

rids – Pap and Aťanaginēs – to assume the perilous dignity of patriarch after the murder of their father Yusik; and finally, after a second and longer interval, Šahak the Great, the son of Nersēs, with whom the house of the Illuminator came to a close in the male line after six generations. The second point of consensus among the sources relates to the earliest group of patriarchs composed of the first five successors of St. Gregory. This group is also characterized by an invariable order: Aristakēs, Vrtānēs, Yusik, Daniēl of Tarōn, murdered before his consecration, and Pařēn or Pařnerseh of Ařtiřat, the first non-Gregorid incumbent to hold the patriarchate, and whose pontificate, like the aborted one of his immediate predecessor, resulted from the unwillingness or unworthiness of Pap and Aťanaginēs.⁴ The fundamental axiom guiding the patriarchal succession reflected in all the early Armenian sources was that the primacy of the church was a hereditary office belonging to the Gregorid house, just as the kingship belonged to the Arřakuni or the command of the army, the սպարապետութիւն, was a prerogative of the Mamikonean family.⁵ The historian Movsēs Xorenaci comments that Pařnerseh was chosen, “since there was no man from Gregory’s family”.⁶ Even more emphatically, the *Buzandaran Patmutiwnk* attributed to Ps. Pawstos Buzand, elaborates after the refusal of Pap and Aťanaginēs,

there was no one who could give them [the Armenians] spiritual guidance as high-priest. Then they took counsel as to whom they might find as their spiritual leader, and the common agreement was that they should find someone from the princely house of Grigor, who might occupy the throne of his fathers.⁷

The indispensability of a Gregorid candidate, if any were available, is reiterated for both Pařēn’s successor Šahak⁸ and the yearned for return of the patriarchal dignity to the Gregorids in the person of St. Nersēs the Great,⁹

⁵ On the tradition of hereditary offices in Arřakuni Armenia, see *inter alia*, N. G. Garsoian, “Prolegomena to a Study of the Iranian Elements in Arsacid Armenia,” HA, XC (1976), cols. 182, 210–213 n. 44; repr., *Id.*, *Armenia between Byzantium and the Sasanians [= Armenia]* (London, 1985), pp. 19–24 and n. 44.

⁶ MX, III, xvi, “. . . վասն ոչ կալոյ այր յազգէ Գրիգորի ընտրեցին զՓառնեբս ոմն յԱշտիշատից ճարօնոյ, . . .” Cf. JK, p. 45, “. . . վասն ոչ գտանելոյ այր յազգէ սրբոյն Գրիգորի՝ ընտրեցին զոմն Փառնեբսն անուն յԱշտիշատէ, . . .” See also below, n. 32.

⁷ BP, III, xv, “. . . ոչ ոք գոյր, որ առաջնորդէր նոցա զբահանայապետութեան: Ապա խորհուրդ արարին՝ թէ զո՞ գտցեն իւրեանց առաջնորդ. ապա կամ եղև ամենեցուն առ հասարակ, զի ի նմին տարնէ իշխանութեան Գրիգորի գտցեն, որ կալցի նա զաթոռ հարցն”:

⁸ BP, III, xvii, “. . . յայնմ ժամանակի միաբան խորհեցան աշխարհօրէն խորհուրդ, եթէ ու՞մ պարտ իցէ զհայրապետութեանն զկաթողիկոսութիւն ունել: Ապա իբրև ոչ ոք գոյր ի տանն Գրիգորի այնմ արժանի (since Pap and Aťanaginēs were unworthy and Nersēs presumably still too young) ապա նմանեցուցին զՇահակ ոմն անուն ի սոսմէ՛ զաւակին Աղբիանոս եպիսկոպոսին”:

⁹ BP, IV, iii, “. . . Ապա յաղթեաց կալաւ այս բան խորհրդի ամենեցուն առ հասարակ որ անդ էին, զի ի մնացորդաց տանն Գրիգորի, յայնմ զաւակէ գտցեն զառաջնորդութիւն”:

Embellishing as usual the account of BP which it generally follows, the *Vita*, ii, p. 15 ties the salvation of the realm to the choice of Nersēs. “Ապա միայնակեացք աշխարհին ի մի վայր ժողովեալ եւ մարգարեական հոգևով իմացեալ, եթէ ոչ լինի հնար փրկութեան Հայոց աշխարհիս, եթէ ոչ գտցի առաջնորդ ի յազգէ սրբոյն Գրիգորի”:

Cf. also KG, p. 19, “. . . եւ խնդրէին . . . հայրապետ յարժանաւոր տեղի սրբոյն Գրիգորի”:

also Łazar Parpeci *Patmutiwn Hayoc* [= LP], G. Ter Mkrtčean and St. Malchasean, edd. (Tiflis, 1904), I, xvi, p. 26, for the Armenians’ unanimous request for the return of the last Gregorid, St. Sahak, after the death of the Syrian anti-Patriarch, Samuel, “. . . որբացին գուրբ եւ զանարատ եւ զառաքելաշնորհ վարդապետութիւնն զոր սերմանեալ անեցոյց ի նոսա սուրբ Գրիգորիս եւ նորին զաւակքն, . . .”:

⁴ BP, III, v, xii, xiv–xvi; MX, II, xci; III, xi, xiv, xvi; JK, pp. 40–41, 44–45; TA, I, x, pp. 59–60, who does not mention Pařnerseh; Asofik, pp. 63–64, 68–69; KG, pp. 12, 15, 17–18; VV, xviii, xx, pp. 41, 43, 45–46; VA¹ and VA², both of which end with Daniēl and consequently omit his successor; *Vita*, i, pp. 10–14, which omits Daniēl as do almost all the remaining sources; MAs., p. 601; YK, pp. 33–34; LE¹, col. 518; LE², col. 521; *Diegesis* § 2; LG¹ § 2–6; LG² § 2–6; LP, col. 186, which includes Daniēl; SA, pp. 65–66; LS¹, p. 270; LS², p. 272. The form Pařēn is found in BP, whereas Pařnerseh is the one favoured by MX and the sources following the same tradition, hence this name is one of the indices for the identification of the filiation of the various lists. Unless referring to a particular work from the opposing tradition, the form Pařēn has been used here as the earlier and probably the more accurate. The inclusion or omission of Daniēl between Yusik and Pařēn is clearly inconsistent. The probable reason for this variation is that Daniēl, although duly chosen in the absence of a Gregorid candidate, did not live to be consecrated at Caesarea and to assume the patriarchal dignity.

whose election, “renewed . . . the moral lustre of this realm of Armenia”.¹⁰ Indeed, the theme of “renewal” attending Nersēs’ election after the first hiatus in the Gregorid succession pervades the pertinent sections of the *Buzandaran Patmutiwnk* and is underscored by the repetitions of the verb “renew, նորոգել” in the descriptions of the patriarch’s activities.¹¹ The concept of the patriarchate as a hereditary office rather than a purely ecclesiastical dignity is likewise evident from the use of the secular term for the head of a noble clan, նահապետ, in reference to the religious primate.¹²

Up to the period of the first breach in the Gregorid succession, then, and even in the case of the first non Gregorid, Pařēn, no serious disagreement is discernible in the Armenian sources. But with the death of Pařēn, two contradictory traditions manifest themselves in the accounts of the patriarchal order. The overwhelming majority of Armenian sources,

conforming to the version found in the *History* of Movsēs Xorenaci, give St. Nersēs as the immediate successor of Pařēn, or rather Pařnerseh, the form they prefer, although a possible hiatus of one year is indicated in the *Vita of Saint Nersēs*.¹³ According to this tradition, the successive patriarchs following Yusik and the brief interlude of Daniēl of Tarōn were: Pařnerseh, Nersēs the Great, and a certain Sahak or Šahak, “a member of the family and descent of Bishop of Aľbianos.”¹⁴ On the contrary, the *Buzandaran Patmutiwnk*, only partially echoed for the latter part of their listing in the sequences given by Eznik the priest, Michael the Syrian, and the “Greek List of Kafolikoi” published by Garitte, reverse the position of Šahak and present the following order: Pařēn, Šahak, “from the house of the descendants of Bishop Aľbianos,” St. Nersēs, and Yusik [II] “who was a descendant of Aľbianos Bishop of Manazkert.”¹⁵

¹⁰ BP, IV, iii, “Զի ամենեքեան ասէին ցարբայն. վասն զի նորոգեաց Աստուած զթագաւորութիւնն ձեր, տոյնպէս պարտ է ի յայնմ զաւակէ նորոգել զհոգեւոր նահապետութիւնն: Զի ընդ նորոգել այնր աթոռոյ, ասին, նորոգեցիմ պայծառ վարք աշխարհիս Հայոց”:

(italics added).

¹¹ BP, IV, iii (Venice ed., p. 79), “. . . գործս հօրն խարհիս Հայոց”:

¹² BP, IV, iii (Venice ed., p. 79), “. . . գործս հօրն խարհիս Հայոց”:

¹³ BP, IV, iii (Venice ed., p. 79), “. . . գործս հօրն խարհիս Հայոց”:

¹⁴ BP, IV, iii (Venice ed., p. 79), “. . . գործս հօրն խարհիս Հայոց”:

¹⁵ BP, IV, iii (Venice ed., p. 79), “. . . գործս հօրն խարհիս Հայոց”:

¹⁴ MX, III, xvi, xx, xxxix, “[Pap] հարկաւորեալ յուզեաց եւ եղիտ զոմն յազգէ եւ ի ժառանգութենէ Աղբիանոս, որում անուն Սահակ կոչէր, . . .”;

JK, pp. 45, 51, calls him Շահակ, as do Asofik, pp. 69, 73; KG, pp. 18, 19, 23; VV, xx, xxiv, pp. 46, 48, who introduces Čunak between Nersēs and Šahak; *Vita*, i, iii, pp. 14, 18, which mentions no patriarch between Nersēs and his son, St. Šahak; MAs, xi–xiii, pp. 601–602; LE¹, col. 518; LE², col. 521, which unexpectedly puts both Pařnerseh and Šahak after Nersēs; *Diegesis*, § 2, which then skips directly from Nersēs to § 28, the death of St. Šahak; LG² § 6, 7, 9; LP § 5–7; SA, pp. 65–66; LS¹, p. 270; LS², p. 273. The form of the problematic Aľbianid primate is given as Šahak in BP, whereas MX and the other lists alternate between Sahak and Šahak. The Georgian version LG² § 9 gives Saak. The form Šahak has been preferred here as the more common, but there is no doubt that all the variants of the name render the Armenian version of Isaac.

¹⁵ BP, III, xvi (Pařēn, xvii (Šahak); IV, iii (Nersēs); xxix, “եղև յետ մահուանն հայրապետին ներսիս կացոյց թագաւորն Պապ զԹուսիկ եպիսկոպոս, որ էր ի զաւակէ Աղբիանոսի եպիսկոպոսին Մանազկերտոյ: Ետ հրաման ունել նմա զտեղի հայրապետին, . . .”

The insertion of Yusik II immediately after Nersēs of the other sources, is accepted by YK § 15, p. 34 and LG¹ § 8. As observed in the preceding note, VV adds Čunak between Nersēs and Šahak, and LS², col. 521 has a Šahak after Pařnerseh, but both come after Nersēs. To my knowledge, BP is alone in recording Šahak between Pařēn and Nersēs. Even the *Vita* which usually derives from its account abandons it on this occasion for the opposite tradition, i, p. 14 (Pařnerseh, iii, p. 18 (Nersēs).

Unable to reconcile these irreconcilable lists modern studies have also failed to reach a consensus. Some scholars, beginning with the first *History* of Čamčean, followed among others by de Morgan, have accepted the "received" tradition of Movsēs Xorenacī and most of the Armenian sources.¹⁶ Others, Gelzer, Tournebize, Leo, and more recently, van Esbroeck and Ananian among them, have preferred the version found in the *Buzandaran Patmutiwnk*.¹⁷ Akinian concentrated primarily on the successors of St. Nersēs, while giving alternate possibilities for his predecessors. He further sought to solve part of the problem of the divergent traditions by identifying St. Nersēs' immediate successor – Sahak the descendant of Bishop Ałbianos – according to Movsēs Xorenacī with both the Yusik [II], identically placed and characterized in the *Buzandaran Patmutiwnk*¹⁸ and the dubious patriarch Čunak or Čonak installed by King Aršak II, who is mentioned exclusively by Ps. Pāwstos, with a distant and inaccurate echo in the much later works of Vardan Arewelcī and Mxiřar Ayrivanečī.¹⁹ Grousset lumped both

versions together to obtain an unwieldy and unworkable list and also proposed the identification of Sahak with Yusik [II] and Čunak.²⁰ The only serious attempts to find an explanation for the confusion created by the two traditions on the predecessor and/or successor of St. Nersēs were made first by Ōrmanean, who also suggested the triple identification Sahak/Yusik/Čunak, but then went on to make of Sahak or Šahak St. Nersēs' vicar [տեղապահ] and substitute, although he put Šahak's actual pontificate after that of Nersēs in keeping with the primary Armenian tradition;²¹ and finally, in the perspicacious, if brief, analysis of Ananian.²²

Certain valid objections to some of the proposed hypotheses are already well known. Gelzer long since observed that Čunak, meaning "have not/have nothing" could hardly be a personal, but only a nickname.²³ Moreover, Ananian rightly observed that the irregular local ordination of Čunak, scornfully characterized by Ps. Pāwstos as, "the slave of the slaves of the King," hardly matched the circumstances of Šahak's traditional consecration at Caesarea of Cappadocia.²⁴ Ananian's objec-

¹⁶ M. Čamčean, *Patmutiwn Hayoc i skizbanē ašxarhi minčew čam Teārñ 1784*, 3 vols. (Venice, 1784–1786) chronological appendix, pp. 51–52; J. de Morgan, *Histoire du peuple arménien* Paris, 1919), p. 364.

¹⁷ F. Tournebize, *Histoire politique et religieuse de l'Arménie* [= *Histoire*] (Paris, 1910), pp. 59–62, 480–488; Leo, *Hayoc patmutiwn*, I (Tiflis, 1917; repr. Erevan, 1966), pp. 428–442, 520–521; H. Gelzer, "Die Anfänge der armenischen Kirche," *Bericht über die Verhandl. der kön. sächs. Gesell. der Wiss. zu Leipzig*, XLVII (1895), pp. 121–125; P. Ananian, "La data e le circostanze della consecrazione di S. Gregorio illuminatore," *Le Muséon*, LXXIV (1961), pp. 351–360, tr. from *Pazmaveb*, CXVII (1959), CXVIII (1960); M. van Esbroeck, "Chronique arménienne," *Analecta Bollandiana*, LXXX/3–4 (1962), pp. 433–434, where he unexpectedly omits Pāren, etc.

¹⁸ MX, III, xxxix; BP, V, xxix. See above nn. 14–15 for the respective texts.

¹⁹ BP, IV, xv; VV, xxiv, p. 48, "Եւ կարողց Պապ ի տեղի նորա [Ներսիսի] զԶուռակ ոմն սակաւ աւուրաւ, եւ սպա Շահակ ի գաւառէ Սպահունեաց ի. e. from the region of Manazkert"; MA, p. 16. Despite the obvious anachronism in VV, since Čunak had been appointed by Aršak II and not his son Pap, these late testimonies are interesting as corroborations of BP's account; N. Akinian, "Die Reihenfolge der Bischöfe Armeniens des 3. und 4. Jährhunderts" (219–439) [= *Reihenfolge*], *Analecta Bollandiana*,

LXVII (1949), pp. 80–85. The impossible chronology proposed in this article does not concern the present discussion. Akinian also repeated his triple identification in a note to his publication and study of Koriwn, "Patmutiwn varuc' S. Maštoč vardapeti knnutiwn ew bnagir," [= *Maštoč*], HA (1949) = *Mxiřar Tōnagir*, p. 284. See below for the discussion of this identification.

²⁰ R. Grousset, *Histoire de l'Arménie des origines jusqu'en 1071* (Paris, 1947), pp. 125–136, 148.

²¹ M. Ōrmanean, *Azgapatum* (Constantinople, 1912), I, cols. 161–162, 186–187, 224, xvi–xvii.

²² See above, n. 17; J. Markwart, "Die Entstehung der armenischen Bistüme [= *Die Entstehung*]," *Orientalia Christiana*, XXVII/2 (1932), 143–233, which has surprisingly little to say on the subject under consideration, except for the comment on Čunak, for which see next note.

²³ Markwart, *Die Entstehung*, p. 222, "Es ist zunächst klar, daß Čunak [Habenichts] kein Eigenname, sondern ein Spottname ist, daß wir somit den wirklichen Namen des Mannes nicht kennen."

²⁴ Ananian, *La data*, p. 359; the same objection was made by van Esbroeck, *Chronique*, p. 434. Cf. BP, IV, xv, "զԶուռակ ոմն անուն . . . էր սորուկ ի սարկաց արքունի": Cf. III, xvii, for the consecration of Šahak at Caesarea. The traditional aspect of this Caesarean

tions are all the more pertinent that a Bishop descended from the distinguished ecclesiastical house of Ałbianos of Manazkert could hardly be the object of Ps. Pāwstos' contemptuous identification.²⁵ Still more crucially, Ps. Pāwstos implies unmistakably that Čunak's ordination as Patriarch was invalid. First, because all the Armenian Bishops summoned by Aršak II to perform his consecration had refused to attend so that the only ecclesiastical dignitaries ultimately present at the ceremony were the Bishops of Ałjnik' and Korduk', whose sees in the southern Marchlands of the Aršakuni kingdom may have put them partially outside the jurisdiction of the Armenian church at that time.²⁶ Second, because the ordination performed by only two Bishops, as against the minimum of three mandated at the Council of Nicaea, made it uncanonical.²⁷ Likewise, Ōrmanean's suggestion that Ps.

Pāwstos' Šahak of Manazkert had merely served as a vicar until the death of St. Nersēs is difficultly reconcilable with the circumstantial description given in the *Buzandaran Patmutiwnk* of Šahak's journey to Caesarea at the beginning of his career accompanied by a brilliant retinue headed by one of the senior royal officials, the *Hayr mardpet*, and composed of the Prince of Gardmanajor and ten more magnates, followed by the report of their "honoured" return to Armenia. An account which matches the unchallenged consecration of Pāriēn of Aštīšat found in the preceding chapter of the *Buzandaran Patmutiwnk*. Furthermore, Ps. Pāwstos and the Armenian sources in general do not fail to distinguish between the Patriarch and his deputy or *locum tenens* in either the case of St. Nersēs and Bishop Xad of Marag, or in that of the later administrator of the see, Yovsep' of Hołocim,

ceremony is evident not only from its mention in the cases of Yusik, Pāren, Šahak and St. Nersēs, BP, III, xii, xvi, xvii; IV, iii, but also from Asohik's mistaken assumption, II, i, p. 63, that it had also been performed in the case of Aristakes, who had been ordained in Armenia by his father St. Gregory, cf. *Agaiangelay Patmutiwn Hayoc*, G. Ter Mkrtčean and St. Kanayanc', edd. (Tiflis, 1090), dcccclxii.

²⁵ This contempt is all the more clear that, outside of Scriptural citations, the word սորուկ occurs only on this occasion in BP, which normally uses the more honorific ծառայ "vassal, servant," and that the compiler of the work did not even bother to record the anti-Patriarch's actual name, see the preceding two notes. The eminent position of the house of Ałbianos, rivaling on occasion that of the Gregorids, has been pointed out too often to need further confirmation. See, *inter alia*, N. Adontz, *Armenia in the Period of Justinian*, N. G. Garsoian, ed. and tr. (Louvain, 1970), pp. 266, 274–275, 286, 288, etc., who may even have been guilty of some exaggeration; E. Ter Minassiantz, *Die armenische Kirche in ihren Beziehungen zu den syrischen Kirchen* (Leipzig, 1904), pp. 14–20; Markwart, *Die Entstehung*, pp. 159, 164–165, 168–169; etc.

²⁶ BP, IV, xv " . . . հրաման տայր թագաւոր՝ կոչել զամենայն եպիսկոպոս Հայոց աշխարհին, զի եկեղեցին ձեռնադրեցեն զԶուռակն ի կաթողիկոսութիւն Հայոց: Եւ ոչ մի ոք հաւանեաց զայլ բայց միայն Աղձնեաց եւ Կորդուաց եպիսկոպոսք եկին, եւ զԶուռակն ձեռնադրեցին ի կաթո-

ղիկոսութիւն ըստ հրամանի թագաւորին". Gelzer's supposition, *Die Anfänge*, p. 155, that the Bishops of Ałjnik' and Korduk' were refugee Bishops in *partibus* and pensioners at the Aršakuni court is untenable, as was observed by Ter Minassiantz, *Die armenische Kirche*, p. 17. For the ambiguous and autonomous status of the southern Armenian March lands ruled by local princes vis-à-vis the Aršakuni crown, see Adontz, *Armenia*, pp. 25–37, 84–93, and my forthcoming *Epic Histories*, Introduction and Appendix II, s. nn. Ałjnik', Korduk'. It is also possible that the Armenian bishops were affronted because no council had been called to assist in the selection of the new primate, as was the custom. Cf. BP, III, xiii, xiv, xv, xvi, xvii; IV, iii, and below n. 38. The fact that the council had been duly called earlier and given its sanction, III, xvii, is one more factor separating the legitimate selection of Šahak of Manazkert and the dubious imposition of Čunak.

²⁷ Nicaea Canon, iv, E. J. Jonkers, *Acta et symbola conciliorum quae saeculo quarta habita sunt* (Leiden, 1954), p. 40. Cf. J. Gaudemet, *L'église dans l'empire romain (IV^e–V^e siècles)* (Paris [1958]), p. 338. The late *Vita*, which normally follows BP, turns Čunak into a palatine priest "զոմն ի դրան քահանայեց" and rounds out the number of ordaining bishops to three, ix, p. 66 "եպիսկոպոսն Գառնոյ՝ Գէորգ, եւ եպիսկոպոսն Աղձնեաց՝ Տաճատ, եւ եպիսկոպոսն Անձնեացեաց՝ Սիմէոն, . . ." but this assertion seems pure fantasy since the three hierarchs are otherwise unknown and the see of Gārnī is not attested in this period.

even though they unanimously praise the vicar's virtues or even sainthood.²⁸

Given these objections, and despite the weight of the opposed Armenian "received tradition," the testimony of the *Buzandaran Patmut'iwnk'*, the earliest and most detailed account of Fourth century Armenian history especially in its ecclesiastical aspect, is not to be lightly discarded.²⁹ Consequently, the identity and position of Šahak of Manazkert in the patriarchal succession still remains elusive, and another attempt to gather all the scattered pieces of information into a *lectio difficilior* may not be altogether unwarranted.

The first factor underlying the entire discussion of this period that must be remembered is the already noted unanimous insistence of all the native sources that the Armenian patriarchate was essentially hereditary and a prerogative of the Gregorid house, despite the uncanonical nature of this tradition for the Church at large. Only the youthful incapacity or absence of a Gregorid candidate could preclude his selection and the reluctant

turn to one of the most eminent ecclesiastical dignitaries in the realm.³⁰ Yusik's sons may still have been too young as well as "unworthy" at the time of his death, when the Armenian magnates sought out the elderly Daniēl, the supervisor of all the southern Armenian churches, if not of the entire realm. But at his death, Pap and Aťanaginēs, in spite of their patent opposition, had the diaconate forcibly imposed on them and their subsequent rejection of the dignity of their house was viewed as having brought the full weight of Divine retribution on their guilty heads.³¹ Only such a crisis as the one provoked by their refusal and death, compounded by the youth or absence of Aťanaginēs' only son Nersēs, could sanction the acceptance of Pārēn and Šahak, who, "were not from the house of Gregory," as the Armenian sources still remembered centuries later.³²

³⁰ BP, III, xiii, "Եւ ոչ այլ ոք ի նմին տանէ զաւակին Գրիգորի գոյր ոք. զի այնչափ խակ կային մարմնաւոր զաւակին, եւ սոքա ոչ թէ արժանի հարցն գնացեալ նմանեցին վարուց: Եւ այլ ոչ ոք էր, որ զառաջնորոտութիւն զըլխաւորութեան քահանայապետութեանն վերակացութեանն որ տէրունական տանն հրամանատարութեանն կատարել, պաշտաման յաջողէր": Tournebize, *Histoire*, p. 488 queried the overwhelming importance of the hereditary ecclesiastical succession, but Gelzer, *Die Anfänge*, pp. 132, 136 equated it with the transmission of the high-priesthood among the Hebrews, and all the Armenian sources stress it, as has already been observed. See also n. 32.

³¹ BP, III, xv, "զի կալեալք, աւանայ առեալք զձեռնադրութիւն սարկաւազութեան՝ հարկեցան Պապն եւ Աթանագենէս: Որոց ընդ ոտն հարեալք զաւանդն հոգեւոր պատուի . . ." Cf. III, xix, and below, n. 37.

³² See above n. 30. The reaffirmation of the Gregorid prerogative spans a millenium in the Armenian historiographical tradition. From BP, IV, iii, which first noted that Nersēs had left Armenia to be educated at Caesarea, although it places him back at the Aršakuni court at the time of his election, whereas MX, III, xvi, insists that the future patriarch was getting married in Constantinople at that very time. The memory of the Gregorid claim is no less clear in the much later identifications of LP § 5, "Փառնեքսէ՛ ոչ ի նոյն ազգէ այլ ի տարանոյ՛"; KG, p. 18, ". . . զՓառնեքսէ ոմն, ոչ յազգէ սրբոյն Գրիգորի . . ." etc. Given the late date of the *Vita*, and its frequent inaccuracies, its claim that the patriarchal throne remained vacant for a year after Pārēn's tenure (see above n. 13) can probably be disregarded especially in view of the fact that the other Armenian sources give a pontificate of 4 to 6 years to Šahak irrespective of his position in their list. The comment in the *Vita* may be no more than a dim memory of Gregorid loyalism. (See below n. 49).

²⁸ BP, III, xvi-xvii. The account of his journey stresses that Šahak was sent to Caesarea, "մեծաշուք պատուով յերկիրն Գաւրաց," and that his return was equally "honourable" պատուով. The parallel with Pārēn's journey is complete except for the presence of a different set of Armenian dignitaries and a slightly less pompous tone in the first case. These slight divergences incidentally preclude the possibility of an automatic repetition in the second case. On the clear identification of patriarchal vicars or *locum tenentes*, see BP, IV, xii-xiii and MX, III, xxxi for Xad, and Garitte, *Diegesis*, pp. 94-96; and N. G. Garsoïan, "Secular Jurisdiction over the Armenian Church (IVth-VIIth centuries) [= *Secular Jurisdiction*]," *Okeanos. Essays presented to Ihor Ševčenko . . . = Harvard Ukrainian Studies*, 7 (1984); repr. *Id.*, *Armenia*, pp. 244-247, for the interesting case of Yovsep. It should be noted that despite his identification, Ōrmanean, also acknowledged the eminence of the Ałbianids, *Azgapatum*, I, col. 162.

²⁹ At a distance of three quarters of a century, the value of this testimony was acknowledged by both Gelzer, *Die Anfänge*, p. III, "Für die Geschichte des IV. Jahrhunderts von Trdats Tode bis zur Reichstheilung ist das Geschichtswerk des Faustus eine historische Quelle ersten Ranges"; and Ananian, *La data*, p. 356, ". . . è preferibile seguire il Biwandaci anzichè il Khorenaci, essendo il primo più vicino all' epoca degli avvenimenti, e più informato."

It is against this background of a deeply ingrained tradition of hereditary offices inherited from Armenia's Iranian past that only force majeure dictated the selection of Pārēn of Aštišat and Šahak of Manazkert and their consecration at Caesarea with all the pomp required of this ceremony.³³ Another factor may also have influenced their choice, although it cannot have been the primary one in the eyes of the contemporaries or even openly admitted. After the death of Constantine the Great, the Armenian court beginning with Tiran found it necessary to conform to the Arianizing policies of his successors. Hence, the presence of a royal official such as the *mardpet* heading Sahak's retinue, whereas Armenian patriarchal candidates appear to have been accompanied exclusively by hereditary magnates on all the other journeys to Caesarea,³⁴ may perhaps be a hint of the turn at that time toward the slightly more theologically pliant house of the Bishops of Manazkert, as against the inflexible Nicaean orthodoxy that had already cost Yusik his life.³⁵ Finally, the chaos of the Persian war in Tiran's tragic last years may also have interfered with traditional practices. Be that as it may, no flaw can be found in Ps. P'awstos' account of the two non-Gregorids' selection and consecration, nor is there any serious reason to challenge Šahak's appearance at this point in time.

Altogether different circumstances attended the accession of the next King, Aršak II. The return of peace precluded the toleration of institutional irregularities. A sense of returning order unmistakably permeates Ps. P'awstos' statement that Armenia now revived with, "every magnate on his throne, every of-

ficial in his station."³⁶ The presence at this juncture of an adult Gregorid candidate in the person of Yusik's grand-son, Nersēs, made imperative the same regularization of ecclesiastical affairs for the completion of the reforms that had been inaugurated by the new King. Clamorously demanded by the Armenian council and the army, the "legitimate" Gregorid Nersēs was ordained, perhaps also against his will, and duly consecrated at Caesarea. The renewal of the church, as of the kingdom, was now complete.³⁷

What then was the fate of Šahak of Manazkert? There is no mention of his abdication, removal or death in the *Buzandaran Patmut'iwnk'*, as was observed by Ananian, who suggests that the former interim Patriarch, if still alive, merely returned to his hereditary see of Manazkert, thus giving way to the superior claim of the Gregorid house.³⁸ Far from being unduly far fetched, this very pattern of episcopal exchanges was in fact to be repeated in the next generation. With the extension of Sasanian control over Armenia in the Fifth century, the King of Kings Bahrām V (the Vram II of the Armenian sources) expelled Nersēs' son, the legitimate primate Sahak the Great; from the patriarchal see and, with the conivance of the Armenian magnates, installed in his place, "a certain priest named Surmak from the village called Arckē in the district of Bznunik [who came] from a priestly family

³³ BP, III, xvi-xvii. See above nn. 26, 28.

³⁴ Cf. BP, III, xii, xvi; IV, iv. On the position of the *mardpet* as a royal official rather than a hereditary dynast, see my *Epic Histories*, Introduction and Appendix III, s. v.

³⁵ On the Arianizing policy of the Aršakuni Kings in the IVth century, see N. G. Garsoïan, "Politique ou orthodoxie ? l'Arménie au quatrième siècle," [= *Politique*], REArm, n. s. IV (1976), pp. 297-320; repr. *Id.*, *Armenia*, iv; also *Id.*, "Armenia in the Fourth century - An Attempt to Re-define the Concepts 'Armenia' and 'Loyalty,'" REArm, n. s. VIII (1971), pp. 346-352; repr. *Armenia*, iii.

³⁶ BP, IV, ii, "Եւ նորոգեցաւ զուարթեացաւ տէրութիւնն թագաւորութեանն Հայաստան երկրին որպէս եւ զառաջինսն. մեծամեծքն յիւրաքանչիւր գահու, եւ գործակալքն յիւրաքանչիւր շահու:"

³⁷ BP, IV, iii-iv. Nersēs' protestations of unworthiness may be no more than the ubiquitous *topos* for episcopal candidates, but his ordination to the diaconate was hardly more gentle than that of his father and his uncle, ". . . թագաւորն Արշակ ինքն . . . հրամայէր զնա [Ներսէս] կապել զիւրով առաջեւ. զհերան . . . ի բաց խղեալ հրամայէր. եւ ընդ նմին զվաճելուչ պատուճանն զայն ի բաց պատարեալ հրամայէր Հրաման տալլ, եւ բերին հանդերձ կղերիկոսաց զգեցուցանէին նմա. եւ հրաման, եւ կոչեցին զձեռունի եպիսկոպոսն . . . Փաւստոս, եւ տալլ զնա ձեռնադրել ի սարկաւազութիւն:" Cf. above n. 31 for the forcible ordination of Pap and Aťanaginēs; also nn. 10-11 and 36 for the ecclesiastical "renewal" - matching the secular one - that followed Nersēs' consecration.

³⁸ Cf. Ananian, *La data*, p. 357. There is no mention of Šahak, or for that matter of any ecclesiastical affairs except for the "deserved" deaths of Pap and Aťanaginēs (III, xix) between BP, III, xvii, the enthronement of Šahak, and IV, iii, the election of St. Nersēs.

from that district.”³⁹ Soon removed from power by his own supporters, Surmak then went back to his home district of Bznunik’ and obtained the hereditary tenure of its see, “for himself and his family.”⁴⁰ Subsequently, St. Sahak returned, but was compelled to share the patriarchal authority with another Persian appointee, the Syrian Šamuēl, whereas Surmak continued to flourish in his see of Bznunik’.⁴¹ No mention of him is found thereafter in the *History* of Movsēs Xorenaci, from which we learn the preceding details, but the presence of a Bishop Surmak of Bznunik’ is recorded by both Łazar Parpeci and Efišē at the time of the rebellion of the Vardananc’ in 450. He must in fact have regained a considerable measure of his patriarchal authority after the death of St. Sahak, if we are to believe the latter historian John the Katolikos, who, departing unexpectedly from his usual model for earlier Armenian history, Xorenaci, states unequivocally,

... Yovsēp’ of Vayoc’ jor succeeded him [Sahak] on the patriarchal throne as vicar. But at the order of Yazkert [II] Surmak performed the office of ordination for six years until his death, and then, St. Yovsēp’ [performed] the ordination for the Armenians.⁴²

The return of Surmak to the patriarchal dignity is also attested by Asofik and Vardan

Arewelci, and he is conceded a measure of legitimacy denied to the contemporary Syrian anti-Patriarchs through his inclusion in some of the lists of Armenian Katolikoi.⁴³ If then, the shift of a Bishop back and forth between his see and the patriarchal throne was possible in the first half of the fifth century, it may not have been unthinkable in the generation of Sahak’s father, St. Nersēs the Great. The subsequent events of the earlier pontificate, as we shall see, appear to bear out such a theory.

The serene picture of Aršak II’s early years and the return to normalcy with the retirement of Šahak of Manazkert and the revival induced by the reforms of St. Nersēs depicted in the *Buzandaran Patmutiwnk’* did not prove long-lasting. With the increasing attraction of Constantius II to the cause of Arianism, theological strife increased in the Byzantine empire and the victory of the Arianizing party after the Council of Seleucia held late in 359 was marked by the wholesale expulsion of its opponents from their sees.⁴⁴ Under the circumstances, Aršak II, indebted to Constantius for a series of recent benefits, had little choice but to follow the lead of his imperial protector. St. Nersēs, who had maintained the Nicaean tradition of his family, travelled the road of his doctrinal colleagues into distant exile and did not return to the Armenian court until the accession of Aršak’s son Pap some eight or nine years later.⁴⁵ Armenia could obviously not remain deprived of spiritual leadership for such

³⁹ ԼՔ, I, xiv, p. 23, “. . . երէց մի Սուրմակ անուն ի գաւառէ Բզնունեաց, ի գեղջէն որ կոչի Արծիկ, ի սոհմէ քահանայից գաւառին.” MX, III, lxiii–lxiv, also identifies Surmak as a priest from Arckē, but TA, I, xi, p. 73, calls him a wild solitary, “մոլեղնոտ փառամոլ արեղա < ի > . . . զՍորմակ [sic] մոլի . . .”

⁴⁰ MX, III, lxiv, Բայց Սուրմակ ոչ աւելի տեսեալ քան զմի ամ’ . . . ապա զԵրջ գաւառին զԲզնունեաց զեպիսկոպոստութիւնն ի Պարսից արքայէն եկիտ ունել արգաւ:”

⁴¹ MX, III, lxv–lxvi, “[Շամուէլ] ատեցեալ ի բնաւ եպիսկոպոստացն՝ արհամարհեալ լինէր . . . բայց ի Սուրմակայն յայ՝ մանէ, զորոյ եւ մեծացոյց իսկ զվիճակն արքունի հրամանաւ հանեալ զարմաց՝ նմա հաւատայր:”

⁴² JK, p. 58, “[At St. Sahak’s death] . . . զաթոռ հայրապետութեանն տեղապահութեամբ յաջորդէր Յովսէփ քահանայ . . . սակայն ի հրամանէ Յակեբարի Սուրմակ կատարէ զձեռնադրութեան զբուն զամս վեց՝ մինչեւ մեռաւ իսկ. եւ ապա զսուրբ Յովսէփ ի ձեռնադրութիւն Հայոց.” ԼՔ I, xxiii, p. 44 and Efišē p. 28 list him among the signatories of the Armenians’ answer to the letter of Mihr-Nersēh. Cf. Garitte, *Diegesis*, pp. 94–96, 99, 102; Garsoiān, *Secular Jurisdiction*, pp. 244–247. See also next note.

⁴³ See preceding note. Also, Asofik, II, i, p. 76, “Սա [Սուրմակ] անկաւ ի թիւ հայրապետաց. իսկ Արդիւոյ եւ Շմուէլ ոչ թուեցան.” Surmak’s return and acknowledgement by the Armenian episcopate is further supported by the account of the council normally assembled to designate his successor, *Id.*, II, ii, p. 78; “Եւ յետ մահուանն Սուրմակայ ժողովեալ հայրապետացն Հայոց՝ խնդրեալ զտին քահանայ տնն Յովսէփ անուն, . . .” Cf. also, *Diegesis* § 33; LG¹ § 16; LG² § 15–17; LS² § 14, pp. 273–274, “Սուրմակ հակառակ աթոռոյն սրբոյն Սահակայ կացեալ . . . ապա հալածին . . . Իսկ զինի կատարման սրբոյն, զարձեալ ունի զաթոռ նորին, այլ եւս ամս 9:”

⁴⁴ Sokratēs Scholastikos, *Ekklesiastikē Historia* [= EH], W. Bright, ed. (Oxford, 1878), II, xxxix–xli; Sozomenos, *Kirchengeschichte* [= EH], J. Bidez, ed. CGS § 50 (Berlin, 1960), IV, xxii–xxx. Cf. e. g. K. Baus, *The Imperial Church from Constantine to the Early Middle Ages* [= *Imperial Church*] (New York [1980], pp. 47–50, etc.

⁴⁵ On Nersēs’ exile and absence from court as a sequel to the Council of Seleucia of 359, see my “Quidam Nersēs – A Note on the Mission of St. Nersēs the Great,” *Armeniaca*, 1969; repr. *Armenia*, v. Nersēs may have re-

a span of time, especially since none of the Armenian sources mention such a hiatus. Yet none of them speaks of a new election, let alone a formal consecration, at this point. The typical pattern throughout the eastern portion of the Empire during this period of turmoil was for pro- and anti-Arian Bishops to alternate on the same see, as was the case for Athanasius himself at Alexandria.⁴⁶ Given this contemporary pattern, as well as external pressure, the simplest and most obvious solution in Armenia after the departure of St. Nersēs was the return of Šahak. The highly visible Bishop of Manazkert (and not the unknown Čunak) was clearly the most acceptable incumbent for the pontificate in default of a descendent of St. Gregory. No objection had apparently been made under similar conditions to his earlier election, which had incidentally given him the necessary administrative experience. There was no need to seek a new Caesarean consecration to sanction his rule since it had already been given. At the same time, Šahak’s greater doctrinal tolerance is at least hinted at in Ps. Pāvstos’ rather acid comment that his spiritual leadership was on a par with that of his predecessor Parēn, “who had kept only his own person holy [but] of necessity associated with the impious King and walked submissively according to his will.”⁴⁷

The return of Šahak of Manazkert to the primacy of the Armenian church after 359 does not, however, rest entirely on mere analogy with contemporary or later practices, or on purely hypothetical bases. During the brief reign of the Emperor Jovian, a synod is known to have been held at Antioch on the Orontes late in 363. At this meeting, the extreme Arian party of the Anomoians was condemned, and both the Arianizing Acacian party and their more “orthodox” colleagues jointly subscribed to the Nicaean creed, thus reversing the position of the Council of Seleucia. In the list of signatories of the “orthodox” creed of Antioch preserved in the *Ecclesiastical History* of Sokratēs Scholastikos, the fourteenth is that of Bishop “Isakokis of Greater Armenia,”⁴⁸ As was long since noted, there can be no reasonable doubt that this Isakokis was none other than Šahak/Sahak (i. e. Isaac) of Manazkert making his peace with a now “orthodox” Emperor and explicitly identified by the form of his signature as presiding Bishop of Greater Armenia. Had he still been at the time no more than Bishop of Manazkert, he would have been so recorded by Sokratēs who scrupulously includes the precise location of each see, and no hierarch would have had the authority to sign in the name of all “Greater Armenia” except the primate of the Aršakuni

turned from the island to which he had been exiled at an earlier date than I formerly believed, since he met with the rebellious Armenian magnates before the fall of Aršak II (BP, IV, li), but he did not return to court or re-assume his patriarchal duties until the accession of Pap.

⁴⁶ See *inter alia*, Baus, *Imperial Church*, pp. 31–62 on Athanasius’ successive expulsion’s and flights from Alexandria in times of Arian ascendancy (A. D. 335, 356, 362) and his re-instatements (345, 361, 363) despite the threat and his replacement by the Arians Gregory of Valens, as well as his replacement by the Arians Gregory and George of Cappadocia. Athanasius was, to be sure, only the most visible among his numerous colleagues.

⁴⁷ BP, III, xvii, “[Շահակ] նմանեաց վարուցն Փառէնայ: Առաջնորդէր սա աշխարհի ըստ նմին օրինակի:” Cf. III, xvi, “[Փառէն] միայն զԵրբ անձն սուրբ պահէր, եւ ի հարկէ ընդերէր “[Փառէն] միայն զԵրբ անձն սուրբ պահէր, եւ ի հարկէ ընդերէր [sic] անօրէն թաղաւորին, եւ ըստ նորին կամացն երթեալ” The need for a diplomatic primate was all the greater that Xad of Marag, whom St. Nersēs had left as his vicar, must have been no less rigid in doctrine than his teacher, since on his return Nersēs found that Xad,

“. . . եր կացեալ ի ճշմարտութեան եւ ուղղութեան, եւ գնացեալ եր զճանապարհս տեսուն Աստուծոյ, եւ ոչ եր թիւրեալ յաջ կամ յահեակ . . .” BP, IV, xiii. The “diplomacy” of Šahak should not be construed as a suggestion of heresy, since this is clearly contradicted by the praise of later “orthodox” authors (see below n. 53). The theological position of the mid-IVth century throughout the Mediterranean world was anything but clear until the Council of Constantinople of 381 and even thereafter, and various shades of homoiousianism seemed more acceptable to many than the unscriptural Nicaean homoiousian formula. The most likely hypothesis in Šahak’s case is that he belonged somewhere among the moderates.

⁴⁸ Sokratēs, EH, III, xxv, “Ἰσοκάκις Ἀρμενίας μεγάλης . . .” Sozomenos, EH, VI, iv, Cf. e. g. J. Bethune-Baker, *An Introduction to the Early History of Church Doctrine* [= *Introduction*] (London, repr. 1949), p. 196; H. Gwatkin, *Studies of Arianism*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, 1900); Glanville Downey, *A History of Antioch in Syria* (Princeton, 1961), pp. 398–399.

realm.⁴⁹ Hence, some degree of stability seems to have been achieved in Armenia between 359 and 363, despite the exile of St. Nersēs, through the reappearance of the earlier Patriarch.

Unfortunately for him, however, Šahak's presence at a council of Nicaean reconciliation was to serve him ill. Jovian outlived the Council of Antioch by only a few months and the accession of the new Emperor Valens early in 364 brought about an abrupt revival of Arianism.⁵⁰ Manoeuvring in an increasingly perilous situation after his abandonment to Persia by Jovian's peace of 363, Aršak II may well have sought a rapprochement with Valens despite the opposition of the Armenian episcopate.⁵¹ As a result of the sharply altered theological climate now prevailing, the former Bishop of Manazkert found himself as compromised in the eyes of the new Roman authorities as the still absent Nersēs. Under the circumstances, neither of them would be acceptable to the Empire or serve the King's

purpose, and Šahak must have found it necessary to withdraw once more to his own see. In this dangerous pass the best that Aršak II could impose on his realm was the servile Čunak, "who was a docile man . . . [who] had no tongue whatever for rebuke or admonition, but he agreed with the King in whatsoever he did."⁵² As we saw earlier, the brief tenure of the King's sorry puppet can in no way be identified with that of the notable, even if tactful, figure of Bishop Šahak. All the more so that the sneer of Ps. Pawstos at Čunak's spineless docility runs counter to the memory of Šahak as a "praiseworthy" man which lingered in the memory of Armenian historians.⁵³ Illegally and uncanonically foisted upon Armenia through the King's will alone, Čunak vanished almost at once, presumably as a result of the downfall of his patron, as the great invasion of Šāhpuhr II deported Aršak II to die in Persian captivity, devastated and depopulated Armenia and sought to re-impose Zoroastrianism on the country under the rule of the apostates Vahan Mamikonean and Meružan Arcruni.⁵⁴ No further trace of Čunak is to be found,⁵⁵ nor do we find any reference to a primate in the Armenian realm temporarily plunged into chaos by the Persian domination.

⁴⁹ BP, IV, xv, "Եւ էր Չունակ այր գգօն, եւ ոչ ինչ ունէր լիզու. յանդիմանութեան կամ խրատու, այլ հաւանեալ էր թազաւորին զինչ եւ նա գործիցէ:" Given the context, գգօն can hardly mean "wise". It should rather be taken in the sense of "tame" or "shrewd" to suggest that as the king's creature, Čunak was adept at staying on the good side of his patron, or was merely submissive.

⁵⁰ MX, III, xxxix speaks of Sahak as, ". . . ոչ հեռի գովութենէ . . ." More enthusiastically, JK, p. 51 praises him as, "այր գովելի եւ լի առաքինութեամբ կրօնից." The more measured praise of MX may be a reflection of both Šahak's earlier dogmatic flexibility and of his ultimate adherence to Nicaean "orthodox" theology at the time of the Council of Antioch but, *pace* earlier identifications, the characterization of the two personages cannot be reconciled.

⁵¹ BP, IV, lv–lix; MX, III, xxxiv–xxxvi. The Zoroastrian fire altar found under the main altar of the cathedral of Eǰmiacin and the newly uncovered one in front of the bema of the basilica at Kasaḫ probably belong to this period.

⁵² The only mentions of Čunak outside BP, IV, xv are the dim recollections in the much later works of VV, p. 48 and MA, p. 16, who place him anachronistically between St. Nersēs and St. Sahak in the reign of King Pap.

⁴⁹ It may also be worth noting in passing that the period between the Councils of Seleucia and Antioch, A. D. 359–363 matches exactly the span of four years most commonly allotted to Šahak's pontificate irrespective of its position. These figures are obviously questionable, and some lists, including BP do not mention the length of the pontificate, but the span of four years is to be found in MX, III, xxxix; Asohik, II, i, p. 73; KG, p. 23; VV, p. 48; MA, p. 16; LG² § 9; LS¹, p. 270; LP § 7; etc., even the three years given by LG¹ § 8 (Yusik II) and SA, p. 67 are explicable. More surprising is the evidence of JK, p. 52 and the list attributed to him, LS², p. 273 which give six years, although JK usually follows MX for the early period. The identification of Šahak and of Isokakis was made by Gelzer, *Die Anfänge*, pp. 121–125; Akinian *Reihenfolge*, p. 85 and *Id.*, *Maštoc*, p. 284; Ananian, *La data*, pp. 359–360, who gave by far the most valuable analysis of the patriarchal succession as an aftermath to his study of the Christianization of Armenia. None of these studies, however, paid sufficient attention to either the Armenian social structure and its tradition or to the significant turns in religious policy throughout this period.

⁵⁰ On the Nicaean character of the Council of Antioch during the brief reign of the "orthodox" Emperor Jovian and the swift Arian reaction at the accession of Valens, see Baus, *Imperial Church*, pp. 61–64; Bethune-Baker, *Introduction*, pp. 186–187, etc.

⁵¹ Ammianus Marcellinus, *Libri qui supersunt*, J. Rolfe ed. (London-Cambridge, Mass., 1939), XXV, vii, 12–13; cf. BP, IV, xxi. See also above n. 35 on the religious policy of the IVth century Armenian court.

It is only with the return of Aršak's son Pap to the Armenian throne and the gradual return to traditional ways in all aspects of life ca. 368, that we hear once again of the situation in the Armenian church. Renewing, like his father at the time of his accession, the patterns mandated by custom, and needing the support of the Armenian magnates who had abandoned Aršak, especially of the powerful Mamikonean *sparapets*, whose devotion to the house of St. Gregory and to the person of St. Nersēs in particular is well attested,⁵⁶ Pap – willingly or not – now reinstated the "legitimate" Patriarch Nersēs to his former dignity, only to connive at his murder a few years later in 373.⁵⁷

One more indication, coming from a source outside Armenia but contemporary with Pap's reign, confirms both St. Nersēs' return to power and the continuing presence of Šahak of Manazkert late in Nersēs' lifetime. Writing in 372 *To the Italians and Gauls*,⁵⁸ St. Basil of Caesarea included in his letter the names of thirty-two contemporary Bishops from the eastern portion of the Byzantine Empire and the adjacent lands, who must necessarily have been orthodox and not Arianisers, since he includes his own name in third place in the list. Unfortunately for us, Basil did not see fit to identify the sees of his colleagues, who were presumably familiar to his contemporaries. Nevertheless, a group of four Bishops men-

tioned – numbers twenty-five and twenty-seven to twenty-nine in the list – must be germane to the present inquiry. They are ". . . Barsoumas, . . . , Chosroēs, Iōsakēs, Nersēs, . . ." ⁵⁹ As I already had the occasion to note in an earlier study, the Syrian name of Barsoumas = Baršaumā and the equally Iranian one of Chosroēs = Xǧsrō/Xosrov point unmistakably towards the extreme eastern edge of the Byzantine Empire or beyond. In such a context, Narsēs/Nersēs and Iōsakēs/Sahak can be none other than the two Armenian primates under discussion, still alive and acknowledged as "orthodox" by their great colleague from Caesarea a year before the murder of St. Nersēs.⁶⁰

Retracing briefly the varied episodes presented, they appear to belong to an understandable, if tortuous pattern. The fundamental Armenian tradition pointed exclusively to the Gregorids as the true holders of the patriarchal dignity. They were to be designated and consecrated at Caesarea whenever possible.

In times of internal or external crisis, however, a compromise with this tradition might

⁵⁶ St. Basil, Ep. xcii, "Βαρσούμας Ἰωάννης Χοσρόης Ἰωσάκης [var. Ἰσαάκης Ἰσαάκις Ἰωσάκις] Νάρσης . . ." The name of John found between Barsoumas and Chosroēs is obviously far too common to permit any identification.

⁵⁷ See N. G. Garsoïan, "Nersēs le Grand, Basile de Césarée et Eustathe de Sébaste," [= *Nersēs le Grand*], REArm, n. s. XVII (1983); repr. *Armenia*, vii, pp. 148–149. The identification of St. Basil's colleague Bishop Iosakes with the Isokakis of the Council of Antioch was made long since by Maran, "Vita S. Basilii," PG, XXII, 2, but he did not have any occasion to refer to the Armenian material which was not germane to his work. Tournebize, *Histoire*, p. 488 perceived that the Bishop of Manazkert who succeeded St. Nersēs according to BP, "Housig de la famille d'Aghpianos . . . est probablement le personnage dont on voit le nom au bas de la lettre adressée par Basile, en 372, au pape Damase et aux évêques occidentaux," but he does not seem to have noticed the juxtaposition of "Iosakes'" name with that of Nersēs, although this was subsequently observed by van Esbroeck, *Chronique*, p. 434. Ormanean, *Azgapatum*, I, col. 224, suggested that Basil's "Iosacis" was an anagram of the two Armenian names, Sahak or Šahak and Yusik, thus reconciling the two historiographical traditions: But this reconstruction, for which there is no authority, seemed too far-fetched.

⁵⁸ The close connexion between the Gregorid Patriarchs and the Mamikonean house is stressed throughout BP, and especially in the case of St. Nersēs; see III, xi, for Vrtanes' praise of the *sparapet* Vačē; IV, liv, v, i, iv, xxx and even xliv, for the devotion in successive generations of Vasak, Mušē and Manuel Mamikonean to St. Nersēs and his memory. Although MX invariably reduces or expunges outright the rôle of the Mamikonean in IVth century Armenian history, he too acknowledges the link between the two families culminating in the marriage of St. Sahak's only child and heiress, Sahakanoyš to Hamazasp Mamikonean and the Patriarch's intercession for his son-in-law at the Sasanian court, III, li.

⁵⁹ BP, V, xxiv; MX, III, xxxvii, followed by the other sources. See Garsoïan, *Politique*, pp. 313–320, for the problem of Pap's murder by "Valens".

⁶⁰ St. Basil, *The Letters*, R. J. Deferrari ed. (London-Cambridge, Mass., 1962), Ep. xcii, Πρὸς Ἰταλοὺς καὶ Γάλλους. This letter has been dated by all scholars in A. D. 372.

have to be made, and the period under consideration abounded in unexpected political and ecclesiastical zig-zags whose reverberations unquestionably affected Armenia. Hence, Paṛēn of Aštišat and subsequently Šahak of Manazkert could have been designated and consecrated at Caesarea only because of the absence of a member of the Gregorid house to whom the aristocratic social pattern prevailing in contemporary Armenia reserved this dignity. An additional, but not in itself a sufficient factor may have been the Aršakuni's perception that these two primates would be better suited to the Armenian crown's need to conform in some measure to the Arianizing policy of the Byzantine court, than the more inflexible Gregorid descendents. The appearance at court of the "legitimate heir" to the throne of his fathers, the great-great grandson of St. Gregory the Illuminator, coming as it did at the very time that the new King Aršak II was restoring Armenia to its normal state after the Persian war that had ended the reign of Tiran, required, however as a *sine qua non*, the recognition of Nersēs' superior claim at this point and the withdrawal of the interim primate Šahak to the see of Manazkert similarly recognized as the apanage of his family since the days of his ancestor Aḫbianos. St. Nersēs' subsequent exile together with other anti-Arian bishops in 360 warranted once again the reappearance of the already consecrated Šahak of Manazkert who then presided over the Armenian church until the aftermath of the Council of Antioch. Faced simultaneously with the abrupt Arian reaction of 364 following the accession of Valens and the still more formidable threat of the Persian invasion which made Roman help imperative, Aršak II now chose an ecclesiastical figurehead in the person of the insignificant "Čunak," while both the duly consecrated primates stayed away from the court, which soon dissolved into chaos. Finally, the second return to autonomy at the beginning of Pap's reign mandated the reinstatement of the traditional Patriarch Nersēs, who could be removed from his hereditary position only through murder, while Šahak survived, presumably once again home in Manazkert, until at least 372.

It is hardly surprising that later Armenian writers were bewildered by this rapid alternation of primates at the head of the Armenian church at a time when its direction presumably belonged to St. Nersēs according to the native tradition with which they were still familiar. The same held for the multiplicity of Šahaks and Šahaks on the patriarchal throne during this period, including not only the one under consideration with the various forms of his name, but also a Šahak Korčēay whom the *Buzandaran Patmutiwnk'* lists as the third successor of St. Nersēs and who can under no circumstances be identified with the earlier descendent of Aḫbianos,⁶¹ and finally the last Gregorid, St. Sahak the Great. Compounding the confusion was the recall that Šahak of Manazkert had not been consecrated at Caesarea at the time of his replacement of St. Nersēs in 360; a memory that would be difficultly distinguishable in later times from the remembrance of a break between the Armenian church and Caesarea after St. Nersēs' murder, little more than a decade later.⁶² Understandably perplexed by the double alternation: Šahak-Nersēs-Šahak-[Čunak]-Nersēs, Armenian historians appear to have preserved the memory of Šahak's unconsecrated replacement of St. Nersēs (which they then conflated with the dim recall of an ecclesiastical break between the Armenian church and Caesarea after St. Nersēs' death), but not that of Šahak's first and entirely legitimate tenure before the consecration of Nersēs. Consequently, they dropped the first appearance of the Bishop of Manazkert from the pa-

⁶¹ BP, VI, iii. Gelzer, *Die Anfänge*, p. 122 also remarked that "Šahak dem Kurden [Korčēay]" could not be a descendant of Aḫbianos of Manazkert. Of Šahak Korčēay, BP, or his continuator, merely says that he came from the southern district of Korčayk' without recording anything about his family. The later sources were obviously confused: YK, p. 34 puts a Šahak, otherwise unidentified, after Zawēn as does BP; LE¹, col. 518 lists both a Sahak and a Šahak between Nersēs and Zawēn, whereas LS², p. 273 produces a chronologically impossible sequence in which Nersēs is succeeded by, "Սահակ եղբայր Աղբիանոսի Հարկայ եպիսկոպոս . . ."

⁶² BP, V, xxix, cf. the much briefer MX, III, xxxix, etc. Cf. also Gelzer, *Die Anfänge*, p. 156, and Garsoïan, *Secular Jurisdiction*, pp. 154-155 and *Nersēs le Grand*, pp. 236-237.

triarchal lists and moved the second one from its position during the Gregorid Patriarch's lifetime, where it would result in the incomprehensible or unacceptable simultaneous presence of two legitimate patriarchs, to the time immediately following St. Nersēs' death and thus preserved in some sense the middle portion of the earlier pattern. The gradual simplification which emerged from this unconscious process undeniably produced a more coherent and consequently a more acceptable but a less accurate list of primates at a critical juncture in Armenian history.⁶³

⁶³ LE², col. 521 even manages to get both Paṛnerseh and Šahak after St. Nersēs, but it at least preserves the correct sequence: Paṛnerseh followed by Šahak.

⁶⁴ The greater interest and detail in all matters pertaining to religion and ecclesiastical affairs found in BP as against MX is discussed in the Introduction to my translation and study of the *Epic Histories*.

The more complicated sequence proposed here must perforce remain hypothetical. However, it appears to fit both the earliest and most detailed account of the events found in the *Buzandaran Patmutiwnk'*⁶⁴ and more generally our information concerning the turbulent political and religious climate of the mid-Fourth century, both inside and outside Armenia, to a greater degree than any simplified or homogenized alternative. The survival of Šahak of Manazkert as late as 372 even raises the intriguing possibility that he lived one more year to succeed St. Nersēs for the last time. In such a case, the two historiographical traditions could indeed be reconciled. But this hypothesis, tempting though it be, must still await further investigation.

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