

აქემენიდები საქართველოში – „ქართველთა ცხოვრების“ მიხედვით

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საქართველოს უნივერსიტეტი

„ქართველთა ცხოვრების“ იმ ინფორმაციების ანალიზს, რომლებიც ქართლში მეფობის დაწყებამდე და ფარნავაზის გამეფებამდე ხანაზე მოგვითხრობენ, შემდეგ დასკვნებამდე მივყევართ: ძვ. წ. VII-IV სს-ში, უფრო ზუსტად ალექსანდრე მაკედონელის მიერ აქემენიანთა იმპერიის დანგრევამდე, სამხრეთ კავკასიაში ერთმანეთს იქ დამკვიდრებული სკვითური მომთაბარე ტომები და აქემენიანები ებრძოდნენ. სამხრეთ კავკასიაში და მათ შორის საქართველოს ტერიტორიაზე დამკვიდრებული სკვითები ორ ნაწილად იყოფოდნენ: თავდაპირველად მოსულები და დამკვიდრებულები, რომლებსაც „ქართველთა ცხოვრება“ „ბუნ-თურქებს“ და „ხაზარებს“ უწოდებს და მოგვიანებით, უკვე მიდიის მეფის ქიასარისაგან გამოდევნილები და თავიანთ ძველ თანამეტომეებს შემოერთებული – „თურქები“ და „ხონები“. სკვითებს ადგილობრივ კავკასიურ, მათ შორის ქართულ მოსახლეობასთან ლოიალური დამოკიდებულება ჰქონდათ, მით უფრო, რომ ერთად ლაშქრობდნენ საერთო მტრის – აქემენიანთა სპარსეთის წინააღმდეგ. სკვითები სერიოზულ პრობლემებს უქმნიდნენ აქემენიანებს, კავკასიურ ტომებთან ერთად არბევდნენ და მარცვავდნენ აქემენიანთა ჩრდილოეთ პროვინციებს. ამიტომ ეს უკანასკნელნი მაქსიმალურად ცდილობდნენ მტკვრის ხეობაში გაბატონებას და სკვითებისათვის ჩრდილოეთიდან სამხრეთ კავკასიაში შემოსასვლელი გზების ჩაკეტვას. პირველი აქემენიანი შაჰის კიროსის ლაშქრობა ამ მხრივ უშედეგო აღმოჩნდა - ის დაიღუპა სკვითურ-კავკასიურ ერთობასთან ბრძოლაში. ეს ამბავი „ქართველთა ცხოვრების“ შესავალ ნაწილში თარგამოსიანთა ნებროთთან ბრძოლის, მისი დამარცხებისა და ნებროთის მოკვლის გაბიბლიურებული ვერსიის სახითაა მოთხრობილი. აქემენიანთა რიგით მესამე ხელმწიფე დარიოს I, „ქართველთა ცხოვრების“ „სპანდიატ რვალი, ძე ვაშტასაბისა“, კვლავაც შეეცადა სკვითებისა და კავკასიელების დამარცხებას, მაგრამ მისი მცდელობა, საკუთრივ სპარსეთში აჯანყების გამო უშედეგოდ დამთავრდა. აქემენიანებმა ქართლის და ზოგადად სამხრეთ კავკასიის დამორჩილება მხოლოდ

მისი ვაჟის ქსერქსეს („ქართველთა ცხოვრების” ბარამის) და შვილიშვილის არტაქსერქსეს („ქართველთა ცხოვრების” - „რომელსაც იცნობდნენ არდაშირობით”) დროს მოახერხეს, მათ მიერ გამოგზავნილი სატრაპი არდამი იგივე არიან ქართლიდან მოსული აზოა, რომელიც არტაქსერქსეს მმიშვილი და მის მიერ მოკლული ძმის - დარიოსის (იარედი) მითიზირებული სახეა. აზო/არდამის ჩათვლით ქართლში ერთმანეთის მიყოლებით 5 აქემენიანი სატრაპი განაგებდა. აქემენიანთა გამგებლობა აქ დაახლოებით 130 წელი, ალექსანდრე მაკედონელის მიერ სპარსეთის დამარცხებამდე, ანუ 331 წლამდე გრძელდებოდა. ფარნავაზი ქსერქსე/არტაქსერქსეს ხანაში არდამ/აზოს მიერ მოკლული „ბუნ-თურქთა” მამასახლისის საგვარეულოს შთამომავალია, ანუ გაქართულებული სკვითური საგვარეულოს წარმომადგენელია, რომლის მმართველობა ალექსანდრე მაკედონელის მიერ აქემენიანთა განადგურების შემდეგ, ან ცოტა ადრე ჩაენაცვლა ქართლში აქემენიანთა მმართველობას.

The Achaemenids in Georgia According to The Georgian Chronicle

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The Georgian Chronicle (Kartvelta Tskhovreba) gives the following account of events in Georgia before the beginning of the Kings’ rule, or the prehistoric period:

- The settlement of the House of Targamos a.k.a. Torgoma in the South Caucasus;
- Targamos’s clash with Nebroth and his victory over Nebroth;
- The campaign against the K’hazars in North Caucasus and the building of a Citadel there;
- The conquest of Kartli by the K’hazars’;
- The establishment of the Persians’ rule in Kartli by the Persian king Afridon’s warlord (eristavi) Ardam;
- The liberation of the Georgians from the Persians;
- Another imposition of a tribute on Kartli by the Persian king Kekapos;

- Second-time liberation of the Georgians from the Persians;
- Persian King Faraborot's (Fraorta) raid into Georgia and his defeat by the locals;
- Persian King Qaikhosro's (Kiahksaros) invasion of Georgia and the subjugation of the Georgians;
- Third-time liberation of the Georgians from the Persians;
- The appearance of the 'Turks' and their settlement in Georgia by permission of the Kartli's Landlord (Mamasaxlisi);
- The arrival to Georgia of the Jewish refugees fleeing Nabucco;
- Spandiat's, the son of Persian king Vashtashab's, raid into Georgia, and his retreat soon after;
- The raid by Baram, the son of the Persian King Spandiat, and the submission of the Georgians;
- Alexander the Great's raid to Georgia and the appointment of Azo as a ruler here.

If we take a close look at the sequence of this narrative, it is obvious that by "Khazar's campaign" *The Georgian Chronicle* does not mean invasions of Georgia by the Turkic-speaking semi-nomadic K'hazars, who lived in the North of Caucasus in the VII-Xth centuries AD. In this case, the ethnonym 'K'hazar' is a term-symbol denoting only a range of nomadic tribes and thus revealing that the author of this part of the text should have lived in the VIII century (Sanadze, Beradze, 1999. p. 100). But what nomadic tribes and what occurrences are referred to in *The Georgian Chronicle*? Surely, they are the tribes who had invaded through Derbent and the Dar'ial passes before Alexander the Great, before the rulers of Persia, and before the Median Kings. This could only be the Cimmerians and the Scythian nomads at that time. In fact, the historiography points out that in various historical epochs presented in *The Georgian Chronicle* the ethnonym "K'hazar" has been used to denote the following meanings: In the most ancient times of Alexander the Great, and in the pre-Pharnavazian period, K'hazars meant nomadic Cimmerians and Scythes; in the times of Mirian and Vakhtang Gorgasali, the term meant nomadic tribes of the Huns; and in the Chronicles of VIII century, it meant the actual K'hazars, as well as north Caucasian tribes under their domination (Barkradze, 1889, p. 45; Baratov, 1865, p. 10-11; Kovalevskaja, 1875, p. 62).

But what is the real chronology of the above mentioned events? The beginning of the Raids of the Cimmerians and then of the Scythians into the South Caucasus are dated by the 30s of the VIII century BC. So, the story of the clash between the K'hazars and the Targamosians and the subjugation of the latter can be dated similarly by that time. As for the rule of the Median kings Kekapos (Keikaus), Fharaborot (Fraorta according to Herodotus), and Qaixosro (or Qiaxsar, approximately 625-585 BC), it is dated by VII-VI centuries BC. In 653/2, Fharaborot is defeated by the

Scythians and is killed in the battle.. That is the story told by *The Georgian Chronicle* about Fharaborot's raid "over the Armenians, Georgians and Targamosians:" "... [A]nd Gathered all the Targamosians, met (Fharaborot) placed near Adarbadagan, and turned him back (or repulsed) (Fharaborot) and eliminated his army."

The King of Media Qiaxsar (or Qaixosro, according to *The Georgian Chronicle*) destroyed the Urartu kingdom in 590 BC. He also successfully defeated the Scythian nomads at Media's north-western borders. Herodotus tells us how Qiaxsar eliminated the Scythians from this land and how the Scythians found a shelter in the kingdom of Lydia (Herodotus, 1975. pp. 62, 76). But Qiaxsar raided Lydia several times, and it seems that the Scythians had to move to the North-East and came in to the South Caucasus. One of the versions of this is the information found in *The Georgian Chronicle* that tells us about the "Turks" that fled from Qaixosro (Qiaxsar) and came to Georgia. Evidently, *Turks* here is the term-symbol used to denote the nomadic tribes in general (just like that of *K'hazars*): "It was the time when the Turks fled from Qaixosro, passed over the Gourgen Sea (Caspian Sea), went up the river Mtkvari and came to Mtskheta; and they were 28 houses that asked the Mamasaxlisi (Landlord) of Mtskheta..." (*The Georgian Chronicle*, 1955, p. 15).

The "Gourgen Sea" is, evidently, the Caspian Sea and is interpolated in the text in the VIth century AD, as at that time the Persians already fought against the real Turks and not the Scythian nomads, and not in Asia Minor or Lydia, but in Central Asia, at the banks of Amu-Darya. Thus, the Georgian chronicler thought that the only route that the Turks could take to get to Kartli could have been via the Caspian Sea. The same story, with some minor differences, is told in *The Conversion of Georgia (Moktsevai Kartlisa)*: "Then came warrior tribes of the Hons, pursued by the Chaldeans, and beseeched the Lord of the Bun-Turks (Native Turks) to give them a land for rent (in Georgian, kharky), and settled at Zanavi place. And they Kept it For rent (kharky) and this [was] why the name of the place became kherky" (*Moktsevai Kartlisa*, 1961, p. 81).

The similarity of these two references becomes even clearer, if we take into account that in the old Georgian "Chaldean" meant "Persian," and Hons/Huns as well as Turks and K'hazars meant nomads in general, or – in the times of Qiaxsar/Qaixosro – the Scythians in particular. In *The Conversion of Georgia*, the Mamasaxlisi of Mtskheta is mentioned as the Lord of Bun-Turks because according to this source, before the coming to Georgia of Alexander the Great, it had been actually inhabited by the mixed Georgian-Cimmerian or Georgian-Scythian population: "[D]own the river Mtkvari in four cities." Thus, according to this source, when the Hones (i.e. Scythians), fled from the Medians//Chaldeans and came to Georgia, they were met here by the Georgian-Scythian population, named as the Bun-Turks (Native Turks).

In the text of *The Conversion of Georgia*, later the above mentioned term “Chaldeans” was later interpreted by one of its editors, in whose time this ethnonym already did not mean the Persians; this interpreter considered Chaldeans as the Mesopotamian population and linked the fact of the “Hons” retreat from this region to the name of king Nebuchadnezzar, who was notorious for his policy of dispersal and resettlement. Such interpretation is even more plausible, if we take into account the fact that at that times (VIII-IX cc.) nobody remembered the Hon/Huns. That is why the historian of a later period thought that “Hons” was an abbreviation and decoded it as “Hurians,” or “Jews” (Arakhamia, 2002, pp. 126-128).). That was the reason why the information was distorted: “King Nebuchadnezzar destroyed Jerusalem and the Hurians (actually, the Hones/Huns) fled to come to Kartli and asked the Mamasaxlisi of Mtskheta a land for settling and promised to pay rent (in Georgian, kharky). He gave them the place to live on the bank of the Aragvi River, named Zanavi. And they kept it for rent (kharky) and this why the name of the place became kherky.”

The same story about how the Scythian nomads fled from Qaixosro/Qiaxsar and appeared in South Caucasus is told in *The Georgian Chronicle* as one more Biblically veiled version. Like many other nations, after the conversion to Christianity, the Georgians tried to attach their mythical heroes to “biblical” prototypes. The opening part of *The Georgian Chronicle* tells us about the settling of Targamos in South Caucasus, his struggle with Nimrod and his defeat. When in the XXth century, the Georgian historiography started critical analysis of *The Georgian Chronicle*, this opening part was claimed to be a Biblical scheme only, lacking historical evidence; but in fact, it is a biblical redesigning of the historical information (Sanadze, 2001, p. 29).

Names of the Ethnarchs Torgoma and Gomer derive from the same root Cimer. Namely, Gomer is the Biblical form of Cimer, i.e. Cimmerian. Why did ancient *The Georgian Chronicle* attach the story of the Scythians, who fled from Qiaxsar, to Togorma/Targamos and why did he tell all this in the form of a narrative of the Targamosians’ arrival? This is because he considered Targamos as the ancestor for nomadic tribes in general, as well as for the Scythians. Thus, the story of the arrival of the Targamosians to South Caucasus is the Biblically veiled version of these stories: the coming of the “Hons pursued by the Chaldeans” from *The Conversion of Georgia*, the arrival of the “Turks [who] fled from Qaixosro” from *The Georgian Chronicle*, and the flight of the Scythians from Qiaxsar the king of Media from Herodotus. We can precisely determine the chronology of this historical event: it should have happened between years 590-585, as a period when the king of Media – Qiaxsar destroyed Urartu, and his death.

Now let us consider the story how the Targamosian brothers, i.e. Scythians and Caucasian joint forces struggled against Nimrod (Nebroth), defeated him, killed him and liberated Caucasian tribes from the Nimrodians.

This Nimrod, like Targamos, is a biblical personage. According to the Holy Book, Nimrod is the son of Cush - one of the Noah's grandsons. He was the king of Mesopotamia, the king of Shinkari country, and he became notorious for his forceful policy towards other nations. That is why in South Caucasian folk epic, he was identified with the oppressor and enslaver against whom the house of Torgoma, i.e. Georgian-Armenian-Scythian union fights successfully. According to Armenian sources, the name of the giant enemy of the Torgoma house is Bel - also one of the legendary kings of Mesopotamia. The Armenian historian Movses Khorenatsi notes that Bel is Nimrod himself. So, we can conclude that he is acquainted with the Georgian version of the story from *The Georgian Chronicle*. But actually, who stands for Armenian Bel and biblical Nimrod or Nebroth from *The Georgian Chronicle*?

In *The Georgians Chronicle*, Nimrod (Nebroth) is forefather of the Persians: "And since then strengthened the Persians living in the East, where the Sun rises, descended from Nimrod," says the chronicler. The "Book of Nimrod" is well-known to the authors of *The Georgian Chronicle*, and evidently it the same as the great Persian-Zoroastrian book - the Avesta. In the same *Chronicle*, in the context of Persian dynasties, the Nebrothians means the Achaemenids as well as the Ajghalanians means the Arshakians of Parthia and the Khosroians means the Sassanides.

According to *The Georgian Chronicle*, Nebroth/Nimrod is the ruler of the world: "*All these eight [the Targamosian brothers] served Nimrod the Hero, who was the king of the whole world,*" says the chronicler. The first Achaemenian king of Persia, the Ruler of the World, Nebroth assaults the Targamosians (according to the chronicler's terminology), in fact the Scythian-Caucasian joint army near Ardabagadan, that is, from the side of present-day Iranian Azerbaijan: "*...and as came Nebroth to the land of Adarbagan and camped there,*" continues the chronicler. Finally, the decisive battle will take place near the Mount Ararat, in broad valley: "*... And Haos called for all seven heroes and all the Targamos keens and got aid from other relatives from the West. He gathered them all at the base of the Mount Masis.*" The Targamosians take over and the first king (the forefather) of the Persians perishes in the battle with the Targamosians, that is, the Georgian-Caucasian-Scythian union. Definitely, it is nothing but a biblical view of the folk story that transforms an event well-known through the ancient world about the killing of Cyrus (Kiros), the first king of the Persia, in the battle with the Scythians near the Araxes river (Sanadze, 2008, p. 257). This great battle, most completely described in *The History* of Herodotus, can be dated quite exactly by the death of Cyrus in 530 BC.

Nowadays, in the modern historiography, this battle is considered to have taken place near the river Amu-Darya, but as we have already proved, this argument is based on a wrongful understanding of Herodotus' geography: In fact, Herodotus meant river Araxes in the south Caucasus and not Amu-Darya in Central Asia as the place where the Scythians killed Cyrus (Sanadze, 2008, p. 257).

After telling in a mythical-biblical form (as a fight of the Targamosians with Nimrod) the story of the defeat and death of Cyrus by the Georgian-Armenian-Caucasian-Scythian tribes, the chronicler of *The Georgian Chronicle* makes a long chronological leap backwards, into the depths of centuries, and recalls the events of the Median kings – Kekapos (Qeiqaus), Fharaborot (Fraorta), and Qaixosro/Qiaxsar: Their raids into the South Caucasian region and namely, into the territory of Georgia. But before starting the cycle about these historical median kings, he speaks of legendary Persian king Aphridon, who raided South Caucasus and whose sons fought among themselves for the throne. He also mentions that in the times of king Aphridon, a Persian warlord (“eristavi”) Ardam came to Kartli and settled there.

The latest dating margin for the Median kings mentioned in *The Georgian Chronicle* is Qiaxsar/Qaixosro's deathtime in 585 BC.

Then the story tells about the Persian king Vashtashab's son, Spandiat Rvali, raiding Kartli and retreating soon, thanks to internal disturbances that took place in Persia. This undoubtedly is the ruler, Darius I (522-486 BC), the son of Histaspas/Hishtashba/Vishtashpa, that actually raided Armenia, and supposedly, Kartli as well. At that time, Darius I failed to suppress the rebels, as someone Gaumata the Magus raised a large-scale rebellion in Persia proper. These events are dated by the year 522 BC. Then, *The Georgian Chronicle* makes one more long chronological leap of some sixty years, but this time forward, and does not say anything about the rule of the first Achaemenid kings – Cyrus II (Kiros II) and Cambis II (as we have seen, the fight of Cyrus with the Georgian-Scythian-Caucasian union was told in an epical-mythical form as the struggle of the Targamosians against Nimrod) but speaks directly about the events that imply relations of the third king, Darius I, with the South Caucasians.

The Georgian Chronicle concludes the so-called “Persian Cycle” with following information: “Afterwards, for several years, Baram, the son of Spandia, who was known under the name of Ardashir, became the king of Persia. His fame surpassed that of any other Persian kings and he conquered Babel and Assyria, and laid commission upon the Greeks and Romans and on Georgians as well.”

In this case, the information covers all in one: That of the two kings of Persia – the son of Darius I, Xerxes - Baram from *The Georgian Chronicle* and the grandson of Darius I, Artaxerxes. Artaxerxes is only mentioned in some sources by the name of *Ardashir*. From the beginning of Xerxes'

rule, the Achaemenid Persia became unprecedentedly successful. In 480 BC, Xerxes started a war against the Greeks and occupied the most of Thrace and Greece. No other Achaemenid rulers were ever so successful in the Western (European) direction. The King Leonydas of Sparta was defeated and killed and the Persians seized the most important city-state of ancient Greece, Athens. Although, finally the scale of success tilted in favor of the Greeks and Persia lost that war.

The success of Xerxes in Mesopotamia was equally significant: In 479 BC, he finally abolished the kingdom of Babel (until then, the title of the kings of Babel belonged to the Achaemenids personally) and made Babel one of the provinces of Persia. Let's recall the phrase from *The Georgian Chronicle*: "He conquered Babel and Assyria, and laid a tribute upon the Greeks and the Romans."

As we see, that is the same time when, according to *The Georgian Chronicle*, Xerxes/Baram also laid a tribute on Kartli. At that time, he was content with the contribution, and never sent a Persian satrap to Kartli. Such policy was taken only by his son, Artaxerxes/Ardashir.

In fact, this Artaxerxes-Ardashir (462-424 BC) was not a legal heir to the throne: He was enthroned thanks to a conspiracy against his father and his elder brother Darius in 465 BC, and after their murder, he himself got rid of the other of his brothers, Vishtaspa. *The Georgian Chronicle* considers Xerxes/Abram and his son, Artaxerxes/Ardashir as one and the same person, and it connects the reign of this "dual" king with the period when the Achaemenids rule was finally established in Georgia. After telling us about the fact of imposition of a tribute on Kartli, the *Georgian Chronicle* turns on to Alexander the Great's invasion of Georgia, thus chronologically jumping to the years 330-323 BC and omitting a 130-year period, although it is obvious that during the time of Artaxerxes/Ardashir's rule and the era of Alexander the Great, the Achaemenids were in power here.

Now let's turn to the question of the king Aphridon's epoch, Kartli's tribute, and the Persian satrap Ardam's coming to Georgia. As *The Georgian Chronicle* considers strengthening of the Persians in the South Caucasus at the time of Artaxerxes/Ardashir to be a later fact, it names Aphridon – the legendary king of Persia – as the first to come and conquer Kartli.

The Georgian Chronicle on the levying of a tribute on Kartli in the times of Aphridon:

And since then strengthened the Persians in the East – descendent of Nimrod, and one hero amongst them, named Aphridon, 'who chained the Lord of Serpents – Bevrasph, and tied him at the mountain where no man can find a path.' This is written in the "Persian Chronicle". Aphridon ruled over entire Persia, and sent to

some of its parts warlords (eristavi) of his own, and made some to pay him a contribution. He sent his warlord (eristavi) Ardama, son of Nimrod's descendents, with an enormous army, and he came to Kartli and ruined all the cities and citadels and killed all of K'hazars found in Kartli. (*The Georgian Chronicle*, 1955, p. 13)

The Georgian Chronicle on the levying of a tribute on Kartli at the time of Xerxes/Baram and Artaxerxes/Ardashir:

Several years after this, the son of Spandiat, named Baram, known as Ardashir, became the king of Persia. He became the greatest amongst of the kings of Persia. He conquered Babylon and Assyria, laid a contribution upon the Greeks and the Romans, and the Georgians as well. (*The Georgian Chronicle*, 1955, p. 16).

It seems there is nothing to be surprised about: There are centuries between these two events, but the anachronistic layout is quite clear – it is one more example, as it was in case of Nimrod and Torgamos, that history and myth are mixed up. Aphridon, the same Phridon, is a mythical king of Persia, and so, what epoch and which historical king is meant under his name in *The Georgian Chronicle*? It is hard to suppose that the Persians could have invaded South Caucasus and appointed their own ruler there before the abovementioned Kaikhosro/Qiaksar for the simple reason that Media itself had not yet been established as an united kingdom. Qeiqavus' and Phraortes' activities, according to the chronicler of *The Georgian Chronicle*, were of no particular success; and it is hard to imagine it could have happened in an even earlier period, in the time of the legendary Aphridon. Before Kaikhosro / Qiaksar, mostly the Scythians and the Urartian Kingdom dominated in South Caucasus. Qiaksar destroyed Urartu only in the year 590 BC, and at that same time, he did a lot of damage to the Scythians as well, and afterwards, as we already mentioned, their big masses came back to South Caucasus and settled there. If all this had happened before Qiaksar, warlord (eristavi) Ardama could not have found Khazars, that is, the Scythians on the territory of Georgia, because before the new influx of the Scythians driven out by Qiaksar, the part of the Scythians who had invaded the South Caucasus and, which had detached from the main influx and stayed on the territory of Georgia almost two centuries before had already assimilated with locals.

Thus, we can suppose that Ardama, the same Satrap who came to Kartli in the time of the Achaemenids, and not in the period when the mythical Aphridon reigned. As for the levying of a tribute on Kartli in the times of the Achaemenids, *The Georgian Chronicle* connects this fact with the reign of Xerxes (Baram)-Ardashir (Artaxerxes). The same source offers us an interesting report about the ruling period of eristavs - satraps

in Kartli: According to the chronicler, there were five “eristavs” succeeding each other in Kartli including Ardam himself. Their rule was hereditary and the five eristavis ruled in Kartli for approximately 125-130 years. If we take as the starting point the year 331 BC, when Alexander the Great defeated Persia’s last ruler Darius III, and make a countdown, we’ll get the year 460 BC, that is, the beginning of Artaxerxes/Ardashir’s reign (462 BC.). In fact, that is the sum of those years that the chronicler missed out when he jumped right to Alexander the Great, after the period of Artaxerxes/Ardashir. Moreover, all this story about the struggle between the three sons of Aphridon for the throne, when the elder brother and legal heir, *Yared*, perished, is absolutely identical to the story of Artaxerxes’ ascending to throne and the death of his elder brother *Dari*. All this proves that Aphridon mentioned in *The Georgian Chronicle* is a mythical prototype of the fourth Achaemenid king, Xerxes/Baram (Sanadze, 2010).

In its pre-Pharnavazian part, *The Georgian Chronicle* often presents one and the same story in two versions: that of a mythical epic and a historical document. The reason is that the chronicler refused to miss any information, be it Georgian mythical, written or any foreign (Persian-Aramaic, Greek) sources. Because of some differences between these various versions of the same historical story, chronicler suggests them to be different stories and puts them in temporal sequence. This doubles, or sometimes, even triples the ancient stories; and sometimes even makes them chronologically vague.

Now we must pay special interest to the subject of identifying Azo and Alexander the Great in Georgian sources. According to *The Georgian Chronicle* and *The Conversion of Georgia*, Alexander the Great might have raided Georgia twice. *The Conversion of Georgia* describes the first raid of Alexander the Great into Georgia as follows:

Firstly, when Alexander the Great defeated the Loti tribe sons and sent to land of Kedari (land of north) came up the river Mtkvari and saw brutal Bun-Turks [native Turks] living in four towns: Sarkine, Kaspi, Urbnisi and Ozrkhe; and their castles: great castle of Sarkine, Uphlistsikhe of Kaspi, and the citadels of Urbnisi and Ozrkhe. Alexander was surprised to see that they were kin to Yebosians, used to eat any flesh and had no graves, as they ate their dead. Alexander could not fight them and retreated.

Then came warrior tribes of the Hons, fleeing the Chaldeans, and beseeched the Lord of the Bun-Turks [Native Turks] to give them a land for rent (in Georgian, kharky), and settled at Zanavi place. And they kept it for rent (kharky) and this why the name of the place became kherky.

The second raid of Alexander the Great to Georgia is described as follows:

Some time after, again came Alexander, the lord of the world, and ruined three of these towns and citadels, and defeated Huns. And put under siege the town of Sarkine for eleven months and stopped in the west of Sarkine, planted the vineyard, channeled out the water from river Ksani, put there watchmen (dastagi) and this why this place was called Nastakisi. He took the town Sarkine and they (Turks of Sarkine) abandoned town and fled. (5, 81).

The Georgian Chronicle describes the first raid of Alexander the Great into Georgia as follows:

Alexander conquered the whole world... [c]ame over the mountains of Caucasus and came to Kartli, and found the Georgians worse than any in their faith, having no limit in vice and marriage, eating their dead, and most cruel in behavior, similar to beasts. The behavior of whom was unable to utter. Pagans and barbarians they were, whom we call the Bun-Turks and Kipchaks, and lived on the banks of the River Mtkvari. Alexander tried to defeat them, but failed, as high were the walls of citadels, and mighty[were] the warriors.

Later came other tribes of the Chaldeans and settled in Kartli too.

Alexander's second raid into Georgia is described as follows:

[A]nd became Alexander the lord of the world, and he came to Kartli, and found strongholds and citadels there: Tsunda, Khertvisi of Mtkvari, Odzrkhe on the rock of Ghado, Tukharisi overlooking the river Speri, named Chorokhi, Urbnisi, Kaspi, and Uphlistsikhe; Big town of Mskheta and its surroundings: Sarkine, Tsikhedidi, Zanavi – Jewish district, Rustavi, main citadel of Samshvilde and citadel of Mtveri – named Khunan and towns in Kakheti. And locals were well-armed and fighting brutally. Then he divided his army and put all these towns under siege, and himself he set near Mtskheta, and strengthened with the army: that side and this side (benches of river Mtkvari), up and down, and he himself stood near the river Ksani, at the place called Nastakisi.

However, he did not fight against the citadel of Mtveri and Tukharisi, as they were too well-built. He conquered all the citadels and cities in six months. The Bun-Turks of Sarkine scolded him, and Alexander got angry, and refused to make a treaty with them... He fought with the Sarkine people for 11 months. They

secretly started to make a hole in the rock and finally bored it. .. They left the town empty. Thus conquered Alexander all of the land of Kartli and annihilated all the mixed population there, took women and those under 15 years old captive and only spared the descendent of the Kartlosians. (4, 18)

The similarity of these texts is self-evident, but it is clear that the same story is told in different volumes and details, though the first coming of Alexander is almost identical in both Chronicles. The main plot of the texts stresses the fact that Alexander invaded Georgia and was met by the Scythians, who are named the Bun-Turks or the “local Turks” by the author of *The Conversion of Georgia* and as Bun-Turks and Kipchaks in *The Georgian Chronicle*. No wonder that Kipchaks in *The Georgian Chronicle* should have appeared in the XII century, when the Georgians got acquainted with the nomadic Kipchaks. It is noteworthy that *The Georgian Chronicle* identifies these Bun-Turks, that is the Scythians, with Georgians too: “... and found the Georgians worse than any in their faith, pagans and barbarians they were, who we call the Bun-Turks and Kipchaks...,” says the chronicler. It is quite clear that from his point of view, the Scythians or the Bun-Turks and the Georgians are some organic unity. Both chronicles agree that Alexander’s first raid was a failure; he could not seize the citadels/towns and had to retreat.

After this, both chronicles tell us about some people coming to Georgia. *The Conversion of Georgia* identifies them with the Huns that fled from the Chaldeans, that is, the Persians, and for *The Georgian Chronicle*, they are merely the Chaldeans that came to Kartli and settled there. This also is no surprise as the chronicler of *The Georgian Chronicle* turned the story of the “Huns, who fled from the Chaldeans” and their settling in Georgia into the story of Hurias (Jews) that fled from Mesopotamian ruler Nebuchadnezzar and settled here in Georgia. So the chronicler settled the Jews instead of the Huns (i.e. the Scythians) in Kherk and Zanavi. Therefore, it would have been strange of him to settle them in the same places for the second time!

Afterwards, both of the texts tell us about the second raid of Alexander the Great to Georgia. Describing this event, “The Georgian Chronicle’s” is more voluminous than the “Conversion of Georgia”, but on the whole, the information is identical: Alexander defeated Scythians, i. e. the Huns –the same Bun-Turks, so that they had to flee from Georgia and moved to North Caucasus.

Finally, both Chronicals give us the same kind of information – namely, about how Alexander brought a certain Azon/Azo to Georgia and made him a ruler there. Though, facts about the descent and identity of Azo are radically different in these sources.

The Georgian Chronicle outlines the facts as follows:

... And he left Azon, the son of Yaredos, descendent of the Macedonians, as a governor (Patric) over them and gave him 100,000 Protathosian soldiers from the Romans. These Protathosian were strong men straggling against the Romans and he brought them to Kartli, gave them to Governor (Patric) Azon, appointed the latter as the Eristavi of Kartli and left him with his soldiers there. (4, 18)

The Conversion of Georgia presents the following account:

Alexander the King had beside him Azo, son of king from Arian-Kartli and gave him Mtskheta to rule over, and the borders up to Hereti, Egrisi River, Somkhiti, and mountain Tsroli, and left. (5, 18)

The information of *The Georgian Chronicle* can be described as layers of events that took place in different historical periods: This is where Alexander the Great coexists with a hundred thousand Roman soldiers; but the Romans appeared in South Caucasus and in Georgia proper in 65 BC, when this region was raided by the famous Roman general Pompeius. Definitely, the Romans had nothing to do with Alexander the Great, as well as with Azo (see below). So, where did these 100,000 horsemen, which were afterwards considered the Romans, come from? While speaking about Azo's coming to Kartli, *The Conversion of Georgia* mentions "eight houses and ten houses of mama-mdzudze" accompanying him. The term "house" here has nothing to do with modern "household" but means "tribe." In comparison, the "mamamdzuze" (straight meaning of it being "father-breast giver," "wet nurse") meant a tribe of lower social status. Different versions of the same plot are given in other Georgian sources. The changes mainly refer to the number and social terminology. For example, there are mentioned *ten* and *ten*, as well as *thousand* and *ten*. E. g., in the XI-XII cc. editions of *the Life of St. Nino*, we read: "Then Azoel went to Kartli and took thousand houses of laymen and ten houses of noblemen, with all their relatives with him, and settled them there." As we see, the original *eight and ten* gradually transformed into *thousand and ten*, and in the later edition of *The Georgian Chronicle* even into *hundred thousand* Roman soldiers.

Other information about Azo, given in *The Georgian Chronicle* is evidently changed in the later times. Precisely, they show some trace of Hellenization: Azo is transformed into "Azon," that is, Jason and his father's name, Yared-os also carries a Greek suffix. However, most importantly, Azon/Jason himself becomes a Macedonian general and thus a comrade of Alexander. All this proves the priority of the version kept in *The Con-*

version of Georgia. Nevertheless, who was Azo and how could he be related to Alexander the Great? Besides all these, did Alexander the Great really raid Georgia?

Nowadays scientists generally agree that Alexander the Great had never been to Georgia (Sanadze, 2001, pp. 70-72).

Nevertheless, an ancient *The Georgian Chronicler* had a basis for bringing Alexander the Great to Kartli. Firstly, it is the antique Greco-Roman literary heritage, where Alexander's raids into "Pontus" or "Caucasus of the Scythians" are mentioned in different passages. It should be noted that in the ancient times two Caucasus existed: One was the Scythian Caucasus, that is, on the Black Sea coast, and the other was the Indian Caucasus, that of the Hindu Kush. One group of ancient authors confused the Hindu Kush and the Scythian Caucasus (the same as our Caucasus) with each other. Thus, Alexander's raid to India and crossing of the Hindu Kush was mistaken as a raid into the Black Sea region. Such a mistake was especially common for the Roman authors who were rather far chronologically from the times of Alexander and had little knowledge about the Indian Caucasus, but who knew quite well the "Caucasian" Caucasus. This mistake was corrected by the ancient Greeks, who criticized the fact of the turning of the Hindu Kush Caucasus into the Caucasian Caucasus. Thus, the ancient Georgian historian, in this particular case Juansher Juansheriani, could have encountered such stories in the writings of antique writers, both Latin and Greek, about the coming of Alexander of Macedonia to his motherland [Georgia] and raiding the Caucasus Region from the North to the South (as *The Georgian Chronicle* relates) or from the South to the North. In short, the story of Alexander of Macedonia is interpolated in the plot due to the similarity of the stories. Obviously, Juansher Juansheriani asked a question: Who could have been the anonymous "king of the whole world" from the ancient chronicles, who "ruined three citadels/towns and wiped out the Huns" and decided that it was nobody but Alexander. Now, let us try to understand who was the anonymous king whose name was replaced by Alexander the Great? Naturally, it is in some connection with the identity of Azo that in Persian stands for "Leader," or "Goat" (Andronikashvili, 1966, p. 136).

According to the Azo's very first story from *The Conversion of Georgia*, Azo's native country was Arian-Kartli. Nobody doubts that Ariani/Ariana is Iran and Persia. Arian-Kartli is supposed to be the Persian Kartli. But then opinions of scholars start to differ: The most popular viewpoint is that Arian-Kartli is identified with the Klarjeti region. This opinion is conventionally shared among the scholars. (Melikishvili, 1959, pp. 278-279; Khazaradze, 2001, pp. 331-332; Sanadze 2010). It is based on two postulates: 1. Azo comes from Klarjeti, because when the Georgians abandoned him and supported Pharnavaz, Azo flees to Klarjeti, and finds a shelter "in the citadels of Klarjeti." In the same year, the chronicler in-

forms us that Pharnavaz conquered the whole Kartli, except the Klarjeti region. Indeed, according to the same chronicler, Azo ruled Klarjeti before the final struggle with Pharnavaz, until his death in Klarjeti.

Even the last battle between Pharnavaz and Azo took place in the South-West of Georgia, in the Javakheti region. Nevertheless, this is not an incontrovertible proof of Azo's Klarjeti origin. If we assume that Azo who came from Arian-Kartli was Persian and he fought Pharnavaz in times when Persia had been already defeated by Alexander the Great, it becomes clear that the defeated motherland could no longer support Azo and the latter had to seek refuge in one of the regions that were under his own rule. Apart from that, according to Herodotus, two satrapies (the 18th and the 19th) bordered Georgia from the South-West. In such a situation for the Persian Satrap who was in Mtskheta, who is referred to as "patrik" (a Byzantine term denoting a local ruler) in *The Georgian Chronicle*, it would be the only way out to seek a refuge in Klarjeti, and wait for assistance - troops from neighboring Persian satrapies there.

And yet, for those supporting the viewpoint that Azo was a Klarjetian, the second argument is most valuable. The proponents of the viewpoint insist that Arian-Kartli, or the Persian Kartli was just a part of Georgia occupied by the Persians. According to Herodotus, such a place could only be the South-Western part of Georgia, since this is the place of residence (the mouth of the Mtkvari and the Chorokhi Basin) of the Georgian tribes: Saspers, Moskhs, Mosinics, Tibarens, etc, paying a tribute to Persia. Indeed, when Herodotus lists the countries that paid a tribute to the Achamenids and their satrapies, he remarks: "Matians, Saspers, and Alarodians paid 200 talents, and that is the 18th satrapy; Moskhs, Tibarens, Mosinics, and Marees had to pay 300 talents, and that is the 19th satrapy". (Herodotus, 1975, p. 226).

The point is that the chronicler of *The Conversion of Georgia* could not identify the abovementioned tribes as "Georgians" - even modern scholars had to conduct linguistic research for that purposes. Based on what then could the chronicler refer to the Klarjeti region or the South-Western part of Georgia on the whole, as "Persian Kartli"? This could have happened in the case of a historical tradition that the Persians conquered and ruled only in the South-Western parts of Georgia. Yet, the historical reality is different. According to *The Georgian Chronicle*, the evidence of that is based not only on written and oral sources, but to a considerable extent also on the historical tradition mentioned above: the Persians conquered the whole Kartli and their "eristavi," that is, the satrap resided in Mtskheta. In this circumstances, Arian-Kartli could not have been a term standing for Klarjeti, as the whole Kartli ruled by the Persians!

Everything will become much clearer, if we take *The Georgian Chronicle* as the basic source of information. If we cut off the Greek suffix

'os' from Azo's father's name, we will have just *Yared*. What does *The Georgian Chronicle* say about Yared?

"When Aphridon divided the kingdom between his three sons, Yared got both Persia and Kartli. Then the two brothers killed Yared, the third one" (4, 13).

As we can see, Yared, the father to Azo, was not a Macedonian general, but a Persian prince. Moreover, he is the one of the three brothers, who ruled over Persia, and also received Kartli as his share. No wonder that after Yared's death, his son Azo got away from his uncles and fled to Georgia, with all his army and household. It also might have been that his uncles gave him the mission in order to get rid of him.

Thus, we see that Yared, one of the three sons of Persian King Aphridon, was killed by his brothers; while Azo, the son of Yared, fled to faraway Georgia to conquer it; he may have been sent there by the brothers of Yared to get rid of him (or he escaped himself). Conquering the region was a very important matter for Persia because the inhabitants of South Caucasus, in alliance with the Scythians, were a trouble for the Achaemenid Persia and apparently the raids of the former [the Scythians] from the North were devastating the Persians.

The same story, according to other version is as follows:

Aphridon conquered the whole Persia, to some countries he sent *eristavis*, and some of the countries paid him contribution. He sent a great *eristavi* Ardam, the son of Nimrod's descendent, with a big army to Kartli, Ardam ruined the citadels/towns of Kartli, and killed all the Khazars there. Ardam *Eristavi* built a city and called in Derbent.that is translated as "closed door" (*daxsha kari*) He also been the first to fortify Mtskheta by limestone. After that people of Kartli learnt constructions by using Limestones. The same Ardam expanded the Armazi limestone fortification up to Mtrvari river. Aradm ruled there for many years. (4, 13).

If we replace the symbolic narration of *The Georgian Chronicle* with historical-scientific terms, we can see the following: A Persian king, conditionally referred as Aphridon, who is the mythical face of Xerxes I the Achaemenid, as we could see above, sent an *eristavi*-satrap named Ardam Achaemenid (Nimrodian) who ruined all the citadels/towns in Kartli and killed as many Khazars, i.e., the Scythians as he found in Georgia. In the times of the same Aphridon, Azo, the son of Yaredos, Aphridon's son, came to Georgia. He was notorious for his brutality. A representative of the Achaemenid dynasty, *eristavi* or satrap Ardam, also notorious for his cruelty and violence came to Georgia, too. If we take into consideration the fact that Azo is not a personal name and means "the leader" in gen-

eral, the resemblance between Azo's and Ardam's identity will not be difficult to realize.

According to both sources, *The Georgian Chronicle* and *The Conversion of Georgia*, Alexander the Great comes to Georgia twice: The first time, he failed to harm local citadels and retreated with no results; the second time, he conquered the country and ruined the foundations of citadels. In *The Georgian Chronicle*, the same story is told otherwise: 1. The coming of Spandiat, i.e. Darius, the son of Vashtashab, and his retreat because of a rebellion in homeland. 2. The levying of a tribute on Kartli in the time of his son Baram, i.e. Xerxes, a.k.a. Darius's grandson Artaxerxes/Ardashir epoch.

Now we can assume that the "king of the whole world," later called "Alexander the Great", was actually the mighty king of Persia Darius I the Achaemenid, that is, Spandiat Rvali, son of Vashtashab, who raided the South Caucasus, but because of a rebellion in Persia, had to retreat. Later on, an Achaemenid satrap named Ardam sent by Artaxerxes, the same "Azo, son of Yaredos," conquered Kartli (Azo was the son of Darius; of the elder brother of Artaxerxes and legal heir to the throne. He was assassinated by the rebels). Indeed how did the so-called Alexandre acted when he came second time in Kartli?

"So Alexandre came, the king of the entire world, and ruined these three cities and citadels, and smashed the Huns...", says the chronicler (5, 81). We can assume that he speaks about the Huns that were actually "Khazars", i.e. the Scythians.

The fact that the so-called "Alexander" is Ardam Eristavi of Achaemenids, i.e. Azo, becomes even more evident, if we compare the deeds of Azo in Georgia with the abovementioned extract that has already described Ardam the Satrap's activities in Georgia:

Azo destroyed the walls of Mtskheta with the foundation and left just four citadels: one the main citadel called Armazi, the second at the end of Armazi fortification, the third, at the top of Mtskheta and the fourth on the west, over the river Mtkvari. He strengthened and filled them with his own army, knocked down all the fortifications and conquered all the borders of Kartli from Hereti and River Berduji, till the Sea of Speri (Black Sea), and conquered Egrisi too and laid a tribute upon the Ossetians, the Lesghins, and the Khazars. (4,19)

We should also take into account that before the so-called "Alexander of Macedonia" came to Kartli, *The Georgian Chronicle* tells us about the Achaemenids setting their rule there in the times of Artaxerxes/Ardashir purging the Khazars, i.e. Scythians. If Alexander were to invade Kartli, he would have to deal with the Achaemenids and not with

the Huns and “Khazars”. But instead it is told that Alexander still eliminates the Huns and the “Bun-Turks” because the name “Alexander” substituted “Ardam” and “Achaemenids” in the text.

The Georgian Chronicle says the following about the end of the Persian eristavi-satrap approximately 130-year rule:

While the sons of Aphridon were struggling with each other and two of them killed the third brother Yared, the Kartlosians took advantage of the situation and called the Ossetians; they found the Persian satrap (eristavi) on the battle field and killed him. The Ossetians and the Georgians got rid of the Persians, and liberated Kartvelians, yet Rani and Hereti were left under the Persian rule. (4, 13-14)

Even in this case, the chronicler ignores the chronological sequence; however it is not difficult to restore the chronology: Ardam the Satrap came to Georgia right at the time when two brothers killed Azo’s father Yared; later the 130-year Achaemenian reign started: “Ardam was the eristavi for many years... and after Ardam eristavi’s death the D eristavis died” notifies *The Georgian Chronicle*. Thus, the defeat of Ardam/Azo could not coincide with the time of the killing of Yared (i.e. Dari-os, the elder son of Xerxes) and the time of Artaxerxes and his brother Vishtasp fighting for the throne. So, when were the Achaemenids, i.e. people of Ardam/Azo defeated? Which period is implied in the abovementioned information and who was the organizer of the defeat of the Achaemenids in Kartli?

According to *The Georgian Chronicle*, Azo’s defeat and the beginning of a local dynasty’s rule is connected with Pharnavaz. The name Pharnavaz is also of Persian origin and means “shining hand” or the glorious ruler. Pharnavaz/Pharnavush is one of the epithets for Ahuramazda, and in Persian realm it was used for the king, because the king was considered as the incarnation of Ahuramazda on the Earth (Sanadze, 2001, p. 82). In the kingdom of Kartli, in time of Pharnavazians’ rule, Pharnavaz/Pharnavush was a title for the kings of Kartli. Later on, it became a proper name. Therefore, Pharnavaz defeats satrap Azo – after Macedonians take over Persia – and he himself becomes the king. But actually, who is Pharnavaz? Which dynasty substitutes the Achaemenids in the South of Caucasus? According to *The Georgian Chronicle*, this Pharnavaz is a nephew to Samara, the “Mamasakhlisi” (the landlord) of Mtskheta. In addition, as we know, this Samara ruled in Kartli in the times of the so-called “Alexander’s” raid to Georgia, i.e. the Achaemenid Ardam-Azo’s occupation of Kartli, in approximately 460s BC. As we know from *The Conversion of Georgia*, the mamasakhlisi of Mtskheta of that time is the mamasakhlisi of the Bun-Turks, i.e. he is of local nomadic Georgian-Caucasian-Scythian

origin. Indeed, Pharnavaz is a nomad-hunter. He had to flee to the Caucasian highlands from the Achaemenid rule. In the period of Azo-Achaemenid rule in Kartli and the whole South Caucasus, which lasted for about 130 years, Pharnavaz developed friendly relations with the Achaemenids and gained permission from the Achaemenid governor Azo to come back and settle in Kartli. Naturally in such conditions, when Iran was destroyed, the Achaemenid satraps' dynasty, left without any support in the South Caucasus, was defeated by the Georgian-Caucasian-Scythian coalition. This was thereafter followed by the restoration of the Georgianized Scythian dynasty's rule in Kartli.

One of the versions of Azo's, i. e. Achaemenids' arrival in Kartli and establishing of their rule there can be found in the writings of a Byzantine historian Cesar Constantine Porphyrogenitus. Surely, he had heard the story from Georgians, which he never denied:

We should keep in mind that those self-pompous Iberians – i.e. the Curopalates Iberians, claim they are the descendants of Huria's wife seduced by David, the prophet and the king. They say that they are descendants of the woman who gave birth to the child from David, and thus they are kins to the Holy Mother, as she herself descended from David.

They say that their dynasty comes from Jerusalem, and they left the place because of the vision that David and his brother Spandiat had. So they came to the borders of Persia and settled on the land they still live on now. This Spandiat was blessed and, according to the Iberians, no blade could wound him except in the heart area which he protected with a special cover. So the Persians were afraid of him very much; he gained victory over them and settled his kin Iberians in impassable lands. They still live there, and gradually spread and turned into a mighty nation. (Georgica, 1952, pp. 255-259)

The point is that this interpolation of genetic kinship to David the Prophet and the Holy Mother of God is the result of a Christian period and this motive substituted the Persian version of the Ahuramazda's descent. It is rather easy to be convinced that the main hero of this plot is Spandiat and not David: Spandiat, who was blessed by God and who was the ire of his enemies, the blade-proof hero, who took his people – the Iberian-Georgians in this case - to their new homeland, i.e. Georgia. Naturally, he should have been the forefather of these Georgians, but the Christian epoch, somehow, changed the essence of this myth. As we can see from Porphyrogenetos's subsequent narrative, Spandiat had no children, and the heritage descended over his Jewish "brother" David. But now the question arises: Who is Spandiat himself? Spandiat, the same Spandiat Rvali, as we have already mentioned, was the third king of the Achaemenids, the

forefather of the lateral branch of the Achaemenid dynasty on the throne of Persia, Darius I. He is the ethnarch and direct ancestor of the Achaemenid satraps that settled and ruled in Kartli. Naturally, the Achaemenid Spandiat would not have taken the so-called “Georgians” from Jerusalem; he could have brought them only from Ariana – Persia or (if we use the terms in *The Conversion of Georgia*) from Arian-Kartli. (No wonder the Georgians (Kartvels) could only have come from Kartli!) As we can see, here the semblance with the story of Azo’s arrival in Kartli is absolutely clear.

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