

## THE TRANSFERENCE OF THE AYRARAT GOVERNORSHIP-VICEGERENCY TO VAHCE I VACHUTYAN

The liberation struggle of Armenia by the military commander of both Armenian and Georgian armies, Zakare II and his brother, Ivane I, became reality in 1190-1200s. The chronicler Vardan has written that "Zakarids seized the country of Shirak in the year of six hundred forty (1191); Anberd in the year of six hundred and forty five (1196); Ani in the year of six hundred and forty eighth (1199); Bjni in the year of six hundred and fifty (1201); and Dvin in the year of six hundred and fifty two (1203)..."<sup>1</sup>. These territories were larger than those under the reign of the Armenian Bagratid kings.

The Zakarid brothers handed over the liberated territories, either immediately or after some time, to the military leaders, distinguished in battles and served to them faithfully, except those which were belonging to princely houses, having legatees.

After the liberation of considerable part of the historical Ayarat province, the Zakarid brothers did not hand it to anyone at first, at least, up to the first half of the first decade of the 13<sup>th</sup> century. They founded the Ayarat governorship-vicegerency on that territory within the frames of the country's administrative reform and gave it to the commander Vache I Vachutyan<sup>2</sup>.

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1 Հաւաքումն պատմութեան վարդանայ վարդապետի (A Collection of History by Archimandrite Vardan), Venice 1862, 138.

2 PETROSYANTS, T., *Vachutids*, Yerevan 2001, 363; Idem, *The Armenian princely coat of arms*, Yerevan 2005 (The coat of arms of the Vachutids, 54-58); Idem, *Vachutids* (p. 284), *Vache I* (p. 283), in *The Encyclopedia of Armenia*, v. 11; Idem, *The Time of Writing the Catalogue of Saghmosavank*, in *Lraber Hasarakakan Gitutiunneri (Journal of Social Sciences)*, 1981, N 1, pp. 82-84; Idem, *The family tree of the Vachutids' princely house*, in *Banber Yerevani Hamalsarani (Newsletter of the Yerevan University)*, 1981, N 3, pp. 130-147; Idem, *Saghmosavank*, in

The year of transference of the Ayrarat governorship-vicegerency and the part of it, Nig-Aragatsotn, to Vachutids is not certified in annalistic and lithographic sources.

Let us start from the preserved lithographic inscriptions to find out the transference date.

The year 1201 was considered in the book of "Ayrarat", printed in 1890, as a date of foundation of the Ayrarat governorship-vicegerency considering the following stone inscription, published by Father Ghevont Alishan, "During the reign of Ivane and Shahnshah and the rule of Vache in the province we gave the entire Anberd to Boghiots, half of a brook of Tegher ..."<sup>3</sup>. Karapet Kostanyants has placed this inscription under the year 1201 in the divan of lapidary inscriptions published by him<sup>4</sup>. Nevertheless, it follows from the formula of the names in inscriptions that it was engraved after the death of Zakare II (1213), when his brother, Ivane I, and the son, Shahnshah I, had already gone to power. Hence, the inscriptions could not be written before 1213. Nonetheless, the inaccurate dating became sometimes a cause for a reality of creating Ayrarat governorship-vicegerency in that year and handing it to Vache I.

Faina Babayan and Aram Kalantaryan have put into circulation an inscription, opened during the excavations of Ushi monastery complex. Here is the restoration they have done for that inscription, "I, Vache, the prince of princes, the son of Sarkis, the governor of my land, decorated the Holy Relics of this church with silver, and donated other goods by the orders of Ivane and Zakare ..."<sup>5</sup>

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*Etchmiatsin*, 1981, IV, pp. 55-58; Idem, *The Church of the Holy Mother of God in Mravyan village and the Inscriptions*, in *Patma-Banasirakan Handes (Historico-Philological Magazine)*, 1981, N 3, pp. 289-294; Idem, *The monastery of Tegheniats as a cultural center*, in *Patma-Banasirakan Handes (Historico-Philological Magazine)*, 1982, N 1, pp. 121-129; Idem, *The Princely Residence Vardenis village of Kurd Vachutyán*, in *Sovetakan Mankavarzh (Soviet Pedagogue)*, 1987, 6, pp. 53-56.

3 ALISHAN, f. G., *Ayrarat*, Venice 1890, 156.

4 KOSTANYANTS, K., *Lapidary chronicles, the list of collection of the Armenian inscriptions*, Saint Petersburg 1913, 142.

5 BABAYAN, F. - KALANTARYAN, A., *The lapidary inscriptions of Saint Sarkis monastery of Ushi*, in *Patma-Banasirakan Handes (Historico-Philological Magazine)*, 2001, N 2, p. 170.

The missing parts are restored with slanting fonts within the square brackets.

About the restoration of words "Ivane" and "Zakare" after the phrases "by order"; it was impossible to write firstly the name of Ivane I on the territory of Ayarat governorship-vicegerency subject to the royal house of Zakare II during the latter's lifetime, up to 1213. The restoration is not correct. Besides, the reason of donation is incomprehensible (regardless of orders by the king-suzerains). We can surely argue that the following text should be restored after the preserved letter "Ի" (I), "I constructed this church by the orders of I[vane and Shahنشah]", in case of which the reason of the wholesale donation will be also clear. The famous inscription from Anberd contains the following formula, "...in the time of Ivane and Shahنشah's reign and under the rule of Vache in the province...". The inscription of Ushi should be also deemed synchronous to that of Anberd, namely, engraved either in 1213 or in later times.

The first two inscriptions with dates and related to the representatives of Vachutids' house refer to the same year, 1211. One of them, "In the year ՌԿ [VoK] 1211 I, Vache, the servant of Zakaria, the son of Sarkis, constructed this tabernacle (the church, chapel and parvis-translator) and then gave my Gospel in a golden box and the Holy Signs and the Acts (of the Apostles), obtained at great expense, to the Monastery of Holy Mother of God"<sup>6</sup> belongs to the founder of princely house, Vache I Vachutyan, and is engraved inside the great parvis of the monastery, on the eastern side of the southern wall; and the second one – "In the year ՌԿ [VoK] (1211) I, Mamakhatun, the wife of Vache, the daughter..., gave a silver fan and other goods to the Holy Community of Tegheneats, and the servants of it confirmed all this"<sup>7</sup> - belongs to the wife of Vache I Vachutyan, the princess Mamakhatun, and is engraved inside the central parvis of one of the cultural centers of Nig province, Tegheneats monastery, on the left side of the northern stone arch.

The inscriptions about the Vachutids on the territory of Ayarat governorship-vicegerency refer to 1213; there is also one hypothetical writing dated 1213.

6 GHAFADARYAN, K., *The Monastery of Sanahin and its inscriptions*, Yerevan 1975, p. 29.

7 From our collection.

Let us examine them sequentially.

A) The construction of Katoghike church (Cathedral) of Ushi was finished either in 1213 or in the year immediately following it. The builder of the church, the prince of princes Vache I, wrote down, "I, Vache, the prince of princes, the son of Sarkis and the governor of my land, constructed this church by the orders of Ivane and Shahنشah, decorated the sacred relics with silver..."<sup>8</sup>.

B) An inscription was carved by Vache I Vachutyan on the lintel of Holy Mother of God church of Tegher in the year ՌԿԲ [VoKB] (1213), "In the year ՌԿԲ [VoKB]...during the reign of Vache, a pious prince, who was appointed the governor of the province by the order of Zakaria...offers a sacrifice in memory of them"<sup>9</sup>.

C) The construction of Ara's inn was finished in 1213. Hovhannes Shahkhatunyants<sup>10</sup> and Toros Toramanyan<sup>11</sup> saw one in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the other at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and wrote down the year ՌԿԲ [VoKB] (1213) of the preserved inscription.

D) Vache I carved an inscription on the Monastery of Kecharis, situated in the Proshids' subject area, "In the year ՌԿԲ [VoKB] (1213) I, Vache, the son of Sarkis, who is the son of Vachut, and my wife Mamakhatur, and my sons, Kurd and Vachut, united the Holy Covenant (Holy Community-translator) of the Khecharis and gave them a garden in our village Shengavit, a treasured possession..."<sup>12</sup>.

Let us consider also another hypothetical memorial inscription, dated 1213. It was circulated by Artashes Matevosyan, a manuscriptologist. The memorial inscription was written by Grigor the Archimandrite penman. Here is the whole text, "In the year ԶՃԿԲ [Z TCH K B] (1213) I, Grigor, labeled archimandrite, who served the construction of the monastic buildings, churches and belfries, raised this commemorative cross stone on my resting place by the order of Christ loving and great prince

8 BABAYAN, F. - KALANTARYAN, A., *The lithographic inscriptions of St. Sarkis monastery of Ushi*, p. 171.

9 KARAPETYAN, S., *The Monastery of Tegher*, in *Vardzk*, 2013, N 10, pp. 18-19.

10 SHAHKHATUNYANTS, H., *Subscript of the Cathedral of Etchmiatsin and the five provinces of Ararat*, Vagarshapat 1842, pp. 169-170.

11 TORAMANYAN, T., *Materials of the History of Armenian Architecture*, v. 2, Yerevan 1948, 119.

12 HOVSEPIAN, G. CATHOLICOS, *Khaghbakids or Proshids in the History of Armenian People*, II publication, Antilias 1969, 314.



Vache at his expense, since I left this writing for memory of the debt of my irreversible path; and to them who will read the writing of my confession to God, my writing, addressed to merciful God - it is the plea of my mind and soul - when you read it, remember me in your prayers"<sup>13</sup>.

One has written in the literary monument that the construction works in 1213 are considered, and that they were carried out by Vache I Vachutyan. The construction of churches and chapel-gateway is mentioned in the said monument, the project having been administered by Grigor the Archimandrite; and that these buildings were constructed "by the order and at the expense of the great prince Vache". The writing of Grigor the Archimandrite is dated ՋՃԿԲ [Z TCH K B]/ $6 \times 100 + 60 + 2 = 662 + 551 = 1213$ . A. Matevosyan has pointed out that the manuscript has been written in Saghmosavank and refers to Saghmosavank.

The construction works of the Cathedrals of Tegher and Ushi in the Ashtarak region were finished in the mentioned year, 1213; the construction of Saghmosavank and the Cathedral of Hovhannavank was already started and running on, was completed in 1215 in the case of the former, and in 1217, in the case of the latter. The exact construction date of the Cathedral of Eghipatrush village in the Aparan region is unknown; the construction was completed, in all probability, in the early 1220s<sup>14</sup>. The construction of the Cathedral of Astvatsynkal (God-carrier) of that same region was over in 1244. The construction of courtyards of the mentioned churches was finished in 1218, in Tegher; in the second half of the 1220s, in Saghmosavank; in 1251, in Hovhannavank; in the early 1250s, in Astvatsynkal; and in 1264, in Ushi. In that case, which one of the churches and courtyards is considered in the literary monument along with the construction started by Vache I Vachutyan and finished still in 1213?

The first St. Zion cathedral of the Saghmosavank complex was not constructed still in 1213 (the construction was finished in 1215). Then, how could Grigor the Archimandrite manage the building process of the church and chapel from the foundation to the end of construction? After St. Zion the construction of the courtyard from the western side of the Cathedral was started, which was most likely ended in 1220-1225. This

13 MATEVOSYAN, A., *Literary monuments of the 13th century*, Yerevan 1984, 82.

14 PETROSYANTS, T., *Holy Mother of God Church of Mravyan village and its inscriptions*, *Historico-Philological Magazine*, 1981, N 3, 289-290.

makes possible the information of Grigor the Archimandrite that he has managed the construction of the churches and courtyard. Nevertheless, it contradicts the date 1213 mentioned in the literary monument. It is known that the prince of princes Vache I fell asleep forever between 1232 and 1235. This is certified by the inscription of Karbi commemorative cross stone of 1235, which was engraved by the order of Kurd I Vachutyan, and by which he confirmed his enthronement<sup>15</sup>. But Grigor the Archimandrite is not writing of that; hence, he has not lived until the death of Vache, has not seen this, as he would certainly have written about it. It turns out that Grigor the Archimandrite saw the end of construction of Cathedral and parvis of the complex that should have taken place in 1225, at the farthest, but he has not lived until the death of Vache I, which should have occurred in 1235. In fact, the literary monument could have been written between the years 1220-1235. Taking into consideration the above-mentioned facts, we are offering to correct the literary monument of Grigor the Archimandrite; we have to correct the letter K /60/of tens there, changing it with the letter H /70/, after which we will have the year ԶՀՀԲ [Z TCH H B] /672+551=1223/. Hence, it follows that Grigor the Archimandrite has managed the construction works of the Cathedral and parvis, launched by Vache I, and wrote the literary monument after termination of those works in 1223.

Having corrected the date of the literary monument, 1213, changing it with 1223, we are confirming, at the same time, that the Cathedral and parvis were built during the reign of Vache I.

Kurd I proved with the inscription, carved in the courtyard of Saghmosavank in 1241, that the said constructions were created by his father, Vache I<sup>16</sup>. We read the first two lines of the mentioned inscription of Kurd with great difficulty in the 1970s; in the continuation, where mention is made of Vache I, having built the Cathedral and parvis, we could not read and make clear the writing of Kurd I, because of which we came to a wrong conclusion and considered Vache II, the grandson of Vache I, the builder of parvis.

The mentioned inscription of Kurd I was read and put into circulation by the decryption of Ashot Manucharyan, an epigraphist; and accepting our mistake, we are also accepting the fact that the parvis was built by Vache I.

15 PETROSYANTS, T., *Vachutids*, 54.

16 GHAFADARYAN, K., *Sanahin*, 29.

After correcting the date of the literary monument of Grigor the Archimandrite, it ceases to be a primary source of 1213.

It follows from the other primary sources of the mentioned date, 1213, that the donation letter of princess Mamakhatur, left in Tegheniats monastery and dated 1211, is the earliest one on the territory of Ayrarat governorship-vicegerency.

The inscriptions of construction works of the Cathedral of Ushi (questionable) as well as that of Holy Mother of God church of Tegher and the inn of Ara, dated 1213, are very close to the above-mentioned writing.

Let us consider the inscription of the construction works of Sanahin, dated 1211. Vache I has built the great parvis of the complex ("I built this tabernacle"). It is adjacent both to the western wall of Mother of God Church and to the northern wall of the parvis of Savior church. The building is a rectangular construction from south to north. It is divided into three parts with colonnades, disposed from east to west, and being each covered with a gable roof.

Karo Ghafadaryan, honored scientist of the Armenian architecture, has pointed out that the mentioned parvis of Sanahin is a unique example of its kind among the Armenian courtyards and, most likely, is connected with the secular palatial columned halls, the examples of which have not reached us<sup>17</sup>. The courtyard was a laborious and time-consuming construction from the constructional viewpoint. If the fact of constructing four-column courtyards, typical to the 13<sup>th</sup> century, in 6-7 years is taken into consideration, then, at least, 5-6 years would be again needed to have built this edifice, even though we consider its two walls being already constructed. And if we take off minimum 5 years from 1211 on the basis of countdown, which was needed for construction, we will get 1206, when the construction of parvis, built by Vache, was started. The correction of this date is very important. We think that the construction of the great parvis of Sanahin must be deemed the time of transferring the Ayrarat governorship-vicegerency to Vache I and an unconditional answer to Zakarids for the great confidence regarding Vache I for giving him Nig-Aragatsohn as a property; appointing him governor-vicegerent of Ayrarat and granting the title of the prince of princes.

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17 MANUCHARYAN, A., *The decryption of two inscriptions of Kurd I Vachutian*.  
ysu.am/files/03A\_Manucharyan.pdf:

The end of construction works of the cathedrals of Tegher and Ushi and the inn of Ara in Nig-Aragatsotn in 1213 proves that it was necessary first to get that area and only then to carry out construction works on those lands.

If we calculate maximum 7 years for these works and extract the same amount of time from 1213 on the basis of countdown, we will get 1206.

Taking into consideration the stated facts, we can prove that the Ayrarat governorship-vicegerency was created and handed to Vache I in 1206.

The creation of the Ayrarat governorship-vicegerency earlier than that time is excluded because of lack of appropriate materials.

TIGRAN PETROSYANTS

### Ամփոփում

**ԱՅՐԱՐԱՏԵԱՆ ԿՈՂՄՆԱԿԱԼՈՒԹԵԱՆ-ՓՈԽԱՐՔԱՅՈՒԹԵԱՆ  
ՅԱՆՁՆՈՒՄԸ ՎԱԶԷ Ա. ՎԱԶՈՒՏԵԱՆԻՆ**

**ՏԻԳՐԱՆ ՊԵՏՐՈՍԵԱՆՑ**

ԺԳ. դարի սկզբին Զաֆաբեանները ազատագրուած Այրարատ մահանգը դարձրեցին փոխարքայութիւն եւ յանձնեցին իրենց զօրավարներից Սարգսի որդի Վաչէ Ա. Վաչուտեանին, շնորհելով նրան իշխանաց իշխան կոչում: Յօդուածում բնագրւում է Այրարատ փոխարքայութիւնը Վաչուտեաններին յանձնելու ժամանակը: