

պատրաստել պատկան իշխանութեանց միտքը, ցոյց տալով ո՛չ թէ միայն Չամչեանի, այլ անոր Հիմնադիրին հաւատքին կասկածելի ըլլալը, որու վարդապետութիւնը իր լրումին հասցուցած էր Չամչեան: Կը մնար միայն Պոլսոյ եպիսկոպոսը Փոնթոն, որ կ'ուզէր վկայել ճշմարտութեան, բայց ան եւս ոչ միշտ բացայայտ ու բաց ճակատով, այլ տարուած մարդկային նկատողութիւններէ:

Այս հսկայ հոսանքին դիմաց ամբաստանեալներու կողմէ չկար ուղղակի կերպով պաշտպանութիւն, ինչ որ թերի կէտ մը համարելի է Չամչեանի եւ իր կողմիներուն. կար միայն Հ. Գ. Աւետիքեանի պատասխանները, եւ այդ եւս իբր լուսաբանութիւն Բաղինեանի առարկութիւններուն:

17 Օգոստ. 1812ին կը կազմուի Հոռոմի մէջ Յանձնախումբ մը, քննելու համար ցարդ հասած գրաւոր տուեալները, ոչ թէ միայն 1809ի միութեան փորձի վերաբերեալ, այլ յատկապէս Մխիթարեան Միաբանութեան ոչ-ուղղափառ վարդապետութեան, որու արդիւնքն էր 1809ի միութեան փորձի անյաջող ելքը: Յանձնախումբի անդամներն էին Գրպօ. Քուստանդուղի, Միքայէլ Կալէասսի եւ Տէր Գրիգոր Բաղինեան, որոնք լաւ կերպով կռնելով նամակները (եւ տեղեկատուութիւնները) Վիեննայի Առաքելական Նուիրակին, Գրպօ. Անտոն Մարեանի, Գրպօ. Ստեփան Աւետիքեանի, Տէր Լեոն Քուցիանդիի եւ ուրիշ Դպրոցեաններու, ինչպէս նաեւ Վենետիկի Մխիթարեանց Աթոռակալ Հ. Գաբրիէլ Աւետիքեանի, բայց յատկապէս ծանրանալով Տէր Բաղինեանի ուսումնասիրութեան վրայ, յստակ կերպով եզրակացուցին թէ Վենետիկի Մխիթարեանները այժմ եւս կը մնան իրենց վարդապետութեան մէջ, թէ կարելի է

հաղորդակցութիւն յաստուածայինս հերտիկոսներու եւ հերձուածողներու հետ, ինչպէս նաեւ ուրիշ սխալ սկզբունքներ՝ որոնք ժառանգած են իրենց Հիմնադրէն, որու հետեւանքով կը ստեղծուի երկիւղը որ ամբողջ ազգը իրենց հետեւելով՝ բռնէ կորուստի ճամբան: Արդ այսքան չարիքի առաջն առնելու համար կը յանձնարարեն առնել հետեւեալ զգուշութիւնները»<sup>35</sup>: Հոս կը թուարկուին ինը կէտեր, լաւ եւս ինը սեղմումներ, որոնք աւելի Միաբանութեան պատմութեան պատկանելուն՝ զանց կ'ընենք յիշատակելէ: Մեզ կը հետաքրքրէ միայն Յորդ համարը, ուր կը սահմանուի որ Չամչեան իր գրած եռահատոր Հայոց Պատմութիւնը ենթարկէ Ս. Աթոռի դատաստանին եւ սրբազրութեան:

Այս որոշումները մնացած են Յանձնախումբի սեղանին վրայ, կամ ինչպէս սովոր է, անցնելով հանդերձ բարձրագոյն Ժողովի ատեանին՝ ենթարկուած է քննութեան, բայց ընդունելի չէ եղած: Հոռոմէն ոչ մէկ դիտողութիւն կամ նամակ հասած է Ստեփանոս Ազոնց Աբբասօր, ու Միաբանութեան ընթացքը քալած է սովորականին պէս, իսկ Հայոց Պատմութիւնը մնացած է հրապարակի վրայ, ինչպէս ուրիշ որեւէ սովորական ծախու գիրք:

Այս է Հոռոմի դերքը, մարդկային ամէն շարժառիթէ ու հաշիւներէ վեր ունի անկողմնակալ գործեակերպ մը, որովհետեւ անկարելի է որ Բարձրագոյն ատեանը որոշողութիւններ առնէր առանց լսելու ամբաստանեալին, առանց յարաբերութեան մէջ մտնելու Ազոնց Աբբասօր հետ:

Վենետիկ, Ս. Ղազար  
25 Յունուար 1987

Հ. ՍԱՀԱԿ ՃԵՄՃԵՄԵԱՆ

<sup>35</sup> Հմմտ. AP., Orig. non rif., 26, f. 605-606:

## THE ORBELIANS AND PROSHIANS OF SIWNİK: PATRONS OF RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS

Since the adoption of Christianity at the beginning of the fourth century as the state religion of Armenia, the Armenian royalty, nobility and hing-ranking clergy had always assumed the role of patrons of religious, educational and cultural institutions; they had also been the major promoters of architecture and the arts, including notably the art of manuscript illumination.

This study will discuss the Orbelian and Khaghbakian/Proshian princely families major contribution to the promotion of religious institutions, as well as to the construction of numerous architectural monuments in the province of Siwnik' in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. These remarkable achievements will be examined against the background of the vicissitudes that marked the history of the province.

Following the ignominious defeat of the Byzantine forces at Manazkert (Manzikert) in 1071, central Asia Minor and all of Transcaucasia, including Georgia and Armenia, fell into the hands of the Seljuk Turks. Within a century, however, an independent Georgia re-emerged, and between 1190 and 1209 an army of Georgian and Armenian troops under the brothers Zak'arē and Iwanē of the Zak'arithe family had recovered the northern and eastern provinces of Armenia - Tayk', Guegark', Utik', Ayrarat, and Siwnik'.<sup>1</sup> Under Georgian suzerainty the two brothers divided the administration of the Armenian territories

between them with Zak'arē and his son Shahanshah controlling the northern and western portions, and Iwanē and his son Awag the southern and eastern portions. The Zak'arians, however, did not exercise direct control over their respective territories but had recourse to the ancient *nakhharar* system of hereditary principalities to reward the Lords who had taken part in the military campaigns. Thus Zak'arē's domain was subdivided among the Vach'utian, the Pahlawuni, the Honents' and other families, and Iwanē's among the Orbelian, the Khaghbakian or Proshian, the Dop'ian, and other families. The local Princes had the responsibilities of raising troops in the event of war and paying tribute to the Zak'arians.<sup>2</sup>

In the region south of Lake Sevan the principalities of the Orbelian and Khaghbakian/Proshian families interlocked in curious and often discontinuous geographical holdings. Step'anos Orbelian, historian of the Orbelian family, attests that, with the approval of King Georgi-Lasha of Georgia (1213-22), Iwanē granted to the Orbelian Prince Libarit I, as domains in perpetuity, the town of "Hrashkaber and its district and a number of villages in Vayots' Dzor, (the town of) Ēlař and many villages in the (district of) Kotayk', Hamasri and many villages in Geghark'unik', and (the town of) Aghstew . . . And because he (Liparit) had played a leading role in the capture of

<sup>2</sup> Concerning the re-apportionment of territories among Armenian feudal families see *Patmut'yun* (Academy), III, 541-557. See also G. M. Grigoryan, *Syunik'ē Ōrbelyanneri ōrōk', XIII-XIV darer* (Siwnik' during the Rule of the Orbelians, XIII-XIV Centuries; Erevan, 1981), pp. 43-50; Garegin Hovsep'ian, *Khaghbakian' kam Prosheank' Hayots' patmut'ean meġ* (The Khaghbakians or Proshians in Armenian History; 2nd printing, Antilias, Lebanon, 1969), pp. 9-10.

<sup>1</sup> For the history of the liberation of Georgia and Armenia from Seljuk rule see *Hay Zhoghovrdi Patmut'yun* (History of the Armenian People; Armenian S. S. R. Academy of Sciences), Vol. III (Erevan, 1976), pp. 523-540. On Georgian history of this period consult Alexandre Manvelichvili, *Histoire de Géorgie* (Paris, 1951), pp. 163-215.

Siwnik' and other fortresses, he also granted him Siwnik', Orotn, Barkushat, and other fortresses." At the same time Prince Vasak I of the Khaghbakian family, who had played an important role in the reconquest of Siwnik', was rewarded with the district of Vayots' Dzor and a series of fortresses and monasteries in Kotayk', Ayarat, Shahapunik' and Varazhnu-nik'.<sup>3</sup>

The liberation of northern and eastern Armenia from Seljuk hegemony and the reinstatement of the Armenian *nakharar* system ushered in a twenty-five-year period of peace. The general revitalization of the economy was evident in the rebuilding of ruined cities and villages, bridges, fortresses and monasteries. The province of Siwnik' benefited most in this revival, the Orbelians and Khaghbakians vying with one another in the construction and endowment of churches and monasteries.<sup>4</sup>

The occupation of Transcaucasia by the Mongols in the 1230s reversed much of this progress. The contemporary historian Kirakos Gandzakets'i reflects the horrified Armenian reaction to their new conquerors, who spread over the plains and mountains "like a multitude of locusts or like a torrent of rain pouring upon the earth... There was nothing that they did not plunder; they marched forth swiftly hither and thither like deer, and they themselves never grew tired of gathering booty."<sup>5</sup> Unable to prevent the occupation of their territories, the Georgian and Armenian Princes arrived at an accommodation with the Mongols by which they would recognize the sovereignty of the Mongol Khan, pay the prescribed tribute, and provide troops for Mongol military operations. This gave the Mongol overlords effective political and economic con-

trol while preserving some autonomy for the Princes in their own domains. At the same time King Het'um (1226-70) of the Cilician kingdom of Armenia entered into an alliance with the Mongols against the Seljuk Turks.

In the long run Mongol policies toward land ownership, taxation and toward the population had disastrous effects on the Armenian principalities.<sup>6</sup> Large tracts of land were confiscated from the local Lords and distributed among nomadic Mongol nobility for conversion to pastureland, destroying the agricultural base of the economy. The Ilkhanid state distinguished two kinds of ownership: *khass* lands, which were owned and controlled by the *Ilkhan*; and *indju* lands, which were technically royal property and therefore privileged. If a local Lord could secure a designation of *indju* status for his domain he might thereby secure it from census-takers and tax-collectors while paying his tribute directly to the *Ilkhan*.<sup>7</sup>

Mongol taxation proved to be extremely onerous. Taxes were imposed on orchards, watermills, lakes, mineral mines, craft products, and animals, but the most burdensome levy was the capitation tax called *jizyah* or *ghapchur*, which was imposed on all males between the ages of ten and sixty.<sup>8</sup> It is important to note, however, that in principle women and clergy enjoyed a tax exempt status. Kirakos Gandzakets'i makes the observation that the census-takers "collected no taxes from the

<sup>6</sup> For a detailed discussion of the impact of these policies upon Armenia consult *Patmut'yun* (Academy), III, 656-668.

<sup>7</sup> For the term *khass* see Jules Théodore Zenker, *Dictionnaire Turc-Arabe-Persan* (Leipzig, 1866-76), p. 400a; and for the term *indju* consult A. Boyle, article "Indju" in *Encyclopedia of Islam*, new ed., vol. III, fascicules 59-60 (Leiden, 1971), p. 1208. A detailed discussion of the system of land ownership under the Mongols will be found in *Patmut'yun* (Academy), III, 645-651; see also L. H. Babayan, *Hayastani sots'yal-tn-tesakan k'aghak'akanut'yuné XIII-XIV darerum* (Social-Economic Policy in Armenia in the XIII-XIV Centuries; Erevan, 1964), pp. 406-417.

<sup>8</sup> On Mongol taxation see *Patmut'yun* (Academy), III, 651-655.

<sup>3</sup> Step'anos Orbelian, *Patmut'iwn Nahangin Sisakan* (History of the Province of Sisakan; Tiflis, 1910), p. 397.

<sup>4</sup> Hovsēp'ian, *Khaghbakeank'*, pp. 1-44; cf. also B. A. Ulubabyan, *Khach'eni ishkanut'yuné X-XVI darerum* (The Principality of Khach'en in the X-XVI Centuries; Erevan, 1975), pp. 176-180, 244-264.

<sup>5</sup> Kirakos Gandzakets'i, *Patmut'iwn Hayots'* (History of the Armenians), ed. by K. A. Melik'Ohanjanian (Erevan, 1961), pp. 237-241.

clergy because they had received no such orders from the Khan."<sup>9</sup>

While such economic policies drove many to emigrate, other policies took a direct and heavy toll on the population at large. The conscription of soldiers for the frequent wars waged by the Mongols, the carrying off of large numbers into slavery, and the intermittent pillage by unruly chieftains decimated many sections of the country. Many Armenians fled into neighboring or more distant lands, especially in the Crimea. Step'anos Orbelian attests that prior to the Mongol conquest the province of Siwnik' had 1008 villages, but that by the end of the thirteenth century the number had been reduced to 677.<sup>10</sup>

Under Mongol rule, the history of the province of Siwnik' and the district of Vayots' Dzor in particular continued to be linked with the fortunes of the three leading Armenian princely families, namely, the Zak'arian, the Khaghbakian or Proshian, and the Orbelian. Step'anos Orbelian relates that upon the death of the Prince Ēlikum II Orbelian (1249/50) of the Awagian branch of the Zak'arians sought to appropriate the Orbelian territory. Thereupon Ēlikum's brother Smbat (1249/50-73) journeyed to the Mongol capital Karakorum where he obtained from Mangu Khan a *yarligh* (official decree) reaffirming his family's hereditary rights.<sup>11</sup> His success had far-reaching consequences. The entire province of Siwnik' was now constituted into a separate *tunikan* as the Orbelian hereditary domain and was granted *indju* status. This meant that the tribute from Siwnik' was no longer collected by tax-farmers but by the Orbelian Prince who was responsible directly to the Mongol court. Clergy and religious institutions were tax-exempt and properties that had been confiscated from them were restored. The Orbelian control of Siwnik' inaugurated a period of new construction throughout the province.

<sup>9</sup> Kirakos Gandzakets'i, *Patmut'iwn Hayots'*, pp. 374-375.

<sup>10</sup> Orbelian, *Patmut'iwn*, pp. 234, 509-523.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 411-412.

Smbat's successor Tarsayich (1273-90) proved himself equally skillful in his relations with the Khan and distinguished himself in several Mongol military campaigns. Arghun Khan (1284-91) made him commander of Mongol forces, and King Demetri of Georgia (1272-89) appointed him *atabek* (viceroy) and *amirspasalar* (commander-in-chief) of Georgian forces, posts which had previously belonged to Zak'arian Princes.<sup>12</sup> During his eighteen-year rule Tarsayich's principality encompassed all of Siwnik' including the cantons of Vayots' Dzor and Geghark'unik', in which Zak'arian and Khaghbakian Princes were allowed to hold scattered monasteries and fortresses under Orbelian sovereignty. Like his brother Smbat, Tarsayich sponsored the restoration or construction of many ecclesiastical and public buildings.<sup>13</sup>

The ascendancy of Smbat and Tarsayich coincided with the career of Prince Prosh, the most prominent figure in the history of the Khaghbakian family which after him came to be known as Proshian.<sup>14</sup> Youngest son of Vasak I, Prosh I ruled his family domains for sixty years (1224/5-84), and distinguished himself both in the military and diplomatic service of the Ilkhanid court.<sup>15</sup> Furthermore, seeking to enhance Khaghbakian authority in Vayots' Dzor and Geghark'unik', he attempted to establish an episcopal see independent of the existing bishoprics of Tat'ew and Noravank' in the Orbelian principality of Siwnik'. This was blocked, however, by Tarsayich and the Catholicos Hakob I Klayets'i. Tarsayich, moreover, arranged to unify the two existing sees by having his son, the historian Step'anos Orbelian, appointed Metropolitan Bishop of the whole province, consolidating secular and ecclesias-

<sup>12</sup> Step'anos Orbelian, *Zhamanakagrut'iwn* (Chronicle), ed. by A. Abrahamyan (Erevan, 1942), p. 28; Orbelian, *Patmut'iwn*, p. 426; Grigoryan, *Syunik'Khaghbakeank'*, pp. 83-84; *Patmut'yun* (Academy), III, 635.

<sup>13</sup> Orbelian, *Patmut'iwn*, pp. 416-418, 420, 424-425.

<sup>14</sup> For the most authoritative study of this family consult Hovsēp'ian *Khaghbakeank'* 2nd printing, Antilias, 1969). The career of Prince Prosh I is discussed in *ibid.*, pp. 45-71.

<sup>15</sup> *Patmut'iwn* (Academy), III, 619.

tical authority in the Orbelian family.<sup>16</sup> Though he failed in his separatist endeavor, Prosh nevertheless contributed significantly to monastic centers in his domains.

Under Ēlikum III (1290–1300), Tarsayich's son and successor, Siwnik' enjoyed relative peace. While other parts of Armenia suffered from the civil strife that followed the murder of Arghun Khan in 1291, Siwnik' became a "Noah's ark among earth-shattering waves,"<sup>17</sup> receiving refugees from all sides. Ēlikum's son and successor Prince Burt'el maintained the Orbelian control of Siwnik' through a long rule of over four decades (1300–44?). Contemporary sources refer to him as the "great Prince of Princes of the house of Siwnik',"<sup>18</sup> and the "great commander-in-chief of the Armenians and the Georgians."<sup>19</sup> It is significant to note that Orbelian overlordship did not preclude the local rule of other princely families. Thus in a colophon written at Gladzor in 1334 we read that the codex was executed "during the principality and lordship throughout the region (of Siwnik') of the great Prince Burt'el and of his sons Bēshk'ēn and Iwanē, and during the lordship in our locality (that is, Vayots' Dzor) of Amir Hasan and Jumay, grandsons of the great Prosh."<sup>20</sup>

Nevertheless, while this was a period of prosperity in Siwnik', ominous signs of the fragility of this prosperity were already appearing. The conversion of Ghazan Khan to Islam in 1295 gave the signal for mass conversions of his countrymen and ushered in a period of new troubles for the Christian populations. Particularly under his successors Oldjaitu (1304–16) and Abu Sai'id (1316–35), colophon evidence points to specifically anti-Christian measures and destruction of church

property.<sup>21</sup> Also, the practice of compelling Christians to wear distinctive symbols is frequently attested in the colophons.<sup>22</sup> Moreover, scattered notices occur of the destruction of churches,<sup>23</sup> or the looting of monasteries.<sup>24</sup> Yet the exempt status of the clergy was still generally observed.

But worse was yet to come, for after the death of Abu Sa'id Khan (1335) there followed a twenty-year period of civil wars among the Mongol Princes who vied with one another for the Ilkhanid throne. The colophons record more frequently the sacking of churches and monasteries.<sup>25</sup> To this picture of general disorder must be added the devastation of natural disasters. A scribe records that following the death of Prince Burt'el of Siwnik' "there occurred a severe famine and one third of the inhabitants of Armenia fell victim to it; and after the famine lifted, God's wrath fell upon us, and there occurred a plague in all the land which took away half of the people."<sup>26</sup>

Ilkhanid rule collapsed in civil strife with the death of the last Ilkhan, Nushirvan, in 1353. Transcaucasia in the second half of the fourteenth century became an arena of conflict between the Chobanid and Jala'irid tribes, and the dynastic families of Armenia saw a continued erosion of their power. In the 1350s the Zak'arian family, which still controlled the regions of Ani and Bjni, lost its last territories.<sup>27</sup> After the death of Prince Burt'el Orbelian (1344?) his family continued to con-

<sup>21</sup> Erevan Matenadaran ms. 4881 in Khach'ikyan, *XIV dari*, p. 47. See also Avedis K. Sanjian, *Colophons of Armenian Manuscripts, 1301–1480: A Source for Middle Eastern History* (Harvard University Press: Cambridge, Mas., 1969), pp. 52–53.

<sup>22</sup> Khach'ikyan, *XIV dari*, pp. 46, 47, 48, 138–139, 268; Sanjian, *Colophons*, pp. 52, 52–53, 53, 72–73.

<sup>23</sup> Khach'ikyan, *XIV dari*, pp. 101–102; Sanjian, *Colophons*, p. 58.

<sup>24</sup> Khach'ikyan, *XIV dari*, pp. 138–139; Sanjian, *Colophons*, p. 60.

<sup>25</sup> Erevan Matenadaran ms. 6257 (fol. 268) and ms. 5734 (fol. 335) in Khach'ikyan, *XIV dari*, pp. 281, 285; Sanjian, *Colophons*, pp. 76, 77.

<sup>26</sup> Khach'ikyan, *XIV dari*, p. 375; Sanjian, *Colophons*, p. 87.

<sup>27</sup> Ghewond Alishan, *Ayrat* (Venice, 1890), p. 112.

<sup>16</sup> Orbelian, *Patmut'iwn*, pp. 364–366, 477–480; Hovsēp'ian, *Khaghbakank'*, pp. 50, 254.

<sup>17</sup> Orbelian, *Patmut'iwn*, pp. 431–432.

<sup>18</sup> Erevan Matenadaran ms. 9222 in Levon Khach'ikyan, ed., *XIV dari hayeren dzeagreri hishatakaranner* (Colophons of Armenian Manuscripts of the XIVth Century; Erevan, 1950), p. 182.

<sup>19</sup> Khach'ikyan, *XIV dari*, p. 297.

<sup>20</sup> Khach'ikyan, *XIV dari*, p. 261.

trol a number of districts in Siwnik', but their authority was gradually restricted to limited family estates, and the same could be said of the Proshian holdings in Vayots' Dzor and Geghark'unik'. In 1385 the forces of Tokhtamish Khan of the White Horde entered Siwnik' and, according to the contemporary historian T'ovma Metsop'ets'i, they "pillaged its twelve cantons and slaughtered many and carried off others into captivity;"<sup>28</sup> they took the Orbelian fortress of Orotan and the traditional Orbelian Eghegis and Vayots' Dzor. Tamerlane's invasion the following year destroyed the Proshian hold on Shahaponk' and the Dop'ian control in southern Siwnik'.<sup>29</sup> Their authority destroyed, many of the nobility emigrated, especially to Georgia and the Crimea.

During the hegemony of the Zak'arians and for a whole century after the Mongol conquest of the Armenian province of Siwnik', the Orbelian and Khaghbakian/Proshian princely families promoted ecclesiastical and cultural centers, constructed religious monuments, restored or constructed new fortresses, bridges, dams for irrigation, water-mills, hostels and inns, numerous wine-presses, workshops for handicrafts, and so forth. They also reclaimed hitherto uncultivated extensive lands.

Under the patronage of the Orbelian and Proshian feudal families the growth of monastic-ecclesiastical institutions assumed large-scale proportions. The Princes and members of their families not only constructed religious edifices; they also endowed them with lands, properties and financial resources, as well as multifarious precious gifts. Thanks to their munificence, architecture and sculpture, miniature painting and other fine arts in Siwnik' achieved remarkable heights. Equally significant were the accomplishments of the new cultural-educational institutions in the promotion of the sciences, scholarship, and literature. The relative political tranquility that prevailed in Siwnik' in the late thirteenth and

early fourteenth centuries attracted to that province a migration of monks and scholars from other parts of Armenia, and the canton of Vayots' Dzor in particular emerged as the principal center of Armenian intellectual, literary and artistic activity in this period.<sup>30</sup>

Throughout the Mongol rule in eastern Armenia, and even after the disintegration of the Ilkhanid state and the hegemony of Mongol and Turkoman tribes, the Armenian ecclesiastical institution and the clergy enjoyed a privileged status. As noted earlier, the Orbelian Prince Smbat secured from Mangu Khan, edicts whereby properties previously confiscated from the religious institutions were restored to them and the clergy and their holdings were exempted from taxation. His brother Prince Tarsayich, likewise, secured tax-exempt status for more than 150 monasteries in Siwnik'.<sup>31</sup> We have also seen that, despite Siwnik's status as *indju* domains and the legal inviolability of the ecclesiastical institution, they were frequently subjected to forcible confiscation by Mongol officials.

In view of the fact that under Mongols privately owned feudal properties were much more vulnerable to taxation and arbitrary confiscation, it became customary for the Orbelian, Proshian and other Princes and members of their families to safeguard their holdings by offering them, either temporarily or in perpetuity, to the monastic institutions, whose tax-exempt status was, in the main, honored by the conquerors. These property grants included villages, farms, orchards, windmills, and so forth, as attested by numerous inscriptions, and the transactions entailed securing of official edicts from the Mongol Khans. In order not to arouse the suspicion of the ruling authorities, however, the transfer of property ownership was frequently inscribed upon the walls of religious edifices in the presence of witnesses, the text of the inscription emphasizing that the grant had been made "free

<sup>28</sup> T'ovma Metsop'ets'i, *Patmut'iwn Lank-T'amuray ew hajordats' iwrots'* (History of Tamerlane and His Successors; Paris, 1860), pp. 12, 98.

<sup>29</sup> *Patmut'yun* (Academy), IV, 23–25.

<sup>30</sup> For a detailed discussion of the cultural activities in the twelfth-fourteenth centuries consult *Patmut'yun* (Academy), III, 789–971.

<sup>31</sup> Orbelian, *Patmut'iwn*, p. 427.

from all tax obligations" or other similar formulas.<sup>32</sup> Legally all such transactions were made to the monastic institutions as gifts in perpetuity, and no one except the abbot or other spiritual leader had the right to alienate such property.<sup>33</sup>

Thanks to its extensive land holdings, the religious institutions had always been one of the more important feudal classes in Armenia. This position was accentuated particularly after the collapse of the Ilkhanid state. In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, when the Armenian feudal domains were at the mercy of a succession of unruly Mongol and Turkoman chieftains, more and more feudal estates were placed under the jurisdiction of local monasteries. There are not a few instances in which members of the feudal families became clerics and assumed the abbacy of the monasteries to which they had transferred ownership of their estates. Such abbots became known as *paron-tēr* (literally "Baron-Lord"), for they were simultaneously secular Princes and spiritual leaders. The Metropolitan Bishops of Siwnik' and many of the abbots of Vayots' Dzor held the title of *paron-ter*.<sup>34</sup>

We have seen that the Proshian family domains were located principally in the cantons of Geghark'unik' and Vayots' Dzor, and it is here that the benefits of their patronage were most apparent. The Proshians had their seat in the town of Srkghunk' (also known as Bashk'end and now Vernashen) and in the nearby fortress of Boloraberd (also known as Proshaberd), both located in the regions of Garni and Vayots' Dzor. The ruins of their palace and of two churches in Srkghunk' are mentioned in literary sources, but today there are no traces of these structures.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>32</sup> See, for instance, S. G. Barkhudaryan, *Divan Hay Vimagrut'yan* (Corpus of Armenian Inscriptions), Vol. III: Vayots' Dzor, the Regions of Eghegnadzor and Azizbekov (Erevan, 1967), p. 55; Vol. IV: Geghark'unik' and the Regions of Kamo, Martuni and Vardenis (Erevan, 1973), p. 33.

<sup>33</sup> A detailed study of this system will be found in G. M. Grigoryan, *Syunik'i vanakan kalvatsatirut'yunē IX-XIII darerum* (Monastic Landownership in Siwnik' in the IX-XIII Centuries; Erevan, 1973); see also *idem.*, *Syunik'ē*, pp. 139-140.

<sup>34</sup> See *Patmut'yun* (Academy), IV, 66.

<sup>35</sup> See Barkhudaryan, *Divan*, III, 93.

Garegin Hovsēp'ian, the historian of the Proshian princely family, has made a detailed study of the monastic institutions that were founded by or enjoyed the patronage of the Proshian Princes. Their oldest religious center was the monastery of Kech'aṛuyk' in Geghark'unik', which had previously belonged to the Pahlawuni princely family and which had been the second seat of the bishopric of Bjni.<sup>36</sup> The Proshians' second major religious center was Ayri-vank', also known as Geghard. This ancient monastery had previously belonged to Prince Awag of the Zak'arian family; it was purchased from him in the 1240s by Prince Prosh I as a burial site for the members of his family. Its major church had been built in 1215 during the rule of the *atabek* Iwanē and the *amirsapasalar* Zak'arē, the founders of the Zak'arian principality. But the monastery enjoys its most prosperous period under the Proshians. Its two rock-hewn churches, which are magnificent examples of this genre of Armenian architecture, were commissioned by Prince Prosh I in the 1260s and 1270s and the large rock-hewn *zhamatun* was completed by Prince Papak' I in 1288.<sup>37</sup> Not far from Ayri-vank'/Geghard is the monastery of Aghjots' Surb Step'anos built in 1217 by the Proshian Prince Grigor and his wife Zaz; its church of Saints Peter and Paul was constructed under their son Prince Vasak.<sup>38</sup>

Another religious institution closely associated with the Proshians is the monastery of T'anahat just southeast of the family seat in Srkghunk'. According to Stepanos Orbelian, this monastery existed as early as 735<sup>39</sup> when the renowned Bishop Step'anos Siwnets'i was buried there,<sup>40</sup> but the fragmentary inscription in the present church of Surb Step'anos attests that it was constructed "during the rule of the valiant and illustrious Prince Prosh and his sons Papak', Hasan, and the child Ēach'i"<sup>41</sup>.

<sup>36</sup> The architectural monuments of Kech'aṛuyk' are described in Hovsēp'ian, *Khaghbakeank'*, pp. 157-180.

<sup>37</sup> For detailed descriptions of these monuments see Hovsēp'ian, *Khaghbakeank'*, pp. 181-223.

<sup>38</sup> See Hovsēp'ian, *Khaghbakeank'*, pp. 224-234.

<sup>39</sup> See Orbelian, *Patmut'iwn*, pp. 131-144, 160-161, 340.

<sup>40</sup> See Orbelian, *Patmut'iwn*, pp. 139-143.

<sup>41</sup> See Barkhudaryan, *Divan*, III, 74.

The inscription does not specifically state that the church was built by the afore-mentioned Princes, but there can be no doubt that they were responsible for its construction. This is affirmed by the fact that, according to the inscription, the monastery's clergy were to celebrate the divine liturgy three times a year for Prince Prosh. Although the date is missing in the inscription, literary sources put the construction in 1273-79.<sup>42</sup> Other inscriptions dated between 1284 and 1292, however, show that extensive lands, farms and orchards were offered to the monastery of T'anahat by individuals named Khut'lubek, Sanchar and his wife Tachmlek', Utar and his wife Gurchik, and Prince Prosh's daughter-in-law Tacher. It should be noted that members of the Orbelian family as well, such as Prince Smbat, his brother P'akhradawla, and Smbat's son and daughter-in-law Pena and Susa, had also offered a number of properties to T'anahat.<sup>43</sup> The Proshians were also patrons of the monasteries of Kuk'i and Ocop (or Acop) in the valley of Shaponk'; the first of these was built by the Proshian Prince Papak'.<sup>44</sup>

The canton of Vayots' Dzor (previously known as Daralageaz, and now comprising the regions of Eghegnadzor and Azizbekov in Soviet Armenia) is a veritable museum of medieval architectural monuments which, relatively speaking, have been spared the ravages of conquerors and marauders. Indeed, many of the canton's monasteries, churches, schools and secular structures belong to the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, that is, the heyday of the Orbelian and Proshian princely families. The region's safety is attributable to several factors. Its valleys were protected by a chain of lofty mountains, and its link to the outside world was by means of deep gorges and passes that were difficult to traverse. Moreover, Vayots' Dzor never developed large cities that would have attracted the rapacity of conquerors.

<sup>42</sup> For details concerning this monastery's monuments consult Hovsēp'ian, *Khaghbakeank'*, pp. 60-62, 235-243.

<sup>43</sup> For the inscriptions attesting to these and other property grants consult Barkhudaryan, *Divan*, III, 71-92.

<sup>44</sup> For additional data on these two monasteries see Hovsēp'ian, *Khaghbakeank'*, pp. 244-250.

In Vayots' Dzor the most prominent centers sponsored by the Proshians were the monastery of Gladzor and its famous school and, in the same region, the monastery of Spitakawor Astuatsatsin whose school rose to prominence after the decline of Gladzor. Spitakawor's church was built in 1321 by the Proshian Prince Amir Hasan II, whose mother Mama-khat'un was the daughter of the Orbelian Prince Ēlikum III. The church is notable for its reliefs of the donor and of his father Prince Ēach'i, now in the Historical Museum of Erevan.<sup>45</sup>

Much of the history of the monastery and school of Gladzor is still shrouded in mystery. Considerable scholarly controversy surrounds the very fundamental issues of the location of Gladzor, the date and circumstances of its founding, and the nature of the studies pursued at its school.<sup>46</sup>

The exact site of Gladzor remains uncertain. Part of the problem in locating the site is that occasionally it is referred to by another name, Aghberts', which means "of the springs." This designation for Gladzor is used in the colophons of six manuscripts written between 1284 and 1328;<sup>47</sup> moreover, in two of the manuscripts the scribes leave no doubt about the identity of the two, remarking that

<sup>45</sup> See Barkhudaryan, *Divan*, III, 94-95; Hovsēp'ian, *Khaghbakeank'*, pp. 106-120.

<sup>46</sup> These and other issues have been addressed in great detail in a forthcoming monograph by Thomas F. Matthews and Avedis K. Sanjian entitled "Armenian Gospel Iconography: The Gospel of U. C. L. A. and Its Tradition."

<sup>47</sup> See New Julfa ms. 373 in Smbat Tēr-Awetisian, *Ts'uts'ak hayerēn dzeṛagrats' Nor Jughayi Amenap'rikich' Vank'i* (Catalogue of the Armenian Manuscripts in the All-Saviour Monastery at New Julfa), Vol. I (Vienna, 1970), pp. 567-569; Vienna Mēkhitarist ms. 382 in Hakobos Tashian, *Ts'uts'ak hayerēn dzeṛagrats' matenadaranin Mkhit'areants' i Vienna* (Catalogue of the Armenian Manuscripts at the Mekhitarist Library in Vienna), Vol. I (Vienna, 1895), pp. 833-835; Erevan Matenadaran ms. 1409 in Ö. Eganyan et al., *Ts'uts'ak dzeṛagrats' Mashtots'i anvan Matenadaran* (Catalogue of Manuscripts in the Mashtots' Matenadaran); Vol. I (Erevan, 1965), col. 545. There are also three mss. whose locations are unknown: Ghewond Alishan, *Sisakan* (Venice, 1893), p. 131; Hovsēp'ian, *Khaghbakeank'*, pp. 274-275, 350-351.

the work was done at "Gladzor, which is called the monastery of Aghberts'."<sup>48</sup> Aghberts' is evidently a nickname or a popular designation for Gladzor.

The commonest theory on the localization of Gladzor is that proposed at the beginning of the century by Eruand Lalayan who identified Gladzor with the medieval monastery of T'anahat.<sup>49</sup> In 1970 a team of archaeologists from the University of Erevan, under the direction of I. Gharibyan, conducted excavations at T'anahat and claimed to have found evidence for its identification with Gladzor.<sup>50</sup> Within the monastic compound the team uncovered the ruins of many structures which, they maintained, must have supported the needs of a large academic institution. Gharibyan proposed that the main church, which was erected in 1215, was turned into a school hall in 1273-79 when the new church of Surb Step'anos was built.<sup>51</sup> The archaeologists also claimed to have found the tombs of three of the principal figures of Gladzor, namely, Nersēs Mshets'i, Esayi Nch'ets'i, and Dawit' Sasnets'i.<sup>52</sup> Gharibyan also cites in support of his position a colophon of 1284 in which the scribe Matt'ēos Kilikets'i tells us that he came to Vayots' Dzor, "near the tomb of Siwnets'i, in the monastery of Aghberts' Vank', the glorious second Athens," to study with Nersēs Mshets'i, who was a *vardapet* at Gladzor.<sup>53</sup>

<sup>48</sup> See Ghewond Alishan, *Hayapatum* (Venice, 1901), p. 525; Hovsēp'ian, *Khaghbakeank'*, pp. 274-275, 350-351.

<sup>49</sup> See Eruand Lalayan, "Sharur-Daralageazi Gawar - I Masn, Vayots' Dzor kam Daralageaz" (The Canton of Sharur-Daralageaz - Part I: Vayots' Dzor or Daralageaz) in *Azagrakhan Handēs*, Vol. 12 (Tiflis, 1904-5), pp. 267, 271.

<sup>50</sup> Igit Gharibyan, "Gladzori Hamalsarani hnagitakan pēghumnerē" (The Archaeological Excavations at the University of Gladzor) in *Banber Erevani Matenadaran*, Vol. 2 (Erevan, 1971): 251-260. The complete report was published in *idem*, *Gladzor - Teghagrut'yunē, Pēghumnerē, Vimakan ardzanagrut'yunnerē* (Gladzor: Its Location, Excavations, and Epigraphic Inscriptions), Erevan, 1983.

<sup>51</sup> Gharibyan, "Gladzori hamalsarani pēghumnerē," p. 257.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 257-260.

<sup>53</sup> The text of this colophon will be found in Hovsēp'ian, *Khaghbakeank'*, p. 259; Tashian, *Ts'uts'ak*, I, 1039; Alishan, *Sisakan*, p. 130.

The names of Gladzor and Aghberts', according to Gharibyan, were secondary or nicknames for the monastery; its formal name was T'anahat. Hence, he argues, Step'anos Orbelian, who studied with Nersēs Mshets'i, does not mention either Gladzor or Aghberts' in his list of monasteries, but he does mention T'anahat.<sup>54</sup>

Other scholars have endorsed the identification of Gladzor with T'anahat for the same or similar reasons. A. N. Avetisyan has suggested that the monastery, which was earlier known as T'anahat, acquired the name of Gladzor during the rectorship of Nersēs Mshets'i who named the monastery Gladzor after a monastery in his home town called Gladzor.<sup>55</sup> A. G. Abrahamyan expresses himself in full agreement with Gharibyan's view and reiterates many of his archaeological arguments.<sup>56</sup> At the same time he adds a misrepresentation of his own, contending that

<sup>54</sup> Gharibyan, "Gladzori hamalsarani pēghumnerē," p. 260.

<sup>55</sup> See A. N. Avetisyan, *Haykakan manrankarch'ut'yan Gladzori dprots'ē* (The Gladzor School of Armenian Miniature Painting; Erevan, 1971), pp. 11-17. Avetisyan has provided no documentation for his conjecture. The same is true of Levon Khach'eryan, whose assertion of this view is even more emphatic (see *Gladzori Hamalsaranē* (The University of Gladzor; Erevan, 1973), pp. 45-49). A. Mat'evosyan informs us that there is a colophon indicating that a ms. has indeed been written in 1521 "in the canton of Taron, in the monastery of Gladzor, at the church of Surb Aḥak'elots'," but he too fails to cite his source. In any event, Mat'evosyan argues that this is the only source attesting that the monastery of Mush was also called Gladzor. He not only rejects Khach'eryan's assertion that Nersēs Mshets'i and his pupils, who came from the monastery of Surb Aḥak'elots' to Vayots' Dzor, named their school Gladzor after their former institution; rather he conjectures that in the early sixteenth century the monks of Surb Aḥak'elots' may have nicknamed it Gladzor in memory of their predecessors who founded an eminent school in Vayots' Dzor, or they may have founded a separate school by that name which had a brief life-span. (Artashes Mat'evosyan, "Hiravi, erb ev ortegh ē himnvel Gladzori hamalsaranē" (When and Where Was the University of Gladzor Founded?) in *Garun* (Erevan), no. 7 (1980): 58-59.

<sup>56</sup> A. G. Abrahamyan, "Gladzori hamalsarani teghē ev himnadrut'yan taret'ivē" (The Location and Date of the Founding of the University of Gladzor) in *Patma-Banasi-rakan Handes* (Erevan), I (1982): 159-176. The same article appeared in *Garun* (Erevan), Sept. 1978, pp. 76-84.

"most of the extant manuscripts written at Gladzor clearly indicate that the university of Gladzor operated under the aegis of the monastery of Surb Step'anos at Tanahat."<sup>57</sup> But in point of fact, none of the manuscripts of Gladzor ever mention T'anahat. Another scholar, Paylak Ant'abyan, is also in general agreement with the conclusions of the archaeologists.<sup>58</sup>

Nevertheless, the archaeological evidence is far from compelling. Indeed, Gharibyan has exercised excessive haste in his excavation; none of the tombstones found at T'anahat actually belonged to figures associated with the school of Gladzor. In asserting these views, Levon Khach'eryan proposes no exact location for Gladzor, but he makes the important observation that subsequent to the death of Esayi Nch'ets'i in 1338 sources referring to Gladzor virtually cease, whereas references to T'anahat continue for another century and a half.<sup>59</sup> The epigrapher S. G. Barkhudaryan, editor of several volumes in the series *Corpus Inscriptionum Armeniacarum*, has also declared the identification of Gladzor as T'anahat unsubstantiated.<sup>60</sup> Neither inscriptions nor colophons ever refer to T'anahat by any other name. Further, none of the inscriptions from T'anahat refer to Gladzor and none of the tombstones name any figures connected with Gladzor. On the other hand, manuscripts from Gladzor name their place of origin as Gladzor and/or Aghberts', but never T'anahat. To these arguments G. Grigoryan adds another, based on the self-evident meaning of

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 163-165. The colophons he has cited are from Khach'ikyan, *XIV dari*, pp. 96, 261. See also L. G. Minasian, *Ts'uts'ak dzeagrats' Nor Jughayi S. Amenap'rkch'ean vanats' tangarani* (Catalogue of the Manuscripts in the Museum of the All-Saviour Monastery in New Julfa), Vol. II (Vienna, 1972), p. 177; also Norayr Pogharian, *Mayr ts'uts'ak dzeagrats' Srbots' Hako-beants'* (Grand Catalogue of the Saint James Manuscripts), Vol. V (Jerusalem, 1971), pp. 71-73.

<sup>58</sup> Paylak Ant'abyan, "Ardyok' Hay aḥajin hamalsaranē Gladzorn ē" (Is Gladzor the First Armenian University?) in *Banber Erevani Matenadaran*, no. 2 (1974): p. 200-203.

<sup>59</sup> Khach'eryan, *Gladzori Hamalsaranē*, pp. 15-18. The single exception is a manuscript executed in Gladzor in 1346, Erevan Matenadaran ms. 2187.

<sup>60</sup> Barkhudaryan, *Divan*, III, 71-73.

the toponym Aghberts'.<sup>61</sup> Genitive plural of *aghbiwr*, 'spring' or 'brook', the name implies that the monastery was built in a location abundant with springs; but there are no springs on the slopes of T'anahat.

If we turn to the historical sources, the identification of Gladzor with T'anahat misrepresents the meaning of a number of texts. Part of the confusion arises over the existence of a church of Surb Step'anos in both monasteries. However, the evidence shows that they were dedicated to two different saints.<sup>62</sup> Step'anos Orbelian testifies that the church of T'anahat was dedicated to the eighth-century Bishop Step'anos Siwnets'i and that it was built on a larger scale in 1273-79.<sup>63</sup> The church of Gladzor, on the other hand, was dedicated to Surb Step'anos Nakhavkay, that is, St. Stephan the Protomartyr, as witnessed by three colophons.<sup>64</sup>

The oldest historical reference to Gladzor appears in the *Ashkharhats'uyts'* by Vardan Arewelts'i, and the full significance of the text has not been appreciated. The text survives in two versions as follows:

Vayots' Dzor is the valley of Eghegets', where is found the Life-giving Holy Cross; and Galoy Dzor (i. e. Gladzor) where is found the seat and the school (*varzharan*) of our holy vardapets; and the mountain in the region called Holy Sion, and at the summit of the mountain the monastery of the hermit Noy. There also are the most sacred relics of the Lord Step'anos of Siwnik' interred in the monastery of T'anahat.<sup>65</sup>

Vayots' Dzor is the valley of Eghegets', where is found the Life-giving Holy Cross and the monastery of Hermon; and there also are the relics of the Lord Step'anos of Siwnik' in the monastery of T'anahat. And Galu Dzor (i. e. Gladzor), where is found the seat and the school (*varzharan*) of our holy vardapets.<sup>66</sup>

<sup>61</sup> Grigoryan, *Syunikē*, pp. 158-159.

<sup>62</sup> Mat'evosyan, "Hiravi..." in *Garun*, no. 7 (1980): 55-59.

<sup>63</sup> Orbelian, *Patmut'iwn*, pp. 131-144.

<sup>64</sup> Khach'ikyan, *XIV dari*, pp. 92, 261, 351.

<sup>65</sup> *Ashkharhats'uyts' Vardanay Vardapeti*, critical edition by Hayk Pērpērian (Paris, 1960), p. 15.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 31-32.

It is evident that the author, in both versions, meant to offer an enumeration of the various sites along the valley of Eghegets' in Vayots' Dzor; both Gladzor and T'anahat were found in the same valley but they are by no means identified. Equally important is the early date of the document, for the history of Vardan must date before his death in 1269 or 1271.<sup>67</sup> Since the document refers explicitly to the "school (*varzharan*) of our holy vardapets," the school must have existed some time before the arrival of Nersēs Mshets'i who is usually credited with founding the school in 1280 or 1282.<sup>68</sup>

Finally, the fact that the historian Step'anos Orbelian failed to mention either Gladzor or Aghberts' in his list of the monasteries of the area is by no means an argument for identifying Gladzor with T'anahat. G. Grigoryan has offered a much more plausible explanation.<sup>69</sup> We have already seen that in the 1270s and 1280s the Orbelians and Proshians were engaged in a struggle for political supremacy in the province of Siwnik', culminating in Prince Prosh I's attempt to establish within his domains in Vayots' Dzor an episcopal seat independent of those at Tat'ew and Noravank' located in the Orbelian family's domains. Not only did Prince Tarsayich prevent this apparent encroachment upon his family's authority; he also managed to have his own son, Step'anos Orbelian, proclaimed as the sole Metropolitan Bishop of Siwnik' after the unification of

the two episcopal sees into a single hierarchy. Under these circumstances, therefore, Step'anos Orbelian's failure to mention Gladzor/Aghberts' must have been a deliberate omission, because he did not wish to give credit to the Proshians for their role in the establishment of the school of Gladzor. In support of this view, we must also point out that, in connection with the construction of the church of Surb Step'anos at T'anahat in the years 1273-79, Step'anos Orbelian again fails to record the fact that the edifice had been built by Prince Prosh I and his sons, even though this event had occurred during his lifetime.

Concerning the location of Gladzor, then, neither historical nor archaeological sources provide exact information. It is clear that it was located in the Eghegets' valley. The most likely site suggested so far is a ruined monastery some four km. southeast of the ancient village of Eghegis which on account of the presence of springs in the area would well deserve the appellation Aghberts', as suggested by Grigoryan.<sup>70</sup>

In spite of the rivalry between the Proshians and Orbelians, support for such a major monastic, educational and cultural center as Gladzor came from both families, even though Gladzor was located in that part of Vayots' Dzor that belonged to the Proshian family. In a colophon of 1323 Esayi Nch'ets'i acknowledges the patronage of Prince Burt'el Orbelian. He extols the Orbelians for their faith and virtuous deeds, including the construction of unspecified buildings at Gladzor and remarks that the Orbelians had "gathered those of us who are from strange places, and received us not as strangers but as their own genuine children, and accepted us . . . with compassion and love."<sup>71</sup>

Gladzor also enjoyed the patronage of the metropolitan bishops of Siwnik', who since the 1280s had been members of the Orbelian family. Sources indicate that not only the historian/Bishop Step'anos Orbelian but also his

two successors, Hovhannēs Awrpel (1303-24) and Step'anos-Tarsayich (1324-31), had shown "much compassion and concern" for the school of Gladzor.<sup>72</sup>

That the Proshians, too, never ceased to support Gladzor is affirmed by a number of colophons mentioning both families as benefactors. One of these, written by Arak'el Haghbatets'i in 1327-28, while mentioning the Orbelian Prince Burt'el and other members of his family as masters of Siwnik', also refers to the progeny of Prince Prosh I, "who are the inheritors of their ancestral domains, (namely), the affable and judicious Amir Hasan, the brave and valiant Vasak, and the sagacious Amir Asat . . . who are the Lords and rulers of our holy monastery (of Gladzor) and the pupils assembled therein."<sup>73</sup> None of these sources, however, gives specific information about the kind of income-producing grants that must have been made in support of the monastery and its school.

The Proshians were responsible for several other ecclesiastical institutions in the southern region of Vayots' Dzor. It was at their urging that a certain individual named Martiros, son of Deghka, founded the village of Martiros in 1283. Three years later, the vardapet Mat'ēos built the rock-hewn church of Surb Astuatsatsin, whose inscription attests that it was constructed "during the rule of the Prince of Princes Prosh, of his sons Papak' and Hasan, of the (latter's) son Ēach'i and his mother T'acher . . ."<sup>74</sup> Similarly, the churches and chapels in the village of Gomk' were constructed in 1263 under the aegis of the Proshian Princes. Two of the inscriptions mention the name of Prosh I as ruler of the region,<sup>75</sup> and a third inscription indicates that certain properties were offered to the monastery by Prince Hasan, son of Papak'.<sup>76</sup>

The religious and educational centers that enjoyed the patronage of the Orbelians were located in the three valleys of Vayots' Dzor, namely, Arp'a, Eghegis and Herher, and in the southern part of Vayots' Dzor. The family seat of the Orbelians was situated in the ancient village of Arp'a (now called Areni) from the time of the founder of the Orbelian principality, Liparit I (c. 1187-1225). At the urging of Prince Tarsayich, Bishop Sargis of Noravank' built a bridge over the Arp'a river, remnants of which have survived to this day.<sup>77</sup> The village's church of Surb Astuatsatsin was constructed in 1321 by the Metropolitan Archbishop of Siwnik', Hovhannēs Awrpel (1303-24) of the Orbelian family, with Momi as its architect. The inscription of 1321 on the upper arch of the southern entrance to the church reads: "I beg you to remember me, the Lord Hovhannēs Awrpel, Archbishop of Siwnik', the builder of this holy church; (remember) also the pious Prince of Princes and my blood relative, the brave warrior Burt'el and his Christ-loving spouse the Queen Vakhakh, as well as their tender children Bēshk'ēn and Iwanē."<sup>78</sup>

The town of Eghegis, the fortress of Smbataberd and the monastery of Ts'aghats'k'ar in Vayots' Dzor had previously belonged to the Vasakian feudal family. After the Orbelians acquired the town of Eghegis they transferred their family seat there, and the Princes Smbat (1249/50-73) and Tarsayich (1273-90) built a magnificent palace there.<sup>79</sup> The grandson of the latter, Metropolitan Bishop Step'anos-Tarsayich of Siwnik', erected the church of Surb Zōrats' in Eghegis,<sup>80</sup> and the family's burial site was located on the western outskirts of the town.<sup>81</sup>

The records indicate that the monastery of Ts'aghats'k'ar in the valley of Eghegis received extensive properties from members of the Orbelian family,<sup>82</sup> particularly during the in-

<sup>67</sup> Hayk Pērpērian, the editor and publisher of the *Ashkharhats'uyts'*, claims that Vardan Arewelts'i died in 1269 (see *ibid.*, pp. xxiii, xxix).

<sup>68</sup> There is no consensus among scholars about the year in which the school of Gladzor was founded. Most scholars are of the opinion that it occurred in 1280 (e. g., A. G. Abrahamyan, *Gladzori Hamalsaranē*, pp. 31-43; *idem*, "Gladzori Hamalsarani teghē . . ." in *Patma-Banasirkan Handes*, no. 1 (1982): 159-176; Alishan, *Sisakan*, p. 131; Hovsēp'ian, *Khaghbakeank'*, p. 252; Khach'eryan, *Gladzori Hamalsaranē*, p. 34. Other scholars contend that the school was founded in 1282 (e. g., A. S. Arevshatyan and A. S. Mat'evosyan, *Gladzori Hamalsaranē mijnadaryan Hayastani lusavorut'yan kendron* (The University of Gladzor As A Center of Medieval Armenian Enlightenment; Yerevan, 1984), pp. 11-13; Artashes Mat'evosyan, "Hiravi . . ." in *Garun*, no. 7 (1980): 55-59.

<sup>69</sup> See Grigoryan, *Syunik'ē*, p. 160.

<sup>70</sup> See Grigoryan, *Syunik'ē*, pp. 158-159.

<sup>71</sup> The text of this colophon will be found in Khach'ikyan, *XIV dari*, pp. 182-183; see also Hovsēp'ian *Khaghbakeank'*, pp. 384-385.

<sup>72</sup> See Khach'ikyan, *XIV dari*, pp. 104, 182-183; Hovsēp'ian, *Khaghbakeank'*, pp. 384-385; Grigoryan, *Syunik'ē*, pp. 223-233.

<sup>73</sup> See text of this colophon in Hovsēp'ian, *Khaghbakeank'*, pp. 350-351. Cf. also Khach'ikyan, *XIV dari*, pp. 261-262.

<sup>74</sup> Barkhudaryan, *Divan*, III, 180.

<sup>75</sup> Barkhudaryan, *Divan*, 192-193.

<sup>76</sup> Barkhudaryan, *Divan*, III, 193.

<sup>77</sup> Barkhudaryan, *Divan*, III, 28.

<sup>78</sup> Barkhudaryan, *Divan*, III, 29.

<sup>79</sup> See the texts of its inscriptions in Barkhudaryan, *Divan*, III, 115.

<sup>80</sup> Barkhudaryan, *Divan*, III, 108.

<sup>81</sup> Barkhudaryan, *Divan*, III, 105.

<sup>82</sup> Barkhudaryan, *Divan*, III, 148-150.

cumbency of Hovhannēs Awrpel as Metropolitan Bishop of Siwnik'.<sup>83</sup> The ancient monastery of Aratēs in the same valley was also the beneficiary of the Orbelian's munificence. Its three churches were restored in 1270 as attested by one of the extant inscriptions: "... During the lordship of the glorious Prince Smbat and his brother Tarsayich, I the humble monk Hayrapet . . . rebuilt this monastery and restored its churches, and built its *gawit'* (vestibule or forecourt) and other constructions that can be seen. And I purchased with my honest means the orchards of Gojots' in Ostin and T'eghut in Mchikadzor and offered them to (the church of) Surb Sion . . ."<sup>84</sup> The *gawit'* referred to in the inscription was the work of Siranes, Orbelian Prince Tarsayich's official architect. Towards the end of the thirteenth century, Step'anos Orbelian, Metropolitan Bishop of Siwnik', restored the monastery's edifices. He also offered the institution eight villages in Geghark'unik' that were his personal domain.<sup>85</sup>

The valley of Herher and its villages in Vayots' Dzor had been granted by the Orbelians to their vassals, the Shahruni family, whose princes were the *asparapets* (cavalry commanders) of the Orbelians. Hermon, the region's principal monastery, flourished particularly during the rule of Burt'el I (1300-44?); its church of Surb Hovhannēs was restored by a benefactor named Met'ar.<sup>86</sup> The institution received extensive land grants from a number of noblemen, particularly during the second decade of the fourteenth century.<sup>87</sup> Of special interest among these is the offer of a property made in 1317 by Smbat, son of Liparit Orbelian. Taken as captive to Egypt, he returned to Siwnik' twelve years later, recovered his personal domains, from which he gave a parcel of land to Hermon.<sup>88</sup>

The most important religious center of the Orbelians, however, was located in the southern part of Vayots' Dzor at the monastery of Noravank' in Amaghu. The monastery's four churches, its two-tiered mausoleum, and its *zhamatun* were all constructed by the Orbelians.<sup>89</sup> The monastery was founded by Bishop Hovhannēs in 1205. Six years later, the *amirspasalar* Zak'arē Zak'arian offered it the village of Agaraki Dzor;<sup>90</sup> in 1223 Liparit Orbelian's father-in-law, Prince Bupa, gave it the farm of Aghberis up to the boundary of the village of Gandzak;<sup>91</sup> and in the same year Liparit himself offered the village of Tkharb and part of the village of Hamasri.<sup>92</sup> The church of Surb Karapet, completed in 1221, was built by Prince Liparit I.<sup>93</sup> The consecration of the church, which was held two years later, was attended by "Bishops, Vardapets, prominent Princes, noblemen and householders, among them the great Bupak," who offered it several villages and farms that had been part of his domains.<sup>94</sup> The church's *zhamatun* was constructed in 1261 by Prince Smbat Orbelian; on the same occasion he offered to Noravank' the villages of Awēsh, Anapat and Azat, as well as the orchards of Akoři, Hoghots'mats', Ch'owoy, Arp'a and Amaghvadzor.<sup>95</sup> The monastery also received extensive properties from the domains of the Mahewanian princely family.<sup>96</sup> In 1275 Prince Tarsayich built the chapel of Surb Grigor at the site where his brother Prince Smbat had been buried,<sup>97</sup> which henceforth became the mausoleum of many members of the Orbelian Princes. During Tarsayich's rule, Bishop Sargis constructed the monastery's hostel.<sup>98</sup> The institution enjoyed its most prosperous period during

<sup>89</sup> See Orbelian, *Patmut'iwn*, 354-368.

<sup>90</sup> Orbelian, *Patmut'iwn*, pp. 358-359.

<sup>91</sup> Orbelian, *Patmut'iwn*, pp. 357-358.

<sup>92</sup> Orbelian, *Patmut'iwn*, p. 360.

<sup>93</sup> See text of the inscription in Barkhudaryan, *Divan*, III, 211.

<sup>94</sup> See Orbelian, *Patmut'iwn*, pp. 356-358.

<sup>95</sup> Orbelian, *Patmut'iwn*, pp. 363-364.

<sup>96</sup> Orbelian, *Patmut'iwn*, pp. 366-367.

<sup>97</sup> See text of the inscription in Barkhudaryan, *Divan*, III, 234.

<sup>98</sup> Barkhudaryan, *Divan*, III, 246.

<sup>83</sup> Barkhudaryan, *Divan*, III, 144, 150, 152-153.

<sup>84</sup> Barkhudaryan, *Divan*, III, 124.

<sup>85</sup> See Orbelian, *Patmut'iwn*, pp. 493-494; also Barkhudaryan, *Divan*, III, 125.

<sup>86</sup> Barkhudaryan, *Divan*, III, 58.

<sup>87</sup> Barkhudaryan, *Divan*, III, 53-56.

<sup>88</sup> See text of the inscription in Barkhudaryan, *Divan*, III, 55.

the tenure of Step'anos Orbelian as Metropolitan Bishop of Siwnik', with his seat at Noravank'. Under the stewardship of this *parontēr*, the institution acquired extensive properties through donations and purchases.<sup>99</sup> Moreover, Step'anos himself bought the village of Ch'owoy and its environs from his brother Jalal and, together with the villages of Abasashēn and Surb Sahak that were part of his own feudal domains, donated them to Noravank'.<sup>100</sup> Finally, the monastery's architectural masterpiece, the double-tiered church of Surb Astuatsatsin designed by Momi, was built in 1339 by Prince Burt'el, the last prominent member of the Orbelian family.<sup>101</sup>

The southern regions of the province of Siwnik', comprising the cantons of Haband, Tsghuk, Dzork' and parts of K'ashunik' and Kovsakan (now called the regions of Goris, Sisyan and Ghap'an, respectively), were also an integral part of the Orbelian domains. The principal institutions that enjoyed this family's patronage were the monasteries of Tat'ew, Darabas and Vaghand (also called Orotnavank'). One of the two episcopal seats in Siwnik' under Step'anos Orbelian, the monastery of Tat'ew benefited the most from the Orbelian family's benefactions. In 1274, for instance, Prince Tarsayich not only furnished the large church at Tat'ew "with beautiful vessels and vestments;" he also re-awarded to the institution six villages that previously had belonged to it.<sup>102</sup> Moreover, in 1297 Step'anos Orbelian himself rebuilt, at his own expense, the monastery's church of Surb Grigor Lusa-worich'; in addition, he offered to the institution the village of Arit, which his brother Prince Ēlikum III had granted to him after Arghun Khan recognized the former as chief Prince of the Orbelian domains.<sup>103</sup> That the monastery of Tat'ew was one of the largest feudal institutions at this time is attested by

<sup>99</sup> For details see Orbelian, *Patmut'iwn*, pp. 490-492.

<sup>100</sup> Orbelian, *Patmut'iwn*, pp. 492-496.

<sup>101</sup> See text of the inscription in Barkhudaryan, *Divan*, III, 240.

<sup>102</sup> See Orbelian, *Patmut'iwn*, pp. 416-418.

<sup>103</sup> Orbelian, *Patmut'iwn*, pp. 483-485; see also Barkhudaryan, *Divan*, II, 25.

the fact that 678 villages throughout Siwnik' either belonged to or paid tribute to it.<sup>104</sup> After the demise of Gladzor, the school of Tat'ew, particularly under the leadership of Hovhan Orotnets'i and Grigor Tat'ewats'i, became the most prominent intellectual center in medieval Armenia.

Finally, epigraphic inscriptions indicate that in 1272 Prince Tarsayich and his wife Mamakhat'un built the church of Surb Astuatsatsin in the village of Darabas; he also offered several parcels of land to it.<sup>105</sup> The same Prince also restored the church of Surb Step'anos at the monastery of Vaghand.<sup>106</sup>

This brief discussion of the Armenian religious-educational institutions in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries and the major role played by the Proshian and Orbelian princely families in their historical development lead to several conclusions. To begin with, we can safely assume that the munificence of the feudal Lords and members of their families were not motivated solely by selfish considerations, namely, the safeguarding of their domains through the stratagem of offering them to religious institutions that enjoyed a tax-exempt status. As seen earlier, in their patronage of monastic institutions they had, indeed, continued a millennial tradition of church support by the Armenian nobility. During the feudal period of Armenian history, the aristocracy and the clerical institution represented the upper strata of society and as such they had a commonality of political and economic interests. The demise of the royalty after the Seljuk conquest of Armenia in the eleventh century did not significantly affect this intimate relationship, for the princely families continued to play the traditional role of patrons of the church and of the educational-cultural institutions.

The colophons of medieval Armenian manuscripts attest that the sponsorship or commissioning of a codex, especially those of a religious nature, was considered to be a mor-

<sup>104</sup> The list of these villages will be found in Orbelian, *Patmut'iwn*, pp. 509-523.

<sup>105</sup> Barkhudaryan, *Divan*, II, 114.

<sup>106</sup> Barkhudaryan, *Divan*, II, 102.

ally and spiritually rewarding endeavor, for it would be an "indelible memorial or monument" to the sponsor's soul and to those of his immediate family and relatives. To many, the sponsorship of a manuscript was also the most effective means to attain salvation, to inherit the kingdom of God, or to deliver them from the "inextinguishable fire of hell." Frequently, codexes were sponsored because the individual recalled the words, "Blessed is he who has a child in Zion"; and many received a manuscript "as a child in Zion and as an intimate friend in Jerusalem."<sup>107</sup> The inscriptions memorializing the construction or restoration of religious monuments and the offering of land and other grants confirm that their donors, too, were motivated by considerations similar to those of the sponsors of manuscripts. The customary reward for such endowments, as shown in numerous inscriptions, was that the institution's clergy would perform the divine liturgy a specified number of times during the year for the souls of the donor and of his family and relatives, who are frequently mentioned by name.

The religious institutions received from their princely and other patrons not only land grants, but also numerous religious objects of

great value. At the urging of patrons, the scriptoria of many of these institutions produced a large number of illuminated manuscripts, many with silver-gilt covers set with gems. The monastic institutions, which owned extensive lands, farms, orchards windmills, and cattle, also played a major role in the country's agricultural economy and in the production of handicrafts. Little wonder, then, that even though the monasteries and clergy enjoyed a tax-exempt status, they frequently became the targets for the tax-collectors' arbitrary exactions and especially for pillaging by officials of the conquering powers and by the Mongol and Turkoman chieftains and marauding hordes. Indeed, it is remarkable that, despite the most adverse conditions that prevailed during the Mongol occupation and particularly during the post-Ilkhanid interregnum, the Orbelian, Proshian and other princely families, as well as the high-ranking clergy, succeeded in erecting great monuments of architecture, in fostering artistic creations of many genres, and in promoting several major centers of learning in Siwnik' throughout the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.

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<sup>107</sup> Barkhudaryan, *Divan*, pp. 12-14.

## DIE BAYERISCH-ARMENISCHE STAMMESSAGE

Jahrhundertlang suchten bayerische Chronisten das Stammland ihrer Vorfahren in Armenien. Ob diese Sagen und Legenden der mittelalterlichen Sitte entsprangen, die Abstammung der Völker ins früheste Altertum –, möglichst bis zur Arche Noahs zurückzuführen, um damit eine Art Vorrangstellung zu erlangen, kann nur angenommen, aber nicht bewiesen werden.

Als Beispiel wären die Franken zu nennen, die angeblich aus Troja stammen, sich infolgedessen als gleichrangig neben den Römern und deren Imperium betrachteten und somit berechtigt fühlten, jüngere Staaten einzuverleiben. Auch die Sachsen führen ihre Geschichte weit zurück. Sie sahen ihre Stammväter in den mazedonischen Griechen aus dem Heere Alexanders des Großen. „Im Angesichte dieser Tatsachen ist es den bayrischen Chronisten nicht zu verdenken, daß sie begierig nach Armenien am Fuße des Ararat griffen, um ihren ‚Barbaren‘ das höchste Alter zu sichern“ – meinte ein bekannter Historiker des 19. Jahrhunderts. Bis Ende des 19. Jahrhunderts konnte man in bayerischen Lesebüchern noch folgende Erklärung lesen<sup>1</sup>:

„In jener Gegend des östlichen Mittelmeeres und somit nicht mal allzu weit entfernt vom Berge Ararat, wurden die alten Baiern sogar weltgeschichtlich aktiv. Die Vorfahren der Bajuwaren haben sich im September 480 v. Chr. in der Seeschlacht von Salamis, als Griechen und Perser aufeinandertrafen, heldenhaft bewährt.“

Hier wird vermutlich auf die armenischen Hilfstruppen angespielt, welche Xerxes in der Seeschlacht von Salamis unterstützten<sup>2</sup>.

Der weitverbreiteten bayerisch-armenischen Stammesgeschichte wurde 1860 von Dr. E. A. Quitzmann<sup>3</sup> energisch ein Ende bereitet, indem er zu beweisen versuchte, daß es sich bei dieser Volkssage um einen durch Jahrhunderte geschleppten Schreib- bzw. Interpretationsfehler handelte, das heißt, daß mit Armenien eigentlich Hermenien – das Hermionenland (Behem oder der Behemer Wald) gemeint waren. Quitzmann erklärte seine Theorie folgendermaßen:

„Wie die mhd. Chronisten von Hermenien auf Armenien gerathen konnten, wird nicht überraschen, wenn wir die Umlautformen betrachten, unter denen der Stammvater Irmin, in den Völkertafeln des Mittelalters vorkommt: Der Cod. reg. Paris (Anfang des 9. Jahrhunderts) hat Ermenius neben Ingus und Scuit; der Pariser Codex vom 10. Jahrhundert hat Ermenius; der Codex Sangallens. (9-10. Jahrhundert) Erminus; der Codex mus. Brit. (11. Jahrhundert) Armeno; der Codex von la Cava Armen; das Chron. Hugon Armenon; der Cod. Vatic. (14. Jahrhundert) wieder Ermenius.“

Der Böhmerwald paßt außerdem auch besser in die von Quitzmann vertretene Sueventheorie und damit verschwanden die Armenier wieder aus der bayerischen Geschichte.

Die Richtigkeit dieser Theorie, die ja auch nicht die einzige ist, steht hier nicht zur Debatte. Auch hat der Autor dieser Studie keineswegs die Absicht, diese oder jene Stammeslegende zu bestätigen, oder gar zu versuchen, die Herkunft der Bayern aus Armenien zu beweisen, da die bisher bekannten Quellen dazu nicht ausreichend sind.

Auf den folgenden Seiten sollen lediglich die verschiedenen Stammesgeschichten nebeneinander gestellt, miteinander in Verbindung gebracht und anschließend auch im Zusammenhang mit anderen Ereignissen betrachtet werden, denn die Volkssage kann nichts erfunden haben, was dem Volke gänzlich fremd gewesen wäre.

<sup>1</sup> M. V. Sattler, *Lehrbuch der bayerischen Geschichte*, München 1868

<sup>2</sup> Պրոֆ. Ա. Գ. Աբրահամյան, *Համառոտ ուրուագիծ հայ գաղթականների Պատմության, Երևան 1964*, էջ 18:

<sup>3</sup> E. A. Quitzmann, *Die heidnische Religion der Baiwaren*, Leipzig 1860, S. 300-301.