

# Armenian Review

Volume 52 · Number 1-2 (Spring-Summer 2010)

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*Armenia and Armenians in International Treaties*

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# Erdumn, uxt, cařayut' iwn Armenian Aristocrats as Diplomatic Partners of Eastern Roman Emperors, 387-884/885 AD

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*In the case of Greater Armenia, though I might have made it a province after the assassination of its King Artaxes, I preferred, following the precedent of our fathers, to hand that kingdom over to Tigranes, the son of King Artavasdes, and grandson of King Tigranes, through Tiberius Nero who was then my stepson. And later, when the same people revolted and rebelled, and was subdued by my son Gaius, I gave it over to King Ariobarzanes the son of Artabazus, King of the Medes, to rule, and after his death to his son Artavasdes. When he was murdered I sent into that kingdom Tigranes, who was sprung from the royal family of the Armenians.<sup>1</sup>*

**T**HE IMPORTANCE OF THE *Imperium Romanum* for the development and emergence of political and social structures among the “barbarian people” beyond its borders has been recognized a long time ago; at the same time, the Romans made use of these people and their ruling elite and these elites made use of the Romans, their resources, their political concepts, and the status connected with it. But besides archeological evidence, for the European borders of the *Imperium* our (written) sources originate more or less without exception from

within the Roman sphere, which makes it very difficult to "examine non-Roman views."<sup>2</sup>

This also holds true to a certain extent for the people and states at Rome's eastern borders to Persia, where the Empire encountered an imperial power of comparable dimensions; accordingly, life was even more complex for these political entities, such as the Armenians. Tacitus called the Armenians "*ambigua gens*,"<sup>3</sup> situated between the Roman and Iranian great powers and sustaining political and cultural connections to both sides. This dilemma became even stronger when the Armenians adopted Christianity at the beginning of the 4<sup>th</sup> century and strengthened their ties to the new Christian *Imperium Romanum* of Constantine the Great and his successors,<sup>4</sup> whereas the traditional social structure with its powerful aristocratic houses, which was very similar to that of ancient Iran, was still strong (see below). The struggle over Armenia at last led to the partition of the country between Rome and the Sasanians in 387 AD and the abolishment of the Armenian kingship. But in contrast to the European *barbaricum*, the invention of the Armenian alphabet at the beginning of the 5<sup>th</sup> century initiated the emergence of a rich indigenous literature, which includes several important historiographical works. These works provide us with a valuable view on three empires of late antiquity (Rome-Byzantium, Persia and, since the 7<sup>th</sup> century, the Arab Caliphate) from the perspective of a nation which lived on the edge of these powers, until the noble house of Bagratuni succeeded in the restoration of the Armenian monarchy at the end of the 9<sup>th</sup> century. Among other aspects, we obtain an invaluable impression of the interpretative and political strategies of a local elite to come to terms with competing imperial dominations.

### *Introduction: Empires of negotiations*

In an often-quoted passage of the history attributed to Sebēos we encounter a very grim interpretation of the Eastern Roman Empire's policy *vis-à-vis* the Armenian aristocracy:

At that time (around the year 591) the king of the Greeks (t'agawor Yunac'), Maurice, ordered a letter of accusation (gir ambastanut' iwn) to be written to the Persian king concerning all the Armenian princes and their troops: "They are a perverse and

disobedient race," he said: "they are between us and cause trouble. Now come, I shall gather mine and send them to Thrace; you gather yours and order them to be taken to the east. If they die, our enemies die; if they kill, they kill our enemies; but we shall live in peace. For if they remain in their own land, we shall have no rest." They both agreed.<sup>5</sup>

This fictitious letter did not only build the introduction for Sebēos's account of the period of Byzantine dominance over the greater part of Armenia in the years 591 to 602, but often serves as characteristic example for the empire's attitude toward this "disobedient race." Of course, the Eastern Roman Empire tried to enforce political and religious conformity in the areas it controlled, if the central power was strong enough to do so: the Western Armenian regions which came under Roman suzerainty according to the treaties with Persia were turned into provinces under Emperor Justinian in the 6<sup>th</sup> century, and the power of their noble houses was broken. During short periods of predominance in Greater Armenia, the Emperors enforced short-living unions between the Byzantine and the Armenian churches.<sup>6</sup> And the fragmented Armenian state of the Bagratuni period was easy prey for the Byzantine policy of annexation in the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> centuries.<sup>7</sup> Nonetheless, these periods of Byzantine expansion and dominance in the Caucasus region were not lasting and do not even add up to 100 years from the 4<sup>th</sup> to the 11<sup>th</sup> century. More often than not, the empire had to come to terms with the Armenian aristocracy through negotiations and compromises if it wanted to maintain the recognition of its claim on suzerainty over Armenia; this was the case even when the Byzantine position in the region was strong.<sup>8</sup>

As we shall see, the relationship between Byzantium and the Armenian aristocracy can be understood better within the framework of "empire" as defined by Karen Barkey in her recent book on the Ottoman Empire than by continuing the monolithic concept of a leveling and centralizing imperial power:

An empire is a large composite and differentiated polity linked to a central power by a variety of direct and indirect relations, where the centre exercises political control through hierarchical and quasi-monopolistic relations over groups ethnically different from itself. These relations are, however, regularly subject to

negotiations over the degree of autonomy of intermediaries in return for military and fiscal compliance. The central state negotiates and maintains more or less distinct compacts between itself and the various segments of this polity. Last, but not least, one can say that most of the different segments of the polity remain largely unconnected among themselves. That is why an imperial system is best represented in terms of the hub-and-spoke network structure, where the rim is absent. Empire, then, is about political authority relations (as well as many other transactions) between a central power and many diverse and differentiated entities. Such a characterization of empire underscores the importance of relations between the imperial state that is in a core central structural position and the different segments that comprise the imperial domain, where power and control remain key to the state, yet the imperial state does not have complete monopoly of power in the territory under control. It shares control with a variety of intermediate organizations and with local elites, religious and local governing bodies, and numerous other privileged institutions. To rule over vast expanses of territory, as well as to ensure military and administrative cooperation, imperial states negotiate and willingly relinquish some degree of autonomy. No matter how strong an empire is, it has to work with peripheries, local elites, and frontier groups to maintain compliance, resources, tribute, and military cooperation, and to ensure political coherence and durability.<sup>9</sup>

That also the Later Roman Empire, formerly considered the archetype of a centralized bureaucratic empire, as well as the Byzantine Empire were empires based on negotiations, has been elaborated in recent studies.<sup>10</sup> Of course, these relations with local powers at the periphery and beyond the borders of the empire never took place at eye level. Until the late Byzantine period, the Emperors formally did not conclude treaties, but only granted privileges to groups and individuals who had begged for it.<sup>11</sup> De facto, we encounter various agreements between the Empire and its rivaling great powers which effected on Armenia and its nobility, for example the partition of the country in 387, the Byzantine-Persian peace treaties of 299, 363, 532, 562, 591 and 629,<sup>12</sup> or the agreement on the division of tributes from various border regions between the Empire and the Caliphate in 686/687 (see endnote 50). But characteristically, the Armenians were object and not subject of these negotiations. Neither during the time of monarchic rule before

390/428 and after 884/885 nor during the period of direct suzerainty over Armenia's nobility, the fragmentation of the country's political structures allowed for the formation of a regional power center which could compete with the empires on its borders.<sup>13</sup>

On the other hand, the structure of the Armenian society allowed for a certain degree of flexibility in relations with the great powers. As Nina Garsoïan has stated: "...the strength and permanence of the *tun* forged a social structure capable of surviving even in moments of political eclipse and the decentralized character of the society diminished its chances of total annexation."<sup>14</sup> This "decentralized character" permitted the adaptation to the separation between various rulers and spheres of interest of the neighboring empires and the existence of multiple layers of authority and loyalty.<sup>15</sup> Thus, one member of Mamikonean clan could lead the rebellion in Persarmenia in 450/451, whereas a kinsman served as imperial general in Roman Armenia (see endnote 56). Individual noblemen and clans could gain a variety of options within this framework, and even the aristocracy at large could achieve a certain degree of autonomy for the country's affairs if equilibrium between the neighboring great powers or a momentary power vacuum would allow it. However, the number of options declined as soon as one imperial power achieved predominance in the region; then, individually or at large, the aristocracy had to choose between collaboration, resistance, or emigration. This would have been the case for the time of the Arab rule over Armenia; but even for this period, the Arab historian al-Baladhuri stresses the Armenian princes' flexibility in their handling of their overlord's representatives:

The Armenian patricians did not cease to hold their lands as usual, each trying to protect his own region; and whenever a *šāmīl* (tax collector) came to the frontier they would coax him; and if they found in him purity and severity, as well as force and equipment, they would give the *kharāj* and render submission, otherwise they would deem him weak and look down upon him.<sup>16</sup>

We are going to encounter all these phenomena on the following pages, which will illustrate the variety of instruments and contents of the relations between the Armenian aristocracy and the Eastern Roman Empire from the 4<sup>th</sup> to the 9<sup>th</sup> century. In doing so, we will make

extensive use of excerpts from our sources to make clear the bases for our considerations.<sup>17</sup>

### *The Emperor and Individual Armenian Aristocrats*

We read in the Buzandaran Patmut'iwnk':

Then one of mightiest naxarars, named Meružan Arcruni, revolted against the king of Armenia. He went to the king of Persia and swore an oath to him that he would always be his servant.<sup>18</sup>

Meružan Arcruni is a kind of "arch-traitor" in the Buzandaran Patmut'iwnk', he betrays his king, his country and his religion. But the way in which he changes his allegiance from the Armenian king to the Sasanian Great King can be regarded as the "normal" one. In a similar way, Sebēos describes the career of Atat Xořořuni, who participated in a rebellion against the Persians after the new partition of Greater Armenia in 591. The rebellion failed, and some of the Armenian princes tried to come in contact with the "Huns" in the north of Caucasus, but:

Since they (Atat Xořořuni and Samuēl Vahewuni) were unable to rely on the forces of the Huns, they then sought an oath from the king of the Greeks (Emperor Maurice) and submitted to him. (...) But the Emperor hastily summoned Atat Xořořuni with his troops to the palace. He bestowed on him compliments and honours, gave him many presents, and sent him to Thrace.<sup>19</sup> (...)

Now what more shall I say about Atat Xořořuni and his further rebellion. He was a great patrik, for which reason the king ordered him to be summoned to the palace; so he went to him with seventy men. He splendidly honoured him and those accompanying him with a worthy and appropriate reception. He gave him gold and silver vessels and very many treasures. He ordered him to go to Thrace to (join) his troops. He took his leave from the king and departed.<sup>20</sup>

But as Atat Xořořuni does not have any interest in fighting against the Avars and Slavs on the Balkans, he switches sides once more:

But while he was still on his way he decided to rebel and go to the Persian king. (...) He rapidly went to the Persian king, who received him in a friendly way, greatly honoured him, gave him treasures, and authorized a stipend from the treasury.<sup>21</sup>

This is one of the many examples from Armenian historiography of how the relationship between individual Armenian princes and the monarchs of the neighboring great powers could be established

and ended. As we have seen in the case of Meružan Arcruni, these phenomena were common even during the existence of the Armenian kingdom and became even more so after its abolition.

The term which Sebēos and other historians used to describe this relationship between the Emperor or the Great King and the individual aristocrats is *cařayut' iwn*; this is the same term which describes the allegiance of the Armenian princes to their king in earlier times.<sup>22</sup> In that way, the Emperor took the place of the Armenian king in this relationship. For the aristocrat, *cařayut' iwn* included the obligation for military service to his lord (*šēr*). But this relationship also included mutual commitments, which according to the Armenian tradition were sealed through a reciprocal oath (*vxt, erdumn*). As a result of this oath, one side took upon itself the duties of lordship and protection, and the other those of faithful service and obedience.<sup>23</sup> As we have seen, the fugitive princes Samuēl Vahewuni and Atat Xořořuni sought an oath (*erdumn*), as they wanted to submit to the Byzantine Emperor. The new fiduciary relation was also manifested in ritual and material ways; Atat was honored in a ceremonial reception at the court in Constantinople and received valuable presents. After changing sides, the Great King "greatly honoured him" and "gave him treasures."<sup>24</sup> As Tim Greenwood stated, these are recurring motives in the depiction of the deeds of Armenian aristocrats in our period: "the service to an external authority, the titles and material rewards available to the individual princes and instances of direct contact between Emperor and client."<sup>25</sup> We are going to take a deeper look especially on these aspects.

### *Armenian Princes Under Direct Roman Rule—From Dependent Principality to Centrally Governed Province*<sup>26</sup>

The first Armenian princes the Later Roman Empire had to deal with on a permanent basis came under its control under the terms of treaties with the Persian Empire. These were the autonomous so-called Satrapies of the Armenian southwest along the Rivers Euphrates and Arsaias, since the treaty of 299,<sup>27</sup> and the various aristocratic houses of the western part of Armenia, which came under Roman sovereignty after the partition of Greater Armenia in 387.<sup>28</sup>

### The Autonomous Armenian Satraps

The southern Satrapies included seven principalities (Sophrène, Anzitène, Ingilène, Sôphanène, Asthianène, Balabiténe, and Chorzanène) ruled by five noble houses.<sup>29</sup> Their relationship to the Roman state is described by Procopius in his book on the Buildings:

(...) but in the other Armenia, which extends inside of the Euphrates River as far as the city of Amida, five Armenian Satraps held the power, and these offices were always hereditary and held for life. However, they received the symbols of office only from the Roman Emperor. It is worth while to describe these insignia, for they will never again be seen by man. There is a cloak made of wool, not such as is produced by sheep, but gathered from the sea. Pinnos (a bivalve shellfish) the creature is called on which this wool grows. And the part where the purple should have been, that is, where the insertion of purple cloth is usually made, is overlaid with gold. The cloak was fastened by a golden brooch in the middle of which was a precious stone from which hung three sapphires by loose golden chains. There was a tunic of silk adorned in every part with decorations of gold which they are wont to call plumia. The boots were of red colour and reached to the knee, of the sort which only the Roman Emperor and the Persian King are permitted to wear. Roman soldiers, however, never fought under the orders of the king of the Armenians or of the Satraps, but these rulers conducted their wars independently.<sup>30</sup>

The hereditary status of the Satraps as clients of the Emperor corresponds with the information on the nature of the *naxarars'* power given by Armenian sources. We also find the characteristic elements of a *catayut' iwn-*relationship: the obligation for military service and the ritual manifestation through the bestowal of the symbols of office by the Emperor—most probable, the Satraps as "friendly kings" had to present themselves to the Emperor in Constantinople to receive their insignia from his hands.<sup>31</sup> But the Satraps were also obliged to offer a tribute to the Emperor in the form of the *aurum coronarium*—golden crowns—which had to be presented to the monarch on the occasion of accessions to the throne, crown jubilees and military triumphs, as we know from an edict of the Emperors Valentinianus II and Theodosius I from the year 387 for the Satrap Gaddana of Sôphanène. In this case, the Satrapies shared the same obligation with all provinces of the empire.<sup>32</sup>

For the same time, the Buzandaran Patmut' iwnk' claim that these princes also kept their allegiance to the king of Greater Armenia.<sup>33</sup> As we know, the Armenian historiography, writing after the partition of the country in 387, tried sometimes to idealize the unity of the Arsakuni monarchy before its fall.<sup>34</sup> But taking into consideration the "multiple layers of authority" we talked about (see the introduction above), such an allegiance to two sides does not seem an anomaly, especially since the Armenian king would be regarded as a client of the Emperor, at least until the treaty of 363.<sup>35</sup> With the abolition of the monarchy in the Persian sector in 428 at the latest, such a double loyalty would end.

Procopius also tells us how most of these princes lost their hereditary status under Emperor Zenon, due to their support of the rebellion of the *magister militum per Orientem* Illios and the Anti-Emperor Leontios in the years 484 to 488:

But at a later time, during the reign of Zeno, some of the Satraps decided to array themselves openly with Illus and Leontius, who had revolted against the Emperor. Consequently, when the Emperor had reduced Leontius and Illus to subjection, he left in the former status only one Satrap, who held a very inferior province which was not of any importance, in the region called Belabiténe; all the others he removed and no longer permitted them to transmit the office to those connected with them by kinship, but he ordained that on each occasion different men of the Emperor's choosing should succeed to these offices, just as is the rule in all the other offices of the Romans. Even so, these officials were not in command of Roman soldiers, but only of a few Armenians, as had been customary previously, with the result that they were unable to repel the attacks of an enemy.<sup>36</sup>

This measure reduced the Satrapies' autonomy and brought to an end one of the main characteristics of the traditional Armenian legal status of a noble house; but the Satrapies would still not be fully incorporated into the empire, as Procopius makes clear in another episode of their history:

In consequence of this, indeed, Cabades, King of the Persians, invaded the Roman territory during the reign of Anastasius, directing his march by way of Martyropolis, since it lay a little more than a one-day's journey from Amida for an unencumbered traveller. And as if he were still dealing with some minor detail of his journey, an incidental task of his campaign, he captured this city out of hand, not by storming the wall or by making any kind of

assault or siege, but simply by sending an announcement that he would arrive. For the inhabitants of the city, knowing well that they would not be able to hold out even for one short moment against the attacking force, when they learned that the army of the Medes had arrived close by, immediately approached Cabades in company with Theodoros, who at that time was Satrap of Sophanene, clothed in his robes of office, and placed themselves and Martyropolis at his disposal, bearing in their hands the public taxes of two years. And Cabades was pleased with this and withheld his hand from the city and from the whole district, as belonging to the Persian Kingdom, and he let the people go unharmed, neither inflicting any damage nor changing the form of the government, but he appointed Theodoros himself their Satrap, entrusting to him, since he had shewn himself not indiscreet, the tokens of the office, with the intention that he watch over the land for the Persians. Then he led his army forward, captured Amida by siege, and marched back into the land of Persia, as I have related in the Books on the Wars. And the Emperor Anastasius, understanding that it was not possible to defend Martyropolis from hostile assault, since it had no defences, not only showed no resentment against Theodoros and the people of Sophanene, but actually expressed deep gratitude to them for their action. Indeed the circuit-wall of this Martyropolis was really about four feet in thickness, while it was only twenty feet high. In consequence, the wall could not only be easily assaulted by the enemy if they stormed it or brought up their siege engines, but it was quite easy for them simply to scramble over it.<sup>37</sup>

This episode can be dated to the year 502, over a decade after Zenon's modification of the Satrapies' status; we still meet the Satrap of Sophanene, "*clothed in his robes of office*," who exchanges the *catayut' iwn* to the Emperor for the service to the Great King in a way already familiar to us, and receives the "*tokens of the office*" from the hands of Kavad. But whereas Emperor Anastasius, at least according to Procopius, was prepared to accept Theodoros' "elastic" policy vis-à-vis the Great powers and obviously acknowledged the Satrap's allegiance when it was again offered to him, Emperor Justinian did not tolerate such doubtful clients.<sup>38</sup> Procopius writes:

And when this (the weakness of Roman power in the Satrapies) came to the knowledge of the Emperor Justinian, he immediately did away with the title of Satrap and appointed over these provinces

two Dukes, as they are called; and he put under them a very large force of regular Roman troops to assist them in guarding the Roman frontier. He also built strongholds for them as follows...<sup>39</sup>

And in his Novella XXXI, the Emperor made clear that he considered the Satrapies an institution alien to the Roman order: "This title (Satrap) is not derived from the Romans or from our predecessors, but was introduced by another power."<sup>40</sup> Thus, in the year 528, the autonomy of the Satrapies came finally to an end; in 536, they were organized as a Roman province.

Anyway, for more than two centuries, these Armenian princely houses had been able to preserve their traditional status even within a political system far more centralized and powerful than the Aršakuni monarchy. But this preservation came at a price: the princes had to abstain from any cooperation with their kinsmen across the border to Persarmenia, which could have run against the interests of the Emperor and disturb the peaceful relations between the two empires that continued for most of the 5<sup>th</sup> century. As Łazar P'arpec'i informs us, in the year 450 the rebels around Vardan Mamikonean appealed for help to the princes under Roman suzerainty as well as to the Emperor, but as the empire declined the Armenians' request, the Satraps had to obey.<sup>41</sup>

#### The Aristocratic Houses of Armenia Interior

The noble houses in the western part of Armenia, henceforth called *Armenia interior*, in Roman documents<sup>42</sup> were in a similar situation, but less successful in the preservation of their status. When Arsaces established himself as Armenian king in the western part of the country under Roman suzerainty in 387,<sup>43</sup> he and his descendants could have founded an autonomous hereditary kingship in a way similar to the Satrapies. But Procopius tells us:

Arsaces meanwhile still feared the hostility of the Persians and of his brother and resigned his own kingship in favour of the Emperor Theodosius (II according to Procopius), on certain conditions which I have described in the Books on the Wars. And for a time the territory of the Armenians was fought over by the Romans and the Persians, but at length they reached an agreement that the Persians should hold the portion of Tigranes and the Romans that of Arsaces. On these conditions a truce was agreed upon by both



sides and thereafter the Roman Emperor always appointed a ruler (archon) for the Armenians, whomever he wished and whenever he wished. And they used to call this ruler even to my time the Count of Armenia (in Greek: komes Armenias).<sup>44</sup>

The exact chronology of these developments is still unclear, as Procopius seems to confuse Theodosius I with his grandson Theodosius II. Movsēs Xorenac'i even claims that Emperor Theodosius I first appointed an Armenian noble named Gazavon as "presiding prince" of the Roman sector and that he and his successors then allowed the kings of the Persian sector to rule also over the western part of the country, which may seem improbable at first glance.<sup>45</sup> According to Movsēs Xorenac'i, the Emperor after the death of Aršak "entrusted" Xosrov (IV), the king of the eastern part of Armenia, with the "Greek sector of Armenia" according to his request. In return, Xosrov promised to pay tribute.<sup>46</sup> Emperor Arcadius also "entrusted" Xosrov's successor Vramšapuh with the Roman part of Armenia, for which the king would pay tribute to Arcadius.<sup>47</sup> Only under Emperor Theodosius II (408-450) this arrangement would end; since then the Emperor "held (his sector of Armenia) himself through governors."<sup>48</sup> But such "multiple layers of authority" and loyalty were not uncommon, as we have seen, and were even created through agreement of the great powers. According to Movsēs Kaňankatuac'i, prince Varaz-Trdat of Albania (Aluank') "paid tribute to three nations — the Khazars, the Arabs and the Romans."<sup>49</sup> ca. 686/687, Emperor and Caliph had concluded a treaty providing for the division of the tribute paid by the subcaucasian states.<sup>50</sup> And the first Bagratuni King Ašot as well as his son Smbat were prepared to accept a crown from the Caliph as well as from the Emperor (see endnotes 147 and 180). The dating of the end of this arrangement in the time of Theodosius II by Xorenac'i would also be consistent with the information provided by Procopius as well as the fact that under this Emperor, Roman power received a firm power basis in Armenia interior with the foundation of Theodosiopolis in the district of Karin.<sup>51</sup>

Since then, "the Roman Emperor always appointed an archon for the Armenians, whomever he wished and whenever he wished." We do not know the responsibilities of this office of Comes Armeniae, as we only find it in official documents at the point of its abolition. But even if it was commonly entrusted to one of the indigenous aristocrats (which

is possible, see endnote 57), the differences to the hereditary status of the Satrapies are obvious.<sup>52</sup> Such, the Aršakuni lost their throne in the Roman as well as Persian sector, but were able to preserve a privileged status in Armenia interior, if we are to trust Procopius, who claims to reproduce a speech some fugitive Arsacid princes held in front of the Persian Great King:

Arsaces, the last king of our ancestors, abdicated his throne willingly in favour of Theodosius, the Roman Emperor, on condition that all who should belong to his family (genos) through all time should live unhampered in every respect, and in particular should in no case be subject to taxation. And we have preserved the agreement, until you, the Persians, made this much-vaunted treaty (of 532), which, as we think, one would not err in calling a sort of common destruction.<sup>53</sup>

This passage indicates not only a freedom from taxation, but also a hereditary status of the royal family, since an "unhampered life" for an Armenian noble house would have included the possibility to pass on its possessions and claims on various districts according to its customs. That the Arsacids had some power bases at their disposal becomes clear from their reaction to the new provincial regime introduced in 536 — the recently installed governor Akakios, who had imposed a tax of 400 pounds of gold on the noble houses, was killed. The Arsacids, namely John and his son Artabanes, took the lead in a rebellion and were able to muster a number of troops, among them heavy cavalry, against which the Emperor had to dispatch his *magister militum praesentalis* Sittas, who eventually also lost his life.<sup>54</sup>

During this rebellion, the Arsacids cooperated with another noble house, the *genos* of the *Aspetianoï*, as Procopius calls them; this would be the family of the Bagratuni, who had had a hereditary claim on the office of *aspet* at the Aršakuni-court. They also were numerous and contributed to the military power of the rebels.<sup>55</sup>

Beside the Aršakuni and the Bagratuni we also find the third famous noble house of this period in Roman Armenia, as we learn from Eġšē:

He (Vasak Siwnik) wrote an epistle to the land of the Greeks, falsely confusing matters for them; it was addressed to a man called Vasak, one of those Mamikoneans who were in service to the Greeks. In



this time of trouble he was the sparapet of Lower Armenia (storin Hayoc') and faithful to the Roman army on the Persian border, but in his actions was beyond the pale of God's religion. The former Vasak found this latter Vasak to be an accomplice in the great crimes in which they both united. He wrote and pretended continuously that all the Armenians were united behind him. The furtive Vasak had this letter taken to the Emperor's capital secretly with caution, so that he estranged the minds of the holy bishops from them (the Armenians) and caused all the Greek forces to doubt the covenant.<sup>56</sup>

We are not only informed about the Mamikoneans living under Roman rule in "Lower Armenia," which most probably can be identified with the territory of Armenia interior, but also that one of them "was the sparapet" of this region. It is unclear what the matching term of this office would be in Roman terminology, but it seems possible to identify the *sparapet storin Hayoc'* with the *Comes Armeniae*. If this is the case and the *Comes Armeniae* was normally chosen among the local aristocrats, then his status could be compared with that of the Satraps after the abolition of their hereditary status in 488.

Also the first governors of Armenia interior as province were recruited among the Armenian aristocracy, as Procopius tells us:

That Symeones (a Persarmenian aristocrat) who had given (the fortress of) Pharangion into the hands of the Romans persuaded the Emperor Justinian (...) to present him with certain villages of Armenia. And becoming master of these places, he was plotted against and murdered by those who had formerly possessed them. (...) And when the Emperor heard this, he gave over the villages to Amazaspes, the nephew of Symeones, and appointed him archon of the Armenians. This Amazaspes, as time went on, was denounced to the Emperor Justinian by one of his friends, Akakios by name, on the ground that he was abusing the Armenians and wished to give over to the Persians Theodosiopolis and certain other fortresses. After telling this, Akakios, by the Emperor's will, slew Amazaspes treacherously, and himself secured the arche over the Armenians by the gift of the Emperor.<sup>57</sup>

Akakios, as mentioned above, was appointed as governor of the newly created province of Armenia interior (or Armenia prima) in 536, as we also know from Justinian's Novella XXXI on the reorganization

of Roman Armenia and the creation of four Armenian provinces (including Armenia interior and the Satrapies) and his Novella, "That the Armenians should follow Roman laws in all ways" addressed directly to "the most magnificent Akakios, Proconsul of Armenia" on March 18<sup>th</sup>, 536.<sup>58</sup> Less clear is the meaning of *archon of the Armenians*, the office Amazaspes received from the Emperor; Adontz expressed the opinion that Amazaspes was already appointed governor of the province of Armenia interior in 532.<sup>59</sup> This seems a fair enough guess since, although Procopius uses the same term for the office of the *Comes Armeniae* (see endnote 44), we know from the law about the installation of the *magister militum per Armeniam, Pontem Polemoniaccum et gentes* in 528, that "the comes Armeniae" was "abolished altogether."<sup>60</sup> This appointment of Armenian noblemen as governors of the new province could be interpreted as concession to the special situation in this region, still dominated by the powerful aristocratic houses. The integration of indigenous Armenians in the new administrative structures made sense, as also Malalas indicates concerning the new *magister militum per Armeniam*:

Sittas enrolled indigenous scriniarii and made them his own military scriniarii in accord with an imperial rescript, having requested the Emperor to enrol natives since they knew the regions of Armenia.<sup>61</sup>

But as governors of the province of Armenia interior, Justinian did not appoint members of an indigenous noble house, but of a family, which had crossed the border from Persarmenia during the previous war (see endnote 57) and whose possessions and rank depended completely on the Emperor. The native Armenians, as we have seen, reacted with violence; Symeones was murdered as well as Akakios. The transformation of Armenia interior into a province led to rebellion, especially after the introduction of a new tax regime and the Roman law system; in an edict "Concerning the order of inheritance among the Armenians" (*De Armeniorum successione*, 535) and in the Novella XXI (*De Armeniis ut ipsi per omnia sequantur romanorum leges*, 536), Emperor Justinian tried to apply the Roman law on the whole of Roman Armenia, "desiring that the land of the Armenians should prosper altogether and should differ in no way from our realm."<sup>62</sup>

We hear Procopius' words from the mouth of the fugitive Arsacids at the Sasanian court, but they may as well reflect the opinion of the Armenians; they complain that Justinian

has turned everything in the world upside down und wrought complete confusion. (...) For what thing which was before forbidden has he not done? Or what thing which was well established has he not disturbed? Did he not ordain for us the payment of a tax which did not exist before, and has he not enslaved our neighbours, the Tzani, who were autonomous, and has he not set over the king of the wretched Lazi a Roman magistrate? — an act neither in keeping with the natural order of things nor very easy to explain in words.<sup>63</sup>

As we know, the Arsacids later crossed again the border to the Roman Empire and were integrated in the Emperor's army; especially Artabanes fought in Africa and Italy and became a Byzantine war hero. Also other members of the former royal family lived throughout the empire; one of these named Arsaces conspired against Justinian, attempting to enthroned the Emperor's nephew Germanus and his sons. Trying to convince Artabanes to join the plot, Arsaces explained to him what Artabanes had lost because of Justinian's rule:

his fatherland was kept under strictest guard and exhausted by unwanted taxes, his father had been slain on the pretext of a treaty and covenant, and his whole family had been enslaved and was kept scattered to every corner of the Roman empire.<sup>64</sup>

#### The Satrapies and Armenia Interior as a Test Area for the Empire's Politics

The example of the Satrapies and Armenia interior demonstrates what a long Roman control of Armenian territory could imply for the aristocratic houses: the gradual reduction of autonomy, the installation of military and administrative structures, the displacement of the noble families from the region and their integration into the empire's elite were the crucial steps of the integration of Western Armenia into the empire as a province.<sup>65</sup> This *modus operandi* could be applied by the empire also in following centuries *vis-à-vis* the noble houses of Armenia if the empire had the opportunity to win the upper hand in the struggle for the control of the country for a longer time, but it was

not able to do so.

After the restoration of Xusro II on the Sasanian throne with the help of Emperor Maurice, Byzantium in 591 gained control over most of former Persarmenia up to a line near Dvin.<sup>66</sup> The Emperor, eager to regain control over the Balkans, transferred many troops from the East to Thrace and also tried to recruit soldiers among the Armenians. Various aristocrats, convinced by means of promises and presents or of force, marched with their troops to Constantinople, presented themselves to the Emperor, and then fought against the Avars and Slavs. Some nobles reacted with rebellion, but we do not find any leading members of one of the great houses among the insurgents. On the contrary, Mušel Mamikonean fought and died in Thrace, while his kinsman Hamazasp Mamikonean took part in the persecution of the rebels under Byzantine command.<sup>67</sup> It is hard to say what the long-term targets of the Emperor were. In the history attributed to Sebēos we find, as we have seen, an Armenian interpretation of the empire's policy in the form of the letter allegedly written by Maurice to Xusro II (see endnote 5).

Sebēos also informs us that in the year 602 the Emperor ordered the resettlement of 30,000 households from Armenia in Thrace.<sup>68</sup> And Yovhannēs Drasyanakertc'i in the 10<sup>th</sup> century even describes—in a somehow confused manner—a system of provinces for the whole area of Armenia.<sup>69</sup> It may have been the Emperor's aim to integrate all Armenian areas as provinces in the empire, but in 602 he lost his throne and his life in a military coup; in the following war with Persia, Byzantium lost control over Armenia.<sup>70</sup> Considering the long process of integration of the western parts into the empire, a decade was too short a period of time to establish a full provincial administration that could compete with the traditional power of the noble houses.

The same can be said about the second time of the Byzantine predominance in Armenia after Heraclius's victory over the Sasanians in 628.<sup>71</sup> The Arab expansion and the defeat of the Byzantines at Yarmuk in 636 led to an arrangement with the *naḡarars* and the installation of the first presiding prince of Armenia (see endnote 130). Byzantine influence decreased and increased in the following decades parallel to the waves of internal wars in the Caliphate, but at the beginning of the 8<sup>th</sup> century, Arab control over Armenia east of the Euphrates (including

the former Satrapies and Armenia interior with Theodosiopolis) could not be challenged by the Empire any more. Likewise, the empire had lost most of its former provincial territory in Western Armenia.<sup>72</sup>

Not until the gradual process of annexation of the various Armenian princedoms and kingdoms in the third time of Byzantine hegemony over Armenia in the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> centuries, which is beyond the scope of this paper, the empire could use methods similar to those we have observed in the Satrapies and Armenia interior.<sup>73</sup>

### *Defectors and Deserters — The Empire and Armenian Aristocrats Beyond Its Borders*

As we have seen in the case of Atat Xořořuni, crossing the border into or out of the empire and entering or leaving the service (*cařayut' iwn*) of the Emperor was an option an Armenian aristocrat could choose several times. The motivations behind such a step could be different—some aristocrats hoped for certain benefits, others would have no other choice. The initiative for a change in the *cařayut' iwn* could come from the respective nobleman as well as from an imperial authority trying to persuade a retainer of the opposing great power to defect.<sup>74</sup>

We find examples for all these possibilities in our sources, beginning again with Procopius, who talks about the borderland of Armenia interior and Persian Armenia:

And this canon for about the space of a three days' journey is tributary to the Romans, but from there begins the territory of Persarmenia; and here is the gold-mine which, with the permission of Cabades, was worked by one of the natives, Symeones by name. When this Symeones saw that both nations were actively engaged in the war, he decided to deprive Cabades of the revenue. Therefore he gave over both himself and Pharangion to the Romans, but refused to deliver over to either one the gold of the mine. And as for the Romans, they did nothing, thinking it sufficient for them that the enemy had lost the income from there, and the Persians were not able against the will of the Romans to force the inhabitants of the place to terms, because they were baffled by the difficult country.<sup>75</sup>

The willingness of the imperial authorities to grant Symeones the entire income from the gold mines, surely object of negotiations ahead of his

defection, seems a fair enough motivation for changing sides. As we have seen above, Symeones would later also receive several villages in Armenia interior; material benefits played, as one would expect, a major role in the negotiations between the empire and the aristocrats willing to join it. This is also the case in another defection at this time in the same region:

At about the same time Narses and Aratius who at the beginning of this war, as I have stated above, had an encounter with Sittas and Belisarius in the land of the Persarmenians<sup>76</sup>, came together with their mother as deserters to the Romans; and the Emperor's steward, Narses, received them (for he too happened to be a Persarmenian by birth), and he presented them with a large sum of money. When this came to the knowledge of Isaac, their youngest brother, he secretly opened negotiations with the Romans, and delivered over to them the fortress of Bolum, which lies very near the limits of Theodosiopolis. For he directed that soldiers should be concealed somewhere in the vicinity, and he received them into the fort by night, opening stealthily one small gate for them. Thus he too came to Byzantium.<sup>77</sup>

The material aspect ("a large sum of money") is augmented with family bonds. This combination leads to the deliverance of an important fortress to the Romans—certainly a win-win-situation, and again the defection is object of previous negotiations. Elements of such negotiations and agreements can be observed in another context—here we encounter again the rebellious aristocrats of Armenia interior, against whom Justinian has dispatched the *magister militum praesentialis* Sittas:

First of all the (Sittas) attempted to win over some of the Armenians by persuasion and to attach them to his cause, in order that the task of overpowering the others might be attended with less difficulty and toil. And the genos called the Aspetiano<sup>78</sup>, great in power and in numbers, was willing to join him. And they went to Sittas and begged him to give them pledges in writing that (en grammasin ta pista), if they abandoned their kinsmen in the battle and came to the Roman army, they should remain entirely free from harm, retaining their own possessions. Now Sittas was delighted and wrote to them in tablets, giving them the pledges (ta pista) just as they desired of him; he then sealed the writing and sent it to them.<sup>79</sup>

The main element of the negotiations between Sittas and the Aspetianoi are the written and sealed pledges in which the conditions of defection were laid down. These documents would bind both sides, but had the main purpose of assurance for the aristocrats delivering themselves to a powerful new lord. Unfortunate circumstances avert the conclusion of the deal between Sittas and the Armenians; in the following fights Sittas is killed, but the rebels finally have to take refuge in the Persian Empire. Later, they again switch sides:

And the Armenians who had submitted to Chosroes received pledges (ta pista) from the Romans and came with Bassaces to Byzantium.<sup>80</sup>

These written pledges are the equivalent to the oaths of fidelity (*erdumn*, *uzt*), which verified the *carayut' iwn*-relation between nobleman and lord according to ancient Armenian customs. As the Armenians ask for written pledges in the history of Procopius, we can assume that they knew within the Roman state system, based on script, one needed written documents to assert his claims. We find both elements—oath and documents—in an episode from the time of Emperor Maurice in the history attributed to Sebēōs:

At that time another command came from the Emperor to seek out again and find from Armenia elite armed cavalry, 2,000 in number, and put them under two reliable men, and to despatch them in great haste. They sought out and chose 2,000 armed men and put these 2,000 under two reliable men: 1,000 to Sahak Mamikonean und 1,000 under the command of Smbat Bagratuni, son of Manuēl. (...) Sahak set out, brought his force to the palace, and presented himself to the king. But when Smbat reached Xaitik', he balked, because his force had become frightened en route, not wishing to go to that place (= Thrace) in compliance with the king's request. The king was informed of these events. Then through letters (hrovartaks) and trustworthy messengers he promised with an oath to send him back promptly to his own country with great honour. He also promised great rewards and gifts to the troops, and in this way he cajoled them into reconciliation. They proceeded in unity and presented themselves to the king. The king fully equipped the troops and despatched them to the borders of Thrace; Smbat he sent in great honour back to the land of his own people with many gifts.<sup>81</sup>

This mixture of warranties and promises (gifts, honors) is also used by a Persian official (collaborating with a Byzantine general) at this time to convince some Armenian rebels:

And they (the Byzantine and the Persian commander) confirmed this for them (the Armenian insurgents) by an oath: "You have nothing to fear from the king." The auditor (of Vaspurakan) added: "The king of kings sent me to you, and I have brought you the treasure. You have nothing to fear from the king of kings." And he swore an oath to them in accordance with their (the Persians) custom. (...) <sup>82</sup>

The Persian auditor has to swear "an oath in accordance" with Persian customs; like the written pledges of the Romans, this oath would bind the Persian official within his political and legal system.<sup>83</sup> This adaptiveness in the media of relations is attested also at the time of the Arab dominance over Armenia, after the flight of Smbat Bagratuni 705 to the Byzantine territory:

Smbat the Curopalate, moreover, left our country with his nobles and crossed over to the Greek territory, asking the king of the Greeks for a city in which to live and settle their herds. And he (the Emperor) gave them the city known as P'oyt' in the district of the country of Egr, where they lived for six years. (...) Once appointed to his office (= governor of Armenia) (Abd ul-Aziz) wrote an edict to the Armenian nobles, persuading them to return to their own countries. He even gave them an oath in writing, according to their custom. (The nobles), having relied on his oath, captured the city where they were staying, seized its treasures and the ornaments of the churches, and returned to Armenia, dissociating themselves from the Greek Emperor.<sup>84</sup>

Whereas in this case the initiative came from the Arab governor, in the year 781 the first step was taken by the Armenian *naḡarar* Tačat Anjewaci, who intended to leave the Byzantine Empire:

Such circumstances forced (Tačat) to work his way back into the service of the Arab Caliph. The opportunity arose when the Arab army was blockaded by the Greeks, and (Tačat) asked the Arabs to hand him a written oath allowing his return to his country. In return, (Tačat) promised to free the Arab troops from the blockade and lead them to their country. Upon hearing the proposition, the Caliph gave his full and prompt approval and offered (Tačat) all he

wanted, under oath. (Tačat), thus assured of receiving the required oath, departed from the Greek territory with his entire household, and delivered the Arab troops from the hands of the Greeks.<sup>85</sup>

After his defection, Tačat Anjewaci is even installed as presiding prince of Armenia by the Caliph, as we will see below; if the bestowal of this honor was object of previous negotiations, we do not know.

Attempts to recruit Armenian nobles could fail, as we have seen in the case of Sittas' negotiations with the Bagratunis. Not every nobleman was responsive to the Emperor's promises, as T'ovma Arcruni recounts:

Gurgēn (Arcruni) went to the province of Sper. At that time the prince called (Grigor) of the Bagratuni clan had surreptitiously seized (from) the Greeks the castle called Aramaneak'; (Gurgēn) was received by him with splendid honour. The (Byzantine) general of the East came to wage war with the prince in order to recover the fortress, and there Gurgēn demonstrated much valour in opposing the Greek army – not once but many times. With forty men he attacked a thousand, killed many of the elite Greeks and completely despoiled them, so that in his astonishment at his valour the general wrote to the Greek Emperor Michael (III) informing him about him. Then the Emperor wrote to his general in the hope that he would be able to persuade Gurgēn to come to the capital to the Emperor, from whom he would receive gifts and honour and promotion in rank. Gurgēn did not consent to go to the Greeks, but he did persuade Grigor to give the castle to the general and appease the Emperor.<sup>86</sup>

Gurgēn Arcruni did not enter the service of the Emperor, but some kind of deal was closed, as we may assume, since he arranged for the restitution of the hard-fought castle to the Byzantines.

Several years later, another Gurgēn from the Arcruni clan was also addressed by Emperor Michael III (842–867) to cross the border. This time, this was prevented by the official authorities of the Arab regime in Armenia:

When he (Gurgēn) arrived at the city of Theodosius in the province of Karin, news of him reached the Emperor Michael, king of the Greeks, who was prompt to arrange that he proceed to him without delay, in order that he might elevate him to the great honour of consulate and decorate him with the insignia of the cross. While this plan was under consideration, two emirs (...) fell on (Gurgēn), captured him, and brought him to Ašot (Bagratuni) son of the sparapet.<sup>87</sup>

Certainly the defection of aristocrats violated the interests of the great power that controlled the country. In the peace treaty of 562, Byzantium and Persia agreed that "those who in time of peace (between the two empires) defected, or rather fled, from one to the other shall not be received, but every means shall be used to place them, even against their will, in the hands of those from whom they have fled."<sup>88</sup>

But as we have seen, for the noble houses and their retainers crossing the border to the east or the west remained a prevalent option to elude a regime which they were not prepared to tolerate any longer. Their bargaining power depended on their status and relationship to the power whose sphere of influence they intended to leave.<sup>89</sup> A commander of a strategic important fortress near the border had more to offer than a fugitive, who barely escaped alive. But in the period under consideration, even refugees were welcome, even in high numbers, if they could provide valuable manpower for military and economic purposes. Lewond reports for the year 788:

Left without property and food, naked and barefoot, (the inhabitants of Armenia) were exposed to the horrors of famine. They left their country and fled to the Greek territory to seek refuge. The mass of the population, over twelve thousand men, women, and children, as we were told, migrated from their land under the leadership of Šapuh from the house of Amatunik', Hamam his son, and other Armenian nobles with their cavalry. (...) As they crossed the river (Akampsis), the Greek Emperor Constantine (VI) was immediately notified. He called them unto him and gave the nobles and their cavalry high honours. (The Emperor) accommodated the bulk of the lower class people on good fertile lands.<sup>90</sup>

Defection and emigration could always be an option for individual aristocrats or, as we see, even for whole aristocratic houses and their retainers. The aristocracy at large had to find other methods to arrange for a regime which seemed beneficial for them.

### *The Emperor and the Armenian Nobility at Large*

*episkopotunk' ew načarak' Hayoc' - decision making without a king*

The participation of the powerful aristocrats in the affairs of the kingdom can be observed since early times, as Nina Garsoïan makes clear: "The

king was forced by custom to seek the counsel of the *naxarars* on all important occasions. As early as A.D. 18 Tacitus observed that Zeno/Artašēs had been crowned 'before the consenting nobles.'<sup>91</sup>

The king could choose to ignore the counsel of the princes, as we see in the Buzandaran Patmut'iwnk':

King Pap changed his mind and turned his heart away from the king of the Greeks, and he wished to unite in love and alliance with the king of Persia. And so he began to rely on the king of Persia and he then sent him envoys concerning an alliance. He also sent envoys to the king of the Greeks (to say): "Ten cities together with Caesarea belong to me, therefore return them (to me). The city of Urhay (Edessa) was also built by my ancestors; consequently, if you do not wish to initiate a conflict, give it back, otherwise we will fight a great war." But Mušet and all the Armenian princes urgently sought to persuade the king not to break the covenant with the kingdom of the Greeks. He, however, would not listen to them and openly manifested his hostility to the king of the Greeks.<sup>92</sup>

But this and other royal attempts of autarchy would normally end in catastrophe—at least according to the philo-aristocratic Armenian historians. The council of the nobles on the other side was able to "oppose the king on occasion and even met in his absence."<sup>93</sup> And in times of interregnum, this council led the Armenian affairs:

And all the greatest Armenian princes assembled together, and the sparapet Mušet and the hayr-mardpet as well as all the other princes said: "What shall we do? How shall we act? Shall we avenge our king's (Pap, killed at the order of the Emperor) death or not?" Then the following decision was taken at the council and they said: "We cannot become servants of the heathen Persians or be hostile to the king of the Greeks. Neither can we carry on hostilities with both of them. Nor can we maintain ourselves without the support of one of them." Consequently, this decision was taken at the council: "What has been, has been. Let us serve the king of the Greeks. Let us make our submission to the authority of the kingdom of the Greeks, and let the kingdom of the Greeks treat us at it wills."<sup>94</sup>

A more detailed description on the composition of such a council we find in the Buzandaran Patmut'iwnk' for the time of interregnum after the capture of King Tiran by the Persians:

Then the men of the realm of the land of Armenia – the *naxarars*, magnates, nobles, kusakals, ašxarhakals and azats, the army leaders, judges, chieftains, and princes, not to mention the army commanders and even (some) of the famik and šinakan – gathered together in a council of still greater accord (...). Then all the men of the realm joined together in one agreement and counsel in order to find help and support for themselves.

At that time the Armenian nobility sent some of the great *naxarars* with gifts to the king of the Greeks (to say that) they gave him their hand (and that) they would serve him obediently were he to support them with aid to obtain revenge from their enemies. And so they sent out Andovk, nahapet of Siwnik', and Aršawir Kamsarakan, nahapet of Aršarunik', who set forth and came to the realm of the Greeks to the imperial palace (palatn) of the kings. They presented their letters-patents, set out the gifts they had brought, and laid before the king the message of united supplication of the realm.<sup>95</sup>

Again, the aristocrats come together, reach a decision and take the initiative in the relations to the neighboring powers. As the aristocracy was able to carry on the foreign affairs on their own during the time of monarchy, they did so even more after its abolition in 428. Elišē states explicitly: "the ruling power (t'agaworut'iw'n) was transferred to the Armenian *naxarars*."<sup>96</sup>

The first occasion for direct negotiations between the aristocracy of Persarmenia and the empire after the end of the Aršakuni-monarchy was the attempt of the rebellious princes around the *marzpan* Vasak of Siwnik' (later to become the "arch-traitor" of the story) and Vardan Mamikonean to obtain the Emperor's support against the Persians.<sup>97</sup> The aristocrats came together and decided to initiate a (unsuccessful) diplomatic mission:

(They) wrote letters to the Emperor and to all the nobles of the Greek court, and also to other princes and prefects: to the bdeāšy of Ahjnik', to the prince of Angel-tun, to Cop'k' and Hašteank' and Ekeleac', and to the other princes of every region, and to the great general of Antioch. They sealed all these letters, first the prince of Siwnik', Vasak himself, with his own ring, and then all the Armenian magnates. They equipped for the journey to Greek territory the prince of the house of the Amatunik', Vahan, as being a thoughtful and prudent man; and the saintly young noble Hmayeak, brother of the blessed Armenian general Vardan, from the family of the

Mamikoneank'; and the blessed Merhužan, brother of the saintly Atan, from the family of the Arcrunik'. Entrusting the letters to them, Vāsak the prince of Siwnik' and all the nobles of Armenia despatched them to the Emperor and to all the other Armenian princes mentioned above.<sup>98</sup>

Also Elišē describes this mission:

Then they sent in haste one of the great princes of the Grumi family, Atom, to the West in order to reveal all these evil plans of the malicious king of the East, and at the same time to describe their own brave valour, which they had proved by deeds – by trampling on the fearful order (of Yazkert) and inflicting great slaughter on the magi – and to seek from him (the Emperor of the West) aid and support, even entering his service (ca'ayut' iwn) should he so wish.<sup>99</sup>

As especially Elišē informs us, in this case not only one individual aristocrat proposed to enter the Emperor's *ca'ayut' iwn*, but the Persian nobility at large. Emperor Marcian, who succeeded to the throne after the death of Theodosius II in 450, refused this proposal in order to avoid a war with the Persians.<sup>100</sup> For the same cause, Emperor Anastasius declined an Armenian appeal for help in 491.<sup>101</sup>

Only Emperor Justin II was prepared to risk a war with the Sasanian Empire when he accepted the Armenians' offer in 570, as we learn from the history attributed to Sebēos:

Then in the 41<sup>st</sup> year of the reign of Khosrov, son of Kawat, Vardan rebelled and rejected submission to Persian rule in unison with all the Armenians. They killed the marzpan Surēn, taking him by surprise in the city of Dvin, seized much booty, and turned their allegiance (ca'ayut' iwn) to the Greeks. (...) Then the Greek king (Justin II) made an oath with the Armenians and confirmed the same pact (*uxt*) which had been made between the two kings – the blessed Trdat and Constantine.<sup>102</sup> He gave them an imperial army in support. When they had received the army, they attacked the city of Dvin; after a siege they destroyed it from top to bottom, and expelled the Persian troops who were stationed in it.<sup>103</sup>

The conclusion of a *ca'ayut' iwn*-relationship between the Emperor and the Armenian nobility was affirmed through an oath as in the case of single nobles who entered Emperor Justin's service. This is confirmed in other sources, which are even more detailed on the negotiations between Justin II and the Armenian insurgents:

They begged to become subject to the Romans, in order that they might freely perform the honours (due) to God without anyone hindering (them). When the Emperor had admitted (their overtures) and certain points had been agreed by the Emperor in writing and guaranteed by solemn oaths, the Armenians massacred their governors; and with their whole army, bringing (with them) their neighbours, both of kindred and foreign race, they united themselves to the Roman empire, Vardian having a precedence among them by birth, dignity and experience in wars.<sup>104</sup>

Evagrius mentions the combination of written pledges and oath which we already have observed in the case of single defectors. Also, Menander Protector mentions that Emperor Justin II swore to bring Armenia under its rule and, if this would fail, not to deliver the Armenian rebels to the Sasanians.<sup>105</sup> As we know from the accounts of the following negotiations between Byzantium and Persia, the Emperor and his successors felt bound to this oath and declined the Persian demands for the delivery of the fugitive Armenians, although the peace treaty of 562 had forbidden the reception of defectors (see endnote 88).<sup>106</sup>

This is of course an interesting example for an Byzantine Emperor binding himself by taking "solemn oaths" to the Armenians. As this oath is mentioned also in the Greek sources, we do not have to fear to be subject to an exclusively Armenian interpretation of the relationship between Emperor and aristocrats, and it gives credit to other oath-takings of Byzantine Emperors mentioned in Armenian sources. The late Angeliki Laiou had stated:

Bilateral, synallagmatic relations, which linked the Emperor and his subjects, or a subset of them, upon a basis of mutual obligations, have been connected to the rise of quasi-feudal relations in the Byzantine Empire. The matter is relatively clear insofar as the Palaiologian period is concerned. For the earlier period, the existence of bilateral, synallagmatic, arrangements has been admitted for the Treaty of Devol, between Alexios I and Bohemond (1108), while it was also posited by certain western medieval sources for the arrangements between Alexios I and the participants of the First Crusade, an issue that remains debatable. It is certainly easier to trace this matter in relations between Byzantium and foreign powers than in the relations between the Emperor and his own subjects. (...) Until the second half of the



eleventh century, Emperors took oaths to individuals very rarely, and in special circumstances, usually in order to give guarantees to unsuccessful rebels. (...) However, the very fact that an Emperor would agree to take "awful oaths" to a private individual to confirm a treaty may be connected to the currency that oaths and sworn associations had received in the second half of the 11<sup>th</sup> century, and the legitimacy or quasi-legitimacy they had acquired.<sup>107</sup>

Laiou than traces back such agreements of Emperors to the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> centuries, when the Emperors were "forced to contract bilateral agreements with his aristocratic subjects, in which visible signs, including the oath and symbols of his engagement (perhaps the very cross upon which the oath was taken) were a condition of the arrangement."<sup>108</sup> We can observe reciprocal oath-taking in earlier centuries between the Emperor and potentates with whom he was forced to deal more or less on eye-level, especially the Persian King or the Arab Caliph. On these occasions, the Emperor was also prepared to accept a "heathen" form of oath by his opponent respectively more often by his opponent's envoys.<sup>109</sup> More common were of course oaths taken by subjects of the Emperor to serve him faithfully.<sup>110</sup> But these did not include reciprocal oaths as were characteristic for the establishment of *ca'ayut' iwn* between lord and retainer (see endnote 23). Thus, the acceptance of the service of an Armenian aristocrat or the aristocracy at large would be one of the "very rare" occasions when the Byzantine Emperor was prepared to take an oath, complying with the traditions (as in his relations with foreign rulers) of a valuable retainer or ally.<sup>111</sup>

As Byzantium gained predominance in the region after the year 591, such a convention of the leading men of Armenia could also be initiated by the Emperor:

He (Emperor Maurice) further commanded all the cavalry from Armenia to assemble, and the chief nobles, (and those) who were experienced and capable of standing firm and fighting in battle in the line of spearmen. He also ordered other forces to be brought from the land of Armenia in great numbers, all of them willing and of elite stature; to be formed into battalions and that, equipped with arms, they should all cross to the land of Thrace against the enemy, and Mušel Mammikonean as their general.<sup>112</sup>

In the second half of the 6<sup>th</sup> century after the difference in dogma had become obvious,<sup>113</sup> such initiatives were often connected with imperial

attempts to achieve theological conformity. In 633, Emperor Heraclius ordered all bishops, *vardapets*, and noblemen to gather in Theodosiopolis for a synod on the council of Chalcedon.<sup>114</sup> His grandson, Constans II, undertook a similar initiative in 649:

But that rebellious dragon (= Satan) did not delay. Desiring through his deceit to fight with God, he travailed to raise persecutions in the churches of the land of Armenia. For in the years of king Constans, grandson of Heraclius, he brought into play his wicked guile, making the Greek troops (*zzors Yunac'*) in Armenia his accomplices, since the Armenians never did receive the Romans (*zHoromn*; also a synonym for the adherents of Chalcedon) in communion in the body and blood of the Lord. So they wrote a complaint to Constans, the Greek king and to the patriarch: "We are considered as impious in this country, because they reckon the council of Chalcedon and the Tome of Leo to be an insult to Jesus Christ, and they anathematize them." Then the king, with the patriarch, gave a command, and they wrote an edict to the Armenians that they should effect a union of faith with Rome und should not scorn the council and that Tome. There was a man there from the province of Bagrawand, from the village of Bagawan, who was learned in the art of philosophy, called Dawit'. He ordered him to be sent to Armenia, so that they might abandon their opposition. All the bishops and nobles of Armenia (*episkopotunk' ew nayarank' Hayoc'*) gathered at Dvin in the presence of the Christ-loving Catholicos Nersēs and the pious Armenian general T'ëodoros, lord of Rštrnik'. They saw the king's orders and heard the arguments of the philosopher, who upheld the doctrine of the Trinity with the distinction according to Leo's Tome. When they had heard it, they did not agree to change the true teaching of St Gregory to conform with the Tome of Leo. They all decided to make a response to the letter.<sup>115</sup>

The Emperor's efforts were a failure, and the empire's influence dwindled due to the Muslim inroads. In 652/653, Constans II faced the danger of Armenia's defection to the Arabs; once again, he tried to convoke Armenia's aristocracy:

In this manner the servant of Anti-Christ split them away from the Romans. For although the Emperor wrote many intercessions and supplications to them and summoned them to himself, they did not wish to heed him. Then he said: "I am coming to the city of Karin (= Theodosiopolis). Do you come to me." Or: "I am coming to you, and I shall give you a subsidy as assistance; and we shall decide together what is best to do." Yet even so they did not wish to heed him.<sup>116</sup>

This notable imperial offer to take share in decision making was of no avail; the modality of allegiance from the Emperor to the Arabs was the same as on earlier occasions: negotiations, covenant, and oath.

In the same year the Armenians rebelled and removed themselves from (allegiance to) the Greek kingdom and submitted to the king of Ismael. T'ëodoros, lord of Rštunik', with all the Armenian princes made a pact with death and contracted an alliance with hell, abandoning the divine covenant. Now the prince of Ismael spoke with them and said: "Let this be the pact of treaty between me and you for as many years as you may wish. I shall not take tribute from you for a three-year period. Then you will pay (tribute) with an oath, as much as you may wish. You will keep in your country 15,000 cavalry, and provide sustenance from your country; and I shall reckon it in the royal tax. I shall not request cavalry for Syria; but wherever else I command they shall be ready for duty. I shall not send amirs to (your) fortresses, nor an Arab army - neither many, nor even down to a single cavalryman. An enemy shall not enter Armenia; and if the Romans attack you I shall send you troops in support, as many as you may wish. I swear by the great God that I shall not be false."<sup>117</sup>

The Armenian noble's *cařayut' iwn* had proved its flexibility in the face of a changing distribution of power once more. In Movsēs Kalankatuac'i we even find a very pragmatic justification for such a defection (here of Albania's prince Juansēr from Byzantium to the Caliphate), dressed in an apocalyptic vision of the dwindling of Roman power:

(...) for as the multitude of waters flood the earth with their furious waves, so the kings of the Romans with their massed armies spread their multitudes thickly over the entire world. Now, however, the exalted power of that throne, thus dissipated, passed away, so that the forests of men in its control were caught in the shadow of that which choked like Gideon's briers and which the scions of the tyrants, stifled among them, could not shift the least degree. When the ram of the west saw that the Lord had withdrawn his aid from his sword and that the savage wild boar grew fierce and ground his horn, he interpreted this to be the fulfilment of the time foretold by the prophecy and promise to Abraham: "the hands of Ishmael will be against all men, and the hand of all men against him" (Gen. 16, 12) and "before him,

a devouring flame, and behind him, a burning flame" (Joel 2, 3). Then the Emperor of the Romans (kayser Hor□omac') took the remnants of his army and hastened across sea and passed within the borders of the distant isles of the west. (...) Seeing the Emperor of the Romans rendered powerless and weak by the king of the south, who consumed his populous markets and towns like a flame, the great prince of the east Juansēr was greatly concerned for his kingdom.(...) He therefore undertook to submit to the yoke of vassalage of the king of the south (= the Caliph).<sup>118</sup>

This vision can actually be connected with a concrete event, namely the year 662, when Constans II transferred his residence from Constantinople to the West and took personal charge of the territories in Sicily and Italy.<sup>119</sup> Seeing "the ram of the West" a fugitive, the submission of prince Juansēr to the Arabs made perfect sense in political and apocalyptic terms.

### *Unity and discord in the nobility*

Up to this point, we have seen the Armenian nobility acting in unity. In 570, according to Sebēos, Vardan Mamikonian started a rebellion against the Persian *marzpan* in "unity with all Armenians" (*miabanut' iwn amenayn hayastaneawk'*), and together they declared their *cařayut' iwn* to the Emperor.<sup>120</sup> A description of the ideal state of *miabanut' iwn* has been given the history of T'ovma Arçruni, together with the insinuation of the decline of this unity and its consequences:

For the Armenian princes with their hosts of knights and troops were still living in unison and harmony and concord, though in secret they had suspicions of treachery. But when discord began to insinuate itself within that unity, they grace of the divine power departed and withdrew. Concerted plans were disregarded in combat and in other matters affecting the administration of the country. (...) They sent letters and messengers to the Caliph secretly from each other.<sup>121</sup>

Discord (or *annibanut' iwn*) is a far more prominent motif in the history attributed to Sebēos (and earlier Armenian historiography);<sup>122</sup> it is the reason of the failure of various rebellions against the empire and the Sasanians.<sup>123</sup> It also describes the state that prevailed in Armenia on the eve of the first Arab invasion.<sup>124</sup> The history of Lewond offers a

description of disunity on two occasions of Armenian rebellion against the Arabs; in both cases it is Prince Ašot from the house of Bagratuni who tries to convince the other aristocrats not to start an uprising.

While war among (the Arabs) prolonged, all the nobles of our country decided to terminate and withdraw their obedience to the Arabs by revolting against them. This advice was given them by Grigor, who was from the house of the Mamikonean, with the insidious intent of deposing Ašot from his principedom. Thus all the Armenian nobles came to Prince Ašot and forced him to give his consent to the useless plan. When Prince (Ašot) realized that the nobles and their cavalry were in agreement with each other and had gone astray following the useless plan. When Prince (Ašot) realized that the nobles and their cavalry were in agreement with each other and had gone astray following the useless plan, he began to hesitate. He then called upon his *naxarars* one by one and beseeched them earnestly not to become involved in such an act of iniquity. (...) The Armenian nobles, however, were unwilling to accept such prudent advice. Rather, they withstood and said: "If you do not agree with our thinking, not one of your troops shall remain with you. We can no longer take the torment that has befallen our land of Armenia." Then Prince Ašot had to consent, albeit unwillingly, to join Grigor and the other nobles and make together a pledge of oath through the mediation of the dominical cross, that they shall sincerely keep their bond of unity. (...) They particularly counted on the help of the troops of the king of the Greeks which were located in the province of Pontus, because there was a treaty of alliance between them by the orders of Emperor Constantine (V).<sup>125</sup>

The Mamikoneans use the enagement against the Arab rule as a vehicle to diminish the power of the rivaling Bagratuni clan, whose head at the same time is the presiding prince of Armenia. But like the Armenian kings in earlier times, the leading aristocrat is unable to oppose the majority of the aristocracy, as it becomes obvious from a later episode shortly before the revolt of 774/775:

Now all the Armenian nobles assembled at a certain place and made an oath to each other, agreeing with a solemn vow to live and die together. The number of those who assembled together (reached) about five thousand men, due to the numerous ramiks who joined their troops. (...) Ašot son of Prince Sahak from the house

of the Bagratids, did not take part in this dangerous enterprise, because he was full of wisdom and prudence. On the contrary, he kept counselling the rest to abandon the perilous enterprise which stemmed from the perverse instigation of the frenzied monk, and think of their own security as well as that of their families. He told them: "(...) Even the Roman Empire was unable to raise its hand against this dragon (= the Arabs), and it still continues to tremble before it and has not dared to act against the dominical command. I do not think you are unaware of the full power, the personal courage of the Emperor of the Greeks (arkay Yunac'), as well as the great number of his troops and ammunition. And yet even he did not think of delivering the land of Armenia from its (the dragon's) hands. (I am referring to) Constantine (V), son of Leo (III), who in one day, while wrestling with fierce beasts, killed the lion as if he were killing goats. If (Constantine) himself, being so powerful, was obviously subdued by the presence of the pernicious beast which ravages the world, on whom are you relying? (...) you will be forced to flee from your land with your entire households (...) and live under the foreign yoke of the king of Greeks." They did not listen to this useful advice. On the contrary, they disregarded it as words of treason (...).<sup>126</sup>

In both cases *armiabanut'inn* did not only restrict the chances of collective action of the Armenian aristocracy, but also the stability of foreign domination; the representative installed by the Arab overlord was not able to enforce allegiance to the suzerain. Discord was a factor every power had to count with in its relations with Armenia in this period.

### *Instead of a King? The Installation of a Presiding Prince*

One of the main elements of a great power's suzerainty over Armenia in the period under consideration was the appointment of a representative of the Great King, Emperor or Caliph, who should enforce the suzerain's interests vis-à-vis the *naxarars*. In the time of Persian predominance this would be the *marzpanes*, the first of whom we already encounter before the kingdom's partition:

After this, Queen Zarmanduxt and the sparapet Manuēl (Mamikonean) sent Garfoyl mařax with many Armenian *naxarars* as well as letters-patent, gifts, and presents to the king of Persia (to say) that they would give him their hand, submit to him, serve him faithfully, and hand the Armenian realm over to him. (...) And he

(the Persian king) sent with him to the land of Armenia the Persian Surēn, one of his illustrious *naḡarars*, and with him ten thousand armour-clad horsemen, so that the Surēn might go to the support of the commander-in-chief Manuēl in the land of Armenia, and protect Queen Zarmanduxt from (her) enemies. (...) They handed the realm of Armenia over to the Surēn and submitted to the commands of the king of Persia. And it was laid down that the king of Persia should be given tribute, gifts, and offerings from the realm of Armenia. Likewise, (they granted) to the marzpan Surēn has (income from land tax) and *košik* (salary), as well as the necessary maintenance, and supplies and food for the ten thousand (men) according to their needs. And they whole-heartedly accepted the king of Persia as their supporter and lord, and served him.<sup>127</sup>

The Armenians are obliged to accept the deployment of Sasanian troops in their country, to pay tribute to the Persian king and to arrange for the maintenance of these troops as well as their commander, the *marzpan* Surēn; this was surely a severe limitation of the aristocracy's freedom of action. After the abolition of the monarchy in 428, the presence of a *marzpan* in Armenia became permanent.<sup>128</sup> But his power was constrained by the same factors as the power of the former kings, mainly the (un)willingness of the nobility to cooperate. Of course, he could send for the superior forces of his overlord; but if the imperial center was inept to intervene in Armenia because of its commitment on other borders, it was often willing to accept a new arrangement. This was the case after the disastrous defeat of Great King Peroz against the Hephthalites in 484. His successor did not only conclude a peace agreement with the Armenian rebels around Vahan Mamikonean and acknowledged his hereditary claim on the office of *sparapet*, but appointed Vahan *marzpan* in 485. Hence Vahan Mamikonean now combined the highest-ranking office of the old Aršakuni monarchy with that of representative of the Great King in Armenia, indeed a very powerful position.<sup>129</sup>

A similar situation occurred during the second period of Byzantine domination over entire Armenia in the 7<sup>th</sup> century. While in 636 the empire faced the first wave of the Arab invasions in Syria, a part of the Armenian nobility under the leadership of Dawit' Saharuni rebelled against the Byzantine general in the country, another Armenian

aristocrat named Mžēž Gnuni. After the defeat against the Arabs in the battle of Yarmuk, Emperor Heraclius had to come to terms with the Armenians:

Then the king, at the request of the princes, made him (Dawit' Saharuni) prince (*išyan*) over all the territories (of Armenia), bestowed on him the title of *kuropalates*, and confirmed him in his service. He held the office for three years with great magnificence; then, discredited by his soldiers, he was expelled. Since all the nobles were disunited, they ruined this land of Armenia.<sup>130</sup>

As the Persians had done in 485, Heraclius appointed an indigenous Armenian nobleman as his representative in the country and bestowed on him the high ranks of *kuropalates* and *patrikios*, as an inscription on the church of Mren attests. In this inscription Dawit' Saharuni also bears the title of *sparapet* of Armenia (and Syria), which makes the similarities to Vahan Mamikonean's position even stronger.<sup>131</sup> Thus, Dawit' Saharuni became the first in a long row of *išyans* of Armenia, which would continue until the last of them became the first king of the new Armenian monarchy. Sebēos states clearly that the initiative for Dawit' Saharuni's appointment came from the Armenian princes; accepting their proposal, Heraclius could safeguard their *catayut' iwn*. Saharuni had been actually an unlikely candidate for such a position of a *primus inter pares*, since he did not come from one of the leading houses of the country,<sup>132</sup> and owed his momentous popularity to his successes in the rebellion against Gnuni. Therefore, it does not seem astonishing that he failed in keeping the prince's allegiance for long; after three years, he lost his position due to the aristocrats' opposition:

In the same period of time, the Emperor Heraclius made Dawit' Saharuni *kuropalates* and set him up as prince of Armenia. The latter ruled for three years with wisdom, great distinction and much success. The magnificent church in the komopolis of Mren was built at his order. But after three years, being dishonoured by the *naḡarars* and his forces, he was persecuted.<sup>133</sup>

Also the next leading figure, T'ēodoros Rštuni, owed his position not to his house's power, but to his military deeds in the defense against the first Arab inroads to Armenia.<sup>134</sup> This time, it was the Catholics of the country who arranged for T'ēodoros' recognition by the Emperor:

On account of this battle a command came from the Emperor (bestowing) the command of the army on T'ëodoros, lord of Rštnik', with the rank of patrik. This all was brought about through the Catholicos Nersēs, who in that same year succeeded to the throne of the Catholicosate in the place of the Catholicos Ezz. 135

The great patriarch Nersēs requested the authorization of the Emperor Constantine and set up T'ëodoros, lord of Rštnik', as strategos of Armenia.<sup>136</sup>

Catholicos Nersēs is also the leading figure in the negotiations between the Emperor Constans II, the Armenian princes, and the fugitive Varaztiroc' Bagratuni, who was appointed *išgan* of Armenia ca. 646:

Then the Greek general T'ëodoros, with (the support of) the princes of the army and the nobles of Armenia, ordered the Catholicos Nersēs to be sent to the aspet (= Varaztiroc' Bagratuni), to bring him an oath of good faith that they would request for him the rank of prince of the country, and that his wife and children be brought to him. The Catholicos went and confirmed the oath with him that he would not travel anywhere else. Then he returned; and they wrote to king Constans (asking him) to do what he had promised in accordance with the oath. For the aspet had written to the king as follows: "I am your servant, and I am not at all abandoning your service. But because some people told me: "You are to return whence you came (i.e., back to exile in Africa)", therefore I was frightened and fled. But now, if you reckon me worthy, I shall serve loyally and live and die for your Piety." Then king Constans ordered him to be made *kuropalates* and to be given a crown of that rank and the rank of the prince of the country. And he ordered his wife and children to be sent with great éelat; and he had taken to him silver cushions with other magnificent gifts. Now while the edict giving him the rank of *kuropalates* was on its way, suddenly an illness struck him and he died. They took his body and brought it for burial beside his father in Dariwnk'. The king appointed his elder son, whose name was Smbat, to the rank of his father, giving him his ancestral position of *tanutēr* and *aspet*, and he made him *drungar* of his army. He gave him a wife from the house of the Arsacids, from among his own relatives, and sent him to the camp to his army.<sup>137</sup>

Once more, the initiative for the appointment of a "prince of the country" comes from the aristocratic elite of Armenia, represented by the Catholicos. The act of appointment lies with the Emperor, who

simultaneously integrates the new prince in the hierarchy of the imperial court by bestowing on him a high rank. This bestowal was normally the content of an elaborate imperial charter (*codicillus*), handed over in a special ceremony (see below). In the case of Varaztiroc' Bagratuni, the consinee did not live to receive the Emperor's diplom. Then the Emperor "appointed his elder son, whose name was Smbat, to the rank of his father, giving him his ancestral position of *tanutēr* and *aspet*, and he made him *drungar* of his army." Actually, Smbat Bagratuni did not receive the rank of his father, but in accordance with the Armenian conventions the hereditary position of *tanutēr* (head of his clan) and the hereditary office of *aspet*, and the more modest Byzantine title of *drungarios*. Smbat could not put any hereditary claim on the position of *išgan* of Armenia or the higher rank of *kuropalates*. Their bestowal depended on the Emperor, who from his part would negotiate (in most cases) for such an appointment with the leading groups of Armenia.

Since the appointment of the first princes of Armenia, an agreement about allegiance to the Emperor normally included the appointment or recognition of a prince of the country. Sebēos describes the situation at the time of the first civil war in the Caliphate in the year 656:

In the same year the Armenians abandoned their submission to the Ismaelites and turned their allegiance to the king of the Greeks. King Constans made Hamazasp, lord of the Mamikoneank', *kuropalates*, and gave him silver cushions and the rank of prince of Armenia. To the other princes (he gave) honours, and treasures to the soldiers. Then when the king of Ismael saw that the Armenians had withdrawn from submission to them, they put to the sword all the hostages whom they had brought from that land, about 1,775 people. A few were left, in number about 22, who had not happened to be at that spot; they alone survived. But Mušel, lord of the Mamikoneank' (nephew of Hamazasp), because he had four sons among the hostages with the Ismaelites, was therefore unable to withdraw from their service. And Hamazasp had a brother among the hostages. So (the Ismaelites) requested him and still others from among the princes (to go) to them in Syria with their wives. Therefore, reckoning death better than life, they withdrew from submission to them, and through precipitate negotiations submitted to the king of the Greeks in unison with the prince and the Army of Aluank' and the princes of Siwnik' with their country.<sup>138</sup>

The change of allegiance is—as we would expect by now—object of negotiations and results in the distribution of material and symbolic rewards to the noblemen by the Emperor. But the Arab Caliph appointed a prince for the country as well, when the Armenians finally defected to him after the end of the civil war in 661 and asked for a new *išḡan*:

Three years after Hamazasp had received the honour of *kuropalates* from the Emperor, he died and was buried with his ancestors. Then the great patriarch Nersēs together with the *naxarars* of Armenia asked the Caliph Mawi to set up to the post of prince of Armenia Grigor Mamikonean, whom he had retained as hostage. Trustfully complying with their wishes, (the Caliph) appointed Grigor to the office of prince (of Armenia) and made him the commander in chief of Armenia.<sup>139</sup>

The designation of a candidate for *išḡan* would most probably take place on one of those conventions of the leading groups of the country which we have observed on several occasions; Movsēs Kałankatuac'i describes such a selection process for Albania, where as in Armenia the head of Church is also present:

(...) that the lords of the (chief) families (teark' tohmic), governors (kusakalk'), administrators (kołmnakalk'), grandees (mecameck'), dukes (naxarark'), and all the princes of those lands assembled in the presence of the great archbishop Efiazar and deliberated upon the peace and prosperity of the land of Albania. They busied themselves with diligent thoughts concerning the government of the land and agreed unanimously to elect a certain senior *naxarar* who had been honoured with the imperial title of ex-consul (apahiwpat) and had acquired the rank of patrician. His name was Varaz-Irdat, son of Varaz-P'erož brother of Juansēr.<sup>140</sup>

The *miabanut' imn* and acceptance by the aristocracy was, as in many other cases of relations between Armenia and the neighboring powers, essential for the election of an *išḡan* and for the stability of his position. Of course, like in the cases of Ašot Bagratuni (see endnote 126) or Dawit' Sahaḡuni (see endnote 130), opposition to the prince could be widespread and undermine his authority as well as that of his overlord. Under Arab dominance, the *išḡan* could also count on the support of local Arab authorities, namely the *ostikan* appointed by the Caliph for the province of Armīniya, which included Armenia, Georgia, and Albania,<sup>141</sup> and the Arab troops stationed in the country:

When Merwan arrived in the city of Dvin, the Armenian nobles came to meet him. He spoke with them peacefully, called Ašot son of Vāsak who was from the house of the Bagratids and, by the orders of (Caliph) Hišam, gave him the authority of a patrician over our land of Armenia together with high honours. When, however, the sons of Smbat (Bagratuni) heard of the honours conferred upon Ašot and the latter's importance to Hišam and to governor Merwan, they acted extremely insolently toward him, to the extent that Muhammad's son (Merwan) became aware of their contention. (Merwan) ordered their immediate arrest and sent Grigor and David, who were from the house of the Mamikonids, to the Caliph of the Ismaelites. He also wrote an accusation against them, stating that they were opponents of Ašot and agitators in his realm. (The Caliph) ordered them to be taken to a desert place called Eman (= Yemen) and to be kept there in prison for the rest of their lives.<sup>142</sup>

On the occasion of Tačat Anjewaci's appointment as prince of Armenia after his defection from the empire, however, it was the Arab governor who opposed this decision of the Caliph; the power of the Abbasids was still strong enough at that point to enforce the center's will:

Harun, the son of the Arab Caliph, not only accorded (Tačat) the highest honours, but he even considered him as his father. Upon meeting (Tačat), the Caliph expressed his deep gratitude and gave him rich presents drawn from the royal treasury. He then invested him with the office of the Prince of Armenia, and sent him to his country with much pomp and splendour. When, however, Prince Tačat arrived in Armenia by the order of the Caliph, he met with unexpected opposition on the part of 'Uthman (Ibn 'Umar), who was the governor of our country at the time. Far from executing the Caliph's orders as far as Tačat's powers were concerned, 'Uthman deferred his action and sent messengers to their Caliph, informing him that the Armenian nobles were unwilling to accept as their chief a rebel who had deserted the Arab rule in the interests of the Greeks, and whom they, the loyal subjects of the Caliphate, suspected of being a potential traitor among our troops. (...) 'Uthman was forced to restore Tačat's powers by the order of the Arab Caliph.<sup>143</sup>

Tačat Anjewaci's tenure of office interrupted the row of *išḡan* from the house of Bagratuni, who otherwise rose in power and prestige in the service of the Caliphs, culminating in the appointment of Ašot Bagratuni, the future king, as "prince of princes:"



Subsequently, a governor named Al Arman was sent to Armenia; he set Ašot as presiding prince of Armenia in accordance with the orders of the Caliph, and investing him with many robes as well as royal insignia, entrusted him with the taxes of Armenia and all the royal bekar. Thus, he became first and foremost among the Armenian *naxarars*, all of whom made treaties with him, as if with a true scion of royalty. Whenever a suitable occasion presented itself, all of them likewise resolved to become worthy of being related to his house (through marriage), and to be distinguished from the other *naxarar* houses, as members of the royal family.<sup>144</sup>

According to Yovhannēs Drasyanakertc'i, the constant bestowal of rank and titles on the Bagratuni-clan had enhanced their prestige within the framework of Armenia's aristocracy to a degree which elevated them above other noble houses. Finally, they also rose "from recipients to granters of insignia of vassalage."<sup>145</sup>

At this time, Ašot raised his son-in-law Vasak Haykazun, surnamed Gaburn, as prince of Siwnik', and obtained for him honour from the royal court. Ruling over his principality with great might, he latter likewise extended his sway over all the people of Sisakan. On the other hand Ašot appointed to the office of the great *sparapetut'wn* of Armenia his brother Abas, a brave man, sturdy, vigorous and handsome in stature, robust and skilled in warfare.<sup>146</sup>

Although considered already quasi-royal in their status, Ašot's promotion to kingship depended on the acceptance of the aristocracy in a similar way as the appointment of a prince of Armenia:

In view of the nobility of his family, the princes and *naxarars* of Armenia unanimously resolved to raise him up as a king over themselves, and informed the Caliph through the governor Isa son of Shaikh. Receiving this fitting request with friendly disposition, the Caliph sent to Ašot a royal crown, which the governor Isa brought and presented together with royal robes, gifts, honours, swift horses, weapons and ornaments. Then they summoned the great patriarch Gēorg, who conferred on him the divine benediction of spiritual blessings instead of the anointment with the chrism, and crowned him king over the people of Ashkenaz.<sup>147</sup>

Also, the status of the Bagratuni kings within the framework of relations to the neighboring powers remained dependent on the will of the commonly accepted sources of legitimation—the Caliph and the Emperor.

### *General Aspects of the Relations between the Emperor and the Armenian Nobility*

In a study on the Amarna Letters from the 14<sup>th</sup> century BC, Christer Jönsson has stated: "Communication is the essence of diplomacy. (...) All acts, verbal or nonverbal, intentional or unintentional, are potential signals that feed into the network and are liable to reach all listeners and be read by them for the messages they convey."<sup>148</sup> On the following pages, we will try to analyze several of these acts, verbal as well as nonverbal, in the relations between the Emperor and Armenian aristocrats.

### **Communicating with the Emperor – Diplomatic Letters, Charters and Imperial Ranks**

The administration of the Eastern Roman Empire was based on written communications between the imperial center and the various officials and notables in the provinces and on the periphery; instructions, laws, and privileges came from Constantinople, reports, petitions, and suggestions came to Constantinople. For approaching the Emperor successfully it was essential to address him in a correct way, integrating the various elements of imperial ideology and protocol.<sup>149</sup>

The letters to the Emperor we find in the Armenian sources followed these requirements. So we read in Efišē in the letter of the Armenian nobles to Emperor Theodosius II on the eve of the rebellion against the Persians in 450/451:

This is a copy of the letter which they wrote to the Emperor Theodosius (T'ēodos kaysr):

"The bishop Joseph, with many of my cobishops and the whole Armenian army; Vasak the marzpan and Nershapuh Rmbosean, with the sparapet and all the greatest princes, to the illustrious Emperor Theodosius (mecanund T'ēodos kaysr) – may our greeting be upon you and all your troops, you who with your peaceful benevolence rule over land and sea; and there is no person on earth who can oppose your irresistible empire (tērut'wn). According to our infallible records concerning your courageous ancestors, having occupied Europe they crossed over and also rule the regions of Asia from the borders of Sēr (in Sinai) on to the limits of Gaderon (north of Media); and there was no one who rebelled or escaped their control."<sup>150</sup>



At least Efišē was familiar with the ideas on the legitimate rule of the Emperor over the whole *oikumene*,<sup>151</sup> since it is not clear if he cites an actual letter or uses his imagination to describe the correspondence of the rebels with the Emperor. However, those ideas are also elaborated in the above-mentioned letter of the Armenians to Emperor Constans II cited in the history attributed to Sebēos, and whose authenticity is not anymore under question.<sup>152</sup>

So now, "because God has delivered us from servitude to the empire of darkness",<sup>153</sup> and made us worthy of the rule of your heavenly city (erknak'atak'), how much more is it right for us to enjoy that peace regarding which we must request from Christ God for your pious and God-loving rule (t'agaworut'iwñ) that it remain unmoved for ever, like the days of heaven upon earth with great victory ruling over the whole universe, sea and land. Although you are in the body from the human race, yet you hold the place of the divine throne. And the light of the glory of your God-loving rule has suffused everything below – you who are crowned from heaven, you the boast of all Christians by the power of the divine sign of the Cross, you who resemble the pious servant of God, the divinely gracious, the valiant and victorious, the blessed saviour Heraclius, your grandfather, who rescued from the cruel executioner the whole world – which may Christ God now bless through Your Piety.<sup>154</sup> (...)

May God grant our unworthiness to seek knowledge of the good from God worthily, and to bless your God-loving and beneficent lordship (t'agaworut'iwñ), so that you may reign for ever over all the earth, sea and land, very victoriously.<sup>155</sup>

Another such letter we find in Kałankatuac'i's History of the Albanians, where the addressee is once more the Emperor Constans II. In the following, the Greek and Latin equivalents to the elements of the imperial titles given by Kałankatuac'i, are given in brackets:

Juanšer's letter to Constantine (Constans II), king of Greece

"All-conquering lord, powerful and merciful king of the Romans, Constantine Augustus (Amenayatt' [vnikητης, victor] tēr [dominus/δεσπότης], hzōr [κράτιστος] ewotořmac [clementissimus, φιλανθρωπιότατος] t'agawor hořomoc' [βασιλεύς Ῥωμαίων] Ōgostos [Augustus] Kostandin), appointed by God ruler of land and sea (covu ew c'amak'i [γῆς καὶ θαλάσσης δεσπότης] astuacabar [ἐκ θεοῦ, θεοψήφιστος] išgan), Juanšer, sparapet and prince of Albania,

together with his vassal land of the east, worships you with humble greetings. May it please your Christian lordship to accept this new offer of vassalage from a distant people that divine virtue may be bestowed from your great dignity and glory upon our humble selves who seek a crown (from you)."<sup>156</sup>

Finally, a sophisticated use of this "imperial language" can be detected in the letter which Catholicos Yohannēs Drasyanakertc'i wrote to Emperor Constantine VII and cited in his history:

Sublime Autocrat and Emperor of the Romans, Augustus Constantine, who are crowned and glorified by God, Great and Victorious King of the Universe, who are God-loving and pious, overseers of the public enlightenment during the course of this life, true peace-makers for all of us that exits, Images of the nine heavenly orders (of angels), Breeders of spiritual instruction, Genuine Leaders of so many nations and races, and indeed Godly Palm Trees planted in the house of the Lord. (...) § 38. As long as all the nations acknowledged fear of you as a protective bastion against the enemies, and as long as we lived safely under the auspices of your imperial majesties, as if in a beautiful city, the nuptial veil of the bride (of Christ), the church, was never contaminated by the inhabitant of Kedar, who hated the kiss of holiness, and the tyranny of the accomplice of Beliar could not force the departure of the peaceful bridegroom. § 39 But as soon as we became negligent of our duties to you, the venom of the insidious serpent of Dan defied you righteous majesty, and there was no one to seek vengeance from our slanderer. § 44 At this time, what could I say concerning Smbat Bagratumi, the chief of all those in the East, and your servant, who spiritually became worthy of being called "my son" by you?" § 56. I beg you to raise your hand out of your wisdom and kindness to the end against the insolence of the enemy, and rescue the inheritance which is yours, as well as to re-establish by great expenditure the majesty of the temple of God in the Highest, which was seized and ravaged by the insurgents. § 57 (...) you should subordinate those parts which you had received in the beginning by virtue of your desirable laws which are full of mercy. § 65 I have also wished to provide my own people with a restful living quarter and a peaceful life within your august, magnificent, glorious and mighty kingdom, so that after being delivered from the hands of the Ishmaelites, and finding asylum under the auspices of your wings we might tend to the flock of God among us, and always offer our ceaseless prayers

to God for the peace, safety, and stability of the power of your imperial majesties, whose might is acknowledged throughout the universe. With much assistance from you and by means of your glory and grace we shall prepare the Armenian nation by turning them first into a people of the Lord, and then by the will of God into your own people.<sup>157</sup>

In their letters to the Emperor, the leading men of Armenia of course had to acknowledge his rule over the Christian world at large and over Armenia in particular. That Yovhannēs Drasyanakertc'i himself had a rather pragmatic approach to the relationship with the "Great and Victorious King of the Universe" becomes clear by the justification of his decline of an invitation to the imperial court in Constantinople:

I decided not to go, thinking that there might be people who might look askance at my going there, and assume that I sought communion with the Chaldeonians. It was for this reason that I did not wish to go, lest I might scandalize the minds of the weak.<sup>158</sup>

But following the usages of the imperial chancellery could be the first step to establish a gainful relationship to the Emperor. Movsēs Kalankatuac'i describes the receipt of prince Juanšēr's letter at the court of Emperor Constans II:

When the letter was brought to the most pious Emperor, he was full of joy and exceeding glad, and he gave a great banquet that day. He immediately ordered treaties to be drawn up so as to ensure mutual peace. He bestowed upon him very great gifts: a throne carved in silver with a gilded back, robes of spun gold, and the sword with pearl-studded scabbard which he himself wore. He made him a first patrician, and ordered the titles of patrician, consul, ex-praefect, stratelates, and illustris, sufficient for 12,000 men to be sent that Juanšēr might bestow them upon whomsoever he wished. He also removed a piece of the redeeming cross of Christ which he always wore on his bosom and sent it to him.<sup>159</sup>

A diplomatic letter to the Emperor would normally produce further documents from the imperial chancellery: written pledges, as we have seen above, treaties (which also would have the form of imperial privileges)<sup>160</sup> or imperial charters of bestowal (*codicillus*), by which certain offices and court titles were granted to the addressee, sometimes also to his entourage.<sup>161</sup> This *codicilli* were engulfed in gold

and ivory, sometimes bore a picture of the Emperor (as did the gold coins the bearer of a title would receive)<sup>162</sup> and were themselves a symbol of imperial power, brilliance and grace.<sup>163</sup> Unfortunately, we do not have any specimen of such a charter for an Armenian nobleman in the period under consideration; only Movsēs Kalankatuac'i claims to cite from Constans II's answer to prince Juanšēr of Albania:

The text of (Constantinēs) letter

"To you, Lord Juanšēr, lord of Gardman and prince of Albania, ex-consul and first patrician and governor of the east, the grace and the mercy of the redeeming cross of divine power and a loving greeting from our august kingdom. We have received your letter of greeting, which has revealed to us your love of the worship of God, and we are glad that you and your eastern country have accepted to be our vassal, in return for which we and our sons shall treat you and your descendants with affection and sincere and indestructible love from generation unto generation for ever."<sup>164</sup>

The importance the Emperors ascribed to their relations to the princes of the Caucasus region becomes evident from the high court titles they bestowed on them, whereby they integrated them in their court hierarchy and demonstrated their dependence on the Emperor.<sup>165</sup> The prince of Armenia received normally the title of *κουροπαλάτης/kuropalates (kiwrapatatut' iwn, kiwrapatat)*, which since Emperor Justinian I was reserved for members of the imperial family and very important foreign princes.<sup>166</sup> Similarly, one of the highest ranks of this period was *πατρικίος/patrikios (patrkut' iwn, patrik)*, also in the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> century bestowed only on the most important generals and governors of the empire. In Armenian as well as Arab sources *patrikios (patrik, baṭrīq)* later became a term equivalent to "prince of Armenia." For Juanšēr, Movsēs Kalankatuac'i mentions the even higher rank of *πρωτοπατρικίος/protopatrikios (proton patrik)*, which we find as a special honor in Byzantine sources from the 4<sup>th</sup> to the 8<sup>th</sup> centuries.<sup>167</sup>

For the beneficiaries such imperial honors were connected with concrete advantages in terms of power politics and material gains; normally, a title was followed by rich presents and qualified for a regular income (i.e., *roga*) from the imperial treasury.<sup>168</sup>

When this same Krikorikios (Grigor, prince of Taron) had entered the city protected by God (= Constantinople), and had been honoured with the rank of magister and military governor of Taron, he was also given for his residence a house called the house of Barbaros, now the house of Basil the chamberlain. He was honoured with an annual stipend (*roga*) of ten pounds in gold and a further ten pounds in miliarisia (silver coins), making twenty pounds in all. After some sojourn in the imperial city, he was escorted back again to his country by this same protospatharius Constantine.<sup>169</sup>

The Emperor's charters, titles, and presents also legitimized and made visible the leading positions of one aristocrat *vis-à-vis* the other aristocrats,<sup>170</sup> especially since these high court titles entitled a nobleman to wear specific insignia.<sup>171</sup> As Nina Garsoïan has stated: "all *naxarars* were theoretically equal insofar as they belonged to the same social class (...), but they were ranked in a rigid order of precedence according to the 'cushion or throne' (*barj, gab*) that they occupied at court."<sup>172</sup> And as Nicolas Adontz has shown, since the abolition of the monarchy, for Persarmenia the power to acknowledge or to change this "order of precedence" was in the hands of the Sasanian Great King.<sup>173</sup> But even before the end of Aršakuni kingdom, the material and symbolic distinctions bestowed by the superior imperial power could become essential for the manifestation of rank and power within the Armenian aristocracy:

The king of Persia also sent a crown, a robe-of-honour, and the royal standard to Queen Zarmanduxt through the Surēn, as well as crowns for her two young sons, Aršak and Valaršak. He likewise sent royal robes to the sparapet Manuēl, sables, and a gargmanak diadem of gold and silver for the head with the knot over the crest of the diadem behind the eagle tied in an ašyarawand knot, and an apizak chest ornament, as is the rule for kings; also a crimson pavilion with the insignia of an eagle on top of it and very large hangings, as well as a sky-blue canopy. And he sent palatial gold serving plates to the sparapet Manuēl, and granted him from his own hand great authority over the realm of Armenia. (...) And everyone of the nobility received gifts, every *tanuēr* and Armenian magnate.<sup>174</sup>

The attraction of imperial titles and honors remained strong even in times of relative weakness of the great powers; the statement of Cermal Kafadar on Western Anatolia in the late 13<sup>th</sup> century seems also valid for Armenia in our period:

However, the area was not free from all interference by the larger authorities in political centres. Not only did they have real muscle, which they occasionally used in these regions, but perhaps more importantly they also maintained significant control over mechanisms of legitimation that were part of the political language of the frontiers. (...) Event if that authority was not able to have its representatives there all the time, even if it was obliged to comply with some case of fait accompli, it was needed at least as a referent to provide some credibility to one's claim.<sup>175</sup>

Accordingly, the Bagratuni kings were also keen to receive the Emperor's approval. The highest honor would be the integration of a prince in the "family of kings" as Franz Dölger has called it. Constellations of fictitious kinship relations had been used since early antiquity, also to symbolize the precedence among rulers; Roman Emperors and Persian Great Kings for example called each other brothers.<sup>176</sup> The order of this "family" in the 10<sup>th</sup> century becomes evident in the Book of Ceremonies by Emperor Constantine VII. According to *De ceremoniis*, the ἀρχόντων τῶν ἀρχόντων/*archon ton archonton* (as the Armenian "prince of princes" is called<sup>177</sup>) had to be addressed by the Emperor as πνευματικὸν ἡμῶν τέκνον/*pneumatikon hemon teknon*, as "our spiritual son." This new form of address was interpreted in Armenian sources as recognition of the royal status of the Bagratunis, since it was first used for Ašot I Bagratuni (885/886) and his son and successor Smbat I (892/893):<sup>178</sup>

Basil (I), the great Emperor of the Greeks, also offered terms of peace - which were in no way trivial, harmony and friendship to our king Ašot, whom he addressed as beloved son (*ordi sireli*), and he communicated this to all the kingdoms in his dominion.<sup>179</sup>

Placing his kingdom on a firm foundation, Smbat tried to establish peaceful relations with everyone in accordance with the words of Paul. First, in compliance with the alliance of his father, he did not withdraw from the friendly affection of Leo (VI) Emperor of the Romans. He honoured the latter with many gifts and worthy presents in accordance with his gentle temper. In return, the Emperor gave to him an exceedingly great many number of gifts,

namely, beautiful weapons, ornaments, robes wrought with gold, goblets, and cups, and girdles of pure gold studded with gems. But a greater honour than these was, that the Emperor addressed Smbat as his "beloved son" (*ordi sireli*) by means of a treaty of friendship.<sup>180</sup>

Such an imperial letter was read loud, most probably in front of the assembled aristocracy; in that way the Emperor's address became an important element of the legitimization and power display of the new Bagratuni monarchy.<sup>181</sup>

#### Meeting the Emperor - Rituals, Ceremonies and Presents

This important relationship between the Armenian aristocrats and the superior imperial power could be stage-managed in an even more impressive and emphatic way when the nobleman met the Emperor, the Great King, or Caliph in person, in "face-to-face ritual contexts."<sup>182</sup> The importance of such occasions for the medieval world is stressed by the German historian Gerd Althoff in one of his numerous important studies on this matter:

Power in the Middle Ages had to be illustrative. This happened through acts of representation in which not only glory and wealth were shown publicly. By using ritual and ceremonial acts, commitments and relationships were depicted, rights recognized and much more. Exercise of power took place very much in such acts. Its character was nowhere more directly expressed than in the often interactive action of the powerful in public. In that public power and ritual met, because through the ritual the possibilities of power were established, and its limits were set.<sup>183</sup>

For the time of the Aršakuni-monarchy, we find an illustrative example in the Buzandaran *Patmut' iwnk'*, specifically the installation of a *tanuēr* of a great Armenian noble house in his hereditary rights under special circumstances:

Moreover, they gave his father' gah and cushion to the son of the commander-in-chief *Vač' ē* (Mamikonian), who was a small child named Artawazd after his (grand)father. They placed his father's diadem on his head in front of the king, and (bestowed upon him) the office of *sparapet* in his place, for indeed he was the son of a worthy man from a worthy clan, and because no other adult could be found in that clan, since they had all died in the great war. And

the duties of the command were assumed by Aršawir Kamsarakan, prince of Širak and of the district of Aršarunik', and by Andovk, prince of Širunik', because they were sons-in-law of the house of the Mamikonian family. And the great chief-bishop *Vrt' anēs*, together with the king, commanded Aršawir and Andovk to nurture little Artawazd so that he might take the place of his ancestors and of his father (...).<sup>184</sup>

Such "ritual and ceremonial acts" were not only used within the framework of the Armenian monarchy and aristocracy, but also in the relationships between Armenia and the neighboring powers. One has only to bring to his mind Sueton's description of the coronation of the first Aršakuni-king *Trdat I* by Emperor Nero in Rome in the year 66 AD.<sup>185</sup>

A parallel for our period is the journey of Lazika's King *Tzathes* to Constantinople and his subsequent coronation by Emperor Justin I in the year 521/522, attested in the chronicle of Malalas.<sup>186</sup> Also, the installation of a new Satrap described by Procopius took place most probably in a similar way after the candidate had presented himself to the Emperor (see endnotes 30 and 37).<sup>187</sup> The reception at the imperial court, the handing over of presents to and by the Emperor, the delivering of diplomas (also the above-mentioned *codicilli* were presented in a magnificent ceremony<sup>188</sup>), and the royal banquet were of course the most important occasions for the display of precedence and power relations<sup>189</sup> in Byzantium as well as Persia:

At that time Šapuh king of Persia invited Aršak king of Armenia, whom he honoured with the greatest deference and glory, with great hoards of gold and silver, and with full royal pomp. He treated him as a brother, like a son and gave him the second domain to the realm of *Atrpatakan*. And they reclined together on one and the same banqueting-throne in the hour of festivity, and they wore the same garments of the same colour with the same insignia and ornaments. And day after day the Persian king prepared the same crown for himself and for him. Linked together like two indivisible blood-brothers, they enjoyed themselves jointly at festivals and revelled in indescribable pleasures.<sup>190</sup>

Equally honorable and splendid was the reception of Ašot II Bagratuni at the court of Emperor Constantine VII in 914:

Here (in Constantinople), the Emperor honoured him (Ašot, son of Smbat) more than his *gaherēc'* (superior in rank) princes with

a proper throne, and unlike the other honourable guests, gave him the majestic distinction befitting the progeny of a king. He treated Ašot almost as his equal, and exalted him with royal dignity. At the same time, he bestowed on him the title "the son of a martyr", and "my beloved son", dressed him in glorious purple, and gave valuable gold-broidered robes, byssus with golden borders, and a girdle studded with gems for his waist. He was honoured thus not once or twice, but many times. They also presented him with swift and spirited horses, which were decked with beautiful armour and ornaments, as well as many cups, and utensils, and many gold and silver wares. They also bestowed great honours on the *naxarars* whom he had taken with him. Until their return they received bountiful largesses and generous allowances.<sup>191</sup>

Drasjanakertc'i is well aware that the Emperor treated Ašot only "almost as his equal," while at the same time he knows how great an honor this was within the framework of Byzantine ceremonial and ideology. He accepts this hierarchical worldview and emphasizes for his Armenian readership the important role given to the new Bagratuni monarchy by the Emperor. Tim Greenwood has stressed, as already mentioned above, the importance of "the service to an external authority, the titles and material rewards available to the individual princes and instances of direct contact between Emperor and client" for the Armenian aristocracy<sup>192</sup> and equally for the Armenian kings, as we have seen. We have also already observed the reception of *Atat Xofxoruni* at the Emperor's court. His co-conspirators who had decided to submit to the Sasanians received similar honors at the court of Great King Xusro II:

As for the nobles and troops on the Persian side, I mentioned above that the auditor departed and left them until the royal command should arrive. Then couriers arrived with letters summoning them all together to the royal court. These are the nobles and troops who went with each one's contingent and banner to the court of the Persian king Khosrov in the sixth year of his reign. (...) When they reached Asoresian and the site of the royal court, they presented themselves to the king. He joyfully received them, and with notable splendour favoured them with honours. He ordered the greatest nobles to be kept at the royal court, stipends to be paid them from the treasury, to be given their own quarters, and summoned every day to the royal banquet.<sup>193</sup>

For the "greatest nobles," their rank within the Armenian aristocracy became manifest due to its recognition by Great King Xusro II, who treated them according to it. They were permitted to stay near the king and dine with him and they received material rewards. "The public display of proximity to an Emperor mattered."<sup>194</sup> Presents, which were given to and by the Emperor or Great King, always had a material as well as a symbolic value and again made ranking and status manifest.<sup>195</sup>

It happened at that time that Smbat Bagratuni became pleasing in the eyes of King Khosrov. He gave him the marzpanate of the land of Vrkan, made him prince over all that region, and favoured him even more with honours and authority. He heaped gold and silver on him, and robed him in expensive and splendid garments. He gave him the belt and sword that had belonged to his own father Ormizd. He put under his control Persian and Armenian troops, and ordered him to go to the land of his appointment.<sup>196</sup>

The material aspect of imperial generosity is stressed by king Smbat I Bagratuni in his negotiations with the Arab governor of Atropatakan:

When the governor (*ostikan*) Afshin, who had given the crown to Smbat, learned of this, as well as of the firm friendship and agreement with the Emperor, he was greatly distressed and irritated at these matters, (which he suspected to be) a plot against himself. He made haste to sever the ties of friendship between them, and having gathered numerous troops for this, he decided to set out and come to Armenia. As soon as king Smbat realized the wicked schemes of Afshin, he immediately mobilized his forces as well as the multitude of the *naxarars'* contingents, altogether thirty thousand brave warriors and skilled soldiers, and he marched as far as the district of Rotokk' near Atropatakan in order to confront the foe. But before he reached the enemy link, he sent an envoy to Afshin with the (following) message: "Why are you coming upon us in anger for no reason? If it is because of the alliance I have made with the Emperor, this was for your benefit also. (I thought that) I might obtain with ease those items that you yourself and the Caliph needed from the land of the Greeks, and present you with noteworthy garments, ornaments and vessels for your own use. Likewise, I wished to clear the way for merchants of your faith, so that they might have access to their land, and enrich your treasury with the riches of the Greeks" (...) Then, mounting upon fiery steeds, they set out to meet each other, and exchanged many royal gifts and presents, and after this Afshin returned to Atropatakan.<sup>197</sup>

Besides the "protocolary" regulated ceremonies and honors, divergences from the normal procedures could symbolize an even higher distinction of a guest:

The king of the south (= the Caliph) gladly rose from his sleep at sunrise before his customary hour and received the prince of the east (= prince Juanšēr) with a friendly greeting, being greatly pleased at his arrival. He was received with a perfect welcome, and to no one of the governors of the country were such royal honours accorded (by the Caliph), especially when he had savoured his intelligence and reason; for though lords and leaders of many lands were there in his service, in none of them had he such sure confidence as in Juanšēr, on whom, and on those with him, he bestowed very great gifts. After this the prince of the east asked to be allowed to take his leave in peace, and the ruler of the south set his seal to a treaty of sincere and perpetual friendship and gave him his right hand, although it had never been the custom of the proud lord of the earth to give it to any other foreigner. When these things had been accomplished, he was sent on his way with high honours from the universal court, and he arrived in the province of Ayrarat where he was received by the brave Grigor of the Mamikonean family and all the nobles.<sup>198</sup>

The reference to Juanšēr's reception by the Armenian nobles, recently honored by the Caliph in that special way, is characteristic for this part of Movsēs Kalankatowac's history, since he makes great effort to point up the high rank the prince of Albania had and the recognition he enjoyed by his neighbors, especially the Armenians. Yet, only the arrival of the overlord in person gave the opportunity to demonstrate such a special position of honor in front of the entire aristocracy:

In the nineteenth year of his reign Constantine (Constans II), grandson of Heraclius, arrived with numerous forces and chosen horsemen and Greek nobles in the kingdom of Persia, having already wrested away the lands of this kingdom, and he carried with him the radiant light of the world, the cross of Christ. He dispatched one of his officers to ask Juanšēr to meet him, and he made haste and arrived in the land of the Medes in the presence of the great Emperor who, hearing of his arrival, came to meet him in person in the village of K'ungr, welcomed him, and commanded him at the same time to put off the mourning he wore on account of his wife's death; and they dressed him in royal robes. (...) Seeing him receive

such heavenly gifts, the Armenian nobles and General Hamazasp were very jealous, but he cared nothing and afterwards took his leave of the benevolent lord, who dismissed him not as a servant, but as a brother of equal rank in the presence of the nobles of Persia and Ayrarat. (...) When spring came the esteemed prince of Albania prepared to meet the Emperor again in the town of Vataršapat. The king commanded the nobles of the palace and the notables to go to meet him, and thus did he enter into the Emperor's court like a king. When he saw him, the Emperor greeted him with a fond embrace and assigned him a place above all the nobles. That day was a blessed holy day for him, surrounded by all manner of gold and silver ornaments. Constantine ordered whatever was placed on the royal table to be offered to him, a gesture which amazed his fellow guests. Over and above all this, he girt about him the royal belt of his valiant grandfather Heraclius and his grandmother Nikita, gave him his own cloak and two banners, and conferred the rank of patrician upon his young sons. All the villages and regions which had belonged to the first kings of Albania gave to him as an inheritance from generation to generation, and he appointed him to govern all the eastern people as king.<sup>199</sup>

Movsēs Kalankatowac's emphasis on the reaction and jealousy of the other aristocrats, especially the Armenians, and courtiers, who were "amazed" by the Emperor's reception of the Albanian prince. These encounters with the Emperor gave the historian the opportunity to demonstrate the superior status of his hero in the aristocratic society of the South Caucasus.

Encountering the Emperor could be of high symbolic value—as could be the refusal of such a meeting. As mentioned above, in 652/653 Emperor Constans II tried unsuccessfully to convoke an assembly of the Armenian nobles in order to prevent their defection to the Arabs. However, when the Emperor came to Armenia with his army in person, a great number of princes presented themselves to their overlord:

Then king Constans agreed to carry out the army's wishes. He took his army and went to Armenia with 100,000 (troops). (...) He (...) came to the city of Karin in the 12<sup>th</sup> year of his reign and the 20<sup>th</sup> year of the rule of the Ismaelites. King Constans remained in the city of Karin for a few days. The princes and troops of the so-called Fourth Armenia presented themselves, and also all the other troops and princes who had left the Rštuni territory. There

met him the men of Sper, the princes of the Bagratunik', the men of Mananali, of Daranali, those from the province of Ekefeats', and all the troops of those places, and the men of Karin, and Tayk', and Basean. There also came to meet him the princes of Vanand with their army, the men of Širak, the Xorxorunik, and the men of the house of Dimak'seank'. Also presenting themselves were Mušel Mamikonian with his clansmen and certain other princes, and the army from the region of Ayrarat; the Arawefeank', the Araneank', the Varažunuk', the Gnt'unik', the Spandunik', and others with them. The Catholicos Nersēs, who had come from Tayk', also met him. All the princes explained to the king the intention and plan of rebellion of the lord of Rštunik', and the frequent coming and going to him of the messengers of Ismael. Then the king and all his army cursed the lord of Rštunik', deprived him of the title of his authority, and sent another person to replace him, accompanied by 40 men.<sup>200</sup>

As T'ëodoros Rštuni refuses to present himself to Constans II, his breach of his *cařayut' iwn* to the Emperor becomes evident; accordingly he is stripped "of the title of his authority," which he had received from the Emperor. The detailed list of those noblemen who came to the Emperor (including those from the areas of the Byzantine provinces in Western Armenia<sup>201</sup>) is an equally important manifestation of their loyalty to the empire, which had become dubious on account of their negotiations with the Arabs. Shortly afterwards, the Catholicos and the aristocrats had to demonstrate their subordination in an even more dramatic way:

King Constans, when he heard this, desired the multitude of his army to engage in plunder and go to winter in Armenia, so that he might destroy the country. Then the Catholicos and Mušel (Mamikonian) with all the Armenian princes fell on their faces, and with great supplications and tearful entreaties requested mercy, lest on account of their trespasses he be totally angered and ruin the country. The king heeded their entreaties and sent away the larger part of his army.<sup>202</sup>

This display of supplication made evident the superiority of the Emperor and simultaneously gave him the opportunity to demonstrate one of the imperial virtues, namely mercy.<sup>203</sup>

The refusal of the customary ceremonial was just as much a sign of disturbances in the relationship between overlord and noblemen. After the victory against the usurper Vahrām Čöbîn, King Xusro II suspects

the Armenian general Mušel Mamikonian of treason:

He (Mušel Mamikonian) entered the tent into the presence of the king with seven men, fell on his face, did obeisance to the king, and stood up. The king did not stretch out his hand as previously to receive and greet him, but sat sullenly as he was. And they stood there in this perverse fashion.<sup>204</sup>

As Great King Xusro's disapproval of him became obvious, Mušel Mamikonian had to fear for his life; only the presence of the allied Byzantine troops prevented an escalation.

An even more obvious sign of the loss of imperial favor for a courtier and retainer was the complete denial of access to the overlord, as the Byzantine general T'umas (Thomas) had to find out after he had arrested T'ëodoros Rštuni without the Emperor's permission and had brought him to Constantinople:

But when king Constans heard of this, he was greatly troubled, because it had not been by his command that he was bound. So he ordered him to be released from his bonds and that the writ of accusation be read. When he realized the deceit, he commanded him to be summoned to this presence; he received him in a friendly way and with the honour due his princely title. He appointed for him a stipend and sustenance from the treasury. Then he ordered T'umas to be summoned; he did not permit him to enter the palace, but had an enquiry held outside. They acquitted T'ëodoros, lord of Rštunik', on his own words, and justice was done in his regard. As for T'umas, they stripped him of his rank in dishonour.<sup>205</sup>

In this example, we encounter two central functions of imperial ceremonial: the ostensible confirmation or renewal of relations of allegiance and their evident termination. The importance of ceremony and ritual for the relationship between the Emperor and the Armenian nobility as well as for the relations within the aristocracy cannot be overestimated.

### *A Special Relationship? The Empire and the Armenians— a Conclusion*

The relationship between the Armenian aristocracy and the neighboring powers, namely Byzantium, Persia, and the Caliphate, are characterized



by many comparable elements and instruments: the establishment and termination of *ca'ayut' iwn*, the granting of honors and presents, the ceremonial encounter of overlord and retainer. But in one central aspect was the Roman Emperor special for the Armenians: he was a Christian ruler, or even more the sole Christian lord over the entire *oikumene*. In the Armenian sources, the Christian character of the Roman/Byzantine Empire is contrasted with the pagan rule of the Persians and Arabs on several occasions, especially in the context of defection or emigration to the Empire:

Thus did Aršak, king of Armenia, quit the district of Ayrarat as if going into captivity. He considered it better to go to the much smaller sector (of Armenia) in a believing country, where he would be subject to the Greek king, than to remain in such a luxuriantly comfortable district (as Ayrarat) and witness daily the ridicule of the (Christian) religion, enmity directed against the holy Church, the insults born by clerics of the divine covenant from the impious mages and the scorn shown to his line and kingdom from the arrogant princes of the Iranian lordship. So he preferred to live out this inconsequential and measured life in peace as a Christian rather than remain dwelling there in false glory, as one who is scorned, and, not attaining eternal life, be betrayed to the inextinguishably burning eternal fire. Thinking all of this over, suddenly he made up his hesitant mind to leave the good inheritance of his ancestors, and to enter the service of the Greek king.<sup>206</sup>

So Aršak left the native kingdom of his fathers, Ayrarat, and all the part of the Persian sector, and went to rule over the western regions of our country, in the Greek sector (i bažnin Yunac'), not only because of his mother who was in the imperial capital (i kayserakan k'atak'ēn), but because he thought that it was better to rule over a smaller region and serve a Christian king than to control most (of the country) and submit to the yoke of heathens. The princes of Šapuh's sector followed him with their wives and sons, abandoning each one's possessions and villages and estates.<sup>207</sup>

(...) the king of the Greeks moved from his imperial portals with a massive multitude of followers and arrived at the city called Theodosiopolis in the region of Karin. (...) Furthermore, he took the city troops and the local Saracens, along with their families, to the land of the Greeks. Many of the inhabitants of the same districts asked the king to allow them to follow him, in order to be

relieved of the heavy yoke of servitude to the Arabs. Having secured permission from (Emperor Constantine V, the inhabitants of the Armenian districts) prepared themselves, packed their belongings and moved, placing their trust in the power of the dominical cross and in the glory of the King (ark'ay). They separated themselves (from the rest), left their homeland, and went to the country of the pious king.<sup>208</sup>

The common Christian faith was also the basis for a very powerful tradition, by which the Armenians in this period tried to interpret the relationship between the empire and their country. This is the legend about the visit of both King Trdat the Great and Gregory the Illuminator at the court of Emperor Constantine the Great in the Roman capital, where the two Christian kings established an alliance in the spirit of Christian love and friendship,<sup>209</sup> as Agathangelos reports:

Similarly with great happiness he showed love for king Trdat as for a dear brother, especially because of his recognition of God. And furthermore he made an alliance (dašin) with him, holding their faith in the Lord Christ as an intermediary so that they might constantly and for ever keep faithful love between their kingdoms, and that he might confirm the Armenian king ever more and more in faith in the Trinity.<sup>210</sup>

This became the strongest tradition on the relationship between Armenia and the Empire, repeated and also adapted to the actual political needs through the centuries:

When the Emperor heard about these events (the capture of King Tiran by the Persians) he met with great eagerness and readiness their request to be of help and assistance to the realm of Armenia, all the more when he recalled the covenant und treaty of alliance reinforced by oaths that had been concluded between the Emperor Constantine and King Trdat.<sup>211</sup>

Also the treaty between Emperor Justin II and the Armenians around Vardan Mamikonian in 570 is interpreted as renewal of this pact between Constantine and Trdat, as we have seen (see endnote 103). The most important source for this tradition is the above-mentioned authentic letter, "which the bishops of Armenia and the Catholicos Nersēs wrote with the nobles" to the Emperor Constans II. Thus, we possess proof for the official use of the Constantine/Trdat-legend in

the diplomatic correspondence between Armenia and the Empire in the mid-7<sup>th</sup> century:

Again a third time (the faith was confirmed) when king Trdat made ready and took with him the holy bishop Grigorios, and his son bishop Rstakēs, and on the military side the four most senior ranking of his palace, and with 70,000 men, elite leaders from all his provinces, went to Rome to see Constantine. When they saw each other, he presented St Gregory to Constantine; and he prostrated himself at the feet of St Gregory in order to be blessed by him. Then they accepted as intermediary the faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. And with an oath the two kings joined together, keeping a sure mutual peace for ever between their two royal persons. They confirmed once more for us the truth of the faith which the Holy Spirit had founded in us.<sup>212</sup>

Robert W. Thomson and others were able to trace this tradition of Constantine and Trdat throughout the Middle Ages.<sup>213</sup> These references to a spectacular precedent in the relations between the Empire and Armenia had various implications; as Christer Jönsson has stated: "Earlier behaviour and relations are considered to commit the actors to similar behaviour and relations in the future."<sup>214</sup> Likewise, the tradition on the pact of friendship between Constantine and Trdat suggested an almost equal status of the two Great Kings, who would call each other "brother," an appellation the Byzantines did not grant easily within the framework of their "family of kings." (see above)

But, to cite Nina Garsoïan once more: "For Rome, at least, the inequality of status was self-evident."<sup>215</sup> The same holds true not only for the whole period under consideration in this paper, but also, as we have seen, for the time of the renewed Armenian monarchy. In his instructions "On the governing of the Empire" Emperor Constantine VII describes the relationship between the empire and the "prince of princes," as the Bagratuni king of Armenia in negation of his claim on royalty is being called:

Since the prince of princes is the servant of the Emperor of the Romans, being appointed by him and receiving this rank from him, it is obvious that the cities and townships and territories of which he is lord also belong to the Emperor of the Romans.<sup>216</sup>

Comparing this passage with the quotation from the *Res gestae Divi Augusti* at the beginning of this paper, we conclude that the Byzantines remained firm in their imperial traditions also in their interpretation of their relationship to Armenia. Thus, the annexation of the Armenian princedoms and kingdoms, which took place in the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> centuries,<sup>217</sup> could be seen as the implementation of a sovereignty which had existed for a millennium. But as political reality was normally in conflict with Byzantium's ideological pretensions, it was the diplomatic game of negotiations and compromises that marked the relationship between the empire and the Armenian aristocrats for most of the time.

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## NOTES

- 1 Res Gestae Divi Augusti, 27. Ed. E. Weber, 36. Düsseldorf - Zürich, 2004.
- 2 For an overview cf. Halsall, *Barbarian Migrations*, 57-62 and 149-152, for the citation see p. 57.
- 3 Tacitus, *Annales* II 56, 1.
- 4 Cf. Seibt, *Der historische Hintergrund*.
- 5 Sebēos 15: 86 (Abgaryan; tr. Thomson and Howard-Johnston, *Sebeos* I, 31); Garsoïan, *Marzpanate*, 109; Preiser-Kapeller, *Kaysr*, 190-191; Thomson, *Armenia*, 169; Müller, Preiser-Kapeller and Riehle, *Register*, N. 108\*.
- 6 Garsoïan, *Armenien*, 1213-1214; idem, *Grand schisme*, 267-272, and idem, *Problem*, 68-72.
- 7 Garsoïan, *Annexionen*.
- 8 Cf. also Garsoïan, *Problem*, 75, on the use of "oikonomia" by the Emperors in their policy towards the Armenians.
- 9 Barkey, *Empire*, 9-10.
- 10 Cf. Kelly, *Later Roman Empire*, 204-216; Neville, *Authority*, 11.
- 11 Treitinger, *Kaiseridee*, 211-212; Lalou, *The Emperor's Word*, 358.
- 12 Güterbock, *Byzanz und Persien*; Dodgeon and Lieu, *Eastern Frontier*, 133-134; Greatrex and Lieu, *Eastern Frontier*, 1-9, 21-30, 96-97, 131-134, 174-175 and 226-228; Dignas and Winter, *Rome and Persia*, 138-148.
- 13 Cf. also Preiser-Kapeller, *Kaysr*, 200-201.
- 14 Garsoïan, *The Arsākuni Dynasty*, 79; cf. also Toumanoff, *Studies*, 147-259 (on the various aristocratic families); Whitrow, *Making of Byzantium*, 201-203; Pohl, *Staat und Herrschaft* (on the concepts of state and statehood under such circumstances).
- 15 Cf. Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds*, 125-126, for this phenomenon; see also Garsoïan, *Armenia in the fourth Century*; Preiser-Kapeller, *Kaysr*, 201; Thomson, *Armenia*, 156-160 and 171-172; Greenwood, *Armenian Neighbours*, 333-336; cf. also Hewsens, *Atlas*, map 63.
- 16 Al-Baladhuri IV: 330 (transl. Hitti); cf. also Garsoïan, *Arab Invasions*, 138.
- 17 On the Armenian sources for this period cf. Bartikian, *Byzantion*; Thomson, *Armenia*, 156-157; only occasionally we will deal with the relations between the Byzantine and the Armenian church, on these cf. Garsoïan, *Grand schisme*; Dorfmann-Lazarev, *Arméniers*; Greenwood, *Photius*; for the role of the church for the political integration of ethnic groups in the early middle ages cf. Pohl, *Staat und Herrschaft*, 14-15.
- 18 Buzandaran Patmut' iwuk' IV, 23; 147 (tr. Garsoïan, 156)
- 19 Sebēos c. 16: 88 (Abgaryan; tr. Thomson and Howard-Johnston, *Sebeos* I, 33)
- 20 Sebēos c. 30: 104-105 (Abgaryan; tr. Thomson and Howard-Johnston, *Sebeos* I, 55)
- 21 *Ibid.*
- 22 Cf. Sebēos c. 15 u. 16: 87, 2; 88, 18 and 25 (Abgaryan; tr. Thomson and Howard-Johnston, *Sebeos* I, 32 and 33); Adontz and Garsoïan, *Armenia*, 349 and 516, n. 49; Garsoïan, *Epic Histories*, 518 (s. v.); Thomson and Howard-Johnston, *Sebeos* II, 330 (s. v. submission - *tsatayut' iwn*).
- 23 Adontz and Garsoïan, *Armenia*, 349, 355 and 520, n. 67; Garsoïan, *The Arsākuni Dynasty*, 78; Mahé, *Norme écrite*; cf. also Pohl, *Staat und Herrschaft*, 11, on such commitments.
- 24 Sebēos c. 16 and 30: 88, 33-35 and 104, 22-27 (Abgaryan; tr. Thomson and Howard-Johnston, *Sebeos* I, 34 and 55-56 and II, 189); Grousset, *Arménie*, 257.
- 25 Greenwood, *Sebeos*, 355.

- 26 The second part of this chapter's title is copied from a chapter in Faroqi, *Ottoman Empire*, 75, and illustrates the continuity of the political techniques of empires; Faroqi writes: "Thus recently acquired territories might at first be constituted as dependent principalities (...). Such a solution had the advantage of neutralizing aristocrats long established in the region, who continued to possess prestige in their respective homelands, and who were familiar with the specific local arrangements governing the collection of taxes. From a different viewpoint, by instituting a 'local man' as governor it was possible to reward someone whose cooperation had been important in establishing Ottoman control in the first place."
- 27 Dodgeon and Lieu, *Eastern Frontier*, 133-134; Dignas and Winter, *Rome and Persia*, 122-130.
- 28 Blockley, *Division*; Greatrex, *Partition*.
- 29 Güterbock, *Römisch-Armenien*, 6-10, 29-32; Hewsens, *Artaxiad Armenia*; idem, *Armenian Geography*, 153-157; idem, *Atlas*, maps 48, 62 and 66; Preiser-Kapeller, *Verwaltungsgeschichte*, 36-45; Dignas and Winter, *Rome and Persia*, 126-128.
- 30 Proc., De aed. III, 1, 17-28: 182-187 (Dewing).
- 31 Güterbock, *Römisch-Armenien*, 35; Braund, *Rome and the Friendly King*, 26-27.
- 32 Cod. Theod. XII, 13, 6, cf. Güterbock, *Römisch-Armenien*, 32 and 35 (with Latin text); Adontz and Garsoïan, *Armenia*, 92 and 2\* (Latin text); Karayannopoulos, *Finanzwesen*, 144; Dagron, *Emperor and Priest*, 62.
- 33 Buzandaran Patmut' iwuk' III, 9 and 12: 32 and 40 (tr. Garsoïan, 77 and 82); Güterbock, *Römisch-Armenien*, 38; Preiser-Kapeller, *Verwaltungsgeschichte*, 37-39.
- 34 Cf. Seibt, *Der historische Hintergrund*.
- 35 On this treaty see Dignas and Winter, *Rome and Persia*, 131-134.
- 36 Proc., De aed. III, 1, 17-28: 182-187 (Dewing); Güterbock, *Römisch-Armenien*, 39; Preiser-Kapeller, *Verwaltungsgeschichte*, 44.
- 37 Proc., De aed. III, 2, 4-10: 187-191 (Dewing); Preiser-Kapeller, *Verwaltungsgeschichte*, 44; cf. also Greatrex and Lieu, *Eastern Frontier*, 63-78, and Dignas and Winter, *Rome and Persia*, 100-106 (on this war).
- 38 See generally on the character of Justinian's policy in these years: Meier, *Das andere Zeitalter Justinians*, 191-233.
- 39 Proc., De aed. III, 1, 17-28: 182-187 (Dewing); Greatrex and Lieu, *Eastern Frontier*, 83-84; Preiser-Kapeller, *Magister Militum*, 348-349.
- 40 Adontz and Garsoïan, *Armenia*, 134 (translation) and 35\* (Greek text).
- 41 Łazar P' arpec' i 33: 63 (T'ēr Mkrtč' ean and Malyaseanc'; tr. Thomson, 104); see also below p. 22; cf. also Łazar P' arpec' i 84: 153-154 (T'ēr Mkrtč' ean and Malyaseanc'; tr. Thomson, 213) for the later rebellion of Vahan Mamikonian, were Łazar explains that the Persian commander feared that Vahan "may send to the Armenians of the neighbouring provinces, to the inhabitants of Anjlit, or Cop' k', or Hashtank', and gain support from them as his kinsmen"; Sanspeur, *Neutralité*; Greatrex and Lieu, *Eastern Frontier*, 55-56 and 59-60; Thomson, *Armenia*, 162-163.
- 42 Armenian Geography (tr. Hewsens), 150-153.
- 43 Cf. Güterbock, *Römisch-Armenien*, 12-20; Toumanoff, *Studies*, 133-134; Blockley, *Division*; Greatrex, *Partition*; Greatrex and Lieu, *Eastern Frontier*, 28-30; Preiser-Kapeller, *Verwaltungsgeschichte*, 45-48; Garsoïan, *Date*; Dédeyan (ed.), *Histoire*, 178; Thomson, *Armenia*, 157-159; cf. also Hewsens, *Atlas*, maps 65 and 66.
- 44 Proc., De aed. III, 1, 12-15: 181-183 (Dewing)
- 45 Güterbock, *Römisch-Armenien*, 22, follows Korenaci's account.
- 46 Movs. Xor. III, 49 (Abetean and Yartut' iwnean; tr. Thomson, 313).



- 47 Movs. Xor. III, 51 (Abelean and Yarıut'iwnean; tr. Thomson, 318).  
 48 Movs. Xor. III, 54 (Abelean and Yarıut'iwnean; tr. Thomson, 321).  
 49 Movs's Kaňankatuaç'ı III, 12: 311 (Arak'eľyan; tr. Dowsett, 202); Bais, *Albania Caucasica*, 146.  
 50 Kaplony, *Gesandtschaften*, 123-124, and 129-130; Belhammer, *Nachrichten*, 346-351 (n. 295, also on the date of this treaty); Greenwood, *Armenian Neighbourhoods*, 344.  
 51 Greatrex and Lieu, *Eastern Frontier*, 53-54; but see Garsoïan, *Date*, esp. 193-194, who contrary to earlier studies now proposes a dating of the foundation of Theodosiopolis in the reign of Theodosius I shortly after the partition of 387.  
 52 Güterbock, *Römisch-Armenien*, 26-29; Garsoïan, *The Aršakuni Dynasty*, 93; Preiser-Kapeller, *Vergewaltungsgeschichte*, 50-53.  
 53 Proc., Bella II, 3, 35-36; 281 (Dewing).  
 54 Proc., Bella II, 3, 1-31: 212-218; Garsoïan, *Problem*, 64, with n. 49.  
 55 Proc., loc. cit.; cf. Garsoïan, *Epic Histories*, 362-363, for the office of *aspet* and the Bagratunis.  
 56 Elišë IV: 93 (T'ër-Minasean; tr. Thomson, 145).  
 57 Proc., Bella II, 3, 1-6: I, 270-271 (Dewing).  
 58 Adontz and Garsoïan, *Armenia*, 133-136 and 143-144; Greatrex and Lieu, *Eastern Frontier*, 100; Preiser-Kapeller, *Magister Militum*, 349; Lounghis et al., *Regesten*, N. 1108 and 1111.  
 59 Adontz and Garsoïan, *Armenia*, 138-139.  
 60 Cf. Adontz and Garsoïan, *Armenia*, 107 and 2\* (Latin text); Güterbock, *Römisch-Armenien*, 40-42; Greatrex and Lieu, *Eastern Frontier*, 83-84; Preiser-Kapeller, *Magister Militum*, 348-349; Thomson, *Armenia*, 167.  
 61 Mal. 18, 10: 359, 12-14 (Thurn); Greatrex and Lieu, *Eastern Frontier*, 84; Preiser-Kapeller, *Magister Militum*, 349.  
 62 Adontz and Garsoïan, *Armenia*, 142-164, 32\*-34\* and 37\*-38\* (Greek texts of the two laws); Güterbock, *Römisch-Armenien*, 43-58; Lounghis et al., *Regesten*, N. 1078 and 1108; Dédeyan (ed.), *Histoire*, 196-197; Thomson, *Armenia*, 167-168.  
 63 Proc., Bella II, 3, 38-40: I, 280-281 (Dewing); on the accusation of being a ruthless revolutionary, which Procopius expresses against Justinian on several occasions, cf. Meier, *Das andere Zeitalter Justinians*, 198-199.  
 64 Proc., Bella VII, 32, esp. 7: IV, 420-437, esp. 422-423 (Dewing); cf. also Meier, *Das andere Zeitalter Justinians*, 261-262, on this conspiracy.  
 65 Cf. also Faroqi, *Ottoman Empire*, 75: "Only after a certain lapse of time were the sons of former dynasts-turned-Ottoman-dignitaries appointed to serve in faraway provinces, while the territories held by their fathers or grandfathers were integrated into the Ottoman imperial structure, and now administered by people with no previous links to the localities concerned."  
 66 On this important treaty cf. Sim. V, 15, 2: 216, 10-13 und IV, 13, 24: 177, 23-27 (de Boor and Wirth); Sebëos c. 12: 84, 24-33 (Abgaryan; tr. Thomson and Howard-Johnston, *Sebeos I*, 28-29); Narratio de rebus Armeniae § 94: 39, 235-237 (Garitte); T'ovma Arcruni, *Patmut' iwn* II, 3: 148 (Patakanean); Honigmann, *Ostgrenze*, 28-37; Christensen, *Iran*, 445; Grousset, *Arménie*, 249 and 251-253; Goubert, *Byzance*, 167-170 and 290-302; Narratio de rebus Armeniae (Garitte) 236-237; Adontz and Garsoïan, *Armenia*, 179-182; Schreiner, *Simokaites*, 302, n. 590; Laurent and Canard, *Arménie*, 40-41; Whitby, *Maurice*, 304; Garsoïan, *Marzpanate*, 108-109; Thomson and Howard-Johnston, *Sebeos II*, 171; Belhammer, *Nachrichten*, 22-23 (n. 14); Garsoïan, *Grand schisme*, 264-267; idem, *Armenien*, 1191-1192; Redgate, *Armenians*, 157; Greatrex and Lieu, *Eastern Frontier*, 172-174 and 294, n. 54; Greenwood, *Sebeos*,

- 335 (with n. 51); Preiser-Kapeller, *Magister Militum*, 349-350; Thomson, *Armenia*, 169; Greenwood, *Armenian Neighbourhoods*, 337; Müller, Preiser-Kapeller and Riehle, *Regesten*, N. 104; cf. esp. Hewsen, *Atlas*, map 69.  
 67 Cf. also Greenwood, *Armenian Neighbourhoods*, 337-338.  
 68 Sebëos c. 30: 105, 28-33 (Abgaryan; tr. Thomson and Howard-Johnston, *Sebeos I*, 56); Grousset, *Arménie*, 264-265; Goubert, *Byzance*, 209-210; Ditten, *Ethnische Verschiebungen*, 134-135; Garsoïan, *Marzpanate*, 109-110; idem, *Problem*, 57; Thomson and Howard-Johnston, *Sebeos II*, 190-191; Greatrex and Lieu, *Eastern Frontier* 178-179; Preiser-Kapeller, *Kaysr*, 195; Müller, Preiser-Kapeller and Riehle, *Regesten*, N. 137.  
 69 Yovh. Drasy. 16, § 40-51 (tr. Maksoudian, 94; tr. Boisson-Chenorkhian, 126-127); *Armenian Geography* (Hewsen) 18-26; Preiser-Kapeller, *Magister Militum*, 350.  
 70 Greatrex and Lieu, *Eastern Frontier*, 186-187; Preiser-Kapeller, *Magister Militum*, 351; Greenwood, *Armenian Neighbourhoods*, 338-339.  
 71 Preiser-Kapeller, *Magister Militum*, 353-354 (for attempts to establish a permanent Byzantine regime in these years); Greenwood, *Armenian Neighbourhoods*, 340.  
 72 Haldon and Kennedy, *Frontier*, 79-85; Ohme, *Armenia magna*; Whitton, *Making of Byzantium*, 212; Preiser-Kapeller, *Magister Militum*, 364-365.  
 73 Garsoïan, *Problem*, 55, 98-99, 111-112; idem, *Annexation*, 188-193; Hewsen, *Atlas*, map 105; Greenwood, *Armenian Neighbourhoods*, 353-354, 358-362.  
 74 We will not deal here with the careers of various Armenian aristocrats in the Byzantine Empire and their integration in the empire's aristocracy, which have been the theme of various studies, cf. Garsoïan, *Problem*, and Ch. Settapani, *Continuité des élites à Byzance durant les siècles obscurs. Les princes caucasiens et l'empire du VI au IX siècle*. Paris, 2006; for the material gains from imperial service which surely enhanced its attractiveness cf. Oikonomides, *Title and Income*, 202-206.  
 75 Proc., Bella I, 15, 18 and 27-30: I, 135 and 139 (Dewing).  
 76 Cf. Proc., Bella I, 12, 21-23: I, 101 (Dewing).  
 77 Proc., Bella I, 15, 31: I, 139 (Dewing 139).  
 78 The Bagratuni-family, see above n. 55.  
 79 Proc., Bella II, 3, 8-9: I, 272-273 (Dewing).  
 80 Proc., Bella II, 21, 34: I, 451 (Dewing), we have more information on how Artabanes returned into the empire, cf. Proc., Bella VIII, 8, 21-28: V, 124-126 (Dewing): *But there was a certain Artabanes in that Roman army (in Lazica), a Persianian by birth, who had, as it happened, deserted long before to the Armenians who are subjects of the Romans, not as a simple deserter however, but by the slaughter of one hundred and twenty Persian warriors he had given the Romans a pledge of his loyalty to them. For he had come before Valerian, who at that time was a general in Armenia and requested him to give him fifty Romans; and upon getting what he wished he proceeded to a fortress situated in Persarmenia. There a garrison of one hundred and twenty Persians received him with his company into the fortress, it not being clear that he had changed his allegiance and gone over to the enemy. He then slew the hundred and twenty men and plundered all the money in the fortress - and there was an enormous quantity of it - and so came to Valerian and the Roman army, and having thus proved himself faithful to them, he thereafter marched with the Romans.*  
 81 Sebëos c. 20: 91, 32-34 (Abgaryan; tr. Thomson and Howard-Johnston, *Sebeos I*, 38); Müller, Preiser-Kapeller and Riehle, *Regesten*, N. 89a and b.  
 82 Sebëos c. 16: 88 (Abgaryan; tr. Thomson and Howard-Johnston, *Sebeos I*, 33).  
 83 We find a parallel in the Buzandaran Patmut' iwnk' IV, 16: 133 (tr. Garsoïan, 146); therefore he (the Persian king Šapuh II) demanded an oath from him and compelled

- him (the Armenian king Aršak), exerting the utmost pressure and saying: "Agree and swear to me on your own faith that you will not be false to me!" When (Aršak) had been pressed to the utmost and in dire straits, the priests of the church of the city of Tispon – the chief of whom was called Mari – were ordered to come. They brought the Holy Gospels, and Šapuh king of Persia made Aršak king of Armenia take an oath, swearing on the Divine Gospels that he would never again be false to him, but that he would keep his oath and maintain his alliance with him.
- 84 Lewond c. 10: 35–36 (Ezean; tr. Arzoumanian, 66); Grousset, *Arménie*, 314; Laurent and Canard, *Arménie*, 237, 245 and 403; Garsoïan, *Arab Invasion*, 127–128.
- 85 Lewond c. 39: 159 (Ezean; tr. Arzoumanian, 143); Trittle, *Flight*.
- 86 T'ovma Arccruni, Patmut' iwn III, 13 (Patakanean; tr. Thomson, 258–259); Grousset, *Arménie*, 367; Laurent and Canard, *Arménie*, 233, 236, 254 and 258, n. 23; Redgate, *Armenians*, 183; Martin-Hisard, *Constantinople*, 434–435; Greenwood, *Photius*, 130–132, and idem, *Armenian Neighbours*, 349; Jones, *Between Islam and Byzantium*, 6.
- 87 T'ovma Arccruni, Patmut' iwn III, 13 (Patakanean; tr. Thomson, 267); Greenwood, *Photius*, 130–132, and idem, *Armenian Neighbours*, 351; Müller, Preiser-Kapeller and Riehle, *Regesten*, N. 453.
- 88 Men. Prot., fr. 6, 1 (Blockley); Güterbock, *Byzanz und Persien*, 81–92; Greatrex and Lieu, *Eastern Frontier*, 132–133 (translation); Dignas and Winter, *Rome and Persia*, 142 (translation).
- 89 Cf. also Jönsson, *Diplomatic Signaling*, 191: "Diplomatic signalling typically aims at persuasion (...) Attempts at mutual persuasion are of the essence. In other words, bargaining and negotiation processes are at the heart of diplomacy."
- 90 Lewond c. 42: 168–169 (Ezean; tr. Arzoumanian, 149); Greenwood, *Armenian Neighbours*, 348.
- 91 Garsoïan, *The Arsākuni Dynasty*, 78.
- 92 Buzandaran Patmut' iwnk' V, 32: 235 (tr. Garsoïan, 213).
- 93 Garsoïan, *The Arsākuni Dynasty*, 78.
- 94 Buzandaran Patmut' iwnk' V, 33: 237 (tr. Garsoïan, 214).
- 95 Buzandaran Patmut' iwnk' III, 21: 64 (tr. Garsoïan, 97–98).
- 96 Ehišē I: 6 (Tēr-Minasean; tr. Thomson, 60); Adontz and Garsoïan, *Armenia*, 218–219.
- 97 Greatrex and Lieu, *Eastern Frontier*, 55–56.
- 98 Łazar P' arpec' i 33: 63 (Tēr Mkrtič' ean and Malayaseanc'; tr. Thomson, 104).
- 99 Ehišē III: 71 (Tēr-Minasean; tr. Thomson, 122).
- 100 Cf. Łazar P' arpec' i 41: 73–74 (Tēr Mkrtič' ean and Malayaseanc'; tr. Thomson, 118); Ehišē III: 73 (Tēr-Minasean; tr. Thomson, 124).
- 101 Josh. Styl. 21 (249, 15–23, ed. Chabot), cf. Greatrex and Lieu, *Eastern Frontier*, 61 (with translation).
- 102 On this tradition see below, p. 51.
- 103 Sebēos 8: 67–68 (Abgaryan; tr. Thomson and Howard-Johnston, *Sebeos* I, 6–7); cf. also Garsoïan, *Armenien*, 1212–1213; Beihammer, *Nachrichten*, 3–5 (N. 4 and 5); Greatrex and Lieu, *Eastern Frontier*, 137–138 and 149; Dédeyan (ed.), *Histoire*, 202–203; Thomson, *Armenia*, 168; Müller, Preiser-Kapeller and Riehle, *Regesten*, N. 17.
- 104 Evagrius, *Hist. Eccl.* V, 7: 203 (ed. Bidez and Parmentier); Greatrex and Lieu, *Eastern Frontier*, 138–139 (translation); cf. also the hint on Vardān's rank within the aristocracy.
- 105 Men. Prot. 20, 2: 184, 49–56 (Blockley).
- 106 Mich. Syr. X, I: II, 282 and 283 (Chabot); Men. Prot. 23, 9 and 26, 1: 204–210 and 228–234 (Blockley); Goubert, *Byzance*, 78–79; Whitby, *Maurice*, 219, 251–252, 271–274; Beihammer, *Nachrichten*, 7–9 (N. 6); Greatrex and Lieu, *Eastern Frontier*, 159–166; Müller, Preiser-Kapeller and Riehle, *Regesten*, N. 22, 23, 54 and 59.

- 107 Laiou, *The Emperor's Word*, 347–351.
- 108 Laiou, *The Emperor's Word*, 354.
- 109 For oath-taking in Roman-Persian relations cf. Greatrex and Lieu, *Eastern Frontier*, 3, and Dignas and Winter, *Rome and Persia*, 132 (on the treaty of 363); for the oath in the form of sealing salt (according to Sasanian customs) Emperor Heraclius was prepared to accept on the occasion of his agreement with the Persian general Šahrbarāz in 629 cf. Sebēos c. 40: 129, 31–130, 4 (Abgaryan; tr. Thomson and Howard-Johnston, *Sebeos* I, 88 and 90); see also Chrysos, *Diplomacy*, 30; for relations with the Caliph cf. Kaplony, *Gesandtschaften*, 371–372, 387–388; for the significance of reciprocity in diplomatic relations cf. Jönsson, *Diplomatic Signaling*, 196–197, and esp. G. Schmalzbauer, Überlegungen zur Idee der Ökumene in Byzanz, in: W. Hörandner, J. Koder and M. Stassinopoulou (ed.), *Wiener Byzantinistik und Neogräzistik. Beiträge zum Symposium Vierzig Jahre Institut für Byzantinistik und Neogräzistik der Universität Wien im Gedenken an Herbert Hunger (Wien, 4.–7. Dezember 2002)* (Byzantina et Neograeca Vindobonensia 24), 408–419. Vienna, 2004, on concepts of equality in the relations between Byzantium and Persia respectively the Caliphate.
- 110 Laiou, *The Emperor's Word*, 349–350; cf. also N. G. Svoronos, "Le serment de fidélité à l'empereur byzantin et sa signification constitutionnelle." *Revue des Études Byzantines* 9 (1951): 106–142.
- 111 For the temporary flexibility of Byzantine diplomacy in the relations to Armenia cf. also Greenwood, *Photius*, and generally on this phenomenon Chrysos, *Diplomacy*, 30–31.
- 112 Sebēos c. 18: 90, 16–22 (Abgaryan; tr. Thomson and Howard-Johnston, *Sebeos* I, 36); Garsoïan, *Marzpanate*, 109; Thomson and Howard-Johnston, *Sebeos* II, 176 and 178; Preiser-Kapeller, *Kaysr*, 193–194 (with a new interpretation of this passage); Müller, Preiser-Kapeller and Riehle, *Regesten*, N. 108b.
- 113 Cf. Dédeyan (ed.), *Histoire*, 197–202.
- 114 Narratio de rebus Armeniae § 121: 43, 300–305 (Garitte); Mahé, *Armenische Kirche*, 484–485; Garsoïan, *Grand schisme*, 274 and 385–387; Greenwood, *Sebeos*, 361; Müller, Preiser-Kapeller and Riehle, *Regesten*, N. 203c; for the role of such conventions in the life of the Armenian church cf. also Mardrossian, *Livre des canons*, 125–128 u. 293–296.
- 115 Sebēos c. 45: 147–148 (Abgaryan; tr. Thomson and Howard-Johnston, *Sebeos* I, 113); Grousset, *Arménie*, 300; Mahé, *Armenische Kirche*, 487–488; Garsoïan, *Arab Invasion*, 120; Thomson and Howard-Johnston, *Sebeos* II, 262–263; Garsoïan, *Grand schisme*, 390–393; Müller, Preiser-Kapeller and Riehle, *Regesten*, N. 227.
- 116 Sebēos c. 48: 164, 27–33 (Abgaryan; tr. Thomson and Howard-Johnston, *Sebeos* I, 135–136); cf. Grousset, *Arménie*, 300; Mahé, *Armenische Kirche*, 487–488; Garsoïan, *Arab Invasion*, 121; Thomson and Howard-Johnston, *Sebeos* II, 262–263; Garsoïan, *Grand schisme*, 390–393; Greenwood, *Armenian Neighbours*, 342; Müller, Preiser-Kapeller and Riehle, *Regesten*, N. 227c.
- 117 Sebēos c. 48: 164, 27–33 (Abgaryan; tr. Thomson and Howard-Johnston, *Sebeos* I, 135–136); cf. also Lewond c. 4: 14 (Ezean; tr. Arzoumanian, 53–54); Then, the chief priest of the Armenians, Nersēs, who had built (the cathedral) of St. Gregory, summoned the princes and the nobles of our country, and together they acceded to submit to the violence of the Ismaelites; Garsoïan, *Arab Invasion*, 121–122.
- 118 Movsēs Katankatuac' i II, 27: 192–193 (Arak'elyan; tr. Dowsett, 124–125); Bais, *Albania Caucasica*, 144; Greenwood, *Armenian Neighbours*, 343.
- 119 Howard-Johnston, *Armenian Historians*, 56–57 and 59–60.
- 120 Sebēos c. 8: 67, 27–31 (Abgaryan; tr. Thomson and Howard-Johnston, *Sebeos* I, 6); Preiser-Kapeller, *Kaysr*, 200.

- 121 T'ovma Arcruni, Patmut' iwn III, 1 (Fatkanean; tr. Thomson, 189-190).  
 122 Thomson and Howard-Johnston, *Sebeos* I, 21, n. 154; Preiser-Kapeller, *Keys*, 200.  
 123 Sebēos c. 11, 16 and 20: 78, 13-14, 87, 26 and 92, 22-24 (Abgaryan; tr. Thomson and Howard-Johnston, *Sebeos* I, 21, 32 and 39); Preiser-Kapeller, *Keys*, 200-201.  
 124 Sebēos c. 41: 134, 1 (Abgaryan; tr. Thomson and Howard-Johnston, *Sebeos* I, 94).  
 125 Lewond c. 26: 123 (Ezean; tr. Arzoumanian, 119-120); Laurent and Canard, *Arménie*, 404; Rochow, *Konstantin V*, 88; Garsoïan, *Arab Invasion*, 129-130; Greenwood, *Armenian Neighbours*, 347; for the treaty between the Emperor and the Armenians mentioned in the text cf. Müller, Preiser-Kapeller and Riehle, *Regesten*, N. 310d.  
 126 Lewond c. 34: 142-143 (Ezean; tr. Arzoumanian, 132); Garsoïan, *Arab Invasion*, 131.  
 127 Buzandaran Patmut' iwnk' V, 38: 248-249 (tr. Garsoïan, 221-222); cf. Garsoïan, *The Arsakuni Dynasty*, 92.  
 128 Adontz and Garsoïan, *Armenia*, 173.  
 129 Garsoïan, *Marepanate*, 101-102.  
 130 Sebēos c. 41: 133, 31-33 (Abgaryan; tr. Thomson and Howard-Johnston, *Sebeos* I, 94); Müller, Preiser-Kapeller and Riehle, *Regesten*, N. 210f.  
 131 Greenwood, *Corpus*, 83 (n. 7); Dawit' Sahafuni is called *patrik, kiwrapat* and *sparapet* of Armenia and Syria; cf. Grousset, *Arménie*, 286; Toumanoff, *Caucasia and Byzantium*, 118-121, 139; Laurent and Canard, *Arménie*, 401; Kaegi, *Conquest*, 190; Ter-Lewondyan, *Observations*, 200; Garsoïan, *Arab Invasion*, 118; Whitton, *Making of Byzantium*, 209; Yuzbashian, *Titres byzantins*, 216-218; Thomson and Howard-Johnston, *Sebeos* II, 230-231; Preiser-Kapeller, *Magister Militum*, 354, with n. 17 (on the function of the *işyan* of Armenia); idem, *Hrovartak*, 301, 305-306.  
 132 Cf. also Greenwood, *Armenian Neighbours*, 340.  
 133 Yovh. Drasy, 19, § 2-3 (tr. Maksoudian, 100-101; Boisson-Chenorhokian, 140).  
 134 Grousset, *Arménie*, 287 and 297; Laurent and Canard, *Arménie*, 401-402; Kaegi, *Conquest*, 190-191 and 193-194; Garsoïan, *Arab Invasion*, 120; Yuzbashian, *Titres byzantins*, 216; Thomson and Howard-Johnston, *Sebeos* II, 246; Preiser-Kapeller, *Hrovartak*, 301; Greenwood, *Armenian Neighbours*, 340.  
 135 Sebēos c. 42: 139, 3-5 (Abgaryan; tr. Thomson and Howard-Johnston, *Sebeos* I, 101); Müller, Preiser-Kapeller and Riehle, *Regesten*, N. 215c.  
 136 Yovh. Drasy, 19, § 19 (tr. Maksoudian, 102; Boisson-Chenorhokian, 144).  
 137 Sebēos c. 44: 144, 25-30 (Abgaryan; tr. Thomson and Howard-Johnston, *Sebeos* I, 108-109); cf. also Yovh. Drasy, 19, § 24-26 (tr. Maksoudian, 102-103; Boisson-Chenorhokian, 145); Grousset, *Arménie*, 298-299; Kaegi, *Conquest*, 190; Garsoïan, *Arab Invasion*, 120; Yuzbashian, *Titres byzantins*, 218; Thomson and Howard-Johnston, *Sebeos* II, 256-257; Greenwood, *Sebeos*, 355; Preiser-Kapeller, *Hrovartak*, 301; Müller, Preiser-Kapeller and Riehle, *Regesten*, N. 224f.  
 138 Sebēos c. 52: 175, 9-12 (Abgaryan; tr. Thomson and Howard-Johnston, *Sebeos* I, 153); Grousset, *Arménie*, 304; Laurent and Canard, *Arménie*, 126-127, 242 and 402; Ter-Ghévondian, *Prince d'Arménie*; Kaegi, *Conquest*, 197; Garsoïan, *Arab Invasion*, 122; Yuzbashian, *Titres byzantins*, 218; Redgate, *Armenians*, 168; Thomson and Howard-Johnston, *Sebeos* II, 282-284; Preiser-Kapeller, *Magister Militum*, 359; idem, *Hrovartak*, 302, 311; Greenwood, *Armenian Neighbours*, 342-343; Müller, Preiser-Kapeller and Riehle, *Regesten*, N. 228a.  
 139 Yovh. Drasy, 20, § 1-3 (tr. Maksoudian, 105); Garsoïan, *Arab Invasion*, 122-123.  
 140 Movsēs Kalankatuac' II, 36: 231 (Arak'elyan; tr. Dowsett, 149); Bais, *Albania Caucasia*, 145-146.  
 141 Ter-Ghévondian, *Prince d'Arménie*; Garsoïan, *Arab Invasion*, 125-126; Hewsen, *Atlas*, maps 78 and 81; Dédeyan (ed.), *Histoire*, 223.  
 142 Lewond c. 21: 112 (Ezean; tr. Arzoumanian, 113); Garsoïan, *Arab Invasion*, 129.

- 143 Lewond c. 39: 159-160 (Ezean; tr. Arzoumanian, 143); Trittle, *Flight*.  
 144 Yovh. Drasy, 27, § 10-12 (tr. Maksoudian, 125-126); Garsoïan, *Independent Kingdoms*, 146-147; Whitton, *Making of Byzantium*, 216.  
 145 Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds*, 147; cf. also Greenwood, *Photius*, 126; Dédeyan (ed.), *Histoire*, 236-239.  
 146 Yovh. Drasy, 28, § 1-2 (tr. Maksoudian, 126-127).  
 147 Yovh. Drasy, 29, § 4-6 (tr. Maksoudian, 128); Garsoïan, *Independent Kingdoms*, 148; Greenwood, *Armenian Neighbours*, 353.  
 148 Jönsson, *Diplomatic Signaling*, 191.  
 149 Millar, *Greek Roman Empire*, 1-38, 192-234; Treitinger, *Kaiseridee, passim*; Dölger and Karayannopoulos, *Kaiserurkunden*, 47-48; Hunger, *Proionion*, 49-58, 163-164; Rösch, *Onoma*; Kelly, *Later Roman Empire*, 26-31; cf. also Jönsson, *Diplomatic Signaling*, 193-194.  
 150 Elišé III: 71-72 (Ter-Minasean; tr. Thomson, 122-123).  
 151 Cf. Chrysos, *Diplomacy*, 25-28.  
 152 Greenwood, *Sebeos*, 327.  
 153 Col. 1, 13.  
 154 Sebēos c. 46: 151-152 (Abgaryan; tr. Thomson and Howard-Johnston, *Sebeos* I, 118-119).  
 155 Sebēos c. 46: 161 (Abgaryan; tr. Thomson and Howard-Johnston, *Sebeos* I, 132).  
 156 Movsēs Kalankatuac' II, 20: 181 (Arak'elyan; tr. Dowsett, 116-117); Bais, *Albania Caucasia*, 142-143; Rösch, *Onoma*, 45-46, 48-49, 51, 63-64, 67, 104, 112-114 and 140 (on the various imperial titles).  
 157 Yovh. Drasy, 54, § 26-69 (tr. Maksoudian, 192-197).  
 158 Yovh. Drasy, 55, § 7 (tr. Maksoudian, 198).  
 159 Movsēs Kalankatuac' II, 20: 181-182 (Arak'elyan; tr. Dowsett, 116-117).  
 160 Dölger and Karayannopoulos, *Kaiserurkunden*, 94-98.  
 161 On the Armenian terminology for imperial documents cf. Mahé, *Norme écrite*, 683-684, and Preiser-Kapeller, *Hrovartak*, 298-302.  
 162 Treitinger, *Kaiseridee*, 205-207, and Neville, *Authority*, 22-23, on the significance of the Emperor's picture as symbol of his authority over its bearer.  
 163 Dölger and Karayannopoulos, *Kaiserurkunden*, 113-115; Const. Porphy., *De cerimon.* I, 47 and 84; 238, 11, 15 and 18, 240, 22, 241, 1 and *passim*, 387, 9 and 13 (Reiske); N. Oikonomidès, *Les listes de préséance byzantines des IX<sup>e</sup> et X<sup>e</sup> siècles*. Paris, 1972, 93, 23-95, 1 and 129, 5 (Kleterologion of Philotheos); Kelly, *Later Roman Empire*, 19-20; Preiser-Kapeller, *Hrovartak*, 296-298.  
 164 Movsēs Kalankatuac' II, 20-21: 182 (Arak'elyan; tr. Dowsett, 116-117); Thomson and Howard-Johnston, *Sebeos* II, 283-284 u. 287; Bais, *Albania Caucasia*, 142-144; Greenwood, *Sebeos* 352; Preiser-Kapeller, *Hrovartak*, 301, 303 (with n. 14), 307-308 and 312; Müller, Preiser-Kapeller and Riehle, *Regesten*, N. 230a.  
 165 Treitinger, *Kaiseridee*, 191-195; Chrysos, *Diplomacy*, 34-36; Garsoïan, *Problem*, 113.  
 166 Yuzbashian, *Les titres byzantins*, 217-218; Martin-Hisard, *Constantinople*, 437-444; Dagron, *Empereur and Priest*, 57; Preiser-Kapeller, *Hrovartak*, 309.  
 167 Yuzbashian, *Les titres byzantins*, 216-217, on the use of *patrikios* in Armenian and Arab sources, cf. also Martin-Hisard, *Constantinople*, 420; Ter-Lewondyan, *Observations*, 199; Preiser-Kapeller, *Hrovartak*, 310, and 311-312 for other titles.  
 168 Oikonomidès, *Filite and Income*, 200-206; Chrysos, *Diplomacy*, 36; Neville, *Authority*, 16-23; Greenwood, *Armenian Neighbours*, 341.  
 169 Const. Porphy., *De admin. imp.* 43: 190, 64-192, 71 (Moravcsik and Jenkins; tr. Belke and Soustal, 206, with n. 459); this visit of Grigor can be dated ca. 898/900, cf. Müller and Belhammer, *Regesten*, N. 534g; Neville, *Authority*, 29-30.

- 170 Cf. also Greenwood, *Armenian Neighbours*, 340–341.  
 171 Treitinger, *Kaiseridee*, 194 and 217–218.  
 172 Garsoïan, *The Arsakuni Dynasty*, 76–77; Adontz and Garsoïan, *Armenia*, 186–210 u. 344; cf. also Runciman, *Social Theory*, 86–97, and Jönsson, *Diplomatic Signaling*, 194–195, on the role of ranks.  
 173 Adontz and Garsoïan, *Armenia*, 211–218.  
 174 Buzandaran Patmut'iwnk' V, 38: 248–249 (tr. Garsoïan, 221–222).  
 175 Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds*, 125; cf. also Whittow, *Making of Byzantium*, 202–203, for Armenia.  
 176 Dignas and Winter, *Rome and Persia*, 148–149, with n. 149; cf. also Avruch, *Reciprocity*, 159–160.  
 177 Cf. also Garsoïan, *Independent Kingdoms*, 148; Whittow, *Making of Byzantium*, 218; Dorfmann-Lazarev, *Arménians*, 282; Dédeyan (ed.), *Histoire*, 244.  
 178 Const. Porph., *De cer.* II, 48: 687, 3 (Reiske); Martin-Hisard, *Constantinople*, 368, 371, 421–422 and 428; Yuzbashian, *Les titres byzantins*, 219; Garsoïan, *Independent Kingdoms*, 148. On the family of kings cf. Dölger, *Familie der Könige*, esp. 41–42; Treitinger, *Kaiseridee*, 195–196; Chrysos, *Diplomacy*, 36–37.  
 179 Yovh. Drasy, 29, § 13 (tr. Maksoudian, 129, 5–9); Müller and Beihammer, *Regesten*, N. 506.  
 180 Yovh. Drasy, 31, § 1–2 (tr. Maksoudian, 138); Garsoïan, *Independent Kingdoms*, 151; Müller and Beihammer, *Regesten*, N. 518.  
 181 On other aspects of this display cf. Jones, *Between Islam and Byzantium*, 13–35.  
 182 Runciman, *Social Theory*, 86.  
 183 Althoff, *Die Macht der Rituale*, 11 (my translation); cf. also Elias, *Die höfische Gesellschaft*, 145–153; Chrysos, *Diplomacy*, 36; Beihammer, *Die Kraft der Zeichen*; Pohl, *Staat und Herrschaft*, 16–27, with valuable theoretical considerations on this subject.  
 184 Buzandaran Patmut'iwnk' III, 11: 38–39 (tr. Garsoïan, 81).  
 185 Suetonius, Nero 13, cf. Dignas and Winter, *Rome and Persia*, 176–177 (with translation); Adontz and Garsoïan, *Armenia*, 329–330; Garsoïan, *The Arsakuni Dynasty*, 67–68.  
 186 Mal. 17, 9: 340, 53–341, 78 (Thurn); Treitinger, *Kaiseridee*, 204; Chrysos, *Diplomacy*, 34; Greatrex and Lieu, *Eastern Frontier*, 79–80 (with translation).  
 187 Cf. also Braund, *Rome and the Friendly King*, 26–27.  
 188 Treitinger, *Kaiseridee*, 216–219; Kelly, *Later Roman Empire*, 19; for the "staging of documents" cf. Herold, *Studien*, 53–73.  
 189 For the ceremonies at the Byzantine court see Treitinger, *Kaiseridee*, esp. 197–202; Dagron, *Emperor and Priest*, 84–124; Magdhalino, *Court Society*, esp. 214–215 on imperial banquets.  
 190 Buzandaran Patmut'iwnk' IV, 16: 133 (tr. Garsoïan, 146).  
 191 Yovh. Drasy, 55, § 4–6 (tr. Maksoudian, 198); Garsoïan, *Independent Kingdoms*, 159; idem, *Problem*, 59–60; Dédeyan (ed.), *Histoire*, 248.  
 192 Greenwood, *Sebeos*, 355.  
 193 Sebēos c. 21: 94 (Abgaryan; tr. Thomson and Howard-Johnston, *Sebeos* I, 40–41).  
 194 Kelly, *Later Roman Empire*, 26; cf. also Elias, *Die höfische Gesellschaft*, 145–161; Magdhalino, *Court Society*, 216.  
 195 Treitinger, *Kaiseridee*, 202–203; Braund, *Rome and the Friendly King*, 27–28; Oikonomides, *Title and Income*, 206; Neville, *Authority*, 29–30 (on the exchange of gifts between Krikorios of Taron and the Emperor); Avruch, *Reciprocity*, 160–164; Jones, *Between Islam and Byzantium*, 16–34.  
 196 Sebēos c. 24: 96 (Abgaryan; tr. Thomson and Howard-Johnston, *Sebeos* I, 43–44).  
 197 Yovh. Drasy, 31, § 1–2 (tr. Maksoudian, 138); Garsoïan, *Independent Kingdoms*, 151–152.

- 198 Movsēs Kalankatuac' i II, 27: 195 (Arak'elyan; tr. Dowsett, 126); Bais, *Albania Caucasia*, 144.  
 199 Movsēs Kalankatuac' i II, 22: 182 (Arak'elyan; tr. Dowsett, 118–119); Bais, *Albania Caucasia*, 143.  
 200 Sebēos c. 48: 164, 27–33 (Abgaryan; tr. Thomson and Howard-Johnston, *Sebeos* I, 135–136); Garsoïan, *Arab Invasions*, 121–122; Preiser-Kapeller, *Magister Militum*, 357; Greenwood, *Armenian Neighbours*, 342.  
 201 Preiser-Kapeller, *Magister Militum*, 357–358.  
 202 Sebēos 48: 166 (Abgaryan; tr. Thomson and Howard-Johnston, *Sebeos* I, 139);  
 203 Hunger, *Proimion*, 143–154.  
 204 Sebēos c. 12: 82–83 (Abgaryan; tr. Thomson and Howard-Johnston, *Sebeos* I, 26–27);  
 205 Sebēos c. 44: 143 (Abgaryan; tr. Thomson and Howard-Johnston, *Sebeos* I, 106–107); Greenwood, *Armenian Neighbours*, 341–342.  
 206 Łazar P'arcep' i 8: 11–12 (Tēr Mkrtč'ean and Malyaseanc'; tr. Thomson, 44–45).  
 207 Movs. Xor. III, 42 (Abetean and Yarut'wnean; tr. Thomson, 304).  
 208 Lewond c. 29: 129 (Ezean; tr. Arzoumanian, 123–124).  
 209 M. van Esbroeck, "Legends about Constantine in Armenian," in: T. J. Samuelian (ed.), *Classical Armenian Culture* (University of Pennsylvania Armenian Texts and Studies 4), Chico, 1982, 79–101; Seibt, *Der historische Hintergrund*, 125–133, esp. 125–126; M.-L. Chaumont, "Une visite du roi d'Arménie Tridate III à l'empereur Constantin à Rome?," in: *Arménie et Byzance, histoire et culture* (Byzantina Sorbonensia 12), Paris, 1996, 55–66, esp. 56–58 and 65–66 (Chaumont presumes a real covenant between Emperor Constantine and King Trdat, around which later the legend of the journey to Rome/Constantinople, which is based on the journey of King Trdat I to his coronation at the court of Emperor Nero in 66 AD, evolved).  
 210 Agathangelos (armen.) § 877: 410 (tr. Thomson, 411); cf. G. Garitte, *Documents pour l'étude du livre d'Agathange* (Studi e Testi 127), City of Vatican 1946, Vg § 174: 106, 5 (*pákta kai philia*) and § 190: 113, 9: *ta pákta*, cf. also 328–331.  
 211 Buzandaran Patmut'iwnk' III, 21: 64–65 (tr. Garsoïan, 97–98).  
 212 Sebēos 46: 155 (Abgaryan; transl. Thomson and Howard-Johnston, *Sebeos* I, 123–124).  
 213 R. W. Thomson, "Constantine and Trdat in Armenian Tradition," *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae*, Tomus I (1–3) (1997): 277–289; P. Halfter, "Constantinus Novus. Zum geschichtlichen Hintergrund des apokryphen Freundschaftspaktes zwischen Konstantin und Trdat, Grigor dem Erleuchter und Papst Silvester," *Le Muséon* 119 (3–4) (2006): 399–428.  
 214 Jönsson, *Diplomatic Signaling*, 200.  
 215 Garsoïan, *Armenia in the fourth century*, 345–346.  
 216 Const. Porph., *De admin. imp.* c. 44, 45–49; 200–201 (Moravcsik and Jenkins; tr. Belke and Soustal); (...) ó áρχων τῶν ἀρχόντων δοῦλος τοῦ βασιλέως τῶν Ῥωμαίων τυράννῃ, ὡς παρ' αὐτοῦ προβαλλόμενος καὶ τὸ τσιούτον δεχόμενος ἀξίωμα, δηλονότι καὶ τὰ ἐπ' αὐτοῦ δεσποζόμενα κάρτερα καὶ πολυτέλεια καὶ χερπία τοῦ βασιλέως τῶν Ῥωμαίων τυράννουσι; cf. also Garsoïan, *Problem*, 117.  
 217 Cf. Garsoïan, *Armextiation*.