrisi. Now that place is called Bedia. In the north, beyond Caucasia, Targamos had no lands; there were no people there, the land was uninhabited from the Caucasus range down to the great river that flows into the Derbent Sea. So Targamos picked out two heroes among the many – Lek' and K'avk'as, and gave
25 to Lek' the land with the borders from the Derbent Sea to the river of Lomek'i, and in the north up to the Great river of Khazaria. To K'avk'as he gave the land from the Lomek'i and to the end of the Caucasus range in the west.

Haos settled down on the land of his father Targamos, taking as well possession of the lands that lay to the north of it, that is, as I have already said, to Mount Oreti in the south, to the Gurgan
30 Sea in the east and to the Pontic Sea in the west. The ruler and master over all these seven heroes was Haos. All the seven were obedient to him and all the eight of them were subject to Nebroth, who was the king over the whole world.

After some years passed, Haos called these seven heroes together and told them: “God granted our tribe the power and greatness of numbers. Now with the help of our Creator we will not remain
35 any more in submission to anybody and will serve nobody but God – the Creator.” The seven heroes expressed their consent with Haos and confirmed their resolution. They broke with Nebroth and stopped paying him tribute. At the same time they colluded with other tribes and they too turned their backs on Nebroth.

Nebroth became angry with them, summoned his heroes and all the armies obedient to him
40 and set out against the Targamosids. Haos called on all the seven heroes and the whole tribe of

Targamosids. He was assisted by some of his relatives from the west. Haos gathered them all and set his camp at the foot of Mount Masis. Nebroth approached the land of Adarbadagan and camped there, and he sent sixty heroes and a powerful army to fight the Targamosids.

When Nebroth's army approached, it was met by the seven heroes, Haos's brothers, with their powerful troops, while Haos himself with a yet stronger army stood behind them in the rear. A fierce battle started, which resembled a whirlwind, with its brutality. The dust raised by their feet was like a thick cloud, the glare of their armor – like lightning in the sky, the cry that parted their lips – like thunder, the arrows and the stones fell like hail; the blood they shed ran like the streams that follow a hailstorm. The fight gained in intensity, and people without number died on both sides.

Haos stood at the rear of his people and supported and encouraged them with his horrific voice, which resembled peals of thunder. At last the Targamosids prevailed, destroying Nebroth's sixty heroes and their armies. And the seven heroes of the Targamosids – Kartlos, Bardos, Movak'an, Heros, Lek', K'avk'as and Egros remained safe and sound, and victorious. They thanked God.

When Nebroth learned of this, he got angry and advanced against them with all his troops. Haos did not have an army equal in number to that of Nebroth, and so he fortified his position in the depressions of the Masis. Nebroth approached him from below, clad in iron and steel, which covered him from head to toe. He ascended one mountain wishing to talk with Haos and to propose he submit to him if he wanted Nebroth's withdrawal. But Haos told his heroes: "Cover me from the rear and I will approach Nebroth."

He came forward and stood facing Nebroth, close enough; and he shot an arrow at Nebroth and hit him in the chest – right in his steel breastplate; and the arrow went through him. Nebroth fell, his army fled, and so the tribe of Targamos freed itself. Then Haos proclaimed himself to be the king over his brothers, as well as over the other tribes that lived next to the borders of his kingdom. And all the seven brothers went to their domains, each to his own, and remained subject to Haos. Up to this point we have been writing the story of all eight brothers.

Chapter Two

The Story of Kartli

And now we will tell the story of Kartli, its tribes, and their life until our time.

After the division by Targamos of the country between his tribes, his eight sons, and after giving Kartlos the country we described above, Kartlos came to where the river Aragvi joins the river Mt'k'vari, ascended the mountain which is called Armazi and built a house for himself and called this mountain by his name – Kartli. Before the erection there of the idol Armaz, the mountain was called Kartli. And so the entire country stretching from Khuani and to the Sp'eri Sea was called Kartli.

After that Kartlos built the fortress Orbi, which is now called Samshvilde. Then he built the fortress Mt'ueri, which is now called Khunani. He lived a long life, and his descendants grew greatly in number.

Among his sons, five heroes stood out: Mtskhetos, Gardabos, K'akhos, K'ukhos, and Gachios. All of them were powerful, but Mtskhetos excelled all the others.

Kartlos died and he was buried on the top of Mount Kartli, which is now called Armazi. After that his wife built Deda-tsikhe. She also built Bostan-kalaki, which is now called Rustavi. And Kartlos's
5 wife divided lands between the five heroes, her sons.

To Gardabos she gave Khunani and defined its borders: the river Berduji in the east, the town of Gachiani in the west, Armazi mountain in the south, and the river Mt'k'vari in the north.

To Gachios she gave Orbis-tsikhe, the land from the river of Sk'vireti to the borders of Abotsi. Gachios built the town Gachiani, which in those times was called "Hunting City."

10 To K'ukhos she gave Bostan-kalaki, which is now called Rustavi and also the land from Aragvi to Hereti, down to the edge of Mount K'akheti, between the rivers of Alazani and Mt'k'vari.

To K'akhos she gave the land between the Caucasus and the mountains of K'akheti, from the river Aragvi to the river T'q'et'ba, which is a border of Hereti. K'akhos built Cheleti, and K'ukhos helped him; that is why, though Deda-tsikhe belonged to K'akhos, the latter gave it to K'ukhos as a
15 token of his gratitude for his aid in the development of Cheleti, which, being the first in K'akheti, was given the name Ber.

And Mtskhetos, who excelled his brothers as a hero, remained on the land of his father Kartlos, which is now called Armazi. He also built a town between the two rivers – the Mt'k'vari and Aragvi – at the place of their confluence and named the town after himself – Mtskheta. From there he took
20 possession of the country from Tpilisi and the river Aragvi to the Sp'eri Sea in the east.

Mtskhetos was the ruler and master over all four of his brothers, and all of them were submissive to him. Such was the division that took place between Kartlos's sons, and such were those whom the mother separated after the death of Kartlos. Mtskhetos lived many years, and raised many of his tribe as well as the other sons of Kartlos.

25 And among the sons of Mtskhetos three brave heroes stood out: Uplos, Odzrkhos, and Javakhos. Mtskhetos divided the country and the entire tribe between them. To Odzrkhos he gave the rocky country from T'asis-k'ari to the Sp'eri Sea. Odzrkhos built two reinforced towns: Odzrkhe and Tukharisi. To Javakhos he gave the land from Panavari to the upper reaches of Mt'k'vari. Javakhos built two towns with fortresses in each: Ts'unda and Art'aani, which at that time was called Kajta-
30 kalaki and now is called Khuri.

Uplos remained on the land of his father Mtskhetos – in Mtskheta. He owned the lands from the Aragvi and Tpilisi to T'asis-k'ari and Panavari. He built Uplis-tsikhe, Urbnisi, K'asp'i and named this land from Aragvi and Armazi to T'asis-k'ari – Zena-sopeli, which is now called Shida Kartli.

35 Until the death of Mtskhetos all these tribes of Targamos lived in mutual love; they lived in fear of Nebrotids, believing that the Nebrotids were looking for a chance to avenge Nebroth's blood. Due to this fear the tribes of Targamos tried to reinforce their city-fortresses.

But when Mtskhetos, the son of Kartlos, died, enmity sprang up among some of Kartlos's sons. Feuds and mutual raids became common occurrences, because the brothers ceased to obey Uplos, Mtskhetos' son; they did not address him as their master, though Uplos had been left on the throne
40 by Kartlos, and the power over the Kartlosids went to him from his father. The feuds went on without

end. When any two of the kinsmen rose against the third, the others came to their aid: some helped this one and the others that one; when they fought each other, the others joined in. Sometimes they were at peace, but discords and feuds soon started again.

So it continued and there was no one among them who could excel over the others in his nobility or eminence; and the people were choosing their chiefs themselves. Only the one who sat in Mtskheta was considered the head of the other chiefs. They were called neither kings nor *eristavis*, but *mamasakhlisis*. The one among the *mamasakhlisis* that sat in Mtskheta was considered a peacemaker between the hostile sides, and the judge in relation to all the Kartlosids, because the city of Mtskheta towered above all the other cities of Kartli, and it was considered the capital.

This was the time when the people in Kartli forgot God, their creator and began to worship the Sun, the Moon and the five stars; and the main and inviolable oath for them was the oath made in the name of Kartlos's grave.⁴

Khazars⁵

At that time the Khazars had gained in strength. They began to fight with the Lek' and K'avk'as tribes. And the Targamosids at that time lived in peace and had general love for one another. Durdzuk', the son of T'iret, was master over the sons of K'avk'as. They entered into negotiations with all six of the Targamosids' descendants, asking for their help in their fight with the Khazars. Then all the tribes of the Targamosids gathered together and crossing Mount Caucasus ravaged the Khazars' land and took prisoners from all over their territories. They built a town on the boundaries of Khazaria and returned home.

After this, the Khazars chose a king for themselves; everybody submitted to him. Setting out on a campaign the Khazars came to the south through the Sea Gate, which is now called Derbent. The Targamosids could not offer them any resistance, because the Khazars were too numerous; the Khazars seized the whole country of the Targamosids, ravaged the towns of Ararat' and the Masis (mountains), and also the northern towns. Only the city-fortresses of Tukharisi, Samshvilde and Mt'ueris-tsikhe, which is Khunani, remained untouched; Shida Kartli and Egrisi also remained intact.

The Khazars took control of both roads that went through the Sea Gate, or Derbent, and the Aragvi Gate, which is Darial. The Khazars increased their raids, ravaging and taking prisoners in the country of the Targamosids. The Targamosids could not withstand them and became the Khazars' tributaries.

When the King of the Khazars captured the countries about which we have written, and crossed Mount Caucasus, he had with him his son by the name of Uobos. He gave to his son the prisoners of Armenia and Kartli; and he gave him besides, part of K'avk'as's land that stretched to the west of Lomek'i river and to the western edge of Mount Caucasus.

And Uobos settled there. His descendants are the Ovses,⁶ and the country is Ossetia, which formerly had been the domain of K'avk'as. And Durdzuk', who was the most distinguished among

the sons of K'avk'as, settled in a mountain gorge, and called that land by his name – Durdzuk'eti. He paid tribute to the King of Khazars.

The King of the Khazars, at this time, gave to the son of his father's brother the land of Lek', from the sea of Derbent in the east to the river Lomek'i, and gave him besides the captives from Ran and Movak'an. And he settled down there on the land that made up the Lek's' domain.

Khozanikh, being the most distinguished among the descendants of Lek', went to a mountain gorge, and built there a town, and called it by his name – Khozanikheti.

Much time has passed since then; all these tribes remained tributaries of the Khazars.

Then the Persians became stronger from the side of the rising Sun; they were Nebroth's descendants. And among Nebroth's descendants, one man stood out, a hero, and his name was Apridon, "the one who put Bevrasp in chains, the lord of snakes, who fastened him to a mountain that is inaccessible to man."

This is what the "Persian History" writes. Apridon became the master over all the lands of Persia; he sent to other countries rulers, and his *eristavis*, and made them his tributaries. Once he sent one of his *eristavis*, by name of Ardam, the son of one of Nebroth's descendants, with a great army on a campaign. He came to Kartli and devastated all its towns and fortresses, destroying all the Khazars whom he found there.

Ardam built a town by the Sea Gate and called it Derbent, which is translated as "the closed gate." He also surrounded the town of Mtskheta with a wall of stone and mortar. Up to that time there was no precedent in Kartli for using these construction materials. People here learned from him. This same Ardam enclosed with a wall of stone and mortar the fortress of Armazi, extending the wall up to the edge of Mount Armazi and down to the banks of the Mt'k'vari. And Ardam ruled for many years. When Apridon divided his country among his three sons, he gave Persia and Kartli to the same son. The name of this son was Iared. Four *eristavis* died after Ardam. After that peace was broken among Apridon's sons, and a feud took place among them. Two of the brothers killed Iared. Then the Kartlosids seized an opportunity. They started negotiations with the Ovses, which prompted the latter to come over the mountains. They found the Persian *eristavi* in the valleys. He was doing great harm by word and deed. They killed him. And together the Ovses and Georgians, when they found any Persians, would kill them. The Georgians achieved their freedom. Only Ran and Hereti remained in the hands of the Persians.

After the passing of many years, the Persians regained their strength. A Persian King arose whose name was Kek'ap'os.

There lived at that time in Lek'eti a magician, a descendant of Khozanikh; he deprived King Kek'ap'os and all his army of their sight. Unable to cross the bounds of Lek'eti, Kek'ap'os turned back and only then he regained his sight. Kek'ap'os made the Georgians his tributaries, after which he retreated.

Several years later the news came that Moses had crossed the Sea of Israel and that his people travelling in the desert lived on manna. Everybody was in wonder and all the heathens praised the God of the Israelis.

Several years later after that Kek'ap'os, the King of Persia, began to wage war with the Turks.⁷ Availing themselves of this opportunity, the Georgians and Armenians broke with the Persians and began reinforcing their fortresses and cities. The whole tribe of the Targamosids was unified.

Several years later Kek'ap'os, the King of Persia, sent his son by the name of Parborot', with a great army against the Armenians, Georgians and all the other Targamosids. All the Targamosids united and came out against the Persians and gave them battle in Adarbadagan, putting Parborot' to flight and destroying his army. 5

Several years after this, the same Kek'ap'os sent his grandson, the son of Lucky Shiosh, to our land. The latter was killed in the country of Turks as is written in the "Persian History."

The son of Shiosh, called Kaikhosro, came here. The Armenians and Georgians could not offer resistance, because his power was too great. He crossed the whole of Armenia and the whole of Kartli, ravaging and capturing people, sacking all the fortresses and cities. He left in the devastated lands his *eristavis*, and built in Adarbadagan a house of prayer for the followers of his faith and left. 10

Several years later, king Kaikhosro again lost the benefit of peace, because he began to fight the Turks, for he wanted to avenge the blood of his father. The Armenians and Georgians seized the opportunity and broke with the Persians; they destroyed the Persian *eristavis* and regained their freedom. 15

The Turks who were put to flight by Kaikhosro, appeared. They crossed the Gurgani Sea and moving along the Mt'k'vari reached Mtskheta; there were twenty-eight houses of them. They entered into negotiations with the *mamasakhlisi* of Mtskheta, promising him military aid against the Persians. The *mamasakhlisi* of Mtskheta let all the Georgians know. The Georgians wished to make friends with the Turks, for they were afraid of the Persians. And so for this promised aid they made friends with those exiled Turks, and settled them in all of Georgia's towns. Most of them found a deep depression to the west of Mtskheta, surrounded by rocks and asked the *mamasakhlisi* of Mtskheta for this place. The *mamasakhlisi* gave it to them. They built houses there, surrounded themselves with a strong wall and the place received the name of Sark'ine. 20 25

From that time on these Turks and Georgians lived in mutual respect, and in expectation of the Persian invasion they reinforced their city-fortresses. In those times, any man, wherever he came from, who had committed some evil deed and was banished from Greece, Syria, or Khazaria, found a friendly reception among the Georgians, for they were looking for aid against the Persians. 30

After the passing of much time, King Nebuchadnezzar invaded Jerusalem.⁸ The Hebrews who fled from there came to Kartli; they asked the *mamasakhlisi* of Mtskheta to allot them some land and to place them under tribute (*khark'i*). The *mamasakhlisi* complied with their request and settled them in the gorge of the river Aragvi by the spring, which is called Zanavi. And the land which they occupied on condition of paying tribute, is now called Kherk'i – from "khark'i" (tribute). Up to that time the Kartlosids talked in the Armenian language.⁹ When in Kartli, where the Georgian language was formed,¹⁰ so many tribes were gathered the Georgians gave up the Armenian language. 35

They adopted the faith that was the most disgusting for those tribes among which they lived: in marriage they disregarded the blood relationship.

Several years after this, the son of the the Persian King Vasht'ashab, Sp'andiat' Rvali by name, a giant and a distinguished man, came. The Armenians and Georgians could not offer resistance, though they reinforced their cities and prepared for the enemy's attack. But when Sp'andiat' came to Adarbadagan, he received the news from the Persians that his grandfather had been killed by the Turks and that the Turks had crossed into Persia. Sp'andiat' stopped fighting the Armenians and Georgians and turned to the Turks, wanting to avenge the blood of his grandfather. So in this way, the Armenians and Georgians got rid of him.

Some years after that, Sp'andiat''s son became the King of Persia, by the name of Baram,¹¹ who is also known as Ardashir. He was above all the other Persian kings. He conquered Babylon and Assyria and made the Greeks and Romans his tributaries. The Georgians, too, were his tributaries. All the tribes were mixed in Kartli. There were six languages: Armenian, Georgian, Khazar, Syrian, Hebrew and Greek. All the kings of Kartli knew these languages and the whole population, men and women, as well.¹²

Chapter three

The Coming of Alexander and the Parnavazids

Alexander appeared in Greece, in the country called Macedonia. He was the son of Nik't'aniba, an Egyptian, as it is written of him in the book of the Greeks. Alexander conquered all the four ends of the earth. He came from the west and entered the south; came from the north, crossed the Caucasus and entered Kartli. He had found that the faith of the Georgians was the most abominable, compared to the faiths of all the other peoples, because they ignored the blood relationship in marriage and ate every living thing. It is indecent to talk of their customs. Seeing this fierce pagan people, whom we call the Bunturks and Q'ipchaks, Alexander who camped along the Mt'k'vari river was in wonder, because no other people behaved like this.¹³ Alexander wanted to destroy these people, though could not do it for some time, because their fortresses were strong and their towns powerful. Besides other people came from the South – the Chaldeans – and they too settled down in Kartli.

Alexander was in wonder, for no other tribe behaved so. And he found in Shida Kartli the strong city-fortresses: Ts'unda, Khertvisi on the Mt'k'vari, Odzkhre leaning up against the rocks of Ghado, Tukharisi on the river that flows in Sp'eri and is called Ch'orokhi, Urbnisi, K'asp'i and Uplis-tsikhe, the great city of Mtskheta and its suburbs, Sark'ine and Tsikhe-didi, Zanavi, the Hebrew settlement, Rustavi, Deda-tsikhe, Samshvilde and Mt'ueris-tsikhe, that is Khuani, and the towns of K'akheti. In all these city-fortresses Alexander had found warlike people. He divided his army and surrounded all these city-fortresses. Himself, he remained in Mtskheta, his troops took positions on this and that side of the city, as well as above and below it. After that he choose a place for himself on an elevation over Ksani, in the place which is called Nast'ak'isi.

He did not fight against Mt'ueris-tsikhe and Tukharisi, because he would be unable to seize them. But all the other fortresses and towns he conquered in a period of six months. When some of the Bunturks of Sark'ine begun to abuse Alexander he became angry and refused to make peace with them or to attend to any of their solicitations. He told them: "You choose to abuse me, and my payment to you will be your destruction." He surrounded Sark'ine so that not one man could escape. The Sark'inians had a difficult time, for Aleksander fought them for eleven months. Then they began to hack a pass secretly through the rocks and achieved their goal in the end, for the rock was loose and easy to cut. The Sark'inians got out of the town through this pass at night and fled to the ravines of the Caucasus, leaving behind them the empty town. 5

In this way Alexander conquered the entire Kartli region, and destroyed all the tribes that came to Kartli and mixed with the local population; he exterminated all those alien tribes and captured women and innocent children less than fifteen years of age. He left only the tribe of Kartlosids. To rule them he left a *p'at'rik'* by the name of Azon, the son of Jaredos, his kinsman from the country of Macedonia. And he gave him one hundred thousand men from the Roman country, called the Prot'atos. The Prot'atosians were strong people, they waged a persistent war against the Roman country. Alexander brought them with him to Kartli, passed them to *p'at'rik'* Azon and left him as the ruler of the country along with the troops, so as to keep Kartli in his hands. 10 15

Alexander ordered Azon to stick to worshipping the Sun and the Moon and five stars so that everybody would serve God, the invisible creator of everything. Because there was no prophet at that time, a teacher of the true faith who could teach and expose the heathens, Alexander himself invented this faith. During his reign, he gave this faith to the whole world. After that Alexander left. 20

Azon razed the walls of Mtskheta to the ground but left intact the four fortresses that stood at the borders of Kartli: the main fortress, Armazi; the one at the edge of Armazi; the one on the mountain that rises over Mtskheta; and the fourth to the west of Mtskheta on the Mt'k'vari river.

He reinforced these fortresses and put his troops there. He removed the walls of all the other towns of Kartli, occupied all its frontiers from Hereti and the river of Berduji to the Sp'eri Sea; he took possession of Egrisi and made tributaries of the Ovses, Lek'is and Khazars. 25

Upon finishing his campaign against Egypt, Alexander built there the city of Alexandria. In twelve years he traveled around the whole world. In twelve years he conquered the ends of the earth and in the twelfth year he died in Alexandria. Before his death he freed all the noble people whom he kept prisoner and in slavery. According to his orders, they left, each to his own country. Then he summoned his four kinsmen, whose names were Antiokos, Romos, Bizintios and Plat'on. 30

To Antikoze he gave the land of Asurastan and Armenia, allotting him the eastern part of his state; Antikoze built a town bearing his name – Antioch.

To Ramos he gave Trimikos and allotted him the western side; and he built the city of Rom. 35

To Bizintios he gave Greece and Kartli, and allotted him the northern side. He wrote a letter – his last testament to *patrik* Azon, the *eristavi* of Kartli, ordering him to serve Bizintios. Bizintios built the city Byzantium, which is now called Constantinople.

He left Plat'on in Alexandria.

And then Alexander died. 40

But Azon broke with the faith, the gift of Alexander, and begun to worship idols. He made two idols of silver: Gatsi and Gaim. He was obedient to Bizintios, the King of Greece. Azon was an ill-tempered, bloodthirsty man. He issued a decree and ordered his army “to execute every Georgian, on whom any arms are found.” And the Romans carried out this order: if there was found anybody among the Georgians well-built and of mature age, they killed him. Great sorrow fell upon the Georgians. Azon was bloodthirsty against the Romans too, and he destroyed many of them as well.¹⁴

The Life of Parnavaz, who was the First Kartlosid King of Kartli

At that time, there lived in Mtskheta one youth by the name of Parnavaz. This Parnavaz was a Kartlian by birth, a kinsman of Uplos, son of Mtskhetos, and on his mother’s side – a Persian from Isfahan. He was the son of Samar’s brother, the same Samar, who at the time of Alexander’s coming to Kartli was the *mamasakhlisi* of Mtskheta.

Samar and his brother, Parnavaz’s father, were killed by Alexander, and his mother took Parnavaz, then a three year old boy, with her and fled to the mountains of the Caucasus. He came back to his domain of Mtskheta when he grew up. Parnavaz was a clever man, an excellent horseman and a skillful hunter. But he hid his virtues, being fearful of Azon. Once as a hunter, who often wandered over the hills and in the valleys, he made the acquaintance of Azon. Azon grew fond of him, because of his hunting skills. Meanwhile his mother implored him: “Oh, my son! Beware of Azon, do not show him any of your good qualities! Do not give him any cause to kill you.”

Fear and trembling possessed her, and she told Parnavaz: “My dear son, leave this country, your father’s domain, take me to my country – Isfahan, to my brothers. Save your life from Azon’s hands.”

So the mother and the son went to Isfahan. For Parnavaz it was a great misfortune, but because of his fear of Azon he decided to go.

After that Parnavaz had a dream: he was in an abandoned house, which he wanted to leave, but could not. Then a sunbeam came through the window, embraced him by his waist and lifted him. Finding himself in the field he saw the Sun, hanging low; he reached out and wiping the dew from the Sun’s face with his hand, he wetted his own face with it.

Waking up, Parnavaz wondered: “This dream means that I shall go to Isfahan and will find some fortune there.”

The same day he went to hunt and begun to circle a flock of deer in the field of Dighomi. The deer fled through the gorges of Tpilisi. Parnavaz followed them, loosed his arrow and hit a deer; the wounded deer ran a little and fell at the foot of a rock. Parnavaz approached it – the day was waning – and sat at its side. He intended to spend the night there and go back in the morning.

There was a cave at the foot of this rock, the entrance was blocked with some masonry, erected from time immemorial. The construction had begun to cave in. Then it started to rain. Parnavaz took an axe and with its butt he made a passage into the cave to protect himself from the rain and keep

dry. He entered into the cave and found there a huge amount of priceless treasures: gold and silver, and invaluable golden and silver utensils.

Parnavaz was astonished, joy filled his heart, and he recollected his dream. He covered the entrance to the cave and went home hurriedly. He told his mother and his two sisters of his finding. That same night all three of them went to the cave on donkeys taking all kinds of vessels with them. Taking part of the treasure from the cave they buried it in a place that was more convenient for them to access. In the morning they again covered the entrance to the cave. In this manner they took all the treasures and buried them near their own place of residence.

5

Then Parnavaz sent his slave to Kuji and informed him: "I am a descendant of Uplos, the son of Mtskhetos, I am the son of the *mamasakhlisi* Samar's brother; I am very rich. Show me your willingness to receive me with all my possessions, so that we can become brothers and dispose of them together. We must rise openly against Azon. And let fortune grant us victory over him."

10

Kuji rejoiced greatly. He answered: "Come to me, do not spare your possessions! With the help of your possessions I will enlarge your army, until we are able to rise openly against Azon. Then all the Georgians beaten and oppressed by Azon will rejoice. Many Romans will join us, because thanks to Azon's endeavors they too are mercilessly oppressed without number."

15

Then Parnavaz went secretly to Kuji in Egrisi, taking with him all the treasures he was able to muster, and he took his mother and sisters as well. He came to Kuji. Kuji said to him: "You are the son and descendant of the sovereign rulers of Kartli; you should be my master. Do not spare your possessions, so that we may multiply your army. If we win victory then you will be my master and I will be your slave."

20

After this, they joined together and began negotiations with the Ovses and Lek'is, and the latter rejoiced, because they did not want to pay tribute to Azon. The Ovses and Lek'is followed him and Kuji, and Parnavaz strengthened his army. Many people came from Egrisi, and all of them wanted to fight against Azon. Azon called his troops and gathered them around him.

25

One thousand selected Roman soldiers, to whom Azon had done some harm, broke with him and came to Parnavaz. All the Georgians broke with Azon. Azon could not trust any more the troops that remained with him, because he treated everybody like a villain. Azon left Mtskheta and went to K'larjeti where he ensconced himself there in the fortresses.

Parnavaz came to Mtskheta and took possession of all the four fortresses. The same year he seized the whole of Kartli, with the exception of K'larjeti.

30

Then Parnavaz sent an envoy to King Antioch of Asurastan, with many gifts and the promise to serve him. In return he asked for Antioch's aid against the Greeks. Antioch accepted his gifts favorably, named Parnavaz his son and sent him a crown, and ordered the Armenian rulers to help Parnavaz.

35

In the second year after this, some troops from Greece joined Azon, increasing his forces considerably. He set out against Parnavaz. Parnavaz had increased his Georgian army. Calling it together, he appealed to Kuji and to the Ovses. Everybody gathered. Antioch's rulers from Armenia, too, joined Parnavaz. Parnavaz gathered all these troops and met his enemy by the city of Art'aani, which then was called Kajta-kalaki, that is Khuri, and gave battle there. It was a great battle, people

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without number died on both sides. But the Greeks were defeated and put to flight. Azon was killed, his innumerable army destroyed, and many taken captive.

5 Parnavaz moved forward, ravaged the enemy and took captives at the borders of Greece in Andziandzor, and then from Ek'letsi he turned back and entered K'larjeti. He took possession of the kingdom and returned to Mtskheta, feeling great joy. All the possessions of Azon were his, which meant countless riches.¹⁵

10 The land that lay below the river of Egris-ts'q'ali remained the Greeks' because the local population did not want to break with them. Parnavaz married one of his sisters to the King of the Ovses and the other – to Kuji. He gave Kuji the lands between Egris-ts'q'ali and Rioni, between the sea and the mountain, in which are situated Egrisi and Suaneti, and appointed him *eristavi* there, and Kuji built the city-fortress Tsikhe-goji there.¹⁶

15 Parnavaz felt securely protected from every enemy: he became King over the entire kingdoms of Kartli and Enguri; he increased the number of soldiers from the Kartlosids and assigned eight *eristavis* and one *sp'asp'et'* in his kingdom. One of them he sent to Margvi as *eristavi* and gave him the territory from the little mountain, that is Likhi, to the border of Egrisi, above Rioni. And the same Parnavaz built two fortresses – Shorap'ani and Dimna.

The second *eristavi* he assigned in K'akheti and gave him the territory from Aragvi to Hereti, that are K'akheti and K'ukheti.

20 The third *eristavi* he assigned in Khuani and gave him the territory from the river Berduji to Tpilisi and Gachiani, that is Gardabani.

The fourth *eristavi* he assigned in Samshvilde and gave him the territory from the river Sk'vireti to the mountains, T'ashiri and Abotsi.

To the fifth *eristavi* he assigned Ts'unda and gave him the territory from Panavara to the upper reaches of the Mt'k'vari, namely Javakheti, K'ola and Art'aani.

25 The sixth *eristavi* he assigned Odzkhre and gave him the territory from T'asis-k'ari to Mount Arsiani, from the beginning of Nost'e to the sea, namely Samtskhe and Ach'ara.

To the seventh *eristavi* he assigned K'larjeti and gave him the territory from Arsiani to the sea. And the eighth, Kuji, was the *eristavi* in Egrisi.

30 He assigned one as *sp'asp'et'*, and gave him territory from Tpilisi and Aragvi to T'asis-k'ari and Panavari, that is Shida Kartli. The *sp'asp'et'* was always with the King; as the first man at the court he ruled over all the *eristavis*. He appointed *sp'asalars* and commanders of a thousand, subject to the *eristavis*. Through them the King and the *eristavis* received tributes that were due to them. Such was the order that Parnavaz introduced in his kingdom, similar to the rules in the Persian kingdom.

He chose a wife from the tribe of the Durdzuk's, descendants of K'avk'as.

35 Parnavaz surrounded the city of Mtskheta with a strong wall. All the towns and fortresses ravaged by Alexander he built anew.

The Greeks could not avenge Parnavaz, because they were warring with the Romans.¹⁷

40 Parnavaz created an idol and dedicated it to his name, that is Armaz. Parnavaz was called Armaz in Persian. He erected a statue of Armaz on the top of Mount Kartli and arranged a great celebration in its honor. Since then, this place has been called Armazi.

He ascended the throne at twenty-seven years of age and reigned quietly for sixty-five years. He served Antioch, the King of Asurastan. All the days of his life, from the day of his ascension to the throne, he spent in peace, building Kartli and filling it with all kinds of riches.

The spring months and the harvesting months, he spent in Mtskheta, in the royal city; the winter months he spent in Gachiani, and the summer months – in Ts'unda. From time to time he came to Egrisi and K'larjeti, visited the Megrels and K'larjs to settle matters. 5

And those one thousand Roman horsemen, who joined him after breaking with Azon, Parnavaz distributed to the valleys and regions; he took care of them, because they displayed courage in the war with Azon. He also granted them the title of *aznauri*.

After Alexander left Kartli, tranquility and joy set in thanks to the reign of Parnavaz, and everybody said so: "We thank our fortune, because it gave us the King from the tribe of our fathers and freed us from the tribute and sorrow, inflicted by alien tribes." All these deeds Parnavaz performed thanks to his wisdom, valor, courage and riches. 10

He had a son, whom he named Saurmag.

Parnavaz was the first king of Kartli from the Kartlos family. He propagated the Georgian language. And the peoples of Kartli did not talk other languages besides Georgian anymore. He also created Georgian writing. 15

The Second King, Saurmag

After Parnavaz, his son Saurmag ascended the throne.

Then the Georgian *eristavis* colluded, saying: "It is not good for us to serve our own kinsman. Let us unite and kill Saurmag, and we will be as free as we were in the past. And we will pay tribute to those who overcome us. For only in such a life style could we find peace." And they decided to kill Saurmag. 20

But Saurmag, feeling the danger, fled secretly taking his mother with him. He came to the country of the Durdzuk's, to the brothers of his mother. The Roman *aznauris* followed him, and they, too, came to Durdzuk'eti. They said to Saurmag: "Great good has been done to us by your father. We are firm in our fidelity to you." 25

And Saurmag met the king of the Ovses, the son of his father's sister and asked him for his help. The latter gladly came to his aid. Saurmag gathered around him the whole of Durdzuk'eti, after which he set out against the Georgians. Nobody could withstand him and he seized Kartli, destroying all who had abandoned him, though some of them he forgave. He reduced the rights of the Kartlosids and advanced *aznauris* to the rank of nobility. He increased in number the Durdzuk's, descendants of K'avk'as. At the time of the ravages and plunder by the Khazars, the population of Durdzuk'eti remained intact, thanks to their country's strength. But now there was not enough room for all the population in Durdzuk'eti. 30
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Saurmag brought half of all the descendants of K'avk'as, made some of them nobles, and the others he settled in the mountains, allotting them the lands from Didoeti to Egrisi, that is Suaneti. The relatives on his mother's side he made his main supporting force. Saurmag sat on the throne in Mtskheta. He multiplied the strongholds in Mtskheta and all over Kartli. He created idols by the name of Ainina and Dalala, and erected them upon the road to Mtskheta.

Saurmag served the king of Asuristan. He married a Persian, the daughter of the ruler of Bardav. With her he had two daughters, but no son. So he called from Persia a young man, Nebroth's descendant and the kinsman of his wife, and adopted him as his son. His name was Mirvan. Saurmag married him to his daughter and gave the town of Gachiani and the *eristavdom* of Samshvilde as a dowry. Another daughter he married to the son of Kuji and his father's sister.

Saurmag reigned happily for many years. After his death his adopted son – Mirvan¹⁸ – ascended the throne.

The Third King – Mirvan, Nebrotid

Mirvan had a perfect constitution, he was handsome, powerful, fearless and valorous. At the time of his reign the Durdzuk's had forgotten their loyalty to Parnavaz and Saurmag. They came from Durdzuk'eti, joining on their way the K'avk'asians who populated Ch'artaleti and ravaged and captured the population in K'akheti and Bazaleti.

King Mirvan summoned all the *eristavis* of Kartli, gathered around him all his troops, horsemen and infantry. All the K'avk'asians resettled by king Saurmag were under his thorough control, with the exception of the Ch'artaliens. Mirvan gathered all of them at his side and set out for Durdzuk'eti. The Durdzuk's gathered and established themselves in the strongholds built at the passes.

Mirvan dismounted his horse, went to his infantry and placed himself at their head; behind the infantry he placed his cavalry. He rushed to the enemy's gates like a fierce leopard, fearless like a tiger, roaring like a lion. A violent fight started. But the Durdzuk's' arms could not harm Mirvan, as if he were bare rock. He stood still like a strong tower. The battle continued, and countless people died on both sides. At last the Durdzuk's were defeated and put to flight. The Georgians encircled them, destroyed them and took them captive. Mirvan entered Durdzuk'eti. He ravaged Durdzuk'eti and Ch'artali. He erected a gate using stones and lime and called it Darubal. After that Mirvan remained on his throne in Mtskheta and reigned quietly, having no fear of enemies.

He was a man, who gave generous gifts to people, and all the inhabitants of Kartli came to love him. And he served the king of Asuristan. During his rule, the reign of Antioch in Babylon ended. At the same time a man by name of Arshak'¹⁹ came to the throne in Armenia. Mirvan arranged the marriage of his daughter to Arshak's son – also Arshak'. After the death of Mirvan his son, Parnajom, became the king.

The Fourth King – Parnajom, Nebrotid

King Parnajom intensified the construction works in all the city-fortresses. He built the fortress Zadeni, and created an idol by name of Zaden, erecting him in Zadeni. He also began to build in K'akheti the town of Nelkari, which is Nek'resi.

He came to love the Persian faith, and fire worshipping; he brought from Persia fire priests and magicians and settled them in Mtskheta at the place, which is now called Mogvta, and began to openly abuse the idols.²⁰ The inhabitants of Kartli hated him, because they were worshipping the idols. Most of the *eristavis* conspired against him and sent an envoy to the King of Armenia with this message: "Our King has abandoned the faith of our fathers and does not serve the gods, the masters of Kartli, any more. He introduced his father's faith in Kartli and refused the faith of his mother. He does not deserve to be our King. Give us your son Arshak', whose wife is from the family of the Parnavazids, our kings. Give us your army's help and we will make Parnajom flee, he who has brought a new faith to Kartli. Let our King be your son Arshak', and our Queen – his wife, the daughter of our kings."

That proposal appealed to the King of Armenia. He sent back the envoy with a positive answer, in which he said: "If you truly and honestly want to have my son as your king, give me your hostages and I will give him to you and shower you with all kinds of presents."

Most of the *eristavis* of Kartli sent him hostages, declaring their renunciation of Parnajom, and the Armenian King advanced to Kartli with his entire army. King Parnajom for his part called the Persians to his aid, and brought to Kartli a powerful Persian army. He also gathered at his side the Georgians who remained faithful to him. The Georgian *eristavis* who broke with him met the Armenian King in T'ashir. Many Armenians and Georgians gathered there. And Parnajom, too, joined battle in T'ashir.

A fierce battle took place between them and many people fell on both sides. Parnajom was defeated by the Armenians and Georgians. Parnajom was killed and his army destroyed. Parnajom's son Mirvan, a one-year-old boy, was taken by his tutor to Persia. The Armenian King gave to the Georgians his son as king.

The Fifth King – Arshak', Arshak'id

Arshak' ascended the king's throne and took possession of the entire kingdom of Kartli. He reigned tranquilly and reinforced all the strongholds in Kartli, first of all the walls in Javakheti, in the town of Ts'unda. Arshak' died, and his son Art'ag became king.

The Sixth King – Art’ag, Arshak’id

King Art’ag reigned only two years. In the second year of his reign the Persian *eristavis* came with a vast army to avenge Paranjom and the Persian army that had been destroyed along with him. Art’ag, the King of the Georgians was unable to withstand them, for the forces of the Persians were great, but he reinforced the fortresses and towns. The Persians crossed over the whole of Kartli and ravaged the valleys, but, being unable to seize any of the fortresses, they left.

Art’ag died and Bart’om ascended the throne.

The Seventh King – Bart’om, Arshak’id

King Bart’om reinforced the walls of Mtskheta and all the fortresses of Kartli. But the Persians brought up Mirvan, Parnajom’s son, who upon the death of Parnajom, his foster-father, took the throne for himself. Mirvan was a valiant man, a fearless fighter tried many times in battle with the Turks and Arabs.

Mirvan gathered a strong army in Persia and set out for Kartli. He sent envoys to the *eristavis* of Kartli saying: “Remember the love of my grandfather Mirvan and the good he did for you. And though my father introduced an alien faith, you must still remember his good deeds. My father was justly killed, for he did not keep your fathers’ faith. And now let the care and fear related to the death of my father, leave your hearts, for on account of apostasy fathers kill their children and brothers, and nobody tries to avenge those murdered for rejection of their faith. I am a descendant of your kings, the Parnavazids, and though I have been brought up among the Persians, I profess the faith of your fathers. I trust in gods, the patrons of Kartli, and, setting my hopes upon them, I am going to regain my homeland. Now receive glory and good from me.”

The *eristavis* of Kartli did not listen to Mirvan and joined Bart’om; very few of the Georgians who were wellborn, joined Mirvan.

King Bart’om gathered at his side all the troops of Georgia and using the aid of the Armenians met Mirvan at Khunani, keeping the town to his rear. Mirvan came to the river Berduji, and the battle began. Heroes from both sides came forward and for one month every day, battles took place in which each side alternately came out the winner. Over the month Mirvan killed thirteen heroes personally, both Georgians and Armenians,. And there was not one among the Georgians or Armenians able to beat Mirvan. And King Bart’om himself could not fight him, because he was not of a powerful constitution.

King Bart’om brought up his troops and moved all his army against Mirvan. And Mirvan advanced to meet him with all his troops, and a fierce battle occurred between them. People without number fell on both sides, but the Georgians and Armenians were defeated by the Persians. And Bart’om, the king of the Georgians, was killed.

Bart'om had no son, only one daughter, and while still alive, he had brought from Egrisi his grandson Kuji, by the name of Kartam, who was a Parnavazid, and a descendant of Parnavaz's sister, Kuji's wife, and of his mother, Saurmag's daughter and the wife of Kuji's son. And to this Kartam from Egrisi, King Bart'om married his daughter, and adopted him as his son. Bart'om did this following the wishes of the Georgians, for they respected the Parnavazids very much, and wanted no king who was not descended from the Parnavazids. 5

Kartam, adopted by King Bart'om, was killed in that battle together with Bart'om. His wife – Bart'om's daughter, who was pregnant, fled to Armenia and there gave birth to a son. She gave him the name Aderk'i, and he was brought up there.

Killing Bart'om, entering Kartli and taking possession of the whole country, Mirvan gave a promise of safety to the *eristavis* of Kartli, who remained in their fortresses, and induced them to leave their strongholds. He took Bart'om's wife by force, who was from the Arshak'ids from Samshvilde, married her, and ascended to the throne in Mtskheta. 10

The Eighth King – Mirvan

He reigned quietly for a short time. After his death his son Arshak' came to the throne. 15

The Ninth King – Arshak' II, Mirvan's son, Nebrotid.

King Arshak' was on his mother's side an Arshak'id, and on his father's side – a Nebrotid and Parnavazid. Arshak' completed the building of Nelkari, a town in K'akheti, that is Nek'resi, and reinforced the fortress of Uplis-tsikhe. He was strong and very tall. Aderk'i, the son of Kartam and King Bart'om's daughter, whom we mentioned above, was brought up in Armenia. He had an excellent constitution and was huge in stature. He proved himself many times in battles between the Armenians and Assyrians. He killed many heroes and amassed much glory. 20

Aderk'i asked the King of the Armenians for aid. The King of the Armenians gave him an army. Aderk'i set out against Arshak', King of the Georgians, his mother's brother. Arshak' gathered all the *eristavis* of Kartli, added his Persian army and came out to meet him. Both armies came to Trialeti and camped close to each other. Arshak' challenged Aderk'i. Aderk'i gladly donned his excellent armor, mounted his horse and said to his troops: "Cover my rear and be afraid of nothing." Arming himself, Arshak', too, came forward before the ranks of his men. 25

Issuing terrible battle cries, they rushed forward and begun to strike each other with their spears, but they could not pierce each other's armor. They broke their spears in the fight; then they took their maces and begun to fight with those. When they struck each other with the maces, it sounded like the strike of a hammer on an anvil, and their battle cry was like thunder. 30

They still could not overpower each other; they were tired and stepped back. It grew dark and both went to rest. In the morning they came out again, took their bows and began to shoot arrows at each other.

5 Aderk'i hit Arshak' in his chest. His strong armor could not protect him. The arrow went through his body and Arshak' fell from his horse.

Aderk'i turned back immediately to the Armenian army and told them: "I implore you by your own gods, do not lift your arms against the Georgians, for they are my kinsfolk and now with your strength and assistance, I am their King." The Armenians heeded his entreaties and remained in place.

10 Aderk'i turned back. He approached the Georgian army and appealed to the people with a strong voice: "I am the son of your kings and my fortune granted me the kingdom; I bring you goods and happiness. As you see, I did not allow the Armenian army to approach you." Then the Georgians answered him: "You proved to be the best among all the descendants of Parnavaz. And as our King has died, henceforth you will be the king over us; and we thank our fortune, 15 for in place of our King, we have the descendant of our kings, a celebrated man and a hero." And all the Georgians dismounted and rendered homage to Aderk'i, and the Armenians, Georgians and Persians from Rani mingled with each other in peace; they took the crown of Arshak' and put it on Aderk'i's head and took him to Kartli.

The Tenth King – Aderk'i, Bart'om's son, Archakid

20 Aderk'i took possession of the whole of Kartli and Egrisi. The King of the Armenians married his daughter to him and he ruled from Mtskheta. He reigned happily, ascending the throne when he was thirty years old, and reigned for fifty-seven years.

The first year of his reign our Lord Jesus Christ was born in the town of Bethlehem in the land of Judea. And the Magi came to him with presents. At the time of the Magis' coming to Jerusalem, the 25 news arrived at Mtskheta of the "seizure of Jerusalem by the Persians." And cries and sobbing were heard among the Hebrews who lived in Mtskheta. The next year more news came: "The Persians came to Jerusalem not for its seizure, but brought with them gifts for some newborn boy." And the Hebrews of Mtskheta rejoiced.

30 After thirty years, envoys from the Judeans of Jerusalem came to the Judeans of Mtskheta, and told them that "the one to whom the Magi came with gifts has grown up and calls himself the son of God. And now we have sent messengers to all the Judeans, inviting the experts in religious doctrine to pass judgement on him. Let your experts of faith come to us." And Elioiz from Mtskheta and Longinoz from K'arsani went to Jerusalem and witnessed the crucifixion of the Lord. And they, Elioiz from Mtskheta and Longinoz from K'arsani, brought back with them the Lord's tunic, as is written in 35 the *Conversion of Kartli*.

King Aderk'i reinforced the strongholds of Kartli, its fortresses and towns, and made the walls of Mtskheta stronger on both sides of the river. At the time of his reign, two of the twelve Apostles, Andreas and Simeon Canaanite, also came to Abkhazia and Egrisi. Here in the town of Nicosia by the Greek border, Saint Simeon Canaanite died, and Andreas converted to Christianity the Megrels, and then went to K'larjeti.

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When Aderk'i learned of the apostasy of the Megrels, he became angry at them and, sending his *eristavis*, he converted them back by force, and they hid their icons and crosses. King Aderk'i scolded severely the *eristavi* of K'larjeti for letting the apostle Andreas go in peace.

During the reign of Aderk'i, the Persian kingdom was restored.²¹ Since the time of Alexander's invasion of Persia, there had been no kings there and only in some places were there any rulers.

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The Persian rulers gathered together and enthroned Azhgalan the Wise. At that time the Armenians and Georgians were obedient to Azhgalan, King of the Persians. But until that time which included the reign of Aderk'i, no matter how many kings' sons there were, only one of them occupied the throne of Kartli. Aderk'i had two sons, one of whom was called Bart'om and the other – Kartam. Aderk'i divided the town of Mtskheta and the whole of Kartli along the Mt'k'vari river between them: Inner Kartli, part of Mtskheta with Mukhnari and the entire region of Kartli to the north of the Mt'k'vari, from Hereti to the upper reaches of Mt'k'vari and Egrisi, he gave to Bart'om, his son; Mtskheta on the side of Armazi, Kartli from Khunani to the upper reaches of Mt'k'vari and K'larjeti, he gave to his other son, Kartam. Aderk'i died.²²

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The Eleventh Kings – Bart'om and Kartam, Arshak'ids

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After Aderk'i, his sons reigned. At the time of their reign Vespasian, the Roman Caesar, destroyed Jerusalem, and the Hebrews who fled from there came to Mtskheta and settled down with the Hebrews who had lived there from the earliest times; and among them were the sons of Barabbas, whom the Hebrews freed at the crucifixion instead of our Lord Jesus.

Bart'om and Kartam reigned peacefully and in mutual love. Bart'om had a son, who was called K'aos, and Kartam had a son, whose name was Parsman. When Bart'om and Kartam died their sons became kings after them: Parsman – in Armazi, and in the Inner city – K'aos.

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The Twelfth kings – Parsman and K'aos, sons of Kartam and Bart'om, Arshak'ids

Beginning with Aderk'i the Georgian kings were subjects of the Armenian King, and particularly the kings of Armazi, who supported the Armenians in their fight with all their enemies. When the King of Armenia became the great King Ervand, he cancelled all the good that the Georgians had

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rendered. He committed violence against Parsman of Armazi, taking away from him Ts'unda, which was situated at the borders of Kartli and Art'aani down to the Mt'k'vari. He settled in Ts'unda where lived a beast-like people of the tribe of devis, and called it Ts'unda Kajat'uni, which is translated as "house of the devis." The kings of Kartli could not restore their borders, and Parsman and K'aos died.

After them, their sons ascended the throne. Azork' – in Armazi, and Armazel – in Inner Kartli.

The Thirteenth Kings – Azork' and Armazel, sons of Parsman and K'aos, Arshak'ids

These kings, Armazel and Azork', were brave and enterprising. They cooperated and decided to restore the borders of Kartli. At that time Sumbat' Bivrit'ian killed Ervand, the King of the Armenians, and enthroned Ervand's brother by the name of Art'ashan. Then the kings of Kartli, Azork' and Armazel, called on the Ovses and Lek'is and brought over the kings of the Ovses, two brother-giants by name of Bazuk' and Anbazuk', with the Ossetian army. They brought with them the Pechenegs and Jiks, and the King of the Lek'is brought with him the Durdzuk's and Didoians. And the kings of Kartli gathered their troops. They gathered together in countless numbers. They collected artfully, secretly, before the Armenian army could gather. All of a sudden they invaded Armenia and ravaged Shirak'un and Vanand down to Bagrevand and Basiani. Turning back they devastated Dasht' down to Nakhch'evan, taking countless prisoners and spoils, and all kinds of goods; and they passed on to the road of Parisos.

Then Sumbat' Bivrit'ian summoned the Armenian troops and they came without delay. He began to cajole them as the northern tribes had already crossed the Mt'k'vari, and had come to Kambechovani and were camped on the banks of the Iori, occupying themselves with the division of their captives and their spoils. Sumbat' sent an envoy to them saying: "I leave to you all the spoils you have taken from Armenia: the cattle, gold, silver and cloth; I also do not look for compensation for the Armenian blood you have shed, but let the prisoners go and leave in peace, enriched and filled with everything." They answered: "We came to Armenia for no other thing, but you, though we could not find you. Now come. Do not refuse, for, wherever you go we will come for you, and you will not escape us alive."

Sumbat' Bivrit'ian crossed the Mt'k'vari, and Bazuk', the king of the Ovses challenged him to a duel; he sent him an envoy and proposed single combat. Sumbat' armed himself, mounted his long-maned horse and came forward before the ranks of troops, from which Bazuk' suddenly darted out. They uttered battle cries and rushed toward each other. Sumbat' with his spear struck Bazuk' in his waist and the spear came out from his back a whole cubit; he lifted Bazuk' from his horse and threw him on the ground. Then Anbazuk' rushed forward to help his brother, but Sumbat' took his spear, moved forward to meet him, and speared him too. He lifted him (Anbazuk'), threw him on the ground and said: "This is for the Armenian women, men and babies you have killed." Then all the troops of the Ovses, Lek'is, Georgians and all the northern tribes uttered a united cry and said: "Since these

two brothers, the embodiment of every manly valor have been killed, what is the value of our lives?" So embittered were they that they rallied to the side of the Georgian kings Azork' and Armazel and attacked Sumbat' and the Armenian army. A great battle occurred between them, which continued from three to nine o'clock; countless people died on both sides, and from the dust raised the day grew dark and turned into night. The fighters mingled with each other and those assembled could not distinguish their enemies because of the dust. 5

The camp of the northerners was defeated by the Armenians, they were scattered and fled. Sumbat', who received many wounds began to pursue them, and he chased them until nightfall. He destroyed almost all the Ovses and Lek'is, only a few of them survived. Many more Georgians escaped, due to their knowledge of the roads. And both kings of Kartli were wounded and found shelter in Mtskheta. 10

Sumbat' triumphantly entered Kartli and devastated it, as well as everything he found outside the fortresses and towns. He did not assail the fortresses and reinforced towns, because he was not prepared, due to the haste with which he organized his campaign. He built a fortress on Mount Ghado in the Ordzkevi area, which is called Samtskhe, in the place called Demoti. He left a garrison in the fortress to render aid to the inhabitants of Ts'unda in their struggle with the Ordzokhevians, and then he left. But the kings of Kartli, thanks to their steadfastness did not give in to their fear, but reinforced their fortresses and towns. Sacrificing the plain of Kartli, they did not stop fighting with the Armenians. And the Ovses (too) began to avenge the Armenians for their spilled blood. They came from the mountains down to Kartli and allied themselves with the Georgians. The Ovses and Georgians joined each other, and continued without pause their fight with the Armenians. 15 20

There lived in the town of Ordzokha one *eristavi* of King Armazel, an *aznauri*, who was truly devoted to Armazel. He was aided by the Megrels. The Ts'undians and Demotians too, helped each other. So the war continued ceaselessly. The main battle took place at the river, which was called Nost'e. 25

There lived in K'larjeti another *eristavi* of King Azork', an *aznauri*, who was inflicting harm upon Armenians at the border, the Parkhali area that is called T'ao. No enemy could enter K'larjeti, because it was strong and inaccessible, due to its forests and its rocky landscape; and its residents were foot soldiers as well as horsemen.

And the kings of Kartli themselves more than once went to Armenia from Mtskheta on the road to Abotsi. The Georgians were fighting constantly. Then Art'ashan, the King of the Armenians set out with all his forces and his *sp'asp'et'* Sumbat' Bivrit'ian. The Georgians reinforced their fortresses and towns and brought in the forces from Ossetia, which filled their towns and fortresses. The Armenians came and faced Mtskheta. They fought for five months and every day there was combat between heroes. 30 35

Then the Georgians and Ovses began to experience difficulties. They appealed for peace and promised to obey the Armenians and not to look for revenge and restoration of their borders. The King of the Armenians heeded their request. They gave a solemn promise. The King of the Armenians enslaved the Georgians and Ovses and left. 40

Several years passed and again the revived Kartli was ravaged by the Armenians. Then the Armenians became occupied with other things, for war broke out between the Persians and the Greeks. The Georgians and Ovses seized the opportunity and began to raid the Armenians, because all the Armenian troops, the King's two sons and Sumbat' were fighting the Persians. But when the damage inflicted by the Georgians and Ovses on the Armenians became intense, King Art'ashan gathered the troops remaining in the country, and charged his son Zaren to battle the Georgians.

The Georgians and Ovses united, met the Armenians in Javakheti, and gave them battle there. The Georgians and Ovses were victorious and put Zaren, son of the King of the Armenians, to flight and destroyed his entire army. They pushed him back to the Armenian borders, seized Zaren, the King's son, on the banks of Lake Tseli, and took him with them.

The Ovses wanted to kill Zaren as revenge for the blood of their kings, but the Georgians preserved his life, wishing to restore their borders. They imprisoned him in the fortress of Darialan. The Armenians could not intercede, for they were occupied by the war with the Persians. The third year after this Sumbat' Bivrit'ian and the King's two sons, Artavaz and T'igran, came with their army. The kings of Kartli ordered the entire country to take cover in the fortresses, towns and mountains. The Armenians camped in Trialeti. But the envoys from both sides concluded peace. The Georgians gave back to the Armenians the captured prince and promised to render aid on the following terms: "If any of your enemies come to fight you, we, both Kings, will come to your aid with our armies. If you go to fight, then each one of us Kings, will give you one thousand armed horsemen. And we will mint coins with the image of King Art'ashan."

In exchange for this promise, the Armenians gave back the borderlands of Georgia – the town of Ts'unda, the fortress of Demoti, Javakheti and Art'aani. From that time on the Armenians, Georgians and Ovses lived in mutual love, and all of them fought together against their enemies.

Then Azork' and Armazel who experienced great relief having regained the frontiers of Kartli due to their great courage, died. Their sons reigned after them: Amazasp' in Armazi, and Derok' in the inner city.

The Fourteenth Kings – Amazasp' and Derok', Sons of Azork' and Armazel, Arshak'ids

After them reigned their sons Parsman the Valiant in Armazi, and Mirdat' in the inner city.

The Fifteenth Kings – Parsman the Valiant and Mirdat', Sons of Amazasp' and Derok', Arshak'ids

Up to that time, all the kings that reigned together lived in mutual love and displayed their love and enmity against others jointly. At that time Mirdat' took a wife – a Persian of the royal family, and instigated by the Persians, he became the enemy of Parsman the Valiant of Armazi. Mirdat' decided to kill Parsman the Valiant perfidiously. Mirdat' invited Parsman the Valiant to his house supposedly for a feast and delectation. But somebody warned Parsman of the danger, and he did not go to visit Mirdat'.

5

After this they became enemies. Mirdat' was supported by the Persians, and Parsman – by the Armenians. Mirdat' was a vain and bloodthirsty man, and Parsman the Valiant – kind, generous, indulgent, handsome, tall, powerful, brave and daring in battle; he was fearless like some incorporeal creature. He surpassed in everything all of the kings of Kartli who had reigned before him. He was loved by the Georgians of Mirdat's camp, who hated Mirdat' for his bloodthirstiness and treachery. And most of the supporters of Mirdat' joined Parsman. Parsman the Valiant was victorious and put King Mirdat' to flight, obliging him to flee to Persia.

10

15

At that time Parsman the Valiant's *sp'asp'et'* was a man endowed with no less valor and strength – Parnavaz (by name). Parnavaz was a foster brother of Parsman, a reliable, loyal and devoted man. Parsman assigned him to Shida Kartli in place of Mirdat'. Parnavaz was also the *sp'asp'et'* of the whole country when King Parsman the Valiant traveled and administered his own country.

Mirdat' led a Persian army against Parsman. Parsman called to his side the Georgian army, some forces from Armenia, and met the enemy in the ravines of Rk'inis-khevi. The giants clashed and fighting went on for many days. And if some giant appeared among the Persians with whom the Georgian and Armenian fighters were unable to fight, King Parsman or his *sp'asp'et'* Parnavaz came out to meet the giant in single combat. In this way they prevailed over their enemy. In this battle Parsman killed seventeen Persian heroes, and his *sp'asp'et'* Parnavaz – twenty-three.

20

25

At that time there was among the Persians one giant, Jumber by name, who could catch a lion with his bare hands. He proposed that King Parsman fight him one-on-one. Parsman the Valiant armed himself and came forward. The two of them uttered terrible battle cries and rushed toward one other. They began to fight with swords. The fight sounded like peals of thunder. Parsman overpowered Jumber, threw him off his horse and killed him. Then he turned to his people and called in a loud voice, saying: "See, fierce lions here are like sheep bitten by hail!"

30

And the Georgians and Armenians rushed at the Persians, and put them to flight, destroying and taking captive countless numbers. And Mirdat' again fled to Persia. The next year Mirdat' returned with a stronger army. Parsman gathered his troops, the infantry and horsemen, and camped in the town of Mtskheta, because he had not as many men as Mirdat'. Mirdat' arrived at Jachvi. Again combat between heroes took place every day. Parsman personally killed twelve giants and *sp'asp'et'* Parnavaz – sixteen.

35

King Parsman, who had a fervent heart, caring not for the number of the Persians, set out in the morning with his army. Fortune granted him victory: he put to flight their camp and destroyed

a countless number of his enemies. Mirdat' fled once more to Persia. After this, the names of Parsman the Valiant and his *sp'asp'et'* Parnavaz became famous. Parsman became commander of the Georgian and Armenian troops and fought the Persians. Nobody could withstand Parsman the Valiant.

5 Then the Persians resorted to a trick. They found a cook and promising him all kinds of rewards, said to him: "Go and secure the patronage of Parsman the Valiant, take a deadly poison with you, mix it in Parsman's food and make him eat it." This cook did everything as he was told and he killed the valiant King.

10 Weeping, wailing and crying was heard among the Georgians, and everybody, from nobles to beggars, participated in the doleful cries. In the villages and towns they beat their heads. Everybody gathered and recollected the courage, valor, beauty and goodness of Parsman the Valiant, bewailing: "Woe unto us, for misfortune has befallen us. And the King, thanks to whom we were freed from slavery, has been killed by magicians. Now we will be captured by alien tribes."

15 Then the Persians set out, taking Mirdat' with them, and conquered Kartli. They gave to Mirdat' part of the country, and Parsman's part they occupied themselves, and appointed a governor in Armazi. *Sp'asp'et'* Parnavaz with Parsman the Valiant's wife and son, fled to Armenia, because Parsman's wife was a daughter of the King of the Armenians. Mirdat' and the Persian governor took possession of Kartli, but the Megrels remained faithful to Parsman's son.

20 At that time the Armenians and the Greeks were on good terms with each other, and the King of the Armenians along with the Greek forces set out to fight the Persians and Georgians. The Megrels joined him and infinite numbers of them gathered. Mirdat' and the Persian governor called for more forces from Persia.

25 The Armenians, Greeks and Megrels came to Shida Kartli: there they were met by the Persians and Georgians by the river, which is called Liakhvi; and there in the place called Rekha, the battle took place. Countless people fell on both sides and the Persians and Georgians were defeated; Mirdat' and the Persian governor died, and their troops were destroyed.

The Sixteenth King – Adam,²³ Son of Parsman the Valiant, Arshak'id

30 Then the son of Parsman the Valiant, by name of Adam, was made King. He reigned only three years and died. He left a son, a one-year-old boy. While he was growing up, Adam's mother reigned, the wife of Parsman the Valiant, by name Gadana. When the grandson of Parsman the Valiant, whose name was also Parsman, grew up, he became king.

The Seventeenth King – Parsman, Son of Adam, Arshak'id

This Parsman reigned in the entire land of Kartli and he had a son, whose name was Amazasp'. After the death of Parsman his son Amazasp' reigned.

The Eighteenth King – Amazasp', Son of Parsman, Arshak'id

King Amazasp' was a powerful man, a hero, resembling Parsman the Valiant. At the time of his reign a great army of Ovses set out against him. They traveled by the road of Dvaleti, and Amazasp' did not notice their coming until the Ovses had crossed the mountains. The Ovses camped at the river Liakhvi and rested there for eight days. They did not send their men to raid, because they came to destroy Mtskheta. 5

Amazasp' called all the *eristavis* of Kartli. All the eastern *eristavis* came: the *eristavi* of K'akheti, the *eristavi* of Khunani, the *eristavi* of Samshvilde. Also all the horsemen of the *sp'asp'et'* came, but before the arrival of the western *eristavis* the Ovses came from the northern side of the town, which is Mukhnari. King Amazasp' withdrew to the fortresses and placed his troops at their gates. Many unmounted Mtskhetians rallied, defending the gates and walls of the city. Apart from these foot soldiers there were thirty thousand troops outside the town's walls. Besides this, the King had ten thousand horsemen at his disposal. Amazasp' set out and arranged his foot soldiers on both sides of the Aragvi river, in the fortresses by the gates, and led his horsemen to the place called Sapurtsle, securing his rear by the city; his foot soldiers he placed inside the city and at its gate. 10 15

And the heroes began to fight. Amazasp' came with his bow and began shooting arrows with his powerful arm. He shot his arrows so far that the opposing Ovses could not see them from a distance; they could not even see whether he had a bow in his hands. The King was shooting arrows so that no armor could withstand them. That day Amazasp' himself killed fifteen select men and many horses, and the other heroes under Amazasp' killed many heroes of the Ovses, causing them great damage. 20

That day Amazasp' returned to the city with his horsemen, and the footsoldiers remained in their place at the gate. During the night they were joined by horsemen, whom the *eristavis* could not bring earlier, because of the haste with which they had to make their preparations. Next day Amazasp' came out again, this time taking his spear. A man stepped forward from the Ovses, whose name was Khuankhua. Both uttered battle cries and rushed toward each other. In the very first sally Amazasp' struck him with his spear, pierced him through and killed him. Drawing his sword he dashed to meet the other giants, killed two of them and returned to the city with his horsemen. The footsoldiers remained at their place, by the gate. That night Amazasp' was joined by more horsemen. 25 30

The Ovses intended to attack him, but at dawn Amazasp' came out and attacked the Ovses with all his infantry and horsemen; he defeated them and put their entire camp to flight. The King of the Ovses was killed and his army destroyed. 35

Next year, taking with him some forces from Armenia and gathering all his troops, Amazasp' occupied Ossetia and nobody could withstand him. He devastated Ossetia and returned home victorious.

5 After that he became conceited and vindictive. He murdered many noble men, for which the Georgian people hated him. He became hostile to the Armenians and displayed fondness to the Persians and their religion.

10 Then five western *eristavis* broke with him: two *eristavis* of Egrisi and the *eristavis* of Odrzkhe, K'larjeti and Ts'unda. They conducted negotiations with the King of Armenia and asked the King for his son, to make him their own king, for he was their King's nephew, son of Amazasp's sister. The King of the Armenians went to Kartli with a great army, taking some Greek forces with him. They also came to an agreement with the Ovses. The Ovses were glad to join in, because they wanted to take vengeance on Amazasp'. They crossed the road of Takveri and arrived at the lands of the *eristavis* of Egrisi. Then Amazasp' called the Persians and a powerful army to his aid. He gathered the Georgians, who remained faithful to him. The Ovses and Megrels crossed the small Likhi range,
15 joined the rebellious *eristavis* of Kartli and appeared before the King of the Armenians.

20 Amazasp' met them at Gutis-khevi and not a man could be found in the numerous army of the Greeks, Armenians, Ovses, Megrels and Georgians, who would dare fight with Amazasp'. The armies met in a great fight and a battle took place between them. Amazasp' was defeated and his army took flight. Amazasp' was killed, his army destroyed and Kartli occupied.²⁴ The King of Armenia left his son – Amazasp's nephew who was called Rev, as King of Kartli.

The Nineteenth King – Rev, Arshak'id

Rev took a wife for himself from Greece, the daughter of Logothete, by name of Sefelia. Sefelia brought with her an idol, by the name of Aphrodite and erected it over Mtskheta.

25 King Rev, though a heathen, was a kind man and rendered help to all the needy. He knew some things from the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; he even felt some fondness for Christ. During his reign he did not allow anybody to kill children, while before his reign they were sacrificed to idols. And while he was the King, nobody killed children for the sake of idols. The King established a rule to sacrifice sheep or cows instead. Because of this he was called Rev the Righteous. Rev reigned happily until his death.

30 The Twentieth King – Vache, Son of Rev, Arshak'id

And after him reigned his son Vache.

The Twenty-first King – Bakur, Son of Vache, Arshak'id

After Vache reigned Vache's son – Bakur.

The Twenty-second King – Mirdat', Son of Bakur, Arshak'id

After Bakur reigned Bakur's son – Mirdat'.

The Twenty third King – Aspagur, Son of Mirdat', Arshak'id

5

After Mirdat', his son Aspagur reigned. Aspagur built the city-fortress Ujarma. After Alexander's invasion all the kings who reigned in Kartli were idol worshipers. Aspagur was the last king, who was a descendant of the Parnavazids. At that time the King of Persia was Khosrov Anushrivan Sassanid, known by the name of Ardashir, who destroyed the Ajgalanid kings, or so it is written in the history of the Persians.²⁵ In Armenia, K'osaro reigned, who began to wage war with the Persian King Khosrov. Aspagur, the King of the Georgians helped him. Aspagur had more than once opened the gates to the tribes of the Caucasus, and bringing the Ovses, Lek'is, and Khazars with him, he went with K'osaro, King of the Armenians, to fight the Persians.

10

In his very first invasion of Persia, he encountered the Persian King Khosrov who joined battle with him, but he was put to flight, his army destroyed. After that, the Persian King could offer him no resistance. The raids into Persia became more frequent and more destructive. Thus ended the reign of the Parnavazids in Kartli.

15

Chapter Four

The Arrival of the Persians in Kartli and the Reign of Mirian, Khosrov's Son

20

The Armenians, Georgians and northern tribes put to flight the King of the Persians, and the invasions and pillaging of the country became more frequent, as the Persian King was unable to offer any resistance to them. He called together the rulers and *pit'iakhshes* of other countries, and began to look for a remedy for this evil. He promised a reward and honors to anyone who would be able to find a means to revenge these attacks.

25

Among the men gathered there was one noble ruler by name of Anak', a relative of the Armenian King K'osaro. Rising to his feet, he said: "Our armies are put to flight by the Armenian King K'osaro, our soldiers are destroyed and the Persians are terror-stricken. Our enemies have gained in strength and we are unable to withstand them. This is my opinion: we must sooth King K'osaro by peace, entreaties and tribute."

But Anak' was not sincere, for he had a motive that he was hiding from the assembled people. He approached the King and told him confidentially: "You must know, that what I have said now is not my real opinion, but if grant me an opportunity to give you my advice in private, I will tell your Majesty what my real idea is." Then each of the nobles consulted separately with the King and left.

After that the King called secretly for Anak', and Anak' said to the King: "My King, may you live for ever, I will find for you a way to take revenge on K'osaro. I will go to him with all my family and he will trust me, for we are relatives. And let fortune send you luck, I will kill the King and give my life for you."

The King of the Persians liked the idea and some days later Anak' and his brother with their families set out as if they had broken with the Persian King and came within the precincts of Armenia, in the town of Khulakhila, the winter residence of the King of the Armenians. King K'osaro received him with great honor, for Anak' did everything to present his arrival as genuine. The King, seeing that Anak' came to him with all his family, rendered him homage and raised him to the level of second-in-command after himself, and spent the winter days with him in happiness and tranquility. Then the summer came and waters rose in the rivers. The King left the palace and came to the town of Arat. King K'osaro was making preparations for the invasion of Persia. One day K'osaro set out to hunt. Anak' with his brother accompanied him. They secretly took with them, under woolen rain cloaks, keen swords, and, seizing an opportunity, killed the King and ran away. But the Armenian nobles organized a pursuit, and caught up with them at a bridge. Another group of pursuers met them at the ford locking them up in a gorge, so that nobody could escape. They killed the brothers and all their relatives. Only two of their children remained, who were taken by their tutors; one of whom fled to Greece and another to Persia.

Hearing this news the Persian King Khosrov Sassanid rejoiced greatly. First, he went with all his forces to Armenia and conquered it, destroying all the relatives of the Armenian Kings. However one of King K'osaro's sons – a small boy, whose name was Trdat', fled to Greece and was brought up there. Seizing Armenia the King of Persia invaded Kartli. Then Aspagur, King of the Georgians went to Ossetia in order to replenish his army and reinforce his towns and fortresses. But death overcame him in Ossetia.

Aspagur had no son, only a daughter. All the *eristavis* of Kartli gathered in the city of Mtskheta, called by the *sp'asp'et'*, whose name was Maejan. Filled with grief they decided unanimously: "We should not give ourselves to sorrow so as not to lose our minds, but we must look for a means to rid ourselves of our misfortune and these dangers." Then *sp'asp'et'* Maejan said: "If we had forces equal to a third of the Persians, we would give our lives and resist them. And if our King had an heir or there was some descendant of our kings deserving to reign, we would fortify ourselves in our towns and fortresses and would, if necessary, eat human flesh to survive, like our forefathers did.

But the bad times have come and have brought us such sorrows, like the murder by the Persians of the great King of Armenia, and the seizure by them of Armenia to which our kingdom was allied.²⁶ The King of the Persians has opened his mouth and wants to swallow the whole world. We have nobody to withstand him, we are left as orphans, like sheep, without a shepherd. Now my decision is this: let us submit to him and ask him to make his son our King. Let us implore him to marry his son to the daughter of our Aspagur. We will inform him of the origin of this woman from the Nebrotids, the famous Arshak'ids and our kings, the Parnavazids. Let us ask him for the right to follow the faith of our fathers, not letting the Persians mingle with us and rule us. Maybe he will comply with our request and treat us well. But if he deprives us of the faith of our fathers, raises the Persians above us and destroys the relatives of our Kings, then it will be better to die than to see all that. Then we will stick to our fortresses and towns and die, every one of us." All the *eristavis* agreed with the *sp'asp'et*. They sent their envoys to the King of Persia and informed him of everything they had decided. 5 10

The Persian King asked firstly about the city of Mtskheta and he was told of its size and reinforcements, and of the proximity of the Khazars and Ovses. The King asked once more about the genealogy of Aspagur's daughter. They told him of her descent from the Nebrotids, Arshak'ids and Parnavazids. The King of the Persians liked all this and complied with the request of the Georgians, for he himself considered it better to set his son as King in Mtskheta, because he thought that Mtskheta was larger and stronger than any other town of Armenia, Kartli or Rani, and was closer to his northern enemies, so it would be easier to wage wars and control all the Caucasian tribes from there. He conceded to their wishes, and giving them a promise and swearing an oath, he came to Mtskheta. Here he was met by *sp'asp'et* Maejan and all the *eristavis* of Kartli. They brought from Samshvilde King Aspagur's daughter by name of Abeshuru. The King of the Persians married her to his son, who was then a boy of seven years of age. He was born of the King's concubine and his name was, in Persian, Mikhran, and in Georgian – Mirian. He is the very Mirian, who in his old age came to know God the Creator, received the Gospel of the apostles from St. Nino, and began to profess the Holy Trinity and worship the Holy Cross. 15 20 25

Chapter Five

The Twenty fourth King – Mirian, Son of the King of the Persians, Khosrovid

Now we will relate the life of Mirian, son of Khosrov Ardashir Sassanid.²⁷ When King Khosrov, heeding the Georgians' request, married the daughter of the King of Kartli to his son Mirian and gave his son as King to the Georgians, seating him in Mtskheta, he gave him possession also of Kartli, Armenia, Ran, Movak'an and Hereti. Mirian was seven years old at that time. Mirian's mother was also with King Khosrov in Kartli, but he did not leave her with Mirian, because he loved Mirian's mother like his own self. But he left with Mirian one noble man by name of Mirvanoz as his tutor and 30 35

governor. He also left him forty thousand select Persian horsemen. According to the oath, given by him to the Georgians he placed them not within the precincts of Kartli, but in Hereti, Movak'an and Armenia. He also ordered Mirvanoz to take from these Persians seven thousand choice horsemen and keep all of them in the city as guards for his son. He concluded peace with the Georgians on condition that only the gates of the fortress would be occupied by Persian troops, and there would be no other Persians in the country of Kartli who could mix with the local population. "And let my son profess both religions: fire worship of our fathers, and your idols." He did all this in accordance with the oath he had given at the very beginning.

The King of the Persians went further and occupied all the Khevis of the tribes of Caucasia, assigning everywhere chiefs and ordering them to be obedient to his son Mirian. He also ordered his son Mirian and his tutor to wage war with the Khazars, and then returned to Persia. Mirvanoz reinforced the fortresses of Kartli, and particularly the walls of the town of Nek'resi. Mirian had grown up serving seven idols and fire. He liked the Georgians and, forgetting the Persian language, he learned Georgian. He added decorations to the idols and the temples, graciously treated the idolatrous priests, and with more diligence than any other King of Kartli, observed the ceremonies dedicated to the idols. He also decorated Parnavaz's grave. All that he did because of his love for the Georgians. He treated the Georgians kindly, exalting them in every possible way, and he did them every kind of good. The Georgians came to love him more than any other King of Kartli. And so Mirian reigned in Mtskheta over Kartli, Armenia, Ran, Hereti, Movak'an and Egrisi.

But when Mirian was fifteen years old, his wife, the daughter of the King of Georgia, died and with it ended the reign of the Kings and Queens of the Parnavazid family. The Georgians grieved, because of the death of their Queen, but they remained faithful to Mirian, for there was no descendant of the Parnavazids worthy to reign over them. For that reason they accepted with love the reign of Mirian.

King Mirian continued doing good things for the Georgians and married a Greek from Pont, the daughter of Oligothos, Nana by name. Mirian waged war uninterruptedly with the Khazars. When the Lek'is broke with Mirian and called the Khazars to their aid, Mirian met them in Hereti or Movak'an, and there he gave them battle, and when the Durdzuk's and Didoians came with the Khazars, he fought them too. Not once could the Khazars overcome Mirian, he always defeated them. His biggest campaigns were his marches against Derbent, because the Khazars came often to Derbent with the intention of occupying it and launching raids from there on the Persians. But when the Khazars approached Derbent, Mirian came to its aid. Sometimes the Khazars fled, offering no fight to Mirian, though at other times he put them to flight in a battle.

When Mirian was forty years old his father, the King of the Persians, died, and after him the Persian King was Mirian's younger brother Bart'am. Learning of this, Mirian called all his troops and set out for Baghdad with the purpose of taking his father's throne.

His brother gathered a countless army and was ready to give him battle by the gorge of Nasibin. But the elders and *marzapans* of Persia, being afraid that the sword could kill both, set up ambassadors and undertook mediation between them. Both Kings agreed to this and when everybody gathered for a counsel, Mirian expressed his complaint: "I am the firstborn of my father,

and have been granted by him the heritage of foreign lands, won by him thanks to his power; and I have spent all my life fighting with the Khazars and more than once defended Persia from them at the price of my own blood. Therefore my father's throne belongs to me."

Bart'am answered: "Though Mirian is the firstborn, he was born from a concubine, and for one born of a concubine it is enough to possess the kingdoms that have fallen to his lot. I was born of the daughter of the King of India, the Queen of the Persians. And the last will of my father is known to you, and you have seen how he entrusted the crown to me."

All considered the matter and gave the reign over Persia to Bart'am, and to Mirian, in order to console him, they gave Jazira, half of Sham and Adarbadagan.²⁸ All this was joined to Kartli, Armenia, Ran and Movak'an. Then Mirian departed, but while he was in Persia the Ovses led by Perosh and Kavtia, devastated Kartli. Mirian immediately went to Ossetia, ravaged it, reached Khazaria and through Dvaleti again returned to Kartli.

Several years passed and the Khazars came as usual to attack Derbent. Mirian again set out to render Derbent aid and while he fought with the Khazars, the King of the Goths with a countless army invaded Greece. The King of Greece, gathering a great army, set out to meet them. Then the King of the Goths challenged Caesar (King of Greece) to single combat, but Caesar was unable to fight with him. At that time the son of the Armenian King K'osaro, by name of Trdat', whom we have mentioned before, was serving in the Greek army. He was brought up in Greece and was a real giant of a man. The Greek army selected him unanimously and putting on him Caesar's dress and armor, sent him in Caesar's guise to fight the King of the Goths. The King of the Goths presented himself and they rushed against each other. Trdat' won the combat and turned back the Goths. And Caesar gave an army to Trdat' and sent him to Armenia, his own domain. The army entered Armenia and drove away from there the Persian *eristavis* of Mirian.

Mirian returned from the war with the Khazars and called on his relative in Persia, a descendant of the kings, by name of Peroz, who brought with him a great army. Mirian married his daughter to Peroz and gave him the lands from Khunani to Barda on both sides of the Mt'k'vari, and appointed him an *eristavi*. He brought other forces from Persia and began to battle with Trdat'. But when Trdat' drew to his aid forces from Greece and advanced against Mirian, the latter was unable to offer him resistance but reinforced his fortresses and towns, while Trdat' invaded his country. When Mirian reinforced his troops with the help of Persia, Trdat' could not offer him proper resistance, and Mirian invaded Armenia. And so continued their enmity for many years, there was not one among the Persians who could withstand Trdat'. He defeated all his adversaries and gained fame in the whole world as it is written in *The History of the Armenians*.

Then the third brother of Mirian and Bart'am became the King of Persia, who sent Mirian an envoy with the following proposal: "Let us unite our forces and crossing Armenia invade Greece." The King of the Persians set out and Mirian met him. They gathered an innumerable army; people were like grass in a field or leaves in a tree. They crossed Armenia and Trdat' could not oppose them; he just reinforced his towns and fortresses. They seized Armenia and invaded Greece. The King of Greece, Constantine, also could offer no resistance to them and gave himself up to great sorrow.²⁹

When they started to ravage Greece, some servants of God appealed to Constantine, saying: “We have seen the wonders of Christ and the victories of those who set their hopes on Him; those who trust in Christ and let themselves be led by the Cross, defeat their enemies.” And as it is written in *The Conversion of the Greeks*, Constantine was baptised and advanced with a small army, led by
5 the image of the Cross, and joined battle with the countless enemy of the Persians. And with faith in Christ, he put the enemy’s camp to flight and destroyed many of them.

Both Kings fled, accompanied by a small group of horsemen, while Constantine pursuing them, crossed into their lands. The Persian King returned to Persia while Mirian remained in Kartli and reinforced its towns and fortresses. Mirian lost all his forces and was afraid of complete banishment
10 from Kartli, for all his nobles, the Georgians as well as the Persians, were thoroughly destroyed. So he sent envoys to King Constantine and asked him for peace, promising to break with the Persians, to serve him and to become his ally. Constantine approved, for he still feared the Persian King, and he made peace with Mirian. He took Mirian’s son, who was called Bakar as hostage. He strengthened the ties between Mirian and Trdat’, establishing bonds between them: Trdat’ married his daughter,
15 Salome by name, to Mirian’s son, by the name of Rev. Constantine determined the borders of Mirian and Trdat’ as follows: the lands, on which the rivers flowed from the south and merged with the Araks, he left to Trdat’, and the lands on which the rivers flowed to the north and merged with the Mt’k’vari, he left to Mirian.

King Constantine, being a mediator between them, arranged their affairs and departed for his
20 kingdom.³⁰ Mirian reigned in Kartli, Ran, Hereti and Movak’an, he possessed also Egrisi down to the river of Egris-ts’q’ali. He gave to his son K’akheti and K’ukheti and set him up in Ujarma. Rev and his spouse Salome, Trdat’’s daughter, lived in Ujarma. And to Peroz, Mirian’s son-in-law, belonged the country from Khuani to Barda, which Mirian assigned to him. And Peroz was *eristavi* there. At that time our saint and blessed mother, our adored Saint Nino, had already been in Mtskheta for three
25 years and was glorifying the faith of Christ, performing healing without medicines. And from that time she began to praise openly the true faith of our Lord Christ.

PART TWO

CONVERSION OF KARTLI BY ST. NINO

**Conversion of King Mirian and the Entire Kartli
by our Saint and Blessed Mother Apostle Nino**

At first we will relate the life of our saint-mother, the enlightener of the whole of Kartli, apostle Nino, which we were told by the Blessed herself at the hour of her passing away and which was recorded by the faithful Christian Queen Salome from Ujarma – spouse of the son of King Mirian, daughter of Trdat', the King of the Armenians. 5

At the time when Saint George of Cappadocia received the crown of martyrdom in the name of Christ, there lived a man in Cappadocia, equal to sovereigns, the servant of God, by name of Zavilon. He went to Rome to serve Caesar and gained favor with him. At the same time there lived in K'olastra one man who had two children – a son and a daughter. The son's name was Juvenal and the daughter's Sosana. The husband and his wife died and the brother and his sister remained orphans. Then, to the joy of all the Christians, on the day of Holy Resurrection they went to Jerusalem and found shelter there. Juvenal was ordained with the rank of *devtalar* and his sister served as *niafora* Sara of Bethlehem. 10 15

The youth from Cappadocia by name of Zavilon, who we mentioned above, came to Rome and appeared before Caesar. At that time the Branjis³¹ were waging war with Rome and made their camp in the fields of Patalan.³² God granted to Zavilon, the youth from Cappadocia, such overwhelming power that he set out against the countless enemy, put the Branjis to flight, took captive their King and all their leaders, and brought them to Caesar. And Caesar decided to put them to death. Then the Branjis began to cry and implored Zavilon: "Share with us your belief and bring us to the temple of your God, and then perform your execution. You have captured us, now do this for us and you will be innocent of the spilling of our blood, and will be a hero." 20

Hearing this, Zavilon immediately informed Caesar and the Patriarch. They baptized the Branjis with the ordination of Zavilon, then introduced them to the temple of God, and gave them communion and the holy sacraments of Christ's flesh and blood, revealing to them the greatness of the deeds of the Apostles. 25

In the morning the Branjis put on the dress of prisoners sentenced to death and came out to the place of execution and the shedding of blood; they prayed and thanked God for their christening, saying: "We are immortal even in our death, for God favored us with such great sight and supplied us with inexhaustible food for our travels – the flesh and blood of Christ, the son of immortal God, who is higher than any summit and deeper than any abyss, and who is blessed for ever and ever. But woe to our offspring – fruits of bitterness and dwellers of darkness." And they appealed: "Let the executioner come and take our heads." 30 35

Seeing this Zavilon was deeply moved, and shed a few tears, for they bowed their heads like sheep, committing themselves to execution, moaning in plaintive voices like lambs.

And then, taking pity on them, he went to Caesar and intervened for those who were ready to die.

5 Caesar took pity on them and told him: "I give them to you and do what you want with them." And he set all of them free.

The Branjis implored Zavilon to go with them to their country in order to give Christ's faith and baptism by water to its whole people. He listened to their entreaties, asked the Patriarch for some priests, obtained an order from Caesar, and then they departed joyfully. When they approached the
10 country of the Branjis for a distance of one day's walk, the news that "the King is alive and returning with all the other chiefs" outpaced them. Then representatives of the principalities of Kholam, Khozab, Khlach', Kheneshgi, T'imgarago, Zakai, Gzai, Zarga, Zarda, Zarma and the kingdom of Tmogon, came out and met them at the great and deep river.

The King divided the people in two parts on both banks of the river. Then the priests consecrated
15 the water and all the people entered the river. Performing ablutions they came out on the bank to the place where Zavilon put his hand on them. Remaining by them for ten days Zavilon gave the people communion and Christ's sacraments. He left his priests there with them and established a Christian order.

After that he took his leave of them and left for Rome with rich gifts. He decided: "I shall go to
20 Jerusalem and dedicate my riches to the Holy places." So he went to Jerusalem.

Arriving at Jerusalem he distributed his goods according to God's commandment among the beggars. Here he learned that the *devtalar* whom we mentioned above had become Patriarch. Zavilon and the Patriarch became close friends with one another.

Then *niafora* Sara said to the Patriarch: "This Zavilon, the father and baptizer of the Branjis is a
25 perfect man in his wisdom and piety, marry him to your sister Sosana." Because the Holy Patriarch liked the proposal of *niafora* Sara, he married Sosana to Zavilon, and Zavilon left for his town of K'olast'ra.

They gave birth to their only daughter – Nino. Sosana brought her up in service to the paupers.

When Nino was twelve years old her parents sold all their possessions, went to Jerusalem
30 and distributed everything among the paupers. When they arrived in Jerusalem, Zavilon received a blessing from the Patriarch. He parted with his wife, embraced his daughter and bitterly crying, said to her: "My only daughter, I am leaving you an orphan and entrust you to the Heavenly Father, God, who brings up everybody, for he is father to orphans and a judge to widows. Do not be afraid, my dear daughter, but take vengeance for Mary Magdalene, who suffered for her love of Christ, and of
35 Lazarus' sisters. If you come to love Him as they did, He will give you everything you ask for." Saying that he kissed her one last time and set out for the wild people that lived beyond the Jordan, for his sojourn there for our omniscient God, creator of everything . The Patriarch appointed the mother of St. Nino as a servant for the destitute and for sick women, along with St. Nino, and she served for two years with one *niafora*, an Armenian from Dvin; St. Nino questioned her thoroughly about the
40 passions of Christ, the crucifixion, the burial and resurrection; she asked about His chiton, shrouds,

cerement and the cross. She kept asking persistently, for there was no one in Jerusalem equal to her (the *niafora*) in the knowledge of the laws of faith both old and new.

She began her narration, telling Nino: "I see, my daughter, your power is equal to the power of a lioness, which roars louder than any four-footed animal, or like a female-eagle, which flies higher than a male eagle and encompasses with the pupil of her eye the whole earth like a small pearl, and like fire seeks food for herself, and seeing the food, folds her wings and falls upon it. Let your life be like this, guided by the Holy Spirit!"

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And now I will tell you everything. It was the time when mortal men beheld the immortal God on the earth, who died, and who came to arouse heathens and save the world. And He began to perform all kinds of good things for the Jews: restoring sight to the blind, healing the sick, raising them from the dead. But the Jews became envious of him; they agreed among themselves and sent *stratiotis*³³ all over the world calling upon the Jews to come as soon as possible to them. And they said: "We are approaching our destruction, come to us!"

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People in great numbers came from all places of the world, versed in the faith of Moses. They rose against the Holy Spirit and did to Christ what was predestined: they crucified him and distributed his clothes among themselves. His unsewn cloak went to the northern citizens of Mtskheta. They buried Christ, and the Jews sealed his grave and placed guards around it. But he was resurrected, as he himself said earlier, and the shrouds were found in the grave. When the sun had risen, all this became known. Pilate and Pilate's wife came to Christ's grave, where finding the shrouds, Pilate's wife took them with her; she went at once to Pont, and in her house she came to believe in Christ. Upon the passing of time the shrouds fell into the hands of evangelist Luke and he put them in a secret place, which only he knew about, but the cloak was not found, though some people said of Peter that it was he who "took it and kept it." But nothing was clear. The Cross is buried in the city of Jerusalem, though nobody knows the place; if God wishes it so, it will be discovered."

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Hearing all this from *niafora* Sara, St. Nino gave thanks to God, blessed *niafora* and asked again: "Where is that northern country, from which the Jews took with them the cloths of our Lord Christ, which fell to their lot?" In answer to that *niafora* Sara told her that there is a town in the west, which is called Mtskheta, in the country of Kartli and Somkhiti – a mountainous area where heathens live, but which now belongs to the Ujiks." From Ephesus one woman came to worship the Holy Resurrection, and *niafora* Sara asked her: "Does Queen Helen still persist in her delusion and darkness?" And she answered her: "I am her servant and know all her designs including the secret ones, and I know that she has a great desire to enjoy Christ's faith and baptism."

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Hearing that St. Nino said to the *niafora*: "Send me and I will go to Queen Helen and appear before her with the word of Christ." The *niafora* informed the Patriarch of Nino's desire. Then the uncle called Nino, his niece, made her stand by the middle gate of the altar, put his holy arms on her shoulders, let out a sigh to heaven from the bottom of his heart and said: "Our Lord, God of Eternity, I entrust to Your arm this orphan, the daughter of my sister, and I send her to preach Your divinity, to spread the news of Your resurrection. And there, where her coming is desired, be for her, Christ, our Lord, her travelling companion, her haven, her teacher, the one who understands her language, as in the past you were for those people who feared Your name."

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He separated her from her mother, gave her a farewell kiss, blessed her with the sign of the cross and let her go with prayers addressed to God. St. Nino set out with the woman, who came from Ephesus, and when they arrived at the kingdom of Rome, at the house of St. Nino's companion, they found there in a convent, one Queen, a descendant of the kings, by the name Ripsime, and her governess Gaiane, who, having the desire to commune with Christ, were waiting for a baptism from Jerusalem.

The woman from Ephesus passed St. Nino on to St. Ripsime, and told the latter of the former's deeds. Seeing her, the pious Ripsime embraced St. Nino with joy and welcomed her to her house.

During St. Nino's stay with her, Ripsime received the baptism she wished for so much; her governess Gaiane and other members of her household also received a baptism, fifty persons in all. And most of them received baptism with the assistance of St. Nino. Then they left for their convent, and St. Nino remained with them for two more years.

At this time, Caesar sent his people around to find a woman of noble origin and beautiful, who could be his spouse.³⁴ When these men reached the convent, they saw Ripsime, and seeing her face, they made inquiries about her origin, for there was not one equal to Ripsime in beauty. They carved her likeness on wood and sent it to Caesar. Caesar liked her, and greatly rejoicing, commanded that a wedding be prepared. He immediately sent envoys and masters of ceremonies to all his domains, calling everybody to come with gifts and jubilation to his wedding.

But the saints, seeing the secret devices of an enemy, grieved, for they knew that Caesar was like the serpent, who turned into a magician in Paradise, and that this deluded unbeliever worshiped vile and despicable idols.

Seeing the danger that threatened them, the blessed Ripsime, Gaiane and the other saintly and worthy women, remembering their vow of chastity and their worthy life in seclusion, about which they had been taught, cried and wailed, because the godless Caesar had found out about the beauty of St. Ripsime through the picture which was carved and sent to him. They prayed tirelessly, committing themselves to the strictest canons, and by unanimous decision they, all fifty-three of them, left the country. And they came to Armenia, to a place called New Town – Valarsbad, that is Dvin, which was the residence of the King of the Armenians. They found shelter in the wine-pressing rooms, which were built in the northern and eastern part of the town and they earned their livelihood by selling items of needlework.

Caesar, filled with grief, sent his people everywhere to find them. Then Caesar's envoy came to Trdat', King of the Armenians, and handed him Caesar's message, in which was written the following: "I, the autocratic Caesar, am sending my greetings to my beloved brother, friend and co-ruler Trdat'! Let your brotherliness and ever readiness to help know of the things of which we suffer from this lost tribe of Christians; for in all things, we have to endure abuses by their community, and they reject our kingdom, because they serve some crucified man, and worship wood, and honor human bones. And they consider it greatness to die in the name of their Lord. They are not afraid of the Jews, but fear the One, crucified by them, wallowing in delusion. They revile kings and abuse gods, they ignore the force of light, the Sun, the Moon and the stars, but think them creations of that crucified one. They brought to their side so many in the country that they separated husbands

from their wives, and wives from their husbands; and though we destroyed them by threats and cruel tortures, they have grown in number. And now I happened to see a young girl of their tribe and decided to marry her. But she has not only refused me, the Caesar, but having found me hateful and impious, fled from me secretly and set out for your country. Now knowing this, my dear brother, find them and, if you find anybody similar, kill him. But send the one with a beautiful face, whom they led astray, and whose name is Ripsime, to me. And if you like her, then consider her yours, for you will find not one like her in the country of the Ionians. Remain in good health and serve your gods.” 5

Reading Caesar’s order, Trdat’ began at once his search and found them in the wine presses.

Seeing Ripsime, Trdat’ was inflamed with desire, rejoiced greatly, and decided to marry her. But not submitting to him, Ripsime was committed to tortures along with her governess Gaiane and many others as well. Their martyrdom and wonders are described in the *Conversion of the Armenians*, where by the grace of God, Trdat’ turned into a wild boar. Some of the saints hid themselves and fled. Hiding herself among the thorns of a rose bush, which at that time had not yet blossomed, St. Nino saw the moment when the souls of the saint martyrs left their bodies, and a deacon resembling Stephan, who descended from above with a radiant *epitrachelion*³⁵ and a censer in his hand from which a fume of incense was coming that covered heaven. There was a heavenly army with him, and the souls of the martyrs joined them. 10 15

Seeing this St. Nino began to pray: “Oh, my Lord! Why you have left me among the serpents and vipers?” And then she heard a voice from heaven, which said to her: “Such will be your reception when the thorns that surround you have turned into fragrant roses. Get up and go to the north, where there is a rich harvest, but no reapers.” And St. Nino went there and reached Orbantu at the border of Armenia, and she wintered there, suffering many privations. And on the fourth month, which is called June, she set out and reached the mountains of Javakheti where she encountered a great lake called Paravna. When she looked north, she saw mountains, which even in those summer days were covered with snow and severe weather. Yielding then to fear St. Nino said: “O Lord, O Lord, take my soul from me.” She remained there for two days and asked for food from the fishermen who were fishing in the lake. There were also shepherds. They guarded their sheep at night and appealing to their gods, Armaz and Zaden, promised to offer them sacrifices when they returned home in peace. 20 25

St. Nino knew some Armenian, for she learned it from the *niafora*. She had found among the shepherds a man talking Armenian and asked him: “Where are you from?” And he answered her that they were from “the villages of Elarbini, Sapurtsle, Kindzara, Rabati, which are in the great city of Mtskheta, where the gods rule and the kings reign.” Then she asked: “And where is Mtskheta?” The shepherd answered her that the river that sprang from the lake was flowing to Mtskheta. 30

Putting a stone under her head St. Nino lay down and went to sleep by the spring flowing out of the lake. And she had a dream: a man appeared before her of medium size and age, and almost bald. He gave to St. Nino a sealed message and said: “Give it to the King of the heathens in Mtskheta.” St. Nino began to cry and implored him: “O Lord, I am a stranger here and do not know the language; how should I go to an unknown country and to a strange tribe?” 35 40

Then the man opened before her the message and gave it to her and read it. And it was written in the language of the Romans, and there was a seal of Jesus. And there were ten commandments in the message:

- a. Wherever this Gospel is taught, let this woman be mentioned there.
- 5 b. There is no male or female; for you are one in Jesus Christ.
- c. Go and teach all the heathens, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
- d. The light began to shine over the heathens for the glory of the people of Israel.
- e. Wherever the Gospel of this kingdom is taught, it will be repeated in the whole world.
- f. Who listens and receives you, receives me; and who receives me, receives the one who has
- 10 sent me.
- g. And the Lord loved Mary very much, for he always listened to her true words.
- h. Do not be afraid of those who kill your body, but who cannot kill your soul.
- i. And Jesus said to Mary Magdalene: "Go, woman, and bring the news to my brothers and sisters."
- 15 j. Wherever you preach, preach in the name of the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit."³⁶

Reading these words St. Nino began to pray to God and realized that that dream was a godsend and lifting up her eyes asked Him for His help in the morning. After this, she went along the river, which ran out of the lake, and which flowed to the west. She walked by difficult and hard roads, undergoing many troubles and going through mortal fear because of the wild beasts, until she

20 reached the place where the stream turned to the east. And from that time on, she enjoyed her journey, for she had found companions, with whom she reached the principalities of Kartli and the town called Urbnisi. There, she saw alien people serving alien gods, for they worshiped fire, stones and trees as gods. And the soul of the saint grieved. She entered the temple of the Jews and stayed there for one month. She was observing the powers of that country.

25 Then one day many people of this town set out for the great capital city of Mtskheta with the purpose to trade and make sacrifices to their god – Armaz. The saint followed them. When they reached Mtskheta, and stopped behind the bridge of Mogvta, St. Nino had an opportunity to see the priests who revere fire, and the delusion of fire worship by the people. She mourned the perishing of their souls and grieved that she was a stranger to them. The next day a trumpet sounded and a

30 countless number of people like field flowers came out, and an awful rumbling was heard, though the King had not yet appeared. And when the time came the people began to run, hiding fearfully under cover. Soon Queen Nana came out and people began slowly to appear, decorating the streets with many-colored dresses and leaves. Then the people began to glorify the King. And King Mirian came out with a gaze both frightening and dazzling. St. Nino asked one woman, a Jew: "What is it?" And

35 she answered: "It is the god of gods Armaz, and there is no idol besides him." Then St. Nino went to look at Armaz and the mountains filled up with banners and people, like fields covered with flowers.

St. Nino entered into the fortress of Armazi and sat close to the idol by a cleft in the wall. What she had seen was inconceivable, something that is impossible to describe: how great was the fear of the King, his nobles and the whole people before the idols that towered above them. And St. Nino

40 saw a man of copper, who had golden chain mail on his body and a hard helmet on his head. His

shoulders and eyes were adorned with precious stones – emeralds and beryls; he held a sword in his hands, which shone like lightning, and which he was rotating. And nobody dared to touch him, being afraid for their lives. And they said: “Woe to me; is it possible that I caused some harm to the glory of the great Armaz, or made some mistake conversing with the Jews, or listening improperly to the sun worshippers, or to any other ignorant person talking of some great man, the son of god? And if he finds any such fault with me let him strike me with his sword, which brings terror to everybody.” And they bowed before him in fear. 5

On the idol’s right stood a statue of a man of gold, by name Gatsi, and on his left – a statue of silver, by name Gaim; and the people of Kartli believed them to be deities. The blessed Nino cried for that northern country, because the light was hidden from them while the dark held sway over them, for she saw an all-powerful King and his chiefs who, while alive, were immersed in hell. Abandoning the Creator, they worshiped stones, trees, copper and forged iron as a god. 10

Then she remembered the words from her saint-father, Patriarch Juvenal: “I am sending you as a man, so that you will arrive in the foreign country and to the tribe of the *daragevel zepel, bakadul*, which in the language of the Branjis means “people that struggle with god.”³⁷ 15

Then she lifted her eyes to heaven and said: “O Lord, I appeal to your great power and your all-embracing generosity, do not leave them without your care, for a man is made in your image, and you alone from the Holy Trinity became a man for their sake, and saved the whole universe. Look favorably on this tribe and bring your wrath upon the masters of an unruly world and the lords of the dark. And help me, my Lord, your servant, in my effort to show them the whole world, so the North can rejoice with the South, and every language can worship you, the only God, in the name of Christ, your son, who is the one worthy of thanks and praise.” 20

That same instant, as St. Nino finished her prayer, a western wind began to blow, a terrible peal of thunder was heard and clouds appeared sweeping across the sky – a horrible omen. And the western wind brought with it the smell of bitter and stinking bile. When the people saw the approaching storm they all ran into the city and the neighboring villages. And they had time to hide in their homes. Swiftly came the cloud of wrath, mercilessly cruel, and brought down hail with each hailstone equivalent to one lit’ra, upon the place where the idols stood, turning them into fine dust. And the frightful wind destroyed the walls of the fortress and swept them away into the clefts of the rocks, while St. Nino remained tranquilly in the same place. 25 30

Next day King Mirian came out with all the other people to look for their gods, but could not find them. And savage as they were, they were frightened, and they said grieving: “Itrujan, god of the Chaldeans and our god Armaz were each other’s enemies since olden times. Armaz brought the sea upon Itrujan, and Itrujan has taken vengeance on him, everything is his doing.” But some said: “All this has been done by the power of the god who turned Trdat’ into a wild boar, the same power, through which he again became a man. No other god can do such a thing.” They said this, because King Trdat’ was turned into a wild boar by the will of Christ, and by Christ’s will he was turned back again into a man. Since that time, people in Kartli openly praised Christ, and God’s grace began to cover the East. 35

On that day of wrath, when the hail stopped and the wind calmed down, St. Nino came out of the cleft of the rock, found the stone of beryl and went to the front ledge of the rock where an ancient fortress stood. At its side an acacia grew high, with fine branches, and this was the place of rest and shade for King Bart'am. She approached the tree, traced a cross of Christ and prayed there for six
5 days, giving thanks to God and asking Him to show his mercy to these people who had strayed, and to save them from devil. When this destruction of the idols occurred, it was the sixth day of August, the sixth month from March, on which day the Transfiguration of Jesus Christ before his disciples and prophets had taken place.

St. Nino was still sitting in the shade of the tree when a woman called Shroshana found her.
10 She wondered at seeing her there, and brought a woman that knew the Greek language and asked St. Nino who she was, and what was she doing there. St. Nino related to her of all her affairs, concealing only who her parents were, and passed herself off as a prisoner. Shroshana took pity on her, cried, and insisted on taking her to the King's house. But St. Nino refused to go with her and Shroshana left.

15 Three days later St. Nino descended into the city, crossed the Mt'k'vari and went to the King's garden where there is still a pillar, erected by God and the church of the Katholicos. Approaching the gate of the garden, she saw a little house of the watchman. St. Nino entered it and saw there a woman by name of Anasto. Seeing St. Nino the woman stood up and welcomed her, washed her hands, oiled them, and offered her bread and wine. St. Nino remained with her for nine months.

20 Anasto and her husband had no children and grieved on this account very much. Then St. Nino had a dream: an enlightened man came to her and told her: "Enter this garden; there under the cedars is a little vine, which is ready to blossom with fragrant flowers. Take the soil from that place and give it to those people to eat, and they will have a son." So she did, saying to them: "By the will of Christ, son of the eternal God, who is co-ruler of his father and Holy Spirit, and who in order to
25 save us took human shape, was crucified and resurrected on the third day, ascended to heaven and sits at the right hand of God. He will come again in his glory to judge those living and dead, and give you his teaching." And she told them all the ways of truth. And St. Nino prayed for them and gave to the husband and wife the soil, and they begat a son and many daughters.

Anasto and her husband recognized Christ and secretly became St. Nino's disciples. And upon
30 the passing of nine months, St. Nino found a thorny bush on the outskirts of the city where at present there is located an altar of the upper bishopric church, and made it her shelter. Making a cross from a vine she erected it under the bush. And she prayed incessantly day and night. The husband and wife served her, wondering at her deeds, her fasting, her praying, and her vigil.

Many times St. Nino visited the Jewish quarter, looking for Christ's cloak, of which she learned
35 in Jerusalem from the *niafora*, who told her that "the Jews from Mtskheta took with them the cloak of the Lord." So she questioned the local Jews, eager to find out something of the cloak. She met one priest, a Jew, by name of Abiatar, and preached the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ to him and his daughter Sidonia. They believed in Him and became her disciples, and six other Jewish women as well. They took upon themselves the burden of the teaching of St. Nino without baptism, for there
40 was no priest there who could christen them, and they became her disciples in secret. St. Nino cured

people and made miracles by the will of Christ: she cured many lepers, but did it as if with the help of medicines. And so she remained in the city of Mtskheta for three years. At this time, King Mirian and his nephew, the great King of the Persians, launched an invasion in Greece, but Constantine, the King of the Greeks, with his faith in Christ and the cross, put the kings to flight and destroyed their numberless army.

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Chapter Six

The Story of Priest Abiatar, Who Became a Disciple of the Holy and Blessed Nino

"I, Abiatar, was a priest in the parish the year the holy and blessed Nino came to Mtskheta. A letter came to me from the Judaic priests of Antioch, in which they wrote: "God has split the kingdom of Israel into three parts. Our prophets have fallen silent, and all, whom the soul had called, have passed away. We are scattered all over the world. The Romans conquered our country. We cried together with the people, for we have angered God the Creator. Have a good look in the books of Moses and at the words, where he said that "whosoever declares himself the son of God, he must perish." Can it be that we made a mistake killing Jesus of Nazareth? For we see that when in the past our ancestors sinned before God and forgot Him thoroughly, He committed them to captivity and heavy oppression. But when coming to their senses they appealed to Him, He immediately delivered them of their troubles. We know from the Holy Scripture that this has happened seven times. But now since the time our ancestors seized the son of that wretched woman and killed him, God has refused us his grace, split our kingdom, removed us from his holy temple, and forgot thoroughly about our tribe. More than three hundred years have passed since that time, but He does not listen to our prayers and He has not freed us of our troubles. We believe this is God's Providence." Such letters became more frequent.

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And when I heard all that, I began to question Nino about Christ, where he was from or why the son of God became a man. Then St. Nino began her narration from the ancient days like a gushing well. She read our books by heart and explained them to me. She awakened me as if I was asleep and brought me to my senses as if I had lost my mind; she made me pity our ancestors and persuaded me to change my faith. I believed her words, that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, I believed in his passions and the resurrection, his awesome second advent. He is the hope of the heathens. My daughter and I received an aspersion, we were cleansed of our sins by the water from the font, which David wished so much but could not attain. And I heard the voice of faith, the sound of singing, of which David dreamt, and we were honored to receive communion of the flesh and blood of Christ, God's son and the lamb, who was sacrificed for the sake of the sins of this world, and of which the taste is so sweet. My Lord, let me abandon my flesh! And during these times my eyes have seen many other wonders performed by St. Nino in Mtskheta."

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The Story of the same Priest Abiatar of the Coat of Our Lord Jesus Christ

5 “I, Abiatar, relate to you the events, which were imparted to me by my father and mother and of which they knew through the accounts of their ancestors and their parents. When Herod reigned in Jerusalem we heard that Jerusalem was conquered by the Persians. And there was a great cry of grief because among the Georgian Jews, the inhabitants of Mtskheta, were the priests of Bodi, the scribes of K’odists’q’aro and the interpreters of the canons of Soba. And all of them wanted to render help to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, but after a little time the news reached us that the Persians had not come to conquer Jerusalem, but instead of arms they brought with them the gold of their king, 10 chrism that could instantly cure wounds, and sweet-smelling incense. They were looking for some newborn, son of David, and had apparently found a wretched baby, born by a wanderer untimely and in an unsuitable place. And they came to bow before the infant, and gave him the presents. And there was joy among all the Georgian Jews.

15 And after that, after thirty years passed, the priest Anna wrote a letter from Jerusalem to my grandfather Eloiz: “The one for whose sake the kings of Persia came with gifts, has grown up, come of age and (now) is calling himself the son of God. And we gather here in order to fulfill the commandment of Moses.”

20 And Elioiz set out, the father of my father, an old man. His mother came from the family of Ilia the priest, and he had one sister. His mother implored him: “Go there, my son, and obey the call of the Highest Priest according to the law of the faith, but do not participate in what they have decided to do; do not, my son, for such is the word of the prophets and the parable among the men of wisdom.” Elioiz of Mtskheta and Longinoz of K’arsa departed and witnessed the crucifixion of the Lord.

25 But when they crucified the Lord and the executioner began striking the nails with his iron hammer, Elioiz’s mother heard this and cried: “Farewell kingdom of Hebrews, for you have killed the savior of your country and are murderers of the Creator. Woe to me, who did not die earlier, so as not to hear all this with her own ears.” And with these words she passed away.

30 And the cloak of the Lord went by lot to the Mtskhetians. Elioiz brought it to Mtskheta. His sister met him there and crying bitterly embraced him by his neck, took the cloak of Jesus and pressing it to her breast breathed her last, due to the threefold pain she had experienced: for the death of Christ and for her mother and for her brother, who were involved in the spilling of the blood of the Lord.

35 Great wonder and uneasiness reigned in Mtskheta, for the great King Aderk’i himself and all the people and *mtavaris* were amazed at these things. Aderk’i wanted to take possession of this cloak, but shaken and frightened by this wonder he did not dare to take it out of the hands of the dead woman, who clasped it fast to her bosom. Elioiz buried his sister and she kept the cloak of the Lord in her hands. Only God knows the place.

Upon the passing of many years, the great grandson of King Aderk’i, King Armazel was looking for this cloak among the Jews, but could not find it, and though he was told of all that had happened, nobody knew anything of that place, except that “it is located close to the cedar, brought from Lebanon and planted in Mtskheta, which has grown there.” Though our mother St. Nino had many

times ordered us to find this cloak, even she was only told that the “place is the one where people’s lips will never fail to sing praise to God.” Elioz’s house stood on the western side of the city, behind Mogva, by the bridge.

These days St. Nino was having one vision over and over again. She dreamed, while kneeling, as if some heavenly black birds came flying, they plunged into the river, washed themselves and came out white; then coming into the garden they picked vines and ate flowers. They approached St. Nino with desire and love, as if the garden was hers, and surrounded her with wonderful singing.

St. Nino recounted all that to her disciple, Sidonia, Abiatar’s daughter. And Sidonia said to St. Nino: “Stranger and captive, who was not born here, saviour of prisoners, as I know you are, through you the new era came and owing to you we now hear the old story of what our fathers did to that divine man, of that unlawful shedding of his innocent blood which brought shame on the heads of the Jews. They are scattered all over the world, their kingdom fell, the holy temple was taken from them. They are a homeless people, their glory has been appropriated by others. Jerusalem, when will you spread your wings and gather your tribe from all around the world under the shadow of those wings. And here is this woman, who will change all the rules of this country.” She turned again to St. Nino and said to her: “Your vision means that you will turn these places into a garden.”

Yet before King Mirian, who was put to flight by King Constantine, returned from Greece, St. Nino began to preach Christ’s faith openly, for she was saying publicly: “I have found the inhabitants of the North who were dwelling in delusion.” She revealed to the people the cross of the vine and performed wonders with it, for she cured lepers without medicine by touching them with the cross, and her disciples, who had secretly become her followers earlier, preached with her – seven women of the tribe of the Jews – Sidonia, the daughter of Abiatar and six others, the guards of the garden – the husband and wife, and the priest Abiatar, a new Paul who tirelessly and fearlessly propagated Christ’s faith. Being versed in the old faith, he was learning the new one from St. Nino, and no less assiduously then she, he was teaching people the true faith.

Then the Jews rose against Abiatar and wished to stone him, but King Mirian sent his servants to them and saved Abiatar from death, for King Mirian was interested in Christ’s faith, because he had heard from Greece and Armenia of the wonders of Christ’s faith. For this reason he did not try to interfere with the preaching of St. Nino and her disciples. But the devil, this invisible enemy struggled within him, and he could not make his mind up to profess Christ, and Queen Nana was hard-hearted, and reviled Christian preaching.

St. Nino prayed tirelessly in her abode, under the bush. The heathen wondered at her prayers and her vigil; it seemed to them quite uncommon. They began to question her, and she told them of the old and new books, and she turned fools and those lacking understanding into sages, and she kindled the love of Christ in their hearts.

Three years passed since St. Nino began to preach about Christ openly, and she had found many disciples.³⁸ At that time there was a youth who was gravely ill. His mother took him everywhere, looking for somebody learned in medicine who could help him. Everybody examined him, but could find no remedy for his disease; and the physicians said to this woman that there was “nothing to help this youth.” This woman was a hard-hearted heathen. And she always abused the Christian

faith and prevented others from visiting and questioning St. Nino. But when she gave herself up to despair after the advice of the physicians, she went to St. Nino, prostrated herself before her and implored her to cure her child. Then St. Nino said to her: "I will not bring him a cure that comes from man, but let Christ, my God give him succor, and cure this doomed boy." And she ordered the boy

5 to be placed on the hair bedding, on which she was permanently praying, and she began to pray to God; the boy recovered at once, and she gave him, revived, to his mother. And the mother of the boy acknowledged Christ saying: "There is no God besides Christ, about whom Nino preaches." She became Nino's disciple and followed her, and glorified God.

At this time Queen Nana fell ill with a grave and acute disease, which nobody could cure, though

10 all the skillful physicians applied every medicine they knew, finally giving in to despair. Then some people said to the Queen, that "the prayers of the woman, a captive from Rome, whose name is Nino, have cured many who are diseased." And the Queen ordered her servants to bring Nino to her.

The Queen's servants came to St. Nino and found her under the blackberry bush praying, already for six hours, and informed her of the Queen's order. But St. Nino said to them: "I am not

15 allowed to go where there is no comfort for us; let the Queen come to the place of my dwelling and she will be truly cured by the will of Christ." The servants imparted to the Queen what St. Nino told them. Then the Queen said resolutely: "Prepare for me a coach and bring me to her." The servants seated her on the coach and her son, Rev, and many other people accompanied her.

When they came to the abode of St. Nino and put the Queen on the hair shirt, St. Nino began

20 for a long time to pray and implore God; then she took the cross she had, and touched the head, the legs and the shoulders of the Queen, cross-like. In an instant, the Queen recovered and got up, full of life. And she now believed in Christ and said: "There is no other God besides Christ, about whom this captive is preaching." And from that day on she became her dear and intimate friend, and she constantly questioned her at great length about Christ's faith; and St. Nino, Abiatar – the new Paul,

25 and his daughter Sidonia taught her. And the Queen became a believer and became acquainted with the true God.

The King asked the Queen how she had recovered so instantly, and the Queen related to him everything that had happened to her, how she was cured without medicines – just by prayers and the touching of a cross; and the people that witnessed all this confirmed the Queen's words.

And then King Mirian wondered and began to ask questions about the faith of Christ, repeatedly asking the former Israelite Abiatar about the old and new books, and Abiatar related to him everything, about the book of Nebroth among other things, which king Mirian owned. In this book he read that when Nebroth was erecting the pillar, he heard a voice from the sky, which told him: "I am Michael,

30 the one who is assigned by God to rule the East. Leave this city, for God favors it, and on the last day, when the Lord of Heaven comes to you as one of the despised people, then you will understand that fear of him will dispel the joys of this world, and the kings will refuse to reign and will suffer misery. Then seeing you in trouble, He will deliver you." King Mirian understood that the old and new books were in agreement with one another and the book of Nebroth confirmed it.

After this, he wanted to adopt the faith of Christ, but the invisible enemy struggled within him,

40 inspiring reverence towards the idols and fire. But the Queen entreated him tirelessly to profess

Christ's teachings. King Mirian remained hesitating for the whole year after the conversion of the Queen. And St. Nino was teaching all the people, relating to no one who she was, or where she came from, pretending to be a captive.

A little time later the chief priest – a Persian, by name of Khuara, fell ill; he suffered bitterly in his impious soul and was close to death. And this noble was king Mirian's relative. 5

Then Queen Nana and King Mirian came to implore St. Nino, but the King still looked on her with some doubts: "By the will of what god are you curing people? Whose daughter are you: Armaz's or Zaden's? You came from a foreign country and have found their protection; and they showed you their grace, granting you the power to cure so that you would be able to survive in a foreign country. Let their greatness last unto the ages. You should be for us like a wet-nurse of our children and be 10 respected in this town, but do not say foreign words, do not preach the faith of the lost Romans, we do not wish to talk of all that. For let the great gods – the Lords of the world, that radiate the sun, send rains and raise seeds upon the earth, the gods of Kartli – Armaz and Zaden, that know all the secrets, the ancient gods of our fathers Gatsi and Gaim – let them remain believed in by our people. If you cure this nobleman I will make you rich and an inhabitant of Mtskheta, servant of Armaz. And 15 though air and hail have threatened it with destruction, this place is invincible. The god of Kartli, Armaz and the god of the Chaldeans, Itrujan, are enemies. The former set upon the latter the sea, and he responded with this storm. Such is the practice of the lords of the universe. Let this order be accepted by you."

And the blessed Nino answered: "You, King, are blessed already in the name of Christ, by the 20 prayers of His mother and all the saints. God, the creator of heaven and earth, of all the creatures, reveals to you the sparks from the fire of his great, glorious and countless grace, to help you in understanding the height of heaven, the light of the Sun, the depth of the sea, the breadth and foundation of the earth. You must know, King, of the one who covers the sky with clouds, whose will shakes the air, whose force moves the earth and strikes lightning, whose footprints leave the fire of 25 his wrath. All this I told you so that you could understand that God is in heaven. He is invisible for those who He created, except for his son, who came from Him here upon the earth in the shape of man and performed all that he had to do. He ascended to his father in heaven, and there he alone beheld the eternal one, who sits high, but sees the lowest and discerns what is high from far away. Oh, King, close is the hour when you will see the God, for there is a wonder in this city: the cloak 30 of the Son of God is here. Some say that there is the sackcloth of Ilia here. And there are many wonders, which God reveals to us. And now I will cure your nobleman by the will of Christ – my God and the cross of his passions, as I cured the Queen of her painful disease. And when I told all this to her, she was only eager to do her best to illuminate her soul and to bring her people to God."

And they brought to her the nobleman, and the Queen came to the garden under the cedars. 35 She seated him with his face to the east, ordered him to lift up his hands and to say three times: "I renounce you, devil, and follow Christ, son of God." Crying and sighing Nino asked God to help this man and her disciples remained there for a day and two nights. Soon the evil spirit left this nobleman and he became Nino's disciple with his whole household and people; and they praised God.

Chapter seven

The Story of the Woman Sidonia, who was Nino's Disciple and who Beheld and Described the Conversion of King Mirian, and Nino's Supplications to him to Recognize Christ, to Erect a Cross and to Build Churches, and the Performances of Miracles in them.
God, give us your blessing!

And so it was. One summer day, on the twentieth of July, a Saturday, the King set out to hunt at Mukhnari. And the invisible enemy, the devil, assaulted him, sowing in his heart the love of idols and fire. And he decided to serve them in every possible way and to destroy thoroughly the Christians. Then the King told his four accomplices: "We are worthy of the wrath of our gods, for we have become careless in our services to them, and we overlook the Christian prophets while they profess their faith in our country: for they perform their miracles by magic. Here is my decision. We must eliminate all who trust in Christ and must serve more ardently our gods – the Lords of Kartli. And we will tell Nana, my wife, that she must repent and renounce her faith in Christ, and if she does not obey me, I will forget her love and destroy her with the others." And his accomplices supported him in his resolution, for they were devoted to this cause, and had wanted it from the beginning, but did not dare to speak openly of it.

And the King walking on the outskirts of Mukhnari, ascended the mountain of Shkhoti to look over K'asp'i and Uplistsikhe. He came to the very top of the mountain and then, right at midday, the Sun grew dark, it became pitch-dark as at night. The dark wrapped up all the places around him and people scattered away to hide themselves from disaster.

The King remained alone, wandering in the mountains and forests, frightened and dumbfounded. Exhausted the King stopped, losing his hope of survival. But when he regained his senses, he said: "So I called my gods, but found no release for myself. Now, maybe those, whom Nino preaches about, the cross and the crucified One, with whose trust she cures people, are able to save me from this calamity? For now I am alive in hell, and do not know whether the whole world has been doomed or only me. If this disaster is intended only for me, enlighten me, God of Nino, indicate to me my location and I will acknowledge your name, erect a cross and bow before it. I will build a house for myself, to pray there, and will be obedient to the faith of Nino and the Romans." As soon as he said these words the day broke out and the Sun shone. The King dismounted from his horse and remaining on the same place, raised his hand to the east and up to heaven and said: "You are the God over all gods and the Lord over all lords, the God of whom Nino talks. Your name deserves to be praised by every creature living under heaven and upon the world, for you have saved me and scattered the dark. I understand that you want my deliverance, and happiness, and closeness to you, my Lord, the blessed. On this place I will erect a Cross of wood, which will glorify your name and be mentioned through the ages." He remembered the place and returned home. Seeing light,

the people who had dispersed joined him, while the King told them: “Glorify the God of Nino, for He is the eternal God and only He deserves to be glorified for ever and ever.”

And Queen Nana and all the people came out to meet the King, for there was a rumor, first of his death, and then of his coming back in peace. They met him by Kindzara and Ghart. At that time St. Nino, following her custom, gave an evening prayer at the proper time under the bush and we, fifty souls, were with her. When the King came the whole city was shaking and the King called in a loud voice: “Where is that foreign woman, who is my mother, and her God – my saviour.” And when he was told that “she is here, under the bush and prays,” he approached her in person and all his hosts with him. He dismounted from his horse and told Nino: “Now I am worthy to say the name of your God and my saviour.” St. Nino ordered him to bow immediately to the east and pray to Christ, the Son of God.

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And then thunder and the cry of people was heard, and the Queen was in tears. The next day King Mirian sent envoys to King Constantine of Greece with the letter of St. Nino to Queen Helen. The messengers told them of the wonders of Christ that had taken place in Mtskheta and what had happened to King Mirian, and asked them urgently for priests to perform a christening. And St. Nino and her disciples tirelessly preached to the people and showed them the paths to the true kingdom.

15

Her Story of the Construction of the Church

The King and all the people fervently converted to Christianity before the arrival of the priests, and the King said to St. Nino: “I am in a great hurry to build the house of God, but I do not know where to build it?” St. Nino answered him: “Wherever you decide, oh King.” Then the King told her: “I love the place where your bush grows, and I am going to build it there. This royal garden will not stop me, neither the tall cedars, nor the fruitful vines and the fragrance of the flowers, for you had a vision of how black birds with incandescent wings washing in the water turned white, and perched on the trees, and sang with sweet voices. The garden is a place of the flesh – it is pernicious, so let us replace it with an eternal garden. We will build a house of God where we will perform prayers until the arrival of the priests from Greece.”

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He immediately began to instruct the carpenters; they cut down the cedars and made seven pillars from them for the church. When they had built the wooden walls and erected six pillars, the tallest one, which was uncommon in appearance and intended for the middle of the church, could not be fixed in place. And they informed the King of this strange thing; they could not move the pillar from its place.

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Then the King came with many people. They brought with them powerful mechanisms and using all their strength they tried to erect the pillar, but still failed to do so. And the King and the people were amazed, and they asked themselves: “What can it be?” And in the evening the King went home aggrieved, and St. Nino and her twelve disciples remained by the pillar; and she, the blessed one, wailed and shed tears upon the pillar.

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And at midnight both mountains, Armazi and Zadeni seemed to fall, as if collapsing suddenly, and dammed both rivers. The Mt'k'vari burst through the barrier and began to carry away the city. And frightful cries and lamentations were heard, and the Aragvi rushed upon the fortress with a terrible, thunderous noise.

5 The frightened women tried to run away, but the blessed Nino called to them: "Don't be afraid, my sisters, the mountains are staying in their places, the waters flow as they did it in the past, and it just appears to you that the mountains have collapsed; only the mountains of disbelief have fallen in Kartli. The dammed waters are the blood of the infants that were offered to the idols, and the howling voices are from the devil, for they deplore being driven from these places by the will of the
10 Almighty and the cross of Christ. Turn to God and pray!" And in the same instant the voices calmed down and there was silence.

Then St. Nino got up, lifted up her hands and prayed to God for the successful accomplishment of the things the King wished for. And before the next cockcrow, the alarm bells sounded at all the three gates of the city and a great army broke in through the gates and the city was filled with
15 Persians. Frightful roars, cries and calls were heard from everywhere and a massacre began. Blood covered the earth, flesh was melting from fear and souls crumbled; and the people bemoaned their loved ones.

Suddenly a loud cry was heard: "The King of the Persians, King of Kings Khuaran-Khuara orders that all the Israelites be spared death from the sword." Hearing that and regaining (a little) our
20 senses we began to wonder at this, while the soldiers with their swords were already close, striking and killing.

And a voice was heard: "King Mirian has been captured." But the fearless devotee turned round and said: "I know that whoever cries so is in a great difficulty, and I thank God, for this is a sign of their destruction, of the salvation of Kartli and the greatness of these places." In this way, she
25 encouraged us like an artful tutoress and Christ's envoy.

And she addressed the army of destroyers: "Where are the Persian Kings Khuara and Khuaran-Khuara? You departed from Sabastan yesterday and you have come here quickly; your army is massive, and you have annihilated this city, smashed it with your swords, and let the wind disperse it towards the northern mountains. But here comes the one from whom you flee." And Nino stretched
30 her hands in the shape of a cross. Immediately everything disappeared, a complete silence fell, and the women began to praise God.

At dawn, the women dozed, but I, Sidonia, remained awake, as Nino continued to lift up her arms. And a youth, enlightened and enveloped in a shroud of fire, approached the blessed one. And he said to her three words, and she prostrated herself before him, and the youth touched the pillar
35 with his hand, lifted it, and took it up with him to heaven. I approached her in wonder and asked her: "My Lady, what is it?" And she answered: "Bow your head down to the ground!" And she cried, trembling.

After some time she got up, helped me to get to my feet, and we left the place. The women here also saw how a pillar of fire descended to the root of the cut cedar. At daybreak the King got
40 up and worn out by his grief, cast his eyes at the site of the construction of the church and saw a

light which came from the garden and rose into the sky as lightning. The King hastily went there with the members of his household and all the townsfolk. Having seen that miracle, how the pillar of light came from heaven with no human intervention, the people rejoiced with happiness for all that had happened. The city of Mtskheta was seized by both fear and joy, and the King, the *mtavaris* and all the people shed their tears and praised God, envying St. Nino. And this was a day of great wonders. 5

At first, a Jew came, blind from birth. He approached the pillar and recovered his sight in an instant, and began to praise God. The second was a youth from the King's house, by name of Amazasp'an, who for eight years had lain ill. He was brought by his mother inspired by hope, who placed him, lying in his bed, before the pillar of light, the true one, and implored Nino: "Look, my Lady, on my son, who is so close to death, for I know that the God of Gods is the one whom you serve and preach about." Then St. Nino touched the pillar with her hand, put it on the head of the youth, and said to him: "Be cured from now on and praise the One, by the will of whom you have recovered!" And the youth got up that same instant, as if he had never been ill at all. Then a great fear seized the King and all the people. All kinds of sick people came and then returned healthy. And so it continued until the King built a wooden shelter around the pillar and covered it from the people's eyes. But people continued to come; they touched the fence around the pillar and were cured. And the King soon completed the construction of the church in the garden. 10 15

When the envoys of King Mirian came to Constantine, the King of the Greeks, and told him of everything that had happened, the King and his mother, Queen Helen, rejoiced: firstly because the grace of God had embraced yet more people, and with their assistance Kartli was receiving its baptism; and secondly, because they received from King Mirian his assurance of the thorough destruction of the Persians, and his inviolable love for them. They praised and thanked God. And they sent to King Mirian a true cleric – Bishop John, and two other priests, and three deacons on top of that. King Constantine wrote a message to King Mirian with prayers, blessings and thanks to God. He sent him a cross and an icon of Our Savior as well as great gifts; and Queen Helen wrote him a letter, praising and encouraging him. 20 25

Bishop John came to Mtskheta, and the deacons, and the envoy with him. And the King, the Queen and the entire people rejoiced, for everybody wanted to receive the baptism. Then without delay King Mirian sent an order to the lords, *sp'asalars*, and all the persons in power to come to him, and they immediately came to the city. 30

The King received his baptism with the ordination of St. Nino, and then the Queen and his sons, with the ordination of the priest and deacons. After this, they sanctified the river Mt'k'vari and the Bishop prepared one place by the very gate of Mogvta, next to the bridge, where formerly there was the house of priest Elioz, and there he baptized the nobles, each one separately. And this place was called "mtavarta sanatlo," which means, the place of the christening of *mtavaris*, and below this place on the river bank two priests and the deacons baptized people. People were in a hurry, pushing and shoving each other and imploring the priest to baptize them first. The desire to be baptized was so strong among the people, because they had heard the preaching of St. Nino, who said: "A man, who does not receive baptism, will not find the eternal light." So all the people of Kartli were baptized. But the Caucasian mountaineers did not accept baptism. They did not come to 35 40

the christening and remained for some time in the dark. The Jews of Mtskheta also refused baptism, except the ones of the Baraba family, about forty houses in number, who became true Christians. After this, they were raised by the King, and he granted them the town of Tsikhe-didi. Peroz, the son-in-law of King Mirian, who was given Ran down to Barda, also refused baptism as well as his
5 people; he served King Mirian only in the flesh.

Then King Mirian sent Bishop John and one noble person with him to King Constantine and asked him for some parts of the life-giving wood, which the God-loving Queen Helen had discovered. He asked also for a certain number of priests, in order to send them to all the towns and places to christen the people there, so that every soul in Kartli could receive baptism; and he also asked for
10 builders and masons for the erection of churches.

When they came to Caesar Constantine, the latter gladly presented them the parts of the life-giving wood, the board to which the Lord's feet were nailed, and the nails from his hands.

And he sent to Kartli priests and a lot of builders, for in the time of his reign Constantine had built five hundred holy churches and temples of God. He presented the great treasure to Bishop
15 John and ordered him: "Wherever you choose to build churches, do it in my name, and place these gifts in the towns of Kartli."

The Bishop departed, and the envoy with him. When they arrived in Erusheti, the Bishop left there the builders to build churches, as well as the treasure and the nails of the Lord, and departed. He left builders and the treasures in Ts'unda also, and as soon as the builders began their work, he
20 departed. He came to Manglisi and began to build churches and left there the boards that had held our Lord.

This saddened King Mirian, because they did not come to the capital city, but built churches in other towns and left the relics there. But St. Nino came to the King and told him: "Do not grieve, King, for so it should be; wherever they go, they will sow the name of God, and here in this city there
25 is God's miraculous cloak."

Then the King called the priest Abiatar and a lot of Jews with him, and began to question them about this cloak; and they told him everything that was written above. Then Mirian lifted up his hands and said: "Blessed are you, our Lord Jesus Christ, the son of immortal God, for from the very first you desired to deliver us from the devil and this dark place. And You sent Your sacred dress from
30 the holy city of Jerusalem to these Jews, estranged from Your divinity, and presented it to us through the hands of the foreign tribe."

The King and the whole city stood firmly on the path of Christianity. They began to build a church behind the wall, over the bush, the dwelling place of St. Nino. And then St. Nino said: "Blessed is our Lord Jesus Christ and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who sent us the holy word from the
35 heavenly heights with the one who descended from the omnipotent throne down to earth. He was born of the seed of David, from a saintly and pure woman; he was the only child and became a favorite of his father, for he came to save us. He was born as a man, and as the adherent of the true faith received baptism by water and by spirit. He was crucified and buried, rose from the dead on the third day, ascended into heaven to the height of his Father. But he will come again in his glory,
40 the one who is worthy of the glory and the honors and devotion, together with his Father and the Holy Spirit.

On the Erection of the Holy Cross

At that time a tree was growing on an inaccessible crop of rocks. The tree was beautiful and sweet-smelling. It was miraculous: if a beast, wounded by an arrow ate its leaves or seeds, it escaped death, even if the wound was mortal. It was a wonder to the former heathens and they told Bishop John of this tree. The Bishop said: "Truly, God singled out this country from the beginning to serve him, for he has nurtured that tree and preserved it till this hour. And now because God's grace has enlightened Kartli, it is time to make a holy cross from that tree, so that all the inhabitants of Kartli can worship it."

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And Rev, the King's son, the Bishop and many other people went to the place, cut the tree and brought it together with its branches to town. People gathered to see its green leaves in the winter time; when all the other trees stood dry it was blooming and issuing sweet fragrance. They erected the tree by the gate of the church, where the southern wind gently blew, stirring its leaves and branches and, as I have heard, it was a great pleasure to behold that slender tree.

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They cut the tree on Friday, the twenty fifth of March, and it remained so for thirty-seven days, and its leaves did not change their color, as if it stood with its roots on some spring, until the trees in the woods shed their leaves and the fruit trees lost their blossom.

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Then on the first day of May they made a cross from it, and on the seventh day of the same month they erected it with the ordination of the King to the joy of all the inhabitants of the city. And all the inhabitants of the city could see how a cross of fire descended from heaven and there was something like a crown of stars around it, and it stood over the church until dawn, and at daybreak two stars parted and moved, one to the east, and another to the west. And the cross itself, remaining as radiant as before, slowly moved away in the direction of Aragvi and stopped over a rocky promontory, by its upper side, close to the brook that sprang from the tears of St. Nino, and from that place it then ascended to heaven. Over and over again all the people could see the salvation that comes from our Lord. Then they asked the blessed Nino: "What do those radiant stars with one moving to the east and the other to the west, mean?" And she answered: "Send people to the east up to the mountains of K'akheti and to the west up to the outskirts of this city and let them see where these stars will stop, and there the crosses of Christ are to be erected."

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Then the King ordered people to place themselves on the tops of the mountains. It was Friday and the next day in the morning the same wonder took place. Next day came the observers from the west, who stood on the mountain of Kuabta-Tavi and told the King that "the star appeared, ascended and reached the top of Tkhoti Mount on the pass of K'asp'i, there it stopped at one place for some time and then disappeared."

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Then came the observers from the mountains of K'akheti and said: "We saw the star coming, which stopped over the village of Bodi from K'ukheti." Then the blessed Nino ordered them: "Take two crosses and erect one on Tkhoti, where God revealed his power to you, and give another to Salome, Christ's servant; let her erect it in the town of Ujarma, so that Bodi, the village in K'ukheti, will not fall into opposition to the town of the kings – Ujarma, for there live many people within it,

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while the village of Bodi is a place dear to God. Let her visit the place herself.” And they did as she had ordered them.

5 Following the wondrous sign from heaven, the people of Mtskheta lifted up the Holy Cross in their hands and went to the foot of the mountain, spent the night over the spring praying, and the blessed Nino mixed her tears into the waters of the spring. Great restorative miracles and wonders occurred. And the next day the people ascended the rock, and she, the blessed one, came to the top, prostrated herself on the stones crying, and the Queen and the *mtavaris* and all the other people cried with her so that the mountains echoed. Putting her hand on one of the stones she said to the Bishop: “Come here, and bless this stone.” And he did so. Then innumerable people came to the cross that was erected and kneeled before it, worshipping it and acknowledging the crucified One as the true Son of the Immortal God.

10 And the great *mtavaris* did not leave the holy church, the pillar of light and life-giving cross, for they witnessed staggering miracles and the restoring of health, all beyond description. On Sunday, the day of the Easter celebration, King Mirian and the entire town of Mtskheta made sacrifices, and the whole of Kartli observes that rite to this day. Some days after the day of the Martyr, on Thursday, they saw a frightening wonder: a cross-like pillar of light which had been hanging over the erected cross and twelve stars, surrounded it like a crown. Its top was covered with smoke and exhaled a sweet smell. And everybody could see the wonder, and many unbelievers were converted that day, receiving baptism, and the Christians became even more ardent believers, and praised God. Then they saw another wonder of the cross: as if the fire above it was seven times brighter than the light of the Sun. And some fiery sparks, angels, or God were ascending and descending it, and the hill on which the cross stood was shaking strongly. But when this wonder ended, the shaking of the earth ceased also. Seeing this miracle, people praised God more eagerly. And while such miracles took place every year, the people looked upon them with fear and trembling, and came to worship the cross zealously.

25 At that time Rev, the King’s son, had a small son, who was ill and close to death. Because he was the only son of his parents, Rev brought him to the Cross and laid him before it, saying with tears in his eyes: “If you grant this boy life, I will build a shelter for you.” The boy recovered instantly and Rev took the boy home with him, healthy and lively. Then Rev, the son of the King, fulfilled his promise gladly and diligently: he built a shelter for the Cross of Mtskheta. And he came there every year to perform the vow of sacrifice. And from that time on all the ill and sick people came there to recover from bad health, and happily praised the Holy Cross of Christ.

There was one youth, blind in both eyes. He sat before the Cross of Christ and after seven days recovered his sight; and he praised the Holy Cross.

35 There was also one woman, who suffered permanently from the evil spirit who had lost her strength and mind from the age of eight and was tearing the dress she wore. When they brought her to the Holy Cross and placed her before it, she recovered in twelve days and went on her way on her own legs, praising God and worshipping the Holy Cross. There was also a small boy, who died suddenly. His mother put him before the Cross and prayed from the dawn and till the sunset. People said to her: “Take him, woman, and bury him, for he is dead, do not bother with him.” But she did not

give way to despair, prayed more eagerly and cried lamentably. Towards the evening, life returned to the boy and he opened his eyes. After seven days he had recovered thoroughly; and the mother of the boy thanked and praised God.

Seeing these wonders and these healings, there came many childless people, asking for children and many received them; they made sacrifices and praised God. Not only those who came to the Cross were healed, but also those who prayed from afar to the Holy Cross. After receiving grace and defeating enemies, they would hurry to the cross to give their thanks. 5

Appealing to the Holy Cross, many ungodly people found immediate relief from their troubles; and then they came and received baptism and praised the Cross. Even today, the diseased, sickly and infirm turn to the Cross, and receiving God's grace, praise the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. 10

The Message Written by the Patriarch of Rome and the King of the Branjis to Nino and King Mirian and the entire People of Kartli

At this time, a message came from Rome, from the Holy Patriarch to Nino and the King and all the people of Kartli. The Patriarch sent a deacon, a Branji by birth, for the lauding of the Almighty, to give benediction, and partake of communion with the blessed Nino. He had a letter from the King of the Branjis to Nino, who wanted to have his country of Branjis baptized. He had learned from Jerusalem and Constantinople that the Sun of truth illuminated Kartli. So he wrote her a letter with a request to know more about the wonders coming from the tree and the bush, and of their healing powers. And the deacon, learning all this and seeing the wonders that took place in Mtskheta, was deeply amazed, and praised God. He took with him the letters and departed. 15 20

Then the King told St. Nino and the Bishop: "This is my will: to convert by force of arms the mountaineers and my son-in-law, Peroz, to make them the servants of the Son of God and bow before the Holy Cross." But they said to him: "God does not allow the raising of swords, so let us show them peacefully the path of truth that leads to eternal life. With the Gospel and the Holy Cross, let the grace of God enlighten the darkness in their hearts." 25

St. Nino and Bishop John departed, and the King sent also one *eristavi* to accompany them. They arrived at Tsobeni and summoning the mountaineers – people resembling dumb creatures like the Chargalians, Pkhovians, Ts'ilk'anians and Gudamaqarians – preached the faith of Christ, the true faith, which leads to eternal life, but they refused to receive baptism. Then the *eristavi* accompanying them, lifting his sword a little above their heads, victoriously destroyed their idols. From there they went to Jaleti and preached to the Erts'o-Tianetians. The latter accepted the preaching and received the baptism, and the Pkhovians left their country and settled in Tusheti, while the majority of the mountaineers still refused to convert. And because they refused to receive baptism, the King raised their taxes. And they fled, persisting in their delusion. Many of them were converted only recently by Abibos, Bishop of Nek'resi, though some remain heathens to this day.³⁹ 30 35

St. Nino went to Ran in order to convert Peroz, and, arriving in K'ukheti, the village of Bodi, remained there for several days. Many people came to her, questioned her about her teaching and accepted it. And there she fell ill. When Rev, the King's son, and Salome, his spouse, who were then in Ujarma, learned of it, they went to her and informed the King and the Queen, who sent Bishop John to bring Nino back, but St. Nino did not obey them. Then the King went himself with many of his people, for all of them looked on her as an angel from heaven. They tore the hems of her dresses, and kissed them. The queens, sitting around her prayed and wept bitterly seeing the approach of the time when they must part with their tutor, zealot and artful healer of the sick. Salome from Ujarma and Perojavr from Sivnieti, and the *eristavis* and *mtavaris* with them asked St. Nino: "Who are you, and from where did you come to this country as our savior, and where were you raised, our Lady?" Tell us of your life. Why do you say that you are a captive, our deliverer and beloved one, and if, as we have learned from you, there were prophets before the Son of God, and the twelve apostles and seventy more of them after him, why has God revealed us just you? And how do you say that you are a captive or stranger?"

Then St. Nino began to talk: "Daughters of the faith, my dear queens, I see that you are confirmed in the faith of Christ, like those first women. You want to know about me, an unworthy servant. Now I will tell you, for my soul is already in my throat and I am going to sleep forever with the sleep of my mother. But bring me something to write upon, and record my unworthy and negligent life, so that your descendants can learn about your faith, the reception I received here and the miracles of God, that you have seen." Then Salome from Ujarma and Perojavr from Sivnieti brought in writing materials. St. Nino began her narrative, and they recorded it. And she told everything as we have described it above – her life of blessed sainthood.

She told the King to make Jacob the Bishop after John. Then Bishop John held a service and administered communion to St. Nino with the flesh and blood of Christ. She delivered her soul to the hands of the Lord of heaven on the fourteenth year of her coming to Kartli, in the year of three hundred and thirty-eight after the ascension of Christ, and in the year of five thousand eight hundred and thirty-eight from the creation of the world (338-5838). And the death of St. Nino shook both towns – Mtskheta and Ujarma, and the whole of Kartli. Her sacred remains were buried in K'ukheti, in the village of Bodi, for she herself asked the King to be buried there, according to a sign from God. And Nino did so because of her modesty, for there was nothing remarkable in this place. The King and all the nobles grieved because of her choice of this place, and only because of her will and command were her remains buried there. And when King Mirian, enlightened by God, did all this, he made all Kartli and Hereti follow the faith of the Holy Spirit and the consubstantial God, the maker of all things. And they strengthened their faith.

Caesar Constantine, who kept Mirian's son Bakar by him as a hostage, let him go with rich presents and a letter to Mirian, in which he wrote: "I, Constantine, the autocratic King, formerly a prisoner of the devil, rescued by the Creator and now a new slave of the Lord of heaven, write to you, a new convert also enlightened by God like me. Let peace and happiness be with you! Because you have recognized the consubstantial Trinity, the eternal God, the maker of all things, I need no hostage from you. For me the mediation of Christ is enough, the Son of God, born in ancient times

and incarnated as a man to save us, and His Holy Cross given to us, for those who have set their hearts on him. And with the mediation of God, the maker, we will live henceforth in brotherly love. I give you your son; behold him and be happy! Let the angel of peace, sent by God be always with you, and let God, the maker drive away the devil, the seducer, out of your kingdoms!"

Bakar, Mirian's son and the envoy of King Constantine came to Mtskheta. King Mirian and Queen Nana rejoiced greatly and offered their thanks to God, who grants true riches.

5

King Mirian completed the church of the bishopric, and celebrated its consecration with much splendor. Twenty five years after the conversion of King Mirian, his son Rev, the son-in-law of Trdat', King of the Armenians, whom Mirian granted the kingdom in his lifetime, died. He was buried in a tomb, built by Rev himself.

10

The same year King Mirian fell ill, and before his death he summoned his son Bakar and his wife Nana and said to Nana: "Now I am going to the place whence I came from, and I thank God, the maker of heaven and the earth, who saved me, a prisoner of the devil, from the jaws of hell and favored me with a place on his right hand. And you, Nana, if the time will be given to you after me, divide our royal treasure in two parts and take one to the grave of Nino, our enlightener, so that its importance will not diminish over time, for this is not the place of the royal throne, but a wretched spot." He asked the bishops to praise the place, "for it deserves to be respected."

15

And to his son he said: "My son, for me the dark was changed by light and death by life. I am giving my royal crown to you. Let God, the Creator of heaven and earth strengthen you in the true faith. Learn all the commandments of the Son of God and set your hopes thoroughly on them. Let death in the name of Christ appear to you, through which you will win eternal life. And wherever you find these harmful idols of fire, burn them and give their ashes to those who trust in them, and tell your descendants about all this. For I know that this belief will disappear among the tribes of the Caucasus. Do this work, apply your heart and entrust yourself to the Son of God, born in ancient times, who became a man and underwent tortures in order to save us. Guided by the Holy Cross you will win victories over your enemies, like those who love him with their hearts. Respect the life-giving tree, erected by God. Set your hopes upon it, and proceed to eternal peace with faith in the Holy Trinity."

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25

And he made them bring the cross of St. Nino, upon which she had in the very beginning, hung the royal crown. He brought his son Bakar and blessed him, took the crown from the cross and put it on the head of his son. King Mirian passed away⁴⁰ and was buried in the upper church by the middle southern pillar, on the northern side, and in that pillar there is a part of the original pillar that was erected by God. The following year Queen Nana died and was buried by the same pillar, where King Mirian had been buried earlier, just on its western side.

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The twenty-fifth King – Bakar, son of Mirian, Khosrovid

Bakar, his son, became the King; he was a believer like his father. He converted most of the Caucasian tribes, which his father had failed to convert. And there arose enmity between him and the Armenians, for the Armenians wanted to set on the throne of Kartli, Bakar's nephew, Rev's son, the son of the daughter of Trdat', the King of the Armenians. Bakar arranged things with the King of the Persians, his cousin, and entered into relations with him; he exchanged territories with his brother-in-law Peroz, whom Miran had granted Ran down to Barda, giving him instead the country beyond Samshvilde down to the beginning of Abotsi. Then Peroz and his people received the baptism. After that they joined the forces from Khuasro and gave battle to the Armenians in Javakheti. They defeated them and put the Armenians to flight. Then King Bakar with the mediation of the King of the Greeks and the King of the Persians wrote a note on behalf of his nephews and their mother Salome, asserting that while there are descendants of Bakar able to reign, they will control the kingdom, not the descendants of Rev who will never claim the throne.

Bakar brought his nephews to him and gave them K'ukheti; one of them he assigned to be an *erismtavari* in Rustavi. Bakar spent his lifetime following the faith; he increased the number of priests and deacons to serve in Kartli and Rani, and built a church in Ts'ilk'ani. He was buried beside his brother.

The Twenty-sixth King – Mirdat', Son of Bakar, Khosrovid

His son Mirdat' ascended the throne and he reigned, also abiding by the great faith. He built a church in the fortress of Tukharisi, for there was no church in the ravine of K'larjeti, and assigned the priests as shepherds of the K'larjis. He added decorations and construction to the churches of Erusheti and Ts'unda. At the time of Mirdat''s reign, the Georgians began to make crosses from parts of the life-giving wood, because great wonders occurred wherever these parts of the life-giving pillars had been placed. King Mirdat' did not forbid the removal of these parts, because Bishop Jacob also gave his consent: "It is granted by God, and from the pillar erected by God the image of the cross can be made." And so the parts of the life-giving pillar were spread all over Kartli. Then king Mirdat' made a large cross from the pillar, and around what was left of the pillar, erected a stone wall with the use of mortar, of the size equal to the initial height of the pillar, and on the top of it, he erected the life-giving cross. And all his days he spent without trouble, abiding in great faith. Bishop Jacob died and was replaced by Job, an Armenian, a deacon of Katholicos Nerse.

The Twenty-seventh king – Varaz-Bakar,⁴¹ Son of Mirdat', Khosrovid

After Mirdat', his son, Varaz-Bakar, became King. He took two wives: one – the daughter of Trdat', Rev's son and Mirian's grandson, and the second – daughter of Peroz, son of Mirian's daughter. Rev's granddaughter gave birth to two sons, whose names were Mirdat' and Trdat', and Peroz's granddaughter – to one son, whom they named Parsman.

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King Varaz-Bakar was an unbeliever and an enemy of the faith, but he did not dare to disclose to the people around him his hatred of the faith, for Kartli was converted and the *aznauris* and the entire people abided by the great faith. Out of fear Varaz-Bakar did not dare to declare his abandonment of the faith. He did not build churches and added nothing to the ones already built. He behaved like an unbeliever in everything.

10

At this time the King of the Persians sent a commander with a great army to bring the Armenians and Georgians under tribute. The Armenians sent an envoy to Varaz-Bakar and proposed an alliance, to join with the Greek forces, and open the gates of Caucasia to bring in the Ovses and Lek'is, and thus offer resistance to the Persians. His nobles also advised him to resist the Persians. But he did not listen to the words of the Armenians, or to his nobles, for he was timorous and a coward. He established himself in the ravines of K'akheti, built a fortress in Khidari, reinforced the town-fortresses and ordered everybody to hide their crosses.

15

The Persians set out first for Armenia, devastated it and then entered Kartli. The Persian commanders built a fortress between the gates of Tpilisi, intending to seize Mtskheta. Then Varaz-Bakar implored them, asking for peace, but the commander said to him: "Give me Ran and Movak'an, for they are parts of the Persian domains and belong to those who are the true descendants of the Kings of the Persians and are sitting on the thrones of their fathers. For you, who are born of a concubine, Kartli is enough. Let Kartli remain in your possession and pay tribute to the Kings Khosrovids."

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Terrified, Varaz-Bakar could not answer; he gave him Ran and Movak'an and promised to pay tribute, and the Persian commander handed him the fortress of Tpilisi and left. After that the Georgians and Armenians became tributaries of the Persians. The K'larjis broke off with Varaz-Bakar and joined the Greeks. The Greeks conquered Tukharisi and the entire territory of K'larjeti from the sea and up to Arsiani, and so only Kartli remained – without K'larjeti – in Varaz-Bakar's possession, as well as Hereti and Egrisi. The commander of the Persians took prisoner Peroz's sons, the grandchildren of Mirian, the believing King. Varaz-Bakar died, leaving behind him small children who were unable to reign.

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The Twenty-eighth King – Trdat', Varaz-Bakar's father-in-law, Khosrovid

The nobles of Kartli, consulting among themselves made Varaz-Bakar's father-in-law, Rev's son and Mirian's grandson, an old man by name of Trdat', the King. They gave him his grandchildren, sons of Varaz-Bakar to bring up. The third son of Varaz-Bakar, Parsman by name, was brought up by the *eristavi* of Samshvilde. And this old man reigned happily. He believed in God and was a wise and reasonable man. With the help of his wisdom he pacified the Persians, he brought out the crosses and decorated the churches. At his time Bishop Job died, and he assigned Elias in his place. Trdat' paid tribute to the King of the Persians. He seized Rustavi and built a church in Nek'resi. He reigned knowing no troubles and died in great faith.

10 The Twenty-ninth King – Parsman, Son of Varaz-Bakar, Khosrovid

Varaz-Bakar's son and Peroz's grandson, Parsman by name, became King, because he was the elder among his brothers. Bishop Elias died and Simon took his place. Parsman believed in God and was a brave man. He carried on negotiations with the King of the Greeks and asked him for his aid. The Caesar complied with his request. Then he broke off with the Persians, refused to pay them tribute, increased the number of crosses, renewed churches all over Kartli and built a church in Bolnisi. But his reign was short.

The Thirtieth King – Mirdat', King Parsman's Brother, Khosrovid

His brother Mirdat' became King. He was Trdat''s grandson, son of Varaz-Bakar, Bakarid on his father's side and Revid – on his mother's, descendant of both of Mirian's sons. Mirdat'' was a brave man and a fearless soldier, but an unbeliever and impious, carefree and arrogant. Relying on his military valor, he did not serve God, did not build churches and added nothing to those already built. Due to his lack of concern, he became an enemy of the Greeks and the Persians. He demanded the lands of Kartli – K'larjeti from the Greeks – and refused to pay tribute to the Persians. Then the King of the Persians sent against Mirdat' his commander Usharab⁴² by name, with an army. Mirdat', again, due to his nonchalance, ignored the numerical superiority of the Persians, met them with a small army at Gardabani and joined battle. The Persians put the Georgians to flight and captured Mirdat'. The Persians conquered Kartli and desecrated the churches. And the King's relatives remained in the ravine of K'akheti, and Bishop Simon with them. And they took Mirdat' to Baghdad, where he died.

NOTES

Part I

- ¹ Targamos (Torgom), a mythological forefather of the Armenians, appears in Moses of Khorenatsi's work, *Istoriia Armenii (The History of Armenia)*, trans. G. Emin, Moscow: 1858.
- ² Ararat' and Masis are at present the names of one and the same mountain, but in the story of Leont'i Mroveli they are two different mountains: "Targamos moved away with his tribe and settled between two mountains which were inaccessible to man – Ararat' and Masis" ("And the lands of Ararat' and Masis could not contain them"). In this connection Strabon is of some interest. According to him, T'igran I built a town, T'igranskert, by the mountain chain of Masios (contemporary Tell-Armen). T'igranokert was situated on the territory of contemporary Syria, on the river Tigris (now called Farkin). Perhaps, Strabon's information was known to the ancient Georgian chroniclers, which explains the above stated interpretation of Mroveli.
- ³ Perhaps the riddle of this name can be solved based on information supplied by Pliny the Second, who, describing the Taurus range says that the mountains have different names in different parts. Two of the names in the southern part of the mountain system sound like Oreges and Oroandes.
- ⁴ Mroveli advances the idea here that the Georgians were initially monotheists and only afterwards began to worship heavenly bodies, which is perhaps an appropriate view for a cleric, but of course this does not correspond with fact.
- ⁵ As has been repeatedly noted in Georgian historiography, mention of the Khazars during this epoch is an anachronism (Khazars were spoken of only in the sixth-eighth cc. when they created their *Kaganat* and achieved regional power). Mroveli, when talking about the Khazars may have meant the Scythians, whose invasion, together with the Cimmerians took place in the eighth century B.C.
- ⁶ The mention of the son of Uobos, the King of the Khazars, as a forefather of the Ossetians seems interesting, because the Ossetians (Alans) represent one branch of the northern Iranian tribes – the Scythians and Sarmatians, as suggested by linguistic data. As we have noted above, Mroveli's Khazars could be the Scythian-Sarmatian tribes, so we are in fact dealing with the relationship between the Alans-Ossetians and the Scythian-Sarmatian tribes.
- ⁷ The denomination "Turks" probably means Turanians.
- ⁸ The conquest of Jerusalem by Nabuchodonosor (Nebuchadnezzar) took place in 597 B.C., and its thorough destruction – in 586 B.C.
- ⁹ There are different opinions in Georgian historiography regarding this problem. We are inclined to think that there were many tribes at that time, who inhabited the territory or Kartli, who spoke in Georgian, but in communications with the neighboring peoples, such as Armenians, they probably spoke in their language.
- ¹⁰ There is a marginal inscription in the Rumiantsev manuscript: "here appeared the Georgian language."
- ¹¹ In reality, according to the sources, Sp'andiat's (Isfandir) son was not Baram (Bahram), but Baaman (Bahman, compare: Vohuman).
- ¹² The assertion that there were six languages in use in Georgia is somewhat confirmed by data from archeological excavations. In the ancient capital of Georgia, in Mtskheta-Armazi, inscriptions in Greek, Aramaic, Hebrew and Pekhlevan languages were found. See G. Tsereteli, *Armazskaia bilingva, dvuiazichnaia nadpis, naidenaia pri arkheologicheskikh raskopkakh v Mtskheta-Armazi, (The Bilingua of Armazi: Bilingual Inscriptions Found at the Archeological Excavations in Mtskheta-Armazi)*, Tbilisi: 1941, p. 70.
- ¹³ The story of the Bunturks can be found in the *Conversion of Kartli*. In scholarly writings there have been several attempts to explain the word "bun," but there is no final conclusion. In *kartlis tskhovreba*, Bunturks are described as a "fierce heathen people." It seems that for Mroveli the term "bunturks" has a quite concrete meaning and points to people of Turkish origin, living somewhere in the north.
- ¹⁴ There are different opinions in the scientific literature regarding the conquest of Georgia by Alexander. Some scholars refute the conquest. In connection with this problem, the opinion expressed by L. Chilashvili in his monograph about the towns of ancient Georgia is interesting. See L. Chilashvili, *Goroda feodalnoi Gruzii (The Towns of Feudal Georgia)*, Tbilisi: 1968, Vol. 1, pp. 36-37.

- ¹⁵ In the foreground of this story are the interrelations of a newly created Eastern-Georgian state with two powerful state formations in the Middle East – the state of Seleucids on the one side and “Greece,” that is the kingdom of Pont (the Seleucids supported Parnavaz against Jason, who was supported by Pont). This probably reflects the real situation. There was a fierce struggle between these two states, formed as a result of dissolution of the Empire of Alexander of Macedon, which ended only in the second century B.C., when new players – Parthia and Rome, entered the region as historical players.
- ¹⁶ Parnavaz is shown here as the King of almost the whole of Georgia; besides the other territories his state included the *eristavdom* (principality) of Kuji, the territory between the rivers of Rioni and Egris-ts’q’ali, and Svaneti. Only “the land that lay below Egris-ts’q’ali remained Greek, because the inhabitants of these places had no desire to break with the Greeks.”
- Here we should discuss *eristavi* Kuji’s name. Mroveli claims Kuji had built a city-fortress by Tsikhe-goji (archeologists identify it as Nokalakevi, the ancient Greek Archeopolis). See N. Lomouri, “Raskopki v Nokalakevi” (“Excavations in Nokalakevi”), in *dzeglis megobari*, 1975, #3). The local population calls this territory at present in the local Mingrelian language, Jikha-Kuji, that is the fortress of Kuji. Probably the same name – Kuji – should figure in the other toponym of Western Georgia – Gocha-jikhaishi. The second part of this name is typical for Kartvelian languages “jikha” (Georgian “tsikhe”) – fortress.
- ¹⁷ The aspiration of Rome to expand to the East was apparent in the middle of the second century B.C.
- ¹⁸ Mirian reigned at the time when the state of the Seleucid Empire was gradually losing its position in the Middle East due to the incursions of the Romans. The defeat of the Seleucids by the Romans at Magnesia (190 BC) finally decided the fate of their state. The dissolution of the Seleucid state began before the battle at Magnesia. Many regions subject to the Seleucids were already autonomous or independent. There were two Armenian states: one in Sofen, and the other – in the northern area.
- ¹⁹ King Arshak’, mentioned by Mroveli, is in fact Artashes I (189-161 BC), who was a Seleucid ruler, and is known by Greek sources as Artaxy. He built the town Artashat and declared it to be the capital of the newly created Armenian kingdom.
- ²⁰ In the middle of the third century B.C., the kingdom of Parthia was formed, established by the Arshak’id dynasty. The first King of this dynasty – Arshak’ I the Great (he ascended the throne in 247 BC) – began his kingdom’s expansion in the middle of the second century when Parthia became a powerful state. Perhaps the story of Mroveli reflects the change in orientation of the Georgian kings at that time. Armenia, which was pressing the Iberian kingdom in the second century B.C., annexed a number of its southern areas, and tried to expand its hegemony over other parts of Iberia. The kings of Georgia colluded with Parthia and with its help tried to repel Armenia. The situation continued under subsequent kings. See G. Melikishvili, *K istorii drevnei Gruzii (On the History of Ancient Georgia)*, Tbilisi: 1959, pp. 298-301.
- ²¹ This information, if we take its chronology to be right, does not correspond to reality, because as was noted above, the kingdom of Parthia had been formed in the middle of the third century B.C. The subsequent story about the origins of the “kingdom of Persia” reflects the state of affairs of a much earlier epoch.
- ²² According to the ancient Georgian sources – the *Conversion of Kartli* and *kartlis tskhovreba* – the Eastern Georgian kingdom splits into two separate kingdoms after Aderk’i. There is nothing in the sources as to why. It is not easy to determine whether the split in the kingdom corresponds to reality at all. Incidentally, there is no information about it in the sources in other languages (Greek or Armenian). According to G. Melikishvili, the so called “kings of Armazi” of *kartlis tskhovreba* were perhaps not real kings, but the King’s *sp’asp’et’s* (“the second person after the King”), who at certain times gained great power and carried out their own policies, including separatist goals. (G. Melikishvili, *ibid.*, pp. 347-348). In *kartlis tskhovreba*, it is always emphasized that both Georgian Kings lived harmoniously together in mutual love. The joint reign ended after a conflict between Parsman and Mirdat’. Parsman finally secured for himself the second half of the Eastern Georgian kingdom.
- ²³ *Kartlis tskhovreba* states that the sixteenth king was Adam, but we think that the name must be distorted, because the appearance at that time of the biblical name Adam was rather strange. The testimony of the *Conversion of Kartli* is probably more accurate, according to which the name of this king was “Gadam.” This opinion is supported by the fact that the name of Gadam’s mother is Gadana. These names are of Alanian origin.

- ²⁴ Towards the end of the first quarter of the third century, great changes took place in the alignment of forces in the Middle East. Rome gradually lost its former power and Iran began to gain in strength. In 226, the dynasty of the Sassanids emerges in the state. The Parthian dynasty of Arshak'ids is overthrown and Ardashir, son of Papak, receives the title of King. The state of Ardashir included almost the whole territory of the former Parthian kingdom. The power of Sassanid Iran grew still more at the time of Ardashir's successor Shapur I, who dealt crushing blows to the Roman army. According to Iranian epigraphic monuments, the King of Iberia Amazasp', was on the list of the allies of Shapur (G. Melikishvili, *ibid.*, pp. 391-395). The information of *kartlis tskhovreba* that Amazasp' came to love the Persians and the Persian religion, we should probably understand as a change in orientation of the Eastern Georgian state after the success of Shapur I in his fight with the Romans. The end of this story indicates that the Persians, yet again, suffer defeat, and their ally, Amazasp', with them. The Greeks here we should perhaps interpret as Romans. Emperor Diocletian (284-305) managed to inflict a number of defeats on the successors of Shapur I and in 287 B.C., he installed Trdat' on the Armenian throne, who reigned until 330 B.C.
- ²⁵ The mention of Khosrov Anushirvan or Ardashir, the founder of the Sassanid dynasty, at the time of Asagur is an obvious anachronism. But the description of the events during the reign of Aspagur corresponds to the period, when the power of Iran was considerably diminished. Along with Aspagur there is mention of the Armenian King Khosrov (K'osaro), who according to Moses of Khoren was a contemporary of Ardashid I. As Mroveli writes, Khosrov was murdered by Anak', who was sent by Ardashir. The mention of Emperor Valerian at the time of the reign of Khosrov of Armenia, indicates that the events described by Moses of Khoren had already taken place at the time of Shapur I, when Amazasp' reigned in Georgia. It seems that the story of Khosrov, taken from Agafangel's work, is attributed in *kartlis tskhovreba* to the time of Aspagur's reign.
- ²⁶ There is disagreement regarding this question. After the loss of Armenian independence and its subjection to Byzantium, and then to the Seljuks, the majority of Armenian territory liberated by Georgia became part of the Georgian kingdom. The feudal aristocracy of Armenia tried to strengthen their legal position at the court of the King of Georgia, so historians do not exclude the possibility that changes in the ancient manuscripts of *kartlis tskhovreba* were introduced under their influence, which gave rise to the critique concerning the second half of the twelfth century, of the tendentiousness of certain facts regarding the history of Georgian-Armenian relations (M. Lordkipanidze, *Chto takoe "kartlis tskhovreba" (What is "Kartlis Tskhovreba")*, Tbilisi: 1989, pp. 77-79).
- ²⁷ As is rightly noted in specialist literature, the information regarding Mirian's origin in *kartlis tskhovreba* must be fictional. If we take into consideration the timeline, Mirian could be the son neither of Ardashir Sassanid, nor of Khosrov Anushirvan. On the other hand, the chronicle of the *Conversion of Kartli* after Aspagur, names Lev (perhaps Rev), Mirian's father, as King. The possibility of such pressure by Iran on Caucasia at this time, particularly on Georgia at the end of the third century, is unlikely (see G. Melikishvili, *ibid.*, pp. 61-62).
- ²⁸ The borders of Mirian's domains are obviously exaggerated. The sources nowhere indicate that half of Syria (Sham), Mesopotamia (Jazeera) and South Azerbaijan (Adarbadagan) were ever part of the Eastern Georgian kingdom.
- ²⁹ According to this information, Iberia still held on to its Iranian orientation. The emperor at the time of these events is Constantine (306-337). But perhaps here the chronology is wrong and we must attribute these events in Iberia to the earlier period (296-297), to the time of Iranian-Roman wars (*Ocherki po istorii Gruzii, tom II, Gruzii v IV-X vekakh [Essays on the History of Georgia, Vol. II, Georgia in the IV-X cc.]* Tbilisi: 1973, p. 62).
- ³⁰ This corresponds to reality. The strengthening of Byzantine power presented Georgia with new problems, and apparently, Mirian at some time changed his political orientation and together with Armenia found himself in a united camp with Byzantine. The logical conclusion to this switch in the policy of Georgia was the adoption of Christianity as a state religion during the lifetime of Constantine (he died in 337).

Part II

- ³¹ It is not easy to guess who is meant by the author of this work. The word means in Arabian tradition, the Franks, but the list of the regions of this country, given later (see below) is unidentifiable.
- ³² Patalan – is Catalaun (Catalaun fields) in Champagne by the town of Troua in France. Here, the Romans gained a decisive victory over Atilla on June 15, 451. Maybe there is an echo of this battle here, and hence the violation of chronology.
- ³³ *stratiotis* – The Greek term *stratiotis/-ai* (στρατιώτης/-αι) was in use since classical antiquity with the sense of «soldier».
- ³⁴ The following story, Leont'i Mroveli takes from the work of Agafangel. Agafangel indicates Caesar as Diocletian.
- ³⁵ *epitrachelon* – (from Greek – επιτραχήλιον, “around the neck”) is the stole worn by priests and bishops as the symbol of their priesthood.
- ³⁶ The noted commandments, with the exception of two (g, j) of them, are taken from the Gospel, though with some changes: a) Matthew 26:13; Mark 14:19; b) Galatians 3:28; c) Matthew 28:19; d) Luke 2:32; e) Matthew 26:3; Mark 14:19; f) Matthew 10:40; h) Matthew 10:28; and i) Mark 16:9.
- ³⁷ The phrase “daragevel zepel bakadul,” which in the text is interpreted as Branjis, is in fact a combination of three Syrian expressions, which were interpreted by N. Marr as follows: dargul-el, zekop-el, bar-radol-el “enemy of God, crucifier of God, son of God’s murderer.” Pronunciation of “k” is “g” and “t” is “d”. N. Marr explains this by the peculiarity of pronunciation. He also thinks that “we obviously have to deal with the epithets of the Hebrews in Christian monuments” (N. Marr, *Bogi iazicheskoi Gruzii (Gods of Heathen Georgia)*, ЗВОИРАО: 1909: Vol. 14, ed. I-IV, pp. 20-21).
- ³⁸ The story that comes after these words, including the construction of a church in Mtskheta, can be found in shorter form in the works of Greco-Roman authors at the end of the fourth and the first half of the fifth century.
- ³⁹ The information about the dissemination of Christianity among mountaineers indicates that the new religion was not always received benevolently in Georgia, and that the royal authorities had to impose it on the population by force of arms, especially where the communal system retained its power.
- ⁴⁰ Dating Mirian’s reign is bound up with certain difficulties. If we start with the date of the adoption of Christianity in Georgia as a state religion as 337 (the last year before the death of Emperor Constantine), then Mirian died in 362 (337+25). This date is, it seems, confirmed by the Roman author Ammian Marceline, according to whom Arshak’ reigned in Armenia in 361, and in Iberia – Meriban (A. Gamq’relidze, S. Q’aukhchishvili, *Bizant’ieli mts’erlebis tsnobebi sakartvelos shesakheb (Byzantine Writers on Georgia)*, Tbilisi: Georgica, 1961, Vol. 1). The texts with the Georgian translation were edited and supplied with comments by A. Gamkrelidze and S. Q’aukhchishvili (Ibid., pp. 80–81, 101, 146). Mirian also takes part in the war of the Persians and Romans. That could have happened in 296-297. To all appearances, he became King before Trdat’, the King of Armenia (the prevailing opinion maintains that Trdat’ became King in 287, this date was shifted to 298, and therefore coincides with the date of the conclusion of the Nizibin peace treaty between Iran and Rome). Of course, if Mirian had participated in the war of 296-297, he would have been quite grown-up at that time. Even if we suppose that he became the King at age seven, as it is said in *kartlis tskhovreba*, then at the time of his death he would have been about ninety years old. These calculations are in accord with other information in *kartlis tskhovreba*, which states that he became a Christian when he was already an old man.
- ⁴¹ According to *kartlis tskhovreba*, “the reigns of Varaz-Bakar, Trdat’, Parsman and Mirdat’ were characterized by serious changes in the foreign policy of Iberia. Sassanid Iran begins its open attacks with the goal of occupying Georgia and propagating the religion of Zoroastrism. On the other hand, the Byzantine Empire, which is fighting with Iran, tries to seize as many territories as possible. As neither Armenia, nor Georgia was able to defend their territories any more, they were divided between Iran and the Byzantine Empire. *Kartlis tskhovreba* tells us that after the invasion of the Persians – at the time of Varaz-Bakar – K’larjeti had broken with Georgia and the

Byzantine Empire occupied K'larjeti and Egrisi. This is an accurate description of the then state of affairs. The last of the Kings listed – Mirdat' – fought with Iran as well as with the Byzantine Empire, trying to regain the lost territories. His undertaking ended rather sadly for him. The Persians occupied Kartli, and Mirdat' was taken prisoner. These events took place in the twenties of the fifth century.

⁴² The name of the Persian commander – Usharab – judging by different copies of *kartlis tskhovreba*, was distorted. Its appropriate ethymology has not been found from Iranian sources. The other variations of the name also do not give us any clues. The more correct name would have been the one listed in the *Conversion of Kartli* – Varash – which was widespread in Iran at that time.

ქართველსა სსმისთას მშობნ სოძისთს მუჯრ აქმნა რძელსა
სსტლო რძელსა ქსანი მშობნ კოხანი სოძისთას მუჯრმანსა
ქცქ სოძითა ჟსსო მუჯრსა სსმისთასა ღმრველქმნა მისა
კუთხელს მუჯრ ქსითაქლთას მშობნ მშობნ მსოფელსა უბნაქნ
ს ქსონი კუთხისანთანი ღმრველქმნის რქსნი ლეკნი
ქ სსმისთას ღმრველს ქსანი მუჯრს თანა სოძითა სსმის
თასა ღმრველსა რქსელსას სსმისთასა რქცქ მუჯრსა სსმი
თასა ღმრველსა მშობნ მორთითუბნ რქსას რქსა წინა მ
რქსა ღმრველსა უბნაქნ რქსელსა სსმისთასა ქსითაქლთას
მუჯრსა მუჯრსა სსმისთასა ქსითაქლთას მუჯრსა მ
რქსასა ქსითაქლთას
თასა რქსა სოძისთას ქსითაქლთას ღმრველსა ნათქსა
კუთხ მუჯრ სსმისთას ღმრველსა რქსელსა სსმისთას
ღმრველსა სსმისთასა ღმრველსა რქსა წინა მუჯრსა
თასა სსმისთას მშობნ მუჯრმან სსმისთას მსოფელსა მქს
რქს მუჯრსა სოძისთასა ღმრველსა თასა
რქსა მუჯრსა მოძისა მორთითქს

Leont'i Mroveli, The Lives of Georgian Kings. The Conversion of Georgia by St Nino. Kartlis Tskhovreba, MS of Queen Anna (XVII c.), National Centre of Manuscripts, Tbilisi, Q-795, 20v.

Juansher Juansheriani

THE LIFE OF VAKHT'ANG GORGASALI

On the great God-serving King and his parents,
He, who showed himself to be the most outstanding among the kings of Kartli.

PART I

5

Captured in the war with the Persians, the King of Kartli, Mirdat',¹ was taken to Baghdad,² where he died. And the Persians invaded Kartli and desecrated the churches, but the Georgians hid their crosses. And in all the churches of Kartli, the Persian fire worshipers lighted fire. The relatives of the kings of Kartli remained in the valleys of K'akheti.³ Three years later the King of Persia was obliged to attend to other things, for his enemies had risen in the East.⁴ Then the *aznauris* of Kartli⁵ brought the son of Trdat', a nephew of the captured King Mirdat', who was called Archil⁶ and set him up as king in Mtskheta.

10

Archil had taken a wife from Greece called Maria, from the family of King Iovian. He declared the Persians his enemies. He retrieved the crosses and adorned the churches; he destroyed and drove away the fire worshipers beyond the limits of Kartli, then summoned some forces from Greece and, led by the cross, began to fight the Persians.

15

In those times, the Persian King's⁷ *eristavi* ruled Kartli; this was before the reign of Archil. Rani and Movak'an⁸ were also under his power. He (the *eristavi*) gathered an army in Rani, Movak'an and Adarbadagan,⁹ and set out against Archil. Archil, putting his hopes and his trust in God, met him at the borders of Kartli and Rani;¹⁰ he arranged his troops on the banks of the Berduji River and with the power of the Holy Cross defeated and captured the enemy, captured Rani, and returned victorious to his country. He sent heralds all over Kartli to announce to all: "We overpowered the enemy not by our power, not by our vigor and wisdom, not by the numbers of our army, but by the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, the son of God, who gave us his Holy Cross as a weapon. Let every Georgian glorify the consubstantial Trinity, and God Primordial, the creator of all existing things. Give Him your thanks, and let your hearts remain firm in your belief in the Holy Trinity." And the Kartlians gave thanks to the Lord and repaired the churches.

20

25

Archil built the church of Saint Stephan¹¹ in Mtskheta above the Gates of Aragvi where he also erected impregnable battle towers.

Archil begat a son, who was named Mirdat'.¹² Mirdat' grew up and came of age. He was a believer, and a godly youth, like his father. He was valiant and fearless. He extended the war with the Persians, invaded and ravaged Rani and Movak'an, for the Persian King had no time to deal with him, because he was fighting the Inds, Sinds and Abashes, and could not put up a large army to oppose Mirdat'. The Kartlians could cope with the troops of Rani, Movak'an and Adarbadagan. Mirdat' leading his father's army, ravaged Rani and Movak'an several times.

The *eristavi* of Rani at that time was Barzabod. Unable to offer resistance to the Kartlians, he reinforced the fortresses and towns. Wherever the Persian troops remained and fought with the Kartlians, who had ravaged them in Rani, they were always defeated.

Barzabod, the *eristavi* of Rani,¹³ had a daughter, a very beautiful girl by the name of Sagdukht'. The rumors of her beauty kindled the flame of passion in Archil's son, Mirdat'. He said to his father: "I ask your majesty to marry me with Barzabod's daughter, Sagdukht',¹⁴ and to make peace between us, for though we have overpowered him with the help of Christ, we cannot seize the fortresses and towns of Rani. If the Persian King finds time, he will take vengeance; he will ravage our churches and do many other terrible things in our country. Let the enmity stop between us, and the King of Persia will meet our demands. In this way we will secure the borders of our country; the faith of Christ will grow stronger in Kartli, and no Georgian will doubt and abuse the Persians when their arbitrariness ends.

Mirdat' said all this because of his love for this woman. And Archil fulfilled his wish. He sent an envoy to Barzabod with the request to marry his daughter to his son. Barzabod rejoiced, and felt great happiness, for his country¹⁵ was ruined and he personally was in straitened circumstances; he asked for an oath and the promise of peace. They took the oath. Barzabod married off his daughter and gave her a great dowry. They brought her to Mtskheta and celebrated their wedding there; and for many days they enjoyed themselves and celebrated. The King presented his son with Samshvilde¹⁶ and all its lands, and Mirdat' and Sagdukht' settled there.

Queen Sagdukht' showed a desire to learn the Christian faith. Her spouse gathered scholars, versed in the faith, and they began to translate the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ for her. And they showed her that the true God is Christ, who sacrificed himself to save us. When Sagdukht' became aware of the true faith, she gave up worshipping fire, converted and was baptized. She also built Zion of Samshvilde.¹⁷

At this time in Archil's reign, three bishops passed away: Iona, Grigol and Basil. After Basil died, Archil appointed a bishop, who was called Mobidan.¹⁸ He was a Persian by birth and outwardly observed Orthodoxy. But he was a faithless man, a violator of mores. King Archil and his son did not discern the faithlessness of Mobidan at once, but continued to take him for a believer. And Mobidan did not preach his faith openly, being afraid of the King and the people, but wrote secret outrageous books, which after his demise were burned like all his (other) writings by the true bishop Michael, who was later discharged due to his impertinence toward King Vakht'ang.

King Archil ended his days in dedication to the Holy Trinity; he erected churches and increased the number of priests, deacons and church attendants all over Kartli, and then he died.

His son Mirdat' was enthroned in his place. Like his father he reigned with great faith. Sagdukht' gave birth to a daughter and she was given the name of Khuarandze.¹⁹ King Mirdat' and Queen Sagdukht' still prayed to the Lord to send them a son. And four years later Sagdukht' gave birth to a son and gave him a Persian name – Varang-Khuasro-Tang, and in Georgian he was called Vakht'ang. The birth of Vakht'ang filled his parents with joy, and they sent heralds to all the *eristavis*. They brought out great treasures, gold and silver, and distributed them to the poor and wretched, and thanked God in day-long prayers and night vigils.

Then the King summoned all the nobles to the city and they feasted and rejoiced for many days, and all prayed to the Lord for the health of the infant Vakht'ang. *Sp'asp'et'*²⁰ Saurmag begged to be given the privilege of bringing up Vakht'ang. The King charged him with this task and entrusted him with his son. There was a custom, according to which the King's children were educated in the houses of nobles.²¹ Six years after this, Sagdukht' gave birth to yet another daughter and gave her the name of Mirandukht'. A *sp'asalar* from K'asp'i²² asked for the privilege of bringing her up, and the King gave her to him; and he took her to the town of K'asp'i, where she grew up. Two years after that Mirdat' passed away, leaving Vakht'ang as a boy of seven.

The imagination of Queen Sagdukht' was stirred by thoughts about her father; and an idea suddenly came into her head: "What if my father wants to take vengeance for all the malice inflicted on him by my father-in-law and my husband, he will exercise his revenge upon me, too, for my apostasy, and destroy my son, ravage Kartli, and exterminate Christ's faith." Imagining all this she fell into great despair. Praying to God, she decided to appear before her father and to appeal to him for mercy. She called all the *eristavis* to the *sp'asp'et'* and with tears in her eyes, charged them with her son.

Then she went to her father in Bardav.²³ She appeared before him, uncovered her head, fell to her knees and exposed her breasts, then touching his feet she wetted them with her tears and begged him for mercy. She implored him not to ask her to renounce the faith of Christ, for He was the true God. She implored him to leave her son on his estate and acknowledge him as under the protection of the King of Persia.

Then Barzabod who had thought of doing some evil to the Georgians, took pity on his daughter: he did not urge her to renounce her faith, and fulfilled all her requests. However, of her faith he said: "We will not force the Georgians to renounce their faith in Christ, but we will send to your town our priests who worship fire; let them minister our faith. You should not prohibit Georgians from choosing our faith, at least those who are willing to do so." And Sagdukht' submitted out of great fear of her father, and by God's grace, returned to Kartli. Barzabod sent the fire worshipers to Mtskheta at once with bishop Shinkaran²⁴ as their leader; they settled in Mogvta.²⁵

Queen Sagdukht' ruled her kingdom with the power and assistance of her father. Then Barzabod, Sagdukht''s father, died, and the King of Persia made his son Varaz-Bakar, Queen Sagdukht''s brother, his successor. *Sp'asalar* Saurmag, Vakht'ang's tutor,²⁶ also died. The King of Persia assigned another *sp'asp'et'*, by the name of Juansher. And Binkaran, a high priest of the fire worshipers,

preached his faith among the Georgians. But not one noble yielded to his persuasions, and only a small number of people were converted to fire worship.

5 Fire worshipping crept in among a small number of people²⁷ in Kartli. Queen Sagdukht' grieved about this, but did not dare to do a thing due to Persian dominance. She summoned from Greece a righteous priest by the name of Michael and seated him as bishop in the heavenly church²⁸ because bishop Mobidan had passed away. Bishop Michael came out against Binkaran, the seducer, and taught the true faith to every Kartlian. He won back to Christian faith all the nobles and most of the population, but a small part of the simple people still remained fire worshippers.

10 When Vakht'ang was ten years old, armies of the Ossetians, without number, came and captured Kartli from the head of the Mt'k'vari down to Khunani;²⁹ they ravaged the valleys but ignored the fortress towns, with the exception of K'asp'i. They captured K'asp'i and devastated it; they took away Vakht'ang's sister Mirandukht', a three year old girl. Seizing the valleys of Kartli, and K'akheti, K'larjeti and Egrisi, they invaded Rani and Movak'an; after capturing these places, they passed through the Darubandi Gates, for the Darubandians themselves showed them the way, and then
15 they returned victorious to Ossetia.

At that time the Greeks from Abkhazia³⁰ also came, for they owned the lands in the lower reaches of Egris-ts'q'ali;³¹ they seized the lands from the lower reaches of Egris-ts'q'ali to the fortress of Tsikhe-goji.³² The Georgians were seized by grief, and distressed. They said: "We have increased our sins before God, iniquitously observing Christ's faith. And the Lord justly sends his
20 wrath upon our heads, giving us as captives to foreign kin;³³ the Greeks stole our lands, as they had stolen K'larjeti³⁴ from King Varaz-Bakar. That happened to Varaz-Bakar, because of his sinfulness, for he did not adhere firmly to the faith of Christ. And what befell us happened not because of the sinfulness of our King, but because of the sinfulness of our people.³⁵ Our King is still young, and there is no one who, trusting Christ and guided by the cross, can lead us. We shall take vengeance
25 first on the Ossetians and retrieve the Georgian land from the Greeks."³⁶ Steeped in sorrow, all the Georgians lamented.

Vakht'ang grew up learning from bishop Michael all things related to divine wisdom, and loved Christ's faith from an early age more than any other king of Kartli. But he grieved much, for there were too many fire worshipers in Kartli, and because of the dominance of the occupiers in the
30 country. He grieved for his faith mainly in his mind, for seeing the power of the Persians, he did not dare disclose his designs.

When he reached fifteen, Vakht'ang summoned all the noble Kartlians and gathered them all in the city. He prepared a room, and set himself on a high throne. On the throne he also set *sp'asp'et'* Juansher and two bishops; all the other *eristavis* were sitting in their seats, and the commanders of
35 thousands and hundreds of battalions, as well as other warriors stood at attention.

The King began in a loud voice like a wise old man brought up among philosophers: "Our Kings suffered trials and tribulations³⁷ and they were sent to people by God for their sins. When believers fail in their devotion to God and ignore His precepts, God sends tribulations to such people to admonish them; the father-King lovingly educates his son, edifying him for the performance of good
40 deeds. But if the son is negligent in following his father's teaching, the father punishes him, beating

him and instructing him, in order to teach him all the good things and make him well behaved. So the Lord – the creator of the Sky and the Earth – teaches us. That is why we must thank Him for his mercy.” Everybody thanked the Lord.

Vakht’ang continued his speech before the nobles of Kartli: “Now, listen to my word! I am young³⁸ and you have not seen any good from me yet, but my ancestors granted you great favors, so that you could continue to rule. But if the Lord grants us good fortune, I will give you such goods and nobility that you have never seen before among your ancestors. Imagine our common trial – from which we all suffer –as if it was only mine. But if someone takes this burden on himself, I will not suspect in the depths of my heart that he does so (just) out of vengeance, but will accept it as a service to me, and will repay him with good things. I cannot stand any more the Ossetians’ mockery. I am setting my hopes upon the consubstantial Trinity, which gave birth to the infinity of God. Led by His cross, which He provides as a guide and weapon to those who keep it in their hearts, we are going to have revenge on the Ossetians. If these misfortunes had fallen on us on account of the King of Persia or the King of Greece, we would have endured them. But we cannot suffer oppression by the Ossetians, it would be better to die than to bear it.” Then *sp’asp’et’* Juansher stood up and said: “Be blessed, King, for ever and ever in your greatness and in the fulfillment of your will upon your enemy! You speak the truth: these calamities befell us because of our sins, and the Lord judges us justly, for we have multiplied our sins against Him. And we should thank God, because we deserved greater sufferings than those that fell to our lot. But the merciful Lord sent us ordeals incommensurable with our sins, edifying us through such insignificant trials. So we, the true Kartlians,³⁹ have to thank the Lord greatly. For He sent you to us as our leader, the best among all the Georgian kings, you, who surpass your ancestors, and are perfectly in everything like Nebrot⁴⁰ the giant. God charged you with the task of dispersing our troubles – old as well as recent ones. And while our sins may not allow it, we expect from you the ending of all our misfortunes and the achievement of more successes within the bounds of our country than ever before, for not one of our forefathers is equal to you. Be blessed, Our King, for all eternity! From the time when the Ossetians invaded us, we have lived in great grief; for you were young and unable to fight, lead the army and put things in order in your kingdom. Now, Our King, you are vested with wisdom and strength, courage and stature, though you are not yet of the age for performing feats of arms. But I see your wisdom: and young though you are, you are able to rule the kingdom although the time of your military feats and your leadership of the army has not yet arrived. Such is my opinion: according to your understanding and following your mother’s advice, choose one of us to command the army and entrust us to him, whom we will obey like your father; and with the power of the Trinity, and our consubstantial God, we will reek revenge. You, meanwhile, remain in your house and rule the kingdom. If we are defeated by the Ossetians, because of our sinfulness, your kingdom will not suffer. But if you fall on the battlefield due to our sins, the whole country will be defeated, for nobody can replace you.” So said *sp’asp’et’* Juansher and all the nobles and *eristavis* supported him.

Then the King said: “Juansher! You talk as becomes one who is faithful and full of wisdom, but I am not going to follow your advice, for since the time this trial befell us, I spend all my days in grief, like a man imprisoned in a dungeon. Pity for my sister pierces my heart like a fiery sword, and

death for me is more desirable than life. And entrusting myself to God and led by his Holy Cross, I am going to go with you in person trusting in his infinite mercy, hoping that He will not abandon me, but grant me a victory.”

5 Unable to dissuade him, all the nobles who were present agreed and said: “Be blessed, Our King, for ever! Let your plans be fulfilled, let the Lord send his angels to you for assistance, and let all your enemies fall, and your kingdom become strong.” They decided to campaign in Ossetia and parted for their homes to make preparations.

10 And King Vakht’ang sent an envoy to his uncle Varaz-Bakar, the *eristavi* of Rani, to inform him of the campaign in Ossetia and asked for help. Varaz-Bakar responded gladly, for his country had also been ravaged by the Ossetians. Vakht’ang summoned the whole army of Kartli. They all gathered and set up camps in Mukhrani⁴¹ and Kherk’I;⁴² along the banks of the Aragvi, there were one thousand horsemen⁴³ and sixty thousand infantry; and Varaz-Bakar sent twelve thousand horsemen. King Vakht’ang set out from Mtskheta, replenished his army and advanced. He rejoiced seeing the number, and at the excitement of his well-supplied cavalry, at the cheerfulness of his people, happy to take revenge upon the Ossetians. He was filled with joy and sent thanks to God. He returned to the town⁴⁴ and spent a week in prayers and night vigils, lavishly handing out riches to paupers. He left his mother Sagdukht’ and his sister Khuarandze to govern the kingdom in his absence and wrote for them his will: “If I do not return alive, let my sister Khuarandze marry Mirian – who is the son of Mirian of the Rev family, the son-in-law of the Armenian king Trdat⁴⁵ and Vakht’ang’s cousin on his father’s side – let him be the King.” Writing this, he handed the letter to his mother saying nothing to anybody, and he left his cousin Mirian in Mtskheta.

20 Vakht’ang advanced and placed his troops in Tianeti.⁴⁶ There he was joined by all the kings of the Caucasians – fifty thousand horsemen. With the name of God on his lips, he passed the Darialan Gates.⁴⁷ On entering Ossetia, Vakht’ang was sixteen years old.

25 Now the Ossetian kings gathered their men; they summoned some forces from Khazaria and met the Georgians by the river which runs through Darialan and into the Ossetian Valley.⁴⁸ This river is also called the Aragvi, because the Aragvi of Kartli and the Aragvi of Ossetia⁴⁹ originate from the same mountain.

30 Both armies set up their camps on the opposite sides of the river, the steep and rocky banks of which were covered with meagre forest, and criss-crossed by valleys. They reinforced their positions and closed the passes, and so stood for seven days. Only the *bumberazis*⁵⁰ were combating with each other at this time. There was a *goliath* among the Khazars, who were the Ossetians’ allies; his name was Tarkhan. Tarkhan came forward and called out loudly: “I am challenging every one of Vakht’ang’s men, any who is powerful enough to fight with me.”

35 There was a soldier by the name of Parsman-Parukh among the Persian allies of Vakht’ang. To that day, nobody could stand up to him in combat, for he was catching lions with his bare hands. He came out to fight with Tarkhan. With loud cries they grappled with each other. And in the very first clash Tarkhan cleaved Parsman-Parukh’s head down to his shoulders striking his sword upon his helmet. Vakht’ang and his men were sorrowful, for there was not one among them equal to Parsman-Parukh. Shocked by what had happened the soldiers were filled with grief.

40

Night fell. Vakht'ang retired to his tent. He began to pray tearfully, appealing to God, pleading for His help until dawn. And with the help of the Lord he decided to engage in combat with Tarkhan, filled with the belief in God and his own power, for he was fearless, as if he were without a physical body.

In the morning Tarkhan again came to the riverbank and mockingly asked for a rival, but there was not one among Vakht'ang's men willing to fight with him. Then Vakht'ang turned to his people: "I rely not on my strength and courage, but trusting the infinite God and the consubstantial all-powerful Trinity, I will fight with Tarkhan." The nobles full of wonder, tried to dissuade Vakht'ang from this combat by every means, for he was young and they knew nothing of his experience.

But Vakht'ang would not listen to them and decided he would fight. He dismounted his horse, prostrated himself on the ground, prayed to God and, lifting up his hands declared: "Oh, Lord! The Creator! He who increases the good and raises up those who trust Him! Be a support to me, send me your angel, strike this infidel and put to shame your defamers. I believe not in my powers, but in Your grace." He rose, mounted his horse⁵¹ and said to his men: "Pray to the Lord and do not doubt." Then Vakht'ang advanced, leaving his people behind shocked and excited; everyone was beseeching his God.⁵²

Vakht'ang descended the slope on horseback, approached the river and stopped on the bank. Both the adversaries were armed with spears. Tarkhan looked at the King and said: "I am a fighter used to battles with experienced *goliaths* and giants, not with youths, but if you want this, I will lower myself." And with battle cries they rushed towards each other. In the very first clash Vakht'ang pierced Tarkhan with his spear in his loins. And his strong armor did not save him; the spear ran through him and killed him.

The Georgians rejoiced and begun to cry in exaltation and offer thanks to God. And Vakht'ang himself dismounted his horse and fell on the ground and praying to the Lord said: "Blessed are You, the Lord, who sent me an angel and killed my enemy: you raise high those who trust you; you help those who fall to stand on their feet, and You raise the humble." Vakht'ang cut off Tarkhan's head and returned to his troops. His people glorified Vakht'ang, and with joyful cries they sent their thanks to God.

The next day another giant, by the name of Baq'atar⁵³ emerged from the ranks of the Ossetians. He was a *goliath*. When he mounted his horse nobody could withstand him. He killed all his adversaries in combat, for he fought with an arch of twelve spans length, and with arrows of six spans. Baq'atar approached the riverbank and called out loudly: "King Vakht'ang! Do not boast of your victory over Tarkhan, he was not considered a *goliath*, and that is why he was killed by a youth. If you engage in a fight with me, you will not escape bloody combat and you will find no escape. If you refuse, I am ready to fight with any of your men." Vakht'ang answered Baq'atar: "I overpowered Tarkhan not by my strength, but by the power of my God. And I fear you no more than a dog, for the power of Christ is with me and His pure cross is my weapon.

Vakht'ang prepared his army for battle, mounted his horse dressed in armor, and protecting himself with a shield of dragon's hide,⁵⁴ which no sword could penetrate, he descended the slope and approached the river. He called Baq'atar and told him: "I will not cross the river, for I am a King.

I will not approach the Ossetian troops, for if I die, my whole army will perish. But you are a slave,⁵⁵ and your destruction will not harm the Ossetian army, just like the death of a dog. Cross the river and come to me.” Baq’atar, the Ossetian, obeyed, but said: “I am the one who will kill you, I will cross the river, but withdraw from the bank three *ut’evans*.”⁵⁶ Vakht’ang did as he was asked. Baq’atar
5 crossed the river and began to let loose one of his arrows. But Vakht’ang evaded it adroitly, for his sight was keen and his mind alert, and his horse was fast, so he saw the flying arrow from far away and evaded it skillfully. On this and the other side of the river the troops were blowing trumpets and beating timbrels. The mountains and hills were shaking because of the violent cries of the soldiers on both sides – Ossetian and Georgian. Twice Baq’atar hit Vakht’ang’s shield with his arrows, but
10 they did not pierce it. He shot another arrow and hit Vakht’ang’s horse. But before his horse fell, Vakht’ang pounced upon Baq’atar, struck his shoulder with his sword and cut down to his heart. After that Vakht’ang’s horse fell, but the King caught Baq’atar’s horse adroitly. At first Vakht’ang sank to the ground, and said his prayers yet more zealously than before. Then he mounted Baq’atar’s horse, came galloping to his troops and exclaimed in a loud voice: “Be of good cheer and take
15 courage, for God is with us.” The troops advanced ready to fight: heavily armed cavalymen dressed in armor with metal helmets were in the front, after them came the infantry, and after the infantry, more cavalry. They attacked the Ossetians. The Ossetians took to the tops of the rocky mountains and rained down arrows on their heads like rain. Vakht’ang with some chosen horsemen was in the rear of his army, reinforcing it and encouraging the soldiers. Heavily armed cavalymen navigated
20 the rocky trail and entered the valley. After them came infantry and more horsemen. A fierce battle took place. Vakht’ang’s assaults on the right shook the enemy on the left, and his attacks to the left shook it on the right. In the *mêlée* of fighting armies, Vakht’ang’s cry was heard like a lion’s roar. Two horsemen accompanied Vakht’ang in the battle: his foster brother⁵⁷ Art’avaz, *sp’asp’et’* Saurmag’s son, and prince Bivrit’ian.⁵⁸ They also fought bravely.

25 They overpowered the Ossetians and put their camp to flight. They destroyed them and took them prisoner. They caught most of the fleeing Ossetians to exchange them for Georgians captured before in another battle. Returning from the pursuit, they gathered in their camp. Resting for three days and offering thanks to God, they invaded Ossetia, seized the towns, took great spoil and many captives. They entered P’ach’anik’eti,⁵⁹ because at the time P’ach’anik’eti was located on the other
30 side of the Ossetian river bordering Ossetia; Jiketi⁶⁰ was next to it. Much later the Turks⁶¹ threw out the P’ach’anik’s and Jiks. The P’ach’anik’s went west, and the Jiks settled along the borders of Abkhazia.⁶²

Vakht’ang devastated P’ach’anik’eti and Jiketi, and on his return, again approached Ossetia. The Ossetian kings fled and hid themselves in the fortresses of the Caucasus mountains.⁶³ They sent
35 envoys to Vakht’ang to make peace with him. The Ossetians asked for thirty thousand Ossetians, select people whom they listed by name, to be returned in exchange for Vakht’ang’s sister. Vakht’ang gave them thirty thousand prisoners in exchange for his sister and regained her freedom. Vakht’ang exchanged those Georgians who were taken captive by the Ossetians over six years ago, for an equal number of Ossetians. He took a hostage from the Ossetians and gave thirty eight thousand
40 more prisoners for him. The captives ransomed in Kartli were three hundred and fifty eight thousand

in number. There remained six thousand and fifty eight, not counting the P'ach'anik's and Jiks. All this was done in four months.⁶⁴

Then the King let his allies go, the Persians and the kings of Caucasia, with great gifts. He sent his sister Mirandukht' and the prisoners over the Darial pass, and he himself, leading the large Kartlian army, advanced over the Abkhazian road.⁶⁵ He began fearlessly to seize Abkhazian fortresses, for the King of the Greeks – the great Leon⁶⁶ – was at that time engaged in war with the Persians and could not send his army against Vakht'ang in Abkhazia. Over three years Vakht'ang took all the fortresses of Abkhazia down to Tsikhe-goji. Finally, he returned to his royal city of Mtskheta. He was welcomed by his mother and sisters, and many subjects, men and women, bowed before him and placed cloth under his feet, and strewed *drahmas*⁶⁷ and *drahk'ans*⁶⁸ on his head, and glorified him loudly, for no king had fought such a fierce battle.

And King Vakht'ang thanked God in many prayers, at night vigils, and presented alms to the poor. He dispersed gifts among his people, and granted noble status to the experienced cavalymen who had bravely fought against the Ossetians. He sent gifts from his own spoils to his mother's brother, Varaz-Bakar, including one thousand slaves, one thousand steeds, and one thousand mares. Then to the Persian King he sent ten thousand slaves, ten thousand steeds, and ten thousand mares. All this he presented to the King of Persia through the hands of bishop Binkaran,⁶⁹ and asked to wed the King of Persia's daughter, by name of Balendukht.⁷⁰ The King of Persia gave him as a dowry Somkhiti⁷¹ and all the kings of Caucasia, and sent him a message, which began with these words: "To Vakht'ang, Varang-Khuasro-Tang, the great King of ten kings, from Ormisd, the King of all kings." And he asked Vakht'ang for his help in his war against the Greek Caesar, for the Caesar had set out on a campaign against Persia.

Vakht'ang summoned his army and the armies of all the kings of Caucasia. About two hundred thousand men gathered on both sides of the river Mt'k'vari. Upon the order of the King of Persia, they were joined by his uncle on his mother's side, Varaz-Bakar, the *eristavi* of Rani, with troops from Adarbadagan, Rani and Movak'an, about two hundred thousand cavalry in all. Vakht'ang at that time was twenty two years old.⁷² He was taller than any other man of his time, beautiful by appearance and so strong that armed and on foot he could overtake a deer and catch it by its antlers; or he could hoist a saddled horse upon his shoulders and carry it from Mtskheta up to the Armazi fortress. He was the only-begotten son of his father; his sister Khuarandze was also strong and beautiful.⁷³ Only Vakht'ang and his sisters remained kin to King Mirian. Pious, they were both descendants of Bakar,⁷⁴ son of Mirian, and Mirian and Grigol were descendants of Rev, another son of Mirian; they owned K'ukheti and lived in the city-fortress of Rustavi, for they had been devastated by feuds. Eight generations and ten kings after Mirian led to Vakht'ang, one hundred and fifty seven years divided them; during this time, eight righteous bishops of the true faith had passed away, while others were violetors of the canon.⁷⁵

Vakht'ang set out on a campaign to Greece. He reached Armenia, and in P'erjok'ap,⁷⁶ where Peroz had erected a fortress, he was joined by Armenian rulers: Arev of Sivn, Juansher of Aspurag, Amazasp of T'arov from the town built by Gregory, and Trdat', kin of Trdat' the Great. They approached the fortress, which was called K'arakhp'ol and now is called K'arnukalaki.⁷⁷ They began

to attack, but they could not capture it, because it was encircled by three high walls. Vakht'ang left two commanders there with twelve thousand men to keep it under siege.

Vakht'ang set out for Pont and ravaged three towns on his way: Andzoreti,⁷⁸ Ek'let'si,⁷⁹ and St'eri.⁸⁰ Then his troops approached the great coastal city of Pont;⁸¹ the army fought for three months, and the army reached the city of Constantine. The Persians destroyed all servants of the church they could catch. King Vakht'ang told the Armenian soldiers and all the Persians that they should not kill monks, but take them captive, and said: "When the father of my father, Mirian, came once with the Persian King who was the son of his brother, to fight the Greeks, they treated the monks and church servants in the same way, and because of that their countless troops were beaten severely by a small army. It was at that time that the Greeks confiscated our Georgian lands to the east of the sea. And the battle of the first kings occurred at Andziadzor, where now the grave of the great teacher Gregory⁸² is located. And our kings fled from there. But we have covered ten days journey and are looking north, and we, too, profess the Greek faith that Christ is the only true God. Have you not heard of the miracles performed by King Constantine guided by the Cross,⁸³ or of the miracles that took place in the country of Greece with the heathen-king Julian? He was struck by a heavenly spear; he gathered the Greek warriors and made Iovian⁸⁴ king, but Iovian did not accept it until the idols were destroyed and crosses were erected. And only after that was the crown placed on his royal head. It was a heavenly angel who raised the crown and placed it on the head of the true monarch, Iovian. A voice was heard from Heaven, which declared to the Persian King Khosro-Tang:⁸⁵ "Stop fighting with Iovian, for he is invincible from the power of the Cross."⁸⁶ And the King and Khosro became friends to the end of their days. Don't you, the heirs of the Armenian Arshak'unians, *p'it'iakhsh* Bivrit'ians, remember the deeds of Gregory of Parthia and his adversary Trdat' Arshak'unian,⁸⁷ how he fell because of his pride and turned into a wild boar? But Gregory converted him and from that time on he became a toiling servant of the church. And because Trdat' was a hero, he erected a great church with his own hands.⁸⁸ And you, the indigenous inhabitants of Kartli, relatives to the Kartlian kings, who are made kings by the Highest, and who are descendants of Nimrod who appeared on the earth before any other king, who tamed a lion like a sheep and could catch running onagers and wild goats. His power increased, and all the tribes of Noah gave in to him, until he erected a city. The stone was golden and its foundation was silver, he faced it with brick and lime, and the crosspieces for doors and windows were made of sapphires and emeralds, and the night retreated, powerless before their light. Inside he built temples and towers, which would be difficult for you to imagine; it is impossible to recall all his wisdom, which was given to him. He erected a ladder which was three days' walk in length; he fixed it on the wall in order to ascend, for he wanted to reach Heaven and to behold its celestial inhabitants. But as soon as he trespassed the aerial bounds, and entered into the astral region, his construction could bear him no more; the gold and the silver melted, because the power of fire increases greatly due to the rotation of this world. And he heard calls of the seven celestial realms which put people into confusion. Every man of every tribe began to talk his own language and ceased to understand the words of his neighbor; and they dispersed. And he said to Nebrot in Persian: "I am Archangel Michael, who is assigned by God, the monarch of the East. Leave this town, for the Lord favors it until the coming of the paradise, which

is located at the edge of your own settlements, between which there is a mountain and from which the sun rises and two rivers flow – the Nile and Geon.⁸⁹ And Geon carries sweet-smelling wood and grass from paradise which people mix with musk.⁹⁰ And now go and settle between the two rivers – the Euphrates and Jila,⁹¹ and let those tribes go where they want, for they have been set free by God. And you will reign over all the kings; and in the future, the heavenly Lord will appear, whom you wish to see and who was rejected by the people; fear of Him will lead to the dispersal of (all) worldly pleasures, and the kings will leave their kingdoms in penitence. Then the Lord will find you in sorrow and save you.” They left the town. He left those who talked Hindi in India, and the Sindians in Sind, the Romans in Rom, the Greeks in Greece, the Gogs and Magogs in Magogia, the Persians in Persia; though the main language remained Syrian. Those are the seven languages which people spoke before Nebrot. I have related all this because our fathers kept these writings in secret, and I was forced to reveal it because of God’s jealousy. After that our father, Mirian,⁹² accepted the gospel of Christ from Nino.⁹³ Did not our forefathers have to pay a tribute before the coming of Christ? Our weakness started in the time of the Greeks when they began to fight on the other side. And he (Mirian) saw Nebrot in hell and saved him. He is the first among the kings, even Daniel⁹⁴ obeys him, because Michael⁹⁵ was backed by the strength of the Persians. And you, the Georgians,⁹⁶ behold the miracles performed by Nino. Maybe you think that the Lord betrayed the Greeks? They overpowered and annexed most of the Persian lands, and now it is six months already and they have learned of our campaign, and their Caesar has set out to meet us, for he was told about our arrival and he is already close and ready to give us battle. And now let every tribe serve the Lord, and the tribe’s sufferings will be assuaged in church.”

Saying all this, he sent heralds to bring all the monks from their shelters, and he freed the captives and let them go where they wanted. And many priests and deacons, monks and *enkratits*⁹⁷ came down from the caves and rocks, but mostly from the town of Pont,⁹⁸ for it had been besieged for almost four months.

There were two men among them: a monk Samuel, and Peter, a priest and a disciple of Gregory the theologian. Peter had officiated at Gregory’s graveside. They appeared before Vakht’ang to thank him for granting freedom to the prisoners and for liberating the churches and priests. And upon finishing his prayer the King kindly came to see them, and ordered all the captives and monks, the infirm whom he had freed, to appear before him – for all these wretched people had been left outside the town. He gave them mules, and to every young person, three *drahk’ans*, and he let them go. But he kept the priest Peter and the monk Samuel by his side.

When the soldiers returned to their tents, the King took his supper, and he told Peter: “It was a good deed to please God, for I have protected the churches and given freedom to the captives.”

And Peter said: “Should your humblest slave talk daringly in your presence or should he praise you falsely?” And the King told him: “Tell me what you have to say, for I look for honesty in order to avoid lying.”

Peter said: “God favors the churches of the living above the temples of stone. A church of stone will crumble some day, and it will be built up again with the same stone. But if a church of the living falls, no one will be able to cure it, neither physician, nor king. So, how many people have you

destroyed? I am talking of the blood of Abel: all the blood was washed off by Noah's flood, and as for the blood of Zachariah, Barukh's son, the Hebrews were repaid by complete disgrace. Isaiah says: take and destroy all his children born through Titus and Vespasian. Or did you not read the book of Moses. When one Israeli committed adultery with an alien seed, how many lives were destroyed
5 for that one sin?⁹⁹ So, how many virgins and how many of God's temples were profaned by your people?

And the King said: "But don't you know that Iovianus who cared so much about the protection of churches was at the same time in the service of the impious Julian? And if a man stumbles let him fall all the way." Peter said: "I would not push a man who had stumbled, and if you fall I will lift
10 you up, like David who was saved from the temptation of Uriah. And I do not want you to resemble a man, who creates with his right hand and destroys with his left, nor the one who blesses with his lips, but curses and defames with his heart; you must be like the kings of blessed memory, who possessed this world but did not drift away from the Heavenly Kingdom: kings like David, Solomon and Constantine, Iovianus¹⁰⁰ and others. But how do you resemble Iovianus, who is your
15 Lord, whose sword is hanging over your neck, like Julian's sword hung over Iovianus? Have you suffered like Iovianus who was tortured by Julian? Who has the Lord selected as your sovereign to testify before Him about your righteousness? He assigned you as a sovereign over all of them and entrusted you with everybody. From now on the Lord will make you responsible for every evil, and you will be punished if you do not repent."

The King said: "I would like to defend myself, but you have justly censured me for my lack of
20 righteousness." Peter said: "When you have begun on the path of confession, your sins will depart. But now I will tell you the word of your heart: you have engaged yourself in the fight against God's children not because of your ignorance, but in order to assist your Persian relatives. And don't you know that the Greeks are of the Lord's tribe by oath; He named them God's children and handed
25 them a seal, which destroyed Hell, which we now know as the Cross?"

The King said: "And now what do you want?"

Peter told him: "I want you to extinguish the fire which you set yourself, and become a friend of
30 Caesar like you have been to the Persians." The King answered: "It is my wish, with the help of your prayers, to meet the Caesar this very night and to establish relations of love between us, and let me learn Christ's will in accordance with your appeal."

Peter said: "Your request puzzles me, for that can be done only by chosen people who are like
35 angels, the perfect ones, who live among these rocks; only they can manage to do the thing which you ask. Give me some time to go over to them and tell them your wish and let them fulfill your will through their prayers. We must stop covering ourselves with shame, for we are sinful people and the Lord finds us impudent."

The monk Samuel became angry with him and said: "Priest! You are talking of the Lord's affairs
40 like the ways of the people. Have you not read what the Lord said to Polycarp:¹⁰¹ "If the angels wanted some good for humankind, I would be willing to crucify myself in any town for the happiness of every man." Isaiah said to Ahab, the King of Israel, who was higher than any Christian king, ask for a miracle of great height and depth; and he said, did not the virgin become pregnant? Or did you

forget what was said to Israel: what you ask in my name will be given to you. Iso told the celestial world – “turn” – and it turned three times. And henceforth the word of your humbleness is virtuous, Peter, but this is an obstacle for those who are lacking in faith. You, our King, help us with your faith, so that the prayer of the wretched ones in this town may help fulfill your will.”

And the saints went away to their dwellings. But the King prayed for a long time and then went to bed. As he began to fall asleep, a woman appeared before him, who turned out to be Saint Nino, and she said to him: “Rise, oh King, and prepare humbly for a meeting, for both kings, the celestial and the terrestrial, are coming to see you.” And as he looked over, he saw at once a city, the city of Constantine. He approached it in haste and saw two thrones with an armed young man on one with a crown, while on another sat an old man in a white smock with a luminous crown on his head, though not of gold; and at his feet Nino was sitting. And the priest Peter was holding Vakht’ang’s right hand, and the monk Samuel – his left hand. And Samuel said: “First, you must fall to the feet of the heavenly lord Gregory.”¹⁰² He approached him and bowed to him. And Gregory said: “What an evil you have done, so ravaging my camp and giving the sheep I tended to the mercy of a beast. And if it was not for the two of them who stay at your side and this saintly woman who tirelessly, no less than Mary, toils for you, I would take vengeance upon you, like I once did on your forefathers, who glorified fire and not the light-bearer who consecrates all the people.” He stretched his hand to Vakht’ang who kissed it. And as if touching the glowing crown on Vakht’ang’s head, he gave him one equal to it, saying: “Place it on Peter’s head.” And Peter took the crown, a simpler one, and put it on the monk Samuel’s head. And Nino said to Vakht’ang: “Now go to the King and take your gifts.” And he (Vakht’ang) came before the King and they kissed each other, and the King pointed him to a place on his throne and made him sit beside him. And he gave Vakht’ang a ring with a seal and a dazzling stone and Caesar said: “If you want to receive a crown from me give your promise to Him, who has risen above us, that you will fight His enemies and take the crown.” Vakht’ang looked and saw a cross, on the crossbar of which there was a crown, and the appearance of the cross made him tremble in dread, and he fell silent. But Nino rose and looked at Peter and Samuel, and they said in one voice: “We vouch for him, oh Victorious Cross, he will succeed in this beyond all the others.” And Caesar stretched his hand, took the crown off the cross and put it on Vakht’ang’s head.

They begun to leave the place, and the bishop proclaimed three times: “Vakht’ang, Vakht’ang, Vakht’ang! You will be a deep believer, more than any of your Persian relatives.” And second: “You will build churches and appoint bishops and archbishops.” And third: “You will receive the crown of martyrdom.” And still in his dream, but as if awake, he summoned Peter and Samuel and told them of his dream, and they interpreted it: “The one you saw on the throne with a shining crown on his head was the great teacher, Gregory, and the one who gave me the crown from him gives me supremacy over the bishops, and my giving a crown to my neighbor, makes him bishop, and the one with a golden crown who sat on the throne was Caesar; and his giving you a ring with a seal means that he will marry you to his daughter and give all the lands of Kartli which were taken in the past, back to you. The crown from the cross which was given to you means that you will toil diligently to further the faith; and making three announcements our teacher solicited three gifts for you, so that the Catholicoses and bishops will establish with your assistance the truth in Kartli, and you will

overpower your enemies to the end of your days. And close to the end of your days you will receive the crown of martyrdom in a battle so as not to fall into the hands of your enemy. All that will come before you become decrepit and old.”

5 Waking up King Vakht'ang thanked God, who had presented him with all this, and he called hastily to Peter and Samuel and asked them: “What have you seen?” And they answered: “Your Majesty, one of us stood at your right hand and another at your left, when you appeared before Caesar and the Theologian sitting on their thrones; then our Queen soothed the teacher, who was angry with you, and entrusted you to his hands.”

10 And the King said to them: “Keep silent, saints, for you have seen the same thing as me. What would you wish for this city which is so close to falling? What should we do with all these captives of whom the number exceeds *bevri*,¹⁰³ and who are now in our hands? Let a herald announce at once that the Persian King is moving towards the country of Jazira,¹⁰⁴ and that the Persians crossed Pilist'im in Caesar's wake, who has ravaged the country of the Persians. The Persian King could offer him no resistance. And Caesar, learning that we have invaded his country, hastens to make war on us. And we see that the Persian army will quickly come to our aid; and it is clear for us that 15 the army of the Persians exceeds the troops of Armenia and Kartli; and there is not one true believer among us.¹⁰⁵ What our father, Mirian, or Trdat', my relative on my mother's side, imposed on us we know perfectly well, now everybody comprehends that faith, and that it is full of temptations. When my deeds are realized, my uncle will be angry with me and we will have to fight with each other, 20 and become a laughing-stock for all our enemies. But nevertheless I will act this way: as soon as our troops set off and I have news of Caesar's arrival, we will retreat. We will inform Caesar about our intention when he approaches us; then let it be as your holinesses will advise. And let not one of the prisoners suffer.”

25 Peter set out for Caesar while Samuel remained by the King. Next day an envoy came and informed the King that the Greek troops had left Constantinople. And King Vakht'ang called his mother's brother and all the other kings and told them: “What do you say, for you know the great numbers in the Greek army and their menacing nature in battle and the swiftness of their ships. For they invaded Persia, a country of knights and *goliaths*, and the Persians were unable to withstand them. Now I wonder, what if their troops come on ships and intercept our path, and kill us like sheep 30 in a pen. Let's move from here and make camp to the south of the sea, so as to secure a path of escape in case of good or bad fortune.”

35 The troops set off from the city and walking south for five days camped by Speri.¹⁰⁶ The residents of the town, who considered themselves doomed came out and thanked Vakht'ang, and presented him with one thousand *lit'ras* of gold and five hundred pieces of precious cloth; and they began to trade and work peacefully.¹⁰⁷

40 When Peter appeared before Caesar and told him of all these things, Caesar rejoiced greatly and acknowledged everything he promised Vakht'ang in the dream. And he sent the priest Peter and assured Vakht'ang firmly and emphatically that he will be worthy of his reign, and that they will join forces with Vakht'ang and destroy the Persians, and so prevent them from becoming his masters. And while Peter and the envoys were on their way to Vakht'ang, Caesar entered Constantinople

and sent five hundred *dromons*,¹⁰⁸ each of which contained five hundred men, and ordered them to go to Vakht'ang without engaging in battle. Caesar himself set out with eight hundred thousand men on the Pontian road.¹⁰⁹ When the army approached, the Persians decided to fight them, but the King held them back allowing no battle.

When Caesar's envoys and Peter gave Vakht'ang gifts, he learned of Caesar's secret as well as his declared words. And publicly he said: "Do not retreat, but stay until I arrive, so I can have the chance to destroy the Persians who are with you, those who had escaped at the time of our invasion of Persia."

And secretly,¹¹⁰ he gave him a pledge – a cross, a crown and some vestments, and accompanied them with the words: "As soon as we meet I will give you the fortress of Tukharisi¹¹¹ and all Kartli that lies within its borders." And King Vakht'ang on his side gave a public answer: "We came here for no other reason than to fight you. Come and meet us, otherwise we will come to Constantinople." But secretly he notified him: "Do not make others do the things that do not befit you, and which you would not do yourself, for treachery does not become honest people. And would not my name be dishonored, if I betrayed the Persians? And many of them love Christ more than we, but they hide it because they are afraid.¹¹² So let's conduct this thing nicely, and continue so to its end, as was done in the case of Iovianus and the Persians. And then, upon the happy conclusion of all this, it will be easier for me to deliver them to your hands, and it should not be done indecently and cause you any trouble; and your people will not die from the sword, for your men feel overly confident, winning victories over the Persians. The Persians have not lost their courage and are going to fight with a sense of vengeance: to die or to revenge themselves. I will wash my hands of it if your people start to fight them."

And Vakht'ang's teacher's brother – Varaz-Mihr¹¹³ – and the monk Samuel set out to see Caesar. And Caesar approached the town of Pont, and the Pontians came out to meet and glorify him, and expressed gratitude to Vakht'ang, for he protected them instead of condemning them to destruction. When the envoys of King Vakht'ang reached the town, they were given gifts: one thousand pouches of musk, five hundred pouches of ambra and one thousand *lit'ras* of perfume.

And Vakht'ang's men dispersed the plunder, but the Greek infantry fell on them, together with three hundred thousand rabble of all kinds, horsemen from the country and towns.¹¹⁴ Vakht'ang held back these thieves by force until the arrival of his mother's brother, the Persian *eristavi*, who told him angrily: "Oh, you, serpent and descendant of a viper! Was it not known that the mother of your father was Greek from the Iovian family? And your father's mother nature has prevailed and kindled love for the crucified man, and you want to deliver us into the hands of the Greeks." Vakht'ang said: "Here you are and here are the Greeks, you will witness yourself the power of this crucified mortal as well as that of the living one, on whom you set your hopes." And trumpets sounded, and from all sides came the Armenians, Persians and the King of Daruband. And King Vakht'ang and the Georgians came to see and stood there. And the King sat on a white elephant by the woody beach of that sea, on the peninsula.¹¹⁵ And before the arrival of the Persian army, the Greeks destroyed about twenty seven thousand of them. The battle hardened, and the brother of Vakht'ang's mother, the *eristavi*, was killed. And Ip'ajaj, the King of the Leks was killed, and a lot of the *erismtavaris*; the eastern

camp was overpowered. There was a commander among the Greeks, Polycarpus Logophet by name, their King's nephew. He was strong and destroyed many brave Persian warriors, and he also slew their *eristavis*. And then Vakht'ang jumped down from the chariot and said: "We did not think of it at all, but it was God's will, for we wanted peace, but the impudence of the Persians enraged the Lord and He punished them for killing the *eristavi* of Rani; and the whole of Persia will mourn him, as if it were their own perdition. Now the arrogance of the Persians has been put to shame, let's take out the cross and carry it in front of us, for we have overpowered them; and let us be the children of power, do not get involved in a feud giving in to somebody's provocation, and do not stand as a superior over your enemy; let your hands be my hands, so as not to doom ourselves to complete destruction. And we will drive them not only out of here, but the whole way down to Adarbadagan, like ravens driven out by their own nestlings."

And the priest Peter brought out the cross, and the King said: "Stay in front of the enemy and our people and call: "Bow before the cross and we will overpower the enemy." And he ordered Demet're, his *eristavi*, and Juansher, his *sp'asp'et'* to follow the cross and to slay everyone who would not bow to it. And a herald cried out loudly: "He who does not bow before the cross will die!" And all the people came and bowed and stood before the cross. But Borzo,¹¹⁶ the King of Movak'an, said: "I will not renounce the burning fire and never will I bow before a rotten piece of wood adorned with gold and precious stones."¹¹⁷ And *sp'asp'et'* Juansher struck him with his sword, and he fell dead. Henceforward nobody dared to defame the cross, and the soldiers swore before Vakht'ang: "If the cross helps us we will know no God besides the Crucified One."

And the King dismounted and bowed before the cross and the whole his army with him. And the King said: "Oh, Lord, show these faithless people your power in order to draw them to the faith of those who trust you; though fallen, they remain alive, and those that live find their power through your life." The Greek troops appeared like a lightning bolt. And Polycarpus came like a wolf who had wallowed in blood; he roared like an enraged lion and put to shame the soldiers. But the King said: "Is there anyone among you who is willing to fight with him and (so) become equal to me?" A herald passed twice among the ranks, but nobody dared to answer the King's call.

Then Vakht'ang said: "A man is great not through strength, but through the power granted him by the Lord. And setting my hopes on Your power, like David, I will set out with a sign of the cross; and give me the strength, like You gave to David against Goliath, for he, too, came to humiliate and disgrace your cross. When he beheld the cross, erected to help us, he did not run away, but trusting his own power fought with it." And he said: "Lord, see the conceited and put them to shame; see those who suffer and save them. This one before me is not worthy, and I am not afraid of him, for the power You give is great and I will win with its help, but I am afraid of You; hear the voice of a humble servant and help me."

He unsheathed his sword, touched the cross with it and said before his troops who stood in ranks: "A lion is not equal to a bull,¹¹⁸ for I am a King, and you are serfs, but I am ready to humbly give my life for my people, to make them believe in the power of the cross." And Polycarpus approached him. Vakht'ang walked to meet him steadily and confidently. The soldiers on both sides began to cry in terrifying voices, and their screaming was like the peals of thunder, which shook the earth. And

Polycarpus thrust his spear into Vakht'ang's shield which was made of dragon's skin, and the spear sank into it to an elbow's depth, and the spear was as thick as a man's hand. Leaving his shield on the spear, the King met (Polycarpus) face to face and struck with his sword on his helmet and cleaved his head down to his shoulder. And stretching out his hand he took one half of the head, put it before the cross and said: "Such will be the lot of everyone who abandons you."

5

Vakht'ang's men fell on the Greek troops and put them to flight, and dividing into fighting groups they pressed them to the edge of the sea. And not one of them escaped except those who embarked upon the ships and put out to sea.¹¹⁹ Forty three thousand of Vakht'ang's men died that day, while seventy two thousand of the Greek soldiers were killed; one hundred and twenty five thousand were taken captive. When Vakht'ang's troops returned and came upon the remains of Varaz-Bakar, the brother of Vakht'ang's mother, they were sorely grieved, and they anointed the body with aloe and myrrh and sent it to Barda.

10

King Vakht'ang summoned his army and ordered all the captives be brought before him. And they brought them: there were men and women, seven hundred eighty thousand in all. He sent all of them to the Caesar, accompanied by his *eristavis* Nasre and Adarnase. And he wrote a letter, which said: "God's wisdom is incomprehensible. God's will triumphs over the human mind and will. As I know, your will had no part in what Polycarpus did, neither did I participate in the intrigues of my mother's brother; the malicious intentions of both brought evil on their heads. And the Lord did this to show the newly converted people, who were seized by dread seeing the power of His faith. But He brought them happiness and treated them like His prodigal children. You have a privileged birthright before God and will retain it forever. I have assuaged my grief over my mother's brother, and avenged the murderers of your sister's son. I wish to console you with seven hundred and eighty thousand men whom the Lord has saved. And if you would deign to meet me, be quick, otherwise let us settle our affairs through envoys, for it is distressing for us to stay longer in this country, which is in a ruined condition."

15

20

25

Until the arrival of the envoy, the great Caesar had been sunk in depression. But when they told him that the prisoners, captured earlier, along with others seized in pursuit, were set free by Vakht'ang, he rejoiced greatly and all the sorrows left him. Caesar embarked in a simple ship, and sailed with three hundred *dromons* to a strip of beach, and summoned Vakht'ang. And they exchanged oaths and settled their affairs.¹²⁰ And Caesar returned Vakht'ang Kartli to its boundaries, and the fortress of Tukharisi and the whole K'larjeti, from the sea to the Arsiani mountains,¹²¹ and the valleys that adjoin the mountain of Ghado.

30

Caesar questioned him about the country that bordered Greece, which is Abkhazia, and he said: "From the time of Alexander¹²² the lands from Egris-ts'q'ali to the river of Little Khazaria were in the boundaries of Greece; now you have taken them away from us. Return them to us and when you take my daughter as your wife, I will give you this country as a gift." And he assigned the lands between Egris-ts'q'ali and K'lisura¹²³ as a dowry, and the remaining part of Abkhazia,¹²⁴ Vakht'ang returned to the Greeks.

35

Vakht'ang set out on the K'larjeti road; he sent his troops back on the Somkhiti road. Reaching Tukharisi, he gazed at the fortress and fell in love with it at once. He said: "Are you the fortress?"

Going on further, he discovered a large rock in the center of K'larjeti, and a village which was called Art'anuji.¹²⁵ He called his foster brother Art'avaz and made him an *eristavi*, and ordered him to build the fortress Art'anuji, and then told him to find a place in the gorge for a monastery and to build a church there. They built a monastery like the ones they had seen in Greece. He told Art'avaz: "If the
5 Persians overpower us with their forces, we will find shelter here."

And Art'avaz built the Art'anuji fortress and a monastery, which is called Op'iza,¹²⁶ and three churches in Babameri, Bidonia and Akiza. And he reconstructed the fortress of Akiza and made a hideaway there. When Vakht'ang came back and entered the town of Mtskheta, the population greeted him with great joy, and thanks were offered to God for his happy return. And he gave lavish
10 gifts to his people.

Learning that Vakht'ang had joined the Greeks, the Persian King returned to Persia, and there he died. His son became king, but three years passed before he came of age. The Queen bore King Vakht'ang twins, a son and a daughter; and during the childbirth Queen Balendukht, daughter of the King of Persia, died. And Vakt'ang named his son in the Persian style – Darchil;¹²⁷
15 in Georgian it is Dachi. King Vakht'ang did not marry the daughter of the King of Greece and he did not summon Catholicoses and bishops, for he was expecting an invasion by the King of Persia and was occupied with reinforcing his fortresses and towns, provisioning them, providing equipment for his horsemen, and other preparations for war. He imprisoned the seducer Binkaran, the Bishop of the fire worshippers, and destroyed and drove off all the fire worshippers from Kartli.

Three years later the Persian King, setting out against Vakht'ang, approached Indabrian,¹²⁸ where he set up camp. Vakht'ang sent an envoy to the Greek King and informed him: "So the day I promised you has come; I will deliver the Persians into your hands. I let them through into the middle of Kartli, about three hundred thousand men in all. The King of the Persians was hoping to increase his troops in Armenia and receive the help of the kings of Caucasia, but they refused to join with
25 him; while some of them believe in the crucifix, the others, (like) the kings of Daruband,¹²⁹ remain in the hands of Devil, and joined him. I fulfilled my promise: wherever I discover a house of fire worshippers, I flood it with urine, and I subject their priests and spies to severe tortures. I have put in prison the seducer Binkaran, though he evaded death. And it was he who brought the Persians to Kartli. I appointed a faithful man, Michael, as bishop. And Binkaran died, when he reached the
30 borders of Kartli. Send here at once your army to destroy all the enemies of the cross and free yourself of your foes; if they overpower us, the Persians will enter the borders of your country too by the Shimshat'i road."¹³⁰

But before King Vakht'ang's envoy reached the great Caesar, the latter had set out towards the country of the Khazars, and so was unable to go to Kartli. Vakht'ang reinforced the city fortresses and installed elite troops, who were with him – about one hundred thousand horsemen and one hundred thousand footmen – in Dighomi¹³¹ down to the Gates of Kartli; the Persians were stationed below in Tskhenist'erpi.¹³²
35

Vakht'ang widened the Mogveti Bridge to sixty *mkharis*,¹³³ so the troops could pass one another. The King and *sp'asp'et'* Juansher remained in Mtskheta, and Nasra and Mirdat' were assigned as commanders over the troops of Somkhiti (Armenia) and Kartli, which were based on the outskirts

of Armazi. When the Persians fought at Armazi, Vakht'ang's troops left Mtskheta. When the Persian troops came to Mtskheta, Vakht'ang's men gave them battle on the Aragvi river. At times, they waded across the Mt'k'vari and fought by the Tbilisi ford. Sometimes they prevailed and sometimes the enemy did.

Vakht'ang had made a golden helmet for himself with an image of a wolf on its front and of a lion on its back. And he rushed to the places where the Georgian forces were weakening and the Persians fell under his pressure like an onager under a lion's charge. The Persians could not withstand him, and when they saw the helmet with a wolf and a lion, knowing it was Vakht'ang they cried: "Duraz Gorgasal," which means "Take care of the wolf's head." After that they named King Vakht'ang – Gorgasali.

The battles between them continued for four months. Then an envoy from Caesar came who brought gifts to Vakht'ang and about eight thousand Greek horsemen; and he wrote to Vakht'ang the following: "I returned from the war with the Khak'an and I am sending you eight thousand horsemen; I wrote to Leon: "If the army summons you, the lands from Melit'ina¹³⁴ to Lameda and further to K'arnukalaki will spread before you; I ordered him to join you."

The Greek army reached Javakheti. When the King of Persia learned of the Greeks coming to the Georgians' aid, he began negotiations with Vakht'ang. He sent him an envoy who told Vakht'ang: "Why do we destroy each other? We are brothers, Nebrot's children! If God is fire, then let Him help us; and we will remain in love with our forefathers. Let each of us serve (God) according to the disposition of his soul."

When the envoy came to Vakht'ang and told him everything the Persian King had charged him with, it appealed to Vakht'ang and his people. King Vakht'ang presented gifts to the envoy and sent him back with the message: "You have seen the power of the cross, for before the appearance of the savior on the cross, all kings gave you tribute. With His appearance, you will be beaten by everyone who believes in Him; and the Greeks, your tributaries, fight on His side, and they dispersed the fire worshippers. If you begin to fight us in order to tear us away from our faith, we will die like He died for us, and He will resurrect us. But if you fulfill your promise, and cease to consider fire as your God, and recognize Christ to be the only Lord of ours, I will take you as my father and my master.¹³⁵ And though I am the first-born son, you will sit on the throne of our forefathers."

Having been told Vakht'ang's words, the King of Persia received them favorably and gave Gorgasali rich gifts, including a crown adorned with sapphires; and they arranged a time to meet. The Persians retreated to Rustavi; they set out at dawn and camped in the K'ala valley, for the territory of Tbilisi and the fortress of K'ala had been ravaged. King Vakht'ang camped in Jach'vi, and the two kings met each other in this valley. They greeted each other and acknowledged the inviolability of their faiths, each to his own. And on the same day Gorgasali invited the King of Persia with his army to Tbilisi and presented him with one thousand female slaves, five hundred male slaves, five hundred (pieces of) precious gold-brocaded cloth, five hundred bolts of silk cloth, ten thousand mares, five hundred pack-horses, three hundred mules, four thousand oxen,¹³⁶ and ten thousand sheep. Next day Gorgasali came to him, taking with him Leon, the Caesar's *antipat*, and they prolonged the discussions. And the *antipat* asked Gorgasali to negotiate a peace between the

great Caesar and Khosro, for the Greeks feared that the Persians could invade Greece and ravage it, as the Greek troops were in Khazaria.

Khosro told Gorgasali: "Ask me anything you like, or something you would like to give somebody." And Gorgasali answered: "I want peace between you and the great Caesar." Khosro said: "Your request has upset me, for the Greeks will seize any opportunity to treat us most unmercifully. And I favored you in order to invade Greece and take my vengeance on them. Recently I received a messenger from the Khazar king, and ten days have passed; but you do not know the cause of our enmity. I will tell you now of their impudence and then I will fulfill your wish, because I swore solemnly to do nothing contrary to your desire." And he related the following: "As you are well aware, we have possessions on this side of the sea, which were given to us from the time of Noah, but he, the great Caesar, is trying to win over Jazira and Sham¹³⁷ from us; the towns have been ravaged, and Sham is rightly our kingdom. But half of Jazira, which was (also) assigned to us by our forefathers, make up your land, and the Greeks have appropriated it. I wanted to fight them, to get it back for you. Now you yourself divide the lands of your ancestors. That is your own and the Greeks' business. But the other part of Jazira the Greeks must give us back, this I demand of you."

Hearing all this, *antipat* Leon rejoiced immensely and bowing to both kings said: "Let five towns of Jazira be yours, for we return you half of Sik'ilia¹³⁸ which we took from you, and let peace be established between you and him."

And the King said: "Who can be sure the King of Greece will acknowledge our deal." But Leon said: "When the King sent me as his authorized representative, some wise and godly monk told him that God wants peace between these three kings. And it has turned out so. And the great Caesar ordered his scribe to write a letter proposing peace. And here is this message."

They read that message, written like an oath: "I will claim nothing besides what the Persian King gave to Iovian." The Persian King summoned the envoy of the King of Khazars, and he tried to incite the Persians against the Greeks. Then the Persian King brought in a scroll and with his own hand wrote an amiable letter to the Greek King with the acknowledgement of the borders and the return of Sik'ilia. He acknowledged Pilist'im and Jerusalem as belonging to the King of Greece. And he said: "Jerusalem is the city of your faith." And he gave Gorgasali gifts: three thousand lit'ras of spices, five hundred lit'ras of amber, five hundred lit'ras of musk, three thousand geldings, one thousand regal garments, and three thousand sables.

Vakht'ang went home. Next day the King (of Persia) sent Barzaban, his own *mobidan*, to Vakht'ang notifying him of the following: "Henceforward I promise to fulfill everything you want. Rule your country as you like: send your representatives and take your towns, which I gave you as well as to Caesar. And I order Barzaban to go to the great Caesar with the purpose of getting your lands and towns back. Though you must know that because of all I do, the Persian elders have become angry, for they expected I would ravage Greece, but instead I granted them two kingdoms on my borders. Now I have one request to you: marry your sister to me and come to visit my native land, to see your relatives and to be an aid for me against my adversaries – the Abashes and Elamits, the Hinds and the Sinds, for they dared to commit an evil deed, and they humiliated my throne. If you come, I will declare to the elders and to my *marzapans*: "I sanctioned love with my friends, for this

was the wish of my brother King Vakht'ang. We gave them some lands, but with their assistance we turned our enemies into our tributaries." In this way we will assuage the anger of our elders with the Greeks. You will support me in person, but your troops you must left in place."

Vakht'ang summoned his counselors, and *antipat* Leon said as follows: "You have rendered the Greeks a great good, more than that of their kings who sat on their thrones, for you saved the town of Pont from destruction and delivered to the great Caesar seven hundred and eighty thousand souls, and now you are giving him Jazira and Pilist'im, which not one of the kings of Greece has taken peacefully. And Khosro is right: if you do not honor his request, his people will consider him to be good-for-nothing. He did not tell you: let us invade, for such is true love. So I will give you ten thousand armed men and go myself together with your envoys to the great Caesar, and from there I will join you in Jazira with a strong army."

Such was the advice of *antipat* Leon. And King Vakht'ang and all his nobles looked favorably on his advice. Vakht'ang married his sister to the King of Persia, whose name was Mirandukht', and who was once captured by Ossetians and had been rescued by Vakht'ang. But he did not marry off Khuarandze, because she was promised to the *p'it'ikhsh* of Somkhiti. And Vakht'ang took his son, who was called Darchil in Persian and Dachi in Georgian. He was five years old; and he put the crown on his head and made him King. He assigned him his nobles: the first was *sp'asp'et'* Juansher, the ruler of Inner Kartli and master of all *eristavis*; then came Demet're, the *eristavi* of K'akheti and K'ukheti; then Grigol, the *eristavi* of Hereti; and then Nesran, the *eristavi* of Khunan; and Adarnase, the *eristavi* of Samshvilde; and Samnaghir, the *eristavi* of the Inner Egrisi and Svaneti;¹³⁹ and Bak'ur, the *eristavi* of Margvi and Tak'veri.¹⁴⁰

And Vakht'ang entrusted them with his son Dachi and ordered them to build Ujarma¹⁴¹ and bring up King Dachi there, because he found this place convenient for hunting and sheep breeding. He took with him his four nobles: Art'avaz, the *eristavi* of K'larjeti, Nasra, the *eristavi* of Ts'unda, Bivrit'ian, the *eristavi* of Odzrkhe and Saurmag, his chief *ejib*;¹⁴² and also ten thousand horsemen, selected from among his men.

Leon, the *antipat*, left him ten thousand Greeks from his army, and himself set out for Caesar. King Vakht'ang assigned the *eristavi* of K'larjeti, Art'avaz, to him as an envoy and sent with him all the presents received by him from Khosro to Caesar, leaving for himself only the valuable cloths and horses; all the rest he sent away and ordered Art'avaz, together with Leon, the *antipat*, to join him in Jazira.

Vakht'ang's mother and sister Khuarandze begged him to take them with him, so as to offer their prayers in Jerusalem. He took them; and Vakht'ang and Khosro went by the Adarbadagan road, and from there Vakht'ang, his mother and sister set out for Jerusalem, and Khosro waited for them in Antioch. They entered Jerusalem and prayed on the day of the Holy Resurrection at all the holy places and said their prayers on Holy Resurrection day; they made abundant sacrifices and returned to Antioch.¹⁴³

Leon, the Caesar's *antipat*, and Art'avaz, Vakht'ang's *eristavi*, came with twenty thousand select horsemen and brought Khosro innumerable presents from the great Caesar, and an immense amount of gifts to Vakht'ang. And Caesar sent them his thanks with joy through his envoys, praising

Vakht'ang immensely and sending him inexpressible thanks. And he told Vakht'ang: "I order Leon to do the following: to be in fear of you and to be obedient to you like he is with me." And fifty thousand select horsemen gathered there under Vakht'ang's command: the Greeks, Georgians and Armenians.

5 Then the King of Persia proposed to Vakht'ang: "Because your mother and sister have seen so much trouble, let them also come to my kingdom to celebrate together our joy. Then if they want to go back to Kartli, let them return by the Rani road.¹⁴⁴ But if they are willing to wait for you, let them wait for you in the town of Urha."¹⁴⁵ Vakht'ang liked Khosro's suggestion. After making preparations for the journey, they set out together. And the Persian King sent messengers to all his nobles and informed them. They rejoiced greatly, because they were seized by the desire to fight the Hinds, 10 Sinds, Abashs and Jorjans.¹⁴⁶ They came to Baghdad, and the Persian nobles came joyfully out to meet them. They celebrated the King's wedding, which continued for six months in ceaseless joy and amusement. Upon the completion of the wedding, he presented Vakht'ang's mother and sister with rich gifts, and they went to Urha. And the whole Persian population rendered honor to Vakht'ang 15 exactly as they did to their King Khosro. Then they left to fight their enemies.

First they came to Jorjaneti, seized it, destroyed the whole population, and settled the Persian people there. Since then, the Jorjans have become peasants and now they are tributaries of the Persians. After that they invaded India and fought fierce battles and single combats. There was a custom there: the camp of the loser in single combat, took flight. King Vakht'ang beat fifteen 20 *bumberazis*, who had killed many Persian giants. They spent three years fighting in India, and seized most of the Indian lands, but they could not overpower the fortress towns and castles, for they were surrounded by great walls. They took tribute from the Indian King: one thousand lit'ras of musk, the same amount of amber, ten ships full of perfume, a whole ship of rubies and emeralds, and all kind of sapphires, one hundred camels loaded with gold and five hundred camels loaded with silver.¹⁴⁷

25 From India, they entered Sindia. The Sindian king distributed his troops among the fortresses and towns. Wherever the Persians went, the Sinds came out of their fortresses and delivered some heavy blows. A great number of Persian soldiers died.¹⁴⁸ But Vakht'ang's people remained intact due to the power of Christ, and they overpowered the enemy everywhere. Vakht'ang's four nobles¹⁴⁹ who accompanied him, and the Greek Leon stood out by their courage, for they killed a lot of brave Sind 30 knights. The King of the Sinds was in the town of Sindia. They came to Sindia with all their forces and fierce battles took place. Every day the Sindian King fought in person, for he was a powerful and fearless giant; he took the Sindian horsemen with him and many combats among the knights on both sides took place. Sometimes this side won and sometimes the other. The Sindian King defeated all the knights who fought against him, though for many days he did not meet Vakht'ang face to face.

35 And then one night the Sindian King dug out a pit in the field by the town's gates to disguise his horsemen, and making artful exits from the pit, placed ten select men there. Early in the morning he sent one knight out. That day it was Vakht'ang's turn to keep guard at the gate. The knight came out and challenged him to a fight, wishing to draw him into the trap and deliver him to the hidden horsemen. Then Saurmag, Vakht'ang's master of ceremonies, stepped up and said: "You are not 40 worthy to fight with a King, I will fight with you, a slave with a slave,"¹⁵⁰ and rushed at him. But the

Sind fled, and Saurmag, as was his way, begun to pursue him, for more than once he had fought in the field. As he passed the horsemen hidden in ambush, they pounced on him at once. The pursued Sind turned suddenly to meet him. Saurmag struck him dead with his spear, but the other ten knights killed Saurmag.

Vakht'ang with his three nobles: Art'avaz, Bivrit'ian and Nasra, and the Greek Leon rushed forward. But the Sinds fled. Vakht'ang with his companions pursued them to the town gates, but the Sinds hid in the town. Filled with grief, Vakht'ang returned and mourned over Saurmag's body like his own beloved brother. After all, they grew up together, for he was a nephew of his tutor, Art'avaz's father, a faithful, reliable and brave man.

Then the King of the Sinds came out of the town gates and cried: "King Vakht'ang, you are like that unreasonable crow which met a wounded hawk, beaten by the eagle; unable to fly it was doomed to death. And the crow behaved contrary to the usual rules of crows. For when the ordinary crow sees a hawk, it begins to caw loudly, informing the other crows, and the whole flock falls upon the hawk to drive it off from its nest and secure peace for themselves, for even animals understand what is in their interest.

The crow did not act in this way, but took pity on that hawk. It ceased to bring up its nestlings and began to collect diligently grasshoppers and snakes for the hawk, because it is not easy for a crow to obtain other food. And in such a way it supported the hawk. When the wounds on the hawk's wings healed, it said to itself: "How many days I am eating grasshoppers and snakes; I cannot regain the power of my ancestors this way, for grasshoppers do not give me the strength I need. If I could catch some bird I would feed myself; but let me catch that crow, my benefactor; I will eat it and rest for a couple of days: when I regain strength, I will start to hunt according to the customs of my ancestors. And he did so: he caught the crow and ate it. Then it began to hunt large and fast-winged birds. And the crow gained no glory for its kindness, and they talk of it as of an unreasonable suicide. Nor was the hawk censured for its ingratitude and cruelty, for such is the usage and the custom of the hawk's race: it would lose strength and die feeding on those grasshoppers and so it behaved according to the rules and saved itself from death. The crow, on the other hand, behaved contrary to his own rules and died.

The Persians, who were from the beginning, are now, and will ever be in the future, the enemies of the worshippers of the cross, are now showing love with a powerless hypocrisy. But when the time comes there will be no mercy or fond memories on their part for the worshipers of the cross. This has happened more than once, and we know this from books. When you saw the Persians exhausted by their fight with me, you did not behave as you should, you did not rejoice and offer thanks to your God, and summon other tribes and enemies to make war with the Persians and give aid to the enemies of Persia. You did nothing of the kind, but leaving your fathers' home turned to the commander of the great Christian army of Greeks, and (toiling hard), in two years became the main support for the Persians. But as soon as they recover, they will doom you and your country to destruction and eliminate a multitude of cross worshipers. This you truly bring on yourself and on the heads of the worshippers of the cross. Now, why did I tell you this parable about the crow? Because

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you, King, sovereign and brave, voluntarily enslaved your own self to your enemy. So why should I not call you unreasonable?”

5 Then Vakht'ang said: “You think that your speech was inspired by the eye of wisdom. But your words are false. I will tell you the truth. You are mad! You resemble a mole, devoid of eyes which lives underground and knows nothing of the brightness of the sun and the fascinations of space, who is content with his life, because he thinks that all living things live like that. And he does not want to see the light and all the charms of heaven and the earth.

10 So are you blind in the eyes of your mind and deaf to the reason of your ears. You do not see or hear, or even know anything of the spiritual life; and you do not want to enter the everlasting, bright and infinite life, the greatness that is unspeakable and inconceivable. And you know nothing of the Lord, the maker of all beings, creator of everything.

15 I came into this world not for its glory, not to serve the King of Persia, but to serve the Creator, incomprehensible, and the consubstantial Trinity, the Maker of the world, in Their glory, for ever and ever. By my appearance here I am saving, in the first place, Jerusalem, the holy city, where the feet of our Jesus Christ walked and where He toiled in order to save our souls. And I saved Christianity from destruction, for the King of Persia could capture the whole Christian world.

20 And while my country was protected by the power of Christ and the courage of my army, the Greeks were busy and they could offer no resistance. And so we who trust Christ, we are ready to give our own lives for our neighbor. And an immense amount of lives were saved this way, and all this I did in order that our Lord, the Creator, would accept my service to Him and absolve me of my sins. And what of your words, that “when the Persians are ready they will become the Christians’ enemies” – but I, with the power and assistance of Christ, have saved the Christians from great disaster, and later the Creator will grant His mercy to those who put their hopes upon Him.

25 And while there was no need for the salvation of the Christians, I came here to assist the Persians. It must be so, in the first place because of my relationship with them, and then because, though the Persians do not abide in the true faith, they are learned in the ways of the Creator and believe in a spiritual being. But you are absolutely ignorant in the ways of God and unthinking like horses and mules, whom the Creator did not create to be His servants.

30 And your mind is one of the disgusting things of this world, because you praise the treacherous acts of the hawk that ate the crow which nursed him. And our nature is such that we must give our lives for our benefactors and be rewarded by the Lord’s mercy, and be blessed by eternal life, and acquire human glory in this world. And if we die in the name of God and His commandments, we will enter immortality and gain life through death.”

35 Then the King of the Sinds said: “Our talk is magniloquent and empty, but when you say that “by dying in God’s name you acquire life” it means that if a man knows of his future greatness and the goods he is going to acquire, he should long to retire to the other world. Now I understand your craving to leave this place for the other world. Come out and fight me in order to obtain your life through your death; one of your nobles has already preceded you and now perhaps, is preparing a shelter for you.”

40 Vakht'ang said: “My death now will not be to my advantage, because I am sinful and have not fulfilled all the commandments of the Lord, I have not thoroughly expiated my sins by repenting

them; but Christ is powerful and I am not afraid of death from your hand, for He is my patron and I am securely protected by Him. And the infinitely merciful Lord will kill by his absolute power His defamer through me, His (humble) slave, and your soul will enter into the pitch dark and into fiery hell.”

The King of the Sinds came out and Vakht’ang addressed his men: “Trust the Lord and cover me from the rear.” And Vakht’ang went forward. Both were gripping spears tight in their hands. And they began galloping over the field each trying to hit the other with the point of his spear. At last, seizing a moment, the King of the Sinds rushed to Vakht’ang intending to strike him and kill him. But due to his courage, dexterity and power, Vakht’ang evaded the strike, rounded on him like a whirl and struck the King of the Sinds on his left shoulder. The firmness of his armor did not save the King of Sinds, and he received a deep wound, for the spear ran through him at a cubit’s depth. And the King of the Sinds fell; Vakht’ang approached him, took him by his leg and dragged him to the King of the Persians. 5 10

The whole army praised Vakht’ang with loud cries, and the Persian King and all his camp rejoiced. All the nobles came to Vakht’ang with tributes and gifts. Then the Persian King called the artful physician to come and entrusted him with the King of the Sinds, to cure his wounds and then to receive from him the whole country of Sindia. And in the absence of their king the Sinds made his son their king. 15

King Vakht’ang gave advice to the King of Persia: let the King of the Sinds free and take from him a tribute and hostages, because it would be impossible for the Persians to conquer Sindia. The Persian King liked Vakht’ang’s advice: he let the King of the Sinds go and took from him tribute twice as much as he had taken from India, and his sons as hostages; and all that tribute of Sindia he gave to Vakht’ang. 20

Then the King of the Sinds, feeling a great fondness for Vakht’ang, made friends with him, because, in the first place, when he fell at the hands of Vakht’ang, the latter did not kill him but brought him alive to the King of Persia; then thanks to Vakht’ang he was freed from captivity. He gave Vakht’ang great and incomparable gifts. And they left Sindia the fourth year after they had invaded, and the Sindian towns – Sindas, Topori and K’imrai¹⁵¹ – remained intact. 25

From there they went to Abasheti. The Abashs were living in a country surrounded by waters and reeds; ships could not sail there, beasts did not prowl. The Abashs bordered Persia and were in a state of prolonged war with the country. However, the Persians changed the course of the waters, burned the reeds and captured the entire Abasheti. And the Persian King divided the Abashs lands into two parts: in one half he left the people in place and the other, about one thousand households, he took with him and settled in different places. The Kurds are descendants of the captured Abashs.¹⁵² 30 35

On the eighth year of his arrival in Persia, Vakht’ang returned to Antioch and came to Urha. The Persian King proposed Vakht’ang marry one of his regal relatives. But Vakht’ang said: “It is improper for me to have two wives, for I already have the great Caesar’s daughter as my spouse.”¹⁵³ King Khosro was distressed by these words but he said nothing; and Vakht’ang met his mother and sister in peace, and went to the border that divided the Greeks and the Armenians. 40

Leon the Greek and his men went to Shimshat'. Vakht'ang sent an envoy with a mission to bring his spouse, and Katholicos Peter and Bishop Samuel. Vakht'ang turned to Kartli, where his son Dachi came to meet him and all the *Sp'asalars* with him, as well as the bishops. But when the bishop learned that the King had sent an envoy to bring the Katholicos and the bishops, he was
5 upset and even tried to resist it, sending an envoy to the King with the words: "It seems, you have renounced Christ and have begun to place your trust in fire."¹⁵⁴ But Vakht'ang sent him an envoy with the words: "By the power of Christ I entered this country and by the right of Christ's power I left it, and God knows I feel no guilt. But I sent the envoy to bring here the Katholicos and the bishops."

Hearing this, the bishop decided to delay the time of their arrival, and cursed the King and his
10 whole army. But the King said: "So much as we are innocent we must be humble." The King came, dismounted from his horse and bent to the bishop's feet, but the bishop jerked his leg and hit the King with his heel in the face, and knocked out a tooth. The King responded: "This impudence and pride of yours are the machinations of the Devil. If the abundance of my sins made you so indignant, you still have no right to be so angry; you must absolve them, like the Gospel teaches: "Do not
15 extinguish a sensitive lamp and do not stamp on a trampled reed."¹⁵⁵ But you think that with the help of your machinations you will stop our love for Christ; and your perfidy becomes particularly obvious when you learned that a man has been brought to Kartli who will be charged to supervise you, and a malicious envy seized you, of the kind that Judas felt for Peter, for you are like Judas and the Church is like Peter. You are a money-grubber and the Christ's treasurer.¹⁵⁶ Now I am sending you
20 to the Patriarch in Constantinople and let him judge what you deserve."

And he sent him with envoys and his tooth in addition, and asked the Patriarch to send him a Katholicos and twelve bishops as soon as possible. And he asked to appoint Peter as Katholicos and Samuel as bishop, but regarding the others, let him choose who he wanted. And when the bishop reached (Constantinople), the Patriarch said to him: "As blood has been shed on the earth
25 because of you, you are not worthy of the cloth of bishop; besides, for your insolence with the King you deserve execution, for it is said: "Obey your kings, because it is not for nothing that they are armed with their swords; they receive their power from God, to rule like lions among sheep." And he immured Bishop Michael in the Monastery of Vigils.

They sent priest Peter and monk Samuel to Antioch. Caesar and the Patriarch of Constantinople
30 wrote to the Patriarch of Antioch the following: "From the very beginning, at the time of the conversion of Georgia by the Roman-woman, a bishop was sent there, but while there was a struggle between the Persians and the Greeks they could not establish all the rules of faith there. As you know, Kartli and the East and the North belong to the Holy See, as it is designated in the glad tidings of the apostles, and they dispose of all the advantages." And they informed them of the deeds of the great
35 King Vakht'ang, and said: "We evicted the bishop who was formerly appointed by them, and now Kartli is newly converted. Now bless the two who they ask for, and as for the other twelve, bless whomsoever you want. Let them come to us and we will send them there with gifts and all that they need." And the Patriarch of Antioch blessed the twelve bishops,¹⁵⁷ and Peter as Katholicos.

They came to Constantinople. The King granted them many gifts and gave his daughter Helen in
40 marriage to Vakht'ang, and assigned a great army to accompany her up to the borders of Armenia.

Here they were met by King Vakht'ang, and the Greek troops turned back. The Georgians set out for Mtskheta.

King Vakht'ang built in Mtskheta the Church of Apostles, Svet'itskhoveli, which is the Great Zion, and erected a pillar¹⁵⁸ south of the place where a church once stood and was later destroyed. And he established Peter there as Katholicos, and in the same Mtskheta See, established Samuel as bishop. He installed one bishop in K'larjeti, in the church of Akiza; one in Art'aani, one in Manglisi, one in Bolnisi, one in Rustavi, one in Ninots'minda, one at the approaches of Ujarma which was built by Gorgasali, one in Ch'eremi, also built by him; and there he built a town between the two churches, which he, too, erected himself; one in the church of Cheleti, which he built at the end of the village, one in Khornabuji and one in Agarak'i, which is opposite Khunani.¹⁵⁹

After that he built the church of Nikozi,¹⁶⁰ in the place where there was an altar of the fire worshipers, and he placed a bishop there; here the relics of Saint Razhden¹⁶¹ were kept, who was tortured to death by the Persians during Vakht'ang's campaign. This Razhden was the tutor of Vakht'ang's spouse – the daughter of the King of Persia, to whom he was married at first; he was converted to Christianity and became a zealous believer. He fought powerfully in battle. He was caught by the Persians and forced to renounce Christ, but this saintly man chose everlasting glory for himself and was tortured to death for Christ's sake.

Vakht'ang had three sons and two daughters with his Greek-wife. And to his first-born son with his first spouse, Dachi, he gave the towns of Ch'eremi and Nek'resi, and K'ambechovani which is Khornabuji, and all the lands to the east of the Mt'k'vari. Vakht'ang himself stayed in Ujarma and adorned it immensely. And his sister Khuarandze he married to the *p'it'iakhsh* of Somkhiti, Bak'ur.

Soon after that Khosro, the King of Persia, died, and his son, Khosro, came to the throne in his stead. The Persians gained in strength, for after Vakht'ang joined them their enemies completely submitted. The King of Persia set out to wage war against the Greeks and sent an envoy to Gorgasali with the words: "My father passed away and my people placed me on his throne. My elders ordered me to appear before you and put myself at your disposal, and to ask you to place yourself at the head of our army, and to take command of our invasion of Greece. Marry your daughter to me so I become equal to your sons." When the envoy came before King Vakht'ang, he was occupied with the building of Tbilisi, laying down its foundations.¹⁶²

And as the envoy passed King Khosro's message to Vakht'ang, the King answered: "In such cases they say: "Smith, temper your sword quickly so we can pierce your limbs." Now Vakht'ang was approaching sixty and he answered so: "Say to King Khosro that he should prepare first for the war with us, and only after that invade Greece. For any force is based on the power of the Cross. Henceforward our life is in setting hopes on He who was crucified."

And he sent heralds everywhere so that people left their unfortified villages and towns and fled to the Caucasus or to K'akheti, for K'akheti, being covered with thick woods, was inaccessible to enemies. And King Dachi and Vakht'ang's nephew retreated to K'akheti and entered Lopoti valley¹⁶³ – the land surrounded by rocks. There lived people who worshipped fire and water, and the valley was crowded with them down to Nosari.¹⁶⁴ Gorgasali's spouse and children hid themselves in the

Ujarma valley. He himself stayed in the foremost fortress and Juansher and Adarnase were with him. Demet're, Nasra and Bivrit'ian he left in Mtskheta and sent an envoy to Caesar with the news.

King Khosro came and destroyed the town of K'ambechovani, the fortress of Ch'eremi and Velistsikhe, and entering K'akheti set up his camp on the bank of Iori. And Vakht'ang's men stood
5 on the plain around the reinforced town, which is called Darpak'a.¹⁶⁵ They engaged in battle on the banks of the Iori and fought for three days in a row, and many people fell on both sides. Vakht'ang called Katholicos Peter and told him: "You should know that they fight with us not in order to impose tribute on us but to take Christ from us. Now I have decided that I would prefer to die in the name of Christ than live such a life, to obtain the kingdom of God promised to those of whom it is said: "Who
10 gives his life in my name gains life."

Katholicos Peter answered him: "To support the devotees of Christ you did things which none of your kin has ever done. For you, in your wisdom, are aware of how Satan, who tests us, tries to turn us from the Lord, as he did with Job. For the Lord commits to perdition those who hate Him, but those who love Him, He raises to Himself. Live in accordance with the Lord's precepts so that
15 we should not perish." And with these words he foretold him of his death in the battle, and said: "Not only Kartli will be ravaged, but Jerusalem as well, which is the mother of all the baptized children."

And the King said: "Stay in the church of Saint Razhden, which I built on the outskirts of Ujarma, for there we have erected thick and strong defences." And the Katholicos did as he was told and all the saintly bishops gathered there." Vakht'ang's army numbered two hundred thousand men and the
20 Persians had seven hundred and forty thousand. Vakht'ang divided his army into three parts: he sent infantry to the rock, he sent the *p'it'iakhsh* and *sp'asp'et'* in the opposite direction, and himself with an army of about one hundred thousand, went to where the Persian King was located.

At dawn, when the night mist had cleared, Vakht'ang came to his troops and addressed his men: "Everyone who escapes death without bringing us a head or an arm of our enemy will be put to
25 death by us." And as the heavenly gates opened wide he rushed forward and stormed through the enemy's ranks to the (Persian) King's chambers. He burst in into the King's tent, but the King jumped in time onto his horse, though Vakht'ang killed his son Bart'am and cut his head off. And there, one Persian struck Vakht'ang in the chest with an arrow; and the battle continued to noon. Vakht'ang's army overpowered the Persians, killing about one hundred and thirty thousand of them, while about
30 twenty eight thousand of Vakht'ang's people died. They took the spoils: about one hundred thousand horses, though because of the number, they could not bring all of them back. The Persian King retreated and camped in Rustavi. Vakht'ang's wound was aggravated, for the arrow had pierced his lungs. He went to Ujarma, and ordered the Kartlian *sp'asalars* to remain in their places.

The Persians learned of Vakht'ang's severe wound and ravaged Tbilisi and Armazi¹⁶⁶ town.
35 They could not seize Mtskheta but devastated all the places outside its walls from Mukhnari to the backwaters of Aragvi. The King of Greece, Vakht'ang's father-in-law, died and his son Zenon¹⁶⁷ became Caesar. He set out for Speri in order to enter Kartli, but learning of the gravity of Vakht'ang's condition stopped in K'arnukalaki. Khosro came there, and Khosro and Caesar engaged in battle in K'arnipora.¹⁶⁸ And so many people died on both sides that a river of blood formed; this was the

reason for the name K'arnipora, which means a bloody womb. No side prevailed in the battle, both armies lost. Khosro returned by the Kartlian road.¹⁶⁹

Vakht'ang, feeling the approach of death, summoned the Katholicos, his spouse and sons, and all the nobles and told them: "I am leaving for my Lord and I am blessing His name, for he did not refuse me access to the circle of his select servants. Now I entrust you to stay firmly by your faith and look for death in the name of Christ, to acquire His perpetual glory."

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And he said to the nobles: "You, the original residents of Kartli, remember my good deeds, for you were favored with eternal baptism in my house, and I, through the embodied greatness of mine, have glorified you as among my kin. Do not hold my house in contempt and do not give up your love to the Greeks."

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He said to his son Dachi: "You are my first-born son and I entrust you with my crown, and to your brothers I give the estates from T'asisk'ari¹⁷⁰ and Ts'unda to Somkhiti and Greece; the land bordering with Abkhazia between Egris-ts'q'ali and K'lisura belongs to the brothers of your mother, let them own them and remain *eristavis* for your descendants."

He called Nasra, *eristavi* of Ts'unda, Art'avaz, *eristavi* of K'larjeti and Bivrit'ian, *eristavi* from Odzrkhe and charged them with his spouse Helen and his sons, who were called Leon and Mirdat', and shedding tears entrusted all the three of them to the *eristavis* and God's care.

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And there came the time of trial, a howl and cry from the nobles and the whole population (of Georgia), and they strewed their heads with ashes and hoped for their death. And the earth shuddered from the sounds of moaning, and the believers prayed for the soul of their beloved King, and to the glory of the innocently murdered Christ. And Vakht'ang passed away, and he was buried in Mtskheta, in the Church of Svet'itskhoveli, where he rests under the protection of the God-given pillar.¹⁷¹

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PART II

His son, Dachi, came to the throne. Vakht'ang's spouse and two (other) sons were taken in by the three *eristavis*; they took possession of Western Kartli, which was granted to them by Vakht'ang. They lived in the summer in Ts'unda, and winters they spent in Odzkhre. They were not called kings, but heads of the *eristavis*, and they were obedient to their brother, King Dachi.

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King Dachi began to rebuild Kartli,¹⁷² for all the Georgian lands, with the exception of K'akheti, K'larjeti and Egrisi, were devastated. He completed the fortification of the walls of Tbilisi, and he turned it into the King's House, as Vakht'ang had ordered. Katholicos Peter died, and was replaced by Samuel. The King proposed him to live in Mtskheta, for such was Vakht'ang's will. Dachi proposed Christ be recognized by the mountain dwellers of K'akheti. But they showed no desire to do this; the Nukhp'at'ians¹⁷³ too, had fully departed.

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Of the two sons of Vakht'ang, who he had with his Greek-wife, Leon died, and only Mirdat', remained. His brother Dachi arranged with Mirdat' the exchange of estates: the King took from

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Mirdat' the area between Egris-ts'q'ali and K'lisura¹⁷⁴ – the lands of Mirdat's mother that bordered Greece, and gave him in exchange Javakheti from Paravani to the Mt'k'vari. Vakht'ang's son Mirdat' took possession of the lands from Paravani and T'asisk'ari down to the Sp'eri Sea¹⁷⁵ and ruled there, but remained in submission to his brother, King Dachi. He built Ts'q'arostavi church in Javakheti.

5 King Dachi died. Then his son Bak'ur became King. Then Bak'ur died. His son Parsman was crowned King. Katholicos Samuel died and Tavpechag became Katholicos. Tavpechag died, and Chermag became Katholicos. And from Vakht'ang to this time these kings lived in peace, and Mirdat's children obeyed the children of Dachi. During Parsman's reign, the Persians came and ravaged Kartli and Ran. King Parsman of Georgia asked the King of Persia to refrain from destroying
10 the churches and let Kartli keep its Christian faith. The Greeks at that time were occupied with other things – their enemies had risen in the east – they could not support the Georgians in their resistance to the Persians. The Persian King listened to his entreaties and preserved the churches. Parsman promised obedience and service to him, and the Persian King left.

15 After this, a division took place between the descendants of King Vakht'ang, because Dachi's children were obedient to the Persians, and Mirdat's children remained in subjection to the Greeks.¹⁷⁶ Parsman died and his nephew, whose name was also Parsman, acceded to the throne.

20 He was a devoted believer like his uncle. He beautified all the churches. Katholicos Chermag died, and King Parsman set Saba in his place. Then Katholicos Saba died and the King appointed Evlali as Katholicos. From that time on they did not bring Katholicoses from Greece, but appointed them from among the Georgian noble families.

25 During Parsman's reign, a man by the name of Iovan came from Mesopotamia, who was (also) called Zedazadeneli. This enlightener of Kartli and purifier of faith, as well as the builder of churches, together with his pupils demonstrated many miracles, which amazed all the Georgians. And books were written on (these) miracles and these books were placed in the Kartlian churches. From¹⁷⁷ the reign of King Mirian to the second Parsman, two hundred and fifty years passed. Fourteen kings passed away. And from Vakht'ang's time, eight Katholicoses passed away. Parsman died. And his son Bak'ur became king.

30 Bak'ur was a devoted believer and builder of churches. He increased the number of churches and priests in his kingdom. And he cleaned Kartli of all kinds of disbelievers.¹⁷⁸ Katholicos Evlali died and the King installed Macarius as Katholicos. At that time in Persia Ormisd reigned.

35 In Somkhiti, there was one man by the name of Varsken, a son of a *mtavari*. His wife was the daughter of Vardan, also a *mtavari*,¹⁷⁹ and her name was Shushanik'. The Devil took possession of this Varsken and he became a fire worshipper. He went to the King of Persia to renounce the Christian faith. The King of Persia granted him great gifts and made him *eristavi* of Rani. When he came back his wife Shushanik' learned he had abandoned Christ's faith, and refused to be his spouse. She thoroughly forgot her love for her husband and with her whole heart adhered to Christ's precepts.

40 Varsken resorted to many measures: at first to hypocrisy, exhortations, and the granting of presents; then he subjected her to severe torture, the multitude of which I am unable to describe fully to show how saint Shushanik' suffered. At last her husband Varsken, the ruler of Ran, killed her.

Then Bak'ur, King of the Georgians, summoned all his *eristavis*, covertly gathered his troops and secretly set out against Varsken. Varsken dwelled beyond the valley on the banks of the Mt'k'vari River, where the river of Anak'ert' joins it. The King fell unexpectedly upon him, caught and dismembered him, and then hung him on a tree. And the remains of Saint Shushanik' they took with great honor and buried them in Tsort'avi.

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King Bak'ur sent an envoy to the King of the Persians and informed him of everything that had happened and asked for his pardon. The King of the Persians thought: "If I become angry with the Georgians, they will join the Greeks," and so he decided to spare them and sent back Bak'ur's envoy with a positive answer, laying all the blame on the murdered Varsken and justified Bak'ur's action. He sent another *eristavi* by the name of Darel to Ran and Movak'an, and instructed him to be on friendly and peaceful terms with the Georgians.

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Katholicos Macarius died, and the King established Simon as Katholicos. Bak'ur died, leaving small children behind him who could not govern the kingdom. Then the Persian King, Urmizd, gave Ran and Movak'an to his son, who was called Ambarvez. He arrived and set himself up in Barda, and summoned the *eristavis* of Kartli. He promised them good things in abundance, and assigned them their property with the right of hereditary transference to their descendants. It was with such hypocrisy that he lured them to his side. The *eristavis* dispersed and each brought Kasre Ambarvez tribute.

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Bak'ur's children remained in mountainous K'akheti. And the children of Mirdat' – Vakht'ang's son – who ruled in K'larjeti and Javakheti, remained in the mountains of K'larjeti. The Persians seized the remaining parts of Kartli, Armenia and Aspuragan, waging war with the Greeks at the same time.

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A few years later, a great disturbance occurred in Persia, for the King of the Turks invaded, and the Greeks engaged the Persians in Mesopotamia putting them to flight. The Greeks entered Persia and began to conquer the land. Then Kasre Ambarvez left Ran and Kartli and went to help his father. While the Persians were thus occupied, the *eristavis* of Kartli – of both the upper and the lower regions¹⁸⁰ – came to an arrangement and sent an envoy to the Greek King with the request to assign somebody from Kartlian royalty as their king, and to leave the *eristavis* in their principalities. The great Caesar complied with their request and sent them as king, Mirdat's nephew – Vakht'ang's son from his Greek spouse – who was called Guaram and who ruled in K'larjeti and Javakheti.

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Caesar granted the title of Kuropalate to Guaram, and sent him to Mtskheta. King Bak'ur's sons, the descendants of Vakht'ang's son Dachi, to whom the crown was granted by King Vakht'ang, remained in K'akheti. They seized K'ukheti and Hereti by the river Iori and settled in Ujarma, and remained in subjection to Kuropalate Guaram.¹⁸¹

Then Caesar sent great treasures to Kuropalate Guaram and ordered him, in payment, to gather and bring an army from the North, and to add troops from Kartli and send them to Persia. Guaram did so: he took the Ossetians, Durdzuk's and Didoians and assigned the Kartlian *eristavis* as their chiefs. Guaram entered Adarbadagan and captured it. Such misfortunes and troubles fell to the Persians.

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Then a man by the name of Baram Chubin appeared in Persia. He fought with the Turks who had invaded Persia, as is written in the history of Persia, killed the King of the Turks and put his camp to

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flight. And the Greek army, which had invaded Persia, turned back and retreated to their country. The Northerners sent by Kuropalate Guaram also returned home, for as soon as the Persians had done with the Turks, the Kartlians grew timid, and they were fearful and trembled before the Persians.

5 Kuropalate Guaram set out to reinforce the fortresses and towns. Again God favored the Christians – new troubles emerged in Persia, for Baram Chubin broke with the King of Persia, and the brothers of King Ormisd's wife gouged out the King's eyes. A feud started between Chubin and Kasre. Kasre was driven off by Chubin and fled to Greece. The Caesar Mauricius married him to his daughter, then gave him an army and sent him against Chubin. Chubin fled Persia and Kasre took possession of the lands.

10 Then Mauricius, feeling responsible for the Georgians, told Kasre: "Since the time the Georgians rejected idolatry, they have become submissive to the Greeks. At the time of your dominance, Kartli was devastated. You have no right to it. Now you and I have come, by the will of God, to a mutual understanding, so let Kartli remain free and in peace. I am an ally and guardian of all the Georgians and Christians."

15 The King of Persia obeyed Caesar, and the Georgians regained their freedom. And Kuropalate Guaram submitted to the Greeks. He was a devoted believer and builder of churches. He laid the foundation for the Holy church of Jvari.¹⁸² Up to that time Jvari was located on the plain, and he built only half of the church. He ruled beneficially and tranquilly. He did not remove the *eristavis* of Kartli from their domains, because they had hereditary letters from the Kings of Persia and Greece. But they were obedient to Kuropalate Guaram.

20 Katholicos Simon died, and he was replaced by Samuel. Katholicos Samuel died and they installed another, also Samuel by name. Kuropalate Guaram repaired the foundations of Tbilisi Zion, for all the descendants of the devoted believer Mirian were builders of churches.

25 Kuropalate Guaram died. His son St'epanos took his place. But out of fear of the Persians and Greeks, he did not dare to assume the title of king, but he was acknowledged as head¹⁸³ of the *eristavis*. Then Katholicos Samuel died and St'epanos established Bartholomew as Katholicos. This St'epanos was an unbeliever and ungodly man, and did not serve the Lord and added nothing to our faith and the Church.

30 A great revolt took place in Greece at this time: Commander Pok'a broke off with Caesar Mauricius and killed him and his children. Commander Pok'a took possession of Greece. Then Kasre, Caesar's son-in-law and the King of Persia, set out to avenge the blood of his father-in-law and the brothers of his sister, by invading and seizing Greece. He overpowered the Greeks; Caesar Pok'a could offer no resistance, and St'epanos, the *mtavari* of Kartli, being afraid of the King of the Persians, broke with the Greeks and joined the Persians. At this time King Kasre seized Jerusalem and removed the Tree of Life.¹⁸⁴ But after that the Lord withdrew His merciful hand from Kasre: he was seized by his own son, placed in prison and died (there) from a malicious disease.

35 During the time of St'epanos, Mtskheta decreased in size, while Tbilisi grew larger. Armazi was going to ruin, and K'ala¹⁸⁵ was just emerging. St'epanos's brother, Demet're by name, was building the Holy church of Jvari, and though a malicious disease possessed him, he could not leave the

gates of the church. St'epanos ruled over the whole of Kartli. He was located in Tbilisi and he obeyed the Persians.

Several years afterward, a man by the name of Heracles¹⁸⁶ and a relative of Caesar Mauricius, appeared in Greece. He killed Caesar Pok'a and seized Greece. He gained strength, brought the Turks from the West, gathered a countless army and set out for Persia to search for the Tree of Life. He entered Kartli first. St'epanos showed no desire to break with the Persians, he reinforced the towns and fortresses and based himself in Tbilisi. King Heracles approached Tbilisi. But St'epanos was a brave and fearless rider; every day he came out of the city's gates and engaged with the Greeks. In one of those battles St'epanos was overpowered and killed. And the Greek Caesar seized Tbilisi.

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People in the fortress of K'ala did not submit; and the chief of the fortress abused the Greek Caesar, saying: "You have a goat's beard and a goat's neck." Then Caesar ordered: "That man calls me a goat, these words should have some basis." And he took the book of the Prophet Daniel and found there the following lines: "And a goat comes forward from the West and destroys the horns of the ram of the East."¹⁸⁷ And Caesar rejoiced, convinced that he would gain a victory over the Persians.

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Then Caesar summoned Bak'ur, son of the King of the Georgians from the line of Vakht'ang's son Dachi – who was called Adarnase,¹⁸⁸ and charged him with holding Tbilisi and controlling Kartli. He appointed under him an *eristavi*, who was called Jibgha, and ordered them to conquer K'ala. He himself set out to wage war with the Persians. A few days later they seized K'ala and they caught the chief of the fortress. The *eristavi* Jibgha at first filled his mouth with *drahk'ans*, which, as was told, delighted the Greek Caesar. After that he skinned the chief of the fortress and sent the skin to Caesar in Gardabani, for he had been so insolent with him.

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So St'epanos and his servitors were subjected to such punishments. And the reason why the Lord did all this to the *mtavari* St'epanos was because St'epanos did not set his hopes upon the Lord, but persecuted believers and made friends with the faithless. Then the Greeks seized the Georgian frontiers: Speri and the outskirts of K'larjeti along the sea. St'epanos's children remained in the mountains of K'larjeti, and Bak'ur's son seized all the remaining part of the country by force. As *mtavari*, he did not dare to call himself king. The *eristavis* lived separately, each in his own principality, and obeyed the *mtavari* Adarnase.

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Then Heracles invaded Persia and killed King Khosro, seized Baghdad, and took away the Tree of Life. He returned by the same Kartli road, seven years after his campaign had begun. And the holy church of Jvari and Tbilisi Zion were completed by the Kartlian *mtavari* Adarnase.

Then King Heracles took from Manglisi and Erusheti the nails of the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the boards to which His feet had been nailed, and gave them to Mirian. It vexed Adarnase, *mtavari* of Kartli, and he implored Caesar not to remove those heaven-sent gifts. The Greek Caesar did not listen to his entreaties and took them away. At the time of ruling of this Adarnase, three Katholicoses passed away: Iovan, Babila and Tabor. Adarnase died, and his son, St'epanos became the ruler.

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This St'epanos was a devoted believer, the purifier of the faith¹⁸⁹ and a church builder to a greater extent than any other Kartlian king or *mtavari*. It was he, who built a wall around the Holy Church of Jvari, erected palaces, and instituted Friday gatherings at which all the bishops and the priests of the vicinity and the neighborhood assembled before the Holy Jvari, glorifying Friday in the same manner they glorified Good Friday. And they gathered every Thursday in the eparchy to glorify the Holy Zion, and on Maundy Thursday they gathered for the sacrament of Christ's flesh and blood. And every Tuesday they gathered in the Mtskheta bishopric and prayed for the first Christian martyr Stephan,¹⁹⁰ and all the martyrs who were killed during the great Persian dominance, including the Bishop of Nek'resi, Abibo, who converted most of the mountaineers to the east of the Aragvi, to Christianity. His saintly remnants were placed in the episcopacy of Mtskheta, in the episcopal burial-place. And on his commemoration day more than on any other commemoration day, people like to gather and praise God.¹⁹¹

Mohammed of the Ismaili family, a preacher of the Saracen faith, appeared at this time, and he took possession of the whole of Arabia and Yemen. He died, and his place was taken by Abobikar. He invaded Persia, because Heracles had also invaded and devastated Persia. And there was nobody in Persia who could offer him any resistance. The Agarian Abobikar conquered Persia, entered Baghdad, and forced the majority to reject fire worshipping and convert to the Saracen faith. Then he died and Omar took his place, and he increased the ruler's power even more.

King Heracles was informed that the Agarians had invaded Sham and Jazira, which is Mesopotamia. Heracles set out for Palestine, to fight them there. But there happened to be a monk, a godly man, who told Caesar: "Flee, for the Lord gave the East and South to the Saracens, which means the dogs of Sara."¹⁹² These words from the monk were confirmed by Caesar's astrologers and all the soothsayers. Caesar Heracles erected a pillar and inscribed on it: "Farewell, Mesopotamia and Philistia until seven times seven will have passed." The philosophers have learned from the books of Hermis T'rismejist'on, the length of this term, and it equals two hundred and fifty years. Then all the noble families buried their treasures in the earth so as to find them easily upon returning.

Caesar Heracles marched by the Rani road, and entered Kartli a second time. He announced to the Persians who were hiding there from the Saracens: "You have understood at last that your rule is finished; leave the North and come over to us." They left, hiding their treasures; some of them followed Heracles and some remained and composed maps and charts, noting in them their tribes and lands, so that upon their return, the Greeks could find by these charts their relatives, and give them back their lands and treasures.

St'epanos had two sons, Archil and Mihr. He divided the entire fortune of his kingdom, the gold and silver treasuries and precious stones, between the two of them; and half of it he took with him to the country of Egrisi along with his first-born son Mihr; and another half of his fortune he gave to Archil, his younger son. Archil buried his part of the treasury in K'akheti gorge, and the golden and silver utensils – in Ujarma gorge. The Kartli and Javakheti treasury he left in Gori, which Heracles assigned as a depository for the treasure which he was unable to take with him. The name Gori is T'ontio, which means "Golden mountain." He left a talisman there so nobody would find it. He hid the

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treasures of all the churches of Kartli in the shade under the protection of the great Zion of Mtskheta. A little later, Archil came to Egrisi.¹⁹³

Murvan the Deaf approached Kartli. He was an Agarian *amir* and a son of Mohammed's tribe, who had been sent to Kartli by Eshim,¹⁹⁴ the al-mu'menin of Baghdad, who was son of Abdal-Melik of Baghdad¹⁹⁵ of the same tribe. His name "the Deaf" was given because he never gave consideration to reasonable advice.¹⁹⁶ All the *mtavaris* and *p'it'iakhshs*, the descendants of the *eristavis* and nobles fled to the mountains of Caucasia and hid themselves there in woods and caves. And the Deaf toured the lands of Caucasia, seized the Darial Gates and crushed all the towns and most of the fortresses within the boundaries of Kartli.

Learning this, the Kings of Kartli left for Egrisi with their households and hid themselves in Abkhazia; the Deaf followed them and destroyed all the towns and fortresses of the country of Egrisi. He destroyed the three-walled fortress of Tsikhe-goji, smashed the boundary wall of K'lisura, and crossed it.¹⁹⁷ At the time of his invasion, the Katholicos was Tabor.

As the Deaf passed K'lisura, which was the border between Greece and Georgia, he destroyed the town of Apshileti – Tskhumi, and approached the fortress of Anak'opia, where there is an icon of the Mother of God, not man-made but sent by God. It is unknown who brought it to the top of the mountain that borders with the sea in the South and with a marshy wood in the North. At that time in Kartli, there were the Kings Mihr and Archil in Anak'opia. Their father had died and was buried in Egrisi. And the *eristavi* of the Caesar, Leon, was in the fortress of Sobghisi,¹⁹⁸ situated on the Ossetian pass. And nobody could oppose the Deaf, for his army was greater in number than the trees in the forests of Egrisi.

Then Archil said to his brother Mihr: "This fortress is doomed to destruction. And if they catch us, they will find out about the treasures buried in the ground, which have been won by our godly kings, first Mirian then Vakht'ang and all their children, who gave birth to us. And then they will demand of us what King Heracles hid, the whole list we put together including two crowns with emeralds as well as dark red rubies, which our father the great King Vakht'ang brought here from India and Sindia, which we buried in Ujarma by two unprotected towers. And all that is imprinted in my memory. Take these two crowns, the golden one and the one made of rubies: one belongs to King Mirian, and the other to Vakht'ang, which was given him by the Persian King, together with the gold and silver which he loaded onto five hundred pack animals with two thousand infantry. You and our father placed all this in Kutaisi and Tsikhe-goji. But I have hidden my crowns and charters, sealed by lead stamps,¹⁹⁹ separately. If we die now, all those treasures will remain hidden; and with the coming of the Greeks, the great Caesar will find them and will restore those treasures to our family and those that reign. We will not become the cause of the devastation of Kartli and Greece, but leaving the place will fight on this side of the sea. And if it is the Lord's will, one will drive away a thousand, and two – ten thousand."

They came to the holy image of the Mother of God, kneeled before it and said: "We depart, setting our hopes upon Your Son and our Lord, to whom you gave birth. Be our mediator before Him and show us Your mercy." And there were just a few courtiers²⁰⁰ and relatives, *eristavis* and *p'it'iakhshes* with them: about one thousand men, and two thousand Abkhazian fighters. Before dawn the Lord brought about a severe sultry wind from the South over the Saracens and affected

them with a bloody diarrhea. And an Angel appeared before Archil the same night, who told him: “Go and fall upon the Agarians, for I sent a destructive and bitter disease upon these people and their animals. Setting out you will hear mourning and cries and lamentation from their camp. You must be fearless and put your trust in the Lord.” And with the coming of dawn sounds of crying and lamentation from the enemy’s camp reached their ears.

Putting their hopes in God, they attacked them. They engaged the enemy and the Lord sent power to this small Christian folk; thirty five thousand Saracens died of the disease, and three thousand of the sword. Mihr was wounded in the groin with a spear. About sixty Christians were killed that day, and the Saracens’ horses fell in numbers like trees, and all of them were thrown into the sea.

Then a spirit appeared before one of the Agarians, and prophesied like their prophet: “The Lord gave them victory over us, which will last until the time of the expiration of ten kings, as the Lord prophesied to Abraham and Agari. Beware of holy churches and people that serve God, as I taught (you) in my Koran.”²⁰¹

They broke camp quickly and fled, retracing their steps. Passing Tsikhe-goji they set up a camp between two rivers. The rain came down in torrents; the waters rose immensely and the lesser river flooded over the Abashes’ troops, and drowned thirty three thousand infantry, and the larger river ran over the cavalry, whose camp was pitched in a woody place, so that they were scattered about in different directions. Some saved their lives by climbing the trees. The river took with it thirty thousand horses, and from that time on, one of the rivers is called Tskhenis-ts’q’ali and the other – Abasha.²⁰²

They left by the Gurian road, then by the Sp’eri road; it was not possible to see there the decrease in their number. But they had to cut the tails of their horses for it was hard for them to drag their tails due to the mud which stuck to them.²⁰³

The lands of Georgia,²⁰⁴ Armenia and Ran were devastated, and it was impossible to find a building or subsistence for a man or animal anywhere. And Mihr, Archil and Leon,²⁰⁵ the *eristavi* of Abkhazia, sent an envoy to the Greek Caesar, and told him of everything that they had performed by the will of the Lord, and with their own hands. He sent them two crowns and a charter to Mihr and Archil, in which he wrote: “You reign in Kartli, and courage and wisdom are with you. Though you have been persecuted along with us for devotion to the Cross and zeal for Christianity, you, as the Lord says, will be raised together with us. But remain in your strongholds until three hundred years pass, for on the two hundred fiftieth year of its existence, their kingdom will be divided, and upon expiration of three hundred years our kingdom will gain in power and we will destroy the Agarians and all who have been raised by them will fall, while those who glorify us will rise.”

He wrote to Leon the following: “We inflicted damage on the lands of Kartli, though we received much help and goodwill from their kings. Now they have rendered assistance to our royal throne for the third time. They received the baptism from our hands; they saved from destruction the great city of Pont, and created peace between us and the Persians.²⁰⁶ King Vakht’ang became a mediator and with his sword recovered Palestine for our kingdom and both parts of Jazira. And if the Lord, with their help, had not withstood our malicious foe, they would have reached Constantinople. The Lord glorified those among the descendants of Nebrot, for true men of wisdom and warriors do not

decrease in number among their kin, as it is written in the charter that we wrote, which tells of the kings distinguished by their tribes and their lands. I order you to be the *eristavi* of Abkhazia; you and your children and your descendants shall rule for ever and ever. But honor with kindness the kings and the people of Kartli, and do not infringe henceforth on their freedom and the borders of Egrisi, as long as they remain there or even when they leave.”²⁰⁷

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Mihr was stricken by mortal wounds and he said to his brother Archil: “So, brother, I am going to meet our ancestors; take me and bury me among the graves of our forefathers. I will tell you of the places where we hid our treasures. I have no heir to pass them to, for seven daughters were born to me; so you are henceforward the heir to the crown from the house of our King Mirian. As you are aware, we did not marry the girls, our daughters, to any of the *eristavis*, but to kings or to the family of the Persian kings, just as King Mirian gave his daughter away in marriage to Peroz.²⁰⁸ But we are at a disadvantage now, for you are not married and I have no son or heir. Yet as our fathers married the daughters of *eristavis*, let us marry my daughters to them and divide the lands of Kartli between them: half to you and another half to them. However, the role of the head of the family, which I have been till now, I am giving to you; let it remain so, and you will be head of our family with possession of Egrisi, Svaneti, Takveri, Argveti and Guria. And K’larjeti and Mtiuleti give to my daughters, in order that they remain there through all these bad times. Our father, too, died at a time of trouble and we could not bring him to Mtskheta; take his remains and bury them in the Kutaisi church so that he can testify to our legacy. And you should remain here and be on friendly terms with the Greeks, until the existing darkness disperses.”

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And Mihr died and they took his remains and buried them in the upper part of the church, by the threshold. Archil summoned the *eristavis* of Kartli and gave them in marriage his nieces: one – to the nephew of his father, the son of Guaram Kuropalate, who ruled K’larjeti and Javakheti; the second – to the *p’it’iakhsh* from the Peroz family, who ruled in Trialeti, T’ashiri and Abotsi; the third – to Nerse Nersian from the family of one of King Vakht’ang’s distinguished nobles; the fourth – to Adarnase Adarnasian, and granted to them both the Upper Lands, that is Kartli; the fifth he married to Varzman and gave him the area from K’ot’man to Kurdis-Khevi (Varzman was from the family of the Persian ruler of Barda, who was the father of Vakht’ang’s mother); the sixth – to Juansher Juansheriani, who was from the family of King Mirian, one of the descendants of Rev; and he was given Jvari and Kherk’i and the entire Mtiuleti, Manglisi ravine and Tbilisi.²⁰⁹

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Archil’s portion was represented by half of all these *khevis*.²¹⁰ When they saw that he gave the most substantial part to Juansher, they were somewhat dispirited. He sent these *mtavaris* together with their spouses to their dwelling places. Then Archil called upon Leon and told him: “Be blessed by the Lord, for you took care of us, protected us and provided peace in your land during the time of our sojourn there. But now, you should know, our possessions above K’lisura are restored. I am going to settle in Tsikhe-goji and Kutaisi. Ask for something you want as a reward for your good service.”

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Leon answered: “The Caesar gave me this country in hereditary possession due to your glorious courage. Now it has been given to me for eternal ownership from K’lisura to Great Khazaria, which adjoins the mountain ridges of the Caucasus. Join me to the number of your slaves and to those whom you deign to be your sons and brothers. I do not need your lands, but let mine be yours.”

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Then Archil married Gurandukht, his niece, to Leon, and gave him the crown which was given by the Greek Caesar to Mihr. And they gave promises to each other and swore that there would be no enmity between them, and Leon obeyed Archil during all his days.²¹¹ Archil established himself in Egrisi down to Shorap'ani. He put all the fortresses and towns in order and built a fortress on the border of Guria and Greece. After twelve years they started restoring Kartli.²¹² Mtskheta on the other hand became unfit for living. Archil came from Egrisi and settled in the former fortress of Hidari.

Then a prince came to Archil, one of the descendants of the Prophet David,²¹³ by name Adarnase. He was the nephew of Adarnase the Blind on his brother's side, whose father was related to the Bagrat'ionis, and was appointed by the Greeks as ruler in some areas of Armenia. At the time of the seizure of Kartli by the Deaf, he went to the sons of Guaram Kuropalate in K'larjeti and remained there with them. He asked Archil: "If you deign to make me your successor, give me land." And Archil gave him Shulaveri and Art'aani.

After that Archil came to K'akheti and granted K'akheti to all his nobles,²¹⁴ made them *aznauris* and built a church in Sadzmori. He married the daughter of Guaram Kuropalate, who was a descendant of one of Vakht'ang's children through his Greek-wife. He settled in Ts'uketi and built a castle,²¹⁵ and in Lakuasti ravine he erected a fortress. He found there the rulers²¹⁶ to whom Ts'uketi was granted by King Vakht'ang; the Tushis, Khunzs and all the heathens of those places were governed by *eristavi* Abukhosro. Archil did not show any desire to take Ts'uketi from him,²¹⁷ but built a fortified town, Nukhp'at'i, between two rivers. The Nukhp'at'ians were heathens and of a predatory nature, but the Deaf killed them in many numbers. Archil baptized them by force.

The Saracens gained strength on the lands of Ran. They conquered Gazir²¹⁸ and Armenia. Maslama fought with the Greeks. The nephews of Adarnase the Blind, those three brothers who gouged out their father's eyes, came from T'arav to Shak'is and settled there following Archil's order, for all the lands of the Caucasus down to Ran were depopulated. Hereti and K'akheti escaped that fate due to the abundance of forests there. And the three brothers settled there, down to Gulgula.

Some *p'it'iakhshes* were not allowed to come to K'larjeti; half of them left and took possession of the rocky area in T'ao, which was called K'almakhi, and built a fortress there. Another half came to K'akheti and Archil. To one of them Archil had married a woman from the Abukhosro family, because she was a widow and had no husband, and he granted them Ts'uketi with the fortress and castle. At that time, on the fiftieth year since the retreat of the Deaf, the Saracens attempted to invade Kartli. Up until then they had tried nothing of this kind, and had just received tribute from the *eristavis*. Archil had two sons: "Juansher and Iovan, and four daughters: Gurandukht', Mary, Mirandukht' and Shushan."²¹⁹

NOTES

Part I

¹ Mirdat' – according to the list of kings of ancient Georgia, composed in the form of titles in "Vakht'ang's edition." Mirdat' was a "second" descendant of the "thirty seventh" King, Varaz Bakar. The genealogy of Mirdat' (II) can be traced in the "Annals" version of *The Life of St. Nino*, included in *kartlis tskhovreba (KT)* (KT, I, p. 72 and

further). The real genealogy of Vakht'ang Gorgasali does not allow precise reconstruction, and there are different opinions in Georgian historiography.

² In Georgian sources, it is called Babylon. One of the frequent anachronisms in *KT*.

³ The information that "the relatives of the kings of Kartli" after the devastation of their estate "remained in the valleys of K'akheti" points to the low level of political life in K'akheti in the fifth century. It is noteworthy, that in Juansher's narrative, K'akheti plays no political role of any importance.

⁴ This echoes the struggle of Sassanid Iran with the eastern nomads, who invaded Iran in the 420s and kept it under permanent pressure (M. M. Diakonov, *Ocherki Istorii Drevnego Irana (Essays on the History of Ancient Iran)*, Moscow, 1961, pp. 269-270). *Azauris* (pl.) – a stratum of the dominant noble class in feudal Georgia; the term, of foreign origin, had a specific meaning in Georgia (*Essays*, (Ibid.), II, p.138 and further).

⁵ This is evidence of the absence of a king in Kartli. Unlike the aspiration of *azauris* for autonomy described in Pseudo-Juansher's *Historical Chronicle*, in this case the tendency is towards undivided authority. Perhaps a conspiracy with the purpose of uniting certain feudal groups in order to resist a foreign invasion, had taken place.

⁶ Archil – according to the genealogy given in *KT*, is Vakht'ang's grandfather. He is also mentioned in the work of the Armenian author of the fifth century, Korun, in the *Adzul* form (Korun, *Zhitie Mashtotsa [The Life of Mashtots]*, Erevan, 1962, pp. 120, 213. The story of Archil is told in *moktsevai kartlisa (The Conversion of Kartli)* in *Shatberdis k'rebuli (Shatberdi Collection)*, Tbilisi: 1979, p. 325). It is noteworthy that here we see the succession "from father to son" among Georgian kings is not always applied. Archil is called Mirdat's "nephew." This might be evidence not so much of the nature of hereditary rights in the Parnavazid dynasty, as of the complexity of the political situation. Some researchers, not without reason, think that neither Mirdat', nor Archil were kings in the full sense of this word, because the Persian policy in the countries of Caucasia was so severe that the kingdom, before Vakht'ang Gorgasali, if not wholly abolished, was heavily controlled (A. A. Bogveradze. *Politicheskoe i sotsial'no-ekonomicheskoe razvitie Kartli (The Political and Socioeconomic Development of Kartli)*, Tbilisi: 1978, pp. 38-39).

⁷ It was common among medieval writers and chroniclers to apply their own social terminology to other peoples. Persian governors in the Caucasus (as everywhere) were called *marzapans* – "heads of the country" (N. Adonts, *Armeniiia v epokhu Justiniana (Armenia in the period of Justinian)*, SPb: 1908, p. 222); in Georgian sources – *p'it'iakhshs*.

⁸ Ran and Movak'an – according to Georgian sources, the names of the two main parts of Caucasian Albania.

⁹ The medieval name of Azerbaijan. The form retained in *The Life of Vakht'ang Gorgasali* goes back to the Arabian name of the ancient Atropatena – Aderbeidagan – and cannot be older than the middle of the fifth century.

¹⁰ This is about one of the military conflicts between the Georgians and the armed forces of the Sassanid vicariate in Caucasian Albania. The river Berduji, mentioned in connection with the "borders of Kartli and Ran," was a border between the Sassanids' domains in Transcaucasia and Kartli.

¹¹ In *The Conversion of Kartli*, there is more detailed information about the building of the church of St. Stephan ("Stephan-Ts'minda") (*Shatberdi Collection*, p. 325). The image of this half-historical figure, St. Stephan was particularly popular in early medieval Georgia, which the visual arts and writing traditions of the time clearly testify to. (Sh. I. Amiranashvili, *Istoriia gruzinskoi monumental'noi zhivopisi (The History of Georgian Monumental Painting)*, Tbilisi: 1957, p.138, 143; see also Sh. I. Amiranashvili, *Istoriia Gruzinskogo isskustva (The History of Georgian Art)*, Moscow: 1963, p.105, table 34; *Sinas mravaltavi (The Homiliary of Sinai)*, pp. 58-62; N. I. Marr, *Agiograficheskie materialy po gruzinskim rukopisam Ivera (Hagiographic Materials Related to the Georgian Manuscripts of Iver)*, SPb: DATE, Vol. I, pp. 48-49; S. N. Janashia, *Shromebi (Works)*, Tbilisi: 1952, II, p. 291.

¹² There is no indication of the relationship between Archil and Mirdat', Vakht'ang Gorgasali's father, in *The Conversion of Kartli*, which may be due to the laconic style of the source.

¹³ The name is also encountered in *The Conversion of Kartli* and the person is called a *p'it'iakhsh*; after Archil, "Mirdat' reigned. Glonokor was Archbishop. This Archbishop was appointed in Kartli and Hereti by *p'it'iakhsh* Barzabod." (*Shatberdi Collection*, p. 325). N. A. Berdzenishvili thought that the term *p'it'iakhsh* corresponded to the Georgian *eristavi*. See N. A. Berdzenishvili, *sakartvelos ist'oriis sak'ithebi (Questions of Georgian History)*,

- Tbilisi: Vol.IX, pp. 30-31. See also A. P. Novoseltsev, *Genezis feodalizma v stranakh Zakavkaziia (Genesis of Feudalism in the Countries of Transcaucasia)*, Moscow: 1980, p. 188.
- ¹⁴ Sagdukht' – is a composite anthroponym, produced from the Old Testament name Isaac (Geor. Sahak) and the ancient Iranian word “dukht” – daughter (see M. K. Andronikashvili, *nark'vevebi iranul-kartul lingvist'ikur urtiertobidan (Essays on Iranian-Georgian linguistic relations)*, Tbilisi: 1966, Vol. I, pp. 493-494. According to different sources in the family names' list of Vakht'ang's nearest ancestors, multiple names of Iranian origin prevailed, and the structural regulations of their composition followed the norms of the Iranian language. The popularity of this name in medieval Georgia is testified to by the Georgian hagiographic work *The Martyrdom of St. Sagdukht'* (N. I. Marr, *op.cit.*, p. 66).
- ¹⁵ “kveq'ana” in the original, an exceptionally Kartvelian, polysemantic term, in contemporary Georgian usually means “country.” In ancient Georgian many more synonyms were in use. In this context, the word is translated as “country,” “land,” “large area,” “domain,” and even “soil.” (I. A. Javakhishvili, *tkhzulebani (Works)*, Vol. VI, Tbilisi: 1976, pp.184-186; N. A. Berdzenishvili, *sakartvelos ist'oriis sak'itkhebi (Questions of Georgian History)* Vol.VII, Tbilisi: 1967, pp. 85-109, 140; A. P. Novoseltsev, V. T. Pashuto, L. V. Cherepnin, *Puti razvitiia feodalizma (The Directions of the Development of Feudalism)*, Moscow: 1972, p. 120.
- ¹⁶ One of the ancient areas of historical Georgia with the town and fortified city of the same name; also one of the centers of artisan production, trade and agriculture. The analysis of the early sources is in G. A. Melik'ishvili, *K Istorii Drevnei Gruzii (On the History of Ancient Georgia)* (Henceforth ИДГ), Tbilisi: 1959, p.138). Researchers think that during Vakht'ang Gorgasali's reign, the town of Samshvilde, along with Manglisi and Tsurtavi, represented the centers of Lower (*kvemo*) Kartli, which according to Arab sources was an ethno-political entity with the center in Manglisi (D. L. Muskhelishvili, *sakartvelos ist'oriui geografiis dziritadi sak'itkhebi (The Main Questions of the Historical Geography of Georgia)*, Tbilisi: Vol.II, pp. 49-51. Our text suggests that Samshvilde was an administrative center of the whole principality (N. A. Berdzenishvili, ВИГ, VIII, p. 145). Being a border zone with Armenia, the population of Samshvilde was mixed Georgian-Armenian. Samshvilde was also one of the centers of ancient Georgian writing. L. N. Janashia, *Svedeniia Lazara Farpetsi o Gruzii (The Reports of Lazar Farpetsi on Georgia)*, p.174 ; Iak'ob Tsurt'aveli, *Shushanik'is ts'ameba (The Martyrdom of Shushanik')*, Tbilisi: 1978; L. M. Melikset-Bek, *K izucheniiu pamiatnikov kulturi i toponimii Trialeti-Tskali (On the Study of Cultural Monuments and the Toponymy of Trialeti-Tskali)*, Tbilisi: 1934, pp. 41-43; S. T. Eremian. *Armeniia po Ashkharutsuitsu (Armenia according to “Ashkharutsuits”)*, Erevan: 1963, p. 87; Z. N. Aleksidze (ed.), *Ukhtanes: ist'oria gamoq'opisa kartvelta somkhetagan (Ukhtanes: The History of the Separation of the Georgians from the Armenians)*, Tbilisi: 1975 (An Armenian text with Georgian translation and annotation by Z. N. Aleksidze).
- ¹⁷ Zion of Samshvilde – one of the exemplary monuments of ancient Georgian architecture; there are inscriptions that date from 759-777, belonging to the period of the monument's reconstruction (L. V. Muskhelishvili, *Nadpisi Samshvildskogo Siona i data ego perestroika (Inscriptions of Zion of Samshvilde and the Date of its Rebuilding)*, *Vestnik ИЯИМК*, 1943, Vol. XIII, pp. 95-106; N. Chubinashvili, *Samshvildskii Sion (Zion of Samshvilde)*, Tbilisi: 1969.
- ¹⁸ Mobidan goes back to the title of the head of priests in the Zoroastrian religion in Sassanid Iran (M. M. Diakonov, *op. cit.*, pp. 291, 298, 300). V. V. Bolotov pointed out that Mobidan, mentioned in *The Life of Vakht'ang Gorgasali*, is directly related to the title given to the head of fire worshippers (V. V. Bolotov, *Khristianskie chteniia [Christian Readings]*, Moscow: 1896-1897, p. 262). The precise title is Mobidan-Mobed. M. I. Brosset supposed that Mobidan must signify an ideologist of Nestorianism in Georgia (M. Brosset, *Histoire de la Georgie [History of Georgia]*, *op.cit.*, Vol. I, p. 174). This opinion has not been proven because of its chronological inconsistency (I. A. Javakhishvili, *kartveli eris ist'oria (The History of the Georgian People)* [Henceforth ИГН], Vol. I, p.305). The existence of the title reflects Zoroastrism's influence in Caucasia, although in the local peasant dialogue it had a pejorative color. (K. S. K'ek'elidze, *Kto takoi glonkor “Obrasheniia Kartli” (Who is Glonkor in “The Conversion of Kartli”)* in *Etiudi (Sketches)*, Tbilisi: 1955, Vol. III, p. 38). I. A. Javakhishvili maintains that the story of Mobidan, borrowed by Juansher from an unknown source, testifies to the spreading of Manichaeism in Georgia in the first half of the fifth century. (I. A. Javakhishvili, ИГН, Vol. I, pp. 304-305). Manichaeism was a current in Christianity in which Christian and Mazdeian outlooks closely interacted with each other (I. A. Javakhishvili, ИГН, I, p.306).
- ¹⁹ The distorted initial name must be Khuaranzan – “Sun-girl:” compare with the Georgian female name “mze-kala” which has the same meaning (M. K. Andronikashvili, *op. cit.*, pp. 511-512).

- ²⁰ *Sp'asp'et'* – “commander in chief;” the term is borrowed from middle Persian. The sources, including *The Life of Vakht'ang Gorgasali* (Henceforth *LVG*), testify to the great role which persons occupying this position played in society. It may have been a position of “second, after the king,” or the head of state administration. Strabo (*The Geography of Strabo*, ed. and transl. H. L. Jones, 8vol., Loeb Classical Library) relates that in Iberia “the second after the king was an arbiter and commander” (G. A. Melikishvili, ИДГ, pp. 347, 455). N. A. Berdzenishvili (ВИГ, IX, p. 25) noted that from the Juansher text we can see that the historian did not know yet that *sp'asp'et'* was a commander in chief, the head of all *eristavis*, and that he thought him to be a bearer of the honorary title of king's tutor (A. I. Boltunova, “*Opisanie Iberii v "Geografii" Strabona (Descriptor of Iberia in the "Geography" of Stabon,*” in *Vestnik drevnei istorii (Bulletin of Ancient History)* (Henceforth ВДИ), Tbilisi: 1947).
- ²¹ *Atalikism* was practiced all over Caucasia (V. K. Gardanov, *Atalichestvo (Atalikism)*, Moscow: 1973).
- ²² This corresponds to the contemporary town of K'asp'i (about 50 km. to the north-west of present day Tbilisi). There is a reference to it in *The Conversion of Kartli*, in which it is associated with the towns of the Kartlians in the first century B.C. (*shatberdis k'rebuli (Shatberdi Collection)*, *op.cit.*, p. 321. Z. I. Jampolski pointed to the ethnonym of the ancient population of the K'asp'i of the Middle Steppe, and supported the argument that the town of “K'asp'i in Georgia was in ancient times connected with the Middle Steppe by a comparatively small part of the great land-waterway on the Indian-Transcaucasia-Black Sea road.” The author advances the idea that the toponym “K'asp'i” is from the K'asp'is, who “lived (appeared and then remained) there, surrounded by the bearers of another ethnonym, making up a minority of the population.” (Z. I. Jampolski, *K'asp'i Gruzii i etno-toponimicheskie zakonomernost: Arkheologicheskie pamiatniki feodalnoi Gruzii [K'asp'i of Georgia and Ethno-toponymic Patterns: Archeological Monuments of Feudal Georgia]*, Tbilisi: 1974, Vol. II, pp. 273-274).
- ²³ Barda – the ancient name – Berda, (Georgian: Bardav-i, Armenian: Partav). One of the centers of Caucasian Albania. In the fifth century A.D., it was a center of the Sassanid vicariate in Albania. This status is fixed in *LVG*. Beginning from 789 the town became a residence of one of the Arabian rulers, and the local population entered a period of ethnic decline.
- ²⁴ In a number of copies, as well as in the summary text of *KT* composed by S. G. Q'aukhchishvili – “Binkaran” as opposed to Mobidan (see note 18). “Shinkaran” must be an antroponym in the narrow sense of this term. In *moktsevai kartlisai (The Conversion of Kartli)*, it is present in the distorted form of “Glonokor” (*Shatberdi Collection*, p. 325; E. S. Taq'aishvili, *Opisanie (Description)*, II, p. 721; K. S. K'ek'elidze, *etiudebi (Essays)*, Vol. III, pp. 38-39). In *kartlis tskhovreba, Anna dedoplis nuskhva (KT, The Copy of Queen Anna)* in S. G. Q'aukhchishvili, Tbilisi: 1942, pp. 93, 94, 104, 120-121, the form “Shinkaran” is used, which should be considered the original use (there was a substitution of analogous graphemes B and Sh in ancient Georgian) which came from the Iranian “shinkar” – “builder” (M. K. Andronikashvili, *op. cit.*, p. 451).
- ²⁵ The center of Mazdeism propaganda in Kartli. The term “mog-vi” which became so widespread in languages of different systems, in Georgian was borrowed directly from the Iranian.
- ²⁶ In the original, “*mamadzudze*,” means “a father who suckled (his child).” In parallel the term “*dedamdzudze*” – “mother who suckled (her child)” was also current (*Shatberdi Collection*, p. 322; I. V. Abuladze, *Slovar' drevnegruzinskogo iazika (Dictionary of the Ancient Georgian Language)*, Tbilisi: 1973, p.139; S.-S. Orbeliani, *leksikoni kartuli (Dictionary of the Georgian Language)*, Vol. 2, Tbilisi: 1993). According to N. D. Chubinashvili (see his *Slovar' Gruzinskogo iazika s russkim perevodom (Dictionary of the Georgian Language with a Russian Translation)*, Tbilisi: 1961, p. 203) “a male baby-sitter ... is called *mamadzudze* or *lala*.” The latter goes back to Greek *lalas* and is practically never met in Georgian. The existence of this institute in Georgia is known from the earliest sources such as the Martyrdom of Shushanik and the Martyrdom of Razhden.
- ²⁷ For a more accurate presentation of the source corresponding to the text we give a word-for-word translation of the Georgian “*tsvrili eri*.” The complexity, polysemanticity and historic evolution of this notion are given by I. A. Javakhishvili, in his *dzveli kartuli saist'orio li'terat'ura (Ancient Georgian Historical Literature)* [Henceforth ДГИЛ], pp. 193, 205. In *LVG* “*tsvrili eri*” – “small people” is represented as an independent category or as a part of the population of Kartli low on the social ladder. N. A. Berdzenishvili believes it means “a free peasantry” (see his *sakartvelos ist'oriis sak'itkhebi (Questions of Georgian History)*, Tbilisi: 1974, Vol., VII, pp. 70-73). See also S. N. Janashia, *shromebi, (Works)*, *op.cit.*, Vol. I, p. 161. A part of the town's trading population might also have belonged to this group.

28 “zemo eklesia” in the original. This suggests a false designation. What is at issue in reality is an important event in the ecclesiastic life of Kartli when “Bishop” Mobidan falls, and is replaced by the Christian Bishop of Greco-Byzantine orientation, Michael. The term “zemo” – “upper” indicates the exceptional significance of this position.

29 Khunani – the center of the historical region of Gardabani, known also in Armenian and Arabian sources (D. L. Muskhelishvili, *peodaluri sakartvelos arkeologiuri dzeglebi (Archeological Monuments of Feudal Georgia)*, Tbilisi: 1974, Vol. II, p. 275). Regarding the account of the Ossetian invasion, we should also remember the campaign of the Huns which took place before 448.

30 Abkhazia in its narrow ethno-territorial meaning. The author of *LVG* testifies to the fact that the control of Abkhazia gave Byzantines the ability to control all Georgian territory, and by implication, Caucasia as a whole. It is not accidental that the process of unification of Georgia in a single feudal kingdom began with the struggle of the Abkhazian principality against Byzantium, fighting for hegemony within the Georgian territories.

31 Egris-ts’q’ali – literally “Egrisi river,” the contemporary name is Galizga which in Mingrelian means “boundary river.” Eremian’s opinion (see *Armenia According to “Ashkharutsuits,” op.cit.*, p.50), that Egris-ts’q’ali was the name of the middle part of the Ch’orokhi river, is unfounded. It is not accidental that the Egros principality was associated with the basin of Egris-ts’q’ali, in which the town of Egrisi, now called Bedia” was built (*KT*, I, p. 5).

32 The center of Lazika was Egrisi. The word-for-word translation is “fortress (tsikhe) Goji.” However, the first part – “tsikhe” became so stable in its character that it transformed the name into a complex and stable toponym (we have taken this into consideration in the translation of *LVG*). It remained like that until the invasion of the Arabs, led by Mervan ibn Mohammad, in the 730s. The contemporary name of Goji – Nakalakevi (literally, “a place of the former town”), is connected with this event. The latter name does not correspond with the other name of this town – Archaeopolis – or “ancient town,” which is known from the work of Procopius of Caesarea.

33 An impressive illustration of the level of ethnic self-awareness of the Georgians; no other religious community within Byzantium shared this.

34 Varaz-Bakar (in the 370s) is mentioned in the concluding part of Leont’i Mroveli’s work, in which, though with a different interpretation, he tells of the K’larjis voluntarily joining Byzantium. *LVG* points to the seizure of K’larjeti by the Romeas (*KT*, I, p. 136). The events described here took place during the establishment of Iranian dominance in Kartli and Tbilisi (the Georgian sources disclose the nature of the events: Varaz-Bakar offered no resistance to the Persians and so earned a reputation as an “impious person”).

35 Georgian “eri” – a multi-valued term distinguished by its peculiar nuances in which different social facets are reflected (“army,” “feudal assembly,” “people,” etc). For more details see: I. A. Javakhishvili, *tkhzulebani (Works)*, Vol. VI, pp. 192-193. Here, we translated *eri* as tribe.

36 The struggle of the Georgians against invasions from Western Asia and Asia Minor could be successful only if their rear in North Caucasia was secured. The Byzantines, Persians and Arabs have always looked at the peoples of this region not just as rivals but as potential allies in their attempt to establish dominance there. The “hate” toward the Ossetians by Vakht’ang is subjective in character; the main reason for this attitude lies in the role the nomads of the North Caucasus in the political and military conflicts in Caucasia and in adjacent regions.

37 This is the original. The Georgian word *mepe* or “king,” definite as it is – is still a poly-semantic term. In conditions of political fragmentation, which continued for many centuries, each feudal unit (“kveq’ana”) was considered a “kingdom” (see N. A. Berdzenishvili, *sakartvelos ist’oriis sak’itkhebi*, VIII, p. 98). “All the kings of the Caucasians” (*KT*), strictly speaking, did not apply to North Caucasia.

38 The motive of a “young hero” in this case has hardly any folkloric origin, nor is it a product of the author’s imagination. In *LVG*, these elements are also present. Vakht’ang’s biographer was well-informed about the age categories of the persons who were appointed to different state positions (especially in the military sphere) in early medieval Georgia.

39 In the original, the Georgian term “mk’vidri,” means “belonging personally to somebody,” “owned,” or “genuine;” in relation to population, tribe and so on, it means “aboriginal” or “native.”

40 Nebrot, or Nimrod – a biblical hero (Gen. 10, 8-10). As opposed to the works of Leont’i Mroveli (*KT*, I, pp. 6, 7, 10, 12, 13, 105), in which he is assigned an important place – even the existence of Georgia is mentioned in the “Book of Nebrot” In *LVG*, this person is given a humbler place, though associations with his apocryphal image are still present.

- ⁴¹ Mukhnari – literally: “oak wood” or “oak-grove;” S. G. Q’akhuchishvili interpreted it as a toponym, though N. A. Berdzenishvili (ВИГ, VIII, p. 337) justly rejects this suggestion, pointing out that “mukhnari” is at the northern outskirts of Mtskheta.
- ⁴² Kherk’i – a toponym. N. A. Berdzenishvili (ВИГ, VIII, p. 338) argues that Kherk’i – is “an area on the other side (of the Aragvi river).” See also G. G. Gvasalia, *Ocherki istoricheskoi geografii Vostochnoi Gruzii (Essays on the Historical Geography of Eastern Georgia)*, Tbilisi: 1983, p. 101; G. V. Tsulaia, *Letopis Kartli (The Georgian Chronicle)*, Tbilisi: 1982, p. 89, note 59.
- ⁴³ Common in the early cycle of *KT* is the fantastic exaggeration of the number of troops of the armies on both sides; it is not just a peculiarity of Juansher’s epic manner. There were several other reasons for such an overstatement; the main one was related to the fact that taking spoils and rewards in men was one of the main sources of obtaining forced labor.
- ⁴⁴ Here, the town of Mtskheta.
- ⁴⁵ Trdat’ – the first Christian king of Armenia, Trdat’ III (289-330). All the aspects of kinship are observed in *LVG* (they are absent in *The Conversion of Kartli*), and are reflected also in the work of Leont’i Mroveli (*KT*, I, p. 70), in which Trdat’'s daughter, supposedly on the insistence of the Byzantine emperor Constantine, was married to Rev (son of the first Christian king of Kartli – Mirian), whose descendants formed the branch of the Revids within the Farnavazid dynasty (see A. A. Bogveradze, *op. cit.*, p. 22). No matter what our attitude to the details of this narrative, for which there is no verification, there is nothing improbable in familial bonds between the dynasties of Armenia and Kartli. The phrase “his cousin through his father” – is a gloss added by the copyist, because it is expressed in the third person and is illogical in such form.
- ⁴⁶ It is difficult to say whether we should assume a certain ethno-territorial unit existed in Tianeti, or simply take its literal meaning – “mountainous country.” Caucasians is a collective name of the autochthonous population of North Caucasus.
- ⁴⁷ The Darial Gates.
- ⁴⁸ “Ossetian plain” is the middle land between the two rivers of Uruk and Sunja, which compared with the high mountainous upper reaches of the rivers Ardon and Terek leaves the impression of a flat plain.
- ⁴⁹ “Ossetian Aragvi” refers to the upper reaches of the river Terek. The Terek and Aragvi originate in the same mountain range. Another name of the Terek in Georgian sources is Lomeki.
- ⁵⁰ The words “bumberaz” and “goliath” in ancient Georgian literature were often used as epithets for knights. The first is borrowed from the Persian language and is therefore older; the second is taken from the Old Testament.
- ⁵¹ In the original, “Taichi” or “Arab horseracing.” It goes back to the name for Arabs in Middle Persian; compare Armenian “tatchik” or “Arab;” afterwards it becomes “Turk” (M. K. Andronik’ashvili, *op. cit.*, p. 375).
- ⁵² One of the interesting places in *LVG*, is where the ethnic diversity of Vakht’ang’s army is noted; however, the various ethnic groups professing different religions are collectively referred to as Kartlians, in the same way as their adversaries, the Ossetians and Khazars (Huns). As N. A. Berdzenishvili (ВИГ, VIII, 268) points out, they were often jointly called just Ossetians.
- ⁵³ The Ossetian Bakatar mentioned here was probably a historical person, whose life was later connected to multiple legends. The name “Bakatar” is not an anthroponym in the narrow sense of this term, it is rather a nominal nickname (like “Caesar,” “emir” etc.). The Arabian historicist Kudam (died in 948) attests to this; he notes that “the king of Alans is called ‘bagair.’ That name belongs to everybody, who is a king for them” (N. A. Karaulov, *Svedenia arabskikh pisatelei o Kavkaze, Armenii i Azerbajane (Information of Arabian Writers on the Caucasus, Armenia and Azerbaijan)*, Tiflis: CMOMPK, (edition 32) 1903, p. 51; see also V. I. Abaev, *Istoriko-etimologicheskii slovar’ osetinskogo iazika (A Historical-Etymological Dictionary of the Ossetian Language)*, Moscow: 1958, pp. 245-246.
- ⁵⁴ “Vigri” in the original. In Georgian, it is encountered in *LVG*. For a more detailed interpretation see: S. S. Orbeliani, *op. cit.*, Vol. 2. According to the explanation of N. Chubinashvili, “vigri is an animal resembling a lizard, but exceeding it in size; its skin is covered with bones; it is used for covering scabbards and other military outfits.” (N. Chubinashvili, *kartul-rusuli leksik’oni (Georgian-Russian Dictionary)*, Tbilisi, 1984). It is borrowed from ancient Iranian (M. K. Andronik’ashvili, *op. cit.*, pp. 239-240; see also G. Acharian, *op. cit.*, Vol. IV, p. 292-293).

- ⁵⁵ In the original, “mona”, a poly-semantic term (“slave” – in contemporary Georgian), in ancient times it also meant “servant.”
- ⁵⁶ A measure of length in medieval Georgia, about 198 metres.
- ⁵⁷ In the original, “dzudzusmte” has the meaning of a “foster brother;” Art’avaz, son of Saurmag, is a *sp’asp’et’* and Vakht’ang’s tutor (*mamamdzudze*). The Georgian historical tradition, fixed in LVG, assigns him an important place in the period of Gorgasali’s rule. The name “Art’avaz” was popular among the family of the Mamikonians, who originated from the Chans, a people who inhabited the T’ao region (bordering K’larjeti), where the foster-brother of the King of Kartli was appointed as an *eristavi*.
- ⁵⁸ Bivrit’ian – the family name of the rulers of Somkhiti (see note 71). The person mentioned in LVG belonged to the class of *sepetsuli*: people, belonging to the royal family. (G. A. Melik’ishvili, ИДГ, p. 468). G. A. Melik’ishvili notes that in the work of the Armenian historian of the fifth century, Favstos Buzanda, the term *sepetsuli* is used for the representatives of the Farnavazid family. See G. A. Melik’ishvili, ИДГ, pp. 468-469, with bibliography. Regarding the annotated text, the following is worth noting: *sepetsuli* Bivrit’ian sits next to Art’avaz – the foster-brother (*dzudzusmte*) and the *eristavi* of K’larjeti, which indicates the importance of the institute of *mamamdzudzeoba*, or atalinity in the social life of Kartli as well as in K’larjeti, at least in comparison with Samtskhe-Ach’ara, where the *eristavi* was Bivrit’ian. See *nark’vevebi (Essays)*, *op.cit.*, p. 455; A. P. Novoseltsev, *op. cit.*, p. 110.
- ⁵⁹ On “P’ach’anik’eti” or “the country of P’ach’anik’s,” see Z. V. Anchabadze, “Kipchaki Severnogo Kavkaza po dannim gruzinskikh letopisei” (“Kipchaks of the North Caucasus According to Materials of the Georgian Chronicles”), in *Trudi (Proceedings)*, Nalchik: 1960; in the same collection, see V. I. Abaev, “Ob alanskom substrate v balkaro-karachaevskom iazike” (“On the Alanian Substrata in the Balkar-Karachai language”). See also P. Golubovski, *Pechenegi, tiurki i polovtsi do nashestviia mongolov (Pechenegs, Turks and Polovtsians before the Mongol Invasion)*, Kiev: 1884; S. A. Pletneva, *Pechenegi, tiurki i polovtsi v iuzhno-russkikh stepiakh (Pechenegs, Turks and Polovtsians in the South-Russian Steppes)*, *Materiali i issledovaniaa po arkheologii SSSR (Materials and Research on the Archeology of USSR)* (Henceforth MIA), # 62, Moscow: 1953.
- ⁶⁰ Jiketi – the settlement area of Jiks (north-west Caucasus), the ancestors of contemporary Abazins. The ethnonym Jikis, a form of “zikhoi” (zikhi) has been around since the first centuries A.D. (Ptolemy, V, 8, 12); the ethnonym “zikhi,” is present in the S. T. Eremian’s notable work, “*Armenian Geography of the Seventh Century*” (see S. T. Eremian, *Istoriko-filologicheskii zhurnal (Historical-Philological Journal)* (henceforth ИФЖ), 1973, # 2, p. 262; Z. V. Anchabadze, *op. cit.*, p. 116).
- ⁶¹ “Turks” in the early cycle of *KT*, as well as in *The Conversion of Kartli*, are mentioned time and again; it most likely corresponds to the notion of “Turks” (for detailed analysis see: Z. V. Anchabadze, *op. cit.*, pp. 116-117; also see: E. S. Taq’aishvili, *Tri istoricheskie khroniki (Three Historical Chronicles)*, Tiflis: 1900, pp. 1-2; N. I. Marr, *Arabskoe izvlechenie iz siriiskoi khroniki Maribasa (Arabian Extract from the Syrian Chronicle of Maribas)*, СПб: 3BOPAO, 1902, Vol. XIV, pp. 081, 086; S. T. Eremian, *Opyt rekonstruktsii (The Experience of Reconstruction)*, *op. cit.*, p. 274, notes 128, 129; Leont’i Mroveli, *The Life of Kartlian Kings...*, *op.cit.*, pp. 28, 59, 60). See also Melikset-Bek, “Khazari po drevno-armianskim istochnikam v sviazi s problemoi Moiseia Khorenskogo” (“Khazars According to the Ancient Armenian Sources Connected to the Problem of Moses Khorenski), in *Issledovaniia istorii kulturi narodov Vostoka (Researches on the History of Culture of Eastern Peoples)*, Moscow-Leningrad, 1960. This is one of the complex problems not only of Caucasology, but of Turkology.
- ⁶² The Jikis lived beyond the borders of Abkhazia, as Georgian writers later pointed out. Already, at the turn of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, S. S. Orbeliani wrote: “Another society bordering Abkhazia is the so-called Jiki,” *Sochineniia (Works)*, *op.cit.*, Vol. 4, part 2, p. 456. Here is an indication of the stability of the territory of the ancestors of contemporary Abazins, confirmed not only by archeological materials, but also by written sources. L. I. Lavrov, “*Obezi*” *russkikh letopisei (“Obezs” in Russian Chronicles)*, СЭ: 1946, # 4; G. V. Tsulaia, *Obezi po russkim istochnikam (Obezis According to Russian Sources)*, СЭ: 1975, #2.
- ⁶³ Here is an echo, perhaps, of the territorial shrinkage experienced by the medieval Alans. As a result, we see a narrowing of the collective meaning of the ethnonym “Alans.” European writers, knowledgeable about the period of Mongol conquests, also talk of the mountainous ravines as natural shelters of the Alans. See B. A. Kaloev (ed.), *Osetini glazami russkikh i evropeiskikh puteshestvennikov (Ossetians in the Eyes of Russian and European Travelers)*, Orjonikidze: 1967, p. 29.

- ⁶⁴ The exchange of prisoners of war was one of the favorite subjects of early medieval historians of Armenia and Georgia. The overstatement of the amount of prisoners of war in *LVG* may be evidence of the great role the seizure of captives played, and their use as “monas” or slaves, in the wars of the ancient Kartlian kings. (G. A. Melik’ishvili, ИДГ, p. 430); on the tactical and organizational bases of military science in feudal Georgia see K. A. Chkhat’araishvili, *peodaluri sakartvelos samkhedro ist’oriis nark’vevebi (Essays on the History of Military Science in Feudal Georgia)*, Tbilisi: 1979.
- ⁶⁵ The “Abkhazian road” was one of the important strategic trading routes which gave Abkhazia an opportunity to broadly communicate with the outside world: in the north – along the K’odori River ravine through the Main Caucasian range, across the Klukhori pass, and in the south, across the south-western regions of Georgia to the Byzantine Empire. The researchers maintain that the road represented a part of a major trade route, which according to the Roman roadmap *Tabula Peutingeriana* ran through the territory of Western Georgia. See Z. Anchabadze, *Iz istorii srednevekovoi Abkhazii (From the History of Medieval Abkhazia)*, Sukhumi, 1959, p. 63. See also S. N. Janashia, *op.cit.*, p. 47; N. Iu. Lomouri, *dzveli sakartvelos savach’ro gzebis sak’itkhebisatvis (On the Question of Trade Routes in Ancient Georgia)* in *sakartvelos metsnierebata akademiis ist’oriis inst’it’ut’is shromebi (Works of the Institute of History of the Georgian Academy of Sciences)*, Vol. IV, part I, Tbilisi: 1958.
- ⁶⁶ Here, the Byzantine Emperor Leon I (457-474). Leon I was occupied with the problems of the Western Roman Empire, with the Goths and the remnants of the Huns (S. Skazkin, *Istoriia Vizantii (The History of Byzantium)*, Moscow: 1967, pp. 202-203).
- ⁶⁷ *Drahma* – a coin and a measure of weight, originated with the Greek *drahme*. In Georgian as well as in Armenian, it is probably connected with the Pehlevian form *dram*. In Georgian sources, it is mentioned from the ninth and tenth centuries (see G. I. Japaridze, *op. cit.*, p. 31-36).
- ⁶⁸ *Drahk’an* is a measure of weight. S. S. Orbeliani considered “pluri” the Georgian equivalent (S. S. Orbeliani, *leksik’oni, op.cit.*, Tbilisi: 1991, Vol. 1). It corresponds to the Byzantine *nomisma* or 4,56 grams of gold (A. G. Shanidze, *kartvelta monast’eri bulgaretshi da misi tipik’oni. dzveli kartuli enis dzeglebi (The Georgian Monastery in Bulgaria and its Typicon. The Monuments of the Old Georgian Language)*, Tbilisi: 1971, p. 274.
- ⁶⁹ See note 24.
- ⁷⁰ About this name see: M. K. Andronik’ashvili, *op. cit.*, p. 445.
- ⁷¹ Somkhiti: both medieval Georgian authors and Armenian scholars used this term (the later form was Somkheti), for Armenia and for the southern regions of Georgia bordering with Lower (Kvemo) Kartli. The population in these regions was often denoted by a double ethnonym – Somkhitar-Kartlians; it probably implied a mixed Georgian-Armenian population. Etymologically the term originates from the country of Sokhmi (Sukhmi), known in the ancient Eastern (Hittian and Assyrian) sources (G. A. Khalatians, *O nekotikh geograficheskikh nazvaniakh drevnei Armenii v sviazi s dannimi vanskikh nadpisei: Drevnosti vostochnie (On Some Geographical Names of Ancient Armenia in Connection with the Information from Vani Inscriptions: Eastern Antiquities)*, Moscow: 1901, p. 128; G. Melik’ishvili, *Nairi-Urartu*, Tbilisi: 1954, chapter I, section 6; G. Melik’ishvili, *Urartskie klinoobraznie nadpisi (Urartian Cuneiform Inscriptions)*, Moscow: 1960. The appearance of the term “Somkhiti” in the sense it is used in Georgian sources, is not known. N. A. Berdzenishvili noted (ВИГ, VIII, p. 303) that this term is not only absent in the *Martyrdom of Shushanik’*, but the territory is quite definitely called “Kartli.” The well-known Bolnisi inscription of the fifth century in the Georgian language, supports this usage. The *LVG* text testifies to the great importance of Somkhiti (Lower Kartli) in the cultural life of Georgia as a whole. The Sassanids extended their power over this territory.
- ⁷² From the events recounted by Juansher in this story, we can perhaps see the echo of the last conflict of the Kartlians with the tribes of North Caucasia. The event described in *LVG* coincides with what took place in 481-484, and is described in the *History of Armenia* by Lazar Farpetsi (L. N. Janashia, *lazar parap’etsis tsnobebi sakartvelos shesakheb Lazar Farapetsi and His Information on Georgia*), Tbilisi: 1962, p. 136). Vakht’ang Gorgasali was hardly young at that time, as Juansher suggests. We have to deal here with one more chronological discrepancy, the result of an attempt to romanticize Gorgasali’s image which acquires an increasingly epic-type character. It is not accidental that after this story, the image of the Kartlian king begins to experience legendary inventions by his biographer.
- ⁷³ One of the characteristic features of the social life of medieval Georgia was the active participation of women. A woman was not only the “keeper of the family hearth,” but an active participant in all spheres of family

and social life. The anonymous author of the *Passions of the Proto-martyr Razhden*, the tutor of Vakht'ang Gorgasali's wife, when describing the deeds of Georgian fanatics, notes: "But not only the men were so fearless, but the weak women too; womanly by nature, they were brave, and forgetting their feeble nature and knowing no fear, they underwent cruel and merciless tortures." The author emphasizes that among these women were "peasants of humble origin, and sovereigns, and women who lived in noble palaces" (S. Kubaneishvili, *dzveli kartuli agiograpiuli krestomatia (The ancient Georgian hagiographical Textbook)*, Tbilisi: 1946, Vol. I, p. 241).

⁷⁴ Bakar – according to the *KT* collection, was the son and successor of the first Christian King of Kartli – Mirian (first half of the fourth century). Leont'i Mroveli ascribes to him the successful continuation of Mirian's work connected to the conversion to Christianity of the population of North Caucasia – the "Kavkasianis" – whose territories bordered Kartli (see *KT*, I, p. 130; G. A. Melik'ishvili, *ИДГ, op.cit.*, p. 130). The closest successors of Bakar in *KT* are considered to be Archil, the son of Bakar, father of Mirdat'. The son of the latter was Vakht'ang Gorgasali. The other branch of the later Farnavazids, who also originated in Mirian's house, came from King Rev. According to Leont'i Mroveli's story (*KT*, I, p. 70) K'akheti and K'ukheti were given to him as hereditary possession. Mroveli calls these two dynastic branches the Bakarids and the Revids. (*KT*, I, p. 138).

⁷⁵ There is evidence of heretical currents in Kartli, the participants and leaders of which were priests themselves.

⁷⁶ Here begins a new chapter in the legendary biography of Vakht'ang Gorgasali, which is characterized by unlimited idealization. P'erjok'ap is a distorted form of the name Firuzikabad (Armenian – Peroz-Kavat) fortress, built by Anushirvan (sixth century) and named by him to honor Shah Peroz (459-484) and his son Kavad. Researchers have been unable to locate this fortress (D. L. Muskhelishvili, *Osnovnie voprosi istoricheskoi geografii Gruzii (Principal Questions on the Historical Geography of Georgia)*, Tbilisi: 1980, Vol. II, p. 21, but mention of it is made in the work of Baladzori: Anushirvan, we are told, "built a castle called Gates of Viruzikobad, and a castle that bears the name – "Gates of Lazik" in the Jurzana area, which borders the Rums (Byzantines), and another one, called the "Gates of Barik", which is located on the Trapezund Sea." (See Baladzori, *Kniga zavoevania stran (The Book of the Conquest of Countries)*, Transl. by P. K. Juze, Baku: 1927, p. 6). The toponym "Jurzan" mentioned by Baladzori corresponds to Juzdjan in Asia Minor, and Juansher's story may well correspond to the geographical nomenclature of his time. The mention of Peroz in *LVG* as a founder of the fortress is connected to the fact that Vakht'ang Gorgasali was active at the time of this Shah's rule.

⁷⁷ K'amukalaki (literally, Karnutown) was built by Byzantines during the reign of Emperor Theodosius (408-450) and named Theodosipol in his honor. It was one of the strongholds of Byzantium at the eastern borders of the empire. After the conquest by the Seljuks at the end of the eleventh century, it was renamed Arzan-ar-Rum (contemp. Erzerum).

⁷⁸ Andzoreti is connected with the "town" Andziadzor. There is no precise location (for more details, see G. A. Melik'ishvili, *K istorii drevnei Gruzii (On the History of Ancient Georgia)*, pp. 47. 282-283, 290-291).

⁷⁹ Ek'let'si is the antique Akilisena. It is mentioned for the first time in Strabon's *Geography* (XI, ch. XIV, 2). Strabon names Akilisena as among those lands annexed by Armenia in the early period of its political rise (third and second century B.C.) (Strabo, XI, ch. XIV, 5); see also I. A. Manadian, *O torgovle i gorodakh Armenii v svyazi s mirovoi torgovlei drevnikh vremen [On the Trade and Cities of Armenia in Connection with World Trade in Ancient Times]*, Erevan: 1954, p. 10.

⁸⁰ Steri is a distorted name of a town or place. However, if we juxtapose the combination "Ek'let'si and Steri," given in *LVG*, with Strabon who places Sispirtids next to Akilisena (XI, ch. IV, 8; ch. XIV, 12), there may be some sense in identifying "Steri" with the historical Sispirtids.

⁸¹ Here the town of Trapezund is implied; it was famous in ancient times and in the middle ages for its commercial and strategic importance. In 1204-1461 – the capital of the Trapezund Empire was founded on the initiative of the Georgian Queen Tamar (1189-1207). Written sources of different periods, including Georgian (Juansher in our case) and later Turkish ones (notably Evli Chelebi as the most distinguished among them in the sixteenth century) testify to a native coastal population with significant maritime and commercial skills.

⁸² In this case, reminiscences of the image of Gregory of Nyssa, one of the outstanding theologians of the early Middle Ages.

⁸³ Here, it is about a legend, widespread in church history, of the appearance of the "sign of the cross" before Emperor Constantine I (324-337) during the war with his political rival Maxentius: see A. P. Kajdan, *Ot Khrista k Konstantinu (From Christ to Constantine)*, Moscow: 1965, pp. 5-33. This legend was already popular in

Georgia in the second half of the first millennium A.D. The “Sinai Doc. of 864” (A. G. Shanidze, *Sinas mravaltavi [Homiliary of Sina]*, Tbilisi: 1959, p. 237), testifies to this.

⁸⁴ Time and again, in *LVG* we see evidence of particular piety in early medieval Georgia, connected to the memory of Byzantine Emperor Iovianus (363-364), who restored the worship of Christ in Constantinople.

⁸⁵ The name “Khosrovtang”, means “likened to Khosrov”, that is, to the “symbol” of the Sassanid rulers. At this time Ezdigerd I (439-457) was ruler in Iran (M. M. Diakonov, *op. cit.*, p. 274). Perhaps this is not accidental and reflects the traditional respect the Georgians felt towards this outstanding ruler of the Sassanids.

⁸⁶ As a result of an unsuccessful war with the Persians in 363 (which cost Emperor Julian his life), the Byzantines, on the initiative of the new Emperor Iovianus, made peace with the enemy; the advantage for the Romans was the preservation of their army from complete defeat. Here in Juansher’s work we can see an apology for Iovianus, traditional in Kartlian society.

⁸⁷ This echoes the legend of relations between Gregory the Enlightener (Armenian: Lusavorich) and the Armenian King Trdat’ III (298-330), at the beginning of the fourth century when Christianity was recognized as the official ideology of Armenia. According to this legend, Trdat’, for his persecution of Gregory, was miraculously turned by Gregory into a wild boar, and then again into a man; only this fact “convinced” the King to recognize Christ as the “true God.”

⁸⁸ A common New Testament cliché, according to which the former persecutor of Christians was miraculously illuminated by “Christ’s light,” and became an ardent proselyte.

⁸⁹ Geon – an ancient Georgian form of the name of one of the four rivers flowing from Paradise.

⁹⁰ Musk – in the original “mushki.” Borrowed from the Iranian, it was widely applied in medieval Georgian medicine, which is reflected indirectly in our source (see S.-S. Orbeliani, *Ileksik’oni*, Vol. 2, Tbilisi: 1993; V. I. Abaev, *ИЭСОРЯ*, II, Moscow: 1973, pp. 142-143; Z. Panask’ert’eli-Tsitsishvili, *usts’oro k’arabadini (The Peerless Medical Handbook – k’arabadini)*, Tbilisi: 1978.

⁹¹ Jila – one of the names of the Tigris River (from Arabian, Jile).

⁹² Mirian – the first Christian ruler of Kartli (the first half of the fourth century).

⁹³ Nino – the bringer of Christianity to Kartli, also known as Nino of Cappadocia (beginning of the fourth century); information about her can be found in the works of the early historians of the Christian church (Sozomen, Rufin), and also in the *History of Armenia* by Movses Khorenatsi (fifth century). The cult of Nino as the first and the only female preacher of Christianity in Georgia, prevailed in Georgia from the end of the ninth and beginning of the tenth century, and was in the final version of local church legends apparent in the spirit of the decrees of the Chalcedonian Council in 451.

⁹⁴ Daniel – a biblical prophet.

⁹⁵ Archangel Michael.

⁹⁶ Georgians – in the original “q’ovelta kartvelta” – literally “all the kartvels.”

⁹⁷ *Encratites* – a sect in early Christianity, a variety of asceticism.

⁹⁸ The town of Trabzon (Trebizond).

⁹⁹ A metaphor of the well-known evangelical maxim, “And if thy right hand causeth thee to stumble, cut it off, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not thy whole body go to hell” (Mt., 5, 30); “But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth; that thine alms may be in secret” (Mt., 6, 3-4).

¹⁰⁰ We think here we are dealing with the genealogy of the ruling dynasty of the Bagrat’ionis, tendentiously created in the period of the strengthening of the medieval Georgian kingdom, in the ninth and tenth centuries.

¹⁰¹ Polycarpus – this name is encountered several times in *LVG*, and once even his title “logothete” is mentioned. Most likely it is just a literary image, which serves the idealization of Vakhtrang Gorgasali’s personality.

¹⁰² This refers to Gregory Parthian. According to the early tradition, preserved in the Armenian sources (Agafangel, Movses Khorenatsi), the enlightener of the peoples of Caucasia (see N. I. Marr, *Kreshenie Armian, Gruzin, Abkhazov i Alanov cv. Grigoriem: Arabskaia versia (Baptism of the Armenians, Georgians, Abkhaz and Alans by St. Gregory: the Arabian version)*, 3BOPAO, Vol. XIV. СПб: 1905). There are extensive Georgian versions of Gregory’s life extant: see, for example, P. M. Muradian, *Drevnegruzinskie redaktsii Agafangela (The Ancient Georgian Editions of Agaphangel)*, Erevan: 1982. The excerpt from *LVG* echoes the cult of Gregory Parthian in Georgia, which finds additional confirmation in the mystical piety of Gorgasali’s biography.

- ¹⁰³ *bevri* – “10000” (S-S. Orbeliani, *op.cit.*, vol. 2); it is used also in the sense of “many,” and is encountered in the monuments of medieval Georgian literature. Researchers suppose that it originates in the Avestanian *baevri* 10000. See M. K. Andronik’ashvili, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 290; V. I. Abaev, *op.cit.*, p. 262.
- ¹⁰⁴ Jazira, Jazireti – the name of Mesopotamia as a whole in the Georgian historical tradition; according to Arabian sources, “Upper Mesopotamia.”
- ¹⁰⁵ In this case we have a testimony of double import: an indication, in the first place, of the presence of different currents in the Christian ideology of Georgia in Vakht’ang Gorgasali’s time, and second, a critical estimation by scholars of the tenth century of the cultural accretions of Georgians from previous centuries.
- ¹⁰⁶ *Speri* – a historical area in the south-western part of the Black Sea; the native population were Saspers as repeatedly mentioned in the *History* of Herodotus (I, 104, 110; III, 94; IV, 37, 40; VII, 79). Later, Sappers were mentioned by Greco-Roman and Byzantine authors. According to Georgian sources, the Ch’orokhi river was called the “Sp’eri River” (*KT*, I, p. 17), and the Black Sea was called the “Sp’eri Sea” (*KT*, I, p. 8, 9, 19). Compare this with the Lazic name of the Black Sea, identical with the river Akampsis (for a detailed analysis of this toponym see N. I. Marr, *Kreschenie armian, gruzin, abkhazov i alanov, op.cit.*, p. 168; G. A. Melik’ishvili, *ИДГ, op.cit.*, p. 91, 102, 233, 281).
- ¹⁰⁷ What kind of goods were traded in these marketplaces is quite noteworthy; Juansher testifies to what goods attracted Georgians’ attention, which supplements our knowledge of the level of commodity circulation in medieval Trabzon (Trebizond). On this, S. P. Karpov, *Trapezuntskaia imperia i zapadno-evropeiskye gosudarstva v XIII-XIV vekakh (The Trabzon Empire and Western European States in the XIII-XIV Centuries)*, Moscow: 1981, p. 18.
- ¹⁰⁸ A type of ship in Byzantium. In Georgian literature we meet it for the first time in *sinas mravaltavi (The Homiliary of Sinai)* (864) in the form of it; a later form of this term was preserved in *LVG*, but hardly appears in the sources of the earlier period. The word “dromon” in *LVG*, and in Orbeliani’s *Dictionary of the Georgian Language*, and in Juansher’s work describes it as “the largest among the ships” which could contain “five or six hundred, or even more men” (S.S. Orbeliani, *op.cit.*, Vol.2; T. N. Beradze, *zghvaosnoba dzvel sakartveloshi (Navigation in Ancient Georgia)*, Tbilisi: 1981, p. 51).
- ¹⁰⁹ Pont road – this quite fits in with the Juansher’s narration about a “Great Pontian city” – Trabzon – and was probably a route connecting Constantinople with Trabzon.
- ¹¹⁰ Evidence for the existence in feudal Georgia (at least at the time of the *LVG*) of “secret diplomacy.” It suggests Georgian rulers had considerable experience in international relations.
- ¹¹¹ Tukharisi – one of the important political units of early medieval Georgia. According to Leont’i Mroveli, the fortress of Tukharisi was situated in the Odzrkhe area, which in Georgian sources is identified with Samtskhe or “the country of Meskhis” (*KT*, I, 47; G. A. Melikishvili, *ИДГ*, p. 113). It is mentioned in the Armenian *Geography of the Seventh Century* in the form of “Tukhar-k, a fortress in the K’larj (K’larjeti) area (see S. T. Eremian, *op.cit.*, p. 111). According to S. T. Eremian’s observation (p. 53), “Tukhar-k or Tukharisi is a fortress in K’larj *gavara* (region), now Kheres village on the borders of Taika.” D. L. Muskhelishvili shares this view, and believes that Tukharisi was situated within the borders of T’ao (see *sakartvelos ist’oriuli geograpiis dziritadi sak’itkhebi [The Main Questions of the Historical Geography of Georgia]*, II, pp. 170-171). In our opinion, the name “Kheres” is a distorted form of Georgian (Tu)kharis-i. N. A. Berdzenishvili (*ВИГ*, VIII, pp. 59-60) supposed “tikha” – “ground,” “soil,” or “clay” to be the root of this toponym (see the name of the fortress *mtveris-tsikhe* – “fortress of earth”).
- ¹¹² This confession of a Georgian author of the eleventh century testifies to the use of an earlier source, likely from the period of persecution of the Christians in Sassanid Iran (M. M. Diakonov, *op.cit.*, p. 264-269) after the proclamation of Christianity as a state religion in the Roman Empire. Taking into consideration that Christianity initially penetrated Georgia (Kartli) by roads which crossed Syria-Armenia-Iran (N. A. Berdzenishvili, *ВИГ*, IX, p. 24), and that the new religion was accepted largely by the lower classes, we should suppose the context given in *LVG*, is related, indirectly at least, to this historical circumstance.
- ¹¹³ Varaz-Mihr – this is the only mention of Vakht’ang Gorgasali’s relative. However, the main significance of this testimony is not in the historicity of this person, but the fact, stressed by the author of *LVG*, of active participation of the King’s tutor’s family in the affairs of state.
- ¹¹⁴ This realistically depicted a scene of marauding by Vakht’ang Gorgasali’s men, representing the way of life of feudal society. Both in the written sources and in popular speech it was called “mekobreoba,” a proper Georgian term, corresponding to the English word “robbery.” This phenomenon was so common that it became

an institution, and the authorities tried to mobilize all social forces of the country to fight it. Laws were introduced which severely punished not only bandits, but false informers as well (see *kartuli samartlis dzeglebi (The Monuments of Georgian Law)*, Edited by I. S. Dolidze, Tbilisi: 1963, p. 450; K. A. Chkhat'arashvili, *op.cit.*, p. 125. Special bodies were organized to fight "mekobreoba", and dues were introduced – such as the "samekobreo" – to help suppress it. In this connection, according to Juansher Juansheriani's words, Gorgasali's reaction towards his own soldiers, who were indulging in this anti-social action, was understandable.

¹¹⁵ In the original – "khertvisi" – a term which appears repeatedly in medieval Georgian literature. C. G. Q'aukhchishvili takes it for a toponym (*KT*, I, p. 429). A. G. Shanidze interprets it as "island" or "peninsula" (A. G. Shanidze, *tkhzulebani (Works)*, Vol. II, Tbilisi: 1981, pp. 260-275). This interpretation conforms with the data of medieval Georgian texts and scientific works.

¹¹⁶ Borzo – this name we encounter twice in ancient Georgian literature. The first time – in the hagiographic writing *evstate mtskhetelis tsamebai (The Martyrdom of St. Eustacius of Mtskheta)*, in about the 370s where its bearer was a Persian converted to Christianity (S. Kubaneishvili, *op.cit.* I, p. 46). The name is Georgianized and originates from *burz*, or "tall," testifying to its long use in Georgian circles (M. K. Andronik'ashvili, *op. cit.*, I, p. 452). The term "mepe" ("king") applied to Borzo ("And Borzo – the Movak'an king") in this case has a synonymic significance and we should understand it in the sense of a "sovereign" or "ruler," and consider it as further testimony of the polysemanticism of the term "mepe" in ancient Georgian social terminology. But the main point is that in this passage (independent of the degree of its fictitiousness), it testifies to the spread of Christianity by the Kartlians in the regions of Caucasian Albania, bordering with Eastern Georgia (Kartli).

¹¹⁷ "Antraks" in the original, goes back to the Greek anthrakos ("pearl").

¹¹⁸ There are many reminiscences, images and direct references to ancient Greek literature in ancient Georgian literature (M. D. Lordkipanidze, *K voprosu ob ispolzovanii antichnikh i vizantiiskikh pismennikh istochnikov v gruzinskoi istoriografii: Istoriko-filologicheskie raziskaniia (On the Question of the Use of Antic and Byzantine Written Sources in Georgian Historiography: Historical-Philological Research)*, Tbilisi: 1980, p. 150). In this case we think the maxim "A lion is no match for a bull" goes back to the ancient Roman saying "What is allowed to Jupiter is not allowed to the bull" – "Quod licet Zovi, non licet bovi."

¹¹⁹ This swift development of navigation by the Turk-Osmans is puzzling in the scientific literature. V. V. Bartold (*Islam i Chernoe More (Islam and the Black Sea), Sochineniia (Works)*, Vol. VI, Moscow: 1966, p. 661) wrote in this connection: "The speed and perfection with which a continental people like the Turks mastered the sea, is notable. The Arabs of North Africa considered the Turks as navigators; the Sultan of Morocco called the Sultan of Turkey mockingly "the king of fish." How far reaching the Turkish marine raids were can be seen from the fact that Iceland was ravaged by them in 1627. The sea piracy of the Berberian regions was organized not by Arabs or Berbers, but by Turks." Till recently, few have paid attention to the "Turkish seafarers," who were mostly coastal tribes of the southern and south-eastern Black Sea, notably the Lazik-Chanians and Abkhazians, which was noted by the Turkish historian and geographer Evlia Chelebi (Evliya Chelebi, *Kniga puteshestvii (The Book of Travels)*, 3rd ed., Moscow: 1983, pp. 40, 42). The coastal regions of the southern Black Sea of the Byzantine Empire were populated not so much by Greeks as by Lazic-Chaneans. The Constantinople emperors called the Trabzon emperors "Kings of the Laziks" (Michael Panaret, *Trapezuntskaia khronika (The Trabzon Cronicle)*, Moscow: 1905; V. A. Gordlevski, *Izbranie Sochineniia (Collected Works)*, Moscow: 1960, p. 56; T. N. Beradze, *op.cit.*, p.32

¹²⁰ "sakme tsindobisa" in the original. S. G. Q'aukhchishvili questioned the word, suggesting it was about the exchange of hostages (*KT*, I, p. 459). In the *Dictionary* of I. V. Abuladze (*op.cit.*, p. 134), among the different meanings for the word "tsindoba" is "to connect." Judging by the text of *LVG*, this meaning of "tsindoba" is the most appropriate one, which is reflected in our translation.

¹²¹ Arsian (mountains) – a mountain chain, part of the watershed of the river basins of the Mt'k'vari and Ch'orokhi. As written sources, including *LVG*, indicate, the Arsian Mountain chain in the Middle Ages represented a natural boundary with neighboring countries. The Arsian ridge crossed rather important communication roads known as the Arsian Way and the Arsian Gate (I. Javakhishvili, *kartveli eris ist'oria (The History of the Georgian People)* (henceforth ИГН), Tbilisi, 1951, pp. 17-18).

¹²² Alexander the Great (356-323 B.C.). The note on the establishment of the political boundaries of the Byzantine Empire at the time of the Macedonian King and Commander points, first of all, to the time when this legend was

invented – and it would be no earlier than the final restoration of iconolatry which led to the revival of Hellenism in Byzantium; it also points to the importance of the territory of the Eastern Black Sea – the central region of the future Abkhazian kingdom up to the upper reaches of the river Kuban (“the river of Little Khazaria”) for Byzantine foreign policy and for the formation of a single Georgian kingdom.

- ¹²³ The territory noted in this context included the area between the rivers Inguri (etrists’q’ali) and Kelasuri (Abkhazia). The term “k’lisura” (from the Greek “key” or “pass”) was often used technically and was widespread in many regions of Caucasia and Asia Minor. (G. Kapantsian, *Assyro-Babylonian Words in the Armenian Language*, Erevan: 1945, p.18). Theophylact Simocatta noted that “fortifications” which represent the “keys” of mountain passes... the Romanians usually call “k’lisuras” (Theophylact Simocatta, *Istoriia (History)*, Moscow: 1957, p. 167). Theophanes the Confessor (790-818) also comments on this. The translator of his work, I. S. Chichurov, writes: “The Greek “k’lisura” meant not only a mountain pass, ravine, but a fortification on the pass” (I. S. Chichurov, *Vizantiiskie istoricheskie sochineniia: “Khronografia” Feofana, “Breviarii” Nikofora (Byzantine Historical Works: the “Chronography” of Theophanes, the “Breviary” of Nicephorus)*, Moscow: 1980, pp. 66, 138). That this term gained a firm foothold as a definite hydronym in Abkhazia does not exclude the probability of a precise correspondence of K’lisura in LVG to the contemporary name of the Kelasuri river. (*KT*, I, p. 235).
- ¹²⁴ Independent of the degree to which Vakht’ang Gorgasali could exercise power over Abkhazia in a narrow territorial sense, “the rest of Abkhazia” should be understood as a broader interpretation (the Abkhazian kingdom). (N. Berdzenishvili, *ВИГ*, VIII, p. 257).
- ¹²⁵ Art’anuji – the center of the south-western part of historical Georgia, or K’larjeti. The legend that Art’anuji was built by Vakht’ang Gorgasali is confirmed in Sumbat Davidis-dze’s work (Sumbat Davidis-dze, *Istoriia i povestvovanie o Bagrationakh [The History and Life of the Bagrat’ionis]*, trans. by M. D. Lordkipanidze, p. 31; D. L. Muskhelishvili, *op.cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 174-176). Art’anuji was rebuilt by Gregory of Khandzti in the eight and ninth centuries. Lexicological analysis of the toponym “Art’anuji” suggests it belongs to the Megrelo-Chanean branch of Kartvelian languages (A. G. Shanidze, *tkhulebani (Works)*, Vol. II. Tbilisi: 1981, pp. 492-493).
- ¹²⁶ A monastery in K’larjeti. Op’iza was rebuilt in the eighth century in the place of the older church built by local Megrelo-Chan inhabitants (N. I. Marr, *Giorgi Merchul: Zhitie Grigola Khadztiiskogo (Giorgi Merchul: Life of Gregory of Khadzta)*, SPb: 1911 p. XXII). Lexicological analysis of the toponym “Op’iza” connects it with the Megrelo-Chanean branch of Kartvelian languages, meaning “front place,” “bank” or “shore” (A. G. Shanidze, *op.cit.*, Vol. II, p. 27; see also Sh. I. Amiranashvili, *Beka Op’izari (Beka Op’izari)*, Tbilisi: 1959).
- ¹²⁷ Darchil – a distorted Persian form of Darius (M. K. Andronik’ashvili, *op. cit.*, I, pp. 462-463). The name Dachi was popular in early medieval Georgia, and only following the cultural domination of Byzantium did it fall into disuse.
- ¹²⁸ Indabrian – a distorted (maybe invented?) geographical name; it is impossible to locate.
- ¹²⁹ Derbendian kings. Derbend (Georgian *Darubandi*) – is the name of a town and district on the western coast of the Caspian Sea. (V. V. Bartold, *Sochineniia (Works)*, Vol. III. Moscow: 1965, p. 419 and V. F. Minorski, *Istoriia Shirvana i Derbenda (The History of Shirvan and Derbend)*, Moscow: 1963). Juansher evidently knew of Georgian missionary activity in the Derbend area in the period when the process of feudal disintegration began there (hence the formulation – “kings of Derbend”).
- ¹³⁰ Shimshat’a corresponds to the name of the town Samosat (*Ptolemy*, V, 14, 8), encountered in the Armenian *Geography* of the seventh century in the chapter about Syria (S. T. Eremian. *Armenia po “Ashkharatsuits”-u (Armenia According to “Achkharatsuits”)*, *op.cit.*, p. 112). See also N. G. Andonts, *op.cit.*, pp. 34-36.
- ¹³¹ Dighomi –now one of the districts of Tbilisi.
- ¹³² Tskhenist’erpi – the phrase sounds rather vague in the original. N. A. Berdzenishvili (*ВИГ*, VIII, c. 227-228) argues that at the time of writing by Juansher of his work, the toponymical names “Gates of Kartli” (*kartlis k’ari*) and “Tskhenist’erpi” (literally “Horse’s foot”) really existed; the problem is in their identification. Berdzenishvili believed that the “Gates of Kartli” and “Tskhenist’erpi” were technical terms. Vakhushti Bagrat’ioni (see *KT*, pp. 109-338) places “Tskhenist’erpi” in Didube, now a district within Tbilisi.
- ¹³³ Mkhari – a Georgian term meaning literally “side” or “shoulder” – a unit of linear measure, often used in ancient Georgian literature. According to S.S. Orbeliani (S.S. Orbeliani, *op.cit.*), it is equal on average to two metres. (G. I. Japaridze, *nark’vevebi kartuli metrologiis ist’oriidan IX-XIX ss. (Essays on the History of Georgian Metrology)*, Tbilisi: 1973, p. 142).

- ¹³⁴ Melit'ina (Melitena), an Antique form of the name of one of the regions of Asia Minor within contemporary Malatya (for details on the ethno-territorial relations of this region with ancient Georgian tribes see G. A. Melik'ishvili, ИДГ, pp. 75, 351, with bibliography).
- ¹³⁵ Bifurcation of the Georgian term "mama-upali" ("father-Lord") was in common usage, and became part of the official administrative terminology in the period of developed feudalism in the form "mampali." The Georgian term "mampali" corresponds to the English "Lord." For comparison, see uplis-tsikhe – literally "the Lord's castle" or "the capital."
- ¹³⁶ "Dzrokha" in the original – a cow in contemporary Georgian; in ancient Georgian it meant cattle. If we exclude the hyperbole, characteristic of Juansher, we can get a general idea of the economic development of the country.
- ¹³⁷ Sham – the pre-Arabian name of Syria.
- ¹³⁸ Sik'ilia – a country of this name is unknown.
- ¹³⁹ One of the ethno-territorial units of Georgia, already known in ancient written sources (Greco-Roman, Byzantine, Armenian, Arabian). In ancient times, the area of settlement of the Svans' ancestors exceeded the boundaries of contemporary Svaneti, and included a part of the northern ridge of the Main Caucasian mountain range. See L. I. Lavrov, *Rasselenie Svanov na Severnom Kavkaze do XIX v: Kratkie soobshcheniia Instituta Etnografii AN SSSR (Settlements of Svans in North Caucasia before the Nineteenth Century: Short Reports of the Institute of Ethnography of AS [Academy of Sciences] USSR)*, Moscow-Leningrad: 1950; T. C. Eremian, *Opit rekonstruktsii... (The Experience of Reconstruction...)*, op. cit., p. 263; G. V. Tsulaia, *Opisanie Kolkhidi i svedeniia ob Abkhazakh v Armiianskoi Geografii VII v. (Description of Colchis and Information on the Abkhazians in the Geography of Armenia of the Seventh Century)*, in *Onomastika Kavkaza (The Onomastics of Caucasia)*, Orjonikidze: 1980, p. 76. In Byzantine, sources dedicated to Maxim the Confessor, a religious figure of the seventh century, it is said that he died in the "town of Alania – Skhimari," and in the epistle of the individual who accompanied Maxim to the town of Fusta (Phustas), the phrase "in the bounds of Apsilia and Misimiana" is mentioned (V. G. Vasilevski, *Trudi [Works]*, СПб: 1909, Vol. II, part I, p. 277). K. S. K'ek'elidze observes, that Lazika, Megrelia and Alania, mentioned in different versions of the *Life of Maxim the Confessor*, represent in fact one and the same territory – the north-eastern side of the Black Sea, bordered on the south and east by the Rioni river, and on the north-east – by the Main Caucasian Range (K. S. K'ek'elidze, *Svedeniia Gruzinskikh Istochnikov o Maksime Ispovednike (Information on Maxim the Confessor in Georgian Sources)*, in *Etiudi (Essays)*, Tbilisi: 1960, Vol. VII, p. 25. The "town of Alania – Skhimari" is similar to the name of an area in Svaneti – Tskhumar, and Fusta is the Fostafori of Leont'i Mroveli, and the Fosforon in the *Geography of Armenia of the Seventh Century* (S. T. Eremian, op. cit., p. 264, note 39). Later, in the period of the formation of the Abkhazian kingdom and in the period of the unification of Georgia (ninth and tenth centuries), Svaneti was mentioned under the name of "Abkhazia" (Aphkazeti). See Kirakos Gandzaketsi, *Istoriia Armenii (The History of Armenia)*, Moscow: 1968, p. 181, 234. In Georgian sources both usages – the broad and narrow ethnic names of Svaneti – are used. The last such source goes back to the epoch of Arab dominance in Caucasia, when the territory of Svaneti sheltered the population of the ravaged regions of Georgia.
- ¹⁴⁰ Based on this text of LVG, G. A. Melik'ishvili (ИДГ, p. 132) posits the following conclusion: "The ancient Georgian historical tradition depicts relations of Kartli and Western Georgia (Egrisi). However, behind this picture we see the Byzantine sources, which say nothing of the political dominance of Kartli (Iberia) over Western Georgia." We think that the silence of the Byzantine authors on the political role of Kartli in Western Georgia can be explained, in the first place, by the weakness of this influence, though the influence was apparent at all stages of Georgian history; secondly, and we must keep this in mind, there was a Great Power disdain towards political processes in neighboring countries, a characteristic feature of foreign political activity among Byzantine rulers. Tak'veri and Margvi are ancient ethnographic regions in Western Georgia (D. L. Muskhelishvili, *sakartvelos ist'oriuli geografiis dziritadi sak'itkhebi [Main Questions on the Historical Geography of Georgia]*, Tbilisi, 1980, vol. II, p. 141).
- ¹⁴¹ Ujarma – one of the largest centers of Georgia in the late Antique epoch and the early Middle Ages. It was situated in the Jaleti area on the bank of Iori river. The ruins of the town have been preserved. See I. Tsitsishvili, *kartuli arkhi'tekt'uris ist'oria (The History of Georgian Architecture)*, Tbilisi: 1955; D. L. Muskhelishvili, *tsikhe – kalaki ujarma (The City-Fortress of Ujarma)*, Tbilisi: 1966. The city reached a high level of prosperity in Vakht'ang Gorgasali's reign; medieval Georgian authors describe considerable building activity at the time. The fortified

- constructions in Ujarma were a barrier against North Caucasian nomads, as well as a base for conducting offensive operations. Sassanid silver coins of the period of Shah Peroz's reign (438-484) have been found on the territory of Ujarma. Ujarma was destroyed by the Arabs in the tenth century. Later, it was restored and turned (in the twelfth century) into one of the king's depositories for his Treasury.
- ¹⁴² Ejib (Arab) – a “doorkeeper,” “master of ceremonies,” and also “king's representative” (S.S. Orbeliani, *op.cit.*, Vol. 2).
- ¹⁴³ Motifs from the journeys of Georgian pilgrims to Jerusalem in the fourth and fifth centuries are in the story of Vakht'ang Gorgasali's visit to Palestine. Pilgrimage was so popular in Georgian society at this time that the authors writing about Gorgasali probably could not resist the temptation to ascribe such a journey to him. See L. V. Menabde, *dzveli kartuli lit'erat'uris kerebi (Centers of Ancient Georgian Literature)*, Tbilisi: 1980, Vol. II, p. 79-80; N. I. Marr, commenting on the historical importance of the text, wrote: “The legendary journey of Georgian King Vakht'ang Gorgasali to the Holy City in the fifth century included in the Georgian Chronicles” is grounded on the early pilgrimages of Georgians to Jerusalem (N. I. Marr, *Antioch Stratig, op.cit.*, p. 4, note 1). K. S. K'ek'elidze also noted that the legend of Gorgasali's visit to the “Holy City” in the fifth century is grounded on “the undoubted fact that pilgrimages of Georgians to Jerusalem took place” (K. C. K'ek'elidze, *Etiudi (Essays)*, *op.cit.*, Vol. IV, p. 359).
- ¹⁴⁴ Rani road was one of the most important strategic routes connecting Kartli, enclosed by mountains, with the outside world. Relations of Eastern Georgia and Iran were likely established by this route in the period of Sassanid rule, and possibly much earlier. There is no mention of it in later Georgian sources, probably, because of shifting strategic routes after the conquest of Iran by the Arabs.
- ¹⁴⁵ Urha – otherwise Edessa, a town in Syria, one of the centers of Christian religion in the East.
- ¹⁴⁶ Here are echoes of the Arabic-Iranian wars in the first years of Khijra, one of the many anachronisms in *LVG*.
- ¹⁴⁷ This information points to the most prestigious commodities in Georgia in the early Medieval Ages.
- ¹⁴⁸ The author of *LVG*, who is prone to exaggeration, in this case expresses the true notions of his countrymen regarding the bloody wars of the Persians with the Arabs (the last fundamental work on the subject is A. I. Kolesnikov, *Zavoevanie Irana arabami v VII-VIII vekakh [Conquest of Iran by the Arabs in the Seventh and Eighth Centuries]*, Moscow: 1983).
- ¹⁴⁹ Four nobles – this is about the four legendary nobles of Vakht'ang Gorgasali – Art'avaz, Nasra, Bivrit'ian and Saurmag.
- ¹⁵⁰ “mona” (literally “slave”) is a polysemantic term in Georgian literature up to the Golden Age of Georgian history, and it designates the subject part of the population, namely the vassal nobility. “Monas” made up the main contingent of military forces. In *LVG*, most prisoners are usually called slaves (mona). Researchers see this as a reflection of the role that prisoners – who subsequently became “monas” – played in the economic life of Kartli, as well as their involvement in the building activity of local rulers (G. A. Melik'ishvili, *ИДГ*, p. 430-432).
- ¹⁵¹ Sindas, Topori, K'imrai – these towns cannot be located today. Sindas is perhaps the “country of Sinds,” and could therefore have been invented by the author of *LVG*. What of the others? They most likely represent names taken from sources which were then distorted beyond recognition.
- ¹⁵² The idea of the “Arabian” origin of the Kurds is one of the numerous legends regarding the ancestry of the Kurds. For a detailed review of the sources, see G. V. Akopov, *Arabskie istochniki po etnicheskoi istorii kurdov i versii ikh arabskogo proiskhozhdeniia (Arabian Sources on the Ethnic History of Kurds and Versions of their Arabian Origin)*, in *Strani i Narodi Blizhnego i Srednego Vostoka (The Countries and Peoples of Near and Middle East)*, Erevan: 1967, vol. III. This version emerged in early medieval Georgia as a result of the close relations of the Kartlians and the Arabs of the Tbilisi Emirate in cultural life. Many people, Georgians by birth, actively participated in these close cultural relations.
- ¹⁵³ According to historical tradition, Vakht'ang was married to a daughter of the Byzantine Caesar. But its mention in this context serves to demonstrate the distinction between Persia and Byzantium. Reading the text, we feel the faithfulness of *LVG* to the spirit of the period, that is the time when Vakht'ang stood at the political “crossroads” between East (Persia) and West (Byzantium). His dependence on Persia led to diplomatic maneuvers, and not just to a “sharp” rejection of one side or the other. The legends depicting the hesitation of the ruling circles in choosing this or that religion in the early Middle Ages are well known.

- ¹⁵⁴ This is a striking confirmation of the fact that any opposition to the church was considered by the clergy to be organized by the agents of Mazdaism – the worst sin in the eyes of Orthodox followers.
- ¹⁵⁵ Matthew 12: 20.
- ¹⁵⁶ According to the *New Testament*, Judas Iscariot, called a thief, served as the treasurer to Christ (John, 12, 6). As has been noted, this association in Juansher's mind is due to exclusively economic reasons. Vakht'ang accused bishop Michael of money grabbing and appropriation of the church's riches. See Z. N. Aleksidze, *O konflike mezhdu Vakhtangom Gorgasalom i arkhiepiskopom Mikaelom (On the Conflict between Vakht'ang Gorgasali and Archbishop Michael)*, Tbilisi:1976, p. 103.
- ¹⁵⁷ See Christ and his twelve disciples. According to N. A. Berdzenishvili (ВИГ, VIII, p. 280) the number thirteen here has sacral meaning, and was adjusted to the number of apostles in Evangelical legends.
- ¹⁵⁸ Svet'itskhoveli – the Cathedral in Mtskheta, literally "Life-giving Pillar," one of the outstanding monuments of medieval Georgian architecture.
- ¹⁵⁹ Khunani – according to some researchers (for instance, D. L. Muskhelishvili, *op.cit.*, II, p. 20), it is a fortress and capital in the epoch of Vakht'ang Gorgasali's reign in the historical territory of Gardabani (Eastern Caucasia), which afterwards was united with Kartli.
- ¹⁶⁰ Nikozi Church – the center of one of the bishoprics in Kartli in the early Middle Ages and situated in Inner (Shida) Kartli.
- ¹⁶¹ Razhden – the tutor of Vakht'ang Gorgasali's spouse; a Persian by birth, he converted to Christianity, served under the then ruler of Kartli. The work *razhden pirvelmots'ame (The Protomartyr Razhden)* was dedicated to him in the twelfth century. In this work, more ancient sources were used. According to an anonymous hagiographer, several years after the murder of Razhden, Vakht'ang Gorgasali brought his remains to the Nikozi bishopric church, which he had built.
- ¹⁶² The story behind the creation of Tbilisi as the capital by Vakht'ang Gorgasali, which was founded at the time of his reign, is a legend. The establishment of Tbilisi as a capital is mentioned only in the *psevdo-juansheris istoriuli kronik'a (The Historical Chronicle of Pseudo-Juansher)*, and then as an act of Vakht'ang's son and successor Dachi. The historical foundation of Tbilisi is in Juansher's story as part of a belief, widespread among many peoples, about the curative nature of hot springs. See G. N. Akhvlediani, *istoriuli realobis asakhva kartul legendebshi (Reflection of Historical Reality in Georgian Legends)*, Tbilisi: 1981, p. 113; see also V. P. Kobichev, "Ob odnoi pozabitoi gipoteze" ("On One Forgotten Hypothesis"), *СЭ (Soviet Ethnography)*, # 4, 1983, p. 120. The foundation of Tbilisi as a new center for Georgia was determined by its strategically and economically advantageous position.
- ¹⁶³ Lopoti Ravine – a place in Eastern Georgia, at the time of Juansher, one of the constituent parts of K'akheti. It represented a reinforced structure with a fortress at its center (N. A. Berdzenishvili, ВИГ, VIII, p. 62).
- ¹⁶⁴ A place with this name is not known in other sources.
- ¹⁶⁵ Any town with this name cannot be found.
- ¹⁶⁶ "Armazi town" – in the collection edited by S. G. Q'aukhchishvili, it is noted: "They ravaged Tbilisi and Armazi Kartli." The nonsense of such a sentence is quite obvious. N. A. Berdzenishvili (ВИГ, VIII, p. 203) indicates that in a number of copies of *KT*, this reads: "Tbilisi and Armazi Town" (*kartlis tskhovreba* – the copy of Queen Ann. S. Q'aukhchishvili, ed., Tbilisi: 1942, p. 138, note 12). We adhered to this reading in our translation.
- ¹⁶⁷ Emperor of the Eastern Roman empire Zeno (474-491) was not a son of Leon (Leon I, 457-474), but the commander of his personal guard. The real situation during the period of Zeno's reign was quite the opposite to what Juansher describes. According to Byzantine authors, an attempt was made at the period of Zeno's reign to establish a balance in relations with Iran due to the difficult situation in the western provinces of the Empire. Zeno took practical measures to ransom Shahinshah Peroz (484), whom Juansher calls by the general dynastic name "Khosro," from Eftalite captivity. The author defended such an interpretation of the historical facts, because it showed the final triumph of Byzantium in the person of Vakht'ang Gorgasali.
- ¹⁶⁸ K'arnipora – a fortification in K'ola district.
- ¹⁶⁹ Kartli Road was one of the strategic routes in south-western Georgia, later called Gujibogaz by the Turks (I. A. Javakhishvili, *op.cit.*, II, pp. 67, 70).
- ¹⁷⁰ T'asisk'ari, or Tashisk'ari – one of the important points in the border zone of Inner (Shida) Kartli, which points to the meaning of the name – "The Gates of Tasi (Tashi)." It appeared for the first time in the work of Leont'i

Mroveli, according to whom Shida Kartli included the lands from Tbilisi and Aragvi to T'ashiri and Panavara (KT S. Q'aukhchishvili, ed., Vol. I, p. 24).

¹⁷¹ Here we gave a literal translation of the name Sveti (tskhoveli), which means a (life-giving) pillar. There can be no doubt that Vakht'ang Gorgasali was buried according to all the canons of Christian rites. Archeological materials from the Mtskheta-Armazi area show that already in the fourth and fifth centuries, the burial rites of a purely Christian character were widespread in the life of different social strata of the local population, though the materials from some excavations indicate the partial preservation of pre-Christian elements.

Part II

¹⁷² The term Kartli here means the whole of Georgia, so we can see by the eighth and ninth centuries, the deepening of ethnic consolidation of the Georgian (Kartvel) tribes and a corresponding change in the author's self-awareness in this regard.

¹⁷³ Nukhp'at'ians – a tribe in ancient Daghestan.

¹⁷⁴ The term "k'lisura" is often encountered in Georgian sources. It has a Greek root and is a stable toponym (see note 26). Different chronological periods are intertwined in this context. First, the division of the united Kartli kingdom by Vakht'ang Gorgasali's successors; second, the aggressive policy of Byzantium, which tried to turn the territory of contemporary Abkhazia between the rivers Inguri (Egris-ts'q'ali) and Kelasuri (K'lisura) into a springboard for expansionist plans in Caucasia. (compare S. N. Janashia, *op.cit.*, Vol. II, p. 372, and Z. V. Anchabadze, *Iz istorii srednevekovoi Abkhazii VI-XII vv. (From the History of Medieval Abkhazia)*, Sukhumi: 1959, p. 37-40).

¹⁷⁵ The ancient Georgian name of the Black Sea (see LVG, note 106).

¹⁷⁶ This is about the division of Georgia between Sassanid Iran and Byzantium in 532 after the Persians ended the right of sovereign rulers in Iberia-Kartli in 523 (S. G. Q'aukhchishvili, *Georgica, op.cit.*, Vol. 2, p. 38). Geographical factors played an important role in the division of Georgia between Iran and Byzantium. The Georgian elites were largely attracted to the Western (in this case Byzantine) world.

¹⁷⁷ There is an elaborate "insertion" added before this phrase about the activity of the "Syrian fathers," the preachers of Christianity in Georgia during the sixth century (Iovan, David, Shio, Ise, Antony), and a concise story of the conversion of the Abkhazians as a whole, taken from the biography of *Shio Mghvimeli* (Shio of the Cave) and the work of Ephraim Junior (*mtsire*) about the conversion to Christianity of the population from the Eastern Black Sea.

¹⁷⁸ Perhaps this refers to heretical excesses in Georgia.

¹⁷⁹ Vardan Mamikonian was not a *mtavari*, to which title "nakharar" would correspond in Armenian sources. The Armenian sources call him *sp'asp'et'* – "commander in chief." See Yegishe, *O Vardane i Voine Armianskoi (On Vardan and the Armenian War)*, I. A. Orbeli and K. N. Uzbashian (eds.), Erevan: 1971. The Georgian source contains some archaisms – the term "*mtavari*" in ancient Georgian often corresponded to *sp'asp'et'* (on the poly-semantic nature of the term *mtavari* in Ancient Georgian see I. Abuladze, *op.cit.*, p. 239; S.S. Orbeliani, *op.cit.*, Vol. II).

¹⁸⁰ Here, on the further division of Georgian principalities, which according to our source was carried out with the support of Byzantium. The mention of the "Upper and Lower" *eristavis* of Kartli points to Upper (Zemo) and Lower (Kvemo) Kartli, as small estates. Some information of this period is also in the *Conversion of Kartli*, but there is a substantial divergence in the names and descriptions (see A. A. Bogveradze, *op.cit.*, pp. 60-61). This is one indication that our source was written independently from the *Conversion of Kartli*. In the historical literature of early Christian Georgia, notions of "upper" and "lower" were complex and confusing. In the beginning, they were used, perhaps, in the usual geographic sense to indicate mountainous and plains. But with the growing socio-economic and cultural activity of Kartli (Georgia) the notions of "upper" and "lower" acquired a more cultural-historical content. In his *Historical Chronicle of psevdjuansher*, N. A. Berdzenishvili (ВИГ, VIII, p.632) notes that the notions "upper" and "lower" corresponded to the rulers of Eastern (Kartli in the narrow sense) and Western (Egrisi, Argveti) Georgia. The latter included the lower course of the Egris-ts'q'ali river.

- ¹⁸¹ Guaram – one of the prominent political figures in the second half of the sixth century; he unified Georgia for a short time, as indicated in the *Conversion of Kartli* (see *n'arkvevebi, op.cit.*, II, pp. 270-271). A Byzantine historian, Theophan, calls him the leader of an anti-Iranian rebellion of Georgians in 571, to which Guaram had drawn North Caucasian peoples. The Byzantine Emperor awarded him the highest title of Kuropalate (S. G. Q'aukhchishvili, *Georgica, op.cit.*, III, p. 257; S. B. Kovalevskaia, *Kavkaz i alani (The Caucasus and the Alans)*, Moscow: 1984, p. 132).
- ¹⁸² Jvari – literally “Church of the Cross” – a distinguished monument of Georgian architecture of the early Middle Ages.
- ¹⁸³ In this case it is necessary to translate the term *mtavari* with its direct lexical meaning – the “head.”
- ¹⁸⁴ The capture of Jerusalem by Persians in 614, described by a Christian-Arabian author Antioch Stratig, whose Arabic work was wholly preserved only in a Georgian translation. See *Antiokh Strati: Plenenie Ierusalima persami v 614 g. (Antiokh Stratig: The Capture of Jerusalem by the Persians in 614)*. N. I. Marr, [trans. and ed.], SPb: 1909, pp. 11-12.
- ¹⁸⁵ K'ala – the citadel (acropolis) in Tbilisi.
- ¹⁸⁶ Here, the Byzantine Emperor Heraclius (610-641), who took Jerusalem back from the Persians, and liberated the “Tree of Life.”
- ¹⁸⁷ The whole previous passage represents a concise rendering of the biblical legend of the vision of Prophet Daniel (Daniel, VIII). The seizure of Tbilisi by the enemy described in the Georgian source has a corresponding description in the work of the ancient Armenian historian Movses Kalankatvatsi (10th century). See M. Kalankatvatsi, *Istoria strani Agvank, (The History of the Country of Agvank)*, Erevan: 1983.
- ¹⁸⁸ Adarnase – one of the outstanding figures in early medieval Georgia, a contemporary of the Byzantine Emperor Heraclius (610-641). The author of our source calls Adarnase the “uniter of the entire Georgia,” and a builder of churches.
- ¹⁸⁹ An indication of the inner religious currents within the Georgian church.
- ¹⁹⁰ As evident in the ancient cycle of the *KT* collection, the “Saint proto-martyr” Stephan was one of the earliest preachers of Christianity in early medieval Georgia (especially in the Eastern part). He was particularly honored in early Christian Georgia, evident in part by the widespread use of the name “Stephan” in Georgia of this period. This name was displaced from the anthroponymic repertoire of the spiritual and secular elite of Georgia by the popular adoption of the names of local saints.
- ¹⁹¹ Here, in our opinion, the first part of the *Historical Chronicle of Pseudo-Juansher* comes to an end, and its second part begins.
- ¹⁹² An artificial etymology which points to the knowledge of the Greek language by the Georgian author, from which he borrowed the word *kinos* – “a dog.” In reality, the Arabian word *sark* or “East” is the root of this term.
- ¹⁹³ Throughout this story, the elements of apparently real events are mixed in with legends, which existed in the Georgian oral tradition. In the copies of *KT* collections of the eighteenth century, the words “Archil also entered Egrisi” are followed by the “insertion,” which had originated in some ancient tradition: “At the time of his sojourn there (in Egrisi) Stefanoz, the *eristavi* of Kartli, passed away and in his place his son Mir became king.” (*KT*, S. Q'auk'chishvili (ed.), Vol. I, p. 233, note 1).
- ¹⁹⁴ Eshim – the Georgian form of the name of caliph Khisham (724-743), one of the outstanding rulers of the Caliphate. In Georgian sources he is designated by the Arabian title “amir al-mu'menin” – “leader of the true believers.” At the time of Khisham's rule, Khazar raids in Caucasia became more frequent and the number of their settlements rose (K. E. Bosworth, *Ibid.*, p. 29; V. F. Minorski, *The History of Sharvan and Darband*, Cambridge, 1958, p. 37).
- ¹⁹⁵ Abdal-Melik of Baghdad – Abd al-Malik-Caliph (685-705). Here an inaccurate genealogy of Khisham is given. Four rulers governed the country between these two caliphs: al-Valid I (705-715), Suleiman (715-717), Umar ibn Abd al-Aziz (717-720) and Iazid II (720-724) (see K. E. Bosworth, *Ibid.*, p. 29). The Georgian historical tradition merged the first two representatives of the Ommiad dynasty listed in this note, who played an outstanding role in the historical events that took place in Georgia in the first half of the eighth century.
- ¹⁹⁶ Murvan the Deaf (Georg. Murvan-Q'ru) – Marvan ben Mohammad, Vice Regent of the caliph in Caucasia and the future ruler of the Caliphate. According to the Arab author Baladzori, while in Caucasia as a consequence of his successful assault on the Slavs who lived in the country of Khazars, twenty thousand families were

resettled in K'akheti (V. F. Minorski, *Ibid.*, p. 146). It is known that Western Georgia was not Marvan's personal field of activity. Here he probably sent some separate factions of his army. Our author reflects the notion of a future powerful caliph. The story told by our Georgian author about the invasion of Abkhazia is confirmed in the *Chronography* of Theophanus (S. G. Zateishvili, *Svedeniia ob Alanakh v "Khronografii Feofana"* (*Information on the Alans in "Chronography of Theophanus"*), Moscow: 1976, p. 82); see also S. G. Zateishvili (*Ibid.*, p. 85) regarding the veracity of the information of the Byzantine chronicler.

¹⁹⁷ "K'lisura Wall" – the ruins of the "border wall of K'lisura" were preserved into our time. Judging from the context of our source, notably that the Arabs came to this country after destroying Tsikhe-goji, and since no other intervening obstacles are mentioned, the wall probably represented a border between the ancient Abkhazian formations and the territories under the control of the ruler sitting in Tsikhe-goji.

¹⁹⁸ Sobghisi – a fortress, was a staging post on the road between Alania and the territory of ancient Abkhazia. Researchers situate it in the area of the K'lukhori Pass (contemporary Karachai-Cherkessia). See Z. V. Anchabadze, *Ibid.*; Z. V. Anchabadze, T. D. Botsvadze, G. D. Totoshvili, M. N. Tsintsadze, *k'avk'asiis mtiel khalkhta ist'oriis nark'vevebi (Essays on the History of the Mountain Peoples of Caucasia)*, Tbilisi: 1969. The sources demonstrate (S. G. Zageishvili, *op. cit.*, p. 82) that relations between the Abazgs and the Alans were peaceful as well as combative. The fortress Sobghisi was not only a stronghold in case of military confrontation, but a place for all kinds of exchanges in times of peace. The Georgian sources, the only ones which contain any information about Sobghisi say nothing about who possessed the fortress, the Ossetians-Alans or the Abazgs-Abkhazians. The suggestion that it was located on the "Ossetian pass," adds little to our knowledge, because that may mean "on the road to Ossetia." The same Georgian sources indicate that the sovereigns of Abkhazia also used the fortress at critical moments. Anakolia is an Abkhazian (Abazgian) name of a locality on the territory of contemporary New Athos (Abkhazia); Tskhumi – the root of the contemporary name of Sukhumi – goes back to the ancient Svan word "tskhum"-i – "hornbeam" (G. A. Melik'ishvili, *K voprosu o drevneishem naselenii Gruzii: Kavkaza i Blizhnego Vostoka [On the Question of the Most Ancient Population of Georgia: Caucasia and the Near East]*, Tbilisi: 1969, p. 64-66).

¹⁹⁹ In the copies of *KT* as well as in S. G. Q'aukhchishvili's edition: "gujarni tq'vivisani" means "charters of lead." M. Brosset and E. S. Taq'aishvili supposed that it must be read "tq'avisani" (literally – "leather").

²⁰⁰ "Tadzreuli," in the original. This is one of the social terms for the highest order in Georgia in the early Middle Ages.

²⁰¹ One of the apocrypha belonging to the author of our source. It is based on the Biblical story of Agari, Abraham's concubine, who bore him Ismail and who was driven out by his spouse Sara (Gen., chapt. XVI).

²⁰² Actually, the etymology of the hydronym "Abasha" remains unknown. The hydronym "tskhenis-ts'q'ali, literally "Horse's river" coincides in meaning with ancient Greek-language sources.

²⁰³ It was one of the primitive techniques of the Arabian cavalry in similar conditions.

²⁰⁴ Here again "Kartli" (as in the original) means Georgia as a whole.

²⁰⁵ Under this name we might imagine Leon I, the predecessor (father?) of Leon II – the founder of the kingdom of Abkhazia with its center in Kutaisi.

²⁰⁶ In this case the author of the Chronicle followed the text of *LVG*.

²⁰⁷ This context sounds like an ultimatum to the *eristavi* of Abkhazia, who successfully competed with the powerful adjacent empire of Byzantium; the successors to the *eristavi* founded the Abkhazian Kingdom (at the turn of the eighth and ninth centuries). All that became a serious obstacle for the Byzantine Empire's plans of hegemony in Georgia. According to Theophan the Chronographer, when Justine II (685-695, 705-711) sent his *Spatharios* and the future emperor Leon III, the Isaurian, to Caucasia at the beginning of the eighth century, he informed the Abazgs: "If you keep safe our *Spatharios* and let him go without inflicting any harm upon him, we will absolve all your sins" (S. G. Zeteishvili, *op. cit.*, p. 83.).

²⁰⁸ Here we have an obvious anachronism: the Iranian Shah Peroz died in 484 in the war with Hephtalites, and his contemporaries in Kartli did not know any ruler by the name of Mirian. Most likely at issue here is the memorable period for the Kartlians of Peroz's rule in Persia (458-484).

²⁰⁹ The text singled out in a separate paragraph may represent a later gloss, introduced in the source not earlier than the eleventh century. Its author's objective is to validate the local political traditions in order to confirm the juridical rights of the Georgian separatist princes to their possessions.

- ²¹⁰ The term “khevi” should in this case be understood as “area” (like the Armenian “gavar”).
- ²¹¹ This phrase with its definite political meaning was likely composed in the period when the political unification of Georgia, initiated by the rulers of the Abkhazian kingdom, had passed the period of formation and had become an accomplished fact.
- ²¹² In this context, the term “Kartli” must imply Eastern Georgia, because it is mentioned in parallel with Western Georgia – “...in Egrisi (up) to Shorap’ani.”
- ²¹³ This note on the legendary genealogy of the Georgian Bagrat’ids has a nuance, which distinguishes it from analogous information in *LVG*.
- ²¹⁴ In the original: “tadzreuli,” see note 29.
- ²¹⁵ In the original: “K’asri” (from the Arabic).
- ²¹⁶ In the original: “*mtavaris*.”
- ²¹⁷ Ts’uketi – a territory in Eastern Georgia. Also, one of the earliest reports of unification of mountain dwellers of Iberia-Kartli in the ethnographic group of Eastern Georgia.
- ²¹⁸ In the copy of Chalashvili’s collection of *KT* – “Jizar’.
- ²¹⁹ It is followed by Archil’s biography, then by the *Chronicle of Kartli*; the beginning is modified by the editors of *KT* with the addition of the story of the martyrdom of the ruler of Kartli.

ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|------------|--|
| <i>KT</i> | <i>kartlis tskhovreba</i> |
| <i>LVG</i> | <i>The Life of Vakht’ang Gorgasali</i> |
| <i>BB</i> | <i>Vizantiiskii vremennik (Byzantine Chronicles)</i> |
| ВДИ | <i>Vestnik drevnei istorii (Bulletin of Ancient History)</i> |
| ВИГ | <i>Voprosi Istorii Gruzii (Questions of Georgian History)</i> |
| ДГИЛ | <i>Drevnegruzinskaia istoricheskaiia literatura (Ancient Georgia Historical Literature)</i> |
| ЖМНП | <i>Zhurnal ministerstva narodnogo prosveshenia (The Journal of the Ministry of People’s Education)</i> |
| ЗВОРАО | <i>Zapiski vostochnogo otdeleniia Imperatorskogo russkogo arkheologicheskogo obshchestva (The Proceedings of the Eastern Section of Emperor’s Russian Archeological Society)</i> |
| ИГН | <i>Istoriia gruzinskogo naroda (The History of the Georgian People)</i> |
| ИДГ | <i>K istorii drevnei Gruzii (On the History of Ancient Georgia)</i> |
| ИЭСОЯ | <i>Istoriko-etimologicheskii slovar’ osetinskogo iazika (A Historical-Etymological Dictionary of the Ossetian Language)</i> |
| ИФЖ | <i>Istoriko-filologicheskii zhurnal (The Historical-Philological Journal)</i> |
| ИЯИМК | <i>Institut iazika, istorii i materialnoi kulturi Gruzii (The Institute of Language, History and Material Culture in Georgia)</i> |
| МИА | <i>Materiali i issledovaniia po arkheologii SSSR (Materials and Research Works on the Archeology of the USSR)</i> |
| СМОМПК | <i>Sbornik materialov dlia opisaniia mestnostei i plemen Kavkaza (Collection of Materials for Description of the Places and Tribes of the Caucasus)</i> |
| СЭ | <i>Sovetskaia etnografia (Soviet Ethnography)</i> |
| ХВ | <i>Khristianskii vostok (The Christian East)</i> |

თა-სინდელთა. და აბაშთა. და გორა-გორანთა. და შიდადის ბარდღას.
 და შიდადის აწკრონი წარჩინებულნი სპარსთანი სამხარეთით დროთ.
ღ ალმასხროვის ქალაქი იქნა თაჲსი ვახტანგისა და ვახტანგისა
 შიდადისა. და შიდადისა ქალაქისა შიდადისა ნიკოლოზ დიდას და
 დიდას და დიდას ვახტანგისა. და წარმოვიდა იქადაგებამა ვახტანგისა
 ვახტანგისა აწკრონი სპარსთანი. და სიძინისა შიდადისა შიდადისა და შიდადისა
 სიძინისა შიდადისა სიძინისა.
შ და ვახტანგისა ვახტანგისა სპარსთანი შიდადისა შიდადისა შიდადისა
 დიდას. აბაშთა. და გორა-გორანთა სიძინისა. და აწკრონი ვახტანგისა.
ი სიძინისა შიდადისა ვახტანგისა. და წარმოვიდა ვახტანგისა. აწკრონი
 და სიძინისა სიძინისა შიდადისა შიდადისა შიდადისა. და გორა-გორანი
 და შიდადისა ვახტანგისა ვახტანგისა ვახტანგისა. და ვახტანგისა
 ვახტანგისა შიდადისა ვახტანგისა.
შ შიდადისა შიდადისა. და შიდადისა წარმოვიდა ვახტანგისა. და ვახტანგისა
 შიდადისა. და იქადაგებამა ვახტანგისა. და ვახტანგისა შიდადისა

Juansher Juansheriani, The Life of Vakht'ang Gorgasali. Kartlis Tskhovreba, MS of Rumiantsev MS (1703), National Centre of Manuscripts, Tbilisi, H-2080, 125v.

THE MARTYRDOM OF SAINT ARCHIL,

WHO WAS KING OF KARTLI¹

Fifty years passed and there came Ch'ich'naum,² the son of Mohammed, who devastated and destroyed all buildings in Kartli³ and departed for K'akheti⁴ to ravage it and to totally depopulate it.

5

The kings, *mtavaris*⁵ and all the people shared a great fear. They were unable to resist Q'ru,⁶ who plundered the country; it could not be restored to its previous condition, although much time has passed in peace.

Then Saint Archil⁷ decided from the courage of his heart, to appear before Ch'ich'naum and ask for peace in his country, for protection of the churches, and to end the encouragement of apostasy. And with hope in God he chose to sacrifice his life for the salvation of Christians. He went to Ch'ich'naum, who was called Asim.⁸ When Asim learned about his visit, he went to meet him. He greeted him joyfully and with much honor. They spent that day together. Asim praised his goodness and liked his splendid figure and especially the beauty of his face.

10

A few days later Asim began to address Archil with flattering words, promising him gifts. He urged him to renounce the religion of Christ and to convert to the Saracen⁹ religion. But Saint Archil did not bend to his will and with a firm mind replied: "It cannot be, though I have heard your words encouraging me to abandon Christ, the living God, who is the true God, who for our salvation endured death in the flesh. But know, if I do as you tell me, I shall die a death and doom myself to eternal tortures. But if you kill me I shall rise like our God and shall be glorified with him."

15

20

When the impious one heard these words and saw Archil's steadfastness, he was astonished and ordered him arrested and put in prison to force him, by ruse, to adopt their (the Saracens') religion. He did not wish his death because of the comeliness of his face and elegance of his figure.

And when they led Archil into the dungeon, he blessed God and appealed for His help and for His mercy, and to be ranked among the assembly of those who obtained immortality through death for God's sake.

25

Then a *mtavari* from Gardabani,¹⁰ who had been converted to the Saracen religion, came to Asim. His uncle (the brother of his father) was killed by pagans but King Adarnase,¹¹ who was grandfather of Archil, set his murderers free.

In order to take revenge for this the Gardabanian said to Asim: "Do you not know who this Archil is? He is the son of St'epanoz,¹² a descendant of the great King Vakht'ang,¹³ kinsman of Mirian,¹⁴ son of Kasre. And he was together with his father when they buried the royal treasure of Kartli. He also knows where King Heraclius¹⁵ buried his treasure, as Heraclius showed him that place."

5 Hearing this, Asim again summoned Archil and said to him: "Previously your magnificence and goodness, and your very elegant form, distracted me. Now I have been told that you are son of the great Khosroid kings, which makes you greater in my eyes, and if you heed me, I will return your kingdom together with your ancestors' treasure to you. But first, show me the treasure of the Greek kings, embrace my religion, become a Saracen and I will make you *spasalar*¹⁵ of the land of Kartli."

10 Then, Saint Archil said: "You do know that I was young in age when King Heraclius crossed this country. My father and my brother stored all the treasure in the fortress from where the *emir*¹⁶ Q'ru retreated, and now the treasure is in the possession of the Greeks. As for me, I will neither abandon the Lord my God nor will I change the eternal glory for a transient one."

15 Asim turned to him and said: "You have seen the defeat of Abkhazia¹⁷ by Saracens, haven't you?" Saint Archil replied: "I was there, when God defeated them." Then Asim asked: "Whose God overcame the Saracens?" And Saint Archil said in response: "The living God who is the creator of heaven and earth¹⁸ and who came down from heaven for the salvation of the human race through his death, and who was raised from the dead¹⁹ and granted us eternal life. He was the one who defeated and humbled them." Then Asim replied: "Your God is mortal and if your hope is in Him, if you put your faith of life in a mortal, you yourself and are fit to die and deserve to."

20 And he ordered the beheading of Saint Archil, not taking into account either his goodness or the splendour of his glory.

25 They led him out and beheaded him with a sword. This happened on the twentieth of the month Mirkan,²¹ which is March. And he (Saint Archil) entrusted his soul to the Creator, preferring death, the harbinger of immortality. He did not exchange the eternal glory for a transient one and joined the assembly of Saints and heroic martyrs and appeared before God.

30 And he was crowned with them, and he rejoices in the presence of the Holy Trinity. And when the holy martyr had passed away, there came the people of Goderdzi from Tbeti²² and other *aznauris*²³ from the family of Mame. And they secretly took the holy martyr Archil's body away that night. They embalmed the body and buried it with great honour at Not'k'ora,²⁴ in the church²⁵ which had been built by him. And his (Archil's) wife gave to those, who had brought Archil's body to K'akheti, villages for their inheritance.

In this book, which was found, is given the brief story of the martyrdom of King Archil; because of hard times there was no opportunity for a proper description.

35 Now this book of the *History of the Georgians* up to Vakht'ang was composed over time. And Juansher Juansheriani²⁶ who was husband of the niece of Saint Archil, a descendant of Rev,²⁷ and son of Mirian, described the history of the Georgians from Vakht'ang down to the present. And beginning from this time, future generations as eye-witnesses, will describe the events in compliance with the time and the wisdom given to them by God.

NOTES

- ¹ The title in the surviving manuscript is the following: წამებაი წმიდისა და დიდებულისა მოწამისა არჩილისა, რომელი ესე იყო მეფე ქართლისაი (*The Passion of the Saint and Glorious Martyr, who was King of Kartli*).
- ² Ch'ich'naum is identified with Khuzayama ibn Khazim, who was the caliph's viceroy in the Caucasus.
- ³ Kartli –eastern Georgia, which gave the country its name – Sakartvelo (Georgia)
- ⁴ K'akheti (eastern Georgia) was one of the principalities ruled by appointees of the King of Kartli-Iberi, beginning from the fifth century.
- ⁵ *mtavari* (Georg: მთავარი) – prince, provincial governor. The word *mtavari* comes from the root of the Georgian word “tav(i)” – head. This word is already present in the fifth century hagiographic work *The Martyrdom of Shushanik*.
- ⁶ Murvan Q'ru – Murvan ibn Mohammed, was appointed the governor of the Caucasus in AD. 730, later he was caliph (744-50) and was the last of the Umayyad line in Damascus. He seized and devastated Kartli (eastern Georgia) in AD. 735, and then he destroyed the cities and strongholds in western Georgia. The Georgians named Murvan ibn Mohammed Q'ru (Deaf) for his punitive expeditions, and their ferocity and special ruthlessness.
- ⁷ The Christian prince Archil (719-45) of eastern Georgia, was son of Prince St'epanoz II (who ruled from 685-736). Historians are divided as to the years of his activity and death. According to Cyrill Toumanoff, his princely rule was established A.D. 736- 86. (C.Toumanoff, *Studies in Christian Caucasian History*, Washington: 1963). The Georgian church canonized him and the day of his commemoration is December 13/November 30.
- ⁸ Khazim
- ⁹ Saracen in the Middle Ages, was any person – Arab, Turk, or other – who professed Islam. Earlier in the Roman world, there had been references to Saracens (Greek: *Sarakenoi*) by late classical authors in the first three centuries A.D., the term being then applied to an Arab tribe living in the Sinai Peninsula (*Britannica Concise Encyclopaedia*, 2007). According to the Book of Genesis (16:3), Abraham's first wife was named Sarah and his second wife – Hagar. Sarah (then Sarai) gave her maid Hagar in marriage to Abraham, so that Abraham might have an heir. John of Damascus described the Saracens in the early eighth century thus: “They are descended from Ishmael, who was born to Abraham from Hagar, wherefore they are called Hagarene and Ishmaelites. And they call them Saracens (*John of Damascus. Fount of Knowledge or The Fount of Wisdom, Chapter on Heresy*, New York: 1958). The authors of *kartlis tskhovreba* use words “Saracen,” “Hagarene” and “Ishmaelite” interchangeably.
- ¹⁰ Gardabani was a province in K'akheti principality in the epoch of the Georgians' struggle against the caliphate.
- ¹¹ Adarnase I was a *mtavari* (*erismtavari*) of Kartli (Iberia, eastern Georgia) from 627 to 637/642 (*Sumbat Davidisdze: tskhovreba da utsq'ebai bagrat'ionta* (*The Life and Tale of the Bagrationis*), S. Q'aukhchishvili (ed.), *kartlis tskhovreba*, Vol. 1, Tbilisi: 1955; Z. Aleksidze, *epistoleta tsigni* (*The Lapidary Book*), Tbilisi: 1968; G. Arakhamia, *Sumbat Davidisdze: tskhovreba da utsq'ebai bagrationta* (*The Life and Tale of the Bagrationis*), Tbilisi: metsniereba,1990; J. Martindale, *The Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire*, Cambridge: Vol.3, 1992. He was a contemporary of the Byzantine Emperor Heraclius (610-41), who made Adarnase I ruler of Kartli (*Sumbat Davidisdze, op.cit.*, Tbilisi: 1955). He is identified by art historians with Adarnase, recorded on the inscription from Jvari (Cross) monastery at Mtskheta. There are disagreements regarding the years of his rule. According to Vakhushti, it was A.D. 619-639 (*Vakhushti Batonishvili, aghts'era sameposa sakartvelosa* (*Description of the Georgian kingdom*), in S. Q'aukhchishvili (ed.), *kartlis tskhovreba*, Vol. IV, Tbilisi: 1973; G. Chubinashvili suggests A.D. 604-605 to 634-635 (G. Chubinashvili, *Pamiatniki tipa Jvari* (*Monuments of Jvari Style*, Tbilisi: 1945); C. Toumanoff suggests late seventh century (C.Toumanoff, *Medieval Georgian Historical Literature* (*VII-XV centuries*), Traditio, I, 1943). The author of our sources attested he was a builder of churches.
- ¹² St'epanoz II was *mtavari* of Kartli (Iberia, eastern Georgia), was son of Adarnase I (637/642 to 650), and father of King Archil. His name is mentioned among the architects of Jvari (Cross) church (586-605). According to historical sources St'epanoz II ruled in AD 639-663 (see Vakhushti, *op.cit.*, Tbilisi: 1973). G. Chubinashvili in his *Pamiatniki tipa Jvari* (*Monuments of Jvari Style*), (Tbilisi:1945) suggests A.D. 634 -635. G. Abramishvili suggests A.D. 634-635 (*st'epanoz mampalis preskuli ts'arts'era at'enis sionshi* [*St'epanoz Mampali's Fresco Inscription in*

Ateni Sioni] (Tbilisi: 1977). N. Shoshiashvili in his *lapidaruli ts'arts'erebi* (*The Lapidary Inscriptions in Ateni Sioni*) (Tbilisi: 1980, suggests the middle of the seventh century.

- ¹³ King of Kartli, Vakht'ang Gorgasali (A.D. 440-503/4). The Persians named him Gorgasal (Pers: gorg(a) sar-wolf-head) as he had a wolf and a lion depicted on his helm. "Hero of Nebroth" was the leading champion of Georgian independence (C. Toumanoff, *Les Dynasties de la Caucasic chretienne*, Rome: 1990, p.378). Vakht'ang achieved autocephalous status for the Georgian church, partially from Antioch, and joined western Georgia to eastern Georgia, or Kartli. During his reign the head of the church of Kartli received the title of Catholicos. He appointed Peter (A.D. 447-522) the first Catholicos of Kartli, constructed churches, fortresses and founded new eparchies. He began preparation to move the capital of Kartli from Mtskheta to Tbilisi, which his son Dachi finally did. The dates of Vakht'ang Gorgasali's rule and death are still in dispute. He was mortally wounded in Samgori valley near Tbilisi in the battle against Persian invaders and died in Ujarma fortress, which he had built himself. The Georgian church canonized him and the day of his commemoration is December 13/ November 30.
- ¹⁴ King Mirian was the last pagan and the first Christian King of Kartli (Georgia). He was a contemporary of the Greek Emperor Constantin (306-337).
- ¹⁵ Byzantine Emperor Heraclius (575-641) ruled in 610-641.
- ¹⁶ *sp'asalar* – commander in-chief (from Persian *sipahsalar*), who was second in charge after the king.
- ¹⁷ Emir (Arabic: *amir*, *emira*, *amirah*) – commander» or «general», also «prince,» used throughout the Muslim world. *Emirs* are usually considered high-ranking sheikhs, but in monarchical states the term is also used for princes, with «emirate» being analogous to principality in this sense. The word entered Georgian in the 730s.
- ¹⁸ Abkhazeti (Abkhazia) – kingdom of western Georgia.
- ¹⁹ Gen. 1:1
- ²⁰ Matthew 28:10
- ²¹ The old Georgian names for the month were the following: Ap'nisi (January), Sarts'q'vnisi (Februari), Mirk'ani (March), Igrik'a (April), Vardobistve (May), Tibatve (June), Mk'atavte (July), Mariamobistve (August), Enk'enistve (September), Ghvinobistve (October), T'irisk'ani and Giorgobistve (November), Krist'eshobistve (December).
- ²² T'beti (Georgian: ტბეთი) – the south-west part of Georgia, Shavsheti.
- ²³ *aznauri* (Georgian: აზნაურნი) – noblemen, minor feudal aristocracy of Georgia from the fifth century. In the ninth-tenth centuries they began to distinguish themselves by adding the title "*didebuli*" or "the *aznauri* who held *dideba*." In the Middle Ages *aznauri* was a dependent noble.
- ²⁴ Not'k'ora (Nadok'ra, Nak'orna) – a village in eastern Georgia.
- ²⁵ The approximate construction of the church found inside the King Archil monastery is regarded as the grave of King Archil and dates from around A.D. 735-740
- ²⁶ Juansher Juansheriani – Georgian historian (XIth century). He is author of *The Life of Vakht'ang Gorgasali*.
- ²⁷ Rev II (Georgian: რეგ) was a prince of Kartli, eastern Georgia. He was son of Mirian III, the first Christian ruler of Georgia. 345-361 was the period of their joint reign. According to the medieval Georgian chronicles, Rev had an appanage at Ujarma in the eastern province of K'akheti. He was married to Salome, daughter of Tiridates the Great. Salome played a role in the conversion of Iberia, in A.D. 337. Rev died before his father, possibly in the same year. Rev's possible son, Saurmag then succeeded Mirian in A.D. 361. His other son, Trdat, reigned in Iberia in A.D. 394-406 (C.Toumanoff, *Studies in Christian Caucasian History*, Washington: 1963, p. 377.

ნათესავთ დათხოვნი . მსაგრო გმს ბრძოლ ვუყვით ღ მსაგრო ღვე
წოთ . დაგითმინეთ . მამარ ვანგელოთა მეფე რუსუდან ვიძლიერით .
აქა მამაროქილო არან მდინარესა დათხნა . ღ ხინა მამაროქილო
უკლიერს მე მისი უხუცესნი :

ღან ესე მს ვანგელოთა სემი ვინათგან მისეა ღინ მღვერე . უხუთი
ვინათგან დაუცვოთ ქვეყანა ესე . აღვიღოთ ღდა ხლოთ სიმდიდრე ღ
ჯოგი ღ ხსოვიდეთ სანკონების ღ მუნ დაუწყვიდინეთ . დალათი სეფი თ
თხნა ვუბოლოყვი . ვინა უყვით ნათესავთა სეფი ვსძლიოთ . უხუთი ვს
ფიქროს ხსოვიდეს სეფი თხნა . ღ თუ სთნათესა ვს მე იყავნ მინა . სანგეთი

სეფი იყავნ უყვით სთხნა :

ღმინ სემლოთა ესე უყვით ვუთ ღ პოვოს ღდა ხლოთ ღ უყვით სიმდი
დრე მათი . ღ ხსოვიდეს ღ მინათგან არან დაღენ ვეცო ვითონ მს
ოქმიოთი თხნი . ღ მინათგან ქვეყანად მუნ ვინათგან . სანგეთი იყავნ
თხნათგან ვეცო ღვინი . ღ თხნი მთეა მამაროქისა მისსა . მამარს და
მამაროქისა უხუცესისათეს : ესე სეფი მამაროქისა ხლოთა მესამისა
ღინა ვინათგან მამაროქისათგან . ვეყვირად ღ მინათგან ქვეყანათა ღვინი
სა ღ მამაროქისა მისათა : ვინს თა იყავნ თხნათგან ღ ვინა ვეყვირად . მ
ივდეს რუსუდან მეფეს ხინამე . მამარის მსგო სეფი მამაროქისა ღ თვით
ღვინს სეფი ვინს ვინათგან . ვინა ღ ვეყვირად ღ მინათგან ქვეყანა
თხეთ . ესეთი უყვითად მინათგან სემლოთა არან თუ ღდათ ღ იმყოფ
თ ვინათგან ირეიდეს : სეფი ვინათგან თხნა რუსუდან მეფეს სეფის
ხლოთ სემლოსა თხნა მისსა . მინათგან ვინათგან იმყოფ ღ მინათ . ღ მ
ლოთ რინა სეფი ღ მინათგან იყავნ თხნათგან სემლოთა მს აქმსა მინათ
თხეთილოთ თუ . მს ვანგელოთა მამარ ვინათგან მამარს ქინელი თუ .
ვანათგან მეფემან რუსუდან სთათ მისთ თაყად ღ თხნა ღდა იყავნ
თხნათგან . ღ ხსოვიდინა ბრძოლ სეფი ვინათგან მს ვინათგან :

Leont'i Mroveli, The Martyrdom of Saint Archil. Kartlis Tskhovreba, MS of Baratashvili MS (1767), National Centre of Manuscripts, Tbilisi, S-25, 216v.

MAT'IANE KARTLISA

After this, when the holy martyr Archil died he left behind two sons: Iovane and Juansher. Iovane went to Egrisi,¹ taking his mother and two sisters with him, while Juansher and his two sisters remained in the country of Kartli² and K'akheti.³ His younger sister was beautiful in appearance. Rumours of her beauty reached the *khak'an* or king of the Khazars. He sent an envoy to ask for the hand of Shushan, promising aid against the Saracens. When the *khak'an's* envoy arrived, Juansher advised his brother and mother of his mission. But they refused the *khak'an's* request, saying: "If our situation becomes untenable we should better retreat into Greece⁴ and appeal to Christians rather than have our daughter defiled by heathens." And Shushan too spurned the King of the Khazars. 5

Three years later the *khak'an* sent his *sp'asalar*⁵ Bluchan⁶ who, taking the road of Leketi,⁷ entered K'akheti and besieged the fortress in which Juansher and his sister Shushan resided. He captured them both in a few days. Then he ravaged the city of Tbilisi,⁸ devastating the entire land of Kartli. 10

As Bluchan was travelling along the Darialan road⁹ (with his captives), Shushan said to her brother: "It is better for me to die so that the Lord might grant me a place among the holy women rather than be defiled by the heathens." Then plucking the gem out of her finger-ring, she sucked the deadly poison under it and died instantly. 15

Bluchan arrived at the *khak'an's* residence, bringing Juansher with him and telling the story of his sister's death. The *khak'an* was angered at his failure to bring Shushan's corpse along, for he had desired to view it. Bluchan was seized, a rope thrown round his neck, and two riders were ordered to pull the ends in opposite directions, mercilessly severing his head. After keeping Juansher for seven years, the *khak'an* released him and sent him back home with many gifts. 20

Henceforth the sway of the great Khosroid¹⁰ kings began to decline. First, the power of the Saracens grew and the whole of this country was from that time periodically subject to incursions and depredation. Then there arose many *mtavaris* in the land of Kartli, resulting in mutual enmity and strife. And if anybody worthy of being king emerged from among Vakht'ang's¹¹ children, he would be denigrated by the Saracens. The city of Tbilisi was captured by the Hagarenes and turned into their place of residence. They received tribute called *kharaĵ*. Thus, by Divine providence, because of the multiplicity of our sins, the nation of the Hagarenes became powerful. 25

This Juansher married Adarnase's daughter, Lat'avri by name, a descendant of the Bagrat'ids.¹² Juansher's mother rebuked him for marrying Lat'avri, for she was not aware that the Bagrat'ids were the 30

descendants of David the Prophet who was called the Father of God in the flesh. But when she saw her son's wife she liked and blessed her.

When many years had passed the Hagarene *emir*, Khusrau¹³ by name, who ruled Armenia,¹⁴ Kartli, and Hereti came.¹⁵ He rebuilt the city of Tbilisi ravaged by the Khazars.

5 When the Greeks became weak, the *eristavi*¹⁶ of the Abkhazians, Leon by name, cousin of

Leon the *eristavi* to whom Abkhazia had been granted as an appanage, lost power. This second Leon¹⁷ was the son of the daughter of the King of the Khazars, and with Khazar aid, he separated from the Greeks, took possession of Abkhazia and Egrisi up to Likhi,¹⁸ and assumed the title of King of the Abkhazians, for Iovane was dead and Juansher had grown old. Then Juansher died too.

10 In the lifetime of Juansher, Adamase the Bagrat'id bargained¹⁹ for himself one third of K'larjeti,²⁰ Shavsheti,²¹ A'chara,²² Nigali,²³ Asispori,²⁴ Art'aani²⁵ and Lower T'ao,²⁶ and the fortresses held by the grandchildren of King Vakht'ang. Adamase went to K'larjeti and died there.

15 Following the death of Adamase, the Lord augmented the kingship of Ashot' the Kuropalate.²⁷ He extended his power to Kartli and its regions. At that time Maslama had entered Greece from where he retreated weakened and disgraced. At the same time the Greek King granted Ashot' the title of Kuropalate.²⁸ The Saracens were weakened, and Ashot' the Kuropalate gained in power. None of the Saracens remained in Tbilisi except Ali the son of Shuab.²⁹ Grigol³⁰ ruled in K'akheti.

20 At that time Ashot' the Kuropalate set out on a campaign, and was assisted by Tevdosi, King of the Abkhazians and son of the second Leon, son-in-law of Ashot' the Kuropalate. Grigol came from K'akheti. He (Grigol) was aided by the Mtiulis and the Ts'anars,³¹ and by the *emir* of Tbilisi. Ashot' and Grigol fought a battle on the Ksani river. Grigol, the *mtavari* of K'akheti, was put to flight, and the land he had taken away from Kartli was regained. Ashot' took possession (of the territory) from K'larjeti to Ksani.

25 After this, Khalil,³² son of Yazid the Arab, came and captured Armenia, Kartli, and Hereti. Ashot' the Kuropalate was slain in the church of Gardabani, and his blood, which was shed, is still visible to this day. The Saracens again took possession of Kartli. Departing, Khalil left Ali, son of Shuab, as the *emir*. At the same time the Gardabanians conspired and appointed Dachi, son of Iovane K'vabulisdze, as *khorepiscopus*. The same Khalil the Arab returned. The Gardabanians gave him battle at Gavazi. Khalil was put to flight and a great number (of Arabs) were slain. Sahak',³³ son of Ismael, again established himself as *emir* of Tbilisi. However, Khalil came for the third time, and was killed in Javakheti.³⁴ His son Mohammed came to Kartli. Bagrat', son of Ashot' the Kuropalate, joined the latter, and he (Mohammed) gave Kartli to him.

30 Sahak', the *emir* of Tbilisi, marched out with his troops and took up a position at Rekhi, while Mohammed and Bagrat' took Uplistsikhe.³⁵ The Gardabanian K'akhis came to Sahak''s aid. A battle was fought at Rekhi. Neither side fled, until they separated. Mohammed broke camp and went to Bardavi³⁶.

40 Two hundred and nineteen years had passed from the advent of Mohammed who lay down the faith of the Saracens. Then Bugha³⁷ the Turk, a slave, came from Baghdad with a great army, sent by the *amir al mu 'minin*. He devastated the whole of Armenia, taking captive all of her rulers. And he came and laid siege to the city of Tbilisi, for Sahak' the *emir* refused to submit to him. He slew Sahak', razed Tbilisi, set it on fire, and ravaged all its environs.

Tevdosi,³⁸ King of the Abkhazians, marched out against him, taking up a position at K'vertskhobi. Learning this, Bugha sent his *sp'asalars* Zirak and Bagrat', son of Ashot' the Kuropalate. A battle was fought and the Abkhazians were put to flight; a countless number of men perished. The fugitive King Tevdosi took the Dvaleti³⁹ road.

The returning troops (of the Saracens) were intercepted at Jvaris-gverdi by the Gardabanians; the latter inflicted heavy losses on them. When Bugha received tidings of this, he broke camp and came to Ch'artaleti, and established himself there. He took hostages from the Mtiulis – three hundred men – and, in a bid to invade Ossetia,⁴⁰ he advanced to Tskhavat'i. But Abulabaz, the *eristavi* of the Armenians, and Guaram, son of Ashot', wrote to the Mtiulis, asking them to keep the enemy out. They abandoned the hostages to their fate. God helped the Mtiulis, for there was a snowfall. They were able to bar the way to the enemy; a battle was fought and God gave them victory. A countless number of Saracens died. Their horses ate azalea and many were lost. However, no diminution of the (Arab) army was apparent, for it numbered one hundred and twenty thousand men.

Withdrawing, Bugha wintered at Bardavi. He captured a certain priest's son who had become the ruler, and razed Gardabani to the ground. He opened the Gate of Daruband⁴¹ and brought over the Khazars – over- three hundred households – settling them at Shankor.⁴² He brought the Ossetes – about one hundred households – through Darialan and settled them in Dmanisi.⁴³ He was planning to enter Ossetia in the summer. When the amir al mu'minin learnt of his negotiations with his kindred Khazar tribe, he advised Bugha to leave Kartli to Humed, son of Khalil. Bugha departed and Humed, son of Khalil, took over the office of *emir*. The amir al-mu'minin dismissed Humed and appointed Isa, son of Shikh, and a relative of Humed.

Gabriel Donauri, brother of Samoel the *Khorepiscopos*, now filled that office. Then Isa departed and another *emir*, Abraham, arrived. Khalil's son Humed came back and established full sway over Armenia, Kartli, and Rani.⁴⁴ Khalil's son departed, and a slave of Sahak', Gabulots by name, became *emir*. Guaram, son of Ashot' the Kuropalate, seized Gabulots and sent him to Greece, for Gabulots had become powerful and the Gardabanians submitted to him.

Ashot' fought against his father's cousin, brother of Guaram. Guaram had captured Javakheti, Trialeti,⁴⁵ T'ashiri,⁴⁶ Abotsi,⁴⁷ and Art'aani.⁴⁸ Guaram fought the Saracens: at times Guaram gained the upper hand, and at other times, the Saracens. Guaram divided the lands between his brothers Adamase and Bagrat', and he gave Abotsi to the brother of his wife, King of the Armenians.

At that time, Giorgi, King of the Abkhazians, brother of Teodose and Demet're, son of Leon, marched out on a campaign. He captured Kartli and left Demet're's son as *eristavi* of Chikha. And when Giorgi, King of the Abkhazians, died, Demet're's son, whose name was Bagrat', was in his minority. He is known to have been exiled. King Giorgi's wife killed Demet're's son, the *eristavi* of Chikha, and she seduced the *mtavari* Ivane Shavliani. Bagrat' was cast into the sea. But God saved him and he reached the city of Constantinople. King Iovane wedded his son Adamase to the daughter of Guaram, Ashot's son. Iovane, King of the Abkhazians died, and his son Adamase succeeded him. Lip'arit'⁴⁹ took possession of the lands of Trialeti, built the fortress of K'Ide-k'arni, and declared David, son of Bagrat', his patron.

Now, Nasra, son of Guaram, and Gurgen sided with the Abkhazians, whereas David and Lip'arit' aided the Armenians. The Armenians and the Abkhazians fought for the possession of

Kartli. At that time Guaram became a monk. And when Gabriel Donauri, *Khorepiscopos* of the K'akhis, died, Padla Arevmaneli, a wise and clever man, occupied the seat of *Khorepiscopos*.

At that time, Guaram's son Nasra ensnared David, son of Bagrat', his father's cousin, and killed him. The Armenians, Lip'arit' and the Kartvels, as well as Ashot', David's brother, joined by the
5 Saracens, united against Nasra. They gave him battle and put him to flight, taking fortresses away from him. Departing for Greece, Nasra presented himself to the King of the Greeks.

Guaram, son of Ashot', died and he was buried at Op'iza,⁵⁰ which had been rebuilt by him. Bagrat', son of the Abkhazian King Demet're, resided at Constantinople in Greece. The King of the Greeks gave him troops, sending him off by sea. Arriving in a ship, he landed in Abkhazia. Slaying
10 Adarnase, son of Iovane, he captured Abkhazia and married Adarnase's widow, daughter of Guaram. Bagrat', King of the Abkhazians, sent for his brother-in-law Nasra, who was in Greece and gave him his own troops. Nasra seized three fortresses in Samtskhe:⁵¹ Odzrkhe,⁵² Jvaris-tsikhe, and Lomsianta,⁵³ built by Guaram himself.

Gurgen and Adarnase, son of David came, aided by the Armenians. A battle was fought on the
15 Mt'k'vari. The Abkhazians were defeated; Nasra and Baq'atar, chief of the Ossetes, as well as the *eristavi* of the Abkhazians, were slain.

Padla the *Khorepiscopos* became powerful and made the Gardabanians submit to him. He was succeeded by K'virik'e the *Khorepiscopos*. The *aznauris*⁵⁴ held sway in Kartli.

At that time, Konstantin, King of the Abkhazians,⁵⁵ marched out and captured Kartli. Sumbat'
20 T'iezerak'al, King of the Armenians, was hostile to him. Marching with a large army, Sumbat' invaded Uplistsikhe. Piling pack-saddles one on another to the top of the wall, the fortress was taken in this manner. However, Sumbat' and Konstantin became allied through marriage, Sumbat' restoring (to Konstantin) Uplistsikhe and the whole of Kartli.

After this, a Hagarene *emir*, Abul-K'asim by name, son of Abu-Saj, arrived in Kartli. He had been
25 sent by the amir al-mu'minin with an army so great and innumerable that the country could scarcely hold it. First he came to Armenia, devastating the whole country, including Sivneti, Vaedzor, and Aspuragan. Sumbat' King of the Armenians, failing to withstand this terror, fled and found refuge in the mountains of Abkhazia, where he stayed.

The son of Abu-Saj came to Tbilisi where at the time Japar, son of Ali, was *emir*. He invaded Ujarma.⁵⁶
30 The fortress had three hundred men within who fought the enemy for many days. When the besieged felt that they could not stand their ground any longer, they abandoned the place by night and fled. Some escaped but some were overtaken and slain.

When the guards of Boch'orma learnt about the fall of Ujarma, they abandoned the fortress and fled. The enemy found it deserted and said: "They offered stiff resistance for a pen but have deserted a
35 fortress." Taking Boch'orma, they retained it as a fortress, but demolished the walls of Ujarma.

Now K'virik'e the *Khorepiscopos*, seeing that he could avail nothing against the enemy and trusting Abul-K'asim's oath, visited him. The latter asked him: "Who advised you to come here?" K'virik'e replied: "My mother did." Abul-K'asim said: "I shall not cause anguish to a person whose hopes are pinned on her only son." He liked K'virik'e for his goodness and let him go, but kept Boch'orma for
40 himself.

After this Abul-K'asim invaded Kartli, ravaging the country. Before he entered, the Kartlians demolished the walls of Uplistsikhe so that the enemy might not hold it. Passing into Samtskhe, Abul-K'asim ravaged Samtskhe and Javakheti, and came to the fortress of Tmogvi. But seeing its strength and defenses, he broke camp and came to Q'veli, which he began to attack. There was within it a youth, Gobron by name. Together with his comrades he made daily sorties. When the fortress was taken, the saintly Gobron was captured and tortured. His martyrdom has been described in detail by our saintly father Stepane Mt'bevari.⁵⁷ 5

Abul-K'asim broke camp and marched to the city of Dvin.⁵⁸ He was informed here that King Sumbat' had entered the fortress of K'ap'oet'i. He immediately struck camp, ordering his troops to bring every man they found alive before him. He besieged the fortress of K'ap'oet'i. He seized all the wives and children of the guards who he found outside the fortress. As a result, the fortress was yielded and Sumbat' was captured. Abul-K'asim took him to Dvin where he hung him from a tree and he died. 10

After this, when several years had passed and the country had recovered, K'virik'e the *Khorepiscopos* summoned Konstantin, King of the Abkhazians. They entered Hereti and laid siege to the fortress of Vezhini.⁵⁹ The King of the Abkhazians approached from the upper side and K'virik'e from the lower. And when they were on the point of capturing the fortress Adarnase the Patrikios⁶⁰ came and offered peace terms, on Friday, the Day of the Cross. He ceded Arishi⁶¹ and Gavazi⁶² to the King of the Abkhazians, and Orch'obi⁶³ to K'virik'e. As soon as they made peace they departed. Konstantin,⁶⁴ King of the Abkhazians, came to Alaverdi⁶⁵ where he prayed before St. George and embellished his icon with gold. He sent most of his troops home and, after being greatly honoured by K'virik'e the *Khorepiscopos*, he departed for his own country. 15 20

Within a few days Konstantin, King of the Abkhazians died, and for some time the land of Abkhazia was in turmoil. For King Konstantin had two sons: one elder, and the other younger, born to him by his second wife. The elder was called Giorgi, and the younger Bagrat', and there was a bitter strife between them, the detailed story of which you can find in their *Life*. 25

Now this Bagrat' was the son-in-law of Gurgen, *eristavi* of *eristavis*. Gurgen aided him with all his might. There was no peace until Bagrat' died. And after his death, King Giorgi⁶⁶ assumed full sovereignty over the Abkhazians. He was filled with every virtue, courage and valour, God-fearing and, above all, a builder of churches, compassionate to the poor, generous and meek, perfect in every goodness and grace. He ordered and settled all the affairs of his patrimony and kingdom: he built the church of Ch'q'ondidi,⁶⁷ setting up an episcopate and embellishing it with many relics of holy martyrs. 30

At that time K'virik'e the *Khorepiscopos* died, and Padla son of K'virik'e succeeded him as *Khorepiscopos*. The latter built the fortress of Lots'obanni.⁶⁸ At this same time the Saracens, led by Sadj, arrived. They despoiled K'akheti, burned down Jvari⁶⁹ and Mtskheta, and departed. Leaving, they took along the honourable cross, broken into pieces. But they contracted gastric diseases, and they understood that the visitation was from the cross. Putting the pieces together, they returned the cross to Jvari (church). They restored the cross to its base and erected it at its former place. 35

Prior to the reign of Shkhanik', in Hereti all were originally heretics. But Shkhanik' was the cousin of Gurgen the *eristavi* of *eristavis*, and Shkhanik's mother, Queen Dinar, converted him to Orthodoxy. At that time the Salars seized Bardavi and Adarbadagan. 40

Giorgi, King of the Abkhazians, gave Kartli to his elder son Konstantin. After Konstantin had ruled (Kartli) for three years, he began to nurse a grudge against his father, seeking control of the King's realm. When his activities were exposed, he isolated himself in Uplistsikhe where he was joined by the T'betians and many other *aznauris*.

5 When King Giorgi received confirmation of his son's desertion, he marched out with all his forces, bringing along the kings of T'ao, and Padla the *Khorepiscopos*. Coming to Uplistsikhe, they stormed it for many days but failed to inflict any damage, for there were many defenders inside. On some days horsemen skirmished, and on other days, foot soldiers.

10 King Giorgi incited the *aznauris* of Sazvere⁷⁰ to win Konstantin over by saying to him: "Come out, we shall take you to Abkhazia, you shall ascend the throne, and your father will remain out of your affairs." Konstantin believed and trusted these words. However, the *aznauris* who were loyal to him tried to dissuade him, but he would not heed their advice. At night he came out on the Mt'k'vari⁷¹ on a raft. And when he pushed off the bank of the river, his men, dashed out to seize him. Becoming aware of their malicious intentions, he fled from the surrounding rafts to enter the fortress. The pursuers
15 lost control of their rafts and fell overboard. At this noise, the King and all the troops came out and surrounded the fortress. When dawn came a search was started. Konstantin had climbed out of the water and hidden himself in a cleft in the rock. He was found by a worthless man, captured, and brought before the King, who punished him cruelly: first his eyes were gouged out, then he was castrated, and finally he died. The King brought out the *aznauris* who were within the fortress, and upon his word of
20 honour, he let the T'betians leave in peace, sending them to Vaspurakan.⁷²

 Padla the *Khorepiscopos* died, and K'virik'e succeeded him. After this the *aznauris* of Gardabani drifted away: they began to scheme with King Giorgi. Marching out, King Giorgi came to K'akheti, burned and ravaged it, and returned to his own country. Then he stationed himself in At'eni.⁷³ His son Leon was *eristavi* of Kartli. Giorgi again urged Leon to enter K'akheti with his entire army. But
25 when K'virik'e understood that he could not offer resistance, he presented himself to Leon. He wanted to escape perfidiously, but Leon seized him and departed for K'akheti to capture his (K'virik'e's) household. However, the household had fled, for the *aznauris* of the Kartvels had warned them.

 Shurt'a, brother of K'virik'e the *Khorepiscopos*, joined King Giorgi, ceding to him the fortress of Ujarma. Other fortresses of K'akheti were also taken, barring three: Nakhichevani, Boch'orma, and
30 Lots'obanni.

 Lots'obanni was taken by Ivane Arshis-dze. He fortified it and betrayed his master. Shuris-tsikhe was built for him and manned with troops. The fortress of Marani was then held by Khakhua Arshis-dze, brother of Ivane. Like his brother, he intended to keep the fortress with the power of his own arms. King Giorgi arrived and ordered his troops into action. They took the fortress by a ruse and
35 brought the captured Khakhua into the King's presence, and the latter sent him to Jiketi⁷⁴ as a prisoner.

 The fortress of Nakhichevani was held by Padla son of K'virik'e. He too sheltered inside. When K'virik'e the *Khorepiscopos* saw that he was powerless, he begged to be spared, and ceded K'akheti to King Giorgi. However, Leon, the King's son, did not intend to let K'virik'e go, for he had not wanted to pardon K'virik'e at his first capture, but then his father did not listen to him.

K'virik'e begged for a pledge that they would not take the fortress of Boch'orma that winter, promising to vacate it after Easter. This was granted. Instead, the fortress of Nakhichevani was taken, and his youngest son David taken as a hostage. K'virik'e was released at Candlemass.

The King departed for Abkhazia, and K'virik'e entered Boch'orma. He made preparations for his intended departure after Easter. Then the *aznauris* of Kartli made an alliance with him, together with the K'akhis: Goderdzi Mgdeuri, Mama Q'ancheli, Dachi K'orinteli, Dachi and Ivane Skhviloseli, the Pkhveneli brothers Sara and Grigol, and fifty other *aznauris*. They all joined K'virik'e. They began to attack the fortresses, capturing all of them within a few days. They demolished Shuris-tsikhe and Lots'obanni, and K'virik'e regained possession of his patrimony.

Messengers came to King Giorgi to tell of the seizure of K'akheti. He was heavy at heart at the tidings, and blamed all those who had advised him to let K'virik'e the *Khorepiscopos* go. And when the winter passed, he again sent his army under the command of his son Leon. The latter came and set K'akheti on fire. During this campaign he was informed of the decease of the great and God-loving King Giorgi. Then Leon called on K'virik'e the *Khorepiscopos* for a meeting. They met at Bazaleti,⁷⁵ on the bank of the lake, each accompanied by a single rider. They conferred the whole day, before Leon informed K'virik'e of the death of his father. Professing his love for K'virik'e, Leon suggested that K'virik'e's son become his son-in-law. On hearing this, K'virik'e dismounted and thanked him with a low bow. He rejoiced at this demonstration of peace, and mostly at the prospect of alliance in marriage.

Leon returned and established his sovereignty over his patrimony and kingdom, for he entered Abkhazia at once. And God enhanced his kingship, similarly to his father's. He too was God-loving and filled with every virtue. He built a church at Mokvi⁷⁶ which he made into an episcopal see. Consecrating the church, he ordained all the rules for it. When he had established his sovereignty over his patrimony, he honoured the pledge he had given to K'virik'e the *Khorepiscopos* by giving his daughter in marriage to K'virik'e's son. Soon afterwards Leon's daughter died.

Leon again started to show enmity toward K'virik'e, with an eye on K'akheti. Marching out with a great army, he stationed himself on the banks of the Aragvi,⁷⁷ ravaging Mukhnari, Kherk'i, and Bazaleti. Falling ill during the campaign, he returned home and died.

After him, Demet're, brother of Leon, ascended the throne. He established his sway over Kartli. Some time passed before he settled the affairs of his kingdom. His brother Teodosi was in Greece. Certain men in this country called on him to oppose his brother. In the lifetime of the great Giorgi, King of the Abkhazians, his two sons, Teodosi and Bagrat', had been sent to Greece to be brought up there so there would not be a struggle and dissension between them.

Arriving from Greece, Teodosi came to Samtskhe. He stationed himself at Margis Mere, from where he appealed to the Meskhian *aznauris* and mustered troops with the intention of taking his patrimony by force of arms. But King Demet're sent his army, and after a surprise attack, Teodosi was put to flight. He went to Kartli and appealed to Adarnase, *mtavari* of Dzama. He was taken into the fortress of Dzama from where he continued to fight for his cause.

Then King Demet're sent his troops to the fortress of Dzama, which they besieged and attacked for about three months, the vicinity suffering considerable harm. When the defenders were pressed

hard, they begged for a guarantee under oath that Teodosi would be allowed to depart in peace. This was granted and he left peacefully. He went to David the Kuropalate and spent one year with him.

From T'ao, Teodosi set out for K'akheti. Then King Demet're sent an envoy to Teodosi and K'virik'e the *Khorepiscopos*, saying: "As my brother has come from Greece, there will be no end to strife between us, fuelled by insulting words. Now, through your mediation reconcile my brother to me, and let us both rule our patrimony equally, as Leon and I did before. Accept from me a pledge and mediators, and I shall greatly appreciate this." When K'virik'e the *Khorepiscopos* received this message from King Demet're, he summoned Teodosi and urged him to place trust in the King's words, adding: "Should anything go wrong, I shall avenge your blood." Entrusting Teodosi to his brother, K'virik'e sent him away.

Then Teodosi, under an oath and pledge sworn before the Life-giving Pillar by the Katholicos, and all the chief priests and nobles came to his brother, and spent a few days with him. But King Demet're forgot the intercession of God and men and dared to break his oath. Seizing Teodosi, he had his eyes gouged out. On seeing this, the residents of his patrimony sought to install their brother, nicknamed the "Straw King,"⁷⁸ in Demet're's place, but failed to do this, for King Demet're was strong and valiant. And when King Demet're passed away, all the residents of the country, seeing that the King had left no successors in Abkhazia and Kartli, brought Teodosi out and made him king.

Then the K'akhis came and invaded Uplistsikhe. At that time Ivane Marushisdze⁷⁹, a powerful man with a great following, was *eristavi* of Kartli. He dispatched an envoy to David the Kuropalate,⁸⁰

advising him to set out with his army and take Kartli: then either to hold it himself or grant it to Bagrat' son of Gurgen, son of the daughter of King Giorgi of the Abkhazians, to whom Abkhazia and Kartli belonged on his mother's side. This Ivane Marushisdze favoured Bagrat' as king. Hearing Ivane Marushisdze's message, David the Kuropalate set out with his entire force and arrived in Kartli. As soon as the K'akhis learnt of David's arrival they withdrew like fugitives, leaving Kartli to him.

David the Kuropalate stationed himself at Kvakhvrelni⁸¹ where he was met by Ivane Marushisdze, *eristavi* of Kartli. Receiving Uplistsikhe from Ivane Marushisdze, David granted it to Bagrat' and his father Gurgen, for David the Kuropalate had no son, and he had adopted Bagrat', son of Gurgen.

David the Kuropalate outdid all the kings of T'ao. In the first place he was God-fearing and compassionate to the poor, humble, patient and not rancorous; he was a builder of churches, sweet and generous, philanthropic, the patron of monks, the doer of good, and filled with every virtue. He built the monastery and God's throne – the holy church of Khakhuli.⁸²

And when he turned back for home, he left Gurgen and his son Bagrat' at Uplistsikhe. At that time Bagrat' was still in his minority, hence David left his father Gurgen as co-administrator. David summoned the *aznauris* of Kartli and commanded them: "This is the successor (of the kings) of T'ao, Kartli, and Abkhazia, my son and ward, and I am his guardian and supporter; obey him all of you." He spent a few more days there and departed for T'ao. After the passage of some time, the *aznauris*

of Kartli embarked – as is their wont – on malicious treachery. ' Conspiring with the *aznauris* of Nakurdevi and Sabot'ari, they brought troops from K'akheti, and yielded Uplistsikhe (to them), and, seizing Gurgen and his son Bagrat' and Queen Gurandukht',⁸³ took them away to K'akheti.

David the Kuropalate was heavy at heart when he learnt this. Marching out with all his forces, he came to Trialeti in order to enter K'akheti. As soon as the K'akhis received tidings of this they sent an

envoy with an offer of peace terms according to which they released Gurgen and Bagrat' and Queen Gurandukht', returned Kartli and Uplistsikhe, but retained the fortresses of Ts'irkvali' and Grui. At that time Uplistsikhe and Kartli was in the possession of Gurandukht' the Queen. This Gurandukht' the Queen was the daughter of Giorgi the King of the Abkhazians, and mother of Bagrat'.

Three years elapsed, and Teodosi the Blind reigned in Abkhazia. The whole country fell into decay and all the rules and principles laid down by the first kings, were changed. Seeing this, the nobles were greatly worried.

Ivane Marushidze wanted to bring Bagrat' and made him King of Abkhazia. Together with him, all the *didebulis*, *eristavis*, and *aznauris* of Abkhazia and Kartli entreated David the Kuropalate to give them Bagrat' as King. He granted their request reluctantly, after long persuasion. For as I have said earlier, David the Kuropalate was childless, and he had adopted and reared Bagrat', and wished him to possess both parts of T'ao. Only when the country of Kartli and Abkhazia was left without a successor did he give Bagrat' away, receiving a pledge and hostages.

He (Bagrat') was brought to Abkhazia, consecrated as King, and all submitted to his command, for he now was in his majority. Within two years he began to look into and zealously administer all the affairs, like his grandfather the great King Giorgi, but even better, I should say, for in everything he acted like the man who had brought him up, the great King David the Kuropalate, and every good deed was seen to come from him. He sent King Teodosi, his mother's brother, to David the Kuropalate in T'ao, for he found this the best way out, so that all men both great and small might look to him in hope and be fearful of wrongdoing.

After this he came over to Kartli to bring order into its confused affairs. He established himself at Tighva.⁸⁴ But at that time some of the Kartlian *aznauris* did not favour his coming, for they administered the affairs of Kartli on their own, even though they were in allegiance to Gurandukht'.

Choosing Kavtar T'beli⁸⁵ as their leader and setting out to oppose Bagrat', they took up a position near Moghri.⁸⁶ Seeing this, Bagrat' King of the Abkhazians, called on his troops and they engaged the rebels. The Kartvels were put to flight; some were slain, some captured, and still others left the country and dispersed as fugitives. Bagrat' came to Uplistsikhe and took the fortress over from his mother. He stayed a few days, introducing some order into the affairs of Kartli. Then, taking his mother with him, he departed for the country of Abkhazia. And like a skilled captain of a ship, he administered all the affairs of Abkhazia. He punished all whom he found disobedient, and in their place elevated those who were true and loyal to him.

Several years passed after this. At that time Rat'i⁸⁷ was *eristavi* of K'ide-k'arni. He had the fortress of At'eni and all the land of Kartli southward of the Mt'k'vari: Trialeti, Manglis-khevi, and Sk'vireti. He did not obey Bagrat' the King, in good faith.

King Bagrat' secretly mustered his entire army and entered Kartli with the intention of capturing Rat'i the *eristavi*. David the Kuropalate was informed in the following manner: "He is heading for no other place, but seeking your death." And Gurgen father of Bagrat', was ready to go to his son. But David the Kuropalate came hurriedly, mustering his troops and summoning all the kings of Armenia. Bagrat's grandfather Bagrat', King of the Kartvels, was still alive at the time. He too came to David the Kuropalate, for he feared that his son Gurgen would deprive him of the kingship. They came with a great army without number and took up a position at Dliv. David sent the troops against Gurgen. They

marched out against the latter and engaged him at Gardatkhrlini, at the entrance of Shavsheti. Gurgen was put to flight, and the fugitive entered the fortress of Ts'epti.

By that time Bagrat' had come to Trialeti and taken up his position at Karusheti. Sending a messenger and reviewing his troops, he saw that he could not stand up to David the Kuropalate's forces. He left his troops where they were stationed and went alone to David. Begging to be forgiven, he said: "I have come for no other purpose but because of the disobedience of Rat'i." David sent him away, saying: "I was told that you had come out seeking my death. But now I have become convinced of your innocence. I am giving you a free hand against Rat'i: bring him to submission in whatever manner you desire."

Then, filled with joy, Bagrat' went back to Abkhazia so as not to arouse Rat'i's suspicions and to attack him by surprise when he was unaware. When the winter season came he arrived with all his forces and besieged K'Ide-k'arni. Seeing this, Rat'i came out, bringing his son Lip'arit' with him. Commending Lip'arit' to Bagrat' King of the Abkhazians, he yielded his fortress to the latter and established himself in his patrimony in Argveti.⁸⁸

When some time had passed, Bagrat' put all the administrative affairs of Abkhazia in order: he replaced rebellious nobles by loyal ones who obeyed his commands without demur. He outdid in his administration all the kings of Abkhazia and Kartli, and increased the number of his army beyond its earlier size.

Marching out with his entire army and coming over into Kartli, he sent an envoy to K'akheti, demanding the Kartlian fortresses held by the K'akhis. David was at the time *Khorepiscopos* (of K'akheti). He refused to cede the fortresses, sending Bagrat' this message: "If you are seeking the fortresses, let arms and battle decide it between us. I shall confront you on the Ksani."

Bagrat', King of the Abkhazians and the Kartvels, was angered with him. At the time the Kuropalate was at Dlivli, for he was administering the affairs of T'ao and Kartli. He came into possession of T'ao upon the death of his father Gurgen, King of kings. Bagrat' sent a man hurriedly to summon the troops of Abkhazia and Kartli, himself marching with the army of the Upper Regions. Passing through Trialeti, he crossed the Mtskheta bridge, and was joined by Abkhazians and Kartvels. Stationing himself at Tianeti, he began to ravage K'akheti. David could not withstand him, for Bagrat's force was innumerable. Bagrat' began to attack the fortresses, and this time he captured the country of Hereti. Appointing Abulal as *mtavari*, he returned home.

When Bagrat', King of the Abkhazians, departed for home, the men of Hereti left him and joined David. David took Hereti. After a short while he died. Bagrat' set out again with his entire army and took Hereti for the second time. He took Dinar⁸⁹ the Queen for himself, occupied K'akheti, and within two years captured all its fortresses with his unassailable force. He shut K'virik'e up in Boch'orma, set guards round the fortress and within a year captured it too. Conquering the whole of Hereti and K'akheti, he led K'virik'e away and kept him at his court.

At that time Padlon,⁹⁰ the *emir* of Gandza, gained great power and began to harass the *eristavis* of Hereti and K'akheti, from time to time engaging in brigandage and surprise incursions and depredations. The great King Bagrat' was dismayed by his insolence, and was filled with feelings of vengeance. Making preparations with his entire army, he sent a messenger to Shahanshah Gagik', King of the Armenians, urging him to wreak vengeance on Padlon. Gagik' was overjoyed (at the request) and

hurriedly mustering all his troops, marched out and came to Bagrat' King of the Abkhazians. Both met at Dzorak'ert' and advanced against Padlon who had grown arrogant, hated Christians and sought in everyway the destruction of all servants of the Cross. Fearful of their invincible force, Padlon withdrew and found refuge in his strongholds.

The great and victorious King Bagrat' ravaged the land of Rani, came to the city of Shankor, set up *mangonels*, and within a few days Shankor's walls were shattered. Bagrat' intended to raze the city to the ground and capture it on the following day. On the same night Padlon sent a messenger to him, begging to be pardoned. He pledged to serve him while he was alive, undertook to pay him the *kharaj*, and gave a written promise to combat Bagrat''s enemies. Then Bagrat' ordered all the *didebulis* to assemble in his presence and commanded that they should hold the city with their forces. They looked into the matter and after consideration, reported back that it was beyond their powers, the more so as they would be busy with other military campaigns. Bagrat' again commanded the *didebulis* to assemble and advised them to make peace with Padlon. They all, in their wisdom, deliberated and came out in favour of peace. The King sent a messenger to announce peace on his behalf. Then Padlon was overjoyed and did everything he had promised verbally: he gave great and innumerable gifts, filled all the *didebulis* with abundant presents, and Bagrat' returned home victorious.

The same great King built the church of Bedia,⁹¹ turning it into an episcopal see in place of the episcopate of Gudaq'va. Donating many villages with all their ravines and open spaces, he laid down rules, embellished the church abundantly, consecrated it and enthroned a bishop. Whoever wishes to see and realize Bagrat''s greatness let him first consider the splendour of the Bedia church and he will understand that there has not been any other King like him in the country of Kartli and Abkhazia.

He also consecrated Kutatisi⁹² church with great and unparalleled pomp, for he called together all the neighbouring kings and catholicoses, chief priests and abbots of the monasteries, and all the nobles from the Upper and Lower regions residing in his patrimony and kingdom, and those of all other states.

Bagrat', King of the Abkhazians and Kartvels, outdid all sovereigns in matters of administration. All neighbouring kings and chiefs of his patrimony and kingdom fawned on him and begged to be allowed to join his campaigns as his trustworthy subjects.⁹³ And God subordinated all his enemies and opponents to him, gracing his reign with peace and great tranquility in the country. Should anybody desire to describe in detail all his works, his powers will fail him; I have narrated but a few so that they might not be forgotten in the course of time. I shall say this too: after the great King Vakht'ang Gorgasali, no one has appeared like him in greatness, power, and wisdom. He was a builder of churches, compassionate to the poor, and dispenser of justice to all men.

Bagrat' reigned thirty-six years, and he died, adorned with beautiful grey hair, in the year two hundred and thirty-four of the *koronik'on*, on the seventh of May, a Friday. On the day of his death, he was in T'ao, and Zviad the *eristavi* of *eristavis* brought his body from there and buried it at Bedia. His son Giorgi became King after him. He too was filled with every virtue. This Giorgi was twelve years old when he became King – and established his sovereignty over his entire patrimony and kingdom.

In the seventh year of his reign, Basil,⁹⁴ King of the Greeks, marched against him with the entire Greek army and countless foreigners. King Giorgi went out with a great army to resist him. They both

encamped in the land of Basiani⁹⁵ for many days, without joining battle. Withdrawing, King Giorgi came to the city of Oltisi⁹⁶ and burnt it down. Thence he came to K'ola, and Basil, King of the Greeks followed on his heels, finding himself in Giorgi's rear. Giorgi's rear-guards and Basil's advance-guards came together and a great battle was fought at a village called Shirimni.⁹⁷ Many were slain on both sides; the *eristavis* and *didebulis*, and Rat'i son of Lip'arit', and Khursi were killed. The tidings of the engagement with his rearguard reached Giorgi late. He gave orders to his troops and they armed themselves hurriedly. King Giorgi led the army himself, for he was courageous and absolutely fearless, like one incorporeal, and with him were his numerous soldiers. King Basil came up with his entire army. The armies were drawn up and a great battle was fought. Many Greeks were slain and booty was taken. The battle lasted so long that Basil the King was ready to flee.

But the Kartvels, showing lack of spirit, turned back and retreated. The Greeks pursued them, putting many to the sword. The (enemy) troops reached Art'aani, which they captured and ravaged. And when King Giorgi left for Trialeti, Basil followed. He devastated the land of Javakheti, and moved into Trialeti. They again encountered each other, for Giorgi had acquired strength, summoning troops from K'akheti and Hereti. However, Giorgi was dissuaded from engaging the enemy for the second time.

Retreating from Trialeti, Basil the King went through Javakheti and Art'aani, again laying these lands to waste and wreaking a more bitter punishment than before. He wintered in the land of the Chaldi,⁹⁸ not far from the city of Trebizond. Envoys began to go to and fro with the object of establishing peace and amity.

At that time there was a great rebellion⁹⁹ in Greece. The commander-in-chief and Ts'arvez, son of Pok'as the Apostate, conspired and seized the eastern lands. Basil was greatly dismayed at this. However, God did him honour, and Xiphias was punished for his unfaithfulness to Ts'arvez. He was lured into a fortress by the Dalassenoi and seized in revenge for the blood of the son of Pok'as, and handed over to Basil the King. The latter banished him to a certain island. Many of Xiphias's accomplices were beheaded with a sword, among who was Peris, son of Jojik, a native of T'ao, the other culprits being Greeks.

Basil returned to Basiani. He demanded lands and fortresses, promising peace and concord. Learning this, King Giorgi dispatched Zviad the *eristavi* with his troops with orders to distract Basil for a short time by peace overtures, while he himself followed Zviad with a powerful army. He reasoned: "If King Basil desires peace, so be it, and if he desires war, we shall make ready for it." Those who did not want peace began preparations for war. Giorgi came to King Basil's army encamped in the manner called *svindaksi* by the Greeks.

The armies engaged and part of Basil's troops were put to flight. King Basil was angered and he ordered the Life-giving Cross to be fetched, and spreading the holy mandylion on the ground, he said: "If you deliver me into the hands of the enemy I shall not make submission to you to eternity." And the battle continued between them, the troops being put to the sword and others taken captive. The Greeks took abundant booty and the royal treasury that was with the King.

King Basil followed in pursuit. And again peace talks were started, as on the former occasion, for Basil was greatly afraid of a rebellion in Greece. Peace was made and a treaty concluded. King Giorgi

gave his three-year-old son Bagrat' as hostage and ceded the fortresses which the *aznauris* had earlier turned over to him; and other fortresses granted earlier by Basil, and a further fourteen fortresses, as well as the lands owned by David the Kuropalate in T'ao, Basiani, K'ola-Art'aani, and Javakheti. However, Basil granted some churches, villages and surrounding land to King Giorgi. And Basil the King departed, taking with him Prince Bagrat', son of our King Giorgi, as hostage. Basil vowed (to Giorgi) under oath: "In the third year I shall send your son back to you." And Bagrat' was for three years at the royal city of Constantinople. And in the third year Basil sent him back as he had promised. 5

When Bagrat' approached his patrimony and kingdom he was accompanied by the *catepan*¹⁰⁰ of the East to the boundaries of his patrimony. And when the *catepan* turned back he was approached by a *mandat'ur*¹⁰¹ who delivered King Konstantin's message to him in which he wrote as follows: "By God's will, my felicitous brother Basil the King has passed away, and in his place I have become King of all Greece. Now, whatever place in my dominions Bagrat', son of Giorgi, King of the Abkhazians, has reached, turn him back with great haste and let him come into our presence." 10

On reading the King's command, the *catepan* wished to turn Bagrat' back in accordance with the order. He hurried to overtake the prince. When he approached him he saw a great multitude had come to welcome the prince: *didebulis*, *eristavis*, and *aznauris* of T'ao, Meskhети, and Kartli, whose number was beyond counting. Taking aside the *mandat'ur* who had approached him, the *catepan* said: "If you can, turn him back; now it is impossible for me to do this." 15

Oh, great marvel and grace of God! How soon the upright youth was rescued from the hands of those who wished to return him by ruse. And if anybody desires to see such grace, with God's help, behold and consider the countless instances of God's grace upon the great Bagrat', King of the Abkhazians, not granted to any other king, which will be shown by what follows. 20

When Bagrat' came into the presence of his father King Giorgi, at their house in Kutatisi, his parents saw their son evincing, like them, unseen and untold virtues; he was handsome in appearance, whose perfection men cannot describe. Beholding him, they were filled with ineffable joy and they offered thanks to God. At that time it was *koronik'on* two hundred and forty-five. 25

Two years later King Giorgi died, in the prime of his life, filled with all virtues, whose like had not appeared among his forbears in power, such chivalry and valour, body and face, knowledge and perfection in the administration of the state. He died in two hundred and forty-seven of the *koronik'on*, on the seventeenth of August, in the land of Trialeti, at a place called Mq'invarni or Its'roni. And he left behind lamentation and grief among the residents of his kingdom. All mourned for his virtues, youth, and valour. He was buried in the Kutatisi church. 30

He had four children: sons Bagrat' and Demet're, and daughters Gurandukht' and K'ata. His fifth child Marta was dead. After the death of the great King Giorgi, Bagrat', aged nine, was at once made King of his entire patrimony and kingdom, Upper and Lower. 35

At the same time Vache K'arich'is-dze and Iovane the Bishop of Bana – *aznauris* of T'ao – departed for Greece, and with them many (other) T'ao *aznauris*. About a year later, King Konstantin dispatched the *parakoimomenos*¹⁰² with a countless host. Arriving, he invaded and ravaged the same lands that King Basil had laid waste. Entering Trialeti, he came up to the fortress of K'Ide-k'arni, which at that time belonged to the *eristavi* of *eristavis* Lip'arit', son of Lip'arit'. Lip'arit' rallied other *aznauris* too. 40

They took up a position at Gandza and engaged the enemy outside the fortress. When the *parakoimomenos* saw that he could not storm the fortress, he retreated. At the same time Chanchakhi Paleli left for Greece. Ceding the fortress of Garq'lobi to the Greeks, he defected to them. Arjevan Hololas-dze yielded the fortress of Ts'erepti to the Greeks.

5 When Saba, the bishop of T'beti, saw that there was no other defence in Shavsheti, he built a fortress on a hill commanding T'beti. He siezed the land of Shavsheti and showed great loyalty to Bagrat', King of the Abkhazians. God did honour to him (Saba), and his enemies failed to wrest the land from him. It was at that time that the *parakoimomenos-proedros*¹⁰³ sent Iovane Baneli the *chartularius*,¹⁰⁴ who took with him Valanges¹⁰⁵ with a large army. Demet're K'larji, son of Sumbat', was also included in the party
10 with a view to winning over the people of the country. In this way they won over many of the common folk. Ezra Anch'eli entered the same fortress (of T'beti), and the *aznauris* who remained loyal, joined him in the same fortress, augmenting its strength.

The fortress of Art'anuji was held by *eristavi* Iovane Abuseri , and at that time there were hostilities, strife and numerous clashes. And since this country was in great turmoil God again did honour to
15 Bagrat' King of the Abkhazians and the Kartvels. King Konstantin was visited with a deadly disease. He wrote to the *parakoimomenos-proedros*, recalling him. The latter hurried back but King Konstantin passed away before his return. Before his death Konstantin enthroned another King, Romanus by name, giving his own daughter Zoe to him in marriage.

In the third year after this, Queen Mariam, mother of Bagrat', King of the Abkhazians, went to Greece
20 to seek peace and concord, as well as to obtain the title of Kuropalate for her son, as is the custom and rule in their (Bagrat's) house. She also planned to bring back a bride for her son.

And when she reached Greece and came into the presence of the King of the Greeks, he fulfilled all her petitions with joy: he gave her a pledge and guarantee of alliance and amity, wrote a golden bull, granted (Bagrat') the title of Kuropalate, and gave her Queen Helen for Bagrat' to marry.

25 When Mariam the Queen reached the patrimony of her son, the country of T'ao, she presented her son with the title of Kuropalate, a wedding ceremony was performed, and the coronation took place at Bana. After a short time Queen Helen died at Kutatisi. King Bagrat' married Queen Borena, daughter of the King of the Ossetes, sister of Dorgholel.

King Giorgi had (left behind) another son at Anak'opia,¹⁰⁶ by his second wife – the daughter of the
30 King of the Ossetes. And there was talk regarding his possible accession among some of the *aznauris*, but the boy, Demet're by name, was in his minority. They failed to crown him, though some harboured the thought. Neither did King Bagrat' and his mother succeed in winning the boy over, nor did the chief nobles of the realm. Losing ground, Demet're left his kingdom and sought asylum with the King of the Greeks, transferring Anak'opia to him. Since then, to the present day, Anak'opia has been lost to the
35 King of the Abkhazians.

After this Bagrat' gained in power and established his sway over the Upper and Lower parts of his patrimony. The great Padlon acted in a foul way, disparaging all the chiefs of this kingdom. And while Bagrat' was still a boy, the armies of his kingdom rallied; Lip'arit' and Ivane Abazas-dze were won over, and so came the great K'virik'e, King of the Ranis and the K'akhis, David, King of the Armenians, and
40 Japar *emir* of Tbilisi. It was at K'virik'e's insistance that all should assemble at Ek'lets'i, against Padlon.

He was put to flight and his army destroyed and countless spoils and treasure taken. From then on up to his death, he was rancorous.

During the minority of King Bagrat', Lip'arit' son of Lip'arit' and Ivane Abazas-dze, *eristavi* of Kartli, deceived Japar, *emir* of Tbilisi, into going to Mukhatgverdi. They seized him and kept him in confinement for a long time, taking Birtvisi away from him. The King of the Abkhazians showed mercy towards Japar and sent him back as *emir* of Tbilisi. From then on enmity rankled between Lip'arit' and the *emir*. 5

A little while later, Lip'arit' advised Bagrat' to capture Tbilisi. The troops of the King of the Abkhazians closed in on Tbilisi on this side of the Mt'k'vari – upstream and downstream; on the other side of the river – from Isani – came the troops of the K'akhis and the Hers. At that time the great King K'virik'e of the K'akhis was killed by a certain Ossetian slave, for in a battle King K'virik'e had slain Urdure, King of the Ossetes. King K'virik'e was killed by the Ossetian slave through a blood feud during a hunt in the Pidrazi hills. 10

At that time, Gagik', son of David, the Armenian King of Samshvilde and Dzorak'ert', son of K'virik'e's sister, was King of K'akheti. For two years they waged warfare against Tbilisi. At the time, Japar son of Ali was the Tbilisi *emir*. The Tbilisians were in such dire straits that they paid five hundred dramas for a lit'ra¹⁰⁷ of asinine flesh; they could not stand the starvation and fierce fighting. The residents of Tbilisi decided to surrender the city. At the time of the siege of the city, the troops of the King of the Abkhazians captured the fortresses of Orbeti and Partskhisi. The *emir* made ready his troops, built rafts and boats in order to leave for Gandza by night to join Padlon's son Lashkari.¹⁰⁸ Now, certain *didebulis* of the King of the Abkhazians, acting without Lip'arit's knowledge, counseled the King not to expel the *emir*, and – without informing Lip'arit' – imposed peace on the *emir*, proclaiming and reinstating him as *emir* of Tbilisi. The King of the Abkhazians brought over to his side the K'akhis, Ashot' the *mtavari* of Marghili, King K'virik'e's sister's husband, and Khakhvila Gurta of Jvaris-tsikhe. The King of the Abkhazians left the city and opened hostilities against the K'akhis. Henceforward Lip'arit' cherished a grudge against his master. 15 20 25

The King of the Abkhazians set out on a campaign against K'akheti. Contacting the K'akhis, he engaged them on the mountain of Michael and Gabriel. In the battle the King of the Abkhazians captured St'epanoz Varjanis-dze, *eristavi* of P'ank'isi, Vache, son of Gurgen Beri, *eristavi* of Khornabuji, and Jedi, son of Goderdzi's sister, *eristavi* of Sht'ori and Mach'eli. Crossing into Tianeti, he burnt down the Bodoji palace, a magnificent edifice built by the great King K'virik'e. And these *eristavis* ingratiatingly surrendered their fortresses to him. However, the King failed to enter K'akheti, and turned back, for Lip'arit' became active with his crooked designs. 30

After a short time Lip'arit' brought Bagrat's brother Demet're over from Greece, with an army of the Greek King. Joined by some other *didebulis* and *aznauris*, they marched through the Upper Country, entered Kartli, and besieged At'eni, setting some areas of Kartli on fire. 35

Though Lip'arit' had the K'akhis and Greeks with him, they failed to take At'eni, for the masters of the fortress were firm in their loyalty to Bagrat', except Parsman Tmogveli and Beshken Jaq'eli, *eristavi* of Tukharisi. Passing into Javakheti, they (Lip'arit's men) began to build walls round Akhalkalaki, for at the time the city was not fortified. The winter came and the Greeks chose to return home. Lip'arit' made peace with the King of the Abkhazians, and the King granted Lip'arit' the *eristavate* of Kartli. The Greeks departed for Greece, taking Demet're along. 40

King Bagrat' again became powerful and supreme in his patrimony, for his fortune now rose: the *Vestes*¹⁰⁹ joined him with nine fortresses of Anisi, except Amberdi. The residents of Anisi transferred Anisi to Bagrat's mother, for the Armenians were their kinsmen: Queen Mariam, Bagrat's mother, was the daughter of Senakerem, King of the Armenians.

5 It was spring and Bagrat' was in Abkhazia. He had besieged Anak'opia, and was on the point of taking it when the elders of Tbilisi arrived with the news of the recent death of Japar, *emir* of Tbilisi. Promising him the city, they urged him to come without delay. He departed, leaving Otagho, son of K'vabuleli Ch'ach'a, with the Abkhazian army, in charge of the siege. Bagrat' came to Kutatisi, where he augmented his force with troops from Samokalako, near Kutatisi; he brought the Gurian *aznauris* and
10 the Lomsiani to Khupati. *Mangonels* were set, and the attack began. The King then came to Kartli where more elders from Tbilisi came to petition him to come to the city.

He went on to Tbilisi and was met in the field of Dighomi by the city elders, courtiers, riders, and all the populace on foot, lined up at Umedeuli, with many women and men in the square. On both sides the sound of trumpets and tambourines was so terrific as to make the earth tremble. And the joy on
15 both sides was astonishing. The King was led in and shown the town, dramas and drahk'ans were showered on him, the keys of the town were presented to him and he was led into the *emir's* palace.

King Bagrat' sat down to administer affairs. He took over the entrance towers with their men; this included Darijeli, the fortress of the city, and both towers of Tsq'alq'ini and Tabori, and he manned them with his own troops and *eristavis*. But the residents of Isani broke the bridge and did not surrender
20 Isani. *Mangonels* were put in position and Isani was attacked; arrows were fired. The King of the K'akhis, Gagik' and Goderdzi the *eristavi* of *eristavis*, and all the *didebulis* of K'akheti came to King Bagrat' to seek peace. Then King Bagrat' went into the field of Isani, summoned the K'akhis and accepted their homage, granting them peace and let them go. And there was joy and peace, and prosperity growing from day to day.

25 When the summer season passed, Lip'arit' again embarked on his perfidious scheming. By subterfuge he got out of Anisi – with the Queen's consent – and he seized Abuseri, *eristavi* of Art'anuji

and master of Khikha, Tsikhisjvari, and the fortress of Ats'q'uri, as well as Ivane the *eristavi*, Ivane Dadiani, and Guaram son of Goderdzi, master of the fortress of Bech'i. They were captured at the gate
30 of Anisi. The King left Tbilisi for Javakheti.

After this Mats'q'vereli (the bishop of the Ats'q'uri see) brought out the Meskhians, paid from Bagrat's treasury, to aid the King. The King had taken up a position at Ghrt'ila. Lip'arit' mustered the K'akhis and came to Pok'ani. Mats'q'vereli defected from King Bagrat' and conspired with Lip'arit'. As soon as the King learnt of this he passed through Shavsheti in a fearful winter blizzard and came to
35 Kartli.

Lip'arit' again brought Demet're, brother of King Bagrat', from Greece, aided by the treasury and troops of the Greek King. Lip'arit' split the men of this kingdom: some he brought over to Demet're, while others remained loyal to Bagrat'. But Lip'arit's son Ivane remained a hostage in Bagrat's hands. Lip'arit' begged Bagrat' for his release, and in return let Abuseri go in peace and restored his fortresses
40 to him. The K'akhis with their forces stood by Lip'arit', as well as King David of the Armenians with

his force. With their aid, Lip'arit' became powerful in this part of K'akheti. Intrigues against the King continued.

The Varangians came, three thousand men in all. Lip'arit' (?) stationed them at Bashi.¹¹⁰ He brought with him seven hundred more men. Bagrat' came with troops from the interior of the kingdom. Failing to wait for the Meskhians, the Varangians came and engaged Bagrat''s men at the entrance to Sasireti forest. The interior troops fled. In this battle Abuseri and other *didebulis* with him were captured; they failed to withstand the Varangians. Lip'arit' gave the Varangians servants who prepared food for them. They crossed the Likhi range.

Prior to this Bagrat''s brother Demet're had died. After his flight, Bagrat', fearing a split in his kingdom and patrimony, entreated Lip'arit', and, with a few horsemen, went to see him in Khovle. When Lip'arit' learned about Bagrat''s arrival, he avoided meeting him and left. The King too turned back and departed for Abkhazia. Within a short time, Sula *eristavi* of K'almakhi and Grigol *eristavi* of Art'anuji entered into a compact and, enlisting other Meskhian *aznauris*, summoned King Bagrat'. Setting out with an army and traversing the Rk'inis-jvari road, Bagrat' encamped at Arq'is-tsikhe. Learning of this, Lip'arit' mustered his troops and enlisted the K'akhis and Armenians. He had Greeks with him too. He made a surprise attack on Bagrat''s troops at Arq'is-tsikhe. A battle was fought in which Lip'arit' was again victorious, putting the King to flight. Sula *eristavi* of K'almakhi was captured and, subjecting him to many tortures they suspended him from a pole, and demanded that he yield K'almakhi, but he refused. Grigol son of Abuseri was captured in the same battle and, under the threat of death, Art'anuji was demanded from him; he surrendered it. Lip'arit' became powerful in the Upper Country, taking fortresses and winning over the chiefs. With the same troops Lip'arit' set out on a distant expedition for Dvin. He conducted a campaign against the ruler of Dvin on behalf of the Greek King, and returned home. Within a year, Turks of the Sultan Ibrahim Inal¹¹¹ appeared in the land of Basiani. The army of the Greek King marched out and Lip'arit' was called upon. Lip'arit' went to aid the Greeks with all his troops from the upper parts of the country. A battle was fought below Ordoro and Ukumia¹¹¹ and the Turks put the entire army of Greece and Lip'arit' to flight. There was a great slaughter, and Lip'arit' was captured and sent to the Sultan of Khorasan. The *didebulis* of this kingdom and Lip'arit''s sons Ivane and Niania, sought security, and so acknowledged Bagrat' as their King. Bagrat' regained power and captured Lip'arit''s sons. He took Uplistsikhe and released Ivane. The Turks had halted in the land of Gandza, and Gandza was on the point of being taken. The King of the Greeks sent the *rectori*¹¹² on his behalf with a large army. Bagrat' was summoned with his entire army, and he marched out with them. Advancing on the Turks, they came up to the gate of Gandza. Avoiding a confrontation, the Turks retreated. Having saved the land of Gandza, the army returned in peace. After this the residents of Tbilisi again invited Bagrat', yielded the city to him, and led him in. There was great joy and peace.

After this, Lip'arit' redeemed himself from the Turks and entered Anisi. Bagrat' left Tbilisi because of Lip'arit' and, passing through Kartli, came to Javakheti. Lip'arit''s power increased, for he had been taken captive for serving the Greek King. He went to Greece where he saw the Greek King and received forces from him. Bagrat' could not stand up to him.

Before this, Bagrat' had a son, Giorgi. Leaving Giorgi at Kutatisi to be King of the kingdom of Abkhazia, Bagrat' left for Greece. At that time Constantine Monomachus was King of the Greeks, and after him, Michael. Fearful of Lip'arit', Bagrat' could not return to his patrimony, and he stayed there for three years in great honour and respect.

5 While Bagrat' was in Greece, Lip'arit' asked Giorgi's mother and the *didebulis* of his country to make Bagrat's son King. Giorgi was brought to Ruisi church and enthroned. Lip'arit' was appointed his tutor, and Bagrat's sister, Queen Gurandukht' – a perfect person, matchless in appearance, wisdom, generosity, devoutness, and every virtue – was his patroness. After a short time, Gurandukht' asked the Greek King to return Bagrat', and the King of the Greeks sent him back with great honour,
10 and countless gifts and treasures. The entire army of Abkhazia came to meet him at Khupati, on the seashore. And there was great joy and thanks to God. He commanded and entered his own house in Kutatisi.

Lip'arit' established his sway over the entire Upper Country, and he was befriended by Toghril-Beg in Khorasan and by the Greek King in Greece. He brought up Bagrat's minor son Giorgi on behalf of the
15 King, while Bagrat' was in possession of the entire land below Likhi.

After a short while, the *didebulis* of this kingdom grew weary of Lip'arit's sway. Sula of K'almakhi and all the Meskhians deserted Lip'arit'. They seized Lip'arit' and his son Ivane at Dlivi, while Mania fled to K'Ide-k'arni, but the guardsmen of his father's fortress did not let him in; so he went to the Greeks in Anisi. Sula took Lip'arit' and Ivane captive, and took them to K'almakhi. Sula immediately despatched
20 heralds to the King. Gurandukht' and Bagrat's son Giorgi were at Ghr'tila, and when they learnt of the capture of Lip'arit' they took him to Akhalkalaki where they waited for Bagrat' to hand the captives over. Bagrat' arrived, and as a reward for this service, the King granted Sula Tsikhisjvari and Odzrkhe with Bodo-k'Ide as his patrimony, as well as much other property and church-plate, and whatever he desired.

25 Sula came into the presence of the King in Javakheti, bringing Lip'arit' and Ivane captive with him. He reported that he had deprived the Lip'arit' house of the fortresses of Art'anuji and Q'veli, Uplistsikhe and Birtvisi. But K'Ide-k'arni was firmly held by the garrison, for Anamori, Lip'arit's *mtsignobartukhutsesi*,¹¹³ was within the fortress. Lip'arit' and Ivane were taken to Trialeti. The guardsmen refused to surrender K'Ide-k'arni notwithstanding the persuasive negotiations. They erected poles and suspended Lip'arit'
30 and Ivane from them, exposing them to death. A few days later Lip'arit's guardsmen got the King and the *didebulis* of this kingdom to agree to let Lip'arit' and Ivane leave in peace. K'Ide-k'arni was surrendered. Lip'arit' took his property (from the fortress), clothed himself in a monk's garment, and committed his son Ivane to the King. The Argveti patrimony was left to Ivane. Swearing to the King that he would commit no more offences, Lip'arit' was set free, and he departed to the kingdom (of Greece).

35 After a short time Ivane stole away to Greece and stayed there for several years. Niania died at Anisi, in the service of the Greeks. Ivane's father interceded for him (Ivane) with Bagrat'. Bagrat' himself won Ivane over and brought him back to his kingdom, granting him the patrimony of Argveti and Kartli. He served the King loyally. He was chief of the *tavadis*¹¹⁴ of this kingdom and a good *sp'asalar*. Lip'arit'
40 passed away in the royal city of Constantinople in Greece, and his loyal friends and pupils conveyed him home with great honours: he was brought to Katskhi and buried in the family vault.

Bagrat' won fame and became more powerful than all the kings of his country. He took over all the fortresses of Hereti and K'akheti, apart from K'vet'ari and Nakhchevani. And after this great deeds were done and great kings arose.

In the time of Bagrat's reign, the Sultan Alp-Arslan, King of Persia, made some inroads. In a surprise move, he ravaged K'angari and Trialeti, and in a single day his raiders reached the environs of Q'veli, spilling over into Shavsheti, K'larjeti, and T'ao, up to Panask'ert'i. On the same day they reached Tori and Ghvis-khevi, the Sultan himself halting in Trialeti for three days. 5

Now, at that time the King was on his way to T'ao. With him were his mother, sister, and his son Giorgi. They had halted at Khek'rebulni. And when they were on the point of continuing their journey, the Sultan's troops appeared: they came and occupied the ridge. However, the King and his household managed to reach Kartli. The invaders went to Javakheti and laid siege to Akhalkalaki. The Meskhian *aznauris* and those of the upper part stood firm at Akhalkalaki and fighting continued for three days. As Akhalkalaki was not fortified well with a strong wall, the residents of the city, failing to withstand the bitter fighting, armed themselves, opened the gates, and engaged the enemy fiercely. Many were put to the sword. The Turks entered the city and took countless number of Christians prisoner. 10 15

They took treasures and many spoils, and the waters of Akhalkalaki were dyed red with blood.

From Akhalkalaki the Sultan dispatched an envoy to King Bagrat'. Foisting on him an alliance by marriage, the Sultan asked Bagrat' to give his niece to him in wedlock. Then the Sultan turned to Anisi, ravaging and taking the city. He massacred and took captive a countless number of people. And he departed to Persia, his country. Taking Anisi away from the Greeks, he gave it to Manucha son of Abulasvar.¹¹⁵ 20

Now, Bagrat's niece, whom the Sultan requested in marriage, was the daughter of the Armenian King K'virik'e's brother. Bagrat' asked the Armenian King but he refused the request. Bagrat' sent the *eristavi* Varaz-Bak'ur Gamrek'eli as a high-ranking envoy. Bagrat' also won over men of the Armenian King, and the Armenian King K'virik'e and his brother Sumbat', who were entering Samshvilde, were captured in the Kveshi¹¹⁶ forest, and this was reported to Bagrat'. He hurriedly left K'vakhvrelni, and the prisoners were brought to him near K'ide-k'arni. Bagrat' requested Samshvilde from K'virik'e, but was refused, for one of K'virik'e's brothers, Adarnase, resided in Samshvilde. Then K'virik'e was taken to Samshvilde, and a pole was erected from which the Armenian K'virik'e was suspended for three days. The Armenians asked for peace and ceded Samshvilde. Two *eristavis* of the Armenian King had come: the *eristavis* of Luk'ia and of K'akvakar. Sumbat', brother of K'virik'e, offered and ceded three fortresses: Opreti, K'oshk'i, and Varzakar. Bagrat's heart went out to K'virik'e: he vacated all the fortresses and gave them back, barring Samshvilde. He did not allow any other noble owners of the fortress into Samshvilde, but kept it for his own residence. In this way, the Armenians submitted to him. 25 30

The great King Bagrat' gave his daughter Marta in marriage to the Greek King. After that he gave his niece in marriage to the Persian King, the Sultan. Three years later the Sultan marched out, skirted Rani, and entered Hereti by surprise. In that country the *didebulis* were at one, and loyal to Bagrat'. At that time, Aghsartan, son of Gagik', a man of modest substance, was King of K'akheti. All (K'akhis) abandoned their fortresses and fled to the Caucasus (mountains). Bagrat' was on a campaign to take K'akheti, and his troops had been sent forward with Ts'irkvaleli, *eristavi* of Vezhini. Returning safely, they 35 40

informed Bagrat' about the invasion of the Sultan and the abandonment of the fortresses. Turning back at once, he came to his own country, Kartli.

5 Aghsartan defected to the Sultan. He made him large gifts, abandoned his faith, circumcised himself, and pledged to pay tribute. The Sultan gave him all the deserted fortresses: those abandoned by the men of the Abkhazian King as well as those vacated by Aghsartan's men. And three weeks later he marched out against the King of the Abkhazians. He was joined by the Armenian King K'virik'e, the *emir* of Tbilisi, and Aghsartan. Entering Kartli via Jach'vi and letting out the marauders at dawn, the whole of Kartli was filled with them towards evening, on Tuesday the tenth of December; and it was two hundred and eighty-eight of the *koronik'on*.

10 And bread and wine were in abundance in Kartli. The Sultan stayed six weeks, and he began to ravage and slay the people. His marauders crossed into Argveti, laying waste the place up to the fortress of Sveri. A countless number of Christians were slain and taken prisoner. The land of Kartli was abominable for men to see: all the churches were devastated and one could not set one's eyes on the ground for the number of dead bodies. The sky above bore witness to God's wrath for our sins, and a blood-raining cloud covered Kartli in the east, and the light of the day changed into a dark night. Its sight was terrible and awesome, and at places men saw visions of a rain of blood. And there came a harsh winter: whoever left for the mountains died from the severity of the season. The army (of the Turks) was deployed throughout Kartli, while the Sultan himself established his quarters at K'arbi, and then he came down to Shertulni. He suffered from the hard winter and strong blizzards.

20 King Bagrat' sent Ivane, son of Lip'arit', as an envoy to the Sultan to seek peace. But the Sultan sent him back to Bagrat' in Abkhazia, demanding tribute and promising peace. However, unable to wait for an answer because of the severe winter, the Sultan left Kartli. On his way out he took Tbilisi and Rustavi and turned them over to Padlon, ruler of Gandza. He took this kingdom of Tbilisi and Rustavi not only out of hostility to our kings, or just because of the hypocrisy of the *emirs* at his court, but because the Turks do evil to every man in repayment for the good service they render. For they trusted in the power of their godlessness, and were perfidious in every respect. And during the desolation of Kartli the Sultan's army numbered five hundred thousand men.

30 The Sultan went back to his own country. And when the spring season came there was great flooding, and the Mt'k'vari, finding its bed too narrow, covered the valleys and carried away many of those who had survived the Sultan's invasion. Padlon, with arrogance and lawlessness, began to take artisans from the environs of Tbilisi. When spring came the King arrived in Kartli and stationed himself at Didgori,¹¹⁷ for that place is a summer retreat of the kings. Padlon ignored the King's presence in Didgori. Marching out with an army of thirty-three thousand men, Padlon came to Tbilisi and encamped in the Isani valley. Leaving his tents there, he marched round Mukhnari through the night and ravaged the marches of Kartli.

35 When the King of the Abkhazians, residing outside Tbilisi, learned about the damage done to Kartli by Padlon's invasion, he sent Ivane son of Lip'arit', Niania son of K'vabuli, Murvan Jaq'eli *eristavi* of Q'veli, and a small number of other *aznauris*, with picked troops, to reconnoiter. However, they failed to find Padlon in Kartli, but caught up with the retreating enemy in front of Mukhnari, near the Ts'ilk'ani hills. Engaging the rear-guard, they put Padlon to flight at the very first touch of swords. Padlon's fugitive

troops came to the Narek'vavi ravine. The troops of the Abkhazian King slew and captured the enemy, so that the ravine was filled with horses and men.

The fleeing troops that were above the ravine began to escape through the Shobo forest. Bagrat's troops caught the troops of Padlon hiding like sparrow nestlings in the woods and bushes. Coming upon them in the Gharta defile, few were allowed to escape. Bagrat's troops pursued the enemy up to the Kherk'i mountain. Padlon's troops were cut down and taken prisoner. With about fifteen riders, Padlon took the Ts'ilk'ani road, came to the bank of the Aragvi, then passing through rugged country, reached Erts'o. He pretended to be a messenger, saying: "I am Padlon's messenger bearing good news for Aghsartan: we have put the army of the Abkhazian King to flight."

There was a knowledgeable man there who knew Padlon, and he said: "You are not a messenger but you are Padlon, *emir of emirs*". Padlon replied to that man: "Accept gold and silver in abundance and many other valuables, and do not denounce me; lead me out into the valley and accompany me." The man answered: "I cannot do that, for I am a native of this land. Now listen to me and follow me, and I shall take you to Aghsartan and let him send you to your country".

Padlon did not wish to do that, but he was unable to get out of Erts'o. The man led him to Isak T'oloshelidze, a Meskhian *aznauri*, who lived in Zhaleti. When the latter learnt about Padlon's arrival he robbed his men, threw them off their horses, laid hold of them, and put Padlon on a mule. Isak was oblivious of the fact that he was a subject of the Abkhazian King and that, having captured Padlon who had fled from the King of the Abkhazians, he ought to have taken him to Boch'orma for Bagrat'. Instead, he hurriedly took Padlon away and handed him to Aghsartan in Telavi. And Aghsartan immediately took him to Khornabuji, for he feared pursuit by the King of the Abkhazians. When Padlon was shown to the guards of Khornabuji ¹¹⁸ he ceded Khornabuji. He was taken to Aradeti and he turned Aradeti too over to Aghsartan.

Bagrat' feared that Padlon might be released by the K'akhis. He gave Boch'orma and Ujarma to the K'akhis, and took Padlon with him. Padlon was put on a pole and taken to Tbilisi. Tbilisi was taken with difficulty, for a certain man within the city intended to become *emir*. Bagrat' did not hold onto Tbilisi, but sought out Sital-Arab,¹¹⁹ whom he had left in Dmanisi, led him to Tbilisi, and gave the city to him. For himself, Bagrat' took the fortresses of Rustavi, Partskhisi, Agarani, Grigol-ts'midani, Kavazini, and forty-four thousand *drahk'ans* and hostages, as well as Padlon's cousin, son of Manucha, and three chiefs of Gandza.

The Sultan sent Alkhaz the *sarang*¹²⁰ and, through his mediation and at the Sultan's instance, Bagrat' made peace with Padlon and let him go, sending him back to his dominion in Gandza. And the *sarang* went with him. Bagrat' was presented with the keys of Gagi, and the King of the Abkhazians took Gagi. After this Padlon broke his oath and the surety of the great Sultan and stole Kavazini. After this the King was in Abkhazia, and Padlon came and besieged Agarani. The commandant yielded Agarani. But the King came in haste, laid siege to Agarani and captured it.

Bagrat' brought Dorgholel, King of the Ossetes with forty thousand of his troops, put his own son, Giorgi the Kuropalate at their head, and ravaged Gandza. He took innumerable prisoners and spoils, then sent them to his kingdom. After this, Dorgholel, the great King of the Ossetes, wished to visit his brother-in-law Bagrat' the *Sebastos*,¹²¹ and requested an audience with him. Bagrat' assented and

the King of the Ossetes set out joyfully with all the chiefs of Ossetia and, taking the road of Abkhazia, arrived in Kutatisi. He saw his sister the Queen, mother of Giorgi the Kuropalate. Giorgi the Kuropalate had been granted the title earlier.

5 The King (of the Ossetes) was brought to Kartli. The King was stationed in T'iniskhidi forest, at Nadarbazevi. He met the Ossetes with great pomp and honours. They got together at K'ezuni. There was great joy and a terrific sound of trumpets and tambourines. They spent twelve days together, sporting in great peace and joy. But they cut short the visit owing to the approach of winter. Bagrat' gave gifts and presents to the King and all the nobles of Ossetia. He sent them away, and they departed joyfully.

10 After this the Sultan sent envoys and presents to King Bagrat', asking for tribute with some sweet talk. However, King Bagrat' did not assume payment of his tribute, but he too sent envoys and presents. There was ostensible amity between them in words.

15 A few years later, King Bagrat', who was staying at the Samshvilde lakes, was afflicted with stomach disease. He went to Marabda, but the disease became worse and he was carried in a litter, accompanied by Giorgi the Kuropalate and all his *didebulis*. Giorgi the Kuropalate had earlier received the title of Kuropalate. The King was brought to Kartli, and all his *didebulis* came too. His mother, Queen Mariam, his wife Borena, and his daughter Mariam arrived. Within a few days he offered Giorgi the Kuropalate as King to the *didebulis* of this kingdom. To his mother he said: "Mother, I pity you, for you will die having first buried all those born by you." After this he passed away on the twenty-fourth of November, two
20 hundred and ninety-two of the *koronik'on*.

At the time of Bagrat''s death, the Sultan was killed in his tent, right among his own troops, by an old Turk. The Sultan crossed the Ghihon¹²² with seven hundred thousand men, fought against the King of the Turks and besieged a fortress close to Samarkand, but was killed by the owner of the fortress. The Turk had no time to find safety in the fortress: he was mercilessly cut to pieces with a
25 sword. Bagrat' and the Sultan were unaware of each other's death.

After this, Bagrat''s son Giorgi the Kuropalate became King. The grief at Bagrat''s death was universal and "even hens fell silent through the land."¹²³ With great praise and honour he was borne to Ch'q'ondidi and buried there. King Bagrat' became King at the age of nine, and when he died he was fifty-six years old. Bagrat' was first Kuropalate, then *nobilissimus*,¹²⁴ and subsequently he became
30 *sebastos*. In appearance he was the handsomest of all men, full of wisdom, a philosopher, felicitous with fortune, the richest of all the kings of Abkhazia, gracious to wrongdoers, and generous.¹²⁵ However, in his time, the country had little peace: the churches and peasants, the *aznauris* and the poor failed to find justice.¹²⁶

King Giorgi was kind and just to the poor, a redoubtable man and most generous of all the kings
35 of Abkhazia, the best banqueter of all men, a choice rider and archer. After the death of his father, Giorgi spent one winter and half of the summer in peace. But afterwards the *tavadis* of this country – Niania, son of K'vabuli, Ivane son of Lip'arit', and Vardan *eristavi* of the Svans acted, as if they had lost something and because of Giorgi's youth, cast the country into turmoil. Ivane enlisted the K'akhis and took up a position on the bank of the Ksani; Niania seized the Kutatisi armoury and entrenched himself
40 in Kutatisi; Vardan led the Svans, bent on evil, to rebel. They raided and devastated Saegro¹²⁷.

However, Giorgi conquered with goodness, wisdom, and lack of rancour. He granted Samshvilde to Ivane, and to Ivane's son Lip'arit' he gave Lots'obanni in return for Rustavi which was given to the K'akhis; to Niania he gave Tmogvi and other choice property; to Vardan he granted Ask'alana, and – on the advice of Ivane – he gave Utaghubo to the house of Jaq'eli. Thus King Giorgi granted all – both the faithful and the false – with favour, thereby pacifying his kingdom.

5

Ivane, son of Lip'arit', again broke away. King Giorgi's soon found out. Coming to Samtskhe from Kutatisi, he enlisted the support of the Meskhians. Marching out, he came to the gate of Samshvilde. He brought Aghsartan, King of the K'akhis, to the same place. Failing to stand his ground in the fortress, Ivane retreated into the southern mountains. In those troubled times, Aghsartan took Lots'obanni away from Lip'arit'. Leaving Samshvilde and crossing into Javakheti, Giorgi, the King of kings, had Ivane brought into his presence, and they swore an oath at Ekranta, and Ivane was endorsed as ruler of K'ide-k'arni and Samshvilde.

10

Ivane again rebelled. He took Gagi from the guards of King Giorgi by ruse and sold it to Padlon, ruler of Gandza. And the Sultan Malik Shah came as an enemy of all Christians. Ivane sent his son Lip'arit' to the Sultan who accepted him. Lip'arit' stayed for a while with him and then stole away. The Sultan laid siege to Samshvilde and siezed it. Ivane himself, his wife and grandchildren, and all the *aznauris* with their families were taken prisoner. The Sultan held Samshvilde, and during his stay there he ravaged Kartli, carried off countless captives and spoils, and departed. He took Gandza and left a *sarang* as chief of Gandza and fifty thousand men with him to fight the whole country. Padlon entrenched himself in strong fortresses but failed to withstand the enemy. He too was brought out and imprisoned.

15

20

After a short while, the *sarang* mustered all his own troops and those of Gandza and, supported by the *emirs* of Dvin and Dmanisi, marched against King Giorgi. Giorgi, King of kings mustered all his troops of the Upper and Lower regions, brought Aghsartan, King of the K'akhis, and the two sides confronted each other. God gave power to King Giorgi and, bearing the honourable cross in front of him, he attacked the enemy below Partskhisi. The *sarang*'s camp fled: the enemy was driven out and destroyed. It was evening time and dusk saved the remnants of the *sarang*'s army. Giorgi King of kings returned to his kingdom without loss and in peace.

25

After this God granted (Giorgi) the fortresses taken forcibly by the Greeks. He took away from the Greeks Anak'opia – the principal fortress of Abkhazia – and many fortresses of K'larjeti, Shavsheti, Javakheti, and Art'aani. And afterwards God granted him the city of K'ari – the fortress and the adjoining country, and the strongholds of Vanand and K'arnipora, and he drove the Turks out of the land.

30

NOTES

- ¹ The Old-Georgian designation of Western Georgia deriving from the tribal name Egri. Egrisi is coterminus with Colchis and Lazica.
- ² A region in Eastern Georgia. According to historical tradition, the designation derives from Kartlos, one of the Georgian ethnarchs. In the 3rd century B.C., a state took shape here under the hegemony of Kartli, with its centre at Mtskheta. In the Middle Ages the cultural and political influence of Kartli over the adjacent and distant regions grew, resulting in the emergence of Georgia as a new historical entity.
- ³ A region in Eastern Georgia, encompassing the middle and lower course of the Iori river and the Alazani basin. Its ancient centre was Cheleti; from the 4th century A.D., it was Ujarma, and from the 11th century, Telavi.
- ⁴ In medieval Georgian historiography Byzantium was referred to as Greece. The present translation follows this usage.
- ⁵ "General" – Old. Persian: *spada-salar*, later *sipah-salar*.
- ⁶ Commander of the Khazar King. In 764 he led a campaign against Kartli.
- ⁷ The Georgian designation of Daghestan.
- ⁸ The capital of Georgia. It became the capital of Kartli early in the 6th century A.D., when Dachi, son of Vakht'ang Gorgasali, transferred the capital from Mtskheta. The city played a major role in the Middle Ages.
- ⁹ The road linking Trans- and Cis-Caucasia. The designation is Persian, signifying the "Gate of the Alans." In Old Georgian and foreign sources it is referred to as Darialan, Dariela, the Aragvi Gate, the Gate of the Ossetes, Iberian Gate, Caucasian Gate, etc.
- ¹⁰ The Iranian Khosroids are implied.
- ¹¹ Reference to Vakht'ang Gorgasali, King of Kartli (circa 450s- 50s), under whom Kartli waged a successful struggle for independence. He died of a grave wound received in a battle against the Iranians.
- ¹² The royal dynasty in Georgia from the ninth century, to 1810, originating in the ancient Georgian province of Speri. Adarnase was the first Bagrat'id to assume the title of King. Bagrat' III (975-1014), the first king of a united Georgia, belonged to that branch.
- ¹³ This was probably Ibn Usaid as-Sulam, a high-ranking Arab military ruler under whom (754-764) the Tbilisi Emirate grew in importance and the city recovered from Khazar devastation.
- ¹⁴ Occurring in Georgian sources both as Somkheti (Armenia) and Somkhiti (a province in south-eastern Georgia). Reference in the present text is exclusively Armenia proper.
- ¹⁵ A historical province in Eastern Georgia, occurring in the sources for the first time in the fifth century. In ancient times it formed part of the kingdom of Caucasian Albania. In the twelfth century, the Hereti Eristavate, an administrative-political unit of the Georgian feudal monarchy, came into being on its territory.
- ¹⁶ A term denoting the ruler of a province in early Georgia. Originally the *eristavis* were officials of the Kartlian king, but subsequently they came to inherit the office. According to the historian Juansher, this took place in the sixth century A.D., when *eristavis* received charters from the Persian kings and Byzantine emperors, conferring the office on them in perpetuity. From the eleventh century, the *eristavis* were officials of the Georgian kings. A system of *eristavates* developed, which continued to the fifteenth century.
- ¹⁷ Leon II was the first King of the so-called Kingdom of Abkhazia, a West-Georgian state. Taking advantage of the weakening of the Byzantine Empire in the last quarter of the eighth century, and enlisting Khazar support, Leon II declared himself King. The kingdom, embracing the whole of Western Georgia (with Kutaisi as its capital), received the designation "Kingdom of the Abkhazians," after the royal dynasty. Beginning with the rule of Leon II, the traditions of the East Georgian Church supplanted Byzantine traditions in the West Georgian Church.
- ¹⁸ The range which divides Georgia into eastern and western parts.
- ¹⁹ See the translation of this paragraph in M. F. Brosset, *Historie de la Georgie (History of Georgia)*, St. Petersburg: 1849 p.259, note 5.
- ²⁰ A region in historical southern Georgia, covering the lower course of the Ch'orokhi river basin, from the Arsiani Range to the Black Sea. The fortress of Tukharisi was the ancient centre of K'larjeti. The region was governed by

the King's *eristavi* whose residence from the fifth century, must have been the fortress of Art'anuji. The royal house of the Bagrat'ids established itself here in the eighth century.

²¹ A region in historical south-western Georgia, bound by the Arsiani Range, the Art'anuji rocky massif and the Ch'orokhi river. There were numerous churches and monasteries here. The T'beti episcopate was founded in the tenth century.

²² An ancient historical province of Georgia, located in south-west Georgia on the Black Sea shore.

²³ A region in historical southern Georgia.

²⁴ An historical stronghold in ancient Georgia.

²⁵ An historical region and fortified city in southern Georgia, in the upper reaches of the Mt'k'vari (Kura). In the second century, the Tsunda eristavate was set up here. In the fifth century, Vakht'ang Gorgasali founded an episcopate, with its centre at Erusheti.

²⁶ T'ao lay in historical southern Georgia, in the middle course of the Ch'orokhi river. In the third-fourth centuries, T'ao formed an integral part of the kingdom of Kartli. It was seized by the Armenian state in the second century, becoming a disputed territory for some time. Subsequently it reverted to Kartli, both politically and culturally. In the eighth to tenth centuries, it was a scene of extensive monastic construction. The rule of the Bagrat'id dynasty started here.

²⁷ Founder of the Bagrat'id dynasty of T'ao-K'larjeti. His successors – called "Kings of the Georgians" – founded the royal dynasty of the Bagrat'ids.

²⁸ Kuropalate was a high-ranking official at the Byzantine Court.

In the eighth century, it developed into an honorary title conferred on representatives of the higher aristocracy. From the eleventh century, foreign and Byzantine authorities received a kuropalateship in acknowledgement of some service. From the eleventh century, the title was conferred on Iberian – first T'ao-K'larjetian, and later all-Georgian – kings and princes (*mtavaris*).

²⁹ Ali ibn Shuab (829-833), emir of Tbilisi. For the history of the Tbilisi Emirate see M. Lordkipanidze, *Tbilisis saemiros ist'oria (History of Tbilisi Emirate)*, Tbilisi: 1951. See also J. Marquart, *Osteuropaische und Ostasiatische Streifziige (Eastern Europe and Eastern Asiatic raids)*, Leipzig, 1903.

³⁰ Grigol was the *mtavari* of K'akheti. He united K'akheti, Kukheti, and Gardabani, and was called *mtavari* or *Khorepiscopus* of the K'akhis. Early in the eleventh century, he captured a large part of Inner Kartli, which was later taken over by Ashot' the Kuropalate.

³¹ The Ts'anars were a Georgian (K'akhetian) people settled in the territory of the Darial Gorge (the historical Ts'anareti province). Attaining greater power in the eighth-ninth centuries, the Ts'anars took an active part in the social, economic, political and cultural life of K'akheti between the eighth and eleventh centuries.

³² Khalil ibn Yazid, Arab commander. For references see M. Lordkipanidze, *op.cit.*, n.31.

³³ Sahak', or Ishak ibn Ismail, was emir of Tbilisi in 831-853. A descendant of the Shuab house and a powerful ruler, he succeeded in controlling the neighbouring peoples. With the capture of Tbilisi by Bugha the Turk in 853, he was taken prisoner and put to death.

³⁴ A region in Upper Kartli, southern Georgia. From early times it was one of the eristavates of the kingdom of Kartli, with Tsunda as its centre. From the eleventh century, Akhalkalaki became the centre of Upper Javakheti. From the eleventh century, Tmogvi was the centre of Lower Javakheti.

³⁵ A city hewn in the rock. It is situated in Inner Kartli. The architectural complex was mainly built in the Early Classical (from sixth to fourth century B.C.) and Hellenistic periods (from third to first century B.C.). Several medieval rock-hewn complexes also occur here. During the struggle for the unification of Georgia, Uplistsikhe frequently changed hands. Georgian kings also fought actively for its possession.

³⁶ The capital of (Caucasian) Albania from the fifth century. Lying at the junction of trade routes, it was a major centre of commerce and handicrafts.

³⁷ In 853-854, the Arabs, acting on the order of the caliph al-Mutawakkil, captured Tbilisi. The Arab army was led by Bugha the Turk. The Arab campaign caused great devastation in Georgia. Tbilisi was burnt down, with the loss 50,000 lives.

- ³⁸ Tevdosi was king of Western Georgia (the Kingdom of the Abkhazians) in 798-825. *Mat'iane kartlisa* erroneously credits him with fighting against Bugha the Turk. During the latter's invasion (853), Tevdosi's brother Demet're II was King of the Abkhazians.
- ³⁹ An historical region in medieval Georgia, lying in the central part of the Main Caucasus Range, between the Darial Gorge and the Mamison Pass. From the time of the emergence of the Iberian state (fourth-third centuries B.C.) this territory formed part of Georgia.
- ⁴⁰ A state in the central part of the Northern Caucasus. It grew in power in the tenth-thirteenth centuries.
- ⁴¹ Daruband (Derbent) is a city in Daghestan. In the seventh-ninth centuries, it was within the Caliphate, and from the tenth century, the centre of a feudal principality.
- ⁴² Shankor (Shamkor) lies in the territory of modern Azerbaijan. In the mid-seventh century it was seized by the Arabs. Later it belonged to the Shaddadid dynasty, emirs of Ganja.
- ⁴³ A city situated in Georgia's southern uplands. Inhabited from ancient times, it was a small settlement in the sixth-eighth centuries. The city boasted the cathedral church of the Dmanisi episcopate. In the ninth century it was under Arab rule.
- ⁴⁴ According to the Georgian sources, Rani, Arani; in Armenian, Ran; in Syriac, Aran; in Greek, Aryana – an Arabized designation of the territory of Caucasian Albania.
- ⁴⁵ A region in medieval Eastern Georgia. It encompassed the upper reaches of the Ktsia river and the ravines of the Shavts'q'arosts'q'ali. From early times it belonged to the eristavate of Samshilde. In the eleventh century, Guaram Mampal wrested it from the Arabs and, adding the neighbouring areas, created Samamplo. In the 1070s, an Argveti noble, Lip'arit' Baghvashi, built the K'Ide-k'ari fortress and, by uniting the political entities of Trialeti, set up the K'Ide-k'ari eristavate.
- ⁴⁶ A region in medieval Georgia, covering the valley of Tashists'q'ali, a left tributary of the Debeda. Its centre was Odzuni. Trade-and-caravan routes to Akhalkalaki in Javakheti and to Abotsi lay through the province. At the turn of the tenth to eleventh centuries, it formed part of the kingdom of T'ashir-Dzorageti.
- ⁴⁷ A historical province on Georgia's southern border, forming an integral part of the country from the seventh century. According to Old-Georgian sources, it first belonged to the eristavate of Samshilde, and later to Lore-T'ashiri.
- ⁴⁸ A region and town in historical south-western Georgia
- ⁴⁹ This is Lip'arit' Baghvashi, first *eristavi* of the eristavate of K'Ide-k'ari. Owing to the struggle for supremacy waged between the principalities in the 880s, he emigrated from the Argveti patrimony of the Baghvashis and settled in Trialeti where he built a fortress and set up the eristavate of K'Ide-k'ari.
- ⁵⁰ A major administrative unit in feudal Georgia from the 880s to 1103 (See also preceding note). One of the oldest monasteries in Georgia, and a major seat of old Georgian culture.
- ⁵¹ Historical province in south-western Georgia.
- ⁵² A historical province in southern Georgia. According to one view, it was earlier called Odzrkhe. Its oldest centres were Odzrkhe and Ats'q'uri. A historical stronghold in southern Georgia, founded by Odzrkhos, one of the Georgian ethnarchs. From the first half of the third century B.C., it was the residence of the *eristavi* of Samtskhe and A'chara. From the fifth century A.D. it was the residence of the royal family. In the eleventh century, the Georgian King Bagrat' IV granted it to Sula Kalmakheli, an influential feudal lord.
- ⁵³ The old name of Akhaltsikhe.
- ⁵⁴ The ruling class of Georgian feudal society. The existence of great *aznauris* and non-*aznauris* (*uaznoni*) in Georgia is attested to from the fifth century.
- ⁵⁵ King of the early feudal West-Georgian state ("The Kingdom of the Abkhazians"). "King of the Abkhazians" became firmly established in the title of Georgian kings, e.g. "David, King of the Abkhazians, the Kartvels, the Ranis, the K'akhis, and the Armenians".
- ⁵⁶ A fortified city and major political and economic centre of historical K'akheti. From the fourth century, Ujarma was the centre of the eristavate of K'akheti.
- ⁵⁷ A tenth-century Georgian churchman and bishop of T'beti. He authored the hagiographic work "The Passion of the Sainly Martyr Gobron," in which the struggle of the Georgians against the Arabs is described.
- ⁵⁸ An Armenian city. In the fourth-thirteenth centuries, it was a major trading and artisan centre.

- 59 A village in K'akheti. At Vezhini (Vejini) fortress the "King of the Abkhazians," Konstantin III and K'virik'e I, *mtavari* of K'akheti, concluded a truce with Adarnase the Patrikios, ruler of Hereti.
- 60 For a discussion of the term patrician/patrikios, see C.Toumanoff, *Medieval Georgian Historical Literature (VII-XVth centuries)*, Traditio, 1943 p., 578.
- 61 A strategic point in ancient Hereti. It was situated on a trade route connecting Kartli and K'akheti with the interior of Albania in early feudal times.
- 62 This is the first reference to Gavazi in *mat'iane kartlisa*. Situated in K'akheti, it was an important agricultural point.
- 63 One of Hereti's fortresses.
- 64 Konstantin III, King of the "Kingdom of the Abkhazians," circa 893-922; son of Bagrat' I, he fought for the unification of Georgia.
- 65 A well-known Georgian architectural monastic complex in the Alazani valley, K'akheti. It was founded in the sixth century by K'virik'e Alaverdeli. In the eleventh century, K'virik'e, King of the K'akhis, built a large cathedral church on the site of the small church of St. George. Alaverdi became a major seat of learning.
- 66 This is "King of the Abkhazians," Giorgi II (922-957), son of Konstantin III. Giorgi II founded the Ch'q'ondidi Episcopal see.
- 67 A city in Western Georgia. In the first half of the seventh century, a church was built here, which turned into an episcopal see in the tenth century.
- 68 A historical stronghold in Inner Kartli, Eastern Georgia. It was built by the *Khorepiscopos* Padla II, in the tenth century.
- 69 "The Church of the Cross" (at Mtskheta) is an important Georgian architectural monument, built at the turn of the sixth and seventh centuries.
- 70 A geographical point in Inner Kartli.
- 71 The Georgian name of the Kura, the largest river in Caucasia, running through Georgia.
- 72 A medieval Armenian kingdom ruled by the Artsruni dynasty.
- 73 A city of feudal Georgia, built in the At'eni ravine in the mid-eleventh century, by King Bagrat' IV (1027-1072).
- 74 The land inhabited by the Jiki (Circassian) tribes of Abkhaz-Adyghe provenance, lying in the north-western Caucasus.
- 75 A historical province in Kartli, Eastern Georgia.
- 76 A village in Western Georgia. It boasts a cathedral church built by Leon III (957-967), King of the Abkhazians.
- 77 A river in Eastern Georgia.
- 78 The Georgian *ch'ala* means straw, hence worthless. According to M. Lordkipanidze's conjecture, reference here may be to Teodosi the Blind. See M. Lordkipanidze, *mat'iane kartlisa*, Tbilisi: 1976, p.77, note 126; see also M. F. Brosset, *op.cit.*, p.292, note 2; Herausgegeben von Gertrud Patch, *Das Leben Kartlis. Eine Chronik aus Georgien 300-1200 (The Life of Kartli. Georgian Chronicles 300-1200)*, Leipzig: 1985, p.345.
- 79 A great feudal lord in Western Georgia, *eristavi* of Kartli in the 970s. An initiator of the unification of Georgia, he actively supported the process.
- 80 David III, the Great Kuropalate (d.1001), representative of the Bagrat'id branch, and King of T'ao. It was under the leadership of David III and the backing of Ivane Marushidze that the plan of enthroning his foster son and ward Bagrat' III, as leader of a united Georgian kingdom, was implemented.
- 81 A geographical point in Inner Kartli.
- 82 A seat of Georgian culture in T'ao – from the Middle Ages, historical southern Georgia. The monastery is an important architectural monument.
- 83 A political figure of the second half of the tenth century. She was the daughter of Giorgi II, King of the Abkhazians (922- 957), and wife of Gurgen, the King of kings (994-1008). Residing in Western Georgia, Gurandukht' ruled Kartli, with its political centre in Uplistsikhe.
- 84 A village in Inner Kartli, mentioned in *mat'iane kartlisa* for the first time.
- 85 A great Kartlian *aznauri* in the second half of the tenth century. Under his leadership the *aznauris* of Kartli gave battle at Moghri to Bagrat' III on his way from Western Georgia to Kartli. The King defeated the *aznauris* and confiscated part of Kavtar's patrimonial lands.
- 86 A geographical point in Kartli.

- ⁸⁷ Rat'i Baghvashi, ruler of the K'ide-k'ari eristavate in the mid-eleventh century.
- ⁸⁸ An historical province (eristavate) in Western Georgia. In the 730s, David and Konstantin Mkheidze were *mtavaris* of Argveti. In the first half of the eleventh century, Khursi and Giorgi are mentioned as *mtavaris* of Argveti. The patrimony of the Baghvashis was here.
- ⁸⁹ According to Brosset, this queen was already dead, so Bagrat' must have taken her remains; see Brosset, *op.cit.*, p.298, n.7.
- ⁹⁰ Ruler of the Shaddadid state in the first half of the eleventh century (985-1031).
- ⁹¹ An important monument of Georgian architecture. Its donor, Bagrat' III, is depicted on the southern wall.
- ⁹² One of the oldest cities of Georgia; second in size to Tbilisi; centre of Western Georgia.
- ⁹³ An obscure passage. See Brosset's translation (*op.cit.*) and note 2, p. 301. See also Patsch, *op.cit.* p.356.
- ⁹⁴ Basil II (976-1025). For references on his campaigns in Georgia see Brosset, *op.cit.*, pp.306-310; M. Lordkipanidze, *op.cit.*, notes 159-168, pp.79-80; G. Tsulaia, *Letopis Kartli (The Georgian Chronicle)* Tbilisi:1982, notes 91-100, pp. 92-94..
- ⁹⁵ A province in historical southern Georgia.
- ⁹⁶ A geographical point in southern Georgia.
- ⁹⁷ The scene of a great battle between the Georgians and the Byzantines in 1021.
- ⁹⁸ For a discussion of the word, see Toumanoff, *op.cit.*, p. 544., note 49.
- ⁹⁹ For references on the rebellion see M. Lordkipanidze, *op.cit.* notes 165 and 166, p.80; Tsulaia, *op.cit.* notes 94-96, p.93; Brosset, *op.cit.*, note 2, p.307, note 102, p.308. Toumanoff, *op.cit.*
- ¹⁰⁰ From the Greek *katepano*; a provincial governor under the Byzantine emperors.
- ¹⁰¹ An official at the Byzantine Royal Court.
- ¹⁰² "The night-nurse on duty, guard" – an official at the Byzantine imperial court. See Brosset, *op.cit.* p.312, note I.
- ¹⁰³ "One who sits in the first place, a president," a Byzantine official.
- ¹⁰⁴ "Keeper of archives", an official at the Byzantine imperial court. See Brosset, *op.cit.*, p.312.
- ¹⁰⁵ According to the Georgian chronicler Sumbat' Davidis-dze, Valanges was the name of Iovane the Chartularius; ("kholo moavlina man p'ark'imanosman Iovane Chart'ulari, sakhelit Valang, lashkrita did dzalita" ("And the Parakoimomenos sent Iovane the Chartularius, named Valanges, with a great army"), *Kartlis tskhovreba*, S. Q'aukhchishvili (ed.), Tbilisi: 1955, Vol.1, p.386.
- ¹⁰⁶ A fortified city in feudal Georgia.
- ¹⁰⁷ Old Georgian measure of weight, approximately equal to 1 lb.
- ¹⁰⁸ Ali Lashkari II (1034-1049); M. Lordkipanidze, *op.cit.*, p.82, note 202; G.Tsulaia, *op.cit.*, p.95, note I, 15; C. E. Bosworth, *The Islamic Dynasties*, Edinburgh: UP, 1967.
- ¹⁰⁹ For a discussion of the term and references see Tsulaia, *op.cit.*, p.96, note I, 18; Brosset, *op.cit.*, p.319, note 2.
- ¹¹⁰ The Old Georgian text characteristically begins with the predicate, omitting the subject. Thus, "Stationed them at Bashi:" who stationed them, Bagrat' or Lip'arit'? Hence the controversy over the translation of this passage. Brosset (*op. cit.* p.321) believed that the Varangians fought on King Bagrat's side. M. Lordkipanidze (*op.cit.* p.50-51) concurs with N. Berdzenishvili's view, according to which the Varangians were on Lip'arit's side. See N. Berdzenishvili, *Sakartvelos istoriis sakitkhebi, (Questions of Georgian History)*, Tbilisi: Metsniereba, 1971, pp. 192-204. Tsulaia's Russian translation follows the Georgian original is not stating the subject, thus admitting to a dual interpretation. Z. V. Papaskiri argues that the Varangians supported King Bagrat'. See his article in *Istoriia SSSR (History of the USSR)*, Vol. 3. Moscow, 1981: pp. 164-172. Interesting evidence has recently come to light. According to one Viking saga, the Vikings, who came to Georgia on their way to the East during the period in question, assisted the King against his brother who wanted to assume power. See Mats Larsson, "The Varangians in Georgia in the 1040s and Swedish Rune Stones", II Saertashoriso kartvelologiuri simpoziumis shromebi ("Proceedings of the 2nd International Symposium in Kartvelian Studies"), Tbilisi, 1989: pp. 24-33; Mats Larsson, "Ingvar's expedition and the Georgian Chronicle," in *Saga-Book (Notes and Reviews)*, Vol. XXII, part 2 (Viking Society for Northern Research), 1987.
- ¹¹¹ The Seljuks' military leader.
- ¹¹² According to Q'aukhchishvili, "commander-in-chief" (Q'aukhchishvili (ed.), *KT*, Vol. I, p.442). Sh. Badridze believes *likhturi* to be a corruption of the Byzantine title "rector." In his view reference here is to the Stratopedarchus and

Rector Nicephorus. See Sh. Badridze “Kartlis Tskhovreba o Gruzinsko-Vizantiiskikh vzaimootnosheniia pervoi tretii XI veka,” (“Kartlis Tskhovreba on Georgian-Byzantine Contacts in the First Third of the Eleventh Century”) in *Istochnikovedcheskie razyskaniia (Research into Historical Sources)* Tbilisi: Metsniereba, 1979, pp. 47-54.

¹¹³ Chief of the royal chancellery in feudal Georgia.

¹¹⁴ Headman, leader, later became a head of state

¹¹⁵ Ruler (emir) of Anisi in the mid-eleventh century.

¹¹⁶ A fortress in Lower Kartli in Kveshis forest.

¹¹⁷ An important city of medieval Georgia, situated near Tbilisi.

¹¹⁸ The fortified town served as a strategic outpost to protect the eastern borders of the Georgian Kingdom.

¹¹⁹ The last Jafarid emir of Tbilisi. For references see Tsulaia, *op.cit.*, p.99, note 142.

¹²⁰ Persian, “officer,” “constable;” see Marjory Wardrop’s translation of Sh. Rustaveli’s *The Man in the Panther’s Skin*, London: 1912, quatrain 1157.

¹²¹ Greek “venerable”, “revered,” “august” – a Byzantine title. See Toumanoff, *op.cit.*

¹²² The Amu Darya.

¹²³ Literally, “not a single hen flew up.” Cf. Brosset, *op.cit.* p.341.

¹²⁴ A Byzantine title.

¹²⁵ Brosset replaced the Georgian *alagtan*, “paths” with *glakhakta*, the poor,” *op.cit.*, p.342, n.l.

¹²⁶ This sentence seems to contradict the preceding statement. See Brosset’s translation, *op.cit.*, p.342. note 2. The Georgian “ver ikithvebodes,” is rendered: “n’etaient point consultes.” M. Lordkipanidze suggests: “failed to find justice;” Tsulaia writes: “nobody cared for the fate of the churches.”

¹²⁷ Egrisi, Megrelia, Samegrelo, (Mingrelia).

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Mat'iane Kartlisa (The Chronicle of Kartli). MS of Palavandishvili (middle of the XVIII c. with 1767 year additions), National Centre of Manuscripts, Tbilisi, H-988, 112v.

LIFE OF DAVID, KING OF KINGS¹

Then Sultan Malik-shah came.² He surrounded Samshvilde³ and seized it, took Ivane, Liparit's⁴ son prisoner, and ravaged Somkhiti.⁵ Then he left. That same year Sarangi,⁶ heading the Sultan's forces, encamped in the valley of Samshvilde.⁷ King Giorgi's⁸ army advanced and joined battle with the enemy by Partskhisi. Giorgi's forces put the Persians to flight,⁹ for the Lord granted a great victory to Giorgi. 5

King Giorgi departed for his estate of T'ao¹⁰ and came to Bana.¹¹ Then the *zoravar*¹² of the East, Grigol, son of Bak'uriani,¹³ who held Oltisi,¹⁴ K'arnu-kalaki¹⁵ and K'ari,¹⁶ presented himself, and they spent time in brotherly recreations. Grigol gave to King Giorgi the fortress of K'ari with its adjoining lands; and King Giorgi, having left the *aznauris*¹⁷ of Shavsheti¹⁸ in K'ari, returned home. 10

When the Turks gained in strength, the Greeks abandoned the fortresses and towns they had occupied in the East and left. The Turks took over their goods and settled down. They approached our borders; our fears and troubles began to grow, for they took to sacking our towns, and ravaging, slaying and capturing Christians.

At that time the Turks had great numbers and were led by Amir Ahmad, a powerful man and an excellent archer,¹⁹ who had seized K'ari, and had cunningly attacked King Giorgi, who was besieging Q'veli.²⁰ This happened because of the treachery of the Christians; and the Turks put King Giorgi and his innumerable men to flight. 15

After seizing immense treasures, including royal cutlery made of gold and silver, precious *k'araseuli*,²¹ wine vessels, women, tents belonging to the King and the nobles, they left. King Giorgi for his part, departed by way of Ach'ara²² for Abkhazia. The Turkish troops returning with the loot met the Grand Amirs – Isa-Bari and Bu-Iaq'ub with a great number of followers who were making their way to Greece.²³ Beholding so much gold and treasure, and learning of Giorgi's flight and listening to the advice of the looters who said – “Why make your way to Greece? Georgia is unpopulated and full of riches,” they turned round immediately and spread all over the Georgian land like locusts.²⁴ 20 25

On the Day of Ivane, Asispori²⁵ and K'larjeti²⁶ all the way to the sea, as well as Shavsheti, Ach'ara, Samtskhe,²⁷ Kartli, Argveti,²⁸ Samokalako,²⁹ and Ch'q'ondidi,³⁰ were flooded with Turks. They killed and captured the whole population. That same day they burned down Kutaisi and Art'anuji,³¹ and K'larjeti was devastated. The Turks remained until the next snowfall, plundering and slaying every living soul who had managed to retreat to the forests, rocks, caves and burrows. This was the first conquest of Georgia by the Turks (the year was *koronik'on* three hundred).³² And if anybody stayed in the mountains or in the fortresses, they died due to hunger, to the bitter winter and the lack of shelter. 30

And the miseries of the Christians continued; the Turks became accustomed to coming in the spring, doing things they were used to, then leaving for the winter. There was no more sowing and harvesting in these lands; the forests crept back, and wild beasts and critters in the fields took the place of men. Insufferable distress seized every living man, unmatched by any ill that had ever fallen
5 to a man's lot in the past, or had ever been heard of at all.

The holy churches were turned into stables for their horses, they filled the sanctuaries with their filth. Priests were slain during divine services, and their blood was mixed with that of the Savior; others were committed to a miserable captivity. The old men were not spared; young women were defiled, the young men were castrated and infants kidnapped. Fire, fierce and merciless, wiped out
10 all that man had created; streams and rivers of blood irrigated the ground. Borrowing words from Jeremy, for only he was able to mourn such a calamity fittingly, I say: "The sons of Zion, upright and inexperienced in evil, travel through strange paths of captivity, and the paths of Zion bemoan their absence; kind maternal arms no longer nourish their offspring, and mothers feed upon their own dear children." And there were innumerable examples, and many other things too.

King Giorgi, witnessing all these things and aware that there was no imminent rescue or relief
15 for the calamities that had overtaken the country – for the Greeks were weak and all the lands that belonged to them overseas in the East had now been seized by Turks – held a council with his *didebulis*,³³ who among themselves decided that he should go and appear before the great Sultan Malik-Shah. He had to sell his soul and his blood for the deliverance of the Christians. Entrusting
20 himself to the Lord, King Giorgi set off to Asp'ani (Isfahan) and met the Sultan who welcomed him and received him like his beloved son.³⁴ He was a man not just endowed with immense lands, but he also surpassed any living person in his cordial demeanor and grace, and he possessed innumerable other virtues: he was a fair judge, merciful and fond of Christians – and to keep a long story short – he possessed a mind unable to conceive any evil. He fulfilled everything that King Giorgi asked
25 for, and went beyond his expectations. He freed Giorgi's kingdom of the raiders and granted him K'akheti and Hereti,³⁵ though he demanded of him a *kharaaj* (tribute), which he had to pay for many a year. And he sent Giorgi, exalted, to his kingdom, escorted by large forces, so as to ensure his peaceful journey, and to enable him to win over K'akheti.

The King and his followers arrived in K'akheti in the fall and laid siege to the fortress of Vejini.³⁶ It
30 started to snow while the war was still in progress. King Giorgi recalled his hunting in Ajameti,³⁷ and forgetting everything, did not wait for the capture of Vejini and K'akheti, and granted Sujeti³⁸ and all the lands of K'ukheti³⁹ along the banks of the Iori⁴⁰ (they remain desolate to the present day) to the Turkish soldiers, and crossing the mountain range of Likhi,⁴¹ descended to Abkhazia.⁴²

At that time Aghsartan,⁴³ King of K'akheti, presented himself to Malik-Shah. He renounced his
35 Christian faith and adopted the faith of the Saracens; in this way he received K'akheti from the Sultan. There was no peace in the world during these times; a man could find no consolation due to the impiousness of those who peopled the world. Men and women of all ages and ranks were sinning against the Lord and indulging in all kinds of improper deeds. Our Lord, kind and merciful by nature, was enraged and those sinners incurred His wrathful judgment, as foretold by the prophet
40 Isaiah: "Woe to you, the seed of evildoers, you who are overflowing with hypocrisy from the soles of

your feet to the top of your heads; you have no health, but open sores which cannot be healed.” And then, “Because of this your country is desolate; the cities burnt down; strangers devour your fields and aliens have stripped your country.”

All this came upon us; we beheld it with our own eyes, much more than is related here, for who could recount everything that has happened to us, and relate each one of our misfortunes? And even now the wrath of the Lord has not diminished, for we have neither repented, nor forced ourselves to understand; we never returned, as we should have done, to the ways of the Lord. And the evils, others than the earthly ones, were sent by God so that no sinner could say: “These troubles afflicting nations befall us not for our sins; they were not sent by God, but came about because of a change in the times.”

And so on Easter Day, the very day of our Lord’s resurrection, when people rest and are happy, the Lord spilt his wrath onto the Earth and shook it to its foundations. High mountains and hard rocks turned into dust. Cities and villages crumbled into pieces, churches tumbled, houses were swallowed by the earth and became graves for those living within. Tmogvi,⁴⁴ was destroyed and K’akhaber,⁴⁵ son of Niania, with his wife were buried under the rubble. And this terrible earthquake lasted until the end of the year, during which time an immense number of people perished.

Consumed by His wrath for so long, our Lord who instructs every one of His dear children, who destroys and revives them, who is always prepared to show kindness like a most loving father, decided to be merciful, for the Scriptures say: “If not for the seed that the Lord granted us, we would be as Sodomites and would be like those of Gomorrah.” Then the breath of life began to blow and the clouds appeared to ascend; and after twelve years of such miseries in the very midst of pitch-darkness, the sun of all the kingdoms began to rise, and the namesake of David, father of the Lord, great be his name and still greater his deeds, appeared, the seventy second descendant of David.

He was then sixteen years of age and the year was *koronik’on* three hundred and nine.⁴⁶ And on his head, the only-begotten son of Giorgi, his father placed the king’s crown, or to be more precise, the Father of the Heavens himself chose David, his servant, and consecrated him with a sacred unction; for His hand supported him, and His right hand strengthened him, and He invested him with mercy and truth. He exalted him above all the kings of the world until he placed his left hand upon the sea and his right hand upon the rivers, though that happened only after many days of tireless labors and great battles, as we shall see.

When David ascended the throne, Kartli was in ruins; there was not a man anywhere, only in a few strongholds, and there were no complete buildings left. In those times, Trialeti, and K’Ide-K’ari⁴⁷ with its adjoining lands were owned by Liparit’,⁴⁸ who pretended to be loyal to King David, as did Niania, son of K’akhaber. Other *aznauris* who had remained began to rally, descending little by little from mountains and settling in the villages.

And the border of the kingdom was the Lesser Likhi Mountains, and the King’s residence was in Tzagulistavi.⁴⁹ When going to hunt in the valleys of Kartli or Nach’armagevi,⁵⁰ which was abundant with deer and wild boar, they did not descend at once, but first sent some men there on fast horses to scout, and only then would they descend and hunt in the dale.

Four years of such life passed; Sultan Malik-Shah died, and Amir Liparit' followed the devious footsteps of his forefathers, contemplated mischief, thinking he would betray the King's trust. Though Christian by countenance, from his kin he inherited falsity and hatred for his superiors; he refused to embrace the good and entered upon the path of evil. Seeing all this, David decided to teach him
5 a lesson. He put him in prison for a time, which would have been enough for a reasonable being to draw the necessary conclusions. Then he released him after receiving all kinds of firm oaths from him. Liparit' called on God to witness his fidelity, and he paid David homage, depriving him of nothing, giving all that was due to him. A good person is hesitant to accuse some other man, whether honest or evil, for having no skill at evil things himself, he does not expect such things in others.

10 But Liparit' went back to his vomit like a dog. Like a pig, he began again to wallow in the mud. He soon revealed his hostility and began to conceive all kinds of misdeeds as he lay in his bed. Then, seeing there was no way to straighten a dog's tail or to make a crayfish walk upright, the gentle and saintly minded King David caught him again the following year, and after having kept him in prison for two years, exiled him to Greece, where he parted this life.

15 At this time the Franks⁵¹ came and seized Jerusalem and Antioch, and with the help of God, recovered the land of Kartli. David gained more power and gathering his forces, he stopped to pay *kharaj* to the Sultan. The Turks were unable to spend the winters in Kartli anymore. Up to that time, when winter approached, they used to come with their felted tents to Avch'ala and Dighomi⁵² and descend along the Mt'k'vari and Iori rivers, and camped there.

20 K'virik'e⁵³ reigned in K'akheti at that time, a sovereign and a thorough master of his passions, a true Christian. God granted King David an opportunity, so he seized K'virik'e's fortress, Zeda Zadeni.⁵⁴ His greatness grew along with his victories, but then something happened: Rat'i, son of Liparit', died, an unfaithful man, a member of the veritable brood of vipers. And so the clan of Baghvashi⁵⁵ came to its end, the clan of mischief-doers, for they had sucked the last drops of wrath
25 from the drink of the sinners of our world; and no heir had been left in their dwelling places, for the iniquities of their fathers were remembered before God, and the King took their lands.

King K'virik'e died towards the end of the following year and his nephew, son of his brother Aghsartan,⁵⁶ was placed on the throne of K'akheti, a man who possessed not one of the attributes befitting a king, for he was slanderous, wicked and unjust in his ignorance, a thorough contrast to
30 his father's brother.

Then the King, drawing on his own insight, conceived a goodly thing which would win him the favor of God and bring about much good. At that time, the holy churches, the houses of God, had been turned into something like robbers' dens. With the help of unworthy and dishonorable powers, rather than through their own virtue, these villains seized the episcopacies, not entering
35 the doors as behooves honest shepherds, but by devious means, as is the custom of robbers. They installed priests and *chorepiscopuses*⁵⁷ who, instead of adhering to God's ways, set about instructing their charges with iniquity. And the iniquities and sins came from God's house and from the priests themselves, and as a result, the all-seeing eye of God grew angry, as our words have shown. For the sin of a priest is not equal to that of a soldier, and the layman's sin is not the same as that of a
40 high priest, nor a shepherd's is the same as of his sheep. And as the Scripture says: "A servant that knows his master's will but shows no diligence, will be severely punished."

In order to put an end to such painful sores, a crowded council⁵⁸ gathered. David summoned to his presence at the appointed time and place, the Katholicos, archpastors, anchorites, and ordinary pastors and scholars from his kingdom; and during many days they thoroughly studied and corrected all the errors, putting everything in God's proper order. Those who had shown themselves unworthy were defrocked and deprived of their altars, though it was not easy because of the influence of their kin, for all of them were the children of *mtavaris* and grandees who had unlawfully taken possession of these altars. True and pious shepherds were appointed in their place. 5

An excellent code⁵⁹ of the true faith was drawn up; it conformed to, and confirmed the Twelve Sainly Sessions. And receiving gifts from the King, every one was sent home. That, too, King David did, just like the Great Constantine;⁶⁰ and we see how God, the reader of our hearts, and a vigilant guard of Israel, arranged everything. 10

Aghsartan, who we have mentioned above, the King of the Kakhis, was seized by the *didebulis* of Ereti – Arishan⁶¹ and Baram, their mother's brother – and by Kavtar, Baram's son. They delivered him to the King. The King captured Hereti and K'akheti, and at Erts'ukhi;⁶² he gained a victory that became famous. With a small army and few troops, he eliminated the innumerable host of the Sultan. God, a wonder-maker, delivered to our hands the *atabag*⁶³ of Ganji⁶⁴ and most of the troops of the country of K'akheti, who surrounded us together with our enemies, and who were so easily defeated that one person could pursue a thousand and even capture them, and two could route a multitude, and pull them from their hiding places in the forests and ditches, taking them captive. 15

The King, for his part, did not remain in the rear of his army directing it from far away like some royal princes have done, but led the soldiers himself, bellowing with a thundering voice, and like a lion, rushed about like a storm. Like Goliath falling upon his enemies he defeated giants, destroyed and crushed all he encountered until, owing to all those blows, his arm stuck to the hilt of his sword, as had happened to Eliazar, son of Dudeia, and the blood streamed back over his sword, and filled his sleeves and chest. All this we found after the battle; when he removed his belt there were clots of caked blood, which fell to the ground. At first we thought it was his. Three horses were killed under him that day and only on the back of the fourth did he finish the day's fight. And we have told only a minor part of a long story. 20

He majestically seized Hereti and K'akheti, which submitted their fortresses and strongholds to him. Like the sun, he spread his favor to every man abiding within the country. It was as if God himself was arranging David's affairs, giving him directions in all his enterprises, granting him time and again wonderful victories, which led him to greater and greater power. He did not neglect working on his talents – he completed good and godly works; he wholeheartedly served the Lord and performed those things he held to be God's will, and which were pleasing to Him, of which we shell tell further. 30

He decided to build a monastery in a beautiful and perfect place, chosen by God's divine grace. Here he erected, like another vault of heaven, a temple to the Blessed Mother of God:⁶⁵ its beauty and proportions, the amount and the quality of materials, and its matchless ornamentation, surpassed everything that had been constructed before by far. Those who have seen it with their very own eyes can bear witness to this. He filled it with holy relics: the venerable remnants of saints, holy icons, rich church instruments and other rare objects. And in addition he endowed the temple with the spoils he 40

had collected: the thrones and the seats of the Great Hosrauids, different candlestick holders and colored chandeliers, crowns, necklaces, bowls and drinking vessels taken from the Arabian kings after he had captured them. All those things he brought to the temple and offered to the Lord in gratitude for his wonderful victories.

5 He gathered around him worthy people who possessed every kind of virtue, and not only those who lived within the borders of his kingdom. He took them from every corner of the world, from wherever he had heard of somebody endowed with spiritual perfection and other bodily virtues. He looked high and low and when he succeeded in finding them, he brought them to his side.

10 The ancestral estates of Liparit', of whom no heir remained, together with the other lawful and uncontested properties, he gave to the (temple of) the Mother of God and left them at her servants' disposal, and so ensured them a carefree life. Even now, the church stands before the entire East as a second Jerusalem, a symbol of all that is good, of instruction and learning, the second Athens, superior to it in its godliness, an example and a model of ecclesiastical beauty.

15 David conceived of one more thing in accordance with the kind and gracious God-like love he had for his fellow-men. He built a hospice in a fine place, and gathered there brothers suffering from various diseases; he provided them with all they needed, assigning everything fully and in abundance. He came to see them himself, greeting and kissing each, like a father cherishing them, humoring them, encouraging them, calling for patience, inspecting their beds, their clothes and linen, as well as every other thing they used, giving each gold, and admonishing their wardens, and
20 arranging all their affairs with unmatched excellence and devotion.

Until then, the towns of Tbilisi, Rustavi,⁶⁶ Somkhiti, Samshvilde, and Agarani⁶⁷ were in the hands of the Turks, while Trialeti and K'ide-K'ari were owned by Tevdore,⁶⁸ son of Ch'q'ondideli's sister, a reasonable and influential man. When the King went to Abkhazia, the Turks and their garrisons breathed a sigh of relief. On one such day when the King left for Abkhazia, Giorgi *Ch'q'ondidelm*
25 *ts'ignobartukhutsesi*, Tevdore, Abuleti,⁶⁹ and Ioane Orbeli gathered and together captured Samshvilde by a ruse. This gave great joy to all, for the territories of the kingdom were expanding daily. Learning of the seizure of Samshvilde, the Turks left most of the fortresses of Somkhiti and fled at night, leaving the towns at our disposal. Turks had long occupied Somkhiti with their felt tents; they placed their camps in Gachiani by the banks of the Mt'k'vari, all the way from Tbilisi down to
30 Bardavi and to the banks of the Iori, all excellent places for wintering. You can mow hay there in the winter like you do in spring, there are woodlands and waters in abundance, and there are beasts of various kinds there to hunt, and all the things you may need for your delight. In all these places the Turks pitched their camps, erecting their tents, and there was no end to the horses, mules, sheep and camels.

35 They lived a life you would just dream of, spending their time hunting, resting and being joyful, wanting nothing. They traded in their own towns, but plundered our frontiers. At the approach of spring, loaded with spoils and with many captives, they set out for the mountains of Somkhiti and Ararat. And the summers, too, they spent in repose and joy, living among beautiful meadows and fields, among springs and flowering crops. Their forces were so immense that one could say: "All
40 the Turks from the entire world were here." And nobody, not even the Sultan himself, could have imagined it would ever be possible to drive them away or cause them any harm.

That year, when Samshvilde⁷⁰ and Dzerna were taken, the Sultan's army appeared unexpectedly and cunningly; all the Turks together numbered up to a hundred thousand. The King, with his suite, was at Nach'armagevi. In the evening, learning that the Turks had entered Trialeti, he rushed to meet them with his troops⁷¹ – one thousand five hundred men in all, for he could only gather this number quickly. He travelled the whole night. At daybreak the Turks approached and a fierce and cruel battle took place. With God's grace, the Turkish camp was defeated, and towards the end of the day they were routed. They were scared and ran away in such haste, that they were oblivious to their tents and goods. They focused rather on the quickness of their legs than on the desire to salvage their possessions. They dispersed in their own countries. Their flight was so unexpected and seemed so incredible to the King and his troops that they did not pursue them, thinking that the battle would continue the next day. 5 10

Then, when the King went to Mukhnari,⁷² Giorgi Ch'q'ondideli seized Rustavi.⁷³ That upset the Turks so much that they began to avoid the places where they used to spend the winter; for every time the King learned of the presence of any unwelcome intruders, he attacked and eliminated them. And he did so not one, two or three times, but many times; we shall relate just one. 15

A lot of Turks were camped at T'ao, putting up tents and trusting on the severity of the winter and inaccessibility of the surrounding mountains. So the King contrived a trick: he ordered the troops of Kartli to stay in readiness, while he himself set out for Kutaisi, lulling the Turks into a false sense of security. In February, he sent word to the troops of Kartli and Meskheta to wait for him at a known place in K'larjeti, while he, with *shida spa*⁷⁴ made for Khupta⁷⁵ along the Ch'orokhi⁷⁶ riverbank. Joining together, they fell unexpectedly upon the unsuspecting Turks who were quietly and confidently sitting in their camps, all the way to Basiani⁷⁷ and the mountain of K'arnifor.⁷⁸ Destroying countless numbers of them, David and his ally captured their families, took their horses, sheep, camels and all their belongings, and filled up the kingdom with all kinds of goods. 20

The same year he sent his daughter, K'at'a, to Greece to marry the son of the Greek king.⁷⁹ Before this, he sent his first-born daughter, Tamar,⁸⁰ to become the queen of Shirvan.⁸¹ He did this for his descendants who would inherit from their father his sun-like splendor, illuminating the firmament, shining in the East and in the West. 25

The following year he seized Grigol's sons, Asat and Shota,⁸² and conquered the fortress of Gishi;⁸³ then he sent his son Demet're⁸⁴ with a strong army to war with Shirvan. And Demet're fought wonderfully, amazing those who witnessed it and later heard of it. He captured the fortress Kaladzor and returned victorious to his father with immense spoils and numberless captives. 30

Next year on Palm Sunday, Demet're set out from Ganukhi along the bank of the river Rakhsa⁸⁵ and celebrated Easter in Nakhiduri.⁸⁶ Here he was informed of the murder of Beshken Jaq'eli⁸⁷ by the Turks; the *didebulis* tried to dissuade him from leaving to take revenge. Not heeding their warnings, he attacked the Turks who were camping on the Rakhsa riverbank and destroyed them, taking many captives and a lot of riches. The same year, in June, he took the fortress Lore⁸⁸ in Somkhiti, and the day after that, at dawn, he seized Agarani; his grandfather Bagrat, had taken three months' of fighting to capture it. The same year in August, Sultan Malik, Malik-Shah's son and Aleks, King of the Greeks⁸⁹ died; neither of them having learned of the death of the other. 35 40

Understanding the abundance of favors and aid, the victories and successes which had fallen to his lot, as well as the kingdoms, countries, cities and fortresses granted to him by God from above, King David realized that there were not enough troops in his kingdom to keep the cities and fortresses manned in order to keep them secure, or to escort him in his constant travels in winter and summer, or on his military campaigns.

He called upon his reason, which was kind and obedient to him, like it was to the other great David, and he appealed to the Holy Spirit, and raised his head high to observe the world around him with his mind's eye, and he understood with all his kingly reason that there were not enough people in his kingdom to fulfill all the desires and aspirations of his soul. And like Alexander,⁹⁰ when he was told by a philosopher: "There are a lot of countries where even your name is not known", he answered with a sigh: "If that is so, what is my dominion worth?"

And like Alexander, David conceived a plan, for there was no other way out. Knowing the numerical strength of the Q'ipchaks,⁹¹ their courage in battle, their quickness in travel, their fury in assault, their nimble control, their readiness to obey their commander's will – and because they lived close by and in poverty, that made them easy to call upon, and because many years before he had brought the worthy Guarandukht', daughter of the Q'ipchaks' leader Atrak, son of Sharaghan,⁹² and made her his lawful spouse and Queen of the entire Georgia – for all these reasons he sent some men to summon the Q'ipchaks and his own father-in-law. And the Q'ipchaks accepted the invitation with joy and asked only for assistance in passing peacefully through the territory of the Ovses (Ossetians).

The King had to go to Ovseti. Giving the necessary orders, he set out at once and took with him Giorgi Ch'q'ondideli, his *mts'ignobartukhutsesi*, a man who possessed every spiritual and physical virtue, endowed with wisdom and understanding, reasonable, successful and prudent. Brought up with royal Masters, he himself now instructed the Master and became his companion in all his ways, deeds and endeavors.

They entered Ovseti;⁹³ the kings of the Ovsetians and all their *mtavaris*⁹⁴ came out to meet them, standing like slaves before them. And David took hostages from both the Ovses and the Q'ipchaks – and thus he united these two peoples in an easy way, creating peace and love between them as if they were brothers. He took the fortress of Dariali and all the others located at the passes which cross the Caucasian mountains and Ovseti territory. Thus he secured a peaceful journey for the Q'ipchaks. And he brought a multitude of them: his father-in-law and the brothers of his wife; and the trouble he went to was not in vain, for with their help he destroyed thoroughly the Persian forces, evoking fear and awe in all the kings of the world. He did many unbelievable things with their help, as will be shown in the following narration.

At the time of their sojourn in Ovseti, Giorgi Ch'q'ondideli, who from his youth had served his Patron,⁹⁵ died, and his remains were carried with the greatest honor possible to a new monastery, and they were buried there. The entire kingdom and the King mourned him as if he were someone more than their father, and they remained dressed in black for forty days; and the mourning ended only upon the coming of good news – the birth of David's son, Vakht'ang.⁹⁶

The King settled the Q'ipchaks with their families in places, which were fitting for them; there were forty thousand of them, selected men ready to fight. He provided them with horses and armor

in plenty; and he had five thousand⁹⁷ of the choicest servants, well-experienced in war, all of whom adopted Christianity, trustworthy and proven in their valor in battle. Most of the Q'ipchaks turned gradually to Christianity and came in large numbers to Christ's bosom.

Gathering the Q'ipchaks and organizing them according to their clans, he assigned *sp'asalars*⁹⁸ and commanders to them. And so the troops of his kingdom were select and well-armed, with excellent horses, people who knew no retreat. David was an unmatched commander and warrior, resembling the hero of the old tale of Kaikhosro.⁹⁹ He began to raid Persia, Shirvan and Great Somkhiti.¹⁰⁰ Indefatigable, never considering it a burden, he kept everything in order, doing everything in time; and he managed everything so according to his understanding. Who could withstand him, or make war against him, or take up arms against him?

Some writings compare Alexander the Great with a winged leopard, because of the ferocity of his assaults, the speed with which he travelled across countries, and the great diversity of his deeds and designs. But our crown-wearer, the new Alexander, though he came after the first Alexander, could easily bear comparison with him, whether in actions, in designs or courage, and even in those very deeds in which Alexander had surpassed all others. David, to my thinking, far from being inferior to him, exceeded him by far. As much as Alexander surpassed his peers and contemporaries in all matters temporal and connected to the flesh, no less do we see the superiority of David over the former in works godly and those related to the precepts of Christ, including mundane virtues. For he did not allow his eyes to sleep, his eyelids to close, his flesh to rest, neither was he inclined to pleasures, nor to carnal delights, or gluttony, or playing and idle singing, nor did he indulge in anything devilish or carnal, in things that chain the mind and urge the will to lapse into inaction and idleness. David followed all the godly and spiritual things.

Now learn of the immensity of his deeds during these four years, even from the little that I am going to recount. The King got into the habit of going to Abkhazia,¹⁰¹ and so doing, lured the Turkmans down to the wintering places by the banks of Mt'k'vari. Spies had been watching the King and were following his tracks. The King went to Geguti¹⁰² and from there to Khupati and thus gave the Turks the confidence to return. Learning that he was away, they descended to Bot'ori. There were many of them, and they set up camps to pass the winter. The King for his part, kept his eyes open, and rushing along on the fourteenth day of February fell upon the Turks unexpectedly. Only a few of them had time to take their horses and flee. There was a countless number of captives and much booty was taken.¹⁰³

Then he went to Ganukhi and the same week, the week of the Great Fast, he seized Kabala¹⁰⁴ city in Shirvan, filling his kingdom with gold, silver and other riches. He came back to Kartli and quickly gathering his troops descended to Shirvan on the seventh of May and ravaged the country from Lzhata to Kurdevan and Khisht'alan, returning to Kartli loaded with yet more spoils. At this time the rulers of Derbent¹⁰⁵ and Shirvan set out to conquer each other; Apridon was killed and the Shirvanians were destroyed. In November, the King went to Ashornia,¹⁰⁶ attacked the Turkmans, destroyed them and took their spoils. On his return, he fell again upon the Turkmans in Sevgelameji, not leaving even mourners in their tents. And that was in just one year.

That same winter he set out for Abkhazia, came to Bich'vinta¹⁰⁷ and arranged all affairs there: he favored those worthy of grace and punished the guilty. The winter was severe with much snow.

Learning that the King was far away, the Turks descended from the mountains without any anxiety and settled themselves on the banks of Mt'k'vari river. However, the skillful lion was neither idle nor asleep, and there was no force able to hold him back when it came to battle. He hastily left Abkhazia and advanced through heavy snow; he made his people dig a pass over the mountains of Likhi, where the snow was up to three *mkharis*¹⁰⁸ thick. The army met him quite ready for battle, and without waiting for news from Kartli, he attacked Khunan.¹⁰⁹ The troops filled up the entire territory from the mountain bases to the Mt'k'vari, and from Gagta¹¹⁰ up to Berduja.¹¹¹ They destroyed everyone with the sharp blades of their swords, leaving not one able to turn his face to the wall¹¹² and relate what had occurred.

In the spring, the Mt'k'vari rose, the riverbed was unable to contain it. Relying upon this, the Turkmans confidently camped in Bardavi. Having tracked them down, the King crossed the raging Mt'k'vari, wading with his Q'ipchaks through the extremely high waters. He slew the Turks and ravaged Bardavi. He spent two days there and returned home content with his large booty. That was in June. Upset by such a disaster, the Turkmans, together with the merchants of Gandza, Tbilisi and Dmanisi, went to meet the Sultan. Arriving in Persia, some painted their faces black, some their hands, and some their whole bodies; and so they appeared before the Sultan and related to him the calamities that had fallen upon them, prompting the Sultan to promise his help. They grieved immensely about the state of their affairs.

The Sultan¹¹³ summoned the King of the Arabs, Durbez,¹¹⁴ son of Sadaq'a, and gave him his own son Malik¹¹⁵ and all his troops to help the Turkmans. He appointed Il-Gazi, son of Ardukh (Arduq'),¹¹⁶ a daring and cunning man, as *sp'asalar*, and called all the Turkmans who were able to carry arms to Damask or Aleppo, along with the *Atabag* of Gandza¹¹⁷ with his army, and all the Amirs of Somkhiti. They gathered, arranged matters among themselves, and joined in countless ranks like the sand in the sea, which the world is unable to contain. On the twelfth day of August they came to Trialeti, Manglisi¹¹⁸ and Didgori,¹¹⁹ and there was not enough space for all of them to stand upright.

King David, fearless and steadfast in his heart, formed his army; how perfectly and prudently he arranged things, ordering everything to be done calmly and without fuss, demonstrating his experience and wisdom. With help from heaven, in the very first battle, he scattered the enemy camp, routing it. He destroyed the celebrated warriors of Arabia; skillfully, he pursued and destroyed those who were fleeing, filling the valleys, hills and gullies with their corpses. He saved his own troops from great losses – the power of my tongue is inadequate to relate all these things, and nor could any other wise man upon this earth tell this story, for no man would be able to tell the whole series of events properly and in detail.

The arm of the Almighty assisted him and the heavenly powers protected him. Saint George was leading him openly before everyone's eyes, eliminating the infidel heathens who were attacking him. The infidels and ignorant souls later themselves told us this tale, recounting the miracle of the Great Martyr Giorgi.¹²⁰

And our troops – and not only them but the whole kingdom was overflowing with gold and silver, Arabian horses, Assyrian mules, tents and carpets, and countless military devices, diverse copper drums and catapults, refined vessels for feasts and ablutions, and kitchenware – how much paper or

ink it would take to describe all that! You should have seen how peasants were driving the captured Arabian kings, how could you tell now that they had been great fighters!¹²¹

Reaching this place in my account, I see that the great and celebrated narrators such as Homer and Aristovul¹²² in Ancient Greece, or the Hebrew Joseph,¹²³ need to be severely censured. The first of them recounted colorfully the battle of Trojans and Achaeans, describing the battles of Agamemnon and Priam, Achilles and Hector, and then of Odysseus and Orestes,¹²⁴ indicating who defeated whom. The second narrated the valor and invincibility of Alexander, and the third told of the distress of his tribesmen brought about by Titus and Vespasian.¹²⁵ Not having enough knowledge of the events for their narrations, they embellished them using the art of rhetoric (which they had in great quantities). As Alexander himself said: “Achilles, you were not so great yourself, but you met a great eulogizer – Homer.” Nothing worthy happened during the twenty eight years of the siege, which was how long the Trojan War lasted. King David’s battle with so many enemies lasted up to three hours, and the enemy was unable to withstand even the first attack. If the stories of these wise men were about the deeds of David, and if they described them with the eloquence so peculiar to them, only then would David’s deeds get the right amount of praise! But let’s leave it at that for now.

The following year the King in the very first attack captured Tbilisi,¹²⁶ which for four hundred years had been in the possession of the Persians, and he entrusted it to his descendants as the treasury and eternal abode for Georgians.

The next year the Sultan¹²⁷ came to Shirvan. He captured Shirvan-shah, took Shamakhia and sent a messenger to the King with the reproach: “You are a King of forests and will never be able to come out into the open; now I have taken Shirvan-shah prisoner and demand *kharaj* from him for myself; if you want the same, send me some worthy gifts and come out of cover to see me.” Hearing this, the King called promptly for all his troops, and instantly, as soon as he had finished issuing orders, all the troops of his kingdom appeared before him. He advanced against the Sultan; the Q’ipchaks, who were with him, counted up to fifty thousand alone.

When the Sultan was informed of the advance, and of the strength and number of David’s troops, he was terrified; he left the field where he had kept his camp, and sheltered in the town, protecting himself on one side by a wall and a dike, and on the other – by the rampart of Shamakhi town. Learning this, the King considered an assault on an absconder unworthy, and prostrating himself over the ground thanked God – the worker of wonders, and the gracious lover of mankind. David remained in place. Then the Sultan, far from asking for any more gifts or calling for a fight, like a suffering slave or a humiliated servant, humbly bent his head upon his breast – quite against what is proper for a Sultan – and sent an envoy with gifts for negotiations. He implored and assured David of his allegiance, and asked only for a way of retreat, for he suffered from hunger and thirst. That same day, the King’s troops destroyed the *atabag* of Rani, Aghsunghul,¹²⁸ with his numerous army –about four thousand men – which was advancing to give aid to the Sultan; the soldiers barely escaped and the *Atabag* alone was able to reach the Sultan. That night, the Sultan fled secretly and, scrambling through a drain hole, made for his country by another road. The King, victorious and praising the Lord, returned home for a few days of rest.

The following month, in June, he set out for Shirvan once again, and there in the midsummer heat, he took Gulistan,¹²⁹ the residence of the ruler of Shirvan; he annexed Shirvan and handed innumerable gifts to all the people who were obedient to his will. Then he returned to Kartli and set out in the autumn for Geguti, to hunt, to rest and to arrange all his affairs there. In March he returned to Kartli and seized the town of Dmanisi.¹³⁰ In April he attacked the ruler of Derbent, Shaburan,¹³¹ destroyed the Kurds, Lek'is¹³² and the Q'ipchaks who were in the service of the ruler of Derbent; he seized the fortresses of Shirvan – Ghasan, Khozaond, and the adjoining lands.

And suddenly, like an eagle shooting skyward, in May he seized the fortresses of Somkhiti,¹³³ Gagta, T'erunak'al, Kavazin, Norbed, Manasgom and Talinjakar. In June he set out with his army, crossed Javakheti, K'ola, K'arnifor, Basiani, descended down to Speri¹³⁴ and destroyed or captured all the Turkmans he met on his way. Then, passing Bugda-Q'uri,¹³⁵ he set Oltisi on fire and returned to Trialeti with a great victory. A few days passed and the troops were dismissed, each regiment returning to its own place. On the twentieth of August, messengers sent by the grandees of Anisi¹³⁶ came to the King, who was camping at the springs of Bozhana,¹³⁷ and reported on the surrender of their town and its fortifications. He at once sent summonses, and on the third day sixty thousand horsemen appeared before him. He marched forward and on the third day took Anisi and its fortifications easily, and also the villages and the adjoining lands.

Taking Bulasvar, he sent his eight sons, servants and daughters-in-law to Abkhazia. Leaving the *aznauris* of Meskheti to protect Anisi, he returned to Kartli. David allowed his troops to rest for a few days and then set out for Shirvan.¹³⁸ He seized the town of Shamakha and the fortress of Birit', the whole of Shirvan, and left many troops – Eris and Kakhis – in the fortresses and the towns. To administer and supervise all the affairs there he appointed his *mts'ignobartukhutsesi* – archbishop Simon Ch'q'ondidi, who at that time was the bishop of Bedia and Alaverdi.¹³⁹ Resembling in everything his mother's brother, Giorgi, he was a man of exceptional perfection and wisdom.

The King arranged all the affairs in Shirvan and lavishly bestowed gifts upon the Kurds, Lek'is and Tarases. Travelling all over Kartli he assigned winter camps for the Q'ipchaks, provided them with subsistence and appointed supervisors over them. And he put in order all the affairs in Kartli, Somkhiti and Anisi, planning to accomplish great deeds in the spring and to perform yet a greater march, for there was nobody who could oppose him. Even the Sultan himself, wherever he was, trembled in fear; the towns and countries over which the Sultan ruled before, he no longer considered his own. Though the distance was much between them, the Sultan was fearful in his sleep, and he saw death on waking up.

The Sultan sent envoys one after another with gifts to propitiate the King. He sent precious things, rich and dainty things, diverse rare overseas birds and beasts, and he asked for peace, love and security from the raids of the Q'ipchaks. He did not care about his considerable expenses, if only he could find peace and security for himself, wherever he was. I believe that David, this man of courage, recovered countries, captives and riches in an amount far exceeding what had been lost by his ancestors. The country calmed down; it was filled with abundant riches of all kinds; everything that had been ravaged was revived and restored. In the place of ruin, peace and prosperity, exceeding all that had been achieved in the past, reigned in the country.

Such are the tales of his royal campaigns, battles and wars – victory, success, and the conquest and seizure of many great kingdoms and princedoms. The story, however, of the great and indescribable deeds he performed, is conveyed in modest and vain words; we are trying to present a lion by his claws only, and the entire cloth by a small rag, a man by his shadow, all of which is impossible.

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It may seem that a man who accomplished such worldly deeds would have had no spare time even to remember or think of godly things and spiritual virtues, let alone to perform them, for it is enough for any man to do what he did and to succeed at it. And if the man remembers in what an abased condition his kingdom was when he inherited it, and the level to which he raised it, and how he extended its borders and how he turned the vanquished into victors, then let them not blame (him); for an investigation designed to learn all the details will reveal that all these worldly deeds we have related here are incomplete and not so important, even minor and insignificant in comparison with his everlasting deeds that are solid and will be deified forever, and which he accomplished in much greater number than worldly deeds, as he considered them more important. We will relate a few of the many, just one sip from the river.¹⁴⁰

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Solomon says: “The path to wisdom is to acquire wisdom.” And David, the ancestor of God says: “The source of wisdom – is the fear of the Lord.” David had had his fear of God from a young age; at all stages of his life, this fear of God produced fruit, which made his life beautiful. He adorned his life with deeds, ordering worldly things and directing spiritual things.

Considering that a fear of the Lord is the mother of wisdom, and that the mother of this fear of the Lord is the Holy Scriptures, then how well David performed. He gathered such scriptures in great numbers; all he could find was translated into Georgian from other languages, the old as well as the new, like the second Ptolomaeus.¹⁴¹ He assimilated them, he lived by them and they kept him in motion. They made his food much tastier than anything else, and his drink the sweetest and most desirable. They served him as consolation and delight; from them he drew instruction and usage. Spending days and nights in constant travel, in permanent marches and in tireless labors, he kept many mules and camels loaded with books. Dismounting his horse a book would be the first thing in his hands and he did not stop reading until he was exhausted. After supper, instead of going to sleep or doing something else, he continued to read. And when his eyes became droopy, he would switch to his ears: he listened to a reader whom he placed before him and not just with half an ear as it may seem, but with full attention. He sought the meaning of what the books were telling him, asking questions and more often, interpreting their points and fathoming their profundity.

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The most amazing thing was the following: all of you know how enjoyable a hunt is for everyone, how it enslaves anyone who practices it, how it captivates a person, forcing him, while he hunts, to think of nothing but tracking, pursuing and seizing a beast. However, the King’s diligence overcame even the hunt, and he would keep some book in his hand; and when the time came, he would give the book to one of his servants and only after that start the pursuit. And you should not think that he would return empty-handed or toil in vain. There was no one among the men like him, who was so lucky as he was in the hunt. They say that a Hebrew, Mosomakh¹⁴² by name, exceeded everyone in Alexander’s army as an archer and a sharpshooter; there was Achilles among the Greeks, taught by a centaur in the art of archery; and there was Bahram-Jur¹⁴³ among the Persians, who performed some amazing things. But really, as we have seen, nobody could be compared with David.

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I shall tell you yet about another incident that shows his love of books. And there is not a scrap of falsity in it; for the Lord destroys those who tell lies. He was accustomed to reading one book in particular, "The Apostle", and each time he finished it, he put a note at the end; as the year passed we counted these notes and found that he had read the book twenty four times.

5 There are many other proofs like this, but I shall add just one: there were times when the town of Tbilisi was not under the yoke of obedience, as it is now, but was bleeding with Christians' blood; at times, during a mutiny of some kind, the heathens exterminated all the Christians they met on their way without the minutest reason for doing so. They handed over the Christians, entering or leaving the town, to the Turks who had arrived with caravans, and condemned them to captivity or to death.
10 And so the country was devastated for a long time, causing pain to David's soul.

One time, a large caravan from Ganja (Gandza), accompanied by many Turks entered the town. Learning of this, the King sent fifteen of his chosen servants to drive away the town's cattle which was at pasture in a place called Loch'ini,¹⁴⁴ in order to exterminate the Turks in case they undertook the pursuit. He, on his part, with three hundred horsemen, hid in one of Avch'ala's¹⁴⁵ valleys. Trusting
15 nobody with the task of keeping watch, he patrolled alone, without arms, having only a sword. He took a book of St John the Divine with him and ordered his troops to stay in place until he returned. The servants, doing what they were ordered to do, took away the cattle. The Turks, about a hundred in number, overtook them and after a fierce struggle they unseated the servants from their horses, and killed their horses; the servants continued to fight bravely on foot.

20 The King dismounted his horse; not expecting the Turks so soon he had absorbed himself in reading, his mind engaged with it so much, he forgot thoroughly about the plan, until the shouts reached his ears. Putting his book aside, he mounted his horse in a moment and went to where the noise was coming from. And so he came upon his servants, who were fighting on foot. Being a long way off from his troops and having no time to let them know what was happening – for meanwhile
25 the servants would be slaughtered – he fell upon the Turks like an eagle and scattered them about like partridges. And he destroyed many of them immediately, and the number of the horses they left behind turned out to be enough for his servants, and mounting them, they killed so many of the Turks, that only few were given the chance to hide in the fortress; and the roads were full of their corpses, while the King's sword, made crooked in battle could not get back into its sheath. Only
30 then he returned to his soldiers, who reproached him severely. So, learn from me, how was it that a man burdened with so much labor, and having no spare time (at all), regarded reading as the most attractive thing in the world. But enough of this.

I shall say one more thing: being versed in bookish wisdom and aware of the deeds performed in the past, he considered them to be a warning or an example and used the experience of former
35 kings – whether they were successful or unlucky. As Solomon says: "He knows the course of time, the meaning of parables, and likens the future with the past." If not, how could he raise up as no one else could, the scepter and his reign from such abasement, which was so difficult to achieve? For he became wiser than Beseliel and Ethan the Ezrakhite, who we know about from the Holy Scripture.

40 And who can count how many things a man must do when he reigns; how many people he must govern, how many things he must put in order? A King has to conquer countries, reinforce

borders, prevent revolts, ensure tranquility in the country, launch campaigns, catch the intrigues of the *mtavaris*, command troops, take care of the people's affairs, appoint officials and judges, look after the treasury's income, receive envoys and give them answers, reward properly those who present gifts, instruct wrongdoers kindly, lavishly present servants, ensure the fair trial of the accused, demand reports, and organize armies for skillful raids. Who can exhaust in words the bottomless abyss of the King's works; David had no match both among the ancient or the recent kings; that is convincingly proved by the things he performed so wisely, more brilliant and impressive than the crown of the Sun. 5

He made the Sultan his tributary, and the King of the Greeks he treated like a member of his household; he crushed heathens, eliminated barbarians, humbled kings, enslaved monarchs, routed the Arabs, defeated the Ishmailites, scattered the Persians like ashes and turned their rulers into peasants, and to cut a long story short, all the former kings, judges, heroes, warriors, and all the people distinguished since ancient times for their valiance and power, or celebrated for their good deeds, all of them look like dumb brutes in comparison to David, in any action and in any dynastic house. 10 15

And still, who can grasp his godly virtues and the spiritual deeds he performed, and whose tongue can recount them all? For like God (himself), he judged his flock fairly, by impartial judgment, and like Solomon, the pointer on his scales never swung wide; this is what the laws of Moses and the tales of old impart to us.

His main virtue was the holiness he displayed, which was of the same degree as the great Antony's.¹⁴⁶ Now do not tell me of the sins of his youth of which God himself remembers not a thing!¹⁴⁷ What I know for certain is that during ten years with pure lips and a clear heart he continuously received the incorruptible sacrament of Christ, moved by the command of his conscience rather than by the command of his mind, for which there is an honest witness in heaven. Is there any need to tell how much he prayed and how much he fasted? And still the monasteries and the eparchies and all the churches received from the King's court all the rules and schedules to minister their prayers, and he established ecclesiastic order like the true canon, excellent and harmonious, regulating all prayers and fasts. The devilish songs, buffoonery and pleasures, impious abuses and all kinds of disgraceful practices were eliminated in his army, and among the countless tribes under his rule speaking different languages, so may it be among heavenly dwellers. 20 25 30

He was so merciful to the poor that he filled the sea and the earth with his charitable activities. He filled *Iavras* with goods, and the churches and monasteries not only of his own kingdom, but of Greece – the one on the Holy Mountain,¹⁴⁸ in Bulgaria,¹⁴⁹ Syria, Cyprus,¹⁵⁰ the Black Mountain, Palestine,¹⁵¹ and most of all the Holy Sepulcher. The ones situated in Jerusalem he enriched with various donations. Still further – on Sinai Mountain,¹⁵² where Moses and Ilea beheld God, he built a monastery, and sent there many thousands of gold coins, gold-woven shrouds, a whole set of ecclesiastical books and church utensils made of solid gold. 35

Who can count the daily contributions he distributed secretly with his own hands, except for our Heavenly Father, who rewards people openly? For he had a small purse, and filling it up himself with *drakhh'ans*¹⁵³ at noon, he brought it back empty in the evening, happy in spirit and with a joyful face. 40

But sometimes, he dispensed only half of it, being unable to find anybody needy at all, and he put the purse back still full to keep it for the next day, saying with a sigh: “Today I could render nothing to Christ, for I am overburdened with my sins.” And all that he gave, he took not from what was brought to him by his officials or from the Treasury, but from what he procured by his own hands. Of this
5 money he gave once twenty five thousand *drakhk’ans* to his confessor, Johann, to dispense among the poor. And that, too, is just a little of what could be related.

He not only freed monasteries and *lavras* from the *mosak’argavis*¹⁵⁴ who harassed them, but all the priests in his kingdom from all duties and cares, to enable them to perform freely their sacred services to God. And how many churches he built, how many bridges over the fierce rivers, how
10 many impassable roads he paved, how many churches defiled by heathens he cleared from filth, turning them back into God’s houses. And how many heathen tribes he turned into the children of the Holy Font, bringing them to Christ’s bosom! Most of his diligence he dedicated to the task of seizing the entire world from the devil’s hands and delivering it to God, for which he received apostolic bliss, like Paul and the Great Constantine.

Along with the other virtues, he had this one: owing to the great number of his troops and the frequency of his movements, petitioners – the oppressed and the suffering – had difficulties approaching him during his trips all over the country. Thus some of them, in need of kingly judgment and help, climbed roadside hills or rocks, or into trees, like Zake, and from there relying on their voices to hail him, let him know of their complaints. He appointed some of his people to investigate
15 these cases, to consider them, and to give the petitioners fair judgment.

Many times we saw his cheeks wet with tears, as he beheld people suffering from various illnesses and infirmities that affect our vulnerable and miserable flesh; such people are living most abundantly in the lands of Kutatisi. Who can count the captives freed by him, and the number of Q’ipchaks he ransomed! Who can describe adequately the honor he rendered to monks, the humility
20 with which he met and greeted them, the fondness with which he received them! Who can list all the gifts and things to eat he handed out to each, providing them with all they needed?

And this all-wise King had one more peculiarity, which made him most fearful and menacing for others; it was God’s gift – a rather wonderful feature. Nothing, good or evil, that was conducted far away from him, whether in his kingdom or in the army, by a grand person or a minor one, or just a
30 word that was passed on by somebody – nothing could be hidden from him. Anything performed or told in secret, all was visible to him and to such an extent, that somebody telling of his designs and desires could bring him into real dismay. He knew perfectly well the devotion of the secluded monks in their cells, and their virtues, and he knew the length of the road to the church down to the last inch, and he praised the patient ones, and humored them.

My dear reader, don’t try to find out how all this could be! But he gained great benefit from such a gift; for he used it not just to reproach somebody for disgraceful behavior, nor to censure someone – God save us from such unfounded suggestions – but to accomplish some great and important things; he made it his mission to do good. Nobody – whether an important or insignificant
35 person – could even dream of intriguing against him or committing treachery, to say nothing of telling somebody about it, not even to his spouse who shared a bed with him, nor to a friend, neither his
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child, for everyone knew it well. Any word parting someone's lips became immediately known to the King; and many were exposed and punished for such (words). And so nobody conspired against the King and nobody thought of betrayal, for everyone heeded and feared him.

For all the archpastors, priests, deacons, monks and the people, this trait was a law and a path to all manner of virtues. Being afraid of him they did not dare to walk along unrighteous paths; for they knew that nothing could be hidden from him, and they knew how he praised virtue and how he condemned impious and unrighteous acts. No one – neither a villager, nor a soldier, nor a man of rank, nor some ordinary person without position – not one of them dared to walk along unrighteous paths. There was an order for all, and fairness for all; even the prostitutes followed these rules. Everybody had this fear (in his heart), which pushed him towards godly and peaceful ways.

Due to this, he could perform great things, feasible only for God, with ease, while no one else could perform even the easiest ones. And the great fear and awe before him spread down to the ends of the Earth, putting every inhabitant of the world in fear.

Once a number of shrewd people gathered before the King – bishops from among the malicious Armenians and many father superiors from their monasteries, who believed self-assuredly that they had reached the peak of all learning and knowledge. And they asked the King to call a council for discussions and investigation of the matters of faith. In addition they said that if they lost the debate, they would turn to his faith and curse theirs, but if they won they would like to be granted only one favor: “Do not take us any more for heretics and curse us for that” – and nothing more was asked. Then the King summoned John, the Catholicos of Kartli, and the bishops subject to him, and the anchorites, and Arsenius from Iq'alto, the translator, an expert of Greek and Georgian languages and enlightener of all the churches, as well as other learned and wise men. And they disputed among themselves starting at dawn and until nine in the evening and were unable to conclude the debates, because there was only a desire to win and vanity on both sides. They got into an impassable maze, and could not find the way out. Having had enough, the King told them: “You, fathers, as is a custom among all philosophers, sink into the depths with inscrutable vision. We, being unenlightened and thorough laymen, can understand nothing. You know that I am far from (any) scholarly things and science, and being brought up for the business of war, I will talk with you in the words of the unenlightened, simple and easy to understand.”

Saying that he began his speech and told them the words that undoubtedly God himself had placed upon his lips. How many parables, examples and statements with indisputable and irrefutable explanations he introduced, and in this way, he plunged the listeners into the deep, like the Egyptians; he shut their mouths, and silenced them, depriving them of the power of speech in the same manner the Great Basil¹⁵⁵ had done in Athens with similar heretics. He frightened them so, depriving them of the smallest possibility of defense. Admitting their obvious defeat they just said: “We thought that you were only a pupil of your teachers; however, as we see it, you yourself are the true teacher, and these false teachers of yours will never reach your heels.” And so excusing themselves, they turned back disgraced, not daring after this to undertake anything of the kind.

But, still, there are people who blame the King for insistently conducting wars, for the incessant mobilization of his troops and the hardships they had to endure. They said: “Even a bow string

cannot be strained for ever, nor can the string of a musical instrument always be tuned, for in time of need each will prove unfit." And such things they said of him, to the irreproachable and guiltless King.

5 But let these people listen to this; as a result of many misfortunes, David received the Abkhazian kingdom much reduced and humiliated. He had a small detachment of soldiers at his disposal, who were not fit to conduct military action, as they had been routed many times by their enemies; they had neither horses, nor arms; they could not fight the Turks at all, being quite timid. If not for his marches and minor battles, his instructions, and his reasonable and firm command, and victories gained by superiority, how otherwise could he teach them the art of the battle and the courage they
10 needed. He had to praise and reward the brave, to dress cowards in frocks and to censure them, until not one man was left in his army who you could call a coward – how else could he win so many victories or conquer so many kingdoms? Could he perform all this by indulging in sleep or feasting on green pastures, by spending his energies on luxury and occupying himself with things that deprive a man of his manliness? Not in the least! Alexander himself did not do otherwise!

15 Gathering the people of his land, he conquered the western countries: Europe, Italy, Rom and Africa. Then with their help he conquered Egypt, entering Carthage, and from Egypt – Palestine and Phoenicia. And, capturing Cilicia he made war on Darius. And after adding Persia to his domains, he engaged in war with Porus of India. And then together with all of them, he circled the world and accomplished all that we have seen. With only a Georgian army, Alexander himself would have not
20 been able to achieve any good at all. Were David the king of the Persians or had he an army of the Greeks or the Romans or of some other great kingdoms, then you would see his deeds and compare them with the deeds accomplished by other much-praised commanders!

I shall tell you one more reason for his behavior: the Georgian race is by its nature disloyal to its sovereign. As soon as they have raised themselves, put on some flesh, reached a state of honor
25 and peace, they immediately start to contemplate all kinds of mischief, as the ancient chronicles of Kartli relate, and which we see to the present time. David, the wisest among men, knew this only too well; and he never left them any spare time to conceive of evil, nor the opportunity to rally together to do mischievous things. He brought to a conclusion all those works he began with such perfection and excellence. And those people accuse a lion for not tossing its glance about like a monkey or
30 trembling like a weasel!

They raise other accusations, and claim: "If he loves someone he exalts him; hating the other, he humiliates him; so he exalts and humiliates people at will." What an injustice, what foolishness! Why are you blaming a man, who is made of dust, if he resembles God in some of his works? Have you ever heard of such a thing? You fools, why are you not accusing God himself for acting
35 in the same manner? Has He not given ten more talents to the one who can make ten out of five? And has He not taken away from the man who buried his talent in the ground and given it as the eleventh in addition to the ten? Why are the heavenly joys and the pleasures of the kingdom of God promised to those who comply with the will of God, and the tortures of hell to those disobedient and unworthy? Can a King who raises the faithful, the vigilant and valorous and not the disloyal, cowardly
40 or unworthy, behave unjustly? Does a fright have to blame the mirror for reflecting his face as it is? Let the unfit and unworthy men blame themselves, not him!

Who, besides him, could so accurately estimate any circumstance? Who knows so well the human essence if not David, under whose protection came many tribes and languages, the kings and sovereigns of Ossetia, the country of Q'ipchaks, Armenia, the lands of the Franks,¹⁵⁶ Shirvan and Persia? Let us recollect the vision of Nebuchadnezzar, who said: "I saw a tree in the middle of the Earth that reached Heaven and its branches stretched out to the ends of the world. Its leaves were beautiful and there were many fruits on it, and it provided food for all. The beasts of the field lived under its branches and heavenly birds nested in it, and each was feeding upon it." 5

Here is an image, which is quite in line with that of our sovereign, expressing by words all that we have seen with our own eyes; for those craving to see his grace, his kindness and his wisdom came to him from all over the world. Who was so gracious at meeting people, amiable in conversation, which was longed for in silence? He had a beautiful face and his frame was even more beautiful; he was well-built and possessed a mighty body. He was strong and powerful, and he was even more dexterous. He was longed for when smiling, and yet more so in grief; handsome in appearance, and terrible like a fear-inspiring lion, he was wise and perspicacious. He was simple in appearance, artful in governing, formidable and calm, and learned. And not one of his virtues was in excess. He was high with the highest and humble with the humblest; he was sweet even in the eyes of his enemies, who were shamed in the presence of such virtues and learned to love him. Was there anybody who possessed just one virtue in the way he possessed them all? Who owned (just) one of the virtues to the extent to which he owned them all? 10 15

And so, when the boat was overfilled with the priceless cargo of virtues and could sail no more to Gadeira,¹⁵⁷ while peace and tranquility reigned everywhere in his kingdom, then the great organizer of our lives, who changed everything for the better, who through his omniscient foresight determined our time and ages, settled everything like a good reaper. He made sure that the ears full of grains were bending towards the ground, then hurried to gather them and store in his granary, or like a wise shipmaster knowing that his ship was full of precious cargo, hurried to a harbor so as not to suffer damage on account of the destructive storms of this world. 20 25

So, in the wintertime, when peace and tranquility reigned all over his kingdom, in a place prepared by himself for his last repose, in the heart of his kingdom and not somewhere in its outskirts, he fell asleep as if sinking into a beautiful dream featuring his forefathers.

And this should be enough to demonstrate his closeness to God, for many times and for many reasons he incurred mortal danger to himself. We shall tell of just of some of these cases: once, in Mukhnari, while pursuing a beast, his horse fell and he was hurt so badly that he lay for three days motionless and senseless, only his breath indicating that he was alive. And only after three days, he belched out a clot of blood, was restored to consciousness and speech, and with great effort got up again, alive. Such things happened to him many times, but God saved him from death. 30 35

And still another example: there was a fight at some fortress in Kartli, the King stood at noontime in the entrance of his tent, dressed only in his shirt. Somebody shot an arrow from the fortress and hit a small golden icon of the archangel hanging on his neck, and so the Divine Powers saved him. And who knows, how many times his own Q'ipchaks contrived treachery against him: sending upon him daredevils, some with swords, others with spears, yet others with arrows. And such things took place not once, two or three times, but many times. However God did not let a crowd of profane 40

people decide upon the lot of a righteous man, and did not deliver him to the hands of those seeking him. And though many times pursuing the Turks he was left alone without armor, the arm of the Almighty always defended him from his pursuers; and he was happy and lucky and full of grace in all these proceedings.

5 And in this way, in a fine and proper time God summoned David to Himself, the one who was ever eager to reign in his name. He did not condemn him to suffer in strange lands, did not allow the burdening flesh to chain his enlightened soul, did not permit him to amuse himself untroubled and lively, like in dreams or reveries, with a perishable crown and porphyry; no he had raised him to be true and solid, permanent and eternal, where the natural God reigns over those deified by his grace,
10 where he (David) is dwelling now, steeped in divine light. The month was January, the twenty fourth, a Saturday. It was the three hundred and forty fifth of the *koronik'on*,¹⁵⁸ he was fifty three years of age, and he had reigned thirty six years.

 And like the first David did with Solomon, so he with his own hands raised to the throne his son Demet're, who differed from him only in name. This scion, his embodiment, resembled in everything
15 his ancestors. He put a crown of precious stones upon his fine head – the crown of virtues, inherited from their forefathers, and girdled him with a powerful sword – and what successes it brought him! And he dressed in porphyry his giant figure and his leonine hands; and blessed him for a successful life and long days in happiness, wishing him to be worshipped by all the earthly kings and to reign in the light of righteousness and peace all his days.

20 And so he exchanged his earthly life for the heavenly kingdom, where those residing there are free from labor, sweat and care. There he reigns over the riches that he sent beforehand to the highest depository, where no thief can steal it, which cannot be wasted nor diminished; there he reigns in the city the beauty of which no eye of flesh has ever seen, the brilliance of which no heart of flesh can ever grasp, and no ear has ever heard. For truly, there is delight there, free of
25 sorrow. There are riches that do not precede poverty, and joy which will never be halted by grief; the kingdom that has no end, where life is not overshadowed by death.

NOTES

- ¹ The writing of an anonymous author depicting the life and work of King David IV (1089-1125) has no single title in the manuscripts of *kartlis tskhovreba* (*KT*). In some copies (“the copy of Queen Anna,” MS Copy “A”; the new part of the “Chalashvili copy, MS Copy “C”), every new text represents a continuation of the previous one, without any title; in other copies such as the “pre-Vakht’ang’s edition” (the Copy of Queen Mariam,” MS Copy “M,” “Mtskhaturi” 1697, MS Copy “Q”) the text has the title “Life of the King of Kings,” without any indication of a name. In the later copies, where the text was edited by a “commission of scholars” appointed by Vakht’ang VI (1675-1737), in the title there is an indication that David’s origins are connected to the biblical David; in others there is also the epithet *aghmashenebeli*. This word, meaning “builder,” was attached to David for the first time in the Synodic of Sinai monastery (I. Javakhishvili, *Opisanie gruzinskikh rukopisei Sinaia (Description of Georgian Manuscripts of Sinai)*, Tbilisi: 1947, p. 242), written by the calligrapher Chidanisdze (at the beginning of the fifteenth century). However, “aghsheneba” has a broader meaning – “to develop, improve, bring to material wellbeing,” and David’s epithet is interpreted by some researchers differently (for example, “David the Reviver”). The differences in the titles of the work can be explained by the fact that it reached us in reduced form: the work is introduced in *KT* without its initial part so that we cannot expect the narrative to be a simple continuation of *mat’iane kartlisa* (*The Chronicle of Kartli*). This, in the view of many researchers, also explains the uncommon beginning of the text: “Then Sultan Malik-Shah came ...” The author of the work is unknown. There are different theories regarding his personality, though it can be seen from the work that the author was a person close to the King and most likely a cleric. This is supported by the information given in the text itself. There are many biblical parallels; the author has an extensive knowledge of the other works of the fathers of the Church. Altogether, the work resembles in many aspects the *Lives of the Saints*, well known in ancient Georgian literature. We preferred to take as the title of the work the literal translation of the Georgian word “tskhovreba,” which means “life” and “history” or “narrative of life,” that is “biography.”
- ² Malik-Shah I – the third sultan of the Seljuk dynasty (1072-1092).
- ³ Samshvilde – the name of a historical military-administrative area – “saeristavo” – and its center, – a city-fortress in Kvemo (Lower) Kartli, in the south-west of Tbilisi. The fortress is built at the point of confluence of two rivers, Chivchavi and Khrami, which controlled the approaches of Tbilisi. Bagrat’ IV, David’s grandfather, subdued the fort in 1073. Giorgi II granted it to Ivane, son of Liparit’, from the Baghvashi family (see note 55). Malik-Shah seized Samshvilde in 1074. The ruins of some cultish practices and fortification constructions have been preserved on the site of the ancient settlement (close to contemporary Tetri Ts’q’aro), among which is a church of the eighth century.
- ⁴ Ivane (John), son of Liparit’, representative of the Baghvashi family (see note 55).
- ⁵ Somkhiti – the southern part of Eastern Georgia, that is, the part of Kvemo Kartli, directly bordering Armenia. The name was used from ancient times to designate Armenia, but from the tenth century, Georgian written sources began to call a certain part of Kvemo Kartli by that name also.
- ⁶ Sarang (Persian: Sarhang) – general, commander. The historian mentions him (as in *mat’iane kartlisa*) without any indication of his personal name. Here is meant the Seljuk emir, Sau-Tegin.
- ⁷ Partskhisi – a fortress to the south of Tbilisi on the left bank of the river of Algeti. The fortress has been preserved in a rather damaged condition. The battle between the armies of Giorgi II and sarang Sau-Tegin took place in 1074.
- ⁸ Giorgi II – son of Bagrat’ IV, father of David IV, who ruled from 1072-1089. As a result of a political crisis, which was followed by a palace reshuffle, the throne passed to his son.
- ⁹ The Persians are called here Turk-Seljuks. Generally David’s historian calls them Turks or Turkmens.
- ¹⁰ T’ao – a historical province in south-western Georgia, in the area of the middle stream of the Ch’orokhi River, now within the boundaries of Turkey. In the ninth and tenth centuries an active construction of monasteries began in T’ao, which, together with K’larjeti was a most important cultural center.
- ¹¹ Bana – an ecclesiastic and state center in T’ao (now in Turkey) in the valley of the Ch’orokhi River, on the right bank of the river of Banists’q’ali (contemporary, Feniak-Chai), not far from the village of Feniak. There are the

ruins of a church, built in the seventh century and reconstructed in the ninth and tenth centuries. There is also a fortress close to the church.

¹² Zorovar – (Armenian) general, commander.

¹³ Grigol (Gregory) – T'aoan by birth, in military service in Byzantium, was a Great Domesticus of the West. In 1083, he built Petritsioni monastery in Bulgaria (which at that time was a part of the Byzantine Empire). The Typicon of the monastery written in Greek and Georgian languages is an important document for the history of Byzantium and Georgia (A. Shanidze, *kartvelta monasteri bulgaretshi da misi tipik'oni: dzveli kartuli enis dzeglebi* (*The Georgian Monastery in Bulgaria and its Typicon: the Monuments of the Old Georgian Language*), Tbilisi: 1971. Grigol died in a battle with the Pechenegs in 1086.

¹⁴ Oltisi – a town-fortress and a province in T'ao (contemporary Oltu, in Turkey) on the right bank of the river of Oltu-Chai. The use of its name in the plural (oltis-n-i) indicates that he means here the town with its adjoining lands.

¹⁵ K'arnu-kalaki (literally “Karnu-town”) – is contemporary Erzurum (in Turkey). The town which was initially called Theodosiopol, after the conquest by the Seljuks was renamed Arzan-ar-Rum (from this came the name – Erzurum).

¹⁶ K'ari (literally “door”) – a Georgian word in its Armenianized form – Kars – is a contemporary name of a town (in Turkey).

¹⁷ *aznauri* (the stem of the word comes from the Middle Persian “free”) – a representative of a privileged social class, which either owned hereditary land, or received it in the king's service.

¹⁸ Shavsheti – a historical province in south-western Georgia (now in Turkey), adjoining K'larjeti in the basin of the river Shavshetis-ts'q'ali (contemporary Shavshet-Su). There is a Georgian church – T'beti – in Shavsheti reconstructed and brought to its final form in the tenth century.

¹⁹ Q'veli, Q'velistsikhe – a fortress on the mountain of the same name on the Arsiani mountain ridge (now in Turkey). The battle between Giorgi II's army and the Turk-Seljuks took place there in 1080.

²⁰ “Good archer” (*magrad moisasi*) – an allusion to the biblical text. ps. 77, 9 of the ancient edition, which was in use before the edition of George of the Holy Mountain (Giorgi Mtats'mindeli, 1009-1065). The quotes, paraphrases and parallels from the Bible included in the text (mostly without indication of the sources), are in accordance with the canons of Christian literature. See D. S. Likhachev, *Poetica drevnerusskoi literaturi* (*Poetics of Ancient Russian Literature*), Moscow: 1979; they are components in the artistic system of author. Identification of materials in the text, often distorted or even wholly omitted by later copyists who did not understand the biblical allusions. They are necessary for a critical identification of the text, as well as for a better understanding of the peculiarities of the work's style. References to the biblical sources are made in correspondence with ancient Georgian texts.

²¹ *k'araseuli* – (our conjecture) a vessel for wine used in monasteries.

²² Ach'ara – a historical province in the far west of Georgia, a territory between Arsiani, Shavsheti and the Ach'ara ridges. A part of the historical province is now on the territory of Turkey.

²³ Georgian sources call Greece *saberdzneti*, both the Greece of the classical epoch and of Byzantium.

²⁴ The invasions of the Turkmens began at the time of Sultan Alp-Arslan (1063-72), but after the defeat of Byzantium and the ravaging of Armenia, the raids of the Seljuks became particularly devastating. “The great invasion of the Turks” began in 1080. The information of the historian that Kutatisi (contemporary Kutaisi) and Art'anuji were “burnt on one and the same day” points to the scale of the disaster. Nomadic tribes, ravaging fertile lands of the country with developed agriculture and turning them into pasture, destroyed the very foundations of economic life. The regions listed here by the historian stretch over the vast territory, mainly in the west and south-west of contemporary Georgia, as well as in the historically Georgian provinces (now within the boundaries of Turkey).

²⁵ Asispori – a part of T'ao, located in the basin of the middle stream of the river of Ch'orokhi, between K'larjeti and Speri (now Ersis, in Turkey).

²⁶ K'larjeti – a historical province in the basin of the Ch'orokhi river's lower stream, from Arsiani ridge down to the Black Sea. The name originated from the village of the same name, situated not far from Art'anuji. Together, with T'ao K'larjeti, it was an important cultural center. The following monasteries were located on the territory of K'larjeti: Op'iza, Khandza, Dolisq'ana, Shatberdi.

- ²⁷ Samtskhe – a historical region in south-western Georgia; it encompassed contemporary Akhaltsikhe, Asp'indza and Adigeni districts, with adjoining Turkish territory.
- ²⁸ Argveti – a historical province in western Georgia. According to Leont'i Mroveli, it extended to the west of Likhi Ridge up to the Rioni river, and from the mountains of Racha in the south down to the Persatian mountains. Argveti was an estate of the Baghvashi family, which after the death of Rat'i (see note 55), David granted to Gelati monastery. There was a church in the village of Katskhi, built at the beginning of the eleventh century (rebuilt in the nineteenth century) as a family burial vault.
- ²⁹ *samokalako* – a term designating the territory adjoining a feudal town. According to David's historian, *samokalako* are the lands around the town of Kutatisi (contemporary Kutaisi), which was from the time of the coronation of Bagrat' III (978), the capital of Georgia until the liberation of Tbilisi by David in 1122.
- ³⁰ Ch'q'ondidi – a town and region in Western Georgia on the territory of historical Egrisi. The town later bore the name "Mart'vili" after the bishopric church, built in the name of all the martyrs (Georgian *mart'vili*). The eparchy preserved its former name and the bishops were called Ch'q'ondideli.
- ³¹ Art'anuji – a town-fortress, situated on the left bank of the river of Art'aanis-ts'q'ali (contemporary Ardanuch-Su); the name is Kartvelian (Lazian Art'aanish-Uji "Art'aani's edge"). The fortress is on the top of an inaccessible rock in the ancient part of Ardanucha (the center of Ilje district in Turkey). In the tenth century it was the center of K'larjeti. Being initially in possession of the Bagrat'ionis of K'larjeti, it was handed over to David IVth's great-grandfather – Bagrat' III.
- ³² *Koronik'on* (Greek) – the name of a calendar year based on a 532 year cycle (*mokts'eva*), in which 28 (the number of years of the Sun cycle) is multiplied by 19 (the number of years of the Moon cycle). The same correlation of week days, months and years is repeated every 532 years. The system was used in the Georgian written sources mainly for designation of the eighth (which began in 781 according to the contemporary calendar) and fourteenth (beginning in 1313) cycles. In the *Life of David*, the *koronik'ons* are not indicated uniformly; in all the early copies (before "Vakht'ang's") only the dates of the Great invasion of the Turks (780+300=1080), accession to the throne of David (1089) and his death (1125) are indicated, the other dates are indicated only in some of them and not always in the same places. There are reasons to suppose that all the dates were introduced into the author's text later, though their precision is not under dispute.
- ³³ *didebuli* (literally "great, grand") – a feudal lord belonging to the top of the noble class, who holds some state position and owns lands with a right of immunity, granted by the king.
- ³⁴ Giorgi II undertook the journey to Isfahan (Georgian, Asp'ani) in 1080-1081.
- ³⁵ K'akheti and Hereti – the north-eastern regions of Georgia, which at the time of *Khorepiscopos* K'virik'e III (1010-1037) became constituent parts of the kingdom of K'akheti. Kings of the Kvirikid dynasty bore the title "the king of the K'akhis and Ranis (Heris)." The capital of the kingdom was Telavi, where the remains of a palace can be seen to this day.
- ³⁶ Vejini – a fortress, built in the tenth and eleventh centuries in K'akheti; it was rebuilt several times and is still preserved (the village of Vejini, near Gurjaani).
- ³⁷ Ajameti – a place by Kutaisi, now a village in Zest'aponi district.
- ³⁸ Sujeti – a region in the middle stream of the Iori river, called after the tribes populating it.
- ³⁹ K'ukheti – a historical region in Eastern Georgia, located along the left bank of the rivers Aragvi and Mt'k'vari from Jinvali up to the Gareji desert, with the center in the town of Rustavi. David's historian uses the toponym as a name of a geographical region.
- ⁴⁰ Iori – a river in Eastern Georgia which merged with the river Alazani (now it flows into the Mingechauri reservoir in Azerbaijan).
- ⁴¹ Likhi (Surami) Ridge, divides Georgian territory into two large geographic regions – Eastern and Western Georgia.
- ⁴² Abkhazia (Georg. *Abkhazeti*) – a name formed with the help of the topo-suffix -et-, in the ancient Georgian sources generally designates Western Georgia.
- ⁴³ Aghsartan I, son of Gaik, King of K'akheti (1058-1084).

- 44 Tmogvi – a fortress in the south of Georgia, on the left bank of the Mt’k’vari. It has been preserved but in a damaged state (in the village of the same name, close to Aspindza, in Javakheti). An earthquake damaged the fortress in 1088-1089.
- 45 K’akhaber, son of Niania – a member of the feudal family of K’vabulisdze.
- 46 The year is indicated in all the early copies as “*koronik’on* 309”.
- 47 Trialeti – a region in the south of Georgia, in Lower Kartli. The *eristavdom* of K’Ide-K’ari was formed on its territory in the first half of the nineteenth century. A fortress built by Liparit’ Baghvashi (see note 55) on the mountain and close to a natural pass through some rocks (hence its name K’Ide-K’ari “a door in the rock”), became its center.
- 48 Liparit’ V Baghvashi, son of Ivane; see note 55.
- 49 Tsagulistavi – on the eastern slope of Likhi Ridge (contemp. Tsagali). There are still signs of the eleventh century fortress.
- 50 Nach’armagevi – a summer residence of the king, located in contemporary K’araleti (not far from Gori). There are remnants of a church from the feudal epoch. The King’s residence is mentioned in David’s epitaph, which is ascribed to Arsenius of Iq’alto.
- 51 Franks (Georgian, *prangni*) – the name of Norman crusaders, is encountered in Georgian sources.
- 52 Avch’ala and Digvami – places on the left bank of the Mt’k’vari not far from Tbilisi.
- 53 K’virik’e IV (1084-1004) – the king of K’akheti from the K’virik’id dynasty.
- 54 Zeda-Zadeni (later – Zedazeni) – a fortress to the north of Tbilisi. David seized it in 1103, securing for himself a strategic point in his fight for the retrieval of K’akheti. In the “copy of Queen Anna,” is an indication of the date of this event (*koronik’on* 323 = 1103).
- 55 Baghvashi – a family of important feudal lords. Liparit’, a western Georgian (Argveti) by origin, founded the *eristavdom* of K’Ide-k’ari in the 870s (see note 47). From that time the powerful Baghvashis, named after the clan’s founder, played a prominent role in the history of Georgia for more than two centuries. Liparit’ IV was the *de facto* ruler under the young Bagrat’ IV (David’s grandfather) in the eleventh century, though he ended his life in a monastery after taking monastic vows. His grandson Liparit’ V, who like his predecessors was opposed to the centralized power of the King, had been exiled by David from Georgia in 1096. With the death of his son Rat’i, whom the historian calls “viper’s brood” (while he condemns the whole family for “inflicting bitterness”), the Baghvashis disappear from the political scene. The lands of the *eristavdom* of K’Ide-k’ari became the King’s domain after 1103, and the estate Katskhi (in Argveti) was granted by David to Gelati monastery after 1106.
- 56 Aghsartan II (1104) – the king of K’akheti of the K’virik’id dynasty.
- 57 Khorepiscop (Greek) – a bishop appointed to a distant district as a person occupying an ecclesiastical position (see note 59). In Georgian reality the meaning of this title underwent a change – it was used by secular persons, such as some rulers of K’akheti.
- 58 The council was called in 1104. In the “Code”, adopted by the council (see note 59) it is noted that it took place close to two bishoprics – Ruisi and Urbnisi (Kartli, central Georgia); hence its name. Its aim was the subjection of the church to state power, which was necessary for David given his plans of centralization and the reordering of church affairs. At the council, David was present in person. The position of *Ch’q’ondidel-mts’ignobartukhutsesi* was instituted just after the Ruis-Urbnisi Council.
- 59 “Code” (dzeglis-ts’era, literally “pillar-writing”) – a document adopted by the Ruis-Urbnisi Council, which reached us in copies of the twelfth century; see E. Gabidzashvili (ed.), *ruis-urbnisi k’rebis nuskhā (Code of the Ruis-Urbnisi Council)*, Tbilisi: 1978. After the extensive “Introduction,” information is given about the defrocking of unworthy church ministers. Then a number of ordinances, related to the rules of appointment to different church positions, as well as the conducting of church sacraments, is provided. According to the opinion of many researchers, the author of the “Code” is Arsenius of Iq’alto, the translator of the “Great Nomocanon”.
- 60 Constantine the Great (285-337) – a Roman emperor, and defender of Christianity.
- 61 Arishian – a noble man in Hereti.
- 62 The Erts’ukhi Battle took place in 1104. Different theories were made regarding its location. Now it is believed we must look for the location in the territory of contemporary Saingilo (Azerbaijan). The battle, when David

defeated an enemy which outnumbered him, was decisive in the reunification of K'akheti and Hereti with the kingdom of Georgia.

⁶³ *atabag* (from Turkish, "ata" – father) – initially – tutor to the successor of the Seljuk Sultan. Later the title of the ruler of a principality (or some other vassal estate).

⁶⁴ Gandza (Ganja) – a town on the bank of Ganja-Chai (contemporary Azerbaijan). *Atabag* of Gandza was the Sultan's vassal. Gandza, conquered by the Seljuks in 1068 was a springboard for their assaults on Georgia.

⁶⁵ Here a monastery complex in Gelati, close to Kutaisi; construction began in 1106. It was finished after the death of David, about 1130. Gelati was an important educational center. The complex has been preserved. The name of the complex is mentioned in just one copy (C), which may be a later interpretation. However, identification of the monastery (in one of the churches there is a fresco of David with a model of the church in his hand) is beyond doubt. David himself was buried in Gelati. See note 158.

⁶⁶ Rustavi – a large town and strategic point on the territory of contemporary Rustavi, to the south-east of Tbilisi.

⁶⁷ Agarani – a region to the south of Tbilisi. There was a fortress of the same name (Agarata tsikhe) located there, which in the later Middle Ages bore the name of "K'ojori fortress".

⁶⁸ Tevdore governed in K'Idde-K'ari and Trialeti as a *mosakargave*, that is, he was appointed by the King to the position of a ruler. Giorgi Ch'q'ondidel-*mts'ignobartukhutsesi* was one of the most faithful supporters of David. Giorgi as the Bishop of Ch'q'ondidi, took part in the Ruis-Urbnisi Ecclesiastic Council. The positions of *mts'ignobartukhutsesi* (the head of the King's office, the chief notary) and Bishop of Ch'q'ondidi, were united by David soon after the Ruis-Urbnisi Council, which allowed him to better control the church. Giorgi occupied this position until his death in 1118.

⁶⁹ Abuleti – a *didebuli* from K'akheti, from the Abuletisdze family.

⁷⁰ Samshvilde was seized in 1110. In copies "A" and "C", *koronik'on* 380" is indicated. The location of Dzerna is unknown. This place is mentioned only in copy "A".

⁷¹ In the copies only a geographical point – Maslata – is indicated, which is impossible to identify. We believe it is just a distorted word *miseulita* ("with his").

⁷² Rustavi was seized in 1115. In copies "C" and "A," the date is indicated as *koronik'on* 335.

⁷³ Mukhnari (literally: "oak-forest") – a historical region to the north of Mtskheta, between the rivers of Aragvi and Ksani. As the King's domain, it is mentioned in David's will, and was given to Shio-Mghvime monastery.

⁷⁴ Shida spa (literally: "interior army") – a military detachment was perhaps made a part of the *mona-spa* (see note 97), the regiment which permanently accompanied the King.

⁷⁵ Khupta – contemporary, Khopa (in Turkey).

⁷⁶ Ch'orokhi (Turk. Chorukh) – a river which flows into the Black Sea to the south of Batumi.

⁷⁷ Basiani – a region in south-western Georgia (now in Turkey), in the upper part of the river Araxes.

⁷⁸ This battle occurred in 1116. In the copies "C" and "A," the date *koronik'on* 336 is indicated.

⁷⁹ David's daughter K'at'a, was married to Isaac, son of Alexios Komnenos, in 1116.

⁸⁰ Tamar, the elder daughter of David, was married to Manuchekhr II, son of Shirvan-shah Afridun, about 1110-1116. Roin Metreveli, *davit meotkhe aghmashenebeli (David IV the Restorer)*, Tbilisi: Tbilisi University Publishing House, 1990.

⁸¹ Shirvan (Georgian, Sharvani) – a state on the western coast of the Caspian Sea to the north-east of the Mt'k'vari river. Historically – a part of Caucasian Albania. Rulers of Shirvan bore the title of Shirvan-shah. The dynastic marriage of Tamar did not justify David's political expectations, and he later conquered Shirvan. In the twelfth century, when Shirvan became a vassal state of Georgia, before the Mongol invasion, Georgian kings bore the title of Shirvan-shah.

⁸² Asat and Shota – representatives of the feudal family, Grigolisdze, owners of the fortress-town Gishi (from this their family name – Gisheli).

⁸³ Gishi – the center of the principality of Tsuketi on the river with the same name (now Kish, in Azerbaijan). David seized Gishi in 1117.

⁸⁴ Demet're I (1125-1156), David's older son from his first marriage.

⁸⁵ Rakhs – the river Araxes.

- ⁸⁶ Nakhiduri – is located in Kvemo Kartli, to the west of Gardabani, on the right bank of the Khrami River, at the place of contemporary Arukhlo.
- ⁸⁷ Beshken Jaq'eli, according to *mat'iane kartlisa*, was the *eristavi* of Kartli.
- ⁸⁸ Lore – a city-fortress and a historical region to the south of Tbilisi. It was seized in 1118. Copy “C” gives an indication of the date – *koronik'on* 338. The ruins of the fortress, founded in the eleventh century, are located near Stepanavan (Armenia).
- ⁸⁹ Alexios I Komnenos (1081-1018) – a Byzantine Emperor.
- ⁹⁰ Here is meant Alexander of Macedon (356-323 BC). The historian compares David several times with Alexander, to demonstrate David's own superiority.
- ⁹¹ Q'ipchaks were invited by David to form a regular army. The resettlement of the Q'ipchaks took place in 1118-1119.
- ⁹² Atrak, Sharaghan's son –Otrok in Slavic sources.
- ⁹³ Ossetia – Georgian word os-et-i (formed by the topo-suffix -et- and the Georgian name of the people) designates the territory populated by the Ossetian tribes north of Darial, a narrow gorge of the river Terek, and a natural pass from southern to northern Caucasia.
- ⁹⁴ *Mtavari* (literally “chief”) – the head of family or principedom.
- ⁹⁵ Patron (Lat.) – suzerain.
- ⁹⁶ Vakht'ang – son of David from his marriage with Guarandukht'. He is mentioned further, only in David's will (T. Eruk'idze, V. Silogava, N. Shoshiashvili, *kartuli ist'oriuli sabutebis k'orp'usi* (*Corpus of Georgian Historical Documents*), Tbilisi: Metsniereba, 1984).
- ⁹⁷ Five thousand soldiers made up a so called *mona-spa* – a regular army and the king's personal guard.
- ⁹⁸ *sp'asalar* (Persian) – commander of a military detachment.
- ⁹⁹ Kaikhosro – a hero in Ferdowsi's (about 935-1020) in the poem “Shah-Nameh”.
- ¹⁰⁰ Great Somkhiti – here the kingdom of Armenia. The epithet “great” is used by the historian to distinguish it from “Somkhiti” – a Georgian territory, directly adjoining Armenia
- ¹⁰¹ Abkhazia – here Western Georgia.
- ¹⁰² Geugi – the king's residence (near contemporary Kutaisi). The palace's ruins are in the village with the same name on the right bank of the Rioni.
- ¹⁰³ This battle occurred on 14th February, 1120. In copy “A,” the date is indicated as *koronik'on* 340.
- ¹⁰⁴ Kabala – a town on the left bank of the Mt'k'vari. The ruins are preserved to the east of Chukhur-Kabala (in Azerbaijan).
- ¹⁰⁵ Derbent (Georgian Darubandi; from the Persian *dar* – “door” and *band* – “lock”) – a town on the Caspian shore, from the tenth century it was the center of a feudal principality. In the text here, darubandeli, means (the ruler) of Derbent.
- ¹⁰⁶ Ashornia – one of the regions of Armenia.
- ¹⁰⁷ Bich'vinta – contemporary Pitsunda (Russ.)
- ¹⁰⁸ *mkhari* (literally “shoulder”) – a measure of length, according to S.S. Orbeliani's definition, equal to the distance between the arms stretched wide, approx. 1.85 meters (G. Japaridze, *kartuli metrologiis is'toriis mimokhilva* (*Essay on the History of Georgian Metrology*), Tbilisi: 1973).
- ¹⁰⁹ A battle in Khunan occurred in March of 1121. The year is indicated in copy “A” as *koronik'on* 341. Khunan – a city-fortress, the center of the *eristavdom* of the same name on the right bank of the Mt'k'vari, not far from the point of its confluence with Taus-Chai (contemporary name).
- ¹¹⁰ Gagi (or Gagta, plural) – a historical province in Kvemo Kartli; the center was the city-fortress with the same name downstream of the river Debeda. In the later Middle Ages the fortress was called Agja-Kala.
- ¹¹¹ Berdudj – the old Georgian name of the river of Dzegam-Chai (in Azerbaijan).
- ¹¹² Here in the text – a euphemistic translation of the biblical text, which can be found at several places in the ancient Georgian Bible.
- ¹¹³ Sultan Mahmud ibn Mohammad, the ruler of the Iranian Sultanate (1117-1131).
- ¹¹⁴ Durbez, son of Sadaq' – Dubais ibn Sadaq'a (1108-1135). Maziadid, the ruler of Iraq.
- ¹¹⁵ Malik – most probably Torgul ibn Mohammed, who at the time of the Battle of Dighomi, was just twelve.

- ¹¹⁶ Il Gazi – Najm-ad-Din-Il-Gazi, Artuqid, the ruler of Baghdad, owner of the towns of Khalab (Aleppo) and Mardin (Diar-Bakr), who defeated the Crusaders in the “Bloody Field”.
- ¹¹⁷ *atabag* of Gandza – Kent-Tukhdi, was appointed *atabag*, when Torgul was under age.
- ¹¹⁸ Manglisi – a territory on the southern slopes of the Trialeti ridge at a height of 1200 meters on the left bank of Algeti in historical Kvemo Kartli. Initially, it was in the possession of the rulers of K’Ide-K’ari; from the eleventh century, it became a part of the King’s domain. There is a well-preserved church in contemporary Manglisi, the final ornamentation was added during the reign of David’s father – Giorgi II (1014-1027).
- ¹¹⁹ Didgori – a place to the north-east of Manglisi, on the slopes of the mountain with the same name at a height of about 1600 meters. Here on the 12th of August, in 1121, a battle took place. The enemy’s combined army entered Georgia along several routes and gathered in Trialeti. There is no unanimity of opinion regarding the number of the enemy troops (from thirty thousand to six hundred thousand). However, their number exceeded by several times David’s army. David put into the field about forty thousand Georgians, fifteen thousand Q’ipchaks, 500 Alans (Ossetians) and several dozen Franks. Occupying an advantageous position, which obliged the enemy to fight in narrow valleys and thick forests, David was able to compensate for his inferior numbers. According to the testimony of Ibn-al-Asir, – Torgul, Il-Gazi and Dubais escaped. The date indicated in copy “A” is *koronik’on* 341.
- ¹²⁰ In the ancient Armenian translation of *KT*, in place of the great martyr George, Christ is mentioned.
- ¹²¹ In one of the later copies it is dated *koronik’on* 341.
- ¹²² Aristovul (375-285 BC) – a contemporary, and historian of Alexander of Macedon.
- ¹²³ Josef Flavius (370 – the date of death is unknown) – a Hebrew historian, the author of the *Judaic War* and *Judaic Antiquities*.
- ¹²⁴ Agamemnon, Priam, Achilles, Odysseus, Orestes – figures in Homer’s poems.
- ¹²⁵ Vespasian, Titus Flavius – Roman emperor (69-79 AD). Titus – his son, emperor (79-81 AD).
- ¹²⁶ Tbilisi was seized by David in 1122. As copy “A” indicates, it was *koronik’on* 342. Tbilisi was the center of an Emirate, though by the time it was captured, the Emirate had shrunk and its political power was substantially diminished. However, as the historian indicates, the town “was not yet under the yoke of submission and was full of Christian blood.” After the seizure of the town the capital was moved to Tbilisi.
- ¹²⁷ Sultan Mahmud (1117-1131) attacked Shirvan-Shah (his name is unknown), seizing Shirvan’s capital – Shamakha. David set out for Shirvan in May 1123.
- ¹²⁸ *atabag* of Ran, Ak-Sonkor-al-Ahmadili. Ran (Arran) – was a political formation on the territory of former Caucasian Albania, in the valley between the rivers Mt’k’vari and Araxes (now Mil Steppe in Azerbaijan). It included the towns of Gandza, Bardav, and Bailakan. In the eleventh century, it was under the control of the Shaddadids.
- ¹²⁹ Gulistan – a fortress on the left bank of Ak-Su, to the north-west of Shamakha (now a village in Azerbaijan). David launched a second campaign against Shirvan in June 1123.
- ¹³⁰ Dmanisi – a city-fortress in Kvemo Kartli, to the south-west of Tbilisi at the confluence of the rivers of Mashaveri and Pinezauri. At the end of the eleventh century, it was under the control of the Seljuks. David seized it in March of 1123.
- ¹³¹ Shaburan –Shabran, now in Daghestan.
- ¹³² Kurds, Lek’is – tribal formations in North Caucasia.
- ¹³³ Somkhiti – here Armenia.
- ¹³⁴ K’ola – an area in the upper part of the river Mt’k’vari to the north-east of Oltisi (now in Turkey). K’arnifor – a region to the south-west of Kars, south of the river Akhurian. Speri – a region in south-western Georgia, upstream of the Ch’orokhi river (now Ispir, a province in Turkey).
- ¹³⁵ Bugta-Kuri – a point near Oltisi, contemporary Bua-Kala in Turkey (D. Muskhelishvili, *sakartvelos ist’oriuli geografiis dziritadi sak’itkhebi* (*The Main Questions of the Historical Geography of Georgia*), Tbilisi: 1985, p. 102.
- ¹³⁶ Bozhana – a village by the lake of Tabatskuri, was well-known owing to its springs. Here was the King’s summer residence (D. Berdzenishvili, *zemo kartlis ist’oriuli geografiis shesakheb* (*Essays on Historical Geography of Zemo Kartli*), Tbilisi: 1985, p. 102.
- ¹³⁷ Anisi (Ani) – from 961, it was a capital of the kingdom of Armenia, in the 1060s, it was seized by the Seljukids. From 1118, Anisi was in the hands of Abu-l-Asvar (Bulasvar in the Georgian text) of the Shadadid family, a Kurd

by birth. The ruins of the town are on the right bank of the river of Akhurian (Turkish, Arpachay – a tributary of the Araxes), now in Turkey. David seized Anisi in August-September of 1124. In the copies of the “pre-Vakht’ang” period, the date of Anisi’s seizure is not noted, but in one of the later copies it is dated *koronik’on* 342. In the same copy (the “Janashvili’s copy”) there is an account of the visit by David to the grave of Queen Katronika in Anisi church.

- ¹³⁸ This campaign of David against Shirvan took place in the autumn of 1124. After this, Shirvan became a vassal of Georgia, whose king began to bear the title “Shirvan-shah”.
- ¹³⁹ Bedia – an eparchy in western Georgia (in Gali in contemporary Abkhazia). In Bedia Church, there is an image of its *Ktitor* (builder), David’s great-grandfather, Bagrat’ III (975-1014), who is buried there. He has a model of the Alaverdi church in his hands. This is an eparchy in Eastern Georgia, in K’akheti. The center of the eparchy is the Alaverdi Church (eleventh century) which is well preserved to this day.
- ¹⁴⁰ In the copies – “a sip of water from the Mt’k’vari”. The expression “(to take a) sip from the Mt’k’vari” (*mt’k’urisagan*) we conjecture means “from the river” (*mdinarisagan*), because the word we meet in the ancient Georgian written texts, in phrases of this kind, represents a separate place, but which refers to the character of the whole.
- ¹⁴¹ Ptolemy II Philadelphus (284-247 B.C.), from the Lagids Dynasty which ruled in Egypt after the death of Alexander of Macedon and the dissolution of his empire, was a passionate bibliophile. According to one legend, under his patronage, a translation of the ancient Hebrew Bible in Greek language was made (“Septuaginte”). David was himself a talented writer. He wrote “Songs of Repentance” which testifies to his deep knowledge of theological literature.
- ¹⁴² Mosomakh (Greek – Mosollamos) – was an artful archer, and is mentioned in the “Against Apion” of Joseph Flavius. In the “Chronograph” of George Amartol, this name has the form of “Mossomakhos”.
- ¹⁴³ Bahram Jur – a king of Persia from the Sassanid dynasty (420-438), one of the heroes of the Firdausi’s *Book of Books*.
- ¹⁴⁴ Loch’ini – a place near Tbilisi by the river Loch’inis-ts’q’ali, a tributary of the Mt’k’vari River, originating in the Saguramo ridge.
- ¹⁴⁵ Avch’ala – a territory to the north of Tbilisi, on the foothills of Saguramo Ridge (now in Tbilisi).
- ¹⁴⁶ Antony the Great, a saint of Phoebe (about 250-356), Egyptian Copt by birth, the founder of monasticism. His whole life he lived in Egypt’s deserts and preached asceticism.
- ¹⁴⁷ The place where David’s early sins are mentioned can be interpreted in different ways. They (the sins) are also mentioned in David’s will, which he gave to Shio-Mghvime Lavra (along with his “Songs of Repentance”). However there is no concrete indication as to what they were. It is perhaps about events of a political character (deposing of his father, George II), though issues of personal character are not excluded. It is clear, however, that David’s enemies used these facts against him, for even his loyal historian is obliged to mention them.
- ¹⁴⁸ Here is meant Ivirion – the Georgian monastery, built in the 1080s, on Mount Athos (Mtats’minda – Holy Mountain). One of the main *Ktitors* was Tornik’e (John when he became a monk), a commander who handed all the spoils he received after the victory over the rebel Varda Sklir, for the construction of a monastery.
- ¹⁴⁹ Petritsioni Monastery (see note 13).
- ¹⁵⁰ Monastery of Jalia (Galia) in Cyprus (contemporary, Iaila).
- ¹⁵¹ The regions of the Near East, listed by the historian as Palestine, Syria (Georgian, *asur-et-i*), Black Mountain – were places of intense monastic activity by Georgians, which is confirmed by historical data, and by epigraphic materials and manuscripts. In the monastery of Sabbus the Sanctified, the Georgians appeared early on: the Sinai Homiliar of 864 was copied there (and donated to Sinai). The Georgians were also in the monastery of St. Chariton (Palaver) and many others, as well as in convents. In Syria, and particularly on Black Mountain (on the outskirts of Antioch), the Georgians were in the monastery of St. Simeon, in Kalipos, Kastana and other places.
- ¹⁵² In Sinai, in the monastery of St. Catherine, the activity of the Georgians is particularly conspicuous in the ninth and tenth centuries. There were several Georgian churches in the monastery and its environs. The Sinai collection of Georgian manuscripts is valuable for its antiquity; the collection was increased after new findings were made in the monastery in 1975. The historian writes that David took care of Sinai Monastery, which is confirmed by a note that David wrote with his own hand on one of the manuscripts, saying that the book was sent by him to the Holy Mount of Sinai (V. Silogava, *Bagrat’ion khelmtspeta avtograpebi* (*Autographs of the*

Kings-Bagrat'ionis), Tbilisi: 2002. There is an image of the King on one of the icons of the monastery. The name and title of the King in the inscription prove that the icon represents David (D. Kldiashvili, *ts'minda giorgis khati sinais monast'ershi davit aghmasheneblis port'ret'is gamosakhulebit (Icon of St. George of Sinai Monastery with a Portrait of David the Restorer)*, Mravaltavi, XV, Tbilisi: Metsniereba, 1989).

¹⁵³ Drakhan – initially a Persian golden coin (etymologically, a Darius' [coin]), A darik, at that time was any golden coin.

¹⁵⁴ *mosakargave* – a person, managing a *sakargave*, that is, monastery lands given to him (A. Shanidze, *Ibid.*, 1971, p. 387).

¹⁵⁵ Basil the Great, bishop of Cesarea (329-378), a theologian and writer, fought the Arian heresy.

¹⁵⁶ In the Georgian text: *prangetisani* (compare note 50). Here we can read: *vrangetisani*, that is, (the land) of Varangians – Russian tribes that inhabited North Caucasia (R. Metreveli, *Ibid.*, 1990, p. 280).

¹⁵⁷ Gadeira – the Greek name of Cadiz. According to the author, who borrowed this image from Greek Christian sources, this geographic point was at the end of the earth. The word is in ancient Georgian literature of the eleventh and twelfth centuries.

¹⁵⁸ This *koronik'on* is indicated in all the copies of the pre-Vakht'ang period (*koronik'on* 345, that is, 1125). David is buried in Gelati, under the threshold of one of the gates of the monastery complex. Those who enter the monastery step over his grave, which, according to the legend, was David's wish. The marble gravestone has been preserved to this day. The following words are inscribed on the stone: "This is the place of my eternal rest and here I will remain" (ps. 131, 14). Now the entrance is through other gates. According to some scholars, David's remains were moved to another place for safety.

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93

The Life of David, King of Kings. Kartlis Tskhovreba, The Mtskheta MS (1697), National Centre of Manuscripts, Tbilisi, Q-1219, 98r.

THE CHRONICLE OF GIORGI LASHA AND HIS TIME¹

The Life of Demet're²

Having completed his reign, David³ arrived in the eternal kingdom that never ends. It was in 345 of the *koronik'on* (1125 AD).⁴ During his lifetime he had made his son Demet're King, placing the crown on his head with his own hands. Demet're received the royal throne and the royal seat, with a lion's arm, worthy of wise praise. King Solomon says: "Peace comes due to the virtues of a king."⁵ Demet're was God-fearing, fortunate and victorious, humble in his greatness and wealth, and charitable to the poor. He gave alms to widows and orphans, donations to cathedrals and churches, priests and monks, and granted villages and lands to his subjects. He spoke pleasantly with the *didebulis*⁶ and courtiers of his kingdom, and was generous and giving. This is how he extended and built his kingdom. 5 10

When the Great David occupied Tbilisi⁷ and incorporated Hereti⁸ and K'akheti,⁹ people lived almost exclusively in fortresses and cities. Hereti, Somkhiti,¹⁰ T'ashiri,¹¹ Javakheti,¹² Lower Art'aani,¹³ and (Upper) Art'aani were strengthened during Demet're's reign, as well as the marshlands of T'ao.¹⁴

When Demet're was still king, the Great David¹⁵ sent his son to Shirvan,¹⁶ and Demet're personally waged war and fought in battles. Eye-witnesses were astonished to see how Demet're took the fortress of Kaladzori¹⁷ and returned laden with booty and innumerable prisoners, putting the Persians and their allies¹⁸ to flight. It was in 350 of the *koronik'on* (1130 AD). He slew and exterminated the commanders of the Persian army, filled the treasury, and all his troops were rewarded. 15

Demet're was merciful to those who were loyal to him and punished evil-doers justly, whether it was for sins committed by a priest, a warrior, a high priest or other people not of equal rank. So it is written: "The servant who knew his master's wishes, yet made no attempt to carry them out, will be flogged severely."¹⁹ 20

He inherited the best qualities from David in all spheres.²⁰ He was like a tree planted by God and anointed. He passed his life like this, reaching an unblemished old age. He took the monastic vows and was consecrated with schema.²¹ A year later he passed away. His son David²² was made king. He reigned for six months and died. Giorgi²³ ascended the throne after his father (David). It was in 375 of the *koronik'on* (1155 AD). 25

The same year that King Demet're passed away, his sister Tamar,²⁴ who built Tighva,²⁵ took the veil, and she too died. And his other sister queen K'ata²⁶ was married in Greece. King David (V) had a son, also called Demet're, who was the nephew of King Giorgi. 30

When the Orbelis²⁷ rebelled against King Giorgi, they took Demet're with them, and entered the fortress of Lore,²⁸ from where the Orbelis were tempted out and slain. Demet're was locked up in the fortress of K'ldek'ari, and later his eyes were gouged out, after which he died. He was buried in Mtskheta²⁹.

5 King Demet're passed away at Belt'istsikhe. He was buried at Gelati³⁰ in the new monastery consecrated by him. It was in 375 of the *koronik'on* (1155 AD). Demet're had beheaded Ivane Abuletisdze³¹ at Chkheres Mere in the twentieth year of his reign. And Ivane was buried in Met'ekhi³² in accordance with an oath sworn to him.

The Life of King Giorgi

10 Giorgi ascended the throne. He was superior among kings, and powerful and mighty over his enemies and other sinners. He was a good servant of God. Giorgi granted favors to the churches, bishops, anchorites and priests; he gave alms to the poor and widows, and was uncompromising with those who committed evil sins, big or small, and he was a generous donor to those who were loyal to him.

15 The Persian Sultans, from near and far, sent him gifts and paid tribute. And he kept the lands of his kingdom secure. He seized and retrieved Anisi,³³ taken by the Turks earlier. That happened in 380 of the *koronik'on* (1160 AD). He captured Saldukh,³⁴ exterminated all his military forces and forced him to send countless gifts and arms. And his kingdom and army were supplied with these riches, and there was no fear. He put to flight the Sultans of Gandza³⁵ and Khlal,³⁶ slaying them.

20 Then Ildegiz³⁷ came with a large army of Persians and devastated Shavsheti and K'larjeti, but while departing, he and his army was slaughtered so that nobody survived to tell the story. It was in 397 of the *koronik'on* (1177 AD) that the Orbelis revolted. Then there was peace in Abkhazeti,³⁸ Svaneti³⁹ and in the cities. And on his order, many thousands of Ossetians and Q'ipchaks⁴⁰ came to support him. The House of Shirvan did the same. And God granted him a child by his crowned wife,

25 Burdukhan, which was granted him as Samuel was to Hannah, as the Lord had promised.⁴¹ Justice and peace shone forth all his days. He ruled 28 years and died at St'agiri, K'akheti on March 27, on a Tuesday, in Holy Week. He was buried at Mtskheta because of the exigencies of the season and that same year his body was conveyed to Gelati.

30 The Life of the Great Queen of Queens Tamar⁴²

Tamar became the greatest among kings, fortunate and God-fearing, beautiful and good-natured (the basis of all virtue is being God-fearing and humble), a lover of churches, monks and nuns; she gave alms to beggars and helped those looking for justice.

She restored the destroyed churches on the Holy Mountain in Greece,⁴³ in Jerusalem,⁴⁴ and on the Black Mountain,⁴⁵ and freed some of them from paying tribute to foreigners. She spun herself and gave the cloth to weavers to donate to God, for the holy service both abroad and here⁴⁶ in the East. She was fond of praying like a nun, both praying and reading the vespers psalms before going to sleep.

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She never raised her voice at her viziers and troops; worthy subjects were rewarded with parental love, and she punished none of her servants, with the exception of Guzan T'aosk'areli,⁴⁷ who had fled across the border to Persia. He was captured by Zakaria Asp'anisdze, handed over to the *darbazi*⁴⁸ and his eyes were gouged out.

During Tamar's reign the Sultans were put to flight and cities and fortresses were captured: the *atabag*⁴⁹ of Gandza was put to flight. It was in 408 of the *koronik'on* (1188AD). The kingdom was filled with captives and booty collected. In the ninth year of her reign the *mandat'urtukhutsesi*⁵⁰ and *sp'asalar*⁵¹ Zakaria Mkhargrdzeli and his brother Ivane the *atabag* took Dvin.⁵² It was in 413 of the *koronik'on* (1193 AD).

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They also took Gelakun,⁵³ Bijnisi,⁵⁴ Amberd,⁵⁵ and Bargushat',⁵⁶ and all the towns above the city of Ani, up to the bridge of Khuaprid. And there was nobody else who would serve their king so faithfully; and they were fortunate and victorious. Rukn ad-Din⁵⁷ came with his troops from Damascus⁵⁸ and Aleppo⁵⁹ to conquer her kingdom. The Queen's men met them at Basiani,⁶⁰ and put them to flight; some were slain and slaughtered. They brought the captured sultans and the emirs of Erzink'i, Sham⁶¹ and Bivrit'i,⁶² with treasure chests filled with precious gold and pearls, and with numerous marquees with the banners of the sultanate, gold and silver in great number. The valleys and fields were full of camels, mules and horses. And it was in 435 of the *koronik'on* (1215 AD)

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Then they captured K'ari,⁶³ the fortresses of K'arnipori⁶⁴ and Vanand, and the strongholds along the Rakhs,⁶⁵ and before that Khakhuli, Oshk'i, and Bana⁶⁶ were taken. Fear of God increased. Nobody dared to destroy churches and monasteries. Nobody robbed caravans. Peace and tranquility reigned in Eastern and Western (Georgia) and in her old kingdom of Abkhazeti, where not even a single chicken was killed: there were neither thieves nor malefactors, and those who found stolen goods brought them to the king's court and left them under the banners. Nobody dared to steal – neither the Ossetians nor the Mtiulis,⁶⁷ nor the Q'ipchaks nor the Svans.⁶⁸ And this kingdom was so rich that the *aznauris*⁶⁹ and their serfs wore similar clothes.

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David, Tamar's consort, was the King of the Ossetians, one of the Bagrat'ioni house, a knight and a lion, victorious in all his deeds, a valiant and a skilful warrior, praiseworthy. Persian cities were destroyed, Marand was wiped out⁷⁰ and also the land of Eran;⁷¹ the troops reached remote places where nobody had heard of Georgia. Tamar and David had two children – Giorgi and Rusudan. When Giorgi was born David gathered an army in honor of this event and captured K'ari. And they were happy, Queen Tamar and David.

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King Giorgi's daughter and Tamar's sister Rusudan⁷² were pious and merciful; Rusudan comforted and gave shelter to those who needed it, and raised children and orphans. The ones that were worthy stayed with her and the Queen's children. She sent her needlework to the churches.

The sultans of neighboring countries paid tribute to Tamar. She preserved the kingdom inviolate; all lived in peace and flourished, and everybody was treated with compassion. Tamar reigned for twenty-three years and ascended to God, where prophets, patriarchs and kings abide, on January 12, a Wednesday, in Agara, Somkhiti, in 427 of the *koronik'on* (1207 AD). She was buried at Gelati, in the new monastery. And the people's grief was inconsolable, people beat their heads and tore their hair and wept, for her parental care and gifts, her understanding and consolation were so keenly remembered. The whole kingdom bemoaned her death for an appropriate time. The same year, her son Giorgi ascended the throne. His reign was long, and his life spent well in this changeable world and in that eternal world.

The Life of Giorgi, the son of Tamar

Giorgi was born in 413 of the *koronik'on* (1193 AD). "The sufferings of the righteous are numerous," says the Prophet "and those who fear Him will be saved from all evil." And the apostle uttered again "Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways! For who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counselor."⁷³

After Tamar the Queen of Queens died, the whole kingdom was in desperate sorrow and only the Lord, who was not angry, mercifully had given her a son, Lasha, who was like her and born by her. He was twelve years old when he ascended the throne, a gentle offspring, a many-colored flower, strong as a lion, pure in his thoughts, a lover of mankind, both young and old. Respectful to the leading *mtavaris*,⁷⁴ monks and priests, calm and not prone to anger, the King of seven kingdoms,⁷⁵ never using the whip against his servants, a brilliant archer, a valiant and brave rider who, in his youth personally took part in battles like his great-great grandfather David; and he was victorious. He was fortunate in battle, and the country flourished. And he gave alms to beggars, was a mediator and a judge, he forestalled time and age by his deeds.

And his kingdom enjoyed unruffled tranquility. And all his affairs were managed by Zakaria Mkhargrdzeli,⁷⁶ *mandat'urtukhutsesi*,⁷⁷ and by Ivane the *atabag*. They had been his advisers since the time of his parents. His mother, the great Queen of Queens Tamar, had sent him to war, and the fortune of her first-born son let him take K'ari. Then he launched a campaign against the great Persia and seized Ardabil,⁷⁸ smashed city-fortresses, filling his kingdom with wealth. After this Giorgi raided and devastated the land of Khlat,⁷⁹ and made the ruler of Khlat his vassal. And this vassal swore to be loyal to Giorgi. He also made the ruler of K'arnu-Kalaki⁸⁰ seek the protection of the King's house. He stopped at Basiani, rested and had a good time with all of them there. Shalva Toreli, being brave and courageous, captured K'echroli⁸¹ and gained victory in a glorious battle, for this young man and warrior had no equal in battle.

King Giorgi took Orot'i,⁸² and all the regions and strongholds subject to it, up to Nakhichevan and the Gate of Gandza; he took Shamkhor⁸³ too. Foreign troops came to Somkhiti and Hereti,

and did them great harm. The King overtook the fleeing troops on the Balists'q'ali river where he received his first wound. After that, with God's help, the enemy fled King Giorgi, and those who tried to escape were exterminated.

Next year they came again and pitched their tents on the bank of the Bardavi. Then, the whole kingdom gathered, the troops of K'arnu-Kalaki joined them. The enemy, camped between Lomtagori and Agara, fled before they were attacked. They retreated, passing through Darubandi. Let us praise him before every man, who rejects lies and confusion. David, the father of God, says: "He trains my hands for battle; my arms can bend even the strongest bow. You give me your protective shield; your right hand supports me; your willingness to help enables me to prevail."⁸⁴ While the country flourished and prospered, the great Sultan Melik of Khlata, and the ruler of Persia from Egypt to Khlata, asked Giorgi to give him his sister Rusudan⁸⁵ as a wife. However, thanks to God's providence, this did not happen. The Shah of Shirvan asked to marry her. He was given consent. The *eristavi* of Kartli was sent to Shirvan, and the King himself arrived in Baghavan⁸⁶ to make preparations for his sister's wedding.

He stayed there ten days and then it was time for departure. But mighty God, who is rich with his mercy, made us pay for our sins. King Giorgi died at Baghavan on January 18, a Wednesday, in 442 of the *koronik'on* (1122 AD).

And there was great pain, hearts bled instead of people shedding tears. Those who had grown up with him and remembered him well were in despair, the viziers and *didebulis* of the whole kingdom sprinkled ashes on their heads, and Ivane the *atabag* did the same. And by God's grace Rusudan did not leave country, and that same year she was raised to the throne. Had the Lord not spared us from perdition she would not have survived the pain, caused by her brother's demise. He was taken at once to Gelati and buried next to his father. And he left no heir by his crowned wife.

Oh merciful Lord, You who never abandon God-fearing people, defend this kingdom and our queen Rusudan, give her children and us joy from generation to generation, let her live long and give her salvation in the kingdom of heaven.

NOTES

¹ Giorgi Lasha (1191-1223) was son of the Queen of Queens Tamar, from the Royal House of Bagrat'ioni. He was king of Georgia from 1213 to 1223 A.D.

² Demet're I (1093-1156) – King of a united Georgia (1125-1156) from the Royal House of Bagrat'ioni, he was the eldest son of King David the Builder. He took part with his father in the battles of Didgori (1121) and Shirvan (1123). Demet're ascended to the throne on January 24, 1125 and reigned till 1154; in 1155 Demet're was restored to the throne. King Demet're I attacked the city of Ganja (Gandza) and held the city for several years. Demet're was known as an author of poems, mainly on religious themes. The most famous is a hymn to the Virgin Mary "shen khar venakhi (Thou Art a Vineyard)." He died in 1156 and was buried at Gelati monastery. The Georgian Orthodox Church canonized King Demet're I as a Saint and his feast day is celebrated on May 23.

³ King David IV, called the Builder (1089-1125) crowned at the age of sixteen. He succeeded as a boy to a destroyed, desolate kingdom and left to his successor a powerful Caucasian Empire, stretching from Nik'opsia to Derbent, and from Alania to Mount Aragats. David the Builder restored and reinforced the authority of the

- Georgian Orthodox Church. He donated churches inside and outside his kingdom, built Gelati Monastery in 1106 as well as the Gelati Academy. As a writer he left us his excellent work “Hymns of Repentance.” The Georgian Orthodox Church canonized King David IV the Builder as a Saint, and his feast day is celebrated on January 26.
- ⁴ *Koronik'on*; from the Greek ο χρονος. One of three systems of chronology used in ancient Georgia. This system is based on a 532-year cycle – 28 years are multiplied with a lunar cycle of 19 years. In 780 the cycle of the given chronology ended. See: K. K'ek'elidze, *kartuli eri da eortologiuri ts'eli, tt. V-VI (The Georgian People and the eortological Year)*: Enis, istoriis da materialuri kulturis institutis shromebi (Proceedings of The Institute of Language, History and Material Culture), Vols. 5-6, Tbilisi, 1940.
- ⁵ Eccl. 3:8
- ⁶ *didebuli* – great, glorious, honored, noble (The root of the Georgian word “didi” means great).
- ⁷ King David IV the Builder (Restorer) liberated Tbilisi in 1122 and moved the capital of Georgia from Kutaisi to Tbilisi.
- ⁸ Hereti – a province in the north-eastern Georgian kingdom. According to King Vakht'ang's historian, “Hereti” was the “land on the north of the Mt'k'vari.” See J.Juansher, G. Tsulaia (eds.) *Zhizn' Vakhtanga Gorgasala, (The Life of Vakhtang Gorgasali)* Tbilisi: 1986, p. 26.
- ⁹ K'akheti – a historical province in eastern Georgia.
- ¹⁰ Somkhiti – the southern part of eastern Georgia, district of Lower Kartli, bordering Armenia. In ancient times, it was used as a designation for Armenia. The term “Somkhiti” appears in the tenth century and the meaning of this term changed. In the eleventh to fourteenth centuries, the whole territory of Lower Kartli from Arran to Tbilisi was called “Somkhiti;” from the eighteenth century – Bolnisi, Mankhut'i, Shulaveri and the Debeda valleys became part of Somkhiti. See D. Berdzenishvili, *nark'vevebi sakartvelos ist'oriuli geograpidan (Essays from Georgian Historical Geography)*, Vol.I, Tbilisi, 1979: pp. 35-41.
- ¹¹ T'ashiri – a region in Lower Kartli.
- ¹² Javakheti – a province of south-western Georgia.
- ¹³ Georgian: “არტაანი” (Art'aani) – a city in the south-east of Georgia, now in Turkey. The first surviving record about this region is attributed to Strabo, who mentioned that it was a province of Caucasian Iberia. In the ninth century, the city was taken by the Bagrat'ionis. From the ninth to eleventh centuries, Art'aani was an important transit point for goods arriving from the Abbasid Caliphate and departing to the regions around the Black Sea. From the eighth to eleventh centuries, it was part of Georgian principality of T'ao-K'larjeti. After the liberation from Arab rule, it was incorporated into the Kingdom of Georgia. The Mongols captured the city in the 1230s but the Georgian princes of Samtskhe-Saatabago were able to retake it from them in 1266. See H.L. Jones (ed.), *The Geography of Strabo*, 8 vols., Loeb Classical Library, 1917-1932).
- ¹⁴ Geo “ტაო” (T'ao) – is a historical Georgian region, now in Turkey. Its name derives from the name of Taochi, its oldest inhabitants, who were an ancient Georgian tribe. It was a province within various Georgian Royal Bagrat'ioni kingdoms and states from the eighth to the sixteenth centuries. Afterwards, the region was conquered by the Ottoman Empire. See *Encyclopaedia Britannica Online*, 2012
- ¹⁵ King David IV's son, Demet're took part in his father's battles, particularly at Didgori (1121 A.D.) and Shirvan (1123 A.D.).
- ¹⁶ Shirvan (Sharvan) – a kingdom between the Caspian Sea and the river Mt'k'vari.
- ¹⁷ Kaladzori fortress in Shirvan
- ¹⁸ Here is a reference to Sokman/ Sukman. (Georgian „სუქმეტი“ (sukmet'ni) from the Persian “sukat” – subordinate, simple man) The Artuqid dynasty was a Turkmen dynasty that ruled in Eastern Anatolia, Northern Syria and Northern Iraq in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. The dynasty was founded by Artuq, son of Eksük, a general originally under Malik Shah I, and then under the Seljuk emir of Damascus, Tutush I. Tutush appointed Artuq governor of Jerusalem in 1086. Artuq died in 1091, and his sons Sokman and Ilgazi were expelled from Jerusalem by the Fatimid vizier al-Afdal Shahanshah in 1098; the Fatimids lost the city to the Crusaders the following year. Sokman and Ilgazi set themselves up in Diyarbakır, Mardin, and Hasankeyf in Jezirah, where they came into conflict with the sultanate of the Great Seljuk Sokman, Bey of Mardin, and defeated the Crusaders at the Battle of Harran in 1104. Ilgazi was defeated by Georgians at the Battle of Didgori in 1121. See Sh. Meskhia,

dzlevai sak'virveli (Miraculous Deeds) Tbilisi: 1972; C. Hillenbrand, *The Establishment of Artuqid Power in Diyar Bakr in the Twelfth century*, *Studia Islamica*, 1981, p.269.

¹⁹ Luke 12:47.

²⁰ David (biblical)

²¹ A religious habit (Greek: Σχῆμα, Schēma), a set of garments worn by members of a religious order. The normal monastic color is black, symbolic of repentance and simplicity.

²² King David V (1155-1156) – son of Demet're I

²³ King Giorgi III (1156-1184) – younger son of King Demet're I

²⁴ Tamar – daughter of King David IV and Queen of Shirvan. She was married in 1112 to Manuchar (Minuchir) III of Shirvan. V. Minorsky, *History of Shirvan and Derbend in the Tenth-Eleventh centuries*, Cambridge: 1958, p.136

²⁵ Tighva – a village in Inner Kartli

²⁶ K'at'a – daughter of King David IV, probably was married to Isaac, a son of the Greek Emperor Alexius I Bryennios Comnenos. (See R. Prinke. "K'at'a of Georgia, daughter of King David IV the Builder, as wife of sebastokrator Issakios Komnenos," *Journal of Foundation for Medieval Genealogy*, 3-6, 2011, pp. 489-502).

²⁷ The Orbelis (Orbelianis) were the powerful family in the twelfth and thirteenth century Georgia. They possessed lands in Lower Kartli, among them were *amirsp'asalars*, *mandat'urtukhutsesis*, *atabags* and later *viziers*. They fled Georgia in 1177 and returned during the reign of Ulu David. During the reign of Tamar, Ivane Orbeli possessed land in Orbeti.

²⁸ Lore (Lori) – a city-fortress in T'ashiri (Kvemo Kartli), capital of the T'ashir-Dzorakert kingdom in the tenth century; David IV made it part of the Georgian kingdom in 1118. The Mkhargrdzelis owned Lore in 1186; the Mongols destroyed it in 1236.

²⁹ Mtskheta – ancient capital of Georgia

³⁰ Gelati – a village in western Georgia, near Kutaisi, where the episcopal cathedral, monastery and academy, built by David IV the Builder, is situated.

³¹ Ivane Abuletisdze – Abulet's son Ivane and grandson Kirkish (Tirkash), who served as the commanders of Georgian troops in Armenia, but who subsequently plotted the murder of King Demetrius I, in order to place the King's half-brother, Vakht'ang, on the throne. The King was warned and survived.

³² Georgian "მეტეკი" (Met'ekhi) – literally means "the area around the palace," is located in Tbilisi, Georgia, on the elevated cliff that overlooks the Mt'k'vari river. The existing Met'ekhi Church of Assumption, was built by the Georgian King Saint Demet're II in 1278-1284 and is an unusual example of a domed Georgian Orthodox church.

³³ Georgian "ანისი" (Anisi) – capital of the kingdom of Armenia in ninth-eleventh centuries: in 1123 David IV seized it and later it became a part of the Georgian kingdom.

³⁴ Saldukhi (Saldukh, Saltuk) Ezdin – ruler of Erzurum and Karin. Al-Malik Salik (Saltukh) emir of Erzurum in 1153-1154. King Demet're I captured Saldukh (I. Javakhishvili, *kartveli eris ist'oria (The History of Georgian People.)*, Tbilisi: Vol. II, 1918, pp. 225-256. According to I. Javakhishvili, he was still alive in 1164-1165 (*op.cit.*, p. 232.).

³⁵ Gandza (Ganja, Gandzak, Elizavet'pol, Kirovobad) – a city in historical Ran (Rani, Aran) in the southern part of Albania, between the Araxes and Mt'k'vari rivers.

³⁶ Khlat – a town in historical southern Armenia, it was situated on the north shore of Lake Van. The Sultanate of Khlat was founded in the twelfth century.

³⁷ Ildegiz (Ildeguz, Eldiguz) – *atabag* Shams al-din Ildegiz was ruler of the Seljuk provinces of Arran and Azerbaijan (1136-1175) and founder of the Ildegizid (Ildeguzid) dynasty (1136-1225). See Z. Buniatov, *Gosudarstvo atabekov Azerbajana (1136-1225) (The State of Azerbaijanian Atabeks:1136-1225)*, Baku: 1978, pp. 44-67.

³⁸ Abkhazeti – kingdom of north-western Georgia.

³⁹ Georgian "სვანეთი" (Svaneti), in ancient sources Suania – is a historic province in Georgia, in the north-west part of the country. It is inhabited by the Svans, a geographic subgroup of the Georgians. The province had been a dependency of Colchis, and of its successor kingdom of Lazica (Egrisi) until AD 552. The Svans took advantage of the Lazic War, and went over to the Persians. Svaneti became part of Lazica again in AD 562. The province joined the Kingdom of Abkhazeti to form a unified monarchy which was incorporated into the Kingdom

- of Georgia in the early eleventh century. Svaneti became a *saeristavo* within Georgia, a district governed by an *eristavi*. During the Georgian “golden age” under Queen Tamar (reigned 1184-1213), Orthodox culture flourished.
- 40 Q’ipchaks were an ancient nomadic Turkic people who occupied territories from Central Asia to Eastern Europe. They, together with the Cumans (Cuman – a Q’ipchak confederation) played an important role in the history of many nations in the region, Georgia among them. At the height of this Caucasian power from the twelfth to the thirteenth centuries, Georgian monarchs recruited thousands of Q’ipchak/Cuman mercenaries and successfully used their services against neighboring states. The Georgian King David IV “the Builder” (1089-1125), employed tens (or even hundreds) of thousands of Cuman-Q’ipchak soldiers and settled them in his kingdom in 1118. David married a Cuman-Q’ipchak princess, Gurandukht, daughter of Khan Otrok and invited his new in-laws to settle in Georgia. Tamar and her successor, Giorgi Lasha (1213-1223), continued to employ Cuman-Q’ipchak mercenaries. They were referred to by the Georgians as “Q’ipchakni akhalni” («new Q’ipchaks») See S. Rapp, *Studies In Medieval Georgian Historiography: Early Texts and Eurasian Contexts*, Louvain: CSCO 601, Subsidia 113, 2003.
- 41 Samuel I:20.
- 42 Queen of Queens Tamar (1184-1213) – a daughter of King Giorgi III. She was crowned in 1178 by her father.
- 43 Mount Athos or the «Holy Mountain» (Greek: Ἅγιον Ὄρος, Agion Oros) on which the Georgian monastery of Iveron was situated.
- 44 Georgian Orthodox Christians settled upon this mountain in the third century and moved to the Sinai Peninsula in the fifth century. A Georgian colony existed there from the ninth century. Georgians erected their own churches in the area of modern Mount Sinai. The construction of one such church was connected with the name of David the Builder. There were political, cultural and religious motives for locating churches on Mount Sinai. Georgian monks living there were deeply connected with their motherland. Georgian manuscripts are still located in Sinai.
- 45 Black Mountain – a mountain in historical Syria, near Antiochia. The Georgians built a monastery there in the eleventh century.
- 46 Queen Tamar donated to churches in Syria and Greece.
- 47 Guzan T’aoskareli – ruler of south-west Georgia, who rebelled against Queen of Queens, Tamar.
- 48 Darbazi – a palace or hall, often used by the supreme royal council of representatives from the Georgian aristocracy and church hierarchy.
- 49 *atabag* (Turkish atabey, ata – father + bæg, bey – prince) a Seljuk provincial governor.
- 50 Georgian “მანდატურტუხუცესი“ (*mandat’urtukhutsesi*) – the head of the Royal Chancellery.
- 51 *Sp’asalari* (Persian *sipahsalar*) – commander-in-chief, military leader.
- 52 Dvin – a city in Armenia, to the east of the Araxes river.
- 53 Gelakuni in Armenia, near Lake Sevan.
- 54 Bijnisi – maybe in Surami, Khashuri region.
- 55 Amberd fortress on the slopes of Mount Aragats.
- 56 Bargushat’, a fortress and mountain in the province of Siuniq.
- 57 Nukardin – Rukn ed-Din – Seljuk sultan of Rum (Erzurum), the successor of the Saldukid dynasty in Erzurum.
- 58 Damascus – a city in Syria.
- 59 Aleppo – a city in Syria.
- 60 Basiani – a historical and geographical region in south-western Georgia, now in Turkey.
- 61 Sham – in Syria.
- 62 Bivriti (maybe Armenian, as in Bivritiani, was the patrimonial name of Somkhiti rulers. See G. Japaridze, *sakartvelo da makhlobeli aghmosavletis islamiuri samqaro XII-XIII sauk’uneebis pirvel nakhevarshi (Georgia and the Islamic World of the Near East in the First Half of the 12-13th centuries)*, Tbilisi: 1995, pp. 147-148.
- 63 Kars is a city in northeast Turkey and the capital of Kars Province.
- 64 Karnifori – a fortification in K’ola.
- 65 Rakhs – river Araxes, a tributary of the Mt’k’vari river.
- 66 *Mtiuls* – Georgians living in the western part of Georgia, present-day Dusheti region.
- 67 *Q’ipchaks* – an ancient nomadic Turkish people, see note 39.
- 68 *Svans* – Georgians, sub-ethnic group of Georgians living in the northern mountainous area of Georgia.

- ⁶⁹ *aznauri* – a feudal lord in Georgia (fifth to twelfth centuries) and the lowest class of feudal lords in twelfth to eighteenth centuries.
- ⁷⁰ Marand is a city and the capital of Marand District, East Azerbaijan Province, Iran.
- ⁷¹ Iran.
- ⁷² Rusudan was the younger daughter of King Georgi III of Georgia and sister of Queen Tamar. Rusudan was married, possibly in 1180, to Manuel Comnenos, the eldest son of Andronikos I, who in turn was Byzantine Emperor from 1183 to 1185. Manuel and Rusudan had two sons, Alexios (probably born in 1182) and David (born around 1184).
- ⁷³ Romans 11:33, 34.
- ⁷⁴ Georgian “მთავარი“ (*mtavari*) – prince (literally, «head/chief» [man], from tavi, «head») was a feudal title in Georgia. The title *mtavari*, along with *tavadi*, was synonymous with *eristavi*, and all referred to upper nobles, or princes. The title gradually became hereditary, a process completed only at the end of the fifteenth century.
- ⁷⁵ Seven kingdoms – seven geographical-administrative units of Georgia.
- ⁷⁶ Z. Mkhargdzeli – head of the Royal Chancellery and commander in-chief.
- ⁷⁷ *Amirsp'asalar* (Georgian ამირსპასალარი) was the commander-in-chief of the medieval Georgian army.
- ⁷⁸ Ardabil is a historical city in north-western Iran.
- ⁷⁹ Khlāt – is a historic town and a district in the eastern Anatolia Region.
- ⁸⁰ Erzurum (Georgian, Karnu-Kalaki) was known as Karanitis, Arzen, Erzen, Karin, later Theodosiopolis.
- ⁸¹ K'echroli – Armenian: *Kechror*, province and fortress in the southern part of the former kingdom of Kars.
- ⁸² Oroti – Armenian Orotan, in the province of Siuniq.
- ⁸³ Shamkhor/ Shamkir (Persian word *shams* («sun») and *kur* («relaying»)). In the twelfth century and in the beginning of the thirteenth century, Shamkhor was under Georgian rule. In 1195, the Georgian Queen Tamar's commanders destroyed the troops of Azerbaijan's *atabeg* Abu-Bakr, who was a member of the Seljuk dynasty of the Ildegizids. In 1235, Shamkhor was destroyed by Mongols. From the first quarter of the sixteenth century till the beginning of the nineteenth century, Shamkhor was governed by hereditary rulers of an Azerbaijani (Qizilbash) tribe called Shamsaddinli-Zulgadar. In 1803, during military actions against the Ganja (Gandza) khanate, Shamkhor was seized by Russian troops and annexed to the Russian empire.
- ⁸⁴ Ps. 18:34 -35.
- ⁸⁵ Queen Rusudan from the Bagrat'ioni dynasty, ruled Georgia from 1223-1245. She was daughter of Queen Tamar of Georgia by David Soslan; she succeeded her brother George IV of Georgia on January 18, 1223.
- ⁸⁶ Baghavan (in Shirvan), Baku. See S. Ashurbeyli, *Gosudarstvo Shirvanshakhov (VI-XVI veka)*, (*The State of Shirvanshahs [VI-XVI cc.]*), Baku: 1983, p.149.

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The Chronicle of Giorgi Lasha and His Time. Kartlis Tskhovreba, MS of Queen Anna (XVII c.), National Centre of Manuscripts, Tbilisi, Q-795, 421v.

THE LIFE AND TALE OF THE BAGRAT'IONIS,¹

Kings of the Kartvels,² from where they came to this land and, from the time they possessed royal authority in Kartli (Georgia),³ whose tale is described

BY SUMBAT', SON OF DAVID.⁴

5

Adam begat Seit, Seit begat Enos. Enos begat K'ainan,⁵ K'ainan begat Malel. Malel begat Iared, Iared begat Enok. Enok begat Matusala, Matusala begat Lamek. Lamek begat Noe, Noe begat Sem. Sem begat Arpaksad, Arpaksad begat K'ainan. K'ainan begat Sala, Sala begat Eber. Eber begat Paleg, Paleg begat Ragav. Ragav begat Seruk, Seruk begat Nakor. Nakor begat Tara, Tara begat Abram. Abram begat Isak', Isak' begat Iak'ob. Iak'ob begat Iuda, Iuda begat Parez. Parez begat Esrom, Esrom begat Aram. Aram begat Aminadab, Aminadab begat Naason. Naason begat Salmon, Salmon begat Boos. Boos begat Iobed, Iobed begat Iese. Iese begat David King, King David begat Solomon. Solomon begat Robuam, Robuam begat Abia.

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Abia begat Asap, Asap begat Iosapat'. Iosapat' begat Ioram, Ioram begat Ozia. Ozia begat Iotam, Iotam begat Akaz. Akaz begat Ezek'ia, Ezek'ia begat Manase. Manase begat Amon, Amon begat Iosia. Iosia begat Iovak'im, Iovak'im begat Iekonia. Iekonia begat Salatael, Salatael begat Zorababel. Zorababel begat Abiud, Abiud begat Eliak'im. Eliak'im begat Azor, Azor begat Saduk'. Saduk' begat Akim, Akim begat Eliud. Eliud begat Eliazar, Eliazar begat Mat'atan. Mat'atan begat Iak'ob, Iak'ob begat Ioseb, husband of Mary and brother of K'leop'a.⁶ K'leop'a begat Naom, Naom begat Sala. Sala begat Robuam, Robuam begat Mokhtar. Mokhtar begat Eliak'im, Eliak'im begat Beniamen. Beniamen begat Ierobem, Ierobem begat Mose. Mose begat Iuda, Iuda begat Eliazar. Eliazar begat Levi, Levi begat Ioram. Ioram begat Manase, Manase begat Iak'ob. Iak'ob begat Mikia, Mikia begat Iovak'im. Iovak'im begat Ierubem, Ierubem begat Abraham. Abraham begat Iob, Iob begat Akab. Akab begat Svimon, Svimon begat Izakar. Izakar begat Abia, Abia begat Gaad. Gaad begat Aser, Aser begat Isak'. Isak' begat Dan, Dan begat Solomon. Solomon begat seven brothers, whom God gave to him while he was in captivity. And these seven brothers, sons of Solomon (Jews who set out from the land of Palestine⁷ and escaped captivity) came to Queen Rakael⁸ in Akilisena.⁹ They were baptized by her, and they settled in the land of Somkhiti.¹⁰ To this day their descendants rule in Somkhiti. And the other four brothers came to Kartli. One of them, named Guaram, was elected the *eristavi*¹¹ of Kartli. And this Guaram *eristavi* of Kartli is a progeny of the Bagrat'ionis. And

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the Bagrat'ionis of Kartli are grandchildren and kinsmen of this Guaram. Guaram's brother, Sahak', went to K'akheti.¹² He became related to Nerse¹³ through marriage.¹⁴ The two other brothers, called Asam and Varazvard, went to K'ambechani,¹⁵ killed the Persian *sp'asalar*,¹⁶ seized K'ambechani and settled in Khornabuji.¹⁷ And their descendants rule there to the present time.

5 The *aznauris*¹⁸ ruled in Kartli from that time, when the descendants of King [Vakht'ang] Gorgasali¹⁹ diminished the status of kingship. But the *aznauris* rule came to an end because of their wicked deeds.²⁰

10 At that time, the Catholicos of Mtskheta ²¹ was Simon-Peter. Mtskheta shrank in size, but Tbilisi grew, and Armazi ²² went into decline, while K'ala ²³ prospered. The Persians ruled in Kartli, K'akheti, Hereti,²⁴ Somkhiti,²⁵ Siuniq²⁶ and Asp'uragan. At that time Samoel was the Catholicos of Mtskheta, and all Kartli came together and elected Guaram, a descendant of David,²⁷ who had come together with his brothers Asam and Varazvard, as mentioned above.

15 These [seven] brothers, Jews who escaped captivity in the land of Palestine arrived from Akilisena, where Queen Rakael had baptized them. Queen Rakael changed the names of three of them: one she named Mushel, one – Bagrat', who is the father of the Bagrat'ionis and the third – Abgavar. She (Rakael) made one of them her son-in-law; the other two (she) connected to the kings of Somkhiti through marriage. And these four brothers came to Kartli, as we mentioned above. And one of them, Guaram, was appointed *eristavi*. Guaram was granted the title of *k'uropalates*²⁸ by the king of the Greeks,²⁹ who sent him to Mtskheta. Guaram laid the foundation of the Jvari Church,³⁰ which is in Mtskheta.

20 And Guaram's three brothers went to K'akheti. Sahak' became related through marriage to Nerses, the son of Bak'ur. And Asam and Varazvard went to K'ambechani, and they incited the people against Veza³¹ the *eristavi* of Bahar Chubin,³² and they killed Veza, and seized K'ambechani. At that time Samoel was the Catholicos in Mtskheta, and (during his office) the residents of Tbilisi started to build a church,³³ half of which was built by the people and the other half by a certain woman.

25 The Catholicos in Mtskheta at that time was Barthlome. And after this Guaram, his son St'epanoz and brother of Demet're³⁴ served as *eristavi*, and continued to build the Jvari Church in Mtskheta. And King Heraclius³⁵ of the Greeks, during his reign, marched out and came to Tbilisi³⁶, and encamped opposite the K'ala fortress. And *tsikhistavi*³⁷ shouted from the fortress: "You are someone who has the beard of a goat and a neck like a billy goat." On hearing this, King Heraclius flew into a rage and read him (the following words) from the Book of the Prophet Daniel: "And a goat will come from the West and will break the horns of the ram of the East."³⁸ And the King said: "If these words were designed to insult me, you will pay double for your impudence." And he left the *eristavi* Jibghu³⁹ to fight and attack the fortress of Tbilisi, and he himself set out for Baghdad.⁴⁰

30 And Heraclius arrived at Gardabani⁴¹ to see Varaz Gageli,⁴² and encamped at a place called Khuzasheni.⁴³ Heraclius baptized Varaz Gageli and all his people, and began to build a church that would surpass anything that had been constructed before. He went on to Berduji⁴⁴ from there, and camped in the center of the village. Heraclius erected a stone cross and laid the foundation of the church of the Holy Virgin, and crowned it with a dome.

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Jibghu seized K'ala and the fortress of Tbilisi, captured the *tsikhistavi*, filled his mouth with *drachkans*⁴⁵ and as for the utterance of praise to King Heraclius, flayed him and sent his skin to King Heraclius to Gardabani at Varaz Grigoli's residence.

From Gardabani, King Heraclius went to Lali, summoned the *mtavari*⁴⁶ of Mets'k'evnelis⁴⁷ to appear before him, baptized him and then left for Baghdad. And he conquered Baghdad, imprisoned King Khuasro⁴⁸ and made him deliver the life-giving pillar.⁴⁹ He started to build Jerusalem⁵⁰ and appointed Modist'os as its Patriarch. And he returned to Kartli in the seventh year. At the time of his arrival, Sioni Church⁵¹ of Tbilisi had been completed, but Jvari Church had not yet been finished.

King Heraclius dispatched preachers to Tbilisi, Mtskheta and Ujarma,⁵² making all Christians enter the church. And he ordered that those *magi*⁵³ and fire-worshippers who refused to receive baptism, should be executed. But those of them who did not wish to be baptized, cunningly mingled with the Christians. However, the sword still reached them, and so rivers of blood flowed in the churches. Having purified the faith of Christ our God, King Heraclius set off for his kingdom. At that time, the same St'epanoz the Great was *mtavari* of Kartli and another Barthlome⁵⁴ was Katholicos in Kartli.

During his rule and after, Adarnase,⁵⁵ son of the same St'epanoz, was *mtavari* of Kartli, and he was succeeded by three catholicoses – Iovane, Babila and Tabor.⁵⁶ After this, Adarnase the *mtavari* died, and his son St'epanoz took his place. He completed the construction of Jvari Church, established the Council of Jvari, and settled down in his residence, in Tbilisi. And Samoel and Enon were Katholicoses. During his reign a population census was conducted in Kartli and the information was taken to Greece. And there came the news that the Hagarenes⁵⁷ had occupied Baghdad.

Following this, St'epanoz, his son *kuropalates* Guaram was *eristavi*. And after Guaram came his son Varaz-Bak'ur *antypathos*,⁵⁸ who converted the residents of Gardabani to Christianity. And then Nerse and his sons – Pilip'e, St'epanoz and Adarnase and Adarnase's sons, Gurgen the *eristavi* and Ashot' *kuropalates* – came.

And Ashot' *kuropalates* held sway over the country and made his residence at Bardav⁵⁹ and Tbilisi, and occupied all the surrounding lands. But the Hagarenes grew stronger and began to oppress Ashot' *kuropalates*, who failed to resist them and fled. He left for Greece with his mother, wife and two infant sons, the elder son Adarnase and the younger son Bagrat'. At the same time, his youngest son Guaram was not born yet. Ashot' *kuropalates*, accompanied by a few native people with their families, came to the mountains of Javakheti, and, exhausted by the journey, encamped on the edge of the shore of the large lake, Paravani,⁶⁰ and there they rested. They had their meal and then took a nap. While sleeping they were attacked by a multitude of Saracen⁶¹ troops. But God helped Ashot' *kuropalates* and his small army, granting him victory (over the Saracens), and countless warriors were slain. They set out and came to the Shavsheti⁶² region.

At this time Shavsheti region was unpopulated, except for some villages, for it had been devastated during the domination of the Persians: "Q'ru (the Deaf) from Baghdad"⁶³ had destroyed all the fortresses and marched across Shavsheti and the Ghado(ni).⁶⁴ Thereafter, an epidemic of dysentery decimated the population of Shavsheti and K'larjeti, only a few residents surviving here and there. Those who had survived met him with joy and love, and he settled there. God granted him victory and made him king of Shavsheti and K'larjeti. Ashot' *kuropalates* bought some of the villages, and

restored and rebuilt the devastated ones. He was strengthened by God's grace and with the blessing of the King of the Greeks.

The same Ashot' *kuropalates* discovered a rock in the forests of K'larjeti, where Vakh'tang Gorgasali had erected the fortress of Art'anuji⁶⁵ and "the Deaf from Baghdad" had destroyed it. Ashot' restored and rebuilt that fortress and raised a city below the fortress. Ashot' built the church of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul inside the fortress, prepared his own sepulcher and settled down in that fortress. Shortly thereafter Ashot' seized the lands up to the gate of the city of Bardav. And many times God granted Ashot' *kuropalates* victory and great glory in battles.

At this time Ashot' set out to gather an army to fight the Saracens. He came to a certain place and dispatched men to assemble an army. His army was not yet complete, when he was suddenly attacked by the Saracens who put him to flight. So he set out and came to the Nigali region and started to gather forces and to increase the size of his army. And those whom he had ordered to come, came to kill him. However, Ashot' knew nothing about their intention before their arrival at his court. And when they came to his court, he realized their plan. However, his army was not with him, except for a small force. He could not resist them, so he took refuge in the church. But he (Ashot') was stabbed with a sword on the altar. And the altar became stained with his blood as he was slaughtered like a lamb over the steps of the altar: traces of his blood are still there.

And when his army, being in Dolisq'ana⁶⁶, heard that their sovereign, Ashot', had been killed by the descendants of Oroz-Moroz,⁶⁷ they set out from Dolisq'ana and pursued the murderers. They overtook them at the Chorokhi⁶⁸ and cruelly slew them until not a piece of them was left alive. And they took the deceased body of Ashot' *kuropalates*, and buried him in his crypt at the Church of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul in the Art'anuji fortress. Ashot' died in the year 6830 after Creation. That was in 46 of the *koronik'oni*, the 13th cycle, on 29 January.⁶⁹ He left three sons behind – the elder Adarnase and the next was Bagrat'. These two sons were with him in Shavshet-K'larjeti. The youngest son Guaram was born after their arrival in Art'anuji. And after the death of their father Ashot'; all the peripheral lands⁷⁰ of Ashot's sons were seized by the Saracens, for the sons were still juveniles.

And when they came of age, God granted them all the lands which they inherited from their father. While they were underage, they grew up in the Art'anuji fortress, and the regions of Shavsheti, K'larjeti and Nigali paid tribute to the Saracens. They occupied the ancestral lands on this side of Art'anuji. God guided their reign and Bagrat' became a *kuropalates*. Adarnase, the elder son of Ashot' had three sons himself: Gurgen,⁷¹ who became a *kuropalates* in his old age, and his brothers Ashot' K'ek'elai and Sumbat' of Art'anuji, who during his reign became the *antipathos – patrikios*.⁷² Bagrat' *kuropalates* had three sons – David, who became a *kuropalates* after his father, Adarnase and Ashot'. And Ashot's youngest son Guaram had two sons – Nasra and Ashot'.

Ashot' K'ek'elai, son of Adarnase died in 87 of the *koronik'oni* (867 A.D.). Ashot' K'ek'elai, son of Adarnase left behind Gurgen who was later made a *kuropalates* and Sumbat' of Art'anuji, the *antipathos – patrikios*. Ashot', son of Guaram *mampali*,⁷³ died in his father's lifetime in 89 of the *koronik'oni* (869 A.D.). He had no sons. Adarnase, son of Bagrat' *kuropalates*, died in his father's lifetime, in 94 of the *koronik'oni* (874 A.D.). He had no heir. His father Bagrat' *kuropalates*, son of Ashot' *kuropal-*

ates died in 96 of the *koronik'oni* (876 A.D.). He left behind sons: David, who was made *kuropalates* after him; and he was killed by Nasra, the son of his father's brother Guaram, in Guaram's lifetime in 101 of the *koronik'oni* (881 A.D.), during the reign of Guaram. And, Guaram *mampali*, his father's brother and Nasra's father did not have a hand in David *kuropalates*'s death.

And the murdered David left behind a young son who was called Adarnase. Nasra, the murderer, fled to the kingdom of Constantinople and spent many years there. And after this Gurgun, son of Adarnase, son of Ashot' the Great, was made *kuropalates*.

Guaram *mampali*, son of Ashot' the Great father of Nasra, died in 102 of the *koronik'oni* (882 A.D.). Ashot', the son of Bagrat' *kuropalates* died in 105 of the *koronik'oni* (885 A.D.).

Then Nasra left the Kingdom of Greece and came to Abkhazeti.⁷⁴ At that time king Bagrat' of Abkhazeti was Nasra's brother-in-law on his sister's side. The King of Abkhazeti gave Nasra numerous troops. Nasra came to Samtskhe⁷⁵ and doubled the size of his army. Adarnase, son of the murdered *kuropalates*, came to battle with him. Gurgun *kuropalates* and his sons came to Adarnase to help, and together they fought a great battle against Nasra. God helped the small army of Adarnase, and so they defeated Nasra and put him to flight, captured and killed him at the village of Asp'indza, in Samtskhe province in 108 of the *koronik'oni* (889 A.D.). Nasra had no successors and his name was consigned to oblivion.

Adarnase, son of David *kuropalates*, was made the king of the Kartvels instead of the murdered king. And this Adarnase, son of the murdered David, had the Bana⁷⁶ church built by the hand of K'virik'e of Bana. who was made the first bishop of Bana. Sumbat' the *mampali* of Art'anuji, son of Adarnase, who was the son of Ashot' the Great, died in 109 of the *koronik'oni* (889 A.D.). He left two sons: Bagrat' the *mampali* of Art'anuji and David the *mampali*. And Nasra was killed during the lifetime of Sumbat' of Art'anuji, and Nasra's land was captured by other *mtavaris*.

Gurgun *kuropalates* left his patrimony of T'ao and K'almakhi for Shavsheti and

Art'aani,⁷⁷ and settled down there. Enmity arose between Gurgun *kuropalates* and his followers, on the one side, and King Adarnase of the Kartvels and Bagrat' Art'anujeli, on the other. They gathered their forces to fight against each other, arrived at the village Mglinavi, in the Art'aani province where they fought. Being mortally wounded Gurgun *kuropalates*, son of Adarnase, grandson of Ashot' the Great, was put to flight but was seized and died of his wounds in 111 of the *koronik'oni* (891 A.D.). He had two sons: Adarnase and Ashot', who later became *eristavi of eristavis*.⁷⁸

Adarnase died after his father Gurgun *kuropalates* in 116 of the *koronik'oni* (896 A.D.). Adarnase had two adolescent sons: David *eristavi of eristavis* and Gurgun, who became a great *eristavi of eristavis*. Bagrat' of Art'anuji the *mampali*, son of Sumbat', died in 129 of the *koronik'oni* (909 A.D.), on 20 April, on Easter day. He left behind four sons: Adarnase, who later became a monk under the name of Basil,⁷⁹ Gurgun *eristavi*, Ashot' and David. David *eristavi*, son of Adarnase and grandson of Gurgun *kuropalates* and brother of Gurgun the Great, died in 128 of the *koronik'oni* (908 A.D.). He had no children.

Ashot' *eristavi of eristavis*, son of Gurgun *kuropalates* surnamed K'ukhi,⁸⁰ built T'beti church⁸¹ in Shavsheti and furnished the church with all that was necessary. And, instructed by the Holy Spirit, the Blessed St'epane became the first bishop. The same Ashot' K'ukhi died in 138 of the *koronik'oni*

(918 A.D.). He had no heir. Gurgen, son of his brother and son of Adarnase, became *eristavi of eristavis* after him. David, son of Bagrat' of Art'anuji, died in 142 of the *koronik'oni* (922 A.D.). His wife was pregnant with a son, who was called Bagrat'.

5 Adarnase, King of the Kartvels, son of the murdered David, died in 143 of the *koronik'oni* (923 A.D.). And he had four sons – David, who became king of the Kartvels after his father Ashot' *kuropalates*; Bagrat', who became *magistros*,⁸² and Sumbat', who was granted the title of *kuropalates* after his brothers. Gurgen *eristavi*, son of Bagrat' Art'anujeli, died in the same year as Adarnase, King of the Kartvels, in 143 of the *koronik'oni* (923 A.D.). Gurgen had a son by his wife, and when he was born, he was named Gurgen, like his father.

10 David, King of the Kartvels, son of Adarnase, King of the Kartvels, died in 157 of the *koronik'oni* (937 A.D.). He had no son. Ashot', son of Bagrat' Art'anujeli, died in 159 of the *koronik'oni* (939 A.D.), in June. He had no heir. Gurgen the Great *eristavi of eristavis*, son of Adarnase, died in 161 of the *koronik'oni* (941 A.D.), on 14 February. He showed more valor in battles than his ancestors, bringing all neighboring lands under his sway. And he had no offspring. David *mampali*, son of Sumbat' Art'anujeli, died as a monk in 163 of the *koronik'oni* (943 A.D.), on 20th February. And he had a son, Sumbat', who became *eristavi of eristavis* after him.

15 Bagrat' *magistros*, son of Adarnase, who was King of the Kartvels, passed away in 165 of the *koronik'oni* (945 A.D.), in March. He had a son by the name Adarnase, who became *magistros* and *kuropalates* after his father's brothers. Bagrat' *magistros* died in the same year, like the monk Basili K'larji, son of Bagrat' the *mampali*. Ashot' *kuropalates*, son of Adarnase, King of the Kartvels, passed away in 174 of the *koronik'oni* (954 A.D.). He had no sons. Ashot', son of Sumbat', died in the same year. Neither did he have any heir.

20 And shortly thereafter Ashot' *kuropalates*' brother, Sumbat', was appointed a *kuropalates*. And this Sumbat' *kuropalates*, son of Adarnase, King of the Kartvels, died in 178 of the *koronik'oni* (958 A.D.). He had two sons – Bagrat' Regveni,⁸³ *eristavi of eristavis*, King of the Kartvels, and Adarnase *kuropalates*.

25 Adarnase *kuropalates*, son of Bagrat' *magistros*, died in 181 of the *koronik'oni* (961 A.D.). He was seized by his sons and forced to take monastic vows and passed away in the garments of a monk. He left his sons, Bagrat' *eristavi of eristavis* and David *eristavi of eristavis*. The same Bagrat' *eristavi of eristavis*, son of Adarnase *kuropalates*, passed away in 186 of the *koronik'oni* (966 A.D.). And his brother David *kuropalates* became Great.

30 Gurgen, son of Gurgen, the grandson of Bagrat' *mampali*, died in 188 of the *koronik'oni* (968 A.D.). Adarnase, son of Sumbat' *kuropalates*, and brother of Bagrat' Regveni, passed away in 203 of the *koronik'oni* (983 A.D.). And Adarnase had a son, by the name David, who was underage. Sumbat' *eristavi of eristavis*, a righteous man, the son of David the *mampali* of Art'anuji, died in 208 of the *koronik'oni* (988 A.D.). And he had two sons – David and Bagrat'. Bagrat', son of Sumbat', died on the fortieth day after his father. He left two sons, Sumbat' and Gurgen. Sumbat', son of Bagrat' Regveni, King of the Kartvels, passed away in 212 of the *koronik'oni* (992 A.D.). He had no children.

35 David, son of Sumbat' *eristavi of eristavis*, a *didebuli*⁸⁴ and a righteous man, died. Bagrat' Regveni, King of the Kartvels and son of the blessed Sumbat' *kuropalates*, passed away in 214 of

the *koronik'oni* (994 A.D.). And his eldest son Gurgen became the King of Kings. The same Gurgen had a son by the name Bagrat'; Bagrat' was nephew to King Demet're and King Teodosi of Abkhazeti⁸⁵ by his mother. Prior to Gurgen's accession to the throne, the same Bagrat' became King of Abkhazeti and subsequently Gurgen – the "King of Kings." David the Great *kuropalates*, son of Adarnase *kuropalates*, died in 221 of the *koronik'oni* (1001 A.D.). He had no son.

5

Outer T'ao⁸⁶ was ravaged. King Basil of Greece marched out and the *aznauris* of the aforementioned David ceded some fortresses to him. And Basil seized the patrimony of David *kuropalates*. King Bagrat' of Abkhazeti and his father (Gurgen) came into his (Basil's) presence. And Basil granted to Gurgen the title of *magistros*, and to Bagrat' that of *kuropalates*, so as to cause enmity between father and son. However, Gurgen was a true and righteous man and no envy could be aroused in his heart by these means. The King of Kings Gurgen, son of Bagrat', King of the Kartvels, died in 228 of the *koronik'oni* (1008 A.D.). And he left a son, Bagrat' King of Abkhazeti; and the Great *kuropalates*, Bagrat' took possession of his patrimony in T'ao. And he placed the whole of the Caucasus under his (Bagrat''s) autocratic rule from Jiketi as far as Gurgan.⁸⁷ He made Adarbagadan and Shirvan his tributaries, and the Somkhiti sovereigns were subject to Bagrat''s will. Through his wisdom and power Bagrat' made the King of Persia a loyal friend, more than members of his household had done, and he also kept the King of Greece fearful of him.

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And the same Bagrat' *kuropalates* assembled the K'larji rulers, Sumbat' and Gurgen, sons of Bagrat' of Art'anuji and the sons of his father's sister in his residence, at Panask'ert'i fortress,⁸⁸ where he had captured them. He seized their lands and fortresses and imprisoned them in the Tmogvi fortress. Sumbat' of Art'anuji died in the Tmogvi fortress in 231 of the *koronik'oni* (1011 A.D.). And Gurgen, brother of Sumbat' died in the same fortress (Tmogvi) in 232 of the *koronik'oni* (1012 A.D.). Bagrat', the son of Sumbat' and Demet're,⁸⁹ the son of Gurgen, set out for Constantinople and came to King Basil. And the descendants of the K'larjeti sovereigns, who remained, all died incarcerated in prison.

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Shortly thereafter Bagrat' passed through his kingdom, including Abkhazeti, Hereti and K'akheti. Bagrat' arrived in the T'ao region and passed the winter there. In the third year, in the summer, he arrived at the Panask'ert'i fortress. And this King Bagrat' died in 234 of the *koronik'oni* (1014 A.D.), on 7 May, which was a Friday. He had a son called Giorgi. Giorgi ascended the throne at the age of 18. As soon as Giorgi ascended to the throne, K'akheti and Hereti seceded from him; the *eristavis* were captured by the treachery of the *aznauris*, and the lands of the kingdom were taken over by their original owners.

30

In the seventh year of Giorgi's reign, Basil, King of the Greeks, marched against King Giorgi.⁹⁰ And the same Giorgi came out with an outsized army and encamped in the land of Basiani. They did not engage in battle for several days. Giorgi avoided an engagement, coming up to the city of Oltisi,⁹¹ and he burnt it, and from there he went to K'ola.⁹² The King of Greece pursued him and caught up with him. And when the rearguard of Giorgi's forces met with the vanguard of Basil's, there was a great battle at the village of Shirimta.⁹³ Many were slain on both sides. The Great *eristavis*, Rat'i, son of Lip'arit', and Khursi were killed. As soon as King Giorgi got wind of the battle, he grew angry, marched and arrived at the battlefield. King Basil also came there with his multitude of troops.

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They approached each other from opposite sides and a great battle was fought, and a multitude of Greeks were killed. Giorgi's warriors took their plunder. The battle grew so intense, that King Basil thought about retreating. Meanwhile the warriors of Giorgi, turning cowardly, retreated and fled. Basil pursued them and arrived at Art'aani, burnt it down and took prisoner everyone he found. 5 Giorgi went to Samtskhe via Niali.⁹⁴ Basil pursued him from Javakheti and devastated all the lands he passed through. Giorgi crossed into Trialeti, and Basil came there too. When they came face to face, Giorgi had his army reinforced by the Ts'anars⁹⁵ and Shakis.⁹⁶ Seeing this Basil left Trialeti; he marched through Javakheti and Art'aani in winter, causing devastation to the region. He departed and spent that winter in Khaldia, in the city of Trap'izoni (Trabzon/Trebizond). Now the envoys of 10 these kings travelled back and forth in order to conclude peace.

At that time, great turmoil occurred in Greece. Basil's *sp'asp'et'* plotted with Ts'arvez, son of the renegade Pok'a. Xiphias was made king and all the eastern provinces supported him. God showed favor to Basil who was in great fear, for Xiphias defected from Ts'arvez. And all his supporters were lured into the fortress, captured and sent to Basil. Basil exiled him to an island, beheaded many of 15 his supporters, among them Peris, son of Jojik';⁹⁷ the Georgian.

King Basil came back to Basiani demanding lands and fortresses from King Giorgi in return for peace. Giorgi sent Zviad⁹⁸ in advance with numerous troops. Zviad camped in Basiani, where he was going to stay for the winter. King Giorgi, wishing for peace, followed him with reinforcements. But the perfidious *aznauris* on both sides did not assist Giorgi to conclude a truce, for they did not 20 wish peace and counseled Giorgi to fight, inciting him against Basil, who wished to come to them with peace, and waited for them. But Giorgi's troops gave battle and some of Basil's warriors were put to flight. In order to secure peace King Basil ordered that a letter be attached to the head of a spear which had been written by King Giorgi, looking for an alliance and peace, and he raised this spear with the letter and appealed to God: "Oh Lord, look at this letter and on their acts."

Shortly thereafter Basil had the life-giving pillar brought with holy *mandyion*,⁹⁹ and dashing it to the ground said: "If You give me up to the enemy, I will never worship You to eternity!" Basil uttered these words, and Giorgi's army was defeated and put to flight; the Russian troops¹⁰⁰ of the King joined the battle from the opposite side. But nobody could survive there, only a few, as King Giorgi with his powerful army had not arrived yet. And those who did not wish for peace perished on the 25 same day and fled. Countless numbers were killed at the point of the sword, and some were put to flight. And the Greeks took great booty and all the royal treasures of the King which he had with him. King Basil pursued King Giorgi for a little while and resumed negotiations as he feared fresh turmoil in Greece. They then made peace and concluded a truce.

Giorgi gave his three-year-old son Bagrat' to King Basil as a hostage, as well as twelve fortress- 35 es and lands in T'ao, Basiani, Javakheti and Shavsheti, which had been inherited by King Giorgi from David *kuropalates*. Basil took with him Bagrat' and gave a promise to Giorgi to return Bagrat' three years later.

After three years had passed, Bagrat', the son of Giorgi set out from the city of Constantinople, as Basil had promised. Bagrat' came to T'ao and entered his patrimony in Bana, accompanied by 40 the *katepan* ¹⁰¹ of the East, to the border of his patrimony. And when the *katepan* was returning,

leaving for home, he was met by *mandat'urs* who handed him the following letter: "My brother King Basil has died and I am the King of the whole of Greece now, and no matter, if Bagrat', son of Giorgi has left the country, you have to return and make him appear before us forthwith." And when the homebound *katepan* read the letter he returned to Bagrat', but failed to catch up with him, for he had entered his patrimony. Bagrat' was with his reinforced army. And the *katepan* was unable to fight. So he turned back and left. Oh, great and wonderful grace of God! The Lord had mercy and saved the righteous man from the hands of the enemy, who wished to capture him. That was in 245 of the *koronik'oni* (1025 A.D.).

5

Bagrat' arrived and joined his father, King Giorgi, and his mother, Queen Mariam¹⁰² at the city of Kutatisi.¹⁰³ They lived together in peace, praised and gave thanks to the Lord, for He is good.¹⁰⁴ And two years later, Giorgi, father of Bagrat', died in Trialeti, at the place called Mq'invari in 247 of the *koronik'on* (1027 A.D.), on 16 August. He was buried in Kutatisi.

10

And Bagrat,¹⁰⁵ son of Giorgi, ascended the throne. He was then in his ninth year. And Vache K'arich'isdze and Ioane, the bishop of Bana, the *aznauris* of T'ao and others left for Greece with them. Some of them possessed fortresses, and others did not. They abandoned Bagrat' and joined with Constantine, brother of Basil, and the successor of King Basil in Greece.¹⁰⁶

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The next year, King Constantine sent out his *parakoimomenos*¹⁰⁷ with powerful forces and countless treasures. He had much more powerful troops than King Basil. The same *parakoimomenos* with extraordinary cruelty devastated the lands more than King Basil had done. He arrived at K'ldék'ari fortress, in Trialeti, occupied by the *aznauris* of Bagrat, and they engaged in a small battle. The *aznauris* defected once more and seized the fortresses; Chanchakhi *eristavi* of Shavsheti, gave away Ts'epti fortress and then left for Greece. Saba, the Bishop of T'beti, erected a fortress near T'beti church called Svet'i (pillar). Saba assembled his people and together with Ezra the Bishop of Anchi, and the *aznauris* of Shavsheti, fortified the place.

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Ioane the *parakoimomenos*, sent Konstantin *chartularios*,¹⁰⁸ called Valanges, with an innumerable army to the fortress of T'beti. He sent with him Demet're, son of Gurgen K'larjeli, in order to entice the inhabitants to defect, which they managed to do. The rural people are quite ignorant and unreasonable, and as a result changed sides. And his army surrounded the T'beti Svet'i and there was a great battle. And Almighty God strengthened those inside the Svet'i fortress with His grace and by the prayers of the high priests. And as true devoted martyrs of God, they were ready to suffer for their earthly born sovereigns and shed their blood as the Apostles have said, and so took courage. They told everyone: "Flattering words and transient riches cannot tempt us, but we will find our goal in loyalty and the crown of martyrdom," for their enemies had surrounded them, and promised them well-being and riches.

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When the East was racked with disturbances and suffered from misery, the imprudent King Constantine was quickly visited with punishment, like Julian the Apostate, because of his ruthlessness toward our King Bagrat' and for devastating Bagrat''s patrimony. So he wrote to his *parakoimomenos p'roedros*¹⁰⁹ to come immediately with his army to Constantinople. When he heard this, he did as he was ordered. When King Constantine died, his kin and supporter, Romanos,¹¹⁰ inherited the throne.

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5 After this, in the third year, the beloved Queen Mariam, mother of King Bagrat', filled herself with glory and courage, as befits one descended from the great and strong family of the kings of Arshak'unian, and went to Constantinople. She appeared before King Romanos asking him to establish peace in the East so that war between the Greeks and Georgians should no longer happen, and the poor be soothed and pacified. And her son Bagrat' should be given honor due to the dignity of his House.

NOTES

- ¹ The royal dynasty of the Bagrat'ionis in Georgia became famous in the eighth century, when Ashot' Bagrat'ioni *eristavi* of Kartli, *kuropalates*, who was known as Ashot' the Great, established the Bagrat'ioni dynasty of T'ao-K'larjeti. His descendant Adarnase Bagrat'ioni became the first king of Kartvelians (the Georgians) in 888 A.D. There are disagreements about the Bagrat'ionis ruling dates; some historians consider that they ruled from the six century, others that they occupied the throne in 813 and kept it for a thousand years.
- ² The Georgians call themselves „ქართველები“ (*kartvelebi*) and their land „საქართველო“ (*sakartvelo*). According to tradition, the designation derives from Kartlos, one of the Georgian ethnarchs.
- ³ Kartli is a historic region in eastern Georgia which gave the country its name. In the third century B.C., Mtskheta was the center of Kartli. In the Middle Ages, Kartli was traditionally divided along the Mt'k'vari, into three principal regions: Shida (Inner) Kartli or all of central Kartli north and south of the Mt'k'vari and west to its tributary, the Aragvi; Kvemo Kartli (Lower Kartli) – the lower basin of the Mt'k'vari and south of the river, and Zemo Kartli (Upper Kartli) – in the upper basin of the Mt'k'vari. Here Shida Kartli and Lower Kartli.
- ⁴ Sumbat' Davidisdze or Sumbat' son of David is author of the narrative source for the Georgian Bagrat'ionis house and Georgian Kingdom. According to E. Taq'aishvili, Sumbat' Davidisdze was a descendant of the Bagrat'ioni family. See: E. Taq'aishvili, *sumbat' davitsdzis kronik'a (Chronicle of Sumbat Davidisdze)*, Tbilisi: 1949, pp. 11-12; C. Toumanoff, *Medieval Georgian Historical Literature*, Traditio, 1943, I, pp. 154-156; on the date of Sumbat's chronicle writing see C. Toumanoff, *op.cit.*, E. Taq'aishvili, *sumbat'*, *op.cit.*, pp. 11-12; M. Janashvili, *Zhizn' Gruzii (The Life of Georgia)*, SMOMPK, 1905, p.120; D. Karich'ashvili, *vin unda iq'ves „sumbat'is kronik'is“ avt'ori* (Who can be author of Sumbat's Chronicle), Dzvili Sakartvelo. Sakartvelos saistorio sa saetnograbo sazogadoebis krebuli (Ancient Georgia. Proceedings of the Society of Georgian history at ethnography), Tbilisi: *Proceedings*, vol. I, 1909, p. 40; K. K'ek'elidze, A. Baramidze, *dzveli kartuli lit'erat'uris ist'oria (The History of Ancient Georgian Literature)*, Tbilisi: 1969, pp. 127-128; Sumbat' Davidisdze, *tskhovreba da uts'q'eba bagrat'ionianta (The Life and Tale of the Bagrat'ionis)*, G. Arakhamia (ed.), Tbilisi: 1990, p. 22; S. Rapp, *Imagining History at the Crossroads*, PhD. dissertation, Michigan: 1997, pp. 492-495; N. Khazaradze, M. Sanadze, *sumbat' davitsdzis tkhzelebis shedgenilobisatvis (On the Structure of the Historical Chronicle of Sumbat, the Son of David)* V. Gabashvili – 90, shromebi (Proceedings “V. Gabashvili – 90”), Tbilisi: 2003, pp. 521-532.
- ⁵ All this preliminary part is based on the Georgian version of the Old Testament. The proper names are given in Georgian transcription.
- ⁶ Sumbat' Davidisdze writes K'leop'a, brother of the Virgin Mary's husband. He uses as a source Eusebius of Caesarea “Historia Ecclesiastica.” See G. Mamulia, *K voprosu ob odnom istochnike Sumbata, syna Davida (On the Question of one source of Sumbat, son of David)*, *Gruzinskoe istochnikovedenie*, III, Tbilisi: 1971, pp. 115-116; According to S. Rapp, by launching his history with biblically-derived stemma beginning with Adam, Sumbat' Davidisdze attempts to authenticate the antiquity of the Georgian Bagrat'ioni house and its biological connection to King David. See: Stephen H. Rapp, *Studies in Medieval Georgian Historiography: Early Texts and Eurasian Contexts*, Leuen: Peeters, 2004, p. 342.
- ⁷ Georgian “პილისტიმი” (*p'ilist'imi*).

- ⁸ Queen Rakael is unknown in history. See N. Nikolozishvili, *Bagrat'ioni, potomki Davida (The Bagrationi, Descendants of David)*, in II saertashoriso simpoziumis: Kristianoba: tsarsuli, atsmko, momavali. shromebi (*Proceedings: Christianity: the Past, Present, Future*), II International Symposium, Tbilisi: 2005, pp. 54-55.
- ⁹ Georgian „ეკლესი/ ელექესი“ (ek'lets/elek'etsi) used by Leont'i Mroveli in his composition. See Leont'i Mroveli, *tskhovreba kartvelta mepisa (The Life of Georgian Kings)*, R. Met'reveli (ed.), *kartlis tskhovreba*, Tbilisi: 2009, p. 43; Juansher, in R. Met'reveli (ed.), *kartlis tskhovreba*, Tbilisi: 2009, p. 173); *mat'iane kartlisa* (Anonymous, *Chronicle of Kartli*) in R. Met'reveli (ed.), *kartlis tskhovreba*, Tbilisi: 2009, p. 281; *ist'oriani da azmani sharavandedtani, kartlis tskhovreba* (Anonymous, *The History and Eulogy of Monarchs*), in R. Met'reveli (ed.), *kartlis tskhovreba*, Tbilisi: 2009, p. 387. A. Lastivertsi uses “EK'eleats;” See K. N. Iuzbashian (ed.), *Povestvovanie vardapeta Aristaketsa Lastivertsi, Perevod s Drevnearmianskogo, (The Narration of Vardapet Aristakets Lastivertsi, translation from Ancient Armenian)*, Leningrad: 1968, p.142, note 8, pp. 56, 66.
- ¹⁰ Sumbat' Davidisdze uses “Somkhiti” for “Armenia” with the exception of one case (see below). In Georgian historical sources until the eighteenth century “Armenia” is used in the form of “Somkheti” and “Somkhiti.” “Somkhiti” is used as well for the designation of the Southern Georgia province, which borders Armenia. Beginning from the eighteenth century, gradually “Somkheti” denotes “Armenia”, and “Somkhiti” is used to mean part of the Southern Georgia boundary with Armenia (See Il. Abuladze, *iakob tsurtaveli, shushanikis ts'ameba (Iak'ob Tsurtaveli, the Martyrdom of Shushanik)*, Tbilisi: 1938, pp. 652-53; R. Met'reveli (ed.), *kartlis tskhovreba*, (Russian translation), Tbilisi: 2008, p. 23.
- ¹¹ Georgian „ერისთავი“ (*eristavi*), from “er” – “people, nation” and “tavi” – “head” signifying the head of a Georgian province. A provincial governor approved by a king, later it become hereditary. Here it designates a semi-independent governor of Kartli. According to the ancient Georgian chronicle *moktseva kartlisa (The Conversion of Kartli)*, the top feudal nobility of Kartli elected Guaram as *erismtavari*. As opposed to the common *eristavi*, Georgian historical sources use “*erismtavari*” or “head eristavi” for this governor’s name. There are disagreements regarding the use of the proper name of this half-sovereign governor of feudal Kartli. Sumbat' names him “Guaram” or “Guram;” that, evidently, goes back to “*moktseva kartlisa.*” Juansher calls “Guaram”/ “Gurami.” But Byzantine sources name “Gurgen” as the governor of Kartli at this time, and based on this source, some authors name him “Gurgen.” See G. Dondua, “kartul-sasanuri ese tsodebuli monet'ebi da adre-peodaluri sakartvelos ist'oriis sak'itkheb” (“The Georgian – Sassanian Coins and Issues of the History of Early Feudal Georgia”), *matsne*, no.1, 1976, pp. 98-106.
- ¹² K'akheti – historical province in eastern Georgia.
- ¹³ Nerse was the son of Bak'ur. See G. Arakhamia (ed.), Sumbat' Davidisdze, *op.cit.* Tbilisi: 1990, pp. 29-30; R. K'ik'nadze, *parsadan gorgidzanidzis erti kartuli ts'q'aros shesakheb, (One Georgian Source about Parsadan Gorgidjanidze)*, Tbilisi: 1982, pp. 39-40.
- ¹⁴ Georgian “დაემზახა” (*daemzakha*) – derived from word „მძახალი“ (*mdzakhali*) (father of the daughter-in-law; father of the son-in-law; mother of the son-in-law; mother of the daughter-in-law). Here it is about the conclusion of a marriage union with Nerse.
- ¹⁵ K'ambechani / K'ambechoani – a historical province in eastern Georgia, between the rivers Alazani and Iori. It is “Kambissene” of antique authors, later – Georgian “Q'iziki.”
- ¹⁶ Georgian “სპასალარი“ (*sp'asalar(i)*), from Persian “*sipahsalar*” – military leader, commander-in-chief.
- ¹⁷ Khornabuji – town in K'akheti.
- ¹⁸ *aznauri* – a feudal lord in Georgia in the fifth-twelfth centuries; the lowest social class of feudal lords in the thirteenth-eighteenth centuries. The term was mentioned in the fifth century Georgian hagiographic work *The Martyrdom of Shushanik*.
- ¹⁹ King of Kartli Vakht'ang I was named Gorgasali. He was an excellent warrior and waged a successful struggle for Kartli's independence. King Vakht'ang strengthened the Georgian church, making it autocephalous, receiving permission from Constantinople to change the status of the Bishop of Mtskheta to a Katholikos. He began to build churches. He decided to move the capital of Georgia from Mtskheta to Tbilisi, which was realized by his son Dachi. There are disagreements about the dates of his rule (Vakhushti – 439-499; Iv. Javakhisvili – 442-502; C. Toumanoff – 435-522; V. Goiliadze – 438-491; S. Gorgadze – 443-501. See M. Lordkipanidze and R. Met'reveli (eds.), *sakartvelos mepeebi (Georgia's Kings)* Tbilisi: 2000, pp. 41-42.

- ²⁰ Here it refers to the union between representatives of the Georgian nobility and Iranian authority in their struggle against Kartli's king. See E. Taq'aishvili (ed.), *Tri khroniki; Obrasczenie Gruzii (Three Chronicles: the Conversion of Georgia)*, Tbilisi: 1900, p. 41, note 2.
- ²¹ Mtskheta – the old capital of the Georgian Kingdom (from 500 BC to 500 A.D.) and spiritual heart of Georgia.
- ²² Armazi – citadel of Mtskheta.
- ²³ K'ala – fortress of Tbilisi.
- ²⁴ Hereti – The Kingdom of Hereti (Georgian “ჰერეთის სამეფო“ (*Heretis samepo*) was a Georgian kingdom in the medieval Caucasus on the Georgian-Caucasian frontier . The Kartlian ruler *erismtavari* Archil gave Hereti to the noble family of the Bagrat'ionis in the 740s-750s. See T. Papuashvili, *ranta da k'akhta samepo (The Rans and K'akhs Kingdom)*, Tbilisi, 1982; T. Papuashvili, *Voprosi istorii Hereti (Questions on Hereti's History)*, Tbilisi: 1983.
- ²⁵ Here Lower Kartli.
- ²⁶ Georgian „სივნიეთი“ (*siwnieti*) – historical province in Armenia.
- ²⁷ According to Sumbat' Davidisdze – King-Prophet David.
- ²⁸ Greek: *κουροπαλάτης*, i.e. “Chancellor” in the Byzantine Empire, member of the Imperial family (See R. Guiland, *Kuropolates, Byzantica, II*, Moscow: 1970). The first Georgian *kuropolates* Guaram/Gurgen was elected in the sixth century. See. Iv. Javakhishvili, *kartveli eris ist'oria (The History of Georgian Nation)*, II, Tbilisi: 1965, pp. 108-11.
- ²⁹ Georgian „მეფე ბერძენთა“ (*mepe berdzenta*) – King of Greece, or Byzantine Emperor.
- ³⁰ Jvari church-monastery is situated on the rocky mountain top at the meeting of the Mt'k'vari and Aragvi rivers and overlooks the village of Mt'skheta, the old capital of Georgia. According to tradition, it was here in the early fourth century that Saint Nino, a female evangelist, converted King Mirian III of Iberia to Christianity, and erected a large wooden cross on the site of a pagan temple. A small church was erected over the remnants of the wooden cross in the beginning of the sixth century named the “Little Church of Jvari.” The present building, or “Great Church of Jvari,” was begun by Guram *kuropolates* in 575, during the period of Katholikos Samoel III. See T. Chachua, *mtskhetis jvari (Mtskheta: Monastery of the Cross)*, Tbilisi: 2000, pp. 258-9.
- ³¹ For Veza See: R. K'ik'nadze, *Parsadan, op.cit.*, Tbilisi: 1982, pp. 39-40.
- ³² Bahram Chubin/Chobin/Chobina was a famous general and head of the house of Mihran at Rayy (near modern Tehran) during the sixth century in Persia. See Tabari, *The History of al Tabari, the Sassanids, the Byzantines, the Lakhmids*, (C. E. Bosworth, trans.), NY: 1999, Vol V; R. K'ik'nadze, *parsadan op.cit.*, pp. 37-38.
- ³³ Here it refers to the building of Sioni church in Tbilisi by St'epanoz and his brother Demet're in the sixth century. Their portraits as founders of the church are on the eastern façade.
- ³⁴ There are disagreements about the dates of St'epanoz's period of rule. According to Vakhushti Bagrat'ion, it was 600-619, See S. Q'aukhchisvili (ed.), *kartlis tskhovreba*, vol. IV, Tbilisi: 1973, pp. 121-122; G. Chubinashvili claims 586/90 – 604/605. See G. Chubinashvili, *Pamiatniki, op.cit.*, pp. 22-23.
- ³⁵ Georgian „ერეკლე“ (*erek'le*) – Emperor Heraclius of Greece (born in 575 A.D.), ruled in 610-641 A.D. He was the eldest son of Heraclius the Elder.
- ³⁶ Emperor Heraclius of Greece arrived in Tbilisi in 626 A.D..
- ³⁷ Georgian „ციხისთავი“ (*tsikhistavi*) – fortress-commander (derives from “tsikhe”– fortress and “tavi” – head).
- ³⁸ Dan. 8:5.
- ³⁹ For jibgu eristavi See V. Goliadze, “juansheris tkhzelebash mokhseniebuli „mepe Saba“ da „jibga eristavi,” (“King Saba and Jibga Ersitavi referred to in Juansheri's Works”) *matsne*, no. 2, 1977, pp. 90-102.
- ⁴⁰ Baghdad's surrender to Babylon – an ancient city located on the Euphrates River in Asia (former capital of the Babylonian Empire); the ruins of the ancient city of Babylon are located south of modern Baghdad (Iraq). See G. Melikishvili, *K istorii drevnei Gruzii (On the History of Ancient Georgia)*, Tbilisi: 1959, pp. 25-6 ; V. Gabashvili, *Bagdadi IX-XIV sauk'uneebis kartul ts'q'aroebshi (Baghdad in the Georgian Sources of the IX-XIV centuries, mravaltavi, XIV*, Tbilisi: 1987, p. 68-79.
- ⁴¹ Gardabani – a historical-geographic province in southern Georgia. Sumbat' mentions Gardabani which was in Hereti. See D. Muskhelishvili, *sakartvelos ist'oriuli geografiis dziritadi sak'itkhebi (The Fundamental Questions in Georgian Historical Geography)*, *Matsne*, vol.II, Tbilisi, 1980: pp. 42-49.

- ⁴² In the text “Varaz Gageli” is a corrupted form of “Varaz Grigoli;” Sumbat’ Davidisdze in this chronicle twice names him as Varaz Grigoli, See G. Arakhamia (ed.), *Sumbat’ Davidisdze, tskhovreba da uits’q’eba bagrati’onianta*, (*The Life and Tales of the Bagrat’ionis*) Tbilisi: 1990, pp. 62-3; D. Muskhelishvili, *sakartvelos, op.cit.*, p. 38, 42-3; S. Eremian, *Moisei Kalankatuiskii o posol’stve albanskogo kniazia Varaz Trdata k hazarskomu hakanu* (*Moisei Kalankatuiskii on the Embassy of the Albanian Prince Varaz Trdat to the Khazar, Hakan*), Zapiski Instituta Vostokovedeniia, AN SSR, Vol. VII, 1939, pp.130, 155.
- ⁴³ Khuzasheni is in south-western Georgia.
- ⁴⁴ Berduji – a river, mountain and village in southern Georgia.
- ⁴⁵ Georgian “დრაჰკანი” (*drahk’ani*) was a gold coin (See: D. Kapanadze, *kartuli numizmat’ik’a* (*Georgian Numismatics*), Tbilisi: 1969; Iv. Javakhishvili, *kartuli numizmat’ik’a da met’rologia* (*Georgian Numismatics and Metrology*), Tbilisi: 1926, pp. 14-25; A. Shanidze, *kartuli monast’eri bolgaretshi da misi tipykoni* (*The Georgian monastery in Bulgaria and its Typikon*), Tbilisi: 1971, p. 274.
- ⁴⁶ Georgian “მთავარი” (*mtavari*) – “prince,” literally “head/chief” from *tavi*, “head,” a feudal title in Georgia. The earliest instance of the use of *mtavari* is in the early Georgian hagiographic texts dated to the fifth century. From the eleventh to the fourteenth centuries, the title *mtavari*, along with *tavadi*, was synonymous with *eristavi*, and all referred to one of the upper level nobles, a prince. Throughout the Golden Age of the Kingdom of Georgia (twelfth-thirteenth centuries), the title gradually became hereditary.
- ⁴⁷ Georgian “მეტს’კეველი” (*mets’k’evneli*) – has the same structural form as „მ-ეგვიპტ-ელი“ (*m-egvipt’-eli* with prefix “m” and suffix “el. ”). And according to the 10th manuscript (CN/Sin-50) from Sinai the Mets’k’evnelis acted together with the Rustavelis in K’akheti and Kartli. See Z.Aleksidze, *krist’ianuli k’avk’asia* (*Christian Caucasia*), Vol. 2, Tbilisi: 2011, pp.9-10)
- ⁴⁸ The Persian Shah Khusro II ruled approximately from 591-628 A.D.
- ⁴⁹ Khusro’s son Kobad concluded peace with Byzantium and gave back the life-giving Pillar, which was taken by the Persians in Ktizephon in 614 (See F. Uspensky, *Istoria Vizantiiskoy imperii*, (*A History of the Byzantine Empire*), Vol. I, Moscow: 1913, pp. 679-80).
- ⁵⁰ Here it refers to the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem.
- ⁵¹ Sioni Cathedral of Dormition in Tbilisi was built in the sixth century.
- ⁵² Ujarma fortress is situated in K’akheti, eastern Georgia.
- ⁵³ Georgian “მოგვი” (*mogvi*) derives from Persian: مَوْج (mogh) – the magi or wise men were a member of hereditary caste of priests, who came “from the East.” See Matthew 2:1, 2, 9
- ⁵⁴ Katholicos Bartolome succeeded Samoel IV in the sixth century. See R. Met’reveli (ed.), *sakartvelos k’atolik’os-pat’riarkebi* (*The Katholicos-Patriarchs of Georgia*), Tbilisi: 2000, p. 30.
- ⁵⁵ The Jvari (Mtskheta) church inscription mentions Adarnase, son of St’epanoz, as one of the builders..
- ⁵⁶ Iovane was Katholicos of Kartli in the seventh century; Babila and Tabori were his successors. See *sakartvelos pat’riarkebi, op.cit.*, Tbilisi: 2000, pp. 29-30.
- ⁵⁷ Georgian “აგარიანთა” (*agarianta*) – derives from Arabic: *Hājar*). According to the Abrahamic faiths , Hagar was the second wife of Abraham and the mother of his first son, Ishmael. Hagarene is a term that widely used for the early Arab conquerors. See: Genesis 16:3.
- ⁵⁸ Georgian “ანტიპატოსი-პატრიკი” (*ant’ip’at’osi-pat’riki*) – proconsul, high – ranking official in Byzantium.
- ⁵⁹ Bardav (Berdav, Partaw) is in Azerbaijan
- ⁶⁰ Paravani lake is in Javakheti.
- ⁶¹ Georgian “სარკინოზი” (*sark’inozi*)– Saracen (Greek: Sarakenoi); in the first three centuries A.D., the term was applied to an Arab tribe living in the Sinai Peninsula. And, after the establishment of the caliphate, the Byzantines referred to all Muslims of the Caliph as Saracens. See: *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 2012.
- ⁶² Shavsheti – historical-geographical province in south-western Georgia, now in Turkey.
- ⁶³ Arab Commander Murvan ibn Muhammad., named Q’ru (Deaf) by the Georgians for his ruthlessness and ferocity.
- ⁶⁴ Georgian „ღადო“ (*ghado*) – impenetrable, impassable. Ghado Mountain situated near Abastumani. See Iv. Javakhishvili, *tkhzulebani*, (*Works*) vol.II, Tbilisi: 1983, p. 17.
- ⁶⁵ Art’anuji (Ardagan) – town in K’larjeti, now in Turkey.

- ⁶⁶ Dolisq'ana – in Shavsheti, south-western Georgia.
- ⁶⁷ For Oroz-Moroz, see A. Abdaladze, *amierk'avk'asiis polit'ik'ur erteulta urtiertoba X-XI sauk'uneebshi (Political Relations of Entities of the Transcaucasus in the X-XI centuries)*, Tbilisi: 1988, pp. 212-213.
- ⁶⁸ The Ch'orokhi (Speri) – river, flows into the Black Sea.
- ⁶⁹ 826 A.D.
- ⁷⁰ According to Sumbat', Ashot' possessed lands from Shavsheti – K'larjeti to Bardav(i).
- ⁷¹ Gurgen *eristavi* received the title of Kuropalate in 881 A.D.
- ⁷² See note 58.
- ⁷³ Georgian “მამფალი” (*mampali*) – derives from “მამა” (*mama*)- “father,” and “უფალი” (*upali*) “lord.” It was a dynastic title in medieval Georgia (late eighth–tenth centuries), usually held by high-ranking Bagrat'ioni princes.
- ⁷⁴ King Bagrat' I of Abkhazeti (western Georgia) ruled in 861-875 A.D. See E. Taq'aishvili, Sumbat' Davidisdze, (*op. cit.*), Tbilisi: 1949; see also Z. Anchabadze, *Iz istorii srednevekovoi Abkhazii (On the history of Medieval Abkhazia)*, Tbilisi: 1978, p. 125; Ioann Draskhanakertsi, *somkhetis ist'oria (A History of Armenia)*, (E. Tsagareishvili trans.), Tbilisi: 1965, p.116;
- ⁷⁵ Samtskhe – a historical region in south-west Georgia.
- ⁷⁶ Bana was an the official seat of the Bishop of T'ao, south-western Georgia.
- ⁷⁷ Art'aani – a historical region and fortified city in south Georgia.
- ⁷⁸ Georgian “ერისთავთ-ერისთავი” (*eristavt-eristavi*) – governor of a large administrative unit.
- ⁷⁹ For Adarnase – Basil, see Sumbat' Davidisdze, (E. Taq'aishvili, (ed.), *op.cit.*, p. 34).
- ⁸⁰ Ashot' K'ukhi began to build a church in Khandzta.
- ⁸¹ T'beti from Georgian “ტბა” (*t'ba*) – a lake in historical Shavsheti, south-west Georgia, now in Turkey. The eparchy was founded at the end of the ninth and beginning of the tenth century by Ashot' K'ukhi (918 A.D.) an *eristavi of eritavis* who governed the region after the death of Gurgen Kuropalate. Vakhushti Bat'onishvili assumes that “it received its name from small but multiple lakes.” The eparchy's centre was the village of T'beti, at present called “Jivizli”.
- ⁸² *magistros*– a title in the Byzantine court, one of the most senior official administrative officials in the late Roman Empire and the early centuries of the Byzantine Empire.
- ⁸³ King Bagrat' of Georgia – called Regveni. According to E. Taq'aishvili “regveni” means “young, inexperienced, silly,” See *Sumbat' Davidisdze*, (E. Taq'aishvili [ed.]), p. 150. According to Sh. Badridze, it means “self-willed and rebellious.” See: Sh. Badridze, “shenishvnebi bagrat' bagrat'ionis biografiasatvis, romelsats erkva “regveni,” (“Comments on the Biography of Bagrat Bagrat'ioni, who was called “regveni”), *metsnierebata akademiis moambe*, Vol. II, 1971: pp. 55-57.
- ⁸⁴ Geo “დიდებული” (*didebuli*) – great, glorious noble.
- ⁸⁵ Son of the King of Abkhazeti or western Georgia, Demet're III ruled in 967-975 A.D. Teodosi ruled in 975-978 A.D. See P. Ingoroq'va, *Giorgi Merchule*, *op.cit.*, Tbilisi: 1954; M. Lordkipanidze, *peodaluri sakartvelos p'olit'ik'uri gaertianeba (The Political Union of Feudal Georgia)*, Tbilisi: 1963.
- ⁸⁶ Georgian “იმერ ტაო” (*Imier T'ao*).
- ⁸⁷ The Caspian Sea.
- ⁸⁸ Panask'ert'i is in T'ao-Klarjeti.
- ⁸⁹ Demet're of K'larjeti, son of Gurgen Demet're, came to Constantinople from where he tried to retrieve patrimonial lands with Byzantine aid, the last time in 1032 A.D. See C. Toumanoff, *Studies in Christian Caucasian History*, Washington D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1967, p. 498.
- ⁹⁰ Here this refers to the Greek–Georgian war in 1021-1023. See V. Kopaliani, *kartul–bizantiuri p'olit'ik'uri urtiertobani (Georgian-Byzantine Political Relations)*, Tbilisi: 1973, pp. 89-122.
- ⁹¹ Oltisi – province and town in south-west Georgia.
- ⁹² K'ola – historical-geographical province in south-west Georgia.
- ⁹³ Shirimta/Shirimni, See V. Kopaliani, “shirinis/shirimtas mdebareoba” (“The Location of Shirinis/shirimtas”), *mnatobi*, 1972, no. 7, pp. 176-182.
- ⁹⁴ Niali – valley situated in Javakheti. See Iv. Javakhishvili, *tkhzulebani, (Works)* vol. II, Tbilisi: 1983, p. 56.

- ⁹⁵ Georgian “წანარნი” (ts’anarni) – K’akhetians (the Georgians), who settled on the territory of the Darial gorge (Ts’anareti Gorge). See T. Papuashvili, *ranta da kakhta samepo (VIII–XI ss.) (The Rans and K’akhs kingdom (VIII- XIcc.))*, Tbilisi: 1982.
- ⁹⁶ Shakis, Heretians.
- ⁹⁷ Peris was son of Jojik’. See more in R. Met’reveli (ed.), A. Chanturia (trans.), *mat’iane kartlisa (Georgian Chronicle)*, Tbilisi: 1995; Il. Abuladze (ed.), *tskhovreba da mokalakeoba ts’mindisa da net’arisa mamisa chvenisa giorgi mtats’mindelisa (The Life and Nationality of our Saintly Father Giorgi Mtatsmindeli)*, from *dzveli kartuli agiograpiuli lit’erat’uris dzeglebi (The Old Georgian sources of Hagiographical Literature)*, Tbilisi: 1967, Vol. II, pp. 117-118; V. Kopaliani, *sakartvelo-bizantiis p’olit’ik’uri urtiertoba 970-1070 ts’lebshi, (Georgian-Byzantine Political Relations in 970-1070 years)*, Tbilisi: 1969, pp. 11-114.
- ⁹⁸ Zviad or Zviad Marushiani *eristavi of eristavis*, See M. Lordkipanidze, “brdzola sakartvelos gaertianebisatvis” (“The Struggle for the Unity of Georgia”), in *sakartvelos ist’oriis nark’vevebi (Essays on Georgian History)*, Vol. III, Tbilisi, 1979, pp. 158, 161-2.
- ⁹⁹ Georgian “მანდილი” (*mandili*) – the holy *mandili* (mandylion) kerchief imprinted with the portrait of Christ. See R. W. Thomson, *Rewriting Caucasian History*, Oxford: 1966, p. 284.
- ¹⁰⁰ Georgian “ტაღმანი” (t’aghmani) – troops.
- ¹⁰¹ *katepan* (Greek “katepano”) – an official of the Imperial court in Greece, governor of a large area.
- ¹⁰² Queen Mariam, mother of King Bagrat’ IV, the daughter of the Armenian King Senekerim.
- ¹⁰³ Georgion ქუთაისი (Kutaisi), ancient names are Aea/Aia, Kutatisi) – the ancient capital of Georgia.
- ¹⁰⁴ 99. Ps. 106:1.
- ¹⁰⁵ King Bagrat’ IV (1027-1072).
- ¹⁰⁶ *aznauris* who joined with the Byzantine Emperor, were given lands and posts in Byzantium.
- ¹⁰⁷ Georgian “პარკიმანოსი” (*park’imanos*) – parakoimomenos was the Emperor’s chamberlain, usually a eunuch, during the ninth-tenth centuries. Many of them were de-facto chief ministers of the Empire.
- ¹⁰⁸ Georgian “ხალტულარი” (*khalt’ulari*). The word “chaltularios/chartularius” derives from Greek, χαρτουλάριος), Roman and Byzantine officials, entrusted with administrative and economic duties. The title was widely awarded in the eleventh to twelfth centuries, for non-eunuchs.
- ¹⁰⁹ Georgian “პროედროსი” (*p’roedrosi*) – proedros derives from Greek πρόεδρος (“president”) – a senior Byzantine court and ecclesiastic title in the tenth to mid-twelfth centuries. See A. Kazhdan (ed.), *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1991, p. 623
- ¹¹⁰ King Romanos III of Greece (1028-1034).

THE HISTORY AND EULOGY OF MONARCHS

You, who let the fishermen triumph over the rhetoricians,
Who through the archangel loosened the tongue of a humble man and made him loquacious,
Straighten out the tongue of a stutterer,
And enable him to tell the story of the monarchs, and to eulogize them.

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I

When the prophet Moses, who saw God, was unwilling to obey Him – when He wanted to send Moses to the Israelis – Moses referred to his poor oratorical skills; but despite this weakness, he was granted signs that foretold the future.¹ So how can a person, who is unable to speak appropriately of exalted things, be so bold as to embark upon this task, when (Moses), who rendered the words which he heard in fire, had no hope, though even turning his staff into a serpent and changing the color of his arms, that he could persuade the people to believe in the correctness of his words?² Like Solomon, who pronounced wise parables and praised Sulamith,³ I will blow the trumpet and render “the praise of praises” to the one, who came from the seed of Solomon, the one, for whom praise of her glory and Olympian grandeur, and even (the gift of) Solomon, would never be adequate. I mean Tamar, famous among the monarchs, and the glory of the first David, a prophet who admired the work of the Maker of every creature – God – who plainly manifests Himself in the soul and heart of man.⁴ His indivisibility and sovereignty is represented within Tamar, who by the furtherance of the true God and the perfect man (Christ) appeared and shone, the most perfect among humankind. For she merged the reason of her soul with its origin – Jesus Christ – the light of (God) the Father, who created five senses: sight, hearing, smell, touch and taste. Renouncing her will, she turned her mind into a pleasant garden, and subordinated it to that rock we call Christ.⁵

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Tamar was a daughter of parents who had far reaching roots and branches. As a tree can be judged by its fruit, and a fruit by the tree, she was quite in keeping with her famous ancestors – the Davidids, Khosrovids and P’ank’rat’ids.⁶ She was a descendant of the one, who by the power of Nimrod,⁷ acquired the domains of the sons of Haos,⁸ whom it befits only Homer to praise. How much Plutarch magnified the place of kings in history,⁹ and elaborated the words of Alexander. From time

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to time, according to His purpose, there, like a kind of light, appear world-creators; some receive praise according to their actions, and others because of their malicious deeds erect monuments of disgrace to themselves. Now I have passed on to history and to basilography,¹⁰ which means the “stories of kings”, and will render only the things which I myself witnessed, or heard from wise and reasonable people. Like Luke (the evangelist) who built his narration in a line of ascent: from Seth to Adam, and from Adam to God,¹¹ I, too, will start with Tamar the blessed one, who together with the Holy Trinity makes up four. Tamar, the ethereal one among the monarchs, whose image and name will always be shown in its proper place.

II

10 Tamar’s father was Giorgi, King of Kings, son of King Demet’re, son of David,¹² who built fortresses and established the borders (of his kingdom) in the east and north, who owned the lands from one sea to the other and who had another son – also called David. The glorious, manly and exceptional life of this Demet’re is shown in the eulogy of a philosopher, Ioane Chimchimeli.¹³ Demet’re, a fearless fighter and victorious in many battles, had two sons, whose names were David and Giorgi. Demet’re gave preference to his youngest son as Isaac did with Jacob,¹⁴ and he abused and reviled the eldest son. God, who listened to Demet’re’s supplications, shortened David’s days, calling David to himself before his father. And God the Father, together with His son Jesus Christ, raised the dearest son – who resembled his father – to his side to share the throne with him, exposing him, like the Sun among the heavenly bodies; or like Alexander¹⁵ and Kaikhosro¹⁶ among the sovereigns; or Achilles,¹⁷ Samson¹⁸ and Nimrod¹⁹ among the heroes; or S’pandiar,²⁰ Tahamtan²¹ and Siaosh²² among the Goliaths;²³ and Solomon,²⁴ Socrates and Plato,²⁵ among the sages.

20 At the time of his father Demet’re’s reign, he brought for Giorgi as wife, the daughter of the King of Khuddan,²⁶ by name Burdukhan, a match for her sun-like and leonine like husband. She herself was like the sun among suns in terms of her beauty and they say²⁷ she shone upon sinners and the righteous alike, for she loved the righteous and showed mercy to the guilty. Regarding her devotion to Christ, I am afraid to name any other woman, who was an object of adoration, who could equal her. She was like Catherine and Penelope,²⁸ who (later) became Irene, although she was married. By her goodness, wisdom and the ability to solicit and render help she was like Mary,²⁹ the enlightener of the heaven and the earth.

30 I am afraid that by applying my efforts with such excess, I will undermine my ability to find the proper descriptions, and I will dig myself into a pit, and those that do not stray to the right or left but walk straight in the middle of the road, will blame me for turning off the right path. So I will start to praise to the best of my ability the father of the shining daughter, Giorgi Gorgaslid,³⁰ who resembled so much the blessed Vakht’ang. With his birth, the prophecy that “from his seed”³¹ will come a ruler of both the East and West, came true. One poet writes in his verse:

Vakht'ang, you are desired by the one who praises God for your sake,
Who, knowing of your victories over your enemies, shines like the Sun,
Who destroys Muslims and helps Christians,
The one who created you wants to beget another similar to you.

III

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Ascending the throne, which ruled over seven kingdoms,³² adorned by the purple mantle and the crown, he armed himself in order to destroy and annihilate the enemies of the Christian faith: the Hagarianes, Ismaelites, and Mohammedans.³³ Showering favors upon the Amiers and Imiers,³⁴ the inhabitants of Upper and Lower Kartli,³⁵ the *didebulis* and *aznauris*,³⁶ *sp'asalars* and *sp'asp'et's*,³⁷ the members of his House and strangers to his House,³⁸ he gathered them all and set out for the city of Upper K'aghdzevan,³⁹ and occupied all the rocky gorges and towns of Ashorni,⁴⁰ which belonged to Shag-Armen, who was called the King of the Armenians.⁴¹

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After this, summoning his troops, he made for the great and glorious city of Dvin, which is located at the foot of Ararat and represents the border between Armenia and Adarbadagan; Dvin⁴² was the inheritance of Trdat' the Giant, who because of Gregory of Parthia was turned into a wild boar.⁴³ Ready for the battle and waiting for it impatiently, Vakht'ang was at the head (of his army) and was the first to rush into battle. Calling on his people to follow, he seized the city, and the captives and treasures they took were so ample that they covered the plains and mountains, and filled up Tbilisi; buyers paid just one drachma for one captive and a wooden scoop. After this, when going on a hunt, he walked round the hills and valleys like Jonathan the Bow-bearer,⁴⁴ and the fine shot Chubin,⁴⁵ who struck enemies and beasts perfectly, just like Artemis, who was called "Mtapholo,"⁴⁶ or a Hunter-God.

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He decided to set out again on a campaign; and he gathered his troops and headed for the great city of Anis,⁴⁷ which was once the property and residence of Greek kings; there are one thousand and one churches in this city even now. He was on his guard against the Greeks, and seizing the right moment, fell upon a highborn Shadadian,⁴⁸ who was the governor of the city; for three days, he led sallies, sending in his cavalry to attack the city. In the end, owing to his words and his deeds, he broke down the resistance of the fortress. After the flight of Shadadian, he who uprooted blackthorns and precipitated thunders in the midst of lightning – the city fell to Vakht'ang's control; he took the city and fulfilled his wish. He liked the city and, not wishing to return it, made it his capital. For its protection and reinforcement he left Ivane Orbeli there, who was *mandat'urtukhutses*⁴⁹ and *amirsp'asalar*⁵⁰, giving him Sargis Mkhargrdzeli and other great *aznauris* from diverse regions as helpers, while he himself, carefree, returned to his recreation and the hunt.

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IV

The anger of the arrogant Hagarianes and Ismaelites flared up. Shah-Armen, who called himself Sultan, summoned the entire peoples of Sham,⁵¹ Jazira⁵² and Diyarbakir,⁵³ together with the outlandish Turks, as well as the son of Ardokh, who through his grandfather was a descendant of the highborn Ortok.⁵⁴ This Ardokh, a distinguished commander, who routed the famous Iovane Abuletisdze and the Sultan's relative, Seljukid Saldukh,⁵⁵ came grinding his teeth like a beast, accompanied by many sovereigns and Persian *padishahs*, and with his countless and immense forces and troops, he besieged Anis. Rattling his arms and riding a prancing horse every day he battled at the city gate.

The King of Kings, a strong and brave man, and a fighter without match, was at that time in Nach'armagevi, at a place of entertainment. When he learned of all this, he called his troops and united them, cavalry and infantry. Ignoring the obvious advantage of his enemies who came from the North and East, he "girded himself, hurried on and prevailed."⁵⁶ He did not pay (any) attention to the paucity of his army, did not wait for his distinguished knights, neither from this side of the mountains of Likhi,⁵⁷ nor from the other side.

Putting his trust in the hands of the Omnipotent, like Iskander of Macedon,⁵⁸ he called upon the force of forces, which reigns in heaven and counted the multitude of enemies that beset him. Not hiding from the glitter of his enemies' swords, he crossed the mountains and descended to Shirak⁵⁹ accompanied by his viziers: *mts'ignobartukhutsesi*⁶⁰ Iovane and Sumbat', who was Simon when a monk, and who advised him not to approach the enemy too closely, because of the small size of his army. But the brave(est) amongst the brave and the greatest amongst the giants, who imitated the feats and the crown of the proto-martyr Giorgi, did not listen: and if he defeated (just) one dragon, this invincible fighter and this namesake of Giorgi (not only in name but in mind), eliminated multiple asps and vipers.

Seeing the troops of the Saracens, King Giorgi made for them, praying and raising his eyes up to heaven. He took up arms himself, but handed the blessed wooden cross to Iovane, to lead (them). With burning heart and encouraging each other, they rode on their horses and though born to live, did not spare themselves in the face of death. And the King, astride his horse, with the firm voice of a Khosrovid, addressed himself to the hearts of his soldiers, who were furious like beasts: "People, my brothers, you have one spirit and one faith! You know how great it is to die for your faith and the Gospel of Christ; we always bless those who follow Christ's steps and die for Him with their perishable bodies. You see, how much better it is to die manfully than to linger from a wasting disease, for the good example and your good name will remain forever with us. We have heard from the ancient chroniclers how because of the Lord's law, the tribe of Hebrews suffered many misfortunes at the time of Artakserks; so did the ancient Greeks, led by the experienced commander Themistocles at the time of Xerxes, the conqueror of the world. Themistocles, with his men, commanded the sea without a fight, and Xerxes was obliged to retreat due just to the town of the Athenians.⁶¹ Now, my winged lions, take lances and pikes and strike those who do not believe in the divinity of the One, who sacrificed himself for our sake!"

Reciting his last prayer, he called on his *amirsp'asalar* Liparit', son of Sumbat', Beka of Surami and Kirkish, son of Abuleti. And the commander of the troops, full of smiles and laughter, declared: "Knights! The best among us will be the one who strikes the standard-bearer, for destroying him will mean delivering a (deadly) blow to the camp of Naval, and to those from the countries of K'idara."⁶² Boasting in such a way and trusting in God, he made the round of his regiments, and surveyed the entire troops and sharpened his lance like Fridon,⁶³ who kept his army in firm control. And when the enemy saw their banner thrown down by the arm of Achilles⁶⁴ and the swords in the hands of their enemies, who turned fast and aimed well, they fled, running as fast as the speed of their horses allowed them. And the words: "and one will put to flight thousands" came to be true.

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The *amirsp'asalar*, *didebulis* and knights⁶⁵ of one side as well as of the other, shed torrents of blood. The King, who was granted the luck of Alexander⁶⁶ and the glory of Siaosh,⁶⁷ pursued them himself, changing his military escort, beating, killing, cutting and striking, and his giant companions helped him. And they saw, like the people of Israel, that the Sun which had stopped in the sky, like it did in the case of Joshua,⁶⁸ was unable to hold back any more the chariot on its course, and was declining to the west while they still continued their pursuit; and so they turned back. They found many stricken and dead governors, *didebulis*, *aznauris*, knights and soldiers, and countless tents and royal tabernacles; precious stones, pearls, gold bullion and articles were in abundance, and many camels, horses and mules; all kind of treasures and goods of this world, spoils that defied counting. Rendering help to countless living people, they took care also of four dead ones; but an order was given to do the same with the thousands of others, who were buried in pits.

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King "Constantine" saw his favorite viziers, *sp'asalars*, governors and *tavadis*,⁶⁹ *didebulis* and *aznauris*, slaves and knights. All his army, wounded and injured men, called him saying: "Peace be with you." How can we render in words their joy and their gratitude towards God and their master⁷⁰ in whose image He revealed Himself? Everybody enjoyed this spectacle: the father finding his son, the son finding his father, the brother finding his brother and others of his kin, the master finding his subject and the subject finding his master. And the victors stuffed with goods of every kind, owning many horses, had a glorious time and kissed one other.

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In this merriment and joy, the King and his army bowed down before Providence. He praised not the strength of his (men's) arms or feats, but the highest destiny, and divine providence. He fell humbly before the Lord, the Sabaoth of all forces, and shedding tears and finding comfort, sat down to rest; he took only a little of the immense booty. After three days' stay before the gates of the city of Anisi, making the necessary arrangements and appointing an *amir*⁷¹ to govern it, he departed, taking his army, the arms and the treasury with him, as well as the monarchs, nobles, *aznauris* and slaves, and happily sent messengers to the philosophers and the Patriarch whose prayers had supported him. He on his part, fair faced, appeared before his tutor, the Queen of Queens Tamar,⁷² who washing her face with tears was overwhelmed with joy; after this, triumphant and manly, he met his spouse.

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V

Covered with glory, praised and successful in all his undertakings, he made a tour of the possessions of his fathers and grandfathers. The news spread about the destruction of the army of the monarchs⁷³ and nobles of Sham, Jazira, Armenia and Erzurum. Hearing of this, the Sultan of Khorasan and Iraq, the Caliph, the possessor of Great Babylon and supporter of the false religion of the Saracens, and the *atabag* of Persia, Varazg, summoned the Ismaelis, not forgetting to gather the burned bones of Zoroaster,⁷⁴ who was the first king and astrologer among the Persians. Of those bones the Persians said: "As long as they are with us, there will be no decline of the kingdom of Persia!"

They gathered in Arran and made for the southern regions of Georgia, to the country of Somkhiti,⁷⁵ and laid siege to the fortress of Gagi, captured it and devastated all the borderlands around it. Learning of this, the glorious and invincible fighter, the matchless knight, King Giorgi, gathered at once the troops from his seven kingdoms, Imeria and Ameria, took the Ovses⁷⁶ and the peoples of many other lands, and set out against the Sultan, who had at his command a glorious army of countless select men. When the Sultan, the *atabag* and all the nobles and knights who were with him, learned of this, they said: "There is no man in the whole world at present, who can contend with Giorgi and his army, so let us retreat and hide." They left all their belongings including those that they kept in Gagi. They crossed the river of Eleketsi,⁷⁷ where they lingered awhile, for they needed some time to gather their forces. There, they were overcome by the advanced detachments of the Georgian army, which began to battle with them.

When the King, who had the arm of an Achilles and a sensitive heart, saw this, he rushed over to them like a beast. But his preparations for victory were futile: for some nobles, and particularly Vardan K'olonk'elisdze, the *eristavi* of Hereti⁷⁸ at the time, a man burdened by age but strong and experienced in battle, began to argue with him and dared even to hold him back by the reins of his horse; and all this because of their mutual enmity and envy. Anything that has been well and perfectly performed can be undone due to weakness or to somebody's envy. However God, the maker of all forces and the source of all actions, is stronger than anything in the world, so nobody can oppose or weaken the one who was chosen by Him at birth. Maybe he is threatened by envy? But the chosen one among the sovereigns was kind, and the kindness knows nothing of envy, and everybody can confirm this. The King was restrained, and they said to him: "Because the Sultan fled with all his army, there is no point in contradicting God's will." It would be senseless, an empty word and a failed action. The King, though a wise man, was easy to persuade; he listened to them and dismissed his army, and indulged himself in joy, recreation and the hunt.

VI

After that the Sultan and the *atabag* came with all their forces and troops to Gelakuni.⁷⁹ Increasing his forces, Shah-Armen, the ruler of entire Arabia, approached the gate of Anisi. At that time, Anisi had been reinforced by Toreli, a glorious and distinguished fighter. Destroying and devastating the neighboring lands, he prepared siege machines. The news reached our country and the King, who was with a small detachment enjoying himself, hunting in the mountains of Lori and Dmanisi.⁸⁰ The Sultan's envoy came to him, a man sly and artful, knowing his trade well, whose aim was to find out the disposition of the King's troops. As in the Indian parable of the owl and the crow from the book of Kalil and Dimna,⁸¹ finding out everything he wanted, he spread his wings, and flying high like the crow came before the Sultan and the *atabag*. He declared: "Here is the hour of our vengeance. If we do not profit by it now, we will hardly find any other opportunity." 5 10

The King, cheerful and powerful, raised so much by fortune, stood with his small party, but the enemy, traveling the whole night, fell at dawn upon the sleeping King and his troops, and the King had time just to put on his armor and mount his horse. *Amirsp'asalar* Ivane and the other nobles seized him like a prisoner, and told him: "Oh, King! Once even Alexander was beaten by a woman, just like Samson by Delilah and Solomon by Sybille."⁸² And they noted still other instances of defeated sovereigns. "We have enraged the One somehow, who supporting your reign so far, has like a father punished you, David's son, whom He exalted like His own (son). And he (David), the King and prophet, who was destined to be the father of the Son of God,⁸³ was pursued, too, by Saul. Now, let us accept this punishment and turn back, hoping that the One, who has the power to conquer, will reward us again with victory!" 15 20

And though the King was taken away forcefully, he and his people were seen many times among the ranks, putting to flight and destroying the armies of their enemies. They showed such courage and skill that they lost not one *didebuli*, *aznauri* or any other subordinate of the King who was skilled or distinguished, except perhaps for the not very useful *aznauri*, a cross-bearer;⁸⁴ however the cross was safely recovered. What amazing valor and courage, and all with the assistance of God's hand! In which battle, be it ancient or new, has such a thing happened so that the party, which experienced such a sudden attack, came out of the battle so unharmed? After this the devotees of Islam who escaped from their hands said: "If catching him unaware, we could not seize him, how can we attack him when he is expecting us? It would be nothing more than the pursuit of a shadow or chasing the wind. Therefore let us return to our country and thank God for what He has granted us." 25 30

Let everyone, who reads this and tries to comprehend it, keeps this in mind: "Thou has placed the limit, which is not to be trespassed."⁸⁵ The Sun among scholars of the Bible, the Great Basil, the luminary of Caesarea says in his book of natural science which is known under the title of "Hexameron:" "The bird of Alk'un lays its eggs on a seashore, how is it then that storms and sea waves do not violate God's order, but protect the seed of Alk'un?" If Providence had permitted the King to pursue the fleeing Sultan, all the towers of the Saracens would have been overthrown, and if the fear of the King and his army's courage had not turned them back, the holy places and surroundings that we possess would have been defiled. After that the King gave Anisi to a relative of 35

its former owners, and made him his vassal. *Atabag* Eldiguz became a mediator between the Sultan and the Georgians and proposed peace. On the other side the King's sister and the Sultan's former spouse, Queen Rusudan, mediated; and tranquility and peace were established for some time.

VII

5 The King gave himself up to amusement, resting and hunting. In winter he went at times to Trans-Likhi-Imeri,⁸⁶ and came down to the Pontic Sea; he hunted all over Abkhazia and reached sometimes the sea of Gorgan.⁸⁷ And he reigned in (his) Olympic Grandeur.

10 And because his troops and *didebulis* remained idle, they dared to say to him: "We cannot stay idle without campaigns and raids." The King, obtaining from his people assurances of peace and an oath of loyalty, began his preparations for a campaign. Being in the Trans-Likhi part of his country, he decided to start a campaign and, fixing the day, ordered the T'aoans, K'larjis and Shavshis to devastate Oltisi and Bana, the Meskhis and Torelians⁸⁸ to raid K'ari⁸⁹ and Ashornia, the *amirsp'asalar* and the Somkhitar⁹⁰ to plunder the banks of the Mt'k'vari down to Ganja, to the chosen Imiers and Kartlians – to take the lands beyond Ganja on this and the other bank of the Mt'k'vari down to 15 Khlata, and to the Ers and K'akhis⁹¹ – to occupy the lands from the mouth of the Alazani down to Shirvan.⁹² It was a campaign the equal of which had never been seen before.

20 And what could be said of his manly and speedy travels? He was evidently not inferior to Habakkuk, Daniel⁹³ and Elias, who, on the Sinai⁹⁴ squeezed rain from one (small) cloud⁹⁵ and ascended to heaven in a fiery chariot. By the quickness of his feet he truly resembled the raised Daniel.

25 Destroying his enemy and seizing countless and inconceivable treasures, like a winged tiger, in the twinkling of an eye, he appeared in Geguti,⁹⁶ so that those that were there could hardly believe it. If any tongue or mind decides to relate all these things, the narration may be found boring, because of its length.

And as our anointed sovereign was the descendant of David and Solomon,⁹⁷ all the kings of the world were serving him like they did Solomon.

VIII

30 Once Andronicus Comnenos, the son of his father's sister, as well as the son of the brother of the great Caesar Manuel, the King of the whole of the West and Greece,⁹⁸ came to visit him with his beautiful fair wife and children. Offering thanks to God, he received him as necessary, and rendered honors proper for his relative: he granted him towns and fortresses, and placed a throne for him next to his own, on the opposite side of Aghsartan, who was the nephew of his father by his sister, and

was the King of Shirvan and the coast from Derbent to Khirkhal;⁹⁹ the King looked upon him like his own son and considered him as one of his *didebulis*. This Sharvansha, harassed in the past by the Khazars of Derbent, turned to him for help.

Then the King gathered his troops from Imeria and Ameria, took Andronicus, a brother of the King of Greece, with him, and advanced to the gate of Derbent. He devastated the lands of the Muskur and Sharabams and seized the town of Shaburan.¹⁰⁰ The King, who observed the battle, as well as all his people, was pleased with the courage of Andronicus before the gates of the town. The town he gave to Sharvansha, his father's nephew. After the victorious return to his home, he enjoyed himself and had a good time on his estates. He kept sending his troops and *sp'asalars* on campaigns and reached at times the gates of Nakhchevan,¹⁰¹ or Masis¹⁰² and Ghaghva, or Bardav¹⁰³ and Balk'un. Through such victories and successes he increased his treasury. What he obtained himself or received as spoil, he placed in the fortress of Ujarma,¹⁰⁴ which was built by Vakht'ang Gorgasali, who, being the lion among the lions and the Goliath among the Goliaths, died there. Nobody has ever had so many beautiful hawks and dogs like he, and never will anyone have such in the future.

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IX

The King's nephew, the son of his elder brother David, beautiful in appearance and learned in everything, as befitted his high birth, grew up in this well-organized kingdom with its gentle life. But what overshadows everything good, reasonable, beautiful and skillful, is the absence of the fear of God and the violation of the faith and Christ's commandments, and this is an inborn feature of some inhabitants of this kingdom, and it upset his (the King's) life. For his father, David, too, betrayed his father, Demet're, and in breaking with him, destroyed the *didebulis* of his kingdom: he imprisoned some of them, put to death the others, and condemned still others to all kinds of punishment. And in like manner, the Devil entered his heart and soul. Through him God brought down his anger upon the Orbelis¹⁰⁵ and their descendants, and the Samtskhians,¹⁰⁶ Ers and K'akhis, and all the loyal relatives of theirs, and all those who were born in their family. There began a series of betrayals, conflicts, murders, bloodlettings, and ravages. God who establishes justice did not allow Absalom to prevail over David,¹⁰⁷ for the Holy Gospel says: "Let him die, who shall say to his parents "Corban," a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me."¹⁰⁸ Commensurate with this, He granted victory to Giorgi, the victor of victors. The King gathered his troops and leaving Tbilisi campaigned against his enemies, who were in the mountains of Somkhiti. Defeating them and putting them to flight, he drove them into the fortress of Lori¹⁰⁹ and took their fortresses and castles. A brother and a favorite of the Orbelis, Sargis Mkhargrdzeli, had with his son and nephew, broken with Demet're. The King received him amiably and kindly and rendered him homage according to his birth.

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Seizing Tashiri and Loris-k'ari,¹¹⁰ the King stationed himself in Agara.¹¹¹ Then he dispatched the troops that remained faithful to him, as well as selected Meskhis, Toreleans, Kartlians,¹¹² Somkhitars

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and even the *mejibetukhutsesi*¹¹³ Ch'iaber, who had been brought up by him. They arrived in Hereti. There they were met by the *eristavi*¹¹⁴ of Hereti, and all the Heris together, along with the Lezghins, and all the inhabitants of the Caucasus. And a fierce and hard battle took place, for experienced and leonine knights fought there. God who judges and punishes, won a victory: the Heris were put to flight, and (many) distinguished *aznauris* and Lezghins were taken captive.

Grigol, son of Asat, was wounded in the fight; his horse was killed under him, and was lost in the battle. Ivane, son of Vardan, who, they say, was preparing a trap for the King from the very beginning, was seized together with Shota, son of Artavacho. Captured as traitors, they were brought to the victorious King. All were filled with great joy. Seeing that God was disposed to grant them victories, the King without delay besieged Lori. The *eristavi* of Kartli, Liparit', son of Sumbat', *mejibetukhutsesi* Kavtar, son of Ivane, who were appointed to these positions by Giorgi, fled along with Anania Dvineli, to Persia; some went to the sons of Shah-Armen, others – to the sons of Eldiguz. And though these latter set out to give them aid, the justice of Christ sent them back empty-handed. By that time, the forces of the defenders of Lori had weakened, and Demet're slipped down the wall of the fortress by rope, and on foot, came to his uncle; the *sp'asalar* and the others who remained in the fortress were brought out and treated according to their lot. The King seized Lori and retained it for himself. Content, and praised for his action, he set out against his enemies and other rebels, and dealt with them according to their deeds. Arriving in Nach'armagevi,¹¹⁵ he, who inspired his enemies with fear, rested in joy and revelry.

20 X

In the second year of these battles and campaigns, returning from Ghanuq'a to Nach'armagevi, Giorgi brought his entire kingdom into action. Gathering the representatives of his seven kingdoms, he invited also the Queen of Queens, his happy spouse Burdukhan, as well as his daughter Tamar, the light and brilliance of his eyes, that precious necklace of all the kings and the crown of all the sovereigns.

Upon consideration and drawing his conclusions with the help of Providence and the support of the One, who determines the highest destiny of kings, Giorgi, with the consent of the patriarchs¹¹⁶ and all the bishops and *didebulis* of Ameria and Imeria, and the viziers and *sp'asalars*, declared Tamar the queen and seated her on his right. She was decorated with many-colored golden fringes and dressed in fine linen and precious clothes. Looking at her, she was like a "divine mountain,"¹¹⁷ he put a crown of pure gold, decorated with rubies and emeralds on her head. And the people rejoiced.

The King himself, swearing his allegiance and loyalty to her, shedding tears and praying to God, blessed her like Abraham blessed Isaac, Isaac – Jacob, and Jacob – Joseph; and the blessing, like the Sun in the cloudless sky, passed its rays from our ancestors to the good, gentle and quiet posterity that came from the seed of David. These descendants were like the stone, seen by Daniel, which fell from the mountain, gathering in strength as it spun, turning in the end into a great mountain

itself – not (just) a stumbling block, but a cornerstone – which destroyed all the images and idols, whether gold or silver, iron or copper, or clay – all the statues of the invisible forces, and all visible enemies and adversaries.¹¹⁸

XI

Then among this prosperity and general happiness, the time came to pay debts to this world; and it was not only sudden but untimely as well, incongruous even with the transient nature of our life. Tamar's mother, equal to the mother of the Son of God, passed away. What language can express how much grief and mourning this caused to everybody? We will say just the following. 5

The King who was at that time in Geguti, had been informed of this awful event. Tearing at his hair and his beard, he, who resembled the golden-haired Absalom,¹¹⁹ shed streams of tears, striking his chest a thousand times with his hands and tormenting himself. With a shaved head and unhappy heart he met his daughter, the radiant appearance of whom was now darkened. They embraced each other, and torrents of tears came from their eyes, as from the heavenly river of Geon,¹²⁰ and, in fact, Georgia became (turned into) Paradise. 10

The King consoled and comforted his daughter, who was gracious and uncommonly beautiful; he soothed her, showing his fatherly love, and announced the end of mourning. Then, he left Kartli and went down into the valley. Upon the passing the mourning period, he again returned to his recreation and hunting, as was his habit, travelling in the mountains and valleys and keeping the West and East under his control. The Greek kings and the Alemanians in Jerusalem,¹²¹ and the Romans, Indians and Chinese were all bringing him gifts, and joined with him in company; the sultans of Khorasan, Babylon, Sham, Egypt and Icon served him along with the Scythians, Khazars, Alans, Khoesmans with the Khoesms-Shah, the Beyroutheans,¹²² Abyssinians, Arabs, Medians, Elamits, the inhabitants of Mesopotamia and "all the languages and tribes" from East to West. 15
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XII

And among such glory and abundance of worldly goods, a time came, due to the sins of Adam and the curse of Eve, a time which comes to all the preachers of truth, beginning with Abel, the righteous, and including Zachariah and his son John,¹²³ for these holy people were enslaved in Hell by the self-murderer Samuel, who was overthrown from the height of heaven down into the underworld, exchanging his light-filled angelic life for a dark one, and turned into a Devil who holds in his hands those who love God and is loved by Him. 25
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Wishing to save the sinners from the Devil, God assumed the aspect of a man, voluntarily, without any constraint; and for thirty three years, He, the Lord and the Maker of heaven and earth

lived among the people showing them all kinds of signs and miracles. For the sake of our deliverance, He accepted, together with the sins and wrongs of this temporal and perishable world, his death in the flesh that is part of our nature. But the immortal God and His eternal Son did not make their flesh immortal, so what must I think on this account? Can it be a comfort for me (to know) that our body,
5 which is made up of four elements, will not always hold our soul? He, the Sun over all Suns and the shining of the royal power, a new Nimrod and Achilles, who had from the very beginning been raised up to heaven, died in the same Holy week like Christ. As it is said: "as in heaven so it is on earth!" He (Christ) lived for thirty three years in a wretched and vile body, and our King Giorgi, though not in quite the same way, lived in God's very likeness.

10 The news of this awful and lamentable event, which could crush rocks and break down the doors of houses, which by its unexpectedness was like the falling of manna or stars from heaven, reached the resplendent, Tamar, who was made Queen by the King of Kings. Her residence in Isani palace¹²⁴ in Tbilisi, which resembled Paradise, turned into Hell. In place of joy and amusement, cries and moans were now heard, and the unhindered light was replaced by darkness. And Tamar, that Sun
15 and pure air, the light without shade, sat in that dark gloom tearing at her hair; and streams of blood exceeded the torrents of her tears. The Patriarch and the honorable *didebulis* went to Samshvilde¹²⁵ to the King's sister, Queen Rusudan, and telling her those awful and horrible words, so hard to imagine, took her from there together with her ward; and they met one another. Embracing each other and shedding their tears mixed with blood, they entered the King's palace. Lifting up their eyes
20 they saw that the throne, which had been raised up to heaven; that seat, which was brighter than the Sun of Gabaon and the rays of Aelon,¹²⁶ was, by the will of fate, empty and free.

Looking around they saw patriarch Michael, who stood with the other bishops, vizier Anton, *amirsp'asalar* Anton Q'ubasar, and other officials, the *mech'urch'letukhutsesi*¹²⁷ Q'utlu-Arslan, the *ch'urch'arkh*¹²⁸ Vardan Dadiani, the *mejibetukhutsesi* Ch'iaber, the *msakhurtukhutsesi*¹²⁹ Apridon,
25 and the *mts'ignobartukhutsesi* Ivane (Kobuletisdze). The *didebulis*, *aznauris*, soldiers as well as the purple mantle, crown, scepter and arms, which he had happily used, were all present. They cast around their eyes once more and beheld the palace full of warriors, troops, and guards, from the devastated towns and fortresses. And they remembered this man of *Gorgasali*'s stature, strong like Archil, bright like the celestial bodies, and invincible in his various enterprises. What language can
30 express or depict that indescribable day. What sorrow or weeping, what moaning, what streams of tears, mixed with blood, what lamentations and reminiscences from the time of Adam to Abel, the righteous, from Jacob to Joseph, from David to Jonathan, has ever been seen?¹³⁰ What desolation there was, along with the refusal to wear bodily armor; people were dressed in hair-shirts and abstained from any kind of food. And so it is to this day.

XIII

Now, putting everything in order, like an adamant, I will struggle and fight. Striking stone with iron, I will produce the fire of love, praise and desire; I will make the stove burning hot and raise it up to heaven. There I will find the fiery ether, and next to it the world, where fire extinguishes the unruly and supports the friendly and the loving.

5

Once, amongst three youths Nebuchadnezzar met three young men and beheld one of the Trinity¹³¹ as the fourth; here and now, together with the incomparable and honored Tamar, the Trinity appears to consist of four.

The representatives of the seven parts of the kingdom had gathered and dared to tell Queen Rusudan:¹³² “Now you are the adoptive parent for Tamar. And though she is young, she seems far from being so, but is intelligent, reasonable and competent; she obeys and respects you, as she would do her parents who are no longer present. Tell her to stop this endless mourning; let her take her place on the throne, on which your high and manly brother, her father, set her, and let her show the splendor and power of your crown-bearing family and house. If she, the necklace and crown of our state, were not so perfect and able to rule, or to put it more grandiloquently, was not able to keep it under her control in such Olympian style, she would not have been given the throne of David and the seal of Solomon.¹³³ Let her begin her reign, and with the ceremony of the coronation, preceded by the life-giving cross, and blessed by the blessing of Melchizedek, who blessed Abraham,¹³⁴ let her ascend and seat herself on the throne of her fathers; and let her hold in her hands the ends of the world and reign from sea to sea.” Rusudan approved and confirmed this proposal, and told Tamar, the Queen and the sovereign. Tamar listened to the request of the *didebulis* of the seven kingdoms and obeyed though not completely willingly.

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This Sun of the Suns and this light that is brighter than ordinary light, Tamar, like lightning or the Sun that illuminates others, was elevated to her father’s throne. The crown was brought and the singers raising their voices sang of her victorious coronation and powerful reign; and the appearance of the cross before Constantine on the Mountain of Olives,¹³⁵ was recalled. For this occasion of such glorification and exaltation, they invited the worthy and blessed monk Anton Saghirisdze, the archbishop of Kutaisi, and asked him to take the crown in his hands, because according to church rankings, Imereti, as part of Trans-Likhi, was charged with the task of crowning the sovereign at the coronation ceremony.

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On the other side stood K’akhaber, the *eristavi* of Rach’a and Tak’veri.¹³⁶ The eminent officials and nobles – Vardanisdze, Saghirisdze and Amanelisdze – placed the sword upon her. And the beating of drums, timbales, and cymbals, and the blowing of trumpets began; and there was exaltation, rejoicing and joy everywhere, and a revival of hope. The armies of all the seven kingdoms bowed before her, and blessed and praised her. Each man took his proper place at the proper time. And the seven times brilliant Tamar was blessed by the One, who for six days called into being all that exists in the world, and rested on the seventh (day).

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XIV

5 It is said of Tamar: "I'll take my rest in a quiet and pure soul." Seeing that the light was brighter than the primordial one, the All-Seeing-One "named it a day."¹³⁷ He called her a light among the happiest of Olympians. Tamar, on her part, prepared the seven pillars of wisdom,¹³⁸ erected a temple and a palace of seven virtues for the enlightenment of the seven kingdoms of Georgia. Praising God seven times a day,¹³⁹ she seven times cleansed herself, as befits a sage and a King, with the words of Isaiah and David. Solomon¹⁴⁰ says "who pardons seven, gives a part also to the eighth." Lighting up all the seven kingdoms, seven days a week she forgave the guilty seven and seven times seventy times.¹⁴¹ She made the earthly sphere like the seven zones of heaven and the celestial bodies –

10 Chronos, Zeus, Aphrodite, Hermes, Apollo and Area; the five senses of understanding she turned into seven, adding the soul and reason. Has an earthly star ever tried to imitate a heavenly body like Tamar, with her incomparable and peerless beauty, with her wisdom, or in the generous, sun-like rays she spreads upon the righteous and the sinners, or in the victories which she gains when she needs them?

15 He, who investigates heavenly bodies and the zodiac, strengthens the properties of his mind and restores himself. She, descending from August Caesar,¹⁴² was sent by highest fortune and turned herself into a paradise, planted by God's hand which rejuvenated all who could smell its perfume. In this garden, a man could pick up the gifts of mind and soul, of feelings and skills. Living in this garden, secure from the temptations of Satan and her own heart, she developed her mind, striving to

20 achieve a likeness with the divine, while, in her soul, she contemplated Him who sees all creatures. She can be compared to Pythodoros and Kritias,¹⁴³ and what they built. She began like Kaikhosro,¹⁴⁴ to pardon and favor, and to hand out gifts. She opened the treasury accumulated by her fathers and grandfathers. One part of this treasury she put aside for Heaven, for that high and pure being, whose commandments she observed; this part she put in a place where there was no decay. Another part

25 she set aside for this world. It is impossible to list or calculate the many treasures she handed out. She released debtors from their debts, supported orphans and gave widows the right to marry;¹⁴⁵ she made paupers strong and those who were strong, she made rich. Queen Rusudan was made her equal, and received towns, lands, villages and palaces for herself and her foster child.

XV

30 At that time when she was handing out gifts to the inhabitants of all the seven regions, Imiers and Amiers, the inhabitants of the upper and lower regions, some began to behave in ways so characteristic of human inconstancy. Some of the upper rank officials colluded and swore: "We cannot stay under the command of the old functionaries and executives anymore, because we are ignored and deprived of the privilege of sitting on morocco cushions, and highborn and distinguished

35 families are driven away by people without kith and kin."

Q'ubasar, brought up by masters, a faithful, kind warrior and knight, who occupied the positions of *amirsp'asalar* and *mandat'urtukhutsesi*, lost the power of speech, and could not move a hand or a leg as a result of the disease, which is known under the name of paralysis. Queen Tamar had been asked to deprive him of all his ranks, possessions and riches. But all such persuasions were in vain, because being kind, she remembered his love, services and care; so she just removed his position and Lori, but kept him in great love and respect until his final days. 5

Yielding to the will and wishes of her knights, she deposed Apridon, who came from the rank of *aznauris*, and by the favor of the God-like one, had become a worthy man achieving the position of *msakhurtukhutsesi*; he had acquired Tmogvi and other fortresses and lands. Striving to achieve power and influence the conspirators began to wrangle with each other. It is terrible to recall Q'utlu-Arslan, that mule-like creature, who came from the lower classes but had a crafty mind, and who made up some project in the Persian manner, demanding a tent be put up in the field of Isani, and said: "Gathering in this tent we will listen to and answer each other, and so be in charge of the matters of pardon and punishment; we will pass our decisions to Queen Tamar, who will carry them out." 10 15

That plan meant the end of Tamar's reign; she, the depository of reason and wisdom, understood this, and was amazed and offended. She decided to seize the chief of the conspirators and consulting with those who remained loyal and faithful to her, captured the *mech'urch'letukhutsesi* Q'utlu-Arslan, who now called himself *amirsp'asalar* and was ready to seat himself in Somkhiti, in Lori, the seating-place of the King of Armenia. When the militants who swore to support him in his intrigues, learned of this, they gathered together and, putting aside their plans, decided to defend Q'utlu-Arslan with all their forces in order to free him and save him from harm; they prepared to lay Isani to siege. 20

The Lord's hand, which helped Tamar in her fight with her enemies and granted victories to those who took up arms and shields on her behalf, frustrated their designs, as the plans of the priest Abiatar and the commander Joab, who joined Adonijah, Solomon's brother,¹⁴⁶ were revealed. Tamar sent to them two of the most honorable women, Khuashak Tsokali, the mother of the *eristavi* of *eristavis*, Rat'i, and K'rava, the mother of the Jaq'elis. She proposed they surrender to her, and she, upon her oath, promised not to punish anybody. They obeyed Tamar's order, and appeared before her and falling on their knees bowed to her. Feeling no power behind them they took an oath from Tamar, and swore on their part, to fidelity and obedience to her will. 25 30

XVI

An anointed sovereign, she sat on her throne, and was raised to the sky, beautiful like Aphrodite, generous like sunny Apollo, pleasant to contemplate, who by her enchanting, inimitable appearance brought those beholding her into ecstasy, led them into an obsession and to withdrawal from society.¹⁴⁷ She was concerned for all who were in need of somebody's care. First of all she was focused on the selection of some worthy persons for the positions of viziers and *sp'asalars*. 35

By full approbation and approval of the *didebulis* of the seven kingdoms, she ordered Anton, *mts'ignobartukhutsesi*, vizier of viziers, brought up by her father, a wise and reasonable man faithful to his masters and an able manager, to take the position of *Ch'q'ondideli*.¹⁴⁸ She appointed as *amirsp'asalar* Sargis Mkhargrdzeli, a wellborn valorous man, well trained in battle; she granted him
5 Lori, the estate of the princes and rulers of Somkhiti, gave presents to his elder son, Zachariah, and his younger son, Ivane, and she made him a member of the Darbazi.¹⁴⁹ She appointed Ch'iaber to a position of *mandat'urtukhutsesi*, handed him a golden rod and dressed him in precious garments; and she seated courtiers on golden-forged chairs, some on her right and others on her left. She appointed K'akhaber Vardanisdze, a great and highborn man, to the position of *mech'urch'letukhutsesi*. She
10 gave the position of *msakhurtukhutsesi* to Vardan Dadiani, and the position of a *ch'ukhch'arkh* to Marushiani, himself the son of a *ch'ukhch'arkh*. Because the fathers of the last two became old, she honored their sons with the positions of their fathers and granted them the right to sit on cushions. To the position of *mejinibetukhutsesi* she appointed Gamrek'eli-Toreli, who became *amirsp'asalar* after Sargis Mkhargrdzeli.

15 At that time the *eristavis* in Imeria, beyond the mountains of Likhi, were Baram Vardanisdze in Svaneti, K'akhaber in Rach'a and Tak'veri; Otagho Sharvashidze was in Tskhumi, Amanuelidze in Kartli, Bediani in Odishi.¹⁵⁰ In Ameria on this side of the Likhi Mountains was Rat'i Surameli, in Kartli was Bak'ur the Younger, son of Dzagama, in K'akheti and in Hereti¹⁵¹ was Asat, son of Grigol, who took the post by force from Saghir K'olonk'elisdze; a little later he handed it over to his son, Grigol,
20 because he obtained for himself Arishiani, and the right to sit on a cushion.¹⁵² Botso Jaq'eli was appointed *eristavi* and *sp'asalar* in Samtskhe.¹⁵³ Other officials, who enjoyed the right to stand before the throne in the palace, received appointments according to their parentage.

Meanwhile Tamar provided the bishops and the churches with endowments, exempting churches of quitrents and duties. Landowners at the time of her reign became *aznauris*, *aznauris* became
25 *didebulis*, and *didebulis* became rulers; and all this can be seen even now, as all these things were written down. During thirty one years the blessed Tamar, with the wisdom of Solomon, and the courage and care of Alexander,¹⁵⁴ held her kingdom (firmly) in her hands, which stretched from the Pontic Sea to the sea of Gurgan, from Speri¹⁵⁵ to Daruband, and all the lands on this side of the Caucasus Mountains, as well as Khazaria and Scythia on the other side. She became the heiress of
30 what was promised in the nine Beatitudes.¹⁵⁶

Tamar possessed such wisdom and a lofty mind that during all thirty one years of her reign, not one man was punished by lashing. She shunned the spilling of blood and such forms of punishment like blinding and maiming. She, who could bring fear and terror to her enemies, and who was humble with the humble, reigned pacifically and joyfully in her state and domain. No man has ever seen
35 anybody, who could so easily subdue another man regardless of his will, and so thoroughly control human obduracy and opposition. What of the other things, such as the victories, the inspection of the borders, the courage of her subjects and fellow tribesmen, or the knightly and heroic deeds of her infantry and cavalry, or the pleasant, brief and peaceful discussions – of all those things the listeners will learn from the following narration.

XVII

So while the grace and favor of the good and sweet patroness of the knights and warriors was complete, some parties were worried, and tried to find an appropriate fiancé for her and make him her spouse. This may remind us of the time of the knight-goliaths, or the shedding of blood among the heathens, or the seclusion in the desert of men who fell in love and lost their heads for women, as for instance, Tahamtan when he fell in love with Tumiana,¹⁵⁷ or Amiran for Khorashana,¹⁵⁸ Shansha Khosrow for Banui,¹⁵⁹ Mzech'abuk' for the Khazar Sun-Beauty,¹⁶⁰ Jacob for Rachel, Joseph for Asenetha, David for Bathsheba and Abishag,¹⁶¹ the manly Pelops for Hippodamia,¹⁶² daughter of Oenomaus, Pluto for Persephone,¹⁶³ Ramin for Vis,¹⁶⁴ Fridon for Sharinoz and Arnavaz,¹⁶⁵ and Shatber for Ainlieta.¹⁶⁶ The heroes among heroes, the good men, the excellent fighters, who were ready to spill their blood like the heathen, had to be encouraged to come for their beloved; they would be lions and enamored suns, ready to withdraw like beasts into the desert, because of this superior Sun, which was brighter and more brilliant than those which are portrayed and represented as suns and celestial bodies. But it was not an easy task to achieve, for there was no one among those born of a man equal to her, and perhaps never will be.

Then the emir of Kartli and Tbilisi, by name of Abulasan, came forward and said: "I know one prince, the son of the great Russian prince Andrei;¹⁶⁷ he was a child when his father died, and, persuaded by his uncle Salavat,¹⁶⁸ moved away to other country; now he is in the city of the Q'ivchaq',¹⁶⁹ King Sevinj." Hearing this, they called an influential person in the kingdom, the great merchant Zankan Zorababel, and sent him there. Changing his horses on the way, he quickly reached his destination, and brought back the young man – valiant, perfect of body and pleasant to behold – sooner than the fixed time. Learning this, the patriarch, the *didebulis*, viziers and the knights reported to Tamar, but receiving no consent from her, they nevertheless started preparations for a wedding. At the same time there was Alexis,¹⁷⁰ who was on his father's side a nephew of the Greek king; he was her close relative and some with bitter feelings, proposed to marry Tamar to him instead. However she was firm in the true faith, refused the marriage and asked to be free of the duty of marriage. But Queen Rusudan and the military leaders insisted, and obtaining her consent organized a wedding appropriate to her Olympian greatness and kingly standing, without match and hard to imagine. There were many performances and gifts of precious stones, pearls, gold, forged, and in bars, expensive cloths, sewn and in bolts; and there was joy and amusement as the presentation of gifts continued for the whole week.

I have to tell you of a sad and distressing event. Before the things described here took place, some Ossetian princes came to her, young people of fine appearance. They asked and prayed to God to give them an opportunity to do something, which would attract the attention of the Queen and so achieve their highest happiness. But their efforts were in vain, and they returned to their homeland; one of them, fell so passionately in love with Tamar, that unable to bear it, he took to his bed with a sickness and died in Nikozi¹⁷¹ near the church of Razhden, where he was then buried.

XVIII

After this, the army began preparations for a campaign; the King of the Russes and Abkhazians¹⁷² set out from Tbilisi. They hoisted their happy banner and, carrying the life-giving cross, the defender and protector of the King's scepter in front of them, they made first, for the country of K'ari¹⁷³ and K'arnipora, which they ravaged down to Basiani.¹⁷⁴ They returned victorious and loaded with spoils, and full of joy and love they appeared before their patroness, enlightened by God.

Before that, the armies of the Arran and Gelakun¹⁷⁵ Turks inundated the countries known by the names of Palakitsio and Dzagin Ravine.¹⁷⁶ Gamrek'eli K'akhaisdze set out against them, and protected by the fortune of Tamar, which allowed the few to defeat many, they put to flight and destroyed the Turks bringing to the sovereign rich booty as a gift. At the same time the countries of Shavsheti and K'larjeti¹⁷⁷ were overflowing with the armies from the town of K'arin,¹⁷⁸ the Shamians, and the alien Turks, which included infantry and cavalry. Then Guzan Abulasanisdze from T'ao¹⁷⁹ set out with his troops; Botso with his men, and the Meskhis came also, and they joined battle with these vagrants and robbers. Tamar's fortune prevailed: the enemy was put to flight and destroyed. From there, too, people and horses without number were brought to the successful Queen, who was crowned by God and praised daily (by her subjects). And they rejoiced and hunted and celebrated the victory.

XIX

After that, the sons of Sargis and Varam Mkhargrdzeli, distinguished young men, the elders Zachariah and Zachariah, who were officially received in the palace,¹⁸⁰ and Ivane and Sargis, who were not yet received, launched a campaign in the country of Dvin. After their victory, on their way back with the spoils, they were overtaken by the army of the Dvinians. After a fierce battle, that resembled a lions' fight, the Dvinians were put to flight. Victorious and glorious with rich spoils, the soldiers appeared before their masters, who graciously thanked them.

A little later they went to war again: the inhabitants of the valley in the lower regions; the mountain dwellers in the upper regions; the middle dwellers¹⁸¹ in the middle regions; everywhere they fought victoriously and successfully. The King gathering his army, devastated the country of Parthia. Seizing the capital of this country and taking treasures and captives, he returned to the most perfect and brilliant Tamar, who was like an eye, not clouded by the dark of night; she was like a day without shadow, a longed for comfort for the spirit and body. Now and then they allowed themselves to rest from military campaigns and enjoying themselves set out according to the custom of Imeri; in this way they reached the borders of Sharvani, and the Sharvansha came before them with rich presents. After a joint hunt, they parted with him joyously, and presenting him with all kinds of gifts, sent him (home) like a brother. He obeyed and served them as should a vassal.

XX

After this, they set out with a numerous army for Gelakuni,¹⁸² which was not easy to fight against, because the Turkmans there were like sand in the sea. However they seized the country, destroyed its inhabitants and took much spoil and many captives. On their way back they were overtaken by the Turkmans of Gelakuni under the command of the princes of Sham,¹⁸³ Rost'om and Jalghuz-Alpes, whom *atabag* Q'izil-Arslan¹⁸⁴ kept alongside himself. Both sides had formed up in ranks and the battle took place. Tamar's soldiers showed themselves as they always did: the old warriors outstripped the young ones, the young left behind the old; masters led their subjects, the subjects their masters, putting to flight their enemy and destroying them. Then they returned to their own country and appeared before the Queen of the entire East and West, North and South.

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Following the invitation of Asat, son of Grigol, they undertook the great and glorious march to the countries below Ganja and Bela'oni,¹⁸⁵ then over the Araxes up to the mountain of Masis. And here, too, they fought with the numerous army of their enemy, and her people gained fame. Vardan Dadiani, a *msakhurtukhutsesi*, four Mkhargrdzelis and other *didebulis* and *aznauris*, got through the great and difficult fight in the presence of their King, and putting their enemy to flight, returned home victorious.

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XXI

And at the time of such an exalted life so abundant with victories, some strange and absurd thing took place, one that has no match at all and was incredible to the human mind. Satan entering the heart of the Russian (prince), who was called by the Georgians, the Scythian, incited him to provoke Tamar, that sun of the monarchs and resplendent light, with all kinds of words. Humble and kind, reasonable and charming, Tamar endured that trial for two whole years, or maybe even more. Learning of this, the viziers and *didebulis* were in wonder and came to the conclusion that this was the work of the oldest man's enemy, who prompted his brother to kill his brother, and father to kill his son, and who drove away the first man from Paradise. He now prepared the exile of the prince from that paradise and lighted Eden. Like the old Scythian *hak'an*, the enemy laid siege, and while the *hak'an* besieged the queen of all the cities,¹⁸⁶ the devil beset the Queen of Queens. Not trusting the prince, now a servant to the devil, Tamar – who was kind and by no means inclined to anger – shedding tears, sent him in to exile, providing him with countless riches and treasures. She did not put him to death, though he deserved it, and she did not rob him, being generous like the Sun. Embarking on a ship he set out for Constantinople where he lived for some time.

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XXII

After that she reigned and ruled more favorably and successfully than before, cleansing herself from all kinds of filth. She considered God's hand to be her aid and assistant in battles, not trusting her own fate or her fathers', and not in the least the luck of the heathens, who put their hopes upon her. All the kings from the East to the West brought her gifts, and everyone who happened to hear of her bright appearance, lost his head. The knight Polycarp, an elder son of Manuel, the King of the Greeks,¹⁸⁷ possessed by his love for her, went out of his mind. Andronik,¹⁸⁸ who reigned at that time and destroyed the Greeks, captured him and punished him. A similar thing happened to the son of the King of Assyria, Mesopotamia and Antioch: if he were able to cross the barbarian countries, he would come like a shot. One of the sons of Sultan Q'izil-Arslan, too, went crazy because of her, and was kept back with difficulty by his father, who was afraid that he would betray his faith for her sake.

Those who were closely related to her felt great love for her, the unworthy were not ashamed of their unworthiness, and relatives did not focus on their kinship. If the rays of the Sun descend from the sky to the earth, the rays of imperial Tamar rose upward into the sky. Hearing of her, Saldukh's grandson, Mut'apradin,¹⁸⁹ refusing to listen to the opposition expressed by his kinsfolk, rejected the false faith of Mohammed, which attracts people by its peculiar teaching of the worldly life. Won over by her beauty and burning with love, he came from his motherland before the highest of all the Kings, the sovereign Tamar, with a great army, numerous princes, eunuchs, guards, slaves and bondswomen. He brought with him many rich royal presents, precious stones, pearls, hunting dogs and horses. He was met according to the established order in the royal court, and was brought to the palace with honors and love.

The Queen's grandfather, the great and glorious Demet're,¹⁹⁰ the knight who resembled Gorgasali,¹⁹¹ brought over his grandfather, Saldukh-Ezdin,¹⁹² to his side, but with great difficulty; Tamar, not wasting a word, brought Mut'apradin over to her rule as a slave and tributary. He remained at her side calmly and quietly for a long time, while from the very first glance he cast at her he began, like Ramin,¹⁹³ to shed torrents of tears. She honored him with a seat on a chair next to her throne. And there was unspeakable joy, which befits a generous feast of *didebulis* and knights at a king's court. Diverse sights, singers, players, presents and dresses – all these things were there without number. Among such honors and gifts, and surrounded with love, Mut'apradin spent the winter in Somkhiti and Tbilisi. He liked the hunting places and the *tavadis*, and he was content with the patroness, perfect like a goddess. In the spring they took him to the camps, the hunting fields, the lands, and the counties of K'akheti and Ran.¹⁹⁴

The *tavadis*, knights and soldiers of the patroness, all rejoiced and enjoyed themselves, and lauding their immortal patroness, waited for her decision. Tamar, proud and haughty, directed up to heaven the wings of her mind, but did not find this suitor right for her. He had to give up his hopes and return to the metropolis of his own country. The Seljukid found himself in a situation quite opposite to the one of Saul: the latter, looking for the donkeys of his father, found a kingdom, while the former, looking for a kingdom that excelled all the others, found the fortune that was quite like the one lost by Saul.¹⁹⁵

There was a woman, born of a concubine, whom they called the king's daughter. The marriage with the Queen was frustrated, but not wishing the visit of their guest to be an entire failure, they married this woman to him, and celebrated a glorious wedding. They presented him with many clothes, horses with all kinds of harnesses, and so loaded with rich treasures he was sent to his dwelling place, Erzurum, though full of tears and so despondent that it is not possible to describe. 5

After this the Sharvansha of Aghsartan,¹⁹⁶ who was burning with love for her, came as if for a casual visit. According to the laws of Ismaelites both in the past and the present, he did not pay attention to parentage and kinship, and was ready to reject his faith. He implored everybody who had any influence, including even her spiritual counselor, and the Katholicos to help him to marry Tamar, proposing huge bribes. But the devices of the devil were futile. The generous Tamar, in her devotion to the highest powers, raised the might of her reason, which gives birth to the word, to the level of the Divine One, and preserved in her kingly way the temple of God's Word¹⁹⁷ sanctified seven times. She put to shame those yielding to Mammon, who though devoted to her, were submissive to the devil's designs. Sending the Sharvansha home with honor, and love, and numerous presents, she put a ban on anybody proposing any such thing in the future. 10 15

XXIII

And the knights of the happy lady Tamar, who was more and more feared by her enemies, continued to fight. People rejoiced and enjoyed themselves with the ceaseless victories, and hunted up hill and down the dale. But they were worried because of the absence of an heir.

While all the seven kingdoms of Georgia were anxious about this problem, Providence, which raises the humble and deposes the proud, showed the way, and it is said in the Gospel: "It is not those that choose me, but those whom I have chosen",¹⁹⁸ or in the words of David, which we should recollect here: "I was the smallest among my brothers and youngest in my father's house, but the Lord Himself took me and anointed with His own unction,"¹⁹⁹ and so on. 20

In the palace of Queen Rusudan²⁰⁰ was a knight who came from the sons' of Ephrem – Ossetians who were powerful and strong in battle.²⁰¹ Because he was Rusudan's relative on her aunt's side – David's sister was married in Ossetia – she personally brought him up. Those who came or returned from there saw that the young man of royal parentage on both his mother's and father's side was at the same time of medium-size, nicely built, broad-shouldered and handsome. 25

The dwellers of our kingdom dared to ask Rusudan to support the viziers and *didebulis* and she addressed Tamar with the following words: "As Your Royal Majesty sees, Providence is showing itself in Your life; for, how many knights, the sons of Greek, Roman, Sultanic, Scythian, Persian and Ossetian sovereigns, have strived for the happiness of being your spouse, though they were all justly rejected by You, because there is no command of God for this yet." 30

Tamar, who was devoted to her aunt like her own parents, as well as to her armies and commanders, with whom she was so gracious, kindly answered: "God is my witness, that I never 35

wished to get married, neither in the past, nor now, and so I would ask you to release me of that necessity; for my throne I have been charged with firstly by God, and then by my parents.” But they begged her still more ardently. The *didebulis* of Imeria and America set out and brought Queen Rusudan and her ward to the palace of Didube, which was located in the outskirts of Tbilisi. There they celebrated a wedding, appropriate and suitable to the regal greatness of the married couple. Rusudan made arrangements in the palace according to the custom of the Bagrat’ionis, because she came from the Bagrat’ioni family, and as the former daughter-in-law of the sultans of Iraq and Khorasan, she did things also in accordance with the customs of these countries.

Everybody rejoiced and enjoyed himself, and the poor became rich. And there was a competition of singers, a show of acrobats, and demonstrations of courage of beautifully dressed troops. It is impossible to tell how happy, victorious and prosperous were in those days Tamar and David, as befitted the seed of David, the prophet.²⁰² This you will learn gradually from the following narrative.

In one year, this David excelled everybody in archery, riding, in gymnastics, swimming and in the knowledge of books; he exceeded all his teachers and fellow students, and foreigners too; it appeared that in the whole world, there was not a man to match him.

XXIV

After that, rumors reached the Queen, who was conquering her enemies, that the unfortunate Russian prince had left Constantinople and was in the country of Ezinkan, in the town of K’arin. At that time the assistant of the *mech’urch’letukhutsesi*, a barbarian by faith who judging by his behavior deserved to be sent to Hell, was dispatched by his kind and tender masters for some mission; and upon arriving to K’arnukalaki he met the Russian. Those who desired the restoration of the Russian prince in the palace began to lobby the ambassador in his favor. Some people in our kingdom learned of this, and the first among them, the devil, who opposes everything.

David (the Prophet) said once in wonder: “A man’s heart is a lie.”²⁰³ Indeed, even those who were willing to see David’s ascension to the throne, and were lavishly showered with favors, committed an evil deed, of which there is no match in the past or present. Those in our kingdom who, willingly or not, became traitors, have never succeeded. And the performers of this treachery turned out to be the sons and the brothers of our own kingdom. But how and where did this come from? Guzan, the ruler of K’larjeti and Shavsheti,²⁰⁴ whom the master seated on the place of the ancient kings of T’ao, was the first who joined the Russian prince. From this side he was joined by Botso, the immensely favored *sp’asalar* of Samtskhe, together with a number of *didebulis* and *aznauris* from the Meskhis, with the exception of Ivane Tsikhis-Jvareli, who was also called Q’varq’vare; the latter, remembering the loyalty of his ancestor Sula, remained faithful to Bagrat’ in his struggle with Baghvashi,²⁰⁵ fortified himself in his domain. Then came Vardan Dadiani, the *msakhurtukhutsesi*, who possessed Orbeti and K’aeni on this side of the Likhi Mountains, and the lands down to Nik’opsia,²⁰⁶ on the other side; he was in the strong fortress of Kveshi, inaccessible to enemies. He went to Geguti, prompted by some

insignificant cause, and, it seemed, with the consent of the Queen. He gathered the entire Svaneti, Abkhazia, Egeria,²⁰⁷ with Guria, Samokalako,²⁰⁸ Rach'a-tak'veri and Argveti,²⁰⁹ and drawing on the Sanigs and Kashags,²¹⁰ forced the *didebulis* and military men of these lands to swear allegiance to the Russian prince in his struggle for the throne.

Vardan sent troops from these countries to Guzan. The Russian prince with his adherents went to Samtskhe; they were met there by Botso and his accomplices. Crossing the mountains they descended to Geguti. What a horrible thing and a wonder, exceeding human understanding! And who was it who wanted to sit on the throne of the descendants of David, the prophet? Tamar was amazed at such an absurd, nonsensical undertaking, and returned to the city of Tbilisi. Asking, as she was wont to do, for the help of the Almighty, she ordered all the governors who remained faithful to her to gather the *didebulis* and *sp'asalars* from Hereti, K'akheti, Kartli, Somkhiti and Samtskhe.²¹¹ Upset by what was going on, they assured that all that happened, had happened without their consent and knowledge, and swore allegiance to the Queen, pledging their lives. 5 10

With a quiet and sweet voice, Tamar herself questioned influential people as to what had taken place. She even sent Patriarch Theodore and Anton Kutateli,²¹² who not without bloodshed, had managed to remain loyal to her, to the other side of the Likhi Mountains, to other bishops, and twice to the court of the *ejib*, to find out the reason for this rebellion. But she could learn nothing from them. Meanwhile there gathered an ungodly assembly, which taking up their swords and lances, set out against the god-loving Queen. Half of the mob, together with their King crossed the Likhi Mountains and devastating and ravaging Kartli reached Gori and Nach'armagevi. Another half under the command of Dadiani, crossed Rk'inis-jvari and descending to Tsikhis-jvari burned the town of Odzrkhe.²¹³ Botso and his accomplices among the Meskhis gathered there. They decided, without asking God, to seize in the first place Javakheti and Akhalkalaki, and then Trialeti and Somkhiti. Starting from Kurd-Vach'ari, the entire region of Somkhiti gave way: that included Ivane, son of Vardan, the ruler of Gaga, and Maq'a, the owner of K'aits'oni; K'aeni remained in the possession of Vardan himself, and other *aznauris* and their children, with the exception of Zachariah, son of Varam; the latter, an experienced soldier, remained faithful to Tamar. They decided to join forces in Agara, and from there with the Upper Kartlians reach the gates of the city, where Tamar was at that time, that sun of suns, the lightest of lights, the innocent lamb, resembling the son of God, Christ, with a humble mind, like the prophet David, trusting in Providence and setting all her hopes upon God's grace. 15 20 25 30

Then Tamar ordered *amirsp'asalar* Gamrek'eli and four Mkhargrdzelis, as well as the Torelis, from the upper and lower regions, to go and meet the enemy in the country of Javakheti, in order to assess their forces and, what is most important, to witness the power of God's justice. They approached the river Mt'k'vari, where their enemy already waited; here they were joined by the Meskhis, who remained loyal to Tamar. The adversaries, approaching the river from two sides, met each other on a bridge, where the battle began with a barrage of arrows. That day they stopped fighting at dusk. In the night the enemy gathered and decided: "We have seen clearly the courage of their troops, and having no forces and powers to fight them, let us retreat to the fortress and make our sallies from there." God who grants courage, inspired Tamar's troops with the strong desire to 35 40

fight the enemy without delay and to pursue them. They crossed the bridge, while their enemies made their way to the mountain called T'ornadzia, hoping to fortify their forces there, though finding no shelter they moved away to the valley of Niali by the river of Khingri.

5 Then between Tmogvi and Erusheti a battle took place, worthy of the select knights of Imeria and Ameria, resembling the battles of ancient goliaths and warriors. The infantry used sharp arrows, formidable swords and murderous spears. Putting their enemy to flight, Tamar's men destroyed, seized and captured them. And there were no losses among Tamar's troops, neither dead, nor wounded, with perhaps just one exception: Ivane, son of Sargis was wounded. They returned happy and joyous, they did no harm to their prisoners, on the contrary, after receiving a promise they would not harm the patroness, they set them free.

10 The victors appeared before the Queen, crowned by God. Offering thanks to God with a shining face, calm heart, and eyes full of love, Tamar arranged a review of her troops.

15 Still knowing nothing of the victory, Sargis, son of Varam, who was always at her side, with Ch'iaber, the *mandat'urtukhutsesi*, the Eris and K'akhis, the *didebulis* and *aznauris*, together with the Q'ivchaks (Q'ipchaks) and the *eristavis* and *didebulis* of Kartli, decided to attack under the command of King David the enemy in Kartli, who was joined by Kartlians and many Caucasian mountaineers. Learning of the defeat and flight of the enemy in Upper Kartli, they appeared before the Queen and asked her permission to set out from Somkhiti and advance against the rebels and recreants. The Queen, who was used to receiving God's favors, gave her consent. You must know that God's edification is a rather broad thing: God edifies the good and the obedient, showing them signs and granting success in their enterprises. A good soul loves God, as Plato, the light of wise philosophers, says: "Good is good for a good man, but for an evil man it is evil." We should think about that and keep it (constantly) in mind, never forgetting the grace of God, so as not exhaust the source of the excessive outflow of kindness. When the traitors became aware of God's impending wrath, some left their fortresses and fortifications; allowing themselves to do such an ugly thing to their sovereign Tamar, they had forsaken their faith. Some came to her with necks tied up, others came after destroying their own uncles. Here we can see the common effect of success.

20 Returning after victory, Tamar's troops stopped in the valley of Agara, where they hunted, feasted, enjoyed themselves and rejoiced with those who remained true and faithful. Zachariah, son of Varam was given Gagi and Kurd-Vach'ari down to Ganja, together with many towns, fortresses and settlements in complete or half ownership. Ivane, son of Sargis was granted the honorable post of a *msakhurtukhutsesi*, and presented with K'aeni and K'aits'oni, as well as Gelakuni, and many other fortresses and towns which paid duties. Gifts were given to many other *didebulis*, after which the monarchs returned to their own palaces in Nach'armagevi. The *didebulis* of Trans-Likhi Georgia repented their treason and implored forgiveness. They asked Queen Rusudan, Katholicos and other bishops and court officials for mediation.

30 Then came the *didebulis* and office-holders and they brought in the former king, the Russian prince. The Queen assured them that she would let the Russian free without harming him and would forget his treason. They appeared before her in Nach'armagevi. The Russian prince set out for his unhappy journey accompanied by Ivane (son of Vardan), whom he trusted. And there was tranquility,

and joy, and unanimity, the like of which nobody has witnessed. “A lion and an ox pastured together, a leopard played with lambs, and a wolf with sheep.”²¹⁴ Tamar’s name was praised in the whole world. Obeying the orders and directions of Tamar, who was endowed with the fortune of Alexander (of Macedon), David was undertaking campaigns and winning victories.

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XXV

At that time *amirsp’asalar* Gamrek’eli died; in consequence, his heirs lost only Tmogvi. The post of *amirsp’asalar* was given to Zachariah Mkhargrdzeli – the son of the former *amirsp’asalar* Sargis – who sat in the place of the Armenian kings²¹⁵ and owned Lori; he was worthy to be a *sp’asp’et’*, and was also given the town of Rustavi. *Mandat’urtukhutsesi* Ch’iaber was given the town and fortress Zhinovani with many lands in the mountains. Sargis, son of Varam was kindly rewarded; he was given Tmogvi. The Lower Ts’irkualians, the sons of Zart’iba, Grigol, Ch’iaber, Makhat’la as well as the grandest people of K’akheti – the sons of Torgha, were rewarded, each according to his merit; some received such generous gifts for the first time, the others increased their former possessions, among them, the Kartlians, Somkhitars and T’aoans.

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XXVI

Guzan, who doomed himself to ruin from the beginning, seized T’aos-K’ari,²¹⁶ Vashlovani and many other fortresses and went to Shah-Armen. Samdzivari and other sons of *aznauris*, among whom were the *meghvinetukhutsesi*, who considered himself an heir to K’larjeti and Shavsheti, joined him. Traveling like this, they reached the mountains of K’ola.²¹⁷ Here, they were met by Zachariah Panask’ert’eli, the Dzinians and the K’almakhians, a glorious people, subjects graciously rewarded in the past. The people gathered there learned that the son of Guzan had come to them with the army of Shah-Armen, in order to evacuate Guzan’s family from there and let the Turks into local fortresses. And though they had a lot of men deployed under twelve banners, the small forces of Tamar, loyal to the faith of Christ and the truth of their patroness, decided to fight them. It was difficult for them to do so because of the numerical strength and staunchness of their enemy. But they put them to flight in the end, and seized the family of Guzan. The victors recovered all the fortresses and fortifications to their country. When they appeared before Tamar, she poured out upon them rivers of her grace and thanked them for their work. In this way the knights acquired fame and brought benefit to their patrons.

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XXVII

I need to tell of two more happy events, which among the other benefactions of God, took place. Recollecting the manifestation of divine forces, they prayed to God and the holy icons. God revealed his grace: “he is open to those knocking, gives to the petitioner, those who look for help, find;”²¹⁸ so it happened in regard to Sara or Rachel, or Elisabeth, but mainly to Ann and, I will dare say, to Mary.²¹⁹

Tamar conceived, and with her pure mind committed to the temple of God, the holiness of her body, her warm heart and enlightened spirit, she turned T’abakhmela²²⁰ into Bethlehem²²¹ by giving birth to a son, equal to the son of God. She gave him the name of her manly father; and the flower of immortality blossomed for us in his person. Seeing such care by the Divine Trinity, which provided the happy delivery and the birth of a son, resembling *Gorgasali*, how could they not rejoice and thank God? In their joy, merriment and exultation they set free prisoners, gave presents to churches, priests and monks, alms to beggars, praised God and granted favors to the bishops and knights of all the seven kingdoms.

Queen Rusudan in person and King David, her ward, Tamar’s sister and all the inhabitants of this kingdom began, like the Magi,²²² to bring presents to the baby. Learning of this, the kings of Greece, the Sultans, the *atabags* and the emirs of Persia sent rich presents and treasures. So the infant came into this world, a scion of the prophet David, destined by Providence to be the son of the King, and a King anointed by the Son. The boy, endowed with natural beauty, bore the image of his parents. The heavenly bodies protected him, and the celestial spheres shone; happiness was added to the happiness, prosperity to the prosperity, and the successes of the kings doubled.

XXVIII

A campaign was begun which no Bagrat’ioni²²³ has ever launched. They gathered for the sake of the good fortune of Lasha,²²⁴ which means “luminary of the universe,” and set out for the great and ancient town of Barda. Devastating Arran,²²⁵ they seized the domains of Bardos,²²⁶ brother of Haos,²²⁷ defeating him in numerous battles, resembling the immemorial battles of Nimrod, taking countless treasures and many captives, of which 30,000 were set free for the sake of the long days of Tamar and her son. Returning from this campaign and resting less than a month they began to fight on the outskirts of Erzurum, at the gates of the town of K’ari. Great battles took place in which horses pranced, and armor was ripped apart. The enemy was helped by Surmaneli,²²⁸ Kareli,²²⁹ Nasr-Eddin, son of Saldukh with his two sons, and infantry and cavalry without number. The battle started at dawn and ended at dusk. In the night the troops seized rich spoils. Those that were inside the town ground their teeth like beasts and tore their beards, seeing their wives and children captured, and the herds of cattle and horses devastated. Crying out, they wondered: “Whence such misfortune? We have never seen Christians in our place before.”

At daybreak the beating of drums and the blowing of trumpets started in the town; a great turmoil began which promised bloodshed. The enemy left the town gates, arranging infantry and cavalry in ranks; on the roofs of the houses and in the streets there appeared archers and stone throwers. When David and his army became sure of the enemy's decision, they reached for their arms and mounting their horses, they took the spears into their hands. They fell upon them like striking thunder. The enemy's troops, driven into the town, crushed each other. Put to shame by their wives, defamed and mocked by honorable and noble ladies and eunuchs, they abused and reviled their own Mohammedan faith. The King and his army returned victorious to their lands. Here they were able to contemplate the star, similar to the one of Jacob,²³⁰ which came from Tamar's womb and presaged happiness, victories and light.

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XXIX

I do not wish to tire you by the length (of my story), but I cannot refrain from telling you of the labor and victories, which exceeded those of the past; the promptings of my heart oblige me to recount these stories. Once, they came out to Gelakuni and passing by Khachiani,²³¹ reached the country of Q'arq'risi, then coming to Balk'un, they devastated the outskirts of Arezi,²³² and then ascended up to the gates of Ganja.²³³ Here a great battle took place, in which their enemies were put to flight and retreated into the town. From Q'arq'ri to Shamkhor our troops walked for six days, and not a day passed without a fight as they caught up with the enemy. Winning victories everywhere, they returned and appeared before Tamar, the joy of the entire world.

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Then two brothers, *amirsp'asalar* Zachariah and *msakhurtukhutsesi* Ivane, sons of Sargis, set out from Lori to devastate the banks of the river Araxes. As it turned out, the armies of Dvin, Bijn and Amberd came to plunder and hunt down caravans. Our people did not know this, though meeting them on their way they attacked them. Their courage deserved more praise than the battle and the fight itself. Seizing many spoils, they returned glorious to the happiest David and the godly Tamar.

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After that the owner of K'aen,²³⁴ *msakhurtukhutsesi* Ivane invited David to embark upon a great and glorious venture: to assault the great Gelakuni, Sparsi-bazar and Goralauk.²³⁵ David joined him. They seized many prisoners, flocks of sheep, cattle and camels, like sand of the sea. Every time they met the enemy, they put them to flight, destroyed and killed them. Seizing Sparsi-Bazar, they arranged for games and conducted exercises on the square of the Sultan which nobody ever did in the past.

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XXX

The Russian prince, a murderer like Cain, but of his own self (and not of his brother), was driven from our paradise. He turned out to be unworthy of dwelling in another paradise, the city of Constantinople. He, who lost not the enemies but sails, appeared before the *atabag* and asked him for a place to live in accordance with his lot. From there, with Ganjian and Arranean armies, he came to the country of K'ambechovani²³⁶ and devastating the countryside, took many prisoners and much booty. The owner of Khornabujj,²³⁷ Saghir Makhatelisdze, learned of this and gathering a small army overtook him with a decision to sacrifice his life and those of his three sons, if necessary. And though one soldier had to deal not with two, but with ten, and two – with twenty, the fortune and truth of Tamar terrorized the enemy and, as it happened with Gedeon,²³⁸ this small army put to flight the enemy, then pursued and destroyed it. The Russian prince narrowly escaped.

XXXI

Listener, you have to know this! Though Tamar was utterly furious with those who were driven wild like beasts by her, at the same time like a magnet she attracted their hearts. Once Sharvansha sent her a lion cub as a present; she brought it up, and it became so big and intelligent that nobody had seen anything like it, neither domestically nor in the wild. When it was brought to the palace, it showed such love, tenderness and obedience towards Tamar that there was no need to hold it back by doubled chains, or retain the people appointed to look after it; the lion approached her and put its muzzle on her lap and licked her, as has been related in the lives of martyrs. When they took the lion away, tears came to its eyes, which fell upon the earth. The name of Tamar caused fear and trembling, defeated enemies and tamed beasts, subdued dissenters inside and outside the country, and spread all over the world, from East to West and from North to South, like the name of an angel from the four corners of the earth.

XXXII

At that time *atabag* Q'izil-Arslan,²³⁹ who just recently became the Sultan, was murdered by the Molids.²⁴⁰ After his death, his three sons became the rulers of Persia, known as the Pakhlavanids,²⁴¹ among whom their father and uncle divided the country in the following way: the senior Khulu-Inanjan received the lands from Iraq to Khorasan and Babylon, Amir-Bubkar received Adarbadagan down to Armenia, and the youngest, Amir-Mirman²⁴² received the territories from the sea of Gurgani to the sea of Gelakuni. As often happens in situations of multiple authority, envy and bitterness sprung up between them.

Amir-Bubkar, defeating and putting to flight his elder brother became the *atabag*. The younger brother Amir-Mirman became the son-in-law of Sharvansha: Amir-Bubkar attacked him and Sharvansha at the gates of Balukan²⁴³ and drove them from Arran. And exalted for a time he became arrogant. Sharvansha and Amir-Mirman found themselves in a helpless state, for at that time God's wrath fell upon the lands of Shirvan: the One who "bends heaven, touches mountains and turns them into dust"²⁴⁴ shook the earth, and tossed and shattered the walls and strongholds of the town of Shermakhia;²⁴⁵ everybody died there, the wife and children of Sharvansha among them. Learning of this Sharvansha and his people strewed their heads with ashes, crying and looking for deliverance, but found no help or savior, besides God and Tamar and David, deified by Him. They sent to them their envoys with countless presents, precious stones, priceless pearls and declared: "Because your power, sagacity and prudence, as well as the fortune of Tamar – which are like the luck of Alexander of Macedon, and the courage and valor of David – and your matchless armies are able to seize the whole Persia, put your daughter,²⁴⁶ the light and fruit of your wisdom and the reflection of the rays that come from you, as a patroness upon the whole Persia."

Without granting them the honor of a relationship with her, Tamar promised to help and support them. She issued an order and sent messengers and emissaries to gather troops from Imeria and Ameria. At that time Salavat, brother of Sevinj, the king of the Q'ivchaq's, was on a mission. There gathered a great army, which camped in regiments.²⁴⁷ Strong and numerous, they occupied the banks of four rivers: the Mt'k'vari, Algeti, K'tsia and Kurd-Vach'ari,²⁴⁸ from Tbilisi to Q'aragaji.²⁴⁹

XXXIII

Then Amir-Mirman Pakhlav, and Sharvansha Aghsartan came with their nobles and *ulemas*. The happiest monarchs marked with God's brilliance stopped in the valley of Agar. They invited Queen Rusudan there with great honor and reverence.

Who among men can convey by mind or tongue the greatness of the tabernacles and tents decorated by carpets, towers and hunting places, or the outfits and decorations which matched those of Besel and Solomon,²⁵⁰ in the temple of God, in which was Tamar, chosen by God, who like a blossoming rose, so desirable to the bee, exhaled the fragrance of the flowers of the Elysian Fields?!²⁵¹ She was honored by the praise of David Ephremid, who was like Baq'atar and Tarkhan,²⁵² the giants and the heroes, who were glorious like Rost'om and Givi.²⁵³

They gathered with such ceremony and greatness, and the reception began. Tamar, David and Giorgi, who brought fame to the crown, and raised its reputation high, sat on the gold-forged throne, a party to many great deeds. It is said: "I will take pity on my people," and an exceptional love of fellow men moved the kindest Tamar and David – who imitated God's initial purpose to save people through reincarnation – to rescue people who applied to them with requests and knelt before them to be released from death and banishment with the aid and power of the divine hand. At first, when they set out from Tbilisi, the Ovses and the new Q'ivchaq's²⁵⁴ were sent to meet them, and after

them – the Ers and K'akhis, and then the Kartlians, Meskhis and Torelians, the Shavshis, K'Iarjis, and T'aoans; after them came the Somkhitars and in the end – the Abkhazians, Svans, Megrels, Gurians, together with the Rach'velis, Tak'verians and Marguelians.²⁵⁵

5 They were met by their officials and courtiers at the door of the King's tent. Sharvansha who was among the group of relatives and courtiers, entered first and bowed; he was seated on the place corresponding to his rank. Then Amir-Mirman entered, the Sultan's nephew and son of Palavand; his mother, the daughter of Inanjan, the owner of Khorasan, now was the spouse of Sultan T'ughril. He was ushered in with respect and dignity, and after an exchange of greetings he was seated with honor. He was received as a son and a good knight of pleasant appearance.

10 They brought the nobles forward, some who belonged to Eldiguz, and others who belonged to his sons; they were favored with the honor of bowing before her, and were greeted with proper respect on their part. The guests rejoiced greatly, and said in wonder: "No man's eyes have ever seen anybody like Tamar, nor anyone similar to her in her behavior or the life she leads; we have read of nothing of the kind neither in ancient, nor in modern books." They admired David with his
15 *tavadis* and knights. They said with joy and hope: "Let us strengthen our hearts and remove the bitter tears from our eyes; they can save us and give us back our motherland!" Then they were invited to dine, after which entertainments started.

And there was joy and inexpressible delight; and singers and acrobats began their performance. Tamar provided expensive clothes for them and their knights. Every day for the whole week was
20 marked by some joyful thing: presents from the guests, rewards from the hosts, hunting and ball playing. Amir-Mirman, his nobles and *ulemas* praised them: "There are no such ball players in Iraq, Adarbadagan or Iran."

The Queen ordered her *amirsp'asalar* Zachariah and *msakhurtukhutsesi* Ivane, the *eristavi* of Hereti, Grigol, and other knights to the arena. Amir-Mirman also came with his nobles and slaves.
25 Queen Tamar, too, descended with a radiant face in order to watch the game. The followers of Islam, confident in their skill and success, were defeated by David and his knights in a moment, and confused and sad, they returned.

XXXIV

30 While all the people rejoiced and celebrated, those who decided to fight were preparing and arming themselves. When the *atabag*²⁵⁶ who gathered all the forces of Persia starting from Nakhchevan, came to Arran, he was informed that the Khalif had sent his army to his banner, as well as one thousand gold coins. Then all the statesmen and *sp'asalars* appeared before Tamar; Sharvansha also came with them. They decided to meet their enemy, and sent an order to the
35 troops from all the regions to gather. Sharvansha and Amir-Mirman were the first who asked the Queen, humble, victorious and successful, for this honor. David set out on a campaign bearing the life-giving cross and the banner of the Bagrat'ids, or rather the Gorgaslids, covered with fortune,

before him. His troops camped by the river of Eleketsi. Then leaving this place they entered the lands of Shamkhor on the first of June, from Thursday to Friday, on the very day when Christ, our God, crushed the enemy and destroyed the double-headed dragon.

King David and his commanders, as well as Sharvansha and Amir-Mirman with their people, were joyful, and thanked God for finding the enemy so close. Though they were very surprised to find out that their enemies had left Ganja and the plains of Arran, depriving themselves of the the mountains useful for their defense. David moved against them quickly. But the enemy had left quite deliberately, relying on their numerical strength and on defensible ravines and fortresses. King David took up his arms, put on his armor and sat on his sorrel-colored horse, which he had received from Vakht'ang of Khacheni, giving him in exchange a fortress and a village, known by the name of Ch'arman.²⁵⁷

The knight Amir-Mirman picked up his lances and put on his sword and quiver like Mosimachus,²⁵⁸ the keen archer who was raised by a Centaur. *Mts'ignobartukhutsesi* Anton was among them, a real knight by his appearance and origin. He was ordered to bear in front the life-giving cross, which is the scepter and armor of kings. Encouraging each other and recollecting the suffering of Christ for their sake, they raised their eyes up to God and prayed, entrusting Him with their souls and bodies. They reminded one other of the courage and military successes of their fathers and grandfathers. They recollected also how once thirty seven heroes of David the Restorer or the troops of Vakht'ang *Gorgasali* had fought and defeated enemy tribes, and how in the past the people of David the Restorer united in Jerusalem with the troops of David the Prophet. Now they were joined by the troops of his descendant, Tamar, who is the eighty first anointed sovereign after David the Prophet.

The *sp'asalars* said: "If there were at that time seekers of glory, ready to sacrifice their lives, seeking a glorious place in history, let us make haste and dim their glory, and consign them to oblivion and eclipse the memory of their battles; let us recollect those, who underwent savage tortures for their faith in Christ and their faithfulness to Him. And if there were once giants and goliaths, who neglected death for the sake of fame, or those, who thinking of their luminaries mercilessly tormented their own bodies and spirits, then let us take our swords and give our souls to God!" Then they blew the horns, and everything became confused; they drew up their troops, the front lines of the detachments closed in on the right and left. They advanced, approached Shamkhor and surrounded it. The King in person, leaving most of his detachments on his right flank by Shamkhor, hurried to cross the river and with a small force battled at the gates of the town, by the bridge. The others, bravely passing along a hard and dangerous road came against the vanguard of the army of the Ismaelites, the baying of whom was horrible for human ears, and the number impossible to count.

And the battles and clashes began, though not of the entire army but only of the advanced troops, which in Q'ivchaq' language are called "ch'alash" and "dasnach't'da." The battle dragged on, for the King, and his men were late to arrive because of the barred and rocky roads. The horse under Zachariah, son of Varam, was killed and the horses of many *didebulis* were wounded. Learning of this, the sons of Sargis Mkhargrdzeli, *amirsp'asalar* Zachariah and *msakhurtukhutsesi* Ivane hurried to their help like winged leopards and came just in time when the troops were experiencing difficulty and falling back.

They saw the approach of the King with his troops and the banner of *Gorgasali*, which has been glorified since the time of *Gorgasali's* entry into Sind,²⁵⁹ and patronized by Providence in all and every way. Those who had arrived before the King had destroyed half of the enemy's troops. Before the King' arrival, the *atabag's* troops received some reinforcement. When they saw the King, the
5 wrath of the Lord fell upon them, as well as the swords and spears of the King, who destroyed their ranks. The enemy was put to flight, and the arrows were drunk with blood, and the swords devoured the flesh of their enemies.

The King was like Achilles. The pursuers reached on one side, the middle of the mountains of Ganja, and on the other, those of Gelakuni. And one could see, how a thousand, or two or
10 ten thousand were being put to flight, how one (warrior) captured a thousand, and how the other (warrior), ten thousand rulers and nobles. Only the *atabag* with one slave managed to escape. And the army pillaged three towns like the soldiers of the Saracens were wont to do, seizing all their riches: one belonged to the *atabag*, the other, to his son, Beshken, the Brave, and the third – to Satmaz, son of Ezdin.²⁶⁰ The latter's father was called "Hatem of Tai" because of his generosity.
15 They also took away the banner, glorified by the Khalif, as a symbol of invincibility. The victors rejoiced at the favorable outcome of the battle.

After the long pursuit, the King returned; he was met heartily by *mts'ignobartukhutsesi* Anton, who praised God, carrying with him the treasures and the treasury of the *atabag*. Being a monk,
20 Anton did not keep a sword, but with his two knights, he seized from the enemy three hundred mules and camels. Then came other *didebulis* and *sp'asalars*, Sharvansha and Amir-Mirman. Joyfully they dismounted, bowed before the knights of the Kings and praised them. They stayed the night in the camps of their enemy. In place of mosques they erected churches, in place of muezzins they rang bells, and in place of the voices of mullahs, the voices of priests were heard.

In the morning the Shamkhorians came and presented the keys of the town. Seizing Shamkhor
25 and the neighboring towns and fortresses, the King gave them to Amir-Mirman, who bowed before him. Then David went to Ganja; when he approached the town, the noble citizens and the "chief merchants," the Qadis and religious teachers came to meet him. Kneeling, they bowed before David and praised him; with tears in their eyes they entrusted themselves and their children to him. They opened the gates of the city before the King, to the very doors of the Sultan's palace, they spread
30 out precious fabrics and showered gold and silver, drams and dinars upon him. David entered the palace, and sat upon the throne of the Sultan.

XXXV

And the reception began. Amir-Mirman and Sharvansha sat in their places, and the
35 *mandat'urtukhutsesi* and *amirsp'asalar* as well; others were offered seats according to the proper order of "seating" and "standing." Who can describe the celebrations and jubinations, or who can describe the unification in one person²⁶¹ of the honors of a king, and of a sultan, and the subjection to

him of the son of the *atabag* and Sharvansha as vassals, and the capture of all the Muslims with the exception of those who came of their own accord, bowing down as they came? And then began the entertainments and feasts, which matched the importance of that day. *Mandat'urtukhutsesi* Ch'iaber was sent as a herald to T'abakhmela where Tamar resided, and informed her of the inexpressibly happy event. And everybody praised God with modest and meek spirits and a humble heart. 5

Returning to town from T'abakhmela, everybody gathered in the palace where the Queen also came; the warriors appeared before her full of God's grace and with ineffable riches. Countless presents and treasures were brought to her: people from rulers and nobles to slaves, and about 12,000, with forty hunting animals, 2,000 horses, 7,000 mules, and 15,000 camels. Who could count the abundance of expensive things, the gold and the many-colored cloths? And then Tamar added her contribution: the Caliph's banner, brought by Shalva of Akhaltsikhe, she sent to the great monastery of Gelati, to the icon of Khakhuli Mother of God, like her great grandfather, David the Restorer, who had sent a golden necklace, adorned by precious stones, removed from the neck of Dorbez, son of Sadak at the time of his flight from the battle of Didgori.²⁶² As a donation and personal prayer, she composed a five-strophic iambic verse made up of twenty five lines. 10 15

In the divine commencement that created the heaven of heavens
The Son, the first and the coming One eternally dwells;
The divine Spirit completed that which had never existed.
The perfect Trinity, single in divinity,
Called the firstborn man from the earth. 20

Through You it was decided to correct all falsehood,
When He, unprejudiced, suffered for this falsehood
Turning passion into dispassion.
The One whom You begot deigned to pull us
From the dark into light and (taught us to) contemplate the light. 25

You the Virgin, for whose sake David danced,
Foretelling that The Son of God would also be Your Son,
You have favored me, Tamar; dust which will turn into dust
You have anointed me and I am related to You.²⁶³
I rule over the lands between the east and west, 30

The south and north, and I bring you spoils:
The banner of the Caliph, with the necklace,
Which was sent as a token of invincibility by the teacher of the false faith.
Long ago, some archer, like the sons of Ephraim,
Took up arms and destroyed the *atabag* and the sultan. 35

Our men who placed their trust in you, Virgin Mary,
Fought in Iran with their armies;
They destroyed and eliminated the tribe of the Agarians.
And from the gifts brought from there, these
5 I offer to you; pray for me to your Son, our God.

Because Tamar, generous like the Sun, would inherit in the future these eternal gifts, she limited herself just to the lands and the seas she owned, and began to govern her domain. Feeling gratitude to God, she dismissed her troops, though guarded vigilantly what she had captured and conquered. And both Tamar and David rejoiced and enjoyed themselves, hunting and living in an Olympian
10 manner, beautifully and happily, with their two luminous and brilliant children.

XXXVI

Now, let the word tell us the painful and regrettable story. The Agarians consider magic and sorcery, which they learned from Junitane, whom Nimrod²⁶⁴ had seen at the seashore by Cyrus and Darius, as wisdom and knowledge. And they remain sorcerers, poisoners, and God deniers. And
15 so the former *atabag* Bubkar, retreating to Nakhchevan found somebody, and promised him a lot of gold to kill his brother Amir-Mirman. The latter was given a deadly poison and fell ill. A messenger was sent to his domain, and from there horrified and terror-stricken, as if bitten by the sharp teeth of a viper, he reached the mountains of K'ap'i and the outskirts of Ganja with difficulty, where he found out about Amir-Mirman's death.

Bubkar came to Ganja; Amir-Mirman's men gave him battle, but were destroyed partially and put to flight. Bubkar forced the Ganjians to swear allegiance to him, and reinforced himself in Ganja, though he was afraid to remain there for long, and he soon left the town. David did not know yet of the death of Amir-Mirman; in spite of the small size of his army, he set out and reached Shamkhor. Here he was met by the nobles of Amir-Mirman, who covering their heads with ashes crying, told
20 him: "He is dead, the fortresses are seized, and there is no chance for us in the whole world to withstand Bubkar."

The King came back with his *didebulis* and appeared before Queen Tamar. Like Alexander of Macedon, who paid homage to Pore of India by sitting in his shrine,²⁶⁵ she who exceeded in brightness the primordial light, clothed in black, mourned Amir-Mirman, shedding tears. The nobles,
30 courtiers and slaves of Amir-Mirman were shown great respect and tenderness.

The brave Ivane Mkhargrdzeli was invincible in his campaigns; with a small force, he set out for Gelakuni and laid an ambush, like a lion, spying out the enemy's claws, or like a lion's cub, or like the sons of Israel against Benjamin.²⁶⁶ He took with him none of his skillful knights.

Waiting in the ambush, Ivane saw an army at a far distance, which outnumbered his own.
35 They were coming from Ganja and making their way to Surman, the country of Dvin, by the pass of

Masis²⁶⁷ and Shura. There was Balshan in person, raised by *atabag* Eldiguz, a knight resembling a lion, owner of Dvin and Armenia, brother of Surmaneli, with an army of the Surmans, and the great Ali-Shur Sham, a victorious man.

Having a fearless heart, Ivane did not pay any attention to the paucity of his forces and the superiority of his enemy, and attacked at once; he scattered and dispersed the enemy, like a falcon scatters cranes and like a lion scatters herds of onagers. He destroyed them and brought God's wrath upon their heads. He captured Balshan, his soldiers and banners, and four men who were the only ones who remained alive. The sovereigns of course were very glad and offered due thanks to God.

5

XXXVII

10

The King with the armies of Imeria and Ameria directed his steps to the country of Ganja. Tamar, on her part, came to Dvin; Sharvansha appeared before her to serve her. Dispatching her troops, she returned and settled in Agara with glory and grandeur. The troops approached the gates of Ganja. Destroying and killing their enemies like wild sheep, they remained at the city gates for twenty five days. *Msakhurtukhutsesi* Ivane brought to the country many soldiers and spoils, and delivered to Queen Tamar the nobles from Khacheni. The conquerors of Arran, who imposed duties upon Ganja and other towns, victoriously returned to their kingdom and brought Sharvansha with them. The latter was honored with lavish presents, dressed richly, and respectfully sent home. The sovereigns went to Trans-Likhi, Imeria; arriving there they worried about the Pontic coastal lands, armed themselves well, for the country of Art'aani and the ravine of Dzagi, as well as P'alakatsio were in the hands of the Turks. Tamar being wise and reasonable always remembered the instructions that Kekaos gave to Kabus.²⁶⁸ Devastating all in their path, the troops reached Basiani and Kurabebi, and camped in the place called "Siskhlis-Mutseli" (stomach of blood). This place now, too, looks like "Siskhlis-Mutseli," which it really was in ancient times.

15

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XXXVIII

25

God's assistance for Queen Tamar revealed itself in such victories and successes; and she was not ungrateful to her Helper. Great by nature and celebrated among the scepter-bearers, she began to perform great things. In my task of recounting them, I am unreasonable and slow, and am unable to find the precise words. But silence consigns to oblivion great and good deeds, so I have no right to keep quiet and am going to undertake a description of what not just exceeds my power, but that of the ancient masters of the word.

30

The word of truth says: "Look in the first place for the kingdom of God and His truth, and the rest will take care of itself."²⁶⁹ Keeping these words in mind and understanding them properly, Tamar turned her eyes to the Almighty, and directed her wise and all-mastering mind to the highest and all-caring being. She trained her all-seeing eyes to make them see only Him. No pleasures of this world, neither crown nor scepter, nor the abundance of precious stones or the number of her army and its courage could tempt her; of this I will speak further. No riches could lure her, or win her over like they have with so many kings in ancient times, and first of all with the forefather of the blessed, Solomon the wise. She proved to be wiser than Solomon, and falling in love with God she shunned all the temptations of the world. Listening to the true voice, she came to love God so much that to the wonder of everybody, she spent whole nights in vigil and prayers, with bowing, and tearful supplications to the Lord, as well as doing needlework in order to help the poor. We will mention just one case.

(Once) tired of prayers and needlework, obeying the law of nature, Tamar fell into a doze. And she saw in her dream a beautiful and splendid place, abundant with flowers, grass and vegetation, sweet to contemplate; it was impossible to describe its beauty and merits. There were thrones in this place decorated with gold and silver, as well as variously adorned places for different persons, according to the merits of their deeds. On the upper side there stood a throne, the most honorable of all the thrones, adorned by gold, precious stones and pearls. Truly worthy of abiding there, Tamar was ushered into this heavenly place. Seeing the throne, she thought: "I am a sovereign King and by all evidence, this high and honorable seat is meant for me," and immediately directed her steps towards it. But at that moment, a luminous man appeared, and taking her by the hand told her: "It is not your seat, for you will be unable to take possession of it!" The Queen said: "Who deserves it more than I, who will take this honorable seat?" And he answered: "This seat belongs to your housemaid, for when the twelve priests stand before the terrible and awe-inspiring throne of the Lord, and offer a bloodless and holy sacrifice, they are dressed in the cloth woven by her hands; she is higher than you are. However you are a Queen, and your place is also here, but this honor is quite enough for you," and He pointed her to a less honorable seat.

When Tamar woke up, she ordered her housemaid to attend her, who confessed to her that she had woven twelve full clothes consisting of surplices and sacerdotal robes as a present for the priests. After this, Tamar began to spin the wool which merchants brought from Alexandria, and sewed cloths for the twelve priests. They say that she calculated the cost of her everyday food, and handed the amount to beggars, and not from the incomes of the state, but of what she gained from the selling of hand-made articles that she herself had produced.

The ecclesiastical and canonical laws at her time were observed without fault, and thoroughly, according to the directions of Typikon²⁷⁰ and the Regulations of the monasteries of Palestine. And they also say that those living in the palace could miss not one service: neither the liturgy, nor the vespers, nor matins, nor the hours.²⁷¹ And what can we say of her justice? No one was violated, and there were no predators, robbers or thieves during her time. She said: "I am the father of orphans and the judge of widows!" And how merciful she was! It is enough to remember Dadiani Vardan, Guzan, who was only blinded; Botso, son of Botso and their accomplices, the *tavadis* and *aznauris*,

who were pardoned. We have to tell also of her still more important deeds. It is said: "Who would give me the wings of a pigeon?"²⁷² Who of the historians can help me to relate the striking miracle that God performed before Tamar, which inspires with great joy not only the Georgians, but all the Orthodox Christians?

XXXIX

5

Two brothers, sons of the former *amirsp'asalar* Sargis, who were at that time raised high by her, *amirsp'asalar* Zachariah and *msakhurtukhutsesi* Ivane, came before the Queen on official business. There were also many other influential persons there: the champion of angels, the God inspired Katholicos John, several bishops and other distinguished men. When Katholicos John made a bloodless sacrifice and performed the liturgy, all the worthy present partook of the communion bread. *Amirsp'asalar* Zachariah also wanted to take the communion bread, but the priests did not give it to him, because he was an Armenian by faith. Confused, Zachariah dared to steal the communion bread and ate it. The Katholicos, flaring up like a fire, condemned him for this action and said: "Not one orthodox believer can give you, an Armenian, communion bread during a divine service, but what of stealing it, is there any dog capable of doing such a thing?"

10

15

Ashamed, Zachariah retreated to his chamber. During the dinner in the palace he said all kinds of impious things and reviled our faith. When the Katholicos, inspired by God, answered him and explained the matter, Zachariah, being unable to object, said: "I am a military man and cannot argue with you. I will call the teachers of our faith, who instead of me will put you to shame!" To that, Katholicos John answered: "Let the will be of Christ and the Eternal Virgin Mother of God, who will reprimand those who deny them." Hearing that, Zachariah sent a man to his Katholicos, bishops, *vartap'ets* and scholars. His brother Ivane tried to dissuade him, saying: "Do not do it, we know that the faith of the Georgians is the true faith!" But Zachariah did not listen to him.

20

And the Katholicos of Vani²⁷³ and all the *vartap'ets*²⁷⁴ came. They placed a table for the judges, and there on one side sat Queen Tamar, who placed her trust in the Queen (of heaven), King David and the most distinguished men among the Georgians, and on the other side sat Zachariah and Ivane Mkhargrdzeli. Katholicos John was invited, who pronounced the following psalm upon entering: "Rise, (our) Lord, and judge according to your judgment, and remember any defamation that comes from the reckless."²⁷⁵ When he entered, the Kings got up and seated him with respect at their side; he was honored according to his rank also by the Armenian scholars and *vartap'ets*. When the time came, silence fell, and the leaders among the Armenians began to expound on their faith extensively and magniloquently. Katholicos John, endowed with a heavenly gift, explained reasonably and wisely answered them, undermining their words and proving his own. The debates dragged on till the evening.

25

30

XL

I fear to unduly extend the story, so I will limit myself to just a few words. You know of the verbose sorcery of the Armenians; they started to shout, but we gained a victory over them proper to the importance of the dispute. The namesake of St. John the Divine, Katholicos John, inspired by the Holy Spirit or trusting the true religion, which I do not know for certain, listened to everything; then he opened his mouth, uttering the wise and indisputable words. You have heard of the great Elias, who prayed to God, and the fire from heaven which was sent down upon (his) offering; how much superior is a bloodless sacrifice of the flesh and blood of the incarnated God than the sacrifice of an animal, which is just a shadow and prototype of the former, and so much brighter and praiseworthy is what has just happened and what has been told by the Holy Spirit, through the mouth of the Katholicos, its servant, who said: "The house of Targamos gathered as an enemy and oppressor of the true faith! Are you aware that the Devil took possession of the human race? Covering humanity's mind and eyes, he subjected them to the magicians; departing from God and not knowing Him they began to offer sacrifices to idols, to onions, garlic, and nettles. But not forgetful of his creation, God talked with Abraham and his descendants. Then He gave law and justice to Moses; and at last, prompted by mercy, He descended from heaven to man. He acquired human flesh from the Virgin Mary and became like a man, for He received the human flesh from the virgin's blood and spirit, and mixing with the people, He fulfilled everything predestined for him.

When Jesus Christ was preparing himself for the terrible suffering on the cross, He called his twelve disciples for the Last Supper and performed the rite of Easter, and initiated at the same time a new deific ordinance. He took bread, broke it and giving it to his disciples said: "Take it, and eat it, my body, to deliver yourselves of sins;" and taking a bowl, he said "Drink from it all of you, for it is my blood."²⁷⁶ And before that he said: "If you do not eat the flesh of the son of a man, you will have no part of me,"²⁷⁷ and yet: "My body is truly food and my blood – drink,"²⁷⁸ and many other words like these. Now answer me: do you believe in these words of the Gospel?" They answered him: "This is not the subject of the argument. He gave us his body and blood, to eat and drink to ensure our immortality. This is a great gift given to us by God: while professing Christ as God, to eat His body and drink His blood."

And the Katholicos uttered solemnly: "Well, my children! If you acknowledge this, then you must believe that the Last Supper embodied the new Testament and the new Easter, and all we who acknowledge Christ to be God and a man, and remember His passions, perform this religious rite: we eat His body and drink His blood, this is our law and our new commandment!" And the Armenians answered: "This is so, and everybody knows it." The Katholicos said: "Now, if your faith is better (than ours), then the bread will turn into the body of God through you, but if ours is better, than it will turn into God's body through our own ritual." They said: "Let it be so!" The Katholicos uttered words, terrible to hear: "Let us show our faith by deeds, not words!" They said: "Do as you want!" The Katholicos said: "I will give you a dog, and will wait for three days, during which time you will perform litanies and pray by night; and keep the dog all that time without food. And give one dog to me; I too will keep it without food for three days, and will pray and perform litanies at night. The true religion

will show itself. On the third day I will perform a bloodless sacrifice. Taking out the communion bread with my own hands, I will put it, though it is not (a quite) proper thing to do, before your dog. On the other hand you, too, take communion bread and put it before my dog. Whose communion bread will be eaten, that party's faith is untrue. If yours is eaten then you will have to feel ashamed, if ours, then shame be on us!"

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The Kings and people wondered on hearing this, and a sense of powerlessness overcame them. When they came round, they said to the Katholicos: "What you have just said is awful, just listening to it!" The Katholicos persisted in what he said. Though the Armenians did not want to do this, they exchanged dogs and retired to their chambers. The King, rather excited, said to the Katholicos: "Who will be able to do what you have said? All this is so overwhelming, even to imagine or hear it is almost impossible!" The Katholicos answered quietly: "I have undertaken this, trusting not myself, but Christ, our God; so let Him show to the believers, who has the right faith, who is Orthodox, from whose hands He receives bloodless sacrifices, and in whose hands He delivers Himself for sacrifice, as God's Lamb, and who consumes his body and drinks his blood. We, who have given ourselves to orthodoxy, will show where the truth is. Help me, King and Georgians!" The King and the people listened in wonder to what the Katholicos said, and then broke up.

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It was Friday, and they started the litany. The King, the Katholicos and the entire holy gathering, on one side – there were few bishops, for the King did not call the council – and the Armenians and Zachariah and Ivane Mkhargrdzeli, on the other. Both parties kept vigil for the whole night. On Saturday, again, they began litanies, and, again, kept vigil for the whole night, and at dawn all went together to the church, praying with tears to God. Both sides prepared the holy meal and cried.

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When the Katholicos finished the preparations for the Holy Sacrifice, he lifted on a paten the awe-inspiring body of Christ, the God, who incarnated Himself for us, and went to his people saying: "Holy, Holy, Lord of Sabaoth: Heaven and earth are filled with Thy glory!"²⁷⁹ And he addressed the Armenian bishops and the brothers Mkhargrdzeli, and all the followers of their religion and said: "Listen, house of Targamos.²⁸⁰ You know that God, who incarnated Himself for our sake, who gave us his flesh to eat, said: "If you do not eat my body, you will not receive life; so do it in my remembrance."²⁸¹ And the Apostle, too, said: "This bread, which we break, is a communion with the flesh of Christ" So if God likes your faith, then this bread will become the body of Christ, and if He likes our faith, it will through us turn into the flesh of the Lord. Let nobody deny it! Bring the dog, which I gave you; and though it is not a proper thing to do, I will put before it this holy bread. If it dares to touch it, our faith is vain and empty. Then we will order you to bring your dog and offer it the bread you have consecrated, and see what will happen; it will show us which faith pleases Christ!" The Armenians did not want to answer, but unable to ignore it, said: "We have to do what we have resolved to!" Many people gathered to see what would happen. The Katholicos, hearing the words of the Armenians, said: "I will proceed!" He ordered the people present to step back and make a circle, so that everybody could see God's glory. The people fell back. The Katholicos, clad in his vestments, stepped forward holding the terrible sanctified sacrifice in his hands. The King with the entire audience was observing everything in wonder. The Katholicos stood firmly like a beautifully erect tower with an expression of inspiration on his face. He ordered them to bring the

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dog, which had eaten nothing for three days; and they brought in the dog, emaciated with hunger. The Katholicos solemnly uttered: "Christ, our King, incarnated for the salvation of Your people, crucified for our sake, buried, resurrected and raised to heaven by Your Father, You who gave us Your own flesh to commemorate You! You, Sovereign Lord, like our Georgian faith, preserve your
5 awe-inspiring flesh consecrated by us, inviolate, and do not allow the dog to approach it. Take it as an immovable sacrifice and show these people the straight and narrow; accept this sacrifice and put to shame our adversaries.

Concluding his prayer, the Katholicos put a morsel of the awe-inspiring bloodless sacrifice before the dog. Seeing the bread, the dog darted toward it, but then howling desperately stopped, unable to
10 touch the sacred bread. The King and the people were perplexed observing this striking miracle. The Katholicos and all the gathered people cried out loudly: "Great are you, our Lord, and wonderful are your deeds."²⁸² And the voices of joy were heard mixed in with tears in praise of God.

The Armenians, feeling helpless, stood dumbstruck. The Katholicos asked the King to quiet the people. When the voices stopped, he turned with an illumined face and threatening voice to the
15 Armenian priests and to the brothers Mkhargrdzeli and said: "Listen and know, that God, invisible, imperceptible and inaccessible to any evil is gentle; He himself deigned to turn this bread into His flesh. Do not wonder, for He said it Himself: "Let there be light, and light appeared; let there be land and it appeared;²⁸³ His word made land from nothing. This bread is His flesh in reality, not metaphorically; who or what can touch it? His body and this bread are one and the same thing, in
20 which way is one better than the other?"

The Armenians, unwillingly were obliged to follow. Their priests stood there; the dog, which their Katholicos had brought in and given their "sacrifice," had snapped it up at once. The Georgians began to offer thanks to God: "You are great, our Lord, and wonderful are your deeds!" They seated
25 Katholicos (John) clad in his vestments on his own horse; and he held a plate in his hands with prosphora and all the nobles accompanied him. Passing through the troops they recited psalm one hundred and twenty eight: "Much as I was crowded by my enemies from my youth, never have I been overpowered by them. I was beaten on my back by sinners, and they continued their assaults upon me. The Lord will destroy the spines of the sinners. Let all those who hate Zion, be put to shame and retreat! Sing to the Lord, for, He is praised in his glory, the Lord destroys warriors, and
30 to the Lord belongs His name."²⁸⁴ Rejoicing they made a round of the whole camp. The Armenians stood silently, like frogs deprived of their bog, with downcast eyes, like the priests of Astarta.²⁸⁵ And it is impossible to describe the joy, hope and gratitude to God, which the Georgians felt.

Coming back home, the King and the Katholicos organized a big feast. The confused Armenians went to the chamber of the brothers Mkhargrdzeli. *Msakhurtukhutsesi* Ivane told his brother,
35 *amirsp'asalar* Zachariah: "I did not want to start debates with them; the Georgians adhere to a high faith; why should we not adopt the right faith and receive baptism from the Katholicos of Georgia?" He answered: "Brother, I know, that the Georgian faith is the right faith, but let the one who is to be judged on the day of the Last Judgment give the answer; I will not join the Georgians!" Hearing this, Ivane said: "I wonder at you, you do not want to do what is better; I cannot agree with you, I
40 will receive baptism and adopt the Georgian faith!" And what is the sense of talking about this so

much? He received baptism in our faith from Katholicos John. And a great number of Armenians were baptized with him, rejoicing; but Zachariah persevered his faithlessness.

XLI

Tamar favored her beloved God with gifts and honors; she was not too lazy to do things agreeable to Him. She replaced Upper Vardzia²⁸⁶ by Lower Vardzia, and began to build an abode for the blessed Vardzia Mother of God, which helped her in her campaigns. A church and cells for monks were carved in rock and were inaccessible to enemies. The construction of Vardzia was started by Giorgi, her father, but he left it unfinished; and the great Tamar completed it, adorned it in all possible ways, donated many lands, and secured its supplies with ample and honest incomes. It is not possible to describe everything, and if anybody wants to know the particulars, they should visit Vardzia, the carved caves and everything that was done there. Queen Tamar served the chaste and wonder-working Vardzia Mother of God, and her reign gained in glory. 5 10

What about her other undertakings: there was her building activity and donations to the monasteries! She built monasteries not only in Georgia, but also in Palestine and Jerusalem, in Cyprus and Galia.²⁸⁷ She bought property for these monasteries and adorned them with everything proper for a respectable monastery; and she helped Constantinople as well. My narration will be too long if I try to tell you of how lavishly she presented monasteries in Georgia and Hellas, and how in Georgia she showered bounties not only upon monasteries, but on churches and cathedrals. She turned her mind to the eternal, for which the One, who grants all things, assisted her in her deeds, opening the path to general prosperity. All the neighboring Kings, towns and emirs propitiated her brave armies with gifts and duties, and the disobedient ones were destroyed. 15 20

XLII

Up to that time the town of K'ari was in the hands of the Turks. Tamar sent her troops to besiege it. Learning of this, the Turks left the town and fled. The town was forced to surrender. Ivane of Akhaltsikhe was left to guard it; he was also appointed an *ejib* and an emir over the emirs. That worried the Turks very much, because he caused them great harm: he took away neighboring Turkish lands and joined them to Georgian domains. When he reported this, he received thanks and was rewarded with the estates and lands of the emir of K'ari. And Tamar's kingdom prospered and increased in size daily. She inspired all the sultans with fear and terror. 25

XLIII

Now I have to relate one of the greatest deeds, which makes me despondent, for I am not fit for a mission like this: it becomes, rather, the great word masters from ancient times.

5 The great Seljukid Sultan, by name of Nukradin,²⁸⁸ learned of all that Tamar performed; he was greater than all the other sultans who ruled in Greece, Asia and Cappadocia down to the Pontic Sea. Nukradin summoned the multitude of his army, and gathered forty times ten thousand, that is four hundred thousand men. He sent an envoy to Queen Tamar with a message in which he wrote:

10 “From the ruler of all the countries, the humblest servant of God! Every woman is a fool: it turned out that you have ordered the Georgians to take up the sword for the destruction of Muslims. It is a sword that was granted by God to the great Prophet Mohammed, the chief of his people. Now I am sending all my army in order to destroy all the men of your country; only those will survive, who come to meet me, bow to my yashmak, trample down the cross which is your hope and adopt (the faith of) Mohammed!”

This is the answer of the Queen to Nukradin:

15 “I, who trust in the power of the Almighty, set my hopes upon the Virgin Mary, and pray to the holy cross. I received your letter, Nukradin, which deserves God’s wrath, and learning of your lies I ask God to be a judge between us. You trust in gold and the drovers of donkeys, while I trust not in my riches or the strength of my army, but in the power of the Almighty and the holy cross, which you abuse. I am sending my whole army to meet you; let the will of God, and not yours, be upon me, His truth, not yours!”

20 When the envoy appeared before Queen Tamar, he stepped forward, gave the letter to her and uttered insolent words: “If your Queen renounces her faith, the Sultan will take her as his wife, if not, she will become the Sultan’s concubine!” He said these words so arrogantly that *amirsp’asalar* Zachariah advanced and hit him in his face so strongly that he fell down and lay there senseless. 25 When they lifted him up and he came to his senses, Zachariah told him: “If you were not an envoy it would be proper to cut first your tongue and then remove your head for your impudence. Now there is no sense in talking with you any more, give this letter to Nukradin and tell him: “We are ready to meet you and fight with you, let God’s judgment triumph!” Then they dressed him, gave some gifts and sent him off. And they summoned the troops from Imeria and Ameria, from every place from 30 Nik’opsia to Daruband, and gathered them in Javakheti.²⁸⁹

Tamar came to Vardzia, before the icon of Vardzia Mother of God, and with tears in her eyes entrusted her with David Soslan and his army, and she sent him from Vardzia with their lucky banner that was bringing him good fortune. The troops set out on a campaign, the commanders were *amirsp’asalar* Zachariah Mkhargrdzeli and two brothers from Akhaltsikhe, Shalva and Ivane, as well 35 as Ch’iaber, who was a *mandat’urtukhutsesi*, and other Torelians: they advanced to Basiani. Queen Tamar came to Odzrkhe;²⁹⁰ she was accompanied by Shavteli, a philosopher, rhetorician, writer of verses, known for his asceticism, and also Eulogy, called the fool, who was endowed with the gift of foresight. Tamar remained with them day and night praying, singing psalms, and keeping wake. She

did not stop performing litanies day and night, and ordered the monasteries and cloisters to do the same and pray to God.

King David wanted to go up to where the Sultan had made his camp, to the place (called) Basiani, known also by the name of Bolost'ik'e. Approaching the Sultan, he saw a countless number of horses, mules and camels, tents, kings' stations decorated by carpets. The field could not contain the tents and the soldiers that were taking shelter in them; and they exceeded in number the Georgians. The Sultan was calm and tranquil. David and the Georgians approached him, and formed up their forces led by Zachariah Mkhargrdzeli, Shalva, and Ivane of Akhaltsikhe, and the Torelians; the Abkhazians and Imiers on one side, and the Amiers, on the other. They advanced quietly.

The Sultan had no guards, but one of his men spied the incalculable army of godless ones (the Georgians). The Sultan gave himself up to despair, everybody was frightened; but they gathered their animals, took up arms, mounted their horses leaving behind them their possessions. Coming out of the tents they formed up into ranks. The vanguards of both armies approached each other. And the battle began, cruel and fierce, of which the like took place perhaps only in ancient times. It continued for a long time; people fell on both sides, but mainly from the army of Sultan. The battle dragged on. The horses were killed under *msakhurtukhutsesi* Ivane, Zachariah Gageli, Shalva and Ivane of Akhaltsikhe, and Taq'aidin Tmogveli, a brave man, and many others. There was a danger that the Georgians might waiver and flee, but the brave Georgians endured and continued to fight on foot. The soldiers seeing their masters fighting on foot did a desperate thing: they dismounted from their horses and stood side by side with their masters, all of them on foot.

The battle intensified. When the bravest David saw this, he, from fear of trampling the Georgians fighting on foot, moved to the left, and Zachariah Mkhargrdzeli moved to the right. They dashed upon the Persians and like hunters attacking a wild beast assaulted them, David Soslan from one side and Zachariah from the other; others who were closer reached the Persians even before them. And David with his men came at the right time and stormed into the countless army of the Sultan, like a wolf into a flock of sheep.

From the very first clash and striking of swords, merciful God blessed those worshipping the cross and Vardzia Mother of God, augmenting still more the glory of David and Tamar. A great number of troops were destroyed, defeated, overpowered and scattered. It was as if an immense place covered by trees broke loose and fell together with its soil. A good comparison! Everywhere where the eye could see were forests of fleeing enemy soldiers. The valiant Georgians, who remained on foot, mounted the horses and pursued the enemy until night, and destroyed them or knocked them off their horses and took them captive. And the enemies crowded upon each other, and trampled one another.

XLIV

Having completed this story I would like to be silent. I wonder at how kind God was to His heritage, as well as Vardzia Mother of God. How securely He preserved the Georgian people, who are devoted to Him, whose incomparable army lost not one man; and how did such a numerous enemy army flee, while Tamar's troops took no losses at all? Our soldiers seized much gold, silver and precious vessels, and who is able to count the herds of horses and camels, the enemy left? The camp was full of carpets, garments and precious fabrics kept in bundles. They fled in such disarray that they did not pay attention to the riches of the tents and carpets, each taking just one horse with him, and letting the reserve one go free. The Georgians returned victorious and camped in the enemy's tents, praising God. They were amazed at the multitude of helmets that lay around like cobble stones, and at the abundance of sugar. There were many springs in this place, and the Georgians, tearing away the lining of the helmets, filled them with water and sugar and drank.

The glorious David returned to his Sun, Tamar. They say also that when Queen Tamar was in Odzrkhe, John Shavteli and Eulogy were with her; and all the time they spent in vigils and unremitting prayers to God, asking for victory for our army. Once Shavteli and Eulogy were sitting before Tamar. Suddenly something unusual happened with Eulogy: he lifted up his eyes and, with a sad expression on his face as if he was contemplating something, fell three times on the ground, and jumping up to his feet at last announced: "Here God's grace descended upon the house of Tamar!" He hurried away and ascended the mountain, called Aragani. Then Shavteli said to Tamar: "You should know, my Queen, that the fool had a vision, and I think, a quite favorable one for us!" They marked the day and time. The Gracious God once foretold our deliverance, and that day He foretold our salvation.

After gaining victory, the Georgians came to Vardzia with happy expressions on their faces; Tamar came, and together they thanked (God) properly. Tamar the brightest of all the crown bearers, successful in everything, bathed in her glory. She began to serve God with yet more zeal, built and decorated churches and monasteries, cared for widows and orphans and delivered upon them her just judgment. She rejoiced and enjoyed herself in her kingdom. She went sometimes to Abkhazia, settled affairs there, and hunted in splendid places – Geguti and Ajameti,²⁹¹ or returning to Kartli and Armenia, rested in Dvin. There the Ganjians and the inhabitants of the upper towns brought her their obligations. In the spring, returning from Armenia, she received dues from the Nakhchevanians and directed her steps to K'ola, to the upper Art'aani, and there she received tithes from the towns of K'arnukalaki and Ezink'i and the other neighboring towns. But... joy is followed by sorrow.

XLV

Unexpectedly came the time of grief: David Soslan died, the man full of all kind of goodness, human and divine; beautiful in appearance, brave in battles and wars, manly, generous and humble. He left behind him two children, a son Giorgi,²⁹² and a daughter Rusudan.²⁹³ They cried, wailed, and the whole world was covered with sorrow.

XLVI

After that peace was established everywhere for a long time. Because it was the time of Lent the Queen was in Geguti, and both brothers Mkhargrdzeli were with her. When the Sultan of Ardabil²⁹⁴ learned of this, he was consumed with hate towards the Christians, he called his army together and sent it to ravage the town of Anisi,²⁹⁵ for he knew that Mkhargrdzeli was not there. He went along the bank of Araxes and harming none on the way, approached the city without been detected on the day of the Great Saturday. 5

At dawn, when the bells sounded the Morning Prayer and the city gates were opened, the army (of Ardabil) rushed at them, and because the citizens had no time to close the gates, they burst into the city mounted on their horses, and began to kill, beat and capture people. According to the traditions of the Christian faith, most of the citizens were in church; some ran off and fortified themselves in their homes, the others – into the caves, known by the name of “stone houses.” Those who escaped found shelter in the fortresses or the caves, for rocks and cave cliffs towered over three sides of the city. The enemy seized the city, and killed twelve thousand men, just like sheep, in churches; many were killed in the streets and squares of the city. After the devastation of the city the enemy returned loaded with spoils and captives. 10 15

The Queen and the brothers Mkhargrdzeli learned of the plunder in Geguti on Low Sunday. Hearing this disagreeable news, they were mortified; their hearts blazed with anger and they did not know what to do. The Queen and her army, seized by grief and anger, began to prepare themselves for war with the Persians. Then the brothers Mkhargrdzeli said to her: “This misfortune befell us because of the violation of God’s commandments by us; due to our sins, many Christian souls suffered cruelly at the hands of the godless Saracens. But we set our hopes on God’s grace and His Holy Cross, and believe that those trusting in Him will not be subjected to destruction by the Saracens; let us prepare for vengeance, and let’s bring down their perfidy on their own heads. You, Queen, order your troops to prepare an action against the Sultan of Ardabil; let us go to Anisi to hunt the Persians. But just a few of us must go, for the advance of a great number would betray our plans and they would hide themselves in fortresses. Give me, (my) Queen, an army and order that everything I have just proposed be ready by the coming of their disgusting Fast!” The Queen liked these words and she ordered her army to make preparations. 20 25

XLVII

The brothers Mkhargrdzeli went to Anisi and started preparations. The day of the disgusting Fast of the Mohammedan faith approached. The Mkhargrdzelis sent a messenger to the Queen with a request to send her troops to join them. She gave an order to the Meskhis, Torelians, Tmogvians,²⁹⁶ Her-K’akhis²⁹⁷ and Somkhitaris;²⁹⁸ the Kartlians were not taken so those in Ardabil would not know of the enterprise. They gathered in Anisi and from there they planned their way to Ardabil: passing 30 35

Gelakuni, they descended to Isp'iani, and crossing the bridge of Khuapridi made their way to Ardabil. In the night, the day before "Eid," which is their Easter, they surrounded Ardabil.

5 When the voice of the herald of their disgusting faith called out and the muezzins' wails became more frequent, the brothers Mkhargrdzeli, giving their horses their head, burst into the city from all sides and seized it without a fight, capturing the Sultan in person, and his wife and children. They took possession of the unaccountable riches of his city, pearls and precious stones, gold, silver and golden vessels, dresses, carpets and all the other goods in such abundance that it is difficult to count. They took many horses, mules and camels, which they loaded with the goods taken from the enemy and returned home. They killed the Sultan of Ardabil, and took captive his wife and children; 10 they destroyed twelve thousand nobles in their mosques, like they did it in the churches of Anisi, and killed or oppressed others in great number. By the same road, consoled, they returned victorious to Anisi and appeared before the King of Kings and the Queen of Queens, the Sun over all the Suns. They took the gifts and presents and piled them before the first person of the state, the Queen, and all the others that were before her.

15 The Queen moved to K'ola. The country grew rich, it became filled with gold, silver, precious stones, and pearls; and all these things were brought by Zachariah and Ivane Mkhargrdzeli. The grateful Queen granted them many fortresses, towns and lands. Praising God everybody rejoiced at the course of the events; the Queen, living how she thought fit, was getting dues and countless gifts from those outside her kingdom.

20 XLVIII

But there already was other great work to do. The brothers Mkhargrdzeli, *amirsp'asalar* Zachariah, *msakhurtukhutsesi* Ivane and Varam Gageli came to her and said: "Our most powerful Lady and the brightest among all the crown bearers! Look at your kingdom, and see the courage and virtue of your army, see how many brave and valiant men are in it, and there is nobody who can withstand them! 25 So as not to consign to oblivion the great deeds of this army, let your highness give us an order and we will arm ourselves against Iraq, Rom-Gur, that is Khorasan;²⁹⁹ let all the armies of the East taste our force and our power. Order your men to prepare for a campaign against Khorasan! Though no Georgian has ever reached Khorasan or Iraq, it does not matter. Order everybody from Nik'opsia to Daruband to arm and prepare themselves!"³⁰⁰ When the Queen heard the words of Mkhargrdzeli, 30 she called all the distinguished men of our kingdom, the Imiers and Amiers, and informed them of what was going on. When they learned that Mkhargrdzeli was going on a campaign, they liked the idea and began to prepare themselves for a war.

The autumn came, and they gathered in Tbilisi before the Queen. She made an inspection of the troops and found them well armed; she was pleased with the good quality of their armor and horses, 35 their quantity and courage, and the spirit and hatred of the Persians. She took the happy banner of *Gorgasali* and David, asked for the blessing of the Vardzia Mother of God, and handing it over

to *amirsp'asalar* Zachariah sent him with the whole army to Persia. The army passed Nakhchevan and came to Julfa and Araxes, and entering the narrow gorge of Daraduzi ascended to Maranda.³⁰¹ Learning of this, the inhabitants of Maranda hid themselves among the rocks. Entering Maranda and finding no man there, they thought that the enemy's army was on the mountain of Maranda. And they selected five hundred of the bravest and noblest men, and assigned *sp'asalar* Taq'aidin Tmogveli as their commander and sent them to the top of the Maranda Mountain. 5

They ascended the mountain and camped on its flat peak. They were ordered by Zachariah to battle with nobody until his arrival at the summit, with the rest of the army; and if they met some great force, they had to let Zachariah know and follow his commands. Five hundred select men stood in their places. The Marandians who were hiding in the deep gulfs and clefts on the very top of the mountain, covered completely by stones and rocks, saw them. 10

Seeing a small detachment and being unafraid, they armed themselves, and attacked it. But our soldiers met them bravely and put them to flight; very few of the enemy escaped, most of them were killed, and those who fled were pursued for a long time. When the Georgian troops scaled the mountain, they saw the battle-place covered by the corpses of men and horses, but not one Georgian was among them. God granted us such a victory that five hundred men with five hundred spears nailed five hundred enemies to five hundred horses. They wondered, seeing all this, and they were particularly amazed at the absence of Georgians. Zachariah perplexed and saddened did not know what to do. But they did not remain in this condition for long; the Georgians returned from the pursuit. Seeing this, Zachariah rejoiced and thanked God that not one Georgian was dead, while five hundred men speared five hundred enemy soldiers and their horses. And though such a victory had been achieved, they still reproached Taq'aidin, particularly Zachariah, for engaging in a battle without letting the commander know. 15 20

XLIX

Rejoicing and thanking God for the victory, the Georgians turned back and headed to Tavriz.³⁰² They crossed the mountains, known as Devsopni. When the citizens of Tavriz learned of the appearance of the Georgian army, they were seized with terror. The eunuchs and the nobles of Tavriz, and all like-minded people as well, decided to appease the leaders among the Georgians and their army with money and gifts, and by obedience and oaths. They sent envoys and asked for peace and mercy for the city, and promised gold, silver, pearls and many precious stones. All the noble Georgians, including Zachariah and Ivane were surprised. They promised them peace and declared they would cross their lands without inflicting harm; they affirmed their words with an oath. Then came the Qadis, eunuchs, dervishes and all the principal persons of Tavriz, and they brought with them gold, silver, expensive cloths, horses, mules and a herd of camels, pearls, precious stones, dresses and the necessary provisions for the army. 25 30 35

The Georgians left guards at the city and leaving Adarbadagan went to Miana.³⁰³ The Melik of Miana, learning of the appearance of the Georgians and how they treated the citizens of Tavriz also asked them for peace and promised countless presents. The Georgians complied with his request and invited him to make peace with them; he brought gold, silver and precious stones with him.
5 Accumulating all kinds of riches the Georgians stationed guards at the city and left Miana in peace.

They approached the small town of Zangan, surrounded by a wattle and daub wall. The citizens reinforced it and began to fight the Georgians. Because the battle dragged on, the representatives of different regions of Georgia divided between them the walls of the town, in order to undermine them. And they began to dig. First the wall on the right was undermined by the Meskhis, who entering the
10 town killed all the fighters and seized many goods. The walls were undermined from other sides too, and troops entered the town, captured it, and took all kinds of goods. Then they stopped to take a short rest. Then they made their way to Khorasan and, approaching a small Muslim settlement towards the evening, ravaged it and rested for a time.

L

15 From there they continued their way to Khorasan and approached Q'azmin³⁰⁴ and Ahvar.³⁰⁵ Because these places could offer them no resistance, they were devastated, and the Georgians seized many goods, which were loaded onto the animals of the defeated country. They did not harm people, just captured the men and boys. Going on further, they caught up with the fugitives and took away gold, silver and many adornments that women wear. Then they made their way to the interior
20 Rom-Gur, that is to Khorasan. But why prolong the story? They reached the country of Gurgani³⁰⁶ and devastated it. They were unable to continue on their way, because of the abundance of the spoil, and they turned back.

Up to this time, no Georgian had come so far. No Sultan in Persia could withstand them: neither in Khorasan, nor in Iraq or any other place. With countless and immeasurable riches, the Georgians
25 returned to Iraq. Because nobody knew what the Georgians had done in the country of Gurgan, nobody knew of the defeat of the Sultan of Iraq. One man coming to the Sultan of Miana, lied to him: "There came the Gilanians and the great Sultan in person, and cutting the Georgians from all sides, destroyed them so that there remained not one soul alive of the whole multitude to bring the news to Georgia." The Mianians rejoiced greatly and their *Melik*, hearing this, destroyed and crucified all the
30 guards whom the Georgians had left there. Only one man survived from the whole body of guards, hiding himself inside the city.

When the Georgians returned to Miana, the Sultan of Miana met them with presents, thinking he would hide his deeds. Zachariah looked about and asked about the guards. He was told the following: "They went to Tavriz, to join the guards left there." And then the Georgian who had hidden
35 himself in the city appeared, and he related in the presence of the Sultan everything that he had done with the Georgians, and of the execution and crucifixion of the guards. The Mianians stood

silent. When Zachariah and Ivane heard all this, they became sullen and angry. They seized the *Melik*, his children and his relatives, and sentenced them to death. They killed the *Melik* and his children, skinned them and hung them on the minaret; and they ravaged, burned down and occupied the town. It is impossible to count the riches which they took from there. They set out on the road that went through Adarbadagan; there they were met first by the Uzhenians,³⁰⁷ then the Tavrizians with rich presents, which filled our kingdom. To Queen Tamar, the sun over the Kings and the suns, they sent precious and rare stones, and choice vessels. Leaving the inhabitants and the towns of Adarbadagan in peace, they crossed the Araxes, near the outskirts of Nakhchevan and appeared before the Queen in Tbilisi. 5

The Queen of Queens thanked God, rejoicing very much; she met them cheerfully, with great pomp and glory. There were sounds of horns and flutes, for nobody gained such victories, not even in ancient times, neither kings not princes. They came to Isani. The Queen sat on her throne, the *amirsp'asalar* ushered in the noblest persons of the kingdom, who took their places according to their ranks. Countless numbers of gifts were brought in and laid out before the Queen. She was amazed, for nobody had ever seen so many riches, pearls and precious stones without number. Tamar continued to thank God, performing litanies and all-night vigils, giving generously to widows and beggars, handing out portions of the treasury to warriors, making the rich still richer; and everybody thanked God for such a victory. 10 15

LI

And then came the time of sorrow; *amirsp'asalar* Zachariah, son of Sargis, a very rich man, endowed with all kinds of virtues, successful in everything, brave and a strong soldier, the head of the region of Lori, died. He was mourned by the Queen and by all the inhabitants of Georgia with her, for there was no other such man at that time. It was as if all beneficial circumstances contributed to his advancement to eminence: he was a descendant of Artaxerxes Longimanus.³⁰⁸ Being Armenian by faith, he possessed all the virtues, divine as well as human. A glorious father, who left behind him a son by the name of Shansha, was committed to the earth. 20 25

Then the Queen called Zachariah's brother, *msakhurtukhutsesi* Ivane, and appointed him to the position of *amirsp'asalar*, which was formerly occupied by Zachariah. Ivane, surprised, told her: "The position you are going to honor me with is a great one, I do not deserve it; you had better reward me in a way so that people would not connect me with the name of my brother, and so I would not feel ashamed to occupy his place. Honor me with the position of *atabag*,³⁰⁹ there was not and still is not such a position in Georgia. And so increase your grace on me and favor me with a new, greater honor, appoint me to the position of *atabag*. The position of *atabag* is a sultanic one; the one who occupies it is considered to be a father and educator of kings and sultans. By doing so you will increase your grace upon me as compared with my ancestors." 30 35

The Queen fulfilled his request and appointed him to the position of *atabag*, which was not formerly known to the Georgian Kings, and had been granted to nobody. She assigned Varam, son of Zachariah Gageli, a worthy man and victorious in campaigns, to the position of *msakhurtukhutsesi*. Queen Tamar, herself, wintered in Dvin, and spent the summer in Kola and Tselis-T'ba,³¹⁰ moving sometimes to Abkhazia – Geguti and Tskhumi.³¹¹

LII

At that time the inhabitants of the Caucasian Mountains – the Pkhovians and Didoians broke away. The Didoians eat uncooked food, and several brothers marry one woman; some of them worship the invisible devil and some even worship a spotless black dog. The Pkhovians worship a cross, and call themselves Christians. They began to pillage, kill and kidnap people. The Queen summoned the *atabag* and mountain dwellers: the Dvalis, Tskhrazmelis, Moheves, Hadis, Tskhavat'is, Ch'artalis, Erts'otians,³¹² and entrusting them to her *atabag* Ivane, sent them against the rebels. Ivane acted reasonably: he ascended the mountain of Khada,³¹³ passed over its summit and scaled the mountains of the Pkhovians and Didoians, which nobody had ever done before, neither before or after him. There was the country of Durdzuk'eti on his one side, and Didoeti and Pkhoeti³¹⁴ on the other.

When the kings of Durdzuk'eti learned of the arrival of the *atabag*, they came to him with gifts, brought their soldiers with them and stood by his side. They began to attack from the mountains, to kill, ravage and take prisoners; they burned everything, killed countless Didoians and Pkhovians. The attackers remained there for three months: June, July and August. Pressed by the *atabag*, the rebels gave hostages and firmly promised to serve and pay duties. Making peace, they took the hostages back with them.

After this victory Ivane appeared before the Queen and reported to her: "Great Majesty! Your order is carried out; I destroyed the Didoians and Pkhovians who did not want to obey you!" The Queen thanked him and rendered him homage. And peace reigned in the kingdom; and Queen Tamar's state prospered and grew, protected by God. The warriors rested, they hunted and played games; the chiefs and the nobles were always by the side of the Queen, resting and enriching themselves with her gifts.

LIII

When Emperor Iovianus,³¹⁵ the nephew of Constantine the Great³¹⁶ died, one of the monks mourning his death said: "Why has God deprived the Christians of such a King, on whose head an angel put a crown before everybody's eyes?" The angel said to the monk: "Why are you, monk,

investigating the justice of Heaven? I order you to stay far away from evil! Do you not know that if the entire world from East to West was professing Christ, and not just Greece, it would not amount by its worth to Iovianus?" And now the same thing happened: not only Georgia, but the whole world was not worthy of the reign of Tamar. And merciful God took care of his heritage. Tamar died at the time of her sojourn in T'abakhmela.

Great, inexpressible misfortune befell the inhabitants of Georgia. Terribly grieved, they cried and strewed their heads with ashes and earth, and the *atabag* and all the others with them. Howls were heard recalling the howls of Atads,³¹⁷ and weeping, reminding us of the weeping of Jeremy at the time of the devastation of Jerusalem. And all that should have taken place! The inhabitants of the country everywhere, in all the places became emaciated because of so much weeping and lamentation. Everybody talked of her inexpressible virtues, her mercy, justice, generosity and humility. And they brought her to Gelati, a place that belonged to her inheritance, and buried her in the holy grave. She left the kingdom to her son Lasha.

5

10

NOTES

¹ Exodus 3.

² Exodus 4.

³ Song of Songs 7, 1.

⁴ That is, of a monarch.

⁵ A rock, according to the Scriptures is one of the symbols of Christ.

⁶ Davidid, Khosrovid, P'ank'rat'id – are titles of the Georgian kings. The first of them, Davidid, is linked to the name of the Hebrew King and prophet David, from whom the Georgian kings claimed descent. The second title, Khosrovid, is connected with Kai-Khosrau of the *Shah-Nameh* or some other Khosrau. Khosrau (from this the Georgian Khvasrovani, Khuasroani) is the title that designates a strong, powerful and glorious king. The third title, P'ank'rat'id, is connected with the name of Pancratius, in Georgian – Bagrat', one of the mythical descendants of the Hebrew King David (Uriah the Hittite); Bagrat' supposedly came to Georgia and Armenia and founded the dynasties of the P'ank'rat'ids and Bagrat'ionis.

⁷ Genesis 10:8-9.

⁸ The sons of Haos, implies the Armenians. Haos – is the ethnonym of the Armenian people. In this case, the historian means the annexation of certain regions of Armenia by Georgia.

⁹ The author means the work of Plutarch (46-120) *The Parallel Biographies*.

¹⁰ From the Greek Βασιλογροφος, which according to the author means *The Story of Kings*, see K. K'ek'elidze, *ramdenime jer k'idev gaurk'veveli t'ermini chveni saist'orio mts'erlobisa (Some Yet not Explained Terms of Our Historic Script)*, Tbilisi: Tbilisi State University, 1925, Vol. 5, pp. 310-312.

¹¹ Luke 3:38.

¹² Giorgi III, father of Tamar (1156-1184), Demet're I, father of Giorgi (1125-1156), David IV the Restorer (1089-1125), father of Demet're. Besides Giorgi, Demet're had one more son, David V, who reigned for several months in 1155.

¹³ One of the Georgian philosophers of the eleventh century. K. K'ek'elidze, *kartuli lit'erat'uris ist'oria: dzveli p'eriodi (The History of the Georgian Literature: The Ancient Period)*, Tbilisi: 1942, vol. 2, pp. 316-318.

¹⁴ Genesis 27.

¹⁵ Macedonian.

- 16 A hero of *Shah-Nameh* of Firdawsi.
- 17 A hero of the “Iliad” of Homer.
- 18 A biblical character (Judges 13-16).
- 19 A biblical character (Genesis 10:8, Genesis. 1, 10).
- 20 A hero of “Shah-Nameh”.
- 21 A hero of “Shah-Nameh,” Tahamtan – is Rustem, or Rost'om in Georgian.
- 22 A hero of “Shah-Nameh”.
- 23 Goliath – a giant, a biblical character (1 Kings 16:4, 21:9, 22:10, 20:5; 2 Kings 21:19).
- 24 Solomon, a Hebrew King, a sage, son of David.
- 25 Socrates, Plato – ancient Greek philosophers.
- 26 One of the North Caucasian rulers of the time.
- 27 Matthew 5:45.
- 28 St. Iren, though a pagan, was called Penelope.
- 29 The Mother of God.
- 30 Gorgaslid, that is, according to the chronicle and legends; descendants of the glorious Georgian King of the fifth century, Vakht'ang Gorgasal.
- 31 2 Kings 7:12.
- 32 The seven main territorial-administrative units, which made up Georgia at that time.
- 33 The triple denomination of the followers of the Mohammedan faith.
- 34 The Amiers and Imiers: the inhabitants of Georgia were divided by the Likhi (Surami) mountain range. Those who lived on the western side of the mountain ridge were called Imiers, from this comes the name of the region of Imereti; and those who lived on the east side of the ridge were called Amiers (Eastern Georgia).
- 35 The territory of Eastern Georgia, known by the name of Kartli, was divided into three parts: Upper, Lower and Inner Kartli.
- 36 *Didebulis* – those who made up the top layer of the *aznauris*. *Aznauris* were generally “free” in the social sense, but were divided into simple *aznauris* or common gentry; *didebulni aznaurni*, or just *didebulni*; and noble *aznauris*, who besides differing in birth and the size of their properties, also occupied state positions.
- 37 The Georgian terms “sp'asalar” and “sp'asp'et” designated heads, or chiefs and commanders of the troops.
- 38 Ours – domestic, and foreigners – outsiders. This refers to the subjects of the state of Georgian and non-Georgian nationality.
- 39 K'aghdzevan – Kagizman, a town in Armenia.
- 40-41 Ashornia – one of the regions of Armenia, seized by the Muslim ruler Shah-Armen, the ruler of the region situated to the north-west of lake Vani. Shah-Armen, the ruler of Khat, was the son of Ibrahim Nassir-Addin-Suklian (1128-1183). S. Lane-Poole, *Mohammadan Dynasties (Muslim Dynasties)*, London, 1894. p. 143. Because he seized the lands of Armenia, he called himself king and Sultan of Armenia.
- 42 Dvin or Dovin – the ancient capital of Armenia.
- 43 An Armenian legend about the turning of the Armenian king Trdat' into a wild boar, as punishment for his opposition to the missionary activity of Gregory of Parthia, the enlightener of Armenia.
- 44 2 Kings 1:22.
- 45 Most probably, Bakhram Chubin, who rebelled against Khosrov Parviz and seized power in 589.
- 46 The goddess of Greek mythology, Artemis; here she is called “Mtafolo.” This name “mtafole” is, in our opinion, a distortion (not by the historian, but by the copyist of his work) of the epithet Artemis Ελαφιβόλος (Elafivolo). The distortion of this epithet probably took place graphically: the Georgian “e” in ecclesiastical minuscule writing could have been twisted into “m,” “l,” “t,” or “iv,” if the word was under the title and reduced, it could be shortened; and so “elafivolo” of the historian could have been transformed into “mtafole” of the copyist, and then into the “History of Tamar.”
- 47 Anisi – the city of Ani, the capital of Armenia (in the ninth–eleventh centuries), which for a time was controlled by the Byzantine Empire; in 1123 it was seized by David the Restorer, the Georgian King; from 1161, it became part of the Georgian kingdom.
- 48 One of the Muslim emirs.

49 The Georgian term *mandat'urtukhutsesi* is a translation of the Byzantine term “protomandator.”

50 *Amirsp'asalar*, from the word *amir* – head, governor, and *sp'asalar* – commander, which means a “chief commander.”

51 Syria.

52 Mesopotamia.

53 A town in the upper reaches of the Tigris and Euphrates.

54 Son of Ardokh was the ruler of Diyarbakir in Mardan, Kutb Ad-Din Il-Gazis (1152-1176); he really came from the family of Ortok (S. Len-Pul, *op. cit.*). This Ardokh, according to historians, put to flight Ivane Abuletsidze, who was assigned by David the Restorer the ruler of Anisi and was killed by Demet're, son of David, in 1145. Historians do not know the reason for his murder; it may be supposed that it was caused by his flight from Ardokh and banishment from Anisi.

55 Saldukh – the ruler of Erzerum, Al-Malik Salik or Saltukh, who in 1153-4 was an emir and was still alive in 1164-5. I. Javakhishvili, *kartveli eris ist'oria (History of the Georgian People)*, Tbilisi:1965, vol 2.

56 Psalm 44:4-5.

57 Likhi Mountains – Surami Pass.

58 Alexander of Macedon.

59 A vast place between Kiziq'i and the Alazani river.

60 *Msakhurtukhutsesi*: literally – the head of notaries; taking into consideration his functions, he could be equated with a prime minister; in the manuscripts he is called “the first among the viziers.”

61 The well-known war of the ancient Greeks with the Persian kings Xerxes and Artaxerxes.

62 1 Kings 25.

63 Fridon – Feridun, a character of the *Shah-Nameh* of Firdawsi.

64 Achilles – a hero of the Trojan War; the author compares Giorgi III to him.

65 Literally – troops, but in this work, particularly in this case, the term “lashkarni” means also “knights.”

66 Here Alexander of Macedon.

67 Siaosh – a hero of the “Shah-Nameh.”

68 Joshua 10:12-14.

69 *tavadis* – princes; here the main and most important part of the nobility.

70 Patron – a social term, means protector, suzerain.

71 Amir – ruler.

72 Tamar, the daughter of King David IV, the Restorer, was married to the Shah of Shirvan. After the death of her husband, she returned to Georgia and occupied herself with bringing up her nephew, Giorgi.

73 The Georgian term *khelmtsipe* usually means “a king, a monarch.” But when it is obvious from the context that there is no question of a king, as in this case, we translate it as “sovereign.”

74 Zaratustra – Zoroaster, founder of fire worshipping.

75 Somkhiti: in this as in the other historical monuments of Georgia, two geographical terms – Somkhети and Somkhiti – are used. The first of them usually designates Armenia, and the second – Somkhiti – or Armenia as well as the lowest part of Georgia, between the river Mt'k'vari and the northern border of Armenia. Sometimes it is not easy to guess what we should understand by “Somkhiti” – Armenia in its proper sense, or Southern Georgia. The only clue we can get from the context, or the analysis of the names of one or the other of the well known places. The historian of David the Restorer says that “Lore and Agara were in Somkhiti,” or “the fortress of Somkhiti, Gagi” (copy of Queen Mary, pp. 299, 310); “when the Turks learned of the seizure of Samshvilde, they left most of the fortresses of Somkhiti” (copy of Queen Anna, p. 210). In our case “Somkhiti” probably means Southern Georgia, because the fortress of Gagi is mentioned, which is located in the southern part of Georgia.

76 Ovses – Ossetians.

77 Eleketsi responds to Eklets, the same as Akilisene of upper Armenia, by the head of the Euphrates; the center of Suni, where geographer Vakhushiti (eighteenth century) places the river of Ekletsis-ts'q'ali. In this case it is probably Suni.

78 Hereti – the north-eastern province of the Georgian kingdom, adjacent to K'akheti.

79 Gelakuni – an area in Armenia by lake Sevan.
80 Lori and Dmanisi are located in Southern Kartli.
81 A well-known collection of parables.
82 Biblical characters.
83 Jesus Christ, according to the Bible was a descendant of the Hebrew king and prophet David.
84 Cross-bearer – a person who bore a cross at the front of the army.
85 Psalm 103, 9.
86 Western Georgia.
87 The Caspian Sea.
88 T'aoans, K'larjis, Shavshians, Meskhis, Torelians – inhabitants of south-western Georgia, which was known as T'ao-Klarjeti. Oltisi, and Bana.
89 The town of Kars.
90 Somkhitars – inhabitants of Somkhiti.
91 Heris – inhabitants of the province of Hereti; K'akhis – or those from the province of K'akheti.
92 Shirvan – the dominions of the Shirvan-Shahs, who were in vassalage to Georgia.
93 3 Paralipomenon 14:33-39.
94 The comparison is not correct; it was not on Mount Sinai.
95 3 Paralipomenon 18:44, 45, 19:7-8.
96 An area in western Georgia, not far from Kutaisi, a seasonal residence of the kings.
97 The Georgian kings of the Bagrat'id dynasty, allegedly came from the Hebrew King David and his son Solomon.
98 Andronicus Comnin was a nephew of Emperor Manuel I Comnin (1143-1180). He was the son of Giorgi III's aunt on his father's side, the daughter of David IV the Restorer, K'at'a, who was married to the brother of Manuel Comnin.
99 King of Shirvan and coastal Aghsartan, he was related to Giorgi in the same manner as Andronicus Comnin: he was the son of the other aunt of Giorgi III on his father's side, the daughter of David the Restorer, Tamar, who was married to the ruler of Shirvan.
100 Lands and a town by the Caspian Sea.
101 Present-day Karabakh.
102 Masis – Ararat Minor.
103 Barda or Berda, the main city of Arran, not far from where the Terter river joins the Mt'k'vari.
104 A fortress built in the fifth century by King Vakht'ang Gorgasali, not far from Tbilisi.
105 Here, a distinguished feudal family, the Orbelianis, most influential in the state's life.
106 Inhabitants of Samtskhe.
107 2 Kings 13-19.
108 Mark 7:10-11.
109 This fortress was situated in Somkhiti.
110 Territory in Somkhiti.
111 Also in Somkhiti, not far from Tbilisi.
112 The Kartlians, the inhabitants of Kartli, a main part of Eastern Georgia.
113 *Mejinibetukhutsesi* – chief of the grooms of the king's court.
114 *Eristavi* – the ruler of a region or province.
115 Nach'armagevi is situated not far from the town of Gori, now the village of Q'araleti.
116 Two Georgian patriarchs: of Eastern and Western Georgia.
117 Psalm 67:17.
118 Daniel 2:31-35.
119 2 Kings 3:3.
120 Genesis 2:13.
121 The kingdom of Jerusalem, founded in the twelfth century by the crusaders. At the time of Giorgi III, the kings were: Baldwin III (1143-1162), Amalrikh (1162-1173) and Baldwin IV (1173-1184).
122 This incomprehensible term in the manuscript we translate as "Beirutians"

123 Matthew 23:35.

124 Isani – a place in Tbilisi on so called Avlabar, where the king's palace was located.

125 Samshilde – a town in Somkhiti, in Southern Kartli.

126 Joshua 10:12.

127 *Mech'urch'letukhutsesi* – a keeper, or manager of the treasury, its functions corresponded to the functions of a minister of finance.

128 *Ch'ukhch'arkh* – the king's bodyguard. K. K'ek'elidze, *ist'oriani da azmani sharavandedtani (The History and Eulogy of Monarchs)*, Tbilisi: 1941, pp. 11-17.

129 *Msakhurtukhutsesi* – the chief of the officials at the court, the minister of the court.

130 Biblical characters.

131 Daniel 3:92.

132 Tamar's aunt, the sister of Giorgi III, a former queen of Khorasan; after the death of her husband she returned to Georgia, to her brother Giorgi.

133 Here, the belief in the Hebrew origin of the Georgian Bagrat'ids.

134 Genesis 14:18-19.

135 There really is such a legend in Christian writings.

136 Rach'a and Tak'veri – provinces in Western Georgia.

137 Genesis 1:4-5.

138 Parables 9, 1.

139 Psalm 118:164.

140 Ecclesiastes 11:2.

141 Matthew 18:21-22.

142 The Georgian kings considered themselves to be related to the Roman emperor Augustus, and they often called themselves "Augustians."

143 Pythodoros and Kritias. Pythodoros – a well known architect of the time of Alexander of Macedon; he built the temple of Athena in Priene. Kritias, if he is not connected in some way with building, may be Critias the Younger (fifth century B.C.) an educated man, whom Plato mentions in his dialogue "Critias" (Timaeus). But here it seems Pythodoros and Kritias are the well-known Greek architects of the fifth century B.C.

144 A character in the *Shah-Nameh* of Firdawsi.

145 Here, the ecclesiastical practice of a second marriage, sanctioned in the Byzantine Empire in the twelfth century.

146 2 Kings 2.

147 Those falling desperately in love traditionally withdrew from human society and lived in deserts and unpopulated places where they communicated only with wild animals and beasts.

148 *Ch'q'ondideli* – the bishop of Martvili, often combined with the position of *mts'ignobartukhutsesi* (prime minister).

149 Darbazi – Council of State.

150 A province in Western Georgia.

151 Kartli, K'akheti and Hereti – provinces in Eastern Georgia.

152 The right to "sit on the cushion" in the Council of State was a particular privilege.

153 A province in south-western Georgia.

154 Alexander of Macedon.

155 A south-western province of Georgia.

156 Matthew 5:3-11.

157 Characters in the *Shah-Nameh* of Firdawsi.

158 Characters in the Georgian work of the twelfth century, *Amiran–Darejaniani*.

159 The amorous couple Khosrov and Shirin in the work *Khosrov–Shiriniani*.

160 Characters in the work *Amiran–Darejaniani*.

161 Biblical characters.

162 Pelop (Pelops), according to mythology was the son of Tantalus and the grandson of Zeus; he went to Paza in order to marry Hippodamia, the daughter of king Oenomaus.

163 Mythological Pluto, who fell in love with Persephone, daughter of Zeus and Demeter.

- 164 Characters in the work *Vis-o-Ramin*.
- 165 Characters in the *Shah-Nameh* of Firdawsi.
- 166 Characters of a lost work of Eastern origin, by the poet Onsoni (died in 1039).
- 167 Andrei Bogolyubsky.
- 168 Vsevolod.
- 169 Q'ivchaq's – Q'ipchaks.
- 170 Alexei, according to the opinion of Academician M. Brosset (M. Brosset, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 41, not. 1) was the son of Andronicus Comnin (see note 98); he was Tamar's relative.
- 171 A region of Kartli between the towns of Gori and Tskhinvali.
- 172 Tamar's husband Giorgi was so called because by his birth he was the son of a Russian great prince and by his position he was the King of the Abkhazians, as they called the Georgians in the Byzantine Empire at that time.
- 173 K'ari – Kars.
- 174 Basiani – a country in the upper reaches of the river Araxes, to the north of Erzurum.
- 175 Countries to the north-east of Lake Sevan in Armenia.
- 176 P'alakatsio – an area in Trialeti by the lake of P'alakatsio, known by the name of paravanis-t'ba. Dzagin, according to the geography of Vakhushiti, is situated in Kartli, to the north of the Tigvi Monastery.
- 177 In south-western Georgia.
- 178 Erzurum.
- 179 T'ao – in medieval times, a country in south-western Georgia.
- 180 That is, officially; appointed on state service according to a particular order.
- 181 The inhabitants of Upper, Lower and Middle Kartli.
- 182 Gelakuni – at the time a country in south-eastern Georgia.
- 183 Sham – Syria.
- 184 Kizil-Arslan must be the son of Eldiguz, who in 1186 took possession of the whole patrimony of Adarbadagan (M. Brosset, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 418, note 1; S. Len-Pul, *op. cit.*).
- 185 Bela'oni, corresponds to Belakan, according to Iakuti, and is situated not far from Derbent, adjoined to Shirvan (contemporary Belo'ani in Saingilo).
- 186 The siege of Constantinople by the Scythians and Avars in 626.
- 187 Apparently, Manuel I, Comnin (1143-1180).
- 188 Andronicus I, Comnin (1183-1185).
- 189 Saldukh – the emir of K'arin (Erzurum), Mutafradin – Mozaffer Edin (M. Brosset, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 418, not 3).
- 190 King Demet're I (1125-1155).
- 191 The Georgian King of the fifth century, Vakht'ang Gorgasali.
- 192 This refers to the defeat King Demet're I inflicted on the emir of Erzerum, Saldukh-Edin in 1153-54 at Anisi, where Saldukh was captured (I. Javakhishvili, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, pp. 225-256).
- 193 The central character of the work "Vis-o-Ramin."
- 194 Ran-Arran – the southern part of Albania of the Arabian geographers, between the Araxes and Mt'k'vari.
- 195 Kings 9-10.
- 196 The domain of Shirvan.
- 197 That is, his seven times sacred body, which is the temple or abode of the Word of God.
- 198 Jonah 15:16.
- 199 Psalm 150:16, 1, 4.
- 200 The former queen of Khorasan, Tamar's aunt (on her father's side) and her educator.
- 201 Here, a prince from the dynasty of the Ossetian Bagrat'ids, who, as opposed to the Georgian Bagrat'ids (the Davidids), were called the Ephremids, that is, the descendants of the biblical Ephraim. K. K'ek'elidze, *erti momenti kartuli p'olit'ik'uri azrovnebisa k'lasik'uri khanis lit'erat'urashi (An Instant of Georgian Political Thinking in the Literature of the Classical Period)*, Tbilisi: TSU, 1942, vol. 25, pp. 43-49.
- 202 The author wants to say that David, being the Ephremid and not the Davidid, was nevertheless like one, who came from the seed of the Hebrew king and the Prophet David, or like the Davidid.
- 203 Psalm 115:2.

204 Countries of south-western Georgia.

205 The greatest feudal lord, who struggled with king Bagrat' IV.

206 The extreme north-western border of Georgia.

207 Samegrelo, or Mingrelia.

208 Lower Imereti.

209 Upper Imereti.

210 In this way, recruitment included almost the entire Western Georgia.

211 The whole Eastern Georgia has gathered.

212 The Archbishop of Kutaisi.

213 Contemporary Abastumani.

214 Exodus 11:6-7, 15:25.

215 Administered the lands and affairs of the former Armenian kingdom.

216 In south-western Georgia.

217 K'ola – an area in K'larjeti, on the upper reaches of the Mt'k'vari River.

218 Matthew 7:7-8.

219 Women, or the biblical characters who for a long time remained childless.

220 T'abakhmela – not far from Tbilisi, one of the residences of Queen Tamar.

221 A town in Palestine, where Christ was born.

222 The Eastern Sages, who according to the Gospel brought presents to the newborn Christ.

223 That is, not one king from the dynasty of Bagrat'ids.

224 The newborn prince was given the name Giorgi. "Lasha" is a nickname, which means "luminary," "brilliant."

225 Arran, in Georgian, Ran, see note 194.

226 Bardos – the eponym of the province of Barda with the town of the same name.

227 Haos – the eponym of the Armenians, who fought with the biblical Nimrod, as both Armenian and Georgian historians claim.

228 The ruler of Surmani in Armenia, near Dvin, close to the passage of Masis.

229 The ruler of Kars.

230 Numbers 24:17.

231 Khachiani, or Khachini-Khacheni – contemporary Karabakh.

232 Arezi – Araxes.

233 Ganja – now in Azerbaijan.

234 In southern Georgia, in so called Somkhiti.

235 A place in Azerbaijan.

236 The country was located on the territory of contemporary K'akheti (Kambisene of Strabon).

237 In K'akheti.

238 Judges 7.

239 The *atabag* of Adarbadagan, who declared himself the sultan in 1191, and was killed by the Molids.

240 The followers of the Muslim sect known by the name of Assassins.

241 The dynasty of the Pekhlevanids.

242 The younger son's name was Uzbek (S. Len-Pul, *op. cit.*, p. 144).

243 Apparently contemporary Beloq'ani in Saingilo, or the town of Bailaq'an, seized by the Arabs at the time of Caliph Osman (644-656).

244 Psalm 111, 3:5.

245 A town in Shirvan.

246 Tamar's daughter, Queen Rusudan.

247 The troops were divided into separate regiments, which occupied the banks of four rivers.

248 A southern tributary of the river Mt'k'vari.

249 According to the geography of Vakhushti, this mountain in Southern Georgia separates Tashiri, Bambeki and Abotsi.

250 Exodus 36, 3 Kings 7:8.

- 251 From ancient Greek mythology.
- 252 Ossetian legendary heroes.
- 253 Characters of *Shah-Nameh* of Firdawsi.
- 254 “The new “Q’ivchaq’s” (Q’ipchaks) – newly arrived warriors from the lands of “Q’ivchaq’ia.”
- 255 Here are listed the inhabitants of almost all the regions and provinces of Georgia.
- 256 According to M. Brosset, it is Naser-Li-Din-Caliph, who reigned in 1190-1236. (M. Brosset, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 440, note 1).
- 257 Ch’arman, according to the Armenian historian Korun, was located by the river Mt’k’vari, near Tashiri; according to the testimony of the Armenian Catholicos John, it was situated between Khachen and Utia. It is unlikely to be Gardabani.
- 258 Mosimachus – a skilled archer, mentioned by Josephus Flavius.
- 259 Sind – in India.
- 260 One of the sons of Mameluke Eldiguz, who owned some towns in Adarbadagan (M. Brosset, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 433, note 5).
- 261 David Soslan in this case combined the title of a king, as Tamar’s husband, and of Sultan, as his conqueror.
- 262 August 15, 1121.
- 263 The relationship is understood here in the following sense: as the Mother of God came, according to the Bible, from the Hebrew King and the Prophet David, so the Georgian kings of the Bagrat’id dynasty, including, of course, Tamar, were the descendants of this same David.
- 264 According to one apocrypha, ascribed to Ephraim Sirin (fourth century A.D.), the Biblical Nimrod learned astrology from an astrologer and magician called Juniatan.
- 265 From the medieval work *Alexandria*.
- 266 Judges 20.
- 267 Masis – the mountain of Ararat.
- 268 Here, a Persian epic and political work by Kabus-Name, written in 1082 (K. K’ek’elidze, *ist’oriani da azmani sharavandedtani (History and Eulogies of Monarchs)*, KT, S. Q’aukhchishvili (ed.), Vol. 2, Tbilisi, 1959.; K. K’ek’elidze, *kartuli lit’erat’uris ist’oria (History of Georgian Literature)*, *op.cit.*,p. 294.
- 269 Matthew 5:33.
- 270 Typikon – a liturgical book which contains instructions on the order of the various Eastern Orthodox Christian church services and ceremonies. There were different editions of the Typicon, one of which was a Palestine (Jerusalem) version, accepted in Georgia in the twelfth century.
- 271 Different kinds of daily ecclesiastical services.
- 272 Psalm 54:7.
- 273 An area by lake Van.
- 274 *Vartap’et* – a teacher (Armenian).
- 275 Psalm 53:22.
- 276 Matthew 26:26-27.
- 277 John 6:53.
- 278 John 6:53.
- 279 Exodus 6:3.
- 280 Targamos, according to the Bible, Torgom was the alleged forefather of the Georgians and Armenians.
- 281 John 6:53, Luke 12:19.
- 282 Revelation 15:3.
- 283 Genesis 3:9.
- 284 Psalm 128:1-5.
- 285 A heathen deity, who the Hebrews refused to serve (1 Kings 7, 12, 10, 31, 10; 2, 3 and 4 Books of Samuel.
- 286 Famous troglodyte-like caves
- 287 An island which in Georgian is also called “Jali.”
- 288 According to M. Brosset, it was the Sultan of Iconium and Asia Minor, Roki-Ed-Din, who died in 1204 (M. Brosset, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 456, not. 2).

289 A province in south-western Georgia.
290 Contemporary Abastumani.
291 Ajameti – a place between the towns of Kutaisi and Vard-tsikhe.
292 Later, King Giorgi V, nicknamed Lasha (1215-1222).
293 Queen Rusudan, who succeeded Giorgi V (1222-1245).
294 Ardabil – to the west of the south end of the Caspian Sea, to the north of Gilan.
295 Anisi – a famous medieval Armenian city.
296 The inhabitants of South-Western Georgia.
297 The inhabitants of Hereti and K'akheti – the countries of Eastern Georgia.
298 The inhabitants of southern Kartli.
299 According to the author, Rom-Gur is Khorasan, the central province of Persia.
300 That is, from Western Georgia to Eastern.
301 Merend, in the basin of the Urmi Lake, and to the north between Julfa and Tavriz.
302 Tavriz (in Georgian, Tavrezhi) – the capital of Persian Azerbaijan.
303 Miana – the town of Miane, between Meraga and Ardabil (V. Bartold, *op. cit.*, pp. 144, 148).
304 Q'azmin – Kazvin, to the south-west of Alamut (V. Bartold, *op. cit.*, pp. 139-141).
305 The town of Abkar, between Kazvin and Zenjan (V. Bartold, *op. cit.*, p. 140).
306 Gurgand (Jurjan) – a territory adjoining the southern end of the Caspian Sea (V. Bartold, *op. cit.*, pp. 77-80).
307 The Uzhenians, inhabitants of the town of Uzheni, or in Persian, Ujana, 8 farsangs (a historical Persian unit of distance comparable to the European league) from Tavriz, along the road to Miana (V. Bartold, *op. cit.*, p. 148).
308 The bearers of the name Mkhargrdzeli (in English, literally “long-armed”) maintained their descent from the Persian king Artaxerxes Longimanus; though in fact, it is a Georgian or Kurdish name.
309 *atabag*, explains the author, is “a sultanic position, which means – a father or educator of kings or sultans.”
310 Tselis-t'ba – the lake of Tseli; the location is unknown, most likely it was situated in western Georgia.
311 Tskhumi – Sukhumi.
312 The tribes of mountaineers, on the territory of the kingdom of Georgia.
313 The highest pass in the Greater Caucasus range.
314 Dzurzuketi, Pkhoeti and Didoeti lay along one line of the Main Caucasian Mountain range.
315 Roman Emperor (363-364).
316 Roman Emperor (306-307).
317 Genesis 50:10-11.

Basil Ezosmodzghvari

THE LIFE OF TAMAR, THE QUEEN OF QUEENS

Giorgi,¹ son of Demet're, who was the son of David, ascended to the throne in the year of 375 of *koronik'on*.² All the days of his life he spent in ease and reigned happily, increasing the favors for churches, monasteries and bishops. He had no children and that grieved him. At last, by the will of the Lord, an agreeable breeze blew and a daughter was born to the royal couple, a beautiful creature, devoid of any fault. The father gave her the name Tamar.

5

Several years passed, and King Giorgi died. There was grief and immense sorrow everywhere, and his sister, Rusudan,³ was especially prone to heartache. Rusudan was a former daughter-in-law of the Great Sultans of Shamiram,⁴ and a Queen, the bearer of power of all the rulers of Khuarasan. After she became a widow, she was brought back to her motherland from the Sultan's domains and she ascended the throne as Queen of Georgia, in order to glorify her family as well as our whole kingdom. At that time Tamar with her sister, who was also called "Rusudan,"⁵ lived at her aunt's. The narrative I am going to impart, affords me little opportunity to talk of Queen Rusudan, to relate how much beauty and excellence she displayed as compared with all the other queens that lived before her. However, I will dare to tell at least something; how, for instance, at eighty years of age she came to love celibacy⁶ and holiness and virtue in full.

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But let us continue after this brief interruption. Grief seized the most worthy of Giorgi's relatives, but seeing Tamar before them, the nobles of the kingdom were unwilling to prolong their grief. They shook off their sorrow, blew the trumpets, as was done in the name of Solomon,⁷ and placed her on the happy throne of Vakht'ang,⁸ with the crown of David, which was prepared formerly for the Moon⁹ by the King of Kings Sabaoth Elohim,¹⁰ so as to possess the word from sea to sea and from the rivers to the end of the world.¹¹ The nobles brought a scepter, a cross of wood, and the banner of David, which had never experienced the force of opposing winds. And all the people in unanimous exclamation handed to Tamar the parental sword and the throne, presented to her by her father.

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25

Did her great mind accept all this bravely? Not at all, and it could not be otherwise. Did she not deserve them – the crown and the symbol of the kingdom? Did she not become a magnet for everyone who beheld her? In ancient times, it was said that "whoever was born blind – would leave this world blind," meaning anyone who had not been able to see Tamar. Her constitution was perfect, with dark eyes, a rosy tint to her white cheeks; her demeanor was modest, she had a way

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of regally and freely casting her eyes around her; then, there was her pleasant and cheerful speech, her shunning of any familiarity; her voice charmed the ear, and her conversation, was devoid of any vestige of immorality. God endowed Tamar with such virtues it would be not excessive to say that her image was from the very beginning destined to gloriously realize the words of David, who said that

5 the kings and princes should worship him, and that the tribes should bring him gifts.

And so all lips praised God. Seeing the Queen, the bearer of the crown, the powerful and the priestly bowed before her and glorified her; she was worthy of the highest praise, which was accompanied by the blowing of horns. Those honored to see all this might have said that all the heavenly powers helped the inhabitants of the earth express their joy. But the most wonderful thing,

10 in my opinion, was that not one valorous warrior who could match her appeared on any other throne at this time. And all (of them), trusting in her grace, full of joy, outstripped one another to thank God and praise the Queen, thankful for their happiness.

Tamar, by God's will, ascended to the throne in the summer of the year six thousand six hundred and eighty six¹² from the creation of the world, in the four hundred and third year of *Kronik'on*. She

15 was the daughter of the King of Kings, Giorgi, son of Demet're, born of Giorgi's wife Burdukhan, daughter of the King of the Ossetians, the one, who, besides being Tamar's mother, exceeded all the other virtuous women in all respects. The country of Georgia and its King had seen no daughter-in-law like her; she was worthy of being honored by posterity and of the praise that passes from generation to generation.

What must be said of Tamar is her role as the Lord's deputy, who promoted the well-being of her kingdom and her people. Elevating her mind, but humble in her soul, she understood the heaviness of the task entrusted to her and, directing her eyes to her heavenly instructor, began to rule as the Holy Spirit inspired her. Observing everybody around her with joy and understanding, she discerned at once the sincere and the dishonest, the perfidious and pure, the faithful and the double-dealers.

20 And judging wisely, she, as a first measure, showered favors generously upon everybody, so that her loyal followers would be grateful, while the others were obliged to keep silence for the sake of justice.

In terms of faith, she was like a second Constantine; like him, she was intent on doing godly things. She began to sharpen her double-edged sword to eliminate the sources of evil, and called a council in order to define and establish the order of all the great and General Councils.

30

At once, she called back Nik'olaoz Gulaberisdze¹³ from the holy city of Jerusalem, who at one time had rejected the rank of Katholicos of Kartli, because of his modesty. When he arrived in Kartli she gathered all the clergy, the monks and hermits of her kingdom, and people well-versed in the law of God, in order to destroy the sources of evil that germinated in the soil of orthodoxy in her kingdom. And setting her kindly hopes upon God, she soon achieved victory in this too.

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And the bishops of both kingdoms gathered; at the head stood Nik'olaoz, who so resembled his namesake; and Ant'oni Kutateli Saghirisdze, the archbishop of Kutaisi, widely glorified for his virtues, powerful in his words and deeds.

Tamar received them with great simplicity, as a human being and not at all as a Queen, like

40 angels and not men; she gathered all of them in one room and seated them on thrones, herself

sitting separately at a little distance, not like a Queen, and she told them: “Oh, Holy Fathers, you are appointed by God as our teachers and the rulers of the Holy Church; you have to preach for the sake of our souls. Investigate everything thoroughly, sanction the just, and banish the unjust. Begin with me, because the halo that surrounds me is the halo of royal greatness and not of theomachy. Have no scruples with princes, because of their riches, and do not neglect paupers, because of their insignificance. Do with your words and I will do by my deeds, you with your teaching and I by suggestion, you with instruction and I by resolution; let all of us lend each other a helping hand, in order to preserve the laws of God from profanity, and escape punishment, you as priests and I as a Queen, you as rulers and myself as a guardian.” 5

Hearing these words the gathering of the fathers thanked God and the Queen, so enlightened by Him. And Tamar sat with them for some time, and then receiving a blessing from them, retired to her chamber. 10

And the leaders of the assembly, Nik’olaoz and Ant’oni, who like the dawn, outstripped the others and shone like a pair of stars in heaven, did not wish to have among their company the Katholikos of Kartli, because he thoroughly distorted the ecclesiastical rules, and managed to obtain from the Lord by perfidy the position of the archbishop of Ch’q’ondidi and the archbishop of Ats’q’uri, as well as of *mts’ignobartukhutsesi*.¹⁴ But they could not excommunicate him, despite trying mightily. However, they rid themselves of him soon enough, through God’s punishment. Other bishops were also dismissed, and godly men were assigned in their place; and they set right the ecclesiastical rules which were perverted by people who disregarded order. 15 20

When the council was coming to its end, the *sp’asalars*¹⁵ and *eristavis* of the kingdom entered the room and announced to the elders the need to bring, by common effort, into the royal house, a fiancé for Tamar, which was then done. They gathered before Queen Rusudan and by unanimous decision sent an envoy to the kingdom of Russia, for the Russian tribes professed Christianity and orthodoxy. But they made a mistake, because the envoy they sent was not adequate to the charge, and they did not know whom he would bring back with him. 25

After some time, the envoy returned and brought a man with him, rather highborn, stronger than all the other kings of his country and fair in appearance.¹⁶ Seeing him everybody liked him, but they knew nothing of his temperament.

The Patriarch¹⁷ and *didebulis*,¹⁸ *sp’asp’ets*¹⁹ and *eristavis*²⁰ gathered before Queen Rusudan; they proposed to Tamar to unite conjugally with the Russian, and urged her to do so. And she answered: “How can you expect me to take such a hasty step? We know nothing of the conduct of this foreigner, nor of his deeds, or his valor, nature or disposition. Let me wait till we see his virtues or shortcomings.” But they opposed her, talking of her childlessness, of the barrenness of her house, demanding a leader for the army, and pressing on her soul by every means. They resembled deer, which sees only a face; or an elephant, which does not ponder what he leans his back upon; they crowded in on her in every way, trying to solve such a difficult problem without great forethought. 30 35

At last, after long wrangling and contrary to her will, they celebrated the wedding and for a long time remained joyful, as was proper for such an important occasion.

Some days later Tamar's prophesy began to come true. The Russian displayed his Scythian manners: together with a loathsome drunkenness, he began to do many improper things, about which there is no place to write here, as I do not wish to drag out my narration.

5 Tamar, like an anvil, cheerfully endured for two and a half years the vices of the Russian, and no one besides her could stand it anymore. The people around her began to grieve, feeling at the same time shame for insisting on Tamar's union. And the wise Tamar began to look for some means for healing him; she admonished him many times along with worthy monks, though it was to no benefit for the Russian. So at last she began to accuse him face to face. But the Russian grew yet more furious, like a man whom God had stripped of his cover. As it is said in the Scriptures: "We
10 tried to heal Babylon, but could not cure it."²¹ He not only rejected all advice, but began to commit still more destructive offences; he subjected honorable men to beating and to torture by tearing off their members.

All that became unbearable for Tamar, and she said to him in front of all the others: "I am taught by the law of God that a man should not leave his first conjugal bed,²² but you should not patiently
15 stay with a man who does not keep his bed pure, because he profanes the temple of God. I am unable to straighten the shadow of a crooked tree, and feel no guilt on my side; I must shake off the dust which has stuck to me from you." With that, she got up and left him. And Queen Rusudan and all the princes banished him in a way that might lead us to pity him. He himself felt wretched not so much because of his fall from the royal throne, but because of the loss of the Tamar's charms.

20 Again, everybody began grieving, because they saw Tamar childless and a lonely occupant of her house.

And there was a son of the Ossetian King, brought up by Rusudan, a youth beautiful in appearance as befits a King's son, and excellent in other respects. And what about his upbringing? He was a well-bred, brave, a powerful fighter, a knight who had no equal, a courageous archer,
25 strong of body and perfect in all the virtues.

Everybody wanted him to unite with Tamar, and they entrusted everything to God. Tamar submitted to their will, because she knew the youth. Without delay they gathered in Didube and united David²³ and Tamar with conjugal bonds. From there they came to Tbilisi, and the two celestial
30 bodies, two Suns, which illuminated the earth, mounted the happy thrones. And all the people rejoiced, young and old.

The signs of a happy life were evident: they undertook victorious campaigns into the upper and lower regions, and there was no enemy anywhere.

The Katholicos of Kartli, *ch'q'ondidel-mts'ignobartukhutsesi*, Mikael, son of Mirian, who owned Samtavisi,²⁴ died, but nobody was sorry for him, neither great, nor small, because everybody
35 despised him.

*Amirsp'asalar*²⁵ Gamrek'eli died, and everybody grieved for him.

At that time a small uprising was organized by the Imeretians and Svans, due to the lack of order among them. And they brought the Russian with them, in order to make him king again. They also urged the Meskhis to join them, which they were not just unable to do, but still more turning
40 them against themselves. The rebels were put to flight and, disgraced, they returned to their homes, for God was caring about Tamar.

Tamar prayed to God thinking about whom she might entrust David and her army to; and everything was subordinated to the power of her house. And in this respect, too, God, did not put her to shame, but filled her with wisdom and knowledge. And looking from above upon all the distinguished people of her kingdom, and considering everything in her mind, she entrusted the whole issue to God, and summoned Ant'oni Glonistavidze from Gareji, who was once a *ch'q'ondideli*, but was deprived of this rank by Mikael, the Katholicos of Kartli, due to the perfidy of a number of the King's advisers. They brought him to her. He was a praiseworthy man, a true Christian, honest, sincere, pure, kind, merciful to everybody, sympathetic, modest, and infinitely faithful to his master. There is no need to talk of his care for the churches and monasteries; his deeds testify to this everywhere: in Mghvime and in K'larjeti, as well as in all the other places there were monasteries founded by him. He was appointed a vizier, and given Ch'q'ondidi, Samtavisi, K'isiskhevi and the post of *mts'ignobartukhutsesi*. If an honest man stumbles, he still will not fall. 5 10

And they began to judge and consider what is good for the kingdom and best for the people.

So they called the two sons of *amirsp'asalar* Sargis Mkhargrdzeli – Zachariah and Ivane – wise and brave men, well-trying, and, according to family tradition, loyal to kings, for which they were greatly valued by Tamar's grandfathers. Tamar turned her eyes to them, trusting God, and she favored them and granted to Zachariah the post of *amirsp'asalar* and to his younger brother Ivane – the post of *msakhurtukhutsesi*.²⁶ They were worthy people, and being Armenians by faith, they respected orthodoxy. Ivane was an expert in the Holy Scripture, thanks to which he perceived the wrongness of the faith of the Armenians,²⁷ baptized himself and became a true Christian. 15 20

After that they called Ch'iaber, also an honest and faithful man, and gave him the post of *mandat'urtukhutsesi*.²⁸

Day by day Tamar's affairs became more successful, and the government of the country was more honest and wiser.

Starting from here, anyone who wishes to describe the successes of Tamar in her undertakings, would need a broad mind and a judicious tongue. As nobody can count every single hair on the head of a man, so none can describe Tamar's deeds, and if somebody could do it, it would be doubted by posterity. 25

But we know a lion by its claws, and Tamar by her deeds; who wants to know her, let him see the towns, fortresses and regions, which once belonged to the sultans and were taken by her; the frontiers, which she doubled in size compared to those she received on ascending the throne, and which were the ultimate limits of the kingdom. The person seeking the truth regarding the works of Tamar will recognize her by these things. Let him learn of the tribute she laid upon the lands, which stretched from Georgia to Iraq and from Baghdad to Maragha.²⁹ It is enough (to say) that the Caliph, in person, prays to the Creator for mercy. 30 35

Thanks to the grace of God, the Christian people lived happily, though everybody worried and grieved on account of Tamar's childlessness.

But God, who turned His eyes upon Manoah and Abraham, and the women Hannah and Elisabeth, here too, did not lose much of His time.³⁰ A little later Tamar conceived. Learning of this, everybody began performing litanies, fasting, praying and crying – imploring God to give her a son. 40

And so it happened; she gave birth to a son, who resembled his grandfather very much. And he was given the name Giorgi. And everybody rejoiced, feeling inexpressible joy.

One year later she conceived again and bore Rusudan, who was of her likeness, on which occasion everybody rejoiced still more.

5 And the country became still happier because of the accumulation of all kinds of earthly goods, and because of the victories gained by the army.

The Georgians began to devastate Persia from every side, winning amazing victories: the occupants of the fortresses abandoned them when ordered to do so. Every man was enriched by the taking of prisoners and the spoils of war. And those among the enemy who managed to escape hid themselves like foxes, and crept into holes like moles.

10 The Persians were pressed on all sides; they were seized by powerlessness and cherished only one hope, the hope to escape with their own death. So they gathered together, and painting their clothes and faces, appeared before the Caliph and informed him of their misfortunes, asking him to mobilize the whole of Persia³¹ to help them. And the Caliph did as he was asked: he opened ancient treasuries and sent (his) people secretly all over Persia. He gave them gold in abundance so that they would gather as many troops as possible from all the countries that belonged to Persia. And he gave an order that if from some principalities of Persia people refused to come, they should be attacked, and the place where they lived, devastated. And so it happened.

15 Troops began to gather, flowing from the regions of Romgur³² and India and further afield from Samarkand and Daruband. They were without number, and there was no place enough for them in any one country. They gathered in Adarbadagan,³³ and only then did they reveal their hostile intentions.

20 Tamar was informed of all this. She called all her viziers and took counsel with them. She ordered Ant'oni Ch'q'ondideli³⁴ firmly, though without any rudeness: "Quickly write and send out a decree on the immediate mobilization of our army, and then ask all the churches and monasteries everywhere to perform night services and litanies. Send money and all the necessities to paupers, so they can find time for prayers and can propitiate God so that the unbelieving have no occasion to ask: "Where is their God?"

25 And her order became a fact. Ten days after that, all the warriors flocked together like falcons from all sides, joyful, hardly restraining themselves. They gathered in Somkhiti.³⁵ Tamar arrived. She observed them. She remained there for some days to take part in public prayers. Then she told them: "My brothers, let not your hearts tremble for fear that there are so many of them, while you are so few, for God is with us. You have heard of Gideon and the three hundred men he commanded, and of the countless Medianites he defeated, and of the camp of the Assyrians which was destroyed in a moment by an angel in answer to Ezekias' prayer.³⁶ Trust only one God, strengthen your hearts before Him with truth, and set your hopes without reserve on the cross of Christ. Now with the help of the Holy Mother of God, storm their country and assault the enemy with the power of the invincible Cross."

30 She prayed and entrusted them to God, and placed the life giving cross in front of them as their guide, and sent Ant'oni Ch'q'ondideli with them.

Taking off her shoes, she went barefoot to the church of the Mother of God in Met'ekhi, then falling down before the holy icon and shedding tears, she did not cease praying until God fulfilled her requests. A few days later Sargis Mkhargrdzeli-Tmogveli came and brought the wonderful news with him of the victory of the army,³⁷ and added that (Georgian) troops suffered no harm.³⁸

But now we have to relate about the help our troops received from the tears of Tamar. They entered the enemy's country and saw their forces camped between Ganja and Shamkhor, like numerous locusts.

They dismounted their horses at once, bowed to God and prayed before the holy cross with tears in their eyes, and like eagles they dashed upon the enemy and struck them like tigers. Using their arms and God's power, in the very first attack they threw confusion into the enemy troops, which outnumbered ours by ten. They destroyed them like mice, and caught like little chickens the great *amirs* of Baghdad and Mosul, and those from Africa³⁹ and Iraq, Adarbadagan and Iran, and from many other places where the enemy had drawn its auxiliary troops, such as, for example, the detachment of butchers from India. They brought them to King David by their beards. And the great, wonderful and extreme assistance of God could be seen in everything, because the enemies themselves brought their merchandise, they drove in loaded camels and mules and themselves guarded the spoils and prisoners, which had been taken from them. And Atabek Bubakar,⁴⁰ who boasted once of his great horse and his power, finding some small hollow, buried himself there in the earth.

Lavishly showered with God's favors, the army reached Ganja. The citizens came out to meet them, asking for peace, and sacrificed their town by their own decision. They brought David into the palace, seated him on the throne intended for sultans, sounded the Sultan's *panjanobat*⁴¹ and presented a great feast, gorging themselves on pork. Every one of the Ganjians brought rich presents and tribute; the Georgians opened the treasury and took many refined cups and dishes, together with many other treasures. And for a few days they camped outside the town, for they wanted to catch the Atabek, but they could not find him.

In a similar way, the Shamkhorians begged for peace and protection. Here Zachariah and Ivane had poorly managed things, but that was the only flaw in their complete victory. There was a man, a Persian, a son-in-law of the Shirvan-shah, by the name of Mirmiran.⁴² He approached Tamar with some request and found protection with her. At the time he was in David's service; and this Mirmiran solicited Ganja for himself, and it was given to him for preservation, before they even informed Tamar.

As soon as Bubakar learned of the turning back of our troops, he appeared before Ganja and the Ganjians handed the town over to him, but he let Mirmiran off alive, fearing vengeance.

After the passing of a few days, the troops came home to Georgia, feeling great joy on account of this Olympian victory, worthy of much greater praise than the victory gained by Alexander over Darius.

When they approached Tbilisi, Tamar came out to meet them, for Sargis Tmogveli had already appeared before her as a herald. She rejoiced and thanked God, and asked each of the coming men about his health, considering them as her children. And they rejoiced to see her.

All the fields around Tbilisi were overcrowded, and could contain no more people, horses, mules or camels. So great was the number of captives that they were brought into the town and sold for a wooden measure of flour. Witness to this is the truthful God, whose name I mention here so that no reader in future times will consider it a lie or a fairy tale.

5 In fact, the distinguished men,⁴³ Zachariah and Ivane, took one fifth from the royal treasury of the vanquished, and lined up the camels, all with packs, and the horses, all with decorations, in the valley of Didube; and these lines stretched down to Avch'ala. They lined up also the captured leaders, each with his banner. And the first among the banners was the banner of the Caliph, then of the Atabek and so on, one after the other. They lined up all the prisoners from the city gates down
10 to the ravine of Gldani. They were brought in a stately manner to Tamar and offered her the spoils as a gift, and brought to her all the leaders of Persia who bowed in subjection before her.

They bowed to her and congratulated her on the happy reign that God had granted her.

After that they entered the city, and each offered his gifts: gold and adornments and utensils of gold, precious stones and priceless pearls, chainmail, helmets, well-used swords, colored and gold-
15 brocaded cloths and rich dresses, horses and mules, golden necklaces, studded by precious stones and pearls, different kinds of incense and aromatic substances, all brought in copper vessels. They offered everything, starting with the fortress of Anak'opia and ending with the fortress of Gulist'an.⁴⁴ The estates⁴⁵ of *aznauris* were overfilled with prisoners, and all the treasuries with gold, as if it was dirt, and Indian stones and many precious pearls.

20 But did Tamar's heart become a little prouder due to all these things? Did she demonstrate arrogance by haughtily lifting her brows?

Not in the least!

On the contrary, she kept herself yet more modest before God, offering Him thanks and asking for mercy. She filled the hands of those who asked her for help, and filled the skirts of beggars;
25 she enriched institutions that cared for churches, widows and orphans, paupers and all the needy in general. To please God, she presented her kingdom to the One, who entrusted her with its governance, and she donated to Him, who gave her everything from His rich and inexhaustible vessels, her wealth.

30 She differed from the kings of old by her deeds, and she was far ahead of those of her time who did novel things, by doing yet newer and more important ones, some of which we have related above. I will state the words of the Scripture: "There was firmness in our country and peace on the peaks of the mountains."

And not only wealth grew in our country, but faith strengthened; the churches were adorned in every way, the services, including the night ones, were held in increased number, particularly in the
35 palace, where the rites of the sacrament were performed continuously. But why prattle on so much? God's grace was increasing, and the evil that comes from the devil, decreasing.

Each labored in his way to earn the approval of Tamar, and she, too, appointed such people to prominent places for their worthy deeds. Those on the frontiers (*monap'ireni*)⁴⁶ labored day and night, without a moment's rest, and the ones serving in the kingdom's interior, longed to be sent to the
40 border areas. And such diligence and zeal from everybody's side brought (in the end) the kingdom

to such a strong position. The first lower border point was Gagi, which was owned by Zachariah Mkhargrdzeli, father of Varam; both were the frontier guards there, both brave and victorious in battles, deserving great praise in their godliness and devotion to their master.

Further up, the border followed the rivers of Dzorak'ert'⁴⁷ and T'ashir; from there Zachariah and Ivane began to fight like lions, first in the upper and lower regions,⁴⁸ and then in other places. Further up was Javakheti, where the border guards were Sargis Mkhargrdzeli-Tmogveli and Shalva Toreli. Still further was Art'aani,⁴⁹ where the border guards were the Meskhis, and Q'varq'vare among them, the *sp'asalar* of Samtskhe, Jaq'eli, always a victorious man and faithful to kings.

On the side of Shavsheti and Sp'eri was Panask'ert'i. There in the mountains of Shavsheti one man, Asp'aanisdze by name, had shown himself an able man. He was of noble birth and behaved decently. His first name was Zachariah. He did not shame his name and did not let his master's favors go to waste; on the contrary, he devoted his life to praiseworthy deeds. He performed many great acts: he seized Bana, Khakhuli and other glorious fortresses and places.

Down on the border, the frontier guards were the K'erdz Grigolisdzes and, particularly, T'beli and Mahat'lisdze, who inspired such fear that in Ganja and Barda⁵⁰ even a child could not cry in his mother's hands, and the Turks could do no damage to the pastures on the banks of the Iori and Mt'k'vari.

But reading all this, let nobody think that anybody (ever) did anything without Tamar's knowledge; you have to understand: the frontier guards if they found something to do, a fortress to seize, or heard of the approach of the Turkmans or had to destroy a town, or ravage a country, they would first report to Tamar, and she herself considered and investigated the issue. If it was worth calling in the army, she ordered Zachariah or Ivane to gather troops, while King David, who had always returned victorious from all his campaigns, led these armies himself.

If the issue was not so important, she ordered the palace troops⁵¹ to mount their horses at once, and like falcons, they did their job. If she was in the field, or at a hunt, or by herself at home, and she learned of the designs of her enemies, she would immediately order some worthy men to their horses, and they would frighten the enemy, like eagles scare partridges.

And she, too, never being idle herself, did not allow her knights to remain inactive; this is what one chronicler says of Alexander.

And the truth of these words will be confirmed by the following: one year's income of the glorious city of Tbilisi could not even cover gifts to the messengers who brought in happy news. Often, three or four messengers would come with good news on one and the same day, and relate what had happened. For instance, if our men did some worthy thing, they sent a messenger with the news of their victory; but not being content with the harvest of that day, they would continue their endeavor, and when God granted them another piece of luck, they would send another messenger with happy news to follow the first messenger.

It would be impossible to count all the deeds and successes like this. Because one deed was achieved in the upper regions and another – in the lower regions, and so during one day, Tamar would receive much happy news and many new messengers, about which it is impossible to relate in more detail, for they are known only to God.

Tirelessly performing all these things, Tamar cared little about her own well-being; she seized so many towns and fortresses, not just to annex them to her kingdom, but to give them to those who she urged to work without respite, that is, to her army. Witness the great and glorious capital of the Armenian kings, Ani, which she took away from the Persians, together with Shahinshah, which was
5 in their possession for a long time, as well as the capital of the kings of Persia – the glorious Dvin.

And all that she did for two reasons: first, so that the heathen, who envied each other, would fight one another to get back the things which were theirs, and second, to eliminate every source that could generate disloyalty among her subjects.

She did not allow her army to stay idle, though even in leisure time they did not become lazy and
10 dependent on other people, or rise and rest on their riches; they had no time to quarrel and wage war with one other, as some did in the beginning of her reign, notably the children of K'akhaber. These were the fruit, brought up on the same rotten roots of Lip'arit', who plotted and fought with their neighbors, who in spite of all the denunciations and favors granted by Tamar, did not realize the foulness of their deeds, and felt no shame for them, but began again to do the things which the
15 chronicle of old told us about. As they say of the dog's tail or the coat's hem, they committed a great evil. They killed two brothers of Ant'on Ch'q'ondideli, casting the great and just man into sorrow and drawing the wrath of God and Tamar on their heads. And so Tamar, stationed at that time in Ch'ala, summoned in her wisdom all five of the children, arrested them and put each in separate fortress, giving them an opportunity to improve. But because they remained the same, she banished them to
20 Greek Macedonia, where they were killed by Q'ipchaks in a battle, as glorious knights.

That is why she allowed nobody to remain idle: when at her side, she made her people happy and granted them all kinds of gifts according to their merits, and provided them with moral peace, or, led them in a hunt on the banks of Iori and Mt'k'vari. Then stopping at some woody place, they might indulge themselves in joy, until snow heavily covered their tents. From there they moved on
25 and entered Somkhiti, where they hunted, as if playing a pleasant game.

And if during these entertainments there came some news from any place of a danger threatening the kingdom, or if they saw such danger, Tamar would not even for a moment fall under the spell of a tranquil sleep, or relax her body. She did not permit anything bad that was contemplated against the kingdom to happen.

30 The waters in the Nile rose and the prices in Egypt fell; Ismail, was deprived, Hagar was deposed and Isaac was blessed. It was said by somebody, and I cite these words as an opening, for the Mohammedans lost their forces, and their tumbrels remained without a man to beat them, while the loud sounds of the Christians filled the country from end to end.

The hopes of the Muslims were running out, and totally powerless they appealed to the mercy
35 of Tamar. They went again to the Caliph, but not like the first time, now in quite a different way; they implored him to beg Tamar to take only tribute from them, and to cease her destructive sword, and to take off the fetters that bound them.

And the Caliph did the following: he sent envoys twice to Tamar, and sent many and various
40 kingly gifts, hitherto unseen, and with utmost deference asked Tamar to only take tribute and stop the devastation.

Tamar listened to these entreaties and replied: "I will fulfill your request, and to those, who want peace for themselves and to bring me tribute, I, on my part, will grant life, in compliance with your request." And so it was done.

This caused spiritual pain to the Sultan of Rum,⁵² Nukardin,⁵³ son of Charaslan, and he perfidiously asserted his alleged love (for Tamar) and constantly sent envoys in order to preserve peace, and many excellent gifts. Tamar did the same, and sent him envoys with gifts in return.

But Nukardin was hiding his perfidy, and under the cover of oaths of loyalty tried to spy on our kingdom. For this purpose he opened the treasuries of his fathers and grandfathers and began to distribute gold in abundance to gather an army, and he gave an order to recruit troops twice as much as was due. And he sent his people to the borders of his state, and began to gather troops in Mesopotamia and K'alonero, Galat'ia, Ghangra, Ankiria, Isavria, Cappadocia, Greater Armenia, Bithynia and at the borders of Paphlagonia,⁵⁴ arming everyone in these countries except the women.

And he himself scurried to the Turks, called Ujads,⁵⁵ who were brave in battle and great in number, like locusts or ants. He gave them much gold and still more gifts, and so managed to gather a hundred thousand horsemen among them.

He also mobilized – contrary to their will and urged only by fear – the inhabitants of Ezinka, Khalperd, K'arnukalaki,⁵⁶ and the son of Saldukh; from the latter he afterwards took away K'arnukalaki, to which he assigned his own brother.⁵⁷

Nukardin was like an amphibious hedgehog, a prolific animal which seeing its numerous litter, takes them out of its hole and arranges them into groups, then climbs up on them in order to rise above them like a tower: seeing so many soldiers gathered, who exceeded any number he had seen, he became proud like Senakerem,⁵⁸ and decided to rise above God. He forgot the perfidious oaths and vows of love formerly given by him, and did quite the opposite of what he had said. He came to the city of Sevast'ia⁵⁹ and began to prepare his fighting machines. Then he sent an envoy to Tamar with the following message:

"I, Nukardin, the Sultan of the entire world under heaven, the highest one, likened to the angels sitting beside God, sent (here) by the Great Mohammed, notify you of this, Tamar, the Queen of Georgia. You ordered the Georgians to take up arms and destroy God's beloved Islamic people; then not satisfied with this, you imposed a vassal's tribute on a free tribe. Now I am coming to restore justice for the house of the Persians, and to reform you and your people so that you will never dare to take the sword up again, which God has granted us. I will preserve life only to those who will come to my tent before I enter your country and humbly ask for mercy and assume the faith of the Prophet Mohammed and reject your faith, and break with their own hands the cross, on which they vainly set their hopes. And now wait for reprisals from me for the troubles you have inflicted upon all Muslims."

Receiving and reading the message, Tamar showed no haste at all, but behaved modestly like the second Ezekias. She held out the message to God and gave a deep sigh from the bottom of her heart, shedding hot tears and placing her hopes in God. Then she called those whom she had by her, and took counsel with them, not like a helpless person, or a woman, and did not neglect the dictates of reason.

Her decrees and orders were spread around the kingdom with the speed of the wind by her messengers. And in a few days warriors gathered, resembling tigers in their agility and lions in their courage. Setting their hopes on Christ, on God, and without losing a moment, they went to the church of the Holy Mother of God in Vardzia. There, praying before the Vardzia Mother of God with
5 tears in her eyes, the Queen entrusted Her with David Soslan and his army, and the banner proved to be lucky. Tamar sent the army from Vardzia, and accompanied it barefoot, her cheeks wet with tears.

And when they approached the town of K'ari⁶⁰ at a distance of one day's walk,⁶¹ only then did she send off the envoys of the Sultan and her own messenger with them, writing an answer as
10 follows:

"I, who entrusted herself to the Omnipotent and Almighty God, and ever praying to the Virgin Mary, and with faith and hopes on the Holy Cross, read your message, which enrages God. Oh, Nukardin don't you know that every man who falsely swears by the name of the Lord will be wiped off the earth? While you write me such things I am sending you an army of Christ lovers, not
15 to ask humbly for mercy, but to crush your arrogance and presumption, to teach you, with God's assistance, not to abuse His name. And knowing of the corruption and unreliability of your servants, I am sending you mine, so that he will hand you as soon as possible the answer to your message, and warn you in time as the soldiers I have sent are already waiting at your gates."

Such was the message she gave to the envoy, after which they dressed him and gave him gifts,
20 and so she sent away the Sultan's envoy.

After that she ordered all her men to mount their horses, and she herself ascended to a high place from where she could observe all of them; and she fell on her knees and cried for a long time, praying to God. When she rose, people could see that the place where she had been kneeling was wet from her tears. Then she summoned all the nobles and ordered the *eristavis* to approach one by
25 one the Holy Cross, to bow before it and kiss it. And they came and begged, crying, for victory and bowed before the Holy Cross and kissed it, and kissed Tamar's hand as well.

Each bowed before her, a holy person, for she held the wood of the Cross with one hand, while the governor of the King's court⁶² and the cross-bearer, Basil, held it by its other side.

When they finished worshipping the Cross in this way, Tamar took the Holy Cross herself, made
30 a sign of a cross three times at each side, blessed her people mounted on their horses, and then they set out trusting in God and Tamar's tears.

The Queen turned to Samtskhe and coming in Odzrkhe, she prayed and fasted. There was Tevdore, Katholicos of Kartli, a holy and good man, at her side along with many God-faring bishops and monks. They performed night services and litanies.

Now we must tell how by solicitation to the Holy Mother of God, and with the help of the life-giving cross, God favored his people. When our troops came to the country of Basiani,⁶³ they found the Sultan encamped there. Approaching the Sultan's camp they saw that the enemy was camped at ease, and the Sultan did not even have guards for himself. The Georgians formed a detachment, and urging on their horses, they made their way to their enemy. When the Turks saw our forces approach
40 them threateningly, they left their camp and rushed to their fortifications, for God inspired them with

great terror. The Christians seeing that their enemies had fled, rushed after them preventing their flight and surrounding them. And God delivered the enemy to their hands, and a wonderful thing happened, for the defeated tied up with their own hands those among them who had escaped death by the sword. The more important were bound by their less distinguished companions, and nobler men were fastened to horse's tails; one man tied up twenty with one rope, attaching them one to the other by their hair. Under-aged youths were bringing in the best warriors like children. The soldiers searched in all places, killing the runaways and gathering others like chickens; they freed numberless captives, because for (every) hundred Muslims there was hardly one Christian who could take them as prisoners. 5

God granted such a great victory because of the tears and the firm faith of Tamar.⁶⁴ And when all was finished they turned to their (enemy's) belongings, the richest spoils; and it was impossible to survey or to count the gold and silver tableware, the fine clothes, the gold bowls, plates and saucers, covered by precious stones and pearls, as well as jugs and kettles, full of inconceivable treasure. And who could count the number of horses, mules and camels, as well as the tents and carpets, which they had left behind them? 10 15

By that time the townsfolk had adorned Tbilisi, and Tamar and David entered the city, beaming like the halo of the Sun, and brought in the banner of Nukardin. Then they brought first into the town, the owner of Ezinka, and then the other noble persons Tamar chose. She consoled everybody and entertained everyone, providing a feast; then she presented everybody, each according to his merit and sent them to fortresses, with the exception of the owner of Ezinka, whom she detained in Tbilisi as a prisoner, her honor and love replaced by anger. In the end she sold this distinguished and noble man for a horseshoe. This is what Tamar did for the honor and glory of her house, a thing that nobody had ever done since the beginning of the world. 20

Again, all the royal depositories were filled with gold and golden utensils, because people showered gold upon the Queen as if it were mere earth; and precious stones and pearls were poured into the treasuries, and gold-brocaded items produced in Greece and rare clothes were piled up without number as if they were trash. Silver utensils were not valued any more in the royal palace, because everything that was put on a table was of gold and cut-glass, adorned by Indian stones. With part of it the Queen filled up all the churches, another part of the treasures she granted for the performance of holy sacraments, and she filled up the palms of every one asking for alms, and satiated all the beggars and lavishly stuffed their pockets with goods. 25 30

So God raises those who worship Him, He elevates the humble ones, He assists those who set their hopes upon Him; such gifts he grants to those who trust Him. So it happened with Tamar, because she kept no other thing in her heart besides "the origin of wisdom, the fear of God,"⁶⁵ and justice and grace which she distributed equally among all. 35

Truth and peace without end reigned in her days; her lips covered the world with grace. For that, God gave her His eternal blessing and put on her head the crown of honor. He girded her with the sword of power, and she left this world for the other in order to enjoy the eternal life she was granted as reward for her labors to establish the truth, peace and the law.

We should also say that many other women showed their power, but not one did it like Tamar. Guided by wisdom, truthfulness and the purity of David, she arranged the lives of her people not by force of perfidy, but by the spiritual calm which distinguished Jacob, by the generosity of Abraham, by kindness which resembled the mercifulness of Jesus, and by imitating His justice.

5 There was no man at the time of Tamar's reign, who was subject to violence with her knowledge; not one was punished, with the exception of cases under the old law, which concerned robbers, when hanging on a tree was applied. Even those who deserved the death penalty and those who deserved banishment were not punished as they deserved, and nobody was subject to the cutting
10 off of members or by blinding by her order, with the exception of Guzan,⁶⁶ who had treacherously left the Queen and began plundering somewhere in K'ola,⁶⁷ hiding in the mountains. He was caught by hay mowers and brought to King David. And he, knowing how infinitely merciful Tamar was, gouged out his eyes, before informing her, because of the Christian blood so abundantly spilled by Guzan.

15 There was prosperity not only in Tamar's own kingdom, but for all the Christians. And from everyone who committed violence against Christians, she demanded immediate obedience for fear and love for her.

She sent her agents around, instructing them: "Travel from Alexandria and through the entire territory of Lubia⁶⁸ and Mount Sinai."⁶⁹ She learned of the needs of the churches, monasteries and the Christian peoples of these countries. And do we need to mention Jerusalem? To the churches of all these lands she sent chalices and patens, and shrouds for sacred objects, much gold for
20 monks and beggars, and ransomed from slavery those who were captured by infidels; and she compensated for the tribute paid by people to Muslims, and so removed the oppressive burden from their shoulders.

She did the same in the regions of Hellas and the Holy Mount,⁷⁰ and also in Macedon, P'et'rits'oni,⁷¹ in the lands of Thrace, and in the monasteries of Constantinople and Romana,⁷² and everywhere, as
25 well as in Isavria and K'uruseti⁷³ and all the surrounding areas of the Black Mountain⁷⁴ and Cyprus. All these lands she filled with good works, and God protected her labor.

Once, as often happened, some monks came from the Black Mountain, Antioch and the island of Cyprus, as well as from the Holy Mountain and many other places to ask her to do some things. She received them, as she was wont to, like angels, and did not let them go; then she gave everybody
30 great gifts and furnished them with all necessities; and to those living farthest away, she gave much gold for their own disposal and for distribution in the monasteries. The monks departed, and when they came to Constantinople, Alexis Angar,⁷⁵ the man who gouged out the eyes of his brother Isaac and deprived him of his kingdom, learned of their arrival. He was a despicable man unworthy to bear royal power; he was despised by everyone, in particular for his cupidity. He saw the large amount of
35 gold, which Tamar had given to the monks, and took it from them.

When Queen Tamar learned of this, she sent yet more gold in the name of the holy fathers, and so put the devil to still more shame. But angry at the Greek King, she sent a small army from Western Georgia⁷⁶ and took Lazika,⁷⁷ Trabzon, Limon, Samison, Sinop', Kerasunt, K'it'ora, Amast'ria, Arak'lia⁷⁸ and all the lands of Peblaghon and Pont from the Greeks and gave them to her relative⁷⁹
40 Comnenos,⁸⁰ son of Andronicus,⁸¹ who was then with Queen Tamar, finding shelter with her.

The Franks⁸² learned that the Greeks had lost support from the East; they seized the Greeks' capital city and expelled the royal power; the unfortunate Alexis fled to Bulgaria,⁸³ to his son-in-law. When the Bulgarian King saw him, he took him to a castle and throwing down much gold before him, said: "Here, Alexis, is the object of your desire, take this gold instead of food and drink, because for the sake of this gold you have ruined the royal Christian house and destroyed the autocracy of the Greeks." And so this wretched man died of starvation, devoid of God's help. 5

Tamar was dreadful to her enemies, but she was so warm-hearted and forgiving that she mourned the whole event with a heavy heart; but it was not worthwhile grieving about Alexis, because if you acquire something by means of falsehood, you will not retain it for long. But Tamar was tender hearted to strangers and weak; she was compassionate and showed them mercy, as with this gold-loving man. 10

In the twenty third or twenty fourth year of her reign, Queen Tamar showed interest in K'ari;⁸⁴ for a long time Sargis Tmogveli, Shalva Toreli and the Meskhis had fought for this town, though they were unable to capture it despite all the different means they tried. Due to the fierceness of the winters and severe cold, they could not approach the town. They could not give battle because the water had frozen during the time of frosts. They captured all the surrounding fortresses and villages, only this one remained in the hands of the Persians. Considering the circumstances, Tamar, using her intelligent mind, dispatched David at the head of the army in Upper Kartli, and sent Zachariah and Ivane to help him, ordering the latter two to take their troops there, and fight the enemy with all their forces. This took a long time. Staying in Javakheti, Tamar waited for news. After arriving, the troops began by smashing a blockade built in the shape of a solid wall, which held the town's water, and after many days of labor, they breached it. The water ran out and that was the end for the most of the townsfolk. Those remaining asked David to arrange a meeting with Tamar, in order to make a deal with her. They were afraid of reprisals for the abuses they had showered on the Georgians from the walls of the fortress. 15 20 25

Then the Georgians reported to Tamar about all this. She came, and those who were in the fortress brought her the city key, first to her son Giorgi and then to Tamar, and petitioned for peace and a promise that the Queen would not transfer K'ari to foreign hands as she had done with Ani and Dvin, but would hold onto it herself and keep it within the precincts of her kingdom.⁸⁵ The Queen gave them a solemn promise, and ordered her son Giorgi to enter K'ari and take the town and the fortress. And so it was done. The Queen herself secured this one town and fortress among all those which had been seized while conquering (the lands) from Dzorak'ert' to Rakhs,⁸⁶ from Gaga to Ganja, and from Javakheti down to Sp'eri.⁸⁷ 30

Whoever thinks that all these works performed by Tamar during these seventeen years⁸⁸ are not enough, and all the feats accomplished by her army during this one year are not enough, and who cannot imagine how Tamar managed to cope with all these foreign affairs, let him cast an eye at the upper lands and see the fortresses owned by the houses of Mkhargrdzeli in the upper and lower regions.⁸⁹ 35

My lips, which so joyfully relate these happy events, now turn to sad things, for I am going to tell you of the event that plunged the entire world into sorrow. 40

Tamar stopped in Nach'armagevi, a place located high in the mountains. And all the *didebulis* and nobles were there with her. She took care of the state's affairs and particularly those related to the churches and monasteries.

5 And while she was there, she caught a disease, one that eats away at us people; it progressed day after day, becoming more and more severe. She hid it for a long time, so as not to worry anybody. But when the illness resisted treatment, with no benefit from medicine, the Queen revealed she had it. This disease of Tamar was probably inevitable; such long-lasting military burdens prey upon the natural weakness of women, and Tamar's body could not live and remain protected from all kinds of accidents.

10 But see, the people, who were devoted to her deserve much pity: how could they deal with such a disease? They took her in a palanquin to Tbilisi, and a few days later they decided, as they were wont to do, to climb into the woody mountains. They were in a hurry, and took Tamar there, still, in the palanquin. But her merciless disease took on yet graver form. They brought her to the fortress of Agari.⁹⁰

15 And all the searches for a medical cure turned out to be vain. And wherever the Queen rested, whatever the places, litanies and endless night services were performed, and you could see how rich and poor alike were shedding tears.

But the verdict was one of no resistance.

20 The day began to approach its end, the Sun was setting, and the air was shot through with a colorless light. Dark clouds smothered the dawn. The rosy cheeks of the Queen began to fade, and her eyes, resembling lakes which could stand up to any comparison with the Sun, were losing their luster. Her arms which had never got tired of serving the poor, began to weaken, her legs, ever ready to serve God, were giving way, and all the signs of life began to disappear.

25 A general feeling of impotence⁹¹ took possession of everybody; nobody knew what to do. The *mtavaris*⁹² were slapping themselves across the face, the paupers – beating their heads. All people, devoted to her, proposed that God take their own lives or the lives of their children in place of the Queen, and asked Him to send them to their death. "Let her remain alive, and destroy us all." So said the people surrounding in crowds the chamber of the palace that contained the bed of our misfortune. If there was any possibility, they would apply all their efforts to prevent death from approaching her. Was there any other means of fighting the disease that had not been tried, such as prayers and grieving? But the one that called her, stood already in the doorway, and it was impossible to resist him.

30 And here, too, the wise Tamar found beatitude and wisdom. For she summoned all the distinguished people of her kingdom, and bracing herself, appearing cheerful in appearance, told them: "My brothers and sisters! The dreadful judge who is more fearful than earthly kings, who takes away people's souls, has called for me. You were yourselves witnesses of my love to you, which I have stored in my heart; I never took away anything that was your share or was the object of your desire, and I was honored for the time, which according to God's purpose, I was your queen. Now I, too, am going to my fathers, following an unknown way, obedient to the frightful order and the wonderful design. And I implore everybody: do good always and pray for me. I am leaving as heirs

to my house those, whom God gave me, my children, Giorgi and Rusudan; receive them instead of me, and let them make up for the loss that my death causes you.”

In this way she entrusted her children to them, and did it before the image of Christ and the life-giving cross. And then she said for the last time: “Christ, my God, the eternal King of heaven and earth, I entrust you this kingdom, which You have charged me with, and this people that you redeemed with your holy blood, and these children of mine, who you granted me, and now here is my soul.”

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Then weeping bitterly everybody left the chamber. On the eighteenth of January, Tamar fell asleep with the sleep of a righteous one; and the Sun went out of Georgia, and only the urge to glorify her grave, gave sense to the earthly life among all us Christians.

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Now what we have yet to tell you is of the howl that took place on account of this sad news, and of the pitch dark and inconsolable grief; for who may be a comforter when the sorrow is universal. The face of the earth became loathsome. Every man who only knew the name of Tamar cut his hair. The underworld began to shake with the sounds of moaning. Everybody went into mourning. It was as if heaven and earth were grieving with us.

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Then they brought her remains and rested them for just a few days in the cathedral in Mtskheta, after which, they buried them in Gelati, in her family tomb, so that she would be praised together with her forefathers and fathers, the eminent great kings.

And the joy of the Georgians gave way to grief, for their lips resembled now a saltless soil, the (same) lips of the (same) people, who before her death were pronouncing nothing but the name of Tamar; for they wrote odes to her in acrostic on the walls of their houses, and, adorning their seals, knives and sticks, they wrote praises to Tamar. And everybody's mouth was ever ready to utter some suitable praise for Tamar, whether boys, or ox-drivers furrowing the soil with their ploughs, performing songs which glorified Tamar. Musicians in Iraq sang the songs composed in honor of Tamar. The Franks and Greeks, sailors at sea in favorable weather, praised Tamar.

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So the entire world was full of her praise, and every language in which her name was pronounced, exalted her. Is there need at all to talk of her works? For the rumors of them run all over the world, the evidence of which we have already seen.

As one wise saying goes, there is no fault in trying to do the things which exceed your powers, even though the beginning and the end of such accomplishments resemble each other as the weight and value of gold resembles those of dry grass. How must I find the proper words? Which of her virtues must I tell in the beginning, and which in the end? Shall it be her indescribable modesty or excessive sublimity, her praiseworthy tranquility, her proper firmness, her heartfelt compassion, gracious kindness, innocent chastity, artless honesty, all-embracing goodness or incredible generosity? She possessed the prerequisites of all qualities, notably she was inspired with fear before the Almighty and faithfully served God. And only due to this was she able to achieve the things, which no other man could achieve. Evidence of this is in all the kingdoms adjacent to Georgia: how many kings reduced to poverty she again helped acquire wealth, how many defeated among them received their kingdoms from her hands, how many outcasts had their domains restored by her and how many sentenced to death, she pardoned. Witnesses to this are the sovereign houses of Shirvan

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and Daruband, the Ghundzes, Ossetians, Kashags,⁹³ K'arnukalakians and Trabzonians. The Queen granted independence to all of them and vouched to protect them from their enemies.

5 Nobody followed the law of God with such zeal, as she did, and nobody bowed his head with such humility. Church services and vigils, performed at her palace, excelled the prayers of Theodosius the Great, and, I am sure, those of the Anchorites. And what to say of her fasts; she herself watched over how the monks and the courtiers observed their fasts.

10 It is impossible to describe her adoration for priests and monks. There were always people with her who followed the rules of the pious life. She always arranged accommodations for them close to her chambers, and provided them with food and all the necessary things. And if somebody was sick among them, she herself visited him and comforted him, and with her own hands prepared the bed for him.

15 She appointed faithful supervisors over the poor. The tenth part of the entire state's income, internal as well as external, she handed out to paupers, and made sure that not even one grain of barley was lost. Doing all these things she did not think she was performing godly acts of charity. Finishing her work, she set at once to spinning or sewing, and the things she produced with her hands she distributed among the priests and paupers.

20 So (it may be said that) the rules, sanctioned once and forever, the expression of the virtues of the great God, she observed not so much by beginning actions, but rather by their completion; like the Sun, she cast the light of her halo upon everyone, treating everyone with the same respect. By the graces she dispensed on everybody she induced God to do the same, and thus she strengthened her friends, and most importantly, without the help of something obtained by lies or injustice.

25 She never relaxed or neglected her duties as sovereign; she did not allow her mind to neglect the works she had been charged with; she never yielded in her mind to any cowardly temptation that drags a man down; she did not refrain from displaying modesty and did not ignore (the necessity of being) majestic too. She did not disdain a moment's softness but showed respect for firmness too; she mixed everything with everything in order to represent all that filled her. She was perfection even among the perfect.

30 Submitting to the rotation of the heavenly cycle, she rigorously observed the Orthodoxy of the Creator, so as not to perform anything contrary to nature; she did not allow passions to seize her, but did not avoid those places, where you are drawn down to the earth as if by cords. Descending low from (the greatest) height, and obedient to the commands of reason, she applied all her efforts to preserve the simplicity of her human nature in compliance with her inner constitution, without coupling her nature with any passion. If she desired something, it deserved to be desired, so that
35 when she desired something it was a thing truly desirable. She was praised, and she deserved all kinds of praise; she was looked on as a happy woman, and she was happy. And there was no good in the entire world that did not find itself in her.

40 Those disobedient to her she belittled, but she raised up loyal subjects. She did not alienate her neighbors; she did not annex houses to her house, and lands to her land,⁹⁴ but contented herself with her family estates, so that others did not think her to be unjust and greedy. And as the highest

truth judges the righteous, she, too, exerted her influence upon her neighbors not through fear, but by personally protecting them from those who terrorized them, making them even frightening for their enemies. Ridding those around her of the insatiability peculiar to leeches, she never made fruits poisonous and deeds harmful.

She sat as a judge between neighboring kingdoms, making sure that nobody started a war or tried to coerce one another. And setting herself as an example for them, she was considered to be a second Solomon among kings. Whoever heard the name of the Queen began to long in his soul to see her; and if they were unable to do so, even great kings cursed their fates. She would have absorbed the whole sea, like a cloud that sprinkles its sweet rain equally upon everyone.

If someone among you goes again over the chronicles, narrating the lives of the kings of old or of the new, he will see that not one of them exceeded by his deeds those performed by Tamar, as we said in the beginning.

She expressed joy when she related something, she was bashful when teaching somebody; she gently entered into contact with everybody and instructed them calmly, she punished mercifully and scolded kindly, so as to show plainly the properties of God. She was a light for reasonable and unreasonable people, she shone for the first and burnt the second. She was a bridle for those who strayed from the straight and narrow and a spur for the careless, a moral law for the aged and an iron staff for youngsters; she was a wise protector for those walking upon the straight path, while impartially whipping the disobedient.

The teachers of scripture feared God, the priests kept order, the monks observed respectable activity, the *mtavaris* learned to live piously and keep to the straight and narrow; the people acquired a sense of duty to serve God and – with fidelity – their masters. The youths learned to despise narrow disbelief, so that there was no trace of a depraved immorality or youthful and obstinate disobedience in the days of Tamar. Moreover, no one used bad language, at least those who were honored to dwell in the royal chambers or to serve at the court.

In this way, observing God's laws in everything, she acquired God's grace, and God blessed her life and increased her fruitfulness. And as the Scripture says, "light falls on the righteous,"⁹⁵ and at dawn, her spouse is the afternoon joy; at dusk she peacefully passed away on her bed. The Lord adorned the days of her life with honor and her time with peace. During the time of her reign, her face had never expressed any doubt, because not one request of a widow or orphan or some oppressed one was left without satisfaction. She spent her days in joy, because every day she personally brought happiness to paupers and the sick. At last she departed to her fathers and joined them, leaving behind her two children, Giorgi and Rusudan. They were fine and beloved, such that everybody would like to have; they were praiseworthy, of regal appearance, reasonable, adorned with wisdom and filled with all kinds of virtues. During her 23 years on the throne, Tamar managed to realize a valorous reign in all its manifestations.

Here I close these words. Let the following generation find proper words for the description of other victories already achieved. We (for our part) respectfully and reverently fall silent.

NOTES

- ¹ King of Georgia, Giorgi III (1156-1184), son of Demet're I (1125-1155) and father of Queen Tamar.
- ² Koronik'on – a year (Greek *ὁ χρόνος*). One of the three calendars used in Ancient Georgia (I – the Jewish; II – the Christian; and III – Koronik'on). The system was based on a 532 year cycle – 28 is multiplied by the moon's cycle (19 years); alternation of the days of the week, months and years is repeated every 532nd year. In 780 the 12th cycle of this calendar was complete. The Georgian sources use this system for designation of the 12th (which began in 781) and the 14th (which began in 1313) cycles (K. K'ek'elidze, *Kartuli era da eortologiuri ts'elits'adi*, (*The Georgian Era and the Eortological Year*), Tbilisi: *Kartuli enis ist'oriis da mat'erialuri k'ult'uris inst'it'ut'is shromebi* (Proceedings of Institute of Language, History and Material Culture, Vols. 5-6, 1940).
- ³ Rusudan – sister of King Giorgi III, aunt of Queen Tamar. She was married to Giyas ad-Din Suleiman-shah, the Seljukid, who was the ruler of Western Iran and Iraq in 1160-1161. After becoming a widow she returned to her homeland and took an active part in the political life of the country. The question of Tamar's marriage was decided by her consent. At the age of 80 she took monastic vows (approximately in 1210).
- ⁴ The sultans of Shamiram. Rusudan (the Queen's aunt) "was sister-in-law of the great Shamiram sultans."
- ⁵ Rusudan – the sister of Queen Tamar. A second daughter of King Giorgi III.
- ⁶ There is disagreement over this phrase, and whether it concerns the aunt of Queen Tamar or her sister, Queen Rusudan.
- ⁷ This is a periphrasis of the biblical expression – "And they blew the trumpet; and all the people said, long live King Solomon" (Kings 2:39). These words were said by people when the biblical King Solomon was anointed. The Georgian kings traced their origin to the biblical forefathers: Jesse, David and Solomon.
- ⁸ The throne of Vakht'ang – the throne kept its halo from the time of King Vakht'ang Gorgasali I (second half of the fifth century). The throne of David – the same throne, which in 1089-1125 was occupied by the powerful king, David the Restorer. It is also an image of the biblical throne of David (2 Kings 3:10).
- ⁹ "... first for the Moon..." – the images of the throne of David as well as of the Moon are suggested by the biblical psalms in the name of King Solomon (Psalm 71:5).
- ¹⁰ Sabaoth Elohim – two of a number of denominations for God in Judaism. In the Georgian original a distorted form "Saboetelio" is given.
- ¹¹ Periphrasis of the biblical text (Psalm 71:8).
- ¹² In the summer of 6686, in Koronik'on 403 – here two systems of chronology (from the three used in Georgia) are used: "in the Hebrew year" (5502 BC) and of the "year 781," that is from the beginning of the 13th cycle of 532 year cycle. The chronology from the time of the creation of the world in Georgia was expressed, variously, by a number of years: 5500, 5508, 5504... In this case 5502 B.C. is used.
- ¹³ Nik'olaoz Gulaberisdze – Katholikos of Georgia (1150-1178). In 1178, declining the position of Katholikos, he went to Jerusalem, from where he was summoned by Queen Tamar. He was offered the position of Katholikos again, but he refused the offer. He died in about 1190. On him as a pastor and ecclesiastical writer, see K. K'ek'elidze, *dzveli kartuli lit'erat'uris ist'oria* (*The History of Ancient Georgian Literature*), Tbilisi: 1951, Vol. 1, pp. 298-303.
- ¹⁴ *Mts'ignobartukhutsesi* – the head of notaries, composer of documents. From the beginning of the twelfth century – the head of government, or chancellor, the first person after the king. From the time of David the Restorer this position was usually kept by the bishop of Ch'q'ondidi (the bishop's cathedral was in the village of Mart'vili, in Samegrelo), who united in his hands both ecclesiastical and secular powers; he was called *ch'q'ondidel-mts'ignobartukhutsesi*. From the end of the fifteenth century, the post lost its initial significance. For more details see N. A. Berdzenishvili, "kartuli savaziro peodalur sakartveloshi" ("The Institution of the Vizier in Feudal Georgia"), Tbilisi: Vol. 3, pp. 5-56, 1966.
- ¹⁵ *sp'asalar* – (from Pers. *Sip'akhsalar*) commander.
- ¹⁶ Yuri, the son of the great prince of Suzdal, Andreas Bogolubski (1110-1174). Andreas Bogolubski was killed in 1174. Yuri had found refuge with the Q'ipchaks; from there he was brought into Georgia and in 1185 became Tamar's husband. This marriage continued for two and a half years. Divorcing him, Tamar deported him to

- Byzantine. Twice (in 1191 and 1193) Yuri attempted to retrieve the throne, but both times was defeated by Tamar. His fate is unknown. The historian does not mention his name, calling him just “the Russian.”
- 17 Patriarch – a head of the church of Georgia; initially the head of the church was vested in the Catholicos, as in Armenia and Syria. From the beginning of the eleventh century the Catholicos of Georgia is also called Patriarch – thus “Catholicos-Patriarch” with an explicit assumption that he is the sixth, after the five Ecumenical Patriarchs, I. Javakhishvili, *kartuli samartlis ist'oria (The History of Georgian Law)*, Tbilisi: no. II, 1929, pp. 9-10.
- 18 *didebuli* – a noble, who has acquired “dideba” or “greatness.” *Dideba* was a post granted by a king to a feudal subject. A domain was bound to the title, and the *didebuli* was granted right of immunity. *Didebulis* tried to transform the title and domains attached into hereditary property.
- 19 *sp'asp'et* – (from Pers. “sepah” (army) and “pat” (head)) commander.
- 20 *eristavi* – literally “head of people,” responsible for running a military detachment (*eristavi* became a family name in Georgian); also a post in the royal administration. See also *eristavt eristavi* – a post in the higher administration, or the ruler of a region.
- 21 A biblical saying (Jeremiah 51:9).
- 22 The phrase is based on the biblical saying: “And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from her husband” (Corinthians 7:10).
- 23 David – the second spouse of Queen Tamar. According to the text of our historian, David “was the son of Ossetian kings.” In the *History and Eulogy of Monarchs*, the following is said about him: “There was a knight in the palace of Queen Rusudan, one of the sons of Ephraim, that is Ovses, people brave and powerful in battles” *Istoriia i voskhvalenie ventsenostsev (History and Eulogy of Monarchs) (kartlis tskhovreba)*, trans. K. K'ek'elidze, Tbilisi: 2008, p. 263). The dynasty of Ossetian Bagrat'ionis, as opposed to the Georgian Bagrat'ionis (the Davidids), were called the Ephraimids, that is, the descendants of the biblical personage Ephraim. See K. K'ek'elidze, “kartuli politik'uri azrovnebis erti momenti” (“One Instant of Georgian Political Thought”), in *dzveli kartuli lit'erat'uris ist'oria (History of Ancient Georgian Literature)*, Tbilisi: 1956, Vol. I, pp. 312-318. The chronicler of the period of Lasha Giorgi, indicates that “David, Tamar's husband, was the King of the Ossetians from the Bagrat'ioni family” (*kartlis tskhovreba*, S.Q'aukhchishvili (ed.), Vol. I, p.369). The Ossetian Bagrat'ionis came from the stepbrother of Bagrat' IV, Demet're, whose mother, Queen Alde, was a daughter of an Ossetian king. In the middle of the eleventh century David, the son of Demet're, ran away to the homeland of his grandmother. He became a founder of the family of the Ossetian Bagrat'ionis. David Soslan was his great grandson. David Soslan was brought up by Queen Rusudan. His marriage with Tamar took place in 1188, and one year after that event David “excelled everybody in archery, horsemanship, gymnastics on the ring, swimming and book learning, and, as it can be seen even now, in all this he surpassed everybody...” (*The History and Eulogy of Monarchs*).
- 24 Samtavrisi – a bishopric and cathedral in the gorge of the river Rekhula; the bishop, who occupied this cathedral bore the rank of *samtavneli* and was a pastor of the valleys of Ksani and Rekhuli.
- 25 *Amirsp'asalar* – a supreme commander; the name comes from the Arabian “amir” (commander over a military formation of 1000 people) and the Persian *sipakhsalar* (commander). The “head of the army” is mentioned for the first time in the sources during Giorgi III's reign. According to “The Royal Court Order,” *amirsp'asalar* was an honorable vizier and a head of the army” (See I. A. Javakhishvili, *kartuli samartlis ist'oria (The History of Georgian Law)*, Tbilisi: 1928, Vol. II, no. I, pp. 161-165).
- 26 *Msakhurtukhutsesi* – a vizier, in charge of the palace and its finances. “Within his province was the supervision of the treasury, the bedchamber, the head of bed keepers, the head of treasurers etc.” (The Royal Court Order, #14) (For more detail, see I. A. Javakhishvili, *kartuli samartlis ist'oria (The History of Georgian Law)*, *op.cit.*, pp. 183-190).
- 27 The faith of the Armenians... – here the Christianity professed by the Armenian Church. The Armenian Church split from the Eastern Church after the Chalcedonian Council (451) and is now often called Gregorian after Gregory the Illuminator (he preached Christianity in Armenia at the beginning of the fourth century).
- 28 Mandat'urtukhutsesi – the vizier of the Georgian court, Master of Ceremonies, corresponds to a Minister for Internal Affairs (See I. A. Javakhishvili, *kartuli samartlis ist'oria (The History of Georgian Law)*, *op.cit.*, pp. 157-167).
- 29 Maragha – the town of Maraga in Iranian Azerbaijan.

- ³⁰ The biblical personages who bear children late in age. Manoaah, whose wife was infertile had an angel appear before her who “told her: Behold now, thou art barren, and bearest not: but thou shalt conceive, and bear a son” (Judges 13:3). Elisabeth, the wife of the priest Zachariah, was also sterile. An angel appeared before Zachariah and “said unto him, fear not, Zacharias, for thy prayer is heard and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John” (Luke 1:13); Hannah, the wife of Elkanah, had no children for a long time, but “the Lord visited Hannah, so that she conceived, and bore three sons and two daughters” (1 Samuel 2:21).
- ³¹ Persia in this case has a rather wide meaning and means the countries peopled by Muslims.
- ³² Romgur (Remjad, Ramjar) – one of the quarters of the town of Nishapur. The Georgian sources of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries implied Khvarasan, the central province of Iran (See V. N. Gabashvili, *matsne*, History Series, 1971, no. 4, pp.124-130).
- ³³ Adarbadagan – Azerbaijan.
- ³⁴ Ch’q’ondideli – literally “From Ch’q’ondidi;” the bishop of Mart’vili was Ch’q’ondideli, who from the twelfth century had the powers of the first *vizier*.
- ³⁵ Somkhiti – a part of Lower Kartli; in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries the territory of Lower Kartli was located to the south of Trialeti Ridge down to the mountains of Bambak’i (in the south), and from the river of Debeda (in the east) to Javakheti (in the west).
- ³⁶ Here the author gives examples of heroism and resourcefulness of small armies, which defeated superior forces (Judges 7:16; 2 Chronicles 32:21).
- ³⁷ Here, the victory of the Georgian Army in the battle of Shamkhor.
- ³⁸ The battle of Shamkhor – a battle between the Georgian army and the army of Atabek Abu Bekir. The Shirvanshah and Amirmiran fought on the Georgian side. According to P. D. Jordania, the battle took place on 1 June 1195 (Kronikebi (*Chronicles*), Tiflis: 1892, Vol. 1, p. 282; see also I. A. Javakhishvili, *kartveli eris ist’oria* (*The History of Georgian People*), *shromebi* (*Works*), Tbilisi: 1983, Vol. 2, p. 270). In one of the Armenian chronicles of the eighth century the year 1194 is stated, but we must keep in mind that in such chronicles we often have to deal with errors of 1-2 years (A. P. Abdaladze, “shamkhoris brdzolis datarighebisatvis” (“On the date of the Battle of Shamkhor”), *matsne*, History Series, 1973, no. I. There exists additional material favoring 1195 (R. K’ik’nadze, *Ocherki po istochnikovedeniiu istorii Gruzii* (*Essays on the Source for the Study of Georgian History*), Tbilisi: 1980, pp. 138-139).
- ³⁹ In the Georgian text they are called “Avrian” – *amirs*. M. Brosset preserved the original reading in his French translation.
- ⁴⁰ Bubakar – Abu Bekr in the Georgian text, the Atabek of Adarbadagan from the Ildegizid dynasty, son of Jakhan Pahlavan, nephew of Kizil-Arslan. Atabek Kizil-Arslan (1186-1191) proclaimed himself Sultan, but shortly after was killed; his domains were divided between his nephews. However, after gaining victory over his brothers Abu Bekr seized their territories. After his defeat in the battle of Shamkhor, he retreated first to Nakhichevan and then to Tabriz. See *sakartvelos ist’oriis nark’vevebi* (*Essays of the History of Georgia*), *op.cit.*, Vol. 3, pp. 321-325).
- ⁴¹ *Panjanobat* – a Persian word, consists of two parts: “panj” – five, and “nobat” – music with drum beating and trumpet blowing, performed at the court of a Shah or a noble. “Nobat” was performed on particularly solemn occasions; in our source “nobat” is preceded by the word “panj” (five), so it is clear that in this case “nobat” was performed five times. The expression “the Sultan’s *panjanobat* was performed” points to an event in honor of David Soslan, who sat on the throne of the Sultan in Ganja. “Nobat” was performed five times (G. G. Alasania, “tamaris meore ist’orik’osis ori t’erminis ganmartebisatvis” (“On the Interpretation of Two Terms in the Work of the Second Historian of Tamar”), *Eastern Philology*, Tbilisi: 1973, Vol. 3, pp. 205-208).
- ⁴² Mirmiran in the Georgian source – *Amir Miran*, the nephew of Kizil-Arslan, the son of Jakhan Pahlavan, according to the Georgian sources the holder of Arran and Gelakun. Driven off from his domains by his brother Abu Bekr, he found a shelter with Shirvanshah Akhsitan, whose daughter he then married. But Abu-Bekr did not give them a moment’s peace, so Mirmiran had to ask for help from Queen Tamar. In the battle of Shamkhor, Mirmiran fought on the side of the Georgians. King David gave Ganja to Mirmiran as a vassal of Georgia. But Mirmiran was soon murdered by Abu-Bekr’s assassins. On Mirmiran, see R. K’ik’nadze *Ocherki po istochnikovedeniiu istorii Gruzii*, *op.cit.*, pp. 132-139.

- ⁴³ "... distinguished people..." – in the Georgian text before these words is the word "ermiontasa." V. Dondua supposed that "ermion," the word used by the author as an epithet to characterize Zachariah and Ivane Mkhargrdzeli, comes, probably, from Hermion, the name of the German King who was deified after his death (V. Dondua, *"ermionis" mnishvneloba tamar mepis epok'ashi (On the Meaning of "Ermion" in the Time of Queen Tamar)*, Tbilisi: 1973, II, p. 142). For T. Q'aukhchishvili such an explanation is unlikely (T. Q'aukhchishvili, "ant'ik'uri samq'aro rustavelis epok'is ist'oriografiashi: tamar mepis ist'otorik'osebi" ("The Antic World in the Historiography of the Epoch of Rustaveli: The Historians of Queen Tamar"), *matsne*, History Series, 1974, no. 3, p.113).
- ⁴⁴ Gulist'an – a fortress on the left bank of the river of Aksu, to the west of Shemakha. According to the text of *The Life of the Queen of Queens Tamar*, the state of Georgia with all its subject countries stretched from Anak'opia (in the west) to the fortress of Gulist'an (in the east).
- ⁴⁵ "Estates" in the Georgian text are represented by the word "sepeni." In this case "sepe" is used in the sense of "estates," "lands."
- ⁴⁶ *monap'ireni* – pl. *monap'ire* – the ruler of a border principality.
- ⁴⁷ Dzorak'ert' – the same as Kurdvach'riskhevi, one of the tributaries of the river of Debeda; originates in the mountains of Irjani (contemporary Karagaja), flows from the west to the east and joins the Debeda River.
- ⁴⁸ "...in the upper and lower regions..." – in Georgian sources "zemo" and "kvemo" (upper and lower) designate the upper and lower parts of the river. They also designate the territories of Kartli located up- and downstream of the river Mt'k'vari. "Zemo" (upper) is often used in the sense of Zemo Kartli (that is, the part of Kartli situated upstream of the Mt'k'vari – from the village of T'ashisk'ari to the head of the river). "Kvemo" (lower), on the other hand, designates Kvemo Kartli (that is, the territory of Kartli that lays south and downstream of the Mt'k'vari).
- ⁴⁹ "Still higher – Art'aani" – the term "zedat" in the Georgian text is translated, which indicates that Art'aani is situated still higher than Javakheti. Art'aani – a province and a town situated upstream of the Mt'k'vari River. Art'aani is now called Ardahan (in Turkey).
- ⁵⁰ Barda, Berda – Georgian Bardavi, the ancient town of Partav. The ruins are located close to the village of Evlakh (Azerbaijan).
- ⁵¹ In the Georgian text we have the word "darbaziseri," which in this case designates the permanently stationed palace troops.
- ⁵² The Sultan of Rumi – in the Georgian text – the Sultan of Greece. Greece in this case corresponds to the sultanate of Rumi or Iconium – a possession of the Seljukids in Anatolia. The capital of this sultanate was Iconium (Konya).
- ⁵³ Nukardin – Sultan of Rumi, Rukn ad-Din Suleiman II (1196-1204). At the end of his rule his sons divided his domain between themselves (K. E. Bosworth, *Musulmanskie dinastii (Muslim Dynasties)*, Moscow: 1971, p. 178). He headed the coalition of the Seljuks in the battle of Basiani, but suffered a bitter defeat. Wounded in the battle he retreated to Erzurum. He died in 1204 (Ibn al-Asir et al., *op. cit.*).
- ⁵⁴ Here the places are listed from where Rukn ad-Din gathered his army: K'alonero – a territory in Asia Minor (Alaya); Galat'ia – a region in the central part of Rumi (Iconic) Sultanate; Ghangra – Gangri – a fortress on the left tributary of the river Galis in Paphlagonia, possessions of the Danishmendids; Ankiria – Ankira (Angora) – a fortress on the territory of the Rumi Sultanate, in the place of contemporary Ankara; Isavria – a territory in Asia Minor, on Tavr, between Lykaonia and Kilikia; Cappadocia – a region in Asia Minor, in the south of Rumi Sultanate, Viphinia – a territory in the south of Asia Minor, situated to the west of Paphlagonia; Paphlagonia – a region in the north of Asia Minor, on the left bank of the lower reaches of the river Galis.
- ⁵⁵ Uj – "watch" and frontier posts of the Turks. For a long time, it was thought that "uj" meant one of the Turkish tribes, a mistake committed by S. Guar (who translated *Abulphid*). But the Georgian historian, the author of *The Life of Queen of Queens Tamar*, implies the "Turks." (VI. Gordlevskii, *Gosudarstvo Seljukidov Maloi Azii (The State of Seljukids in Asia Minor)*, Moscow-Leningrad (M-L): 1941, pp. 22, 46). The Turks who lived in bordering regions were called Ujs. Usually the Oguz tribes lived at the borders; they were allegedly the bravest among the Turks and excellent warriors. Our historian indicates this: "... [they] were brave in the battle and numerous in number..." G. G. Alasania, "tamaris meore ist'orik'osis ori t'erminis ganmartebisatvis", *Vostochnaia filologia*, Vol. 2, pp. 209-210.

- ⁵⁶ K'arnukalaki – Georgian name of the city of Erzurum. Erzurum (Arzan-ar-rum) was founded after the destruction (1049) by the Turks of the town of Arzan (Artsi in Armenian) in the upper reaches of the Tigris River, in the place of the ancient Theodosiopolis, which later they called Arzan of Rumi, that is of Byzantium. In the twelfth century it became the capital of an Emirate. In the thirteenth century the Sultan of Rumi, Rukn-ad-Din, deprived the ruler of this city (Ala ad-Din Saltuk-oglu, Saldukh, in Georgian) of power and appointed his brother Mogis ad-Din Togril-Shah as Emir of Erzurum. After the battle of Basiani, Erzurum fell into the sphere of influence of the state of Georgia.
- ⁵⁷ Here Rukn ad-Din's brother, Mogis ad-Din Togril-Shah.
- ⁵⁸ Senakerem (Sennakherim) – an Assyrian king (705-681).
- ⁵⁹ Sevast'ia – a town in Asia Minor, in the upper reaches of the river Galis.
- ⁶⁰ K'ari – the city of Kars (on the river of Akhurjan).
- ⁶¹ These two lines belong to the author of *The History and Eulogy of Monarchs*. I. A. Javakhishvili included them in the text of the second historian of Queen Tamar to make the content clearer.
- ⁶² Manager of the king's court – the literal translation of the Georgian term *ezosmodzghvari* used in the text. This term is met rarely in Georgian sources. It was used for the first time in the most ancient editions of *Four Chapters*. Later this term is encountered in *The Great Nomocanon* (translated in the eleventh century) for an official who, together with the bishop, is in charge of the church's treasury (See *didi nomokanoni (The Great Nomocanon)*, Tbilisi: 1975, pp. 274-275). According to Vakhushti Bagrat'ioni, the *ezosmodzghvari* was in charge of the king's affairs, took care of receptions, the king's cuisine etc., and corresponded to the "nazir" of his time (V. Bagrat'ioni, *aghts'era sameposa sakartveloshi (Description of the Kingdom of Georgia)*, Tbilisi: 1941, pp. 16, 21). The same explanation of this term is given in the Dictionary of S. S. Orbeliani (*naziri* – is a foreign word, in Georgian – *ezosmodzghvari*). In the opinion of I. P. Antelava, *ezosmodzghvari* corresponds to the position of *ganmgetukhutsesi* (master of ceremonies of a king's court), which is in the "Regulations of the King's Court" (fourteenth century) (I. P. Antelava, *ts'entraluri da adgilobrivi administ'ratsia XI-XIII sauk'uneebis sakartveloshi (Central and Local Administration of Georgia in the 11-13th cc.)*, Tbilisi: 1983, p. 72).
- ⁶³ Basiani – a region in the upper reaches of the Araxes River.
- ⁶⁴ Battle of Basiani – the battle between the united armies of the Seljuks and the state of Georgia. The Seljuks were headed by Rukn-ad-Din. The battle took place in a valley in the region of Basiani and ended with the victory of the Georgian Army. This event is dated variously: according to the eastern sources it took place in 1202. M. Brosset proposed 1203 (*Uchenie zapiski imperatorskoi Akademii nauk (The Scientific Notes of the Imperial Academy of Sciences)* SPb.: 1904, V. II, ed. 5, p. 727). P. Jordania dated this battle as 1202 (Jordania, *op. cit.*, p. 291). 1205 and 1206 became widely accepted in Georgian historiography (see I. A. Javakhishvili, *kartveli eris ist'oria (The History of Georgian People)*, *op.cit.*, Vol. 2, p. 277; N. A. Berdzenishvili, *sakartvelos ist'oriis sak'ithebi (Questions on the History of Georgia)* Tbilisi: 1973, Vol. 6, p. 83. Several works were dedicated to a more precise definition of the date of the battle of Basiani (see for instance, A. G. Gamkrelidze, "Data Basianskogo Srazhenia i Nekotorie Voprosi Osnovaniia Trapezuntskoi Imperii" ("The Date of the Battle of Basiani and Some Questions on the Foundation of the Empire of Trabzon") in *Voprosi istorii narodov Kavkaza (Questions on the History of the Peoples of the Caucasus)*, Tbilisi: 1966; B. G. Silagadze, *rustavelis epok'is sakartvelos ist'oriis zogierti sak'itkhebi (Some Questions on the History of Georgia in the Age of Rustaveli)*, Tbilisi: 1958 pp. 119-120; R. K. K'ik'nadze, *Ocherki po istochnikovedeniu istorii Gruzii, op.cit.*, pp.148-149). At present the battle of Basiani is dated as 27 June 1202 (G. G. Alasania "basianis brdzolis datarigebisatvis" ("On the Date of the Battle of Basiani"), *matsne History Series*, 1975, no.1
- ⁶⁵ An excerpt from the tenth verse of the 110th psalm of David.
- ⁶⁶ Guzan – a powerful feudal lord from Southern Georgia; he rebelled twice against the Queen, for which he was punished by David by the gouging out his eyes.
- ⁶⁷ K'ola – an area in the upper reaches of the Mt'k'vari River.
- ⁶⁸ Lubia – Libya.
- ⁶⁹ Sinai Mountain – situated in the Sinai Peninsula, in its extreme western part; there were several Georgian monasteries and churches on the mountain, including a Georgian Church, founded in the tenth century, the cloister of Moses, and the church of Moses at Alias.

70 “The Holy Mountain” Athos, in the Balkan Peninsula.

71 P’et’rits’oni – a monastery in Bulgaria, in the village of Bachkovo, founded in 1083 by Grigol Bakuriani.

72 Romana – a district of Constantinople, in which the monastery of Roman was located, founded by the Georgians in the tenth century.

73 K’uruseti – the city of Kurus in Syria.

74 The Black Mountain – a mountain and monastery (founded by the Georgians in the tenth century) close to Antioch in Syria.

75 Alexius Angar – Byzantine Emperor Alexius III Angel (1195-1203), notorious for his cruelty and stinginess. In the Georgian source the wrong form “Angar” is used in place of “Angel.” On the basis of the traits of his character, the Georgians apparently detected a certain meaning in this name (in Georgian the word “angari” means a mercenary-minded person). Taking away the throne from his brother Isaac in 1195, Alexis blinded him. In 1203, when the crusaders occupied Constantinople, Alexis left the metropolis while the crusaders restored his brother Emperor Isaac, to the throne, as well as his son Alexis IV. In 1204 Alexis V Duka became emperor, and the former emperor began intriguing in order to regain the throne. He began actions against his son-in-law, the King of Nicaea Laskar. But Laskar won the struggle. In 1210 the old emperor was brought to Nicaea and made a monk in the monastery of Hyacinth, where he ended his life in 1211. T. I. Uspenski, *Istoriia Vizantiiskoi Imperii (The History of the Byzantine Empire)*, Moscow-Leningrad: 1948, Vol. 3, pp. 548-549).

76 “...army from Western Georgia...” – here in the Georgian text the term “over Likhi” is used, to mean the Likhi Ridge, which stretched north to south and divided Georgia into Western and Eastern parts.

77 Lazika – Lazia in the Georgian text; here is meant Ch’aneti (on the southern shore of the Black Sea), on the territory of which the Trabzon Empire was founded.

78 Here some points of the Trabzon Empire are listed: Limon – the fortress of Limnia on the Black Sea shore of Asia Minor; Samison – Samsun in Asia Minor, on the Black Sea, the ancient city of Amis; Sinop’ – a seaport on the Black Sea shore of Asia Minor; Kerasunt – a town in Asia Minor, on the Black Sea, between Trabzon and Samsun; K’it’ora – a town in Asia Minor, on the Black Sea shore, to the west of Trabzon; Amast’ria – a town in Asia Minor, on the Black Sea shore, to the east of Sinop’; Arak’lia – the town of Iraklion in Asia Minor, on the Black Sea shore, to the west of Amast’ria.

79 Calling Alexius Comnenus, the first emperor of Trabzon, Queen Tamar’s relative, the second historian of Tamar probably means the following: David the Restorer’s daughter K’ata was married to one of the representatives of the Comnenus House.

80 Here, the first emperor of the Trabzon Empire Alexius Comnenus. Our historian thinks him to be the son of Andronicus Comnenus. However, Alexius was not the son but the grandson of Andronicus (on this historical mistake see the article of A. G. Gamq’relidze, *basianis brdzolis datarigebisatvis (The Date of the Basiani Battle)*, Tbilisi: 1966, p. 251). Andronicus had two sons – Manuel and John. Manuel’s children – Alexius and David – lived at the court of Queen Tamar. This Alexius later became the Emperor of the Trabzon Empire.

81 Andronicus – the grandfather of the emperor of Trabzon Alexius Comnenus; the son of Isaac Sebastokrator, the grandson of Emperor Alexius I Comnenus (1081-1118). During the time of Giorgi III, when his uncle, Manuel I (1142-1180), reigned in Byzantium, he visited Georgia with his family and took part in some battles for the King of Georgia. In 1182 he became the emperor Andronicus I. In 1185 he was dethroned and murdered. His older son Manuel was also killed, and his children Alexius and David came to Georgia and Queen Tamar. Later, Alexius became Emperor of Trabzon (T. I. Uspenski, *Istoriia Vizantiiskoi imperii, op.cit.*, p. 221).

82 Franks – the Georgian sources usually call Franks the inhabitants of Western Europe in general (in this case – the crusaders).

83 In the Georgian text – Borgaleti.

84 “...in the twenty third or twenty fourth year...” – according to Ibn al-Asir, Kars was joined to the state of Georgia in 1206-1207. The Armenian historian Vardan dates this as 1206. These dates are confirmed by the testimony of the second historian of Tamar: The 23rd or 24th year of Queen Tamar’s reign falls on 1206 or 1207.

85 “...including in the precincts...” – in order to rule non-Georgian regions. Two forms of inclusion into the Georgian state were used: direct annexation (inclusion into the crown lands) and feudal-vassal dependence. Feudal-vassal

dependence is expressed by the word “giving” (“gantsema”), and direct annexation – by the words “inclusion into the precincts of the kingdom” (“samepod dach’era”).

⁸⁶ Rakhs – the Araxes river.

⁸⁷ Sp’eri – a region in the upper reaches of the Ch’orokhi River.

⁸⁸ “...only in 17 years...” – the annexation of the town of K’ari took place in 1206-1207. It is not clear, what the author means by this phrase, what had happened “in seventeen years” preceding this event. P. Jordania thought that the author meant the years King David Soslan spent on the throne in the kingdom of Georgia (1189+17=1206) (Jordania, *op. cit.*, p. 196). I. A. Javakhishvili supposed that in the text the designation of tens was lacking – in place of “atchvidmeti” (seventeen) there should be “(otsda)chvidmetsa” or thirty seven. The number thirty seven designates the whole life of Queen Tamar, from her birth until the seizure of the town of K’ari in 1207 (1170+37=1207).

⁸⁹ Upper lands (in Georgian “aghamarti”) is used in the sense of “southern lands,” and the “upper and lower regions,” if it is about the “foreign affairs” of the Queen, in our opinion means the regions of Ani and Dvin.

⁹⁰ “And again, they brought her here into the fortress of Agari” – the fortress of Agari was a large fort and the residence of kings. As N. A. Berdzenishvili established, the fortress of Agari in the ancient sources is the contemporary K’ojori Fortress. This fortress was erected on a mountain slope situated to the south of Tbilisi; this was a summer residence of the Georgian kings. It was also surrounded by woody mountains (in Georgian “daso”), where the King spent the summer with his court. Queen Tamar died in this fortress. From the fifteenth century the fortress of Agari was called the K’ojori Fortress (N. A. Berdzenishvili, “dzveli tbilisis t’op’onik’isatvis” (“On the Toponymy of Ancient Tbilisi”), in B. Silagadze, *Nekotorie Voprosi Istorii Gruzii (Some Questions of the History of Georgia) op.cit.*, Vol. 1, pp. 301-331).

⁹¹ “General powerlessness (impotence)...” – with these words begins the so-called “Afterword” or the “concluding part” – a disputed section of the text. Some think that this is the end of *The History and Eulogy of Monarchs* (I. A. Lolashvili), others believe that this passage belongs to the text of *The Life of Queen of Queens Tamar* (I. A. Javakhishvili); still others suppose that this is the end of some third description of the life of Queen Tamar, which did not reach us (K. Grigolia).

⁹² *mtavaris* – sovereign princes.

⁹³ Kashags – a north Caucasian tribe.

⁹⁴ Here in negative form is the eighth verse of the fifth chapter of the book of the Prophet Isaiah: “Woe unto them that join house to house, that lay field to field, till there be no place, that they may be placed alone in the midst of the earth!” (Isaiah 5:8).

⁹⁵ An excerpt from the eleventh verse of Psalm 96 of David.

აწინაგებელითა აქროთა ვუცხლოთა ღმერთა აქროთ
 სიმღერითა ბრძოლითა შაღლითა საქრთა ღმერთა
 ბრძოლისა თესვან ღმერთა მარტოვანთა მეფეებსა აქროთ
 მარტოვანი ციხენი ღმერთაქნი ღმერთაქნი ესრეთა მ
 დიდებულნი ღმერთანი იმყოფდეს ღმერთებდეს ღმერთ
 რაჟ იაქვდეს დამოუკიდებელად გრძობითა მარტოვან
 თუთავან ხანაჟს ღმერთანი აქროცხვან

† სხვადასა დასა მღვდელს მეს ღმერთს მარტოვანი საქრთა
 სპასლოანი ღმერთანი აქროცხვი იაქვ ღმერთს მარტო
 და მარტოვან ბოიარა ~~მარტოვანი~~ ღმერთნი ღმერთნი
 შაღლის აქროცხვი დამოუკიდებელად იხილოთ ღმერთს
 ღმერთს თქვანი ღმერთს სიძვერე ღმერთს სპასლოანი
 ღმერთს სპასლოანი მარტოვანი მარტოვანი ღმერთ
 ნი იმყოფიან სპასლოანი შაღლის ღმერთს მარტოვანი
 მარტოვანი მარტოვანი მარტოვანი თქვანი მარტოვანი
 ციხეთა დამოუკიდებელი სპასლოანი თქვანი ღმერთს

ღმ

Basili, The Life of Tamar, the Great Queen of Queens. Kartlis Tskhovreba, MS of Chalashvili (1731), National Centre of Manuscripts, Tbilisi, Q-207, 289v.

ქს სიმკრე მათი ეს წიგნიველით უნაყს რამდენაჲს
 ხელს რამდენაჲს ხელისხანი რათა ცნან ყველთა სხათა
 წმინდოებისათა ძლია ქს სიმკრე ხოფნი. აჲ აქმანე
 სხათს საქრთველთასათა რათა მხა იყვნენ ლაშქრობაჲს
 ხელისხანს ღლიათე მათიჲს ქრთველთასანი მიწეყრულთ
 მას მიჲს ხელისხანს ქს უნაყს ეს მძნე რათს - ნაჲფ
 სთი ღრთიქნანძმდის აღიჭყრონ ქს მხა იყვნენ: -
 ქს ვითარ ქსმენს თქმულთაჲს ქსე მკრთველთასანი მუჲქსა
 მოჲყრადს ყველთაჲს წინაინებულთაჲს ამის სემეჲსანძ
 მუჲრთა ქს იმერთა აჲყჲს თქმულთაჲს მათი ქს ვითარ
 ქს ლაშქრობაჲს წყეჲს მკრთველთასანს სთინდა ყველთაჲს მათი
 ქს ღმსეჲსეჲს ლაშქრობაჲს ღა იჲქსს კანძარ: ქს ვჲ მათიჲს
 სთი სთიქმისა მოჲვდეს ცჲვლის მუჲსა წინამუ ქს ვანი
 ხელთა რასმანი თჲსნი მჲწონა ძმჯანთაჲს ვანქჲსნიღო
 ქს ქს ცხერს უთიღონძა მათი სწიღე ქს სიმკრე სხათა მის
 თს ქს მთიქროთა სხანსთათა აღსეჲსეჲს: ქს მოიღოჲს ღრთიჲს

Basili, The Life of Tamar, the Great Queen of Queens. Kartlis Tskhovreba, MS of Chalashvili (1731), National Centre of Manuscripts, Tbilisi, Q-207, 290r.

THE HUNDRED YEARS' CHRONICLE

1. She, the beloved one, still in her lifetime, crowned her son, Giorgi, who was also called Lasha. He was thirteen when he received the crown, and Queen Tamar gave him her blessing. When Tamar passed away, he was eighteen years of age. She had left to her son her kingdom. Grief and sorrow, and the sounds of moaning, and mourning was among the Georgian people – as if they had been sucked alive into hell. Alas, such was their lot. 5

After Tamar, the kingdom was inherited by her son – Lasha Giorgi – who had a powerful frame, was a daring archer, loved feasting, and was brave. He had a rather special nature. The main reason for his ascendancy was that all the adversaries of his virtuous and godly mother submitted to him; she left him a tranquil and peaceful kingdom, and all the peoples paid tribute to him, like the Ganjians and their neighbors, the Nakhchevanians, and the inhabitants of K'arnukalaki, and many others, who came to him with gifts and tribute. He rejoiced at all this and joy reigned everywhere 10

But then the Ganjians began to break away, and stopped bringing tribute to the King. Learning of this, King Lasha called on his people and gathered the whole Georgian army, Imiers and Amiers, and Ivane Mkhargrdzeli, to whom his mother Tamar honored with the position of *atabag*. This position became prominent so that the person occupying it was respected even more than certain *eristavis*. Mkhargrdzeli was a vizier of the King's court. The King said: "My mother, the most brilliant among the Kings and the blessed one, entrusted me with this kingdom, making all the adversaries of my fathers and forefathers her tributaries, and they remained subject to our power. But now the *atabag* of Ganja behaves inadmissibly, refusing to pay us tribute. I have decided therefore to respond to Ganja with vengeance and to charge you with this task. With your might and assistance, my blessed fathers and forefathers demolished the powers of the great sultans. Now accept our honor and gifts and let's take up arms against Ganja so as to avoid the outrage of our other enemies. With God's assistance, guided by the Precious Cross and your valor, we will overcome our foe." 15 20

The nobles rejoiced at hearing these words of the King and told him: "The great comfort God granted us has been increased, for we have found a valorous Goliath in you, comparable to Gorgasal or David. Trusting in God and your might, we shall conquer all the unruly in your kingdom and make them repent for their disobedience." They approved a campaign and the King in person with an ample army set out to ravage Ganja. The Ganjians were unable to offer resistance and the lands of Ganja were devastated, many captives and much spoil was taken. The army approached the town of Ganja, surrounded it and fought for many days; and day after day fighters came in groups out 25 30

of the gate of the fortress to engage in battle with the soldiers enforcing the siege; chosen soldiers specially selected fought on both sides.

2. Then the King decided to skirt the town with a small squad. While he was surrounding the city from the plain alongside the river Mt'k'vari, the inhabitants of Ganja discovered his design and prepared for the attack, heavily arming themselves. There were about ten thousand well-armed men. And the King had roughly four thousand soldiers with him, most of whom were Meskhis; the people of Mkhargrdzeli, the Er-K'akhs and Somkhitis,¹ the Kartlians and Torelians, all were in separate groups. The Abkhazians and the Dadian-Bedianians were in mutual accord with the Likhians-from-the-other-side.

Seeing that the King was close, the Ganjians opened the gate and fell upon him like wild beasts. King Lasha looked at this multitude, having no fear in his heart, and turning to his people he found reassurance, for they were ready to give their lives for the King and told him: "Let us perish in this deadly feat, but we will not put you to shame in the very first battle of your reign." And they rushed forward and engaged the enemy, and a battle, daring and savage, took place. Most of the Ganjians found death from Georgian swords. King Lasha himself rushed bravely and mightily forward – the Goliath, lucky with arms, and strong of hand. Side by side with him in the vanguard fought the son of Q'uarq'uare Jaq'eli – Bibila Gurk'eli, Botso, son of Botso and the brother of Memna, for they were placed at the head of the military host. As soon as the Ganjians saw their courage, they took flight with all the speed they were capable of. They were pursued up to the very gates of Ganja. Only a few of them managed to reach the town, most of them being taken captive, and some were slain.

The women witnessing this, struck a desperately at their breasts, tore off their scarves along with their hair, and intensified their yelling and moaning. Hearing this noise, the soldiers and the distinguished noblemen besieging (the town) approached the King and told him of the decision of the troops and their commanders that he had to forbear from fighting like an ordinary soldier. Approaching the gates of the fortress, the King, protected by God, dismounted and asked for pardon for his actions, which stemmed from ignorance. Then he returned to his camp happily, and for the whole week there was joy, and gifts were given to the troops.

The *atabag* of Ganja, falling into such desperate situation, begged the King to restore the *kharaj*. Hearing this, the King gave him back the captives, with all kinds of riches and many gifts, precious stones and pearls, gold and silver.

The King came to Tbilisi and filled Georgia with his gifts, for he was more generous than any other King in the world. He bore no envy, was a devout man, he fasted, was law-giving and merciful. However later he showed an inclination for evil things, falling under the influence of immoral people. And as has been written of Solomon, who was perverted by his wives in a similar way, immoral people did the same with our King, which can be seen from the following. He indulged in feasting with drunkards, and he inclined more and more to evil, and as it is said of Israelites: "And he set people about eating and drinking and they started to dance."

Drunken marrying and immoderate gluttony deranged him more than any vice; he rejected the viziers of the blessed Queen and the instructors of the King in matters of propriety. He surrounded himself with his drunken peers and dissolute women, and he reached such a degree of disgrace

that wine-lovers arriving in Tbilisi invited the King to drink with them to satiate their abominations along with those of the King. One time, some drunken sots not suspecting he was the King, under the influence of excessive wine and mead, fell upon him and beat him so hard that he lost the sight of his right eye.

3. Learning of this, the Georgian nobles were angry; and most of all *atabag* Ivane and Varam of Gaga, Zachariah's son, who stopped attending the court, and grumbled: "We cannot bear this reign of yours until you stop sharing company with such evil people who follow such dissolute paths." The King repented and made a firm vow to do nothing henceforward without their counsel. And though he kept his promise, the invisible enemy grew stronger; they could not persuade him to get married, as it would have meant tempering the fire of his passion towards women. Coming to Velistsikhe, one of the villages of K'akheti, he beheld a woman of fine appearance and at once became a prisoner to his passion. Forgetting the story of David and the wife of Uria, he brought her in haste to himself and made fervent love to her. She became pregnant and gave birth to a boy, who was named David. This is the very David who later, after overcoming many great ordeals, became King, which will be seen later. In order to educate the boy, the King entrusted him to his sister Rusudan, who was the only-begotten daughter of Tamar. There was an affection between them which surpassed the love which (generally) takes place between brothers and sisters. 5 10 15

So the King lived in an orderly and peaceful manner, and his vassals from everywhere furnished his court with gifts and tributes. With joy on their lips, people came to his kingdom to perform worthy deeds. He descended to Ajameti, hunted in Tskhumi and Abkhazia, and settled affairs there. At the time of the grape harvest, he came to Tbilisi, and spent winters at the Armenian Gate, fighting battles with the Ganjians from there. In the summer he ascended the upper reaches of the Mt'k'vari and stopped in K'ola, where tributaries from Khlata and Greece came to him with gifts. 20

Living so carefree a life, he had no desire to get married. The catholicoses, bishops and viziers gathered and concluded: "It does not befit you to keep a concubine by your side, and no spouse; embodying the word of Christ, apostle Paul writes: "Marriage is sacred and the marital bed – pure. But adultery and adulterers are condemned by the Lord." However the King would not listen to them. They removed the woman, David's mother, and sent her back to her husband. Even after that he would not get married, and remained single. Lasha was brave, well-built, manly, audacious, arrogant, selfish, willful, and as I have already said, generous; but he was also a hypocrite, fond of drinking and a glutton. And while there was peace in his Kingdom, he loved wining and dining. The Fathers write: "There are three causes of passions from which all evil things proceed: gluttony, greed for money and vanity. Their antecedents are: lechery, adultery, spite, over-sensitivity, and pride. From these evils comes lust and indulgence of an unlawful passion, which we have no time to describe separately here. As the Prophet says: "Jacob ate, became satiated and fat, and forsook the Lord, his creator; he broke from God, his savior." 25 30 35

The same thing happened to the Georgian people, for satiating themselves, they indulged in pleasure; reckless people who did not deserve to stay at the King's court, gave themselves up to adultery and drinking; they remain there even now. All this became burdensome for both the catholicoses and the nobles of his kingdom, and above all for *atabag* Ivane. Unwilling to remain 40

amongst such people, they withdrew from the King, isolating themselves in their own estates. That was the cause of the increase of sins and the devastation of Georgia, which the following words bear witness to.

The Story of Genghis-Khan or how he Appeared in the Eastern Land

5 4. There in the Sunny Land called Chin-Machin, which is in the East, are people from an amazing place, called Q'araq'urum. They are strange by face, and in their mores and appearance. You cannot find stories about them in any of the ancient books, for they are alien in their language, habits and their way of life; they did not know the taste of bread, while they ate the meat and drank the milk of horses. And they were perfect in their bodies, stout, but strong on their feet, beautiful and of fair
10 complexion, with narrow brown eyes, elongated and bright; they were big-headed, with thick dark hair, flat-foreheads, and the noses so low that the cheeks rose above them in a way that only small nostrils were visible; they had small lips, regular white teeth and no beards at all. So uncommon were they in appearance. But nobody should wonder, all of them – the men as well as the women – possessed a kind of amazing beauty. They were also brave by nature and chosen archers, shooting
15 perfectly the heavy arrows from their tight bows, which no armor could protect you from. They were especially skillful in handling horses, for they were brought up on horseback, and knew nothing of armor, using only bows and arrows.

 So wonderful were those people that looking at them you might think them crazy. Though all kinds of wisdom resided amongst them, and they were in full possession of reason and self-control.
20 There was no place for lies among them; they were servile in the face of no man, neither great, nor small, or even before a council; they submitted to the good order created by Genghis-Khan, though to tell of everything in detail would be a long story.

 By tradition, they believed in and worshipped a single and immortal God. They turned their faces towards the East, kneeled three times, bowed three times, touched the palm with the tip of the long
25 finger, snapped it, and did nothing more.

 The Uighurs, on the other hand, were votaries of an idol which they called Kunjit. They have a script with few letters, for they write books with only sixteen letters, which are simple to study and easy to understand. They also have twelve years, in the manner of the *kronik'on* (cycle), with the names of dumb animals at the head of each year. This is like in ancient times, when the sage
30 Hellenes created twelve zodiacs, which are stars and constellations of the Sun and the Moon, and for each of these constellations they set aside thirty bright days, and not animals but signs (of the zodiac). The Uighurs also placed one animal at the head of each year and upon expiration of twelve years, they start the cycle anew. Reaching the twelfth year, they began again to count years, which they called: Q'alghunjil, Ukurjil, Parsinjil, Tavlainjil, Luiljil, Moghiljil, Morinjil, Q'onijil, Mechinjil,
35 Taghanjil, Nokhinjil, Q'aq'injil.

Such were the names of the twelve animals, each of which was privileged to head a year. The first of them was called Q'alghun, that is the Mouse, then came the Cow, the Leopard, the Rabbit, the Dragon, the Snake, the Horse, the Sheep, the Monkey, the Hen, the Dog and the Pig. This they had for the enumeration of years, like we, the Georgians, who have *kronik'on*.

The Mongols worshiped a single god, whom they called Tengri. And they began their writings with the words: "Mangu Tengri Kuchundur," which means: "By the power of immortal God."

They got by with little food, for they ate all living creatures: cat meat, dog meat, or any other kind of animal. Their kin consisted, in the past as well as today, of many clans, among which we will mention just twelve: the foremost among them was the clan – Saq'irs, (then) Kindis, Q'atis, Jalairs, Oirids, Suldus', Nahims, Q'onghards, Manghuts, Tanghuts, Q'aits and Uighurs.

The Uighurs worshiped an idol which they called Kujin. They called themselves in their language "Mongols," though the Georgians called them – Tatars, and I am representing them as one whole tribe.

5. Among the Q'aits, one of the tribes, a man by the name of Temurchi stood out, who is Genghis-khan. He was handsome, stately, with slightly reddish hair, powerful, brave, fearless in battle, an artful archer, deep in reasoning and lucky in ventures. He went once to the senior King, called a khan, whose name was On-khan, to receive gifts and honors. As soon as the latter saw him (Temurchi), he was enchanted by him because of his virtues, and he raised him to be equal to the nobles of the highest rank. He appointed him the commander of his troops, and Temurchi annihilated all the detractors and apostates who rejected his power, and from everywhere he returned victorious to his master, the King On-khan. Temurchi was given the greatest possible honors.

Utkin, the brother of On-khan and his own son Kurak began to envy Temurchi and they said to On-khan: "He wants to seize your kingdom and the people already call him khan." And On-khan decided to kill him, but Temurchi found out about his plan, for two men, whose names were Kurak and Bad informed him, saying: "On-khan craves greatly for your death".

He escaped and took those two men with him. He came to his home – his yurt, and took his family with him and rode the whole day and night. Then leaving his household, goods and herds behind him, he came to the bank of the river, which is called Baljun, and, moving his squad out of the way, entered into a ravine by himself.

But On-khan learned of the flight of Temurchi and set out after him at once, and caught up with his household and his herds. On-khan seized many prisoners and his army took much spoil. Then Temurchi fell unexpectedly on On-khan's army, and engaged him in battle, which was forceful and fierce. Countless numbers of people were slain on both sides; and Temurchi defeated On-khan, pursued him and killed him. He rushed onward to the household of On-khan and seized all his belongings, his wife and his children, with the exception of the On-khan's elder son Kurak.

And he mounted On-khan's throne, and Temurchi was given the name Genghis Khan.

After that he engaged in battle with the King of the Q'ongards, Altu-khan, overpowered him and killed him; Genghis Khan took possession of his kingdom. Then On-Khan's son, Kurak went to Gor-khan and, joining forces with him, fought Genghis Khan. Genghis Khan won the battle, overpowered Gor-khan and killed him, and subjected Gor-khan's troops to his command.

After that he advanced against the Uighurs, those, who called their king, Edut. At that time the Emir of the Uighurs was someone by the name of Sarchuk, whose deeds are like amazing fairy-tales, fairy-tales that are rather filthy at that, so that it would be improper to talk of them. But Genghis Khan showed mercy to him and kept him in esteem; Genghis Khan defeated a great number of
5 Tatars and subjected them. He also subdued the Q'arq'its.

And as soon as he had dominated the Tatars, some wonderful man came, so it was rumored, from Tebtengrs. He appeared before the Khan and spoke the following words: "I am going to the mountain which is called Baliq': I hear the voice of God. And God orders: I am going to hand over to Temurchi and his soldiers all the lands, and let his name be Genghis Khan."

10 But the story of how Genghis Khan ascended a high mountain, and how the Lord Jesus Christ appeared before him, the God of all, is also often told. He taught Genghis Khan the law, faith, innocence and truth, unacceptance of lies, and many other things, telling him: "If you remember these rules, all the lands and tribes will be given to you. Go and take as many of them (the lands), as will be in your power."

15 After becoming khan, he went to Khat'aeti and entered the church and beholding the image of the Savior Jesus Christ bowed instantly before it saying: "That is the man I have seen on the Chineti mountain; the same in appearance, and he taught me all those laws." And Genghis Khan fell in love with Him, blessed Him and observed accurately all the laws given by Him. Then he fought with the khan of the Khat'aetians, Arslan Khan, and defeated him. He captured two hundred
20 thousand of his people and executed them. Learning of that, Arslan Khan entered his home with his wife and children, and ordered his servants to set it on fire. They did as he told them. And Arslan Khan perished with his entire family in the flames. Genghis Khan came and mounted his throne, and brought Khat'aeti under his rule. And so it remains to our days.

A few words about Genghis Khan's children

25 6. Genghis Khan had many wives, as well as children. His senior wife, Sevinji,² gave birth to a son, who was given the name Tushi, whom the Georgians called Jochi. The second son was – Chaghat'a, the third – Okota, the fourth – Tuli. These four, who were stationed in Khat'aeti, he appointed khans. To the senior – Tushi – he gave half of his (own) troops and sent him to Great Q'ivchaq'ia, Ovseti, Khazaria and Russia down to the (lands of) Dark. And all those lands he gave
30 to his son, and of the others we will tell of later.

And so, learning of the approach of the Tatars, the highest and the greatest of all Kings, Khuarazmsha, who was at an advanced age at the time (the sultanate, as well as the government of his domain were in the hands of his son Jalaldin), and who held territories down to Jeon, Khorasan and Iran, called his son, Jalaldin, with his army of six hundred thousand men and advanced towards
35 Genghis Khan.

Genghis Khan set out against Khwarazmsha. They engaged in a brutal and fierce battle, in which numberless people were killed on both sides, and the Khorezmians were defeated. In the course of the battle, the aged Khwarazmsha, remaining with a small detachment of fighters, was surrounded by the Tatars. His son – the Sultan Jalaldin – valorous and brave, courageous and fearless like some immaterial being, superb, strong and an excellent fighter, came to the rescue of his father with a small group of soldiers, picked him up, and together they fled to Khorasan. 5

And again, more than once, Jalaldin fought with the Tatars – three times he engaged them in battle beyond Jeon and four times in Khorasan, on this side of Jeon. And so, on account of our sins, the Lord placed our country in the hands of the Tatars; Jaladin was overpowered and driven away. Learning of his flight and his hiding in the fortress, Genghis Khan sent two chiefs in pursuit – Iama and Sanp'ian, whom the Georgians call Seba and Jebo. He ordered them to cross the lands of Khorasan and Iraq and to explore these countries as much as they could. 10

They advanced with twelve thousand horsemen without armor and provision, having only bows with them, and no swords. They passed through Turan, Jeon, Khorasan, Iraq, Adarbadagan³ and reached Gandzi.⁴ And there was no one who could oppose them. They defeated everybody who they met on their way. They reached the borders of Georgia and ravaged the lands of Gaga. Varam of Gaga and *atabag* Ivane learned of this and informed King Lasha of the invasion of foreign tribes, with foreign languages, and about the ravaging of Somkhiti. The King called up his army and gathered ninety thousand horsemen. They advanced towards the Tatars who were camped around Gaga. Then they were joined by the large army of *atabag* Ivane and his nephew Shanshe, the son of his brother *amirsp'asalar* Zachariah, and Varam of Gaga, and they set out to meet the enemy. 15 20

However the Tatars had been camping on the bank of Berduji, which is now called Sagimi.⁵ They saddled their horses in a flash and engaged in battle. And a fierce encounter took place. Half of the Tatars fled, but the other half, being hidden and waiting in ambush, attacked the Georgians unexpectedly from the rear. And then the wrath of the Highest fell upon us for all our sins and lack of faith, and the Georgians took flight, their soldiers and King Lasha⁶ as well. Many Christian souls perished that day. The great *atabag* Ivane, *sp'asalar* of Samtskhe, had a narrow escape, and Beka the son of *mech'urch'letukhutsesi* Q'uarq'uaire, and an excellent warrior, was killed. And God's wrath fell upon us in full, condemning the Georgian people for its lack of faith, turning fortune away from the great and glorious House of David, for up to that time the merciful Lord, who determines our fortunes, had granted victories to the happy House of David. The victorious lineage of David and Gorgasali had never suffered defeat. But after this, because of the turning of fortune's wheel, the Georgian people were never granted a single victory over the Tatars, and so it is up to our times. 25 30

Once glorious and powerful, they came to the town as fugitives. Their strength and glory was replaced by mournful sighs. And the Tatars reached Samshilde,⁷ then turned back and did something wonderful: they went by the road of Daruband,⁸ and because neither the Shirvanshah⁹ nor the Darubandians could resist them, they passed the Darubandi Gates, entered Q'ivchaq'ia and engaged the local population in battle; and the Q'ivchaq's¹⁰ fought in many places with them, but the Tatars defeated them everywhere; so, fighting as they moved, they left. And as I have noted already, 35 40

they did this without armor and rode on unshod horses. Crossing Q'ivchaq'ia and rounding the Darubandean Sea, they reached Q'araq'urum (Karakorum) and appeared before their King, Genghis Khan. And they acted quite strangely: crossing all those roads and exiting Q'araq'urum on unshod horses and without rest, they returned there once again.

5 Learning that the Tatars prevailed everywhere, Genghis Khan sent his sons on the search for Jalaldin, the Sultan of Khorasan. Receiving these tidings, Sultan Jalaldin summoned his army and many times engaged them in battle. But feeling his own impotence, he moved on with his entire household, escorted by one hundred and forty thousand of his soldiers with all their households, trying to escape from the pursuing Tatars. They made their way into our country, of which we will in
10 the following.

One year passed and King Lasha fell ill, for the wrath of God, who we had angered was not assuaged. Feeling the approach of his end, King Lasha summoned all the distinguished nobles of his kingdom and entrusted them with his sister, Rusudan, telling them with tears in his eyes:
15 "Knowing well of the blameless devotion of the royal family to you, people of Georgia, and trusting in God, I charge you with my Sister, Rusudan, for you will have to make her a queen, as it has been the custom of your ancestors. Serve her faithfully and protect by your courage the royal throne from the spite of its enemy. For though she is not a man, but a woman, she is not lacking the wisdom and the knowledge for governing a state. You, the distinguished people of this kingdom, should know and remember the grace, generosity and homage of my blessed and well-remembered mother, glorious
20 among the Kings. And, if such is the will of God, my sister, too, will be favored with your respect. Now I pray to you before God to make her the Queen, my successor. And my sister Rusudan, and that I say before God for everybody to hear, I entrust with the commission of bringing up my son David, and when he achieves the ability to rule and becomes a capable warrior, let her make him the king, or make him a monarch and the heir to my kingdom. And though he is small yet, if the Lord
25 wishes him to grow up, he, I believe, will become quite worthy to reign, for he is stately of body, and fine of face."

Completing his order, he found peace for himself, leaving unspeakable grief and sorrow behind him. And his sister Rusudan was mourning him for many days, and they brought him to their burial place in Gelati.

30 II

7. Upon the passing of the King, all the distinguished (people) of his kingdom gathered, the Imiers and Amiers,¹¹ both catholicoses and bishops, from Nik'opsia¹² and up to Daruband; all subjects recognized Rusudan's¹³ claim to be Queen; they enthroned her, and congratulated her with her ascension to the throne.

35 And Rusudan was fine in appearance like her blessed mother, gentle, generous, and fond of upright and well-behaved people. She settled peacefully everything that was subject to her administration, and filled her whole kingdom with all kinds of goods.

But then people began to display insatiability and idleness, and everybody turned to evil. And because they had forgotten God, the Lord subjected them to obscene outrages and massacres at the hands of the heathens. Queen Rusudan adopted her brother's habits and indulged herself in idleness and amusement, from which originated the great evil.

Sultan Jalaldin was tired from the fight with the Tatars and one day he turned to his soldiers and said to them: "You, my dear *marzapans* and *eristavis*, are aware and remember well the kindness and favors of my forefathers. Now you know what has befallen both me and you, due to the alien Tatar tribes. Many times we engaged them in battle and spent much effort, but in compliance with God's design, everywhere we were defeated. Now Genghis Khan has approached the river of Jeon and is sending his first-born son to fight us. So such is my decision: since God has granted him victories, let us, as it is also your desire, leave this country and take our families, belongings and herds with us and move to Greece and settle ourselves there. For while the Tatars overcame us, we on our part can defeat all the other tribes. So let those, who want to do so, join us, but let those, that have no such desire, remain, for let the wish of each be granted."

Everybody resolved to accept the offer and taking their households and all their belongings they set out and came to Adarbadagan, about one hundred and forty thousand men in number, and they reached the estates of Mkhargrdzeli; *atabag* Ivane was given (the town) Dvin, and Ani was given to the son of his brother – *mandat'urtukhutsesi* Shanshe.

The Khoesmiens came the third year after the passing of Lasha Giorgi, with the aim of ravaging and seizing the lands and population of Dvin. Learning this, *atabag* Ivane and Varam of Gaga appeared before Queen Rusudan and told her of the appearance of the Khoesmiens and the great Sultan Jalaldin in person, who would ruin the Christians. They destroyed every living thing, mercilessly, sparing neither women, nor babies.

When Rusudan learned of the incursion of the Khoesmiens into her kingdom, she summoned an army of youths, of Imiers and Amiers, unfolded the royal banner and called upon *atabag* Ivane, advanced in age, a man still reasonable and virtuous but who at that time had secretly taken monastic vows. Rusudan appointed him the commander of her army and, handing him her banner, sent him to make war on Sultan Jalaldin.

They reached Dvin and Amoberdi. The Khoesmiens had set up a camp in the village that is called Garni, and when the Queen's army moved forward, Sultan Jalaldin took to the field. *Atabag* Ivane quickly lined up the royal soldiers, Imiers and Amiers, and in the vanguard, the people of Tori and two brothers – Shalva and Ivane from Akhaltsikhe¹⁴ – glorious soldiers, whose family was used to leading troops.

When the Georgian soldiers of the front ranks approached the Sultan, *atabag* Ivane refused to advance. They say that he did this out of envy of the Akhaltsikhians, Shalva and Ivane. Oh, envy, the source of all the evils, that cruelly exterminates the human race, it spares no tribe! It made the Jews kill the Lord, and now, with the fiercest persistence and the heartlessness of evil, it prompted a man to consider the elimination of the whole Georgia, so that as it will be clear from the following, it induced *atabag* Ivane to stay aloof above the battle and abstain from rendering aid to the fighters.

The advancing fighters sent to Ivane a messenger with the words: "We approached the Sultan and his troops, but we are in an extreme minority and the battle is going to be hard. Let the chosen royal troops, enforced by your courage, come hastily to our aid." And so two or three times they sent messengers to him, but he did not give them an answer. But because the Torians and particularly the Akhaltsikhians, Shalva and Ivane, fighting in the forefront were fearless in battle, they were not discouraged by the numerical superiority of the Sultan's army, and like beasts of prey they rushed upon the enemy, demonstrating glorious fighting skills; and countless people fell on both sides. But Shalva and Ivane fought powerfully, smashing the brave and formidable enemy. The fierce battle went on. Meanwhile *atabag* Ivane and the Georgian troops observing the hot combat from the side, took no pity on their kinsmen and their brothers in the faith of Christ, the Torians, and many other distinguished people with them. *Atabag* Ivane did not come and help them, because of envy, they say, not from cowardice.

And in the course of the battle the horses fell under both Akhaltsikhians, but even on foot they continued to fight bravely. And the warriors fell in great numbers on both sides, but most of all the Torians. When the fight became still more furious and the swords of the Akhaltsikhians broke over the helmets of the Khoesmans, the Georgians took flight. Shalva was seized, unable to withstand the others' overwhelming power, and Ivane, having found cover in the rocks of Garni, was killed by a stone thrown down on him. Shalva was presented to Sultan Jalaldin. The Nakhchevanians and Adarbadaganians, having recognized him told the Sultan of his courage and valor in battle.¹⁵ And the Sultan, far from executing him, kept him by himself in great respect, and even presented him with some towns in Adarbadagan, and honored him equally with his own nobles. One year later however, he was put to death for refusing to reject his faith.

Atabag Ivane returned to Bijnisi, and the Sultan set out for Adarbadagan and Nakhchevan. From there he devastated Georgia, ravaging the land, kidnapping people, and killing mercilessly. There was no one to give comfort. Two years later *atabag* Ivane passed away and his son Avag was made *mtavari* and given the title of *amirsp'asalar*.

8. After this, a great evil embraced the Georgian people, complete destruction became our lot, because of our lack of righteousness. The Sultan took up arms against Georgia, with the intention of becoming its king. He devastated all the lands, and the region of Dvin, and Ani, Armenia, and Gagi up to Gandza and Shankur. Up to that time Shankur with adjoining lands belonged to Varam of Gaga, a reasonable man and distinguished in battles. Such discord and misfortune roamed all about the country.

At this time Queen Rusudan had the son of Ort'ul brought to her as a hostage. Well-built, he was of a mature age, perfect of body, fearless and very strong. Taking a fancy to him, Queen Rusudan decided to marry him, which desire she then fulfilled. She made Ort'ul's son her husband and gave birth to a girl of sublime beauty. She gave her the name of her blessed mother Tamar. They begot a son and named him David. In addition, she were bringing up her nephew David – the son of Lasha-Giorgi.

When her daughter Tamar was grown up, the Sultan of Greece, Q'iasdin, son of Nukhradin learned of her fine appearance and sending many presents implored Queen Rusudan to give him

in marriage the virgin Tamar, swearing not to force her to renounce the faith of Christ. Heeding his request, Queen Rusudan married her daughter (Tamar) to him, an indecent thing for a Christian, and with great honors gave her Ats'q'uri as a dowry.

Meanwhile the Khoresmian Persians had almost entered Georgia already and were devastating its lands. Learning of the sojourn of *atabag* and *amirsp'asalar* Avag in Bijnisi, Sultan Jalaldin wanted to meet him. He sent him a messenger with the words: "You are the head of the King's viziers and are in charge of Georgia. Let us meet each other escorted only by one soldier, for I have a word to say to you." Avag accepted this and agreed to the meeting. So in the company of one man, and fully armed he came to meet the Sultan in one of the ravines of Bijnisi. They came face to face and the Sultan started as follows: "I came to Georgia having no desire to destroy it, but for peace and concert. You armed at once and engaged me, so that the peace was forgotten between us. Now you, the most noble of Georgians and the vizier of the King's court, you know my kin, my people, the greatness and the riches of my kingdom, and you know that no other sovereign can compete with me. I am the son of the highest and greatest King Khoresmshah, and I am holding sway over Persia from Adarbadagan to Jeon, and from Jeon to India, as well as Turan, Khat'aeti, Chin-Machin and the whole of the East. But by the design of the Almighty in the country of Chineti, in the unknown land called Q'araq'urum, appeared a wonderful people, talking an alien language, following alien ways of life, who subdued the entire East and defeated many Kings. They made as their King a marvelous man, versed in all matters and fearless in battle, who is called Genghis Khan. As soon as he laid his hands on Khat'aeti, I advanced upon him with the armies of Iran, Turan, Persia and Turkman and gave him battle many times over the other side of Jeon, and finally on this side. But fortune has deserted the house of Khoresmshahs and I suffered defeat everywhere. When the Khan's strength had grown, I realized that I had no more power to withstand him, so I left my kingdom and came to Georgia in search of peace and an alliance with you. I am aware of the firmness of your country and military valor of the Georgian people and I want now to unite with you in a solemn vow and to fight our enemies together. I heard that a woman is ruling over you, so make me her husband and your King, and we will overpower all our enemies. If you refuse to accept this, you will bring your kingdom to ruin. For even if I leave you now, the Tatars are already here, and you have no power to withstand them. Send a messenger to your Queen and inform her of what I have told you now. Far from desiring the devastation of Georgia, I want to defend it from its enemies, to increase my power with your aid, and live in peace." Hearing the words of the Sultan, Avag gave no answer, but said: "I will pass your words to the Queen and her viziers." He at once sent a messenger to the Queen and informed her of what had been said.

When the words of this proposal and the message reached her, the Queen began to wonder, for she thought it to be a very unusual thing. Avag was told to ignore the Sultan's appeal and reject it outright. Avag immediately informed the Sultan, and the latter, receiving the answer, set out with his army for Tbilisi with the aim of seizing it.

9. Learning of the approach of the Sultan, Queen Rusudan set out for Kutaisi, putting the troops under the command of the brothers Botso and Memna, sons of Botso, with the task of defending the

city. The Sultan invaded Somkhiti and devastated it entirely; its population found their death at the sword. And then they (the Khoesmians) came to Tbilisi.

5 The defenders of the city armed themselves and put up a fierce battle to save the city; it was a brilliant battle on the part of the Georgians. But then, one night, the Persians living in Tbilisi sent a man to Sultan Jalaldin with a promise to commit treachery and open the gates which they were guarding, and to incite an uprising inside. In the morning the Sultan armed himself again, hoping to take advantage of the betrayal. The defenders of the city, the sons of Botso – Memna and Botso – suspected nothing, and armed themselves and went to the gate of Gandza with the intention of making a sortie. When they started putting on their helmets, one of the Persians struck Memna heavily on his uncovered head with a large flat sword, and Memna fell dead. A fight broke out inside, for the Persians of Tbilisi revolted and opened the gates of the city. When the betrayal from inside became evident, the defenders of the city fled to Isani. Botso, the son, reinforced Isani and put up a fierce battle against the enemy. The pain in my heart does not allow me to tell what the Khoesmians did in the town. Who can tolerate the words they uttered and endure the ordeals that befell the Christians at the hands of these heathens? Here I would like to keep silent, because with pain in my heart, I have to tell how thoroughly they indulged in their cruelty, taking babies off the breasts of their mothers and smashing them before their mother's eyes upon rocks; or they tore out their eyes and broke their skulls, and only then killed their mothers; the aged men they trampled down in the streets with their horses, the youngsters they killed with their swords; and rivers of blood were flowing everywhere; human brains – of women, old people and babies, blood and hair, heads and parts of human bodies, entrails, trampled down in the mud by horses – everything was mixed together. Knowing no mercy they put the people to death by severing their shoulders, turning them over on their backs and disemboweling them.

25 Oh, such injustice and such desperate lamentation! The sounds of crying and heartrending moans shook the city. People groaned like a flock of sheep, some saw their beloved children, others their brothers and fathers, their wives – perishing in dishonor, trampled by horses in the streets, torn to pieces by dogs, deprived of the right to be buried. Churches and altars were desecrated, and honest priests were murdered and icons and crosses destroyed. A calamity befell us, of which the like has never been described in the books of old, and only comparable perhaps to the complete destruction by Titus and Vespasian of Jerusalem, the city of the Jews, those crucifiers of Christ. The chronicler and narrator Josef Flavius, wrote about the destruction of the Jews and says that about three million men died from starvation and murder by the sword. A similar thing happened to the city of Tbilisi at the time of the Saracen invasion.

35 Because there were neither forces nor any hope of relief, Queen Rusudan sent an order to Botso and other defenders of the city to leave Isani and retreat. With much difficulty the Queen had managed to persuade Botso to abandon (Isani), for many times she sent him messages with her permission to do so, as the Elder Mghvimeli writes about it.

40 And so taking the city in his severe grip, the Sultan resorted to the cruelest of cruel things ever committed against Christians. He so mercilessly murdered people that the streets, ravines and ditches were filled with dead bodies while most of the corpses were thrown into the river Mt'k'vari. That did

not pacify him, this hateful adept of the false faith, and he invented a new mischief; recounting it fills me with shame. Grief and tears overcome me, for how could we enrage so our most merciful comforter the Lord. Jalaldin set about destroying the churches, and after razing them to the ground, he then (even) dared to raise his hand upon the church of Zion, attempting to destroy its dome; for he conceived putting his foul seat on it, or to use it as a bridge for his ascent to a high platform. And yet one more thing he added: he ordered to take away the icons of our Lord Jesus Christ and the Holy Mother of God, which belonged to Zion, and put them on a platform facing up. He forced the people subjected by him, the men as well as the women, to trample the holy icons with their feet and renounce their faith, beheading those who refused to do so. In order to carry out this will of his, men were brought over together with their wives and made to trample on the icons. However many showed brilliant resistance and disobedience, refusing to profane the holy icons and renounce their beliefs. A lot of men and women Jalaldin found valorously accepting the crown of martyrdom; they were not counted, because of their great number, but it seems to me it came to a hundred thousand. 10. So, laying waste to Tbilisi, they set out to raid, captivate, defeat and devastate Somkhiti, K'ambechiani and the banks of Iori, Kartli and Trialeti, Javakheti and Art'aani, part of Samtskhe and T'ao, K'arnipora and the lands adjoining Anisi. 5 10 15

And this calamity and the wrath sent by God continued for five years; the country was ravaged for two years, and for five years the enemy stationed itself in the city, devastating all the above-noted lands. All the buildings were razed to the ground, with the exception of the fortresses and strongholds. All this was because the Georgian country had been handed over to its enemies for destruction, because its kings and *mtavaris* had renounced law, mercy, love and justice, acquiring instead, arrogance, perfidy, envy, malice, theft, hate, greed, murder, and lechery. As the Apostle says: "Woe to one who treads the path of Balaam and commits the actions of sodomites." For people of all ages, young and old, turned their face toward evil and sank into disease and the suffering of Sodom and Gomorrah. And the Lord in his power subjected them to a cruel death, because we are doomed by God, whom we have forgotten and who has justly forgotten us. The country of Georgia was devastated, beginning with Likhi, and as the Prophet Isaiah says: "Woe to unrighteous people, to people full of sin, malicious tribes, offspring of the faithless; you have rejected the Lord and angered the Saint, who is from Israel. Why are you wounding yourself, disbelieving, subjecting your flesh to disease and your hearts to grief, now and again, from head to toe? And there is no peace on this path, nor life, no comfort, no healing balm, nor oil, nor bandage. Your country is devastated and your city burned down. Your villages will be swallowed up by a foreign seed and witnessed by you; you have been wasted and ruined by people of foreign seed. And the daughters of Zion remained like sheep in a vineyard, like vegetables, or like a besieged city. If the Lord of Sabaoth had left to us the seed, we would have turned into those of Sodom and Gomorrah." 20 25 30 35

But the country of Georgia, which was steeped in inconsolable grief, experienced yet other great hardship. So let us recommence the interrupted story. Queen Rusudan, constrained by hardships, remained in Kutaisi and in Abkhazia.¹⁶ And when her son David became five years old, an idea came to her – to make him a King. And as is a custom among worldly pleasure-seekers, she became so fond of the temporal world that losing fear of God and forgetting her brother's love, she conceived 40

the things disgraceful to any man; for she sent secretly her nephew David – who under her brother Giorgi's will was entrusted to her – to Greece, to her daughter and son-in-law, Q'iasdin, with the purpose of destroying him, and so leaving the Kingdom to her own son thoroughly and securely.

5 And when David appeared before the Sultan and his father's niece – Rusudan's daughter, Tamar – whom the Sultan called Gurji-Khatun, the Sultan took a fancy to him; and so he and Tamar kept David close and in honor. Queen Gurji-Khatun kindly treated the youth, her cousin David, not heeding the murderous order of Queen Rusudan. And thus he was held in respect.

10 As soon as Rusudan sent her nephew to Greece, she summoned her Abkhazian army, the Dadian-Bedianis, *eristavi* of Rach'a, and the Katholicos of Abkhazia. They made David, Rusudan's son, a King, blessed him in Kutaisi and placed the crown upon his head. In this way they enthroned him, and in compliance with the existing custom, congratulated him on his accession to the throne; and the Katholicos anointed him.

15 The rest of the country on this side of Likhi could not attend the ceremony, as they were oppressed by the Khoesmians; *mandat'urtukhutsesi* Shanshe remained in Anisi, and *amirsp'asalar* Avag in Bijnisi, and Varam of Gaga, the Eris and K'akhis, Somkhitis, Torelians, Shavshians, K'larjians, T'aoans – all of them found shelter in their fortresses; and they remained subject to Queen Rusudan, but they did not assist at the coronation of David.

20 11. Here, let us turn again to Genghis Khan. At the time when the Tatars reached our country, Sultan Jalaldin fled and left his Kingdom. The Tatars easily seized Turan, Turkey and the whole of Khorasan. Then Genghis Khan divided his army in four and appointed his four sons Khans: to his firstborn son, Tushi, he gave half of his army and sent him to the great Q'ivchaq'ia down to the country of Dark, Ovseti, Khazaria and Russia down to the Borgars and Serbs, to all the peoples of the North Caucasus, as I already noted; to his second son, Chaghat'a, he assigned some troops and the country of Uighurs down to Samarkand and Bukhara, as far as the country of Almaliq', which is perhaps Turan; to his third son, Okota, he granted his throne, as well as Q'araq'urum, Chin-Machin, 25 the countries of Emelia, Q'ubaq' and Khat'aeti; his fourth son was called Tuli; to him he gave an army and the lands to the east of the dominion of Okota.

30 The four of them he appointed Khans and instructed the elder brothers to come once a year to Okota for the convocation of the Q'urulta, because the throne had been given to Okota.

35 And so having fixed his legacy, he came to Turan and sent his younger son, Tuli, to Khorasan for some reconnaissance. Tuli crossed Jeon and entered Nishabur, where the Nishaburians engaged him in battle three times. In the very first battle he seized a town in which he beheaded three hundred thousand men, in the second – one hundred thousand, and in the third – thirty two thousand. And here is the truth for those who do not want to believe it: all this was seen by the brother of the great sahib-divan, Khoja Shamsadin, an eyewitness to the ravaging of Nishabur.

Then Tuli moved on from Turan, crossed Khorasan, Mazandaran and approached the country of Iraq.

40 Learning of this, Sultan Jalaldin set out from Tbilisi and with all his people and belongings set out to wage war with the Tatars. He came to Adarbadagan and sent envoys to the Sultan of Khlati and the Khalif, the ruler of Baghdad, with a request to help him as well as their own selves.¹⁷ He

also sent a note to the Sultan of Iraq: "If you have no desire to take part personally in the fight with the Tatars, send me your army, for I am experienced in fighting with them. But if you do not heed my warning, you, yourself, will be unable to offer any resistance to them, unless I bar their way."

When the envoy of the Sultan came to Iraq, they had shown no desire to wage war with the Tatars. Learning of this, the Sultan concluded that he could not stand alone against the Tatars, 5
left Adarbadagan and retreated again to Tbilisi. Receiving tidings of all this, Queen Rusudan summoned her whole army, the Imiers and Amiers, *mandat'urtukhutsesi* Shanshe, *amirsp'asalar* Avag, *msakhurtukhutsesi* Varam, the Ers, K'akhis, Somkhits, Meskhis, T'aoans, Tso't'ne Dadiani, a man honorable and virtuous, the Abkhazians, the Jikis and everybody from the kingdom of Imereti, 10
for to tell of all them separately would take too much time. And she opened the Gate of Darial and let in the Ovses, the Durdzuku¹⁸ and all the mountain dwellers in addition. They gathered in Nach'armagevi, in countless numbers, and the Queen sent them to make war with the Khoesmans.

She did not give them the royal banner because of the accident with *atabag* Ivane. They set out and left Tbilisi. The Sultan was camping in Somkhiti, in Bolnisi Ravine. The sentries of the Sultan saw the Georgians, and they reported it to him. He, being fearless, armed himself and came out at 15
the head of his troops; a fierce battle took place, and the Georgians overpowered the enemy in the beginning. Though as the battle gained in heat and a great number of people fell on both sides, God threw a wrathful glance at the Georgian people, for His wrath had not softened and His arm was suspended over our heads, high above. He remembered the want of belief on our part. The royal army was defeated, and they fled from the Khoesmans. And the Sultan again entered Tbilisi. They 20
robbed whoever they caught. And the Khoesmshah ravaged all the lands.

The chief of the Tatars, Tuli, crossed Iraq down to Kaevin; he ravaged the country, slew the disobedient, departed, and crossed Khorasan and Jeon, then returned and appeared before his father Genghis Khan and his brothers. As soon as Genghis Khan learned of the complete flight of Sultan Jalaldin, he summoned the *erismtavaris*, whom the Georgians call *noins*, who bore the 25
names Chormaghan, Chaghat'a, Iosur and Bicho. These four had been given ten thousand soldiers each with all their households, and were sent in search of the Sultan. All four of these *noins* were sons of the Khan. All of them were instructed that, wherever they went, they had to spare people if they asked for God's mercy, but to destroy all those who refused to submit; and the tribute of the subjected country was to be divided into four parts and sent to their sovereign. 30

So, all four of these *noins* set out – Chormaghon, Chaghat'a, Iosur and Bicho; they crossed Jeon and Khorasan with an army numbering forty thousand men and their households, and they reached the country of Almut, engaged it in battle at once, and abused it significantly. From this country they went to Iraq and ravaged it. They spared those who approached them humbly. Then they came to Adarbadagan, which is Tavriz, and all sorts of people, including the Adarbadagians, 35
came out there to meet them with countless gifts. From there they came to the town of Ardavel. The citizens of the town met them with obedience. They passed Rahts and approached the strongly reinforced Gandza, and after three days of fighting, laid their hands on it; they stormed the town and devastated it, destroying many lives, for they believed that the faith preached by Mohammed was disgusting. 40

Learning of this, the Sultan gathered his household and fled in haste to Greece. The Tatars followed him and caught up with him at Basiani. Seeing the Tatars, the Khoresmians scattered. Alone, the Sultan went on and reached some small village in which he took refuge. Finding him sheltering there, an ordinary resident killed him. The Sultan's sash, saddle and quiver were trimmed with precious stones, and it was for these that the high and great monarch was killed. Our hopes in this vain world are treacherous, and as the wise Ecclesiastes says: "Everything is just a vanity of the vanities, and languor of the soul." Everything that Jalaldin had possessed – his army and his strong will, his victorious power and his excessive riches, all these things proved futile. Everything is vain, with the exception of eternal life, which is imperishable and unlimited.

The Khoresmians were scattered, most of them fled to Garmiani after the Sultan Jalaldin was murdered. And so the great kingdom disappeared. After receiving tidings of the murder of the Sultan, Khwarazmsha's son, the Sultan Q'iasdin, ordered his soldiers to bring to him the man who had brought the Sultan's slash, saddle and quiver, which were decorated with such rare stones. Those who looked upon them, marveled at them, while the murderer was burned at the stake.

12. Ending their pursuit of the Khoresmians, the Tatars ravaged the lands of Khlat and Valashk'ert.¹⁹ The Sultan of Khlat could offer no resistance but reinforced his city. The Tatars moved to Adarbadagan, for an agreement had been established between the Tavrezhians and the Tatars.²⁰ The Tatars took Tavrezh and the adjoining lands. The next year they set out for Bardav, Ganja and Mughan,²¹ and set about pillaging and ravaging Georgia. They started with Daruband, and the lands of Shirvan, and Kabala,²² Ereti,²³ K'akheti, Somkhiti and the domains of the Arshak'unians – Dvin and Anisi. Moving across the lands of its neighbors, they approached Georgia, and unseen ordeals befell the people at its borders, worse than those already described, all due to the wickedness of the population of Kartli; for the people of all ages, old and young, kings and *mtavaris*, great and small, had displayed an inclination to evil. They rejected truth and righteousness, and the priests themselves showed instances of sin, and the entire nation wallowed in abomination, behaving, as the sons of Benjamin behaved in ancient times. As Isaiah the Prophet says: "The Lord, the Lord of Sabaoth has ordered an armed race to come from a distant country, the stronghold of heaven; the Lord and His army come armed to destroy this world and eliminate its sins. Lament, for close is the day of the Lord, the day of annihilation through Him." And then he says: "The day will come, inevitably, when the Lord, in His wrath and fury, will condemn, as in ancient times, the sinners and send them to ruin and destruction." And so the lands of Kartli were thoroughly devastated.

Learning of the approaching Tatars, Queen Rusudan left Tbilisi and retired to Kutaisi, charging the son of Mukha with the task of the defense of Tbilisi, ordering him, if the Tatars arrived, to burn down the city, including the Palace and Isani, and thus prevent, in this way, their occupation by the Tatars who would use it for their residence, like the Khoresmians had.

When the son of Mukha saw the approach of the Tatars, he burned the city down including the Palace and Isani; and so the city of Tbilisi was destroyed. And the *noins* entered Kartli, Trialeti, Somkhiti, Javakheti, Samtskhe, Shavsheti, K'larjeti, T'ao, K'ola, Art'ani, Anisi and like locusts they invaded our country, plundering and destroying it; and joy disappeared from the land, and it was brought mercilessly to ruin.

*Mandat'urtukhutsesi*²⁴ Shanshe found refuge in the country of Ach'ara; *amirsp'asalar* Avar retired to the fortress of Q'aen,²⁵ and Varam of Gaga fled to Kutaisi,²⁶ as well as the Eris, K'akhs, Somkhitar-Kartlians, Meskhis, T'aoans, Torel-Art'an-K'olaians. All fled to their fortresses, and in the mountains, to the forests and the strongholds of the Caucasus and Mtiuleti.²⁷

The plunder and destruction of the country dragged on, owing to our deep lack of belief, for the people of every age were corrupted, and not only in Georgia, but in Persia, Babylon and Greece as well; and for that reason they were committed to a bitter captivity and merciless destruction, and nowhere could they find comfort for themselves; the cities and villages, forests, mountains and valleys were overflowing with corpses, except, perhaps, for a few survivors who had found shelter in the country's strongholds. The fathers and mothers looked at their dead children and the children at their dead fathers and mothers, fallen, stark; and others looked at their dead brothers, still others looked at their dead relatives and their sisters, their kidnapped wives and children and their stolen goods. And the Tatars inspired the people with such fear that most of the Georgians left the fortresses and the strongholds and fled to the Caucasus mountains.

And thus the country was plunged into an abyss of inconsolable evil; and the mighty *eristavt-eristavis* and viziers, who had been in accord initially, rejected each other, because Queen Rusudan had settled on the other side of the Likhi for good; even the local dwellers did not appear before her for reasons of business, with the exception of fugitives. They remained so without any relations or accord between them; for the strong and glorious Georgians proved to be quite incapable even to think of boldly fighting the Tatars. Though Hereti and K'akheti were well-protected by forests. And the inhabitants of Georgia, the *eristavis*, high-ranking and fearless fighters, as well as many other people, of every rank, from top to bottom, were condemned to complete ruin.

Seeing all this evil, *amirsp'asalar* Avag, the son of *atabag* Ivane, sent an envoy to Bardav, where the leaders were stationed, who used Bardav as their winter camp, while for a summer camp they used the mountains of Gelakun²⁸ and Ararat, for Chormaghan had already captured Anisi. To these people Avag sent his envoy with an appeal for peace, telling them of his desire to come and see them, and to serve them, and to pay them *kharaj*, and to give them his lands, and he asked only for a firm oath (to the Christian faith) on their part. They exulted greatly, and received with joy the Avag's envoy and took the oath.

They believed in a single God, and in the morning, at dawn, they knelt three times facing the East, and that was all. And to confirm their oath they dipped a piece of pure gold three times in water and (then) removing it, drank the water. Much consideration was shown to those who took the oath. Confirming an oath meant they would not break it. No lie left their lips, and they destroyed resolutely robbers and other atrocious people. Many good laws were introduced by Genghis Khan. They took an oath before Avag's envoy and confirmed their truth with gold, which convinced him of the absence of falsity or treachery on their part.

The *amirsp'asalar* Avag returned, ready to sacrifice his very life for his country, and appeared before Chormaghan, Chaghat'a, Bicho and Iosur. They liked him, and they promised protection for his city. This was called "shan" in their language.

13. When Avag's domain was calmer, and Shanshe learned of the peace agreement concluded between Avag and the Tatars, he decided to secure his own domain in the same way, based on an oath, and he asked Avag to inform the Tatars of his intention. The Tatars met the news with joy; they agreed to provide him with security in the same way, receiving an oath backed with gold; and Shanshe, too, went to meet them. They gave him worthy honors, and returned Anisi to him and everything that had been taken away by them from his domain, and installed soldiers to defend his estates. And they rendered honors to any of the Georgian *mtavaris* that came to them, but the estates of those who disobeyed, they destroyed.

Learning of all this, Varam of Gaga, son of Zachariah, too, set his hopes on peace, and his country was pacified. Yet Hereti and K'akheti, Somkhiti, Kartli and K'arnukalaki, all these lands were horribly devastated; the population was robbed and taken captive, the men were slain, and only women and youngsters were placed in captivity.

They occupied the city of Tbilisi and started its reconstruction.²⁹ They camped for the winter in Bardav and on the banks of the Mt'k'vari and Iori, and upstream, up to Gagi. They occupied and robbed Kartli and Samtskhe-Javakheti, and the lands bordering Greece, and also K'akheti, and Hereti – to Daruband. Cheerless and full of sorrow because of these circumstances, all the dignitaries of Georgia committed themselves to the Tatars – the Er-K'akhs and Kartlians, Gamrek'eli from Tori, Sargis from Tmogvi, a scholarly man and philosopher and many others. The Meskhis on the other hand held out, remaining loyal to Queen Rusudan. Angered, *noin* Chaghat'a took up arms against Samtskhe, but the Meskhis hid themselves in fortresses. A lot of the Samtskhians were killed and captured, and a great number of people perished.

When their forces were diminished, Ivane Jaq'eli from Tsikhis-jvari, who was also called Q'uarqu'are, reported to Queen Rusudan that if she wanted to save the country of Samtskhe from destruction, she too, should address Chaghat'a, for the *Mech'urch'letukhutsesi* and the *mtavari* of the country of Samtskhe were treated with honor by the Tatars. The Queen assented, and gave her permission. Then Ivane went to the Tatars and met Chaghat'a, who welcomed him with respect and assigned guards to his country.

So laying their hands upon the country, these four *erismtavaris* divided the land into four parts, together with its *eristavis*, and each took his part of the *khara*, which was collected and sent to the Tatars. And so the country gradually settled down.

Thinking carefully, Queen Rusudan, deprived by the Tatars of one part of her country, decided to send her son David and entrust him to the Tatars, making sure first that they swore to protect his security. And she sent Shanshe, Avag, Varam and the *eristavi* of Hereti, Shota, who was called K'up'ari because of his swarthy, as envoys to the Tatars.

But before sending her son, the Queen decided to set out on a campaign against the great Sultan Q'iasdin,³⁰ of the Seljukid family, who had occupied Greece. And the Tatars sent *noin* Bicho together with the high-ranking Georgian *mtavaris*.³¹ They entered the lands of Sevast' and Eznik' and began ravaging it. Then Sultan Q'iasdin summoned his whole army, gathering together forty *bevr*is of soldiers, which makes up four hundred thousand, and appointed an Abkhaz, son of Sharvash, Dardin by name, to head them.³² For his courage he had been raised to a position of great honor

by the Sultan, and he was in the firm possession of the faith. And also Fakhradavl, son of Shalva of Akhaltsikhe from Tori, a brave man and distinguished as a fighter who had fled secretly to the Sultan, was made a commander. The Sultan put these two commanders at the head of his army. He approached the Mongols and set up a camp close to them.

The news of the arrival of the Sultan who wished to engage in battle with them, made the Tatars proud and angry; Bicho, hearing of it, told the Georgians who attended him what he thought. He met the nephew of Q'uarq'uaire Jaq'eli, by name of Sargis, a man brave and fearless, and skillful in battle, and told him: "What would be my reward for bringing these good tidings? For the great Sultan has heard of our arrival and is here already, close by, setting up a camp with a great and countless army, thinking of beginning a battle with us no later than tomorrow."

Hearing this, Sargis said in amazement: "*noin*, I know of the courage of your army and your victories, though given the strength of their army I do not expect any good coming of it." But Bicho answered him smiling: "You do not know well our Mongolian race, for the Lord granted us such might that we do not give a pin for the size of an army, and we gain victories easier, when the opponents are greater in number, and take spoil in abundance. And now prepare yourself to behold the battle of tomorrow and see how we fight our enemy." So proud they were of themselves, more than any other people.

At dawn the Sultan came with a formidable army, for there were about four hundred thousand soldiers divided into detachments. And the Tatars arranged their troops, placing some specially selected ones on their left flank. That was their rule, placing the best on their left meant they set their choicest and bravest against the best of the other armies, because they generally placed them on their right; so the select could oppose the select. The red color of their banners stood for the spilled blood of their enemies.

All the Georgians were placed in the advance divisions; as they closed in with the enemy, the Tatars began to cry and to exclaim loudly: "Akhla, akhla, akhla!" rushing headlong. The Georgians were the first there, and they engaged powerfully, and a fierce battle began. A mighty number of the Sultan's people fell, and among them the glorious son of Sharvash – Dardin, the Abkhazian, their commander. And the Sultan's men were put to flight, and the Tatars and Georgians pursued them, slaying them and taking many captives. The Akhaltsikhian had been killed by the Sultan himself, as a revenge on the Georgians. From the very beginning the Georgians fought so valiantly, they amazed their Mongol commanders who expressed their affection and respect for them, and rewarded them with gifts, and rendered them praise.

14. The Georgians and the Tatars gorged themselves with all kinds of riches, gold and silver cups and vessels, and precious garments. There was no end to the horses, mules and camels, which they captured. And so loaded, pursuing the Sultan, they came to Greece at Ikoni, which is a rather large city, reinforced by a strong wall; and here the Sultan took hasty shelter. A great battle took place by the city gate, but the account is not given in detail. Every day without a break, the Sultan's forces made sallies and gave battle to their enemies; the Georgians fought valorously and continuously.

Exhausted by the fight, the Sultan sued for peace, and promising the Tatars an ample and heavy *kharaj*, he pacified them by multiple presents and priceless stones and asked for protection and not meeting him for some time until they would decide something else for the better. Accepting his offer, the Tatars turned back and came to Khlát, and the Sultan of Khlát sued for peace and met them with
5 countless gifts; and the Tatars kindly welcomed him and assigned guards to his domain, which are known as “shan.”

They retired to their summer stations in Gelakuni and the mountains of Ararat; they sent an envoy to Queen Rusudan for the purpose of establishing peace between them, and asked her to yield them her son David, so that they could grant him the kingdom: Tbilisi, and the whole of Georgia.
10 These words pleased Rusudan, and in her heart she cherished the thought that the Mongols always observed their oaths and displayed consideration to those who trusted them. The Queen braced herself and sent her son David to the Tatars, where he was met by Shanshe, Avag and Egarslan, who lacked manly qualities and who was received with great honor by the Tatars, Shota K’up’ari, Varam of Gaga, the *eristavi* of Kartli, Grigol from Surami, the *sp’asalar* and *mech’urch’letukhutsesi* of
15 Samtskhe, Q’uarq’uare of Tsikhisjvari, the Torelians, Tmogvians, Shavsh-K’larjetians and T’aoians. They all accompanied King David, son of Queen Rusudan. And Queen Rusudan provided him with an escort of all the *mtavaris* of Likht-Imereti: Tso’t’ne Dadiani, a man honest and virtuous and distinguished in battles, Bediani, the *eristavi* of Rach’a, Gurieli, and all the nobles. They entered Tbilisi, and then went to Bardav, where the *noins* had made their camp. They accompanied David
20 with great honors, escorted by a great army. Seeing him, Chormaghon, Chaghat’a, Iosur and Bicho rejoiced and rendered him and the nobles of Georgia homage, and granted him the entirety of Georgia, Tbilisi and Samshvilde, which in the first war had been seized by *noin* Iosur and Angurga with the participation of Avag. David was welcomed kindly, and he was given the name Narin David, which means David the chief.

They sent an envoy to the great Khan, who sat in Q’araq’urum, upon the throne of Genghis Khan, for Genghis Khan had passed away and his son, Okota, had laid his hands on the Khandom (q’aenoba). He was a kind man, quite generous and just by nature, though he also passed away. The son of Okota, Kuka, was made Khan, but he too, died, and Kuka’s son, Mangu, took over the Khandom. An envoy was dispatched to his quarters to inform him of the seizure of Persia, Georgia,
30 and Greece; helmets, armor and garments had been sent to him from every quarter, and the report stated: “The Georgians came in their entirety; the King and the *mtavaris* with him. They have a virtuous faith and shun falsity, and you will not find a poisoner among them.” And of the Persians they said this: “The Persians are false, traitors and perjurers, and there are poisoners (among them) in great numbers, and sodomites without number.”

The envoy came at first to Bato, who was the son of Tushi, the firstborn son of Genghis Khan, for he had the advantage (before the others) of capturing Ovseti and the Great Q’ivchaq’ia, Khazaria and Russia up to (the lands of) Dark and the Darubandean Sea. And he sent him (the King) to Khan Mangu. The latter rejoiced seeing the envoy, and wondered at the sight of his helmet. And Khan Mangu told the *noins*: “Because you have already all the evidence you need regarding the valor of
40 the Georgians in battle, and the absence of falsity among them, as well as their fidelity, keep them

at your side in your fight with your enemy, but destroy the Persians, remove the chiefs from their country, and send them to the Khan.”

When the envoy returned, Avag, who was raised by Queen Rusudan from the rank of *amirsp'asalar* to that of *atabag*, was sent by noin Chaghat'a, together with the Sultan of Khlat, to Khan Bato. They went along unknown roads, which no man of the Georgian nation had ever walked on before. When they came to Bato, who at that time had the highest rank amongst the Khans and was the greatest, the most distinguished, and the most splendid among them, his *ejib* David, son of Ivane of Akhaltsikhe, told *atabag* Avag: “You are approaching a strange tribe and, have no knowledge of what may befall us, so I suggest you to pretend that I am your master and your chief, and you are my servant. If they decide to kill you, let me be executed, not you. I do not think that they will kill the servant together with his master.” And so, with many entreaties and much insistence, David was allowed to act this way. When they appeared before Bato, David went before him as if he was the chief among them. David showed such spirit by his willingness to sacrifice his life for that of his master. Beholding them, Khan Bato rejoiced and for many days rendered them homage. As they experienced the benefaction of Bato, the danger of death vanished. Bato summoned David, and Avag stepped forward in his place. Seeing this, the Khan addressed Avag in wonder: “Are you so ignorant or don't you know that the one behind you is your master and it doesn't befit you to advance before him?” But David answered with a smile: “My great, great victorious lord! He is my master, and I am his servant.” And the Khan asked in amazement the reason for such a sudden turn of the events. David answered: “I behaved so, great Khan, because we were ignorant about your generosity, and did not know what you had in store for us. And in case you wished to put (one of us) to death, I would be executed and not my master.” Wondering greatly at this and praising David, the Khan said: “If the Georgian people are like this, I command that they must be considered the best and the noblest among all the tribes subject to the Mongols, and will be ranked amongst the armies of Mongols. Their estates and property should belong to them, and they must be trusted in everything.” He ordered this written down in his will, and to inform of this decision great Mangu, who was the Khan in Khat'aeti and Q'araq'urum. And so it has remained, but let us return to the interrupted words.

15. Queen Rusudan left Likhi and came to Tbilisi, where she was met by all the nobles of her kingdom. She sent her son David to the Khans, who welcomed him with honor and handed over to him the entire kingdom and all the nobles and *mtavaris*. So the kingdom was again under the authority of Queen Rusudan.

Here again I resolve to keep silent, because an unbecoming story comes to my mind, for it is not consistent with propriety to say disparaging things of kings. Moses who beheld the Lord says: “Of the one, that has taken the leadership of your people, say no wicked things.” But because this book is an intermediary between the kind and the wicked, let my words be excused, for truth-telling is important to my chronology and not deceiving you. Queen Rusudan, forgetting the fear of God and the oath her brother obliged her to take, made a strange decision – she sanctioned the transfer of the kingdom to her son David. She sent a man to Sultan Q'iasdin, her son-in-law, in Greece and to her daughter Tamar, for the purpose of committing an atrocity against her nephew, the young David,

whom she had formerly sent there. Though her previous order had not been fulfilled, now she felt they had to destroy him so that she and her son David could keep the kingdom without fear.

5 But they would not listen to her. Rusudan sent another envoy with the same message. But, again, they would not obey. And the third time, the message about her son and her nephew, full of fratricidal ideas, but they still did not obey. Frustrated, with her heart full of rage, she forgot altogether her faith and the compassion she was expected to show to her relatives, motherly love itself. How the wise Solomon says: "The fury of a man's heart cannot overwhelm the truth of God," and so, exhausting the dregs of her goodness and displaying complete absence of righteousness, she wrote a letter to her son-in-law, Q'iasdin, informing him of the following: "I want the destruction
10 of my nephew David, because he is the lover of your wife, my daughter, and that does not become her." Oh, the design is crueler than the evil itself! This wish for destruction exceeds in wickedness any ever heard of or executed before; and what she did to her brother and (his) son, was trampling on both her motherly and brotherly love!

15 The Sultan received the message. Overwhelmed with rage, he entered at once into the Queen's rooms and seizing her dishonorably by her hair, dragged her out and began kicking with all his might her beautiful face. Her body became bloody-purple; then he committed another outrage, by destroying the icons which she kept for herself. And all the maids and servants who attended her he subjected to exile and even murdered some of them. And he threatened his spouse, promising a merciless execution if she did not renounce the Christian faith and become Muslim. He exposed
20 her to many tortures, after which, unable to endure such excessive suffering, she renounced the true faith of Christ, which up to that time she followed resolutely; for she kept priests and icons by her side openly.

They caught the young David and subjected him to many tortures in order to make him confess the truth. But he said: "I am innocent, God is my witness my aunt impugns me, and you trust her,
25 and all this is because of the sinfulness in Georgia; she initiated my exile and is expecting to hear of my death from you. Now, you can see, high and merciful Sultan, that from the very beginning she has been contemplating my destruction." Hearing this, the Sultan softened a little. Then through Divine Providence, he refused to execute him, for the truth is inscrutable and the judgment of God is written: "Who was able to perceive the providence of the Lord, who was His witness?" But the
30 Sultan's raging heart was not fully assuaged, and a cruel fire continued to burn within. He called some sailors and delivered David into their hands, ordering them to take him to the sea and cast him into the deep. And if they did not carry out his order, their homes and households would be plundered, and they themselves would be mercilessly killed. The helmsmen took David to the boat, sailed into the open sea, and finding themselves far from the shore, the sailors decided to cast
35 David into the deep. But he implored the boatmen to allow him to say some prayers. And they gave him some time for that. Then he stood up and retrieved the icon of the Holy Mother of God out of his bosom and covering his face and eyes with it and shedding bitter tears (prayed in the following words): "Oh, Holy Mother of our Savior Jesus Christ, our hope and consolation, take my soul, for only in You can I find comfort for my orphan life and my unjust death, for nobody will favor me with
40 a burial and a grave, but I will be eaten by fish. And nothing will be known of my funeral; here I am,

on the brink of my last precipice and trusting in Your mercy; I ask you to save me from the hands of the heavenly guards and their dreadful torments, prepared for me like you have done for all other sinners and doomed souls.”

And he prayed in such a tenderhearted way and shed such bitter tears. The boatmen took off his clothes as well as his icon; and he implored them passionately to return to him the icon of the Holy Mother, for he wanted to keep it by himself, and the boatmen returned the icon to him and he hung it around his neck. And when he was ready to jump into the sea, one of the boatmen, by the will of God, and through the prayers of the Holy Mother, showed mercy and put a small piece of wood in his hands. Then he was cast in the sea. David caught hold of this wood, a strong wind commenced to blow and he moved away from their sight. And the waves carried him along like Noah’s Ark, driving him towards the coast. A traveling merchant saw him and sent a swimmer to help, for he was still far from the beach, at about one *utevan*’s distance. The merchant fished him out. They dressed him promptly, and gave him food and consoled him. David, who had been enfeebled by hunger and thirst so much that he could hardly blink, recovered a little. The merchant asked him the reason he was cast into the sea. And David related everything that I have told you; the merchant rejoiced and took him to his home, and treated him respectfully and kindly like his own son. He stayed with that merchant about six months, and the news of this event began to spread all around, namely, that a merchant had found a Georgian prince who had been cast in the sea, until the rumor reached Sultan Q’iasdin. Filled with anger he sent some horsemen, and they brought David and the merchant to him; and the boatmen he threw into prison, and threatened to execute them. Learning that David was fished out of the sea by the merchant, he released the boatmen.

But his anger against David did not lessen, and quite like Herod he added another atrocity to what he had already done, for he added a new murder to the old one, adorning it with the cruelest tortures. There was a deep well there, in which there was no water. Snakes lived in it, so that it was full of fierce and mad reptiles. The well was covered with a boulder, there was pitch-darkness within, and the Sultan committed people to a cruel death there. He ordered David to be cast inside. When they brought him to the well he was holding on to his icon. They moved the boulder aside and dropped David down in the well. But he was saved, like Daniel from the lion’s jaws: not one of those so amply venomous (reptiles) touched him. And they covered (the well) with the boulder.

From the very beginning a man by the name of Sosan had been sent to accompany David by his father Lasha. Sosan followed David when he was sent (with an escort) to the well. He remembered the place, and when the Sultan’s people left, he dug a little hole under the boulder and henceforward passed through it the necessary food to David. He kept him (alive) in this way for five years. When David lay down, some of the reptiles used to wind themselves around his neck, some about his legs, the others over his bosom, and still others lay next to him. But once turning over, he accidentally squashed one of the snakes, and she bit him painfully on his side. But the other reptiles caught the snake that had bitten David, and began to lick David’s wound with their tongues and healed him in an instant; the reptiles ate the snake up. In such a wonderful way the Lord saved him from all the misfortunes that had befallen him.

16. Queen Rusudan decided to give the kingdom to her son, forgetting the words of the prophet Isaiah, when he says: “And the Lord turned His Providence upon the head of the great Asurast’an from the height and the greatness of His all-seeing eye. He said: I create with my own hands, like a chicken creates, but I can take away the eggs. Nobody can avoid me or contradict me. And can a scythe overcome the mower, and mow by itself, or can a saw raise itself above the one who moves it? In the same way – who will pick up a wand or a stick? And so – let the Lord Sabaoth cover with honor your dishonor, and scorching fire will fall on your greatness,” and so it came to be with Queen Rusudan.

It is a shame for me to tell this once more, but I cannot keep silent, for Rusudan disgraced herself by all the evil that she inflicted upon the son of her brother. However, Heavenly Providence dispelled her design, like the mischief of Ahitophel against the prophet David, and did not heed it. “The Divine dispels man’s design,” like the plot of the Pharaoh against Moses, when He saved Moses, a fugitive, from the Pharaoh’s hands. And as Joseph the chronicler, says, He saved David from the hands of Saul, and the latter’s plan became void.

But let us get back to the previous story.

Queen Rusudan came to Tbilisi and sent her son, David, to the *noins*. They decided to send David to the great Khan Bato³³ and then to Q’araq’urum, to Khan Mangu. When Queen Rusudan learned of the departure of her son to foreign parts on a long and uncertain journey, she gave herself up to pain and fathomless grief; she shed her tears uninterruptedly and recollected all that she had done to her nephew, David, and how she had subjected him to exile; in a very similar way the Tatars sent her son in exile to Bato.

And because there was no other way to settle these things, Narin David departed and Queen Rusudan appointed a couple of his former playmates to escort him: Bega, the son of Surameli, the *eristavi* of Kartli and the *amirsp’asalar* Beshken – the son of Makhujag Gurk’eli, and she secretly gave David two valuable precious stones. He set out on the path of Avag and the Sultan of Khlata, for they had been sent to the Tatars before him. And they came to Bato, who looked kindly at King Narin David, kept him by his side for two years and then sent him to Chin-Machin and Q’araq’urum to Khan Mangu, who welcomed him kindly. And he joined Avag and remained there with Mangu.

Those four Tatar *noins* reported on the misdeeds of the Almutians, who acted against the Mongols and they (the Mongols) rose against Almut. And they assigned the Georgians their allies, and sent an envoy to Queen Rusudan (asking for her assistance in) stationing them in Georgia to conduct a campaign against Almut. But Queen Rusudan was fading sadly away, grieving for her sweet son, and passed away in Tbilisi. And the *mtavaris* took her and with great honors and howls and buried her at the burial place of her forefathers in the monastery of Gelati.

III

17. And the Georgians were left without a king and hope. For David was thought to have died in Greece, and nobody knew what had happened to him. And everyone ruled according to his own whims, and thought only of himself, and each *eristavi* sided with his *noin*.

And the Tatars assigned chiefs for every ten thousand men, whom they called heads of a *duman*,³⁴ and appointed *mtavaris*: the first was Egarslan Bak'urtsikheli, a thoughtful person, but lacking military talents. And he was charged with the troops of Hereti, K'akheti and K'ambechiani, from Tbilisi and up to the Shemakhia mountains. And Shanshe was charged with his estates and those of Avag. Varam was charged with the whole of Somkhiti, and Grigol of Surami – with Kartli; Gamrek'eli of Tori like Egarslan, because of his young age, was charged with Javakheti, Samtskhe and further up to K'arnukalaki, and Tsot'ne Dadiani and the *eristavi* of Rach'a – with the whole Imerian part of the Kingdom.

On arranging and dividing Georgia, the Tatars set out on a campaign for Almut and took the Georgians with them, whom they divided into two parts. One half of them participated in the campaign for Almut the first year, and the other half – the next year; for seven years they continued the war with the Almutians, who are treacherous murderers, and are also called Mulids. The Tatars fought with them: Chormaghon, Chaghat'a, Iosur and Bicho – in the summer as well as in winter, all the year round. And the Georgians, divided and distributed according to their duties, accompanied them in their campaigns; and then others set out in compliance with their lot and spent one year in Almut, and then still others were called on, as was their lot. So during the whole seven years their participation in the Almut war continued.

One day the Almutians sent one skillful Mulid (to the Tatars). Stealthily he slipped among the guardians of the *noin* Chaghat'a, stole into his tent, stuck his knife in Chaghat'a's heart while he was asleep and killed him; and nobody realized anything. In the morning, at dawn, the tent guards found the murdered *noin* Chaghat'a and started crying, moaning and grieving. The soldiers of *noin* Chaghat'a came running in and what they saw was the dead Chaghat'a, and nobody knew who had killed him.

They said: "The Georgians are now in a difficult condition, because of us Mongols; he was certainly killed by them in revenge for that." And everybody agreed, with the exception of the *noin* Chormaghon. He said: "Calm down, the Georgians are not murderers, and their faith does not encourage such deeds." But the Tatars revolted, and enraged by the death of their master, advanced towards the Georgian camp, for that camp was situated close to (the tent of) Chaghat'a. And as soon as the Tatars addressed them, the Georgians felt dismay and prostration, not knowing what to do. And some began to prepare for a fight, while the others remained perplexed, for they were too few in number. Then Grigol of Surami, the *eristavi* of Kartli said: "It's not the best time for a battle, for we are in minority. If we give battle they will kill us all, but if we forbear from fighting, they will kill only the men of high rank. And it seems to me, that it would be better if they had killed just us and not the whole army. We must set our hopes upon our Lord, for there is no other deliverer of ours besides Jesus Christ, the Son of God and His Holy Mother, ever Virgin Mary, who is the eternal protector of

those who set their hopes on Her Son, and especially of us Christians. Now, let each of us kneel three times and implore the Holy Mother, and let those who know (how to do it) render homage to Her and say: "Open the gates of grace, the blessed Mother of God" and so on."

5 And as they performed that thanksgiving prayer and gave glory to the Holy Mother and the barbarians approached them with the intention of killing them all, a man came out of the reeds with a drawn sword in his hand smeared with blood. He raised his sword in the air and cried loudly: "Man kushtem Chaghat'a," which in the Persian language means: "I killed Chaghat'a."

10 When the Tatars saw him, they rushed towards him at once, but he ran off into the reeds. The Tatars set the reeds on fire and the flames drove the man out. He was brought to the presence of Chormaghon, Iosur and Bicho. And they questioned him: how had he managed to kill *noin* Chaghat'a. And he told them: "I am a Mulid and a distinguished one. The chiefs of these Mulids gave me a lot of gold to kill one of the four of you. So I came here and killed *noin* Chaghat'a and made off." And they said: "What was then the reason of your coming out of the reeds and crying loudly of your killing the great *noin*, for you could have escaped?" And again the Mulid answered: "I entered these reeds and
15 concealed myself. But suddenly a woman appeared before me of an exceptional charm, and she said to me: "What have you done? You have killed a man and then you ran away. And now because of you, too many lives will be destroyed and a lot of innocent ones will perish." And I said: "What should I do then, my Queen?" And she said: "Get up and stand by my side, and let us go, you will say that you killed that man, and in this way you will save a great number of lives from destruction."
20 I got up instantly and stood at Her side, and She brought me here to you. And as I uttered my first words and you saw me, the woman disappeared, and I do not know who she was. And here I am, before you."

And the Tatars wondered on hearing the words of this man, and they cut him in two with a sword. In this way the Holy Mother of God saved her people, saved them from unjust death like
25 she saved the great city of Constantinople when it was besieged by the savage barbarians headed by Savronis, from the evil designs of Khaghan, the fierce commander of the Scythians. The foes of the city were engulfed by the sea through (the prayers of) the devotees, for the sea boiled and melted the ship's resin and they sank into the deep sea with the aid of the Holy Mother of God, and a heavy shower poured down over the raiders, as happened in ancient times with the citizens of
30 Sodom. No less a wonderful miracle took place now – the quick and sweeping deliverance of the Christians by the Holy Mother of God. But there is no one who can show adequate glorification for that miracle-worker which saved so great numbers of Georgian souls – the Word of immaculate Mother of God, who merged the Word and Human flesh, creating a perfect unity of two natures and two wills, otherwise incompatible.

35 The Georgians, though saved by such Purity, continued to be controlled by the Tatars, for they waged a ceaseless war against the Alamutians. Each *erismtavari* was appointed to one *noin*. Egarslan, a wonderful man, but devoid of the talents of a military commander, had risen so high that he was thinking of taking the title of a king; and all the Georgian families obeyed his will, (even) the most high-ranking and honest *mandat'urtukhutsesi* Shanshe, and Varam of Gaga, and all the
40 *mtavaris*.

18. Other evils revealed themselves at this time. The Turks, who were located in Sham, learned that the Georgians were in a kingless state, and that Georgian troops had left their country at the command of the Tatars, and were focused on other matters. The Turks gathered in great numbers, about sixty thousand men, whose head and master was a distinguished man by the name of Q'ara-khan. They advanced with the object of ravaging Georgia and reached the lands of Valashk'ert, which at that time had been seized by Shanshe, and began plundering these lands and the lands behind Rahs and up to Surman, which were almost won by the *mandat'urtukhutsesi* Shanshe. When the later saw all that, he called his people and *atabag* Ivane, and gathered about thirty thousand horsemen by his side. They went to Rahs and arrived at Valashk'ert, where Q'ara-khan had set up his camp. 5 10

As they approached, they lined up in rows and fell upon the enemy; and the first among them was Shanshe, who struck down a noble Turk with his spear. A fierce battle took place, and a great number of Turks were slain, while Shanshe's men were well protected by the True Power on which he had set his hopes.

And the battle intensified, and Q'ara-khan was overpowered and his people were routed. They pursued them all the way down to Khlat, and slew and captured them in great numbers; and they replenished their own resources with the enemy's horses, mules and camels, tents and tabernacles, acquiring immeasurable spoil. Glorious and victorious they returned to Anisi. 15

However, the tidings that Georgia remained kingless spread far and wide, and kings of all tribes came to Georgia for plunder. At that time Sultan Ezinka and the Turks who were in Greece together with the emirs of other cities, gathered an innumerable army and set out for Georgia. Hearing of this, the population of T'ao, Shavshet-K'larjeti and K'ola-Art'aani-K'arnipor was seized by horror; they sent a messenger to Q'uarq'uaire Jaq'eli of Tsikhis-jvari in Samtskhe, asking for his help. And he summoned all the Meskhan *eristavis* and *tadzreulis* and gathered about ten thousand horsemen; and they took to the field. The Turks were there already, besieging Bana, for Oltisi and Bughataq'uri belonged to them already; they devastated T'ao. Q'uarq'uaire became commander of the Meskhan army, and they advanced to the approaches of K'almakhi. Learning of the coming of the Meskhis, the Turks, under the command of Altu-khan and On-khan, took up arms. From there the Meskhis descended to the plain which is called Avnisvak'e. They advanced towards each other, and a battle broke out, vigorous and fierce. The Greeks and Turks trusting in their superiority in numbers did not give in. And the Meskhis did not flee either, and guided by their courage they fought powerfully. One of the fighters, an *aznauri*, cleaved with his sword some Turk's head together with his helmet, and then struck in the back another of the On-khan's mighty soldiers, and cut him into pieces. And so the battle continued, and many people perished on both sides. Then the Greeks and Turks broke and fled. The Georgians seized captives and plunder in abundance, horses and mules, camels and tents, and all their goods; overfilled with goods and glory they returned to Samtskhe, and triumphant, for not one of the prominent people in their army had been killed. And this war was called the Bani Gathering, because it was not easy to accommodate so many spoils in Bani and Avnisvak'e. 20 25 30 35

After this was finished, the *eristavi*, *sp'asalar* of Samtskhe – Q'uarq'uaire – set out on a campaign with his two grandchildren: Ivane, who was also called P'ap'a, and the senior one, Sargis. The 40

brothers were mightier and braver than others, and fearless and steadfast in battle. And they fought with the Oltisians, and seized Oltisi and the fortress of Bughataq'uri, strongly fortified, which had endured many great wars. This is a true story.

19. At that troubled time in K'okht'astavi, all the *mtavaris* of Georgia, the Imiers and Amiers gathered: Egarslan, Tsot'ne Dadiani, Varam of Gaga, Q'uarq'uaire, K'up'ari Shota, Torghai, the Er-K'akhs, the Kartlians, Gamrek'eli from Tori, Sargis Tmogveli, the Meskhis, the T'aoians, and all of them asked: "What should we do? No Georgian of the royal family is left, who can take command and lead us to fight the Tatars. We are scattered and can offer no resistance to them, and they oppress us so savagely that every year we have to set out to Almut whenever there is any kind of threat; we cannot stand it any longer. Though we have no king, let us gather together and fight the Tatars." They agreed to make war on the Tatars, to gather in Kartli and then split up. And the distant residents – the Abkhazians, Tsot'ne Dadiani and Bediani, a positive man enjoying divine as well as worldly virtues, and the *eristavi* of Rach'a – all withdrew to their estates to make preparations.

Learning of the unification of the Georgians, the Tatars Bicho and Angurag set out, and came to K'okht'astavi.³⁵ They were met by the Georgian nobles. Their armies were disunited and they could offer no resistance to the Tatars. So they were sent to the country of Ani, to a place which is called Shirak'avan. When they came into the presence of the *noin* Chormaghon, he said: "What do all these military gatherings mean, if you are not thinking of separating from us?" But the Georgian leaders answered: "We gathered not to discuss separation but to discuss your affairs and determine our tribute" which was called "kharaj."

Hearing this but not quite believing it Chormaghon ordered to strip them, tie up and place naked in the square, in the full blaze of the sun; and in such a condition, they were interrogated every day about the reason for their meetings and the Tatars threatened the leaders with death if they did not tell the truth. But they continued to insist: "Our aim was the determination of our tribute." And so this continued for many days, because the Tatars did not believe them.

And when the fixed date of the meeting approached, Tsot'ne Dadiani came with his troops to the agreed place, which is called Rk'inis-jvari and is situated between Samtskhe and Ghado. But he was aggrieved immensely learning that those leaders had been sent to Anisi and put through such a trial. And he saw all that had happened as his personal humiliation. Dismissing his troops, he departed to Anisi accompanied by two men, ready to give up his life and keeping in mind the precepts of the Lord, who says: "There is no love superior to the one when a man gives up his life for his neighbor;" and so this man displayed a nobility worthy of glorification. He passed Samtskhe and Javakheti and came to Anisi.

Seeing the nobles with tied hands sitting in the square and condemned to such a dishonorable death, Tsot'ne dismounted his horse, stripped off his clothes down to the skin, hung them up, tied up his own hands and sat beside the nobles. The Tatars were amazed and immediately informed the *noin*: "Tsot'ne Dadiani came escorted by two men; he took off his clothes, tied himself up, and sat beside the Georgians." Having heard of Tsot'ne, who had done such an amazing thing, the Tatars called him to the *noin*'s presence and asked him the reason for his arrival. And he told them: "Our gathering was to resolve definitively the problem of your *kharaj*, and to carry out your

orders, that was the reason for our meeting. Now you take us for evil-doers and that is why I appear before you: if questioning them you will find that they deserve to be executed, then I, too, have to die with them, for they have done nothing without me, though if they are left to live, I should be with them too." Hearing his words, the *noins* wondered at his nobility and said: "Because the Georgian people are valiant and tell no lies, and this man came from Abkhazia to give his life for his friends, he does not lie to us, for he would commit himself to death by doing so; so they are innocent. We have to set them free." And they said to Tsot'ne: "We thought that you Georgians were renegades, but now, when you display such obvious valor, we grant all you Georgians freedom, and we have faith in you." And they released all the nobles. 5

20. The Georgian *mtavaris* parted with one other, but plunged into internecine wars. Then the nobles of the kingdom gathered together; they decided to place at their head Egarstan, the descendant of an impeccable family. This was the reason for the gathering of the *mtavaris*: Shanshe, Varam of Gaga, Q'uarqu'are Jaq'eli, Sargis of Tmogvi, an experienced man, a philosopher and rhetorician; Grigol Surameli, the *eristavi* of Kartli; Gamrek'eli of Tori; Orbeli, and many *erismtavaris*. They began to search for David, the son of Lasha. They learned from one merchant that he was still alive, but was imprisoned in a deep well teeming with snakes. They went to Chormaghon, Iosur, Bicho and Angurag, for the Khan had not yet visited that country, but the *noins* were ruling it. They said (to the *noins*): "You sent our King, Narin David, to the Khan and we do not know what has happened to him; his mother, Rusudan, passed away and there are no other descendants of the royal family; we live in disagreement with each other; it would be wrong for us to obey anybody that does not belong to the royal family. But now we have learned that there is a son of our King Lasha, by the name of David, whom he entrusted to his sister Rusudan in order to elevate him to the throne, but Queen Rusudan sent him to Greece, to the Sultan, with the purpose of destroying him; we heard that he is alive, though the Sultan keeps him in prison. Now we implore you to send some artful man, bring back David and make him our King." 10 15 20 25

The *noins* marveled at what Queen Rusudan had done to her nephew. And they sent at once Angurag as an envoy and Varam of Gaga, and Sargis of Tmogvi with him. Not many days passed before they arrived in Greece to the Sultan, to whom they said: "We come here in search of David, call for him and we will take him with us." He was not supposed to be alive, and the Sultan said: "The Queen of Georgia sent us the boy David to send him into exile, and I did so a long time ago. Seven years have passed since then, and I do not know whether he is alive or dead." 30

But they said to him: "We know that he is alive, and is imprisoned in a well with snakes," for Sosana, having heard of their arrival, had met Varam and Sargis and informed them that David was alive. When the Sultan heard this, he sent a man who took David out of the well hardly breathing at all. To those, who saw him, he looked like a breathless body, or rather a living corpse; it was a strange sight, for his face was sallow, his hair reached his thighs and he had very long nails; the Sultan and Varam of Gaga wondered at seeing him and Sargis shed tears. The Sultan showed his tenderheartedness – he washed him and gave him many gifts: garments, choice horses, gold and silver, rendered him homage and asked for forgiveness; and then he let him go. When they entered Georgia, all the Georgian nobles came out to meet them: Shanshe and his son, *amirsp'asalar* 35 40

Zachariah, a man full of virtues, Q'uarq'uaire Jaq'eli, Grigol of Surami, Orbeliani, the *eristavi* of Kartli, Gamrek'eli, Shota K'up'ari and all the *mtavaris* with the exception of Egarслан.

And they went to the *noins*. The *noins* rejoiced at seeing him. They did not give the kingdom to him, but sent him to the great Khan Bato. And with him went the son of Shanshe, Zachariah,
5 Aghbugha, son of Varam, and Sargis of Tmogvi. They set off to the Khan Bato.

When they arrived at Bato's, he kindly welcomed them; he retained the son of Shanshe, Zachariah and Aghbugha, and sent King David to Khan Mangu. He made Sargis of Tmogvi an escort for his journey to Q'araq'urum. They reached Khan Mangu, whom Bato asked to look into the affair and decide which one of the two Davids should receive the kingdom, and approve him.

10 Yet before their arrival Khan Mangu met King Narin David, *atabag* Avag, Surameli, Gurk'leli and *amirejib* Beshken. They spent a long time in Khat'aeti and Q'araq'urum. Then the Tatar *noins*, who were settled in Georgia, wished to see Sultan Q'iasdin, and sent envoys to him in haste. When they saw the Sultan with all kinds of riches, they wanted to present him to Khan Bato, and so they sent him there. Wherever they defeated some King, they sent him to Bato, and Sultan Q'iasdin they sent
15 to Khan Mangu as well. So they remained there – both Davids, Q'iasdin, the Sultan of Greece, the Sultan of Khlata and *atabag* Avag –they spent there about five years in Khat'aeti and Q'araq'urum.

21. At this time the following event occurred there. Mangu Khan had two sons: the elder, Q'ubil Khan, and the younger – Ulo,³⁶ who was also called Ejanobit. Mangu made his first-born son – Q'ubil, a Khan, and ordered him to set out on a campaign to the West – against Babylon, that is Baghdad, Egypt and the whole of the West. And Ulo he ordered to make conquests in the great India. But to Khan Q'ubil the way to the West seemed difficult, and Ulo offered an exchange: Q'ubil Khan would go to India. Khan Q'ubil gladly accepted Ulo's proposal, and they exchanged the campaigns. And they informed Khan Mangu, their father, of the exchange of the campaigns that is, of the departure of Ulo to Babylon and Egypt. He gave his consent. Khan Mangu summoned his son Ulo to himself
25 and gave him an army of about sixty thousand horsemen with all their households and livestock, and appointed by him as a chief commander – which was then called *ulus-noin* and now *beglarbeg* –the *noin* Elga, from the Jalair family, an honest and virtuous man. Ulo was assigned about a thousand soldiers. Ulo set out with his chief commander, *noin* Elga; they passed Turan and Jeon, reached the borders of Khorasan and then Almut.

30 Just as they started the war with Almut, Khan Mangu died. Khan Qubil was enthroned in his place, who was appointed Khan by his father. The two Davids remained in Q'araq'urum, because the Tatars had no time to occupy themselves with such matters.

Ulo approached Adarbadagan with the army, which numbered sixty thousand men. The *noins* Chormaghon, Iosur, Bicho and Angurag came out to meet him with all the dignitaries of Georgia and the first among them, Egarслан, to whom all the *mtavaris* of Georgia were obedient, as if he was
35 king. They met in Adarbadagan. And both parties of the Tatars joined together – the ones who had been there formerly, who were called "Tamachs," and those who came with Khan Ulo.³⁷

The Georgian dignitaries appeared before Ulo. He looked kindly upon them, welcomed them and armed them, assigning them as his allies; he appointed some of them to the rank of *uldachs*,
40 which means sword-bearers, people who have swords and stay as guards at gates, others are

called *sukurchs*, which means that they bear refreshing folded circle, which they unfold when needed over the Khan's head on a high pole – the staff, and keep it in this way (cooling him) No one, who was not of the Khan's family, was allowed to hold it; others were made *q'ubchachs*, who were trusted with garment and footwear; others – *q'orchs* – arrow-bearers and quiver-bearers. These rare honors were rendered by the Khan to these high dignitaries of Georgia, and everyone of them was given an honorable rank. 5

They set out and arrived at a place called Alat'agh,³⁸ and all the Khan's subjects came to him. He sat on the king's throne,³⁹ and they prayed according to their custom, and his subjects acknowledged him as their Khan. And so begun Ulo's khandom over them.

At first the subject countries lived under these four *tamach noins*. Romgur, which is Khorasan, Iraq, Adarbadagan, Movak'an and Bardav, Shirvan, all of Georgia, Khlata and Greece right up to Asia, were ruled by these four *noins*. They governed these countries. Upon the death of Rimos, the country of Romos was ruled by four hypatoses. And when Ulo came, he managed the country, and governed it in accordance with his position as Khan. 10

At that time there came the other sons of the Khans as well, who are called by the name of "koun": Bato was T'utar, Urq'an, the son of Khan Chaghat'a, Balagh, the descendant of the Q'uli and Tuli families. So that the children of the Khans could take possession of the country and gather *kharaj*. And Ulo, grandson of Khan Okota, Q'ubil Khan's brother, met the *kouns* here. As soon as he saw these three *kouns*, Ulo welcomed them and gave each the country due to him; and so they lived in peace. 15 20

But the royal country, the throne, Mtskheta, and the adjoining lands and the monasteries remained unprotected by anybody, for the nobles of this country looked only after their own estates. And because of this Katholicos Nik'oloz went to present himself before Ulo. The Katholicos was a distinguished man, angelic, wonderful in all of his many undertakings, an orthodox man, the powerful and impartial expositor of kings and *mtavaris*, for he was pure and flattered nobody. Meeting with him the Khan wondered at his rank and his appearance, for he knew nothing of the Georgian people except the Arkuans. He rendered him homage and wrote for him a charter, which was an order. And they made and then gave him two golden crosses as a *shan*, and adorned them with precious stones and pearls, and granted one to him and the other to the father superior of Vardzia, who accompanied the Katholicos. And so honored, he (Ulo) sent him back, and he protected the churches and monasteries of Georgia. 25 30

22. And both – David and David – stayed with Khan Q'ubil and each thought of the kingdom for himself. Sargis of Tmogvi firmly opposed Narin David and those who were brought up with him, saying: "It is not proper for a woman's offspring to sit on the throne, which is a place of the son, an autocratic king – the son of a man." But they answered: "Though Narin David is a woman's offspring, the crown-bearing Rusudan was a Queen who had succeeded her brother Giorgi; for this reason Narin David is also a king." And while the discussions dragged on, they called upon *amirsp'asalar* Avag and gave him the sign of mercy, and a virgin of a noble appearance by the name of Eslom, descendant of a noble family, and sent him to Khan Ulo, hoping for a kind reception. And he appeared before the Khan, and the later showed him mercy and sent him to Georgia, to his estates. 35 40

When the Georgians learned of the return of *amirsp'asalar* Avag, all sorts of chiefs and dignitaries went out to meet him, and with them Shanshe and Egarslan, who had almost the rank of king. When Avag approached him, he thought that Egarslan would dismount his horse and so would meet him. But he gave himself airs and did not deign to treat Avag according to his rank and give him a kiss. Seeing that, Avag became angry, and lashed him upon the head with his whip, and ordered his subordinates to drag him dishonorably down from his horse, which order they obediently carried out.

Now we have to recall our previous words. There were disputes between the kings, and Khan Q'ubil did not know to whom the kingdom should belong, and they remained in Q'araq'urum for many years. And Sultan Q'iasdin and the Khatian were sent with Avag. They arrived at their Royal House. And while the two kings stayed in Q'araq'urum and Khat'aeti, and procrastinated, the Khan Q'ubil decided to send them to his brother Ulo. He informed him, that, if he wished to, he could give the kingdom to both, precisely what Ulo subsequently did. And so they came, and he beheld them and welcomed, and approved the reign for both, granting them a whole kingdom.

When the Georgians learned of the arrival of the two Kings, they rejoiced immensely; the high-ranking Imiers and Amiers came out to meet them in Alat'agh, and there was joy and thanksgiving to God. Keeping them for a while, Khan Ulo finally let them leave for Kartli. They came to Tbilisi, delighted. And all the *ep'isk'op'oses*, *mtavaris* and *eristavis* gathered around the Katholicos, and David and David – together mounted the throne of their forefathers in Tbilisi. But other views have also reached us, which were related by other witnesses of the events, claiming that during the sojourn of the Kings in Q'araq'urum, Khan Guiuk decided to give the kingdom to the son of Lasha and sent him back with that promise, and that the son of Rusudan fled the same night and came to Abkhazia.⁴⁰ But I do not believe it. And you must know first of all that Khan Guiuk had not separated them, and that neither Khan Mangu, Q'ubil's father, nor Ulo did that either, and the kingdom was given to both of them by the son of Khan Mangu – Khan Q'ubil, who then presented them to Khan Ulo, and the latter sanctioned their joint possession of the kingdom.

IV

23. Both Kings sat on the throne, and there are many charters that prove this. I personally saw one, at the head of which was written: "The Kings Bagrat'ians" and "By the will of God David and David," signed by both, and "Sanctioned by me, David, and by me, David, also sanctioned." Both sat firmly on the throne, as I have already said. This makes the story of the love of Shanshe for the son of Lasha, and the adherence of Avag to David, the son of Rusudan, doubtful. But they did not profess any of this openly, for the relations of David with David were of trusting love and they did not lapse into confrontation. And they were obedient to Khan Ulo and paid him *kharaj*. And the priority in honor and superiority was to the son of Lasha, for the reason of his being the son of Lasha as well as his seniority.

The Tatars did not give up their destruction and devastation of other peoples, but the Georgians were kept as allies in their campaigns, because of their courage; and for this reason the Kings and *mtavaris* were under great stress. Knowing no rest the Tatars fought with disobedient nations and especially with the citizens of Almut. And because this war continued for seven years, Ulo also sent the *noins* as well as King David, the son of Giorgi, and the Georgian army to fight against Almut. The Almutians, learning of this, and tired by the war and thoroughly exhausted, fled to Egypt (Misr), taking with them their households, their livestock and all their possessions. The Sultan of Misr settled them there. And now every *mulid* coming from Misr is one of those Almutians who had settled there. 5

And so having command over Almut and the whole of Khorasan, Ulo started to fight all the other disobedient tribes, and destroyed so many people, that at any place where they camped, they could stay (only) twelve days, because the place started stinking due to all the corpses. Most of all he killed the Persians, for he thought that the Muslim faith was disgusting and he had the right to judge them. 10

Both Kings – David and David – lived permanently at Ulo's side. And David, son of Lasha was tall, stately and portly, a skillful archer, innocent, honest, trustful and full of forgiveness for the evil-minded. And the son of Rusudan, David, was of an average height and lean, good-looking, of clear complexion and with thin hair, light-footed, an excellent and lucky hunter, smooth-spoken and loquacious, generous and gentle, a brave rider, clever in campaigns and a believer in justice, and in particular – a hard worker. Most of the time they were living with Khan Ulo. Ulo conceived an affection towards the son of Lasha – David, and held David, son of Rusudan, in contempt. And when the son of Rusudan was with Khan Ulo in Alat'agh, he was seized and brought to the wintering place of the Tatars at Bardav. When they approached Nakhchevan, David, the son of Rusudan escaped to Abkhazia and took three men with him, notably, Gurk'leli, Amirejib, and Bega of Surami, whom the Tatars called Salin-Beg, which means kind Beg. They departed to Abkhazia, and the son of Lasha was at that time in Tbilisi. When Narin David reached the estates of *atabag* Avag in his simple dress, Sumbat' Orbeli, who was hunting there at that time, saw him. 15 20 25

At the time of destruction of the Orbeli family by the King, one of them, by the name of Lip'arit', fled to Nakhchevan. He reached the estates of Eligun. And Eligun beholding Lip'arit' Orbeli, introduced him to his house as a fiancé and married his daughter to him, who gave birth to two sons, who were given the names, Eligun and Sumbat'. And the senior Eligun adopted Sumbat'. And the grandson of this Sumbat' – also Sumbat', came across David and brought him to his home. David implored Sumbat' not to report him, but sent him to Abkhazia, and gave him the precious stone that had been given to him by his mother Rusudan. And due to their fear of the Tatars, David came to Abkhazia in beggarly dress. He reached Tori, the estates of Lip'arit' of Tori, who was also called "Dragon's ears." He gave him a horse and dress and escorted him to Kutaisi. Learning of this, the Abkhazians, Suans, Dadianis, Bedianis, the *eristavi* of Rach'a and the Likh-Imerelis, gathered together in a great joy and made David the King of the Abkhazians up to Likhi. 30 35

And so the kingdom became divided into two principalities, though both Davids continued to live in mutual love as before. The lands on this side of Likhi remained in possession of David, the son of Lasha, and the ones on the other side of Likhi belonged to the son of Rusudan. And the entire 40

country settled down and gained in riches immeasurably, and the royal house ruled well and served the Khan.

5 Then the great Khan Bato, who owned Q'ivchaq'ia and Ovseti, Khazaria, Russia, Bulgaria down to Serbia, Daruband and Khat'aeti, sent an envoy to King David summoning him. And King David went to Bato with great presents, charging Queen Jigda-Khatun⁴¹ and her guest Jikur⁴² with the management of his House, for Jikur was devoted to the Kings with all his heart, more than any other man. There was no thief or robber left in the whole kingdom, and if they happened to appear anywhere they were hung on a tree. As a reward for his devotion, King David charged him with the government of the kingdom and left him in Tbilisi at the Queen's side. Jikur built Isani palace displaying great sense, and he made the Pkhovelis the King's tributaries, and turned these people of savage habits into mule-keepers.

10 The King went to Bato, who received him with honor and fulfilled all his wishes. And the King remained with Bato for a long time. The King assigned one man to every district, so for K'akheti, he appointed Torghva of P'ank'isi and ordered him to obey the will of the Queen. Torghva thinking that the King would not come back, had withdrawn to P'ank'isi fortress, appropriated K'akheti, and refused to obey the Queen and her guest Jikur.

15 Then the Khan showing his generosity towards King David presented him with a punkah, which nobody had a right to own with the exception of the Khan himself and his relatives. And he notified Ulo that no one, except perhaps the *noin* of Ulus, should be allowed to occupy a position in front of the King upon entering the Horde, for such was the rule of the Tatars. Nobody had the right to sit before a Khan, not even when sharing a meal with him. And so he honored the King and sent him to the kingdom of Kartli. When he reached Hereti, all the grandees of his kingdom came out to meet him. And Torghva, frightened, retreated to P'ank'isi. The King entered Tbilisi, and the whole population of Georgia rejoiced. King David called for Torghva, but he did not come to the King's court, as he was afraid of the King. And many times he called for him, but he could not summon the courage to appear before the King. Then following the advice of Jikur, the ruler of Khornabuji came to Torghva to win his confidence, giving him a firm oath. And Torghva told him: "Let's go to Alaverdi to Saint George and there give me your oath and your promise." They went there together, and Torghva pressed himself against the edge of the robe of the Martyr of Alaverdi. The Khornabujian, too, came and swore on the hem of the robe. And Torghva told him: "Let Saint George repay you for what you will do to me, for I am single and with my death my estate will be left without successor; let the Saint Martyr leave your home without successor as well." And the Khornabujian, who was bound by a firm oath, took him to T'abakhmela, but he ignored all entreaties as well as his own oath. Jikur, subject to the intrigues of the Queen, seized him, without the King's knowledge, brought him to K'Idek'ari and dropped him there from a high cliff.

25 And how the Khormabujian was repaid for his perjury and disregard of Torghva's entreaties, you may judge for yourself, for he had a son by the name of Shalva, full of goodness. This Shalva had children, who died very soon; and the old man, too, died from grief; and we heard much of the emptiness of his house. And only his son, Shalva, remained, who in the end was killed by the Tatars. His home was turned desolate. That is how the Martyr of Alaverdi had avenged him.

Settling all the affairs in his kingdom, King David appeared before Khan Ulo with great gifts, and the Khan welcomed him with respect and granted him the privilege of sitting among the first ranks, the *noins*, judging and counseling equally with them.

24. At that time Khan Ulo decided to start a campaign against Babylon, or Baghdad, and its king – the *Caliph*. He summoned his whole army and set out for Baghdad. He came to Babylon and the *Caliph*, unable to offer any resistance, hid in Baghdad. The Khan surrounded the city and laid siege to it. From one side of the river the Khan himself attacked the city, from the other – *noin* Elga, and from yet another – King David. All the distinguished nobles of Georgia were there with him. And they fought mightily, but only for a few days, for in twelve days Baghdad had fallen.

King David ordered his soldiers to dig a tunnel under the city wall. They did so, and the Georgians entered the city. A fierce fight took place, and they slayed the Baghdadian soldiers; mortal fear seized the citizens. The Georgians opened the city gates and the Tatars entered. Learning that the Tatars entered the city, the *Caliph* embarked a ship and fled by the river, which flows through the city. Catching sight of him, *noin* Elga, who was on the other side of the river, rushed after him. Seeing that he could not escape, the *Caliph* returned to his palace. And so this famous city was captured so easily, but what about the trials and calamities that fell to the lot of the people of Baghdad? So many of them were slain with swords, not a man could count the number; the city districts, the streets and the houses were filled with corpses. And who could tell how much spoil and plunder was taken? For the Tatars and the Georgians took an immense amount of gold and silver, precious stones and pearls, clothes and garments, gold and silver vessels, so that nobody took anything besides the gold and silver, precious stones, cloths and garments. Vessels produced in China and Kashan and brought from there, tough-pitch copper and iron had lain there without anyone noticing them. The soldiers loaded themselves up, and packed their saddles, k'urdans and other cheap vessels with precious stones, pearls, and pure gold, some breaking off the handles of their swords, filled up the sheaths with gold and secured them with the broken handles. Some disemboweled the corpses of the dead Baghdadians and filled them up with gold and precious stones and under the guise of their own dead, took them out of the city. And so they plundered, destroyed and took captives.

They broke in into the *Caliph's* palace and took the *Caliph* and his son and all his treasures and presented them to Khan Ulo. When the *Caliph* appeared before the Khan they told him to bow before him, but he did not concede, saying: "I am an autocratic King, and have never been submissive to anybody. If you let me go, I will resign to it, if not – I will die submissive to nobody." But they urged him to bow and knocked him down, and he fell on his back, but still did not bow. And (Khulagu) ordered them to take him out, escorted by *noin* Elga in order to put him and his son to death. Then he told the *Caliph* that the Khan had spared him, and they rejoiced. The *Caliph* said: "If he is going to spare me, let him release me and give me Babylon." But *noin* Elga told him: "No, the Khan will kill you himself with his own sword, and the son of the Khan, Abagi, will kill your son." And (the *Caliph*) said in amazement: "If I must be executed, it is of no difference whether the executioner is a dog or a man." So the *Caliph* was executed, along with his entire household. But the Khan showed mercy to the remaining Baghdadians, and ordered reconstruction, and they scattered coins from the icons. And so enriched by the captives and with spoil, they returned to their camp.

At that time, the following happened: Khan Bato, who was the greatest among the Khans, decided to take a census of all his subject countries.⁴³ He found a man of the Oirad kin, by the name of Arghun, a law-maker and just-spoken, a profound and judicious man. And he sent him on a tour of the whole of his empire – Russia, Khazaria, Ovseti, Q'ivchaq'ia, down to the Dark, and in the east
5 down to China and Khat'aeti, – to determine how many horsemen and soldiers were able to take part in campaigns with the *noins*, great and minor, according to their *ulupa*, which consists of aid to travelers, and the cost of horses and their loading. After enumerating everything in the imperial domains, Bato sent him to Q'araq'urum to Khan Q'ubil, so that he could do the same there with the help of Arghun. And Khan Q'ubil did as he was proposed; he sent Arghun around his lands to
10 introduce the order. And Arghun established order as he had done it for Bato. Chaghat'a and Urq'an appeared before the Khan. And he rendered them assistance and brought order to Turan and settled all the affairs there. Then he crossed Jeon, and came to Khorasan, Iraq and Romgur and did the same there too.

Then Arghun came to Khan Ulo, who welcomed him with honors and sent him to Georgia,
15 to King David, and to Greece, and all the other lands subject to him, and he took a census and regulated the problems of government. When he came to Georgia, the whole population of David's kingdom was in great distress. And lists of everything were made, starting with people and ending with beasts, from fields to vineyards, and from orchards to vegetable gardens. And from every nine well-off peasants they took one for military service. David's Kingdom had to render nine *dumans* of
20 horsemen to accompany the Tatars, which made up nine *bevrís*. And the the size of the tribute was established; from one village for the commander of a thousand horsemen, they took one lamb and one *drahk'an*, and for the commander of a *bevri* – one sheep and two *drahk'ans*, and the fee for a horse was three *tetris* daily. Ordering things in such a way, Arghun left for Greece and Baghdad. After settling the affairs of four Khandoms, Arghun was satisfied with his work, for he was a lawmaker. He
25 excluded the houses of priests and monks and the churches from duties, and the *q'alan*; he freed sheikhs, dervishes and the people of any faith who remained in God's service.

At that time Khan Ulo decided to advance into Egypt and called on the Georgian King with all his army, and made war with the Sultan. They reached Mesopotamia and Sham. The Sultan of Egypt armed himself to offer resistance to the Tatars and advanced to the river Euphrates with
30 all his horsemen. The Tatars crossed the river, for the Sultan had not yet reached its banks. And they engaged in battle. The Sultan stood in the front line, and a great struggle took place, in which King David and his soldiers fought mightily in the leading ranks. Many fell on both sides, and the Egyptians fled, and many of the Sultan's soldiers died. The Khan set up a camp on the riverbank and stayed for a long time. He saw a small, though strongly reinforced town on the bank, which was
35 upon a rock; from the other side it was protected by the river Euphrates. When the Khan became aware of the firm defenses of the town and realized it was impossible for him to seize it in a battle, he thought up a wonderful ruse. He told the soldiers camped under it: "There is no way of taking the town. I order you to advance, lay siege to the town and start growling and howling like dogs." Hearing that the soldiers were amazed, though they mounted their horses and started to growl like
40 dogs. When the sound reached the town a miraculous thing happened; the town split in two parts,

one part fell from the rock into the river and countless people perished. The Khan seized the rest of the town and advanced to Sham and Mesopotamia. And all the population of Mesopotamia and Sham came out to meet him, bearing gifts in abundance.

25. King David and the Georgians left the Khan, in order to return home, for they had been campaigning a long time. Khan Ulo gave them their freedom and they made their way back home. Enriched and filled with immeasurable gifts and spoils, King David and the Georgians came to Adarbadagan, and from there, full of joy, marched to Tbilisi. 5

At this time, the nobles of the royal court were seized by grief, for Jigda did not bear a child. The King decided to take a woman by the name of Altun from the tribe of the Ovses in order to beget a child, promising that if she bore him a son, he would not force her to stay, but would send her back home. After some time Altun became pregnant and gave birth to a son, who was given the name of Giorgi, and Queen Jigda-Khatun took him in and adopted him as her son. A little time later she became pregnant and bore a daughter, who was named Tamar. And the King sent his lover Altun away, who was Ossetian and very attractive. In a little while, Queen Jigda-Khatun died and they took her to the burial place of the Queens at Mtskheta and buried her there. 10
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King David departed for Mughan to Khan Ulo, where the Tatars had their winter camp. David accompanied Khan Ulo to the Tatar's summer camp, and from there Ulo sent the King to Kartli, so that he could prepare himself for a campaign in Egypt,⁴⁴ which is Misreti. David visited the estates of *atabag* Avag, the son of *atabag* Ivane. This was the time when Avag passed away, leaving no son behind, but only a daughter by the name of Khuashak. The King came to the funeral in Bijnisi and noticed the good-looking widow of Avag of the K'akhaber family, the daughter of the *eristavi* of Rach'a, by the name of Gvantsa. He fell in love with her and a little time later took her as his wife and Queen, and brought her to his kingdom. And he left Avag's daughter to govern her estate, entrusting her to the supervision of Sadun of Mank'aberdi, who was a wise and reasonable man, well intentioned, handsome, quick, stately, an excellent wrestler of outstanding strength, and an artful archer. He appeared before Ulo, bowed to him and folding his hands said: "The Lord has granted you victories over all your enemies and distinguished you among all the people, and now one hundred thousand horsemen are present here, though I am ready to contend with any of them, be it wrestling or shooting." And no such man was found who dared to accept the challenge, and so he came out victorious. He became a favorite of Khan Ulo and from that time his advancement began. King David respected him for his reasoning power and charged him with the patronage of the house of Avag. And Queen Gvantsa conceived and gave birth to a boy, naming him Dimit'ri, who became king after David, to which the following words will testify. 20
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The reign of Gvantsa was hard for the guest Jikur, for they were enemies. As a result, due to the evil designs of Sumbat' Orbeli, the King was persuaded that Jikur was going to send his people to Arghun to inform Khan Ulo of the wealth of the King, and of his plans of treachery". The King, being innocent – and an innocent man believes everything – sent his people out to bring Jikur to him, and to ravage his house. And the King's servants carried out his order and brought Jikur in the night to the King's presence, for the King was at Isani and was observing the river Mt'k'vari from above. But the King exchanged no word with him, and without examination of any kind ordered 35
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to throw him down into the river. Seeing in the morning Jikur's body stranded on the sandy bank, people wondered at his sudden death; there was nobody to bury him, for he had no children. All the wretches, orphans and widows gathered together and implored the King to give them the remains of Jikur, for he had done them much good. David heeded their request and gave them his body; they took Jikur with great lamentations to the Church of Saint Virgin Christina, which, destroyed by the Khoesmans, was built anew, and buried him there with great honors, as much it was within the powers of the wretched to do so.

After this, the Khan decided to arm himself against the Sultan of Misreti and summoned all his chiefs and soldiers, and called upon David and his army to march to Egypt. But King David as well as his country were constrained by the census of Arghun, which obliged David to put aside for the Khan three *tetris* from every hundred earned in Tbilisi. Besides the Khan had installed in Tbilisi Khoja-Aziz, a Persian by race and faith, who was so impudent that he had established a *kharaj*, which they call *t'amgha*, on the purchase of a sheep or lambs for the King's kitchen. Pressured by these circumstances, the King reasoned: "Should I go to Egypt or rather break with the Khan? – or could I decide on neither of these options." However, he left for the campaign, but on reaching the lands of Javakheti decided to break with the Khan. Summoning his counselors he told them: "Let those who desire it leave their domains and come with me. If somebody disagrees, let him serve the Khan and go to Misr, to defend his empire. And let the will of every man be his own, but I have no desire to serve the Tatars, because of the injustice of Khoja-Aziz, who was set above me by Arghun. I will stand no such disgrace." Some of the nobles supported him, while others did not, though he resolved to depart for home in any case. But most of them went to the Khan: Ivane, son of Shanshe, Grigol of Surami, K'akha from Tori, the *eristavi* of Akhalkalaki; the principal ones among them went to the Khan, and most of the Er-K'akhs.

Seeing that the nobles joined the Khan, the King nevertheless broke with him and proposed Sargis Jaq'eli from Tsikhis-jvari, who had the rank of the *amirsp'asalar* of Samtskhe, to follow his example and break with the Khan too. Sargis conceded, and brought the King to Samtskhe, quartered him in his house, and kept him in great honor, exceeding everything that was considered due for a royal family by custom. He offered to submit all his city-fortresses and estates for maintaining the King and his army, though the King did not take advantage of this proposal. The King remained with him for much of the summer, and a thorough accord was established between them. They dwelt in Samtskhe. Queen Gvantsa and her little son Dimit'ri, he left at the house of Avag in Bijnisi.

26. Ulo returned victorious from his war against the Sultan of Egypt, whom he defeated and put to flight; and the Georgians, who were with him, fought mightily. He returned to his summer camp of Alat'agh, and from there he went to Siaka, and then to his winter camp, which is now called Q'arabagh and Mughan. There he asked about the affairs of David and learned of his dissent. He called Arghun and two hundred of his chiefs (*mtavaris*) and appointed Arghun their commander. Then he gave him twenty thousand horsemen and ordered those of the Georgians, who remained his subjects, to accompany Arghun Oirad to Samtskhe and make war with the King. Arghun set out with twenty thousand horsemen, passed Ganja and Somkhiti and approached Tbilisi. Here he was joined by the above mentioned nobles of Georgia, and they set off for Samtskhe to wage war with

the King. Learning of the approach of Arghun and all the nobles of Kartli, King David summoned his people – about eight thousand horsemen – assigned as commander Sargis Jaq’eli, a brave and manly man tested many times in glorious battles, stately, an artful fighter on horseback, an excellent shooter with a great aim, and perfect in hunting game. The King relied on him, and his loyalty to the King was great. The King sent him to fight Arghun; they advanced but stayed in the gorges. Arghun crossed Kartli and halted in Surami. He sent forward his vanguard – six thousand horsemen. Arghun was camped at Shindara, while his vanguard went to T’asisk’ari and camped in the basin of the river, which is Shola. Sargis advanced towards the valleys and sent forward one thousand five hundred horsemen, chosen and experienced in battles. They did not know of the approach of Arghun. And they marched forward and crossed the bridge of Akhaldaba. It was a cold winter as it is normally in December. The Georgian vanguard came out of the gorge and saw the detachment of the Tatars; the Georgians prepared for a battle. The Meskhis rushed forward and in the very first engagement put the Tatars to flight, and slew many distinguished ones among them. And the Meskhis fought so mightily that only a few of the enemy could escape, taking shelter among Arghun’s troops on the hill of Shindara. The Meskhis pursued them and slew them with their swords, not waiting for the coming of their commander, Sargis, and the King’s army and Tatar troops were close. With glorious victory, they returned with the heads of many distinguished Tatars, and joined Sargis and the main army. Sargis rejoiced, seeing their safe return and their exultation, though it was hard for him to admit, as he did not take part in the battle. He decided to line up the Meskhis again, and inspired by his valiant heart, they marched against Arghun. Seeing the advance of the Georgian army, Arghun, who had called up his troops, took to flight again, but now the noble Georgians, under the command of K’akha from Tori, did not allow him to flee. K’akha said to him: “We, Georgians, are skillful in wars and will fight them in your place.” And so they pursued Arghun, though with difficulty. And again Arghun drew up his horsemen. And they approached each other, and the daring Meskhis rushed at the enemy. Sargis Jaq’eli was the first to meet the Tatars, and with his spear brought down from his horse the bravest of them – Chinbaadur. A fierce battle took place, and many followers of Arghun were slain, and took to flight. The first line of the King’s army overpowered (the enemy), though as is the custom among the Tatars – they retreated and then turned about suddenly. The King’s faint-hearted soldiers took instantly to flight. And so fleeing they scattered, and they were slain by the Tatars. The Lord doomed them for so many of our sins, giving them up to the hands of heathens. And the heathens mercilessly destroyed them, and killed many noble Georgians, and only a few survived. They were pursued down to the bridge of Akhaldaba, and even further. And some were taken captive – Gur’leli Murvan and many others.

Arghun victorious presented himself before Khan Ulo, while Sargis and the Meskhis came before the King in Ats’q’uri, lamenting their friends, for most of them were slain and only a few remained alive.

The King spent half of the winter in Samtskhe, then moved to Shavsheti and K’larjeti, and then departed for Nigaliskhevi. As May came, and grass covered the meadows, the Khan, again, sent Arghun, together with the Georgians that were allied with him, in pursuit of the King. They came to Samtskhe in June. Some of the Meskhis came out to meet Arghun, but some joined the King.

And then Arghun occupied and devastated Samtskhe; he approached Tsikhis-jvari and attacked it fiercely, for it was not surrounded by a strong wall. The defenders of the fortress fought vigorously and destroyed many attackers and harassed them, making sallies day and night, eliminating the enemy at many places. Seeing the firmness of Tsikhis-jvari, which means the fortress of the Cross,
5 Arghun raised the siege and departed. He received a letter from the Khan, who urged him to return, because the Khan, at war with the country of Turan, was approaching Khorasan. In this way the Lord protected the country of Samtskhe from disaster, for Arghun had been in Samtskhe for twenty days at most.

And King David came back to Shavsheti and Samtskhe and, seeing Samtskhe so devastated,
10 he called his counselors and asked them, what should he do, for it was impossible for him to fight the Tatars. And then Sargis Jaq'eli of Tsikhis-jvari said: "Samtskhe is small and inconvenient for the stationing of a king's camp. My advice to you would be to go to Likht-Imeriti where David, Rusudan's son lives, for both of you are owners of the entire Kingdom, of this part as well as of the other. As for me, I put myself in your hands, with all my belongings and my army; make use of them at your
15 own discretion. And if your stay with David is favorable, it will be good, and if not, than here is my wealth at your disposal. And you, too, do not spare your wealth; let us negotiate with the *tavadis* of Imeri and give them some of our treasures, and so draw them to our side."

David listened to his advice and sent an envoy to the son of Rusudan, with a request for shelter, as he was fleeing from the Tatars. The latter promised to do so. King David departed and came to
20 Kutaisi where he was met by the son of Rusudan, who kindly received him; they spent one year together. That the son of Rusudan received him so warmly was not surprising, for it was only proper to treat the son of Lasha this way; but David walked among them like a stranger.

Then, conferring between themselves, the *eristavi* of Rach'a, K'akhaber, son of K'akhaber, the sons of Kvabuli, Parjanian Sargis, decided to make the son of Lasha – David, whom they preferred
25 – the King. This split Likht-Imeriti: some supported the son of Lasha, and some the son of Rusudan. Dadian-Bediani, son of Juansher, remained loyal to the son of Rusudan, for this Bediani was a man with high morals, generous as no other man, and extremely reasonable. He brought order to Odishi, where it was impossible to find a thief or a villain any more. And the Svans, too, divided into two. But both, David and David, did not harm each other; and the troops did not obey them, for neither
30 of the two was handing out allowances to them. Such was the disorder that seized Imeri, producing a lot of trouble.

Unable to stand it any more, they decided to divide the Kingdom and the treasury in two. Identifying the principalities of the kingdom, they divided the territory into Tbilisi and Kutaisi; and all the *tavadis* and *eristavis* from Nik'opsia and up to Daruband they divided in two equal parts.⁴⁵ They
35 divided the royal treasury, but shared between themselves only a small part of the treasure kept in Khuamli cave, leaving most of it there. And the specially forged chain, the noble stone, the anvil and the pearls of a size that no eye of a man has ever seen, all of them went to the son of Rusudan. So the division of the kingdom took place, and from that time on – two kingdoms came into being. And the lands of this side of Georgia were left without a king; there was no campaigning with the Tatars
40 any more, or serving them.

27. Then the Khan decided to make an alliance with the King. He called Arghun and ordered him to send an envoy to the King for the purpose of establishing an alliance, promising security by oath. Queen Gvantsa, Avag's widow, and her little son, were taken to the Horde, and remained in the hands of Ulo, the latter thinking of doing some evil thing to the boy. Then the spouse of a *noin* adopted him, for she was childless. But they said also, that suckling the baby Dimit'ri, her womb opened, and she conceived and gave birth to a child – a son. For this reason the *noin's* wife rendered favors to Gvantsa and her son. Arghun ordered to find a man, who would propose the alliance before the King. And an envoy was sent with the message containing the offer to give back to David the whole Kingdom and to restore all the initial royal honors. When the Khan's messengers appeared before the King and told him (of the Khan's proposal), he answered as follows: "The reason I broke from the kingdom was Khoja-Aziz. If the Khan deigns to settle relations with me, I will present to him my firstborn son, Giorgi, and let the Khan present to him my kingdom. And let him send to me Queen Gvantsa and my son, Dimit'ri, and deliver Khoja-Aziz over to me, so I can avenge him by putting him to death for all the harm he has caused me."

When the messengers returned and appeared before the Khan, he took favorably the King's words. And they called for his son, Giorgi, and gave him a firm promise on oath, which involved drinking from a gold vessel, that the Khan would protect the King's son and would give him his kingdom back. And if King David came to see Khan Ulo, who was also called Ejan, he would deliver Khoja-Aziz into the King's hands, and according to his desire, the King could put him to death or set him free. As a mediator in this affair, he took Eruk Arkuan, a man just and honest for he was faithfully devoted to the Cross of Christ. And Eruk asked the Khan not to harm David or his son Giorgi. Eruk came to the King took an oath and departed taking with him David's son Giorgi. They entered Tbilisi and all the *mtavaris* and *eristavis* of Georgia came out to meet them, and Shadin with them, an Armenian by birth, to whom Arghun presented Tbilisi and the entire Kingdom. He presented Giorgi with gifts without number. They spent a little time in the city and then departed to Erjan and reached the Horde. First he presented Giorgi to Erjan's wife, T'onghuz-Khatun, for she was the daughter of the great King of Constantinople, Christian by faith and orthodox. And for that reason T'onghuz-Khatun rendered homage to Eruk Arkuan, for he also was a Christian. As soon as she had seen the boy, she felt a fondness for him, because of his virtues, herself being filled with grace. Then he was presented to the Khan, and he kindly welcomed him and rendered him great homage. And enjoying such honors he spent one year there and the Khan granted him his whole Kingdom. He sent an envoy in order to present King David to Ejan, but the King continued to be fastidious, because they had not delivered Khoja-Aziz to him: "If you do not give him to me with a right to execute him, I will not come to the Horde." Learning of this from Arghun, the Khan got angry, for the thought of execution of Khoja-Aziz depressed him. Arghun told the Khan: "The King will not come here and put himself at your service, he just pacifies you by this lie. My advice to you will be to kill the King's son at once, and send me over there to make war with him. I will bring him bound to you."

The Khan believed him and assigned assassins to kill the King's son and all those who accompanied him.⁴⁶ Learning of this, Eruk Arkuan rushed immediately to T'onghuz-Khatun and told her of all that had been said. And she, in hurry, taking Eruk Arkuan with her, appeared before the

Khan and said: “Oh, Great and High Khan, what an unjust order you gave now – to kill the King’s son and his attendants? Don’t you know that he is a descendant of the glorious and noble family, of the prophets with whom the Lord communicated. And, as you are well aware, you took an oath to bring him up here. I and Eruk Arkuan would prefer to die, and lo, we will give our lives for the son of the King. And you must also know that your brother, the son of the great Khan, sends him envoys and presents with countless gifts in order to obtain his assistance for use of the passage of Darialan and Dvaleti, as both of them are in his hands. And I allow myself to give you an advice: why as the sake of one aged Persian merchant do you alienate the great King and put him in the hands of your enemies, for if *ulus* Bato and the King make an alliance they may produce great trouble.”

Hearing this, Ulo wondered. He called immediately for Giorgi, showed him great honors and dressed him in excellent garments. And he told T’onghuz-Khatun and Eruk Arkuan: “Here, take on my oath the son of the King from me. I will render no harm to David, but show him only honors. And you, Eruk, take both children, sons of the King, Giorgi and Dimit’ri as well as Queen Gvantsa and do to them what T’onghuz-Khatun’s and your wish is, and bring me David.” Hearing this, they rejoiced, and bowing to him they said: “If you deliver us Khoja-Aziz and we do not bring David here, let our heads be our pledge. But if you do not give us Khoja-Aziz, David will not come.” Though it was not easy for Arghun to give them Khoja-Aziz, he gave in, and Eruk took Khoja-Aziz with him. And T’onghuz-Khatun wrote a letter, with an oath to the King: “The Khan will not harm you in any way, if you come to the Horde, but will render you all kinds of honors and grant you the kingdom without the slightest detriment.”

Eruk Arkuan set out and came to Tbilisi, and brought with him the King’s both sons. He sent an envoy to the King and informed him of everything. And the King set out and came and camped at the edge of Kvishkheti in the centre of Surami, and summoned Eruk Arkuan. He came to the King and brought both his sons with him, and gave him the message with the oath, and delivered to him Khoja-Aziz. The moment the King set his eyes on him, he ordered his head cut off. And they cut off his head and sent it to Tbilisi, where they erected a pole and placed Khoja-Aziz’s head on the top.

And so the King together with Eruk set out for the Horde. And the whole population of his kingdom saw him off. They departed. And Sargis Jaq’eli of Tsikhis-jvari accompanied him, an outstanding person, who also did a noble thing, for during the sojourn of the King in Tbilisi an envoy of the Khan came over and told them: “I vouch for the King, but not for P’ap’a Sargis.” These words upset Sargis, and the King tried to persuade him to return, but he did not obey him: “Do not urge me to do such thing and turn back. For if for the sins of mine the Tatars harm you, every man will say that because of (the intrigues of) Sargis, the King parted with the Tatars and then Sargis returned home, sending the King to the Khan to meet his death. Heaven forbid, this will bring shame on my family. On the contrary, if they put me to death, let it be for you, and if I remain alive, I will remain with you.” The King was so grateful for this that by a special charter, he granted him an estate with one community in Samtskhe and the church of T’beti in Shavsheti.

They set out for The Horde and appeared before Khan Ulo in Bardava, his winter camp; they did not know of his intentions. Some days later the Khan called the King and the *mtavaris* to a reception and asked the King the reason for his dissension. And everybody was expecting to hear the censure

of the King and his nobles, and everybody was praying to God and Met'ekhi Holy Mother of God to whose protection they entrusted their lives. And they appeared before the Khan and he gave them wine in a big golden bowl with his own hands, for such was the custom of Khans. And when the King sat with folded legs and all the *mtavaris* with him, the Khan asked him: "How dared you to dissent from me and oppose my edict and quarrel with Arghun? Is it not enough, what I have done for you? Lost and doomed, I dragged you out of the well, and saved you from the reptiles, and made you a King." And having nothing to say, the King looked over at Sargis Jaq'eli, as if he was the reason of the quarrel with Arghun and the beating of the Tatars. 5

28. And Sargis, seeing the King growling like a lion ready to pounce on him for his past deeds, was not scared, but stepped forward fearlessly before the Khan, willing to sacrifice his own life for the King, ready to be executed in his place, and bending his knees said to him: "Oh, great Khan, I am the one who fought with Arghun-Agha." And the Khan asked: "Are you P'ap'a Sargis?" for the Tatars called him so. He answered: "I am the one." And the Khan asked: "Why did you disobey the King and quarrel with Arghun?" Sargis was not versed in the Tatar language, and Sadun was appointed as interpreter, an artful speaker in the presence of the Khan, whom Ulo liked and respected greatly, for he was reasonable and a kind-spoken man. Then Sargis answered: "Oh, Great Khan, there was no other reason than that he laid his hands on the Kingdom of David, he seized the towns and the villages and he destroyed the churches and the fortresses. Oh, the happiest of Khans, nobody has told you of such injustice, for he locked your doors with bribery. For this reason I brought the King here, and the happiest of Khans should know and judge the issue. And if you consider me worthy and ask me this question, then you must know, Oh Khan, that the Persians are our enemies since old times. That is why I made war and fought with Arghun, for we could not tolerate the injustice of Khoja-Aziz to the King. Oh, Khan, the King is innocent, I am the one who induced the King to turn from your court." And the words and arguments between them increased, but there is no time to talk or write about it now. The King, too, said many things. And Eruk Arkuan and the great Khan were sitting in the middle, and Sadun skillfully translated and adorned the King's words; for the King was somewhat uneasy with words, while Sadun of Mank'abardi was exceptionally well spoken. 10 15 20 25

And everyone expected that something bad would happen to the King and that execution was awaiting Sargis. Then the Lord granted mercy to those, who set their hopes upon Him, and protected them now as ever. And while the Khan and the King were exchanging words, a man appeared from Daruband, one of the traveling guards of the Khan who were called watchmen; the dispute was not finished, when this Khan's man entered the Horde and reported to the Khan: "There is no time for rhetoric, for the ulus of Bato, the greatest among the great Khans, and his son, the great Khan Berka, have set out with a great and numberless army, and are advancing by the road of Daruband."⁴⁷ 30

Hearing this, the Khan called in haste his troops and they gathered promptly before him. They set off at once, and when the two armies approached each other, the King implored the Khan to assign him and his troops a place in the front lines, for it was in the custom for Georgians to fight in the first ranks. Ulo heeded his request, and appointed the King to the vanguard beside himself. And Sargis Jaq'eli he placed right before himself and he assigned people on his right and left. The commanders arranged the troops. 35 40

But some other things also happened. A deer broke into the party, whom Sargis Jaq'eli, clad in armor, killed. They walked a little and the same Sargis hit a fox with an arrow. Then again he killed a rabbit in passing on their way. Khan Ulo was the witness to all three occurrences and he praised Sargis warmly and told him many good things.

5 Then the two armies approached each other and there appeared one distinguished person among them, who was sent by the great Khan Berka, for the Khan himself did not take part in the march. He approached King David, which caused anxiety among the King's soldiers, for the man was rather powerful and stately and an excellent marksman. But the King quickly picked out an arrow from his quiver and hit his horse in the chest, then thrusting his sword, he pierced the man's
10 heart. Rejoicing and cheering, the Georgians rushed forward. A fierce and vigorous battle took place in the field of Sharabani. The King and his soldiers fought mightily, and Sargis performed such a glorious feat in the presence of Ulo that he managed to amaze the Khan. And the battle dragged on everywhere and people without number died on both sides. Then the army of Berka fled, and Ulo's people rushed in pursuit. But during this pursuit Ulo stood with about four of his men on a hill.
15 When those pursued noticed him, seven of them, all chosen fighters, dashed for the Khan. Seeing this, Sargis who was passing by the place with three men, attacked these seven soldiers, and fought them (four against seven); and Sargis with his *aznauris* killed four of them straight away, and the remaining three took to flight. Ulo rejoiced, seeing with his own eyes how Sargis and his servants achieved this. And they continued to pursue Berka's people up to the gates of Daruband, then
20 passed through Daruband and for three days continued to chase the enemy.

Victorious and glorious they returned to their camp in Bardav. The Khan paid homage to King David and his soldiers and presented them with many gifts, and granted to Sargis Jaq'eli a warrant for K'arnukalaki and the adjacent lands. That made some of his enemies jealous and they said to the King: "Now, you will have to give the kingdom to Sargis. Because the Khan has raised him, he
25 will refuse to obey your highness." And the King believed them, for he was not firm in spirit, but credulous and easily trusted kind and evil words alike. And he went one night to *noin* Elga and told him: "If the Khan grants Sargis, K'arnukalaki, let him grant Sargis the whole kingdom as well." Wondering, *noin* Elga told him: "The Khan gave him that because of his loyalty to you, but if this displeases you he would not do it. Don't you, Georgians, reward those who fight fearlessly in battle?
30 Don't you know that Sargis saved the Khan from the enemy, performing a brave and glorious feat?"

The *noin* went over to the Khan and told him everything, and Sargis was not given K'arnukalaki. Learning this, Sargis was upset and felt offended by his master. That winter the King remained in Bardav, while Sargis, departed for Samtskhe.

At that time Shanshe's son, *amirsp'asalar* Zachariah, a man endowed with all kinds of virtues
35 broke with the Khan and fled to Kutaisi to Narin David, for he was accused of assisting Berka in his invasion. The King welcomed him kindly and spent some time with him. Then the Khan summoned him, taking an oath, though that did not sooth Ulo's heart, and he put to death *amirsp'asalar* Zachariah, an honest and eminent man. Learning this, his father – the great Shanshe – was seized by grief and passed away.

29. Queen Gvantsa, Avag's widow, during her sojourn with the Tatars was murdered by them. People say that she was killed due to the slander of her daughter Khuashak, who was the spouse of *sahib-divan* Khoja Shamsadin. Because the King was left without a wife he married Esukan, the daughter of the great *noin* Chormaghon. He departed for Tbilisi where he celebrated his wedding.

At that time the Ovses, who had fled from Khan Berka also returned; there was a wonderful woman by the name of Limachav among them, and she brought her little children with her; they were from the Akhasarpakiani family, the first-born Parejan and the younger son Baq'atar, and many chiefs with them. They passed the Daruband Gate and appeared before the King. He welcomed them affably as guests and sent them to Khan Ulo. Ulo rendered them homage, presented them with *kharaj*, accepted them in his army as allies, and sent them back to the King. The King settled them: some in the city, some in Dmanisi and the others – in Zhinovani. 5 10

When the harvesting time came, the Khan set out for the country of Shirvan, on the borders of Georgia, to the place which is called Chaghan-usun, or White river. They enclosed a place by the river bank with a stockade and called it "Siba," for Khan Ulo was afraid of the invasion of Khan Berka. And the Tatars and Georgians remained in Siba from the time of harvesting until spring. And in spring they departed for their summer location. 15

But then something happened: the children of the Khan – T'utar, Q'uli and Balagh – who were sent to Ulo, were seized and put to death by him. He seized their country and all their treasures. Learning of the murder of their master, the members of his family, who stayed in Greece, led by their chief – one by the name of Ala-Temur – took off at once and fled to Samtskhe with all his goods and his household. 20

Learning of the flight of Ala-Temur, the Tatars of Khan Ulo went in his pursuit and soon overtook him. But the fugitives turned around and fought the pursuers, slaying many of Khan Ulo's people. To keep a long story short, we will just say that before entering the K'ola mountains, the pursuers caught up with the fugitives twelve times, and twelve times Ala-Temur overpowered his pursuers and threw them off. They reached Lower Art'aani, and the village, which is called Glinavi. There they met Murvan Gurk'leli, son of Makhujag, who was hunting there; and they caught him and wanted to kill him. But he implored them not to do that, promising to take them over the Likhi (Likhtimeri) and to present them to Khan Berka. They believed him. He brought them to Samtskhe, led them into Gurk'lis Ch'ala conceiving to give them up. He sent a man to tell Sargis Tmogveli and Shalva, son of Botso and all the Meskhis and soldiers of Sargis Jaq'eli to gather together, catch Ala-Temur and deliver him up to Khan Ulo. They set out to realize this plan, but Ala-Temur found out about it, and departed with all his goods and household, and crossed the river Mt'k'vari towards Javakheti. He crossed Elasi, located close to Oshora and came to the place called Lerdzavi, where he ran up against Tmogveli, but he took a side route. Sargis and the son of Botso pursued him, closely followed by Murvan Gurk'leli. Gurk'leli with a small army caught the fugitives, but neither Botso with Sargis, nor Tmogveli with his people were close enough to help Gurk'leli. There was a fierce fight, and the Tatars overpowered Gurk'leli, slaying many courtly *aznauris*, and put him to flight. 25 30 35

The Tatars crossed Javakheti and Trialeti and crossed the river Mt'k'vari by Rustavi. Everywhere, the Tatars fought with the Somkhitians, but there is no time to give an account of this. Everywhere, 40

Ala-Temur remained victorious. They crossed K'ambechiani, K'akheti, Hereti, fighting battles everywhere, then took the Belakani road and crossed into Ghundzeti, where they were confronted by the King of Ghundz', but, again, the Tatars defeated him and returned victorious to Khan Berka. They performed such wonderful feats that the Tatars with them were named "*aghnars*", which means seniors or elders. Infuriated by what had happened, Berka began his preparations for an advance. And the Tatars (of Ulo), as I have already said, erected a wall by the river and spent the winter there.

And because the King was occupied with all these things and had no time for other matters, Basili of Chq'ondidi and Ujarma began to rule arbitrarily, taking no account of the King, and at the time of the King's stay in Imeria, inflicted a lot of harm on the King's estates because he considered them his property; and it was rumored that he was in close relations with Esurkan. Basili was slandered so much before the King, that the King commanded Basili to come before him and ordered to hang him on a tree. And they hung him on a tree in the middle of the city, for the King was credulous and simple-hearted.

When the time of the vintage came, the Khan departed again for Siba, and the King did the same. With the coming of spring, the Khan set out for Siaka, and his son Tankush went to Gelakun – for they used Gelakun as their summer station – and the Khan took the King with him and they stayed there. Then the King implored Tankush to intercede for him with his father, Khan Ulo, so that he would let him go to his kingdom. Tankush heeded his request and sent someone. But when they came to Siaka, Khan Ulo had already passed away. Then the *khatuns*, and *noins* ordered Tankush to let the King go to his kingdom. He released him, and the King came to Tbilisi, and to Kartli, and Somkhiti, and settled affairs there.

The *noins* enthroned Ulo's elder son, by the name of Abagha, a kind, generous and merciful man, and compassionate, obliging, humble, just, lawmaking, charitable to such extent, that even an inveterate villain would not reproach him. He used to say: "The Lord appointed me the sovereign of the whole world, and I will not take away from a man that which I did not give." Many times thieves robbed his treasury, and he did not put them to death, he just said: "Let me lose my treasures, let the wretched take them, they steal because they are needy." He had a mind, which lacked malice. Then Abagha appointed as commander a man remarkable in battle, by the name of Abata, and as a ruler of the Horde and his house he assigned the son of Chormaghon, called Sirmon, a victorious man and distinguished in battles. Because all those before him were bribe-takers, he chose one man, by the name of Aghubagha, a gracious law-maker, an obedient observer of fasts and a pilgrim, loving all those who placed their trust in the Christians, churches and the Lord. He appointed him the judge of the weak and poor. He changed the *noins* honored by Khan Ulo, though many of them had already passed away, like *noin* Elga and many others.

And King David went to this Abagha, and he respectfully welcomed him and rendered him homage. All the Tatars loyal to his father Ulo were obedient to Abagha.

At this time the great Khan Berka set out with his countless army upon the Daruband road to take vengeance for all the deeds of T'utar, Balagh and Q'uli. Learning of this, Khan Abagha called his troops together; King David set off to meet him.⁴⁸ Knowing the power and size of the Berka's army, Khan Abagha did not venture across the Mt'k'vari, but advanced along the banks and by back

roads. He occupied the high places and stationed his soldiers from the place where the Mt'k'vari and Raqs flow together, all the way up to Mtskheta.

Berka devastated the lands of Shirvan, Hereti, K'akheti and the banks of the Iori; his army reached Tbilisi and destroyed many Christian souls. Khan Berka stationed himself in the Gareji mountains. Then the Lord cast his merciful glance upon the country and Khan Abagha; Berka fell ill and died. When the soldiers learned of the death of their Khan, they took his body and returned home through the Gate of Daruband. And then the country calmed down. 5

But the fear of Berka's army continued to linger in the hearts of the Tatars and at the coming of harvest time, the King went to Siba as before. And when the time for leaving Siba came, the King called for his soldiers, and for Sargis Jaq'eli of Tsikhis-jvari. When Sargis appeared before King David in Tbilisi, the latter suspected him of plotting with the Khan and, yielding to the instigations of the evil minded, and forgetting of all his services, he invited him to his palace, seized him and locked him in the dungeon. Learning of this, the *aznauris* who accompanied him, fled to the Khan and told *noin* Abata of the capture of Sargis by the King and asked him to report it to Khan Abagha and set Sargis free. The Khan listened to the request of *noin* Abata and gave him an envoy; he came to Tbilisi, took Sargis and brought him to *noin* Abata. And from that time the Jaq'eli family remained subject to the Uloses up to the time of the splendid and most remarkable among kings – Giorgi. 10 15

This time the King did not depart for Siba, because his first-born son Giorgi, who was endowed with all kinds of virtues, had a stomach ache. The disease lasted so long that they began to think he was dying; for he lay silent, motionless, breathing hard, just keeping himself alive. Grief and a feeling of impotence seized the King and the whole of Georgia. Recalling Dmanisi Mother of God, the King went before Her. And on his way there he saw all kinds of barefoot people who followed him, and who, on meeting him cried out prayers. And the Holy Mother of God heeded their prayers and instantly after just one touch to Her and Her lips, opened Giorgi's eyes and he stood up as if he never had been ill. The King marveled at this and the whole population of Georgia was amazed by the Holy Mother of God, and everybody praised the Lord. 20 25

And again the King went to Siba, and during his stay there and towards the time of his return he fell ill with the similar stomach problem, and his healers could not cure him. He traveled in his coach, and was brought to a hermit; he approached the icon that was not human made, but appeared by itself on the canvas over the icon's riza. He ordered the icon to be brought close, and pressed his lips to it in tears and prayed, and it cured him like our Lord the Healer cured the one who lay on his deathbed. Now recovered, he went to his palace in Tbilisi and rested, and the *mtavaris* and *eristavis* tried to spare him from anxiety over the Khan. But they say, as was written of the wise Solomon too, that in his later years David behaved unjustly before the Lord, and spared from the raids of the Tatars, began ravaging the Episcopal Sees, dispensing with profitable villages, which were granted to him and to the monasteries by the blessed Kings. And as with Solomon, the enemy inspired other evil thoughts, which overcame him in his old age. That is why the Lord cherished not the image but the (spiritual) beauty, while bemoaning the death of his son; we, Adam's kin, dwell in madness, and the human heart bends assiduously towards evil; so it is written: "We desired not to listen to reason, but transgressing our lives, we gave ourselves to vanity," and as the wise Ecclesiastes says: "Vanity of 30 35 40

vanities, everything is vanity of vanities” and everything that we see under this sun is committed to vanity.

30. However, let's return to our story. As the time to leave for Siba came, the King, again, departed. And during his stay there his son Giorgi fell ill and passed away from internal bleeding, leaving unspeakable grief among the whole population of the kingdom, young and old alike. And the remains of the young Giorgi were put to rest in the church of Sioni, to wait for the King, for the time of his return had already come.

Some time passed and the King returned to Tbilisi. Because nobody came to meet him, with the exception of a few citizens, he rushed with uneasy foreboding to his palace, where the soldiers and viziers clad in mourning met him; and as they told him of the death of his son, Giorgi, he collapsed that same instant and passed out. They carried him in their hands to his chambers and with much difficulty brought him to his senses, for if a soul is extinguished, consciousness disappears at the same time, but if consciousness disappears the soul is not extinguished, so says the creator of words. The pain that seized him after losing his beloved son was only augmented when he thought of the exalted, well-looking youth of eighteen, brave and skilled in military rules. In the profundity of his grief, and moaning, he desired death for himself. He looked at his son, Giorgi, dead in the prime of life, who lay deathly pale before him, mourned by the people. Wailing they took Giorgi to Mtskheta, buried him there and returned overwhelmed with grief. His love for his son increased his pain and from that day on, joy disappeared from his life, he caught many diseases, and most of the time he was sick in his body and could not serve Khan Abagha.

Then began to rise Sadun of Mank'aberdi, who was first pardoned by Ulo because of his power as a wrestler, who was respected by Khan Abagha and to whom the great Sahib-Divan showed goodwill by appointing him to the position of *ejib* of his wife Khuashak, daughter of Avag, and King David granted him many lands.

A faction started among the Tatars; Khan Abagha broke with Tegutar, the younger brother of Khan Barakha, who was a descendant of Khan Chaghat'a, son of Genghis-Khan, and who held the country of Turan and great Turkey. Khan Barakha dwelt in Turan, and he sent his brother Tegutar there in order that the *kharaj*, which according to the (existing) law had been levied from the country, as it was noted above, went to Tegutar. Tegutar brought twenty thousand soldiers with him. Abagha allotted him a summer station in the Art'ana Mountains, and a winter station on the bank of the Rakhsi River in Nakhchevan. Tegutar became jealous of Abagha's Kingdom and asked his brother, Khan Barakha, who was on the other side of Jeon: "Why do we give the kingdom and the great country to Abagha? Now, you advance from there and I from here, and together we will overpower him and seize his country." He resorted to the following ruse: taking three wooden arrows he cut off their heads, then put the secret notes to his brother in them and fastened them with ivory, for the Tatars had guards everywhere and travelers and messengers could read them.

And when Tegutar's messenger appeared before his brother Khan Barakha, he took kindly to his words and plan, and agreed upon their meeting, and to the overthrow of Khan Abagha and the seizure of his country. And he set the time –Tegutar's departure and Barakha's crossing of the Jeon with his army. But Providence dispelled their plans and protected Abagha, because of his purity,

righteousness and truthfulness. The writer made a mistake, writing that the departure of Tegutar had to take place two Moons earlier, for they calculate their months by the Moon. And he also put this message in the head of an arrow. The messenger set out and arrived at Nigalisveli and gave Tegutar the arrows, and Tegutar opened the arrow's head and took his brother Barakha's letter. And he learned from the message of the closeness of their meeting, and he gathered in haste his goods and household, and soldiers, about ten thousand five hundred, for he could not gather more because of his haste and the fear of disclosure of his evil designs. He departed toward the Ghado Mountains in K'archkhali and K'ari, which are situated between Shavsheti and Ach'ara, and set up a camp at Pich'uta in Shavsheti. He addressed Sargis Jaq'eli with a request to give him passage, because he was going to appear before David, the King of Abkhazia, to be a mediator, promising that if he gained a victory he would promote him greatly. While they talked, Sargis listened favorably to Tegutar. 5 10

Abagha called his troops together and the *mandat'urtukhutsesi* Ivane, the son of the great Shanshe, and ordered them to pursue Tegutar. He appointed as their commander the son of *noin* Chormaghon, Sirmon, a man fearless and glorious in battles, and recruited many other *noins*. They came to the Art'ana Mountains and set up camp there. 15

Then a miracle happened, one that exceeds all that was born of a mother, which is the word of God, our Lord Christ, born of a Virgin, and the one who baptized with his own hands and heard the heavenly voice of the Father, and saw the Holy Spirit in the shape of a dove, and taught St. John the Baptist. This desert is not unknown in the Ghado Mountains: Op'iza is the first among the twelve deserts. Here is the larynx of one who exceeded all the prophets and disciples, the larynx of the great John the Baptist, which did not lapse into silence in its glorification of the revealed God, and which condemned the iniquities of Herod. And so, adorned by precious treasure and full of Chosen Divinity, this is the dwelling of the Baptist and the true dwelling of the Prince himself, as will be shown later. 20 25

Having heard of the greatness of the Op'iza desert, of the splendor of its honored icons and icon lamps, Tegutar wished to seize it; he sent there about a thousand of his horsemen with the purpose of ravaging it. They advanced by the mountain path to K'archkhali. But the Heavenly Judge disposed otherwise; the Lord would not bring dishonor on so many holy fathers – whose work in Op'iza shone, who had illuminated it by miraculous signs, and entrusted themselves to John the Baptist. He would not permit a massacre by pagans, nor did He wish to dishonor that voice, the unsilenced herald of the Lord. And so He defended his dwelling and sent mist and darkness upon the invaders; and they were unable to move their fowl feet, for they approached the desert and stood at the foot of the mountain named Dzegli, on which is the church of St. George between Op'iza and Midznadzor. Then John the Illuminator looked mercifully at his abode and, like Immaculate Blachernae Mother of God, sent a fierce wind to the Ghado Mountain, and heat, and hail, and a terrible rain, and the earth began to move as in a high sea, and the waters rushed down, and the small river that flows into the river of Shavshuri, overflowed, reaching the top of Dzegli, so that even now man can see the traces of that great flood. The waters raged and swept the Tatars completely away, men and horses, leaving only one man alive. He returned to Tegutar to inform him of what had happened, like 30 35 40

the herald to Job: "The place is the House of the Lord, the dwelling of the Lord's servants, beware of going there." Tegutar stood on the high top of the Arsiani Mountain and they came and told him: "The great army of Abagha has arrived and is camped at the mountain of Art'aani, tomorrow they will be here." Hearing this, at dawn, Tegutar took his goods and household and hid them behind the strong mountain of K'ari, to which only one road goes, and he himself advanced with his troops to
5 Arsiani. Sirmon, too, came over the mountain of Q'ueli. And both came to the approaches of Q'ueli. Sirmon, who was glorious in battles walked at the head of his troops; so did the people of Tegutar: Segzi, Jolak, Abishkha, Tolak-Demur. They engaged in a great battle, in which countless people fell on both sides. The battle continued and Tegutar was overcome, and he fled to his household in the
10 direction of the Ghado Mountains of Jnalistavi, and Sirmon followed him, but Tegutar confronted him, pinning his hopes on the strength of the mountains.

A powerful battle took place, which continued for two days. Falling into distress, Tegutar fell back, but in a very strange manner. Some of his men retreated through Ach'ara, some – through Nigaliskhevi, which was thoroughly impassable. And not one man that had seen those mountains
15 could understand, how they managed to pass over them, for it is quite impossible for a man to cross them, to say nothing of horses, because of the steepness of the mountains and the thickness of the forest, thistle and thornbush, that is called *burts'umel*, which grows over them. The places covered by ivy, which the Tatars entered were impenetrable even by beasts. But one more thing: they passed over one mountain, rocky at its foot and with some soil on top, on which a forest was growing. But
20 while they were crossing, an avalanche happened, which buried the horses and horsemen alike; they disappeared, and so the wretched perished. And even now the inhabitants of Mach'ara digging there find women's golden and silver adornments.

Others passed Ach'ara and Nigaliskhevi, and then crossed Guria and appeared in Kutaisi before King David. He met them with joy and gave them a lavish feast, including five hundred roasted cows,
25 not counting pigs and sheep. And on the same day he gave their army six hundred horses, – one thousand five hundred head of cattle, two thousand sheep, and pigs. All that he presented to Tegutar that day, the latter divided it among his soldiers. The King's action left both Tegutar and his soldiers amazed; and there was no end of wines, they brought them on carts in vessels.

31. King David, being generous and humble, welcomed his guests. He was wise in all his
30 deeds, and champion of a good name. And so like a servant he attended upon Tegutar. The Queen, the daughter of the King of Constantinople, Palaeologus, also tried to please Tegutar's wife, and they became close with each other and enjoyed each other's confidence. King David constantly presented himself before Tegutar, observing all the necessary rites and orders, and such was his relationship with him.

Sirmon returned victorious to Khan Abagha, but then a man from Khorasan came, one of guards
35 on the road, and informed them that "the *ulus* of the great Turan and the Great Khan Barakha had crossed Jeon with a countless army," for Barakha set out at the time agreed, and he was told of Tegutar's retreat. Abagha was amazed and summoned his subjects and all the Georgians. And although King David was quite drained of strength due to the death of his son, he, too, departed for
40 Khorasan with all his army and came to Eri, and from there to the field of Amosi. They approached

each other. They placed the King and his troops in the front, in order to protect their army from the assault of Barakha, meanwhile looking for information about the *ulus* and Barakha's army. Abagha sent forward other *noins* four or five miles ahead. He charged them with obtaining information related to Barakha's army, and to retreat in the case of assault; they began to circle the enemy's army. These detachments which go far ahead of the main body of troops are called in their language *q'arauls*. 5

And so the King and the Tatar *q'arauls* set out, and after walking for two days at dusk they camped; at sunrise they saw dust, which rose like a cloud over the Amosi field. They guessed that it was Barakha with his army. The King and Sikdur saddled their horses but, in compliance with the order of Abagha, the latter wanted to retreat, and he said to the King: "We are *q'arauls* and have just a few people with us; we have found their army and let us go to the Khan and inform him of their coming. But the King said: "We Georgians are not used to turning our backs to the enemy, without giving him battle, even if death awaits us." Hearing this, the Tatars were amazed, and filled with indignation. They said: "You do not know what you say! You have no orders from Abagha to engage the great Khan without him. You Georgians are reckless and do not know anything," and they implored the King and his people and threatened them with the Abagha's wrath, but could not persuade them to give in. Then they hastily sent a man to the Khan and informed him: "Barakha comes with a great army, we see a cloud of dust and the Amosi field darkened completely by the dust; and in accordance with your instruction we want to retreat and appear before you, but the Georgians are unreasonable creatures, and will not go with us. They say: "We are not accustomed to retreating from the enemy." If you, our Khan, do not come and give your orders, we will be doomed to lay down our lives; so hurry with your help." 10 15 20

When the envoy came, Abagha, learning of the arrival of Barakha and amazed at the persistence of the *q'arauls*, quickly saddled his horse and setting out with his army came in time with his troops ready to fight; and he called the King and said to him: "I know of your soldierly valor. You Georgians are disobedient and mad. If one of my *noins* had done what you did, I would have put him to death. But I do not blame you; you are ignorant of our rules. Now stand in the first line with your troops." The King dismounted his horse, bowed before him and said: "Oh, great Khan, it is not among the habits of a Georgian to turn his back after seeing his enemy. Now let the happy eyes of the Khan see how we give our lives." 25

The King placed himself in the front line. And the great and fearless *noin* Abata, who was the commander, or *amirsp'asalar*, stood on the left side; on his left side also were Sirmon and the great Bugha; and Sikdur, T'oghan-Bugha, Jinilis, Arghun-Agha and Ias-Bugha stood on the right, and the other *noins* were placed on both sides. And Barakha arranged his troops in a similar orderly manner. 30

32. Then a man came by the name of Alinaq', leader of a hundred, not a descendant of any noble family, but with a stately body, strong and fearless, charming, slim and good-looking. He asked the *noin* Abata to allow him, when he thought it appropriate, to fight with his men as an advanced detachment. And the *noin* Abata agreed to this wish. Then both armies approached each other and the battle took place, great and dreadful. Alinaq' cut into the enemy's ranks, cleaved them and together with his people passed through them; then he called them together, turned round and crying "Alla, Alla" cut again through the enemy's ranks. Then again he turned back and smashed the 35 40

enemy lines, again with his “Alla, Alla.” And the Georgians gave a furious battle, for the Khan saw with his own eyes how the King and his people in the front ranks crowded the enemy and forced them to flee. *Noin* Abata labored so forcefully that overthrowing a well armed horseman in the fight, hoisted him into his saddle and kept him like an eagle would a hazel hen during the whole battle.

5 Sirmon, too, acted bravely and put to flight all his adversaries. Khan Barakha happened to be to the right of the Abagha’s *noins* – Sikdur, T’oghan-Bugha, Jinili and Arghun-Agha. Barakha put them to flight at once and pursued them until the following day, while Abagha followed them for two days, not knowing what had happened, because of the extended location of the troops. When Barakha learned of the flight and defeat of his army, he turned back, and, again, they approached each other and got
10 ready for battle. As soon as the *noin* Abata saw Barakha, he raised his spear and went towards his detachment, for this *noin* was fine and stately, with broad shoulders and chest like a lion’s, fearless and strong, vigorous and slim, and quite outstanding. And his troops followed him, and pursued the enemy and slew and captured countless numbers of men. Victorious they returned to their Horde.

At the time when Khan Abagha was in Khorasan at war with Khan Barakha, Tegutar sent over
15 three commanders with their households and goods – Segzi-Badur, Abishkha and Tolak-Demur by name, and a fourth – Jolak. They stationed themselves in the mountains that branch from the Caucasus and which are called Likhi. And so they went west into the mountains that are called Ghado, and at their crossing – Demoti – the Tatars camped in the place called Lomistavi. From there they ravaged Javakheti up to Faravan. Then the Tatars that stationed there passed Ek’eriskhevi
20 and, fording across the Mt’k’vari above Ats’q’uri entered Javakheti. They met on their way the herd (of cows) of K’akha of Tori, who was honored by the rank of *mech’urch’letukhutsesi*, and the herd of Q’urumchi, head of a thousand horsemen; not Q’urumchi, the son of Alinaq’, but someone else’s son. They took the herds with them and went to Lomistavi. Learning of this, Q’urumchi-Badur called K’akhi of Tori, and set out in pursuit of the Tatars. But Tegutar’s people had crossed the Mt’k’vari
25 already at the place where the Gur’li River flows into it. And the pursuers came to the bank of the Mt’k’vari. Since there were too many of the Tatars and the Georgians, and too few of the other party, the latter resorted to a ruse. Tolak-Demur crossed the Mt’k’vari with thirty men unobserved, while the others remained on the opposite bank. Then Tolak-Demur left the gorge, ascended the ridge, raised the flag like a banner and rushed down with loud cries. As Q’urumchi-Badur saw troops in front and
30 behind him, he thought that there were a great number of them; he was scared and took flight, and many fine men were killed. Both of the Kokht’ians found their end there. Samdzivari, whose horse was killed under him, swam across the river to Ats’q’uri. The leader of the Tatars, Q’urumchi-Badur, was killed and his people were dispersed; unable to escape they went over the Rugeti Mountain up the steep slope which is called K’virik’ets’minda. And they (the winners) returned victorious to the
35 Khan’s brother Tegutar. And Tegutar, impassioned, invaded Kartli and began to ravage it.

Khan Abagha implored King David, Rusudan’s son, not to support Tegutar or admit him to his country, promising many gifts in return. Suspecting Tegutar of treachery against Abagha, and hearing it directly from Tegutar’s subjects, King David preferred to obey Abagha rather than Tegutar. He closed his roads to horsemen. Tegutar knew nothing of it. Abagha realized that King David was not
40 helping Tegutar. He sent his commander, Sirmon-Badur, and other chief *noins* and a lot of troops.

They came to Trialeti and summoned King David and his army. But because the King was ill at the time, he sent all his *mtavaris* to Sirmon instead. Sirmon entered Kartli.

Learning of Sirmon's arrival, Tegutar drew up his troops and a battle took place and many were slain on both sides, but the night fell and they broke apart. At daybreak they again prepared for battle, lining up face to face. A fierce battle took place and the King's troops fought in the front lines. And they clashed with each other, and Tegutar's people took to flight, and they were dispersed, killed and driven away. Tegutar and his son, a helpless little child, escaped. They came to Sirmon, and Tegutar implored him to arrange a meeting for him and his son with Khan Abagha. Sirmon listened to him but took his household captive and seized all his possessions: his goods, property and herds. He brought Tegutar and his son before Abagha. But Abagha did no harm to them, for he was a merciful and indulgent man, as we have said above, but sent him to the Iraqi lands, and gave him and his son twelve men, a lavish subsistence and garments, falcons, hawks and leopards; and assigned him maintenance so that he experienced no deficiency in anything, and appointed guards to prevent him returning to his lands. And Tegutar lived in a restful state, and so passed away.

Khan Abagha sent many presents and gifts to the King and (granted him) many villages in Kartli and At'eni.

33. The Khan departed for Siba and took King David with him. There he spent the winter season and with the coming of summer returned. On their way back the King fell ill with his stomach ailment and seeing that the physicians were unable to cure him, he prayed to the icon of Mart'q'opi and came before it, as he was used to doing, for earlier, plagued by a stomach disease and lying speechless like a dead man, he was raised up by the image of the incarnated God. But this time he found no relief, because weakened in his devotion, he had begun to ravage and destroy Sees. And the Lord removed his merciful arm; and while the previous year his first-born son, Giorgi, a most honorable young man, died, now David passed away, grieving for his son. But he had also another son, well remembered, fearless and valiant, Dimit'ri by name, who later became King. When David ended his life, he was buried in the royal burial place in Mtskheta. But they say that he may have been poisoned by his wife Ersukan; and, as it is said of the Macedonian, who, having a headache, was given a doubtful medicine by Midos and Ant'ip'at'ros, they say that Esukan took vengeance on him for putting to death Basil of Ujarma for his dishonorable behavior: Basil committed adultery with Esukan and dishonored the King's bed, and threw off his cassock, and stole the power. And for this dishonor, Basil was put to death.

So King David passed away and inconsolable grief seized the whole Georgian people. He was mourned according to his rank, and many gifts were given to churches and temples, and to the wretched for remembering him in their prayers. The *mtavaris* grieved, for King Dimit'ri was a little boy and unable to reign. And for that reason most of them served the Khan, for King David could not bring the *eristavis* to reason, because of his fear of the Khan.

Ghalghur and the *eristavi* of Rach'a, K'akhaber, arranged between them to break with King David, Rusudan's son, and left for the camp of Khan Abagha. They let Alinaq' Badur know of their intention, who was in the mountains of Javakheti, and the latter informed the Khan. The Khan gave Alinaq' Badur great presents. Ghalghur and K'akhaber's son K'akhaber, who was evil in his seed,

as says the Book of the Kings about Baghushi and his relatives, set out. When they arrived at the Khan's, he welcomed them, called *noin* Sirmon and said: "King David is a rebel, but that is not enough; he is helping all our rebels; for instance, he assisted Tegutar, and now Ghalghur. I gave him a lot of gifts and rendered him homage, because of Tegutar, but then he sheltered Ghalghur. Now
5 I am willing to avenge him." And hearing these words K'akhaber stepped forward and said: "If the Khan wants to have revenge on King David, then I came here precisely for that. I know how to carry out the invasion and will let loose my troops upon him. I will have the upper hand over the King. Ghalghur knows the roads and the forces of their country."

Khan Abagha ordered the *noin* Sirmon and Alinaq', Taicho and Abchi to march against King
10 David. They gathered an army of three *bevr̄is* in number and crossed Trialeti and then the Likhi Mountains, and stormed into Kutaisi, while the King was taking his bath. He had hardly the time to mount his horse and flee, having only his shirt on him. And the Tatars ravaged the churches and many Christians were slain and taken captive. They appeared unharmed before the Khan. But the King, protected wonderfully by the Lord, had escaped. He had no time to give battle to them,
15 because they retreated in haste.

In the third year, Sirmon and Alinaq', again obeying the Abagha's order, set out to catch the King, who, being visited by K'akhaber, was not thinking of the Tatars at all. Again, they invaded, though the King evaded them, and they devastated his lands. But as soon as the Tatars learned of the preparations of the King, they fled in haste, taking the spoil and captives with them.

20 At this time Sadun of Mank'aberdi had risen above all the other *mtavaris* of his time, because Khan Abagha was fond of him. He began to be concerned with Georgian affairs, for the daughter of his master, *Atabag* Avag, asked Sadun about it, while Khuashak even gave him the rank of *ejib*.

The Georgian princes and nobles gathered and took the son of the King – Dimit'ri – to the Horde. And they came to the *mandat'urtukhutsesi* Ivane, the son of Shanshe. He went with them
25 to the Horde. They presented him before the Khan at the Horde so that he could deliver Dimit'ri his kingdom. And when the Khan saw Dimit'ri,⁴⁹ he had mercy on him, for he was well-built and handsome, and he granted him the kingdom, with the exception of the estates of Sargis Jaq'eli, and assigned Sadun to accompany him, to whom King Dimit'ri granted the rank of *atabag*. Dimit'ri came to Tbilisi and ascended the throne of his fathers, and the rite of blessing was performed by
30 the Katholicos and the bishops and by all the *mtavaris* of Georgia, from Hereti, K'akheti, Javakheti and T'ao. All gathered for the event. And they gave thanks to God and rejoiced greatly and granted presents to the wretched and to orphans, so that the reign of Dimit'ri and his rule of Georgia could be successful.

V

34. Then Khan Abagha started a war with the ruler of the Egyptians, Sultan Punduq'adar of Misr and sent a powerful army against him, including Georgian troops; he appointed Badur Todan, from the Saldus family and chief of the Garets, the commander, and sent him along the road that goes from Greece to Sham. He informed the Sultan of Greece, Parvan, for the great Sultan Seljukid Q'iasdin had passed away. His right hand man (Parvan) had seized the Sultanate and married his wife, Rusudan's daughter, Gurji-Khatun; so Parvan possessed the whole Pont, Asia and Cappadocia. The Khan asked him for military assistance.

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The troops of Abagha set out, appeared before Parvan and camped in Evkhait', which is Asurast'an. As soon as Sultan Punduq'adar learned of the approach of the Tatars, he confronted them with his Egyptian army and fell upon them at daybreak; and a great battle took place, in which the Georgians displayed the fearlessness that amazed the Tatars. Then one Tatar, Morghul by name, rushed alone at the Arabs, and breached their ranks; and one unmounted soldier cut the right hind leg of his horse close to its hoof. And then a wonderful thing happened: Abagha's army took flight and Todan was killed. Then Morghul continued to ride on the legless horse and rode for three days and nights. Then the horse died.

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The destruction of his army and of the Georgians grieved Abagha immensely. Slandorous things were said of the Sultan of Greece, Parvan, that Punduq'adar attacked on his advice. They seized Parvan, and though Abagha did not want his death, the *noins* killed him and appropriated all his property. They sent to Greece a descendant of the first Khans, the great and kind *noin* from the On-Khan family, by name of Erinji. And he was given the government of Greece. He removed Ats'q'uri from the Samtskhe region, which belonged to Parvan from his wife's line, and granted it to Sargis Jaq'eli and his son, Beka.

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Meanwhile King Dimit'ri had grown up and had begun to think of good deeds, for this Dimit'ri was stately, of fair complexion, handsome, with beautiful hair and beard, brown-eyed and slender, learned in military operations, a perfect rider and archer, generous, gracious to the wretched and humble; there was no one like him not only in the King's family, but among other people as well. He made it a rule for himself, wealthy as he was, to get up in the night and go into the city to find beggars, the wretched and orphans, and then with his own hands to distribute gifts among them. And everybody knew of the King's generosity; beggars wandered at night in the streets, hoping to meet the King. Besides, he fasted, kept night vigils and went down on his knees many times, performing one thousand and five hundred deep kneeling at a time. He was gifted in every way, but he remained in the hands of Sadun, for the Khan had raised him (Sadun) very high in status. Sadun took care of Telavi and Belakani and many other lands for King Dimit'ri. And he excellently managed Georgian affairs, for there was no violence or lawlessness on the part of the Tatars, nor the great *noins*, nor their ministers. And Georgia revived.

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The King began to visit Siba and restored the ravaged lands there. He also built a monastery in the Isani Palace in order to keep the Met'ekhi Mother of God there; and he adorned it properly and donated villages and vineyards to it, and maintained clothes for the monks and introduced sensible

rules. He departed for the Horde, and during his stay there he asked about the many things initiated by Sadun. And Sadun told him: "If you give me Dmanisi, I will pay the Khan for it." The King listened to him and gave him Dmanisi and its vicinities contrary to his own will, and raised Sadun still more. But Sadun did good things for the monasteries and the poor; in his lifetime he granted Q'alani and Mali to the Twelve Deserts of Gareji, and freed the lands of Gareji, and served King Dimit'ri. He provided himself with an army and a treasury – gold and silver – and possessed incalculable herds and immeasurable wealth, for he was easy to deal with, considerate and wise, and Khan Abagha and the great Sahib-Divan valued his advice; the estates of *atabag* Avag belonged to him and his daughter, Khuashak, was married to Sahib-Divan. This Sahib-Divan was favored by Khan Ulo; Sadun, too, had been favored by him. The whole country of the Khan was under his control and everybody obeyed his orders. Sadun bought many lands and the Kings granted him K'ari, and he settled in K'ari, and, through clever guile, acquired the adjoining lands from the Akhaltsikhians, and took as wife the daughter of the governor of Akhaltsikhe. The Khan charged him with the management of the Georgian army, and the Georgian, Armenian and Er-K'akh courtiers dwelt with the King.

35. At this time raised the *sp'asalar* of Samtskhe and *mech'urch'letukhutsesi* Sargis Jaq'eli and his son Beka, who governed in Samtskhe. Of Sargis's deeds we wrote above, now we will tell of his son Beka. Beka was stately, of fair complexion, brown-eyed and dark-haired, broad-shouldered and high-chested, a strong and brave fighter, an artful rider, a good archer at the hunt, careful in reasoning, an organizer and builder of churches and monasteries, and respectful to God-loving people. He was a devoted worshiper who missed no daybreak service, or liturgy, or vespers, observing the rules that are put down by the Typicon. And the Lord, too, favored him with a worthy spouse, who devoted herself to praying and fasting, was merciful to the poor, respectful to monasteries and icons, and provided orphans and the wretched with sustenance.

Then Beka took possession of the country from T'asisk'ari to K'arnukalaki: Samtskhe, Ach'ara, Shavsheti, K'larjeti and most of T'ao, Vashlovani, Nigaliskhevi, Art'anuji, Twelve Deserts, K'ola, K'arnipora, both Art'anis and many villages in Javakheti. And so he was rising day by day, serving Khan Abagha and obeying King Dimit'ri. King Dimit'ri succeeded with his love of God and man, and continued to rise in the Khan's esteem. When he was still a boy, they decided to send a man to the Pont to the King of Greece, Comnenus, who was of the Great Constantine's seed, and he (the man) brought the daughter of King Comnenus of Trabzon in glory and with great treasures; they celebrated the wedding as is appropriate for a King. And a little later the Queen conceived and gave birth to a son, who was given the name David and who became later the last King of Kartli.

At that time, Arghun who had worked out the complete census of the domains subject to the Khans, appeared again; his task was to make an inventory of the lands and find out to what extent they were ravaged or rehabilitated. He concluded that most of them were devastated, and most of all in Hereti and K'akheti; for the valleys of K'ambechiani were plundered during the first arrival of the Tatars, when the great Khan Berka came. Then at the time of Arghun Oirad's stay in Tbilisi, he asked the King for Tamar, the King's only sister, saying: "Your well-remembered father promised me his daughter, your sister, as a daughter-in-law to marry my son, but he did not live long enough. Now

I am asking you not to reject my request as unworthy, and give me your sister for my son.” Hearing this, the King felt quite upset and grieved greatly; he tried to overcome his pining spirit looking for inner strength, for he hated the marriage of his Christ worshipping sister with a heathen; however he was powerless to change anything, for his own father did promise her. He married her to Arghun’s son and they celebrated their wedding as was due. And Arghun returned to the Horde leaving his son by the King.

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The Queen conceived again and gave birth to a son, and they gave him the name of Vakht’ang.

And again peace came to the lands beyond Likhi. And King David settled down; he was first of all a kind and reasonable man, generous, humble and hospitable, more than any king before him, and he lived in so much peace.

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The *eristavi* of Rach’a, K’akhaber, lived in Kartli, owning the outskirts of At’eni; he was held in disfavor by the Khan as well as by King Dimit’ri, because of his duplicity in relations with the Kings. Straitened in his affairs, he implored the King to have mercy on him and grant him his own estate. And the kind and merciful King showing pity, pardoned him, and, swearing firmly that he would not accuse him of past wrongs, asked him to come in peace with him, and granted him all his estates. And so K’akhaber regained his estates in Rach’a, but as the time passed, he began again to walk along the path of his fathers and forefathers, like a pig looking for mud, and spouting venom like a viper. He inherited this double-dealing from his kin. And forgetful of all his promises he resorted again to treachery and sent an envoy with a letter to the chief of a thousand, Alinaq’, who stayed in the mountains of Javakheti and K’oli, proposing an assault on the King as in former times so as to lay his hands upon him. But the Lord made his design futile, like the design of Ahitophel against David, and the message was revealed. So he incurred a well-deserved retribution on himself, and his lie boomeranged on him. The King caught him and gouged his eyes at first, then he cut off one hand and one leg, and subjected his sons to exile, sending them to Constantinople, because the Queen, his spouse was the daughter of the great Emperor Palaiologos. K’akhaber, alive for a short time, passed away. And so K’akhaber Baghvash’s kin disappeared, and no descendant of his remained, as well as any memory.

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At this time, the Khan decided to make war to the country of Gilani, because it had got out of control, refusing to pay tribute. He sent the Tatar and Georgian troops, but did not send the King along with them. He assigned Sirmon-Badur as commander of the army, and they set out and invaded Gilani. The Gilanians gathered and manned their fortresses. The country was protected by rocky mountains and forests with narrow paths on one side, and by the sea from the other. So fortified, they lined up and gave fierce battle. The Gilanians brought down showers of arrows on their enemy’s heads. Sirmon dismounted and squatted, turning back to his soldiers, and all his men also dismounted. And as the arrows diminished, Sirmon got up and rushed forward like a leopard, and the Georgians rushed bravely with him, putting the Gilanians to flight; and they cut two of Sirmon’s fingers, but there were no losses among the Tatar and Georgian troops. Though, having seen that the strongholds of this country were impregnable and it was impossible to seize them, they returned to Khan Abagha.

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And the country came to peace, and tranquility reigned everywhere. The Lord looked mercifully on those who set their hopes upon Him and there was an abundance of bread and wine. King Dimit'ri settled the affairs of the Kingdom.

5 When the troubles receded a little, people began to go back to their pleasures, and turned away from the path of the Lord, for the King took three wives, and Sadun had three wives as well. And the nobles began to lay their hands on the churches and monasteries, to ravage the villages and estates, and particularly the Meskhi Church – the magnificent Ats'q'uri. And though this outrage was severely censured by Katholicos Nik'oloz and Nik'oloz of Mats'q'uri, the son of Juansher, nobody took heed of them.

10 Then evil appeared once more; people turned to lawlessness and theft, and no law-giver was to be found anywhere, and the pastors and priests were willful, arrogant, mercenary, malicious and dishonorable. Though why continue with these words; evil was everywhere.

15 36. Then came the day of trial for our sins, for Arghun came to Samtkhe to call on Sargis Jaq'eli, because he had grown decrepit with the diseases of old age and was weakened in all his members. Arghun made a tour of Somkhiti, Tbilisi and Kartli with his troops which numbered twelve thousand, causing great distress to the country, not because of any malicious intent, but due to forcible extortion. He came to Samtskhe quietly and stationed his troops in Ats'q'uri. Sargis learned of his arrival, and came to him with his son Beka. Arghun was surprised at seeing both together, and took Sargis with him to the Horde; he left Beka at Samtskhe, for it was the fifth week of the Holy
20 Fast. Leaving Samtskhe they came to Somkhiti.

Holy Week came, and on Great Wednesday the earth shook severely because of our unbelieving souls. On Thursday the ground shook again, though less strongly, but nobody understood why God the merciful got angry. Saturday came and at three o'clock in the afternoon – the next day being assigned for celebrations on the occasion of God's Resurrection of which everybody lived in joyful
25 expectation – God looked on the earth with anger because of our iniquities, and the earth shuddered right down to its foundations. It shook so that chapels crashed down and monasteries, churches, fortresses and houses, and buildings, all collapsed; mountains and hills crumbled, and rocks turned into dust. The ground opened wide and black streams of fluid resembling tar gushed out; high trees tumbled down and swayed with the shaking of the world; and down came the church of Ats'q'uri, and because Ats'q'uri Holy Mother of God stood in the middle of the church, its dome just covered
30 Her like a cap, leaving Her intact due to the powers she possessed. The church of Mtskheta also collapsed, and people without number perished in Samtskhe; and there were no more churches, chapels or fortresses anywhere, and everywhere groaning was heard and there was immeasurable sorrow.

35 Arghun-Agha lived with the Khan, but he had some illness of which he died. Learning of this, his son came to the Royal Court, leaving his spouse in Tbilisi. The King's sister, Tamar, ran away into the mountains, for she hated her husband as he was faithless and a heathen. Then Sadun, learning that the King's sister did not want Arghun's son as her husband, bargained for her with Khan Abagha. The latter, yielding, sold her. The King gave his sister to Sadun. Sadun behaved

improperly, for she was his third wife. This angered Katholicos Nik'oloz, a just elder. But he could do nothing against Sadun's power, though he censured him strongly.

At this time, for some reason, Sargis and his son, Beka, drifted away from the Tatars. Sargis was aging, weak because of a sickness affecting his legs. Arukha's brother, Tual, was sent to Samtskhe by *noin* Bugha, with the object of ravaging the region. Arukha himself came with an army of twenty thousand men. But Beka evaded him, retreating into the mountains, located between Guria and Ach'ara. The Meskhis hid themselves in the caves and forests. The troops crossed Samtskhe, inflicting no damage on it. After twenty days there, they departed, leaving the country in peace. 5

As the year passed, Abagha decided to invade Egypt and impose a tribute on it. He called all his people and King Dimit'ri with his troops, to wage war against Nasir Melik, the new Sultan of Egypt, who had replaced the late Punduk'adar. Abagha summoned his younger brother and assigned him as commander, and gave him his whole army. He ordered him to go and wage war on the Sultan. Mangu-Demur summoned the *mtavari* of Samtskhe, Beka, demanding he go with him, but Beka answered: "Because of the slanders of my enemies, your brother Abagha is angry with me and sent Arukha against me and ravaged my country. Though I have escaped the troubles because of my innocence, I still fear the Khan; so you must convince me by taking an oath, that the Khan will peacefully protect my country and my estates. Then I will appear before you with my army." 10 15

Hearing this, Mangu-Demur rejoiced and took the oath, drinking the golden water, proving his firmness, and presented Beka with the seal ring from his finger, because that was considered a sign of a firm oath. The envoy informed Beka of all this, and Beka quickly called all the Meskhis and appeared before Mangu-Demur. Mangu-Demur was very glad and rendered him homage, and presented him to Abagha, who also showed him much honor and love, for his kindness. 20

They set out for Misr. They travelled many days and reached a town, which was called Darbuzak'. Its citizens came out, and a battle took place, in which Beka and the Meskhis, who were at his side, toiled harder than any other group. The Tatars and Georgians stormed into the town, and the Meskhis pressed forward most of all. And after the heat of battle had subsided, Mangu-Demur honored Beka with robes and wonderful horses, not forgetting Beka's nobles and *aznauris*. 25

They set out for Egypt and approached the towns of Amasi and Amo, and set up a camp by them. Sultan Nasir Melik learned of the appearance of the Tatars and came at once with all his forces. As soon as Mangu-Demur saw the Sultan and his army, he made preparations for a fight and moved forward. King Dimit'ri, though not quite prepared due to his youth to do battle, implored Mangu-Demur to assign him and his troops the front lines. The request was satisfied. The battle commenced, fierce and forceful, the greatest that had ever happened. And knowing of the courage and invincibility of the King and his army, the Sultan himself took command of twelve thousand choice horsemen and assigned them two brave commanders, in order that if the battle increased in strength, he would overcome the enemy and force the Georgians to retreat. The battle started and many people fell on both sides. Then Q'ara-Sunghur and Iaq'ub Aprash with twelve thousand select horsemen rushed at the King. And so atrocious was the fight that all of the two hundred soldiers, picked out by the King, were slain, the exception being the King and three horsemen. The King's horse fell, struck by the spear of Q'ara-Sunghur, and seeing this, the Georgians intensified the 30 35 40

fight, and most of the Egyptians were destroyed, and the King, whose horse was killed under him, continued to fight powerfully. Seeing the King fighting on foot, Abash, Sikdur's son, gave him his own horse. As the Georgians caught sight of their King on horseback again, they took heart and put to flight Q'ara-Sunghur and Iaq'ub with all twelve thousand of his people. But before that the *noins* and the Tatars had fled, Mangu-Demur himself with all his troops turned back. The exhausted Georgians also retreated. By Divine Providence, the King was spared, though most of the Georgians were slain. And Mangu-Demur and the King came before Abagha.

Abagha being on a hunt, and waiting for the news of the battle, met on his way a fugitive Tatar. The Tatar recounted in his own language the stories of their commanders in sweet verses. Of Alinaq', he said: "He attacked like a falcon in the sky." He compared Mangu-Demur with a battering ram, Ebagan, Sirmon's son – with a rushing tiger, Ias-Bugha – with a bull, Bugha – with a buffalo, and Tigna – with a she-goat. And of the Georgian King he said in his language the following: "Tengri metu kaurkurba, bughar metu builghaji," which means: "He thundered about like God, and raged like a camel."

And when the Georgians appeared before the Khan, he honored the King and sent him home. Then Abagha decided to start a campaign to avenge the Sultan. His brother, Mangu-Demur, died, and a little later *atabag* Sadun died, and the King granted his estates to his son Khut'lubugha and raised him to the rank of *sp'asp'et'*.

And in a short time Abagha, too, died, and Abagha's brother Ahmad, who had no proper talents for governing, was made the Khan of *noins*. Then the King set out for the Horde to present himself to Ahmad; and Ahmad welcomed him and paid him proper respect. During his stay there the King married his daughter Rusudan to the son of the great Bugha, which greatly angered Katholikos Nik'oloz, who severely censured him and promised ample and just punishment on the Lord's part. For at the time of Dimit'ri's sojourn there, Khan Ahmad committed an evil deed, ordering to put to death his brother Q'onghard, whom he brought from Greece. Two brothers, sons of Abulet, who some time before that fled from Sadun were executed together with Q'onghard. Khut'lubugha, son of Sadun, killed them.

37. King Dimit'ri, a kind ruler till that time, adorned by the royal scepter, merciful and just, who cared about monks and churches, a careful governor for all the ranks, religious as well as humanitarian, deviated from the path of perfection, mixing with the heathen and acquiring their practices. Seized by insatiable desire and voluptuousness, and following the fancies of his heart he took three wives: one – the daughter of Beka, and (two) others. Like Solomon, he was seduced by women, and once full of virtue, he turned to evil. And Katholikos Nik'oloz edified, reprimanded and raged at him time and again, but could not persuade him. So he resigned from the rank of Katholikos, and blessed as Katholikos the King's best man at his wedding, Abraham. The old man retreated to his estate, and lived there in toiling and fasting and devoting himself to night vigils and prayers for the poor.

The monk Basil came at this time from the Holy Mountain; he was the uncle of Katholikos Euphemius, who led a God-pleasing life and was blessed with the gift of foretelling. Standing before King Dimit'ri with the revelation of the Holy Mother of God, he, like an apostle, passionately

denounced him, attacking his lawless marriages, and educated him about holiness, reminding him that we all dwell in God's temple, and how necessary it is to stay pure, and that Dimit'ri brought adultery into God's immaculate temple; and he talked of acquisition by wretched of priceless pearls, of praying, fasting, of the necessity to show mercy to poor, of charity and generosity, incompatible with flows of muck and marches of filth. He instructed him as follows: "If you renounce your impious marriage, I will vouch for your succeeding with your gentle reign." And he exhorted the nobles, condemning their impiety, and denounced many, for he knew of their secret passions. This blissful monk shone with such virtues. And because he failed to convince the King, who ignored his words, he came before him and his nobles: "If I express it in my own way, like a false prophet seducing a pilgrim, who is sent by Rehoboam, the son of Naboth(ians), and not by the Holy Mother of God, you can take me for one that is versed in a false faith. But I am sent here by the Holy Mother of God to instruct you, before your deeds, your prayers and your steps become foul, and if you do not reject your dissolute marriages, or if you ignore my words, you will perish cruelly and ingloriously at the hands of a tyrant, and you will be deprived of your kingdom, and your children will be dissipated, and another man will seize your kingdom, and your treasures will be plundered. Lo! I take my leave." The King, astonished, did not answer him, for he was respectful of holy people.

In those days P'imen Salos stood out; he had retreated from Gareji and settled in one of the caves in Belakani. He converted to Christianity some heathen tribes of Leks, who now live by the Christian faith.⁵⁰ Together with him the great zealot Anton Naokhrebilis-dze, a Meskhi by birth, was outstanding.

But now let us return to Ahmad. On the order of Ahmad, his brother, Kongard, was murdered. The *noins*, sitting in Khorasan, having seen such lawlessness, renounced Ahmad and made Arghun the son of Khan Abagha, the new Khan. Learning of this Ahmad called his army and summoned the King with his troops to accompany him to Khorasan to wage war with Khan Arghun. And the King took all his forces with him, along with *mandat'urtukhutsesi* Ivane, son of Shanshe, and *amirsp'asalar* Khut'lubugha, Sadun's son. And they set out and crossed Iraq and entered into the domain of Arghun. Seeing the numerical strength of the invading army, Arghun did not dare offer resistance, but fled and took refuge in the fortress that is called Kalas, to which Khan Abagha laid siege, rounding it from behind. Feeling helpless, Arghun begged Ahmad not to blame him and spare him, and take an oath of not harming him in any way, so that he could appear before him. And Ahmad listened to him, and assured him by taking an oath, for Ahmad had adopted the faith of Persians. And Arghun left the fortress and came before his uncle, and they made peace with each other. But when they went through Khorasan, there were some bands of lawless and mischievous people, the enemies of Christians, who murdered Christians as a positive deed, for such was the teaching of the godless Mohammed, who inscribed the evil words in the Koran: "If you kill a Christian, you will achieve Paradise, and if you are killed by them, you will still reach there." That is why that godless band was formed, and wherever they found Georgians, alone or in small numbers, they would murder them.

The son of Beka of Surami – Rat'i, learned of this and being a fine young man, set out with sixty men and discovered a band of about three hundred men in the mountains. He fell upon them and a fierce fight took place. In the very first clash, they put them to flight, and most of them were slain;

others he brought to the King, for which the King honored him and presented him with many gifts. They departed and reached Here and Q'azvin. The Khan was grateful to the King for his participation in the Khorasan campaign and showed him great honor and gave him all the Georgian *mtavaris*. The Khan departed for home and appeared victorious before his spouse. He took the King with him, but
5 his nephew, Arghun, he left in Here, and all the *noins* he left with Arghun; and he told Alinaq' and the other *noins* to wait a little and then kill Arghun. The *noins* remained with Arghun, and the great Bugha and Ias-Bugha of the Iorad family decided to make Arghun, son of Abagha, Khan, and to kill Ahmad. And so they did. Quickly coming in the night they brought out Alinaq', sleeping in the tent, and killed him. And at daybreak they declared Arghun the Khan and set out in pursuit of Ahmad. He
10 came in his Horde to Uzhan, where they caught him and strangled him with prayer ropes.

38. They told King Dimit'ri to break with Ahmad, and the King followed this advice and appeared before Khan Arghun. Arghun gratefully welcomed him and granted him his whole kingdom and the house of *atabag* Avag, which was owned by Sahib-Divan, for the Khan was in the hands of Bugha, and Bugha was the King's friend and relative. He came home victorious and in peace, and he sent
15 his son, the younger David, to the *atabag's* house, to be educated and prepared for his princely status. So day by day, his kingdom became stronger, and Katholicos Abraham kept in his hands the helm of the Catholic Church, for he was an excellent man who accomplished good deeds and cared well for the affairs of the kingdom.

King Dimit'ri had children from his Queen, the daughter of the Emperor of Trabzon: the first born
20 was David, then came Vakht'ang, Lasha and Manovel, and a daughter, Rusudan; and from the Tatar woman – two sons: Baidu, Iadgar and a daughter, Jigda. Beka's daughter, Natel, gave birth to her only son Giorgi, who became king after his brothers and who exceeded in greatness all the Kings that followed him, because he was the only son of his mother. It is said that solitude adorns a pearl, so Giorgi achieved superiority over all the men of his time, not only over the kings, but other people
25 in general. Dimit'ri acquired great riches, surpassing those that he received from his father, and he served Khan Arghun, for he was seconded by the great *noin* Bugha, to whom the Khan granted the honor of being Chingizid, which for them is the greatest of all honors.

The Darubandians⁵¹ broke with the Khan, and the Khan advanced against Daruband and summoned King Dimit'ri, who set out with him. Together they entered Daruband. And the Darubandians
30 could not stand their ground and fled to the acropolis of their fortress, which they called Aniq'.⁵² The attackers surrounded them, but inflicting no harm. Then Khan Arghun ordered the King to give them battle, because he was rather strong. Arming themselves, the King and his troops surrounded the fortress and stormed it, and Rat'i, Bugha's son, breached it before the others. They seized the fortress, slew their chiefs, captured the citizens, seized treasures and their goods, and burned down
35 the fortress. The Khan saw all this. He felt animosity towards the King. He ordered him to give him (some) precious chain and the King gave it to him at once, and they parted for home.

The time passed, and at the coming of the new year, which they call *urdsing* in Tatar, and which falls on the fifteenth March, the Khan sent the *noins* to capture Bugha, and they took him prisoner, seized all his treasures and presented him before the Khan, who ordered to put him and his son to
40 death without any further investigation. They executed Bugha and his entire household. The Khan

sent many people everywhere – to Greece, Sham and Khorasan, and killed many grand *noins*. There was execution and destruction of the *noins* everywhere.

The Khan sent an envoy to summon the King, and the King visited the Horde. Learning of the execution of Bugha, the King grieved immensely. And he called for Katholicos Abraham and the bishops, priests and monks of the deserts of Gareji and all the chiefs of his kingdom. They gathered before him; he sat on the throne and they took their seats. The King opened his lips and said: “Listen to me Katholicos and officials of my Kingdom. When my father passed away, I was a little boy; it was the time of the Tatars’ dominance. But the Lord Almighty, our Master Jesus Christ and the Holy Mother of God, whose lot we are, and who granted us the Cross of Honor, protected me and brought me to a mature age and granted me my reign, and the scepter and porphyry. With your help, I am ruling now. But now the Khan is enraged, he destroyed all his chiefs and now calls me to him. Knowing of his atrocities, I am inclined to refuse to go to the Horde, and instead hide in the mountains and strongholds to save my life. But my whole kingdom lies defenseless before him. Look, how many Christian lives will be destroyed and taken captive, and the churches defiled and ravaged, and the icons destroyed and crosses pulled down. But if I go to the Khan, then, I am perfectly sure he will kill me. And now consider this affair with your wisdom. Now what I think: varied is our life and troubling, changeable and temporal, our days will disappear like dreams and ghosts, and our departure from this world is certain and pressing. What is the use of my life, if many lives will perish because of me, and I will leave this world loaded with sins. I am willing to appear before the Khan, and let everything be according to the will of God. If they put me to death, the country will escape disaster.”

Hearing this, the Katholicos and the bishops, the spiritual fathers and nobles wondered at the King, who was prepared to sacrifice his life for his people and gave him the following answer: “Our King! Nobody can replace you. The Lord will not allow the Tatars to kill you. The country will be ruined and your children dispersed. And if the country remains, who will replace you? Our advice to you is to go to the strongholds of Mtiuleti, or Abkhazia, as did your father; there is no reason for you to sacrifice yourself. We are all firmly in accord about that.”⁵³

Hearing this, the King said: “You are saying that, because of your fidelity and love for me, but I feel sorry for the innocent people, doomed to be killed like sheep, and there will be no comfort for them. I will give my life for my people, and I will accept this demand to go to the Horde”. Then they started up in amazement, and Katholicos Abraham said: “It is not right, oh King, to sacrifice your life, for many kings happened to escape and defend themselves. But now, if you will give up your life for your people, we, all of us, the bishops, will take on your sins upon ourselves, and we will testify before the Lord to canonize you, as the Sovereign Lord says in the Gospel: “There is no love for a man greater than to give up his life for his neighbor.” And if it is good to sacrifice your life for one of your neighbors, then how much more good is in saving innumerable lives.”

39. Hearing the Katholicos’ words, the King rejoiced and decided to go to the Horde in great glory and with treasures; he was accompanied by Katholicos Abraham. He appointed places of residence for his children. And all the *mtavaris*, who did not accompany him, he entrusted with the care of his children, and sent some of them to Mtiuleti, and others – to K’akheti. He sent his

youngest son, Giorgi, to T'ao, to Ishkhani fortress, in Asp'aresheni, and departed for the Horde. As he entered the lands of Khuashak, which belonged to the Avag's daughter, he was met by his son David, whom he took with him, so as to disperse the doubts of the Khan and convince him of his good disposition towards him.

5 They approached the Horde. But the Khan thought that the King would not come to him, so he sent one *noin*, by the name of Tukul, the son of Ias-Bugha, to bring him the King. And he met the King on his way (to the Horde), took away from him all his things and belongings, seized the King and presented him to Khan Arghun. And the Khan put him in prison. The Khan thought that if he destroyed the King, there would be nobody worthy to reign, but how could he let the supporter and
10 co-plotter against Bugha to go free.

But Khut'lubugha told him: "Do not worry about that, for I will bring you the son of the King of the Abkhazians, by name of Vakht'ang; grant him the kingdom and both kingdoms will be under your dominion." The Khan listened favorably to these words and sent Khut'lubugha in Imereti to King David and promised to grant his son Vakht'ang the throne, and his sister, Oljat, as spouse.

15 When Khut'lubugha set out for Imereti, they ordered King Dimit'ri to make an inventory of all his riches, his storerooms, cattle and sheep and all his possessions. For the King and his *mtavaris* were imprisoned, and only Catolicos Abraham remained free. He had to obey, and he counted everything he had, all his plentiful possessions. The Khan sent a man who took everything, leaving nothing; the townsfolk knew of his treasures and they betrayed him, but they say that the son of Khoja-Aziz,
20 whose father was executed by King David, had a hand in it; that he and Khut'lubugha conspired together against the King and brought to the Khan all the King's treasury. The Khan wondered, and his anger subsided a little, and he began to think of doing no harm to him. Seeing this, the King's viziers said to him: "So, now your fate is in your own hands. In the night they will bring you some fast horses, go, flee from him, for there is no substitute for your soul." And the King said: "Look, from
25 the very beginning I thought of my death, and I laid my life and my soul down for my people. But if I escape now, innocent people will perish. What is the use for me in gaining the whole world and losing my soul by doing so." And he did not heed the advice of his *mtavaris*.

Khut'lubugha returned from Likht-Imerethi, and reported to the Khan: "King David will send you his son and his Abkhazian army at your service." Hearing this, the Khan ordered King Dimit'ri to
30 be taken into custody, and two days later they seized the King and, separately, his son, the boy David. He was accompanied by the hieromonk Mose, who was brought with him. They beat the King with a stick, and everybody thought that he would not be executed, because it was the Khan's custom, that if a person was beaten with a stick, he would not be put to death. However his heart was not assuaged. They dragged the King to the house of trial, which they called a *divankhan* and
35 questioned him, as to whether he was aware of the intentions of Bugha Chingishan, but found no fault. A certain *noin* called T'oghan came before the Khan with the request not to execute the King, but the Khan did not heed his request. And then twelve horsemen of the Khan's came in order to take Dimit'ri and put him to death. The King realized everything, though he joyfully greeted the Georgian *mtavaris*, for all of them came to encourage the King, and Khut'lubugha was also there.
40 And the King told him: "Intercede for me with the Khan if you can, before my death. If you have no

desire to do this, then at least take care of my son, little David, so that they will not kill him while the Khan's heart is full of wrath. He and all the *mtavaris* began to weep and went out. The King prayed and received communion, partaking of the blood and flesh of our Master Jesus Christ. And they seated him on the horse and took him off at a mile's distance from there. And he asked the villains to allow him to pray a little. And he prayed in tears that were streaming on the ground; and then he bowed his head. And that was the awful day, the day of disaster, how could these reprobates allow themselves to do such thing to the anointed sovereign. They cut off his head. 5

But the glory of God descended upon His anointed servant, for the sun thoroughly darkened its disc and a great darkness covered the earth, and astonished all the heathens. It was ten o'clock and the earth remained in dark till the evening, as (it happened) for the Lord that suffered for the life of this world, so for this blessed King, who was a martyr for Georgia, in order that people could see that glorious are those, anointed by God. It was the third Saturday of the Holy Fast, the twelfth day of the month that Hebrews call *nisan*, and we call March. 10

And they satisfied the grudge in their hearts, but the wrath continued to kindle in them, for they seized the boy David and brought him to *noin* T'oghachar, who was the commander of the army. That night, the night of heavy hearts, they brought the boy David in the tent to murder him, but that did not happen. At daybreak the priest Mose, who never parted with David for all this time, walked out secretly and coming to T'oghachar said to him: "They are going to put David to death." And T'oghachar rushed to the Khan and told him of the innocence of David: "Why do you need the death of a sinless boy? Grant him to me." The Khan listened to him and gave him David; and he took him to his house and entrusted him to his *khoja*, who later became *sahib-divan*. 15 20

And they guarded for many days the honorable remains of King Dimit'ri so as not to allow the Georgians to take them. And the prediction of Basil Mtats'mindeli was fulfilled. There were many Georgian nobles there, but nobody dared to steal the King's remains. Then the Katholikos and Mose hired some people, Mose himself guiding them; they stole the remains in the night. Then, by the will of God, some people from Tbilisi appeared, who carried fish; and with the fish they took also the King's remains, and brought them to Mtskheta and buried them there in their burial place. 25

And while all these events were taking place, *noin* T'oghachar securely guarded David, son of Dimit'ri, and the Queen, and the other wives of the King, remained hidden. Sorghal went to his father's house in Tataria and Beka's daughter retreated with her father to Samtskhe; Vakht'ang stayed in Mtiuleti. The Khan gave the Queen Skoretiskhevi in allowance, and left her two little sons, Manovel and Lasha, with her. And her two sons, Baidu and Iadgar, went with Sorghal to her parental house. The country remained kingless. 30

The Khan called Khut'lubugha and told him: "So, I have exterminated all my enemies, as well as your enemy, Dimit'ri, and now there is no king in Georgia. Keep your word, bring me the son of the King of the Abkhazians and let him be the King. I will grant you the whole of Georgia and govern it according to your own judgment."⁵⁴ Khut'lubugha appeared before King David. And as soon as King David beheld Khut'lubugha, he called his army and taking with him his son Vakht'ang, hurried to meet him. They came to T'asisk'ari, in the field of Kvishkheti. The son of *noin* Sirmon, Q'orchibal, and Q'urumchi, son of Alinaq', who was in the mountains of Javakheti, situated between Art'ani and 40

Samtskhe, were there too, and they summoned all the nobles of Georgia and took an oath of fidelity. And the King gave over his son and brought many of his *tavadis* to accompany him. They departed, in haste, and King David retreated to Kutaisi. They appeared before Khan Arghun. Seeing Vakht'ang, the Khan felt a fondness for him because of his goodness, for he had a perfect body and beautiful face, was graceful, merciful, a good adviser, and versed in all affairs. To this Vakht'ang he granted the entire Georgian kingdom and gave his own sister Oljat, as a wife; and they came to Tbilisi.

VI

40. And the Katholikos, bishops and *mtavaris* gathered together and placed the king's crown on his head, enthroned him and performed a rite of blessing. And he took possession of the whole of Georgia from Nik'opsia to Daruband, with the exception of the estates of Beka Jaq'eli from Tsikhisjvari; and the whole population of Georgia rejoiced at having for their ruler an honorable man of the King's family, godly, a righteous judge, stately and brave, and gifted with an exceptional military disposition. He honored Khut'lubugha with both the ranks of *atabag* and *amirsp'asalar*, and the right to govern the kingdom.

David remained in Tataria, with *noin* T'oghachar, in trouble and under pressure; the Queen, his mother, remained in Skoreti, and the other brothers had dispersed all over the country. His youngest brother, Giorgi, whose mother was Beka's daughter, was brought up by his grandfather, Beka, and he was as a result better than any other man, to which the following bears witness.

After two years passed, a terrible disease struck Khan Arghun; all his members withered away and his flesh began to putrefy, his bones crumbled and his body rotted; his appearance was loathsome and horrid and he looked almost dead. Being sick, Arghun wished to see Khut'lubugha in order to make David and his successors kings; he demanded the *noins* to deprive Vakht'ang of the kingdom. T'oghachar helped David, and one Ovsetian prince by the name of Parejan assisted him eagerly. An assembly was called on the question as to who should reign. Some of the Georgian nobles did not want David to rule, for they were firmly devoted to Vakht'ang. So they did not give David the kingdom, though they granted him some villages and lands.

And because the Heavenly wrath that fell upon Arghun's head and the disease lasted for four months, rotting from head to foot he annoyed the *noins*. Colluding, they fell upon Arghun and strangled him in his own tent at the same time and on the same day – the twelfth of March – that the worthy and blessed martyr Dimit'ri, anointed by the Lord, was executed. A miracle happened; the evil disease struck Arghun, because so much innocent blood had been spilt by him, and he had dared to lift his hand against God's Vicar.

Arghun died, and all his associates, who were his accomplices in the murder of the King, were exterminated. And now the power passed to David, and the *noins* were on his side. But Vakht'ang also possessed the kingdom firmly.

The *noins* enthroned Khan Keghatu-Koun, Arghun's brother, and entrusted him with the Khandom. He became fond of Vakht'ang, for he believed that because of him Arghun had become a victim of some cruel wrath. While all this was taking place King Vakht'ang caught some trifling illness, and he took to bed and passed away after only three years of his reign, which was filled and adorned with godly and humanistic deeds, for he had a kind and wise tutor – Parsman's son. Learning of Vakht'ang's fate, David was upset, for he was a kind young man, and he mourned him according to the existing custom; he rendered him due homage and sent him to Gelati and buried him in the royal burial place. When King David, his father, learned of the death of his cherished son Vakht'ang, who was loved by everybody, he was seized by unfathomable pain and grief. The sorrow took possession of him so deeply that he could not find joy in anything, and several years later he too passed away, after a long and honest life. He left three sons: his firstborn, Constantine, the second Michael, and the youngest, Alexander, who was borne by the Queen, the daughter of the great Palaiologos, who commanded Constantinople and Greece. The kingdom was taken by Constantine by the right of seniority, but his accession was opposed by his brother Michael, who seized the lands of Rach'a and Argveti. The kingdom was falling apart and there was no peace in the country until they died, for every time they made a truce, they broke it instantly. 5 10 15

41. We now return to the subject of rebels. As soon as Keghatu ascended the throne, the town of T'unghuzalo abandoned his protection. Because Keghatu left Greece, they assumed that the Khan had no time for them and defected from him. The Khan summoned his army, and David, son of Dimit'ri, and the *mtavaris* of Kartli, and entrusted *noin* Sikdur with his throne, wife and concubines. Khut'lubugha and other nobles of Georgia he placed in Mughan, for he was afraid of an invasion by Berka's army. Then he departed, taking with him David, son of Dimit'ri. Reaching T'unghuzalo town, they laid siege to it for four months, but inflicted no harm upon it. On the fifth month, they started decisive actions. David and a small number of Georgians seized the town and entered it. In one of the side streets they were accosted by Christians, who entreated David to have mercy on them and asked for protection from the Khan. David listened to them and assigned them guards, and protected them, and after taking *kharaj* and innumerable valuables, he returned. 20 25

During Parejan's sojourn there, the Ovses started to ravage, destroy and imprison the people of Kartli. They seized the town of Gori. Then all the Kartlians gathered before Hamada, son of Beka, the *eristavi* of Kartli, and laid siege to Gori. There were many battles inside the town, and many died, the Ovses as well as the Kartlians, and they burned the town to the ground. When it became quite unbearable, the defenders let down a man from the wall by rope and sent him to the Tatars, who were stationed in Mukhrani and asked for help. The Tatars came as mediators and established peace. And so began the enmity between Kartllans and Ovses until the brilliant among the kings, the great and glorious Giorgi, drove the Ovses away and destroyed them.⁵⁵ As they returned back, the Khan called for David and told him: "Because you have put your life in my service and faithfully stay by my side, I grant you your kingdom and the right to reign over it." And he sent him to Tbilisi and seated him on the throne of his father. He assigned the Georgian army to accompany him, including Shanshe and Khut'lubugha and all the other nobles. He summoned Beka from Samtskhe, but Beka did not want to come, for he had advanced (in his career) and did not appear eagerly neither 30 35 40

before the Khan, nor before the King. He sent to him his firstborn son, Sargis, the *amirsp'asalar* of Samtskhe, and all the treasures which King Dimit'ri had entrusted him upon an oath, including the precious belt. Sargis came and delivered to him everything in full. They enthroned the King and Catholicos Abraham and the bishops blessed him.

5 And the Khan gave him (as wife) his sister Oljat, who had been married to Vakht'ang. David took possession of the whole kingdom of his father Dimit'ri, with the exception of Samtskhe – Beka's estates. But Beka kept King David in respect, sending him many gifts and presents. David spent most of his time at the treasury. Though the *mtavari* of the Ovses, Parejan, served the King faithfully, there was enmity between the Kartlians and the Ovses; they were so uncompromising that each did
10 not miss the opportunity to kill the other. Once the Ovses went to trade in the town, and on their way back they met a beggar. Giving him alms, two Ovses, Satkhiz and Uzurbeg, said to him: "Poor man, pray to God that today we will have an opportunity to cross our swords with Beka of Surami." Then walking a little further they met Rat'i, unarmed, with a small group of attendants, accompanying him on his hunt. The Ovses fell on him; he put out his shield and standing in the narrow pass of the river
15 brought down, his sword on the Ovse's helmet, split it and killed the Ovse dead. Then it was the turn of Uzurbeg, but Rat'i thrust his sword in his side, which was covered with chain mail, ripped it open and brought him down, and his servants finished him off. Seeing this, the other Ovses took flight. And so says the Prophet: "God destroys arrogant people;" others say: "Let God destroy insidious lips and malevolent tongues."

20 Tukul's herald appeared before King David. David came to see Tukul, who was camped in the mountains of Ararat. Seeing King David, Tukul felt respect and fondness for him. And he expressed his wish by taking oaths to establish a loving union between them. After establishing unity, the King returned home and rendered up Dmanisi, which was owned by Khut'lubugha, brother of Mangasar.

42. After some time the *noins* left, fleeing from Tukul, and among them Navroz, son of the
25 great Arghun, who was manly, strong, stately, active and, above all, fearless, and Q'urumchi, son of Alinaq', whose brother, Bugha, was killed by Tukul. They came to Khorasan to koun Q'azan, son of Arghun, who owned Khorasan from his father's side. They all gathered together and set out to battle with Baidu. But learning of the intent of Q'azan, Baidu called his troops, and Tukul, and not waiting for King David, they swiftly set out. And here again God protected David, for nothing happened to
30 him. The armies closed in with one other by the small town of Zangan, face to face, and were equal in their success; they overran each other and then separated. Q'azan was not with them, having sent Navroz and Khut'lush. Navroz was caught, and Jalair gave fierce battle. Q'azan left Khorasan.

Navroz implored Tukul to set him free, swearing that he would deliver Q'azan to him bound. Tukul believed him and let him go. And when he returned to Q'azan, he tied up a copper kettle and
35 sent it to Tukul, for in Turkish a kettle is called "q'azan." The kettle arrived tied up with ropes. Tukul wondered, and grieved, for he had already reached the mountains of Ararat.

Q'azan advanced secretly with a larger army and attacked Baidu in Uzhan, and they caught him. He was brought to Q'azan and strangled, and many *noins* as well. And here, too, the Lord protected King David. Learning of the death of Khan Baidu, Tukul fled and came to Samtskhe to Beka, who
40 reigned from T'asisk'ari to K'arnukalaki. And he sent his son to King David, entrusting him with the

King. And as Q'azan entered Adarbadagan, which is Tavrezh, he sent more than once an envoy to King David and Beka, asking them to deliver Tukul and his son to him. However, they did not do it, but applied all their efforts to ensure that Q'azan would forgive them. Q'azan gave his word and guaranteed their safety, and they gave up Tukul. Learning of the departure of Tukul to the Horde, Q'urumchi appeared before Q'azan's envoy in Nakhiduri, took Tukul away and killed him, in revenge for the execution of his brother Bugha. King David handed over his son to him and many treasures with which he graciously entrusted the Ovsetian *mtavari*, Parejan, and which were kept in At'eni fortress. Khan Q'azan was grateful to him for that but the King did not dare to go to the Horde, for Navroz, son of Arghun-Agha was the enemy of Christians in general; he invited those who wanted to reject their faith and converted them to the Muslim faith without informing Khan Q'azan. But he was weakened by this malice and died maliciously because of it, which the following words testify to.

Navroz had been raised high and ruled without any reference to the Khan; he was an enemy to Christians, preparing himself to destroy them thoroughly and demolish their churches in Tavrezh and all the other towns. And he brought to him the bishop of the town of Maragha, Nasrani by origin and faith, who was a merciful and fine-looking man, respected by the first Khans and given the nickname "Father." He was seized and subjected to much beating and all kinds of abuses, and persuaded to give up his faith. But he resisted and endured the insults of Mohammed and the faith preached by him. And he was subjected to punishment by exorie, for he was very old.

Added to this was another evil: Navroz sent a rascal from his tribe to devastate the churches all over Georgia; first to ravage the dwelling place of Vardzia Holy Mother of God, and to take away all he could find in Georgia. He expected to find in Vardzia countless treasures, gold and silver, precious stones and a multitude of pearls. Reaching Nakhchevan, he began pillaging and destroying churches. But the wrath of the Vardzian Mother of God fell upon him. As he came to outrage the Vardzian Holy Mother of God and pull down the Precious Cross, he was struck by thunder and lightning, which incinerated him so that he was burned to ashes including his bones. And so the Vardzian Mother of God, and the place of her dwelling, was miraculously protected.

The wrath of God fell upon Navroz's head, for Khan Q'azan became angry with him for his iniquitous and malicious deeds. The Khan was a rather virtuous man without malice; he was a law giver, more so than any other Khan before him, to the extent that he ordered that a chain be hung on two poles covered with rattles, so that the wretched and infirm, and those not favored with an appearance before the Khan, including *noins* coming to see him, all shook the poles and the chain, and the Khan hearing the sound of the rattles would remember how unfortunate those wretched and despicable people were; he judged them himself face to face. He loved justice so much that there was no lawlessness or injustice for the poor in his days. That is why the damned Navroz fled to Khorasan. He was pursued by Khan Khut'lusha, who overtook him and ordered to kill him, along with his son, and all his kin. And his memory was wiped from the earth; as it is written: "Let the ungodly man perish, so that he shall not see the glory of God." And his memory vanished and this calmed the Tatars. Khan Q'azan began to govern the country fairly and with a kind heart.

Khan Q'azan sent a messenger to King David calling him to his side.⁵⁶ Hurriedly preparing himself David advanced to K'akheti and Hereti. The nobles and *aznauris* of Er-K'akhi appeared

before King David, as well as *eristavi* Samadavla, a man gifted with all kinds of military virtues and a chosen archer, like the Jew Mosomakhos, or the chosen Neop't'olemeos P'ighas, glorious tutor of the Myrmidons. The King remained in Hereti for a little time consulting with the viziers: "Should I go to the Horde or not?" The viziers advised him to go, but the King would not listen to them and left, for he feared to meet the Khan. Then he went to Mtiuleti and, retreating to Zhinovani, erected fortifications and deployed defenders there.

43. King David stayed in Mtiuleti and sent his younger brother Vakht'ang as an envoy to the grandson of the great Khan Bato, and promised to show the way to the Khan; and the Khan welcomed him kindly and promised him estates and much riches. As soon as the Khan had learned of David's apostasy he sent against him his chief commander Khut'lusha, who was called Beglarbeg, with a great army. They came before Tbilisi. They sent an envoy to King David and asked for reliable and trustworthy people, and proposed a peace agreement, ensuring David's loyalty to Q'azan, and no siding with his enemies. David sent Katholicos Abraham, Ivane of Bursa, and Q'adi of Tbilisi, asked for hostages, and promised to take an oath. They swore according to their faith and gave as hostages Khut'lusha's son Sibuch, the brother of Q'urumchi – Arpa and the children of other *noins*. And they gave him also the Khan's seal and guarantee of his security. He went to see them and promised to go to the Horde. Khut'lusha welcomed him kindly and reconciled with him. Then David returned home, gave the hostages gifts and let them go.

When the spring came, King David was summoned to the Horde, but being afraid, he did not go. He sent his brother Baidu to Khan Tokhta. Learning of this, Khan Q'azan again sent his chief commander Khut'lusha with a massive army. They came to Somkhiti and addressed the King, proposing him to appear before them and promising many gifts. And again David sent the Katholicos Abraham, Qadi of Tbilisi and Ivane of Bursa, promising to come later in person. Realizing that he was just gaining time, the Tatars caught Ivane of Bursa and killed him, but let the Katholicos and Qadi go. They began preparing for an invasion of Mtiuleti. They ravaged Somkhiti, Kartli, Trialeti, Erts'o and camped in Mukhrani, Kherk'i, Bazaleti, Erts'o and Tianeti, and there was no place large enough for their camp; they plundered Kartli and all the other lands. They took numberless captives, and put to sword every man they could find; the country was given to destruction because of our sins.

The same year an evil star appeared in the North, spear-shaped, and hung there for about four months; every night this star was visible and they said: "It is an omen of destruction by spear."

The Tatars again proposed a peace agreement with the King and sent an envoy to him with the proposal for him to take an oath of loyalty to the Khan, and not to allow passage to the great Khan Tokhta, Bato's grandson; if he agreed, they would let him remain and defend his Kingdom. They swore on this and assured each other, and David sent his mother, the Queen, and his younger brother, Manovel, and Katholicos Abraham and the Queen, the King's spouse, Oljat, to settle all his affairs. Again peace came to the country.

As the winter passed and the spring came, they sent a messenger to the King, to learn whether he remained faithful to the Khan. The messenger found out that David had sent Baidu to Khan Tokhta and had given him passage. The messenger informed the Khan. Angered, the Khan sent Q'urumchi

and Erinj from his house, along with Shanshe Mkhargrdzeli, against David. They appealed to David's younger brother, Giorgi, to whom Beka's daughter had given birth. Giorgi was her only-begotten son, and he was like a unicorn, for no woman could give birth to another like him, as the following words show.

Giorgi lived in the house of Beka; Beka rose high, and owned (the lands) from T'asisk'ari to Sp'eri and further down to the sea, including Samtkhe, Ach'ara, Shavsheti, K'larjeti, Nigaliskhevi and Ch'aneti, all granted to him by the Greek King Comnenus K'ir Mikhail, who married Beka's daughter. He was also in possession of the greater part of T'ao, Art'aani, K'ola, K'arnipora and K'ari, and the lands and fortresses inside them, and Art'anuji and twelve deserts of K'larjeti, and the eminent *aznauris* and monasteries, everything he had by him. He paid *kharaj* to the Khan and assisted him with his troops. And they asked him to give them the boy Giorgi in order to make him the King of Kartli in place of David, his brother; and he did this, sending them Giorgi and a large army to accompany him. They made him a King. And though he was underage, they granted him royal immunity. 5 10

44. And the small boy Giorgi was King in Tbilisi. And when the spring came, Khan Q'azan again sent Khut'lusha with a powerful army, and many other *noins*. And they camped in the same places. They ravaged Kartli with even greater malice. 15

King David was in Khada. Then Shalva from Kueniplevi fled from the King with all the great gifts that had been given to him. He forgot all the favors granted by the King and went to *noin* Khut'lusha. Khut'lusha rejoiced and welcomed him with honors and appointed him a guide. They left on the Tskhrazmiskhevi road and over the mountain between Tskhavat'i and Tskhrazmiskhevi, which is Lomisa. 20

When David learned of the treachery of Shalva from Kueniplevi, he retreated to Tsik'are, for Tsik'are was impregnable. Khut'lusha descended to Khada, crossed the ravine and made his way to Gueleti, for they thought that King David was there. They surrounded the village of St'epants'minda. The villagers, putting their trust in God, reinforced their position; and the foremost among the Tatars were Shalva from Kueniplevi, the Ovsetian *mtavari* Baq'atar and the Tatar Baan Tanghut, who stood in Mukhrani. When they realized that they could not overpower the defenders of St'epants'minda, and that the King was not there, they asked the besieged for some supplies. The defenders of St'epants'minda gave it them. Then they broke their camp and ascended Khada. The King was in Tsik'are. Hamada of Surami, the son of *amirejib* Abaz, Ch'ila, and the *aznauris* from Kartli and Somkhiti affirmed their loyalty to the King, displaying complete unanimity. 25 30

Khut'lusha learned that the King was in Tsik'are, and divided his army. Some he sent through Tskhavat'i by a difficult road, to invade Tsik'are, which in fact was practically impossible. The other part of the army descended from the mountains, advanced along the Tskhavat'i road and entered Tskhavat'i. Learning of this, the King sent some of his troops to engage in battle, in which many Tatars were destroyed; about five hundred men entered a very slender pass and could not escape because of its narrowness. David's troops ambushed five hundred Tatars, killed many, and sent the others to King David; the remaining few escaped. The King's troops crossed the mountain, which is situated in the middle of Khada facing Tsik'are, and launched a powerful battle. The King's 35 40

troops, the Khadians and select fighters from Khevi, fought excellently. Yet more Tatars were killed by the Mtiulis, for they were light-footed, and horsemen could not fight there. The Tatars were forced to defend themselves on foot; they were assisted by Shanshe, son of Ivane, by the Ovses who had settled in Gori, by the Meskhi soldiers sent there by the *mtavari* of Samtskhe – Beka, and
5 by the Torels, the Tmogvians and the T'aoians. The battle continued until sunset. Because of the narrowness of the gorge the adversaries did not get entangled with one other, and the Tatars from Khada were put to flight.

God assisted the King, for the army that came from Tskhavat'i retreated. About five hundred men gathered, and Khut'lusha too had suffered great losses. He realized the firmness of the country and the impossibility of seizing Tsik'are. He moved at night along the Lomistavi road, unexpectedly
10 invaded Kartli and killed anybody who remained there, or took them captive. They ravaged Kartli and returned to Khan Q'azan.

In the spring, Khut'lusha, ordered by the Khan, returned with a still greater army. He approached Tbilisi, and intended to invade Mtiuleti. Learning of this, the nobles of the kingdom were terrified and began to look for the ways how to escape or evade the Tatars. People came to King David and suggested him to go before the Khan and obtain from him a promise of security. The King listened to them and decided to go to the Horde; he asked for peace and a promise of security. The Khan rejoiced greatly and promised him security and protection. If he could manage to see the Khan, he would be sent back in peace. In all this he was assured by Ivane from Bursa. With these words,
15 Ivane came before the King. Seeing firmness among the Kartlians, and the Er-K'akhs, the King rejoiced; and he was urged to go and even proposed to take hostages: "Khut'lusha is a reliable man, he will not break his promise, and we hope you will come to a mutual agreement."

But the King did not want to hear this, for he was still afraid of the Tatars, and he stayed in Gueleti. Seeing such devastation, many nobles, with the King's permission, went to the Horde in
25 order to defend their country and Khut'lusha welcomed gracefully those who came to him. But again they ravaged some of the lands of Kartli, with the exception of Mtiuleti, and returned to the Horde.

When the harvest time came, King David entered Tskhrazmiskhevi and ravaged the estate of Shalva of Kveniplevi for his double-dealing. When Shalva could bear it no more, he implored the *msakhurtukhutsesi* of Surami, the *eristavi* of Kartli – Hamada – to put in a word for him before the
30 King. He conveyed the request to the King and the King refrained from seizing him. On the contrary, he granted him his estates. Shalva strewed ashes on his head and said: "That is the punishment I deserved for double-dealing against the King." The King pardoned Shalva.

At this time the King's brother, Vakht'ang, appeared; he slackened in love and goodness, and he had been captured by his brother David and imprisoned in the Zhinovani fortress. He escaped
35 secretly and came to Ivane from Bursa and told him: "I have done no evil to my brother, nor did I offend him. I am not going to the Horde, to his enemies. Send a messenger and inform him that I came to you. If he deigns to see me and convinces me by oath that he is not going to harm me, I will appear before him; and let him give me some subsistence." A man was sent to inform the King of all this. The King rejoiced and taking an oath, took his brother in and obligingly looked after
40 him. And he thought that they were reconciled, because Vakht'ang married Shabur's daughter. But

Vakht'ang did not want to live without people rendering him the proper honors, so he went to Q'azan and the Horde. The Khan welcomed him graciously and gave him the kingdom. And Khut'lusha, with a powerful army, was ordered to accompany him; and so he came to Tbilisi. There all the Tatars and Georgians joined him, and *sp'asalar* Sargis, the son of the ruler of Samtskhe, Beka, the T'aoians, Torians, Tmogveans and Somkhitars. For Shanshe was the first to join.

5

45. When King David learned that Vakht'ang was to be crowned, he sent (the lord) of Bursa a proposal for a truce, and promised to appear before the Horde, if they would take an oath and give him a hostage. Khut'lusha swore, and satisfied all his demands. And (the lord) of Bursa returned to the King. The King rejoiced and sent to him Queen Oljat and Katholicos Abraham and (the lord) of Bursa, and they came to Mukhrani. Khut'lusha and other *noins* met Oljat in Bazaleti and honored her as if she was a Khan and gave a firm promise, the Khan's seal, and a handkerchief, for this is how they expressed the strength of an oath, and gave as a hostage Khut'lusha's son Sibuch. They did not let Oljat go, but sent the Katholicos, Qadi, and (the lord) of Bursa to meet the King. When they appeared before the King, he noted the absence of Oljat among them, used it as a pretext, and refused to meet the Tatars, for he was quite afraid of them and on his guard against them. He again sent there the same Katholicos, Qadi, and (the lord) of Bursa and asked them to send back Oljat. He promised to meet them after that. When the envoys came to Khut'lusha and he learned that the King was not among them, he said to (the lord) of Bursa: "Where is the deception here? I took a firm oath, and he did not come. So you will receive the punishment for this deception." And in anger he executed (the lord) of Bursa, whose body Shalva sent to his burial vault. Vakht'ang was approved as king and Oljat was sent to the Horde.

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The Tatars went to Mtiuleti and then to Gueleti, for the King had hidden himself there and it caused the Tatars a lot of trouble, while the latter did not diminish in number. When they became aware of the impregnability of Gueleti, they broke camp and retreated, for the winds and snowfalls had begun. The highlanders caught up with them and slew them in great numbers. Many Tatars who entered Zanduk'iskhevi were also slain. They arrived in Kartli and went to Q'azan, taking Oljat with them, whom they had not sent back to the King. Learning of this, the King married the daughter of the *eristavi* of Kartli, Hamada, who was very beautiful.

25

Because of these events in Kartli, there was neither sowing nor building of any kind, as in the time of King Ahab, when Elijah abstained from all activity for three years and six months; but here, the devastation continued for five years, for the Lord was very angry with the lust and sins of Sodom which the people indulged in. We fell first into bitter captivity, followed by a period of destruction and extermination by barbarians, then the wheat crop diminished, so that it became impossible to buy it anywhere for any money. And such hunger raged that people ate carrion without shame. Districts and squares, roads and fields, towns and villages were filled with corpses, infants sucked with their lips the petrified breasts of their dead mothers. Most of the people of Kartli went to the lands of Samtskhe, Beka's estates, which was the only place where it was possible to find and buy some bread. Beka's wife Vakhakhi showed great and immeasurable charity, for she possessed all kind of virtues.

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Vakht'ang was permitted to reign. Because the Khan had granted him the kingdom, he took Tbilisi and Somkhiti, Dmanisi and Samshvilde; but he was in conflict with his brother David, for Vakht'ang was stately, firm in his faith, respectful to the church, tranquil and humble, and was not vindictive, but calm and serene.

5 46. At that time the *mtavari* of Samtskhe, Beka, came up still higher. At that time the Turks, who dwelt in Greece, appeared; in the summer they camped in the mountains of P'arkhali, and in winter, by the Pont. Sixty thousand men gathered, and the leader was Azat'-Mose, a brave man. Azat'-Mose set out with all his forces to devastate the whole of Georgia. When he reached Basiani and T'ao, he began to mercilessly plunder, destroy and murder the population. So many people were killed and
10 taken captive that it is not possible to count them; old people were mercilessly slaughtered, young men, boys, babes in arms murdered on the breasts of their mothers. Nobody had expected such an invasion of Turks, and the villages of T'ao were taken unawares, nobody had time to hide. That was the reason why so many people were killed. T'ao was so ravaged that leaving Vashlovani, the Turks invaded the impassable Murghuli and Nigaliskhevi, where they were beaten off by the sons
15 of *aznauri* Kherkhemeli. Then the *eristavi* of T'ao, Taq'a Panask'ert'eli, despite his weakness, for his troops were small in number, gave battle to the Turks at the approach of Tortomi fortress, and caused them great harm. But he was unable to drive them from his lands, because of their multiplicity. The Turks grew yet more furious, and devastated T'ao.

 News of these events reached *mtavari* Beka, who took it painfully like anyone with mind and
20 reason. He summoned all his subjects and set out against the Turks. When he reached T'ao and Basiani, he learned that the Turks had left for their winter quarters. He was late. Grieving because of the destruction of T'ao, he set out for home. T'ao worked oppressively on his soul; he was burning with a desire to repulse the Turks. He summoned all the nobles of Samtskhe, the Shavshet-K'larjis, and said to them: "Now, listen to my word, my brothers and kinsmen, you masters of Georgia. The
25 most glorious among the bearers of the scepter and purple garments, King David, smashed and overthrew the power of the Turkish tribe, and threw them out of his kingdom. From that time up to now the Turks never reappeared. Now because of our sinfulness, they have risen again and they fiercely ravaged T'ao, took captives and destroyed people without number; they burned down churches, defiled our sacred places; and they again prepare to do all kinds of malicious things to
30 Christians, to annihilate them. The King is oppressed by the Tatars, and the functionaries and the chiefs of Georgia stand idle, nobody offers any resistance to them. So listen to me, singly and in your tribes; let us gather all our forces and battle against the Turks, and stop them from taking our heads and our children. The Lord will not condemn those who place their trust in Him and profess in Him; He will send us victory over them, as He granted victory to our fathers. Let us fall on the field
35 of battle in order to keep our faith pure and let us save our brothers. There is no doubt that the Lord will grant us life."

 The *mtavaris* and Beka's soldiers approved the King's words joyfully, and agreed to make war on the Turks, and then broke up. The summertime came, and the Turks started to return; they gathered many soldiers on the way, up to six *bevris*, and all the people of Saracen faith in all the towns joined
40 them to destroy Christians; there were not only Turks but Persians as well. Learning of the coming

of the Turks, Beka called all his subjects from T'asisk'ari to Basiani: the Meskhis, Shavshis, K'Iarjis, K'ola-Art'an-K'arniporians, and most of the T'aoians, for all these lands belonged to him, and he called also on the Tmogvians and Torians. He gathered about one *bevri* and two thousand men, and they set out against the Turks. The Turks entered the P'arkhala Mountains, set up a camp there, and sent their horsemen to plunder in Vashlovani. They thought that Beka had gone to the lands of Samtskhe, Kartli and Somkhithi. As the Turks came to Vashlovani – about ten thousand of them – Beka's army barred their way – about five hundred men who were sent as defenders and stood firmly protecting their strongholds. A fierce battle took place, and the Turks fled, and a great number of them were destroyed. The Lord foreordained the victory of Beka over the Turks. 5

Learning of the flight of the Turks from Vashlovani, Beka rejoiced and advanced quickly towards Sp'eri and Baberdi, where the Turks were camped. When the Turks learned of the destruction of their troops by a small army, they were angry and gnashed their teeth. Their leader Azat'-Mose, summoned the Turk soldiers, selected thirty thousand men and set out for Vashlovani to take revenge for the blood of his people. He did not want to encounter Beka. Another thirty thousand he sent to T'ao saying: "I will go and destroy Vashlovani and avenge the blood of my people, but you go to T'ao and raze it to the ground, if there is anything left, and stay in Bana. I will come to Bana after my victory and we will gather and plunder Georgia." He then made his way to Vashlovani. 10 15

The *mandat'urtukhutsesi* and Beka, and all his army took up arms and advanced towards the Turks, for they did not know of their decision to go to Vashlovani. They caught four Turk travelers and brought them to Beka. He questioned them about the Turks' actions and where they were. He separated them and each said the same: "Azat'-Mose with thirty thousand horsemen went to Vashlovani, and the remaining forty thousand he sent to T'ao, and tomorrow or the day after tomorrow they will be there." Beka believed them and divided his army into two parts. The largest part of his select soldiers he entrusted to his firstborn son Sargis, who was brought up as an armor bearer and sent him to Vashlovani against Azat'-Mose. 20 25

Sargis moved fast and overtook the Turks on Vashlovani mountain. As soon as they saw the troops behind them, they turned their horses and moved against Sargis. Seeing the smallness of his troops, for there were only five hundred Meskhis and the Turks were thirty thousand, they (the Turks) rejoiced and decided to destroy them all. The horsemen rushed fearlessly, Sargis moved in front and his people bravely met the enemy. A fierce battle took place, and in the very beginning of the fight the Turks wavered and fled, and so many of them were killed that the pursuers, checking the Turks who fell on the battlefield, counted five hundred and thirteen dead, and this without taking into account those who were destroyed in pursuit. They pursued them until the sunset. The Lord looked mercifully on the cross-bearers. And what must be noted particularly, is that in such a battle, not more than five men of Beka's were killed, and not one noble among them. So the Lord granted them power and a victory. Sargis, though a young man, fought bravely, for from his family he inherited the valor and courage, which distinguished his forefathers. 30 35

Beka moved on towards the Turks' households, and the Turks seeing Beka and his troops advancing toward them stepped aside at once and fled. They fled into the mountains, and had nothing on them that was worth anything, for they abandoned everything. Beka and his people 40

pursued them, catching and killing them without number. A few of the Turks had found refuge in towns and fortresses of the Persians, and some hid in Norkalaki. Beka's people barred the narrow roads, and for many Turks, there remained no way for flight. The Turks were corralled there, and like sheep they were caught and killed by Beka's people. The following also happened: the Turks who
5 were put to flight by his son Sargis, encountered the rear of *mandat'urtukhutsesi* Beka's troops. Here they were met by the Meskhis, who slew them and surrounded the town of Sp'eri. They captured the town at the first assault, except for the fortress, and filled their coffers with goods, gold, silver, cloths, flocks, herds, camels, cattle and sheep, the number of which were too many to count. They themselves loaded the donkeys and took all the spoils, though with difficulty. The victory the Lord
10 granted Beka was without the sacrifice of a single man.

Beka besieged Sp'eri and two hundred fleeing Turks retreated to Pont. After his victory, Sargis went to his father; on his way he destroyed Norkalaki and gave his people booty and captives. He appeared victorious before his father. When it became impossible for the Sp'erians to stand Beka's siege any more, they sent him an envoy: "We belong to Khan Q'azan, and the Turks left for the
15 Pont; we implore you to have grace and give up the siege, and we will give you a lot of gold, silver, mules and horses." Listening to this, Beka took from Sp'eri and Baberdi immeasurable riches and returned victorious. The *mtavaris* from K'arnukalaki came out to meet him, they also gave him gifts and presents and he did them no harm. After such a brilliant victory granted to him by the Lord, he came back with immense riches. For Beka was the builder of monasteries and churches. He was
20 respectful to monks, elders and deans, and morning, afternoon and evening services were never missed in his churches. That was the reason why the Lord assisted him, and Khan Q'azan gave him K'ari with all the adjacent lands.

47. We will return now to our initial narrative. Khan Q'azan began to set up for a campaign against the Egyptians and he called on King Vakht'ang; Beka also sent him his chosen troops, as
25 he was in his service. Q'azan set out and entered the country of Asurast'an and Shamis and started ravaging it, for he had an army of one hundred and thirty thousand men. The Sultan of Misr, who was called Nasir Melik, had gathered all his troops and was prepared to engage the enemy. The war broke out, so fierce that *noin* Khut'lusha with a thousand horsemen came out and stood in the front line of Q'azan's troops to fight against the enemy who had a numerical superiority; six hundred out
30 of one thousand were killed and about four hundred remained, and with these (men) he overcame and put to flight his enemy. Chopan Suldus came to his help with five hundred men, among whom were Vakht'ang and his people. A huge amount of people died on both sides and the Egyptians and Sultan Nasir Melik fled. Q'azan returned from the pursuit and rested for three days, and on the fourth day started the pursuit again and caught up with them, and slew them. The Tatars dispersed
35 all over the country and took captives, but the army drove them (the Egyptians) down to the Holy City of Jerusalem, a place of death for many Christians, but still more so for Persians. Q'azan attacked Diamushq', which is Damask. And the worshippers of the Almighty yielded them the city and immeasurable goods; Q'azan reinforced Damask and adjoining towns, and spent four months there. He left a garrison there to defend the towns and went home to Tavrezh.

When the summer came, the Damaskians drove away the garrison left by Q'azan. Learning of this, Q'azan summoned his *sp'asp'et'* Khut'lusha, King Vakht'ang and all the *mtavaris* of Georgia and sent them on a campaign against the Sultan. They entered Sham and Damask, and ravaged Damask, but could not capture it. They crossed Great Antioch and reached Gaza. But the Sultan did not dare to fight them, and they plundered the country for six months. Then they turned back and appeared victoriously before Q'azan. 5

Because King David did not trust the Tatars, he spent summers in Mtiuleti, and winters in Kartli,⁵⁷ which was the reason why the country of Kartli was declining. *Mtavari* Baq'atar gained power; he plundered Kartli and Trialeti, and drove away the *aznauris* from their estates. The population of Kartli suffered many troubles. King David gathered all the Mtiulis, and came to Tbilisi with an army of about fifteen thousand horsemen and foot soldiers and joined battle with the Q'ivchaq's who were travelling to their summer quarters. Part of the Q'ivchaq' contingent retreated into town and part fled along the banks of the Mt'k'vari. 10

Learning of this, Vakht'ang, who was residing at T'abakhmela, advanced with a few men, crossed the bridge and then Sakhiudabeli, and came to Makhata. David was with his army in Makhata, on the top of the ridge. And Vakht'ang approached from the foot of the mountain but stopped, not giving battle because of the superiority of David's army. Then a small group of soldiers descended. Vakht'ang's people who were waiting there, attacked them and put them to flight, and killed two brothers and their children. When the fight flared up a group of one thousand fugitive Q'ivchaq's joined Vakht'ang. Then the wrath of God overcame David; he fled and his immense army remained unengaged in battle. David left the battlefield without a fight and the Q'ivchaq's and Georgians following in his wake persuaded him to come down to Jach'vi. But Vakht'ang was not David's enemy, and he fought David only out of fear of the Tatars. 15 20

Learning of David's flight, Baq'atar began to plunder Kartli even more mercilessly, and King David could offer no resistance to him. Meanwhile David caught a severe disease – gout of the hands and legs, which disabled him. He was faithless and had no fear of God, so, falling ill, he lost all his strength. Baq'atar continued to plunder the country, destroying the population, though Hamad of Surami and Rat'i staunchly resisted him. Baq'atar won from Garmek'eli, K'akha's son, and the fortress of Dzami.⁵⁸ Learning of this, Beka set out with a large army against Baq'atar. But Baq'atar lined his people up in the fortress in front of Beka's leading troops. A fierce battle took place and in the very first engagement Baq'atar fled and hid in the fortress. Beka followed him and persistently besieged the fortress. When the siege became very hard, the Ovses, by the grace of God, begged for mercy, promising to do no harm. And Baq'atar came out, suffering no disgrace before Beka, and then he died. 25 30

48. Now we will talk more about the Tatars. Because the Egyptians drove away the guards from Damask, Q'azan was angered, and he sent the very same Khut'lusha with a powerful army and Vakht'ang with Georgian troops. Learning of their coming, the Sultan gave them battle. A powerful fight occurred, and many died on both sides. But that day did not show a winner, and the night separated them. And when the Tatars retreated, they saw a high range; Khut'lusha and his people ascended it, as well as Usein and Sevinji. Only Sibuch, son of Khut'lusha remained in the plain 35 40

close to the Sultan. And Beka's people were close by him, and all of them kept their horses ready. But the Sultan resorted to cunning, for he flooded the Tatars camp, and such a bog formed there that night, that the horses and the people disappeared in confusion in the slime. At daybreak, the Tatars found a slimy bog behind them and soldiers before them, and they scattered. They found in
5 that slimy bog a narrow spot, and there many people and horses were slain. When this spot filled up with people and horses, fleeing soldiers trampled upon them. Numberless Georgians and Tatars died there, Vakht'ang and the *noins* survived and appeared before the Khan, who, however became angry, and put all the *noins* in prison. He then began again to arm himself against the Sultan, though falling ill with some stomach illness he passed away. And there was wailing, for the people admired
10 his uprightness; there were no evil deeds or robbers, or iniquitous people in his time, and for that reason his death caused the people much grief.

After him, his brother, by the name of Kharbanda, was made Khan; he was called afterwards Sultan Oljat and he was one-eyed. And as far as he was able, he held to his brother Q'azan's mode of ruling, for he too was a kind man. He settled things over his realm and did many good things for
15 Vakht'ang.

Kharbanda wanted to go to Gilan and summoned the Tatar army along with Vakht'ang and divided all his people into four parts: the best and the most deserving part of his army he left for himself as well as King Vakht'ang. One part he gave to Khutlusha and Beka. One part of the army to Jalair, as well as the Ossetians of Gori. One part he gave to Suldus Chopan. And each of them he
20 sent upon a specified route; he himself set forth toward Gilan – and he assigned King Vakht'ang in advance. But the Gilanians though few in number did not waver, for there were four commanders in Gilan, who were called Erkabazn, Ubash, Rost'an and Asan. This last one stayed in the stronghold and conducted firm defence; and Erkabazn appeared before Khan Kharbanda and gave battle, and a powerful struggle took place, for Vakht'ang himself led the troops. Because of the narrowness of
25 the roads and the thickness of the forests, foot soldiers could not move, and on the plains there were slimy bogs.

The battle flamed up; the Tatars and Georgians fought at first with arrows, then swords, and Kharbanda observed everything in person. Some came to their help and encouraged with their voices. The battle became fierce. King Vakht'ang and his people did not turn their back on the
30 enemy, and because of the narrowness of the roads many were killed; of every ten men hardly two survived. The Somkhitars were also with him and all of them horsemen. It was a slaughter, and many *aznauris* remained without heirs, for the fathers, sons and brothers, all of them were there. But some of them survived. Vakht'ang did not leave the battlefield, but fought mightily and fearlessly. He was wounded lightly in his hip. As the sun began setting and the night approached, the armies
35 broke up.

Having seen the power of the forests and mountains, the Khan withdrew in the night. Learning of this, the Gilanians pursued them and overtaking him inflicted much damage. But then the son of Khut'lusha came to challenge the Gilanians. The chief of the Gilanians, Ubash, ordered to put wattle fences, hung up a gate and bar the narrow passages, offering strong resistance to Khut'lusha. But he
40 dismounted, sat on a chair and ordered Beka's troops to dismount and get under the wattle fences,

which they did. They went under the wattles and passed through. A fierce battle took place with the participation of the Georgians and Meskhis. They did not turn their backs, and fought bravely, and most of the Gilanians were destroyed. Then somebody let loose an arrow and struck *noin* Khut'lusha on his uncovered head and he fell dead from his chair. Seeing the death of his father, his son, Sibuch fled at once, and his troops as well, but the Meskhis remained behind the wattle fences. Only a few escaped, most of them died. And the Lord's wrath descended upon the Tatars and Meskhis, for there where an acacia-tree stood in the plain water had accumulated in the night. And the ground had turned into such a slimy bog that it was impossible for horses or people to cross it, and great destruction took place. 5

Rost'an Melik met Chopan in fight on the plain, but Chopan overpowered him and he hurriedly retreated to the fortress. Chopan did not follow him, but quietly turned back taking with him his horsemen. Gamrek'eli, the son of Javakh, fought bravely in that war and returned peacefully. 10

Asan also fought Usen and the Ovses but not one prevailed in this battle, and they too fled and gathered in Uzhan before Khan Kharbanda. Suldus Chopan was assigned the chief commander in place of Khut'lusha, and King Vakht'ang was rendered honors and all his nobles with him, for their military feats, and sent home with lavish gifts. 15

49. When Vakht'ang left, some people from Khodras – Saracens by faith and enemies of Christianity – came to Khan Kharbanda, and said to him: "If you do not force all the Christians to renounce their faith and destroy the churches, you will be unable to conquer your enemies, your kingdom will not prosper or your government succeed." These believers in evil urged this abomination upon the Khan. The Khan yielded to this pressure and began to destroy churches. He sent his army and one of the main *noins* to conquer Georgia in order to force the King and all Georgians to renounce their faith and turn into Saracens. They destroyed churches all over Georgia. The commissioned *noin* caught up with Vakht'ang who was on his way to Nakhchevan. But King Vakht'ang was not scared; on the contrary, he was inspired, along with his soldiers, to perform courageous feats in the name of our Lord Christ. He said to them: "People, brothers and fellow believers, true advocates of Christ! Remember the faith of your fathers, hear the voice of the Apostles, remember the deeds and courage of the martyrs and see with your eyes their innumerable miracles in the churches and hear the true tidings from His fair lips: "Who accepts Me before the people, him I will accept before My Divine Father," and again: "Come to Me all the suffering and burdened, and I will give you repose." Now let us go without hesitation to the Khan and let us give our lives for the One, who sacrificed his life for us. We are going willingly, and let the Will of God be as it is, and He will protect His flock." 20 25 30

Vakht'ang's soldiers joyously received his order, set out hastily for the Horde and appeared before the Khan. The Khan was surprised at the arrival of the King. They came to the Khan's court and fell on their knees; and the King said in a loud voice: "Listen, oh, high and powerful Khan. There is an order for all the Christians to reject our faith. So listen: your happy grandfathers and fathers were obeyed and served by our grandfathers and fathers with this faith, and they were never told that the Georgian faith was wrong, and we were your most distinguished servants. The Persian faith was considered to be the most foul by the first Khans. That was the reason why they were 35 40

so ruthlessly destroyed, for they were poisonous sodomites and murderers. And if you listen to the words of the Persians, Oh, Khan, I, King of Georgia, and all the Georgian *mtavaris* now standing before you, are ready to die for the Christian faith, and all the Christians who stand before you are ready to do the same. So, cut off our heads now". And he bowed his head. Hearing these words, the

5 Khan was astonished; and he showed respect to the King, made him stand up, bowed before him and blamed those who tried to persuade him.

But the following also happened: the churches in Tavrezh were destroyed and in four days, the four sons of Kharbanda were killed. By his audience, the King saved Georgia from impending evil and destruction.

10 Vakht'ang returned honored, and arrived at Nakhchevan. But he caught some stomach disease and passed away, adorned by the royal crown. They took him over and buried in Dmanisi. He left two sons: Dimit'ri and Giorgi. Dimit'ri possessed Dmanisi, and Giorgi – Samshvilde.

Command was transferred from Khut'lusha to Chopan; Chopan set out with an innumerable army. At first he entered K'ola-Art'ani and then Arsiani; he ordered Beka to meet with the Khan, but

15 Beka did not do this himself, but sent his younger son, by name Shalva. The Khan departed and crossed Somkhiti leaving Beka's estates in peace.

50. The King's son Giorgi, who was brought up by his grandfather, the great Beka, whom Beka sent to accompany Chopan, began to shine, and was presented to the Khan. And the Khan kindly honored him and assigned him a royal rank in advance. The Khan then sent an envoy and asked

20 David to send him his son, so as to make him King. Giorgi was young; he was sent to the Horde, and the Khan gave him his kingdom and Tbilisi, and he appointed the great Giorgi as his tutor and manager of affairs. Then they came to Tbilisi.

That same year, the *mtavari* of Samtskhe, Beka, passed away, a man who had been successful in everything, diligent in divine as well as in human affairs, a law-giver, a builder of churches and

25 monasteries, honorable in the secular world, and immensely generous to the wretched. His loving spouse was so generous to bishops and monks, that as soon as she got to know of some devoted hard working bishop, she summoned him and kept him close, presenting gifts and honors. Her house was full of monks and elders. And at the same time she heeded orphans and widows, and prayers were said three times a day in her house. And that is why the Lord helped her in overcoming

30 her adversaries in all the days of her life. She passed away in peace and tranquility at sixty six years of age leaving the population of Samtskhe in mourning and in infinite grief. Her three sons took possession of Samtskhe: the elder was Sargis, then Q'uarq'uaire, and the youngest was Shalva.

In the third year, King David died, burdened by a bitter illness, and he was buried at the royal burial place in Mtskheta; he was replaced by his little son Giorgi, a King at the age of two.

35 The Khan, meanwhile, decided to arm himself against the country of Sham, the fortress that is called Rabasham, which was owned by the Sultan of Misr. He set out with his forces and took a great army with him, and laid siege to Rabasham for five months, but unable to inflict any harm to it, he departed. He had with him six eagles, trained with other birds and leopards, so great was his power. The Khan returned home, and never more in the course of his days did he lead any

40 campaign, living in peace, unconcerned, keeping his Khandom for a further thirteen years.

Sultan Oljat set up little Giorgi as King, and Melik Zaal, a Persian from Khorasan and Akhruch, Chopan's uncle, was instructed to bring the whole of Georgia together under the reign of Giorgi. They assigned to him Shanshe Mkhargrdzeli and Zachariah, born of Khuashak, Avag's daughter. They arrived in Javakheti, then in K'okht'astavi, and they invited Sargis and Q'uarq'uaire to visit them, but they decided not to come.

5

A revolt occurred in Greece, Parvan's children and the great city of K'oni broke away from Oljat. The Khan sent Chopan to Greece at the head of his army, giving him the Georgians to accompany him. Giorgi set out with Chopan, but young Giorgi, Melik Zaal, Shanshe and Zachariah did not go with him; they came to Tbilisi instead. Then King Giorgi went to Greece; the Parvanians could not put up resistance for more than a year. The Khan gave all the Georgians who were there to King Giorgi. The Javakhians and Torelians joined him; and wherever or whoever they fought, every time the King and the Georgians demonstrated their courage. He subdued all the renegades and those who revolted, and one year later he came back. At the time of harvest, when Chopan appeared before the Khan and stayed with him about a month – Sultan Oljat died and left behind him a little son, a seven-year old boy by the name of Abusaid. They buried the Sultan in a town called Q'orghoilang, which he had founded and developed more than Tavrezh, and had given it the name Sultania.

10

15

King Giorgi learned of the death of the Khan and of his replacement by Abusaid, and he went to the Horde. They welcomed him there, and Chopan rejoiced and treated him like his son, and granted him the whole of Georgia, all the *mtavaris* of Georgia, and the children of King David, and the Meskhis, Beka's children.

20

Luminaries began to shine; and my speaking power fails me in my task to recount these wonderful and terrible things.

NOTES

- ¹ Somkhiti was the name given by ancient Georgian authors to the southern regions of Georgia – Lower (Kvemo) Kartli, and also to Armenia. This is similar to the name “Abkhazeti,” which meant Abkhazia in its narrow sense (Abkh. Apsni), and the entire Western part of Georgia as well, or even Georgia as a whole. The population of Somkhiti was often denoted by the double ethnonym: Somkhitar-Kartlians (compare: L.M. Melikset-Bek, “Armiane v Gruzii,” (“Armenians in Georgia”), in *Kavkaz I Vizantia*, Vol. 9, 1979, no. 1, pp. 175-176),
- ² A distorted spelling of some anthroponym.
- ³ The invasion of Azerbaijan by Mongol troops pursuing Khoresmsah Jalal-ad-Din (1220-1231).
- ⁴ Gandza was established in the middle of the ninth century, and was the second (after Bardava) capital of ancient Caucasian Albania. Gandza's close military and economic relations with Georgia and Armenia contributed to its growth. Gandza was an important point connecting Georgia with Eastern Transcaucasia, which is supported by the existence of the “Gandza Gate” in medieval Tbilisi.
- ⁵ There is a confused identification of the name Berduji river with the rivers of Debed, Dzegam-Chai (Sagim), and Akstafa.
- ⁶ The first armed conflict of Georgians with Mongols was in 1222. Giorgi Lasha was the son of Queen Tamar.
- ⁷ The south-eastern region of historical Georgia.
- ⁸ The Georgian name of Derbent Pass, one of the most important strategic arteries connecting south Caucasia with north-eastern Caucasia.

- ⁹ There are variations of the Arabian and Persian forms of this name in ancient Georgian sources, corresponding to Sharvan and Shirvan. See V. F. Minorski, *Istoria Shirvana i Derbenta (The History of Shirvan and Derbent)*, Moscow: 1963, p. 34) who writes that the Persian form – Shirvan – was established only in the sixteenth century.
- ¹⁰ On Q'ipchaks in the North Caucasus see: Z. V. Anchabadze, "Kipchaki Severnogo Kavkaza po dannim gruzinskikh letopisei" ("The Q'ipchaks of North Caucasus According to Georgian Manuscripts") in *O proiskhozhdenii balkar i karachaevtsev (On the Origin of Balkars and Karachais)*, Nalchik: 1960, pp. 115, 120-121. In Georgia to the end of the thirteenth century, there existed the government position "me-sa-q'ivchaq'e" (literally "tax collector for the Q'ipchaks). The duty of the person occupying it was to collect a special tax for keeping the Kipchak mercenary army.
- ¹¹ These are the ancient Georgian names for the populations that lived to the west and east of Surami ridge (the ancient Georgian "Likhi"). There is some information suggesting that Imiers (literally "living on the other side") was the name for the peoples of North Caucasus too.
- ¹² A fortress town in the north-west of Caucasia.
- ¹³ The sister and successor of Giorgi IV, who ruled from 1223-1245.
- ¹⁴ The distinguished Georgian commanders at the time of the wars with the Khorezmians.
- ¹⁵ Defeat of the Georgians by Jalal-ad-Din's army at the town of Garni (1225). The incident where Shalva is recognized by the "Nakhchevanians and Adarbadaganians," which is emphasized by the chronicler, indicates the existence of direct contacts between the public figures of southern Georgia (adjoining Armenia) and Azerbaijan.
- ¹⁶ In this case Abkhazia means the entire western part of Georgia including Abkhazia proper.
- ¹⁷ The retreat of Jalal-ad-Din from Tbilisi, which he devastated, to Adarbadagan, where the Khoresmshah quickly started his preparations for battling the Mongols, is evidence of his insecure position in Tbilisi.
- ¹⁸ The ancestors of the Vainakh group of peoples (Chechens, Ingush, Batsbians). They are also mentioned in the early parts of *kartlis tskhovreba* and in the Armenian language *Geography* of the eighth century. In later Georgian sources, this people are known under the name of "kisti;" the old term "durdzüks" now designates only Ingush.
- ¹⁹ Towns in medieval Armenia.
- ²⁰ Compare: the information of Sebastatsi on the peace between the Kipchaks who appeared in Tabriz after the first Mongolian invasion, and the Tabrizians (A. G. Galstian. *Armianskiye istochniki o mongolakh (Armenian Sources on Mongols)*, Moscow: 1962, p. 23, and note 13.
- ²¹ Tavrezh (Tavriz) was seized by the Mongols about 1232, and their invasion of Georgia is dated as 1233. Mughan was a springboard for the Mongols invasions into Caucasia.
- ²² A town and a district in Shirvan.
- ²³ An ancient Georgian name of the western outlying districts of Caucasian Albania. With the fall of these regions (about 1235) the Mongolian conquest of Caucasian Albania was concluded.
- ²⁴ A position at the court in feudal Georgia ("court minister").
- ²⁵ A town in historical Armenia. In the fight against the invading Mongols, feudal sovereigns could not create sufficiently monolithic armies. That is why they used individual forms of resistance – such as the defense of towns, fortresses, castles etc.
- ²⁶ Contemporary Kutaisi.
- ²⁷ Under the term "Caucasus," the Georgian Chronicles implied the North Caucasus too with the exception of Daghestan. Daghestan was given different names depending on the names of its different regions (Didoeti, Lek'eti etc.). North Caucasia and the northern regions of Kartli – Mtiuleti, where parts of the population were related ethnically to Vainakhs as well as to Georgian mountain dwellers, often served as a secure place of shelter for the population of different regions of Caucasia.
- ²⁸ One of the regions of historical Armenia.
- ²⁹ The Mongols raided Georgia and Armenia in the spring and summer, and with the approach of winter, retreated to the territory of Azerbaijan.
- ³⁰ Gias-ad-Din Kaikhosro II, the ruler of the Sultanate of Rumi in 1236-1245, and the husband of Rusudan's daughter Tamar.
- ³¹ A category of the medieval Georgian feudal system.

- ³² This is the only information we have about the Abkhazian *eristavi* Sharvashidze Dardin and his relations with the Sultan of Rumi. The Abkhazian feudal family Sharvashidze, which played an outstanding role in the cultural and political life of Georgia during the Middle Ages and modern times (S. N. Janashia, "Giorgi Sharvashidze," in G. Sharvashidze: *Shromebi (Works)*, Tbilisi: 1946 . He is mentioned for the first time in *History and Eulogies of Monarchs*. It is thought, not without foundation, that the Sharvashidze family originated from the Shirvan-Shah clan (D. I. Gulia, *Istoriia Abkhazii (The History of Abkhazia)*, Tiflis: 1925, Vol. 1, p. 138; Z. V. Anchabadze, *Iz istorii srednevekovoi Abkhazii (From the History of Medieval Abkhazia)*, Sukhumi: 1959, p. 192, His domains were annexed to Georgia at the time of David the Restorer (1089-1125).
- ³³ The departure of Rusudan's son to Bato took place about 1243. In August-September of 1246 in Han Guiuk's headquarters, he and the Russian prince Jaroslav Vsevolodovich were visited by Plano Karpini (*Puteshestvia v vostochnie strani Plano Karpini i Rubruka (Journey to the Eastern Countries of Plano Karlini and Rubruka)*), Moscow: 1957, p. 34).
- ³⁴ Immediately after the death of Rusudan (1245) the Mongols turned Georgia into a regency, dividing it into eight *dumans*.
- ³⁵ The participants prepared an anti-Mongol rebellion. The conspiracy was organized about 1245 in K'okht'astavi (historical Meskheti, to the south-east of Akhaltsikhe). Representatives of eastern and western Georgia ("Abkhazeti" in the original sources) participated in the revolt. The Mongols pardoned those responsible in the end, indicating some political discretion and pragmatism regarding distant provinces.
- ³⁶ The Georgian form of the name of Ilkhan Khulagu (1256-1265).
- ³⁷ On his way back Khulagu stopped in Azerbaijan, where he replenished his army.
- ³⁸ A place in Armenia.
- ³⁹ After the defeat of the Ismaelites (1256) Khulagu assumed the title of Ilkhan. In the vast empire of Khulagu, the Christian peoples of Caucasia played an important role, which indicates his patronage, even to the detriment of the Muslims.
- ⁴⁰ Rashid-ad-Din, *Sobranie letopisei (Collection of Chronicles)*, Moscow: 1960, Vol. II, pp. 118, 120) informs us that among the first measures of Khan Guiuk at his election in 1259, where "both Davuds from Gurjistan were present," was the decision of the Khan to subject "the Queen's son Davud to another Davud".
- ⁴¹ Jigda-Khatun, the first spouse of Ulu David, was Mongol by birth. The marriage was contracted for political reasons by Ulu David. In the absence of her husband, Jigda-Khatun with the help of Jikur acted as ruler of Georgia. But in 1259, Ulu David's son Giorgi, borne of Altun, put his signature after his father's, which indicates some diminution of her role in state affairs. At the same time Jikur was displaced from his active position. The reasons for his removal are not known from any primary sources, but they were perhaps due to the weakening control of the Mongols. In this connection, as the chronicler writes, acceptance by Jigda-Khatun of the adultery of her spouse with Alanian Altun, who was probably a representative of some influential class of Ossetian society which had never submitted to the Mongol authorities, was not accidental. The Turk name of this Alanian woman is noteworthy and indicates the level of influence of Turkish linguistic elements in Northern Caucasia at that time.
- ⁴² After the division of Georgia into "two *mtavardoms*" (similar to princedoms) "the country settled down." That was not the purpose of the Mongols who kept the Georgians under constant control. A man by the name of Jikur (his dates of birth and death are unknown) had risen from the ranks at the court of the ruler of eastern Georgia. Being a civil administrator at the court of Ulu David (in the position of guest protocol manager (Georgian: "mest'umre"), whose duty was to ensure the observance of protocol connected with the reception of ambassadors and "guests"), Jikur, because of his distinguished personal qualities, secured great influence over the King. The latter, during the period of Mongol dominance, gave Jikur virtually unlimited power in Georgia. The chronicler says nothing of his ethnic origin, but his name "Jikur" (which means "Jikian") suggests Jikian origin. Obviously he was one of the many representatives of the peoples of North Caucasia, whose names we meet on the pages of the Georgian chronicles among distinguished state figures and feudal lords serving in Georgia.
- ⁴³ According to Armenian historians (Gandzaketsi, Sebastatsi and others) the Mongols carried out the census of the subject population and created an inventory of their properties in 1254. The reason was the economic difficulties of the conquerors.

- ⁴⁴ This refers to the war of the Mongols against Egypt and Georgians' participation in it.
- ⁴⁵ I. A. Javakhishvili, making reference to the Ani inscription of Abusaid, writes that at the time, as noted by the chronicler, there existed a double notion of the "precincts of Georgia"- the ethnic boundaries and the state boundaries (the sphere of influence including dependencies). In order to compare them it is possible to refer to the Armenian historian Stepanos Orbelian about the transfer by the Mongols to Dimit'ri II "of the country of Armenia in its entirety, Avag's house, Shahanshah's house, and the sons of Gageli and *atabek* Sadun." S. Orbeliani, *tskhovreba orbelianta (History of the Orbelians)* (E.Tsagareishvili, ed.), Tbilisi: 1978, p. 426). The chronicler reflected the pre-Mongolian annals tradition, which began at this time to conflict with the real state of affairs. At the end of the thirteenth century, the eastern borders of Georgia followed the Arsu river. The power of Georgian rulers, who were dependent on the Mongols, was also nominal in Nik'opsia. Dimit'ri's power did not extend over Western Georgia at all. Regarding Derbent, we should ask: is the name in this context used in the broad sense so often employed by Georgian chroniclers? There was a historical tradition according to which the territory of Derbent extended far to the west (V. V. Bartold, *Sochinenia (Works)*, Moscow: 1965, Vol. III, 424).
- ⁴⁶ The Mongols decided not to execute the conspirators. The concern of the nobles of Khulagu for protection from North Caucasia is quite understandable: in the struggle between the Juchids and Khulaguids for possession of Caucasia, an important role was assigned to Derbent and North Caucasia. Eastern Georgia, a vassal to the Khulaguids, was systematically manipulated by the Juchids, and that could have had undesirable consequences for the Ilkhans. There were trade relations between the Golden Horde and Georgia; communications were carried out through the Derbent pass and Darial road.
- ⁴⁷ The success of the Khulaguids in their long struggle against the Golden Horde was due in part to the contribution made by Christian peoples in Caucasia, particularly Georgians, Armenians and Alans. An important field of military operations was K'akheti and the regions of the ancient Caucasian Albania – Hereti and K'ambechiani. On this territory, which long before the described events was made part of the kingdom of Kartli, was dominated by contingents of the armies of Georgian rulers, the Ilkhans' allies. Due to these wars the Mongols had again to carry out a census and inventory of the properties of the local population. Berka in the *Hundred Years Chronicle* is called Batu's son, though in fact he was a brother. In the account of an Egyptian author of the thirteenth century on the beginning of the military conflict between Berka and Khulagu, there appears a diplomatic messenger of the Sultan of Egypt, a person "from Alan merchants" (cited by V. G. Tizengauzen, *Materiali otносiashchiesia do istorii Zolotoi Ordi (Materials Related to the History of Golden Horde)*, Moscow: 1886, Vol. I, pp. 55-56. He was probably not a Caucasian Alan. In the above mentioned Egyptian source it is said that on their way to Berka, the Sultan's envoys visited "a place called Crimea, which is populated by peoples of various nations, notably, Q'ipchaks, Russians and Alans" (*Ibid.*, p. 63). According to information of Kirakos Gandzaketsi, the Caucasian Alans supported Khulagu. During the war against Berka, one of the mercenary regiments "gathered at the Alanian gate."
- ⁴⁸ According to Kirakos Gandzaketsi, Khulagu's successor, Abagha (1265-1282) "gathering a large army set out to make war against Berka, who departing through the Derbent gate set up his camp on the bank of the Mt'k'vari." Georgian and Armenian historians give a number of important topographic details.
- ⁴⁹ Upon the death of Ulu David (1272), his juvenile son Dimit'ri Tavdadebuli (self-sacrificing) ascended the throne. In the political life of Georgia in this period, people of other nations played a more active role. If in the past they were "Georgianized" so that chroniclers thought it natural to count them among the "Georgian tribe," now, because of the cultural and political weakening of the Georgians, there appear to be tendencies of "denationalization" among these tribes. This is illustrated by the example of Sadun Mank'aberdeli (of Mank'aberd), one of the powerful vassals in Georgia and Armenia during the period of Mongol dominion, and a Kurd by birth. The sources indicate his skill of easy adaptation to the milieu of Georgian, Armenian and Mongol nobles. He was distinguished by his particular devotion to the Mongol authorities, as a result of which he obtained high military rank in Georgia and gained a number of large estates in Armenia. He was known as a skillful blackmailer, who kept the local nobles in a state of permanent fear of the Mongols.
- ⁵⁰ The representatives of the highest clergy of Georgia did not fail to take advantage of the benefits that the Mongols granted for some time to the Christians. Poemen, the bishop of Gareji, reestablished Christianity

among the Daghestanis, who populated the territory adjacent to Georgia and who were neglected in the period of the Mongol conquest.

⁵¹ At the end of the thirteenth century, the population of Derbent rebelled against the Mongols. Dimit'ri II, who participated in all the military actions of the Mongols, took part in the suppression of the "revolt," probably without any hope of personal advantage. It was no accident that the Georgians had established their missionary activity in the neighboring regions of Daghestan, which met with no objections on the part of the Mongols.

⁵² I. A. Javakhishvili supposedly corrects: Anu (?); the location of the fortress is not identified.

⁵³ Suspected of participation in the plot of the Mongolian nobles against Khan Abagha, Dimit'ri II was summoned by him to his headquarters (1289). In this connection the Georgian nobles called a council at which it was proposed the King flee to the "strongholds of Mtiuleti or Abkhazia." What is meant in the first case is the mountainous areas of the southern ridges of the Greater Caucasian range, populated by the ancestors of the contemporary Batsbians, Tushs and Khevsurs; and in the second, case, the regions of North Abkhazia or Svaneti, which were regions difficult to access.

⁵⁴ After the death of Dimit'ri II in the Ilkhans' camp, a struggle occurred around the question of succession to the throne in eastern Georgia. In connection with this event the chronicler mentions the "Ossetian King" Farejan, one of the participants in the council which took place at the Khan's court, who was an active supporter of David and opponent of Vakht'ang (David Narin's son), the candidate supported by most of the Georgian feudal lords. After the death of Khan Argun (1291), this struggle became fierce, and David's adherents, among whom was the Ossetian group headed by Parejan, played an important role, and gained the upper hand.

⁵⁵ I. A. Javakhishvili believed that the activation of the Ossetian expansion in Kartli at the turn of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, was stimulated by David's frequent trips to the Khan's headquarters as well as by the weakening of Georgia as a result of the heavy wars it was waging.

⁵⁶ With the coming to power of Ilkhan Mohammad Gazan (Georg. Q'azan-Khan) in 1295 (K. E. Bosworth, *Musulmanskie dinastii (Muslim Dynasties)*, Moscow: 1971, p. 200), Islam finally triumphed in the state of the Ilkhans, and active persecution of Christians began. That brought about a split between the Ilkhans and their recent ally and supporter David VIII. The latter acted confidently and presumptuously against Gazan-Khan. He rejected the decision of his own council to appear in the Ilkhans' headquarters on Gazan's demand; many tribes and peoples in Caucasia were on his side. The center of this mutiny was Mtiuleti, a region located on the southern ridges of the Greater Caucasian range. This region was not part of ethnographic Kartli, and was populated by tribes related to the Vainakhs, who experienced a great cultural influence from Kartli, and formed a political union with the kingdom. Being a natural ally of the Kartlians, David could freely use the strategic roads that went over their territory and connected North Caucasia with southern Caucasia.

⁵⁷ At first, the position of David VIII was quite firm; he spent winter in the valleys of Kartli without fear. Waiting in vain for the khans from the Golden Horde, who were in confrontation with Gazan, David began to act on his own, relying mainly on the army made up of the Mtiulis and local Kartlian feudal lords, whom he had won over. His main goal was to win back Tbilisi from Vakht'ang II (the latter ascended the throne in 1304). The Ovses under their ruler Bakatar (Baq'atar), Parejan's successor, were on Vakht'ang's side. According to the chronicler's words, the Ovses represented the most active force among those who fought against David VIII. Bakatar died in 1304. After his death the Ovses are mentioned only once as part of the Mongol army during Mohammed Khudaband's campaign against Gilian in 1307.

⁵⁸ Fortress Dzami was located in the ravine with the same name in Inner (Shida) Kartli.

ლიმიტოვ ბავიციტნი :

მე შვიდალე : ამინდ ზ მთსცა , ზ წარჩუყან სახლს თუსს , ზ შეუდ
 რა სოჯაშ თუსს , ზ მელი უყანსენელ სიბდიფან იქმნა :

სოლო გუმი იგი ბავიციტნი ლიმიტოვი მეფეს ლაცაჲს მანაგლდე , რათა
 ანა წარჩინ ქართლეთა , ზ ასრყო სრულიქმნა წწრ თქმული , ვასილი მთ
 წიბიღლია : ხ² იყნეს მანაგლნი წარჩინებულნი საქართლეთსანი , ზ ყწ
 ვნ ივალრა ემ-თხვრ გუმი მეფეს : მამინ ვწმან , ზ მსე იყიდეს ჯცნი
 ზ მსერც თანა წარჩუყ , ზ მანაგლის ლამით გუმი ლიმიტოვ მეფეს : მამინ
 გუნგეღითა სეგანდამნა ემ-ხნდეს ჯცნი ცხვლამდონი , ზ მელითა აქენ
 თეფნი წარსაღობლად , ზ თეფითათანა იცვრთაჲს , ზ მიღეს მქსეთას ,
 ზ ლამსხვის სამასხლას მამათა მათათას , ვთარცა იქმნა ესე აწგლი და
 ვთ ბე ლიმიტოვნი შეინას ჯილიად ცაქან ნოინმან : ხ² ლელო-თელო , ზ სეფ
 ნი ცურნი მეფესანი ლამაღონეს : სოლოლა წარვლა , ხსლს მამის მისის
 თათარში : ხ² მსული ბეჟსნი , წარვლა მამის მისისთან სამცხის , ზ ვა
 სტანე იყ მთიულეთის : ხ² ყანმამან მისცა ლელო-თესს საჩრ-ლ სწორდის
 ჯუჯ , ზ ვახლნეს ორნი მცობდნი ბიწი მანოღო , ზ ლამა : ზ სოლოლაჲს წა
 რჩეჲს ორნი შვილი ბადსურ ზ იღვარ სახლს მამის მისისას , ზ ლარს
 ქეყანა ესე უმეფელ :

სოლო მ-ყწოდა ყინმა სუცლოაქმულას ზ ბრქეა , ანა მ-ღსნენ აწგლი
 ნი მცობნი ხეზნი , ზ მცობცა შენი მეფე ლიმიტოვ , ზ აწ მეფე სოლოლაჲს
 მისსული , ზ მელი აღმითიქ , მ-იყუანე ბე აქსანთთა მეფეს , ზ იწეს იგი მე
 თელ , მამინ მ-გითაგლო საქართლეთ აწგლი , ზ გუნგეღლი ვთარ ცნე
 ბაჲს , ზ წარგელ აქსანდეს , ზ წარვლა სუცლოაქმულა მეფეს ლავთის წე² :
 ზ ვთარ მსილა სუცლოაქმულა , მეფემან ლავთ : მ-ყწოდა სპათა თუსთა
 წარმ-გმანთა , ზ თანა წარმ-იგან ბე მისი აქსანდე : ვარდამ-ვდეს ზ ლ²
 ვეს ცვასის კარს ქვმხეთის მიხლო-ლის : აქათ მ-ვდეს სიომ-ნინის შვი
 აწჩინა აღიყანის შვილი ყურაქმინი , ზ მელი ლგის მათთა ვაგუნეთისთა ,

რე-ახ

The Hundred Years' Chronicle. Kartlis Tskhovreba, MS of Dadiani, National Centre of Manuscripts, Tbilisi, S-354, 466v.

ანსა უსდონს ზედა ნათესავთა სლარეუანსა რა ღმირთა რიგად რამდენადაცა
საბერძენეთი. ღ წინააღიღონს. ბიხუის ნათინი ღ თანა წინააღიღონს ღიღონი ქოი
მთაყარნი სარქთაჟღასნი ღ ვთარს მითწიკრის ქუყანას ვინჯისა ღ სეკსტის
ღ იწყის. ადგარება :- **ქ** მინ სულაჟან მან უსდონ მთაყარსა ყელათა სმად ღმე
მთაყარება მჟღარება თუნი ჟესი თანმეწი ბერნი რამდენა თანხი ათასი ღ უმინ
მჟღარით მთაყარად მარტინს ბე ათქმნი სმარლოთ ღ რღანი რამდენი სიმკრის მი
სისათვის პირველად ღიღს ღიღიქმს ალიყრან ღ მცყვილ ვაქრას სეკული ქრისტიანი
ამისათნა თარს ღმელ თარღარს მხლა უმარღარს მარტინს ბე რამდენი იგი ღმელად
წინასაჟღ იქ სულაჟანს წინმე ჟესი მკრე ღ წამმთა მინს სმარღარნი ყლენი მჟღარ
ითა მთაყარებენ ღ ღამმქრთა წინა მანბთლად ვანანის წინმთა ვლას სარღ
ღას ღ ღმარება :- **ქ** მინ რა ესე თათართა მთხლავ სულაჟანის წინა
ღ მათლად ესე მთხ ვანლარებულა იყრის რმე ვანანის რის მიმიღრლი ბი
უის ნათინი მიღს თანმად სარქთაჟღათა მჟენ მარჯათა მთხლავ სულაჟანის უსდონს
ი, ღ მთლად მის წყლია უმარეყარე ვლას სმარლოთ სარღნი ჟესი მკრე ღ მემ
მანბთარღლი ღ ღმელად თან მინს ვმს უმე ბიხუის ღ მარტინს მანბარღლიად მემ
მთაყარ ვთარს რა იქს ნიჭი რმინ, რ ღიღს სულაჟანს მხმის მთხლავ რმინ ღ იგი
იქს მთხლავლარს ღ ღამმქრთის მხლს რმინს ღიღითა ღ უმინათა ღამმქრ
თა ღ მარჯე ვლას სმარ ღმად ღ მანბთლას მარტინს რმინს რა ესე სარღ
რის ვანმარეჟმარმან მანმე უმე წინმთათა მინს სიმკრე ღ ვანმარეჟმას თქმინი
ქ რ ნათინთა ვანან სიმარვლასათვის მათისა მანმე ღმად სმარლოთ იყრის :-
ს ბიხუის ვანლიმინს ღ მანმე მთა თუნი ჟეთლად მესობისარს ნათესავს რმინ
მთლად თანს რამდენ ღმინ მთხლავ რმინ მარჯე ანად მემეწი სარღს სიმინ
ვლავ სმათა, რ უმინადღისთა უმეწი მარღს ვლავ მემ მარღვრთა ღ უმინადღისთ
თა ალიგსეჟით ალიგთა აქ ღ მარღვრთა მარღისა მანბთლად ღ ვანლათ-
ვთარს ჟმინდთ მემრთა ესე მთხ ვანლარებულა იყრის ყელათა ნათესავთა მან
ვთარს ვანთარს ღ მთხლავ სულაჟანის სმითა სმარღლითა, რ იქ თანხი ათასი მემ
ღმინ ღ ვანმეჟის მანმე აქათ თათართა ვანმეჟის მანმე ღ უმინადღისთ მათინ

მარტინის

The Hundred Years' Chronicle. Kartlis Tskhovreba, MS of Palavandishvili (middle of the XVIII c. with 1767 year additions), National Centre of Manuscripts, Tbilisi, H-988, 112v.

GLOSSARY

agariani – (Arabic: *Hājar*). Hagar was the second wife of Abraham and the mother of his first son, Ishmael.

Hagarene is a term that widely used for the early Arab conquerors.

amira – ruler, commander, prince.

amirejibi – the grand chamberlain.

amirsp'asalar (*amir* – head, governor, and *sp'asalar* – commander) – a commander-in chief.

ant'ip'atosi-p'at'rik'i – Georgian „ანტიპატოსი-პატრიკი“ – proconsul, high-ranking official in Byzantium.

atabagi, a father or tutor of kings or sultans, adviser to the kings.

aznauri – a stratum of the dominant noble class in feudal Georgia(5th-12th cc).

Bagrat'ionis – the royal dynasty of the Bagrat'ionis in Georgia.

ber – the elder.

bevri – ten thousand.

bumberazi – a champion. The words “bumberazi” and “goliati” (hero) in ancient Georgian literature were often used as epithets for knights. The first is borrowed from the Persian and is therefore older, the second is taken from the Old Testament.

katepan (Gr. catepano) – an official of the Imperial court in Greece, governor of a large area.

ch'artularius – Keeper of archives, an official at the Byzantine imperial court.

chq'ondideli – the bishop of Chqondidi, often combined with the position of *mtsignobart'ukhutsesi* (prime minister).

chukhcharkhi – the king's bodyguard.

curopalate – a high-ranking official at the Byzantine Court.

darbazi – a palace or hall, often used by the supreme royal council of representatives from the Georgian aristocracy and church hierarchy.

didebulis – great, glorious, honoured, noble;those who made up the top layer of the “aznauris.”

drahk'ani – a gold coin.

ejib (Arab) – a “doorkeeper,” “master of ceremonies,” and also “king's representative”.

encratits- a sect in early Christianity, a variety of asceticism.

ep'isk'op'osi – bishop.

eri – people.

erismtavari – governor of a region.

eristavi – the head of eri, the army.

eristavt eristavi – chief eristavi, the eristavi of eristavis a post in the higher administration, the ruler of a region.

ezos-modzgwari – master of courtyard.

ghado – impenetrable, impassable.

goliati – giant, hero.

gvari – house, family.

K'akheti – a historical province in eastern Georgia.

kalaki – city.

k'araseuli – a vessel of the size of a fist.

Kartli – a historic region in eastern Georgia which gave the country its name. In the third century B.C., Mtskheta was the center of Kartli. In the Middle Ages, Kartli was traditionally divided along the Mt'k'vari, into three principal regions: Shida (Inner) Kartli or all of central Kartli north and south of the Mt'k'vari and west to its tributary, the Aragvi; Kvemo Kartli (Lower Kartli) – the lower basin of the Mt'k'vari and south of the river, and Zemo Kartli (Upper Kartli) – in the upper basin of the Mt'k'vari. Here Shida Kartli and Lower Kartli.

kartvelebi – the Georgians call themselves „ქართველები“ (*kartvelebi*) and their land „საქართველო“ (*sakartvelo*). According to tradition, the designation derives from Kartlos, one of the Georgian ethnarchs

khalt'ulari – (Gr. χαρτουλάριος), Roman and Byzantine officials, entrusted with administrative and economic duties.

kharaj – a tribute.

khelmts'ipe – a king, a monarch.

koshki – tower, bastion.

koronik'on (Greek) – the name of a calendar year according to a system, grounded on 532 years cycle (*moktseva*), in which 28 (the number of years of the Sun cycle) is multiplied by 19 (the number of years of the Moon cycle). The same correlation of week days, months and years is repeated every 532 years. The system had been used in the Georgian written sources mainly for designation of the 13th (that began in 781 y. according to the contemporary calendar) and 14th (begin. in 1313 y.) cycles.

lashq'ari – army.

lit'ani – in Christian worship and some forms of Judaic worship, is a form of prayer used in services and processions, and consisting of a number of petitions.

litre – Old Georgian measure of weight, approximately equal to 1 lb.

magistros – a title in the Byzantine court, the most senior official.

mampali (Geo. *mama* – father and *upali* – lord). It was a dynastic title in medieval Georgia (late eighth-tenth centuries), usually held by high-ranking [Bagrationi](#) princes.

mandat'urt'ukhutsesi – chief of mandators, the Byzantine “protomandator.”

Mandat'uri – an official at the Byzantine Royal Court.

mandili – mandylion, the kerchief imprinted with the portrait of Christ.

marzap'an – head of an Iranian province. Persian governors in the Caucasus were called *marzap'ans*.

mech'urch'letukhutsesi – a keeper, or manager of the treasury, its functions corresponded to the functions of a minister of finance.

mejinibet'ukhutsesi – chief of the grooms of the king's court.

mepe – king.

mepoba – kingship.

mkhari – side, shoulder, a unit of linear measure.

mkhedari – warrior.

mk'vidri – a native, inhabitant.

mogvi (Persian: مَغْوَی) – the magi or wise men were a member of hereditary caste of priests, who came “from the East.”

monap'ire – the ruler of a frontier principality.

msakhurt'ukhutsesi – the chief of the officials at the court, the minister of the court.

mtavari (Geo “tavi” head) – leader, prince, noble.

mtiuls – Georgians living in the western part of Georgia, present-day Dusheti region.

mts'ignobart'ukhutsesi – chancellor, literally – the head of notaries, secretaries; taking into consideration his functions, he could be equated with a prime minister; in the manuscripts he is called “the first among the viziers.”

nobilissimus – A Byzantine title.

p'ark'imanosi – parakoimomenos was the Emperor's chamberlain, usually a eunuch, during the ninth-tenth centuries. Many of them were de-facto chief ministers of the Empire.

p'it'iakhshi (Mid. Pers. *bidaxš*) – Persian governor in the Caucuses. The dignity of *pitiakhsh* approximated to that of satrap.

panjanobat – music with drum beating and trumpet blowing, performed at the court of a Shah or a noble.

parakoimomenos – the night-nurse on duty, guard – an official at the Byzantine imperial court.

parakoimomenos-p'roedros – “One who sits in the first place, a president,” a Byzantine official.

Patriarch – a head of the church.

p'roedrosi (Gre. πρόεδρος “president”) – a senior Byzantine court and ecclesiastic title in the tenth to mid-twelfth centuries.

q'oveli sakartvelo – all Georgia, united Georgian kingdom.

rekt'ori – commander-in-chief

saep'isk'op'oso – cathedral, cathedral church.

spani – soldiers.

sp'asalar (Pers.) – commander of a military detachment.

sark'inozi (Gre. Sarakenoi) – Saracens; in the first three centuries A.D., the term was applied to an Arab tribe living in the Sinai Peninsula. And, after the establishment of the caliphate, the Byzantines referred to all Muslims of the Caliph as Saracens.

sigeli – charter.

sp'aspet' (Pers. “sepah” army and “pat” head – commander-in chief, military leader.

Svans – Georgians, sub-ethnic group of Georgians living in the northern mountainous area of Georgia.

t'adzreuli – one of the social terms for the highest order in Georgia in the early Middle Ages.

t'aghma – troops.

tavadi – prince; the main and most important part of the nobility.

t'belni – the people of T'beti.

tsikhistavi (“tsikhe” – fortress and “tavi” – head) – a fortress-commander, a head of a small town.

ut'evan – a measure of length in medieval Georgia, about 198 metres.

vaziri – the vizir.

INDEX

INDEX OF PROPER NAMES

A

- Abaev V. I. 119, 120, 123, 124
Abagi 349₃₆
Abagha, son of Ulu 360₂₂, 360₃₈, 361₅, 362₂₀, 364₃,
365₂, 366₆, 367₈, 368₁₁, 369₁, 370₇, 372₃₉, 373₁₁,
374₇, 375₂₃, 376₇, 398, 399
Abash, son of Sikdura 374₂
Abata 361₁₄, 365₃₀, 366₃
Abdaladze A. 224
Abdal Melik of Baghdad 111₄, 131
Abchi 368₉
Abel (bible) 88₁, 237₂₆, 238₃₁
Abeshuru, Aspagur's daughter 41₂₃
Abgavar 212₁₅
Abia, son of Izakar (bible) 211₂₄
Abia, son of Robuam (bible) 211₁₃
Abiatar, priest 52₃₇, 53₇, 54₁, 55₈, 56₂₄, 62₂₆, 241₂₅
Abibos, Bishop of Nek'resi 65₃₆, 110₉
Abishag (bible) 243₈
Abishkha 364₈, 366₁₅
Abiud, son of Zorababel (bible) 211₁₇
Abobikar 110₁₄
Abraham (bible) 112₁₃, 132, 137, 143₂₃, 236₃₃, 239₁₈,
264₁₅, 291₃₈, 300₃
Abraham Katholicos 374₃₅, 376₁₆, 377₄, 378₁₇, 382₄,
384₁₃, 387₉
Abraham, son of Iovak'im (bible) 211₂₃, 223
Abramishvili G. 137
Abram, son of Tara (bible) 211₁₀
Absalom 235₂₇, 237₁₀
Abu-Bakr, Azerbaijanian atabeg 209, 308
Abukhosro, eristavi of Ts'uketi 114₁₈
Abulabaz 143₈
Abuladze I. 8, 117, 125, 130, 221, 225
Abulal, mtavari of Hereti 150₂₉
Abulasvar 159₂₁
Abuleti, didebuli from K'akheti 176₂₅, 195, 231₂
Abul-K'asim, son of Abu-Saj 144₂₄, 145₁
Abusaid 395₁₇, 398
Abu-Saj 144₂₄
Abusalan 243₁₆
Abuseri, eristavi of Art'anuji 156₂₆, 157₆
Acharian G. 119
Achilles 181₆, 183₄₀, 197, 228₂₀, 231₇, 232₂₁, 238₆, 258₈,
279
Adam (bible) 211₆, 220, 228₆, 237₂₅, 238₃₁
Adam, son of Parsman the Valiant 36₂₇, 37₁, 72
Adarnase Adarnasian 113₂₆
Adarnase, brother of Armenian King K'virik'e 159₂₉
Adarnase, eristavi of Kakheti 109₁₈
Adarnase, son of Gurgen kuropalate 215₃₀
Adarnase I 109₃₃, 137
Adarnase, son of Sumbat' kuropalate 216₂₅, 217₅
Adarnase, son of Bagrat' magistros 216₁₈
Adarnase the Blind 114₈
Adarnase, son of Ashot Curopalate 141₂₉, 142₁₀, 143₂₉,
164, 213₂₈, 214₂₄, 215₇, 216₁, 220
Adarnase, son of Bagrat' kuropalate 214₃₄, 216₂₇

Adarnase, son of Bagrat' mampali 215₃₅, 216₁₉, 224
 Adarnase, son of David kuropalate, King of Kartvels
 144₁₄, 215₅, 216₄
 Adarnase, son of King Ioavane of Abkhazia 143₃₆, 144₁₀
 Adarnase, son of Nerse eristavi 213₂₃
 Adarnase, son of Stephanoz, mtavari of Kartli 213₂₁,
 223
 Adarnase, grandfather of saint Archil 135₂₈,
 Adarnase, nephew of Adarnase 114₇
 Adarnase, ruler of Hereti 144₁₆, 167
 Adarnase, eristavi of Samshvilde 93₁₅, 97₁₉, 104₁, 131
 Aderk'i, son of Kart'am 29₉, 30₄, 54₃₁,
 Aderk'i, Bart'om's son 30₁₉, 31₁, 72
 Adjgalanid 39₉
 Adonijah 241₂₅
 Adonts N. 115, 126
 Afridun 195
 Agafangel 73, 74, 123
 Agamemnon 181₆, 197
 Agari 112₁₃, 132
 Aghbuhga, son of Varam 344₅
 Aghsartan, King of Shirvan 234₃₃, 255₂₁, 280
 Aghsartan, son of Gagik' 159₃₈, 160₃, 161₉, 163₈, 172₃₄,
 193
 Aghsartan II 174₂₈, 175₁₂, 194
 Aghsungul, atabag of Rani 181₃₅
 Aghubagha 360₃₁
 Ahab, King of Israel 88₃₉
 Ahitophel 371₂₁
 Ahmad Khan, Abaga's brother 374₁₉, 375₂₁, 376₈
 Ainlieta 243₁₀
 Ainina 26₅
 Akab, son of Job (bible) 211₂₄
 Ak'ak'i K'limiashvili 7, 9
 Akaz, son of Iotam (bible) 211₁₅
 Akhruch 395₁
 Akhvlediani G. N. 129
 Akim, son of Saduk' (bible) 211₁₈
 Akopov G. V. 128
 Ak-Sonkor-al-Ahmadili 197
 Alasania G.G. 308, 309, 310
 Ala-Temur 359₂₀, 360₁
 Aleksandre, King of K'akheti 6
 Aleksi/Alexios I Komnenos, King of Greece 177₃₉,
 195, 196, 207, 243₂₄, 282, 311
 Aleksidze Z.N. 116, 129, 137, 223
 Alexander Macedon 10, 20₁₅, 21₃, 22₁, 25₁₀, 31₉, 39₆,
 71, 72, 93₃₄, 125, 178₉, 179₁₁, 181₇, 183₄₀, 188₁₄,
 196, 197, 198, 227₂₇, 228₁₉, 230₁₅, 231₁₁, 233₁₅,
 242₂₇, 251₃, 255₁₁, 260₂₇, 279, 281, 293₃₆, 295₂₉
 Alexander, son of Vakht'ang 381₁₂
 Alexis Angar 300₃₂, 301₂, 311
 Alexis V Duka 311
 Al Gazi, ruler of Baghdad 197
 Ali ibn Shuab 142₁₇, 144₂₉, 165
 Ali Lashkari II, son of Padlon 155₁₉, 168
 Alinaq' 365₃₄, 367₃₈, 368₉, 371₁₉, 374₁₀
 Ali-Shur Sham 261₃
 Alkhaz 161₃₁
 Alp-Arslan, King of Persia 159₄, 192
 Altu-Khan 341₂₈
 Altun, second wife of David Ulu 351₉, 397
 Al-Valid I 131
 Amalrikh, King of Jerusalem 280
 Amanelisdze, eristavi of Kartli 239₃₂, 242₁₆
 Amazasp' 34₂₅, 35₂, 37₂, 38₁
 Amazasp, ruler of T'arav 85₃₉
 Aminabad, son of Aram (bible) 211₁₁
 Amir Ahmad 171₁₅
 Amiranashvili Sh. I. 115, 126
 Amir-Bubkar, ruler of Adarbadagan 254₂₈, 255₁, 260₁₅
 Amirmiran 308
 Amirejib 347₂₃
 Amir-Mirman, 254₂₉, 255₂, 256₆, 257₄, 258₂₀, 260₁₆
 Ammian Marceline 74
 Amon, som of Manase (bible) 211₁₅
 Ana 54₁₄
 Anak' 40₁, 73
 Anamori 158₂₇
 Anania Dvineli 236₁₁
 Anasto 52₁₈
 Anchabadze Z.V. 120, 121, 130, 132, 224, 396
 Andrea Apostle 31₃
 Andrei Bogolyubsky, Russian prince 243₁₇, 282, 306
 Andronikashvili M. K. 116, 117, 119, 121, 124, 122,
 125, 126
 Andronikos I Comnenos, Emperor of Byzantine 209,
 234₂₉, 235₄, 246₇, 280, 282, 300₄₀, 311
 Ann (bible) 252₅
 Anna the Queen 9, 191, 194

Anna, wife of Aleksandre, the King of K'akheti 6, 117, 129
 Anbazuk'/Bazuk, King of Ossetia 32₁₃
 Angurga 334₂₂, 342₁₄, 343₁₇, 344₃₄
 Antelava I.P. 310
 Antiokoz 21₃₂, 23₃₂, 25₂
 Antioch Stratig 131
 Anton Kutateli, Archbishop of Kutaisi 249₁₅
 Anton Naokhrebeldidze 375₁₉
 Anton Q'ubasar 238₂₃
 Anton Saghirisdze 239₂₇
 Anton 238₂₂, 242₁, 257₁₃, 258₁₇
 Ant'oni Glonistavidze, mts'ignobartukhusesi-ch'q'on-dideli 291₅, 292₂₄, 296₁₆
 Anton the Great, a saint of Phoebe 185₂₁, 198
 Anushirvan 122
 Apollo, God in ancient Greek mythology 240₁₀, 243₃₃
 Apridon, descendant of Nebroth 18₁₁, 179₃₆
 Apridon, msakhurtukhutsesi 238₂₄, 241₇
 Aphrodite, God in ancient Greek mythology 38₂₃, 240₁₀, 243₃₂
 Arakhamia G. 9, 137, 220, 221, 223
 Aram, son of Esrom (bible) 211₁₁
 Arev 85₃₈
 Archil (Saint Archil), son of St'epanoz, King of Kartli 7, 8, 9, 110₃₃, 111₂, 112₁, 113₆, 114₁, 131, 135₁, 136₁, 137, 138, 141₂
 Archil, son of Mirdat', 31st King 77₁₁, 78₁, 79₁, 115
 Ardama 18₁₅
 Ardashid I 73₁₇
 Ardokh/ Ardukh 180₂₀, 230₄, 279
 Area, God in ancient Greek mythology 240₁₀
 Arghun 350₉, 351₃₆, 352₁₀, 353₁, 354₁, 356₁₇, 357₅, 365₃₂, 366₆, 370₃₃, 371₄, 372₁₃, 375₂₂, 376₅, 378₈, 380₃, 381₂, 399
 Arishian 175₁₃, 194
 Aristobul, historian of Alexander of Macedon 181₄
 Arjevan Hololasdze 154₄
 Armaz (idol) 24₃₈, 49₂₉, 50₂₆, 51₄, 57₇
 Armazel, son of K'aos 32₆, 33₂, 34₂₄, 54₃₆
 Arnavaz 243₉
 Arpa, brother of Q'urumchi 384₁₅
 Arpaksad, son of Sem (bible) 211₈
 Arsan Khan 320₁₉
 Arukha 373₄
 Arsenius 187₂₁, 194
 Arshak' 26₃₂, 26₃₃, 27₁₁, 30₂₀, 31₂₀, 32₈, 34₂₈, 35₂, 36₂₇, 37₁, 38₂₁, 39₁, 41₇, 72, 73
 Arshak' II, Mirvans son 29₁₅, 30₄
 Arshak I the Great 72, 74
 Art'ag Arshak'id 28₁
 Artakserks 230₃₄
 Art'ashan, brother of Ervand, King of Armenia 32₁₁, 33₃₁, 34₅
 Artavacho, father of Shota 236₈
 Artavaz, Art'ashan's son 34₁₄
 Artavaz, Saurmag's son 84₂₃, 94₂, 97₂₈, 99₅, 105₁₅, 120, 128
 Artaxerxes Longimanus 275₂₄, 279, 285
 Artemis/"Mtapholo", God in Greek mythology 229₂₁, 278
 Artuq, son of Eksuk 206
 Asam, brother of Guaram 212₃
 Asap, son of Abia (bible) 211₁₄
 Asat, son of Grigol Grigolisidze 177₂₉, 195, 236₆, 242₁₈, 245₁₁
 Asenetha (bible) 243₈
 Aser, son of Gaad (bible) 211₂₅
 Ashot' (Ashot' K'ukhi), son of Gurgen kuropalate 215₃₀, 224
 Ashot', brother of David, son of Bagrat' kuropalate 144₄, 214₃₅, 215₉
 Ashot' K'ek'elai, son of Adarnase 214₃₃
 Ashot' kuropalate, son of Adarnase 142₁₃, 143₂₇, 165, 213₂₄, 214₃, 215₇, 216₅, 220, 224
 Ashot', son of Bagrat' mampali 215₃₅, 216₁₁
 Ashot', son of Guaram mampali 214₃₅
 Ashot', son of Sumbat' 216₂₁
 Ashot', mtavari of Marghili 155₂₂
 Ashurbeyli S. 209
 Asim (Khazim) 135₁₂, 136₁
 Aspagur, Mirdat's son 39₅, 40₃₁, 41₆, 73
 Asp'anisdze 295₁₀
 Atad (bible) 277₈
 Atrak, Sharagan's son 178₁₆, 196, 208
 August Caesar 240₁₆, 281
 Augustians 281
 Avag, atabag and amirsp'asalar, son of atabag Ivane 324₂₅, 325₅, 328₁₇, 329₇, 331₂₃, 332₁, 334₁₂, 335₃,

338₂₅, 339₉, 344₁₀, 345₃₈, 346₁, 347₂₅, 351₁₉, 352₃₁,
355₃, 362₂₃, 368₂₂, 370₈, 376₁₃, 378₂
Avaga 398
Azat'-Mose 388₇, 389₁₂
Azhghalan, Wise King of Persia 31₁₁
Azon p'at'rik, eristavi of Kartli 21₁₃, 22₁, 23₁₂, 24₁, 25₇
Azor, son of Eliak'im (bible) 211₁₇
Azork' son of Parsman 32₆, 33₂, 34₂₄

B

Baaman/Bahman 71
Babila, Katholicos 109₃₈, 213₁₆, 223
Badridze Sh. 168, 169, 224
Badur Todan 369₂
Bagrat' 212₁₅
Bagrat' eristavi of eristavis, son of Adarnase kuropalate 216₂₉
Bagrat' I King of Abkhazia, Nasra's brother-in-law 215₁₀, 224
Bagrat' IV, son of King Giorgi I 153₁, 154₆, 155₃, 156₁,
157₄, 158₁, 159₁, 160₁, 161₃, 162₇, 166, 167, 168,
177₃₈, 191, 218₃₄, 219₂, 220₁, 225, 248₃₃, 283, 307
Bagrat', son of Ashot' kuropalate 142₃₁, 143₂, 213₂₈,
214₂₄, 215₉
Bagrat', son of Adarnase 216₆
Bagrat' Regveni, son of Sumbat' kuropalate 216₂₅, 224
Bagrat', son of David mampali 216₃
Bagrat', son of Demet're eristavi of Chikha 143₃₃, 144₇,
Bagrat', son of King Giorgi 147₃₁
Bagrat' III, son of Gurgen 148₂₀, 149₁, 150₃, 151₁, 164,
167, 168, 193, 198, 217₂
Bagrat', son of Sumbat' eristavi of eristavis 216₃₆,
217₂₃
Bagrat', son of Sumbat' mampali 215₂₂, 216₂, 217₁₉
Bagrat', son of King Konstantin 145₂₄, 167
Bagrat'ionis/Bagrat'ids 6, 7, 8, 114₉, 123, 126, 133,
137, 164, 165, 167, 193, 203₃₁, 205, 206, 209,
211₁, 212₁, 220, 222, 248₆, 252₂₂, 256₃₇, 227₂₅,
277, 280, 281, 282, 283, 284
Bagvashi 194, 248₃₃
Bahar Chubin 212₂₃
Bahram-Jur, King of Persia 183₄₁
Baidu, son of Dimit'ri 376₂₁, 379₃₂, 382₂₈, 384₂₀
Bakar, King Mirian's son, 25th King 44₁₃, 66₃₅, 67₅, 68₁,
85₃₂, 122

Bakarid/Bakarids 70₁₈, 122
Bak'ur, Dachi's son, King of Kartli 106₅
Bak'ur, eristavi of Kartli, son of Dzagama 242₁₈
Bak'ur, eristavi of Margvi and Tak'veri 97₂₀
Bak'ur, p'it'iakhsh of Somkhiti 103₂₁
Bakur, son of Vache 39₁
Bakur, Parsman's son 106₂₇, 107₁
Balaam 327₂₃
Balagh 345₁₆, 359₁₇, 360₃₈
Baldwin III, King of Jerusalem 280
Baldwin IV, King of Jerusalem 280
Balshan 261₁
Banui 243₇
Baq'atar 83₂₉, 84₃, 119, 144₁₅, 255₂₈, 359₇, 391₈
Baraba 62₂
Barakha (khan) 362₂₇, 363₄, 364₃₆, 364₂, 366₅
Baram 175₁₃
Baram/Ardashir, son of Sp'andiat' 20₈, 71
Baram Vardanisdze, eristavi of Svaneti 242₁₆
Baramidze A. 220
Baram Chubin 107₄₀, 108₅
Barukh 88₂
Bardos, son of Targamos 13₂₂, 14₁₀, 15₁₂, 252₂₄, 283
Bart'am, King of Persia, brother of Mirian 42₃₅, 43₄, 52₄
Bart'am, son of Persian King Khosro 104₂₇
Barthlome, Katholicos of Kartli 108₂₆, 213₁₄, 212₂₇, 223
Bartold V.V. 125, 126, 285, 398
Bart'om Arshak'id 28₇, 29₁
Bart'om, Ardek'i's son 31₁₄
Barzaban 96₃₁
Barzabod, eristavi of Ran 78₉, 79₃₀, 115
Basil 298₂₈
Basili, Ezosmodzghvari 7, 8, 9
Basil, Bishop 78₃₃
Basil II, King of the Greece 151₃₉, 152₂, 153₂, 168,
217₆, 218₃, 218₂
Basil of Chq'ondidi 360₇
Basil of Ujarma 367₂₉
Basil the Great, bishop of Cesarea 187₃₄, 199, 233₃₃
Basil, monk of Holy Mountain 374₃₈, 379₂₃
Bathsheba (bible) 243₈
Bato (Khan) 335₅, 338₁₇, 344₄, 345₁₆, 348₃, 348₅, 350₁,
356₉, 384₈, 397
Baladzori 122, 131
Balendukht, Varaz-Bakar's daughter 85₁₈, 94₁₃

Bediani, eristavi of Odishi 242₁₇, 334₁₈, 342₁₂
 Beka of Surami 231₁, 375₃₈, 382₁₂
 Beka Op'izari 126
 Beka, son of mech'urch'Irtukhutsesi Q'uarqu'are
 321₂₈, 369₂₃, 370₁₆, 372₁₈
 Beka, son of Sargis Jaq'eli 369₂₃, 370₁₆, 372₁₈, 373₃,
 379₃₀, 380₁₀, 381₃₉, 382₆, 383₂, 385₅, 387₃₇, 388₅,
 389₁, 390₂, 391₂₉, 292₁, 394₁₄
 Beniamen, son of Eliak'im (bible) 211₂₁
 Beradze T. N. 124, 125
 Berdenishvili N. A. 115, 116, 117, 118, 119, 121, 124,
 126, 129, 130, 168, 306, 310, 312
 Berka (Khan) 357₃₃, 358₆, 359₅, 360₃, 361₃, 370₃₇,
 381₂₂, 398
 Besel 255₂₆
 Beshken 155₃₇, 177₃₄, 196, 258₁₃, 338₂₄, 344₁₁
 Bevrasp 18₁₁
 Bibila Gur'eli 316₁₇
 Bicho 329₂₆, 331₃₈, 332₃₆, 333₆, 334₂₀, 339₁₇, 340₁₀,
 342₁₄, 343₁₇, 344₃₄
 Bivrit'ian, eristavi of Odzrkhe 84₂₄, 99₅, 104₂, 105₁₅,
 120, 128
 Bluchan 141₁₀
 Bogveradze A.A. 115, 119, 130
 Bolotov V.V. 116
 Boos, son of Salmon (bible) 211₁₂
 Borena, wife of Bagrat' IV 154₂₇, 162₁₇
 Bosworth K. E. 131, 222, 309
 Botsvadze T. D. 132
 Botso Jaq'eli 242₂₀, 244₁₃, 248₃₀, 249₆, 262₄₀, 316₁₇,
 325₃₉, 326₇, 359₃₅
 Botso, son of Botso 262₄₀
 Bozro, King of Movak'an 92₁₆, 125
 Brosset Marie 6, 9, 116, 132, 164, 167, 168, 169, 282,
 284, 308
 Bubakar 293₁₇
 Bugha the Turk 142₃₈, 143₂, 165, 166, 365₃₂, 373₅,
 374₁₁, 376₇, 377₄, 378₁₀, 382₂₆
 Bu-Iaq'ub 171₂₂
 Bulasvar, ruler of Anisi 197₅₀
 Burduktan, wife of Giorgi III 202₂₅, 228₂₃, 236₂₃, 288₁₅
 Bursa 387₆

C

Cain 254₂
 Caterine 228₂₇
 Chachua T. 222
 Chagat'a 320₂₇, 328₂₃, 329₂₆, 331₃₈, 332₁₉, 332₂₄, 334₂₀,
 335₄, 339₁₇, 340₇, 350₁₀, 362₂₆
 Chalashvili 133, 191
 Chanchakhi Paleli 154₂, 219₂₁
 Chanturia A. 225
 Charaslan 297₄
 Cherepnin L.V. 116
 Chermeg Katholicos 106₇
 Ch'iaber, mejinibetukhutsesi-mandat'urtukhutsesi
 236₁, 238₂₄, 242₆, 250₁₄, 251₁₀, 259₃, 268₃₅
 Ch'iaber, son of Zalt'iba 251₁₂
 Chi'ch'naum/Khuzayma ibn Khazim, son of Muham-
 med 135₃, 137
 Chichurov I. S. 126
 Ch'ila, son of Abaz 385₃₁
 Chilashvili L. 71
 Chopan Suldus 390₃₁, 394₁₃, 395₂
 Chormaghan/Chormagon 329₂₆, 331₂₅, 334₂₀, 339₁₇,
 340₁₀, 342₁₇, 343₁₆, 344₃₄, 360₂₉, 363₁₅
 Ch'q'ondideli, bishop of Mart'vili 242₃, 281
 Ch'q'ondidi 289₁₆, 291₁₁
 Chronos, God in ancient Greek mythology 240₁₀
 Chubin 229₂₁
 Chubinashvili G. 137, 222
 Chubinashvili N. 116, 117, 119
 Constantine Monomachus 158₂
 Constantine the Great, King of Greece 43₃₉, 44₁, 53₃,
 55₁₆, 59₁₃, 61₁₈, 62₆, 66₃₅, 67₅, 73, 74, 86₁₄, 88₁₄, 119,
 122, 138, 175₁₀, 186₁₄, 194, 231₂₁, 276₃₀, 288₂₈
 Constantine, son of Vakht'ang II 381₁₁
 Cyrill Toumanoff 137, 138, 167, 168, 169, 220, 221,
 224
 Cyrius 260₁₃

D

Dachi Skhviloselli 147₆
 Dachi (son of Iovane K'vabulisdze) 142₂₇
 Dachi, Vakht'ang's son, King of Kartli 94₁₄, 97₁, 102₃,
 103₁₉, 105₁₁, 105₂₅, 106₄, 107₃₂, 109₁₈, 129, 138,
 164, 221

- Dadian-Bedianians 316₈, 328₉, 354₂₆
 Dalala (idol) 26₅
 Dan, son of Isak' (bible) 211₂₅
 Daniel 87₁₀, 109₁₃, 123, 131, 212₃₂, 236₃₅, 281, 337₂₈
 Dardin Sharvashidze 332₄₀, 333₂₇
 Darel 107₁₀
 Darius, King of Persia 188₁₇, 260₁₄, 293₃₇
 David, son of Adarnase eristavi 215₃₂, 216₂₉
 David of Gareji 130
 David, King of Armenians 154₃₉, 155₁₃, 156₄₀
 David, King of Kartvels, son of Adarnase 216₅
 David IV King of Kings, the Restorer 6, 7, 9, 10, 166,
 171₁, 173₂₂, 174₄, 175₁, 176₁₄, 177₂₃, 178₃, 179₆,
 181₁₂, 182₁₉, 183₁₆, 184₁₀, 185₆, 188₄, 189₂, 190₅,
 191, 193, 195, 196, 197, 198, 199, 201₃, 204₂₂,
 205, 206, 208, 228₁₀, 247₂₇, 257₁₈, 259₁₂, 272₃₆,
 277, 278, 279, 280, 287₃, 288₄, 306, 311, 397
 David, son of Bagrat, 148₂, 143₃₈, 144₃, 149₉, 150₄,
 153₃, 167, 214₃₄, 215₁, 218₃₆
 David, son of Sumbat' mampali 215₂₂, 216₁₄
 David Mkheidze 168
 David, son of Queen Rusudan 327₃₈, 328₉, 332₃₂, 334₉,
 335₇, 336₂, 338₁₆, 343₁₈, 344₁₀, 346₁₈, 354₁₂, 366₃₈,
 367₃₈, 378₁₄, 397, 399
 David, son of Adarnase kuropalate 216₃₄, 217₄
 David, son of Bagrat' mampali 215₃₅, 216₂
 David, son of Bugha 376₁₅
 David V, son of Demet're I 201₃₀, 207, 228₁₄, 235₁₇, 277
 David, son of Dimitri 376₂₀, 378₃, 379₁, 380₃, 381₆, 382₅,
 383₂, 384₁, 385₁, 386₁₅, 387₆, 388₂, 391₇, 394₂₀
 David, son of Iase 53₃₁, 54₁₁, 62₃₆, 88₁₀, 92₂₉, 114₇, 142₁,
 173₂₃, 178₇, 191, 201₂₄, 205₇, 207, 211₁₂, 212₁₁,
 220, 222, 227₁₆, 233₁₈, 234₂₅, 235₂₈, 236₃₅, 238₃₂,
 239₁₆, 240₇, 243₈, 247₂₂, 248₁₁, 249₈, 252₁₇, 257₂₀,
 277, 278, 280, 282, 284, 288₄, 300₂, 315₂₇, 317₁₂,
 321₃₀, 338₁₁
 David, son of Sumbat' 216₃₆
 David Soslan, King of Ossetians, Queen Tamar's
 husband 203₃₁, 209, 250₁₆, 251₄, 252₁₄, 253₄,
 255₉, 256₁₄, 257₄, 258₂₆, 260₉, 263₂₆, 268₃₂, 269₃,
 270₁₃, 284, 290₂₈, 291₁, 293₂₁, 298₅, 299₁₆, 300₁₁,
 301₁₈, 307, 308, 312
 David, Chorepiscopus of K'akheti 150₁₉
 David VII Ulu, son of Lasha-Giorgi, the King of
 Georgia 207, 317₁₃, 322₂₃, 324₃₇, 328₁, 335₄₀,
 336₁₀, 337₉, 338₂₀, 339₁, 343₁₅, 344₇, 346₁₈, 347₅,
 348₄, 349₁, 350₁₅, 351₄, 352₄, 353₁, 354₉, 355₈,
 356₁₂, 357₁₇, 358₇, 360₃₅, 361₁₁, 362₂₄, 363₁₀, 364₂₄,
 367₁, 368₂, 371₂₂, 397
 David, son of Giorgi King of Abkhazians 147₃
 Davidids 227₂₅, 277
 Delilah (bible) 233₁₆
 Demet'er 281
 Demet're 92₁₄, 97₁₈, 104₂, 236₁₄
 Demet're, brother of Leon eristavi of Kartli 147₂₈, 148₃
 Demet're I 8, 177₃₀, 190₁₄, 195, 201₂, 202₅, 205, 206,
 207, 228₁₀, 235₂₂, 246₂₂, 277, 279, 282, 287₃,
 288₁₅, 306
 Demet're II 207, 351₃₂, 352₃₁, 355₅, 356₁₃, 367₂₅, 368₂₃,
 369₂₄, 370₅, 371₁₂, 372₃, 373₁₀, 374₂₄, 375₂, 376₁₁,
 378₁₅, 379₂₂, 380₃₀, 382₂, 398, 398, 399
 Demet're, son of David V 201₃₁, 202₁
 Demet're, son of Giorgi I 153₃₃, 154₃₁, 155₃₃, 156₃₆,
 157₉
 Demet're, son of Gurgen K'larjeli 217₂₃, 219₂₆, 224
 Demet're K'larji, son of Sumbat' 154₉
 Demet're, son of Leon, King of Abkhazia 143₃₁, 144₈,
 166,
 Demet're, St'ephanos's brother 108₃₈, 222
 Demet're III, King of Abkhazia 217₂, 224
 Derok' 34₂₅, 35₂
 Diakonov M.M 115, 116, 123
 Dimit'ri Bakradze 6
 Dimit'ri, son of Vakht'ang 394₁₂
 Dinar 145₃₉, 150₃₃
 Diocletian, Empreror 73, 74
 Dolidze I. S. 125
 Dondua G. 221
 Dondua V. 9, 309
 Dorbez, son of Sadak 259₁₃
 Dorgholel, brother of Queen Borena, King of Ossetia
 154₂₈, 161₃₇
 Dudea (bible) 175₂₄
 Durbez, son of Sadaq'a, King of Arabs 180₁₉, 196
 Dzagama 242₁₈
 Dzurdzuk, son of T'iret 17₁₆

E

Ebagan, son of Sirmon 374₁₁
 Eber, son of Sala (bible) 211₈
 Egarslan Bak'urtsikheli 334₁₂, 339₆, 339₁₀, 342₅, 343₁₁,
 344₂, 346₂
 Egros, son of Targamos 13₂₃, 14₁₉, 15₁₃
 Elga 344₂₇, 349₇, 358₂₆, 360₃₄
 Eldiguz 234₁, 236₁₂, 256₁₀, 261₁, 282, 284
 Elias 234₁₈, 264₆
 Eliak'im, son of Abiud (bible) 211₁₇
 Eliak'im, son of Mokhtar (bible) 211₂₀
 Elias, Bishop 70₇
 Eliazar, son of Eliud (bible) 175₂₄, 211₁₈
 Eliazar, son of Iuda (bible) 211₂₁
 Elijah 387₃₀
 Elioz from Mtskheta 30₃₂, 54₁₅, 55₂, 61₃₄
 Elisabeth (bible) 252₅, 291₃₉
 Eliud, son of Akim (bible) 211₁₈
 Emin G. 71
 Eruk Arkuan 355₂₀, 356₄, 357₂₅
 Eruk'idze T. 196
 Enok, son of Iared (bible) 211₇
 Enon, Catholics of Kartli 213₁₈
 Enos, son of Seit (bible) 211₆
 Ephraim Sirin 284
 Ephrem 247₂₅, 259₃₄, 307
 Ephrem Junior (mtsire) 130
 Eraj Ch'alashvili 6, 7, 9
 Eremian T. 116, 120, 124, 126, 127
 Erinji 369₂₁, 385₁
 Erkabazn 392₂₂
 Ersukan 367₂₇
 Ervand, King of Armenia 31₃₂, 32₁₀
 Eshim 111₄, 131
 Eslom 345₃₈
 Esrom, son of Parez (bible) 211₁₁
 Esukan, daughter of Chormaghon 359₃, 360₁₀
 Ethan (bible) 184₃₈
 Euphemius, Catholicos 374₃₉
 Eusebius of Caesarea 220
 Eustacius 125
 Eve (bible) 237₂₆
 Evlali, Catholicos 106₁₉
 Ezek'ia, son of Akaz (bible) 211₁₅, 292₃₅, 293₃₅, 297₃₇
 Ezdigerd I 123

Ezdin 258₁₄
 Ezra Anch'eli 154₁₁, 219₂₃
 Ezrakhite (bible) 184₃₈

F

Fakhradavl 333₁
 Farejan 399
 Fatimids 206
 Favstos Buzanda 120
 Ferdowsi 196, 198, 278, 279, 281, 282, 284
 Fridon 231₆, 243₉, 279

G

Gaad, son of Abia (bible) 211₂₄
 Gabashvili V. 220, 222, 308
 Gabidzashvili E. 194
 Gabriel Donauri 143₂₂, 144₁
 Gabulots 143₂₄
 Gachios 16₁
 Gadana 36₃₀, 72
 Gageli 398
 Gagik', son of David 155₁₃, 156₂₁, 159₃₈, 193
 Galstian A. 396
 Gamq'relidze A. 74, 310, 311
 Gamrek'eli K'akhaisdze 244₈, 391₂₈
 Gamrek'eli-Toreli, amirsp'asalar 242₁₃, 249₃₂, 251₇,
 290₃₆, 332₁₇, 339₁₀, 342₆, 343₁₄
 Gardabos 16₁
 Gardanov V.K. 117
 Gaiane 48₅, 49₁₀
 Gaim (idol) 22₂, 51₉, 57₁₄
 Gatsi (idol) 22₂, 51₈, 57₁₄
 Gedeon 254₁₀
 Genghis-Khan, Temurchi 318₂₁, 319₁₄, 320₄, 321₁,
 322₂, 323₉, 325₁₉, 328₁₈, 329₂₄, 331₃₄, 334₂₆,
 362₂₆
 George (St. George) 45₉, 144₁₉, 180₃₄, 197, 230₂₁,
 Ghalghur 367₃₇, 368₄
 Gias-ad-Din Kaikhosro II 396
 Giorgi Bogolyubsky, husband of Queen Tamar 282
 Giorgi V Brts'q'invale ("the Brilliant") 8
 Giorgi Ch'q'ondideli 176₂₂, 177₁₂, 178₂₂, 182₂₄, 195
 Giorgi, King of Abkhazia 143₃₁

- Giorgi IV Lasha, son of Queen Tamar 6, 8, 9, 201₁,
203₃₄, 204₈, 205₂, 208, 209, 252₂₃, 255₃₁, 270₃₅,
277₁₃, 283, 285, 292₂, 301₂₇, 303₁, 305₃₃, 307,
315₁, 321₁₇, 322₁₁, 323₁₉, 324₃₈, 328₂, 337₃₁, 343₁₅,
345₃₆, 346₂₀, 347₅, 354₂₂, 395, 396
- Giorgi Machabeli 7, 9
- Giorgi Merchule 126, 224
- Giorgi Mtats'mindeli 192
- Giorgi, mtavari of Argveti 168
- Giorgi I, son of King Bagrat III 151₃₇, 152₁, 153₄, 154₂₉,
217₂₉, 218₂, 219₂
- Giorgi II, son of King Bagrat IV 158₁, 159, 161₃₈, 162₂,
163₁, 171₄, 172₁₅, 173₂₅, 191, 192, 193, 197, 198
- Giorgi, son of David 394₃₄, 395₁
- Giorgi, son of David Ulu 350₁₂, 355₁₂, 356₁₀, 361₁₇,
362₄, 367₂₃, 397
- Giorgi III, son of Demet're I, King of Georgia 201₂₇,
202₁, 203₃₇, 207, 208, 209, 228₁₀, 230₂₄, 232₁₂,
235₃₀, 236₁₁, 238₈, 267₈, 277, 279, 280, 281, 287₃,
288₁₅, 306, 307, 311
- Giorgi, son of Dimit'ri 376₂₂, 378₁, 380₁₇, 385₂
- Giorgi, son of Vakht'ang 394₁₂
- Giorgi, son of King Konstantin 145₂₄, 146₁, 147₁₀,
148₂₀, 149₄, 167
- Givi 255₂₉
- Giyas ad-Din Suleiman 306
- Glonokor Archbishop 115
- Gobron (saint) 145₄, 166
- Goderdzi, eristavi of eristavis 156₂₁
- Goderdzi Mgdeuri 147₆
- Goiliadze V. 221, 222
- Golubovski P. 120
- Gordlevski V. A. 125, 309
- Gorgadze S. 221
- Gorgaslid 228₃₃, 256₃₇, 278
- Gor-Khan 319₃₈
- Gregory of Khandzta 126
- Gregory of Parthia 229₁₅, 278
- Gregory the Theologian 85₃₉, 86₁₂, 87₂₆, 89₁₃, 122, 123
- Grigol, Bak'uriani's son, ruler of Oltisi, K'arnu-kalaki
and K'ari 171₈, 192
- Grigol, Bishop 78₃₃
- Grigol, descendant of Rev, eristavi of Hereti 85₃₂, 97₁₉
- Grigol, son of Abuseri 157₁₂
- Grigol, eristavi of Hereti 256₂₄
- Grigol Grigolisdze, ruler of Gishi 177₂₉, 242₁₈, 245₁₁
- Grigol, mtavari of Kakheti 142₁₇, 165
- Grigol, son of Asat 236₆, 242₁₉
- Grigol, son of Zart'iba 251₁₂
- Grigol Surameli 334₁₄, 339₉, 343₁₄, 344₁, 352₂₂
- Grigolia K. 312
- Grigolisdze K. 295₁₄
- Guaram 107₃₀, 108₂, 113₂₃, 114₁₀, 131, 211₂₉, 212₁₁,
213₂₁, 221, 222
- Guaram Mampal, son of Ashot kuropalate 143₉, 144₁,
144₇, 166, 213₂₉, 214₂₅, 215₂
- Guaram, son of Goderdzi 156₂₉
- Guarandukht', daughter of Atrak 178₁₆, 196, 208
- Guilland R. 222₁₄
- Guiuk Khan 346₂₀
- Gurandukht', Archil's niece and Leon's wife 114₁
- Gurandukht', daughter of Giorgi I 148₃₈, 149₂, 153₃₃,
158₇
- Gurgen Beri 155₂₈
- Gurgen, son of Adarnase 145₂₆, 148₂₀, 149₁, 150₁,
215₃₂, 216₁
- Gurgen, son of Bagrat' mampali 215₃₅, 216₇, 217₁₈, 224
- Gurgen, son of Adarnase 143₄₀, 144₁₄, 150₂₄, 167,
214₃₂
- Gurgen, son of Bagrat' Regveni 216₃₇, 217₁
- Gurgen kuropalate, son of Adarnase 213₂₃, 215₅, 224
- Gurgen, son of Gurgen 216₉
- Gurieli 334₁₈
- Gurji-Khatun 369₇
- Gurk'leli 344₁₀, 347₂₃, 353₃₂
- Guzan Abulasanidze 244₁₂
- Guzan, ruler of K'larjeti and Shavsheti 248₂₈, 249₅
- Guzan T'aosk'areli, ruler of south-west Georgia 203₇,
208, 251₁₇, 262₄₀, 300₉, 310
- Gvantsa, daughter of the eristavi of Rach'a (Queen)
351₂₂, 352₃₁, 355₃, 356₁₃, 359₁
- Gvasalia G. 119

H

- Habakkuk 234₁₈
- Hagar, Abraham's second wife (bible) 137, 296₃₀
- Hamada Surameli, son of Beka 381₂₉, 385₃₁, 386₂₉, 387₂₈

Hannah (bible) 202₂₅, 291₃₈
 Haos, son of Targamos 13₂₁, 14₁, 15₁, 227₂₆, 252₂₅,
 277, 283
 Hector 181₆
 Helen, Leon's daughter 102₃₉, 105₁₆
 Helen, Queen of Greece, wife of King Constantin
 47₃₀, 59₁₃, 61₁₉, 62₇
 Helen, wife of Bagrat IV 154₂₄
 Heraclius, Byzantine Emperor 109₃, 110₁₅, 131, 136₄,
 137, 138, 212₂₉, 213₂, 222
 Heraclius Humed 143₁₉
 Hermes, God in ancient Greek mythology 240₁₀
 Hermion 309₁₀
 Hermis Trismegitus 110₂₅
 Herod, King of Jerusalem 54₅, 363₂₃
 Herodotus 124
 Heros, son of Targamos 13₂₃, 14₁₅, 15₁₃
 Hippodamia 243₈, 281
 Homer 10, 181₄, 227₂₆, 278

I

Iadgar, son of Dimit'ri 376₂₁, 379₃₂
 Iak'ob, son of Isak' (bible) 211₁₀
 Iak'ob, son of Manase (bible) 211₂₂
 Iak'ob, son of Mat'atan (bible) 211₁₉
 Iak'ob Tsurt'aveli 116
 Iama (Seba) 321₁₀
 Iaq'ub Aprash 373₃₇
 Iared, son of Apridon 18₂₄
 Iared, son of Malel (bible) 211₆
 Iaredos, father of Azon 21₁₃
 Ias-Bugha 365₃₂, 374₁₁, 376₇
 Iazid II 131₄₅
 Ibn al-Asir 311₄₆
 Ibrahim Nassir-Addin-Suklian, father of Shah-Armen
 278
 Ibrahim Inal, Sultan 157₂₃
 Iekonia, son of Iovak'im (bible) 211₁₆
 Iese, son of Iebed (bible) 211₁₂
 Ierobem, son of Benjamin (bible) 211₂₁
 Ierubem, son of Iovak'im (bible) 211₂₃
 Ildegiz, ruler of Arran and Azerbaijan 202₂₀, 207
 Ilea (bible) 185₃₅
 Il Gazi, son of Ardukh 180₂₀
 Iliia, priest 54₁₈, 57₃₁
 Ilkhan Mohammad Gazan 399
 Inanjan 256₇
 Ingoroq'va P. 224
 Ioann Draskhanakertsi 224
 Ioane Chimchimeli 228₁₃
 Ioane Orbeli 176₂₅
 Ioane, Parakoimomenos 219₂₅
 Iob, son of Abraham (bible) 211₂₃
 Iobed, son of Boos (bible) 211₁₂
 Iona Bishop 78₃₃
 Iorad 376₇
 Ioram, son of Iosapat' (bible) 211₁₄
 Ioram, son of Levi (bible) 211₂₂
 Iosa, son of Amon (bible) 211₁₆
 Iosapat', son of Asap (bible) 211₁₄
 Ioseb, son of Iak'ob, husband of Mary (bible) 211₁₉
 Iosur 329₂₆, 331₃₈, 334₂₀, 339₁₇, 340₁₀, 343₁₆, 344₃₄
 Iotam, son of Ozia (bible) 211₁₅
 Iovak'im, son of Iosa (bible) 211₁₆
 Iovak'im, son of Mikia (bible) 211₂₃
 Iovan, King 77₁₃
 Iovan, Katholicos 109₃₈, 213₁₆, 223
 Iovane, K'vabulisdze 142₂₇
 Iovane, mts'ignobartukhutsesi 230₁₈
 Iovane, son of Archil 114₃₂
 Iovane (son of holy martyr Archil) 141₂, 142₉, 143₃₆
 Iovane, King of Abkhazia 143₃₆
 Iovane, bishop of Bana (Iovane Baneli) 153₃₆, 154₈,
 219₁₄
 Iovane Zedazneli 106₂₁, 130
 Iovane Abuseri 154₁₃
 Iovianus, emperor of Byzantine 86₁₆, 88₇, 91₁₇, 96₂₄,
 123, 276₃₀, 277₃
 Ip'ajaj, King of Leks 91₄₀
 Isa 143₂₀
 Isaac (bible) 228₁₅, 236₃₃, 296₃₁, 300₃₂, 311
 Isaac, son of Alexios Komnenos, K'atas husband 195,
 207, 311
 Isa-Bari 171₂₂
 Isaiah (bible) 88₂, 172₄₀, 240₇, 312, 327₂₇, 330₂₆, 338₂
 Isak T'oloshelidze from Meskheta 161₁₅
 Isak', son of Abram (bible) 211₁₀
 Isak', son of Aser (bible) 211₂₅
 Ismail (bible) 110₁₃, 132, 137, 142₃₀, 223, 296₃₀

Ishmaelites 137, 229₇, 230₂, 247₇, 257₃₃
 Itrujan 51₃₂, 57₁₇
 Ivane Abazasdze, eristavi of Kartli 154₃₈, 155₃, 156₂₈
 Ivane Abuletisdze 202₆, 207, 230₅, 279
 Ivane Arshisdze 146₃₁
 Ivane Dadiani 156₂₉
 Ivane Jaq'eli (Q'uarq'uaire) 316₁₇, 332₂₃
 Ivane Kobuletisdze, mt'ignobartukhutsesi 238₂₅
 Ivane mandat'urtukhutsesi, son of Shanshe 352₂₁,
 363₁₃, 368₂₄, 375₂₅
 Ivane Marushisdze, eristavi of Kartli 148₁₇, 149₇, 167
 Ivane of Akhaltsikhe 267₂₅, 268₃₄, 269₈, 323₃₂, 324₁,
 335₈
 Ivane of Bursa 384₁₃, 386₁₉
 Ivane Orbeli 207, 229₃₁, 233₁₄
 Ivane, son of Q'uarq'uaire 341₄₀
 Ivane Shavliani 143₃₅
 Ivane Skhviloselli 147₆
 Ivane, son of Liparit' Bagvash 158₁₇, 160₂₀, 162₃₇, 163₂,
 171₂, 191, 194
 Ivane, son of Vardan Dadiani 236₇, 249₂₅, 250₄₀
 Ivane, son of Zakaria Mkhargrdzeli 242₆
 Ivane, son of Sargis 203₁₃, 204₂₆, 205₂₀, 250₈, 253₂₀,
 256₂₃, 257₃₈, 260₃₁, 261₄, 263₇, 265₁₉, 266₃₄, 272₁₆,
 275₁, 276₁₂, 291₁₄, 293₃, 295₅, 301₁₈, 309, 315₁₅,
 316₇, 317₅, 321₁₇, 323₁₇, 324₉, 329₁₃, 331₂₃, 341₈
 Ivane Tsikhis-Jvareli (Q'varq'vare) 248₃₂
 Iuda, son of Iak'ob (bible) 211₁₀
 Iuda, son of Mose (bible) 211₂₁
 Iuzbashian K. N. 221
 Izakar, son of Svimon (bible) 211₂₄

J

Jacob 253₉
 Jacob (bible) 228₁₅, 236₃₃, 238₃₂, 243₇, 300₃, 317₃₅
 Jacob, Bishop 66₂₃, 68₂₄
 Jalair 382₃₂
 Jalaldin 320₃₄, 321₄, 322₆, 323₅, 324₁₈, 325₅, 326₅, 327₃,
 328₁₉, 329₂₅, 330₈, 395, 396
 Jalghuz-Alpes 245₅
 Jambak'ur-Orbeliani A. 6
 Jampolski Z. I. 117
 Janashia L. N. 117, 121
 Janashia S. N. 115, 117, 121, 130

Janashvili M. 220
 Japar, son of Ali, emir of Tbilisi 144₂₉, 155₄, 156₆
 Japaridze G. 121, 126, 196, 208
 Japhet, grandfather of Tarsh 13₁₂
 Jaq'elis 241₂₇
 Jaroslav Vsevolodovich 397
 Jason 72
 Javakhishvili Iv. 6, 7, 8, 9, 116, 117, 118, 125, 129,
 191, 207, 221, 222, 223, 224, 279, 306, 308, 310,
 312, 398, 399
 Javakhos, son of Mtskhetos 16₂₅
 Jedi, son of Goderdzis sister 155₂₉
 Jeremy (bible) 172₁₁, 277₈
 Jesus Christ 30₂₃, 31₂₄, 38₂₅, 44₂, 45₉, 46₇, 47₁₅, 48₅, 50₂,
 51₂₂, 52₄, 53₁, 54₂, 55₁₈, 56₄, 57₂₀, 58₄, 59₁₀, 60₁₀,
 62₂₈, 63₂₈, 64₃₂, 65₂₉, 66₁₆, 67₂₁, 77₂₄, 78₁₅, 79₂₁,
 80₂₂, 83₃₇, 86₁₃, 87₁₃, 88₃₀, 91₁₅, 95₂₈, 98₂₈, 100₁₅,
 101₁, 102₆, 103₁₆, 104₈, 105₆, 106₃₅, 109₃₄, 110₆,
 122, 123, 129, 179₃, 185₂₃, 186₃, 197, 213₁₃, 225,
 227₁₉, 228₁₇, 230₃₀, 235₂₀, 236₁₃, 238₇, 249₂₉, 251₂₅,
 257₂, 263₂₀, 264₁₉, 265₁₂, 266₂, 277₂, 280, 283,
 300₄
 Jibgha, eristavi 109₁₉, 212₃₄, 213₁, 222
 Jigda, daughter of Dimit'ri 376₂₁
 Jigda, Khatun 348₅, 351₁₂, 397
 Jikur 348₅, 351₃₄, 352₁, 397
 Jinili 365₃₂, 366₆
 Joab, Solomon's brother 241₂₅
 Job (bible) 104₁₃
 Job, an Armenian 68₂₀, 70₇
 Johann 186₅
 John, Armenian Katholikos 284
 John (bible) 129, 184₁₆, 237₂₇, 284
 John, Bishop 61₂₃, 62₆, 63₅, 65₂₇, 66₅
 John Katholikos 187₂₀, 263₉, 264₄, 266₂₄, 267₁
 John of Damascus 137
 John Shavteli 270₁₄
 John the Baptist 363₃₀
 John, son of Andronicus 311
 John, son of Elisabeth and Zachariah 308
 Jojik', father of Peris 218₁₅, 225
 Jolak 364₈, 366₁₆
 Jonathan 229₂₀, 238₃₂
 Jones H.L. 117, 206
 Jordania T. 308,310

Joseph (bible) 236₃₃, 238₃₂, 243₇
 Joseph Flavius, historian 181₄, 197, 198, 284, 326₃₁
 Joshua 231₄
 Juansher, Vakht'ang's sp'asp'et' 79₄₀, 80₃₄, 81₁₅, 92₁₄,
 94₃₉, 97₁₇, 104₁
 Juansher Juansheriani 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 77₁, 113₂₈, 115,
 116, 117, 119, 121, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126, 127,
 129, 136₃₆, 138, 164, 206, 221
 Juansher, ruler of Aspurag 85₃₈
 Juansher, son of holy martyr Archil 114₃₂, 141₂, 142₉,
 Judas Iscariot (bible) 102₁₈, 129
 Julian, emperor of Byzantine 86₁₅, 88₈, 123
 Julian, the Apostate 219₃₆
 Jumber 35₂₆
 Junitan 260₁₃
 Jupiter 125
 Justine 132
 Justinian 115
 Juvenal, Patriarch 45₁₃, 51₁₃
 Juze P. K. 122

K

Kabus 261₂₂
 Kaikhosro 179₇, 196, 228₁₉, 240₂₁, 277
 Kaikhosro, son of Shiosh 19₁₀,
 K'ainan, son of Arpaksad (bible) 211₈
 K'ainan, son of Enos (bible) 211₆
 Kajdan A. P. 122
 Kekaos 261₂₁
 K'akha from Tori 352₂₂, 353₂₁, 366₂₁
 K'akhaber Baghvash 371₂₆
 K'akhaber, eristavi of Rach'a and Tak'veri 239₃₁, 242₁₆,
 296₁₁, 351₂₁, 367₃₇, 368₅, 370₁₁
 K'akhaber, son of Niania K'vabulisdze 173₁₄, 194
 K'akhaber Vardanisdze 242₉
 K'akvakar 159₃₁
 Kapanadze D. 223₄₅
 Kapantsian G. 126₂₃
 Karaulov N. A. 119
 Kareli, ruler of Kars 252₂₉
 Karich'ashvili D. 220₄
 Karpov S.P. 124
 Kartam, grandson of Kuji 29₂
 Kartam, Aderk'i's son, 11th King 31₁₄
 Kartlos, son of Targamos 13₂₂, 14₂, 15₁₂, 16₃, 164, 220

Kartlosids/Kartlosid 17₈, 18₂₆, 19₃₆, 21₁₂, 22₇, 24₁₃, 25₃₂
 Kasre 136₃,
 Kasre Ambarvez, son of Urmizd 107₁₄, 108₇
 K'ata, daughter of David 177₂₅, 201₃₀, 207, 280, 311
 K'ata, daughter of Giorgi I 153₃₃
 K'avk'as, son of Targamos 13₂₃, 14₂₄, 15₁₃, 17₁₄, 18₁,
 24₃₄, 25₃₃, 26₁
 Kavad, Shah Peroz's son 122
 Kavtar 175₁₃
 Kavtar, son of Ivane 236₁₁
 Kavtar T'beli 149₂₄
 Kavtia 43₁₁
 K'akhos 16₁
 K'aos, son of Bart'om 31₂₆
 Kazhdan A. 225
 Keghatu-Koun, Arghun's brother 381,
 Kek'ap'os 18₃₂, 19₁
 K'ek'elidze K'. 9, 116, 117, 127, 128, 206, 220, 277,
 281, 282, 284, 306, 307
 Khakhvila Gurta 155₂₃
 Khakhua Arshisdze 146₃₂
 Khalil ibn Yazid 142₂₄, 143₂₀, 165
 Kharbanda 392₁₂, 393₁₈
 Khazaradze N. 220₄
 Khendom 381₁
 Kherkhemeli 388₁₅
 Khoja-Aziz 352₁₂, 355₁₁, 356₁₅, 357₂₃, 378₁₉
 Khoja Shamsadin 328₃₅, 359₃
 Khorashana 243₆
 Khosrov Anushrivan 39₈, 40₂₈, 41₃₀, 73, 96₁
 Khosro, King of Persia 96₁, 97₈, 98₈, 101₃₉, 103₂₂
 Khosro, son of Khosro 103₂₂, 104₃, 105₂, 109₃₁
 Khosro-Tang 86₂₀
 Khosrov Pavriz 278₄₅
 Khosrow 243₇, 281
 Khosrovid/Khosrovids 41₂₉, 68₁, 69₁, 70₁, 136₇, 164,
 176₁, 227₂₅, 230₂₈, 277
 Khozanikh 18₆
 Khuankhua 37₂₉
 Khuara 57₁, 60₂₆
 Khuarandze, daughter of Sagdukht' and Mirdat' 79₄,
 82₁₇, 85₃₀, 97₁₅, 103₂₁, 116
 Khuarazmsha 320₃₂, 321₁, 330₁₂
 Khuashak, daughter of Avaga 351₂₀, 359₂, 362₂₃, 368₂₂,
 370₉, 378₂, 395₃
 Khuashak Tsokali 241₂₆

Khuasro 68₉, 213₆, 223
 Khulagu 398
 Khulu-Inanjan 254₂₇
 Khursi, mtavari of Argveti 152₅, 168, 217₃₉
 Khusrau/Ibn Usaid as-Sulam 142₃, 164
 Khut'lubugha, son of Sadun Mank'abardi 374₁₇, 375₂₆,
 378₁₁, 379₃₄, 380₁₃, 381₂₁, 382₂₃
 Khut'lush 382₃₂, 383₃₅, 384₁₀, 385₁₆, 386₉, 387₂, 390₂₈,
 391₂, 392₁₈, 393₃, 394₁₃
 K'ik'nadze R. 9, 221, 222, 308, 310
 Kinzil-Arslan 308
 Kirakos Gandzaketsi 127, 398
 Kirkish 207
 Kirkish Abuletisdze 231₂
 K'leop'a (bible) 211₁₉, 220
 Kldiashvili D. 199
 Kobad, Kuasro's son 223
 Kobichev V. P. 129
 Kolesnikov A. I. 128
 Kongard, Ahmad's brother 375₂₁
 Konstantin, King of Abkhazia 144₁₉, 145₁₄, 167
 Konstantin, brother of King Basil 153₁₀, 154₁₅, 219₁₆
 Konstantin Mkheidze, mtavari of Argveti 168
 Konstantin III, mtavari of K'akheti 167
 Konstantin, son of Giorgi, King of the Abkhazians 146,
 Korun 115, 284
 K'osaro 39₁₀, 40₂, 43₁₇, 73
 Kopaliani V. 224, 225
 Kovalevskaia S. B. 131
 K'rava 241₂₇
 Kritias 240₂₁, 281
 Kubaneishvili S. 122, 125
 Kuji 23₉, 24₉, 26₁₀, 29₂
 Kuka 334₂₈
 K'ukhos 16₁
 Kurak 319₂₂
 Kutb-Ad-Din II Gazi, son of Ardokh 279
 Kutsikidze Ts. 6, 9
 K'vabuleli Ch'ach'a 156₈
 K'virik'e Alaverdeli 167
 K'virik'e, King of Armenia 159₂₂, 160₆
 K'virik'e 174₂₀, 194
 K'virik'e, King of Ranis and K'akhis 154₃₉, 155₉, 167
 K'virik'e, bishop of Bana 215₂₀

K'virik'e, Chorepiscopus 144₁₈, 145₁₃, 146₂₁, 147₁,
 148₃, 150₃₃, 193

L

Lamek (bible) 211₇
 Lane-Poole S. 278, 279, 282
 Larsson Mats 168
 Lasha, son of Dimit'ri 376₂₀, 379₃₂
 Lastivertsi A. 221
 Lat'avri 141₂₉
 Lavrov L. I. 120, 127
 Lazar Farpetsi 116, 121
 Lazarus 46₃₅
 Lek', son of Targamos 13₂₂, 14₂₄, 15₁₃, 17₁₄, 18₃
 Leon II 142₆
 Leon, cousin of Leon II 142₅
 Leon, son of King Giorgi 146₂₄, 147₁₆, 148₆
 Leon I 111₁₉, 112₂₅, 113₃₃, 114₁, 132
 Leon, King of Abkhazia 132
 Leon, King of Greece 85₆, 95₁₄, 96₁₉, 97₄, 98₁, 99₅, 102₁,
 121
 Leon, son of Vakht'ang Gorgasali 105₁₆
 Leont'i Mroveli 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 13₁, 71, 72, 73, 74, 118,
 119, 120, 122, 124, 127, 129, 193, 221
 Levi, son of Eliazar (bible) 211₂₂
 Likhachev D. S. 192
 Lip'arit' 143₃₇, 144₄, 296₁₂
 Lip'arit, amirsp'asalar, son of Sumbat' 231₁, 236₁₀
 Liparit', son of Ivane 163₂, 173₃₃, 174₁, 176₉, 194
 Lip'arit', son of Lip'arit' 153₄₀, 154₃₈, 155₃, 156₂₅, 157₁,
 158₃, 168, 171₂
 Lip'arit', son of Rat'i 150₁₂, 152₅
 Lip'arit Orbeli 347₂₇
 Lip'arit of Tori 347₃₄
 Logothete 38₂₂
 Lolashvili A. 312
 Lomouri N. 121
 Longinoz from K'arsani 30₃₂, 54₂₂
 Lortkipanidze M. 9, 73, 125, 126, 165, 167, 168, 169,
 221, 225
 Luke, evangelist 47₂₁, 74, 228₅
 Luk'ia 159₃₁

M

- Macarius Catholicos 106₃₀, 107₁₂, 109₃
Maejan sp'asp'et' 40₃₅, 41₂₂
Mahat'lisdze 295₁₅
Mahmud ibn Mohammad 196
Makhat'la, son of Zart'iba 251₁₂
Malel, son of Kainan (bible) 211₆
Malik, Durbez's son (probably Torgul ibn Mohammed)
180₂₀, 196
Malik Shah 163₁₄, 171₂, 172₁₉, 174₁, 177₃₉, 191
Mama Q'ancheli 147₆
Mamikonians 120
Mammon 247₁₃
Mamulia G. 220
Manadian I. A. 122
Manase, son of Ezek'ia (bible) 211₁₅
Manase, son of Ioram (bible) 211₂₂
Mangu-Demur 373₁₃, 374₅
Mangu (Khan) 334₂₈, 335₂, 338₁₇, 346₂₄, 344₇
Manuchar, son of Abulasvar 159₂₀
Manuchekhr II, son of Shirvan-shah Afridun 195
Manuel Comnenos, son of Andronikos I 209, 234₃₀,
246₆, 280, 282, 311
Manovel, son of Dimit'ri 376₂₀, 379₃₂, 384₃₆
Maria, Archil's wife 77₁₃
Mariam, daughter of Bagrat' IV 162₁₇
Mariam the Queen, mother of Bagrat' IV 154₁₉, 156₃,
162₁₆, 219₉, 220₁, 225
Mariam, wife of King Rost'om of Kartli 6
Mark 74
Marquart J. 165
Marr N. 74, 115, 120, 123, 124, 126, 128, 131
Marta, daughter of Giorgi I 153₃₄
Martindale J. 137
Marushiani 244₁₁
Mary, daughter of Archil 114₃₂
Mary Magdalene 46₃₄, 50₁₁, 89₁₇, 252₅
Mashtots 115
Maslama Abib-ibn 114₂₂, 142₁₄
Mat'atan, son of Eliazar (bible) 211₁₈
Mats'q'vereli, the bishop of Ats'q'uri 156₃₁
Matthew Evangelist 74, 129, 138, 223, 281, 283, 284
Matusala, son of Enok (bible) 211₇
Mauricius Caesar 108₇
Maxim the Confessor 127
Melchizedek 239₁₈
Melikishvili G. 72, 73, 116, 117, 120, 121, 122, 124,
127, 128, 132, 222
Melikset-Bek L.M. 116, 120
Melik, Sultan of Khalt 205₁₀
Menabde L.V. 128
Meriban, King of Iberia 74
Mghvimeli 326₃₇
Mervan Ibn Mohamed 118
Meskhia Sh. 206
Memna 316₁₇, 325₃₉, 326₇
Met'reveli R. 10, 195, 199, 221, 223, 225
Michael (ArchAngel) 56₃₃, 86₃₉, 87₁₆, 123
Michael, Bishop 78₃₈, 80₅, 94₂₉, 102₂₈, 118, 129
Michael, King of Greece 158₃
Michael Panaret 125
Michael, Patriarch 238₂₂
Michael, son of Vakht'ang 381₁₁
Midos 367₂₈
Mihir, Stephanos's son 110₃₃, 111₁₈, 112₈, 113₆, 114₂,
131
Mikael 390₃₃, 291₁₁
Mikia, son of Iak'ob (bible) 211₂₂
Minorski V. F. 131, 132, 207, 396
Mirandukht', daughter of Archil 114₃₂
Mirandukht', daughter of Sagdukht' and Mirdat' 79₁₅,
80₁₂, 85₄, 97₁₃
Mirdat' 34₂₉, 35₁, 36₁, 94₃₉
Mirdat', son of Bakar 68₁₈, 69₁
Mirdat' II, Parsman's brother 70₁₇, 72, 74, 75, 77₆, 114,
115
Mirdat', son of Archil 78₃, 79₃, 122
Mirdat', son of Bakur 39₃
Mirdat', son of Vakht'ang Gorgasali 105₁₆, 106₁, 107₁₉
Mirian, Christian King of Kartli 9, 39₁₉, 41₂₅, 42₁₀, 43₄,
44₈, 45₃, 50₃₃, 51₃₁, 53₂, 55₁₇, 56₃₀, 57₁, 58₃, 59₁₃,
60₂₂, 61₁₈, 62₄, 64₁₄, 65₁₃, 66₃₂, 67₅, 68₁, 69₃, 70₃,
72, 73, 74, 85₃₁, 86₇, 87₁₂, 90₁₇, 106₂₅, 108₂₃, 111₂₄,
113₉, 119, 122, 123, 136₂, 138, 222, 290₃₃
Mirmiran (Amir Miran) 293₂₉
Mirvan 26₈, 27₂₆, 28₁₀, 29₁₀
Mirvanoz 41₃₅, 42₃
Mkhargrdzelis, 245₁₄, 249₃₂, 266₁₅, 271₃, 272₄
Mobidan, Bishop 78₃₄, 80₆, 116, 117, 118
Modist'os, Patriarch of Juresalim 213₇

Mogis ad-Din Togril 310
 Mohamed 110₁₃, 111₃
 Mohammed Prophert 246₁₆, 268₁₀
 Mohammedans 229₇
 Mohamed, son of Sakhak' 142₃₁
 Mokhtar, son of Robuam (bible) 211₂₀
 Morghul 369₁₂
 Moses (Bible) 18₃₇, 47₁₄, 53₁₄, 54₁₇, 88₄, 185₁₈, 227₇,
 264₁₅, 338₁₂, 378₃₁, 379₁₇
 Mose, son of Ierobem (bible) 211₂₁
 Mosimachus 257₁₂
 Movses Kalankatvatsi 131
 Moses Khorenatsi 71, 73, 120, 123
 Mosomakh 183₃₉
 Movak'an, son of Targamos 13₂₂, 14₁₃, 15₁₂
 Mtskhetos 16₁, 22₉, 23₁₀
 Mukha 330₃₃
 Mulid 340₁₁
 Muradian P. M. 123
 Murvan Gurk'leli 359₂₇
 Murvan Jaq'eli 160₃₇
 Murvan, the Deaf 111₃, 114₁₀, 131, 132, 135₆, 136₁₁,
 137, 213₃₆, 214₄, 223
 Mut'apradin, son of Saldukh 246₁₅
 Mutawakkil 165
 Mushel 212₁₅
 Muskhelishvili D. L. 116, 118, 122, 124, 126, 197, 222
 MzeCh'abuki 243₇

N

Naason, son of Aminabad (bible) 211₁₁
 Nakor, son of Seruk 211₉
 Nana, King Mirian's wife 42₂₆, 50₃₂, 55₃₀, 56₉, 57₆, 58₁₅,
 59₃, 67₆
 Naom, son of K'leop'a (bible) 211₁₉
 Nasir 373₁₀, 390₂₇
 Nasra, son of Guaram 143₄₀, 144₃, 214₃₅, 215₂
 Nasre 93₁₅, 94₃₉, 97₁₉, 99₅, 104₂, 105₁₅, 128
 Nasr-Eddin, son of Saldukh 252₃₀
 Natel, Beka's daughter 376₂₁
 Navroz, son of Arghun 382₂₄, 383₉
 Nebroth (bible) 14₃₁, 15₄, 18₉, 26₇, 56₃₂, 81₂₂, 86₂₇, 87₁₁,
 95₁₈, 112₄₀, 118, 138
 Nebrotid/Nebrotids 16₃₅, 29₁₆, 41₆

Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon 19₃₁, 71, 189₄, 239₆
 Neop't'olemeos P'ighas 384₂
 Nerse, Katholicos 68₂₀
 Nerse Nersian 113₂₄
 Nerse, son of Bak'ur 212₂, 221
 Nerse, eristavi of Kartli 213₂₃
 Niania 157₂₇, 158₃₅, 160₃₇, 162₃₇, 163₃, 173₁₅, 194
 Nikephorus, Rector 126, 169
 Nik'olaoz Gulaberisdze 288₃₁, 289₁₃, 306, 372₈, 373₁, 374₂₃
 Nik'oloz of Mats'q'uri 372₈
 Nik'oloz, Katholicos 345₂₃, 346₁₇
 Nik'oloz Samebeli 7
 Nikolozishvili N, 221
 Nik't'aniba 20₁₆
 Nimrod (bible) 227₂₆, 228₂₀, 238₆, 252₂₅, 260₁₃, 283, 284
 Nino 7, 8, 9, 41₂₆, 44₂₄, 45₂, 46₂₈, 47₃, 48₂, 49₁₃, 50₁₆, 51₉,
 52₁, 53₈, 54₃₉, 55₄, 56₁, 57₂, 58₂, 59₁, 60₅, 61₅, 62₂₃,
 63₂₃, 64₅, 65₁₃, 66₁, 67₁₅, 87₁₃, 89₆, 123, 222
 Noah 13₁₂, 86₂₈, 88₁, 96₁₀
 Noe, son of Lamek (bible) 211₇
 Novoseltsev A.P. 116, 120
 Nukardin, Seljukid Sultan 268₄, 297₄, 298₁₃, 299₁₇, 309,
 310

O

Odysseus 181₆, 197
 Odzrkhos, son of Mtskhetos 16₂₅, 166
 Oenomaus 243₉, 281
 Okota 320₂₇, 328₂₅, 334₂₆, 345₁₈
 Oligothos 42₂₆
 Oljat, wife of Vakht'ang 378₁₄, 380₆, 382₅, 384₃₆, 387₉,
 392₁₃, 395₁
 Omar 110₁₈
 Omar Kherkheulidze 7
 On-Khan 319₁₇, 341₂₈, 269₂₀
 Orbeli I. A. 130
 Orbeliani S. 117, 119, 120, 121, 123, 124, 126, 130,
 196, 310, 398
 Orbelis/Orbelianis 202₁, 207, 235₂₅, 280, 343₁₄, 344₁
 Orestes 181₆
 Oroz-Moroz 214₁₉
 Orjonikidze 120
 Ormisd 106₃₀, 108₆
 Ortok 230₅

Osman 283
Otagho Sharvashidze 242₁₆
Otagho, son of K'vabuleli Ch'ach'a 156₇
Ozia, son of Ioram 211₁₄

P

Padla Arevmaneli 144₂, 145₃₂, 146₆
Padlon, emir of Gandza 150₃₆, 151₂, 154₃₇, 160₂₃, 161₄,
163₁₃
Pakhlavanids 254₂₆
Palaeologus 364₃₁, 381₁₂
Palavand 256₆
Paleg, son of Eber (bible) 211₉
Panask'ert'eli-Tsitsishvili Z. 123
Papak 73
Papaskiri Z.V. 168
P'ap'una Orbeliani 7
Papuashvili T. 222, 225
Parejan 359₇, 380₂₃, 381₂₈, 382₈, 383₇
Parez, son of Iuda (bible) 211₁₀
Parnajom, son of Mirvan 26₃₄, 27₁, 28₃
Parnavaz, sp'asp'et' 35₁₇, 36₂
Parnavaz, King of Kartli 22₇, 23₃, 24₃, 25₇, 30₁₃, 42₁₆, 72
Parnavazid/Parnavazids 20₁₅, 27₁₂, 28₁₉, 29₂, 39₈, 41₇,
42₂₁
Parsman, Adam's son 36₃₁, 37₁
Parsman, Bakur's son 106₅
Parsman, nephew of Parsman 106₁₆
Parsman, Kartam's son 31₂₆, 32₁
Parsman, son of Varaz-Bakar 69₅, 70₄, 74
Parsman the Valiant, King of Armazi 34₂₉, 35₁, 36₂, 37₅,
72
Parsman Tmogveli 155₃₇
Parsman/Paruk, Persian soldier 82₃₅
Parvan, Sultan of Greece 369₄
Pashuto V. T. 116
Patch G. 9, 168
Paul (bible) 55₂₃, 56₂₄, 186₁₄, 317₂₆
Pelops 243₈
Penelope 228₂₇
Peris, son of Jojik' 218₁₅, 225
Perosh 43₁₀
Perojavr from Sivnieti 66₉

Peroz, Iranian Shah 113₁₁
Peroz, Mirian's son-in-law 44₂₂, 62₃, 65₂₃, 66₁, 68₇, 69₃,
113₁₁
Persephone 243₉
Peter 47₂₃
Peter, Katholicos 87₂₆, 88₉, 89₃, 90₅, 91₅, 92₁₂, 102₂,
103₅, 104₇, 105₃₁, 138
Pharaoh 338₁₂
Pilate (Bible) 47₁₉
Pilip'e, son of Nerse 213₂₃
P'imen Salos 375₁₇
Plano Karpini 397
Plato, ancient Greek philosopher 228₂₁, 250₂₁
Pletneva S. A. 120
Plutarch 227₂₇
Pluto 243₉
Pok'a 108₂₉, 109₄, 152₂₂, 218₁₂
Policarp 246₆
Polycarpus Logopeth 92₁, 93₁
Porus of India 188₁₈
Priam 181₆
Prinke R. 207
Pseudo-Juansher 115, 129
Ptolemy 120, 126

Q

Q'ara-khan 341₄
Q'ara-Sunghur 373₃₇, 374₄
Q'aukhchishvili S. 6, 7, 8, 9, 74, 117, 119, 125, 129,
130, 131, 132, 137, 168, 222, 284, 309
Q'azan, son of Arghun 382₂₇, 383₁, 384₁₂, 385₁₅, 386₁₂,
387₁, 390₁₄, 391₁, 392₁₃
Q'iasdin, Sultan of Greece 324₃₉, 328₂, 330₁₂, 332₃₆,
335₃₉, 336₉, 337₁₉, 344₁₂, 346₉, 369₅
Q'izil-Arslan 245₆, 246₁₀, 254₂₅
Q'uarq'uaire 316₁₇, 333₇, 342₅, 343₁₃, 344₁, 394₃₂, 395₈
Q'uarq'uaire of Tsikhisjvari 334₁₅, 341₂₃
Q'ubasar 241₁
Q'ubil Khan 344₁₇, 345₁₈, 346₈, 350₈
Q'uli 345₁₆, 359₁₇, 360₃₈
Q'urumchi, son of Alinaq' 366₂₂, 379₄₀, 382₂₅, 383₅,
384₄₀
Q'utlu-Arslan 238₂₃, 241₁₀

R

Rachel (bible) 243₇, 252₅
 Ragav 211₉
 Rehoboam 375₁₀
 Rakael Queen 211₂₇, 212₁₄, 221
 Ramin 243₉, 246₂₆
 Rapp S. 208, 220
 Rashid-ad-Din 397
 Rati Bagvashi 149₃₂, 150₆, 152₅, 168, 174₂₂, 217₃₉
 Rat'i Surameli 241₂₇, 242₁₇
 Rati, son of Beka 375₃₈, 382₁₃
 Rati, son of Bugha 376₃₃
 Razhden (Saint) 103₁₂, 104₁₇
 Rev II, King Mirian's son 44₁₅, 56₁₈, 63₉, 64₂₆, 66₃, 67₈,
 68₄, 69₃, 70₂, 82₁₉, 113₂₉, 119, 136₃₆, 138
 Rev the Righteous 38₂₀
 Rimos 345₁₂
 Ripsime 48₄, 49₆
 Robuam, son of Sala (bible) 211₂₀
 Robuam, son of Solomon (bible) 211₁₃
 Romanus III 154₁₇, 219₃₉, 220₃
 Romos 21₃₂
 Rost'an 392₂₂, 393₁₀
 Rost'om 255₂₉
 Rost'om, prince of Sham 245₅
 Rukn ad-Din 203₁₇, 208
 Rustaveli Sh. 169
 Rusudan, daughter of Giorgi III and sister of Queen
 Tamar 203₃₇, 209, 234₃, 238₁₇, 306
 Rusudan, daughter of Queen Tamar and David Soslan
 203₃₄, 205₁₀, 209, 270₃₅, 283, 285, 287₁₄, 290₁₇,
 292₃, 293₂₄, 303₁, 305₃₃, 307, 317₁₅, 322₁₃, 323₃,
 324₃₃, 325₂, 326₃₄, 327₃₇, 329₆, 330₃₂, 331₁₆, 332₁₉,
 334₈, 335₃, 336₃, 338₁, 343₁₉, 346₂₁, 347₁₆, 354₁₂,
 366₃₆, 367₃₈, 369₇, 396, 397
 Rusudan, sister of Giorgi III 239₁₀, 240₂₇, 243₂₇, 247₂₅,
 248₄, 250₃₅, 252₁₄, 255₂₃, 287₉, 290₂₂, 306, 374₂₂,
 376₂₀

S

Saba, Katholicos 106₁₈
 Saba, bishop of T'beti 154₅, 219₂₂
 Sabaoth 231₃₀, 287₂₂, 306

Sadaq'a 180₁₉, 259₁₃
 Saduk', son of Azor (bible) 211₁₇
 Sagdukht' daughter of Barzabod 78₁₂, 79₃, 80₃, 82₁₇,
 116
 Sadun of Mank'abardi 351₂₄, 357₁₄, 362₂₁, 368₂₀, 369₃₃,
 370₂, 372₃₇, 373₂, 374₁₇, 398
 Saghir K'olonkelisdze 242₁₉
 Sahak', brother of Guaram 212₁
 Sahak Ibn-Ismael, emir of Tbilisi 143₂₄, 165
 Sala, son of K'ainan (bible) 211₈
 Sala, son of Naom (bible) 211₂₀
 Salatael, son of Iekonia (bible) 211₁₆
 Salavat 243₁₈, 255₁₇, 282
 Saldukh Ezdin, ruler of Erzurum 202₁₇, 207, 230₆, 246₁₄,
 252₃₀, 279, 282
 Saldukid dynasty 208
 Salmon, son of Naason (bible) 211₁₁
 Salome, Trdat's daughter 44₁₅, 45₇, 63₃₇, 66₃, 68₁₂, 138
 Samar of Mtskheta 22₁₁, 23₁₀
 Samdzivari (aznauri) 251₁₈, 366₃₁
 Samnaghir 97₂₀
 Samoel (Katholicos) 213₁₈, 222, 223
 Samoel (Chorepiscopos) 143₂₂
 Samson (bible) 228₂₀, 233₁₆
 Samuel (bible) 202₂₅, 208, 237₂₈
 Samuel (Bishop) 87₂₆, 88₃₆, 89₁₂, 90₅, 91₂₃, 102₂, 103₅,
 105₃₂, 106₆
 Samuel (Katholicos) 108₂₁, 108₂₂, 212₁₁
 Sanadze M. 220
 Sarah (bible) 110₂₂, 132, 137, 147₇, 252₅
 Sara the Bethlehem 45₁₆, 46₂₄
 Sarchuk 320₂
 Sargis Jaq'eli 352₂₅, 353₂, 354₁₁, 356₂₈, 357₇, 358₁,
 359₃₁, 361₁₀, 363₉, 368₂₇, 369₂₂, 370₁₅, 372₁₃, 373₃
 Sargis Makhatelisdze 254₇
 Sargis Mkhargrdzeli (amirsp'asalar) 229₃₂, 235₃₃, 242₄,
 244₂₀, 250₈, 251₈, 253₂₀, 257₃₈, 263₆, 275₂₀, 291₁₄,
 293₃, 295₆
 Sargis, son of Varam 250₁₃, 251₁₁
 Sargis, son of Beka 387₄, 389₂₄, 390₅
 Sargis, son of Q'uarq'uaire 341₄₀, 382₁
 Sargis Tmogveli 293₃₈, 301₁₃, 332₁₇, 342₆, 343₁₃, 344₅,
 345₃₂, 359₃₀
 Sahib-divan 328₃₅, 362₂₂, 370₈, 376₁₃, 379₂₁
 Sassanids 73, 121, 123, 128, 198

Satkhiz 382₁₁
 Satmaz, son of Ezdin 258₁₄
 Saul 246₃₇
 Saurmag son of Parnavaz 25₁₄, 26₁, 29₃
 Saurmag, sp'asp'et' 79₁₁, 84₂₃
 Saurmag, Tutor of Vakht'ang Gorgasali 98₃₉, 99₁, 120,
 128
 Sau-Tegin, Seljuk emir 191
 Sefelia 38₂₂
 Segzi /Segzi-Badur 364₈, 366₁₅
 Seit, son of Adam (bible) 211₆
 Sekhnia Chkheidze 7
 Sem, son of Noe (bible) 211₇
 Senakerem 156₄, 225, 297₂₂, 310
 Seruk, son of Ragav 211₉
 Sevinj 243₁₉, 255₁₇, 320₂₅, 391₄₀
 Shadadid, Muslim emir 229₂₆
 Shaddadid dynasty 166, 197
 Shah-Armen, ruler of Khlata 229, 229₁₂, 233₃, 230₂,
 236₁₂, 251₁₈, 278
 Shalva from Kueniplevi 385₁₈, 386₂₈
 Shalva Khornabujian 348₃₇
 Shalva of Akhaltsikhe 259₁₁, 268₃₄, 269₈, 323₃₂, 324₅,
 333₁
 Shalva Toreli 204₃₃, 295₆, 301₁₃
 Shalva, son of Beka 394₁₅
 Shalva, son of Botso 359₃₁
 Shamiram 287₁₀
 Shanidze A. 121, 123, 125, 126, 192, 199, 223
 Shanidze M. 9
 Shansha 275₂₆
 Shansha Khosrow 243₇
 Shanshe, mandat'urtukhutsesi 321₂₀, 323₁₈, 328₁₄,
 329₇, 331, 332₁, 334₁₂, 339₈, 340₃₉, 341₇, 342₁₂,
 343₄₀, 346₂, 358₃₈, 363₁₄, 375₂₅, 381₃₉, 387₅
 Shanshe Mkhargrdzeli 385₁, 386₃, 395₃
 Shapur I 73
 Sharaghan 178₁₆, 196
 Sharinoz 243₉
 Sharvashidze G. 397
 Shatber 243₁₀
 Shikh 143₂₁
 Shinkaran/Binkaran bishop 79₃₆, 80₆, 85₁₇, 94₁₈, 117
 Shio Mghvimeli 130
 Shirin 281
 Shirvan-shah 181₁₉
 Shkhanik' 145₃₈
 Shoshiashvili N. 138, 196
 Shota 332₃₃
 Shota K'up'ari 332₃₃, 334₁₃, 342₅, 344₂
 Shota, son of Artavacho 236₈
 Shota, son of Grigol Grigolisidze 177₂₉, 195
 Shroshana 52₉
 Shurt'a, brother of K'virik'e 146₂₈
 Shushan, daughter of Archil 114₃₃, 141₅
 Shushanik', Varsken's wife 106₃₂, 107₄, 116, 117, 121,
 137, 221
 Sibuch, son of Khut'lusha 387₁₂, 391₄₀, 393₅
 Sidonia, Abiatar's daughter 52₃₈, 55₈, 56₂₅, 58₂, 60₃₂
 Silagadze B.G. 310, 312
 Silogava V. 196, 198
 Simeon Canaanite 31₃
 Simon, Bishop 70₁₂
 Simon Ch'q'ondideli 182₂₃
 Simon, Katholikos 107₁₂, 108₂₁
 Simon-Peter, Katholikos of Mtskheta 212₈
 Siosh 228₂₁, 231₁₁, 279
 Sirmon, son of Chormaghon 360₂₉, 363₁₅, 364₆, 365₃₁,
 366₅, 367₂, 368₂, 371₃₄, 379₃₉
 Sokman, son of Artuq 206
 Solomon 241₂₅, 255₂₆
 Solomon, son of Dan (bible) 211₂₅
 Solomon, son of David (bible) 88₁₄, 183₁₆, 184₃₅, 185₁₈,
 190₁₃, 201₆, 211₁₃, 227₁₃, 228₂₁, 233₁₆, 234₂₅, 239₁₇,
 240₇, 242₂₆, 262₈, 278, 280, 287₂₀, 305₇, 306,
 316₃₄, 336₇, 361₃₃, 374₃₂
 Sorghal 379₃₂
 Sosan 337₃₀, 343₃₃
 Sosana 45₁₃, 46₂₅
 Sozomen 123
 Sp'andiar 228₂₀
 Sp'andiat' Rvali, son of Vasht'ashab 20₁, 71
 St'epane of T'beti 215₄₀
 St'epane M'tbevari 145₇
 Stephen 49₁₅, 78₁, 110₈, 115, 131
 St'ephanos, son of Guaram Kuropalate 108₂₄, 109₁,
 212₂₇, 213₁₄, 222
 Stepanos Orbeliani 398
 St'ephanos, son of Adarnase I 109₃₈, 110₁, 131, 136₂, 137
 St'ephanoz, son of Nerse eristavi 213₂₃

Stephen Rapp 220
 St'epanoz Varjanis-dze, eristavi of P'ank'isi 155₂₈
 Strabon 71, 117, 122, 206, 283
 Sula, ancestor of Ivane Tsikhis-Jvareli 248₃₃
 Sula, eristavi of K'almakhi 157₁₂, 158₁₆, 166
 Suldus Chopan 392₁₉, 393₁₄
 Suleiman 131
 Sultan Ezinka 341₂₀
 Sumbat' Bivrit'ian 32₁₀, 33₃, 34₄
 Sumbat', brother of K'virik'e 159₂₅
 Sumbat' Davitisdze 6, 8, 9, 126, 137, 168, 211₅, 220,
 221, 222, 223, 224
 Sumbat', son of David 216₁₆
 Sumbat, mts'ignobartukhutsesi 230₁₈, 231₁
 Sumbat' of Art'anuj, son of Adarnase 214₃₃, 215₂₀
 Sumbat' Orbeli 342₁₇, 351₃₅
 Sumbat', son of Adarnase 216₅
 Sumbat', son of Bagrat' Regveni 216₃₇, 217₁₈
 Sumbat' T'iezerak'al 144₂₀, 145
 Surmaneli 252₂₉, 261₂
 Svimon, son of Akab (bible) 211₂₄
 Sybille(bible) 233₁₆

T

Tabor, Catholicos 109₃₈, 111₁₃, 213₁₆, 223
 Tahamtan 228₂₀, 243₆, 278
 Taicho 368₉
 Tamar, daughter of David Ulu 351₁₃
 Tamar, daughter of David the Builder 177₂₆, 195, 201₂₉,
 207, 231₃₅, 279, 280
 Tamar /Gurji-khatun, daughter of Rusudan 324₃₉,
 325₁, 328₅, 335₄₀, 370₃₈, 372₃₆, 396
 Tamar, Queen of Queens 6, 7, 8, 9, 122, 202₃₀, 203₁₀,
 204₁, 205, 208, 227₁₆, 228₆, 236₂₃, 237₇, 238₁₂,
 239₇, 240₂, 241₃, 242₂₆, 243₂₃, 244₉, 245₇, 247₉,
 248₁₁, 249₈, 250₆, 251₂, 252₆, 253₂₄, 254₁₀, 255₉,
 256₁₃, 257₂₁, 259₄, 260₆, 261₁₁, 262₂, 263₃, 267₄,
 268₄, 269₂₈, 270₅, 275₆, 276₄, 277₄, 282, 283, 284,
 287₃, 288₃, 289₂₃, 290₁, 291₁, 293₅, 294₁₀, 295₁₈,
 296₁, 297₁, 298₆, 299₁₀, 300₁, 301₇, 302₁, 303₈,
 305₂₄, 306, 309, 310, 311, 312, 315₂, 317₁₆, 324₃₆,
 395
 Tantalus 281
 Taq'a Panask'ert'eli 388₁₅

Taq'aifan Tmogveli 269₁₇, 273₅
 Taq'aishvili E.6, 9, 117, 120, 132, 220, 221, 222, 224
 Tara, son of Nakor (bible) 211₉
 Targamos 13₁₁, 14₉, 15₂₂, 16₃₄, 71, 264₁₁, 265₂₆, 284
 Tarkhan 82₃₈, 83₂, 255₂₈
 Tarsh, father of Targamos 13₁₂
 Tavpechag, Catholicos 106₆
 T'beli 295₁₄
 Tegutar, brother of Khan Barakha 362₂₅, 362₂₇, 363₁,
 364₂, 366₁₄, 367₃, 368₃
 Teodosi, brother of Demet're 147₂₉, 148₁, 149₅, 217₂,
 224
 Tevdore, Catholicos of Kartli 298₃₃
 Tevdore, son of Ch'q'ondideli's sister 176₂₂, 195
 Theodore, Patriarch 249₁₅
 Theodosius, Byzantine Emperor 122
 Theophanes 126, 131, 132
 Theopilact Simocatta 126
 Thomson R. W. 225
 Toreli 249₃₂
 Torgha 251₁₃
 Thosman R. 9
 T'igran 34₁₄, 71
 Tigna 374₁₂
 T'iret 17₁₆
 Titus, emperor of Rome 88₃, 181₈, 197, 326₃₀
 Tizengauzen V.G. 398
 T'oghan 365₃₂, 366₆, 378₃₆
 T'oghachar 379₁₅, 380₁₅
 Toghril-Beg 158₁₃
 Tolak-Demur 364₈, 366₁₅
 T'onghuz-Khatun 355₂₈, 356₁₁
 Toreli 233₄
 Torghva 348₁₄
 Torgul 197
 Tornike 198
 Totoshvili G. D. 132
 Trdat', son of K'osaro 40₃₀, 43₁₇, 44₁₄, 45₈, 48₃₂, 49₈,
 51₃₅, 67₈, 68₅, 69₃, 73, 74, 85₃₉, 86₂₄, 90₁₇, 119, 123,
 138
 Trdat', 29th King, Varaz-Bakar's father-in-law 70₁, 74,
 82₁₉
 Tsagareishvili E. 224
 Ts'arvez, son of Pok'as the Apostate 152₂₂, 218₁₁

Ts'ereteli G. 71
 Ts'irkvaleli, eristavi of Vezhini 159₄₀
 Tsintsadze M. N. 132
 Tsitsishvili I. 127
 Tsot'ne Dadiani 329₈, 334₁₇, 339₁₁, 342₅, 343₇
 Tsulaia G. 9, 120, 127, 168, 169, 206
 T'ughril Sultan 256₇
 Tukai, son of Ias-Bugha 378₆, 382₂₀, 383₂
 Tuli 320₂₇, 328₂₆, 329₂₂, 345₁₇
 Tumiana 243₆
 Turush 206
 Tushi (Joshi) 320₂₆, 328₂₁, 334₃₅
 T'utar 359₁₇, 360₃₈

U

Ubash 392₂₂
 Ulo Khan 344₁₈, 345₉, 346₁₁, 347₄, 349₁, 350₁₄, 351₅,
 352₃₂, 353₃₄, 355₄, 356₁₀, 357₁₅, 358₃, 359₉, 360₁₇,
 370₉
 Umar Ibn Abd Al-Aziz 131
 Uobos, son of the King of Khazars 17₃₂, 71
 Uplos, son of Mtskhetos 16₂₅, 22₉, 23₉
 Urdure 155₁₀
 Urmizd 107₁₃
 Urq'an, son of Chaghat'a 345₁₆, 350₁₀
 Usharab 70₂₄, 75
 Uspensky F. 223
 Uzbashian K. N. 130
 Uzurbeg 382₁₁

V

Vache K'arich'is-dze 153₃₆, 219₁₄
 Vache, son of Rev 38₃₀
 Vache, son of Gurgen Beri 155₂₈
 Vakht'ang VI 6, 7, 8, 9
 Vakht'ang Gorgasali 6, 7, 8, 9, 77₂, 78₃₉, 79₆, 80₉, 81₄,
 82₈, 83₁, 84₄, 85₇, 86₁, 87₂₇, 89₁₁, 90₄, 91₂, 92₃, 93₁,
 94₈, 95₁, 96₃, 97₁, 98₁, 99₅, 100₃, 101₅, 102₁, 103₁,
 104₄, 105₃, 106₂, 107₁₉, 109₁₇, 111₂₄, 112₃₇, 113₂₅,
 114₁₅, 115, 116, 117, 118, 119, 121, 122, 123,
 124, 125, 126, 127, 128, 129, 130, 136₂, 138,
 141₂₅, 142₁₂, 151₃₂, 164, 165, 191, 193, 199, 206,

212₅, 214₃, 221, 228₃₄, 229₁, 235₁₂, 238₂₈, 246₂₃,
 257₁₈, 272₃₆, 278, 280, 282, 315₂₆, 321₃₂
 Vakht'ang, brother of Demet're I 207
 Vakht'ang of Kacheni 257₁₀
 Vakht'ang, son of David Narin 378₁₂, 399
 Vakhtang, son of David the Restorer 178₃₉, 196
 Vakht'ang, son of Dimit'ri 371₇, 376₂₀, 379₃₀, 380₃, 381₂,
 382₅, 384₇, 386₃₃, 387₁, 388₁, 390₂₄, 391₂, 392₇,
 393₁₅, 394₁₀
 Vakhush't'i Bagrat'ioni 7, 8, 126, 137, 221, 222, 279,
 282, 310
 Varam of Gaga 323₂₀, 324₃₀, 328₁₅, 331₂, 332₉, 334₁₄,
 340₃₉, 342₅, 343₁₃
 Varam Mkhargrdzeli, Son of Zakaria 244₂₀, 249₂₆,
 250₁₃, 251₁₁, 257₃₃, 272₂₂, 276₂, 295₂, 317₅, 329₈,
 339₉
 Varash 75
 Varaz-Bakar, son of Mirdat' 69₁, 70₁, 74, 114, 118
 Varaz-Bakar, son of Barzabod 79₃₈, 80₂₁, 82₈, 85₁₅, 93₁₀
 Varaz-Bak'ur, son of Guaram kuropalate 213₂₂
 Varaz-Bak'ur Gamrek'eli 159₂₄
 Varaz Gageli/Grigoli 212₃₄, 213₃, 223
 Varaz-Mihr 91₂₃, 124
 Varazvard, brother of Guaram 212₃
 Varda Sklir 198
 Vardan 311
 Vardan Dadiani 238₂₄, 242₁₀, 245₁₃, 248₃₄, 249₅, 262₃₉
 Vardan, eristavi of Svans 162₃₇, 163₃
 Vardan, father of Ivane 236₇
 Vardan K'olonk'elisdze 232₂₃
 Vardan, father of Shushanik' 106₃₂, 130
 Vardanisdze 239₃₂
 Varsken pit'iakhsh 106₃₁, 107₂
 Vasht'ashab 20₁
 Vasilevski V. G. 127
 Vespasian 31₂₁, 88₃, 181₈, 197, 326₃₀
 Vezan 212₂₃
 Virgin Mary 205, 211₁₉, 220, 228₂₈, 260₁, 263₂₀, 264₁₆,
 268₁₅
 Vis 243₉
 Vivian K. 9

X

Xerxes, Persian King 230₃₅, 279

Xiphias 152₂₃, 218₁₂

Y

Yazid 142₂₄

Yuri, son of prince of Suzdal 306, 307

Z

Zaal 395₁

Zachariah (bible) 88₂, 237₂₇

Zachariah Panask'ert'eli 251₂₁

Zachariah, son of Shanshe 344₁, 358₃₄, 395₃

Zachariah, son of Varam 249₂₆, 250₃₀, 257₃₇

Zaden (idol) 27₃, 49₂₉, 57₈

Zakaria Asp'anisdze 203₈

Zakaria Mkhargrdzeli, son of Sargis 203₁₃, 204₂₆, 209,
242₅, 244₂₁, 251₈, 253₂₀, 256₂₃, 257₃₈, 263₇, 265₁₉,
266₃₅, 267₂, 268₂₄, 269₈, 272₁₆, 273₁, 274₃₃, 275₁,
276₃, 291₁₄, 293₂₇, 294₅, 295₁, 295₄, 301₁₉, 309,
321₂₁, 332₉

Zake 186₁₈

Zaren, son of Art'ashan 34₆

Zarkan Zorababel 243₂₀

Zateishvili S. G. 132

Zavilon 45₁₀, 46₁

Zenon, Leon's son 104₃₆, 129

Zeus, God in ancient Greek mythology 240₁₀, 281

Zirak 143₂

Zoe, daughter of Konstantin 154₁₈

Zorababel 211₁₇

Zoroaster 232₇, 279

Zviad 151₃₆, 152₂₉, 218₁₇, 225

INDEX OF GEOGRAPHICAL TERMS

A

- Abasha 101₂₉, 112₂₀, 132
Abastumani 223
Abkar 285
Abkhazia/Abkhazeti 31₃, 80₁₆, 84₃₂, 85₇, 93₃₃, 105₁₃,
111₁₁, 112₂₆, 113₂, 118, 120, 121, 126, 127, 130,
132, 136₁₄, 138, 142₆, 144₉, 145₂₂, 146₁₀, 147₄,
148₁₆, 149₅, 150₉, 151₂₁, 156₅, 157₁₂, 158₂, 160₂₁,
161₃₅, 162₁, 163₃₀, 164, 171₂₁, 172₃₃, 176₂₃, 179₂₄,
180₄, 182₁₈, 193, 196, 198, 202₂₂, 203₂₆, 207,
215₁₀, 217₂, 234₆, 249₂, 270₂₆, 276₅, 317₂₀, 327₃₈,
328₉, 343₅, 346₂₂, 347₂₃, 363₁₀, 377₂₆, 395, 396,
399
Abotsi 16₈, 24₂₂, 33₃₁, 68₈, 113₂₄, 143₂₈, 166, 283
Ach'ara 24₂₆, 142₁₁, 166, 171₂₁, 192, 331₁, 363₈, 364₁₃,
370₂₄, 373₇, 385₆
Adarbadagan 15₂, 19₆, 20₄, 43₉, 73, 77₁₉, 78₇, 85₂₆, 92₁₀,
107₃₈, 115, 145₄₀, 166, 217₁₄, 229₁₄, 254₂₈, 256₂₂,
274, 275₅, 282, 283, 284, 293₁₂, 308, 321₁₄, 323₁₆,
324₂₁, 325₁₅, 328₃₉, 329₆, 330₁₇, 344₃₃, 345₁₁, 351₇,
383₁, 396
Adigeni 193
Africa 188₁₆, 293₁₂
Agara 204₄, 205₆, 235₃₅, 249₂₇, 250₂₈, 261₁₃, 279
Agarak'i 103₁₀
Aghsartan 247₆
Ajameti 172₃₀, 193, 270₂₇, 285, 317₂₀
Akhaldaba 353₁₀
Akhalkalaki 155₃₈, 158₂₁, 159₁₁, 165, 166, 249₂₃
Akhaltzikhe 193, 259₁₁, 268₃₄, 370₁₃, 397
Akilisena 211₂₇, 212₁₄
Akiza 94₇, 103₆
Akstafa 395
Ak-Su 197, 309
Alania (Ossetia/Ovseti) 127
Alat'agh 345₇, 346₁₅, 347₂₁, 352₃₄
Alaverdi 145₁₉, 167, 198, 348₂₇
Alazani 16₁₁, 164, 193, 221, 234₁₅, 279
Alazani (valley) 167
Albania 115, 117, 167, 207, 282
Aleppo/Khalab 180₂₂, 197, 203₁₈
Alexandria 21₂₈, 262₃₀
Algeti 191, 197, 255₁₉
Almut 329₃₃, 338₃₀, 339₂₁, 342₉, 347₄
Amasi/a 373₂₈
Amast'ria 300₃₈, 311
Amberdi 156₂, 203₁₅, 208, 253₂₂, 323₂₉
Ameri 232₁₃, 235₄, 236₂₈, 242₁₇, 248₃, 250₅, 255₁₇, 261₁₁,
268₂₉
Amosi 364₄₀, 364₇
Anak'ert' 107₃
Anak'opia 111₁₅, 154₂₉, 156₅, 163₃₀, 294₁₇, 309
Anatolia 209, 309
Alaverdi 182₂₃
Anchi 219₂₃
Andzoreti 24₄, 86₃, 86₁₁, 122
Anisi 156₂, 157₃₅, 158₁₉, 159₁₈, 169, 182₁₃, 197, 198,
202₁₆, 207, 229₂₄, 230₈, 231₃₂, 233₂, 271₅, 272₁₀,
278, 279, 282, 285, 296₄, 301₂₈, 312, 324₂₉, 327₁₆,
328₁₄, 330₂₁, 331₂₅, 332₅, 341₁₈, 342₁₆, 398
Ankara 309
Ankiria 297₁₁, 309
Antioch 21₃₄, 53₁₀, 97₃₅, 101₃₆, 102₂₉, 138, 174₁₅, 198,
208, 246₉, 300₂₇, 311, 391₄
Apshileti-Tskhumi 111₁₅
Apsilia 127
Arabia 110₁₄, 233₃
Aradeti 161₂₂
Aragani 161₂₈, 176₂₁, 177₃₈, 195, 270₁₉
Aragats 205, 208
Aragvi 15₃₀, 16₁₃, 19₃₄, 24₁₇, 37₁₇, 60₃, 63₂₂, 78₁, 82₁₁, 95₂,
104₃₆, 110₉, 119, 130, 147₂₆, 161₇, 193, 220, 222
Araks 14₁₁, 44₁₇
Ararat' 13₁₅, 17₂₄, 71, 176₃₈, 229₁₄, 280, 331₂₅, 334₇,
382₂₁
Ardabil/Ardavel 204₂₉, 209, 271₃, 272₁, 285, 329₃₆
Ardon 119
Argveti 113₁₆, 130, 193, 150₁₃, 158₃₃, 160₁₁, 166, 168,
171₂₇, 194, 249₂, 381₁₅
Arishi 144₁₇
Armazi 15₃₁, 16₃, 18₂₁, 21₂₃, 24₄₀, 31₁₈, 34₂₅, 35₅, 36₁₆,
60₁, 71, 95₁, 104₃₄, 108₃₇, 129, 130,
Armenia/Somkheta 17₃₃, 19₁₁, 21₃₃, 23₃₉, 26₃₂, 27₈, 29₈,
32₁₆, 33₃₀, 35₂₁, 36₁₆, 38₁, 39₁₀, 40₁₅, 41₂, 42₃, 43₉,
47₂₈, 48₂₇, 49₂₂, 55₂₈, 69₁₈, 71, 72, 73, 74, 85₁₉,
90₁₆, 94₂₄, 97₁₅, 102₄₀, 103₂₁, 105₁₂, 106₃₁, 107₂₁,

112₂₄, 114₉, 115, 116, 119, 121, 123, 127, 142₄,
 143₂₄, 144₂₆, 149₃₈, 164, 171₃, 176₂₁, 179₇, 180₂₃,
 182₈, 189₃, 191, 192, 196, 197, 201₁₃, 204₄, 207,
 208, 221, 222, 232₄, 241₂₀, 254₂₉, 261₂, 270₂₈, 277,
 278, 279, 280, 282, 283, 297₁₁, 307, 324₂₉, 395,
 396, 397, 398

Arq'istsikhe 157₁₄

Arsiani 24₂₆, 69₂₉, 192, 242₂₀

Art'aani (Kajta-kalaki, Khuri) 16₂₉, 23₃₉, 24₂₄, 32₂, 34₂₂,
 103₆, 114₁₂, 142₁₁, 143₂₈, 152₁₂, 163₃₁, 201₁₄, 206,
 215₂₄, 218₄, 261₂₀, 270₃₀, 295₇, 309, 327₁₅, 330₃₈,
 341₂₂, 362₃₀, 363₁₆, 364₃, 370₂₆, 379₄₀, 385₈, 394₁₄

Art'aanis-ts'q'ali 193

Art'anuji 94₂, 126, 154₁₃, 156₂₇, 157₁₂, 158₂₆, 165, 171₂₇,
 192, 193, 214₄, 223, 370₂₅, 385₉

Artashat 72

Arukhlo 196

Arzan 310

Ashornia 179₃₇, 196, 229₁₁, 234₁₂, 278

Asia 222, 268₅, 345₁₂, 369₇

Asia Minor 118, 122, 126, 127, 284, 309, 310, 311

Asispori 142₁₁, 171₂₆, 192

Asp'ani/Isfahan 172₂₀, 193

Asp'indza 193, 215₁₅

Aspuragan 85₃₈, 107₂₀, 144₂₇, 212₁₀

Assyria 20₁₀, 246₉

Asurastan 21₃₃, 23₃₂, 26₆, 338₂, 369₁₀, 390₂₅

At'eni 146₂₃, 149₃₃, 155₃₅, 167, 367₁₆, 371₁₁, 383₇

Athos (Holy Mountain)

Ats'q'uri 156₂₈, 166, 289₁₆, 325₃, 366₂₀, 369₂₁, 372₇

Avch'ala 174₁₈, 184₁₄, 194, 198

Avlabar 281

Azerbaijan 166, 194, 195, 197, 207, 209, 223, 283,
 285, 308, 395, 396, 397

B

Babameri 94₇

Babardi 389₁₁

Babylon 13₁₃, 20₉, 26₃₁, 115, 222, 232₅, 237₂₁, 254₂₈,
 331₆, 344₁₉

Bachkovo 311

Baghavan 205₁₃, 209

Baghdad 42₃₆, 70₂₈, 77₆, 98₁₁, 109₃₁, 110₁₇, 111₄, 142₃₈,
 197, 212₃₅, 213₅, 222, 291₃₃, 293₁₂, 328₄₀, 344₁₉

Bailakan 197

Baku 122, 209

Baliq 320₈

Balists'q'ali 205₁

Balkan Peninsula 311

Bambeki 283, 308

Bana 153₃₆, 154₂₇, 171₇, 191, 203₂₄, 215₁₉, 218₃₉, 234₁₂,
 280, 295₁₃, 341₂₅

Banists'q'ali 191

Barda/Bardav/Berdav 14₁₁, 26₆, 43₂₆, 44₂₃, 62₄, 68₇,
 79₂₅, 93₁₂, 107₁₄, 113₂₈, 117, 142₃₆, 143₁₄, 145₄₀,
 176₃₀, 180₁₁, 197, 205₄, 213₂₅, 214₇, 223, 224,
 235₁₀, 252₂₄, 280, 283, 295₁₅, 309, 330₁₈, 331₂₃,
 332₁₃, 334₁₉, 345₁₁

Bargushat' 203₁₅, 208

Bashi 157₃, 168

Basiani 32₁₇, 152₁, 153₃, 157₂₃, 177₂₂, 182₁₀, 195, 203₁₈,
 204₃₂, 208, 217₃₄, 218₁₆, 244₅, 261₂₂, 268₃₅, 269₃,
 282, 298₃₆, 309, 310, 330₂, 388₈

Bato 334₃₅

Batumi 195

Bazaleti 26₁₇, 147₁₄, 384₂₆, 387₁₀

Bech'i 156₂₉

Bedia 14₂₂, 118, 151₁₇, 182₂₃, 198

Belakani 245₁₂, 282, 283, 360₂, 369₃₄, 375₁₈

Berduji 14₃, 16₆, 21₂₆, 24₁₉, 28₂₄, 77₂₀, 115, 180₇, 196,
 212₃₈, 223, 321₂₂, 395

Bethlehem 30₂₃, 252₇

Bich'vinta (now Pitsunda) 179₄₀, 196

Bijnisi 203₁₅, 208, 253₂₁, 324₂₃, 325₅, 328₁₅

Birtvisi 155₅, 158₂₇

Bivriti 203₂₀, 208

Black Mountain 185₃₃, 198, 203₂, 208, 300₂₅, 311

Black Sea 124, 125, 126, 127, 130, 164, 165, 192,
 195, 206, 224, 311

Boch'orma 144₃₃, 146₂₉, 147₁, 150₃₃, 161₁₉

Bodoji 155₃₀

Bolnisi 70₁₆, 103₇, 121, 206

Bostan-kalaki 16₄

Bot'ori 179₂₇

Bozhana 182₁₄, 197

Bulgaria 121, 185₃₃, 192, 301₂, 311

Byzantine/Byzantium 21₃₇, 73, 74, 75, 118, 121, 122,
 123, 124, 125, 126, 128, 130, 131, 132, 164, 192,
 209, 222, 223, 224, 225, 278, 281, 282, 309, 311

C

Caesaria 233₃₄
 Cappadocia 45₉, 123, 268₅, 297₁₁, 309, 369₇
 Casp'ian Sea/Sea of Gurgun 13₁₉, 14₂₉, 19₁₈, 126, 195,
 206, 217₁₄, 224, 234₇, 242₂₈, 254₂₉, 280, 285
 Caucasia/ Caucasus 10, 14₂₁, 16₁₂, 20₁₉, 21₉, 22₁₃, 39₁₂,
 42₉, 67₂₄, 69₁₃, 73, 85₃, 94₂₄, 103₃₆, 111₇, 113₄₀,
 114₂₄, 115, 116, 117, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122,
 123, 126, 130, 131, 137, 167, 217₁₃, 222, 236₃,
 328₂₃, 331₄, 366₁₇, 396, 397, 398
 Caucasian Albania 164, 166, 195, 197, 395, 398
 Caucasian Iberia 206
 Central Asia 208
 Ch'ala 296₁₇
 Ch'aneti 311, 385₇
 Ch'artaleti 26₁₆, 143₇
 Cheleti 16₁₃, 103₉, 164
 Ch'eremi 103₈, 103₁₉, 104₃
 Chikha 143₃₂
 Chkheres Mere 202₇
 Ch'q'ondidi 145₃₁, 162₂₈, 171₂₇, 193, 306, 360₈
 Ch'orokhi 20₂₉, 118, 124, 125, 164, 165, 177₂₀, 191,
 192, 195, 214₂₀, 224, 312
 Constantinople 21₃₈, 65₁₈, 86₅, 89₁₀, 90₂₅, 91₁₂, 102₂₀,
 112₃₉, 123, 124, 125, 143₃₄, 144₈, 153₇, 158₄₀,
 215₆, 217₂₃, 218₃₈, 220₃, 221, 224, 245₃₀, 248₁₈,
 254₄, 267₁₆, 282, 300₂₄, 311, 340₂₅, 364₃₁, 371₂₄,
 381₁₃
 Crimea 398
 Cyprus 185₃₃, 198, 267₁₅, 300₂₅

D

Daghestan 130, 164, 166, 197, 396, 399
 Damascus/Damask 137, 203₁₇, 206, 208, 390₃₇, 391₃
 Darial (Aragvi Gate) 17₂₇, 82₂₃, 111₉, 119, 143₁₇, 164,
 196, 329₁₀, 356₆, 398
 Debeda 166, 196, 206, 308, 309, 395
 Derbent/ Darubal/Daruband 14₂₄, 17₂₂, 18₄, 18₁₈, 26₂₈,
 42₃₀, 43₁₃, 80₁₄, 91₃₆, 94₂₅, 126, 143₁₅, 166, 179₃₆,
 182₅, 196, 205₆, 235₁, 242₂₈, 268₃₀, 272₂₉, 282, 293
 20, 304₁, 321₃₇, 322₃₂, 330₁₉, 332₁₅, 334₃₇, 348₄, 354₃₄,
 357₃₁, 358₁₉, 359₈, 360₃₇, 361₇, 376₂₈, 380₁₀
 Didgori 160₃₂, 197, 205, 206, 259₁₃
 Didoeti 26₂, 276₁₅, 285, 396

Didube 126, 248₄
 Dighomi 22₃₀, 94₃₆, 126, 156₁₂, 174₁₈, 180₂₅, 196
 Diyarbakir 230₃, 279
 Dlivi 149₄₁, 150₂₃, 158₁₇
 Dmanisi 143₁₇, 161₂₇, 163₂₃, 166, 180₁₅, 182₅, 197,
 233₆, 359₁₁, 361₂₁, 370₃, 382₂₃, 394₁₁
 Dolisq'ana 192, 214₁₈, 224
 Durdzuk'eti 18₁, 25₂₆, 26₂₀, 276₁₅, 285
 Dusheti 208
 Dvaleti 37₆, 43₁₂, 143₄
 Dvin 46₃₉, 48₂₈, 145₈, 157₂₂, 163₂₃, 203₁₃, 208, 229₁₃,
 244₂₂, 253₂₁, 260₃₅, 261₂, 270₂₈, 276₄, 278, 283,
 296₅, 301₂₉, 312, 323₁₇, 324₂₉, 330₂₀
 Dzami 391₂₉
 Dzerna 177₁, 195
 Dzorak'ert'i 151₂, 155₁₃

E

Eastern Anatolia 206
 East Azerbaijan 209
 Eastern Europe 208
 Eastern Georgia 166, 167, 191, 193, 198, 203₂₆, 278,
 280, 281, 285
 Eden 245₂₅
 Egrisi/Saegro/Megrelia/Samegrelo 14₂₁, 17₂₆, 21₂₇,
 23₁₇, 24₁₀, 25₆, 26₂, 29₁, 30₂₀, 31₃, 38₇, 42₁₉, 44₂₀,
 69₃₀, 75, 80₁₃, 105₃₀, 110₃₅, 111₂, 113₄, 114₄, 118,
 122, 127, 130, 131, 133, 141₃, 142₈, 162₄₀, 164,
 169, 193, 207, 249₂, 283, 300₃₈, 311
 Egris-tsq'ali/Inguri 24₇, 44₂₁, 72, 80₁₇, 93₃₄, 105₁₃, 106₁,
 118, 126, 130
 Egypt 21₂₈, 188₁₆, 198, 205₁₀, 237₂₁, 296₃₀, 344₂₀, 347₆,
 350₂₇, 351₁₈, 352₉, 373₉, 398
 Ek'eriskhevi 366₁₉
 Ek'letsii/Eleketsi 24₄, 86₃, 122, 154₄₀, 232₁₈, 257₁, 279
 Ekrinta 163₁₁
 Elasi 359₃₄
 Eligun 347₂₈
 Enguri 24₁₃
 Ephesus 47₂₉, 48₃
 Erevan 115, 116, 122, 123
 Erts'o 161₈, 384₂₆
 Erst'ukhi 175₁₄
 Erusheti 62₁₇, 68₂₂, 109₃₄, 165, 250₄

Euphrates 87₄, 222, 279, 350₂₉
Europe 188₁₅
Erzan-ar-Rum/Erzrum/Theodosiopol/K'arin 122, 192,
207, 208, 232₄, 244₁₁, 247₅, 248₁₈, 252₂₈, 279, 282,
309, 310
Erzink'a 203₁₉, 270₃₁, 248₁₈, 299₁₈, 332₃₇
Evlakh 309

F

France 74

G

Gachiani/Gardabani 16₇, 24₂₀, 25₅, 26₉, 70₂₆, 109₂₃, 118,
129, 135₂₇, 137, 142₂₅, 143₁₅, 146₂₁, 165, 176₂₉,
196, 212₃₆, 213₃, 222, 284
Gadeira/Cadiz 189₂₁
Gagi 161₃₃, 180₇, 196, 232₁₁, 249₂₅, 250₃₀, 279, 301₃₂,
321₁₆, 323₂₁, 324₃₁, 328₁₅, 331₂, 332₁₄
Galat'ia 297₁₁, 309
Galia 267₁₅
Galidzga 118
Gandza/Ganja 150₃₆, 154₁, 155₁₉, 157₂₉, 160₂₃, 161₃₀,
163₁₄, 166, 175₁₆, 180₁₄, 184₁₁, 195, 197, 202₁₉,
203₁₁, 204₃₆, 205, 207, 209, 234₁₃, 245₁₂, 250₃₀,
253₁₆, 257₆, 258₉, 260₁₈, 261₁₁, 283, 293₆, 295₁₅,
301₃₃, 308, 315₂₀, 316₄, 321₁₅, 324₃₀, 326₈, 329₃₈,
330₁₈, 395
Ganukhi 177₃₃, 179₃₂
Gareji 193, 291₅, 361₄, 370₅, 375₁₇, 377₅, 398
Garmiani 330₁₀
Garni 323₃₀, 324₁₇, 396
Garq'lobi 154₃
Gavazi 142₂₉, 144₁₇, 167
Gazir 114₂₁
Geguti 179₂₆, 182₄, 234₂₂, 237₉, 248₃₆, 249₇, 270₂₇, 271₃,
276₅
Gelakuni 203₁₅, 208, 233₂, 244₇, 245₂, 250₃₂, 253₁₄,
254₃₀, 258₉, 260₃₂, 272₁, 280, 282, 308, 331₂₅,
334₇, 360₁₅
Gelati 202₅, 204₄, 205₂₃, 207, 277₁₂, 303₁₇, 338₃₄, 381₇
Georgia 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 28₂₄, 34₂₁, 42₂₀, 71, 72, 73,
74, 102₃₁, 105₁₉, 106₉, 111₁₄, 112₂₄, 114, 115, 116,

117, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123, 124, 126, 127,
128, 129, 130, 131, 132, 133, 137, 138, 164, 165,
166, 168, 169, 171₃₁, 178₁₇, 191, 192, 193, 194,
195, 197, 198, 203₃₄, 205, 206, 207, 208, 209,
211₃, 220, 221, 222, 223, 224, 232₁₀, 237₁₄, 240₅,
247₂₀, 250₃₄, 263₃, 266₃₆, 267₁₄, 274₈, 275₂₂, 277₃,
278, 279, 280, 281, 283, 284, 285, 291₃₃, 293₃₅,
297₂₈, 303₉, 306, 307, 308, 309, 310, 311, 312,
316₃₁, 318₂, 321₁₆, 322₁₄, 324₂₄, 325₄, 327₂₆, 330₁₉,
331₆, 332₁₆, 334₉, 336₂₅, 338₃₁, 339₁₃, 341₅, 342₄,
343₄₀, 344₁₂, 345₅, 361₂₁, 368₃₀, 369₃₆, 379₁₁, 380₁,
381₂₁, 383₂₀, 388₈, 389₁₇, 391₂, 393₂₂, 394₂, 395₂,
396, 397, 398, 399,

Ghado 14₈, 20₂₈, 33₁₅, 93₃₂, 213₃₇, 223, 342₂₇, 363₇,
364₁₀, 366₁₈

Ghinon/Amu Darya 162₂₂, 169

Ghrt'ila 156₃₂, 158₂₀

Gilan 285, 371₂₈, 392₁₆

Gishi 177₃₀, 195

Gldani 294₁₀

Gomorrhah 173₂₀, 327₂₅

Gori 110₃₇, 194, 249₂₀, 280, 282, 381₂₉, 386₄, 392₁₉

Greece 19₂₉, 20₁₆, 21₃₆, 22₂, 23₃₆, 24₃, 38₂₂, 40₂₇, 43₁₅,
44₁, 53₃, 55₁₆, 59₁₃, 72, 77₁₃, 80₄, 81₁₄, 85₃₇, 86₁₅,
87₉, 93₃₃, 94₄, 96₁, 97₇, 103₂₇, 104₃₆, 105₁₂, 106₂,
108₇, 109₄, 111₁₄, 114₅, 141₈, 142₁₄, 143₂₅, 144₆,
147₂₉, 148₄, 152₂₁, 153₁₂, 154₃, 155₃₃, 156₃₆, 157₂₆,
158₂, 164, 171₂₃, 174₁₄, 177₂₅, 181₄, 185₃₃, 192,
201₃₀, 203₁, 208, 213₂₀, 215₁₀, 218₁₁, 219₂, 222,
225, 234₃₀, 235₅, 252₁₆, 268₅, 277₂, 299₂₆, 309,
317₂₃, 323₁₂, 328₂, 330₁, 331₆, 332₁₅, 333₃₅, 334₃₀,
335₃₉, 339₂, 341₂₀, 343₂₃, 344₁₅, 345₁₁, 369₄, 370₂₉,
374₂₅, 377₁, 381₁₃, 388₆, 395₉

Grigol ts'minda 161₂₈

Grui 149₂

Gudaq'va 151₁₈

Guleti 386₂₄, 387₂₂

Gulgula 14₁₆, 114₂₅

Gulistan 182₂, 197, 294₁₇

Gundzeti 360₂

Guria 113₁₆, 114₅, 249₂, 364₂₃, 373₆

Gurjaani 193

Gurk'li 366₂₅

H

Harran 206

Hellas 267₁₇

Hereti 14₃, 16₁₁, 18₃₀, 21₂₆, 24₁₇, 31₁₇, 41₃₃, 42₂, 44₂₀,
66₃₃, 69₃₀, 97₁₉, 107₃₃, 114₂₄, 115, 142₄, 145₁₄,
150₂₈, 152₁₅, 159₂, 164, 167, 172₂₆, 175₁₃, 193,
194, 195, 201₁₂, 204₃₆, 206, 212₁₀, 217₂₆, 222,
232₂₃, 236₁, 242₁₈, 249₁₁, 279, 285, 331₂₀, 332₁₀,
339, 360₁, 361₃, 368₃₀, 370₃₆, 383₄₀, 384₃, 398

Hidari 114₆

I

Iceland 125

Iconium 284, 309

Imereti 7, 239₂₉, 329₉, 360₉, 378₁₃

Imeria 232₁₃, 235₄, 236₂₈, 242₁₅, 244₃₂, 248₃, 250₄,
255₁₆, 261₁₁, 268₂₉

India 43₆, 87₈, 98₁₈, 101₂₂, 111₂₆, 188₁₈, 260₂₈, 284,
293₁₄, 325₁₅

Iori 32₂₂, 104₄, 107₃₃, 164, 172₃₂, 174₁₉, 176₃₀, 193, 221,
295₁₆, 296₂₃, 327₁₅, 332₁₄, 361₃

Iq'alto 187₂₁

Iran 73, 74, 115, 116, 123, 128, 130, 203₃₃, 209, 256₂₂,
260₂, 294₁₂, 320₃₄, 325₂₀

Iranian Azerbaijan 307

Iraq 196, 232₅, 248₇, 254₂₈, 256₂₁, 272₂₆, 274₂₄, 291₃₃,
303₂₄, 306, 321₁₂, 328₃₇, 329₁, 345₁₁, 367₁₁, 375₂₆

Isani 155₉, 156₁₉, 160₃₄, 238₁₂, 241₁₂, 275₁₂, 281, 326₁₂,
330₃₄, 369₃₈

Isavria 297₁₁, 300₂₅, 309

Isfahan 22₁₀, 193

Ishkhani 378₁

Israel 50₇, 53₁₁, 88₄, 89₁, 175₁₁, 231₁₃, 260₃₃, 327₂₉

Italy 188₁₅

Its'roni 153₃₀

J

Jachvi 35₃₅, 95₃₃, 160₇

Jaleti 65₃₂

Javakheti 24₂₄, 27₃₀, 34₇, 49₂₃, 68₁, 95₁₆, 106₂, 107₂₀,
110₃₇, 113₂₃, 142₃₁, 143₂₇, 145₃, 152₁₃, 153₃, 155₃₈,
156₃₀, 157₃₆, 158₂₅, 159₁₁, 163₁₀, 182₁₀, 194, 201₁₃,

206, 213₃₀, 218₅, 223, 224, 249₂₃, 268₃₀, 295₆,
301₂₀, 308, 327₁₅, 330₃₈, 339₁₀, 342₃₂, 352₁₆, 359₃₃,
366₁₉, 367₃₉, 368₃₀, 370₂₆, 371₂₀, 379₄₀, 395₄

Jeon 320₃₃, 321₈, 323₉, 325₁₅, 328₃₁, 329₂₃, 344₂₈, 362₃₉
Jerusalem 19₃₁, 30₂₅, 31₂₂, 45₁₅, 46₂₀, 47₁, 48₆, 52₃₅, 54₅,
55₁₃, 62₃₀, 65₁₈, 71, 96₂₇, 97₃₃, 100₁₄, 104₁₆, 108₃₄,
128, 131, 174₁₅, 176₁₂, 185₃₄, 203₁, 206, 213₆, 223,
237₁₉, 257₂₀, 267₁₄, 277₉, 280, 284, 300₁₈, 326₃₀,
390₃₆

Jiketi 84₃₀, 120, 146₃₅, 217₁₄

Jila/Tigris 87₄, 123

Jinvali 193

Jordan 46₃₆

Judea 30₂₄

Julfa 273₂, 285

Jurzana 122

K

Kabala 179₃₂, 196, 330₂₀

Kacheni 257₁₀

K'aeni 248₃₅, 249₂₅, 250₃₂, 253₂₅, 329₂₂

K'aghdzevan 278

K'akheti 6, 7, 16₁₂, 20₃₁, 24₁₇, 26₁₇, 27₄, 29₁₈, 37₁₀, 44₂₁,
63₂₇, 69₁₆, 70₂₈, 77₉, 80₁₂, 97₁₈, 103₃₆, 104₄, 105₂₉,
107₁₉, 114₁₃, 115, 122, 129, 132, 135₄, 136₃₁, 137,
138, 141₄, 142₁₇, 145₃₄, 146₂₂, 147₁₀, 148₃, 150₁₈,
152₁₅, 155₁₄, 156₂₁, 157₁, 159₂, 166, 167, 172₂₆,
174₂₀, 175₁₄, 193, 194, 195, 198, 201₁₂, 202₂₆, 206,
212₂, 217₂₆, 221, 223, 242₁₈, 246₃₂, 249₁₁, 251₁₃,
279, 280, 281, 283, 285, 317₁₁, 330₂₀, 331₂₀,
332₁₀, 339₇, 348₄, 360₁, 361₃, 368₃₀, 370₃₆, 377₄₀,
383₄₀, 398

Kalandzor 177₃₁, 201₁₇, 206

K'almakhi 114₂₇, 157₁₂, 158₁₆, 215₂₃, 341₂₇

K'alonero 297₁₁, 309

K'angari 159₅

K'ap'oet'i 145₉

Kerasunt 300₃₈, 311

K'araleti 194, 280

K'archkhali 363₈

K'ari/K'ars 163₃₁, 171₈, 192, 203₂₃, 204₂₈, 208, 234₁₂,
244₄, 252₂₈, 267₂₃, 280, 282, 283, 298₈, 301₁₂, 310,
311, 312, 363₈, 364₅, 370₁₁, 385₉

K'arnipora/ K'arnifor 104₃₉, 105₁, 129, 163₃₂, 177₂₂,
 182₁₀, 197, 203₂₃, 208, 244₅, 327₁₆, 341₂₂, 370₂₆,
 385₈
 K'arnukalaki 85₄₀, 95₁₅, 104₃₈, 122, 171₈, 192, 204₃₁,
 205₅, 209, 248₂₁, 270₃₁, 297₁₇, 310, 315₁₁, 332₁₀,
 339₁₁, 370₂₄, 382₄₀, 390₁₇
 K'arsani 30₃₂
 Kartli/Iberia 6, 7, 8, 9, 15₂₇, 17₆, 18₁₆, 19₂, 20₁₁, 21₁₀,
 22₇, 23₁₉, 24₁₃, 25₃, 26₄, 27₇, 28₅, 29₁₀, 30₁₈, 31₁, 32₂,
 33₁₀, 34₁, 35₁₂, 36₁₄, 37₂, 38₁₀, 39₇, 40₃₁, 41₁₉, 42₂,
 43₉, 44₈, 45₂, 47₂₈, 50₂₁, 51₉, 57₁₃, 58₁₄, 60₈, 61₂₀,
 62₉, 63₇, 64₁₅, 65₁₃, 66₂₅, 68₄, 69₇, 70₂, 71, 75, 77₁,
 72, 73, 74, 78₁₉, 79₂, 80₃, 81₄, 82₁₀, 84₄₀, 86₂₆, 89₃₇,
 90₁₆, 91₁₀, 93₃₀, 94₁₉, 98₇, 102₂, 104₁₆, 105₇, 106₉,
 107₁₅, 108₁₁, 109₁, 110₂₇, 111₁, 112₂₈, 113₄, 114₅,
 115, 117, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123, 125, 127,
 128, 129, 130, 132, 133, 135₂, 136₃, 137, 138,
 141₄, 142₄, 143₁₉, 144₁, 145₁, 146₁, 147₅, 148₁₆,
 149₂, 150₁₆, 151₂₁, 153₁₆, 155₃, 156₁₀, 157₃₆, 158₃₈,
 159₁₁, 160₂, 162₄, 163₁₈, 164, 165, 167, 171₂₇,
 173₃₁, 174₁₆, 177₁₈, 179₃₃, 180₆, 182₃, 187₂₀, 188₂₆,
 189₃₆, 194, 196, 205₁₃, 211₃, 212₁, 213₇, 220,
 221, 223, 236₁₀, 237₁₆, 242₁₇, 243₁₆, 249₁₁, 250₁₅,
 278, 280, 281, 282, 285, 301₁₈, 309, 327₁₇, 330₂₃,
 332₁₀, 338₂₄, 339₉, 342₁₁, 343₁₄, 344₁, 346₁₆, 348₂₂,
 351₁₇, 353₁, 360₂₀, 366₃₅, 367₂, 370₃₂, 371₁₁, 372₁₅,
 381₂₀, 384₂₅, 385₁₂, 386₁₁, 387₂₆, 389₆, 391₇, 395,
 396, 398, 399
 Karusheti 150₃
 K'asp'i 16₃₂, 20₂₉, 58₂₀, 63₃₂, 79₁₅, 80₁₁, 117
 Kastana 198
 Katskhi 158₄, 193, 194
 Kavazini 161₂₈, 182₉
 K'echroli 204₃₃, 209
 K'ezuni 162₅
 Khachiani/Khacheni 253₁₄, 261₁₆, 283
 Khada 276₁₃, 385₁₈
 Khakhuli 203₂₄, 259₁₂, 295₁₃
 Khaldia 218₉
 Khandzta 192, 224
 Khashuri 208
 Khazaria 14₂₆, 19₂₉, 43₁₁, 82₂₅, 96₂, 113₃₉, 242₂₉, 320₂₉,
 328₂₂, 334₃₆
 Kherk'i 19₃₅, 82₁₁, 113₃₀, 119, 147₂₆, 161₆, 384₂₆
 Khertvisi 20₂₈, 125
 Khidari 69₁₆
 Khikha 156₂₈
 Khingri 250₃
 Khirkhal 235₁
 Khisht'alan 179₃₅
 Khlat 202₁₉, 204₃₀, 205₁₀, 207, 209, 234₁₅, 278, 317₂₃,
 328₃₉, 330₁₅, 334₄, 341₁₆, 345₁₁
 Khodras 393₁₇
 Khoranta 14₁₈
 Khorasan 157₂₇, 158₁₄, 232₅, 237₂₀, 248₈, 254₂₈, 256₇,
 272₂₆, 274₁₂, 281, 282, 285, 320₃₃, 321₆, 322₆,
 328₂₀, 329₂₃, 344₂₉, 345₁₀, 364₄₀, 366₁₄, 375₂₂, 377₁,
 382₂₆, 383₃₅, 395₁
 Khornabuji/Kambechovani/K'ambechoani 32₂₂, 103₁₀,
 104₃, 155₂₈, 161₂₁, 212₂₂, 221, 254₆, 327₁₅, 339₇,
 254₇, 348₂₆, 360₁, 370₃₆
 Khovle 157₁₀
 Khozanikheti 18₇
 Khozaond 182₇
 Khrami 191, 196
 Khuani 15₃₃, 24₁₉, 44₂₃
 Khuaprid 203₁₆, 272₁
 Khulakhila 40₁₆
 Khunani (Mt'ueris-tsikhe) 15₃₅, 16₆, 17₂₆, 20₃₁, 28₂₅,
 31₁₈, 37₁₁, 43₂₆, 80₁₀, 103₁₀, 118, 129, 180₆, 196
 Khupati 156₁₀, 158₁₀, 179₂₆
 Khupta/Khopa 177₂₀, 195
 Khuzansheni 212₃₇, 223
 K'idara 231₄
 Kiev 120
 Kilikia 309
 K'imrai 101₂₈, 128
 Kindzara 49₃₂, 59₄
 K'isiskhevi 291₁₄
 K'it'ora 300₃₈, 311
 Kiziq'i 279
 K'larjeti 14₆, 23₂₉, 24₄, 25₆, 31₅, 33₂₆, 38₈, 68₂₀, 69₂₈, 70₂₃,
 74, 75, 80₁₃, 93₃₁, 94₁, 103₆, 105₁₅, 107₂₀, 109₂₇,
 113₁₆, 114₁₀, 118, 120, 124, 126, 142₁₀, 159₆,
 163₃₀, 164, 171₂₆, 177₂₀, 191, 192, 193, 202₂₀,
 213₃₈, 214₃, 217₂₄, 223, 224, 244₁₁, 248₂₉, 251₁₉,
 283, 291₁₀, 330₃₉, 353₃₇, 370₂₅, 385₆
 K'ide-k'ari 143₃₈, 149₃₂, 153₃₉, 158₁₈, 159₂₇, 163₁₂, 166,
 173₃₂, 176₂₂, 194, 195, 197, 202₃, 219₁₉

K'lisura/Kelasuri 93₃₇, 105₁₃, 106₁, 111₁₂, 113₃₅, 126,
130
K'odists'q'aro 54₇
K'odori 121
K'okht'astavi 342₄, 395₄, 397
K'ola 24₂₄, 129, 152₂, 182₁₀, 197, 208, 217₃₆, 224,
251₂₀, 270₃₀, 272₁₅, 276₄, 283, 300₁₀, 310, 317₂₃,
330₃₈, 341₂₂, 370₂₅, 371₂₀, 385₈, 394₁₄
K'ola-Art'aani 153₃
K'olast'ra 45₁₂, 46₂₇
K'otam 113₂₇
K'oshk'i 159₃₂
Ksani 20₃₅, 142₂₁, 150₂₁, 162₃₉, 307
Ktizephon 223
K'tsia 166, 255₁₉
K'ukheti 24₁₈, 44₂₁, 63₃₅, 66₁, 68₁₄, 85₃₃, 97₁₉, 107₃₃, 122,
165, 172₃₂, 193
Kurabebi 261₂₂
Kurdevan 179₃₅
Kurdiskhevi 113₂₇, 295₄, 301₃₂, 309
K'uruseti 300₂₅, 311
Kutaisi/Kutatisi 111₃₁, 113₁₈, 132, 151₂₂, 153₂₃, 154₂₇,
156₈, 158₁, 162₂, 163₇, 164, 171₂₇, 177₁₈, 186₂₃,
192, 193, 195, 196, 206, 207, 219₁₀, 225, 239₂₈,
280, 283, 285, 325₃₈, 327₃₈, 328₁₀, 330₃₂, 331₂,
347₃₅, 354₂₀, 358₃₅, 364₂₃, 368₁₁, 380₃, 396
K'vakhvrelni 148₂₄, 159₂₆
K'vertshobi 143₁
K'vet'era 159₂
K'virik'ets'minda 366₃₄
Kvishkheti 356₂₃, 379₃₉

L

Lakuasti 114₁₆
Lali 213₄
Lameda 95₁₄
Lamisq'ana 6
Lebanon 54₃₉
Lek'eti 18₃₃, 141₁₀, 396
Leningrad 120
Liakhvi 36₂₄, 37₈
Likhi 14₈, 24₁₅, 38₁₄, 142₈, 157₈, 158₁₅, 172₃₃, 173₃₆,
180₅, 193, 194, 230₁₄, 242₁₅, 248₃₅, 249₁₆, 278,

279, 311, 327₂₇, 328₁₃, 331₁₇, 335₂₉, 347₃₇, 359₂₈,
366₁₇, 368₁₀, 371₈
Likht-Imereti 334₁₇, 354₁₂, 378₂₈
Lizhata 179₃₅
Loch'ini 184₁₃, 198
Lomek'i 14₂₅, 17₃₄, 18₄, 119
Lomisa 385₂₂
Lomsianta/Akhaltsikhe 144₁₃, 166
Lomtagori 205₅
Lopoti 103₃₇, 129
Lore 177₃₇, 196, 202₂, 207, 233₆, 235₃₂, 236₁₀, 241₆,
244₅, 251₉, 253₂₁
Lore-T'ashiri 166
Lots'obani 145₃₃, 146₃₀, 147₉, 163₂
Lower Art'aani 201₁₃, 359₂₆
Lower Imereti 283
Lower Javakheti 165
Lower Kartli/Kvemo Kartli 116, 121, 130, 169, 191,
194, 196, 197, 206, 207, 220, 222, 229₉, 278,
282, 308, 309
Lower Vardzia 267₅
Lubia/Libya 300₁₇, 310

M

Macedonia 20₁₆, 21₁₄, 300₂₃
Mach'ara 364₂₁
Magogia 87₉
Makhata 391₁₅
Mali 370₅
Mamison Pass 166
Manasgom 182₉
Manglisi 62₂₀, 103₆, 109₃₄, 113₃₀, 116, 180₂₅, 197
Mankhut'i 206
Marabda 162₁₄
Maragha 307
Maranda 203₃₃, 273₂, 285
Marani 146₃₂
Mardin 197, 206, 279
Marghili 155₂₂
Margvi 24₁₄, 97₂₁, 127
Mart'q'opi 367₁₉
Mart'vili 193, 281, 306
Masis 13₁₅, 15₂, 17₂₄, 71, 235₁₀, 245₁₂, 261₁, 280, 283,
284

Mashaveri 197
 Maslata 195
 Mazandaran 328₃₆
 Melit'ina 95₁₄, 127
 Meskheti 153₁₆, 177₁₉, 182₁₉, 397
 Mesopotamia (Jazeera) 43₉, 73, 90₁₂, 96₁₁, 97₇, 106₂₁,
 107₂₄, 110₁₉, 112₃₈, 124, 206, 230₃, 232₄, 237₂₃,
 246₉, 279, 297₁₁, 350₂₈, 351₂
 Met'ekhi 202₇, 207, 357₁
 Miana 274₁, 285
 Midznadzor 363₃₄
 Misimiana 127
 Misreti 351₁₈
 Mglivani 215₂₇
 Moghri 149₂₅, 167
 Mogva 55₃
 Mogveti 94₃₈
 Mogvta 27₆, 50₂₇, 61₃₃, 79₃₆
 Mokvi 147₂₁
 Movak'neti/Movak'an 14₁₄, 18₅, 41₃₃, 42₂, 43₁₀, 44₂₀,
 69₂₀, 77₁₈, 78₅, 80₁₃, 85₂₆, 92₁₆, 107₁₀, 115, 125,
 345₁₁
 Mq'invarni 153₃₀, 219₁₁
 Mtatsminda 198
 Mtiuleti 113₁₆, 377₂₆, 379₃₁, 384₅, 386₁₄, 387₂₂, 391₇,
 396, 399
 Mt'k'vari (Kura) 14₆, 15₃₁, 16₇, 18₂₂, 19₁₉, 20₂₂, 21₂₄, 24₂₄,
 31₁₅, 32₂, 43₂₆, 44₁₈, 52₁₅, 60₂, 61₃₂, 80₁₀, 85₂₄, 95₃,
 103₂₀, 106₂, 107₃, 125, 144₁₅, 146₁₂, 149₃₃, 155₈,
 160₂₉, 165, 167, 174₁₉, 176₂₉, 179₂₅, 180₂, 193,
 194, 195, 196, 197, 198, 206, 207, 208, 220,
 222, 234₁₃, 249₃₅, 255₁₉, 279, 280, 282, 283, 284,
 295₁₇, 296₂₃, 309, 310, 316₄, 317₂₂, 326₄₀, 332₁₄,
 360₄₀, 361₁, 366₂₀, 391₁₃, 398
 Mtskheta 7, 16₁₉, 17₆, 18₁₉, 19₁₉, 20₃₀, 21₂₂, 22₈, 23₂₈,
 24₅, 25₄, 26₄, 27₆, 28₉, 29₁₃, 30₂₁, 31₂, 33₁₁, 35₃₅, 37₉,
 38₂₃, 40₃₄, 41₁₃, 42₁₉, 44₂₄, 47₁₆, 49₃₃, 50₂₅, 52₃₅, 53₂,
 54₆, 57₁₅, 59₁₄, 61₄, 62₁, 64₃, 65₂₀, 66₂₈, 67₅, 69₁₉,
 71, 74, 77₁₂, 78₁, 79₃₅, 82₁₃, 85₈, 94₈, 95₁, 103₂,
 104₂, 105₂₂, 107₃₁, 110₇, 113₁₈, 114₆, 119, 125, 129,
 130, 137, 138, 145₃₄, 150₂₆, 164, 167, 195, 202₄,
 207, 212₈, 213₉, 220, 221, 222, 303₁₆, 361₂, 367₂₆,
 372₃₁, 379₂₇, 394₃₄
 Mughan 330₁₉, 351₁₆, 352₃₅, 381₂₁
 Mukhatgverdi 155₄

Mukhnari 31₁₆, 37₁₃, 58₉, 82₁₁, 104₃₅, 119, 147₂₆, 160₃₄,
 177₁₂, 189₃₂, 195, 381₃₃, 384₂₆, 387₁₀
 Murghuli 388₁₄
 Muskur 235₆

N

Nach'armagevi 173₃₇, 177₃, 194, 230₁₀, 236₁₈, 249₂₀,
 250₃₄, 280, 302₁, 329₁₂
 Nadarbazevi 162₅
 Nakhch'evan (Karabakh) 32₁₈, 146₂₉, 147₂, 159₂, 204₃₅,
 235₁₀, 256₃₂, 260₁₅, 273₁, 275₈, 280, 308, 324₂₃,
 347₂₂, 362₃₁, 383₂₂, 393₂₄
 Nakhiduri 177₃₄, 196, 383₅
 Nast'ak'isi 20₃₅
 Naval 231₄
 Nek'resi 27₄, 29₁₈, 42₁₃, 65₃₆, 70₈, 103₁₉, 110₉
 Niali 218₅, 224, 250₃
 Nicosia 31₃
 Nigali 214₁₁, 363₃
 Nigaliskhevi 353₃₈, 364₁₄, 370₂₅, 385₆, 388₁₄
 Nik'opsia 205, 248₃₅, 268₃₀, 272₂₈, 354₃₄, 380₁₀, 398
 Nikozi 103₁₁, 129, 243₃₇
 Nile 87₂, 296₃₀
 Ninots'minda 103₇
 Nishabur 328₃₁, 308
 Norbed 182₉
 North Abkhazia 399
 North Africa 125
 North Caucasus 197, 199, 396, 398
 Northern Syria 206
 Nosari 103₃₉
 Nost'e 24₂₆, 33₂₅
 Not'k'ora 136₃₀, 138
 Nukhp'at'i 114₁₉

O

Odishi 242₁₇, 354₂₇
 Odzrkhe 16₂₇, 20₂₈, 24₂₅, 38₇, 105₁₆, 124, 144₁₂, 158₂₃,
 166, 249₂₂, 268₃₆, 270₁₄, 283, 285, 298₃₂
 Okota 328₂₇
 Oltisi 152₂, 171₈, 182₁₁, 192, 197, 217₃₆, 224, 234₁₂,
 280, 341₂₅, 342₂
 Op'iza 94₆, 126, 144₇, 192, 363₂₀

Orbantu 49₂₁
 Orbeti 155₁₈, 207, 248₃₄
 Orbi 15₃₄, 16₈
 Orch'obi 144₁₈
 Ordoro 157₂₅
 Ordzkhevi 33₁₅
 Orot 204₃₅, 209
 Oshk'i 203₂₄
 Oshora 359₃₄
 Ossetia/Ovseti 17₃₅, 33₃₃, 38₂, 40₃₂, 43₁₁, 80₁₅, 82₆, 84₂₈,
 127, 132, 143₈, 162₁, 178₂₁, 189₃, 196, 205, 247₂₇,
 320₂₉, 328₂₂, 334₃₆, 348₃, 350₄, 380₂₃

P

P'ach'anik'eti 84₂₉, 120
 P'alakatsio 244₈, 261₂₀, 282
 Palestine 110₂₀, 112₃₈, 128, 185₃₄, 188₁₆, 198, 211₂₇,
 212₁₃, 262₃₅, 267₁₄, 283, 284
 Panask'ert'i 159₆, 217₁₉, 224, 295₉
 P'ank'isi 155₂₈, 348₁₄
 Paphlagonia 297₁₂, 309
 Paravani 16₂₈, 24₂₃, 49₂₄, 106₂, 130, 213₃₁, 223, 282
 Parthia 72, 86₂₃, 229₁₅, 244₂₉, 278
 Parkhali 33₂₇, 388₆, 389₄
 Partav 309
 Partskhisi 155₁₈, 161₂₈, 163₂₆, 171₅, 191
 Peblaghon 300₃₉
 P'erjok'ap 85₃₇, 122
 Persia 18₁₃, 19₁, 20₅, 27₅, 28₁₃, 31₁₀, 35₁, 36₁, 39₈, 40₂₁,
 41₁₂, 42₁₁, 43₂, 44₈, 54₁₅, 77₉, 79₂₉, 81₁₄, 85₁₇, 87₁₀,
 90₂₈, 91₈, 92₅, 94₁₁, 95₁₆, 97₁₃, 98₅, 99₃₅, 100₁₂,
 101₁₉, 103₁₄, 106₉, 107₂₃, 108₁, 109₅, 110₁₅, 128,
 132, 159₄, 179₇, 180₁₅, 188₁₇, 189₄, 198, 203₈,
 204₂₉, 205₁₀, 217₁₆, 222, 232₆, 236₁₂, 252₁₆, 254₂₆,
 255₁₃, 256₃₁, 273₁, 274₂₃, 285, 296₅, 325₁₄, 331₆,
 334₂₉, 308
 Petersburg 7
 Petritsioni 192, 198, 300₂₃, 311
 Pidrazi 155₁₂
 Pilist'imi 90₁₃, 96₂₇, 97₇
 Phoenicia 188₁₇
 Pkhoeti 276₁₅, 285
 Pok'ani 156₃₃

Pont 13₂₀, 14₃, 42₂₅, 47₂₀, 72, 86₃, 87₂₄, 91₂₄, 97₆, 112₃₇,
 234₆, 242₂₈, 268₅, 369₇, 390₁₁
 Pore 260₂₈
 Punduq'adar 373₁₁

Q

Q'alani 370₄
 Q'aragaji 255₁₉
 Q'araq'urum 318₆, 320₅, 322₂, 325₁₇, 327₂₅, 334₂₅,
 335₂₇, 338₁₇, 344₈, 346₈, 350₈
 Q'arq'isi 253₁₅
 Q'azvin 376₂
 Q'ivchaq'ia 320₂₉, 321₃₈, 322₁, 328₂₁, 334₃₆, 348₃, 350₄
 Q'iziki 221
 Q'ubaq' 328₂₆
 Q'veli/Q'velistsikhe 145₄, 158₂₆, 159₅, 160₃₈, 171₁₇, 192,
 364₆

R

Rabasham 394₃₆
 Rabati 49₃₂
 Rach'a 193, 239₃₁, 242₁₆, 281, 328₉, 339₁₁, 342₁₃, 354
 23, 361₂, 371₁₆, 381₁₄
 Rach'a-Tak'veri 249₂
 Rakhsa/Araxes 177₃₃, 195, 203₂₄, 207, 208, 245₁₂,
 253₁₅, 271₆, 273₂, 275₈, 282, 283, 301₃₂, 312, 310,
 312, 329₃₇, 341₉, 362₃₁
 Ran/ Rani 18₄, 30₁₇, 41₁₉, 42₁₉, 43₁₀, 44₂₀, 62₄, 66₁, 68₇,
 69₂₀, 77₁₇, 78₅, 80₁₃, 82₈, 85₂₅, 92₅, 106₉, 107₁₀,
 112₂₄, 114₂₁, 115, 143₂₄, 151₅, 159₃₅, 166, 181₃₅,
 197, 207, 232₁₀, 244₇, 246₃₂, 252₂₄, 255₃, 256₃₂,
 257₆, 261₁₆, 280, 282, 283, 308
 Rekha 36₂₄, 142₃₃
 Rekhula 307
 Rioni 24₉, 72, 127, 193, 196
 Rom/Rome 21₃₅, 45₁₁, 46₁₉, 48₃, 56₁₁, 65₁₂, 72, 73, 74,
 87₉, 188₁₅
 Rom-Gur 272₂₆, 274₂₀, 285, 345₁₀, 350₁₂, 308
 Romos 345₁₃
 Rugeti 366₃₂
 Ruisi 158₆, 194
 Rum/Rumi 297₄, 309
 Russia 289₂₄, 290₁, 320₂₉, 328₂₂, 334₃₇, 348₃, 350₄

Rustavi 16₄, 20₃₁, 68₁₅, 70₈, 85₃₃, 95₃₂, 103₇, 104₃₂, 160₂₂,
161₂₈, 163₂, 176₂₁, 177₁₂, 193, 195, 251₁₀

S

Sabastan 60₂₇

Sabot'ari 148₃₇

Sadziori 114₁₄

Saguramo 198

Saingilo 194, 283

Samamplo 166

Samarkand 162₂₃, 293₂₀, 328₂₄

Samgori 138

Samison 300₃₈, 311

Samokalako 156₉, 171₂₇, 193, 249₂

Samshvilde 15₃₄, 17₂₅, 20₃₁, 24₂₁, 26₉, 29₁₂, 37₁₁, 41₂₃,
68₈, 70₅, 78₂₇, 97₂₀, 116, 155₁₃, 159₂₅, 162₁₃, 163₁,
166, 171₂, 176₂₁, 177₁, 191, 195, 238₁₆, 279, 281,
321₃₆, 334₂₂, 388₂, 394₁₂

Samtavis 290₃₄, 291₁₁, 307

Samtskhe 24₂₆, 33₁₅, 124, 144₁₂, 145₂, 147₃₃, 163₆, 166,
171₂₇, 193, 215₁₂, 218₅, 224, 242₂₁, 248₃₁, 249₆,
280, 295₈, 298₃₂, 327₁₇, 330₃₈, 332₂₀, 339₁₀, 341₂₃,
342₂₇, 352₂₆, 354₁, 356₃₇, 358₃₃, 359₂₀, 369₂₂, 370₁₅,
372₁₃, 373₅, 379₃₀, 380₁, 382₃₉, 386₄, 385₆, 387₃₇,
388₅, 389₆, 394₃₂

Sapurtsle 37₁₇, 49₃₂

Sark'ine 19₂₆, 20₃₀, 21₃

Sasireti 157₅

Sazvere 146₉

Serbia 348₄

Sevan 208, 280, 282

Sevast'/Sevast'ia 297₂₄, 332₃₇

Sevgelameji 179₃₈

Shaburan/Shabran 182₅, 197, 235₆

Shak'i s114₂₃

Sham/Syria 19₂₉, 43₉, 71, 73, 96₁₁, 110₁₉, 126, 127, 128,
185₃₃, 198, 203₂₀, 207, 208, 230₃, 232₄, 237₂₁,
245₅, 279, 282, 307, 311, 341₁, 350₂₈, 351₂, 369₄,
377₁, 390₂₅, 291₃, 394₃₅

Shamakhia 181₁₉, 182₂₀, 197

Shamkhor/ Shankor 143₁₆, 151₅, 166, 204₃₆, 209,
253₁₇, 257₂, 260₂₃, 293₆, 308

Shat'berdi 192

Sharbani 244₃₃, 358₁₁

Shavsheti 138, 142₁₁, 150₁, 154₅, 156₃₄, 159₆, 163₃₀,
171₁₀, 192, 202₂₀, 213₃₄, 215₂₃, 218₃₅, 219₂₁, 223,
224, 244₁₁, 248₂₉, 251₁₉, 268₃₆, 295₉, 330₃₈, 353₃₇,
354₉, 356₃₇, 363₈, 370₂₅, 385₆

Shavshuri 363₃₈

Shertulni 160₁₉

Shida Kartli/Inner Kerti 16₃₃, 17₂₆, 20₂₇, 24₃₀, 31₁₆, 35₁₈,
36₂₃, 97₁₈, 129, 130, 165, 167, 207, 220, 278

Shimshat' 102₁, 126

Shio-Mghvime 195, 198

Shirak 32₁₇, 230₁₇

Shirimni 152₄

Shirvan 177₂₆, 179₇, 181₁₉, 182₁, 189₃, 195, 197, 198,
201₁₅, 202₂₄, 205₁₂, 206, 207, 217₁₄, 234₁₆, 235₁,
255₅, 280, 282, 283, 303₄₀, 321₃₇, 330₂₀, 345₁₁,
359₁₂, 361₃, 396

Shobo 161₃

Shorap'ani 24₁₆, 114₄, 133

Sht'ori 155₂₉

Shulaveri 114₁₂, 206

Shura 146₃₁, 147₈, 261₁

Siaka 352₃₄, 360₁₄

Siba 359₁₅, 360₁₄, 361₉, 367₁₇, 369₃₇

Sik'ila 96₁₇, 127

Sinai Mountain 137, 185₃₅, 198, 208, 223, 234₁₈, 280,
300₁₇, 310

Sind/Sindia 87₉, 98₂₅, 101₁₇, 111₂₆, 258₂, 284

Sinop' 300₃₈

Siskhlis Mutseli 261₂₃

Siuniq 208, 209, 212₁₀

Sivnieti 66₉, 144₂₆

Skoretiskhevi 379₃₁, 380₁₆

Sk'vireti 16₈, 24₂₁, 149₃₃

Somkhiti (the southern part of eastern Georgia) 93₃₉,
206, 211₂₈, 212₁₀, 217₁₅, 221, 232₁₁, 235₃₁, 241₁₉,
242₅, 246₃₀, 249₁₁, 250₁₈, 279, 280, 281, 283,
293₃₀, 296₂₅, 308, 321₁₈, 326₁, 327₁₄, 329₁₄, 330₂₀,
332₁₀, 339₉, 352₃₉, 360₂₁, 372₁₅, 384₂₁, 388₂, 389₆,
394₁₆, 395

Southern Georgia 221, 279, 283

Southern Kartli 280, 281

South-Western Georgia 285

Sp'eri 15₃₃, 16₂₀, 21₂₆, 90₃₂, 104₃₇, 106₃, 109₂₇, 124,
182₁₀, 192, 197, 242₂₈, 295₉, 301₃₃, 312, 385₆,
389₁₁, 390₆

St'arivi 202₂₆
 Stepanavan 196
 Stephants'minda 115, 385₂₈
 Sujeti 172₃₁, 193
 Sunja 119
 Sukhumi/Tskhumi 121, 132, 285
 Surami 208, 231₁, 334₁₄, 353₆, 356₂₃, 391₂₈, 396
 Surmani 260₃₅, 283
 Svaneti 24₁₀, 26₂, 72, 97₂₀, 113₁₆, 127, 202₂₃, 207, 208,
 242₁₆, 249₁, 399
 Sve'itskhoveli 103₃, 105₂₂, 129, 130
 Sveri 160₁₂
 Syria/Sham

T
 T'abakhmela 252₇, 259₄, 277₅, 283, 348₃₃, 391₁₄
 Tabatskuri 197
 Tabori 156₁₈
 Tak'veri 38₁₂, 97₂₁, 113₁₆, 127, 239₃₁, 242₁₆, 281
 Talinjakar 182₉
 T'ao 14₆, 33₂₇, 114₂₇, 120, 124, 142₁₁, 146₆, 148₃, 149₁₂,
 150₂₃, 151₃₆, 152₂₆, 153₃, 154₂₅, 159₆, 165, 167,
 171₇, 177₁₆, 191, 192, 201₁₄, 215₂₃, 217₆, 218₃₅,
 224, 248₂₉, 251₁₇, 282, 327₁₆, 339₃₉, 341₂₂, 368₃₁,
 370₂₅, 378₁, 385₈, 388₈, 389₁₅
 T'ao-K'larjeti 165, 206, 220, 224, 280
 T'arov 85₃₉, 114₂₃
 T'ashir 24₂₂, 27₂₂, 113₂₄, 143₂₈, 201₁₃, 207, 206, 235₃₅,
 283, 284, 295₄
 Tashists'q'ali 166
 T'ashisk'ari 16₂₇, 24₂₅, 105₁₂, 106₃, 129
 Tataria 376₃₇, 379₃₀, 380₁₅
 Taurus 71
 Tavriz 273₂₅, 274₂, 285, 329₃₅, 383₁, 390₃₉, 394₇, 395₁₆
 T'beti 136₂₈, 138, 150₂, 154₅, 165, 166, 192, 219₂₂, 224
 Tbilisi (Tpilisi) 5, 16₂₀, 22₃₁, 24₁₉, 69₁₉, 95₃, 95₃₃, 103₂₉,
 104₃₄, 105₃₀, 108₂₂, 109₁, 113₃₀, 115, 124, 126,
 128, 129, 130, 131, 138, 141₁₂, 142₄, 144₂₉, 154₄₀,
 155₄, 156₆, 157₃₃, 160₇, 161₂₅, 164, 165, 168, 169,
 176₂₁, 180₁₄, 181₁₆, 184₆, 191, 193, 194, 195, 196,
 197, 198, 201₁₂, 206, 207, 212₈, 213₁, 221, 222,
 229₁₉, 235₃₀, 238₁₃, 243₁₆, 244₃, 246₃₀, 248₄, 249₉,
 272₃₃, 275₉, 280, 281, 283, 293₃₈, 294₁, 295₃₁,
 299₁₆, 302₁₁, 316₃₁, 317₁, 325₃₇, 326₂, 327₁₄, 328₃₈,
 329₆, 330₃₂, 332₁₃, 334₉, 335₂₉, 338₁₆, 339₉, 346₁₆,
 347₂₅, 348₉, 351₇, 352₁₁, 354₃₃, 355₂₃, 356₂₁, 359₄,
 360₂₀, 361₄, 362₈, 368₂₉, 370₃₇, 372₁₅, 379₂₆, 380₆,
 384₁₁, 385₁₅, 386₁₄, 387₃, 388₂, 391₁₀, 394₂₁, 395₉,
 396, 397, 399
 Tehran 222
 Telavi 161₂₀, 164, 193, 369₃₄
 Terek 119, 196
 T'erunak'al 182₉
 Tetrists'q'aro 191
 Thrace 300₂₄
 Tianeti 82₂₂, 119, 150₂₇, 155₂₉, 384₂₆
 Tighva 149₂₂, 201₂₉, 207
 T'igranskert/T'igranokert 71
 T'igri/Farkin 71, 279, 310
 T'imgarago 46₁₂
 Tkhoti 63₃₂
 Tmogvi 145₃, 163₃, 165, 173₁₄, 194, 217₂₁, 241₉, 250₄,
 251₇, 332₁₇
 Tori 159₆, 323₃₁, 332₁₇, 333₂, 342₆, 347₃₄
 T'ornadzia 250₂
 T'q'et'ba 14₁₆, 16₁₃
 T'rapezund/Trabzon/Trebizond 122, 123, 124, 152₁₉,
 218₉, 300₃₈, 311, 370₃₀, 376₁₉
 Trialeti 29₂₅, 34₁₆, 113₂₄, 143₂₈, 148₄₀, 149₃₃, 150₃, 152₁₃,
 153₃₀, 158₂₈, 159₅, 166, 173₃₂, 176₂₂, 177₃, 180₂₅,
 182₁₂, 193, 195, 197, 218₆, 219₁₁, 249₂₃, 282, 308,
 327₁₅, 330₃₇, 359₃₉, 367₁, 368₁₀, 384₂₅, 391₉
 Trialeti 116
 Trimikos 21₃₅
 Tseli (Lake) 34₁₀, 276₄, 285
 Ts'erepta 154₄
 Tsik'are 385₂₃, 386₁₀
 Ts'ikavali' 149₂
 Tskhavat'i 143₈, 385₂₁, 386₈
 Tskhrazmiskhevi 385₂₁, 386₂₇
 Tsikhedidi 20₃₀, 62₃
 Tsikhegoji 24₁₁, 72, 80₁₈, 85₈, 111₁₂, 112₁₅, 113₃₆, 118,
 132
 Tsikhisjvari 156₂₈, 158₂₃, 249₂₁, 332₂₂, 341₂₃, 354₁, 380₁₁
 Ts'ilkani 68₁₆, 160₃₄
 Tskhenistsq'ali 112₂₀
 Tskhinvali 282
 Tsobeni 65₂₈
 Ts'q'arostavi 106₄

Ts'unda 16₂₉, 20₂₈, 24₂₃, 25₅, 27₃₁, 32₁, 33₁₆, 34₂₂, 38₈,
62₁₉, 68₂₂, 105₁₂, 165
Ts'uketi 114₁₅, 133, 195
Tukharisi 16₂₈, 17₂₅, 20₂₉, 21₁, 68₂₀, 69₂₈, 91₁₀, 93₃₁, 124,
155₃₈, 164
Turan 321₁₄, 325₁₅, 328₁₉, 328₂₅, 344₂₈, 350₁₁, 354₆,
362₂₇, 364₃₆
Turkey 125, 191, 192, 195, 197, 198, 206, 208, 223,
224, 328₁₉, 362₂₇
Tusheti 65₃₃

U

Ujarma 7, 39₆, 44₂₁, 45₇, 63₃₇, 66₄, 97₂₂, 103₇, 104₁,
107₃₃, 110₃₇, 111₂₇, 127, 128, 138, 144₂₉, 146₂₉,
161₂₄, 164, 166, 213₉, 223, 235₁₂, 360₈
Ukumia 157₂₅
Umedeuli 156₁₃
Uplistsikhe 16₃₂, 20₂₉, 29₁₉, 58₂₀, 127, 142₃₄, 144₂₁, 145₂,
146₃, 148₁₇, 149₂, 157₂₉, 158₂₆, 165, 167
Upper Imereti 283
Upper-Javakheti 165
Upper K'aghdzevan 229₁₁, 278
Upper Kartli 130, 165, 220, 229₉, 250₁₇, 278, 282, 309
Upper Vardzia 267₅
Urbnisi 16₃₂, 20₂₉, 50₂₂, 194
Urha/Edessa 98₈, 101₃₆, 128
Urmi 285
Utaghubo 163₄
Utia 284
Uzheni 285, 376₁₀, 382₃₇, 393₁₄

V

Vaedzor 144₂₆
Vainakhs 399
Valarsbad 48₂₇

Valashk'ert 330₁₆, 341₅
Vani 263₂₄, 278, 284
Vanand 32₁₇, 163₃₂, 203₂₃
Vardzia 267₆, 268₃₁, 269₂₈, 270₃, 272₃₆, 298₄, 345₂₉,
383₂₀
Varzakar 159₃₂
Vashlovani 251₁₇, 370₂₅, 388₁₃, 389₆
Vasपुरakan 146₂₀
Velistsikhe 104₄
Vestes 156₂
Vezhini 145₁₅, 159₄₀, 167, 172₂₉, 193
Viruzikobad 122

W

Western Asia 118
Western Georgia 167, 168, 193, 196, 203₂₆, 280, 281
Western Iran 306

Y

Yemen 110₁₄

Z

Zadeni 27₃,
Zakai 46₁₂
Zanavi 19₃₄, 20₃₀
Zanduk'iskhevi 387₂₆
Zangan 274₆, 382₃₀
Zarga 46₁₂
Zarma 46₁₂
Zedazeni 174₂₁, 194
Zenjan 285
Zest'aponi 193
Zhaleti 161₁₆
Zhinovani 251₁₁, 384₅, 386₃₄

ETHNIC DESIGNATIONS

A

Abashs 78₆, 96₃₈, 98₁₁, 101₂₉, 112₁₇
Abazin 120
Abkhazian 111₄₀, 123, 125, 127, 130, 132, 142₅, 143₁,
144₈, 145₁₄, 146₁, 148₂₀, 150₁₂, 151₂₆, 155₅, 161₁,
166, 167, 244₂, 256₂, 269₈, 282, 316₈, 329₉, 332₃₉,
333₂₇, 342₁₂, 347₃₅, 378₁₂, 379₃₆, 397
Abyssinian 237₂₂
Achean 181₅
Adarbaganian 324₁₉, 329₃₅
Agarian/Agarian 110₁₆, 111₃, 112₂, 260₃
Akhaltikhian 323₃₅, 333₂₉, 370₁₂
Alemanian 237₁₉
Almutian/Mulid 338₂₉, 339₁₆, 340₃₆, 347₆
Armenian 6, 8, 13₁₀, 19₂, 20₂, 23₃₄, 27₂₂, 28₂₄, 29₂₂, 30₆,
31₁₂, 32₁₀, 33₇, 34₁, 35₁₀, 36₃, 38₅, 39₁₃, 40₁, 43₁₇,
45₈, 46₃₉, 48₂₈, 49₁₁, 67₉, 68₄, 69₁₁, 71, 82₁₉, 86₆,
91₃₆, 98₄, 101₄₀, 115, 120, 121, 123, 127, 131,
143₃₀, 144₄, 150₄₀, 155₁₃, 156₃, 157₁₅, 159₂₂, 166,
187₁₅, 229₁₂, 251₉, 263₃₀, 264₃, 265₈, 266₁₃, 267₁,
275₂₄, 277, 283, 284, 291₁₈, 296₄, 307, 311, 355₂₄,
370₁₄, 397, 398
Arab/Arabian 6, 9, 28₁₂, 117, 118, 119, 125, 127, 128,
131, 132, 137, 142₂₄, 143₁₂, 164, 165, 166, 176₂,
180₁, 181₁, 185₁₁, 237₂₂, 282, 283, 307, 369₁₃, 396
Arkuan 345₂₇
Arranenean 254₅
Assyrian 29₂₂, 180₃₉, 293₃₄
Athenian 230₃₇
Avar 282
Azerbaijani 6

B

Barber 125
Branji 45₁₈, 46₇, 51₁₅, 65₁₃, 74
Bedian 347₃₆
Beyruyhean 237₂₂
Bulgarian 301₃
Bunturk 20₂₂, 21₃, 71
Byzantine 6, 74, 118, 119, 124, 127, 128, 129, 131,
137, 164, 168, 196, 225, 279

C

Caucasian 13₁₀, 41₂₀, 68₃, 82₂₃, 128, 131, 250₁₆
Cimmerian 71
Chaldean 20₂₅, 51₃₂, 57₁₇
Ch'an 120
Chargalian 65₂₉
Ch'artalian 26₂₀, 276₁₂
Chechen 396
Chinese 237₂₀
Colchi 127, 164, 207
Cuman 208

D

Daghestanian 399
Damaskian 391₁
Darubandian 80₁₄, 321₃₈, 376₂₈
Didoian 42₂₈, 107₃₇, 276₇
Dvalian 276₁₁
Dvinians 244₂₃
Durdzuk 24₃₄, 25₂₅, 26₁₅, 42₂₈, 107₃₇, 396
Dzinians 251₂₁

E

Egyptian 20₁₇, 187₃₂, 198, 350₃₃, 369₁, 374₁, 390₂₄,
391₃₅, 398
Elamitian 96₃₈, 237₂₂
Eris 13₁₀, 182₂₁
Erts'oian 276₁₂
Erts'o-Tianetians 65₃₂

F

Franks 74, 174₁₅, 189₃, 194, 197, 300₁, 303₂₅, 311
French 6

G

Ganjian 254₅, 260₂₁, 270₂₈, 315₁₁, 316₁₀, 317₂₂
Gardabanian 142₂₇, 143₅, 144₁₇
Georgian/Georgians 5, 6, 8, 9, 13₂, 18₂₈, 19₂, 20₂, 22₃,
23₁₅, 25₂₀, 26₂₆, 27₂₁, 28₄, 29₅, 30₇, 31₁₂, 32₃₇, 33₂

34₃, 35₁₃, 36₃, 38₅, 39₁₁, 40₃₁, 41₁₇, 42₂, 44₁₀, 68₂₂,
69₁₂, 70₂₆, 71, 72, 77₇, 78₁₉, 79₃₀, 80₁, 81₂₁, 82₂₆,
83₂₃, 84₉, 87₁₆, 91₃₆, 95₁₇, 98₃, 103₁, 106₁₁, 107₁,
108₁₀, 109₁₇, 115, 118, 120, 121, 122, 123, 124,
127, 128, 130, 131, 137, 164, 165, 166, 168,
181₁₈, 197, 198, 206, 207, 208, 218, 220₄, 234₂,
245₁₉, 265₁₅, 266₂₂, 268₁₉, 269₆, 270₃, 273₁₄, 274₁,
276₂, 277, 278, 279, 282, 283, 284, 293₂₄, 297₂₈,
298₃₈, 301₂₄, 303₁₉, 306, 307, 308, 309, 310, 311,
312, 315₅, 319₄, 320₂₆, 321₂₄, 324₁₆, 325₁₂, 326₄,
327₂₀, 329₁₅, 331₁₃, 333₆, 334₃₁, 335₅, 338₃₀, 339₁,
340₃₅, 341₂, 342₁₄, 343₇, 346₁, 347₁, 349₁₀, 351₄,
352₃₃, 353₁₁, 357₃₇, 358₁₀, 359₁₅, 364₃₈, 365₁₁, 366₁,
367₃₂, 368₂₁, 369₁₇, 370₁₄, 371₃₁, 373₂₅, 374₃, 375₃₇,
379₂₃, 380₆, 381₂₄, 387₄, 391₂₁, 392₆, 393₂, 394₂,
395₁₂, 396, 397, 398, 399

Gilanian 274₂₇, 371₃₁, 392₂₁, 393₃

Gogs 87₉

Goths 43₁₄, 121

Greek/Greeks 6, 20₁₀, 23₃₃, 24₁, 34₂, 36₁₉, 38₁₀, 42₂₅,
43₁₈, 44₄, 53₄, 61₁₈, 68₁₁, 69₂₈, 70₁₃, 72, 73, 80₁₆,
85₆, 86₈, 87₉, 88₂₄, 90₂₅, 91₃₃, 92₁, 93₆, 95₁₂, 96₁,
97₃, 98₃, 99₅, 101₄₀, 102₁, 103₁, 105₁₀, 106₁₀, 107₈,
108₁₁, 109₉, 110₃₁, 111₃₂, 112₂₆, 113₁₉, 114₂, 125,
136₈, 142₅, 142₁₅, 144₆, 151₃₉, 152₉, 154₃, 155₃₄,
156₃₇, 157₁₅, 158₂, 159₂₀, 163₂₉, 171₁₁, 172₁₆, 177₂₅,
183₄₀, 185₉, 188₂₁, 212₁₉, 214₂, 218₂, 220₄, 229₂₄,
230₃₄, 237₁₉, 243₂₅, 246₇, 247₃₂, 279, 281, 300₃₉,
301₁, 303₂₅, 341₃₀

Gudamaqarian 65₂₉

Gurian/Gurians 156₉, 256₃

H

Hebrew/Hebrews 19₃₁, 30₂₆, 31₂₂, 54₂₄, 74, 88₂, 181₄,
183₃₉, 197, 198, 230₃₃, 277, 278, 280, 281, 282,
284

Hers/Ers 155₉, 193, 234₁₅, 235₂₅, 236₂, 250₁₄, 256₁,
280, 328₁₅, 329₈, 331₂

Huns 118, 121

I

Indian/Indians 98₂₂, 237₁₉, 294₁₉, 299₂₈

Ingush 396

Imeretian 290₃₇, 339₁₂

Ionian 49₇, 71

Iranian 196

Israelitian 60₁₉, 185₁₁

J

Javakhians 395₁₁

Jew/Jews 47₁₀, 48₃₈, 50₂₃, 51₄, 52₃₅, 54₆, 55₁₂, 61₆, 62₁,
211₂₆, 212₁₃, 326₃₀

Jiks 32₁₄, 84₃₁, 85₁, 120, 167, 329₉

Jorjans 98₁₁

Judeans 30₂₉

K

K'akhian 142₃₄, 144₁, 147₆, 148₁₇, 150₁₉, 155₉, 156₂₁,
157₁₅, 159₃₈, 161₂₄, 163₃, 165, 166, 167, 175₁₂,
182₂₁, 193, 222, 234₁₅, 235₂₅, 250₁₄, 256₁, 280,
328₁₅, 329₈, 331₂

K'almakhian 251₂₁

K'arnukalakian 304₁

Kartlian/Kartlians (Georgians) 22₉, 77₂₆, 78₇, 80₇, 81₂₀,
85₄, 86₂₆, 104₃₃, 107₃₇, 108₃, 109₃₃, 110₂, 117, 119,
120, 121, 123, 125, 128, 145₁, 149₂₂, 164, 220,
222, 234₁₄, 235₃₆, 249₂₈, 250₁₆, 251₁₅, 256₁, 271₃₄,
280, 316₇, 331₂, 332₁₇, 342₆, 381₂₉, 382₉, 386₂₀,
395

Kartvels 13₁₀, 144₄, 149₂₆, 150₂₂, 151₂₆, 152₁₁, 166, 211₂,

Kashag 249₃, 304₁, 312

K'avk'asians 26₁₆

Khat'aetians 320₁₉

Khazar/Khazar s 17₁₃, 18₂, 21₂₇, 25₃₃, 39₁₂, 41₁₅, 42₁₁,
43₂, 71, 82₃₂, 94₃₄, 96₇, 119, 120, 131, 142₄, 142₇,
143₁₅, 164, 235₃, 237₂₁

Khevsur 399

Kisti 396

Khoesmanian 237₂₁, 321₂, 323₁₉, 324₁₆, 325₄, 326₂, 328₁₄,
329₁₂, 330₂, 351₆, 396

Khunzs 114₁₇

K'larjian 25₆, 68₂₁, 69₂₇, 118, 217₁₈, 234₁₁, 256₁, 280,
328₁₅, 389₁

K'ola-Art'an-K'arniporian 389₂
Kurd 101₃₄, 128, 182₆, 197

L

Lazik-Ch'anian 125
Lek' 13₁₀, 21₂₇, 23₂₂, 33₉, 39₁₂, 42₂₇, 69₁₃, 91₄₀, 182₆, 197
Lezghin 236₂
Likhian/Likhan 316₈, 347₃₆, 398

M

Macedonian 125, 367₂₇
Magog 87₉
Marandian 273₁₀
Marguelian 256₃
Median 237₂₂
Megrel 13₁₀, 25₆, 31₄, 33₂₃, 36₁₈, 38₁₄, 256₂
Meskhis/Meskhian/Meskhians 124, 147₃₄, 156₃₁, 157₅,
158₁₇, 159₁₁, 161₁₆, 163₇, 234₁₂, 235₃₆, 244₁₃, 248₃₁,
249₂₂, 256₁, 271₃₃, 274₉, 280, 301₁₃, 316₆, 329₈,
331₃, 332₁₈, 341₂₄, 342₆, 353₁₂, 359₃₁, 373₇, 375₁₉,
389₁, 390₆, 393₂, 395₂₀
Mianians 274₃₆
Mohevian 276₁₁
Molid 283
Movak'an 13₁₀
Mongol 6, 206, 207, 209, 319₅, 333₄, 334₁₀, 335₂₄,
339₂₈, 395, 396, 397, 398, 399
Mtiulis 142₂₀, 143₇, 203₂₉, 208, 386₂, 391₁₀
Mtskhétian 37₁₄, 54₂₇

N

Norman 194
Nakhchevanian 270₂₉, 315₁₁, 324₁₈
Nishaburian 328₃₁
Nukhp'at'ian 105₃₄, 114₁₉, 130

O

Oltisian 342₁
Ordzokhevian 33₁₆
Ovses/Ossetians (Alans) 17₃₅, 18₂₆, 21₂₇, 23₂₂, 24₉,
25₂₈, 32₁₂, 33₉, 34₃, 37₆, 38₁₁, 39₁₂, 41₁₅, 43₁₀, 69₁₃,

71, 80₉, 81₁₀, 82₁₀, 83₂₉, 84₁, 85₁₄, 97₁₄, 107₃₇, 118,
119, 120, 123, 132, 143₁₆, 144₁₅, 155₁₀, 161₃₇,
162₁, 178₁₉, 196, 197, 202₂₃, 203₂₉, 232₁₃, 237₂₁,
243₃₃, 247₂₅, 255₃₆, 279, 284, 397, 288₁₆, 290₂₂,
304₁, 307, 329₁₁, 351₁₄, 381₂₈, 382₈, 386₃, 391₃₂,
392₁₉, 393₁₃, 397, 398, 399

P

P'ach'anik 84₃₁, 85₁, 120
Pecheneg 32₁₃
Persian/Persians 6, 8, 18₉, 19₂, 20₄, 22₉, 26₆, 27₂₀, 28₂,
30₁₇, 31₁₁, 34₂, 35₄, 36₃, 38₆, 39₁₀, 40₁₄, 41₁, 42₁, 43₆,
44₅, 53₃, 54₅, 57₄, 60₁₅, 61₂₂, 68₆, 69₁₁, 70₆, 73, 74,
75, 77₆, 78₅, 80₃₀, 85₃, 86₅, 87₉, 88₂₃, 89₃₀, 90₁₂, 91₃,
92₂, 94₅, 95₁, 96₁, 98₁₁, 99₂₉, 100₂₁, 101₁₃, 102₃₂,
103₁₃, 104₂₀, 106₁₂, 107₆, 108₂, 109₂, 110₂₈, 112₃₇,
113₁₁, 115, 118, 123, 128, 130, 131, 138, 159₃₆,
164, 171₅, 181₁₇, 183₄₁, 185₁₁, 188₂₀, 191, 201₁₇,
202₁₅, 207, 212₉, 213₃₆, 223, 230₇, 232₇, 247₃₂,
269₂₃, 271₂₀, 272₃₅, 279, 285, 293₂₉, 294₁₁, 308,
296₄, 297₃₀, 301₁₇, 307, 325₄, 326₄, 334₃₂, 335₁,
347₁₂, 352₁₂, 356₈, 357₂₁, 375₃₁, 388₄₀, 390₂, 393₃₉,
394₂, 395₁, 396
Pkhovian 65₂₉, 276₇
Pkhveneli 147₇, 348₁₀
Pontian 91₂₄
Prot'atosian 21₁₅

Q

Q'ipchak 20₂₂, 178₁₃, 179₂, 180₁₂, 181₂₅, 182₆, 186₂₄,
189₃, 196, 197, 202₂₃, 203₂₉, 208, 243₁₉, 250₁₅,
255₁₇, 282, 284, 296₂₀, 306, 321₃₉, 391₁₉, 396, 398

R

Rach'velian 256₃
Ranian 13₁₀, 166, 193, 222
Roman/Romans 6, 20, 22₄, 23₁₅, 24₃₇, 25₇, 25₂₅, 50₁,
53₁₂, 57₁₁, 58₃₀, 72, 73, 74, 87₉, 102₃₁, 123, 125,
188₂₁, 194, 209, 225, 237₁₉, 247₃₂
Russian/Russians/Russes 209, 218₂₇, 243₁₇, 244₂,
248₂₁, 249₄, 254₂, 282, 398

S

Salar 145₄₀
 Samtskhian 235₂₅
 Sanig 249₃
 Sark'inian 21₆
 Sasperian 124
 Scythian 71, 237₂₁, 245₁₉, 247₃₂, 282, 340₂₆
 Shakis/Heretian 218₅, 225
 Shamian 244₁₁
 Shamkorian 258₂₄, 293₂₇
 Shavshian 234₁₁, 256₁, 328₁₅, 334₁₅, 388₂₃, 389₁
 Seleucid 72
 Seljuk/Seljuks 73, 122, 168, 192, 195, 197, 206, 208
 Serb 328₂₂
 Sermatian 71
 Shirvanian 179₃₇, 280
 Slav 131
 Somkhitar 234₁₃, 235₃₆, 251₁₅, 256₂, 271₃₄, 280, 331₂,
 387₅, 392₃₁, 395
 Somkhitis 316₇, 328₁₅, 329₈, 359₄₀
 Surman 261₂
 Svan 127, 162₃₇, 203₂₉, 207, 208, 256₂, 290₃₇, 347₃₆,
 354₂₈

T

Tabrizian 275₅, 396
 Tabtengr 320₇
 Tak'verian 256₃
 T'aoan/T'aoians 192, 234₁₁, 251₁₅, 256₂, 280, 328₁₆,
 329₈, 331₃, 334₁₅, 342₆, 386₅, 387₄, 389₂
 Tatar 319₁₂, 320₅, 321₄, 322₅, 323₅, 325₂₈, 328₁₈, 329₁,
 330₁, 331₁₃, 332₂, 333₅, 334₁, 338₂₀, 339₄, 340₈

341₁, 342₁₁, 344₁₁, 347₁, 348₂₀, 349₁₂, 350₂₀, 351₁₆,
 352₁₉, 353₁₁, 354₁₁, 356₃₂, 357₈, 359₁, 360₃, 361₉,
 362₂₅, 363₃₉, 364₁₈, 365₆, 366₁₈, 368₁₂, 369₁₀, 370₃₇,
 371₂₉, 373₃, 374₅, 377₈, 381₃₃, 383₃₈, 384₂₄, 385₃₇,
 386₁, 387₃, 388₃₀, 390₃₄, 391₇, 392₂, 393₆

T'sanar/K'akhetian 142₂₀, 165, 218₇, 224
 T'betian 146₄
 Tbilisian 155₁₅
 Tmogvian 271₃₃, 334₁₅, 386₅, 387₅, 389₃
 Torelian 234₁₂, 235₃₆, 256₁, 268₃₅, 269₈, 271₃₃, 280,
 316₇, 328₁₅, 334₁₅, 386₅, 395₁₁
 Torian 324₄, 334₁₅, 387₅, 389₃
 Trabzonian 304₁
 Trojan 181₅
 Ts'ilik'anian 65₂₉
 Ts'undian 33₂₃
 Turks 6, 19₁, 20₅, 28₁₂, 71, 84₃₀, 107₂₃, 108₃, 109₅, 120,
 125, 129, 137, 157₂₃, 159₁₅, 162₂₂, 163₃₂, 165,
 171₁₁, 172₁, 174₁₇, 176₂₂, 177₂, 179₂₇, 180₁, 182₁₁,
 184₉, 188₇, 190₂, 191, 193, 202₁₆, 230₄, 244₇,
 251₂₃, 261₂₁, 267₂₃, 279, 295₁₆, 297₁₃, 298₃₉, 309,
 310, 341₃, 341₁₂, 388₅, 389₁, 390₁, 397
 Turkman 179₂₅, 180₁₁, 191, 192, 245₃, 295₂₀
 Tushian 114₁₇, 399

U

Uighur 318₂₆, 319₁₁, 320₁, 328₂₄
 Ujad 297₁₃
 Ujik 47₂₉
 Uzhenian 275₅, 285

CONTENTS

| | |
|---|-----|
| Foreword | 5 |
| Editor's Note..... | 11 |
| Leont'i Mroveli, The Lives of the Georgian Kings..... | 13 |
| Juansher Juansheriani, The Life of Vakht'ang Gorgasali | 77 |
| The Martyrdom of Saint Archil, who waz King of Kartli..... | 135 |
| Mat'iane Kartlisa..... | 141 |
| The Life of David, King of Kings..... | 171 |
| The Chronicle of Giorgi Lasha and His Time..... | 201 |
| The Life and Tale of the Bagrat'ionis | 211 |
| The History and Eulogy of Monarchs | 227 |
| Basili Ezosmodzghvari, The Life of Tamar, the Queen of Queens | 287 |
| The Hundred Years' Chronicle..... | 315 |
| Glossary | 402 |
| Index..... | 406 |

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