

# The *Sparapetut'iwn* in Armenia in the Fourth and Fifth Centuries

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One of the most important offices in Arsacid Armenia belonged to the *sparapet* or commander-in-chief of the armies. Like many other offices in the Armenian kingdom such as those of the coronant, the chamberlain, and the master of the hunt, the *sparapetut'iwn* was a hereditary charge held traditionally by the senior member of one family, the Mamikoneans. Exactly when the *sparapetut'iwn* was instituted in Armenia is not known, since the earliest relevant Armenian sources (fifth century) give a confused picture of the establishment of Arsacid offices in the country. Likewise the time of the abolition of the office is unclear since one meets Mamikonean *sparapets* after the fall of the Armenian Arsacid kingdom (A.D. 428) and during the seventh and eighth centuries. In the medieval Bagratid and Arçrunid kingdoms as well as in Cilician Armenia, the *sparapetut'iwn* was still an important office, although with the removal of the Mamikoneans to the Byzantine empire in the late eighth century, its occupants were drawn from other lordly (*naxarar*) families.

Because of Armenia's strategic geographical position between two mighty and inimical powers, Rome-Byzantium on the west and Iran on the east, the country was often forced to participate in the campaigns launched by one empire against the other. As an ally of the one and a border state of both, Armenia was subjected to devastation by the armies of both empires. The almost perpetual state of war which was endemic between Armenia and its neighbors, as well as warfare within the country between the Arsacid kings of Armenia and their *naxarars*, made the *sparapetut'iwn* an institution capable of rivaling the country's *bnik ters* ("native lords"), that is, the Arsacid kings themselves.

Etymologically the word *sparapet* derives from the Parthian *spadapet* (*spad* -army, *pat*-leader) which in turn derives from the Old Persian *spadapaitis* (1). The Iranian origin of this word and of other Armenian Arsacid official terminology is a reflection of Armenia's long cultural and political ties with Iran which date from Achaemenid times (2).

Although there exists no separate study of the *sparapetut'iwn*, both Iranists and Armenists perforce have commented on the importance of this office and its occupants in their works on Iranian and Armenian society. Among Iranists treating the Sasanian *Eran-spahbad* the most detailed information is found in the writings of A. Christensen and G. Widengren. Christensen, in *L'Iran sous les Sassanides*, wrote that in the Sasanian hierarchy each of the four social groupings, the clergy (*asravan*), soldiers (*arteshbaran*), bureaucracy (*dibheran*), as well as the commoners (*vastryoshan*) and artisans (*hutukhshan*), had a supreme head. The chief of the military was the *Eran-spahbad*, and until the time of Xosrov I (531-579), the Iranian army was under the command of a single *Eran-spahbad* who performed the threefold functions of minister of war, commander-in-chief, and negotiator of the peace (3).

As a result of Xosrov I's military reforms, four *spahbads* were created in place of a single leader. The *spahbad* of the east controlled the armies of Khurasan, Sacastan, and Kerman; the *spahbad* of the south, the armies of Pars and Susiana; the *spahbad* of the west, the armies of Iraq to the Byzantine frontier; and the *spahbad* of the north, the armies of Media and Azerbaijan (4). Since the rarely-encountered officer known as

the *arteshtaransalar* (chief of the warriors) is not mentioned after Kavadh and the *Eran-spahbad* was abolished during the reign of Kavadh's successor Xosrov I, Christensen equates the two terms (5).

In *L'Iran sous les Sassanides*. Christensen expressed doubt that an office as important as that of the *Eran-spahbad* could be hereditary in one family. G. Widengren cites the transmission of the Armenian *sparapetut'iwn* in the Mamikonean family as an example of such a tendency and believes that the Iranian *Eran-Spahbad* was also a hereditary position (6).

Among Armenists, the *sparapetut'iwn* has been examined most notably by N. Adontz and C. Toumanoff. Adontz placed the consolidation of the Mamikonean holdings in the southern district of Taron during the reign of king Trdat the Great's son Xosrov II Kotak (ca. 330-339). While noting the existence of *sparapets* prior to the accession of king Arshak II, Adontz seems to place the real establishment of the *sparapet* as a court official (*gorcakal*) during Arshak II's reign (350-367) (7).

In *Armenia in the Period of Justinian*, Adontz wrote:

The Mamikonean as *sparapets*, were said to stand above all the *zoravark'* or military commanders. The Armenian army was made up of many contingents furnished by the princely houses. Each of these detachments was commanded by its own prince, but the supreme command belonged to the hereditary *sparapets*, the Mamikonean house, who, in this sense stood "above all the princes and their armies" (8).

Thus the *sparapet* stood at the head of the princely class just as the *hazarapet* stood at the head of the peasant population (9). According to Adontz, the division of command of the army under four *sparapets* found in the history attributed to Movses Xorenac'i does not correspond to historical reality. Finally, Adontz observed the important position which the bishop of the Mamikoneans occupied in ecclesiastical affairs:

The bishop of the Mamikonean held the leading position in the Church after the patriarch or Catholicos, the influence of the *naxarar* system is obvious in this case. Just as the hereditary Mamikonean *sparapets* stood at the head of the *naxarars* under the Arsacids and even later, so in ecclesiastical affairs, the chief administrator found at the side of the Catholicos was the representative of the same house (10).

Toumanoff believes that the Mamikoneans were the "immemorial dynasts" of Tayk', a district on the Armeno-Georgian border, and were possibly of Georgian origin. Although he mentions Mancaeus, defender of Tigranocerta against the Romans (B.C. 69), as the first historically visible member of the dynasty, Toumanoff does not specify when the *sparapetut'iwn* was entrusted to the Mamikoneans. He notes that by the fourth century this family had acquired half of Taron centered in the castle of Oghakan on the Arsaniyas river. By 439, as a result of the will of St. Sahak, the last descendant of St. Gregory, the Mamikoneans acquired the other half of Taron centered in the city of Ashtishat as well as the principalities of Bagravande and Acilisene—making them "the greatest territorial princes of the Monarchy, ruling a State that nearly sundered it into two halves" (11).

Toumanoff compares the *sparapet* with the Iberian (Georgian) *spaspet* (12) who, unlike the *sparapet* held an apparently non-inheritable office (13) which included civil as well as military functions (14). Finally, Toumanoff suggests that while in Sasanian Iran both an *Eran-spahbad* and an *Aspahbad* (master of the horse, *i.e.*, head of the cavalry) coexisted, in Armenia this could not have been the case since the Armenian army was primarily cavalry. He concludes therefore that the term *aspet* which the Armenian sources apply to the Bagratid princes was not an official, administrative, but merely a family title (15).

Before turning to an examination of the relevant Armenian sources on the *sparapetut'iwn*, some general observations on these sources are in order. First, none of the sources considered in this study was written while the Arsacid dynasty ruled Armenia. The Arsacids were deposed in the Byzantine-controlled portion of the country in 390 and in the Iranian-controlled portion in 428. The earliest example of classical Armenian writing to survive, the Bible, was not finally translated until after 431 (16). The historical sources with which we are concerned describe a kingdom which had long since lost its glory. Thus, although the *sparapetut'iwn* outlived the kingdom which created it and existed throughout the fifth century, one has no guarantees that the sources faithfully describe this institution in the heyday of the state (*i.e.* as an Arsacid institution). Second, the sources which have survived even from the post-428 period are few and belong to different genres. Koriwn's *Life of Mashtoc'* is a biography; "*Agat'angeghos*" is a short epic account of Armenia's conversion to Christianity; the *History* by P'awstos Buzand is more a collection of episodes than a history; and Ghazar P'arpec'i's work is a eulogy of the Mamikonean family. Third, although some of these books contain the word "history" in their titles, not one of them is a history of Armenia. Instead they are, for the most part, the products of House historians who have written about the role of a particular family in Armenian affairs. P'awstos Buzand and Ghazar P'arpec'i were both historians of the Mamikonean House. Thus their works contain few disparaging remarks about their patrons and most likely numerous half truths and outright distortions. Finally, one is obliged to eliminate from consideration two works traditionally accepted as fifth century compositions: Eghishe's *On Vardan and the Armenian War*, and the *History of Armenia* attributed to Movses Xorenac'i. Serious doubt was raised about the dating of Eghishe's history by N. Akinean who believed that rather than describing the Vardananc' (450), the work might instead be an account of the late sixth century rebellion also led by a Vardan Mamikonean (17). Eghishe, a Mamikonean sympathizer, is unknown to the definitely late fifth century P'arpec'i who most certainly would have used the former's work had it existed when he was writing. In any case, Eghishe's history does not contain any information on the *sparapetut'iwn* which differs from what is found in P'arpec'i. As regards Xorenac'i, this enigmatic writer and/or editor seems to have operated in the last part of the eighth century. He is violently anti-Mamikonean and provides much information on the *sparapetut'iwn* which contradicts the sources which will be examined here. For this reason Xorenac'i's history cannot be ignored, but neither can it be classed with authentic fifth century sources. A discussion of Xorenac'i's information on the *sparapetut'iwn* therefore is confined to the notes (18).

## I. The *Life of Mashtoc'*

The *Life of Mashtoc'* is a biography of Mesrop Mashtoc', creator of the Armenian alphabet, written by Mashtoc's youngest pupil, Koriwn (19). The author implies that he wrote his work several years after the death of Mesrop at the request of the then acting Catholicos Yovsep'. However, according to Ghazar P'arpec'i, Koriwn's superior, Catholicos Yovsep' was taken prisoner and martyred by the Iranians shortly after the battle of Awarayr (450-451) (20). It is difficult to see how Koriwn could have received his directive from Yovsep' to write concerning Mashtoc' after Yovsep's arrest in 450-451. Furthermore, prince Vasak Siwnik', who defected to the Iranians during the battle and subsequently was transformed into the traitor *par excellence* in Armenian literature, is praised by Koriwn as a brave and wise man (21). It appears, therefore, that this work was written before the Armenian rebellion.

Koriwn notes that his teacher passed away in the first year of the Iranian king Yazdgard II, son of Vahram, *i.e.*, in 440 (22), and that Mesrop's colleague Sahak died in 439 (23). He states elsewhere that the students of Sahak assembled "year after year" to honor their teacher's memory (24). Thus Manuk Abeghyan calculated that Koriwn wrote his biography not immediately after Mashtoc's death, but around 443. This is supported by another of Koriwn's remarks, namely that three years after Mashtoc's death (25) Vahan Amatuni constructed a

church over his grave (26). Abeghyan suggested that the *Life of Mashtoc'* was written during the period 443-51 (27). There seems to be no grounds for challenging this proposal.

The little that is known about the author is gleaned from two statements he makes about himself in Mesrop's biography. In chapter 12, Koriwn mentions that after receiving his education, he was sent with other students to various unspecified districts of Armenia to teach the new alphabet (28). In chapter 19 he says that he studied in Constantinople and then returned to Armenia bringing, along with other manuscripts, the canons of the Council of Ephesus (29). Thus Koriwn's homecoming took place after 431, the year of the Council.

Because Koriwn's work is a biography of a cultural figure and not a political or military history of Armenia, the *Life* contains little detailed information about the Mamikoneans or the *sparapetut'iwn*. From chapter 12, one learns that Catholicos Sahak personally taught the alphabet to the Mamikonean folk (*orear*)—"foremost among whom was Vardan, also called Vardkan" (30). Sahak's special ministrations are perfectly understandable, since Vardan was Sahak's own grandson. In chapter 26 Koriwn presents a partial list of dignitaries attending the burial of Mashtoc'. The relevant portion translates: "[Present] from the military, the first [or foremost, *arajnumn*] was named Vahan of the Amatuni family [*azg*] who was the *hazarapet* of Greater Armenia, and the second was Hmayeak of the Mamikonean clan [*tohm*]..." (31). In scholarly literature the *hazarapet* usually is associated with civil rather than military matters (32). According to Koriwn's list, however, the phrase "from the military [*i zinuorakan koghmanen*]" suggests that in the period following the abolition of the Armenian Arsacids (428), the *hazarapet's* function may have been altered to include military duties.

The only *sparapet* mentioned by name in the *Life* is Anatolis, commander-in-chief of Byzantine Armenia. In chapter 16, Mashtoc' was received warmly by Anatolis (called *spayapet*) who wrote to emperor Theodosius informing him of Mastoc's plans to teach the alphabet in Western Armenia (33). When Mashtoc' returned from Constantinople, he presented the emperor's rescripta to Anatolis, now called the *sparapet* of Armenia [*sparapetn Hayoc'*] (34).

## II. "Agat'angeghos"

The compilation of sources known as the *History of Agat'angeghos* concerns the Christianization of Armenia during the reign of King Trdat the Great (ca. 303-330) and incidents relating to that event. The work has survived in two important recensions: (1) the Armenian Agat'angelos (Aa) and a Greek translation of it made perhaps between 464 and 468 (Ag) (35); (2) the Arabic *Life of St. Gregory* (Va) (36) discovered by Nicholas Marr in 1902 and the Greek version of this recension (Vg) (37) published by Gerard Garitte. The Greek *Life* which Garitte discovered in the Codex X.III.6 of the Library of the Escorial appears to be the hitherto unknown Greek translation of an Armenian text from which Marr's Arabic *Life* ultimately derives (38). Toumanoff believes that Va could not have been translated before the end of the eighth century (39).

In chapter 7 of his classic *Documents pour l'etude du livre d'Agathange*, Garitte compared Vg with the other recensions. He concluded that (1) in general, the Armeno-Greek Agat'angeghos and the Graeco-Arabic *Life of St. Gregory* are parallel despite the different ordering of events and the absence or presence of episodes from one or the other (40); (2) each recension, except Va, has an element peculiar to itself whether this be the Teaching of St. Gregory in Aa, the revolt of Artashir in Ag, or Vg's story of Gregory's wife (41); (3) Vg is not a translation of Aa but an entirely different version (42); (4) Va is a concoction of an unabridged recension of Vg and a text resembling Aa (43).

Thus there are not one but several accounts of the conversion of Armenia, written, compiled, and translated at different times. Nor is one dealing with an independently written narration, the work of one man's genius. As

Abeghyan pointed out long ago, in the Armenian *Agat'angeghos* alone the influences of Irano-Armenian folk tales and Syrian martyrologies are observed (44). The presence of numerous lengthy borrowings from Koriwn place the compilation of Aa (from which Ag and parts of Va) after 443-450. However, the fact that the story of Armenia's conversion contains passages which date from the mid-fifth century does not necessarily mean that "*Agat'angeghos*" describes a fifth century reality. Toumanoff observed that the definitely fifth century list of princes which Adontz drew up based on P'arpec'i differs from the one list found in all four versions of "*Agat'angelos*". Nine princes appear in the latter list but are absent from P'arpec'i. The regions represented by many of the princes were part of an Armenian state in the fourth, but not in the fifth century. Therefore Toumanoff believes that the historical situation found in the two recensions reflects one contemporaneous with Armenia's conversion (46).

Concerning the Mamikonean family and the *sparapetut'iwn*, there is disagreement among the versions. There are three lists in "*Agat'angeghos*" which mention the *sparapet*: (1) The princes accompanying St. Gregory to Caesarea for ordination: Aa (Venice, 1930). Mentioned fifth in this list is "prince of the *sparapetut'iwn*, general of Armenia" (47); Aa (Tiflis, 1909, critical edition) the *sparapet* in command of the expedition is named Artawazd (48); Ag calls this officer the *stratopedarch* (49); Va as well as Vgs (50) employs a surname and gives an expanded statement:

Quintus princeps *mqwuyn'nwn* nomine 'sb'r'b'ts: hic autem praefectus erat exercitui totius Armeniae, equitum et peditum, nec discedebat a rege magnae Armeniae, atque in bellis omnes quos memorabimus principes et memorabimus, sub eius potestate erant, praeterquam quod princeps qmrdl non erat sub eius potestate, quae (regio) est iuxta fortes *qrdytn* (51).

Vg and Va subsequently mention Artawazd "prince of the Mamikonean and *asparapet*" (52); (2) The three envoys sent to Caesarea by Trdat III to fetch Gregory's sons: Aa and Ag record "prince Artawazd, generalissimo of all the armies of Greater Armenia" as the first envoy (53); Vg does not mention the name of any of the ambassadors; Va has "*primus princeps 'rtw'zd'* (Artawazd) *qui praefectus erat patnciorum super totam regionem Armeniae*" (54); (3) The princes accompanying Trdat III to Rome: Aa, "the great *sparapet*" (unnamed) is recorded after Trdat's four border-lords, the prince of Angegh district and the coronant (55); Ag has "the great *stratopedarch*" (56) Va and Vg do not contain this passage.

While all versions mention a *sparapet* during the reign of Trdat III, this officer's first and last names are found together only in Va and Vg. This circumstance did not escape Movses Xorenac'i, the author of an anti-Mamikonean *History of Armenia*. For Movses, the *sparapet* under Trdat was also an Artawazd, but Artawazd Mandakuni, not Mamikonean (57). The fifth century *History* of P'awstos Buzand, however, confirms Artawazd Mamikonean as Trdat's *sparapet*. In III.2, P'awstos calls Vach'e Mamikonean (*sparapet* of King Xosrov Kotak) "the son of Artawazd." Presumably, just as Xosrov succeeded his father Trdat as king, so Vach'e succeeded his father Artawazd as *sparapet*.

The *sparapet* is not an important figure in "*Agat'angeghos*". Ordinarily the armies appear to be under the direct control of the monarch, a circumstance which heightens the epic grandeur of the tale. Thus King Xosrov "assembled the multitude of soldiers and all who had arrived from different parts to aid him in war" (58). The king divided his army into cohorts (59); he raided Assyria (60). A Christian, "the king and all the army" destroyed pagan temples (61). The king himself paid and dismissed his troops (62). All military affairs are in the hands of the king. The king summons his army, or the king, his sister, and the queen summon the army (63), or even St. Gregory calls the cohorts together for baptism (64). But the *sparapet*, though he is mentioned three times, has little to do with the army in this story.

### III. The *History of Armenia*

The *History of Armenia*, attributed to P'awstos Buzand, exists in four "books" or *dprut'iwnk'*. Instead of being numbered books I, II, III, and IV as one would expect, the first book of the extant text is titled Book III ("Beginning") and is followed by books IV, V, and VI. The word "End" appears in the chapter heading of Book VI. The late fifth century historian Ghazar P'arpec'i cites a passage from the text of P'awstos which he claims was found in Book II.15; however, in our text this same passage is in Book IV.15 (65). In other words, Ghazar's P'awstos Book I is now Book III ("Beginning"). This curious fact led Stepan Malxasyanc' to speculate that toward the end of the fifth century, after Ghazar P'arpec'i used it, the text of P'awstos Buzand was placed by an editor as the third history in a book of many histories. This would explain why the *History* opens with Book III, since the first two books were each one-book histories. Then, Malxasyanc' continues, the editor wrote in the words "Beginning" and "End" to inform the reader that this particular section was one complete history in the compilation. The editor's hand also is visible in the *History's* two forwards; in tables of chapter headings arranged in lists preceding each book; in the chapter headings themselves; and in a statement at the end of Book III claiming that the work was written in the fourth century by "the great historian P'awstos Buzand". Furthermore, Malxasyanc' notes that the fifth century editor employed the first person singular while the fourth century P'awstos Buzand used the plural when referring to himself (66).

Controversy also exists over the author's identity, and over where, in what language, and when this history was written (67). The question of the dating of this work is of direct concern. Malxasyanc' compiled certain facts which seem to place the author (P'awstos) in the fifth century. First, P'awstos is familiar with the name of only one Byzantine emperor (Valens) for almost the entire span of his *History* i.e., 319-384, when in fact during this period emperors Constantine, Constantius, Julian, Jovian, Valens, Gratian, and Theodosius the Great ruled. Since Armenia was in frequent contact with Byzantium during that time, Malxasyanc' argues, a fourth century writer naturally would know the emperors' names. P'awstos, living in the fifth century, had only a vague recollection of fourth century emperors and so styled them all Valens. Again, P'awstos contends that the Armenian king Arshak (350-367) ruled during the time of the Iranian king Nerseh (293-302) and the Byzantine emperor Valens (364-378), when in fact these last two autocrats were not even contemporaries. Another important proof of the *History's* fifth century date is its source material, which includes the Armenian translation of the Bible (430's) and Koriwn's biography of Mashtoc'. Finally, in Catholicos Nerses the Great's curse of the Armenian Arsacids which appears in IV.15, Nerses seems to prophesy the end of the Arsacid kingdom (68).

P'awstos lacks chronology in the strict sense: he does not mention in which king's regnal year an event occurred or how long each king reigned. However, he does know the correct sequence of Armenian kings from Xosrov II Kotak (330-339) to Varazdat (374-378) and mentions each one by name. Despite numerous problems associated with the text, P'awstos' information still has the greatest value; although he lacks numerical chronology, the thematic unity on occasion substitutes, nonetheless, for an absolute chronology (69).

As a historian of the Mamikonean *naxarar* house, P'awstos' desire is to portray the Mamikoneans as the defenders *par excellence* of Armenia. To P'awstos, the Mamikoneans are not merely the only legitimate military defenders of the country, but also the loyal defenders of the Arsacid family, defenders of the Church, and defenders of *naxarar* rights (70). The contradiction which arises from the fact that P'awstos simultaneously has made the Mamikoneans defenders of the kings and of the *naxarars*—two usually inimical groups—appears to have been resolved by the author by a second assumption that the Mamikoneans are in fact the equals of the Arsacids.

P'awstos' first assumption—that the Mamikoneans are the only legitimate military defenders of Armenia—is developed in several ways. The family's legal right to the *sparapetut'iwn* is stressed throughout. Thus the small child Artawazd succeeded his father Vach'e as *sparapet* even though he clearly was too young to fulfill the obligations of the office. Two generals, Andok Siwnik' and Arshawir Kamsarakan, looked after the military affairs of the country during Artawazd's minority, and P'awstos notes that these *naxarars* were relatives of the Mamikoneans through marriage, as if to explain how they came to be entrusted with such responsibility (71). Mushegh became *sparapet* immediately upon the execution of his father Vasak by the Iranian king (72); Artashir inherited the *sparapetut'iwn* from his ailing father Manuel (73) and this automatic succession is presented as normal procedure.

When the Armenian army is under its legal Mamikonean *sparapets*, it is invincible. Only when the army is led by non-Mamikoneans can foreigners overrun Armenia. This happened when King Xosrov (330-339) appointed Databa Bznuni to ward off an Iranian invasion. Databa deserted to the enemy and almost destroyed the Armenian army (74). When the Mamikoneans angrily withdrew from court affairs under Xosrov's successor, Tiran (339-350), (75) the country was invaded once more by the Iranians and the king himself was blinded and taken captive. The king and the country were vulnerable since there was no one (Mamikonean) to protect them (76).

Not only do the Mamikoneans protect the country from external enemies such as Iranians or Mask'ut nomads (77), but as the loyal defenders of their land's *bnik ters*, the Mamikoneans fight against domestic enemies. Vach'e, *sparapet* of Xosrov, was in charge of exterminating the rebellious Manawazean and Orduni clans (78) and he later exterminated the Bznunis as well (79). During the reign of Pap (368-374), *sparapet* Mushegh Mamikonean massacred the clans of the *bdesxsh* of Aghjnik' and Gugark' who had rebelled against the authority of the king, and in Iberia he ordered the crucifixion of the P'arawazean clan (80). *Sparapet* Vasak even killed his own Iranian cousin, Dehkan, in defense of Armenia and King Arshak (350-368) (81).

The Mamikoneans' loyalty to the crown is expressed too in the family's role as protectors of the royal line: Vasak's son Mushegh travelled to the Byzantine empire to install Pap, Arshak's legitimate heir, who was residing on Byzantine territory, as King of Armenia (82). Manuel Mamikonean was so devoted to the royal family (or so P'awstos implies) that, like a wise father, he raised the two sons of Pap's son Varazdat (374-378)—a king he had expelled from the country after a dramatic battle (83). In this clash Manuel prevented his own sons from killing the fleeing Varazdat, just as earlier Mushegh, accused of disloyalty before Pap, had explained his refusal to kill the Albanian/Aghuanian king Urnayr:

I killed all of my peers [*enkerk'*] while those wearing crowns were not my peers, but yours. Come, just as I killed my peers do you kill yours. For I have not, do not, nor shall I put forth my hand against a royal man who wears a crown. If you wish to kill me, do that but whenever a royal man falls into my clutches as has happened many times, I will not kill him. I will not kill the wearer of a crown even if I am killed (84).

The loyalty of the Mamikoneans is so profound that it acquires a supernatural quality. After the Iranian army had scattered the bones of the Armenian Arsacid kings, desecrating the graves in the royal mausoleum at Ani of Daranalik', *sparapet* Vasak Mamikonean retrieved these bones and buried them, caring for the memory of deceased kings and providing for the rest of their souls (85). Supernatural loyalty is also apparent in P'awstos' narration of the fate of the executed Vasak's straw-filled corpse. The sixth century Byzantine author Procopius who claims to have used a "*History of Armenia*" says that Shapuhr [Pacurius] flayed Vasak [Bassicius] and, making a bag of his skin, filled it with chaff and suspended it from a lofty tree (86). P'awstos preserves the same fate for Vasak but claims that Vasak's body was sent to Anhush fortress where King Arshak was imprisoned, as if to say that even in death this *sparapet*, and by implication all the Mamikonean *sparapets*, are loyal and near to their *bnik ters*—the Arsacid kings of Armenia (87).

As defenders of the Church, the Mamikoneans are depicted as loyal Athanasian Christians and supporters of Armenia's legitimate Gregorian line of Catholicoi (88). In addition to defending the Church zealously, the Mamikoneans are the holy warriors of Armenia. During an Athanasian period in Arshak's confusing reign, for example, *sparapet* Vasak was ordered to ravage Byzantine lands for six years to avenge the Byzantine arrest of Nerses (89). Later this same Vasak defeated hosts of Iranian soldiers and an army of Armenian apostates (90). As a prelude to the return of Nerses to court, Samuel Mamikonean murdered his apostate father Vahan and his royal Iranian mother (91). By destroying Zoroastrian temples and rebuilding churches, Mushegh continued this process of restoring the work of Nerses and undoing the damage caused by the pro-Iranian Vahan (92).

Naturally P'awstos would like his readers to believe that some of the early *sparapets* such as Vach'e were not mere mortals, but the agents of God through whom Armenia enjoyed many victories (93). However, it is in the personality of the later Mushegh that P'awstos' fanatical pro-Mamikonean bias and his religious worldview are fused the best. For Mushegh has much in common with Christ. He is the savior of his people, condemned for his compassion. Betrayed at a banquet reminiscent of the Last Supper, he is attacked and killed by all twelve "apostles," six on one side and six on the other (94). P'awstos adds that the people expected Mushegh's resurrection (95).

The other assumption made by P'awstos—that the Mamikoneans are the equals of the Arsacids—is expressed by direct assertion and by the implications of certain details. The first actual expression of this equality appears in a dubious passage in V. 4 where King Pap himself said:

Worthy of death are those who dare to speak ill of Mushegh, a brave and honorable man. For [he is] a man who by family [*azg*] is as honorable as we, his ancestors as our ancestors His ancestors left the kingship of the land of Chenk' and came to our ancestors and they lived and died for us. His father, trustworthy until death, died for my father...

A second claim of equality between the Mamikoneans and the Arsacids was advanced by Manuel during his battle with king Varazdat (ca. 378) which resulted in the latter's expulsion from the country. Manuel denounced Varazdat for appointing to the *sparapetut'iwn* a non-Mamikonean, Bat Saharuni, and added:

You are not an Arsacid, but a bastard. Therefore you do not recognize those who work for the Arsacids. We are not your servants [*carayk'*] but your peers [*enkerk'*] and we are above you. For our ancestors were kings of the land of Chenk'. Because of a quarrel among brothers, to prevent great bloodshed we left [that land]. And to find rest we stopped here [in Armenia]. The first Arsacid kings knew who we were and where we came from. But you, since you are not an Arsacid, begone from this country and do not perish at my hands (96).

The claim of equality with and fitness for the crown is stressed likewise in the details. The imperial claim even transcends the boundaries of Armenia, since the Mamikoneans are equal or superior to kings anywhere. For example, Arshak's ill-fated *sparapet* Vasak boasted to the Iranian king that he stood on two mountains (the Iranian and Byzantine kings) and that he brought either one to the ground by pushing down with his right or left leg (97). According to P'awstos, Vasak's brother (the apostate Vahan) was married to the imperial Iranian Ormizduxt (sister of the Iranian king) (98). A portrait of Pap's *sparapet* Mushegh appeared on the drinking goblet of the Iranian king who even toasted the health of his noble enemy (99).

Manuel Mamikonean, who expelled king Varazdat, is in fact a king. He raised Varazdat's children, and together with queen Zarmanduxt made all the important decisions in the country (100). He sanctioned the return of land to *naxarars* Babik, Sam, and Vaghinak Siwnik', and appointed *ters* and *nahapets* "in every district"—a traditional prerogative of the monarch (101). Manuel also married his daughter Vardanduxt to the young Arshak (son of Varazdat) whom he made king (102). Most significant of all is P'awstos' statement

about the gifts sent by the Iranian king to the crown princes Arshak and Vagharshak as well as to the *sparapet* Manuel:

The king gave to *sparapet* Manuel a royal robe, a sable, a *patiw* for his head with a crest of gold and silver. On top of this headdress was [the figure of] an eagle and the crown was fastened with an *ashxarawand* clasp. On his breast he wore a brooch of honor. [Such things he was given] which by law only kings have: a tent of red leather and on it an eagle's design, great hangings, and sky-blue parasols (103).

#### IV. Ghazar P'arpec'i's *History of Armenia*

A late fifth century *History of Armenia* by Ghazar P'arpec'i is the product of an author about whom certain biographical details exist. This information is found in Ghazar's *History* and in his *Letter* to the *marzpan* of Armenia, Vahan Mamikonean (*marzpan* 485-ca. 506). According to these documents, Ghazar was from P'arpi village in the Aragacotn district and perhaps was a Mamikonean relative (104). He was educated at the home of *bdeshx* Ashusha of Iberia along with Hmayeak Mamikonean's children Vahan, Artashes and Vard (105). Subsequently under the tutelage of Alan Arcruni (106), Ghazar became a cleric who received part of his education in Byzantium (107). According to Manuk Abeghyan, from 484 to 486 Ghazar was a hermit in Siwnik', but left his cave when his childhood friend, the now *marzpan* Vahan Mamikonean, invited him to Vagharshapat to become abbot of the monastery there. For reasons not entirely clear to us, Ghazar eventually was expelled from the monastery by jealous monks. It was then that he wrote his *Letter* to Vahan, refuting the charges levelled against him. At Vahan's request Ghazar returned to Armenia from his place of refuge, Amida on Byzantine territory (108). Likewise at Vahan's request Ghazar wrote his *History of Armenia* (109). This work is a panegyric to the Mamikonean family generally, and especially a glorification of two of the family's members: Vardan, leader of the anti-Iranian rebellion at Awarayr (450-451) and Vahan, Vardan's nephew and Ghazar's patron, leader of another anti-Iranian uprising known as the Vahaneanc' (481-484).

Accounts of the activities of Vardan and Vahan comprise the contents of Ghazar's Books II and III respectively. Book I begins with information concerning the division of Armenia between the Byzantine and Sasanian empires (387), and describes the invention of the Armenian alphabet and the abolition of the monarchy in the Iranian-controlled eastern sector (428). Toward the end of Book I the death of Catholicos Sahak in 489 is recorded. One also learns there that because Sahak left no male heir, his property, including lands in Taron district, passed to his grandchildren Vardan, Hmayeak, and Hamazasp—sons of Sahak's daughter, who was also the wife of *sparapet* Hamazasp Mamikonean (110). The positioning of this piece of information close to the end of Book I provides a sort of introduction to the contents of Book II, the exploits of the adult Vardan. The hero of Book III, Vahan, was the son of Vardan's brother Hmayeak.

The text of Ghazar's *History* contains one serious lacuna: apparently one or more pages were removed in III.74, which presumably contained a description of the deaths of Vasak Mamikonean and Sahak Bagratuni as well as the names of the *naxarars* who fell in the same battle. Also, several lines in the description of Vahan's battle near Mt. Jrvezh with the famous Iranian commander Zarmihr Hazarawuxt—which only confuses the outcome of the battle—are missing or out of place (111). One long section, the "Vision of St Sahak," in which Sahak speaks of the fall of the Arsacid kingdom and the discontinuation of the priesthood in the line of Gregory the Illuminator, is recognized today as a later interpolation (112). The discovery of a lost fragment of P'arpec'i in 1967, which describes the creation of the Armenian alphabet, has cleared away the confusion found in the *History* regarding when this event occurred and also cleared Ghazar of the one serious criticism raised by Abeghyan regarding reliability (113).

Ghazar P'arpec'i cites three authors as sources: Agat'angelos, P'awstos (114), and Koriwn (115). He is reluctant to rely on P'awstos' *History* since he discovers in it many passages of an anti-clerical and vulgar nature that lead him to suggest that bishop P'awstos' work was corrupted by some uneducated person. Ghazar also appears to have used a *Life of Alexander* (116) and Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History* (117). Likewise the author cites oral informants, most notably Arshawir Kamsarakan (118) and his son Nerses (119) and a Syrian merchant "Xuzhik" (120), all of whom were participants in the events described.

P'arpec'i is a reasonably trustworthy historian. True, certain of his biases, especially his religious worldview, occasionally lead him to attribute incorrect causes for some events. Nonetheless, he does know the correct sequence of Iranian and Byzantine kings as well as of Armenian Catholicoi. His veracity on certain details and events may be attested to by other sources. In addition to being our major source on military, political, and religious developments in fifth century Armenia, Ghazar's *History* is also a major untapped source on the history of fifth century Iran (121).

An understanding of Ghazar's biases depends on a knowledge of some of the major political developments occurring in Armenia since the expulsion of King Varazdat by Manuel Mamikonean. Manuel, as P'awstos noted toward the end of his history, raised the two sons of the ousted monarch. One of these sons, Arshak III, became king. However, upon Manuel's death (385) the *naxarars* revolted against Arshak and appealed to Shapuhr III for a new Arsacid king. Varazdat's son Xosrov IV was sent to Armenia with an Iranian army and King Arshak fled west near the Byzantine border for safety. Armenia was divided between Byzantium and Iran by the Peace of Ekegheac' (387) with the Iranian sector being five times larger than the Byzantine. Arshak III died in 390 and, with his passing, the Arsacid monarchy was abolished in the western sector. The princes residing there were placed under an officer appointed by the emperor called the *comes Armeniae* (122).

The situation in Persarmenia and in the empire administering it, Iran, was quite different from that which developed in the west. As a consequence of the division of Armenia in 387, those lands falling to Iran included most of Arsacid Armenia minus its border districts of Gugark', Utik', Arc'ax, P'aytakaran, Parskahayk', Korcek', and Aghjnik'—which were still subject to Iran but no longer formed part of an Armenian administrative unit (123). Eastern Armenia was thus reduced to six provinces: Ayrarat, Taruberan, Vaspurakan, Siwnik', Tayk', and Mokk' (124). In the Iranian sector ruled the Armenian Arsacids Xosrov IV (385-388), Vramshapuh (388-414), and Artashes IV (423-428). King Yazdgard I's son Shapuhr occupied the Armenian throne between ca. 414 and 421. In 428, at the request of the *naxarars*, Artashes IV was deposed and Iranian monarchs began appointing Iranian and Armenian viceroys or *marzpan*s as their representatives with Dwin as the administrative seat. Seven of the *marzpan*s are known: Vehmirshapuh, appointed in 428 (125); Vasak Siwnik', ruling at the time of the battle of Awarayr (450-451); Atrormizd Arshakuni, ruling after Awarayr (126); Yozmandean Atrvshnasp, ruling at the outbreak of Vahan's revolt (481) (127); Shapuh Mihran, *marzpan* during the Vahaneanc' (128) and Andekan, an Iranian who ruled briefly and then supported his replacement in office by the successful rebel Vahan (129).

Ghazar's attitude toward Iran and its policies is one of unequivocal hatred. This is quite understandable, since as panegyrist of the Mamikoneans who fought with their lives against Iran, he cannot support Iranian policies. Iranian administrative policy included a definite religio-cultural policy (130). Thus, not only as a Mamikonean sympathizer, but as a Christian cleric, he cannot tolerate either the implications or the actualities of Iranian domination (131). P'arpec'i's reaction to Iranian religious policies is expressed in several ways: by repudiation of all things Zoroastrian, exultation over Zoroastrian reverses, refutations of Zoroastrian beliefs (132), elevation of Christian martyrs into epic heroes (133) and humiliation of the Syrians whose influence in Armenia was encouraged by Iran (134).

P'arpec'i also has definite opinions about Armenia's nobility, the *naxarars*. He divides this aristocracy into two groups, the oath-keepers and the oath-breakers, *i.e.*, those *naxarars* who fought loyally on the side of the Mamikoneans against Iran and those apostates who sided with Iran and so converted to Zoroastrianism. Ghazar says that among the oath-breakers siding with the apostate *marzpan* Vasak Siwnik' were members of the Bagratuni, Xorxoruni, Apahuni, Vahewuni, Paluni, Abeghen, and Urc families, some from the royal family, "and a few *sepuhs* from every clan [*tohm*]" (135). Among the oath-keepers, besides the Mamikoneans, were members of the Kamsarakan, Arsharuni, Dimak'sean, Abeghen, Amatuni, Arcruni, Xorxoruni, Paluni, Vahewuni, Mokac', Kajberuni, Araweghen, Gnt'uni, Gnuni, Anjewac'i, Bagratuni, and Siwnik' houses (136).

Those *naxarars* who were traditionally loyal to the Mamikoneans receive great praise from Ghazar who, in his descriptions of the numerous battles fought, heroically describes their feats of individual bravery. These are the *naxarars* imprisoned in Iran after the Vardananc' whom Ghazar portrays as angels on earth and living martyrs (137). In jail these pious *naxarars* recalled the moving words of the priest Lewond (138); when released from captivity, they secretly kept the relics of the martyred priests (139); and, while serving in the Iranian army, they conducted open and secret religious meetings (140). Occasionally the author speaks of "all the *naxarars*," such as the group of nobles who urged Catholicos Sahak to translate the Bible into Armenian (141), or the group urging the deposed Sahak to resume his duties as Catholicos (142).

However, in both instances, Ghazar apparently is referring to Christian rather than Zoroastrian *naxarars*. Likewise the expression "all the *naxarars*," who slay by lapidation the lord Zandaghan for telling Vasak Siwnik' details of the planned revolt, refer to the Christian pro-Mamikonean rather than the Zoroastrian, pro-Iranian *naxarars* (142).

Throughout the fifth century the *naxarars* were strong, independent, and therefore untrustworthy allies. The *naxarars* broke their oath to support Vardan's rebellion while he was in Albania/Aghuania (144). They deserted at Awarayr (145). One *naxarar*, Varaznerseh Urc, broke his oath with Vahan, sacked the city of Brnavezh, and fortified himself in the castle of Sadra with the loot (146). Garjoyl Maxaz deserted the Vasakeans (147). Vahan's soldiers, who did not want to fight in Iberia, treacherously swore secret oaths with the enemy Iranians and deserted Vahan the next day (148). The natural enmity which existed among rival *naxarar* houses also received great impetus from the divisive policies of Iran (149).

For P'arpec'i, Vardan and Vahan Mamikonean epitomize resistance both to Zoroastrian Iran and to the apostate *naxarars*. There are some general similarities between the descriptions of Vardan and Vahan. However, it is in the personality of Ghazar's friend and patron Vahan, about whom the information is more detailed and intimate, that one sees most clearly the author's attitude toward the Mamikoneans.

Because P'arpec'i considered both the Vardananc' and the Vahaneanc' religious wars, his Mamikonean leaders are holy warriors. They are the protectors of the faith *par excellence*. In war they are noble fighters; in war and peace they care for the poor like good shepherds; uncle and nephew are both portrayed as democratic leaders. The author's pro-Mamikonean bias is apparent also in his defense of that family against charges made by Armenia's enemies—the apostate *naxarars*. Beyond this, Ghazar wishes his reader to understand that the Mamikoneans are the equals of the highest Iranian nobility (if not the monarchy) which deeply admires their prowess. Ghazar's elevation of the Mamikoneans concludes with a hint that the Mamikoneans may in fact be supernatural beings.

Every event in P'arpec'i's *History* concerning Armenia's military confrontation with Iran, such as the revolts of Vardan and Vahan, is simultaneously coupled with an event of great importance in the religious life of the country. Because these are religious wars, their military directors are depicted as pious and profoundly firm in the faith.

The muster of the *naxarars* in Ctesiphon (prior to the Vardananc' rebellion), which resulted in the Armenians' forced conversion to Zoroastrianism, is used by P'arpec'i as a setting for an outpouring of pious speeches by *sparapet* Vardan. In Yazdgard II's presence, Vardan boldly refused to convert (150). The *naxarars* then planned to feign apostasy in order to extricate themselves. They finally convinced Vardan to join them after his many pious protestations (151). With tears in his eyes, Vardan swore on the Bible that his conversion was temporary (152). Vardan returned to his land, unable to bear his apostasy, and gloomy that he was unable to enter church (153), he decided to go to Byzantium to live as a Christian (154). Incidents leading up to the battle of Avarayr also reflect P'arpec'i's sanctification of Vardan. Prior to leaving for Albania to fight, Vardan entered a church and kissed the Cross (155). Before the battle of Avarayr, Vardan spoke of the Heavenly Banquet (156) and told his loyal supporters to come forward to receive their haloes (157). Vahan's character receives much the same treatment. During a trip to Ctesiphon he was obliged to demonstrate his loyalty by converting to Zoroastrianism, like his uncle Vardan. Vahan too returned to Armenia greatly grieved over his conversion and, like Vardan, was soon at the head of an anti-Iranian rebellion (158).

The Church, for its part, stood loyally behind the Mamikoneans. Not only does the cleric Ghazar make Vardan, Hmayeak, Vasak, and Vahan into saints, but he openly expresses the Church's gratitude in at least two passages. Thus the captive Ghewondean priests courageously told Yazdgard II, "We are Vardan's *vardapets* and we supported and encouraged him in everything" (159). When Vahan returned from Iran to Armenia as *marzpan*, *sparapet*, and lord of the Mamikoneans, he was met by Catholicos Yovhan bearing the Cross and the relics of St. Gregory, who is called Vahan's ancestor (160). At a church service soon afterward, Yovhan read to an overflowing congregation, including Vahan, the fitting passages in Kings concerning Solomon's coronation by David (161). One feels very strongly that the Armenian Church is metaphorically anointing the country's new "king"—Vahan.

Though military men, both Vardan and Vahan are compassionate, noble in war and peace. When, for example, Vardan comes upon Iranian warriors unprepared for battle near Tghmut in Ayrarat, he does not attack (162). Later, during battle, he tells his brother, the rear-guard Hamazaspean, not to compel the troops to fight or forcibly prevent desertion (163). Vardan frets about the sons of Vasak Siwni and Ashusha, the *bdeshx* held hostage in Iran (164), just as later Vahan fears for the safety of his younger brother Vard, also a hostage in Iran (165). Caring for the welfare of the poor is said to be Vahan's custom and he does it frequently throughout his rebellion (166). Furthermore, Vardan and Vahan are also shown as democratic leaders. Thus in Albania/Aghuania, Vardan seems to ask his men's advice before engaging in battle (167). Vahan refuses to negotiate with Nixor Vshnaspdat's representatives in private. Instead he bids the envoys to "speak out before all the soldiers (168)". He insists that the demands made of Valash are not his demands, but the demands of his men (169).

P'arpec' i's *History* contains a defense of the Mamikonean family. Part of this defense is entrusted to Vardan and Vahan who denounce the *naxarars* as untrustworthy and unappreciative. The *History* also contains Ghazar's own defense of the Mamikoneans. For example, when the *bdeshx* Ashusha obtained from Mihr Nerseh and Yazdgard II the right to raise Hmayeak Mamikonean's children, Ghazar denounces Ashusha and makes him seem as ridiculous as possible (170). Similarly, P'arpec'i defends the young Mamikonean princes Vahan, Vasak, and Artashes from the attacks of jealous *naxarars* (171).

P'arpec'i equates the Mamikoneans with the highest Iranian nobility (or the monarchy) in a variety of ways. First he establishes Mamikonean primacy in Armenian affairs. In I.8, where King Arshak flees to the west, P'arpec'i writes that the Arsacid family is no longer worthy of Ayrarat. Who then is worthy of Ayrarat? Ghazar does not say. But some of his statements imply that power in Armenia belongs to the Mamikoneans who, though not Arsacids, were part of the old royal court and have inherited Armenia in the absence of the land's *bnik ters*. He is very careful to stress, in speeches placed in the mouths of both Vardan and Vahan, the hoary association of the Mamikoneans with Armenian affairs. The *sparapets* say that their family's history is

known to the *naxarars* from writings (172); and the *naxarars* trying to persuade Vardan to convert allude to these old histories (173). Valash made Vahan *sparapet* "according to the law of his ancestors" (174). In the absence of Armenia's *bnik ters*, the family with the oldest claims to participate in Armenia's affairs is the Mamikonean. They are like the kings. Ghazar implies this again in his description of Vahan's military maneuvers around Erez, for at that city "everyone obeyed Vahan as though he were king" (175). In the absence of Arsacid royalty then, the Mamikonean family has become the royalty to Ghazar. As Armenian royalty, or at least the highest nobility, the Mamikoneans may always interact with the Iranian nobility on terms of equality.

P'arpec'i expresses Mamikonean equality with the very highest Iranian nobility in a second effective way. He frequently portrays the Iranian nobility as especially solicitous of the Mamikoneans whom they often praise. Thus the death of Vardan was lamented not only by the Zoroastrian *hazarapet* Mihr Nerseh (176), but by King Yazdgard II himself (177). Vahan supposedly was favored even as a child by the Iranian grandees who praised him before King Peroz (178). Vahan was toasted by Valash's peace-negotiator Nixor, who also praised Vahan's bravery (179). When Vahan travelled to Valash's court, the king himself was solicitous about his guest's comfort and postponed their meeting until Vahan was rested (180). Vahan's speech at court was praised by the Iranian nobility and his eloquence in speaking at court (*atenaxosut'iwn*) was said to be divinely granted (181). Finally, after delivering a speech in which Vahan fearlessly denounced the Iranians and Valash agreed that Vahan's revolt had been justified (182), the latter was loaded with honors and sent home triumphantly. Nor are Vardan and Vahan the only Mamikoneans whom imperial Iran took note of. Young Grigor Mamikonean's brilliance at the head of an Armenian detachment fighting the rebel Zareh was watched closely by Valash himself (183). The Mamikoneans are equated with the highest nobility and are the favorites if not the equals of the Iranian kings. Ghazar has *marzpan* Andekan make the following remarks to Valash about Vahan:

Who has his grace and intelligence besides you (who are god-like and above human nature)? Boldly I say that there is no one else. There is scarcely a one to compare with him. (184)

This quotation is interesting because therein Vahan is equated with the king of Iran. It is also noteworthy that the Iranian monarch is said to be god-like and above human nature. For Vahan too is represented as a sort of superhuman. Thus, despite his unbearable exhaustion, Vahan arranged his troops at Steo village and tried to raise the men's morale (185). After his soldiers deserted, Vahan made the sign of the Cross and entered battle like a mythological warrior spirit, the *k'aj* (186). The Iranian soldiers were afraid to look at his face (187). The *marzpan* Shapuh Mihran noted that he had never heard of a commander pitting ten men against three thousand troops as Vahan did (188). Vahan is not human; like a *k'aj* of former times (189), he is fighting his enemy "like an eagle swooping down on a flock of partridge" (190). He can ford a swollen river safely after making the sign of the Cross (191). His work is above human deeds, "let the listener think what he will" (192).

Ghazar P'arpec'i's *History of Armenia* contains references to five *sparapets*: Theodosius II's *sparapet* in Antioch named Anatol; Peroz' *sparapet* Vahram; Hamazasp Mamikonean; his famous son Vardan; and Vahan, the latter's nephew. P'arpec'i has little to say about Anatol beyond the information that this *sparapet* was one of the parties appealed to for aid by the Vardaneanc' and that partly due to Anatol's meddling, Theodosius decided against helping the rebels in 450-451. Information about the Iranian *sparapet* is also limited, although it is fuller than what P'arpec'i presents on the Byzantine officer designated by the same title. Peroz' *sparapet* Vahram is mentioned twice. According to Ghazar, Vahram along with other Iranian grandees unsuccessfully attempted to dissuade Peroz from warring on the Hephthalites. Peroz, however, refused to heed his advice (193). Ghazar's second reference to the Iranian *sparapet* provides no proper name but instead deals with the prerogatives of any Iranian *sparapet*. Prior to being brought back into the service of the Iranian crown, the rebel Vahan rode into the camp of King Valash's peace-negotiator Nixor with his trumpets sounding. Nixor,

alarmed, sent a message to Vahan, saying that he was not observing Aryan custom and that he should. Nixor says that only the Aryan *sparapet* has the right to such a prestigious entry. Vahan haughtily replied that he is already familiar with Iranian customs and will obey such customs only when he is the vassal of the Iranian king (194). Until that time Vahan obviously considered himself the equal of the Iranian *sparapet*, one of whose prerogatives the Armenian *sparapet* temporarily appropriated.

P'arpec'i's specific information on the Armenian *sparapetut'iwn* concerns not traditional rights, but the new rights which *sparapet* Vahan asserted. During the Vahaneanc' uprising, a separate Mamikonean administration was set up in Armenia under Vahan's ultimate direction. Thus at the outset of his revolt, having "received his *sparapetut'iwn* first from God and second from the will of the Armenian people", Vahan appointed as *marzpan* Sahak Bagratuni, who is presented as the Mamikonid counterpart to Yozmandean Atrvshnasp, the Iranian-appointed *marzpan* of Armenia (195). *Sparapet* Vahan also directed his administration by naming pro-Mamikoneans as lords of certain districts held during the struggles by pro-Iranian apostate *naxarars*. Most likely this circumstance explains the statement that on the eve of the Vahaneanc', Vahan's comrade-in-arms Babgen Siwnik' was appointed prince of the Siwnik' *terut'iwn* despite the fact that Gdihon Siwnik was still alive and apparently ruling Siwnik' as lord, like Vasak and Varazvaghan before him, with the complete support of Iran (196).

The highly sensitive and unstable situation in which many *naxarar* houses found themselves during the fifth century made activities of the generalissimo, such as arranging the wings of his army or encouraging the soldiers, very difficult. Not only was desertion frequent as seen already, but the deliberate dissemination of misinformation by the enemy made things more complicated yet. Thus Vargos Gnt'uni and Vasak Saharuni reported to Catholicos Yovhan, *marzpan* Sahak, and *sparapet* Vahan that Vasak Mamikonean and the flower of the country's military had been defeated, when in fact they had been the victors (197). Later, false messages were sent to Vahan from Iberia claiming that after a disastrous battle there many knights were alive and safe, when the opposite was true. This message was sent with the expectation that Vahan immediately would dispatch half his army to rescue the survivors, thereby reducing his ability to resist the Iranians in Armenia (198). Under such conditions of disunity among the *naxarars*, because of the terrain and the overwhelming numerical superiority of the enemy, resistance usually took the form of guerilla warfare (199).

The core of the Armenian resistance consisted of the pro-Mamikonean noble families listed above, many of whom—as both Vardan and Vahan observed—were related to each other (200). In addition to the noble participants, Ghazar notes the very active presence of infantrymen (*ramiks*) in the Armenian army (201). From the fact that a Greek named Gherpargos died fighting on Vahan's side, it seems that the army may have included Byzantine volunteers or mercenaries (202). The north Caucasian Huns too were an element that the *sparapets* considered including in the army. Vardan, after wresting from the Iranians control of the Iron Gates at Derbend, sent a royal Albanian/Aghuan named Vahan to various Hun generals and a military alliance was made (203). Vriw accused Vahan of planning to hire Hun or Byzantine mercenaries (204). Vaxt'ang promised Hun auxiliaries to Vahan (205) and he himself expected Hun support for his own rebellion (206). Some three hundred Huns did in fact arrive in Armenia to help Vahan, but soon were recalled by Vaxt'ang (207).

The importance which Iran attached to both the Vardananc' and Vahaneanc' rebellions is seen clearly from the ranks of Iranian officers sent against the *sparapets*. Vardan was pursued by the famous *hazarapet* Mihr Nerseh himself (208). Likewise the Iranian Vehshapuh, who had been chamberlain (*senekapan*) and chancellor (*atenadpir*), participated in the campaign against Vardan (209), as did of course Armenia's *marzpan* Vasak Siwnik' who had previously been *marzpan* of Iberia (210). Vahan was opposed by the *marzpan* of Atrpatakan (211), the Iranian *marzpan* Atrvshnasp (212), the *marzpan* of Armenia Shapuh Mihran (213) and the generals Zarmihr (214) and Nixor Vshnaspdat (215). One detachment of Iranians planning to attack Vahan from the districts of Her and Zarewand, included Suren Pahlaw, Atrvshnasp (overseer of the bodyguards), Vin-i Xorean, Itapean Atrvshnasp, and the Siwnik' Prince Gdihon. Ghazar writes: "Although

there was one of greater authority (*ishxanut'iwn*) among them, nonetheless, the commandant and head of the troops was the overseer of the bodyguards (216)".

This last comment is particularly interesting since a very similar remark was made before Yazdgard II by *sparapet* Vardan himself. The capable Vardan admitted that some of the lords of Armenia, Iberia, and Albania/Aghuania surpassed him in authority and yet he, not they, was the *sparapet* (217). Thirty years later Valash's nobility made Vardan's nephew *sparapet* "according to the law of his ancestors (218)". Tradition here, it seems, is invoked by Ghazar for reasons already mentioned. During the fifth century, the Mamikoneans were *sparapets* not so much because of tradition, but because of their own organizational and military genius—to say nothing of their ambition. In a century of concerted Iranian efforts to assimilate Armenia forcibly or through subtle means, Armenian Arsacid tradition had little importance to Sasanian Iran. After unsuccessfully trying to destroy the Mamikonean family by killing senior members in war and trying to splinter the family inheritance, Iran finally was forced to recognize the reality it had helped to create in Armenia and was obliged to adopt for the moment a more conciliatory policy toward the Mamikonean family and Armenia in general.

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## Conclusions

The sources examined in this study permit the construction of [a list of Armenian \*sparapets\*](#). The earliest known commander of the Armenian army was Artawazd Mamikonean, *sparapet* during the reign of King Trdat III (303-330). The last Mamikonean *sparapet* within the chronological limits of this study was Vahan, who was *marzpan* of Armenia in addition to being *sparapet*.

1. Authentic fifth century sources all indicate that the *sparapetut'iwn* was an office held by the Mamikonean family. However, these sources are not explicit on the nature of the transmission of the office. Although there was no requirement for direct patrilineal inheritance in a *tun*, ordinarily the *sparapetut'iwn* passed from father to son. Thus Artawazd was the father of *sparapet* Vach' e, who was the father of Artawazd. But it is not known if Arshak's *sparapet* Vasak was Artawazd's son. Pap's *sparapet* Mushegh was the son of Vasak, but it is not known in what relationship Manuel Mamikonean stood to Mushegh. The relationship between Manuel's son Artashir and *sparapet* Hamazasp Mamikonean (St. Sahak's son-in-law) is not clear. *Sparapet* Vahan was the nephew, not son, of Vardan.

Apparently the *sparapetut'iwn* belonged to the head or *tanuter* of the family, although as a consequence of Arshak's restoration of the Mamikoneans, Vasak was given the *sparapetut'iwn* while Vardan was "appointed" *tanuter* (PB. IV.2). The sources record only one instance—during the reign of the "false king" Varazdat—when the *sparapetut'iwn* was held by a non-Mamikonean. The office soon was seized by Manuel, however, who killed *sparapet* Bat Saharuni and expelled Varazdat.

2. The sources frequently dwell on the loyalty of the Mamikonean *sparapets* to their *bnik ters*, the kings of Armenia, during the period of the Arsacid dynasty. According to P'awstos Buzand, the Mamikoneans are the only legitimate defenders of Armenia's kings from internal and external enemies. Their loyalty to king and country achieves a supernatural quality as do the *sparapets* themselves. However, following the murder of *sparapet* Mushegh by King Varazdat, an act subtly compared by P'awstos to the betrayal of Christ, the situation changes. At this time, though, the Arsacids become unworthy of the Armenian throne. Manuel was obliged to seize the *sparapetut'iwn* and expel the king. P'awstos follows these developments by advancing the theory of Mamikonean equality with the Arsacids. Apparently, throughout the fifth century following the

deposition of the Arsacids, the equation of the Mamikoneans with royalty formed a part of the propaganda of the Mamikonean family. For Ghazar P'arpec'i, the Mamikoneans epitomize resistance to Zoroastrianizing enemies, foreign and domestic, and thus are not only outstanding military leaders, but zealous defenders of the Church. In the absence of Arsacid royalty, P'arpec'i equates the Mamikoneans with royalty and, like P'awstos, makes the *sparapets* the equals of kings anywhere and occasionally supernatural beings.

3. The sources present no information on the traditional prerogatives of the Armenian *sparapet*. To a large degree this is the result of the nature of the sources themselves, which tend to be epic and eulogistic and the creations of biased clerics directly patronized by the Mamikonean family. For this reason it is impossible to draw any conclusions about the similarities or dissimilarities between the Armenian *sparapet* and the Iranian *Eran-Spahbad*.

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## ***Sparapet* List for Fourth-Fifth Century Armenia**

### **Monarch**

### ***Sparapet***

---

303-330 Trdat III,  
the Great

Artawazd Mamikonean

---

330-339 Xosrov II  
Kotak

Vach'e Mamikonean, son of Artawazd (PB III.4) Artawazd, child son of Vach'e, is made *sparapet*. During his childhood his relatives by marriage, Arshawir Kamsarakan and Andok Siwnik', control the army (PB III.11).

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339-350 Tiran

Under Vasak and Artawazd the Mamikoneans withdrew to Tayk' (PB III.18). Arshawir Kamsarakan and Andok Siwnik' apparently are in charge of the army following Tiran's blinding and before Arshak's restoration of the Mamikoneans (PB III.20).

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350-367 Arshak

Vasak (PB IV.3). Restoration of the Mamikoneans. Vasak's son Mushegh returns Pap to Armenia, accompanied by *stratelat*

Terentius and Count Ade. Mushegh becomes *zoravar-sparapet* (PB V.1).

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367-374 Pap Hayr (Dghak) *mardpet*, placed in charge of the eastern border by Terentius and Mushegh, defects and is replaced by Gnel Anjewac'i (PB V.6).

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374-378 Varazdat Bat Saharuni. Mushegh is the power behind the throne until his murder by Varazdat. Manuel Mamikonean returns to Armenia after imprisonment in Iran. He seizes the *sparapetut'iwn*, kills Bat and his sons, and expels Varazdat (PB V.37). Manuel Mamikonean (385). Artashir, son of Manuel (PB V. 44).

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430's-440's? Hamazasp Mamikonean (GHP I.18).

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d. 450-451 Vardan Mamikonean, son of Hamazasp (GHP II).

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480's-506? Vahan Mamikonean, nephew of Vardan (GHP III).

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## Footnotes

1 H. Hubschmann, *Armenische Grammatik, I. Armenische Etymologie* (Leipzig, 1895), p. 240; F. Justi, *Iranisches Namenbuch* (1895, repr. Hildesheim, 1963), p. 306.

2 The Armenian and Iranian social patterns also show numerous similarities. In Armenia, as in Iran, supreme power was exercised by a monarch ever engaged in a struggle against his own family, the nobility, and frequently against the clergy as well. In both societies the power of the nobility tended to increase with the consolidation of the state apparatus. An explanation frequently given for this phenomenon is that during the establishment of a new royal clan, in the process of overthrowing the old royal clan and its noble allies, the would-be monarch was forced to rely on the armed might of the country's dynasts who possessed large private armies. Following the seizure of power from the previous ruling clan, the new monarch was obliged to give gifts to his loyal comrades-in-arms. Such gifts were in the form of land grants.

A second stage in the growth of the nobles power came as the state increased in size or was centralized. To administer his realm, the monarch had no choice but to turn again to the most powerful rulers of the land and distribute the most important offices to them. Among these "most powerful rulers of the land" must be included not merely the king's noble supporters, but also the aboriginally powerful dynasts and clan leaders whose true power in a particular locality was not only more firmly established than that of the king, but also frequently predated it. Thus as Iranists and Armenists have noted, a mixed bureaucracy existed in both societies composed of dynasts receiving office in recognition of their ancient and real military rights and of royal appointees (such as junior members of the royal clan) through which later group the monarch tried to

maintain or expand his control over the nobility. Again in both societies a hereditary principle operated which meant that offices and land grants remained in a particular family as inalienable possessions. This meant in Armenia, for example, that if the *sparapet* died or was killed, another member of the same family had to fill the vacant position. In the case of land-holdings, the king could not reclaim his grants and could not confiscate one family's lands without first exterminating the entire clan since as long as one male member of the clan survived, the family holdings could be reclaimed and the clan gradually reestablished when the survivor reached maturity. Any attempt on the part of the crown to alter their rights and privileges was resisted militarily by the nobility.

In both Iran and Armenia it was through an oath of personal allegiance sworn before the king that a noble expressed his "vassalage" or recognized the king's military superiority. The oath of allegiance carried with it the obligation of military service. Each noble was assigned a *gah* (seat, place) at royal assemblies based on the number of cavalry he could provide.

As Adontz, Christensen, Widengren, and others have shown, the Armenian social, ethnic, and military vocabularies bear a heavy Iranian stamp. For example, (Arm.) *nahapet*-Ir. *nafapat*; *ishan-xshana*; *zoravor-zoravar*; *azg-azg*; *patiw-patev*; *shnorh-shnorh*. Most revealing of all, the names of the Armenian nobles themselves are often Iranian: Varaz, Bagarat, Vahan, Vardan, Vagharsh, Vasak, etc.

These and other similarities in Armenian and Iranian society led Widengren to comment:

Comme ces faits arméniens nous ont servi à confirmer que les conditions décrites dans le SN [Shahname] sont valables pour des temps ante-islamiques, les faits arméniens peuvent aussi servir à compléter pour la période parthe même en Iran proprement dit et ensuite pour la période sassanide.

See G. Widengren, "Recherches sur le Féodalisme iranien", *Orientalia Suecana*, V (1956); 94 and *passim*. R. Frye, *The Heritage of Persia* (New York, 1963); and N. Adontz, *Armenia in the Period of Justinian*, N. Garsoian, trans. -ed. (Lisbon, 1971), *passim*.

3 A. Christensen, *L'Iran sous les Sassanides* (2nd ed., Copenhagen, 1944), p. 99.

4 *Ibid.*, p. 370.

5 *Ibid.*, p. 132.

6 Widengren, *op. cit.*, p. 108. The great value of Widengren's study is that the author frequently draws upon Armenian sources to fill some of the many gaps in our understanding of the Iranian social pattern. As a result of this study Widengren equates certain Armenian and Iranian terms such as "servant"/"vassal" (Arm. *caray*. Ir. *bandak*), house/holdings (Arm. *tun*, Ir. *katak*), decree (Arm. *hrovartak*. Ir. *fravartak*), military detachment/banner (Arm. *drawshs*, Ir. *drafsa*) and others. Widengren, pp. 93-94.

7 Adontz, *op.cit.*, p. 185.

8 *Ibid.*, p. 340.

9 *Ibid.*, p. 362.

10 *Ibid.*, p. 288.

11 C. Toumanoff, *Studies in Christian Caucasian History* (Georgetown, 1963), p. 209.

12 *Ibid.*, p. 97 n. 144.

13 *Ibid.*, p. 141 n. 253.

14 *Ibid.*, p. 211 n. 238.

15 *Ibid.*, p. 325.

16 The earliest use of the term *sparapet* is found in the Bible, translated by different hands soon after the creation of the Armenian alphabet in the early fifth century. Usually *sparapet* is given as the equivalent for Greek *strategos* (I. Ezra 3. 14; I Maccabees 2.66, 14.47; II Macc. 3.5, 4.4, 8.8, 8.9; III Kings 2.22, 2.31; Judith 2.4, 2.5).

17 N. Akinean, "*Elishe vardapet ew iwr patmut'iwn hayoc' paterazmi* [*Eghishe Vardapet and His History of the Armenian War*], *Handes Amsoreay*, 1931-32; 1933-34; 1935-37; 1950-51.

18 See note 219 on Xorenac'i.

19 *Vark' Mesrovbay* [*The Life of Mesrovb*], S.Y. Banean, ed. (Boston, 1951), ch. 1, p. 1 (hereafter Koriwn).

20 Ghazar P'arpec'i's *History of Armenia and Letter to Vahan Mamikonean* (*Ghazar P'arpec'u Hayoc' Patmut'iwn ew Tught' arh Vahan Mamikonean*), M. Ter-Petroseanc', trans. (Alexandropol, 1895), II.57, pp. 212-14.

21 Koriwn, ch. 14, p. 21.

22 *Ibid.*, ch. 28, p. 43.

23 *Ibid.*, ch. 24, pp. 36-37.

24 *Ibid.*

25 M. Abeghyan, *Hayoc' Hin Grakanut'yan Patmut'iwn* (*History of Ancient Armenian Literature*), Vol. I (Erevan, 1968), "Koriwn Vardapet" pp. 170-179. An abridged English translation appears as the introduction to the *Life of Mashtotz* (New York, 1964), B. Norehad trans. and ed., pp. 9-20.

26 Koriwn, ch. 26, p. 40.

27 Abeghyan, *op.cit.*, p. 171.

28 Koriwn, ch. 12, p. 19.

29 *Ibid.*, ch. 19, p. 30.

30 *Ibid.*, ch. 12, p. 20.

31 *Ibid.*, ch. 26, p. 39.

32 On the *hazarapet* see J. Markwart, "*Hazarapet*", *Handes Amsoreay* (1898), 316-21.

33 Koriwn, ch. 16, p. 24.

34 *Ibid.*, p. 26. Koriwn is careful to distinguish Byzantine from Arsacid or Eastern Armenia. In chapter 16 he speaks of "the districts [wherein resided] half the Armenian people, under the authority of the emperor (*i*

*gawars kes azgin Hayoc' yishxanut'eann kayser]*". Unquestionably Anatolis is the *sparapet* of Byzantine Armenia only.

35 Such a late translation date for Ag would explain why such an important figure as St. Gregory is unmentioned by Koriwn and mentioned only in passing by the pious cleric Ghazar P'arpec'i writing at the end of the fifth century. Garitte concludes that excepting the *Teaching of St. Gregory* and the interpolated story of Artashir's revolt, Ag is a faithful translation of Aa made by an Armenian. See G. Garitte, *Documents pour l'etude du livre d'Agathange* (Vatican City, 1946), pp. 1-16 and p. 333 (hereafter Garitte). The present study was completed in 1975, before the appearance of R.W. Thomson's edition of *Agat'angelos* (Albany, 1976). Readers may now consult that work which contains a reprint of the Tiflis, 1909 Armenian text accompanied by an English translation. Thomson's introduction provides the most recent review of the versions as well as supplementary bibliography.

36 *Ibid.*, pp. 16-18.

37 *Ibid.*, pp. 18-19.

38 *Ibid.*, p. 19.

39 See Toumanoff's review of Garitte's study in *Traditio*, 5 (1947) pp. 380-1.

40 Garitte, p. 33,3.

41 *Ibid.*

42 *Ibid.*, p. 334.

43 *Ibid.*, pp. 334-335.

44 Abeghyan, *op.cit.*, pp. 182-183.

45 *Ibid.*, p.186 n. 14.

46 Toumanoff's review *op.cit.*, pp. 382-383.

47 N. Adontz, *Armenia in the Period of Justinian*, Appendix III, 72\*. The Appendices were compiled by N. Garsoian (hereafter Garsoian).

48 Ag Garitte, p. 203; AaT #860, p. 451.

49 Ag, # 135; Garsoian, 74 \*.

50 Garitte, p. 72; Vg, #98.

51 *Ibid.*, p. 72; Va, #86.

52 Garitte, p. 83; Vg, #124; Va, #112.

53 Aa, #860; Ag, # 160.

54 Garitte, p. 105; Va, # 163.

55 Garsoian, 75 \*; Aa, 163.

56 Garsoian, 76\*; Ag, #164.

57 Movses Xorenac'i, *Hayoc' Patmut'iwn (History of Armenia)* St. Malxasyanc' trans. (Cairo, 1953), II. 85. Also P. Hapozean, "Another Falsification by Xorenac'i: Artawazd Mandakuni or Mamikonean?", *Handes Amsoreay*, (1910):17-18 (Arm). See note 219 below.

58 The French translation of Ag #11 in *Collection d'historiens anciens et modernes de l'Armenie*, Langlois ed. (Paris, 1867-1869), Agathange, p. 116.

59 Ag, #12; Agathange, p. 118.

60 Ag, #19; Agathange, p. 133.

61 Ag, #129; Agathange, p. 164.

62 Ag, #11; Agathange, p. 117.

63 Ag, #135; Agathange, p. 169.

64 Ag, #149; Agathange, p. 177.

65 Ghazar P'arpec'i, *op.cit.*, I.15.

66 P'awstos Buzand, S.T. Malxasyanc' trans. (Erevan, 1968), pp. 18-19. On the *dprut'iwnk'*, *ibid.*, pp. 6-7.

67 There are references in the text to a P'awstos of Greek nationality (III, end), a bishop P'awstos who ordained the future Catholicos Nerses the Great deacon (IV.3), a P'awstos who was one of a twelve-member council to assist Nerses as Catholicos (VI.5), and a P'awstos who buried Nerses (V.24). If these are all the same figure and the author then he would have been living in the 50s and 60s of the fourth century during the time of Nerses Catholicos. Now, because of P'awstos' appellation Buzand(eay) and the fact that he is said to be of Greek nationality, some scholars have argued that P'awstos was a late fourth century Greek bishop who wrote in Greek (his *History* being translated into Armenian in the fifth century); or perhaps he was an Armenian from Byzantine-controlled Western Armenia (Buzanda); a fifth century cleric educated in the Byzantine empire; or simply P'awstos from an Armenian town called Buzanda (Malxasyanc' pp. 25-29). The question of P'awstos identity is by no means a new one. This question was raised already in the late fifth century by Ghazar P'arpec'i who refused to believe that any Bishop P'awstos could have included certain vulgar and anti-clerical passages that he laments discovering in P'awstos' *History*. The offended Ghazar thinks that the bishop's *History* was later corrupted by an uncultured person who assumed the distinguished name of P'awstos (after the bishop P'awstos found in the text) to increase the prestige of his compilation of stories (Ghazar P'arpec'i, *op.cit.*, I. 3-4). Who P'awstos was and what should be understood by Buzand(eay) are still unsolved problems. See also note 220.

68 Malxasyanc', pp. 29-30.

69 Professor N. Garsoian in her article on fourth century Armenia "Politique ou orthodoxie? L'Armenie au quatrieme siecle" *Revue des Etudes armeniennes*, n.s. IV ( 1967) pp. 297-320), has provided an explanation for P'awstos' unfavorable statements about certain Armenian kings, statements which are directly contradicted in contemporary Byzantine sources. Because of the fused nature of religious and political allegiance in this period, the Armenian kings politically allied with Byzantium were required to follow "every twist and turn of the Imperial Arianizing policies," a situation which probably prompted the murders of the Armenian Athanasian Catholicos Yusik and Daniel (c. 348) and Nerses (c. 373) by Arianizing monarchs. By placing side by side two chronological tables showing the political and religious developments in the

Byzantine Empire and in Armenia, professor Garsoian very convincingly shows the correlation between Imperial religious policies and the religio-political events taking place in Armenia. P'awstos, who is orthodox (Athanasian), has nothing but hatred for Armenia's Arianizing kings and he accuses them of spiritual and moral bankruptcy. What is important for our purposes is that P'awstos' bias in the case of the kings is systematic. He has given us a sort of chronology for the fourth century which, though lacking absolute figures, very neatly dovetails with more easily datable events in Byzantine *History*. P'awstos Buzand's information on the Mamikonean *sparapets* of fourth century Armenia is also systematically biased and likewise is contradicted by the reliable Byzantine writer Ammianus Marcellinus (b. ca. 330) who not only lived in the very times he described but even travelled to the East in 363 with Emperor Julian. On Ammianus see note 220 below.

70 Under *naxarar* law operating in the fourth and fifth centuries, a clan's holdings could be appropriated by the crown only if every male member of the clan in question was killed. If but one male baby was preserved, when the child reached maturity he could reclaim his family's lands—and the king was obliged to recognize the validity of the claim. The Mamikoneans appear as defenders of the *naxarar* rights in their capacity as preservers and nourishers of innocent and helpless children from clans which kings Xosrov II, Tiran, and Arshak tried to exterminate. Thus Vach'e raised the son of rebel *bdeshx* Bakur of Aghjnik' (PB III.9); Vasak and Artawazd raised Rshtuni and Arcruni children whom they had saved—drawing from court and even returning to Tiran his son Arshak whom they had been raising—in order to restore two *naxarar* clans (PB III.18); finally, by protecting and raising the little Kamsarakan prince Spandarad, Vasak Mamikonean prevented king Arshak from appropriating for long the Kamsarakan holdings in Shirak and Arsharunik' (PB IV.19).

71 P'awstos Buzand (PB) *History of Armenia* [*P'awstosi Buzandac'woy Patmut'iwn Hayoc'*], K. Patkanean, ed. (Venice, 1889), III.11.

72 PB, V.I.

73 *Ibid.*, V.44.

74 PB, III.8.

75 PB, III.18.

76 PB, III.20.

77 PB III. 5-6.

78 *Ibid.*

79 PB, III.8.

80 PB, V.15-16.

81 PB, IV.32.

82 PB, IV.55.

83 PB, V.37.

84 PB, V.4. Each of the two occasions when Mamikoneans *do* kill "royal men" may be justified on the grounds that the executors were acting under the orders of the king. Thus (1) *sparapet* Vach'e brought to Xosrov the bleeding head of the king's Arsacid relative Sanesan. But Sanesan had rebelled against Armenia

and, perhaps a greater sin to P'awstos, had murdered the 12-year-old Grigoris II, son of the Armenian Catholicos Vrt'anes and grandson of St. Gregory (PB III.6); (2) On king Arshak's express instruction Vardan Mamikonean, older brother of the *sparapet* Vasak, killed Arshak's nephew Gnel, allegedly for coveting the crown (PB IV.15).

85 PB, IV.24.

86 Procopius, *History of the Wars*, H. Dewing, tr. (London, 1912), I.v.40.

87 *Ibid.*, I.v.28; PB, IV.54.

88 Thus, while Vasak Mamikonean's name appears in P'awstos' list of notables accompanying bishop P'aren to Caesarea for ordination as Catholicos (PB III. 17), the Mamikonean name is noticeably absent from the group of *naxarars* taking P'aren's successor Sahak Aghbianos to the same city and returning with him to king Tiran (339-350). Or else the Mamikoneans were present but PB suppressed their name. The list of the group accompanying Sahak is more vague than most (III.17). It is no wonder that in his saga P'awstos minimizes the Mamikonean association with Tiran: for the Arianizing Tiran had murdered P'aren's two predecessors, the Catholicos Yusik and Daniel (c. 348), and it was during Tiran's reign that the Mamikoneans withdrew from court. It is one thing to accompany a future Catholicos to Caesarea for ordination and quite another to deliver up to an Arianizing king his own hand-picked candidate from a rival line. The delegation traveling with P'aren to Caesarea was the last to accompany a cleric who, though perhaps not a Gregorid and one who "reprimanded no one" (*i.e.*, Tiran), still appears to have been somewhat acceptable to the author (PB III.16; Adontz, pp. 274-275). Following P'aren's death soon afterward, subsequent delegations sent to accompany crown-selected Albianid Catholicoi included the arch-fiend Hayr *pardpet*. Vasak, accompanying P'aren, had been part of the last group of "loyalists", pro-Gregorid representatives of the most noble families including Mehendak Rshtuni, Andok Siwnik', and Arshawir Kamsarakan (PB III.16). Dramatically and with swords drawn, Vasak and Artawazd Mamikonean withdrew from court to their patrimonial holdings in Tayk', protecting the little sons of the Rshtuni and Arcruni clans from Tiran's attempt to exterminate them (PB III.18). Thus in defense of the orthodox religious values cherished by P'awstos, the Mamikoneans withdrew from court, just as the Athanasian Gregorid Catholicos Nerses did later (c. 359) during king Arshak's Arianizing period (Garsoian, "Politique ou orthodoxie?" p. 309; PB IV.15). The Mamikoneans reappear at court only after Arshak has sought them out, in a period of orthodox reaction in Byzantium (c. 363) PB IV.2. The orthodox Nerses is ordained Catholicos and again a Mamikonean name appears among the *naxarars* accompanying Nerses on a journey to Byzantium. The Mamikoneans return to court in IV.2. In IV.3, an assembly including military leaders but not the *sparapet* specifically, has Nerses ordained deacon against his will. The Mamikonean name is not mentioned among the *naxarars* accompanying Nerses to Caesarea for ordination, although Mamikonean relatives (Kamsarakan and Siwnik') are present (IV.4). Perhaps chapter 3 should precede 2, or perhaps P'awstos did not want to associate the Mamikoneans with a forced ordination. And yet it is "Bishop P'awstos" himself who performs the ordination!

The absence or presence of St. Nerses at Arshak's court likewise may be the key to another difficulty. During the reign of Arshak (350-364) acting under royal orders, Vardan Mamikonean (*sparapet* Vasak's brother) killed the innocent Arsacid cadet Gnel, Arshak's nephew (PB IV.15); Vasak killed Vardan (PB IV.18); Vahan, another brother, apostasized, destroyed churches, and even murdered his Christian relative Hamazaspuhi (PB IV.50). In each disgraceful instance that the Mamikoneans appear in an unfavorable light, Nerses was not at court or (as in the case of Vasak's execution by Shapuhr) Nerses' advice to the *naxarars* to unite around Arshak, Vasak, and Andok Siwnik' was rejected (PB IV.51). With Nerses back at court under Pap, the new *sparapet* Mushegh tried to undo some of the damage: Zoroastrian fire-temples were destroyed and many pro-Persian *naxarars* were killed (PB V.1).

According to P'awstos, Pap had Nerses murdered (c. 373) and once more appointed Aghbianids to the Catholicosate (PB V.24). However the author seems to foreshadow Pap's swing to Arianizing policy earlier in his narrative, at V.4. There, before a battle Mushegh accepted Nerses' prayers over his standards, but he refused the horse and spear of his lord Pap. Pap had questioned Mushegh's loyalty, and with good reason, since for P'awstos the Mamikoneans cannot be loyal to Arianizing kings without disastrous consequences. A final insult is hurled at the memory of Pap who was murdered by the Byzantines, for when Mushegh, Hayr, and the other princes met and decided not to avenge their king through the blood feud, they broke an ancient and honored convention of this society, feeling perhaps that Pap was not worth avenging (PB V.29).

89 PB, IV.11.

90 PB, IV.23.

91 PB, IV.59.

92 PB, V.2.

93 PB, III. 11.

94 PB, V.35.

95 PB, V.36.

96 PB, V.37.

97 PB, IV.54.

98 PB, IV.50.

99 PB, V.2.

100 PB, V.37.

101 PB, V.42.

102 PB, V.44.

103 PB, V.38.

104 Ghazar P'arpec'i, *op.cit.*, I.5 p. 10. Hereafter GHP.

105 GHP, III.62 pp. 234-35; Letter, p. 404.

106 Letter, p. 404, 432-33.

107 Abeghyan, p. 345.

108 *Ibid.*, pp. 345-47.

109 GHP, I.5, p. 10.

110 GHP, I.18, p. 71.

111 GHP, III.78, p. 311.

112 GHP, I.17, pp. 55-70.

113 Abeghyan, pp. 355-57; N. Bolaryan, "A Newly-Discovered Fragment of P'arpec'i's *History of Armenia* [*Noragyt Hatvac Ghazar P'arpec'u Hayoc' Patmutyan*]" *Banber Matenadarani*, 8 (1967):263-73.

114 Agat'angelos and P'awstos, GHP, I.1-3, pp. 1-5.

115 Koriwn, GHP, I.9, p. 23.

116 GHP, III.73, p. 285.

117 GHP, III.93, p. 367.

118 GHP, II.57, p. 214.

119 GHP, III.74, p. 290.

120 GHP, II.57, p. 214.

121 The author dates important events to the regnal years of Iranian monarchs (II.47, p. 179; II.57, p. 214; III.61, p. 234; III.66, p. 252, etc.) and uses Persian units of measurement for distance throughout his work (II.55, p. 203; II.57, p. 219; III.75, p. 292). He provides interesting information on the judicial and other prerogatives of such Iranian officials as the *hazarapet* (II.43-45, pp. 159-69), *ambarapet*, *maypet*, master of the wardrobe (II.55, p. 205), *pustipansalar* (III.71, p. 275), and *marzban*; on the lives and deaths of Yazdgard II; Hormizd III (III.60, p. 228), Valash, and the rebel Zareh (III.94, p. 370). P'arpec'i is a major source on King Peroz, and perhaps the only contemporary historian whose descriptions of this king's administrative policies, court life, eastern wars, and "crimes", have survived. Furthermore, the *History of Armenia* contains detailed information on Iranian religious and administrative policies toward Armenia and Syria, including the treatment of prisoners and the peculiar form of penal servitude called *mshakut'iwn* in Armenian. By no means lastly, P'arpec'i provides a wealth of geographical information on Iran which has yet to be examined by specialists.

122 C. Toumanoff, *Studies*, pp. 151-52, n. 6. Theodosius (379-395) was forced to accept this peace since the empire was in internal turmoil and greatly shaken by its recent encounters with the Goths. The late fourth and the entire fifth century were times of great peril for the Byzantine state. With the death of Theodosius in 395 the empire was split into two parts and one of the emperor's sons was enthroned in each, Arcadius in the east and Honorius in the west. The west was perpetually subjected to invasions by the Visigoths, Huns, and Ostrogoths. After 480, no one in the west bore the title emperor. The eastern part of the empire also was subjected to invasions after 439 when Vandal fleets destroyed the security of Mediterranean harbors. Few if any of the Byzantine emperors of the late fourth and fifth centuries were outstanding leaders. Under Arcadius 395-408 and Theodosius II (408-450) power was exercised by Theodosius' sister Pulcheria and her nominal husband Marcian (450-457) who was ruling during the time of Armenia's Vardananc uprising. Not surprisingly with the state under increasing attack, the next two occupants of the throne Leo I (457-474) and Zeno (474-491) were military men. In fact Leo himself was placed on the throne by his commanding officer, the successful Alan general Aspar.

In addition to attacks from without, the Byzantine state also had to cope with problems from within, especially its spiritual disunity. Antagonisms over precedence among the sees of Alexandria, Antioch, and Constantinople and the condemnation of Nestorianism (432) and Monophysitism (451) as heresies not only divided Byzantine society from within but also alienated the state from areas such as Egypt, Syria, and

Armenia. Thus in a period of barbarian invasion, weak leaders, and internal division, Byzantium had no intention of provoking Iran into war on its eastern borders and instead followed a conciliatory and yielding policy in all encounters with Iran.

Ghazar's attitude toward the Byzantine empire is generally favorable. At the very opening of his work he writes that streams of wisdom flowed and flow to this day from the city of Constantinople (I.3, p. 7). He himself was educated in Byzantine territory and notes with pride that Catholicos Sahak, Vardan's grandfather, was "more learned in Greek, rhetoric, and philosophy, than certain Greek scholars" (I.10, p. 28). Xorenac'i connects both Sahak and his grandson Vardan with the Byzantine empire during the reign of Theodosius II, who allegedly authorized Sahak's teaching activities in the western sector and appointed Vardan *sparapet* (MX, III.57).

Vardan must have had important ties with Byzantine officials, since he planned to move to Byzantine territory rather than live as an apostate in Iranian-controlled Armenia (GHP II. 30, p.114). Now at the time of this dramatic move and at the urging of *marzpan* Vasak Siwnik', the *naxarars* convinced the Mamikoneans to abandon their would-be exile and swore that they would participate in an uprising against Iran. The rebels sent letters to Emperor Theodosius II, the *sparapet* of Antioch, and to the princes of Aghjnik', Angeghtan, Cop'k', Hashtyank', and Ekeghyac' asking for aid (GHP II.33, p. 129). RGB However, aid was not forthcoming. But Ghazar does not blame Theodosius for this. Instead he attributes the Byzantine decision to the meddling of the *sparapet* of Antioch, Anatol, with the assistance of some Syrian advisor, P'lorent (II.41, p. 151) as well as to Theodosius' sudden death. Another instance of Ghazar's sympathy or at least neutrality toward the Byzantine empire appears in his description of Catholicos Giwt on trial before King Peroz. Giwt was charged with twice sending messengers to Emperor Leo who allegedly "wanted to help (the Armenians)" but did not (III.63, p. 240). These Byzantine decisions were consistent with the Empire's earlier policy of non-intervention in the east during the fifth century. Despite the attacks and treaty-breaking of Iranian kings Vahram V Gur (420-438) and Yazdgard II (438-457), Byzantium was forced to follow a policy of conciliation. Thus in 443 Theodosius II agreed to pay Yazdgard tribute in order to buy peace, and thus the decision not to aid the Armenian rebels in 450/1.

Thirty years later *marzpan* Vahan Mamikonean warned a second group of *naxarars* that if they rebelled against Persia, they should expect no help from Byzantium, for that state was "weak and prone to breaking oaths" (III.66, p. 255). If Byzantium was unable to furnish military aid, it nonetheless did not deny the Vahaneans access to its territory since Vahan regrouped his forces on land called Roman by Ghazar (III.78, p. 313). V. Ishkanyan has tried to show on the basis of passages from Ghazar and Eghishe that in fact neither the Vardaneans nor the Vahaneans truly expected aid from Byzantium. It is not improbable that such men of affairs as *sparapets* Vardan and Vahan knew the internal situation in Byzantium in their own times. The actual state of affairs is reflected in Ghazar's *History*. He relates with little bitterness the encounters with Byzantium by Armenian delegations seeking aid, as if he himself did not expect anything. Not being a source of support and not a participant in affairs, Byzantium is essentially left out of P'arpec'i's narration. See V.K. Ishkanyan, "On the Question of Byzantine Orientation at the Time of the Vardananc' War (*Byuzandakan Koghmnoroshman Harc' Vardananc' Paterazmi Zhamanak*", *Patma-banasirakan Handes*, 3 (1966):53-70, and "The Rebellion of *Marzpan* Armenia against Persia, and Byzantium" by the same author, *Patma-banasirakan Handes*, 4 ( 1963):51-62.

123 Adontz, p. 1 79.

124 *Ibid.*

125 GHP I.15, p. 48.

126 GHP, II.40, p.150.

127 GHP, III.66, p. 257.

128 GHP, III.79, p. 315.

129 GHP, III.98, pp. 383-86. For Armenia, administratively a part of Iran, certain features of Iran's internal life had great significance. First, during the late fourth and fifth centuries a fierce struggle was taking place in Iranian society between the kings and the nobility. This was an unequal contest with the nobles usually having the advantage. So of Shapur II's successors, Artashir II (379-383) was dethroned while Shapur III (383-388) and Vahram IV (388-399) were killed by the nobles (Christensen, pp. 110, 253). Supposedly Yazdgard I (399-421) was murdered by the nobles who attempted to supplant his line on the throne with that of a collateral branch (Christensen, p. 272). Thus during the period 385-428 when the Armenian *naxarars* deposed or expelled four kings, the Iranian nobility was engaged in the same work. Christensen wrote that during the reigns of Vahram V Gur (421-438) and Yazdgard II (438-457), government was wholly in the hands of the nobles (Christensen, pp. 277, 263). Following the death of Peroz in 484, a successful general Zarmihhr put Valash on the throne, but this king was dethroned and blinded by the nobles in 488 (Christensen, pp. 296-97). Valash's successor Kavadh also was deposed in 497.

A second feature of fifth century Iran—the eastern war—also had an effect on affairs in Armenia. Almost every Iranian king who ruled in the fifth century fought against invading tribes on the eastern border such as the Hephthalites and Chionites. Vahram IV, Vahram V, and Yazdgard II all fought the invaders (Christensen, pp. 280, 287). Peroz (457-484) died fighting in the east, and Iran was obliged to pay tribute (Christensen, pp. 290, 293, 294). Finally, Peroz' son Kavadh grew up as a hostage among the Hephthalites and a Hephthalite army later helped him regain his throne. For Armenia it should be noted that both the 'Vardananc' and the 'Vahaneanc' occurred when Iran was fighting in the east. The death of Peroz in war coupled with the diminution of the treasury were important factors forcing Valash to make peace with Armenia in 485.

130 The increasing power which the Zoroastrian clergy wielded in fifth century Iran meant that its orthodox policies increasingly had the force of law within the state. With the conversion to Christianity of Byzantium and Armenia in the early part of the fourth century, on both sides of the Byzantine-Iranian frontier religious and political policies hardened and consolidated. An Iranian monarch would see practitioners of Orthodox Christianity living within Iran as potential enemies of the state since the centers of the Christians' spiritual leadership were on Byzantine soil. Urged on by a zealous Zoroastrian clergy whose support the monarch needed, the persecution of Christians became official policy.

In Persarmenia the Iranians resorted to various means to convert the population. Outright persecution was employed at the advice of Mihr Nerseh *hazarapet* of Kings Vahram V and Yazdgard II (Christensen, p. 280). This latter monarch is said to have killed his Christian daughter and to have massacred the Christians of Syria in 446 (Christensen, pp. 283, 289). The persecution of Christians coupled with excessive taxation generated rebellions four years later in Armenia, in Albania/Aghuania during 460 and in Iberia during 482. From the demands made of Valash by the rebel Vahan Mamikonean (484), it is clear that attempts to convert had continued until that time and that the Iranian court was preferentially advancing the Armenian apostates and giving them lavish gifts. Among the methods the Iranian government used to prevent the possibility of subversion from its Christian communities was the encouragement of a confessional break between the Christians under its domination and those in Byzantium. At the Synod of Markabka (424) the Christian church of Iran was declared independent of Byzantium. Thenceforth Iranian kings encouraged Syrian rather than Byzantine Christianity among Christian communities under their domination, including those in Armenia.

Already at the time of Shapur II's invasion of Armenia in 363, according to Xorenac'i, the Armenian apostate Meruzhan Arcruni had been instructed to uproot Greek learning in the country and had burned books written in that language as part of the campaign (MX, III.36; See also H.G. Melk'onyan, "Armeno-Syrian Cultural

Relations during the IV-Vth Centuries (*Hay-Asorakan Mshakut'ayin Haraberut'yunner IV-V Darerum*)", PBH, 2 (1963):127-138). Apparently he was successful in the undertaking because the same author notes that Sahak first translated the Bible from Syriac since no Greek Bibles were found or permitted in Persarmenia (MX, III.54). Syrian influence was strong too on the creation of the Armenian alphabet and on the material first selected for translation into Armenian. Characters for an Armenian alphabet had been sought by Mashtoc' in a Syrian milieu (MX, III.53; III.60; III.62) for which Sahak was reprimanded by Emperor Theodosius II (MX, III.57). Iran furthered this Syrian cultural diffusion by taking a more active part in Armenian religious affairs after the Synod of Markabka. P'arpec'i notes that in 428 with the deposition of the last Armenian Arsacid Artashes IV, the Iranian king Vahram V also deposed Catholicos Sahak and replaced him with a Catholicos presumably from another line named Surmak (GHP, I.14, p. 43). Surmak was replaced by the Syrians Brgisho (or Bardesh) and Shmuel (GHP, I.15, p. 20). On Bardesh see Bogharyan p. 271. Yazdgard II had Catholicos Yovsep' arrested and executed with other Armenian clergy as instigators of the rebellion of 450/ 1 (GHP, II.42, p. 155; II.57, pp. 212-213) and Peroz deposed the pro-Greek Catholicos Giwt (GHP, III.64, p. 243).

131 In speeches placed in the mouths of *marzpan* Shapur Mihran and the Zoroastrianizing *hazarapet* Mihr Nerseh, Ghazar stresses the importance which the Persians gave to control of Armenia from an administrative and spiritual point of view. Shapur Mihran states that by controlling Armenia, Iran would easily control Iheria and Albania (GHP, III.88 pp. 434-45). Mihr Nerseh likewise convinces Yazdgard II that if the Armenians were Zoroastrian they would draw away from Byzantium, and Iberia and Albania would follow suit (GHP, II.20, p. 82). The author sees Iranian administrative policies as sinister and assimilatory. Vahram V is described as overjoyed at the Armenian *naxarars'* request that he appoint for them a Persian governor "to uncover disloyalty" (GHP, I.14, p. 47). Earlier under Yazdgard I (399-421) Iran's assimilatory policies are underlined by Ghazar and denounced. He has Yazdgard observe that by placing his son Shapur on the Armenian throne and through intermarriage, Armenians "who are unfamiliar with Persian law peacefully will learn to fear the Persians" (GHP, I.12, P. 34). P'arpec'i does not have a kind word for any Iranian monarch or his appointees with the exception, of course, of *marzpan* Vahan. In fact the only Iranian official Ghazar speaks of with a modicum of respect is the *marzpan* Andekan who ruled briefly following the Vahaneanc' uprising and then wisely recommended to King Valash that Vahan be named *marzpan* in his place (GHP, III.98, pp. 383-86).

132 No matter how bad the Christian, he is still better than a Zoroastrian. Ghazar has Catholicos Sahak warn the *naxarars* that he cannot support their request to depose King Artashes IV who, though sinful, still does not worship the elements (GHP, I.13, p. 42). At trial before King Vahram V, Sahak declaims that while Artashes is an unworthy Christian, nonetheless by Persian standards he is beyond reproach (GHP, I.14, p. 46). The author approvingly describes the rebuff given by Armenian nobelwomen to the Zoroastrian mages sent to convert them (c. 449. GHP, II.32, p. 122). He also reports the subsequent massacre of the mages and the extinguishing of their fires, descriptions which ring with triumph and contempt (GHP, II.32, p. 127). In addition the author himself moves to the attack in numerous important polemical passages in which he refutes Zoroastrian theology (as he understands it) always trying to make that theology seem as ridiculous as possible (for example II.20, pp. 74-78; II.24, pp. 89-90; II.44, pp. 162, 165-66).

133 Concomitant with the denigration of Zoroastrianism is the elevation of Christianity and especially its clerical defenders whom Ghazar turns into heroes. There is much of the supernatural in the author's description of Christian-Zoroastrian combats and encounters. Before the battle of Awarayr, for example, the soldiers are represented praying throughout the night and light radiated from the face of the presbyter Ghewond who preached to the men (II.38, pp. 142-43). Before a major battle with the Persians, Vahan prayed together with Catholicos Hovhan and it is to the efficacy of these prayers that the successful outcome of the fight is attributed (III.71, pp. 275-56; III.72, p. 279). Vasak Mamikonean and those who fell with him in Iberia all had illuminated faces before battle (III.74, p. 288).

Catholicos Sahak before King Vahram V and Giwt before Peroz speak with heroic boldness and somewhat arrogantly, condemning Zoroastrianism and defending their faith (I.14, p. 46; III.63-64, pp. 241-47). Ghazar adds that the Christians of Ctesiphon, Xuzhastan, the hishop of Hrew and all the presbyters and deacons (presumably Nestorians) feared the deposed Giwt (III.63, p. 241) who resolutely continued to ordain bishops and priests while under house arrest in Persia (III.64, p. 247). The hero Giwt brazenly told Peroz' messenger that the latter would not have the courage to address the king the way he himself would (III.64, p. 244). And supposedly at trial Peroz even believed the veracity of Giwt's defense, but dethroned him anyway "in order that the Christians not believe his laws were weak" (III.64, p. 243).

The deaths of all the Armenian clergymen executed in Iran either for failure to convert or for their active participation in the uprisings are recorded as martyrdoms replete with denunciations of Zoroastrianism and an abundance of miracles. This is true for all the clerics executed by Yazdgard II: Samuel the presbyter, T'at'ik, the Catholicos Yovsep', the priest Ghewond, bishop Sahak Rshtuni (II.57, pp. 212-140), and for the layman Yazd Siwnik' (III.76, pp. 301-3). The influence of these martyrs even transcended death since the powers of their bones are repeatedly asserted, especially, it is interesting, by the Persians themselves who took great pains to see to it that these holy relics did not fall into the hands of Christians (II.50, p. 184; II.57, pp. 214-15; III.64, p. 246). P'arpec'i also places in the mouths of certain Iranian officials unlikely statements demonstrating the speakers' awe and respect for the Christian faith. Following the execution of the Ghewondean priests, for instance, an earthquake occurred causing the Iranian officials to remark that the powers of the Christians are great and that they themselves are lost (II.57, p. 218). Similarly *marzpan* Shapur mused that Vahan's successful warriors "appeared to be aided by some unseen force" (III.83, p. 328).

134 Ghazar reacts unfavorably to Iranian attempts to encourage Syrian influence in Armenia. By the late fourth century Syrian influence was very strong in the country. Ghazar portrays Mashtoc', creator of the Armenian alphabet, as concerned about the extent of this penetration (I.9, p. 24). Mashtoc' himself was a product of this cultural phenomenon since, as Ghazar says, Mesrop was reluctant to translate the Bible from Greek, being insufficiently familiar with Greek grammar. However, he knew Syriac (I.10, p. 29). Naturally Ghazar has nothing but contempt for the Syrian Catholicos appointed to the leadership of the Armenian church. Beyond this, the author manifests resentment for all Syrians. P'lorent, a Syrian adviser to Theodosius II, is held partly responsible for the emperor's refusal to assist the Vardaneans (II.41, p. 151). Vahan was accused before Peroz by "his foolish associate Vriw, son of a Syrian, who like all Syrians is a blabber-mouth and a liar" (III.65, p. 250). Finally Ghazar, like his hero Vahan, is outraged by Peroz' statement that the Armenian detachment in his army is even worse than the worst—the Syrian (III.65, p. 250). After demonstrating his military prowess by fighting off the Persians, the triumphant Vahan rhetorically asked Valash's peace-negotiator Nixor, "Are we (Armenians) like real Aryans, or like the Syrians?" (III.92, p. 364).

135 GHP, II.36, p. 136. See also note 143 below.

136 GHP, II.30, p. 117; II.33, p. 129; II.34, p. 130; II.39, pp. 147, 149; II.42, p. 154; III.68, p. 260; III.69, p. 265; III.71, p. 277.

137 GHP, III.61, p. 232.

138 GHP, II.57, pp. 214-15.

139 GHP, III.60, p. 230.

140 GHP, III.61, p. 232.

141 GHP, I.11, p. 29.

142 GHP, I. 16, p. 51.

143 GHP, II.32, p. 123. The fact that there were "a few *sepuhs* from every *tohm*" fighting on either side is a direct result of Iranian policies as well as of the dynamics of development of the *naxarar* system in the fifth century. It was the policy of the Iranian government to promote apostasy from Christianity in Armenia by financially and politically advancing the apostates. Catholicos Sahak was offered many gifts if he would corroborate the *naxarars'* charges against king Artashes IV (I.14, p. 46). The apostate *naxarars* who deposed Sahak together with Artashes returned to Armenia with money, honor (*patiw*), and "greatness" (*mecut'iwn*) (I.14, p. 48). Varazvaghan Siwnik' who supposedly was converted by Mihr Nerseh himself (II.20, p. 75) expected gifts and honor for this (II.20, p. 79) and his mentor urged Yazdgard II to lavish wealth on Varazvaghan "so that his own *tohm* and the other Armenian grandees (*mecameck'*) see what the protection of the Iranian crown means and they will fall over themselves in their eagerness to serve" (II.22, p. 83). At the time of the mass conversion of *naxarars* summoned to Ctesiphon with Vardan (c. 449), the newly-apostate Armenian, Iberian, and Albanian princes were decorated and given gifts and honor, villages and fields (II.28, p. 107). Similar inducements were offered to the Ghewondean priests and to the priests Abraham and Xoren (II.46, p. 177).

Beyond financial inducements, Iran held out to prospective apostates the promise of political power. Thus Yazdgard II replaced Vasak with the Zoroastrian Varazvaghan as lord of Siwnik' (II.46, p. 177). As a result of his communication with the Greeks and his oath of allegiance with the Vardaneans sworn on a Bible, Vasak must have been viewed by Yazdgard II as disloyal from a political and religious standpoint. That Persians were advancing apostates is seen too in the accusations made about Peroz' policies by Vahan. Peroz, according to Vahan, allied himself with brigand-leaders, murderers, fugitives, and insignificant and worthless men. Vahan complained that the unworthy were being given princedom and honor (*ishxanut'iwn ew patiw*, III.92, p. 362). Earlier, speaking to *marzpan* Shapuh Mihran, Vahan revealed that power in Armenia was in the hands of men from lowly *tohms* (III.75, pp. 293-96) and he denounced Peroz for "not recognizing worth and worthlessness" among his subordinates (III.85, p. 340). Long before Valash, Vahan says, Persian officials were collaborating with "lowly villagers, disobedient sons, and servants who worked evil against their lords" (III.95, p. 376).

The results of these policies are evident from Ghazar's *History*. Availing themselves of the opportunity for advancement many representatives of Armenia's lesser nobility converted and so destroyed whatever unity had existed previously within a particular house. Some areas such as Siwnik' appear to have been squarely within the Iranian camp. Vasak and Gdihon Siwnik' are arch-fiends to Ghazar. It was in Siwnik's fortresses that the captured Vardanean-Hmayeakean priests and Catholicos Yovsep' were held captive (II.42, p. 155) and it was the princes of Siwnik', according to P'arpec'i, who in the vision of Gregory the Illuminator found in "*Agat'angeghos*" first were transformed from white lambs into black wolves (II.20, p. 80). However, not even the pro-Iranian house of Siwnik' was free from religio-political troubles. Babgen and Bakur Siwnik' were fighting on Vahan's side (II.47, p. 179). Yazd Siwnik' was martyred for his Christian faith, although his relative Gdihon had urged him to apostasize "like a jealous brother" (III.76, p. 302). In other parts of the country too there was a great division within the *naxarar* families, which destroyed the unity of Armenia's resistance. Thus when Vahan wrote for aid to the Anjewac'i and Mokac'i houses, Nerses Eruanduni and Yohan Anjewac'i answered his summons but they were attacked on their way to the *sparapet* by Anjewac'i and Mokac'i led soldiers (III. 70 p. 273).

The *naxarar* system was also undergoing changes internally. Like the nobility in Iran during the same period, the Armenian nobility was strengthening its power. The bitterest passages in the book reflect P'arpec'i's reaction to some of the internal changes in the *naxarar* system. Like the nobility in Iran, the Armenian *naxarars* were notorious for deposing their kings. King Arshak III was driven from the land and left Ayrarat lamenting the insubordination of the *naxarars* (I.6, pp. 13-14). The *naxarars* treacherously informed Persian

king Shapur III (383-88) that their king Xosrov IV was in secret communication with the Byzantines (I.8, p. 21). Xosrov was deposed and the nobles *requested* Vramshapuh as king (I.9, p. 22). King Artashes IV also was requested by the *naxarars* from Vahram V (I.12, p. 35), but he too was deposed (I.14, pp. 47-8). Catholicos Sahak was deposed at the same time and replaced by Surmak from Bznunik' whom the *naxarars* had selected as their candidate and brought to court (I.14, pp. 43-4). Surmak was deposed (I.15, p. 48) as was Vahram V's replacement for him, Brgisho (I.15, p. 50).

144 GHP, II.36, p. 136.

145 GHP, II.39, p. 148.

146 GHP, III.67, p. 259.

147 GHP, III.69, p. 266.

148 GHP, III.73, pp. 286-86.

149 Grudges among the *naxarars* such as between Varazvaghan and Vasak Siwnik' (II.20, p. 79) or between Vahan Amatuni and Vasak Siwnik' (II.31, p. 121) were exploited whenever possible. Also an extensive system of domestic espionage was encouraged within Armenia. Zoroastrians (mages or Armenian converts) constituted one source of intelligence, of course. Thus both rebels Vardan (II.32, p. 122) and Vahan (II.66, p. 257) believed that the Persians knew about their plans before the outbreak of their rebellions. Vardan specifically accused the mages of spying. There were numerous willing informants who, either from sincere pro-Iranian convictions or to destroy enemies and advance themselves, informed on their countrymen and friends. There are many examples of this development in P'arpec'i: Gadisho Maxaz accused Catholicos Giwt of paying bribes and giving gifts to apostates to return them to the Christian fold (III. 64 pp. 240-41); Vahan's associate Vriw accused him of conspiracy (III.65, p. 250); Varazshapuh Amatuni informed *marzpan* Atrvshnasp of Vahan's plans for rebellion (III.67, p. 250); oath-breaking *naxarars* informed the Persian commander Zarmihr Hazarawuxt that Vahan had sent Mushegh Mamikonean with half the army to fight in Iberia and that Vahan's forces in Dwin were few. They urged the Persians to massacre Vahan's compatriots to put a quick end to the disturbances (III.78, p. 310). P'arpec'i in no way emphasizes the fact, but it is clear that very often the Persians were using willing local guides in their operations, whether to uncover the concealed Hmayeakeans or to capture the Kamsarakan women (II.41, p. 153 and III.79, p. 313).

Each of Ghazar's references to the disunited or apostate *naxarars* is laced with bitterness and scorn. Sometimes the author directly intrudes into the narrative with his own comments. These are often of a religious nature, such as the damning remarks he makes over his enemy Gdihon Siwnik's decaying corpse (III.83, p. 329), or his comparison of the *naxarars* who deposed Artashes IV and Catholicos Sahak with Joseph's brothers (I.14, p. 48). More often Ghazar places his sentiments in the mouths of others. Thus before Vahram V, Armenia's last Arsacid king Artashes IV stated angrily that the *naxarars* traditionally disobeyed their lords and changed them frequently (I.14, pp. 43-4). Vardan, called back from exile, denounced the *naxarars* in their presence for casting the Mamikoneans into danger and then remaining aloof (II.30, pp. 118-19). Vahan called the *naxarars* untrustworthy and liars (III.66, p. 255).

150 GHP, II.26, pp. 96-97.

151 GHP, II.27, p. 104.

152 GHP, II. 27, p. 106.

153 GHP, II.31, p. 120.

154 GHP, II.30, p. 114.

155 GHP, II.33, p. 130.

156 GHP, II.38, p. 147.

157 GHP, II.37, p. 139.

158 GHP, III.65, p. 252. In his letter for aid to the Arcruni, Anjewac'i, Mokac'i, and Rshtuni princes, Vahan called for "revenge for the church" (III.70, p. 272). Vahan took into battle with him Catholicos Yovhan with whom he prayed publicly before the troops (III.79, pp. 275-76). Throughout the course of his uprising Vahan lavished attention on the churches. He gave presents to the church in Vagharshapat (III.77, p. 304). When *marzpan* Shapuh Mihran left the country, Vahan renovated a church in Vagharshapat (III.86, p. 338). He had mass said in Dwin (III.94, p. 371), and after peace was announced, he spent several days in Vagharshapat visiting shrines (III.97, p. 383). Vahan even more than Vardan is shown as a champion of the church. The first of three demands presented by Vahan to the Iranian peace negotiators of Valash concerned religion: Armenians must not become mages, apostasy must not be rewarded, the fire-temples must be removed, the people must have the right to worship freely wherever they please, and the church must not be vilified (III.89, p. 348). Vahan is shown pressing this demand insistently. Initially he demanded toleration of Christianity from the Iranian general Mihran (III.75, p. 298). He repeated the demand to Nixor (III.95, p. 369) and before King Valash himself (III.95, p. 377).

159 GHP, II.44, p. 167.

160 GHP, III.97, p. 382

161 GHP, III.99, p. 388.

162 GHP, II. 38, p. 142

163 GHP, II.39, p. 147.

164 GHP, II.31, p. 120.

165 GHP, III. 66, p. 257.

166 GHP, III.97, p. 383; III.77, p. 304; III.94, p. 371 are examples.

167 GHP, II.35, p. 132.

168 GHP, III.89, p. 346.

169 *Ibid.*

170 P'arpec'i obviously felt that Ashusha would marry his daughters to his young wards and try to control the Mamikonean family's holdings in that way. Ghazar calls the request outrageous, unheard of, and unbelievable (III.59, p. 227). He has the grateful Ashusha roll around on the floor before Yazdgard like a clown and explain that, since he was receiving an honor unknown to any of the king's other servants, he had to honor the king with a new type of prostration (III.59, pp. 227-28).

171 The Mamikonean boys were good archers, fast runners, and quick to kill (III.63, p. 237). Of the three princes, the *naxarars* feared Vahan was the one who would ruin them; they were thus jealous, bitter, and

slandorous (III.63, p. 239). Supposedly it was because of the slandering of the jealous *naxarars* that Peroz had postponed honoring the young Vahan (III.63, p. 238). P'arpec'i defends Vahan in Ctesiphon where the latter was called to answer charges that he was planning a rebellion, triumphing with Vahan's vindication, and gloating over the humiliation of Vahan's accusers (III.65, p. 251) .

172 GHP, II.29, p. 119.

173 GHP, II.27, p. 99.

174 GHP, III.96, p. .379.

175 GHP, III.82, p. 324. 176 GHP, II.43, pp. 163, 167.

177 GHP, II.46, p. 175.

178 GHP, III.63, p. 238.

179 GHP, III.90, p.350; III.91, p. 357.

180 GHP, III.95, p.373.

181 GHP, III.93, p.368; III.95, p.378.

182 GHP, III.95, pp. 374, 378.

183 GHP, III.94, pp. 94, 372.

184 GHP, III.98, p. 385. Also see III.89, p. 350 where Vahan demands an interview with Yazdgard II "lest the problems between us remain problems."

185 GHP, III.83, pp. 325-26.

186 GHP, III.83, p. 327.

187 GHP, III.83, p. 330.

188 GHP, III.84, pp. 331-32.

189 GHP, III.86, p. 336.

190 GHP, III.86, p. 337.

191 GHP, III.94, p. 371.

192 GHP, III.88, p.343

193 GHP, III.85, p. 334.

194 GHP, III.91, pp. 355-56.

195 GHP, III.66, p. 254.

196 GHP, III.71, p. 275.

197 GHP, III.69, pp. 269-70.

198 GHP, III.77, pp.304-7.

199 GHP, III.81, p. 319.

200 GHP, II.38, p. 145; III.77, p. 312; III.84, p. 331.

201 The *ramiks* are presented as an almost ungovernable force at the start of the Vardananc' uprising and the group which initially destroyed the fire-temples without awaiting orders (II.32, p. 127). After the Vahaneanc' the *ramiks* were honored especially by the peace negotiator Nixor who admitted a group of them into his tent (III.94, p. 366).

202 GHP, III.83, p. 330.

203 GHP, II.35, p. 135.

204 GHP, III.65, p. 250.

205 GHP, III.66, p. 253.

206 GHP, III.73, pp. 284-85.

207 GHP, III.70, p. 271.

208 GHP, II.33, p. 128.

209 GHP, II.34, p. 131.

210 GHP, II.45, p. 173.

211 GHP, III.68, p. 260.

212 GHP, III.68, p. 263.

213 GHP, III.88, p. 344.

214 GHP, III.79, p. 313.

215 GHP, III.88, p. 344.

216 GHP, III.71, p. 275.

217 GHP, II.26, p. 96.

218 GHP, III.96, p. 379.

219 Readers may now consult R.W. Thomson's English translation of Xorenac'i (Cambridge, Mass., 1978) which appeared after the present study was completed.

On the dating of Movses Xorenac'i (MX) see H. Lewy, "The Date and Purpose of Moses of Chorene's *History*" *Byzantion*, XI ( 1936) and his "Additional Note on the Date of Moses of Chorene" in the same volume N. Adontz, "A propos de la note de M. Lewy sur Moise de Chorene" in the same volume C.

Toumanoff, "On the Date of the Pseudo-Moses of Chorene", *Handes Amsoreay*, (1961). Both Adontz and Toumanoff accept a late eighth century date, albeit for different reasons.

Xorenac'i does not describe any single individual as *sparapet* prior to the time of Tiran. However, even in the days of the semi-legendary King Vagharshak, Xorenac'i does note several officials with military charges. One such was Smbat Bagratuni. Another was a descendant of Sisak, made *biwrapet kusakal* (Ten Thousander Officer) over Albania/Aghuania (MX, II.71). A tendency which runs throughout Xorenac'i's narration is to divide the command of the forces into four parts. The quadripartite division of the army, is projected back even before Vagharshak to the legendary King Aram (I.14).

In the time of Tigran, control of the forces was taken from the Bagratids and presumably given to Barzap'ran Rshtuni, who is called *sparapet* and leads an Armeno-Iranian army (II.19) against three Roman *sparapets*: Skavros (II. 15), Gabianus (II. 16), and Bendidos (II.20)

Four *sparapets* are mentioned again during the reign of Artashes. Each of this king's sons is given an office: Mazan was made chief priest, another son became *hazarapet*, while Zareh, Tiran, and Artawazd were made *sparapets* of the north, west, and east. Smbat Bagratuni was appointed *sparapet* of the south (II.53).

From the end of Artashes' reign until the beginning of the rule of Trdat the Great (313-330) Xorenac'i has little to say about who led the armies, noting only that control of the eastern troops was given by a King Tiran to a certain Anjewac'i *naxarar* (II.62). It is under King Trdat the Great that the army was divided once again. When Trdat's sole *sparapet* Artawazd Mandakuni was killed fighting the Basil king, four lords replaced him: (N) Mihran, the *bdesx* of Gugark', (S) Manachir Rshtuni, (E) *nahapet* Vahan Amatuni, and (W) *aspet* Bagarat Bagratuni (II.85). The same *sparapets* functioned under Trdat's son Xosrov II (330-339) with two exceptions: Garjuyl Malxaz Xorxoruni replaced the slain Mihran in the north (III.9) and a Zora Rshtuni was *sparapet* in the south in place of Manachir (III.15). Under Tiran (339-350) the Rshtuni clan was almost exterminated by the king for alleged pro-Byzantine sympathies, and the *sparapetut'iwn* of the south was transferred from the Rshtunis to a lord Salamat' of Ancit (III.15).

Beginning with Arshak's time (350-367) foreign *sparapets* make their appearance, leading foreign and Armenian armies. Thus a Persian *sparapet* entered Armenia with an Armenian army in order to capture the fugitive King Arshak. This same *sparapet* seized Ani, despoiled the royal treasures there, and scattered the bones of Arsacid kings buried in the royal mausoleum (III.27). Yet Xorenac'i continues to list changes in the Armenian *sparapets*. Thus under Arshak, the *sparapetut'iwn* of the east passed from Vahan Amatuni to Vaghinak Siwnik (III.18). Another foreign *sparapet* this time the Byzantine *stratelat* Terentianos accompanied Pap to Armenia with a large army and maintained him on the throne for awhile, fighting with his Byzantine troops against the Persians. Armenian *naxarars*, for their part, fought Persians under their own *sparapet*, *aspet* Smbat Bagratuni (III.37). Xorenac'i calls Gnel Anjewac'i King Pap's *sparapet* of the east (III.39).

Following Armenia's partition in 387, each king, Arshak and Xosrov, had his *sparapet*. Arshak's commander was Dara Siwnik' (III.45) while Sahak *aspet* Bagratuni became Xosrov's *sparapet* (III.44). After Arshak's death in 390 the *stratelat* Gazavon Kamsarakan led the western *naxarars* (III.48) while the Mamikoneans were installed as *sparapets* in the east through foreign intervention.

220 Ammianus Marcellinus' narration of important events taking place in the reign of Pap differs from the record found in P'awstos in many ways. Here we shall examine only those divergences affecting the reputations of members of the Mamikonean family. In this category the first important discrepancy between the two authors concerns the capture of Artogerassa fortress. According to Ammianus, the wife of imprisoned King Arshak took refuge in this fortress which was besieged twice by the Persians. The Persian King Sapor entrusted the taking of Artogerassa and control of the country to two Armenian deserters: Cyclaces, a eunuch;

and Arrabannes, a commander-in-chief (Ammianus Marcellinus, *History*, J. Rolfe tr. (London, 1939), vol. III. XXVII, 12, 5). Unsuccessful in their siege, the two traitors entered the fortress where, pitying the queen's plight and encouraged by the hope of greater rewards from the Romans, they decided to turn from the Persians. They were able to bring the besiegers to inaction by saying that the besieged had asked for two days grace. Then, when the Persian camp was asleep, by prearranged plan Armenian warriors streamed out of Artogerassa and massacred the unsuspecting soldiers (*ibid.*, XXVII 12, 6-8).

The second, final, and successful besieging of Artogerassa took place under Sapor's personal direction. Furious over the massacre of his sleeping soldiers and over the return from Byzantine lands of Arshak's son Pap, Sapor invaded Armenia with a huge force destroying castles and burning the vegetation. Terrified, Pap, Cylaces, and Arrabannes fled north to inaccessible mountains and remained there in hiding for five months. Meanwhile Sapor had seized and burned Artogerassa, dragging from it Arshak's wife and treasures (*ibid.*, XXVII 12, 11-12).

Markwart observed that P'awstos has merged these two distinct sieglements into one (J. Markwart, "P'awstos Buzand", *Handes Amsoreay*, (1897):5-9). P'awstos named as the generals in charge of taking Artogerassa (Artagers) two Persian princes, Zik and Karen. After thirteen months the Persians still were unable to capture the fortress. Meanwhile, Mushegh Mamikonean had gone in company of other princes to negotiate with the Byzantine emperor for the return of Pap. In the fourteenth month an epidemic broke out at Artogerassa killing the 11,000 men and 6,000 women with the queen. Only Queen P'aranjem and her two maids survived. Then the eunuch Hayr *mardpet* secretly entered the fortress, denounced the Arsacid family, and fled. Finding herself alone, P'aranjem opened the gates and let the Persian soldiers in (PB, IV.55).

Now in Ammianus' version (1) the commander-in-chief Arrabannes is originally on the Persian side; (2) in the expectation of greater rewards from the Byzantines, he abandons his allies; (3) he treacherously massacres defenseless Persian soldiers; (4) terrified of Sapor, he, Pap, and Cylaces flee and hide in the mountains while Artogerassa is stormed.

Remembering some of P'awstos' biases it is easy to understand why Ammianus version could never have been acceptable to him. For the Mamikoneans are the defenders of Armenia militarily and the defenders of the legitimate Arsacid line. They are loyal to their allies and fight fearlessly against the enemy. That is why in P'awstos the sordid story of Mushegh Mamikonean's duplicity has been suppressed or, as this writer believes, P'awstos has assigned to the apostates Vahan Mamikonean and Meruzhan Arcruni some of the traitorous deeds of Ammianus' Arrabannes—spreading the responsibility and clearing Mushegh's name. This hypothesis suggests itself from the fact that just such a splitting has occurred in the case of the eunuch Cylaces/Hayr. As Markwart pointed out, confused over the orientation of the *mardpet* during this period, P'awstos created a second *mardpet* (Dghak) and gave two varying accounts of the death of one and the same figure (Markwart, p.5). Thus Ammianus' statement that Shapor "entrusted Armenia to Cylaces a eunuch and to Arrabannes both of whom he had long before received as deserters..." (Ammianus, XXVII 12, 5) is similar to the notice found in P'awstos (IV.58) that Shapuhr left Zik and Karen in charge of some parts of the country with Vahan and Meruzhan in charge of other parts. Apparently Arrabannes is sometimes Vahan and Meruzhan, as well as Mushegh.

According to P'awstos, Mushegh Mamikonean was outside the borders of Armenia on the noble mission of arranging for Pap's return during the taking of Artogerassa. Nor is Mushegh associated with "either" *mardpet*. P'awstos knows that even though Mushegh is out of the country, he is the legitimate *sparapet*. Therefore, despite Mushegh's absence, in P'awstos the Armenian soldiers at Artogerassa cannot be defeated. Only an epidemic—an act of God—could defeat them. That is why Ammianus' story of the storming and capture of the fortress would have been unacceptable to P'awstos, and why instead the author has Queen P'aranjem herself open the gates to the enemy.

P'awstos' Mamikonean bias explains a second discrepancy between our two authors. According to Ammianus, Arrabannes (Mushegh) was killed during the reign of Pap (Ammianus, XXVII 12, 14), while P'awstos has Mushegh murdered at Varazdat's command (PB, V.35). Knowing P'awstos' antipathy toward Pap, it would be natural to expect him to place this murder during the reign of Pap whom, of all kings P'awstos hates the most. Such an expectation is unwarranted, however, if we recall P'awstos' assumption that the Mamikoneans are the equals of the Arsacids. For just as the Mamikoneans cannot kill royalty, so true Arsacid kings cannot kill *sparapets*. Pap, despite his sins, was nonetheless a legitimate Arsacid. Varazdat on the other hand as Manuel himself noted, was "illegitimate". That is why he could murder his trustworthy Mamikonean *sparapet* and also why Manuel in his turn was justified in battling with and expelling the false King Varazdat from Armenia.