

THE ARMENIAN PEOPLE FROM ANCIENT TO MODERN TIMES

VOLUME I

The Dynastic Periods:
From Antiquity
to the Fourteenth Century

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THE INDEPENDENT KINGDOMS OF MEDIEVAL ARMENIA

Nina Garsoïan

The Altered International Situation in the Late Ninth Century

As noted at the end of the preceding chapter, external conditions in the second half of the ninth century were propitious for the reestablishment of political autonomy on the Armenian plateau. In the east, the power of the Abbasid caliphate declined rapidly after the murder of the caliph al-Mutawakkil in 861, and its influence over Armenian affairs became correspondingly weaker. The main Muslim threat to the Armenian princes at the end of the ninth and all of the tenth centuries came not so much from the Abbasid caliphs at Baghdad as from neighboring emirs, such as the Hamdanids based on Mosul and Aleppo, who reached their zenith in the mid-tenth century, and the rulers of Azerbaijan (Adherbaijan). Particularly in the case of the latter, their attacks could and did do great harm to Armenia, especially in the reign of Smbat the Martyr (890-913/4), but they were not sustained and might be offset by various alliances or occasionally by appeals to the authority of the distant caliph. On the western border of Armenia, the Byzantine emperors returned to an offensive military policy against Islam after

more than two centuries on the defensive. By 863 the great imperial victory of Poson on the Euphrates destroyed the powerful Muslim emirate of Melitēnē/Malatia, and in the 870s the emperor Basil I crushed the Paulician republic. These victories brought the imperial armies once again to the upper and middle Euphrates and consequently into direct contact with the Armenian lands. Nevertheless, the main concerns of Byzantium through much of the tenth century were, first, to secure the main points of communication toward the east: the Euphrates crossing near Melitēnē and the pass of the Cilician gates in southeastern Anatolia leading from central Asia Minor to the Cilician plain and the eastern Mediterranean coast; then to reconquer the former imperial territories of Mesopotamia, Cilicia, and Syria. Consequently, Armenia was increasingly involved with the Byzantine Empire during this period, but it was not yet the primary target of the imperial policy. This relative weakness or unconcern of the great powers on either side of Armenia created an equilibrium between them that provided a particularly favorable climate for the development of the major local dynasties. Left largely to their own devices, these dynasties hastened to exploit these conditions to further their autonomy and eventually to achieve independence with the coronation of Ašot I in 884.

According to the historian T'ovma Arcruni (Thomas Arcruni, III, xiv-xv, pp. 264-74), the surviving captive princes began to return home from Sāmarrā around 857-858. As was observed earlier, many *naxarar* families had not survived the tragic years of the preceding century so that power had gradually accumulated in a few dominant houses. Even there, progress did not manifest itself simultaneously. The dynasty of the Siwnik' still remained divided between the prince of Gelakunik' in the western portion and the prince of Vayoc' Jor in the east, who was considered the "senior" (*gaherec'/gaherets*) prince of Siwnik'. In Vaspurakan, the situation remained confused until the beginning of the tenth century. The returning prince, Grigor-Derenik Arcruni (857-886/7), found himself opposed by his kinsman, Gurgēn, prince of Mardastan (855/58-ca. 896), who had led the guerrillas against the Muslims at home and annexed most of the Arcruni domains during their exile at Sāmarrā. Driven back by Grigor-Derenik, Gurgēn continued to battle his kinsman as well as the local emirs and the heirs of Bagarat Bagratuni in eastern Tarōn, to carve himself a principality centered around the principality of Anjewac'ik' (Andzevatsik) south of Lake Van into which he had married. Even where dissensions did not arise, the prestige of the returning Armenian magnates was greatly impaired by their apostasy.

Under these circumstances, the advantage unquestionably belonged to the Bagratuni.

Ašot I “the Great” (855-884, 884-890)

Immediately after the deportation to Sāmarrā of Smbat *sparapet* “the Confessor” in 855, his son Ašot Bagratuni assumed his father’s title and the leadership of the Armenian opposition in the north. Imitating from his distant refuge in the Bagratuni lands bordering on Tayk’ the policy that had already proved successful under his grandfather Ašot *Mšaker* at the beginning of the century, Ašot systematically reconquered the territories of Širak and Aršarunik’ which became the core of his domain. The death of Grigor Mamikonean (Mamikonian) in 862 gave him further opportunity of expanding this domain by annexing the district of Bagrewand south of the Araxes. The increasingly dominant position of Ašot was simultaneously supported by a whole nexus of marriage alliances that linked him with the ruling families of Armenia: two of his daughters, Mariam and Sop’i (Sophia) married Vasak Gabur, prince of Gefarkunik’, and Grigor-Derenik Arcruni of Vaspurakan; Ašot’s sister was the wife of Bagarat I Bagratuni, prince of Iberia, while in the next generation one of his granddaughters wed Ašot II of the Bagratuni branch in Tarōn and another, the powerful Arcruni prince, Gagik Apumruan, regent of Vaspurakan for Grigor-Derenik’s minor sons. Not only did these family relationships give Ašot ample opportunity to intrude into, and on occasion play arbiter in, the affairs of these principalities, especially in the continuing quarrels of Grigor-Derenik Arcruni and his kinsmen, but his seniority within the family made of him the unquestionable *tanutēr* of all the branches of the Bagratuni house with precedence over his kinsmen in Iberia as well as Tarōn. His transfer of the office of *sparapet* to his own brother Abas insured that power would not be divided between different branches of the family, as it had been in the preceding generation under Bagarat and Smbat “the Confessor.”

On the international scene, Ašot consolidated his position in the west by assuring Byzantium that he had never wavered in his allegiance to the empire. Yet, when the Greeks reiterated their constant policy of implementing this allegiance by a religious union, Ašot backed the Armenian *kat’olikos* Zak’aria. A council met at Širakawan (Shirakavan), one of the Bagratuni residences, to consider the Byzantine position presented in a presumed letter from Photius, patriarch of Constantinople.

and returned an answer, which though ambiguous seemed to provide a *modus vivendi* for Chalcedonians and anti-Chalcedonians throughout Transcaucasia. Armenia's relations with Byzantium were consequently not impaired by this action, which renewed the collaboration of the Bagratuni and the kat'olikos begun by Smbat "the Confessor" and Yovhannēs of Ovayk' in the preceding generation, and it won for Ašot the all-important support of the church. This mutually beneficent collaboration was to continue with the election as kat'olikos of Ašot's candidate, Gēorg Gēvorg II of Gairni (877-897), whom he supported against the secessionist tendencies of the Albanian Church, whose kat'olikos elected without the ratification of Armenia, was forced once again to seek his consecration from Gēorg II at Duin.

Alarmed by the growing menace of Byzantium on the Euphrates, the caliphate also sought to ensure Ašot's loyalty as early as 862, and the *ostikan* of Armīniya was ordered to confer on him the title of "Prince of Princes" formerly held by his uncle Bagarat Bagratuni, Prince of Tarōn. The historian Yovhannēs "the Kat'olikos" may have exaggerated when he claimed that the *ostikan*,

investing him [Ašot] with many robes as well as royal insignia, [and] entrusted him with the taxes [*sak*] of Armenia and all the royal [tribute] *bekar*. (Yovhannēs Drasxanakerc'i, xxvii, p. 125)

Asolik even claimed that Ašot had been appointed Prince of Princes not only of Armenia but of Iberia as well. There is no doubt that the Abbasid *ostikans* ruling the larger administrative unit of Armīniya from their residence at Partaw/Bardha'a occasionally still sought to enforce their direct authority over Armenia proper during the 870s of the ninth century with the help of the warlike *Ḳaysite* emirs of Manazkert. Nevertheless, Ašot's investiture in the name of the caliph officially acknowledged his authority over the local Muslim emirs as well as over the Christian *naxarars*. Ašot consequently used his position as representative of the caliph to consolidate his hold over Aršarunik' by repelling the attacks of the *Djahhāfid* emir, whom the *sparapet* Abas routed and drove from Armenia, and to extend a degree of control over the capital city of Duin during the 880s without serious interference from the Muslim authorities, even though he still preferred to remain in the Bagratuni residence in Bagaran in Širak.

Yovhannēs the Kat'olikos was probably correct in viewing Ašot as already *de facto* King of Armenia from the time of his investiture as

Prince of Princes in 862; inscriptions refer to him as king from the middle of the next decade. Consequently, a number of scholars have argued that Ašot's formal coronation at Bagaran by the kat'olikos Gēorg II with a crown brought by the *ostikan* in the name of the caliph on August 26, 884 (Yovhannēs Drasxanakerc'i, xxix, p. 128) should not be overstressed, since it added no substantial powers to those he already possessed. In their view, the sending of crowns was a customary courtesy of the period and need not have had a crucial importance. This argument is further bolstered by the fact that both Arab and Greek sources continue to refer to Ašot as merely "Prince of Princes" and not king, while his recently discovered official Arabic seal styles him even more modestly, *Ashut ibn Sinbat* (Ašot son of Smbat), without any title whatsoever. Moreover, Ašot never achieved full sovereignty, since he struck no coinage of his own and remained tributary to the caliphate.

Nevertheless, even though Ašot's coronation apparently brought him no tangible additional prerogatives, and he remained to some degree subordinate to the *ostikan* in Partaw, the significance of the brilliant coronation ceremony at Bagaran in the eyes of a society for which visible symbols were of paramount importance should not be underestimated. Ašot I's prestige had unquestionably been enhanced both at home and abroad. The tenth-century Muslim geographer Ibn Ḥawqal probably rendered Ašot's new status more accurately than other Arab sources when he referred to him as "King of Armenia." Not to be outdone by his rival the caliph, the Byzantine emperor Basil I hastened in his turn to offer "terms of peace, harmony and friendship to our King Ašot," whom he addressed as "beloved son" (Yovhannēs Drasxanakerc'i, xxix, p. 129). According to Yovhannēs the Kat'olikos, the Armenian *naxarars* and princes had "unanimously" requested Ašot's elevation from the caliph, and the later historian from Siwnik' Stephen Ōrbelean's (Orbelian) identification of these "princes" as the two rulers of Siwnik' as well as Grigor-Derenik Arcruni of Vaspurakan supports Yovhannēs's claim that recognition of Ašot's preeminence united all Armenia from north to south.

Ašot I maintained this dominant position in the few remaining years until his death ca. 890. His own domain, which stretched eastward across the central district of Ayrarat to Lake Sevan and the border of Vaspurakan, according to Stephen Ōrbelean, was increased by portions of the northern districts of Gardman and Utik', which Ašot conquered from the local mountaineers with the help of his faithful cousin, Bagarat I of Iberia, as well as by the border Armeno-Iberian district of

Gugark' pacified by the crown prince Smbat in the last years of the reign. Presiding over the welfare of his family far and wide, Ašot also supported the Iberian Bagratid heir, Atrnerseh II, and confirmed him as *curopalate* of Iberia (888-923). At the opposite end of the Armenian plateau, Ašot first sought to mediate in the attack of his son-in-law Grigor-Derenik Arcruni in an expedition against the Muslim emirs west of Lake Urmiah. Ašot appointed another of his kinsmen, Gagik Apumruan Arcruni (the husband of his granddaughter), as regent for Grigor-Derenik's minor sons Sargis-Ašot, Xaç'ik-Gagik (Khachik-Gagik), and Gurgēn, and as support for their widowed mother, Ašot's own daughter Sop'i. Thus, a new autonomous state based on the northwestern portion of the plateau, such as Armenia had not known for centuries, was re-created by Ašot "the Great" and recognized as such by the contemporary world.

The Bagratid Crisis Under Smbat I "the Martyr" (890/91-914)

The powerful personality and achievements of Ašot I had overwhelmed his contemporaries and united the loyalties of the Armenian princes, but it also masked a number of latent flaws in the newly created state. The domain of the Bagratuni based on northwestern Širak, where Ašot normally resided at Bagaran, was an excellent refuge in times of trouble (as the events of the ninth century had amply demonstrated), but it was neither sufficiently extensive and powerful nor sufficiently central to serve as a base for the control of the entire Armenian plateau. Ašot I's decision not to move to the Aršakuni and subsequently Sasanian administrative capital of Duin in the valley of the Araxes, and his successors' usual inability to wrest it from Muslim governors, compounded the problem. The eastern valley of the Araxes with the Muslim emirates of Golt'n and Naxčawan consequently remained a threatening wedge leading from Azerbaijan to Duin in the heartland of Armenia and separating the northwestern Bagratuni possessions from the Arcruni territories of Vaspurakan in the south and the lands of Siwnik' in the east. In general, the presence of the various Muslim centers at Tiflis, Karin, Duin, Manazkert, Xlat', Arčēš, Berkri, Naxčawan, Golt'n, Alj-nik' and Azerbaijan aggravated the geographical fragmentation of the Armenian highlands and perpetually impeded any policy of political, religious, or demographic unification and of centralization, even though

the local emirs also pursued self-serving policies, neither presenting a unified Muslim front nor supporting the representatives of the distant caliphate.

More fundamentally, no constitutional framework held the various principalities together or linked them into a single state. The old *naxarar* structure that had flourished in the days of the Aršakuni and the *Marzpanate* was beginning to break down as the common lands of the *tun* split into apanages for its leading members and consequently opposed different branches of the same family to each other. This tendency already manifested itself in the days of Ašot I as Grigor-Derenik Arcruni and his father struggled with Gurgēn, prince of Mardastan, over Anjewac'ik'. The Iberian Bagratids increasingly went their own way and battled among themselves; the Bagratids of Tarōn, descended from the Prince of Princes Bagarat, drew apart from their northern kinsmen. This divisive tendency reached the royal house itself at the king's death as the *sparapet* Abas, based on the fortress of Kars, abandoned his long loyalty to his brother Ašot to turn against his nephew Smbat I. Still more crucially, the Bagratid claim to a dominant position within the land rested ultimately on the personal authority of the ruler rather than on any traditional or legal foundation that might have curbed the centrifugal tendencies of the magnates. According to the Aršakuni system of hereditary offices, the Bagratuni "coronants" had placed the crown on the head of their Aršakuni lords but had never been entitled to wear it. Consequently, they had not even been the first among their equals in a society where every clan jealously guarded its own prerogatives, and both the vanished Mamikonean and the belligerent Arcruni rightly or wrongly claimed royal descent. More immediately, the new legitimacy bestowed on Ašot by his coronation at the hands of kat'olikos rested upon the continuing goodwill and collaboration of the Armenian Church, thus raising potential questions of mutual relations of church and state and limiting the king's freedom of action in various areas such as Armenian religious concessions to Byzantium. The additional sanctification of the royal house rested only on its apocryphal descent from the biblical house of David first reported in the mid-tenth century. These elements of weakness were to manifest themselves all too soon after Ašot I's death.

The first years of Smbat I's reign continued the successful pattern of his father's days, even though his uncle Abas, entrenched in the fortress of Kars, made the most of the young king's absence in Gugark' to dispute the succession. Two years were needed before Smbat could

assert his authority, despite the intervention of the kat'olikos Gēorg II and the support of the *curopalates* Atrnerseh II of Iberia. This inauspicious beginning ended, however, in Smbat's coronation by the kat'olikos at his residence of Širakawan or Erazgawork' (Erazgavork) with the same pomp as his father:

Smbat was presented with a royal diadem on the order of the caliph, by Afšin (Apshin) the Ismaelite prince of Atrpatakan [*ostikan* of Azerbaijan] ... and along with it he was given robes wrought with gold, and swift steeds bedecked with ornaments and shining armor forged with gold. They came forth to meet him at the place of assembly, and returned to the holy church with the patriarch Gēorg, who pronounced the solemn blessings on him, and investing him with the gold embroidered robes . . . , he placed on his head the royal crown. Smbat emerged from the spiritual nuptials to rule over all of Armenia. (Yovhannēs Drasxanakerc'i, xxx, p. 132)

Abas' attempt to vent his resentment by having the kat'olikos deposed proved unsuccessful. Like his father, Smbat also secured his position on the Byzantine side:

Placing his kingdom on a firm foundation, Smbat tried to establish peaceful relations with everyone . . . First, in compliance with the alliance of his father, he did not withdraw from the friendly affection for Leo [VI] Emperor of the Romans. He honored 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 honor than these was, that the Emperor addressed Smbat as his 'beloved son' by means of a treaty of friendship. (Yovhannēs Drasxanakerc'i, xxxi, pp. 137-38)

The king even succeeded in allaying the *ostikan* Afšin's understandable alarm at this friendship with Byzantium by arguing that his policy would prove economically beneficial to the caliphate as well:

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. (Yovhannēs Drasxanakertc'i, xxxi, p. 138)

Consequently, the *ostikan* who had advanced to Armenia with an army returned to Azerbaijan after exchanging gifts with the king.

Smbat's early policy proved equally successful at home. On Good Friday, April 21, 892, he recaptured the city of Duin, which had closed its gates against him, sent its Muslim commanders in chains to the Byzantine emperor Leo VI, and reestablished his full control over the city. Yovhannēs "the Kat'olikos," who always praises the Bagratuni, gives a considerable expanded description of Smbat's realm:

. . . setting about to annex many lands, he watched over all of them, and brought them into obedience, some by means of gentle words, others by force. Accordingly the great Curopalate of Georgia [Atrnersē II] and his adherents persuaded by the righteousness of his wonderful order all submitted to him. But whoever lifted their hands against him, he repressed with daring force, and subdued them beneath his feet. Thus, he extended the boundaries of his domain as far as the city of Karin in the northeast, and to the farther side of Klarĵk' [Kghardĵk], as far as the shore of the great sea [Black Sea] and the borders of Egrisi [Abkhazia], as well as to the foot of the Caucasus Mountains, that is to say, Gugark', and Canark' [Dzanark] as far as the Gate of the Alans, where he also seized the fortress guarding the pass [Darial]. From there the boundary [ran] southward to the city of Tiflis (Tp'xis) along the course of the Kur River, and [continued] on to the district of Uti, as far as the city of Hunarakert, to Tus and to Šamk'or [Shamkor]. Thus he enlarged the limits of his domain and brought these beneath the yoke of the royal tributes, *bekars* and taxes, and dedicated the weapon he used valiantly in battle as a sign of victory. (Yovhannēs Drasxanakertc'i, xxxi, p. 139)

This picture, which includes a large portion of western Iberian lands and reached all the way to the Darial Pass in the main Caucasus chain, probably reflects Smbat's sphere of influence rather than his actual domain, as Yovhannēs himself implies when he speaks of

Atrnerseh II's recognition of Smbat's suzerainty. Nevertheless, Asolik also furnishes a more than glowing picture of the prosperity of Armenia in this period:

During his reign Smbat ruled over all his domains, on Armenia and on Iberia and acquired the cities of his opponents. In his reign, as under the rule of his father, there was prosperity and peace in the realm of Armenia according to [the words of] the prophet: 'Everyman rested under his vine and under his fig tree' [I Kings 4:25]. The farms became towns and the towns cities through the increase in the population and wealth until the very shepherds and cowherds themselves were clad in silken garments. And he [Smbat] built the church of the All-Savior in Širakawan with a cupola of great height and walls of dressed stone. (Asolik, III. iii, pp. 12-13)

The report is at least partially confirmed by the reappearance of architectural monuments in Armenia after the long hiatus of the eighth century. Ašot I was praised by Yovhannēs the Kat'olikos for his endowment of churches and the twin foundations of Smbat's aunt, Mariam, princess of Siwnik', (the churches dedicated to the Mother of God and to the Holy Apostles) still standing on the former island in Lake Sevan. The main blow to this flourishing situation was the frightful earthquake that destroyed the city of Duin in 893/4 and struck the imagination of both Armenian and Arab writers who have left descriptions of the catastrophe. The cathedral and the residence of the kat'olikos collapsed, forcing Gēorg II to take refuge in Vałaršapat, the city walls and most of the houses were leveled, and the loss of life horrendous, though the figures of 70,000 and 150,000 respectively given by T'ovma Arcruni and the Arab historian Ibn al-Athir are unquestionably inflated.

The auspicious beginning of the reign began to wane, however, even before the end of the ninth century under external and internal pressures. Most ominous was the outbreak of war with the Turkish Sādjjids ruling in (Persian) Azerbaijan, which began immediately after the destruction of Duin and continued intermittently to the end of the reign. The *ostikan* Afshīn belonging to this family had been granted by the caliph authority over Armīniya as well as Azerbaijan, where he was carving a principality for himself. As such, Smbat's independent policy could not be tolerated by him. The first Sādjjid attack took Naxčawan, and recaptured Duin. Afshin seized the kat'olikos Gēorg II, but his defeat by Smbat at the foot of Mt. Aragac (Aragats) forced him to come

to terms and retreat to Azerbaijan. The kat'olikos was ransomed through the intervention of the prince of Šakē, who had assumed the title of King of Caucasian Albania in 893, and he returned to settle at Valaršapat instead of his residence at Duin, destroyed by the earthquake.

Smbat's authority likewise faced a whole series of internal challenges. Despite his new status, the ruler of Albania seems to have remained loyal to the Bagratuni, but the prince of eastern Siwnik'/Vayoc' Jor temporarily wavered in his allegiance, according to Yovhannēs "the Kat'olikos." The young prince of Vaspurakan, Sargis-Ašot, actually went to pay court to Afshīn, though he obtained nothing and was imprisoned with his brothers on his return by Grigor Apumruan, to whom Smbat I may even have granted Vaspurakan jointly with Gurgēn, prince of Anjewac'ik'. Far to the south, the Shaybani emir of Ałjnik' seized the Bagratid domain of Tarōn in 895. Led astray by Grigor Apumruan, who had remained loyal until then, Smbat I was routed by the Shaybanids and barely escaped northward to Bagrewand. Apumruan's treason was soon avenged, as the ablest of the Arcruni heirs, Xač'ik-Gagik, whom he had unwisely released, killed him with the help of the local magnates and reestablished his elder brother Sargis-Ašot as senior prince of Vaspurakan. Nevertheless, the growing suspicion and hostility between the Bagratuni and the Arcruni would soon have serious consequences for the king. Encouraged by Smbat I's difficulties in the south, Afshīn attacked a second time in the north. Crossing through Utik' and Gugark', he struck directly at the heart of the Bagratuni domain, seized the queen with a number of the royal household and the royal treasure in the fortress of Kars, which surrendered, and retired with his booty to Duin while Smbat took refuge in Tayk'. This time the Sadjjid terms were harsher. To obtain the release of his wife, Smbat was compelled to send his eldest son and heir, Ašot, and his nephew as hostages; to give one of his nieces in marriage to Afshīn; and to pay a tribute to the *ostikan's* son, who was left behind to govern Duin, while Afshī now turned to Vaspurakan, capturing the fortresses of Van and Ostan and forcing the Arcruni princes to flee to the mountains.

The position of Smbat I was seriously compromised at this point especially since he was also faced with the rebellion of the Kaysite emirs of Manazkert, who took the opportunity to refuse the tribute they owed to the king, but it was not yet critical. The newly elected kat'olikos, Yovhannēs "the Historian" (897-924/5), from whom we derive much of our knowledge of contemporary events, continued the collaboration of

the church with the crown. In the north, the *curopalate* Atrnerseh II, who had remained loyal, was rewarded by Smbat with the crown of Iberia in 899. The prince of Siwnik' returned to his allegiance. In the south, the Bagratuni heir of Tarōn regained his domain in 898 after the death of the Shaybānid conqueror. The Ḳaysites were crushed by 902 with the help of Sargis-Ašot Arcruni and returned to their former status of tributaries of the Bagratid crown, although their base of Manazkert was not captured. The Bagratid crown prince Ašot was finally released from captivity, and Smbat even obtained from the caliph al-Muḳtafi the separation of Armenia from Azerbaijan with the right of forwarding the Armenian tribute directly to Baghdad, thus bypassing the *ostikan*. Finally, the governor left at Duin fled on hearing of Afshīn's death in 901, after having ruled the city for only one year. Unfortunately, the new *ostikan*, Afshīn's brother Yūsuf (901-919, 922-929), was to pursue the war against Armenia even more relentlessly with catastrophic results for the king. The situation in the country, where the separatist tendencies of the princes soon continued, rapidly grew chaotic.

The beginning of Yūsuf's rule was as circumspect as that of his brother, since Smbat had the support of the caliph, who rightly suspected the *ostikan* of rebellious plans. Even so, Yūsuf immediately sought to reassert his authority over Armenia. The first campaign, again following the northern path through Utik' to Duin, was met by the king near Aruč to the west of the city with a large force, which overawed the invaders, and it consequently ended in mutual gifts. Yūsuf showered Smbat with a new crown and diadem and precious garments, designated the crown prince Ašot as "Prince of Princes," honored the kat'olikos as well, and withdrew into Azerbaijan. In this period Yovhannēs "the Historian" could still praise the prosperity of Armenia, where "each one lived on his own patrimony" and the "chief *naxarars*, being secure and at ease from the onslaught of the enemy, built in monasteries, towns, and *agaraks* churches of thick walls of stone and mortar" (Yovhannēs Drasxanakerc'i, xl, pp. 157-58), and favorable relations were maintained with the Byzantine empire.

The first signs of trouble came from the north, where the prince of the coastal Iberian district of Abkhazia revolted against his father-in-law, King Atrnerseh II. Smbat I at first supported Atrnerseh, defeating and capturing the prince of Abkhazia, but then conceded to him the crown to which he aspired, winning his alliance but alienating the more powerful king of Iberia, who now broke his long loyalty to his Armenian kinsmen and turned against Smbat. The king's reward of

Sargis-Ašot Arcruni for his help against the Kaysites by the grant of the city of Naxčawan north of the Araxes River antagonized the new prince of eastern Siwnik', also named Smbat (whom the king had confirmed as "senior prince of Siwnik' and lord over the entire realm of Sisakan"). Smbat of Siwnik', who considered Naxčawan part of his domain, consequently refused to pay the royal tribute and turned to the emir of Azerbaijan in 903. The king's attempt to remedy the situation by returning Naxčawan to Siwnik' merely aggravated matters by alienating Xaç'ik-Gagik Arcruni, who had replaced his brother Sargis-Ašot as senior prince of Vaspurakan in 905, and pushing him likewise toward Yūsuf.

The turbulence of the magnates was increased by Yūsuf, who had made peace with the caliph against whom he had rebelled. As a result of this reconciliation, Armenia in 907-908 found itself faced with the necessity of paying a double tribute: to the caliph in Baghdad and to the emir of Azerbaijan as well. Outraged by the king's order to provide one fifth of their possessions, the *naxarars* grew restive. The magnates of Vanand plotted with Atrnerseh of Iberia to murder Smbat I, and the keeper of the royal domains surrendered the fortress of Ani in Širak to Atrnerseh II. The plot failed, and the King of Iberia was forced to sue for peace, but a far more damaging situation was already developing in Vaspurakan under the leadership of the warlike and ambitious prince Xaç'ik-Gagik Arcruni, supported by his younger brother Gurgēn and the local princes. Seeking revenge against both his uncle King Smbat I and Siwnik' for the loss of Naxčawan, but mostly concerned with his own aggrandizement, Gagik set out for Azerbaijan, where he received a crown from Yūsuf in 908 as King Gagik I of Vaspurakan, thus creating in the south an autonomous Arcruni kingdom opposed to that of the Bagratuni in the north. The embassy of Yovhannēs "the Historian" attempting to mediate the troubles ended only in the captivity of the kat'olikos, who remained prisoner for a considerable time, was ransomed with difficulty, and retired to Gugark'. Gagik I Arcruni is understandably the hero of his kinsman T'ovma's *History of the Arcruni House*, which praises at length the new king's bravery, generosity, and benevolence, as well as the conspicuous prosperity of his realm. The elegant palatine church of the Holy Cross on the island of Alt'amar (Aghtamar) still stands as testimony to Gagik's extensive and splendid building program. His ability was beyond question, but his defections struck a mortal blow at Smbat I. The split of Armenia brought about by the creation of the Kingdom of Vaspurakan was never to be repaired and

added yet another element to the complicated pattern of Christian and Muslim principalities developing on the Armenian highlands.

Immediately after Gagik I's coronation, Yūsuf made use of his new ally, to march on Armenia, and in 909 the war between Smbat I and the Sadjids entered into its final phase. Advancing from Azerbaijan up the valley of the Araxes by way of Naxčawan, Yūsuf met with Gagik I and his brother Gurgēn Arcruni to overrun most of Siwnik', which bore the first brunt of the attack. The senior prince, Smbat of Eastern Siwnik', succeeded in escaping to Vaspurakan, but his kinsman Grigor Sup'an II, prince of Western Siwnik' was forced to make his submission to the *ostikan* at Duin, where the latter had established his winter quarters and which became his base of operations, while the king, who had fled northward, made his way back to Širak. In this moment of crisis, the hold of Smbat (whose gentleness is repeatedly stressed by Yovhannēs the Kat'olikos) on the loyalty of his vassals proved insufficient. Even the *sparapet* Ašot Bagratuni abandoned his uncle and rallied to the support of Yūsuf, as did the leading princes, according to Asolik:

To him [Yūsuf] came Atrnerseh King of Iberia and Gagik prince of Vaspurakan, who was the son of Smbat's sister, and Ašot the son of Smbat's brother Šapuh, together with all their forces, abandoning King Smbat and betraying him out of envy and for the prosperity of the Armenian realm. (Asolik, 1917, III, iv, p. 17)

The last stand of the royal army commanded by the crown prince Ašot and his youngest brother Mušel was crushed the following spring by Yūsuf and Gagik I Arcruni north of Duin. Prince Mušel was captured, while the king sought refuge in the impregnable stronghold of Kapoyt Berd "Blue Fortress" in Aršarunik', and the northern districts were overrun. Yūsuf treated the captive Armenian princes with unwonted ferocity: Mušel, the king's son, Smbat Bagratuni, the king's nephew, and Grigor Sup'an II of Western Siwnik' were poisoned and Yūsuf's armies devastated northern Armenia, while the other princes of Siwnik' fled to the distant districts of Gardman and Arcax in the north. Smbat I sought help to no avail from the caliph, distracted by a rebellion in Egypt, and from Byzantium, while the Armenian princes turned away.

Those [who survived], whether they were related to him or not, remained aloof from him in deed and in thought, some very much

against their will, and the others for no reason at all. They preferred to recognize [the domain of] the foreigners rather than his. Those whom he loved with friendship dissociated themselves from him and joined the enemy. Certain others, who were annoyed at him, even rose and disgracefully attacked him intending to kill him in compliance with the intrigues of the Hagarite . . . (Yovhannēs Drasxanakerc'i, xlviii, p. 174)

The fortress of Kapoyt Berd could not be taken by the Muslims, but Smbat I finally surrendered to put an end to the slaughter. Yūsuf first received him honorably, but soon returned to his former cruelty. Dragged to the siege of the stronghold of Ernĵak (Erndjak) where the princesses of Siwnik' were still holding out, the king was savagely tortured to death at the order of the *ostikan* in the hope of forcing the defenders to surrender, and his headless corpse was exposed on a cross in the capital of Duin.

The Revival of Armenia Under Ašot II *Erkat'* (914-928/29) and Gagik Ārcruni (908-943?)

The kar'otikos Yovhannēs "the Historian" follows his grim account of Smbat I's "martyrdom" with descriptions of the tragic state of Armenia after his death: attempts at forcible conversions to Islam accompanied by intensified persecution and executions; the scorched earth policy and attacks of the northerners, Abkhazia, Gugark', and Utik', resulting in widespread famine; and the internal quarrels of the magnates increasing the fragmentation of the land:

Our kings, lords and princes tried to break up and take away the homes of each one of the original *naxarardoms*, and in accord with their whims, created new *payazats* and *spasalars* of their own. Brother rose against brother, and kinsman against kinsman, because jealousy, malevolence, agitation and absolute hatred turned them against one another. Thus falling on one another *en masse*, they fought as enemies, and . . . shed more of their own blood than that of the enemy. They tore down with their own hands all their cities, villages, towns, *awans*, *agaraks* and houses. (Yovhannēs Drasxanakerc'i, lii, p. 186)

Nevertheless, the savagery of the king's death brutally awakened the senior Armenian princes. Gagik I Arçruni, whose support of Yūsuf had become increasingly unwilling, took over the leadership of the Armenian resistance. Vaspurakan bore the brunt of Yūsuf's attacks, giving a breathing space to Smbat I's son Ašot II, usually known as *Erkat'*, "the Iron King." Following yet one more time the traditional policy of his house in times of trouble, Ašot *Erkat'* entrenched himself in the Bagratuni domains in the northwest from which he systematically drove out the Muslim invaders, whom he also defeated in Bagrewand with the help of his brother Abas. He then advanced northward through Gugark' as far as Tiflis, where he again defeated the Muslims before returning home.

Ašot *Erkat'*'s success bore immediate fruit. Gurgēn, prince of Iberia, and, more important, the old King Atrnerseh II, turned back to the support of their Bagratid kinsman. Atrnerseh had Ašot II crowned King of Armenia. Meanwhile, Gagik I of Vaspurakan, supported by Smbat, prince of Eastern Siwnik', and the southern Bagratuni princes, continued to hold off Yūsuf from a stronghold in the southern mountains. The remaining princes of Siwnik' held out in the mountains of their domains, and the kat'olikos Yovhannēs made his way south to Tarōn. Yūsuf sought to counter Ašot II's new prestige by installing his cousin and namesake, the *sparapet* Ašot, at Duin, but the critical situation in Armenia had already aroused the attention of Byzantium, where the patriarch Nicholas Mystikos wrote in 914 to the Armenian kat'olikos urging a union of all Christians against the Muslims. The correspondence led to an invitation from the Byzantine court, and in 914 Ašot II traveled to Constantinople, where he was received with royal honors, treated again as a "beloved son," and presumably granted the title of Prince of Princes attributed to him in contemporary Byzantine sources. The earlier political alliance of the Bagratuni with Byzantium seemed fully renewed, and Ašot's journey to Constantinople is noted by the Greek sources as well, but the kat'olikos, "thinking that there might be people who might look askance at my going there, and assume that I sought communion with the Chalcedonians" (Yovhannēs Drasxanakertc'i, iv, p. 198), preferred to remain at home.

The situation in Armenia was still murky when Ašot II returned home in 915 with a Byzantine army to face the opposition of his namesake whom Yūsuf had crowned as anti-king and whom he was unable to drive out of the capital of Duin where he was residing under the *ostikan*'s protection. The "war of the two Ašots" dragged on for two

years (918-920) despite the mediations of the kat'olikos and the support given to Ašot II *Erkat'* by both princes of Siwnik'. Even so, Ašot II steadily consolidated his position in the face of this rivalry and continuous rebellions, especially in the north. He wrested the powerful northern fortress of Šamšuildē (Shamshuilde) from its governor, who had appealed for help to the emir of Tiflis; quelled the revolt of Utik'; escaped the conspiracy of his own brother Abas plotting with Prince Gurgēn of Iberia; and seized Gardman from his own father-in-law, who had also attacked him. Gradually he annexed the lands of Western Siwnik' as well, so that Siwnik', reduced to its eastern portion, weakened by interior quarrels and isolated from the Bagratuni holdings by the emirate of Goh'n, no longer presented a serious threat.

The other crucial factor in the Armenian recovery was the reversal of Yūsuf's policy, as he now recognized King Ašot II, to whom he sent a crown. Ašot's position was further improved by Yūsuf's recall and imprisonment for rebellion against the caliph in 919 and the arrival of a new *ostikan*, who maintained a benevolent policy toward Bagratid Armenia. He not only recognized the legitimacy of Ašot *Erkat'* but granted him the title of *Šahanšah* (*Shahanshah*), "King of Kings," which raised him above all the rulers of the area, effectively ending de jure as well as de facto the career of the anti-king Ašot who, bereft of his Muslim support, could not maintain himself at Duin and was forced to make his peace with his cousin and retire to his own domain at Bagaran in Širak ca. 920. The submission of the anti-king and Ašot II's renewed control of the capital marked the effective recovery of the Bagratuni kingdom despite continuing difficulties in the northern borderland of Utik'. The same stabilization manifested itself in the south where the *ostikan* first attacked and looted, but soon concluded an agreement with Gagik I Arcruni, who maintained and extended his hold over Vaspurakan as far north as the central district of Kogovit, supported by the remarkable loyalty of his kinsmen and vassals.

The consolidation of the country, especially in the north, was strained to some degree by the renewal of external pressures at the end of Ašot II's reign, but its autonomy was not seriously compromised. The earlier help given to the king by Constantinople came at a price, since the Byzantine emperor saw himself as the image of Christ on earth and consequently as the suzerain as well as the protector of all Christian rulers, with the right to intrude into their internal affairs and their lands. The imperial view on the terms of the relationship with Armenia was

clearly spelled out by the emperor himself in his treatise *On the Administration of the Empire*:

since the prince of princes is the servant of the emperor of the Romans, being appointed by him and receiving his dignity 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. (Porphyrogenitus, *De admin.* ch. 43, p. 201)

Undoubtedly alarmed by Ašot II's negotiations with the *ostikan* and his official recognition by the Muslims as *Šahanšah*, the Byzantine armies under the leadership of the empire's ablest general, the Armenian Yovhannēs Kurkuas (Hovhannes Gurgēn), interfered both in the north, where they supported the rebels, and in the south, where they brought increasing pressure on the *Ḳaysites* emirate and the principality of Tarōn. In 922 Kurkuas even seems to have made a first attempt to seize Duin, jointly defended by the *ostikan* who was in residence and Ašot II, who had been summoned to his support, according to Asolik:

In the second year of his reign he [the emperor Romanos I Lekapenos] raised a great host and sent the *Demeslikos* [Grand Domestic] to the city of Duin held by the emir Spuk' who called Ašot *Šahanšah* to his assistance. And the Greeks came, they besieged Duin but could not take it, and returned from there. (Asolik, 1917, III, vi, pp. 24-25)

The contemporary Yovhannēs the *kat'olikos* is curiously silent about this expedition.

The release of Yūsuf by the caliph in 923 added to the difficulties. On his return to Armenia, Yūsuf first turned against Vaspurakan, from which he extorted "two to three times the amount of tribute" before returning to Persia. His new deputy seized the princes of Siwnik', whom he held at Naxčawan, and he brought back in chains to the capital forty of the "foremost *gaherec'* (princes) and glorious *nahapets* of the noble families of the city of Duin, who had come to meet him. Abandoning once and for all the traditional seat of the *kat'olikate*, Yovhannēs "the Historian" fled from Duin, with the Muslim troops in pursuit, first to the "Monastery of the Caves" (Ayri Vank'/Gelard [Geghard]) and then to his own "small fortress of Biwrakan," where he had built an impressive basilica, then to the former anti-king Ašot Bagratuni at Bagaran, and

finally to the relative quiet of Vaspurakan, where he died some two years later, ca. 924/5, at Gagik I's royal residence on the island of Aht'amar. The damage done by the Muslim armies was considerable, but Ašot II, who had fled to the island in Lake Sevan, defeated their commander, who retreated toward Duin only to be routed again north of the city. An almost simultaneous Greek attack on Duin failed again in 927/8, beaten off by the population as well as the garrison, according to the Arab historian Ibn al-Athir.

The withdrawal of the Greeks as well as of the *ostikan* left Ašot II master of his own house at the end of his reign. The Sādjids, for all the harm they had done, were mere soldiers of fortune whose power had collapsed even before Yūsuf's death in 929. The resultant confused situation in Azerbaijan—where various Kurdish and Daylamite chieftains battled for power (in what the historian Minorsky has termed “the Iranian interlude” (Minorsky, 1958, pp. 14, 19-20) of the tenth century, during which Iranians generally replaced Arabs in the Muslim emirates)—lessened to some degree its threat to Armenia. The attention of Byzantium was increasingly diverted southward by the war against the great Hamdanid emirs of Aleppo and Mosul, and Bagratid Armenia was again left in peace, though the empire continued to manifest its displeasure by failing to grant the title of prince of princes to Ašot's brother and successor Abas. Seemingly less battered than the north as a result of the diplomatic skills of its ruler, the Arcruni kingdom of Vaspurakan continued to flourish under the aging Gagik I, whose prestige was greatly enhanced by the favor shown him by Byzantium, since he seems to be the prince of princes addressed in a letter of the patriarch Nicholas Mysticos rather than the northern Bagratuni king, and by the asylum provided for the kat'olikos in the last years of Yovhannēs “the Historian.”

The Apex of the Bagratuni Dynasty (929-1020)

Our information concerning the affairs of Bagratuni Armenia, and of the country in general, declines sharply with the end of the *History* of Yovhannēs the Kat'olikos, whose last recorded events date from 923-924. The history of the capital of Duin is particularly obscure and chaotic in the tenth century. The main dangers for the autonomy of the Armenian states, in addition to the ever-present threat of Byzantium's claim to suzerainty over the land, and the internal tendency to ever-greater fragmentation, came from the neighboring Muslim powers. In

the north, the Kurdish *Shaddādid* emirs and Daylamite *Sallārids* (also called *Musāfirids*) struggling to dominate Azerbaijan alternatively seized control of Duin by way of the valley of the lower Araxes, which was still controlled by the local Arab dynasty of the emirs of Golt'n. In the south, the Hamdanids holding Aleppo and Mosul between 941 and ca. 967 exerted increasing pressure on the *Ḳaysite* emirate which they eventually destroyed, as well as on the Christian principalities of *Tarōn* and *Anjewac'ik'*. Northern Armenia had obviously been seriously drained by the long *Sādjid* wars, since Ašot II's successor, King Abas (928/9-952/3), apparently made no effort to extend his dominion or reconquer Duin and in general, left much of the initiative to Gagik I Arcruni, who was still ruling over Vaspurakan until 937 or even 942/3. Nevertheless, the work of Ašot II had obviously not been in vain. The Armenian kingdoms were now sufficiently rooted to survive well into the eleventh century. As the Bagratuni reaffirmed their autonomy from external domination and gradually retook their earlier precedence over Vaspurakan after the death of Gagik I, their prestige and Armenian culture reached their zenith under Abas's descendants: Ašot III *Otormac'* (*Voghormadz*) ("the Merciful") (952/3-977), Smbat II *Tiezerakal* ("the Master of the Universe") (977-989/90), and Gagik I "the Great" (989/90-1017/20).

Asoḷik praises the return of peace and prosperity to Armenia under the reign of Abas, who remained the sole Armenian Bagratuni ruler after the death of his cousin, the antiking Ašot of Bagaran in 936, though much of his energy was spent in adorning his capital of Kars, where he erected a new cathedral, and in protecting it from the raid of Prince Bēr of Abkhazia, who sought to force the consecration of the church according to the Greek Orthodox and not the Armenian rite, rather than in expanding or consolidating his realm. Numerous religious foundations, among them the great monasteries of *Hořomos Vank'* (934) and *Narek* (935), also date from his reign in which religious questions again became acute. The *kat'olikos* Anania *Mokac'i* would have to fight through most of his pontificate (943?-967) against the secessionist tendencies of the bishop of *Siwnik'*, supported by the *kat'olikos* of Caucasian Albania and the local princes who resisted the centralizing policy of the Bagratuni king and the Armenian *kat'olikos*. In this, as in military matters, the leadership still came at first from Gagik I of Vaspurakan, who continued to extend his protectorate over the *kat'olikat*e by having three successive primates elected from the southern house of the *Řštuni* after the death of *Yovhannēs* "the Historian" and keeping them in

residence at his court, until Anania Mokac'i finally made his way back north after the death of the powerful Arcruni king.

Duin remained in Muslim hands (since a coin struck there in A.H. 319 [=A.D. 931] still commemorates the Sādjids and a silver *dirrhem* dated ten years later bears the name of the Kurdish emir of Azerbaijan), but a number of victories are recorded in southern Armenia. In the same year (931) the Arab historian Ibn al-Athir recorded the collaboration of the Greeks with King Gagik I Arcruni against the Ƙaysite emirate and the Continuator of T'ovma Arcruni also noted a victory of his kinsman against a nameless Muslim general, "a certain man, Arab by race; versed in warfare and military deeds" (Thomas Artsruni, *Cont. IV, ix, p. 362*), who had defeated King Abas but was routed by Gagik near Duin. Finally, the prince of Anjewac'ik' in Vaspurakan is also said to have defeated and killed another raider from Azerbaijan. The only indication of strain in Vaspurakan and among the southern rulers in general comes from two minor Muslim historians, who report that during the Hamdanid campaign of 940, the emir Sayf al-Dawla had received at Ɛlat' and Datuan on Lake Van the submission of the Ƙaysite emirs, as well as of Gagik I, of his son and of the prince of Tarōn, whom he stripped of some of their possessions before going on to loot the revered shrine of Surb Karapet (St. John the Precursor) at Muš (Mush). Sayf al-Dawla's attention was primarily focused on the Ƙaysites, whose emirate was destroyed by 964, but it was partly diverted northward by the Byzantine capture of the key fortress of Karin in 949. His hastily assembled principality fell apart soon after his death in 967, before he had done lasting damage to Armenia outside the regions already held by the Ƙaysites.

The accession of Abas's son Ašot III (952/3-977), who pursued a more energetic policy than his predecessor (despite the surname of *Olormac'* "the Merciful," derived from his support of the church and of monastic foundations), marked the return of the full prestige of the Bagratuni house. The king failed in his attempt to retake Duin the very year of his accession, and the capital remained in Muslim hands, but he may have been more successful in the south, where the Armenian historian Matthew of Edessa (Matt'eos Urhayec'i/Matteos Urhayetsi) records an Armenian victory against the Hamdanids. One of the main indications of Armenia's autonomy was its final achievement of fiscal independence. According to a tax list of 955 preserved by the Arab geographer Ibn Hawkal, the following tribute was due to the Sallārid emirs of Azerbaijan from the Armenian lands:

al-Wayzūri lord of Wayzur [Vayoc' Jor], fifty thousand dirrhems and gifts . . . the Banu-Dayrani [Sons of Derenik] were compelled to abide by the obligations of the agreement by which they were to pay one hundred thousand dirrhems per year, but were dispensed for four years . . . An agreement was made with the Banu Sunbat [Sons of Smbat I] for their districts of Armenia Interior stipulating two million dirrhems. They subsequently received a reduction of two hundred thousand dirrhems—Sinharib lord of Khadjin [Senek'erim of Ճաճ'են] was taxed one hundred thousand dirrhems and horses to a value of fifty thousand dirrhems (Ibn Ḥawḳal II, pp. 347-48).

Hence, it is evident that a considerable tribute had been paid by the Arcruni "sons of Derenik" in Vaspurakan, as well as by the lords of Eastern Siwnik' or Vayoc' Jor and Ճաճ'են (Khachen). Something had even been paid by the Bagratuni "sons of Smbat," Ašot II and Abas for the region of Armenian Interior, corresponding to northwestern Armenia from Նաճաւան to Karin, but no tax was recorded for the contemporary reign of Ašot III.

The return of the kat'olikos Anania Mokac'i from Vaspurakan to the north and his coronation of Ašot III in 961 in his new capital of Ani in Տիրակ also contributed to the king's growing stature, as did his supervision of ecclesiastical affairs. The schism of the bishop of Siwnik' supported by the kat'olikos of Albania had already come to an end in 958 at the Council of Կաթան, where the kat'olikos reasserted his authority over Siwnik' by consecrating its new metropolitan. The successive councils of Տիրակաւան and Ani summoned by the king to elect new primates and settle dogmatic disputes testified further to his authority and concern, as did his continuation of the great Bagratuni monastic foundations at Խալբատ (Haghbat) and Տանահին. This growing prestige conferred on the king an authority that reached beyond the Bagratuni domains and extended over all the other Armenian princes, as it had in the days of Ašot I, and even Դուին may have returned to Bagratid overlordship between 957 and 966. The Byzantine advance annexed Թարօն in 967/8 and razed the former Քայսիտե stronghold of Manazkert in 968/70, but when the Byzantine emperor John Tzimiskes, who was also of Armenian descent, appeared on the Armenian border in 974 with a considerable army, the princes closed ranks around the Bagratuni king:

Then all of the kings of Armenia, the *azats* and the greatest *išxans* of the realms of the houses of the East came together to the Armenian

king Ašot Bagratuni: P'ilippē king of Kap'an and Gurgēn king of Albania, Abas lord of Kars and Senek'erim lord of Vaspurakan and Gurgēn lord of Anjewac'ik' and the whole of the house of Sasun and they camped in the district of Hark', up to eighty thousand men. (Mathieu d'Edesse, I. xv, p. 14)

Faced with their combined forces, the emperor preferred to move southeastward into Mesopotamia and to acknowledge the authority of his "beloved son," the *Šahanšah* Ašot III.

The one major source of weakness that would manifest itself in the later Bagratuni kingdom was brought about by the king himself. Faced with the constant restlessness among the various members of the ruling house that had already manifested itself in the opposition of the *sparapet* Abas to his new nephew Smbat I and the war of the two Ašots, the king sought to obviate this danger by creating apanages for his kinsmen. When Ašot III moved the capital from Kars to Ani in 961, he granted the former city with its district of Vanand and eight more districts surrounding it to his brother Mušel, who assumed the royal title two years later. Ašot III likewise granted the northern district of Tašir (Tashir) with the great fortress of Šamsuıldē and the royal monasteries of Halbat and Sanahin to his youngest son, Gurgēn or Kiwrikē, probably as early as 972. He is titled king of Albania at the assembly of Hark' of 974 and is likewise called king on the inscription above the relief of the donors on the church of the Savior at Sanahin built between 966 and 972, although later Armenian sources date the creation of this secondary Bagratid kingdom, usually called Tašir-Joraget (Tashir-Dzoraget) or Lori, as late as 980. Both Vanand and Tašir-Joraget were unquestionably subordinate to the main kingdom of Ani, but they formed autonomous units within the larger Bagratid sphere. The same pattern of fragmentation repeated itself in Vaspurakan, where the grandsons of King Gagik I—Ašot-Sahak, senior prince of Vaspurakan proper, Gurgēn-Ճա՛'ik, lord of Anjewac'ik' and Senek'erim-Yovhannēs, lord of Rštunik'—divided their father's kingdom among themselves. The two elders successively assumed the dominant position until 1003 when Senek'erim-Yovhannēs drove out his nephews, the legitimate heirs, and reunited the Arcruni kingdom for the last time. Finally, the remains of the principality of Siwnik', now reduced to the district of Balk' (Baghk) with the fortress of Kap'an and the great monastery of Tat'ew, which was the seat of the metropolitan of Siwnik', also became a kingdom probably in the 970s. We have already seen from

the tax list of 955 preserved by Ibn Hawḳal that the princes of Vayoc' Jor and Xaç'en paid their taxes directly to the Sallārid emirs of Azerbaijan rather than to the Armenia king. Hence, by the end of the century, the Armenian plateau was subdivided into a series of kingdoms that satisfied the ambitions of their rulers but fostered their centrifugal aspirations and sapped the cohesiveness of the Bagratuni and Arcruni realms, which once again were held together only by the authority and personal qualities of their rulers.

Smbat II was proclaimed king on the very day of his father's death, perhaps to prevent the intervention of his uncle, Mušel of Kars, who then sought to arouse the Sallarid emir of Duin against Smbat in revenge for the king's seizure of a fortress in Širak which Mušel considered his own. However, the Sallārid attack of Ayrarat was halted in 982 by the emir of Golt'n, who took from them "Duin and all his cities," while the two Bagratids were reconciled through the mediation of their kinsman, the curopalate David of Tayk' (Georgian Tao), a junior member of the Iberian branch of the family. The emir of Golt'n then turned against Ašot Arcruni of Vaspurakan, whom he defeated with the help of a contingent Muslim *ghazi*, or fighters for Islam. In 989 he also retook the city of Duin from the new Kurdish house of Rawwādid emirs of Azerbaijan, who had seized it from him two years earlier. The struggle of Golt'n with the Rawwādids also served the interests of Smbat II, who had been compelled to pay tribute to them at the time of their capture of Duin, in 987. The king even "concluded with him [the emir of Golt'n] a treaty sealed with an oath through the mediation of [kat'olikos] Lord Xaç'ik, that they would live in peace with each other." Subsequently, however, Smbat violated the agreement and sought the help of the Sallārids to regain Duin, much to the indignation of Asolik:

And [Smbat's] second evil deed was the violation of the covenant that he had concluded with the emir of Golt'n, whereas that one [the emir] kept his oath according to his heathen religion, this one [the king] even though a Christian did not keep his word and being forsworn, gave Armenian troops to help make Salar emir, a thing repulsive to God, had he not been stopped by fear of betrayal by his brother Gagik (Asholik, 1917, III. xxix, pp. 136-37).

The main achievement of Smbat II's reign was his extension and embellishment of the new Bagratuni capital of Ani:

He filled the moats of Ani and built above it a circular fortification from the Axurian river to the valley of Colkoc'ac' (Dzoghkotsats). He built it from stones bound with a lime mortar, with bastions and tall towers; it was far higher than the old wall, enclosed the full extent of the city, and [had] cedar doors reinforced with iron fixtures and large solidly embedded nails. He also laid the foundation of a magnificent church in this same city of Ani under the direction of the architect Trdat, who had also built the church of the Kat'olikos at Argina (Asholik, 1917, III. xi, pp. 49-50).

Smbat II maintained the autonomy of his kingdom unimpaired and had the wisdom to support—together with his cousin, King Abas of Kars (984-1024), and their contemporary David of Tayk'/Tao—their young kinsman, King Bagrat of Eastern Iberia, in his claim to the coastal region of Abkhazia; an action for which Smbat II received the Abkhazian border fortress of Sakurēt'i.

The *curopalate* David of Tayk' (966-1000), great-grandson of King Atrnerseh II of Iberia, was unquestionably the most distinguished man of his period, although his principality never became a kingdom. Asoġik praises him enthusiastically:

For he was a gentle and merciful man, more than all the kings of our time. And he was a source of peace and prosperity for all of the East and especially for Armenia and Iberia; for he halted the tumult of war everywhere through his victories over all the surrounding nations. All the kings submitted to him of their own will (Asoġik, 1917, III. xliii, p. 162).

His bicultural Armeno-Iberian court in the northwestern border district of Tayk'/Tao was one of the great cultural centers of the time. Yet his brilliant career ultimately turned against his kinsmen and to the advantage of Byzantium. The help given by David to the Byzantine emperor Basil II (976-1025) at the time of the great revolt of Bardas Skleros (976-979) earned him a vastly expanded domain that stretched southward from Tayk' along the entire western border of Bagratid Armenia. It included the military district (*Kleisura*) of Ȳaldoyarič (Khaldoharidz), the fortress of Karin with its district, and the provinces of Basean, Hark', and Apahunik' with the city of Manazkert which had been retaken by Byzantium a decade earlier but which David could not recapture from the Kurdish Marwānid emirs, who had succeeded the

Ḳaysites in this area, until 992-993. He then removed the Muslim population of the city, filled it with Armenians and Iberians, and twice put to flight the armies sent against him from Azerbaijan, with the help of the Bagratid kings of Ani, Kars, and Iberia. In the north, David's patronage of his young relative Bagrat of Eastern Iberia, whom he adopted and who was able to reunite Iberia and Abkhazia into a single kingdom in 978, gave him a form of protectorate over most of Christian Transcaucasia that he was to enjoy until his death. Unfortunately, however, David's backing of a second revolt against Basil II in 989/90 undid much of his achievements. After his defeat of the rebels, Basil II compelled David to will all his lands to the Byzantine Empire, although he was allowed to keep them for his lifetime. No sooner had the *curopalate* died (March 31, 1000), perhaps at the instigation of the pro-Byzantine party among his nobles, than Basil II claimed the fulfillment of the agreement of 990. As we shall see, the emperor's successive campaigns, culminating in the annexation of all the lands of David of Tayk', were to mark the establishment of Byzantium on the Armenian plateau and the crucial break in the international equilibrium that protected the autonomy of the Armenian kingdoms.

The last of the great kings of Ani, Gagik I (898/90-1017), also came to the throne on the day of his predecessor's death, as Asolik had noted in his condemnation of Smbat II's disloyalty toward his ally, the emir of Golt'n and Naxčawan. However, a royal governor was set over Duin, which seems to have remained part of the Bagratuni kingdom through most of Gagik's reign. The king also acquired considerable lands at the expense of Siwnik', according to Asolik, who claimed that

he ruled over a larger number of fortresses and districts from the borders of Vayoc' Jor, Xaç'ēn, and P'arisis than his brother, and no one was able to inspire fear in Armenia [in his time] (Asolik, 1917, III, xxx, p. 138).

His support of David of Tayk' against the incursions of the Kurdish Rawwādid emir halted the first attack from Azerbaijan. A second Ibero-Armenian coalition routed him again near Arčēš in 998 and prevented the Rawwādids from reconquering the lands of the Ḳaysites and Marwānid emirates. Similarly, an alliance with Bagrat of Iberia helped to drive back the advance of the other Kurdish Shaddādid emir holding Ganja since 970.

The senior position of the king of Ani vis-à-vis the other Bagratid kings of his generation was fully maintained by Gagik I, especially after the death of David of Tayk'. The southern kingdom, subdivided by the grandsons of Gagik I Arcruni and weakened by the usurpation of the youngest, Senek'erim-Yovhannēs, who drove out his nephews in 1003, could offer no challenge to the Bagratuni despite the protectorate extended over Vaspurakan by the emperor Basil II after his campaign of 1001. The southern kingdom would soon be distracted by the attacks by the attacks of Daylamite and Turkmen raiders. Gagik's cousin Abas of Kars seems to have accepted his subordinate position willingly. The king's more turbulent nephews were more sharply brought to heel. Abusahl, lord of Kogovit, who had slandered Gagik to Basil II, saw his domain devastated by an Armenian army commanded by the king's son Yovhannēs. David *Anhotin* (*Anhoghin*) "the Landless," king of Tašir-Joraget (989-1048?), who had subjected the emirate of Tiflis and claimed to be an "independent king" (*ink'nakal ark'ay*) on an inscription of 996 at Sanahin, saw himself attacked by a royal army and forced to make his submission:

Through the mediation of the patriarch, Lord Sargis, he submitted to the King [Gagik] and came to meet him at Širakawan. And Lord Sargis made a covenant of peace [between them]. David agreed to submit like a son to his father, and Gagik to love him with fatherly concern (Asolik, 1917, III. xlv, p. 167).

The more benevolent attitude of Gagik I toward Siwnik', to which he returned some of its ecclesiastical privileges lost in 958, was probably a result of the intercession of Queen Katramidē, the daughter of the king of Siwnik'. The same haughty demeanor marked the relations of Armenia to Byzantium. When the emperor Basil II came to the Armenian border 1000/1 to claim the inheritance of David of Tayk', all the Armenian and Iberian rulers—Bagrat of Abkhazia and his father Gurgēn of Iberia, Abas of Kars, and Senek'erim-Yovhannēs of Vaspurakan—hastened to meet him and make their submission. Basil II then

came to the district of Hark' to the city of Manazkert and thence into Bagrewand, where he camped in the plain near the city of Valaršakert [Vagharshakert], [and] there waited for the coming of Gagik King of Armenia. But he [Gagik] considered it demeaning to come to him (Asolik, 1917, III. xliii, p. 165).

Gagik remained defiantly behind the walls of Ani. Like his predecessor John Tzimiskes in 974, Basil II did not insist. He refortified the stronghold of Karin in 1018, but made no further attempts against Armenia as long as Gagik I lived.

The Armenian Church in the Bagratuni Period

The crucial role of the Armenian Church during the periods of the *Marzpanate* and the Arab domination (when it substituted itself for the crown as the focus of national allegiance) continued during the revival of the medieval kingdoms.

To be sure, royal influence and occasional control over the church manifested itself in all the medieval Armenian kingdoms. The dogmatic councils of Širakawan under Ašot I and later, again at Širakawan and at Ani, under Ašot III were held under royal sponsorship at the royal residence, although the *kat'olikos* normally preferred to live away from court, first at Duin or Vałaršapat until the forced departure of Yovhannēs "the Historian" in 923 then at Argina near Ani after the return of Anania Mokac'i from Vaspurakan to the north. He moved to Ani itself only in 992. The contemporaries found this royal patronage entirely acceptable, and Asofik related without the slightest misgivings that the Council of Ani elected Step'annos III Sewanec'i (Stepannos III Sevanetsi) "in accordance with the will of Ašot Šahanšah" (Asofik, 1917, III, viii, p. 41), or that "Gagik King of Armenia installed as *Kat'olikos* the lord Sargis" after the king had "called together a council of bishops from the realm of Armenia and the Greek regions" (Asofik, 1917, III, xxxii, pp. 143-44). In 1036 king Yovhannēs-Smbat Bagratuni briefly forced the deposition of Petros I Getadarj (Getadardz) (1019-1036, 1038-1058) and the election of a new patriarch. The protectorate of Gagik I Arcruni over the church in the latter part of his reign manifested itself equally clearly in his offer of asylum to the fleeing Yovhannēs V "the Historian," and even more so in the successive election of three subsequent Rštuni *kat'olikoi*, who remained in residence at the court of Vaspurakan. Later in the tenth century, the *kat'olikos* Vahan of Siwnik' also found refuge in Vaspurakan, after his deposition by the Council of Ani in 969/70, and Gagik I's son would not hesitate to imprison his rival, the *kat'olikos* Step'annos III. The earlier election of the future *kat'olikos* Vahan as bishop of Siwnik' in 958 may well have been influenced by the fact that he was the son of Prince Ĵuanšēr of Balk' (Jvansher of Baghk). Even

Gagik-Abas, the last king of Kars/Vanand would see to the election of the kat'olikos Grigor II Vkasasēr in 1065/6. Still later, according to the Armenian chronicler Matthew of Edessa:

In the year 530 of the Armenian Era (1081-1082) the archbishop of Širak, who resided in the city of Ani and whose name was Lord Barseł (Barsegh) [Basil], went to the realm of Armenia to the city of Lorē in the district of Aĥank' [Albania] to the King of Armenia Korikē [Kiwrikē I], son of Dawit' Anholin, son of Gagik [Gurgēn]; and Barseł asked for consecration as Kat'olikos of Armenia. Then King Korikē gathered together the bishops of the land of Aĥank' and, taking along the Kat'olikos of Aĥank' Lord Step'annos to the monastery called Halbat, they consecrated Lord Barseł onto the throne of St. Gregory as Kat'olikos over the entire realm of Armenia at the order of King Korikē and of Lord Step'annos who held the see of the holy apostle Thaddeus (Mathieu d'Edesse II. cxx, p. 185 corrected),

As late as 1140, the last Bagratuni rulers of Lorī/Tašir met in the fortress of Tawuš for the consecration of the kat'olikos of Caucasian Albania. In the same troubled times, the Armenian kat'olikos Petros Getadarj sought refuge at the court of Senek'erim-Yovhannēs Arcruni at Sebastē/Sivas ca. 1047 after the surrender of Ani to Byzantium. A decade later the kat'olikos Xaç'ik II would likewise flee to the last Arcruni heir residing in Cappadocia. Finally, most of the great monasteries of this period were all royal foundations: the churches of Lake Sevan dedicated by Ašot I's daughter Mariam of Siwnik' (which marks the beginning of the great architectural revival under the Bagratids), as well as the famous centers of Tašir—Halbat and Sanahin, founded or restored by Ašot III's queen; the Arcrunid monastic foundations at Hadamakert, Aparak', and Varag in Vaspurakan; Kot', Makenoc' (Makenots), Gndevank', and especially the great monastery of Tat'ew in Siwnik'. Similarly, the cathedrals of Bagaran, Širakawan, Kars, Ani, and the church of the Holy Cross of Alt'amar, all of which are directly linked to the reigning dynasty, also serve to underscore the royal concern and protectorate over the church.

At the same time, however, the great ecclesiastical figures of the period—Gēorg II Garneç'i (877-897), Yovhannēs "the Historian" (898-924/5), Anania Mokac'i (943?-967), Xaç'ik I (972-992), and finally the enigmatic figure of Petros I Getadarj—easily dominated the scene both in their new position of coronant presiding over the royal consecration

and in their more secular role of ambassadors and peacemakers. The Armenian tradition of patriarchal families going back to the descendants of Gregory the Illuminator continued with Yovhannēs “the Historian,” a kinsman of his predecessor Maštoc’, with the three successive Rštuni patriarchs, with the transmission of the kat’olikate from Anania Mokac’i to his nephew Xaç’ik I, with the latter’s brother Petros Getadarj and Petros’s nephew Xaç’ik II, and finally through the long line of Pahlawuni kat’olikoi who would occupy the patriarchal throne from Grigor II Vkasasēr (1065-1105) through the entire twelfth century. This continuity helped perpetuate a definite ecclesiastical policy. The status of the kat’olikos is perhaps best illustrated by the Byzantine ambassadors coming in 914 to invite Ašot *Erkat’* to Constantinople. Past masters in matters of protocol, the official imperial envoys paid their first visit to the kat’olikos Yovhannēs “the Historian” and only then sought out the young ruler in his domain. The move of Yovhannēs from the north to Vaspurakan helped shift the balance of prestige to Gagik I Arcruni in the last years of the reign of King Ašot II, while the return of kat’olikos Anania Mokac’i to Argina and his coronation of Ašot III reestablished the authority of the Bagratids. By the end of the period of Armenian independence, the position of the kat’olikos was so firmly entrenched that not even the equivocal policy of Petros Getadarj could undermine it, and the bishops assembled at Ani in 1038 forced his return against the claims of the royal candidate imposed by Yovhannēs-Smbat. The jurisdiction of the Armenian kat’olikos in this period was not limited to the Bagratuni Kingdom or even to the Armenian lands. The Council of Kap’an in 958 reaffirmed his authority not only over the dissident bishopric of Siwnik’, but also over the kat’olikos of Caucasian Albania, who had supported the schism. The religious concessions made to Siwnik’ by Gagik I Bagratuni in 1005/6 were more ceremonial than substantive in character. Even more interesting is the greeting in the letter of the Byzantine Patriarch Nicholas Mystikos to Yovhannēs “the Historian” in which he refers to “the Armenians, the Iberians and the Albanians who collectively comprise your faithful flock,” thus implying that the jurisdiction of the Armenian kat’olikos extended over the whole of Transcaucasia and that the long-standing schism between the Armenian and Iberian churches had found some kind of solution in the later ninth century.

The growing power of the Armenian Church may in part have fostered the great expansion of the heretical movement of the T’ondrakec’i (Tondraketsi), which is also recorded in the tenth century

in a number of regions far from its home district of Apahunik' north of Lake Van. The heretics may have supported the insurrection of the peasantry of Siwnik' against the great monastic center of Tat'ew in this period, but the main references to them now record their penetration into the upper classes of society. The Armenian historian Aristakēs Lastivertc'i (Lastiverttsi) speaks of aristocratic ladies, mistresses of villages, a bishop, Jacob of Hark', and Prince Vrvver of Širi (Shiri) in the northwestern district of Mananali (Mananaghi). The regular clergy was apparently also infected in this period, since the great mystic poet Grigor Narekac'i (Narekatsi) wrote at the direction of the Council of Ani a letter of reproof and admonition to the abbot of the monastery of Kčaw (Kchav) in the southern district of Mokka'. The survival of the T'ondrakec'i into the mid-eleventh century when they were actively persecuted by the learned duke of Tarōn and Vaspurakan Grigor Magistros Pahlawuni reveals the depth to which Bagratid society had been penetrated and disturbed by the heresy.

Other religious groups, such as the Nestorians surviving in the southern border districts and Syrian communities in communion with the Armenian Church, were also found in Armenia, but the most crucial as well as the most obscure and controversial problem is that of the relationship between the Armenian Church and official Byzantine Chalcedonian Orthodoxy. The continuing presence of Chalcedonian Armenians under the Bagratuni is beyond doubt, even though their presence has long been obscured by the common reference to them as "Iberians." The pro-Greek tendencies of the monastery of Narek, founded in 935 by monks reputedly fleeing from Cappadocia, were well known, and both Grigor Narekac'i and his father incurred blame because of them. Siwnik' must have contained a number of Chalcedonian sympathizers, since its bishop, Vahan, elected kat'olikos in 967/8, was deposed for such tendencies by the Council of Ani in the following year. Similarly, the asylum granted to Vahan after his deposition by Gagik I Arcruni and the king's surviving letter about a possible ecclesiastical union with Byzantium point to the presence of the same inclinations in Vaspurakan. Finally, the refusal of Yovhannēs "the Historian" to accompany Ašot *Erkat'* on his journey to Constantinople in 914 lest he be suspected of Chalcedonianism suggests that the position of the kat'olikos himself was not beyond question. As late as 974, the assembled Armenian bishops were willing to compromise so far as to present Vahan of Siwnik''s suspect confession of faith as "orthodox" to the Byzantine emperor John Tzimiskes.

A cultural rapprochement, perhaps helped by the kinship between the Armenian and Iberian Bagratids, seemed to be in the making and to explain the spiritual protectorate over Transcaucasia attributed by the Byzantine patriarch to the Armenian kat'olikos at the beginning of the tenth century. The best example of this hybrid world was undoubtedly to be found in the border region of Tayk'/Tao with its splendid churches, such as Oški (Oshki) and Išxan (Ishkhan) uniting Iberian and Armenian features, and most of all the bilingual and bicultural court of the *curpalate* David. Unfortunately, this seeming trend toward reconciliation rapidly provoked a violent reaction, perhaps linked once more to the expansionist policy of Byzantium in the East. Asolik reports both the brutal punishment of Prince Bēr of Abkhazia, blinded ca. 943 by King Abas for his attempt to have the cathedral of Kars consecrated according to the Orthodox rite, and the conversion of

the *marzpan* Demetr who was the *išxan* of the fortress of Gag . . . abandoned the Armenian faith of his fathers, and obtaining the help of the Iberians bathed in their twice mortal [baptismal] water (As-holik, 1917, III. xxx, p. 140).

The kat'olikos Anania Mokac'i was also said to have imposed a second baptism on those who had already received Orthodox baptism in violation of the canons which forbid the repetition of this sacrament. The election of his successor, Vahan of Siwnik', by the Council of Širakawan in 967, immediately brought dissensions among the bishops because of "the love and agreement with the Chalcedonians expressed in his letters." Vahan was deposed and fled to the king of Vaspurakan, who also imprisoned Ašot III's candidate, elected by the Council of Ani in the following year. The schism ended with the death of both rivals, but the tension with the Greeks increase under the newly elected kat'olikos Xaç'ik I (972/3-992/3), most of all among the Armenians on imperial territory in the region of Sebastē/Sivas, whose metropolitan bishop showed particular antagonism toward them. For the first time Xaç'ik consecrated bishops for external sees. The learned Armenian *vardapet* Yovhannēs was killed by the Iberians, who remained in communion with the Greeks, and the polemic on both sides reached such a level of bitterness that the Armenian chronicler Matthew of Edessa denounced the eleventh-century Duke of Antioch Philaretos (Armenian P'ilardos Varažnuni [Varazhnuni]) as

the eldest son of Satan . . . [and], an enemy of the Christian faith . . . [because] he held to the Roman [Chalcedonian] customs and religion although he was an Armenian on [both] his father's and mother's side (Mathieu d'Edesse, II. cvi, p. 173).

The Social and Economic Development of Armenia and the Bagratuni

The evidence for the prosperity of Armenia during almost the entire period of the medieval kingdoms, some of which has already been cited earlier in this chapter, provides an important corrective to its complex and often unstable political history. This evidence is based not only on the written sources, many of which are, interestingly, in Arabic rather than Armenian, but on an increasingly large archaeological documentation. The enormous artistic and cultural flowering of the period, attested by a multiplicity of visual and literary monuments, provides an index not only to the taste and refinement of the ruling class and the skill of contemporary artists, but to the powerful economic base that made such a development possible. Nevertheless, an important series of questions on the internal life of Armenia in the period of the Bagratuni and Arçruni kings still requires investigation and some of the answers will have to be provided by further archaeological material.

From the point of view of its social structure, Bagratuni Armenia does not seem to have produced a radical change from the earlier pattern. As we have seen, no constitutional framework was introduced to reinforce the hold of the king over his vassals. The titles of "Prince of Princes" and subsequently *Šahanšah* acknowledged the ruler's authority de jure over both the Christian and Muslim princes of the region, but this authority continued to rest de facto on the personal qualities and prestige of powerful figures, such as Ašot I Bagratuni or the two Gagiks of Vaspurakan and Ani. To be sure, the cohesion of the collective *tun* had been seriously impaired by the growing system of apanages given to junior members of a family, but the noble classes of the *naxarars* or *išxans*, the lower nobility of the *azats*, the hierarchy of the clergy, and the great majority of the taxable *ramiks* and *šinakans* are still clearly identifiable throughout the period and also show no appreciable geographical variations within the country. The powerful cavalry continued to provide the military force of the state, and it rested as before on the *azat* contingents serving under the local princes, their immediate lords.

As such, the medieval period seems to have been one of evolution and refinement in institutions, but not of innovation in the basic structure of society.

One of the main elements of transformations was demographic rather than social. The majority of the population unquestionably remained Armenian until the mid-eleventh century at least throughout the region, with the exception of the southern border region of Aġnik', administratively linked to Mesopotamia at an early date and heavily Arabized. The tenth-century Arab sources themselves attest that the cities of the Araxes Valley remained Armenian despite Muslim overlordship. According to them, the Christians formed the majority of the cities' population. The contemporary geographer Ibn Hāwqal specified that Armenian continued to be spoken at Duin and Naḫčawan, whereas Arabic was the language of Partaw/Bardha'a in Azerbaijan (Ibn Hāwqal II, p. 342). Nevertheless, considerable Muslim settlements resulted from the creation of the emirates in the ninth and tenth centuries. The cities of the emirates on the north shore of Lake Van were heavily Muslim, and we learn from Asoġik that the Armenian quarter at Ḫlat' must have lain outside the city walls, since the churches and the bishop's residence were to be found there late in the tenth century. These Muslim settlements were primarily Arab in the early period and appear to have remained so at Karin, which was primarily a garrison city with surrounding villages, and in the emirate of Got'n, which preserved its local dynasty. In the southern districts, however—where the Kurdish Marwānids replaced the Arab Ḳaysites after the brief Hamdanid interlude, and especially in Azerbaijan, where the Daylamite Sallārīds, the Kurdish Rawwādīds, and the increasingly powerful Shaddhīds jockeyed for power—the Iranian ethnic element began to dominate in the late tenth century. Ibn Hāwqal again specifies:

the language of Azerbaijan and of the majority of the inhabitants of Armīniya is Persian which they use as a common language, but among themselves they use Arabic . . . a language which the merchants and lords of domains use with elegance (Ibn Hāwqal, II, p. 342).

Similarly, the presence of Muslim groups, first Arabs and subsequently Daylamites and Kurds coming from Azerbaijan, were attested at Duin. At times this demographic transformation could be reversed temporarily, as was the case at Manazkert, where David of Tayk'

expelled the Muslim population in 992/3 and replaced it with Armenians and Iberians, the latter of whom may have been ethnic Iberians or Chalcedonian Armenians, to whom this term was also applied. Even so, the ethnic unity of the plateau had been breached and was not to be reconstituted.

One of the most interesting problems of the period, that of the medieval Armenian cities, still requires considerable investigation. The great revival of international trade between Byzantium and the caliphate as well as the Far East and the northern Russian lands and the creation of a network of routes, attested by the contemporary Arab geographers and minutely studied by Manandyan (1965, pp. 155-72), clearly fostered an urban development. The main trade route through Armenia ran from the Caliphate to Trebizond on the Black Sea by way of Ani, Kars, and Arcn near Karin. At Kars it linked to secondary routes leading northward through Artanuč (Artanuch) to the eastern Black Sea ports or through Ardahan to Abkhazia and Eastern Iberia. In the south, the route from Ardabil and Maragha in Iran led to Her/Xoy (Khoi) and from there either along the north shore of Lake Van through Berkri, Arčēš and Xlat' to Bidlis and Diarbekir, or westward by way of Manazkert to Arcn, Erzincan, and Sivas, or yet again northward through Naxčawan to Duin, which was linked through Siwnik' with Bardha'a, from which other routes led farther north to Tiflis. The main road from the caliphate to Russia was called the "Great Armenian Highway."

There is no doubt that Armenian cities flourished in the tenth century as a result of this revival of international trade as well as from a considerable amount of local manufacture, and contemporary sources speak with some exaggeration of forty-five cities and twenty-three additional settlements. Strategically placed at the junction point of a number of the trade routes, Duin was unquestionably the main urban center of Armenia even after the destructive earthquake of 893, and it was not overtaken by Ani until the very end of the tenth or even the eleventh century. Like Procopius in earlier days, Arab writers praise the beauty and wealth of the city. According to *The Book of Roads and Kingdoms* of al-Istakhri.

Dabil [Duin] is greater than Ardabil. This city serves as the capital of Armenia and in it is the palace of the governor just as the palace of the governor of Arran is in Bardha'a . . . There is a wall around Dabil. Here there are many Christians and the main mosque is next to the church . . . Dabil is the capital of Armenia and there stays Sanbat ibn

Ashut [King Smbat I]. The city is always in the hands of the Christian nobility, and the Christians form the greater part of the population of Armenia also known as "the Kingdom of the Armenians" (Manandyan, 1965, pp. 143-44).

The importance of the city was equally great in the second half of the tenth century, although a warning note was sounded by the Arab geographer al-Mukadasi:

Dabil is an important city, in it are an inaccessible citadel and great riches. Its name is ancient, its cloth is famous, its river is abundant, it is surrounded by gardens. The city has suburbs, its fortress is reliable, its squares are cross-shaped, its fields are wonderful. The main mosque is on a hill and next to the mosque is the church. The Kurds watch over the town. By the city is a citadel. The buildings of the inhabitants are made of clay or stone. The city has many gates such as Bab ['gate']-Keydar, Bab-Tiflis and Bab-Ani. Despite all of its advantages the Christians are a majority there. Now its population has already diminished and its citadel is in ruins (Manandyan, 1965, p. 144).

Recent archaeological excavations that have uncovered a considerable portion of the city have borne out much of the information of the Arab geographers by identifying both a citadel and the central portion of the city, which contains the cathedral and the adjacent ruins of the palace of the kat'olikos, probably converted into a mosque during the eleventh century.

The rapid growth of the new capital of Ani described as "the city of one thousand and one churches" by Matthew of Edessa is likewise attested by archaeological evidence. The first walls erected under Ašot III had to be supplemented within a generation by new ones that trebled its area in the days of Smbat II, who expended much of his energy on the adornment of the city. By the eleventh century, the capital was apparently composed of a citadel as well as upper and lower cities enclosed by the two lines of fortifications, and Matthew of Edessa claimed that its population was reaching 100,000. This figure is probably inflated, but the evidence of considerable settlements beyond the walls as well as a cemetery covering a square kilometer point to an urban center considerably larger than contemporary ones in the West. Armenian historians such as Asolik concentrated primarily on the description

of royal ecclesiastical foundations, such as the cathedral of Ani, begun by Smbat II and completed by Gagik I's wife, Katramidē of Siwnik':

The pious queen . . . completed the building of the church founded by Smbat, a magnificent edifice with lofty vaults and a sanctuary surmounted by a heavenlike cupola. And she adorned it with tapestries embroidered with purple flowers woven with gold and painted in various colors, and with vessels of silver and gold through whose resplendent brilliance the holy cathedral in the city of Ani shone forth like the heavenly vault (Asolik, 1917, III, xxx, p. 139).

The archaeological excavations directed by N. Marr at the beginning of the twentieth century revealed primarily the elaborate urban development of the city with its paved streets, water system for drinking water as well as sewage, baths, caravansarais, and bazaars.

Similarly, Kars had grown by the mid-eleventh century from a fortress to a city "enriched by the goods bestowed upon it by sea and land," according to the contemporary historian Aristakēs Lastivert'i (Aristakēs de Lastivert, xv, p. 74). Most remarkable of all was the unfortified commercial city of Arcn founded near Karin/Theodosiopolis and described by the twelfth-century Byzantine Kedrenos:

Arcn is an open and very rich city with a very large population. There lived local merchants and a large number of Syrians, Armenians and other peoples. Taking strength from their numbers, they did not find it necessary to live within walls despite the proximity of Theodosiopolis, a large and strong city with inaccessible fortifications (Manandyan, 1965, p. 145).

And goods from all over the East were exchanged in its markets.

Despite this clear evidence for the prosperity of the great commercial cities of Armenia, a puzzling series of problems concerning their integration into contemporary society remain to be solved before general conclusions can be reached. Part of these difficulties derive from the fact that the excavations of Duin are still incomplete and the evidence for the period of Muslim domination in the city is far less satisfactory than that for the earlier period of the *Marzpanate*, which had relied on stone rather than clay for its buildings material. At Ani, where no systematic work has been possible since the beginning of the twentieth century, earlier results remain unverified. Consequently, the chronology of the

sites is difficult to establish with precision, and the portion of the evidence belonging to the Bagratid period rather than to later ones is still uncertain.

One of the puzzling aspects of this urban development is that with the exception of Kars, Ani, and Arcn, whose rise comes late and belongs to the eleventh rather than the tenth century, all the main cities of this period are to be found in the Muslim emirates rather than in the Christian principalities. Even Duin, as we have seen, was more commonly ruled by various Muslim governors in the tenth century than under the control of the Bagratuni kings. The previously cited comment of Ibn Hawḳal that the native language of the merchants in Armīniya was Arabic; the observation in Kedrenos's account that the "local merchants" of Arcn were distinct from the Armenians and Syrians also found in the city; and the total absence of Armenian coinage throughout the Bagratid period, which depended on either Byzantine or Muslim currency, all suggest that much of the international commerce and the centers enriched by it were not primarily in Armenian hands.

This hypothesis finds support in the picture of the purely Armenian society provided by the contemporary native sources. As in earlier times, the magnates normally lived in their fortified strongholds rather than in urban centers, and we hear of no Muslim peasant communities in the countryside. Like their nobles, the ruling houses of the period showed a distinct preference for isolated sites and fortresses. Such were the Bagratuni residences of Bagaran and Širakawan and even Kars and Ani through most of the tenth century, as well as the fortresses of Šamšuildē, Loṛē and eventually Macnaberd (Madznaberd) and Tawuš favored by the junior royal line of Tašir-Joraget. The princes of Siwnik' clung to their strongholds of Ernjak and Kap'an, while the Arcruni preferred the fortress of Nkan or the protected island of Alt'amar in Lake Van. To be sure, such preferences were often dictated by considerations of safety, but the Christian princes showed a curious aversion to urban centers even when they held the upper hand. Neither Ašot the Great, nor Ašot III, nor yet Gagik I cared to hold directly and reside in the central capital of Duin, and the Bagratuni in general showed no sense of geographical loyalty, moving from generation to generation from Bagaran to Širakawan/Erazgawork' and eventually to Kars and Ani. The constant picture derived from the account of Yovhannēs Kat'olikos, in which the Muslim *ostikan* remains firmly based on his residence at Duin while the Armenian king withdraws to his stronghold of Erazgawork' or even more commonly to camps in the countryside, is particularly telling in

this context, and it clearly recalls the preferences of the earlier Aršakuni. Obviously, no clear-cut divisions existed in this society, and the Armenian and Muslim worlds necessarily coexisted, yet the impression of polarization between a mercantile and urban Muslim group with practically no roots in the countryside and a para-feudal Christian aristocracy surrounded by its traditional peasantry seems inescapable.

A chronological problem compounds the difficulty of estimating the importance of the cities within the fabric of Bagratuni society. As was already observed, the architectural evidence from Duin is disappointing for this period. Ani continued to flourish in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, and the other major sites have not yet been studied. Consequently the internal organization of the Armenian cities and the participation of the urban population in their administration, let alone the history of the period, still requires considerable study. Both the Arab historian al-Balādhurī and the Armenian Continuator of T'ovma Arcruni speaks of the "elders" of Duin, and Yovhannēs Kat'olikos alludes to the "senior nobles . . . of the noble families of the city of Duin" imprisoned by Yūsuf's deputy in 923 (Yovhannēs Draxanakerc'i, lxv, p. 221). Some sort of aristocracy was consequently present in the city, and Ibn Ḥawḳal's reference to the "Christian nobility" supports the conclusion that it was Armenian. We have, however, no evidence whatever for the relationship between these "elders" and the ruling feudal nobility, and except for their unlucky overtures to the Muslims in 923, we do not hear of the participation of such "elders" in political events until the very end of the period under consideration, when their deliberation concerning a suitable protector at the moment of the surrender of Ani in 1045 was recorded by Aristakēs Lastivertc'i (Aristakēs de Lastivert, ix, p. 52). Similarly, archaeological evidence demonstrates the presence of considerable workshops at both Duin and Ani, while the marginal decorations of manuscripts depict a varied collection of craftsmen. Much of this evidence is, however, of later date, so that the existence of an elaborate system of artisans' guilds unquestionably attested for the post-Bagratid period of the thirteenth century is far less clear for the period of the medieval kingdoms to which it has sometimes been attributed. All of these considerations and complexities suggest that the structure and the role of the cities in medieval Armenian society still require considerable study.

In contrast with the lack of precision in our knowledge of the status and configuration of urban centers, no such problems plague an estimate of the economic strength of the country repeatedly praised by Armenian and even more precisely by Arabic sources. Part of the prosperity of the period was unquestionably derived from the exchange of foreign goods

carried along the transit routes, which enriched the cities. Early in the ninth century, King Smbat I had called the attention of the *ostikan Afshin* to the advantage for the caliphate derived from the role of Armenia as an intermediary between caliphate and Byzantium. Even so, much of Armenia's economic importance derived from the country itself.

The natural resources of the land were thoroughly familiar to the Muslim world. The silver mines of Sper, the iron of Vaspurakan, and the copper of Gugark' supplied local industries as well as the mints located at Duin, Manazkert, and Bardha'a. Lead, borax, arsenic, mercury, copper sulfate, and salt from the mines of Kulp' were exported to the caliphate, as were natural dyes of which the most famous was the scarlet *kirmiz*. The extensive forests covering the slopes of Mt. Ararat supplied large quantities of timber as well as walnuts, filberts, and almonds. The fertile valleys of the Araxes and of Vaspurakan were particularly suited to the cultivation of cereals and fruit trees such as peaches, apricots, and pomegranates. Wheat was exported from Armenia to Baghdad, according to the Arab historian al-Tabari. The vineyards and wine industry of Duin were noted in the account of the unsuccessful Byzantine siege of the city in 1049. The saltpeter (natron) of Lake Van supplied the bakers of Iraq. The salted herrings of the lake called *tarrex* in Armenian and *tirrikh* in Arabic as well as the *surmahi* of the Araxes and Kura rivers, were in great demand on Muslim markets (Manandyan, 1965, pp. 150-51), as were the horses and mules of Anjewac'ik', "reputed for their physical strength, their endurance, their swiftness and their tenacity," according to Ibn Hawkal (II. p. 340). A tax list preserved by the historian Ibn Khaldun specifies the following goods in addition to monetary payments: 20 rugs, 580 pounds of *rakm* (?), 10,000 pounds of *surmahi*, 10,000 pounds of *tirrikh*, 200 mules, and 30 falcons.

Even more prized than these natural products were the manufactured goods produced in Armenia. Armenian sources praised the work of the local goldsmiths, and the excavation of the workshops of Duin have found the metalwork, glazed ceramics, and glassware for which the city was famous. But the greatest demand was for "goods of Armenian type" [*asnaf al-Armeni*], textiles dyed with the local *kirmiz* (primarily produced at the dyeworks of Artašat, known as the *kirmiz* village to Arab sources), flowered silks called *bosjun*, and gold embroidered garments. A detailed description of these prized textiles is provided by Ibn Hawkal:

From Dabil are exported goat-hair [cashmere] textiles and [ordinary] woolens such as, for example, rugs, pillows, cushions, saddle blan-

kets, laces for trousers and other textiles of the same type which are of Armenian manufacture and dyed with *kirmiz*. This is a red dye for goat-hair textiles and for wool. It is obtained from a worm which weaves around itself as the silkworm encloses himself in a cocoon of raw silk. They also produce there patterned silks of which many similar are found in the Byzantine empire, although they are imported from Armenia. And among the goods called Armenian are found women's cloaks, cushions, rugs, tapestries, narrow rugs, round cushions, sofa pillows and saddle blankets. These tapestries are not equaled in any part of the universe in any fashion or in any technique (Ibn Ḥawqal, II, pp. 335-36).

These must be the splendid garments repeatedly mentioned as royal presents in the *History of Yovhannēs Kat'olikos* and the tapestries adorned with purple flowers and gold embroidery that decorated the cathedrals of Argina and Ani, according to *Asotik*. Their splendor can still be glimpsed in the caftans of figured brocade worn by the Arcruni princes on the reliefs of the church at Aḥ'amar, and especially in the embroidered caftan of the king, as well as the red and gold dress and veil interwoven with gold of the queen in the portrait of the royal family of Kars preserved in the Gospel of Gagik-Abas of Kars in Jerusalem.

This flourishing civilization, documented by Muslim geographers, goes far to rectify the image of relative instability suggested by a purely political consideration of this period. Far from presenting the battered aspect of the eighth century, royal Armenia emerged in the tenth century not only as thriving at home but as one of the prosperous regions of the East with a reputation acknowledged from afar. Its position between the Byzantine and Muslim worlds provided wide contacts with the entire range of Mediterranean and Oriental culture, and these in turn fostered the amplitude and magnificence of its own artistic development that soon came to be admired by outsiders. "Frankish" painters may have been invited to decorate the church of the great monastery of Tat'ew in Siwnik', but it soon counted more than 500 monks renowned for their erudition and skill as painters, according to the local historian Step'annos Ōrbelean (Stepanos Orbelian). Before the end of the Bagratuni period, the Byzantine court itself, searching for an outstanding specialist capable of repairing the dome of the Church of Hagia Sophia in Constantinople, which had been seriously damaged by the earthquake of 989, would find it necessary to seek him beyond the borders of the empire and invite the Armenian architect Trdat of Ani.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

For the sources of, or more information on, the material in this chapter, please consult the following (full citations can be found in the Bibliography at the end of this volume).

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