

VAHRAM'S  
CHRONICLE  
OF  
THE ARMENIAN KINGDOM IN CILICIA,  
DURING THE  
TIME OF THE CRUSADES.

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TRANSLATED FROM THE ORIGINAL ARMENIAN,  
WITH  
NOTES AND ILLUSTRATIONS,  
BY  
CHARLES FRIED. NEUMANN.

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brought to him on a silver plate started suddenly away, and fled to the corner of the house and hid itself among the poultry. Wise men looked on this as a sign that the king would soon be gathered to his forefathers, and so it happened. He repositeth in Christ with his father Rouben, and was buried in the church called Castalon.<sup>(20)</sup>

Constantine had two sons, the elder, who 1100 succeeded his father, was called Thoros, and the younger Leon. Thoros superabounded in wisdom, and his military valour is highly spoken of. He sought to revenge the blood of Cakig the Great, and made war against the sons of Mandal; he reduced their fort Centerhasg,<sup>(21)</sup> killed the inhabitants, and carried away great booty. He found in this place a likeness of the Holy Virgin, and treated it with great esteem: by this he became more and more powerful, and vanquished the Greeks many times. He took Anazarbus, built therein a large church, and adorned it with the names of his generals and with the likeness of the Holy Virgin. He governed valiantly, and so much was he esteemed that Cilicia lost its proper name, and has been

called *The Country of Thoros*. Thoros loved God with all his heart, favoured his servants, built churches, and held the convents in high esteem, in particular those which are called *Trassarg* and *Mashgevar* ; he bestowed on these and on others many gifts. Living such a holy life, he went at last in to the Lord, and was 1123 buried in the holy church called *Trassarg*.<sup>(22)</sup>

After the death of Thoros, his only son and heir was cast into prison by some wicked people, who administered to him a poisonous drug,<sup>(23)</sup> thus the principality came to Leon, the brother of Thoros, and his equal in reputation. *Leon* conquered *Mamestia* and *Tarsus* ;<sup>(24)</sup> he invited many famous warriors to join him, and allured them by great rewards. Forward in battle, he prepared himself, and often fought against the foreigners or infidels,<sup>(25)</sup> took their forts and put all the inhabitants to the sword. He was the admiration of warriors, and the fear of foreigners or infidels, so that they called him the new *Ashtahag*.<sup>(26)</sup> After his return with honours and fame to his own country, four sons were born to him, so incomparable among men ; the first was called *Thoros* the Great, who was adorned by

Stephanus (or the crown). Next to Stephanus came *Meleh*, and then *Rouben*.

The Roman Emperor (Calo-Johanes), who had the surname of Porphyrogenitus,<sup>(27)</sup> hearing all that Leon had done, became very angry. He assembled a great army and brought them down into Cilicia. Leon, finding that he was surrounded by a large army, lost all confidence in his forts and fled to the mountains; but he was speedily taken and brought in fetters before the emperor. There are some who even affirm that the emperor broke his oath, and took Leon by fraud. His two sons were also arrested, and with their father carried into captivity; they were detained together in prison in Constan- 1137 tinople. Meleh and Stephanus were fortunately not in Cilicia at the time their father was taken prisoner; they were on a visit in Urha or Edessa, with their uncle, the count of that place.<sup>(28)</sup>

The Armenian army was destroyed, and the emperor took possession of Cilicia; he left a part of his soldiers in that country and then returned to Constantinople. The eye which looks down from heaven on the earth below had

pity upon Leon and his two unfortunate sons, and the emperor's heart turned to clemency. He honoured Leon exceedingly, and gave permission to his children to stay with their father; he invited him to dinner, and permitted him the recreation of hunting; he gave him handsome clothes and many other fineries.<sup>(29)</sup> On one occasion the emperor, being in his bathing-room, called Leon and his sons before him, treated them most kindly, and was so pleased with the prowess of Rouben, that he made him one of his household, and promised to raise him yet higher.

Rouben once took the bathing tub of the emperor, which was full of water, and swung it quickly round, which excited much surprise. The news reached the emperor, and all who saw the act called him a new Sampson; but this excited envy in the soldiers and filled them with hatred. They gained the ear of the emperor, accused Rouben, and ultimately killed him by their wicked devices.<sup>(30)</sup>

Thoros was now left alone with his father in prison, where he had a dream, which he instantly imparted to his father. "I saw in a

dream," said he, "a man of very superior appearance offering me a loaf of bread, on which was a fish; I being very astonished, took from the man what he offered to me; when thou, Oh father! camest, and I enquired the meaning of that; but what further happened I know not." Leon, hearing these words from his son, was enlightened by heaven, and turning to him joyfully, embraced him ardently and said: "Be joyful, O my honourable son! for thou wilt be honoured as thy forefathers. After evil cometh a twofold good fortune,—our country, which was taken from us on account of our sins, and other lands, will again be governed by thee. The fish which thou hast seen, means,—that thou wilt be master of the sea, but I shall not enjoy these good tidings."

Leon died and was elevated to Christ; the emperor then felt compassion for Thoros, took <sup>1141</sup> him out of prison, and received him into the imperial guards. Being now in the imperial palace, and a soldier among the soldiers, he very soon distinguished himself, and even the emperor looked upon him with benevolence. Before the end of the year (1141) the emperor left

Constantinople with a large army, and went to assist the Prince of Antioch, who was hard pressed by the Turks.<sup>(31)</sup> Being on a hunting party in the valley of Anazarbus, one of his own poisoned arrows wounded him, and he fell dead on the spot; he thus met with his deserved fate.<sup>(32)</sup> The army buried him on the place where he lost his life, and erected a monument which is even now to be seen, called *Kachzertik*, that is, *The corpse of the Calos, or Beautiful*.<sup>(33)</sup>

The Greek army returned, but Thoros remained in the country; though the traditions concerning this fact are different. Some say, Thoros withdrew himself quite alone, went by sea from Antioch to Cilicia, and took possession of his dominions, finding means to gain at first the town of Amouda, and afterwards all the other places. But the emperor's party say that Thoros, during the time the Greeks stayed in the country, lived with a lady who gave him a great sum of money; with these treasures he fled to the mountains, and discovered himself to a priest as the Son of Leon, the true king of the country. The priest was exceedingly happy at these tidings, and

Thoros hid himself under a shepherd's disguise. There were many Armenians in this part of<sup>1143</sup> the country who, being barbarously treated by the Greeks, sighed for their former masters; to these men, as it is said, the priest imparted the joyful tidings; they instantly assembled and appointed *Thoros* their *Baron*;<sup>(34)</sup> he gained possession of Vahga, and afterwards of many other places. Let this be as it may, it was certainly ordained by God that this man, who was carried away as a prisoner, should become the chief of the country of his forefathers, that he should take the government out of the hands of the Greeks, and destroy their armies.

After the death of the Porphyrogenitus, his son Manuel succeeded him, who is commonly called *Pareser, the Virtuous*.<sup>(35)</sup> Immediately after he had taken possession of the empire, Manuel assembled an army to assist the Franks, who came by sea to these countries, and were hardly pressed by the Turks. Coming to Cilicia, and hearing what Thoros had done; how he wronged the Greeks, and behaved himself as the master of the country, the emperor became



very angry, and ordered that Thoros should be brought to him a prisoner, which he thought an easy matter. But Thoros shut himself up in a steep and high fort, occupied all the narrow passes by his soldiers, and easily repulsed from thence the Greeks, many of whom were taken and brought in fetters before the victor. Manuel being informed of what had happened, 1146 became still more enraged.<sup>(36)</sup>

It happened that the emperor sent at that time, under the guard of many great men, a large sum of money, and that Thoros took the guard and the treasure, and divided the latter among his soldiers. These Greek nobles seeing this, said to Thoros: "Having taken such great riches, why dost thou squander them away to the common people?" Thoros answered nothing to this question, and only remarked: "These same men will bring you back to fetters, although you are now allowed to return to your friends."<sup>(37)</sup> The emperor heard with astonishment what these men, on their return, reported to him, and wished to keep on good terms with Thoros. The Prince of Antioch became the umpire between them. The emperor came to

Antioch, where also Thoros was invited, and gained the admiration of every body by his prowess and valour. The emperor wanted Anazarbus and many other places, which were in the possession of Thoros ; he accordingly delivered them up for a large sum of money.

Thoros returned to Cilicia, and the emperor put a stop to the campaign in order to return to his own country. As soon as the imperial army started from Anazarbus, Thoros proceeded suddenly in the night time to Vahga. Now, whether the king presumed upon <sup>(38)</sup> any thing, or whether some communication had been made to him, he did not wish to hold to the treaty. Thoros, as soon as the Emperor Manuel went back, again began his inroads. He again took Anazarbus and conquered Mamestia and the surrounding towns. The Duke of Tarsus, who was appointed governor of the country by the emperor, hearing of these proceedings of Thoros, assembled the great Greek army left him by the emperor, and those Armenian barons who belonged to the emperor's party, and enjoyed many honours by his kindness, such as Oscin the baron of Lampron, and the family of Na-

thaniel, who were the chiefs of Asgourhas.<sup>(39)</sup> They now united together to besiege Mamestia; when Thoros behaved himself very valiantly. With only a few men he made a sally out of the town, gained a complete victory over a large army, and took many prisoners; some of the Greeks he put to death, while others gained their liberty for a ransom. His Armenian captives he set instantly at liberty, and contrived to gain their friendship. Oscin having been won by a large sum of money, gave up his connexion with the emperor, and made a treaty with Thoros; and Thoros gave his daughter in marriage to the son of Oscin.<sup>(40)</sup> The Baron having thus settled his affairs collected a fresh army, took the famous Tarsus, and all the country from the precipices of Isauria<sup>(41)</sup> to the sea; he conquered Cilicia, beginning from Isauria, from one end to the other. The Emperor Manuel hearing these occurrences grew enraged on feeling himself unable to chastise Thoros. He sent a message to the Sultan of Iconium,<sup>(42)</sup> Chlish-Aslan, and promised him a great sum of money if he would make war against Thoros. The first time, the sultan objected to the treaty

which existed between him and Baron Thoros, and so withstood the temptation ; but his reluctance was overcome by a second message. He collected a large army, carried them into Cilicia, descended into the plain, and besieged <sup>1154</sup> Anazarbus. But God was against them and punished them with plagues, like those of the Egyptians ; he sent flies and wasps against the infidels, and harassed them with many other heavy calamities. Thoros made inroads into the Sultan's own country, won Iconium itself, returned with a large booty, and sent Chlish-Aslan a present out of the booty. By this, and by the hardships they suffered, the Sultan and his followers were disgusted, and returned to their own country. They came back a second <sup>1156</sup> time, and returned again in confusion. The Sultan then kept his oath, and remained the friend of our hero.

Thoros was of a tall figure and of a strong mind : his compassion was universal ; like the light of the sun he shone by his good works, and flourished by his faith ; he was the shield of truth and the crown of righteousness ; he was well versed in the Holy Scriptures and in

the profane sciences. It is said that he was of such profound understanding, as to be able to explain the difficult expressions of the prophets—his explanations even still exist.<sup>(43)</sup> In a word, he was so accomplished in every thing, that God was pleased to call him to heaven. He 1167 was buried in Trassarg.

His brother Stephanus, of whom we have spoken before, remained near the *Black Mountain*, making himself illustrious by his prowess, and gaining Carmania and the surrounding places;<sup>(44)</sup> but the Greeks came again against him, and he was consumed by the “seething pot.”<sup>(45)</sup> He died in the field and was buried in the church of Arkagal (or the Archangel). He left two sons, Rouben and Leon, who became afterwards king of Cilicia.

Thoros left a child under age, whom he committed, together with the country, to the care of a certain Baron and Baillie Thomas, his father-in-law, with an injunction to deliver to him the country as soon as the child should have 1168 attained his majority.<sup>(46)</sup> *Meleh*, of whom we have spoken above, was with the Sultan of Aleppo, and hearing of the death of his brother,

he came with an army into the country, and dealt very cruelly with its inhabitants. Not being able to conquer the possessions of his brother he returned to Aleppo, and came back with still greater forces. Receiving a message from the Armenian Barons that they would freely acknowledge him as their sovereign, he sent back the Turks, and governed in peace for some time. But he soon drove into exile the Baillie Thomas, who went afterwards to Antioch. The child of Thoros was killed by the command of Meleh by some wicked people. This cruel 1169 man was at last killed by his own soldiers, and buried in the church called *the great Car*.<sup>(47)</sup>

The sons of Stephanus, Rouben and Leon, were very much honoured by a certain Baron *Pakouran*, by the whole Armenian nobility, and the army; they therefore appointed *Rouben* as their Baron. He was an 1174 excellent prince, compassionate and kind; he ruled the country very well, and was praised by every body. He was a friend of the Greeks, and married a lady of that nation, by whom he had two daughters blooming in chastity. He besieged Lampron and pressed its inhabitants

very hard; they not being able to withstand him, called the Prince to their assistance; he  
1182 invited Rouben to Antioch, and fraudulently held him a prisoner, thinking to conquer Cilicia with ease during his captivity. But his brother Leon and the army behaved themselves very valiantly; they pressed Lampron so closely in the absence of the Baron, and defended their own country so well, that they released Rouben and acknowledged his supremacy. The inhabitants of Lampron gave themselves and their treasure up to the Baron of Cilicia. On his return to his own country Rouben was kind and humane to every one, and at his death left the crown to Leon; he gave him many rules concerning the government of the country, and committed to him his daughters, with an injunction not to give them foreign husbands, that the Armenians might not be governed by foreigners and harassed by a  
1185 tyrant. Rouben was buried in Trassarg.

*Leon* was a valiant and learned prince; he enlarged his principality and became the master of many provinces. A few days only after his taking possession of the country, the de-

scendants of Ismael, under the command of one Roustam, advanced and came against Cilicia.<sup>(48)</sup> 1186 Leon was not frightened, but confiding in God, who destroyed Sanacherib, he vanquished with a few men the great army of the infidels. Roustam himself being killed by St. George,<sup>(49a)</sup> the whole Hagarenian army then fled and dispersed; the Armenians pursued them and enriched themselves by the booty. The power of Leon thus increased, and being confident in his strength, he chased the Tadjiks<sup>(49b)</sup> and pursued the Turks; he conquered Isauria and came as far as Iconium; he captured Heraclea,<sup>(50)</sup> and again gave it up for a large ransom; he blockaded Cæsarea,<sup>(51)</sup> and had nearly taken it; he made a treaty with the Sultan of Iconium, and received a large sum of money from him; he surrounded Cilicia on every side with forts and castles; he built a new church called Agner, and was exceedingly generous to all monasteries erected by his ancestors; his bounty extended itself even to the leprous; they being shunned by every body and expelled from every place, he assigned to them a particular house, and provided them with necessaries.