Strangers in a foreign land: the assimilation and alienation of the Armenians in the Byzantine Empire c.867-1098 A.D.

Toby Bromige

Royal Holloway, University of London

Thesis Submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy
Supervised by: Prof. Jonathan Harris

2019
Declaration of Authorship

I, Toby Richard Timothy Bromige, hereby declare that this thesis and the work presented in it is entirely my own. Where I have utilised other works, I have clearly given reference.

Signed:

Date:
## Contents

Abstract ................................................................................................................................. 6

Abbreviations ....................................................................................................................... 8

Acknowledgements ............................................................................................................. 9

Introduction ......................................................................................................................... 11

  Chronological Scope: 867-1098 ......................................................................................... 11
  Modern Historiography ........................................................................................................ 13
    Assimilation ..................................................................................................................... 13
    Annexation ....................................................................................................................... 16
    Alienation ......................................................................................................................... 18
    Separatism ....................................................................................................................... 21
  Identity and Assimilation .................................................................................................... 24
  The Assimilation Model ...................................................................................................... 37

Chapter One: The Sources and their problems .................................................................. 39

  The Medieval Sources ....................................................................................................... 39
    Greek ............................................................................................................................... 39
    Armenian ......................................................................................................................... 53
    Georgian .......................................................................................................................... 65
    Syriac/Arabic (Christian) ............................................................................................... 65
    Arabic (Muslim) .............................................................................................................. 69
    Latin ................................................................................................................................. 73
    Sigillography ................................................................................................................... 77
  The Assimilation Model: Primary Source Evidence ......................................................... 78
  Armenian Identity ............................................................................................................ 85
  Conclusion .......................................................................................................................... 90

Chapter Two: Assimilation into the Byzantine Empire, 867-1000: The Integration of the Armenians before the Eleventh Century ................................................................. 92

  The Areas of Territorial Settlement .................................................................................. 92
  Acceptance and Adoption of ‘Roman Customs’ ............................................................... 100
  Religious Conversion and Conformity ............................................................................... 120
  Conclusion ........................................................................................................................ 133
Chapter Three: The Byzantine Annexations of Armenia, 1000-1064: Ideology and Opportunism? ................................................................. 135

Primary Sources .................................................................................. 135
  Basil II and his image ........................................................................ 137
The Context of the Annexations .......................................................... 140
i. External Relations ........................................................................... 140
ii. Tao/Tayk and the Rebellions of Skleros ........................................ 146
The Subsequent Annexations ............................................................... 155
i. Ani (I): Background and the Treaty of Trebizond ....................... 155
ii. Vaspurakan .................................................................................. 159
iii. The Later Annexations: Edessa and Kars ................................. 163
Unforeseen Consequences ................................................................. 168
i. The Rebellion of 1022 .................................................................... 169
ii. Ani (II) ..................................................................................... 175
Conclusion ......................................................................................... 180

Chapter Four: The Alienation of the Armenians, c.1020-1071. ............... 181

The Later Annexations and Settlements: Vaspurakan, Ani and Kars .... 183
Religious Antagonism ......................................................................... 193
The Royal Armenians in the Empire .................................................. 211
i) The ‘Rebellion’ of 1040 ................................................................. 213
ii) Grigor Magistros ........................................................................ 217
iii) Gagik II of Ani .......................................................................... 220
The First Steps to Separatism ............................................................ 223
Conclusion ......................................................................................... 229

Chapter Five: Separatism, 1071-1098 .................................................... 230

Primary Sources .................................................................................. 231
Romanos IV, Manzikert and the Islamic World .................................. 233
The Separatism of the Armenian Lords .............................................. 243
i) The ‘Royal Armenians’ ................................................................. 243
ii) The ‘Imperial Agents’: Philaretos Brachamios and others .......... 249
The Armenian Church ....................................................................... 261
From Philaretos to the First Crusade (1086-1098) ................................. 270
Conclusion ......................................................................................... 279
Conclusions..........................................................................................................................................................282
Appendix I: Map....................................................................................................................................................292
Appendix II: The Harran Gate............................................................................................................................293
Bibliography ..........................................................................................................................................................294
  Primary Sources: .................................................................................................................................................294
  Secondary Sources: .............................................................................................................................................299
Abstract
This thesis explores the long and complex relationship between the Byzantine Empire
and the Armenians in the period 867 to 1098 AD, navigating the complex path laid
down by our primary materials. It will argue that the relationship can be understood
in four distinct, but linked, chronological phases: Assimilation, Annexation, Alienation,
and Separatism. Regarding assimilation, this thesis will argue that one
must understand what was meant by custom (ἔθος), an ingredient of Byzantine
identity that is often highlighted in the source material, in order to successfully
evaluate the motivation and success of Armenian assimilation. In defining what was
meant by customs this thesis confirms that during ninth and tenth centuries the
Armenians did in fact adopt and practice those customs that made one inherently
Byzantine. The next phase then comes to prominence with the annexations of a
number of Armenian kingdoms during the late tenth and eleventh centuries. The
settlement of exiled Armenian royalty on estates in the eastern provinces, however,
seems to have had unforeseen consequences. While Basil II had worked hard to
integrate the rulers of the annexed lands in estates in Cappadocia, after his death a
number of events, notably the suspected Artsruni rebellion of 1040 and the annexation
of Ani in 1045, undermined his intention. Rather, from the 1040s onwards the
Armenians appear to have struggled in assimilating, instead they become alienated
from the Empire that most had voluntarily opted to live in. Finally, in the years after
the Byzantine defeat at Manzikert in 1071, one can witness the final phase of the
relationship with the desire for separatism that many Armenians exhibited in their
actions. Many of the leading characters, of whom most had been formerly engaged in
Byzantine service, sought out the creation of independent lordships separate from the
Byzantine state. Previous historians who have sought to explain these changes have
often done so along nationalist lines. Those writing from a Greek viewpoint have seen the Armenians as an alien element whose unwise settlement in frontier zones altered the demography of these areas and so undermined their adherence to Byzantium. Those writing from an Armenian viewpoint have placed emphasis on the religious divide and Byzantine intolerance to explain the alienation. This thesis will argue these factors have been given undue weight and do not in themselves do not explain the alienation and ultimate separation of the Armenians which has to be sought in the particular circumstances of the 1040s.
## Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CFHB</td>
<td>Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSHB</td>
<td>Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantinae</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DOP</td>
<td><em>Dumbarton Oaks Papers</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PO</td>
<td><em>Patrologia Orientalis</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REArm</td>
<td><em>Revue des Études Arméniennes</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TM</td>
<td><em>Travaux et Mémoires</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ZRVI</td>
<td><em>Zbornik Radova Vizantološkog Instituta</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Acknowledgements

I owe a huge debt of thanks to a great many people who have helped and supported me through to the submission of this thesis. My deepest gratitude must go to my mentor and supervisor Professor Jonathan Harris for his guidance throughout this project, but also for the decade-long journey we have been on since I first walked into his office in the autumn of my first year as an undergraduate student fascinated by everything Byzantine. I would also like to thank Dr Evrim Binbas, Dr George Vassiades, Professor Peregrine Horden, and Professor Jonathan Phillips for their helpful suggestions and advice in the development of the thesis. I would also like to thank Dr Mark Whelan and Dr Christopher Hobbs for their kind advice and support through my PhD. A very special mention must go to my great friend and colleague Dr Niccolò Fattori who not only created the map for this thesis, but who I have shared many joyful memories as we studied for our PhDs together. Finally, a special acknowledgment must go to all those who have inhabited ‘steerage’ over the years where I spent most of my time writing the thesis.

I would not have been able to pursue my studies to this level without the generous support of the Hellenic Institute and the tireless efforts of its director, Dr Charalambos Dendrinos, for raising money to support MA and PhD students in the field of Byzantine and Hellenic Studies. I would like to thank specifically the funder of the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomaios I Postgraduate Studentship in Byzantine Studies for their donations. I would also like to pay my thanks to Dr David Gwynn and Dr Hannes Kleineke for reading draft chapters and the thesis respectively.

Lastly, but equally importantly, I must thank all of those who have supported me outside of academia and on a personal level. I owe a massive debt to Matthew Williamson, not only for the employment he provided me but the companionship and
advice he has given me through pleasant and occasionally testing times. I must as ever mention my greatest friend Gregory Goss-Durant for his enthusiasm of pointing out my mistakes. I have a lot of gratitude to Zosia Edwards for helping me through the past two years, something I doubt I will ever truly be able to repay. I reserve my great thanks to my parents Timothy and Fiona Bromige, who have supported me entirely through my academic study, and have also encouraged my pursuit of history from a very young age. Finally, I must thank my Grandfather Keith White for his ever sound advice and encouragement since I was a young boy – and to my Grandmother Patricia Ruth Venner White, who sadly passed during my PhD, I dedicate this thesis to her for she was always my greatest supporter.


Toby Richard Timothy Bromige
Introduction

Chronological Scope: 867-1098

The period 867-1098 saw first the consolidation and expansion of Byzantium as arguably the most powerful political entity in the Mediterranean under the rule of the Macedonian dynasty, reaching its ‘Apogee’ under Basil II during his reign, 976-1025. Then, in the mid-eleventh century, new foes appeared on the frontiers of the Empire that threatened the territorial integrity of Byzantium. The remarkably quick collapse of Byzantine Anatolia, following the battle of Manzikert (1071), forced the Emperor Alexios I Komnenos to seek help from western Christendom to counter the Turkic occupation of the peninsula, which ultimately took the form of the First Crusade.¹ It was within this period that the Empire came into ever closer contact with Armenia and her people, largely as a result of its expanding eastern frontiers and establishing a shared border with the western Armenian kingdoms in Caucasia. Initially, the cooperation with local elites was the policy favoured by the emperors in Constantinople and this brought about peace and stability along this broad frontier zone. This was the period of greatest Armenian assimilation, when many arriving Armenian migrants successfully pursued careers in both imperial governance and the army, just as they had before 867 when they had been subject to forced transfers across the Empire to bolster frontier populations in the west.² By the ninth and early tenth century, major figures in political and ecclesiastical circles clearly came from Armenian stock, yet they tended not to pride themselves on their ethnic background or ancestral origin; rather

¹ The Byzantine background to the first crusade has been covered by a series of historians: Jonathan Harris, Byzantium and the Crusades, 2nd Edition (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2014); Peter Frankopan, The First Crusade: The Call from the East (London: The Bodley Head, 2012); Paul Magdalino, The Byzantine Background to the First Crusade (Toronto: Canadian Institute of Balkan Studies, 1996).
they had generally assimilated and had become largely indistinguishable from the *Romaioi* of the Empire.

Yet, at the height of Byzantium’s power at the turn of the first millennium, the external relationship between the Empire and Armenia changed.3 The previous status-quo of co-operation between the centre and the periphery was replaced by direct annexation; while the settlement of Armenians in the Empire’s heartland was abandoned in favour of the resettling them in large numbers in the eastern provinces of the Empire. In the final years of Basil’s reign Vaspurakan, the southern Armenian kingdom, was annexed, while Ani, its northern and technically superior counterpart, was to be bequeathed to the Empire by its king Yovhannes-Smbat (1020-1040) upon his death. Indeed, within twenty years of Basil II’s death in 1025, the annexation of Ani was complete and the Armenian royal houses of both kingdoms found themselves occupying considerable estates in Cappadocia and Sebasteia. Thereafter, the same mechanics of assimilation that had successfully transformed Armenian migrants into *Romaioi* during the ninth and tenth centuries no longer seemed to work. Indeed, it would appear that the Armenians in the mid-eleventh century were now feeling alienated from the imperial centre, a combination of resentment of the annexations, territorial isolation, religious antagonism, and lack of loyalty towards the institutions of the Byzantine state. Once the territorial integrity of the Empire in the east started to crumble under the onslaught of Turkoman raiders raiding and settling on the Anatolian Plateau in the 1070s, many Armenians began to pursue separatist agendas: existing either in isolated fortifications in the Taurus Mountains or forming independent lordships in Cilicia and northern Syria. It is in this context that the First

---

Crusade arrived in a power vacuum in the summer of 1097, and the Frankish lords saw a leaderless, yet potentially valuable ally in the Armenians.  

It is this transition that this thesis will examine, focusing on four key themes: Assimilation, Annexation, Alienation, and Separatism. The first task is to establish how these themes have been treated in previous secondary works.

**Modern Historiography**

**Assimilation**

The precise nature and mechanics of Armenian assimilation is not universally agreed by Byzantinists to this day; although much of our previous understanding on the subject has been framed by the works of Peter Charanis (1908-1985). Central to his approach was his belief in the concept of Medieval Hellenism, and the negative impact which he believed Armenian migrations had on this. His understanding of what constituted Byzantium, and of what forms of acculturation the Armenians had to take in order to become fully Byzantine, were dictated by his strict division between what he saw as Greek and Armenian culture. Charanis argued for viewing the Byzantines as essentially Greek: ‘for those who passed under the ethnicity of “Romans” were in

---


5 A recent study on the correspondence of imperial agents, specifically from the eastern frontier, still judges that the Byzantines saw the Armenians as a fundamentally foreign element: AnnaLinden Weller, *Imagining pre-Modern Imperialism: The letters of Byzantine Imperial Agents outside the Metropole* (Unpublished Thesis of Rutgers University, 2014), 4.


reality Greeks, i.e. Greeks in language and in culture.\textsuperscript{8} He also insinuated that the Armenians, most specifically in the eleventh century, were incapable of assimilating:

The discontent of the Armenians may have been justified but in the end it proved disastrous not only for the Greeks but also for themselves. But then it is in the nature of a minority, aware of its identity and with a sense of power, to be discontented.\textsuperscript{9}

The wide circulation of Charanis’ works has strongly influenced how subsequent Byzantinists have understood assimilation.\textsuperscript{10}

In contrast to Charanis, one of the most helpful works on Armenian assimilation was written by Nina Garsoïan, though much of the article is a summary of where the various areas of the assimilation process struggled, and it leaves open many areas where a wider enquiry is needed.\textsuperscript{11} These include: a more thorough understanding of what the term ‘Armenian’ means in Byzantine terms, whether it is a linguistic, religious, or geographical indicator; removing the uniformity that has often been placed on Armenian minorities for simplicity; and coming to a realistic understanding of the polemically charged religious tensions between the Byzantines and Armenians.\textsuperscript{12} Garsoïan’s most relevant points to this thesis are the drawing of attention to the ever-problematic reliance on identity labels within our primary sources, whether that is in the material or literary record. Further analysis of Garsoïan

\textsuperscript{8} Charanis, “The formation of the Greek people”, 88.
\textsuperscript{9} Charanis, ‘Armenians and Greeks’, 32.
\textsuperscript{10} Charanis’ works are invariably cited wherever an Armenian subject appears within modern Byzantine historiography.
\textsuperscript{12} See introductionary note to the article: 53.
will be found below; while the inconsistency of identity labels as used by our primary sources will be acknowledged throughout this thesis.

There have also been credible works on the social background of Armenian migrants, which is an important differential when it comes to measuring assimilation in the ninth and tenth century. The work of Alexander Kazhdan (1922-1997) on the Armenian elite in Byzantium deserves credit for its informative survey on the Armenian origins of the Byzantine aristocracy, though he regards the existence of ethnic groups as a challenge to Byzantine uniformity.\textsuperscript{13} Isabelle Brouselle has also investigated how Armenians integrated into the Byzantine nobility, but she parts company with Kazhdan by focusing on the ninth century. Brouselle’s article offers some enlightening findings on the use of ethnic identification within family names. This phenomenon, she states, could either be the result of surnames not being common in the ninth century, or of negative qualities attributed to persons of particular ethnic ancestry.\textsuperscript{14} Jean-Claude Cheynet is of the opinion that it took up to three generations for migrants to lose their ethnic identity, which may explain Brouselle’s observation on the ethnic stereotypes surrounding the surnames of recent arrivals into the Empire.\textsuperscript{15}

Finally, on the theme of assimilation, there is the work of Angeliki Laiou (1941-2008) who tackled the form in which assimilation took place in Byzantium. She concluded that the main mechanics of assimilation were ‘Christianization, the use of


the Greek language, service in the army or the administration, [and] intermarriage.’

We will return to many of these themes below. Lastly, Gilbert Dagron (1932-2015) provides a viable comparison for the assessment of migrating ethno-religious minorities in Byzantium with the case of the Syrians. Not only were the Syrians who entered Byzantium largely followers of the Miaphysite Syrian Church, they were used by the Byzantines for the same purpose as the Armenians, to resettle depopulated areas after devastation or conquest to provide a Christian, albeit non-Chalcedonian, population which could be used as a buffer against a more hostile state. This comparative approach will be advanced in Chapter Two alongside the works of S. Peter Cowe.

**Annexation**

The Byzantine annexations of Armenia have most often been viewed by modern scholars through two main schools: either as a demonstration of ‘victimhood’ for the western Medieval Armenian kingdoms, or the ill-judged expansion of Byzantium that brought about the calamitous events of the later eleventh century. The latter viewpoint will be expanded upon in Chapter Three on the Byzantine Annexations of Armenia, 1000-1064, but in summary this thesis rejects such an interpretation. The ‘victimhood’ viewpoint however, needs further consideration and scrutiny.

The understanding of ‘victimhood’ comes from the conflicting and confusing Armenian accounts of the period: this can be seen through direct reference to Matthew of Edessa’s account of the eleventh century where, for example, he laments that ‘[by]
removing the throne of the Armenian Kingdom, they [the Byzantines] in effect destroyed it and thus demolished the protective wall which was provided by its troops and generals."\textsuperscript{18} Armenian historians still echo the narrative of the betrayal of Armenia by Byzantium that is found in the Matthew’s chronicle.\textsuperscript{19} One of the main proponents of this view is Nina Garsoïan, who argues that Byzantium’s ultimate goal was the total incorporation of the Armenians realms within the Empire from the accession of Basil I in 867 onwards. She states:

> The threat to the Armenian kingdoms was all the realer since the political theory of Constantinople revived under the Macedonian dynasty and inaugurated by the Emperor Basil I recognized no Christian ruler as equal to or independent of the Byzantine emperor [...] and Byzantium’s ultimate goal, even when it was masked for a time by diplomatic compromises, remained the total incorporation of the Armenian realms within the empire.\textsuperscript{20}

Certain objections can be raised to Garsoïan’s analysis here. In the first place, not all of the Armenian realms were annexed; in fact, the more eastern kingdoms of Lori and Syunik were never incorporated into Byzantium, nor do there seem to have been any attempts on the part of the Byzantines to do so. Secondly, the view that the diplomatic compromises were a mere mask for Byzantium’s ultimate goal of annexation discredits the constructive aspects of Byzantine-Armenian relations in the tenth century. Thirdly, there is no evidence for a pre-meditated ‘Macedonian’ foreign policy entirely focused,


from the accession of Basil I, on incorporating the entirety of the Armenian kingdoms. Garsoïan believes that the Byzantines could not accept independent Christian rulers on their eastern border as it was contradictory to their views of their Empire and emperor. One only has to look at Byzantium’s dealings with western Christian kingdoms to understand that a policy of extending direct rule over other Christian states was not necessarily on the agenda. It would seem, moreover, that Garsoïan’s conclusions do not consider the internal events in Byzantium during Basil II’s reign, particularly his continuous attempts to limit the power of the Anatolian nobility, and the direct involvement of some of the Caucasian magnates in aiding Basil’s enemies.21 This issue will be subject to further scrutiny in Chapter Three.

**Alienation**

In terms of the period of alienation, roughly covering the years 1022-1071, previous scholarship has focused almost single-mindedly on the religious antagonism between the Byzantines and Armenians in the regions of Cappadocia and Sebasteia. Nina Garsoïan’s survey of Armenian integration is of limited help here. Covering the fifth to the late eleventh centuries, she only deals with this important and possibly pivotal period in passing. She identifies it as ‘the most repressive period’, again through the medium of religious issues, but she does not explore why that might have been the case.22 This thesis will argue against Garsoïan’s view, using primary source evidence,

---


about the issues surrounding the failure of the mechanics of assimilation for the exiled princes in the Byzantine east:

In themselves, the pretensions and defiance of the Royals had little importance. Their possibilities were small and all of them were dead with the decade following Manzikert.23

In stark contrast to Garsoïan, Peter Charanis stressed the unifying forces of the Empire, the Greek language, imperial tradition, but most importantly religious orthodoxy. That is to over stress Christian Orthodoxy as the dominant construct of Byzantine identity; rather it will be argued here that it was the weakest element in the ‘Assimilation Model’.24 Elsewhere Charanis noted the apparently natural enmity between the ‘Greeks’ and Armenians, loosely referring to religious and cultural barriers that enflamed the hostilities, a concept that Howard-Johnston has supported, but once again Charanis failed to fully expand on why this might have been the case.25

Speros Vryonis (1928-2019), who was a vocal proponent of the concept of ‘Medieval Hellenism’ and its collapse in the late eleventh century, takes a negative attitude, similar to that of Charanis, towards the events surrounding the Armenians in the decades immediately before the battle of Manzikert. Vryonis dwells upon the failure of religious assimilation between the Byzantines and Armenians and goes further by stating ‘...the religious petty issues merely covered deeper racial and cultural antagonism’, which would suggest that he saw religious antagonism as a façade for the

cultural barrier that sundered the Armenians and Byzantines. This does not account for the centuries beforehand when successful assimilation happened with no evidence of ‘racial and cultural’ antagonism. Conversely, Vryonis, like Charanis, also saw two distinct self-identified ethnic groups, ‘Greeks’ and Armenians, whose fundamental hatred towards one another flared up over religious issues, though, as stated above, this thesis will argue that the religious differences have been often over-stated.

From a geo-political viewpoint Michael Angold has touched on what he calls the ‘Armenian question’ with reference to the defence of Byzantium’s eastern frontier in the eleventh century. Angold characterises the defence policy as the creation of a broad frontier zone that relied on the loyalty of the local populations, which subsequently failed thanks to religious disagreements between the Byzantine and Apostolic Churches. Once again we find the role of religion being judged as the most important factor in explaining the ‘disaffection’ of the Armenians towards the Byzantines. This conclusion is found in other works, such as Alfred Friendly’s book on the battle of Manzikert, or more recently with Isabelle Augé’s survey. To Friendly, the religious hostilities between the Armenians and the Byzantines prevented any unity between the two groups in defending Asia Minor from the Turks. Catherine Holmes also indicates that the religious differences between Byzantium and the inhabitants on the eastern frontier were one of the major problems Basil II faced in

---

28 The Syrians suffered similar treatment of their Church, with near-identical consequences.
29 Angold, Byzantine Empire, 42.
governing the eastern regions, though not in terms of toleration, but rather of the challenges that the imperial centre faced in the governance of a heterodox population living on the frontiers. The issues highlighted by Holmes were the variety in the population on the eastern frontier with a lack of Greek as a first language and the minority practising Orthodox Christianity. It is without doubt that religious and linguistic differences hindered rather than helped the assimilation process of the eleventh century Armenian migrants, although the question why this differed from the earlier migrations in the ninth and tenth centuries has not been at the centre of discussion. It is the aim of Chapter Four to explain this change, utilising the conclusions of Chapter Two as a point of comparison.

Separatism

Lastly, one must turn to the theme of Separatism, covering the murky period of 1071-1098 when Byzantine authority unravelled in eastern Anatolia in the face of Turkish raiding and settlement. Speros Vryonis has argued that it was the existence of only a ‘thin veneer’ of Hellenism in Byzantium’s eastern provinces that contributed the major factor in the breakdown of Byzantine controlled Anatolia:

... the civil wars and the ethnic-religious difficulties in the provinces were the key developments which led to the collapse of Asia Minor in the face of Seljuk invasions and the resultant humbling of Byzantium from its position of power and glory.\(^{32}\)

---


Vryonis subsequently changed his mind, later arguing that ‘the political and military failure of Byzantium stemmed ultimately from political and military weaknesses’.  

Charanis complements Vryonis by recognising the role the Armenians had to play in the breakdown of Byzantine authority in Anatolia, highlighting some of the factors that led to the insubordination that plagued the Empire at a time that they were most needed. However, his argument has substantial shortfalls stemming from his belief that the very nature of the Armenian minority somehow fuelled its discontent which then helped to bring about the collapse of Byzantine power in the east. Charanis, more so than Vryonis, views the Armenian minority as somehow intrinsically inclined to separatism which is difficult to accept. Charanis’ analysis is particularly weak on the relations between the Armenians under Gagik II of Ani, who seemed to no longer have any affiliation with the Empire, and those Armenians in Cilicia and Antioch who still maintained nominal ties with the Empire, such as Ablgharib Artsruni, the governor of Tarsus, and to a lesser extent Philaretos Brachamios. It is the actions and relationships of these major figures that must be understood in order to ascertain the development of Armenian loyalties in the final decades of the eleventh century.

Other Byzantinists have been drawn into the debate surrounding the Byzantine decline in the late-eleventh century, though largely focusing on the destruction wrought by de-militarisation and the civil wars of the 1070s, rather than the role of the Armenians. George Ostrogorsky (1902–1976) argued that the demilitarisation of the

---

34 Charanis, ‘Armenians and Greeks’, 32; see Chapter Two for argument on how Armenians were able to successfully assimilate.
35 The most significant work on the Armenians, and the various independent lordships that sprung up between Manzikert and the arrival of the First Crusade is: Gérard Dédéyan, Les arméniens entre grecs, musulmans, et croisés: Étude sur les pouvoirs arméniens dans le Proche-Orient méditerranéen (1068-1150), 2 vols (Lisbon: Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, 2003).
thematic armies was in fact the most important cause for the collapse of Byzantine Anatolia; others draw attention to the destruction of Byzantine military power at Manzikert.\textsuperscript{37} A slightly different view has been offered by Mark Whittow who wrote on the subject of the Byzantine loss of Asia Minor, and came to some interesting and unusual conclusions. Whittow disagrees with the military capacity argument of Ostrogorsky, and the political disunity of Vryonis and Angold, rather seeing that the stronger and more militaristic culture won, an argument which he supports with comparative examples from the period in Iberia and Sicily. For Whittow, the reason for a lacklustre defence of Anatolia was a lack of interest in land ownership on the part of the Byzantine aristocracy who were more focused on securing their positions at court. A western ‘feudal’ focus on land has distorted our understanding of Byzantine society and of the causes of the collapse of Asia Minor.\textsuperscript{38}

In more recent years there have been scholars who have tried to understand the situation in the east during the 1070s from the perspective of the crusading period. Peter Frankopan has suggested that Byzantine control of Asia Minor was actually relatively stable for nearly twenty years after the battle of Manzikert and that it was only in the 1090s that a dramatic deterioration of Byzantium’s influence can be seen.\textsuperscript{39} This view, however, relies upon interpreting the actions of the Armenians as always working for the Empire, a conclusion based on a selective reading of the primary evidence. Frankopan’s view that characters like Philaretos and his successors were

\textsuperscript{37} This particular point is rejected by this thesis, namely the much-repeated example of the thematic troops of Iberia being disbanded by Constantine IX Monomachos, even though this was reflecting the recent absorption of Armenian soldiers being enrolled in the imperial army after the annexation of Ani. Ostrogorsky, \textit{History of the Byzantine State}, 305; J.-C. Cheynet, ‘Manzikert: un désastre militaire?’, \textit{Byzantion}, 50 (1980), 410-438, at 433. For recent rejection of this see: Anthony Kaldellis, \textit{Streams of Gold, Rivers of Blood} (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2017), 274-275.

\textsuperscript{38} Mark Whittow, ‘How the east was lost: the background to the Komnenian reconquista’, \textit{Alexios I Komnenos: Papers vol.1}, ed. M. Mullett and D. Smythe (Belfast: Belfast Byzantine Enterprises, 1996), 55-67, at 56, 66-7.

\textsuperscript{39} Frankopan, \textit{The First Crusade}, 42.
working for the benefit of the Byzantine state completely disregards the separatist feelings of the Armenians on the eastern frontier, and he does not engage with the wider Byzantine-Armenian relationship. From the perspective of the wider Muslim world, the recent work by Alexander Beihammer has looked in depth at the early Turkish settlements in Anatolia at the expense of imperial authority. His work offers further context on the wider Muslim world and its contribution to the events surrounding the collapse of Byzantine Anatolia. While his focus is on the ‘Turkification’ of Anatolia, he does acknowledge the various Armenian lordships as entities in their own right, not simply paying lip-service to the emperor in Constantinople. These themes will be explored fully in Chapter Five on the situation post-Manzikert and the breakdown of imperial authority in Asia Minor up until the arrival of the First Crusade.

**Identity and Assimilation**

To summarise the argument so far, the four most important themes that underlay the relations between Byzantines and Armenians (Assimilation, Annexation, Alienation, and Separatism) have been established and their treatment in the most prominent secondary works has been traced. Behind all four themes, however, lies the further issue of identity. Only by establishing what distinctive qualities were perceived to make a person a *Romaios* can the extent to which Armenians were assimilated or alienated be assessed. A discussion of how the primary sources inform us on the subject of Byzantine and Armenian identity will be found in the following chapter. In this section, the approach of the main secondary voices on the issue will be considered.

There has recently been an intense discussion of the nature of identity within Byzantium, and this has allowed discussion of assimilation to advance beyond the
simplistic narrative of a Greek people hiding under a Roman name.\textsuperscript{40} Nevertheless, the interpretation of Byzantium through the lens of Hellenism, mainly by scholars of Greek heritage, has been the largest obstacle in the study of Armenians and the Byzantine Empire. As to why the Hellenic element came to dominate our understanding of the Byzantine state, one must understand the process by which the Greeks in the nineteenth century came to define their identity through the past.\textsuperscript{41} The national problem was exemplified by the debate over how the inhabitants of the newly-independent kingdom of Greece were to be defined: ‘[A]re we \textit{Romaioi} (Romans, in the sense of the Byzantines), \textit{Grekoi} (Greeks, as westerners call us), \textit{Hellenes} (Ancient Greeks), or Orthodox Christians?’.\textsuperscript{42} There was little interest in taking the first option and attaching the new state to the Byzantine Empire, the medieval past of the modern Greeks.\textsuperscript{43} So much so, that when on 14 January 1844, the Greek politician Ioannis Kolettis (1773-1847) made his famous speech on the ‘Great Idea’ there was no mention of Byzantium at all.\textsuperscript{44} Kolettis’ silence spoke volumes on the negative image Byzantium possessed in Greek intellectual life during the early years of the Modern Greek state, and is a fascinating counter-point to the later over-zealous claims to Byzantium. The Classical Hellenic definition easily won out.

The credit for bringing Byzantium into Modern Greek identity largely goes to the efforts of two scholars. The first was Spyridon Zambelios (1815-1881) whose


\textsuperscript{42} Millas, ‘History Writing among the Greeks and Turks’, 491.


Byzantine Studies: On the Sources of Modern Greek Nationality from the Eighth to the Tenth Centuries after Christ, was published in 1857. Zambelios argued that it was ecclesiastical, not imperial, history that defined Hellenism; furthermore, he offered a new interpretation of Hellenism as a trinity, defined as ethnology, politeuma (democracy), and religion.\textsuperscript{45} To Zambelios, the vehicle of continuity was not Hellenism itself; rather its transmission by fusion with Christianity, a process which continued through the Byzantine and Ottoman periods to modern Greece. He even invented the term ‘Helleno-Christianity’ to describe the vehicle that transported Hellenism from antiquity through to the modern state.\textsuperscript{46} Additionally, Zambelios defined Byzantium itself as a trinity in order of importance: Hellenic in speech and learning, Christian in doctrine, and Roman in the imperial system of government.\textsuperscript{47} Interestingly, while Zambelios can claim the credit for this understanding of a trinity of identification, there are elements of the idea in the works of the eleventh-century philosopher, Michael Psellos.\textsuperscript{48}

Arguably the most prominent scholar to highlight Byzantium within the ongoing identity debate was Constantine Paparrigopoulos (1815-1891). His History of the Hellenic nation from ancient times to the present, which was published between 1860 and 1877, insisted that an unbroken continuity of Greek life existed from ancient to modern times.\textsuperscript{49} This theory, as devised by Paparrigopoulos, divided Hellenism into five eras: Ancient, Macedonian, Christian, Medieval, and Modern, with the period of

\textsuperscript{46} Huxley, ‘Aspects of Modern Greek Historiography’, 17-18; Millas, ‘History Writing among the Greeks and Turks’, 493-4.
\textsuperscript{47} Huxley, ‘Aspects of Modern Greek Historiography’, 18.
\textsuperscript{49} Constantinos Paparrigopoulos, Ἑστορία τοῦ Ἑλληνικοῦ Ἐθνος ἀπὸ τῶν ἀρχαίων χρόνων μέχρι τῶν καθ’ ἴδιας (Athens, 1886); George Gooch, History and Historians in the Nineteenth Century (London: Longmans, Green and Co, 1952), 16.
Byzantium constituting the Medieval era. Paparrigopoulos' work has been viewed by some as the 'the closest to what could be called a master narrative' for Greek historians. The popularity of his work led to a rapid and exaggerated retrospective Hellenization of the Byzantine Empire to maintain the historical continuity from ancient to Modern Greece, although, of course, not everyone accepted the idea of continuity.

Paparrigopoulos' legacy was an ideological and essentially rhetorical statement of Greek nationalism. He implored his readers to consider the legacy of Byzantium, claiming that ‘...to the Byzantine state we owe the conservation of our language, our religion and more generally of our nationality’. The concept was also far reaching in Greek academia, largely thanks to the efforts of Pavlos Karolidis (1849-1930), who, as well as writing a history of Byzantium in Turkish, edited a new edition of the *History of the Greek Nation* and provided a continuation to bring it up to date. Karolidis originally came from Cappadocia and he promoted the importance of Byzantine Anatolia, seeing it as the ‘greater Hellas’ of Medieval Hellenism. He saw the Emperor Romanos IV Diogenes (1068-1071), who lost the battle of Manzikert in 1071, as the last upholder of Hellenism on the eastern frontiers of the empire. These views, developed at the end of the nineteenth century, were to have a far-reaching influence for Greek and other scholars through to the end of the twentieth century. A prime example of

---

50 Kitromilides, ‘On the intellectual content of Greek nationalism’, 29.
51 Millas, ‘History Writing among the Greeks and Turks’, 495.
52 See the works of Jakob Fallmerayer (1790-1861) who argued that as a result of the Slavic invasions of the Balkans and Greece in the seventh century, ‘not one drop of Hellenic blood flows in the veins of the modern Greeks’. His work created a storm of scholarly activity within Greece as nationalistic historians scrambled to defend the Hellenic purity of their race and contributed directly towards Paparrigopoulos’ exaggeration of the Hellenic character of the Byzantine Empire. See: *Geschichte der Halbinsel Morea während des Mittelalters. Teil 1: Untergang der peloponnesischen Hellenen und Wiederbevölkerung des leeren Bodens durch slavische Volksstämmen* (Stuttgart, 1830).
this genre of historiography and its persistence up to the present is the work of Apostolos E. Vakalopoulos (1909-2000) who throughout his work promoted the idea that the Byzantine Empire represented just another phase in the long saga of Hellenic civilisation.56

There can be little doubt that Paparrigopoulos’s conclusions have distorted and continue to distort our understanding of the medieval Empire. He went too far in stressing the importance of Hellenism in Byzantium, and particularly in avoiding any analysis of the real heritage from ancient Rome that persisted in its governance and legal codes. Further, he failed to appreciate that Byzantium’s legacy was not inherited only by Greece and her people, ignoring a great many others whose ancestors had been subjects of Byzantium. It should also be noted that the ‘Balkan awakening’, the establishment of various nation states in the Balkans in the beginning of the early twentieth century, had yet to take place when Paparrigopoulos published his works. Once it did, there was suddenly a significant challenge to Greece’s sole claim when nations such as Bulgaria also regarded the Byzantine Empire as part of their own medieval past. The historian Simon Franklin summarises this dilemma skilfully:

Problems – conceptual and actual – arise either when more than one nation share the same stories, or when those who would notionally count themselves as part of the same nation have to choose between or haggle over a range of alternative stories.57

---


In essence, the establishment of nation states in the Balkans gave historians and intellectuals the opportunity that those alive today can only dream of: that of being necessary.\textsuperscript{58} As such the independence of Bulgaria and other Slavic states in the Balkans on the eve of the First World War brought into dispute the legacy of Byzantium as a Hellenic state. Cyril Mango believes that this challenge brought about further exaggeration of the ‘Greekness’ of Byzantium within Greece itself. While it is entirely understandable that the origins of many Balkan states lie in the Byzantine period, it is fair to conclude that their connection with the medieval Empire was often distorted and made to serve the ends of nationalism.\textsuperscript{59}

Greek and other Balkan historians were not left to discuss the issue of the ‘Greekness’ of Byzantium entirely alone. During the 1960s and early 1970s, a series of Anglophone academics engaged with the issue, and the debates at various points turned sour. Little was achieved and, in the words of Michael Angold ‘the debate ended in more a discussion about modern Greek identity and its medieval roots’, rather than attempting to understand what made a Byzantine a \textit{Romaios}.\textsuperscript{60} Paul Magdalino declared that ‘the debate over the continuity of Hellenism seems to hold little interest for younger Byzantinists [...] there is much to be said for letting the issue die what

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{58} Franklin, ‘The Invention of Rus(sia)(s)’, 181.
\end{itemize}
seems to be a very natural death’.

Nevertheless, it remains hale and hearty and the discussion has continued into the twenty-first century.

Among these anglophone critics of the Hellenic narrative of Byzantine identity is a group who might be described as ‘Romanists’. They have come to view the Byzantines as Medieval Romans, basing their arguments on the fact that the Byzantines called themselves Romaioi and retained various customs that were inherited from the classical Roman Empire. What these customs (or concepts, as Ostrogorsky labels them) were, has been largely left vague, and is still very much open to interpretation. One of the most prominent members of this group is Anthony Kaldellis, whose recent works have attempted to highlight the primacy of Roman influence on the construction of Byzantine identity. Kaldellis argues that the Byzantines were Romans and thought of themselves as such. He claims that European scholars downplay the Roman element of Byzantium because ‘they hold that the Roman legacy is fundamentally western and Latin and cannot bring themselves to accept that Byzantium “really was” Roman’. In essence, he is criticising western historians for the same disdainful approach to Byzantium displayed by their eighteenth-century predecessors. But Kaldellis is also critical of Greek scholars. Because of their desire to find a core of national ‘Greekness’ behind what they take to be only a Roman façade, they reject the Roman nature of Byzantium and invent other

---

61 Magdalino, ‘Hellenism and Nationalism in Byzantium’, 1. Magdalino’s argument borders on questionable accusations of neo-colonialism on the part of the Anglophone scholars who were arguing against the Hellenic identity of the Byzantines. Nevertheless, his criticisms do show how arguments about race, religion, and identity from scholars of the late 1960s and 1970s need a thorough re-examination.


63 The debate over the word customs comes directly from its use in our narrative sources to describe a true Romaioi.

‘essences’ to describe it, such as Greek Orthodoxy, Oriental despotism or even Medieval Hellenism. He also rejects the idea of Byzantium as a ‘multi-ethnic empire’ as he argues that the Byzantines did not define themselves ethnically. Rather, what made the Byzantines Roman was ‘a social consensus that all belonged to a single historical political community defined by laws, institutions, religion, language and customs’. While Kaldellis’ hyperbolic narrative is uncomfortable for some, and too brash for others, he does grapple with the most important point of all – how the Byzantines described their identity in their own words. He recognises that it is the primary evidence that counts more than the writings of nineteenth and twentieth-century nationalist historians in understanding Byzantine identity.

Ioannis Stouraitis is another proponent of the ‘Roman’ view. He has contributed further to this line through his highly commendable paper on a critical approach to Roman identity in Byzantium. Stouraitis too has recognised various issues in the ways that previous scholarship has collectively tackled the question of the identity of the Byzantines. For Stouraitis, one of the primary problems of deciphering Byzantine identity is the name ‘Byzantine’ itself. The terminology, he argues, is a retrospective construct that has imposed a latent bias on looking at the Byzantines as Romans, which is what they considered themselves to be. This argument has strong parallels with that of Kaldellis, the main one being his emphasis on the rejection by European scholars of Byzantium’s Roman character, though it suggests unintentional confusion, rather than selective bias on the part of the historian. It is clear that

---

66 Kaldellis, *Hellenism in Byzantium*, 44.
68 Stouraitis, ‘Roman Identity in Byzantium’, 175.
Stouraitis does not subscribe to the Hellenic view of Byzantium, as he makes plain through two ‘facts’:

First, the Eastern Roman elite did not employ Greek ethnic discourse to circumscribe its self-identification up to the thirteenth century; second, the ruling elite’s *top-down* identity discourse encompassed ethno-cultural diversity and promoted mass *regnal* Romanness as an identity of allegiance/submission to the political order of Constantinople.69

These are interpretations not facts, and Stouraitis’ deployment of them reveals a certain level of stubbornness in order to prove a point. Yet, putting the negative aspects aside, Stouraitis offers a critical approach to the concept of ‘Romanness’ in Byzantium, and something from which genuine concepts are offered for interpretation by the wider scholarly field.

The ‘Romanist’ view did not originate out of thin air, and one can see in a previous generation of Byzantinists some awareness of the issues at stake. Donald Nicol (1923-2003), who can loosely be placed within this section, viewed Byzantium as a ‘multi-racial’ society, something that is less difficult to identify than ethnicity. For Nicol the name *Romaioi* was a means used by a variety of races to identify with the Roman Empire in which they lived.70 While this puts Nicol’s interpretation at odds with that of Kaldellis, they both argue that the term *Romaioi* ought not to be disregarded as some sort of façade. Rather, it is a fundamental element of Byzantine

---

69 Stouraitis, ‘Roman Identity in Byzantium’, 206; for the opposite view see Hélène Ahrweiler who believed that the universalism that Byzantium inherited from Rome was replaced in the eighth century by an aggressive nationalism on Greek and Orthodox patriotism: Hélène Ahrweiler, *L’idéologie politique de l’Empire byzantin* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1975), 29-36.

70 Nicol, *Byzantium and Greece*, 5-6.
identity, as will be clearly shown in the critical evaluation of the primary sources in Chapter One.

There are plenty of alternatives to the formulations of Kaldellis and Stouraitis. The most common definition of Byzantine identity by modern scholars follows a Trinitarian format. Speros Vryonis believes that being a Greek speaker and following the Orthodox creed of the church in Constantinople are the two most important aspects of being a Byzantine, which he groups together under the concept of ‘Medieval Hellenism’. This conclusion will be shown, in chapter one, to run contrary to primary source evidence. Magdalino views Medieval Hellenism as a very average third in the construct of Byzantine identity, those of more importance being Christian Orthodoxy and Roman Imperialism respectively.71 An alternative view is offered by Michael Angold who favours the combination of emperor, capital, and Orthodoxy, as the trilogy that enshrined Byzantine identity.72 Laiou, for her part, saw ‘Christianization, the use of the Greek language, service in the army or the administration, [and] intermarriage’ as the most important elements of identity when it came to assimilation.73 While all of these definitions of Byzantine identity have their strengths, none of them specifically attempt to define identity through the evidence provided by assimilation. This thesis will provide a new working ‘Assimilation Model’ below.

Having surveyed the debates surrounding Byzantium’s Hellenic identity, their impact on previous understandings of the Armenian presence in the Empire needs to be considered. One of the most influential historians writing on the subject is Nina Garsoïan, whose work has already been discussed. An Armenian émigré who was born

71 Magdalino, ‘Hellenism and Nationalism in Byzantium’, 2.
in Paris and moved to New York in 1933. Garsoian’s background inevitably affected her outlook on several key points, particularly the migration of the Armenian peoples into the Empire, how they attempted to integrate into Byzantine society, and the Byzantine annexations of Armenian lands in the tenth and eleventh centuries. It is clear from Garsoian’s work that she views the annexations negatively, often basing her interpretations on the rhetoric stemming from the chronicle of Matthew of Edessa who was highly critical of the Byzantines. She frequently uses the term ‘Greek’ with negative connotations and blaming the subjects of her study for the destruction of Armenia and the scattering of her people. Such an agenda can be viewed in plain sight in Garsoian’s article of 1997 which is written entirely from the perspective of Armenia as ‘the victim’ and Byzantium as the ‘imperial aggressor’. Her stance has often been repeated by other Armenian historians such as Razmik Panossian for whom the Byzantine annexation of Armenia was an unmitigated disaster. One could argue that the insistence on seeing Byzantium as ‘Hellenic’ have paved the way for the view that Byzantine presence in Armenian lands or any Armenian presence in the Empire was bound to end in disaster. Further investigation will confirm that impression.

Garsoian has previously addressed the nature of Armenian assimilation into the Byzantine Empire. Although her main objective was to provide a broad overview, in doing so she highlighted particular areas where a more thorough investigation is required. The title of her article ‘The Problem of Armenian Integration into the Byzantine Empire’ is suggestive. Yet, the use of the word ‘Problem’ when addressing the historiographical issue of the Armenians in the Empire is not necessarily a value

74 See the autobiography: Nina Garsoian, De Vita Sua (Costa Mesa: Mazda Publishers, 2011).
75 A full deconstruction of Matthew of Edessa’s account can be found below under the section on Primary Sources: Matthew of Edessa, II, 13, 96.
77 Panossian, The Armenians, 59.
judgement on Garsoïan’s part, for she is recognising a clear difficulty here that of identifying Armenians in our written sources. In the final analysis though, for Garsoïan, Armenians could not share in Byzantine identity.

There is much confusion as to what the primary sources actually mean when they use apparently ethnic terms. The designation ‘Iberians’ is a case in point. There are a number of interpretations of the word that could be valid: people from lands to the east who had integrated into Byzantine society, the inhabitants of the theme of Iberia, or the Georgians. This is also true of the term ‘Armenian’, which is used to refer to the Armenians who had not fully assimilated, or the Armenian inhabitants of the theme of Cappadocia, one of the main territorial areas of settlement after the annexations, something that will be expanded on below in Chapter Three. The issue with these tags is that they often have inter-changeable connotations and require a cautious and methodical approach in order to grasp the true meanings behind them. A further problem is that our primary sources do not follow the same rules in using these words creating further ambiguity.

The difficulty with these terms specifically stems from religious labels being commonly applied to the Armenian people. Within this particular parameter, there are three distinct categories that can be identified. First, there are Armenian Miaphysite Christians who followed the teachings of the Armenian Apostolic Church and recognised the church’s religious authority and structure. Second, there were those Armenians who had recently converted to the Chalcedonian rite but had kept enough forms of identity for them to be recognised as Armenian by Byzantine sources. Finally, there were also the ‘Armenian-Chalcedonians’, Armenians whose religious

80 By ‘Byzantine sources’, I am referring to those sources written in Greek by people who live within the confines of the Empire.
confession followed that of Chalcedon, yet their liturgical language was Armenian.\textsuperscript{81} These Armenian-Chalcedonians were regarded as outcasts by both Byzantines and Armenians, and strangely are still seen as an un-Armenian phenomenon by modern writers.\textsuperscript{82} The issues surrounding religious forms of identification from our primary sources will be explained in full in the following chapters which will assess the main Armenian medieval narrative histories.

Some other scholars of Armenian history have briefly touched upon identity within the study of Armenian-Byzantine relations. David Lang (1924-1991) rejected the idea that the Armenians assimilated into Byzantium, instead believing that Armenian individualism persisted and that many of those inside Byzantium never truly renounced their loyalty to the homeland.\textsuperscript{83} More recently S. Peter Cowe offered a comparison between the Syrian and Armenian migration into Cappadocia during the Byzantine expansion in the east, but while an interesting comparison, it is not without logical inconsistencies.\textsuperscript{84} Cowe expanded on the observation of Sirarpie Der Nersessian (1896-1989) that the elimination of the autonomous Armenian Church was one of the destructive methods of assimilation.\textsuperscript{85} Der Nersessian does offer genuine insight into the Armenian role in Byzantium, and acknowledges voluntary Armenian migrations preceding the Byzantine annexations of Armenia.\textsuperscript{86} She views the annexations as a preordained long-term policy, rather than pragmatic or reactive decisions by Basil II in face of the geo-political conditions at the beginning of the

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{83} Lang, \textit{Armenia}, 184.
\item \textsuperscript{85} Der Nersessian, \textit{Armenia and the Byzantine empire}, 29.
\item \textsuperscript{86} Der Nersessian, \textit{The Armenians}, 33-43.
\end{itemize}
eleventh century. Like Garsoian, Der Nersessian’s approach to this question is coloured by her Armenian background and the historical events of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

This section has surveyed some of the debates about what constituted a Byzantine in the medieval period, whether that was Greek ethnic identity, Orthodox religion, Roman heritage or a combination of these and other factors. We have also seen how scholars writing from an Armenian perspective have been reluctant to accept that Armenians could assimilate into Byzantine identity, however that might be defined. This thesis will argue that the Armenians did in fact adopt and practice the customs of the Byzantines, thereby accepting Byzantine markers of identity, being considered as Romaioi by their contemporaries. It will base this argument on a model of assimilation drawn from the authors of the Byzantine primary sources.

The Assimilation Model

In order to challenge previous understandings of Armenian assimilation into the Byzantine Empire, and the subsequent alienation the Armenians were to suffer, this thesis will offer an alternative ‘Assimilation model’. The new model is divided into three constituent and interrelating parts that encapsulate the most important mechanics for successful assimilation:

i) The area of territorial settlement

ii) The acceptance and adoption of ‘Roman customs’

iii) The religious conversion/conformity of the migrants

---

88 This thesis defines ‘Byzantine primary sources’, or equivalent name thereof, as those sources written in Byzantine Greek by writers who lived within the Byzantine Empire.
For the ‘Assimilation model’ to withstand scrutiny, however, it must be underpinned by the evidence provided by the primary sources from the period, and before this can be achieved one must cautiously and carefully examine the full range of primary sources available for the study of the Byzantine-Armenian relationship in the period c.867-1098. The aim of Chapter One is therefore first to outline the variety of literary and material sources that cast light on the Armenian-Byzantine relationship during this period. This will then be followed by the substantiation of this new ‘Assimilation model’.
Chapter One: The Sources and their problems

Before this thesis can advance to the study of Armenian assimilation into the Byzantine Empire the full range of primary materials that can be utilised for a work of this scope must be presented. In this chapter a critically evaluated survey of the primary materials will be offered and this survey will be organised by the linguistic traditions in which they were written: Greek, Armenian, Syriac/Arabic (Christian), Arabic (Muslim), and Latin. The division of the literary works by language is necessary in order to understand the historiographical tradition that they came from and this will then allow a deeper understanding on how these sources can be used comparatively within the respective periods of the main research chapters. The main aim of this chapter is to clearly and coherently present the problems and potentialities of the main narrative sources for the study of Armenian assimilation into the Byzantine Empire. Sigillographic evidence will also be included within this evaluation, as it greatly assists our study of what roles the Armenian migrants pursued once they were settled inside the Empire.\(^9\) As the later chapters will demonstrate, it is naturally necessary to use these sources in combination to gain as full a picture as possible of Byzantine-Armenian relations from c.867-1098.

The Medieval Sources

Greek

The Greek sources of the Byzantine period descended from a rich tradition of history writing stretching back to antiquity, with models such as Thucydides heavily influencing the literary style of Byzantine authors. Yet the advent of Christianity had produced a different style of history writing in the form of the universal chronicle,

\(^9\) It must be noted however, that sigillographic evidence only gives us information on the careers and interactions of the nobility.
connecting the Greco-Roman record of events with biblical history, a task first taken up by Julius Africanus in the third century, and continued by Eusebius of Caesarea (263-339), whom many later Byzantine (and Armenian) writers would imitate in style. The oldest extant universal history is that of John Malalas (c.491-578) whose work in turn was incorporated within the Chronicon Paschale, or ‘Easter Chronicle’, a work completed in c.630.\(^90\) The arrival of the Arab conquerors in the following decade marked a significant break within Greek historiography, and the mantle was not picked up until the early ninth century, when George Synkellos wrote a universal chronicle from the creation to the accession of Diocletian, drawing heavily on Julius Africanus and Eusebius. George, however, was unable to complete his task of writing a universal chronicle up to the events of his day and asked Theophanes the Confessor to complete his work.\(^91\)

This survey will not cover every single Byzantine author from Theophanes through to Niketas Choniates.\(^92\) Rather the primary goal here is to draw the reader’s attention to the main Byzantine accounts for the study of Byzantium and the Armenians. The Greek sources that are most useful for the study of Byzantium and the Armenians can be divided into three main groups: first, the range of historical works produced by the courtly circle of Constantine VII; second, the writers of the late eleventh century including Michael Attaleiates and John Skylitzes; and third, the history of Nikephoros Bryennios and the Alexiad of Anna Komnene.\(^93\) All of these sources were written from a distinctly Constantinopolitan viewpoint, with the possible

---

\(^92\) The range of Byzantine primary texts used within this thesis extends beyond that of the chronological framework. This is to provide as wide a range as possible of identity indicators used within Byzantine historiography.
\(^93\) This does not mean however, that sources outside of these three groups will be ignored. Rather, they will be addressed where relevant/necessary.
exception of Michael Attaleiates, whose work will be discussed later. However, before one can tackle these three particular groups of Byzantine historians one must turn to arguably the most influential writer within the ‘middle’ Byzantine period: Theophanes the Confessor.

Theophanes’ chronicle covers the period from 284/5 to 813, and was a deliberate continuation of the work of George Synkellos, which had in turn covered the period from the beginning of the world down to the accession of Diocletian (284-305). Mango and Scott have commented that ‘[t]he combined chronicles ... represent the most ambitious effort of Byzantine historiography with a view to offering a systematic account of the human past’.94 It is this legacy that prompted later Byzantine chroniclers to continue from 813, where Theophanes’ original chronicle ended, down to their own time to honour and preserve the tradition of this method of historiography. This is specifically evident in the identification of Theophanes by John Skylitzes who described it as the ‘best compendium of history’ before his own Synopsis.95 Yet Theophanes is little used in this thesis for two reasons: first, his limited commentary on Armenian assimilation into the Byzantine Empire; second, the Chronographia lies some fifty years outside this thesis’s timeframe, which is understandable, as Theophanes ends his history with the downfall of Michael I (811-813). There will be occasions in when Theophanes will be directly referenced (one particular instance will assist in developing the ‘Assimilation model’ below), but otherwise these are few and far between. Rather, one must look to the historians of the

---

tenth century who will be utilised to a far greater extent in examining assimilation in the mid-ninth through to the early tenth century.

The courtly circle of Constantine VII Porphyrogennetos produced a whole array of historical works, including but not limited to De Administrando Imperio (DAI), De Thematibus, De Ceremoniis, alongside Theophanes Continuatus, the Vita Basilii and Joseph Genesios’s On Imperial Reigns. These sources are excellent founts of information regarding Armenian assimilation and the relationship between Byzantium and Armenia for three specific reasons. First, the histories produced within this circle attempted to continue from where Theophanes finished and are the main historical accounts of the early Macedonian dynasty, from their Armenian origins to their claiming of the throne. The second is that the sources themselves were written at the very centre of the Empire and reflect both official and more traditional views of Byzantine identity and foreign policy than those on the frontiers; indeed, the De Administrando specifically covers the neighbours of the Empire in the form of advice for the future emperor Romanos II. Third, these sources occasionally give us an insight into how the authors themselves interpreted the identity of those peoples who had found themselves in different parts of the Empire as a result of the policy of population movements, specifically the Armenian settlements in Byzantine Macedonia. So, let us take a look at these three points in turn.

Constantine VII Porphyrogennetos commissioned a whole series of works during his reign. The two strands of works that are of particular use to this thesis are the histories and ‘manuals’ created to advise the emperor’s son, Romanos II, when he ascended the throne.96 The ‘manuals’ had specific themes such as on the nature of

96 Although many of the works have been accredited to Constantine personally, it has been convincingly argued that the emperor was significant in collecting all of the materials required, rather than actually writing the entirety of the works.
imperial governance: the *De Thematibus*; foreign policy and details on the peoples surrounding the Empire: *De Administrando*; and another dedicated to courtly ceremony: *De Ceremoniis*. Constantine was also fascinated with history. He was deeply interested on the origins of his ancestors, particularly his grandfather Basil I, but also in continuing the history-writing tradition that had largely been dormant since the completion of Theophanes’ *Chronographia*. Constantine was able to fulfil these two desires in his reign, and the first was the history of his grandfather’s life, known as the *Vita Basilii*. The *Vita* is a highly important source in the study of Armenian assimilation into Byzantium, as it gives evidence of assimilation in action, specifically how Basil I’s ancestors were able to remove their Armenian identity indicators and come to be seen as *Romaioi*. There must be a note of caution however: the actual events surrounding Basil’s ancestors’ arrival in Byzantine Macedonia were nothing like those described in the *Vita Basilii*. Rather it is now believed that Basil’s ancestors arrived either during the population transfers of Constantine V (741-775) or Leo IV (775-780), information we can gather from the work of Michael the Syrian. Despite the fabrication of Basil’s heritage, what these sources allow us to study is how identity and subsequent assimilation worked, or was at least supposed to work according to the view from the courtly circle surrounding Constantine VII.

---


99. Further information on Michael the Syrian can be found below. It should be noted that there is a discrepancy on the details of which groups of people were involved in this transfer. The Syriac edition only mentions Syrians as part of the transfer, while the Armenian edition mentions Armenians and Syrians (both French translations). Michael the Syrian, *Chronique*, iii, VII.i, 2; Michael the Syrian, *The Chronicle of Michael the Great*, trans. V. Langlois (Venice: San Lazzaro degli Armeni, 1868), 260, 262; Theophanes, ed. 452, trans. 623; Charanis, *Armenians in the Byzantine Empire*, 15-16.

100. Further investigation into the evidence from the *Vita* can be found in Chapter Two.
Yet Constantine also required a history to link the *Vita Basilii* to the *Chronographia* of Theophanes, for the period 813-867, covering the reigns of Leo V the Armenian, Michael II, Theophilos, and Michael III. While this ‘need’ is not directly relevant to the study of the Byzantium and Armenia, it provides some context as to why the *Vita Basilii* was written; to glorify Basil I’s reign, justify his deposition of a ruling emperor in Michael III and degrade Michael’s moral character. The two works commissioned for this task were Theophanes Continuatus,¹⁰¹ and *On the reign of the emperors* by Joseph Genesios. The most relevant section of Theophanes Continuatus is Book Six, which still remains published only in the Bonn edition of 1838, and untranslated. Book Six has a parallel history in the works of Symeon the Logothete, namely the third section of the so-called Chronicle of Pseudo-Symeon. This section covers the years 913-948 and holds vital information regarding the lives of many of the assimilated Armenian aristocracy who carved out careers in the Byzantine military.¹⁰²

The work of Joseph Genesios, who was commissioned to write a history of the years 813-867, covers the same timeframe as Books I-IV of Theophanes Continuatus.¹⁰³ In a similar way to the *Vita*, the work of Genesios comes down to us through one single manuscript from the eleventh century, with a modern critical edition appearing in the CFHB series in 1978 and an English translation from Anthony Kaldellis in 1998.¹⁰⁴ Genesios’ history frequently reports on the deeds of his grandfather, a relatively obscure official named Constantine Maniakes or ‘the
patrician’ (before the adoption of a family name ‘Genesios’), who was a first-generation Armenian immigrant. There are some questions surrounding the authenticity of the events concerning Constantine that it records but it is beyond doubt that he had personal interactions with the young Basil before he become Emperor. This fascinating episode of Genesios’ grandfather’s life and his assimilation into the Byzantine Empire will be investigated fully in the following chapter. The two works of Genesios and Theophanes Continuatus must be used together to gain detailed information on the careers of multiple individuals of Armenian stock.

The other literary sources produced by Constantine’s scholarly circle were manuals of instruction for later use, and to these one must turn to examine attitudes emanating from the centre towards the surrounding powers and commentary on Byzantine identity. The De Administrando Imperio was written on the orders of Constantine VII by unnamed officials, and survives in four manuscripts, with the modern critical edition produced by Romilly Jenkins and Gyula Moravesik in 1949, and a revised edition published in 1967. The work was meant as a handbook through which Constantine could advise his son, Romanos II (959-963), on the peoples that surrounded the Empire, and how best to conduct foreign policy. The most relevant section of this work for the purposes of this thesis are the four chapters dedicated to the policy in Caucasia, chapters 43-46, while also potentially offering reflections on recent events for the amusement of Constantine himself. As has been discussed before in the introduction, modern historians have misinterpreted these chapters as some future programme, or dynastic foreign policy, of the Macedonian house towards

Caucasia which they have used to explain why portions of western Armenia were annexed by Basil and his successors.\textsuperscript{106} This thesis refutes these claims. What the \textit{De administrando imperio} actually reveals is how the Empire viewed Armenia and its inhabitants, while also warning the young Romanos of mistakes that had been made by previous administrations.

To side-step slightly, the tenth century was also a time where several military texts were produced, and these offer important insights into the role of the Armenian soldier. It is important to remember that the institution of the army does not only tell us about the assimilation of the aristocracy, but also the role of the rank-and-file soldiers, many of whom were Armenian, particularly on the eastern frontier. Here our primary source evidence changes in style, moving away from the flowing narratives of the Byzantine court writers, to the more descriptive military manuals that outline in rather regimented detail the expected stratagems and training of Byzantine military forces. The manuals are especially valuable as they provide some precious details on the Armenian rank-and-file who came to dominate the ethnic composition of the Byzantine army, specifically on the eastern frontier. This is further assisted by the information incorporated within the works commissioned by the courtly circle in the mid-tenth century, all of which highlight the importance of the army in the mechanics of assimilation.\textsuperscript{107}

\textsuperscript{106} Shepard, ‘Constantine VII, Caucasian openings’, 24; Garsoian, ‘Byzantine Annexation’, 188.  
While Byzantine historiography continued apace through the tenth century, many of the first-hand accounts are lost, particularly the sources on the reign of Basil II, and it is to the later eleventh-century works one must turn to gain a glimpse as to what the lost sources were alongside the recording of the events that led to the collapse of Byzantine Anatolia in the 1070s and 1080s. It should be noted at this juncture that the famous work of Michael Psellos, the *Chronographia*, does not feature heavily in this thesis, for Psellos’ interest and level of detail falls dramatically in quality when discussing events on the eastern frontier. Psellos notes laconically that during the reign of Constantine IX Monomachos (1042–1055) ‘... a considerable part of Armenia was annexed. Certain kings of that country were deposed and forced to acknowledge Roman suzerainty’,¹⁰⁸ as such revealing him as ill-informed and uninterested with the events in the east. As such, this work will not be expanded upon any further.

The first work of the late eleventh century to be assessed, which was written surprisingly late in the century, is the *History* of Michael Attaleiates, which covers events from 1034–c.1079. The *History* survives in two manuscripts with only one providing the full text.¹⁰⁹ The most recent critical edition was published in 2002 by Inmaculada Pérez Martín with an accompanying Spanish translation. The edition used in this thesis is that of Krallis and Kaldellis who provide an English translation from Martín’s Greek text. Attaleiates came from the southern coast of Anatolia, most likely in or around Attaleia, but pursued a career in law in the capital.¹¹⁰ His life and outlook would have been dominated by the capital, had he not been chosen as head of the

---


military tribunal for the three campaigns of Romanos IV in 1068, 1069, and 1071.\footnote{Attaleiates, 17.1, 189.} The \textit{History} provides us with an in-depth primary account of the Byzantine eastern frontier in the 1060s and 1070s, offering a rare account of military matters drawn from the author’s own personal experiences. While the purpose of Attaleiates’ work was to praise the brilliance of the otherwise rather lacklustre emperor Nikephoros III Botaneiates, the historian came to respect, then support, Romanos IV and largely became his apologist. The coverage of the earlier reigns in the narrative is relatively brief in content and detail, while the accounts of Constantine X Doukas, Romanos IV Diogenes, and Michael VII Doukas are rich in detail and commentary. Michael offers some reflection on the nature of Byzantine identity, and the religious divide between the ‘Romans’ within the army of Romanos IV, and the Armenians who served as soldiers. Yet the role and definition of the label ‘Armenian’ varies in Attaleiates’ account, ranging from styling them as heretics and defectors to admiration for their bravery and skill at arms.\footnote{For wider discussion on Attaleiates’ view of the ‘foreigner’ see: Krallis, \textit{Michael Attaleiates}, 157-169, esp. 158, n.151. Examples - Attaleiates: (heretics) 16.7, 177; (defection) 17.12, 207; (bravery) 20.14, 277.} His characterization of Philaretos Brachamios is a fascinating point of comparison with Matthew of Edessa, a subject that will be expanded upon in Chapter Five.

The compendium or \textit{Synopsis of Histories} of John Skylitzes is the other main work of the eleventh century that needs to be considered in greater depth. It covers the years 811 to 1057, although a ‘Continuation’ (or second edition) exists which extends the work up to 1079. The work of Skylitzes was widely copied in Byzantine times, and survives in the present day in numerous manuscripts. The modern critical edition comes from Hans Thurn, published in 1973 in the CFHB, who used at least nine manuscripts containing the entirety of the text, alongside other manuscripts.
containing only extracts and the *Chronographia* of George Kedrenos ‘which includes
the entire text of the *Synopsis* of Skylitzes almost unchanged’, as noted by Bernard
Flusin in the English translation by John Wortley appearing in 2010.\(^{113}\) Skylitzes has
attracted a great deal of attention from modern scholarship, yet his use for the specific
issue of Byzantine and Armenian identity is problematic, as his work has been widely
accepted to be a compilation of other sources, some slavishly copied.\(^{114}\) Holmes in
particular highlights the problems concerning the relationship between Skylitzes’ own
narrative and the variety of sources that he used in compiling the *Synopsis*.\(^{115}\) There
are also further issues one has to contend with when using the *Synopsis*, namely the
accuracy of events that are geographically distant from the Constantinopolitan base of
Skylitzes’ sources.\(^{116}\) Some exceptions can be made.\(^{117}\) Let us briefly turn to the sources
Skylitzes may have used to highlight the questions regarding the consistency of the
*Synopsis*.

In his preface, Skylitzes lists the sources he used in compiling his history,
although without giving us any details on the extent to which he used them. They are
as follows:

Theodore Daphnopates, Niketas the Paphlagonian, Joseph Genesios and
Manuel ... Nikephoros the Deacon from Phrygia, Leo from Asia, Theodore,
bishop of Side and his nephew of the same name who presided over the church
of Sebasteia, Demitrios, bishop of Kyzikos and the monk John the Lydian.\(^{118}\)

\(^{113}\) Bernard Flusin, *Synopsis of Byzantine History*, xxx.

\(^{114}\) Treadgold, *Middle Byzantine Historians*, 329; Flusin, *Synopsis of Byzantine History*, xii.

\(^{115}\) Holmes, *Basil II*, 67.

\(^{116}\) The incorrect identification of the relationship between Gagik II of Ani and Yovhannes-Smbat is a
classic example of this: Skylitzes, ed. 435, trans. 410. Although there are occasions where Skylitzes
uses sources outside of the capital – see note below.

\(^{117}\) Namely Skylitzes’ account on events in Armenia in the late 1040s, see: Jonathan Shepard, ‘Scylitzes
on Armenia in the 1040s, and the role of Catacalon Cecaumenus’, *REArm* XI (1975-1976), 269-311.

\(^{118}\) Skylitzes, ed. 3-4, trans. 2.
Skylitzes comments on their perceived weaknesses, at least for those named first:

These all set themselves their own goals: maybe the glorification of an emperor, the censure of a patriarch, or to extol a friend.\textsuperscript{119}

While Skylitzes is setting out as his primary aim to record history in the manner of George Synkellos and Theophanes, and to avoid the pitfalls of the subsequent histories between 813 and his own present day, what matters most for this thesis is how his sources influenced his recording of Byzantine and Armenian identity. We have already discussed above the works concerning the ninth and tenth centuries, yet it is the reign of Basil II that warrants attention, as Skylitzes’ narrative is often the only reliable history in Greek. The source of Theodore of Sebasteia has been previously suggested by scholars for underpinning Skylitzes’ account of Basil’s reign, and if this were true it would produce an interesting perspective. Theodore was the bishop of Sebasteia from c.997-c.1030 and wrote an account that may have been entitled \textit{History of the Lord Basil the Porphyrogennetos}, though this questionable.\textsuperscript{120} Yet Theodore’s role as the bishop of Sebasteia would have given him personal experience of religious tension, and most certainly religious discussion, with the sizeable Armenian community in the city and surrounding districts, as is demonstrated by the Armenian sources, namely Stephen of Taron.\textsuperscript{121} But how does this filter through to Skylitzes’ narrative? The answer is, sadly, not at all; whether Theodore reflected on the environment in which he was living within his work it is hard to tell. But it may at least explain the source for

\textsuperscript{119} Skylitzes, ed. 4, trans. 2; Treadgold reads φίλος as ‘one dear to him’ – signifying a familial relation; Treadgold, \textit{Middle Byzantine Historians}, 177.
\textsuperscript{120} Treadgold, \textit{Middle Byzantine Historians}, 248; Holmes, \textit{Basil II}, 96.
\textsuperscript{121} A particular instance as recorded by: Stephen of Taron, \textit{Patmut ʻiwn tiezerakan}, ed. S. Malxaseanc‘ (St Petersburg: publisher unknown, 1885); English translation: Timothy Greenwood, \textit{The Universal History of Stepannos Taronets‘}, Oxford Studies in Byzantium (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), III, XX, ed. 201. trans. 252. The event in question is placed while Skleros was in Baghdad (980-986), this would be far too early for Theodore’s instalment as bishop, see: Treadgold, \textit{Middle Byzantine Historians}, 248, for discussion of his age. Further discussion of this episode is found below and in Chapter Two.
Basil’s expedition against Georgia in 1021-1022, and the description of the Xiphias-Phokas revolt of 1022.

Some attention must be paid towards the work known as *Skylitzes Continuatus*, or rather the second edition of Skylitzes’ *Synopsis* that continues the narrative to 1079.\(^\text{122}\) It has generally been agreed that Skylitzes was the author of the continuation, and that the motivation for Skylitzes to extend his work most likely came from his discovery of Michael Psellos’ *Chronographia* and Michael Attaleiates’ *History*, the latter of which the continuation closely follows.\(^\text{123}\) While this begs the question as to why Skylitzes did not feel confident enough to continue his history with events through which he lived, or at least up to the accession of Alexios I, as claimed in the title, this is not within the remit of this investigation, and it has to be concluded that the work is largely a reworking of Attaleiates and of limited use for the study of Armenian alienation in the Byzantine Empire during the period 1057-1079.

The last Byzantine sources to be included here are those written by Nikephoros Bryennios and his wife Anna Komnene in the early-to-mid twelfth century. Bryennios’ *History* will be used less than Anna’s *Alexiad*, as the two are undeniably connected and the *Alexiad* is arguably the stronger and more useful work in the study of the Byzantine eastern frontier in the period 1070-1098. The title of Bryennios’ work was *Material for History* and seems to have been an original attempt to write an account of the events from 1057 (the end of Skylitzes’ first edition) through to 1081.\(^\text{124}\) It has come down to

\(^{122}\) Skylitzes Continuatus: Ἡ Συνέχεια τῆς χρονογραφείας τοῦ Ἰωάννου Σκυλίτζη, ed. E. T. Tsolakes (Thessaloniki, 1968).

\(^{123}\) Attaleiates is missing from the preface where Skylitzes lists his sources in the first edition. Treadgold supports the argument that the author of the Continuation was Skylitzes, although he errs on the side of caution: Treadgold, *Middle Byzantine Historians*, 331, n. 95 and 338, n. 126.

us in only one extant manuscript which is corrupted in places.125 Bryennios provides a slightly different narrative to that of Attaleiates, whose history Bryennios does not appear to have been aware of, and it corroborates Skylitzes’ second edition, as discussed above.126 The work’s focus is on the period from the accession of Romanos IV to the fall of Nikephoros III from power in 1081, and sadly the work does not provide a huge amount of information concerning the Armenians in the eastern provinces in the 1070s, with some exceptions surrounding the obscure events in Antioch in 1075. Rather, it is to the superior work of Anna Komnene that this evaluation must turn, for she provides interesting details on the collapse of Byzantine authority in the east despite the obvious bias towards the actions of her father, Alexios I Komnenos.

Anna’s Alexiad is quite simply extraordinary in that it is written by the daughter of a Byzantine Emperor reflecting on her personal experiences, and those of first-hand witnesses, to some of the most extraordinary events in Byzantine history. As might be expected, Anna has attracted a lot of attention from Byzantine scholars, some resorting to questionable theories over whether she did indeed write the Alexiad.127 The value of the Alexiad as a source is reflected in the recent critical edition produced in the CFHB series, while an English translation has been readily available to Anglophone scholars since the 1950s. It too has undergone recent revision.128

126 Treadgold, Middle Byzantine Historians, 348.
The *Alexiad* is not a simple continuation of Bryennios’ work; it is a direct imitation of the epic poems from antiquity cast in a posthumous panegyric literary format for her father, Alexios I Komnenos (1081-1118).\(^{129}\) The account provides some dubious details on the events in the east. Although it should be noted that her account is skewed in the portrayal of Alexios, in order to hide his contribution to the collapse of Byzantine authority in Anatolia through his diplomacy and cooperation with Turkish warlords. Anna’s account provides a few details of the career of Philaretos Brachamios, and can be used in conjunction with Matthew of Edessa and Michael the Syrian to gain a better insight to the events of the period 1071-1098.

**Armenian**

The Armenian sources grant Byzantinists (and historians of the Crusades) with familiar, but different, accounts of events in Armenia, Byzantium, and northern Syria, all from a Christian perspective and with a historiographical foundation shared with the Greek sources. This approach must, however, be used with great caution, for the Armenian historiographical tradition has suffered a great deal by comparison with Byzantine historiography, as argued by Tara Andrews in her assessment of Matthew of Edessa’s chronicle.\(^{130}\) Rather, one must attempt to understand the Armenian tradition within its own context, before one can utilise the Armenian primary sources in a comparative approach for the study of Byzantium and the Armenians. This thesis uses three Armenian narrative accounts from the ninth to the eleventh centuries those by: Stephen of Taron (*Asolik*), Aristakes Lastivertc’i, and Matthew of Edessa. These works occasionally overlap, but most importantly they all came from the same

---

\(^{129}\) The imitation I refer to is that of the Homeric epics. As Peter Frankopan notes in his introduction to the *Alexiad*: ‘It is in many ways entirely unrepresentative of the medieval Greek canon of historical narrative, for it is an epic history in style, scope and intention; its title is a reference to that of Homer’s *Iliad*.’ *The Alexiad*, ix.

historiographical tradition and need to be considered within this context, while also highlighting the individualistic tendencies of the authors.

The *Universal History* of Step’anos Tarōneći (Stephen of Taron) is the earliest of the three Armenian texts that this work will be drawing on. Completed in the year 1004/5 the *Universal History* offers an Armenian perspective on the expansion of the Empire to the borders of Armenian lands, and the insecurity placed on Armenians in the face of a revitalised Christian power in the region. And it is on this last point that one must provide some contextual background to the world in which Stephen lived and how this shaped his understanding of the events of his time.

The details surrounding Stephen’s life are tenuous at best, and the debates surrounding the dates of his life can be found in greater detail in Greenwood’s new translation of the *Universal History*. What can be summarised is that Stephen was born around the middle of the tenth century, and died at some point after the completion of his work in 1004/5: therefore placing the years in which he was actively writing between c.950-c.1040. This was a period of dramatic change for the inhabitants of the region Stephen heralded from, Taron. The most western principality of the Armenian realms, Taron was ruled by an extension of the Bagratid family, whose senior branch ruled from Ani as the *Shahanshah*. Yet, in the 960s it was annexed by the Byzantine Empire, though this was a voluntary annexation countenanced by the ruling family who were resettled within the Empire and whose family went on to have successful careers in the next couple of centuries. But it was not just political change that was occurring in the region of Taron. The expansion of the Armenian Apostolic

---

132 This is simply a working range, and there have been some suggestion that Stephen was alive in the 1040s, although Greenwood has his doubts.
133 The figures of Grigor and Bagrat of Taron, and their subsequent careers, feature heavily in chapters Two and Three.
Church westwards was unfolding before Stephen’s very eyes, finding areas of new growth unparalleled since antiquity and starting to interact more closely with the church of Constantinople.

Yet, it is of great importance to understand the historiographical tradition within which Stephen was writing his history, what motivated him, and what his sources were. Earlier Armenian historians had generally structured their narratives around two corresponding themes: first, an impious foreign persecutor from the east (Persian/Sassanian, or later Muslim) oppressing ‘the second theme’ a Christian Armenian population seeking autonomy and martyrdom.\(^{134}\) By Stephen’s time, however, the model had changed, and the only perceived threat to Armenian identity and autonomy came from the west: Byzantium. And it is this new perspective that can be seen through the other two main Armenian sources that this thesis uses, Aristakes and Matthew of Edessa. Within the chronological context of Armenian historiography, Stephen’s work bridges the narrative gap between the History of Yovhannes Drasxanakertc’i, which ends in 924, and the History of Aristakes which opens in the year 1000.\(^{135}\) Stephen was very much aware of the History of Yovhannes Drasxanakertc’i, whereas Aristakes makes specific mention in his History of Stephen’s work.\(^{136}\) As to the sources for Stephen’s work, it has been argued that an unnamed Byzantine source, identified by Greenwood as an ‘imperial Byzantine history’, was utilised for the composition of Book III, which covers the tenth century in detail.\(^{137}\)

\(^{134}\) Stephen of Taron, The Universal History, 1.


\(^{136}\) Stephen of Taron, I, I, ed. 7, trans. 100; Aristakes, 2, ed. 26, trans. 8.

\(^{137}\) Greenwood’s discussion of this unnamed source can be found at: Stephen of Taron, The Universal History, 57-61.
Despite this thesis drawing heavily upon Book III of Stephen’s *Universal History* for the chapter on the ninth and tenth centuries, one must briefly address the work as a whole before analysing in depth the historical value of the source. The *Universal History* is divided into three parts, with the divisions between the books based on significant events in Armenian history: from the creation to the accession of Tiridates III (287), the second book continuing to the resumption of the independent Kingdom of Armenia in 884 with the coronation of Ashot I Bagratuni, and the third to 1004/5. While there was precedent for dividing historical narratives into three parts within Armenian historiography, the internal structuring of the *Universal History* was unique within this tradition, in that Book III contained half of the entire work with unparalleled focus and detail.\(^{138}\) It is here that we must turn our attention towards Stephen’s primary sources to explain this phenomenon. Greenwood has demonstrated that Book III was structured around extracts from a single text, though not from an Armenian perspective, but rather an unnamed Byzantine primary source.\(^{139}\) This is revealed by certain sections paying special attention to events within the Empire and covering atypical themes for Armenian sources in recording civil wars, succession crises, revolts, and problems in the Balkans. What is clear is that Stephen was wary of the Byzantines, particularly concerning the independence of the Apostolic Church, but he also harboured a mistrust of Basil. As Greenwood notes, the heavy inclusion of setbacks for Basil in his early reign play a prominent part in Stephen’s recording of events in Byzantium; and while Stephen resists from openly criticising Basil, he also does not praise him. What is clear is that Stephen had mixed feelings about the

\(^{138}\) Stephen of Taron, *Universal History*, 32–33.
\(^{139}\) Stephen of Taron, *Universal History*, 57.
Byzantines, but this does not stop him from utilising an unnamed Byzantine primary source.\textsuperscript{140}

We are at a loss to which Byzantine source Stephen used, but we can be certain that it definitely did not survive in its original form down to the present day. It is entirely possible that the same sources used by Skylitzes for the period 963-1025 were used by Stephen.\textsuperscript{141} As Greenwood summaries '[this unnamed source] provide[d] the narrative and chronological structure for book III, around which other entries are arranged'.\textsuperscript{142} Whatever the case, Stephen did not hold Basil II in high regard, in contrast to later Armenian sources, and this could partly be down to the unnamed source that Stephen utilised holding pro-Skleros views. The fact that Stephen had access to this source highlights the availability of Byzantine imperial histories on the fringes of the Empire; and indeed shows us a world of greater interconnectivity between the Byzantine and Armenian political and cultural milieus in the late-tenth century.

However, it is events within the Armenian world that are of interest to this thesis, as they offer us some indication of how Armenian identity was constructed in this period: this analysis can be found below. While Stephen’s \textit{Universal History} ends in 1004/5, the narrative from the Armenian tradition was continued by Aristakes Lastivertc’i in the \textit{History Regarding the Sufferings Occasioned by Foreign Peoples Living Around Us}. We must now turn to this text and assess its historicity and comparative usefulness for the events of the eleventh century.

\textsuperscript{140} Stephen of Taron, \textit{Universal History}, 60-61.
\textsuperscript{141} As discussed above, the works of Theodore of Side and Theodore of Sebastia may have been entirely copied or heavily borrowed in Skylitzes’ \textit{Synopsis}; Holmes is a little more cautious than Treadgold in specifying the exact sources: Holmes, \textit{Basil II}, 272; Treadgold, \textit{Middle Byzantine Historians}, 247-258.
\textsuperscript{142} Stephen of Taron, \textit{Universal History}, 57.
Aristakes Lastivertc’i wrote his history of the Armenian people during the period 1072-1079, while the work itself details the events of 1000-1071.143 Not much is known about the author’s origins. We do know that Aristakes was a vardapet and his world view was heavily influenced by his religious beliefs and that he saw the torments of the Armenian peoples during his lifetime as part of God’s plan. As noted by Bedrosian, the translator of Aristakes into English, the author did not have a patron, nor was he writing for a noble family, which was unusual in Armenian historiography.144 Aristakes views the events of the eleventh century with horror, and blames ecclesiastical and secular authorities alike for dividing the Armenian people and allowing her people to scatter. While the theme of division within Armenian society is later echoed by Matthew, Aristakes does not go to the same extent in blaming the Byzantines whole-heartedly for their actions during the eleventh century.145 Rather Aristakes’ perception of historical causality is through the sins of the Armenian people, mimicking the Jews of the Old Testament. While there are some issues regarding dating accuracy within Aristakes’ work, it is highly important in seeking to understand the events of the eleventh century from a balanced Armenian viewpoint.

Aristakes must be evaluated within the historical context of his time, and this is evident even in the title of his work. By the 1070s the Armenians had been scattered throughout the immediate geographical area, although the movement of the Armenian nobility has been more prominently recorded in comparison with other social groups. The last Bagratuni king of Ani lived in exile in Cappadocia, while the Katholikos, the

145 The question regarding the shared sources of Matthew is addressed below.
head of the Apostolic Church, resided on the lands of the Artsruni princes of Vaspurakan around Sebasteia. Furthermore, Aristakes was aware of the Byzantine defeat at Manzikert, and could see the rapid unravelling of Byzantine authority in the east, alongside increasing Turkoman raids through Armenia into north-eastern Anatolia. It is entirely reasonable to question Aristakes’ perspective as a historian writing with the benefit of hindsight and as such shaping his narrative around the final juncture as he knew it; but it is nevertheless necessary to look further into his understanding of the world in which he lived.

In a colophon to Aristakes’ history, which was translated by Robert Bedrosian into English, one finds a curious case of historical causality that is fundamental in our understanding of Armenian historiography in this period and how Aristakes understood the events of his time.\textsuperscript{146} In 1033/4 either the appearance of a comet or a spectacular total eclipse of the sun was seen across Christendom, and was interpreted by some to mark a millennium since the crucifixion of Christ and the first sign of the second coming.\textsuperscript{147} While it has been noted that the prophecies of Yovhannes Kozern, an eleventh-century vardapet who declared that Satan had been released on earth and that the Armenians would suffer terribly before the end, influenced Matthew of Edessa, Aristakes, or at least the colophon, offers its own interpretation.\textsuperscript{148} The description of the comet’s passing, ‘the quickly-moving, beautiful, luminous element which faced earthward ... then became weaker than the [distant] stars and merely its outline was visible’, became a metaphor for the decline and destruction of the Armenian people, kingdoms, and Church:

\textsuperscript{146} Aristakes, ed. 142, trans. 173-174.
\textsuperscript{147} Andrews, \textit{Matt’ēos Ürhayec’l}, 14, 30-37.
\textsuperscript{148} It must be noted that the author of the colophon may have been aware of Kozern’s prophecies and is just paraphrasing here.
Step by step the prophecy of its eclipse became actualized, because afterwards our enemies attacked us and made us wear the dress of mourning and sorrow; and joy quit the land.\textsuperscript{149}

It is through the interpretation of this cosmic event, and the prophecies that came from it, that Aristakes, and later writers, were to understand the causality of the cataclysmic collapse of Byzantium and the Armenian kingdoms in the eleventh century. This should not detract from the historical strengths of Aristakes. His account is extremely important in understanding the Armenian perspective on key episodes of Byzantine-Armenian relations. A comparison with Byzantine and Syriac/Arabic sources highlights the importance of Aristakes as a source for the eleventh century. In many ways it is a great shame that the work does not continue for longer, as one must rely on the account of Matthew of Edessa for the period from 1072 for an Armenian perspective, despite the inherent weaknesses with Matthew’s source material and analysis.

The second Armenian chronicle for the events of the eleventh century is the aforementioned Matthew of Edessa (although his account does stretch back into the tenth century), written most likely in Edessa between 1130 and 1137.\textsuperscript{150} One must first acknowledge the world in which Matthew lived, for the geo-political climate was fused with ethno-religious identity politics, something that dominates the language of Matthew’s chronicle regarding Byzantine-Armenian relations and that must be understood before the source can be put to use in understanding the late eleventh-century developments that affected the Armenian community in Cilicia and Syria.

\textsuperscript{149} Aristakes, ed. 142, trans. 173-174.

\textsuperscript{150} Andrews, \textit{Matt’ēos Urhayec’l}, 1.
Matthew was born during one of the most turbulent periods in Armenian history, his city of origin, while supporting a dominant Armenian population, was in reality a melting pot of the different peoples that inhabited northern Syria at the time, Syrians, Arabs, Turks, Byzantine, and Armenians. The city of Edessa had found itself on the immediate frontiers of the Christian and Islamic worlds following the expansion of Byzantine influence during the ‘Age of Conquest’ and Basil II’s reorganisation of the region during his reign. The city fell under direct Byzantine control in the 1030s when the independently-minded general George Maniakes seized the opportunity to capture the first Christian city. The city had remained under Byzantine governorship until the fateful battle of Manzikert in August 1071. In the immediate aftermath, Byzantine imperial authority unravelled at an alarming pace, Edessa was caught between the control of Byzantine separatists and agents of the Seljuk Sultan, eventually leading to a tenuous peace held together by T’oros, an Armenian who was connected with other Armenian independent lordships in the region through marriage and apparent allegiance to the Byzantine Empire, who held the courtly title of Kouropalates. This brief summary does not truly do justice to the complexities in the region, but it does highlight the fractured nature of the world in which Matthew grew up in, along with the identity politics that affected the various groups in the region. But there was to be one last major player in the region: the Franks, and the Latin kingdoms established during and after the First Crusade. While at first the Franks who took over Edessa were initially seen by many Armenians as liberators and protectors against the Byzantines and Turks, they too came to be viewed in the same light as the Byzantine-Armenian warlords of the late eleventh century, which is reflected in Matthew’s narrative.

151 For a full analysis of the capture of Edessa by Maniakes see below in Chapter Three.
152 At least according to Matthew’s chronicle: Matthew of Edessa, II, 105, 162.
It is in this light of a confusing and fractured geo-political world that Matthew’s work must be understood, but the nature of the Chronicle in itself needs a great deal of attention, along with caution, in understanding what Matthew’s intended goals were when recording the events of the period 952/3–1128/9. Matthew was the heir to the Armenian history-writing tradition dating back to the conversion of Armenia under King Tiridates III by St Gregory the Illuminator, although Matthew recognised his own ‘ignorance’ in comparison with his forebears, for he had not attained the rank of *vardapet*, the ecclesiastical scholars of the Apostolic Church.¹⁵³ And it was in this tradition that Matthew understood his role in recording the events of his time, while following the trajectory of Armenian history-writing by those who came before him.¹⁵⁴ But Matthew’s interpretation of history was just as much influenced by his understanding of his own surroundings as it was based on the prophecies of one Yovhannes Kozern.¹⁵⁵ Matthew could see a clear trajectory of events from his own time that matched Kozern’s warnings; some historians have suggested that the arrival of the First Crusade was the very motivation for Matthew to begin his chronicle so that the momentous events of his time were not forgotten.¹⁵⁶ Yet, Matthew had a further motivation to write his work and that was to illustrate his world view. In the words of Andrews:

[Matthew’s] goal was to illustrate the truth of the Biblical conception of Armenian history: God’s children had strayed from righteousness; they were to

---

¹⁵⁴ This tradition is briefly, but ably summarised in: Andrews, *Matt’ēos Uṙhayec’i*, 12-13, and in greater depth: 23-27.
¹⁵⁵ A new translation of the two prophecies can be found in: Andrews, *Matt’ēos Uṙhayec’i*, 184-211; a similar account can be found in the Colophon of Aristakes, as discussed above.
be punished for the errors of their ways, but could look forward to eventual redemption through God’s mercy.\textsuperscript{157}

Alongside Matthew’s goals, one must assess, as previously with the Byzantine authors, the written sources used by Matthew for the information on events outside of his geographical range and timeframe. Book One covers the events from 951-1051, and is primarily concerned with the relations and interactions of the Byzantines and Armenians, becoming specifically more focused geographically with the eastern campaign of Basil II in 1021/22 and the annexations of the kingdoms of Vaspurakan and Ani in 1019 and 1042, respectively. Let us first address the works that Matthew may have used and are still extant today. The first is most obviously that of Aristakes which Andrews argues was used heavily by Matthew’s Chronicle, though this is based on similarity in content, rather than language. Whereas in relation to the tenth century Andrews is notably more sceptical about Matthew’s use of Stephen of Taron’s \textit{Universal History}. There are many areas of difference which indicate that Matthew never came across Stephen’s work, despite similarities in dating errors which exist in both works for the period from the revolt of Bardas Skleros and the death of David III of Tao.\textsuperscript{158} Therefore other sources must have been used by Matthew, or at least employed to a far greater extent than that of Stephen’s work alone. We know of the lost chronicle of Yakob Sanah nec’i, which only exists in fragments, and some scholars believe it to be Matthew’s sole source, whereas others are more sceptical.\textsuperscript{159} Yakob’s work, as far as our fragments reveal, detailed the eastern campaign of Basil II in the 1020s, and this helps to explain Matthew’s extremely positive view of Basil II, detailing events such as the emperor’s supposed ‘secret’ baptism into the Armenian faith,

\textsuperscript{157} Andrews, \textit{Matt’ēos Urhayec’i}, 29.
\textsuperscript{158} Andrews, \textit{Matt’ēos Urhayec’i}, 19-20.
\textsuperscript{159} Arutjunova-Fidajan, ‘L’image de l’empire byzantine’, 17; Andrews, \textit{Matt’ēos Urhayec’i}, 16, although Andrews notes further sources could have contributed.
although Matthew also accused him of warmongering against the Armenian kingdom of Ani and Kars.\textsuperscript{160} Unfortunately there is no evidence to suggest that Matthew used Byzantine sources for the events of the late tenth century (we are left to speculate whether these were the works of Theodore of Sebasteia, or whether Theodore’s and Yakob’s accounts are somehow linked), at least not in the same manner that they were used in Stephen of Taron. Other historians have even suggested that Matthew’s lack of education alone may have prevented him from reading any language other than Armenian.\textsuperscript{161}

The historicity of Matthew’s work strengthens in Book Two, which can primarily be attributed to his sources, whether that is through written record or oral testimony.\textsuperscript{162} Unfortunately we have very little knowledge of what form these sources actually took, and where Matthew was able to access them. As noted by Andrews, the lack of a full critical edition limits our ability to link Matthew with contemporary writers, and also frustrates any attempt to critically analyse linguistic patterns that may help us understand Matthew’s literary sources.\textsuperscript{163} In essence Matthew is not particularly reliable for the study of Armenian relations with the Byzantine Empire in the period 951-1098. This is not altogether surprising as Matthew was writing nearly one hundred years after the events of Book I, and between eighty to fifty years after Book II. As for many of the events in the 1070s and 1080s there are simply no surviving contemporary sources to provide a comparison, one must approach the events reported by Matthew with caution, and always consider the religiously charged identity-politics that shaped his world view.

\textsuperscript{160} Andrews, \textit{Matt’ēos Urhayec’i}, 16; Matthew of Edessa, I, 50, 46.
\textsuperscript{161} Andrews, \textit{Matt’ēos Urhayec’i}, 20.
\textsuperscript{162} See prologue to both Book II and III: Matthew of Edessa, II.1, 83-84, III.1-2, 181-183; Andrews, \textit{Matt’ēos Urhayec’i}, 16.
\textsuperscript{163} Andrews, \textit{Matt’ēos Urhayec’i}, 18.
Georgian

The most prevalent and relevant primary source from the Georgian tradition for this thesis are the Georgian Royal Annals. It is important to note that this work is closely attached to the Armenian chronicle tradition, so much so that it was adapted into Armenian in the thirteenth century, and the shared history of Georgia and Armenia.\textsuperscript{164} The Georgian Royal Annals comprise of six works by four authors, tracing historical events from Georgia’s legendary origins down to the death of King David II the Builder in 1125, and became accessible to western scholars without knowledge of Georgian in 1985 with the publication of Robert Thomson’s translation.\textsuperscript{165} The most directly relevant work within the Georgian Royal Annals is \textit{The Book of K’art’li}, which recounts the reigns of Georgian rulers from the early ninth century down to 1072, and is supposed to have been a combination of several unknown writers. While this thesis does not directly deal with Georgian affairs, or how Georgians assimilated into the Byzantine Empire, the \textit{Annals} provide additional supporting details for events on the eastern frontier where the Greek sources are at their weakest. Events surrounding Basil’s eastern campaigns and relations with Caucasian magnates have a point of comparison within our primary source record, which greatly assists in our understanding of the Byzantine eastern frontier in the tenth and early eleventh centuries.

Syriac/Arabic (Christian)

There are two key sources that originate from outside of the geographical and historiographical confines of the previous two groups, although within the Christian milieu, written in Syriac or Arabic. The two sources provide valuable details on

\textsuperscript{165} Georgian Royal Annals, xxxviii–xxxix.
Armenian and Byzantine relations that cannot be found elsewhere, while also providing details on the Syrian and Armenian frontier that previous works have left out entirely or only mention in passing commentary.

The first work that one must turn to is that of Yahya Ibn Sa‘id, an Arab Christian doctor writing on events in the period 938-1034, although it has been suggested that it may originally have continued to a later date considering the author’s lifespan.\textsuperscript{166} Yahya was most likely to have been born in Fatimid Egypt, but relocated to Antioch during the anti-Christian measures of Caliph Al-Hakim (996-1021) in c.1014/15.\textsuperscript{167} Yahya was a relative of Eutychius of Alexandria, the Orthodox (or Melkite) Patriarch of Alexandria 933-940, who himself had written a universal chronicle called the Nazm al-Jawhar. Yahya was commissioned by an unnamed individual to write a continuation, which he began while still in Egypt and finished after emigrating to Antioch, and it is entirely possible that his continuation went beyond 1034.\textsuperscript{168} The history written by Yahya is an invaluable source for the period covering Byzantine expansion in the east, as it not only provides details of events on the eastern frontier that neither Byzantine or Armenian sources can offer, but also comes from the rare perspective of an Arab-speaking Christian living within the Empire. Many modern historians have found Yahya’s narrative style refreshing in comparison with the neighbouring historiographical traditions; indeed Forsyth notes that ‘[Yahya’s] personal style of chronology appears to owe comparatively little to Byzantine historiography’, which is not entirely surprising, considering Yahya’s upbringing and


\textsuperscript{167} Yahya was able to assimilate quickly into the city with the influence of the Melkite Orthodox elites that lived in the city, see: Asa Eger, ‘(Re)Mapping Medieval Antioch: Urban Transformations from the Early Islamic to the Middle Byzantine Periods’, \textit{DOP}, 67 (2013), 95-135, at 103.

education in Fatimid Egypt.\textsuperscript{169} Indeed, Yahya’s strength becomes apparent by comparison with both Byzantine and Armenian sources, in that Yahya’s history often compliments the omissions found in Skylitzes (and on occasion vis-a-versa). Forsyth points to the rebellion of Bardas Skleros as an example of when these two sources complement each other in forming a coherent narrative.\textsuperscript{170} Although it is more often than not that Yahya offers greater insight and information on the events on the eastern frontier, particularly concerning the events on the eastern frontier for the majority of Basil’s reign. While Yahya’s account can certainly stand on its own, the uncertainty surrounding the sources that Yahya used and even alluded to raises more questions than it answers.

Our main source in Syriac for this period is that of Michael the Syrian (or the Elder), a name coined by Jean-Baptiste Chabot (1860-1948) in his edition of the Syriac manuscript, the only one to date. Michael was not a contemporary of the events in the tenth and eleventh centuries, living from 1126/7 until 1199, but well-travelled around in the region between Melitene, Samosata and Mardin.\textsuperscript{171} His account must be approached with these conditions in mind, and this is why his source is largely used in this thesis to corroborate information gained from other primary materials. As with all of the primary sources in this survey, one must ascertain how Michael’s background influenced his perception of the world. Michael was a man of the Syrian Orthodox Church, becoming its Patriarch in 1166, and was active on the religious-political scene in the Levant for much of the later twelfth century. Michael’s direct involvement with the Syrian Church immediately raises the need to treat religiously-themed identity...

\textsuperscript{169} Forsyth, 27.
\textsuperscript{170} See Forsyth, 384.
politics with caution whenever it arises in his work. The religious tensions that arose in the late eleventh and twelfth centuries do not accurately reflect on earlier periods when religious co-operation was very much more common.

Michael’s most valuable work is the Chronicle, a universal history from Adam down to 1195/6. Michael was writing in the tradition of Eusebius of Caesarea, although he adapted the traditional pattern to suit his own needs.\(^{172}\) The chronicle has 21 books, with 19-21 recording events observed by Michael himself. Michael’s sources have not been thoroughly analysed, and the chronicle is largely a compilation of previous works, some of which are extant or survive in fragments (e.g. Eusebius of Caesarea, Socrates and Theodoret’s Church Histories), but others are completely lost.

Michael was attached to the Armenian communities in northern Syria and Cilicia through their similar theological position and so maintained cordial relations with the Armenian Katholikos Nerses IV Shnorhali (1166-73). This close relationship is illustrated Michael’s attendance at the coronation of King Levon I of Cilicia in 1198 or 1199. In relation to Michael’s chronicle, it exists in two separate Armenian translations/adaptations completed in 1246 and 1248 respectively.\(^{173}\) These were translated by Langlois in 1868 and occasionally are utilised to provide comparative, or in rare cases new, information. It is no surprise that the Armenians receive favourable treatment in comparison with the Jacobite Syrians in Michael’s chronicle, as they both shared anti-Chalcedonian sentiments towards the Byzantines.

It is beyond doubt that Michael had a negative attitude towards the Byzantine Empire, particular in view of religious antagonism and persecution over the


Chalcedonian split in Eastern Christendom, referring to Byzantines as ‘Greeks’ in later sections of his chronicle, rather than calling them ‘Romans’ as he does for his recording of the tenth century.\(^\text{174}\) A further discussion of the differential between these identity labels in a broader context can be found below. Yet Michael’s work does not contain consistent and reliable information on events within the Byzantine Empire, although he does occasionally provide material that cannot be found elsewhere. His presentation of the Byzantines and Armenians, particularly through the medium of identity, is heavily influenced by the identity-politics surrounding the Chalcedonian confessional split between the Imperial and Eastern Orthodox churches.

**Arabic (Muslim)**

There are few sources of particular relevance to Byzantine and Armenian relations in the ninth to eleventh centuries within the Muslim Arabic literary genre, and this makes it even more important to include those that can be utilised. The origins of history writing in the Islamic world were certainly different to those of the Christian worlds of the Orthodox or Miaphysite tradition, however we will not be tracing the development of history-writing in the Muslim world here.\(^\text{175}\) Rather we will turn directly to the most significant and relevant voices in Islamic historiography, and assess how these can assist in the study of the Armenians and the Byzantine Empire in the eleventh century.

The arrival of Turkic tribes in the near-east during the early eleventh century is documented to varying degrees of reliability by a number of different historiographical traditions, most of which viewed the coming of the Turks as a sign from God that the second coming of Christ was near at hand, and therefore the Turks were the vehicle

\(^\text{174}\) Michael the Syrian, *Chronique*, iii, XII.i, 2 and XVI.i, 222.
from which the Apocalypse would be wrought. As one would expect from a semi-nomadic people, the Turks were not especially interested in history, or history-writing.\textsuperscript{176} We therefore do not get a Turkic history or chronicle of the arrival and creation of the Great Seljuk Empire until the mid-twelfth century. This narrative account was written by Ibn al-Athīr, who would title his work \textit{al-Kāmil fī l-Taʾrīkh}. Translated into English as \textit{The Perfect or The Complete [Work] of History}, the chronicle provides a near contemporary account of the events during the late eleventh century from a Muslim perspective, eventually ending with a record of the year 1233. The part of the chronicle that this thesis will be using, is that covering the years 1029-1097, providing a different perspective and source for the collapse of Byzantine authority in Anatolia and Northern-Syria.

Ibn al-Athīr was born on 13 May 1160 in a village north of Mosul, known today as Čizre, and died in Mosul in June 1233 aged seventy-three. His work clearly drew upon existing works, as one would expect from a chronicle that starts from the creation, and it is important to highlight what current scholarship identifies as the sources of the \textit{Kāmil}. The earlier sections of the \textit{Kāmil} were heavily based upon the chronicle of al-Tabarī, an Abbasid Chronicler of the ninth century and one of the earliest historians in the Islamic tradition to cover the expansion of Islam to 915 A.D.\textsuperscript{177} Even though Ibn al-Athīr claimed to have used other sources, he fails to identify them. This has frustrated students the Turkish world and the general near-east, however; some sources have been identified for the period under investigation here. It is quite obvious that the period 1029-1097 was outside the author’s first-hand experience, but

\textsuperscript{176} The most extensive secondary work on the early history of the Seljuk Turks is: Andrew Peacock, \textit{Early Seljuk History: A new interpretation} (London and New York: Routledge, 2010). For the sources on the early period see 6-12.

it is almost impossible that Ibn al-Athîr had access to first-hand accounts of the late eleventh century. So what sources did he use? Richards notes that the period produced little ‘dynastic historiography’, and even the rare examples that do not survive are not geographically focused on the area concerned in this thesis.\footnote{Ibn al-Athîr, 6.} For the earliest part of this period (1029-1038/9) Ibn al-Athîr most likely relied on the source called *Malik-nâme*, which was allegedly written for Alp Arslan, the second Seljuk Sultan, using information from an old Turkish Emir, Inānj Beg, concerning the semi-legendary and early history of the Seljuk dynasty.\footnote{Peacock, *Early Seljûk History*, 8-9.} For the next section of the chronicle (1038/9-1087) Ibn al-Athîr most likely used the history of Ghars al-Ni‘ma Muhammad ibn Hilāl al-Sābī, which covered the period 1056-1087. Whether he used this directly or through the *Kitāb al-Muntazam* by Ibn al-Jawzî (1116-1201) is not of the highest importance, as there is little difference between the two accounts, where comparison is possible. In fact, Ibn al-Jawzî was certainly known to Ibn al-Athîr, as he is one of the few sources actually named in the *Kāmil*.\footnote{Ibn al-Athîr, 7.} Both sources for this period were largely centred around events in Baghdad, and this has a direct effect on the degree to which Ibn al-Athîr is useful to the study of Armenia and Byzantium.

One must also briefly examine the motivations of Ibn al-Athîr and how his worldview influenced his understanding of historical causality. As one would expect for someone living in this period, many of the events are explained as part of the will of God, while also attempting to provide a record of moral and practical examples to the present day.\footnote{Ibn al-Athîr, 4.} As noted by Richards, Ibn al-Athîr often starts a paragraph with ‘The reason for this was that etc.’, but does not attempt to offer any further analytical explanation. This strict adherence to the chronological method of history writing has
its advantages and disadvantages. Most noticeably, the information available to Ibn al-Athīr is comprehensively stored under each year, all the while leaving modern historians with a wide scope for interpretation. This therefore requires historians to tread carefully when using Ibn al-Athīr’s Kāmil, and to consider that the information stored in the chronicle is rarely referenced and poses difficult questions surrounding the precise value of the author’s account.

On the subject of Armenians there are but few direct references. In the year 1029 Ibn al-Athīr mentions that some Oghuz Turks raided the territory of the Armenians, though this seems to have occurred further to the east than Byzantine Vaspurakan, with further details of raids from the direction of Mosul, specifically ‘plundering and taking captives’, even grouping the Byzantine and Armenians together, possibly in Vaspurakan.\(^{182}\)

Other fragmentary sources must be used to piece together the history of the Seljuk Turks, and one such work is the Mir‘āt al-Zamān by Sibt b. al-Jawzī, a thirteenth-century Arabic text. The author himself identifies as its source for the eleventh century the descriptions of the Baghdad-based historian Ghars al-Ni‘ma who was an eyewitness to many events, although his reliability on the Byzantine frontier is highly questionable.\(^{183}\) On the whole the use of Muslim texts strengthens our understanding of the Byzantine eastern frontier, and when used comparatively with Byzantine, Armenian, and Syriac sources we can illuminate on this murky phase of history.

\(^{182}\) Ibn al-Athīr, 18, 23, and 24.

\(^{183}\) For discussion on the strength of this source in our manuscript tradition see: Peacock, Early Seljūk History, 9.
Latin

The Latin sources for the study of Byzantine and Armenian relations are entirely separate from the other works used here and were deeply influenced by the experience of the First Crusade and its interaction with Byzantines and Armenians alike. Therefore, the identity indicators they employ must be treated with caution, allowing for their misunderstanding of recent events concerning the Byzantine Empire and the Armenian lords in northern Syria and Cilicia.184 This does not mean that they should be viewed as ‘lesser sources’ for information on Byzantine and Armenian relations. Rather, we have several primary accounts that record in varying degrees of detail the interactions between the Armenian lords and the princes of the First Crusade. These include some correspondence preceding the call to arms by Urban II in 1095, which again must be treated within their own context in order to assess their historical value for the study of Byzantium and the Armenians.

The *Gesta Francorum et aliorum Hierosolimitanorum* was the earliest account of the First Crusade and provides us with an anonymous, yet personal, account of the passage. An edition and English translation were produced in 1962 by Rosalind Hill, making it a necessary and accessible narrative account for the study of the First Crusade.185 Before we continue on to assess the usefulness of the *Gesta Francorum* for understanding the political complexities in the region around Cilicia, we must reflect on its authorship. The *Gesta* was most likely written by someone in the southern Norman contingent that followed Bohemond, who would seize Antioch for himself and found the first Latin state in the Levant. And it is this action that influenced how the

---


Byzantines were to be portrayed in the Gesta, namely viewing them as unreliable and treacherous to the crusading cause.\(^{186}\) There is significant debate as to how the Gesta was used to promote the negative Byzantine image in the west in the aftermath of the Crusade with the result that the negative image given to the Byzantines by the Gesta found reflection in subsequent accounts of the First Crusade who utilised it as a first-hand account for their own narratives.\(^{187}\)

The Gesta does however assist in our understanding of western attitudes to the geo-political climate of eastern Anatolia and northern Syria in the final years of the twelfth century. For example, when the main crusading army decided against taking passage through the Cilician Gates, as taken by Tancred and Baldwin of Boulogne, they instead journeyed eastwards ‘enter[ing] the land of the Armenians’.\(^{188}\) Furthermore, we gain information on the reaction of indigenous Armenians towards the arrival of the army of the crusade in the form of the populace of Marash, an Armenian city which had previously been the capital of Philaretos Brachamios’ domain.\(^{189}\) On another occasion the Armenians are seen supplying the starving army camp with food brought ‘over the mountains by paths which they knew’.\(^{190}\) It is clear that the author of the Gesta saw the Armenians as fellow Christians and helpful allies, but it would appear that he was not fully aware of recent events in the Levant – hence a lack of explanation of the Armenian reaction to the passage of the First Crusade.

Albert of Aachen’s account of the First Crusade, or rather the Historia Ierosolimitana (History of the Journey to Jerusalem), largely adopts the perspective


\(^{188}\) Gesta Francorum, 25.

\(^{189}\) Gesta Francorum, 27.

\(^{190}\) Gesta Francorum, 33.
of Godfrey of Bouillon, although the history continues up until 1118 which is outside the range of this investigation. Albert's opinions of Byzantines and Armenians warrant direct attention, as they are unusual in comparison with the other Latin chronicles. For the Byzantines, Albert displays an impartiality that bucks the trend of descriptions of devious or treacherous Greeks who betrayed the First Crusade during its darkest hour at Antioch. Nor does he focus on doctrinal differences between either the Imperial or Armenian churches, rather in the words of Edgington: ‘Albert’s attitude to Christians of other rites than the Latin may be characterized as ecumenical’. This therefore provides us with an

192 Albert of Aachen, xxii.
193 Albert of Aachen, xxiii.
195 Albert of Aachen, xxxiv.
account that does not directly play into the religious identity-politics that plague our Greek, Armenian, Syriac, and other Latin sources. Unfortunately, there is only little that Albert’s account provides for a study of Byzantine and Armenian relations.

Another important eye witness account is that of Fulcher of Chartres, a priest probably in attendance at the Council of Clermont, who remained a part of the Northern French contingent until the crusades’ division in eastern Anatolia. Fulcher of Chartres’ account of the First Crusade captures the exploits of Baldwin of Boulogne, who unexpectedly ventured away from the main body of the crusade to strike at Edessa, and create a Latin principality in the region. Fulcher’s account provides not only a narrative that explicitly excuses Baldwin’s behaviour in carving out an independent Latin principality on the Euphrates, but also provides details of Armenians living in the region such as their perception of the Latin arrival. In comparison with the other eye witness account, Fulcher seems to have been privy to intimate information regarding the planning and worries of the crusading leadership, and he is generally factually accurate. Despite the negative portrayal of the Byzantines in other accounts of the Crusade, Fulcher does not share such sentiments, or at least voice them in his work.196 This is particularly interesting in the episodes of Fulcher’s account where he was not present: principally the siege of Antioch and onward journey to Jerusalem. It has been argued by some that this is proof that the deterioration of the Byzantines in the eyes of Crusading accounts can be attributed to Norman propaganda under the instruction of Bohemund. This does not mean, therefore, that Fulcher’s account is more reliable, rather it offers the opportunity for comparison between the surviving sources to understand how the First Crusaders approached

relations with the Byzantine and Armenians, and their understanding of this particular relationship.

**Sigillography**

Although not a literary source, Sigillography is extremely helpful for the study of Armenian assimilation into the Byzantine Empire. Through the study of lead seals that accompanied official correspondence, one can identify individuals and the offices they held in either a civil or military capacity. Leads seals from the period 867-1098 survive in vast numbers. Thankfully the arduous task of assembling and analysing the lead seals has been conducted by other scholars. One of the most significant works is the *Catalogue of Byzantine Seals*, edited formally by Nicolas Oikonomides, and presently Eric McGeer and John Nesbitt. The work is made up of five volumes, of which four and five grant this study the opportunity to assess the evolution of Armenians holding important military, administrative, and judicial offices in the East, as well as elsewhere.197

Another resource that assists with the inclusion of sigillography in the study of Armenians in the Byzantine Empire is the online catalogue of Dumbarton Oaks.198 The catalogue enables scholars to refine searches by geographical area, timeframe, titles, or offices helping bring lead seals into the wider use. A further resource that will be used by this thesis is the ‘Prosopography of the Byzantine World’, which assists scholars in finding Armenians operating in the Empire as described by literary sources.199 Once again available through an accessible online platform, it is a highly useful tool to assess Armenian assimilation into the Byzantine Empire and

198 [https://www.doaks.org/resources/seals](https://www.doaks.org/resources/seals)
descriptions of Armenian characteristics by the full array of literary sources, allowing scholars to analyse the results comparatively.

The Armenians were most frequently identified as serving within the Byzantine army by our literary sources, and this is where the use of lead seals and prosopography to corroborate these claims is most valuable. Furthermore, one can analyse the seniority of the ranks granted to Armenians and assess how these positions facilitated assimilation into the Empire and consider whether the same practices were continued from the tenth to the eleventh century. This issue is of particular importance for the events of the later eleventh century, where Armenians were given titles of territorial importance, but questions remain as to whether these titles induced loyalty or were merely a façade.\textsuperscript{200} We will look at seal evidence in the subsequent research chapters and question how reliable they are in determining Armenian assimilation.

\textbf{The Assimilation Model: Primary Source Evidence}

With the survey of the wide variety of primary sources complete, this section will now look closely at particular examples that offer clues, in whole or in part, as to how contemporaries defined what made someone a \textit{Romaios}. These clues take a number of forms: labels of political allegiance, religious confession, and linguistic preference. Such markers of identity were, of course, very fluid and doubtlessly fluctuated a great deal during the 231 years covered by this thesis, but those very changes are themselves instructive. So, before we turn to analysing the markers of identity in our primary

\textsuperscript{200} One particular debate will be discussed in Chapter Four where, according to a lead seal, Gagik II of Ani held the position of Μέγας δούξ Χαρσιανοῦ, which does not necessarily corroborate with the character presented in Matthew of Edessa’s chronicle. Werner Seibt, ‘War Gagik II. von Grossarmenien ca.1072-1073 Μέγας δούξ Χαρσιανοῦ?’, \textit{Τὸ Ἑλληνικὸν: Studies in Honor of Speros Vryonis, 2 vols} (New Rochelle, N.Y., 1993), ii, 159-68.
sources, let us re-affirm what this thesis means by the ‘Assimilation model’ and its three contributory developments:

i) The territorial settlement of Armenian migrants in the Empire

ii) The acceptance and adoption of ‘Roman customs’

iii) The religious conversion/conformity of the migrants

These three developments, it will be argued, produced many successful examples of assimilation in the ninth and tenth centuries. The first and last are relatively self-explanatory and we will revisit them in the following chapter. What will be discussed here is what is meant by ‘the acceptance and adoption of “Roman customs”’ and what the surviving literary sources seem to be saying on that point.

Investigating that issue is easier said than done since, when considering the Byzantine historiographical tradition, the obvious question is whether the extant works contain any reliable indicators of contemporary identity at all. Their authors were often merely compilers and copyists of now lost histories, and even when they were writing distinct histories of their own time, they studiously avoided originality and perpetuated archaic stereotypes from antiquity in order to maintain their link with a literary tradition that stretched back to antiquity. Some prime examples can be found among the works either written or commissioned by Constantine VII during the tenth century. The military manual known as the *Sylloge Tacticorum* which, while not written during Constantine’s reign, was probably revised under his auspices, contains

---

numerous passages which are reproduced from earlier manuals written in Roman
times.\textsuperscript{202} Moreover, when it comes to the issue of identity, such works represent the
Constantinopolitan view of what made one Roman and while they were created
deliberately to preserve the knowledge of the past, at the same time they were clearly
pursuing a political agenda: that of aggrandizing the Macedonian dynasty’s origins by
forging tenuous links back to the royal Arsacid house of Armenia that ruled in
antiquity.\textsuperscript{203} This has led some scholars to believe that the Byzantines did not care
about the ‘ethnic’ origins of a person, so long as they subscribed to a set of ‘Roman’
preconceptions.\textsuperscript{204}

That does not mean, however, that the works which were produced in the court
of Constantine VII are of no assistance in revealing markers of identity, or indeed
illuminating the mechanics of assimilation in this period. In fact, they are rich in
detailing how the Byzantines perceived the ‘foreigner’ in their eyes, which in turn
assists in our understanding of what made someone a \textit{Romaios}. With regard to these
preconceptions, the Byzantine writers saw themselves as Romans (Ῥωμαῖοι), living
within the Roman Empire (Ῥωμανία), while those who inhabited lands outside of these
borders were classed as barbarians (βαρβάροι), in the classical sense. The Byzantine
understanding of the peoples on their borders and further afield was based on the
model from Classical Greece. For example, all nomadic peoples north of the Danube
basin were called ‘Scythians’, or any power coming from the Iranian plateau were
labelled as ‘Persians’. This use is not entirely consistent throughout the Byzantine
sources, and identity indicators were not monolithic in meaning, therefore one must
be cautious in applying this uniformly, but one can take it as a general guideline. The

\textsuperscript{202} \textit{The Sylloge Tacticorum}, 7.
\textsuperscript{203} See above for analysis of the \textit{Vita Basili}, and in the following chapter.
\textsuperscript{204} Kaldellis, \textit{Hellenism in Byzantium}, 82.
only concept to override the sense of the Roman and Barbarian distinction was that of Christianity, so a variety of peoples, such as Iberians, Syrians, Copts, Armenians, Bulgarians, Latins and the like, were accepted as Christian, but not Roman. So, while one’s Christian belief was important, it did not immediately qualify someone as Roman; rather it was what our sources refer to as the acceptance and adoption of ‘Roman customs’ that quantified whether someone was a *Romaioi*. It is therefore imperative that we seek out other examples from our primary sources and assess how they each defined the distinction between a ‘Roman’ and a ‘non-Roman’ in relation to the concept of ‘Roman customs’.

Of all the works produced at the court of Constantine VII, the *De Administrando Imperio* is the obvious source of information for these perceptions. A series of passages, allegedly written by the emperor himself, appear to reveal a disdain and desire for separation between the ‘Romans’ and the ‘others’. The basis of the gulf is often given as ‘custom’ (*ἔθος*), even if is never specifically defined. For example:

[N]ever shall an emperor of the Romans ally himself in marriage with a nation whose customs differ from and are alien to those of the Roman order.\(^{205}\)

Or defence against the precedent set by Romanos I Lekapenos in allowing his daughter Maria (Irene) Lekapene to marry the Tsar of Bulgaria, Peter I (927–969):

The lord Romanos, the emperor, was a common, illiterate fellow, and not from among those who have been bred up in the palace, and have followed the Roman *national* customs from the beginning [...] \(^{206}\)

\(^{205}\) *DAI*, 13, 70–1: τὸ μηδὲ ποτέ βασιλέα Ῥωμαίων συμπενθεριώσαι μετὰ ἔθνους παρηλλαγμένους καὶ ξένους ἔθεσι χρωμίνον τῆς Ῥωμαιίκης καταστάσεως.

\(^{206}\) *DAI*, 13, 72–73: Ο κύρις Ῥωμανός, ὁ βασιλεύς, ἴδιωτας καὶ ἀγράμματος ἀνθρωπός ἦν, καὶ οὔτε τῶν ἀνωθὲν ἐν βασιλείας τεθραμμένων, οὔτε τῶν παρηκλοουθηκότων ἐξ ἀρχῆς τοῖς Ῥωμαιίκοις ἔθημασιν.
These passages are not, in fact, blanket proscriptions. Rather they belong to a particular political context. It is clear the claim that Romanos I was uncouth and poorly educated was an attempt to discredit his reputation by an embittered Constantine VII, who long dwelt in Romanos’ shadow during the usurpation period which preceded his own adult reign. It is likely that he deeply resented the marriage that his father-in-law had brokered between his son Romanos II and the daughter of the king of Italy, Hugh of Provence, in 944. Anna Komnene made a similar retrospective criticism of Michael VII Doukas (1071-1078) for agreeing to the marriage of his son Constantine to the daughter of Robert Guiscard in 1074. These were not statements of some principle that the customs of Byzantines and Barbarians were incompatible but a one-off dismissal of a defeated political rival. After all, such marriages did take place and often without a word of protest being raised. The obvious example is that between Constantine VII’s granddaughter Anna and the Russian ruler Vladimir in 989.

Even if custom did not present any insuperable barrier to marriage alliances, it was nevertheless clearly important when it comes to defining what a Roman was. Niketas Choniates, in reference to the campaigns of John II Komnenos (1118-1143) in southern Anatolia during the twelfth century, informs us that the Emperor came across the descendants of those who had previously resided in the Empire, who were

---

have placed ‘national’ in italics as there is no justification for this from the original Greek as included by Jenkins.


208 Anna Komnene, I.10, ed. 35, trans. 53.

Christian, but who were now under the rule of the Seljuk sultan of Ikonion. Rather than seeing themselves as under alien occupation, they on the contrary:

... viewed the Romans as their enemies. So much greater is custom, strengthened by time, than race or faith.\textsuperscript{210}

It was the abandonment of custom, Choniates suggests, that marked the departure of these Christians from the Roman camp. Yet once again, the source here actually suggests that custom, though central to Byzantine identity, was not an insuperable barrier. After all, Choniates makes it absolutely clear that these renegade Romans had remained Christian and had not converted to Islam to please their new masters. Thus, custom was apparently distinct from religion. That would suggest that, just as the abandonment of Roman customs meant separation, by adopting them, a wide variety of people could be included. Matthew of Edessa describes the Armenian soldier Philaretos Brachamios as:

... a superficial Christian ... he professed the Roman faith and followed their customs.\textsuperscript{211}

Elsewhere, however, Constantine VII suggested that another dividing line was presented by kinship and language:

[...] it is right that each nation should marry and cohabit not with those of another race and tongue but with those of the same tribe and speech.\textsuperscript{212}


\textsuperscript{211} Matthew of Edessa, II, 60, 137.

\textsuperscript{212} DAI, 13, 74-5: οὕτω καὶ ἐκατον ἔθνος σῶκ ἐξ ἀλλοφίλων καὶ ἀλλογλώσσων, ἀλλ’ ἐκ τῶν ὁμογενῶν τε καὶ ὁμοφώνων τὰ συνοικία τῶν γάμων ποιεῖσθαι καθέστηκεν δίκαιον.
As in the case of customs, however, the barrier was not insuperable and could be overcome by outsiders who wished to enter the charmed circle. The *Chronographia* of Theophanes describes the proposed engagement between Erytho/Rotrude, the second daughter of the Frankish king Charlemagne (768–814), and the Byzantine emperor Constantine VI (780–797) in 781. Theophanes informs us that the eunuch Elissaios was sent to the Frankish kingdom before the young woman travelled to Constantinople for her marriage to teach her:

... the language and letters of the Greeks (Γραικῶν) and educate her in the customs of the Roman Empire.²¹³

Both custom and language, Theophanes suggests, could be learned and adopted by an outsider. One assumes that the same could be said of the Arab Anemas, son of the last emir of Crete, who in 961 became a subject of the Byzantine emperor and fought bravely in his armies, and of the Turk Prosouch who loyally served John II Komnenos.²¹⁴ It probably also applies to the Venetians whom Choniates says were adopted as ‘natives and genuine Romans’.²¹⁵

As noted earlier, exactly what the customs were that made one a ‘genuine Roman’ is never spelled out, although it is clear that this was not simply another way to describe either religious confession or native language. The obvious conclusion is

---

²¹³ Theophanes, ed. I. 455, trans. 628: τῶν Γραικῶν γράμματα καὶ τὴν γλώσσαν, καὶ παιδεύσαι αὐτήν τὰ ἣδη τῆς Ῥωμαίων βασιλείας. This particular passage has also been commented on by Florin Curta in: *The Edinburgh History of the Greeks, c.500 to 1050*, The Early Middle Ages (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011), 292.


²¹⁵ Choniates, ed. 171, trans. 97: τὰ δ’ ἄλλα σύμφυλοι ὄντες καὶ <φίλοι> πάνυ Ῥωμαίοιν
that these ‘Roman customs’ were in fact a subconscious, yet simultaneously active, belief, support, and loyalty in the universality of Rome, her Emperor, her Church, and above all the sanctity of the Empire and its institutions in comparison with those of its heterodox neighbours. It is here that the missing part of the ‘Assimilation model’ fits into place. It is through observing the lifestyles, military roles and political careers of Armenians once they found themselves living within the Empire that we can most easily identify how assimilation took place, and whether it was successful in the ninth and tenth centuries. While we have seen in the previous chapter how the Byzantines perceived the ‘foreigner’ and commented on their own identity, we should also address how the Armenian sources observed their own identity in a world in which the Byzantine Empire was re-emerging as the dominant power in the region.

Armenian Identity

While we have some understanding of the Byzantine perspective on Armenian identity, one must understand how the Armenians themselves understood their identity through the written accounts we have available for the study of the ninth and tenth centuries. We have already seen within the survey of the Armenian sources and their historiographical tradition that the Armenians viewed their identity differently to the Byzantines viewed themselves. Medieval Armenian identity was without doubt the product of events from the conversion to Christianity in the fourth century to the formation of the Medieval Armenian kingdoms in the late ninth century. In general, it has been argued that the identity indicators of the Armenians were as follows: the land

---

216 This concept was still held dear during the late Byzantine period for example, in c.1396 the Patriarch Anthony IV rebuked the grand duke of Moscow for belittling the position of Emperor stating that he was ‘[the] single emperor whose laws, ordinances and decrees hold throughout the world, who alone, with none other, is revered by all Christians’. Acta et Diplomata Graeca Medii Aevi Sacra et Profana, 6 vols, ed. F. Miklosich and J. Muller (Aalen: Scientia Verlag, 1968), ii, 190–92. Ernest Barker, Social and Political Thought in Byzantium from Justinian I to the Last Palaeologue (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1957), 553–4.
that was recognised as Armenian, the Armenian language, pride in and acceptance of Armenian Christianity (in a broad sense), and the shared history of the Armenian peoples from antiquity.\textsuperscript{217} The Armenians were proud of their Christian heritage, being the first Christian nation, and their religion and church were crucial to their identity. Yet a cautionary approach must be urged here for all of the main Armenian narrative histories were written by men who had careers within the church and/or were writing history under the patronage of a particular princely house and saw the religious identity of the Armenians as the main paradigm of their shared identity. This is particularly prevalent in the period covered by this thesis, c.867-1098, when correspondence between the Byzantine and Armenian Churches increased, fluctuating between cordial relations and animosity over confessional differences.\textsuperscript{218}

The manner in which religious identity indicators were viewed by our sources reveals how remarkably fluid they actually were in this period. We rely heavily on Stephen’s \textit{Universal History} for the Armenian perspective of events in the tenth century, but we must be cautious in how we treat Stephen’s observations on Armenian identity. We must remain vigilant when using Stephen’s account for study of increased engagement between the Byzantine and Armenian worlds, for Stephen placed great value on the religious aspect of identity, not simply because he was a churchman, but more importantly because he believed it to be true.\textsuperscript{219} Furthermore, with regard to the model of identity that Stephen of Taron followed, it has been argued that his inclusion of a theological letter, which dominates Book III of the \textit{Universal History} amounted

\textsuperscript{217} Andrews, \textit{Matt’êos Uṙhayec’i}, 44-45.

\textsuperscript{218} The religious dimension of the Byzantine-Armenian relationship will be explored in Chapter Two: Religious Conversion and Conformity, while Chapter Four: Religious Antagonism will present a similar assessment in an eleventh century context.

\textsuperscript{219} It is important to acknowledge that not all Armenians identified with the Miaphysite Apostolic Church. The group known as ‘Armenian Chalcedonians’ – Armenians who were Chalcedonian but whose liturgical language was Armenian – are not included in this section. They will be addressed in Chapter Two: Religious Conversion and Conformity.
to, ‘a defiant response to the Imperial Church as well as an assertion of Armenian parity with, and independence from, Byzantine intellectual and religious culture’.\textsuperscript{220} Earlier Armenian historiography was dominated by an ever present threat of religious annihilation by either the Persian or Arabic Empires that surrounded the Armenian homeland. Yet in Stephen’s lifetime there was no traditional Zoroastrian and Islamic power threatening the faith, rather it was a Christian, albeit Chalcedonian, power that challenged the Armenians’ religious independence. It is important to understand the motives behind Stephen’s decision to give prominence to monastic communities and scholars in his history, for it offers some indication of Stephen’s own view on his Armenian identity, ‘constructing it in terms of cultural memory and tradition as well as historic political and territorial expression’.\textsuperscript{221} Greenwood goes further in expanding what this meant:

This construction of Armenian identity, rooted in a simplified expression of the Armenian past onto which local traditions of sanctity and scholarship could be grafted, proved in the long term to be remarkably resilient, because identity, when expressed in terms of shared cultural memory, is able to transcend political and social upheaval.\textsuperscript{222}

It is clear that the construction of Armenian identity, as enshrined by Stephen, was remarkably resilient. Yet the same identity indicators as viewed by Stephen are not consistently witnessed in the migrations into the Byzantine Empire during the ninth and tenth centuries. Indeed, our understanding of Armenian identity is severely limited in scope for the lives and feelings of everyone below the nobility. It cannot be over-emphasised that it is nearly impossible to evaluate the factors of identity that the

\textsuperscript{220} Greenwood, \textit{The Universal History}, vii.
\textsuperscript{221} Greenwood, \textit{The Universal History}, viii.
\textsuperscript{222} Greenwood, \textit{The Universal History}, 70.
majority of Armenians held onto outside of the aristocracy, for our sources did not record their voices.

As such we can conclude from our tenth-century source that Armenians placed great emphasis on their Christianity as it underpinned their literary and linguistic heritage – in essence, their cultural significance in the world. This – coupled with the Miaphysite nature of the Armenian Apostolic Church – became the beacon around which Armenians viewed themselves in comparison with the other Christian peoples that lived around them. And it was this religiously-themed identity that persisted through the main Armenian narrative sources stretching beyond the chronological scope of this thesis. The issue with using this understanding of Armenian identity is that it rarely appears in the Byzantine sources; in fact, it could be argued that it is entirely ignored. As we will see below, many of the Armenians who migrated into the Empire in the ninth and tenth centuries seem to have had no difficulty in assimilating, despite the insistence on religious identity being held so dearly by our Armenian sources. This is not to claim that Armenian identity as viewed through Christianity was not real, merely that it was not the divisive and obstructive force towards the mechanics of assimilation that historians have usually assumed it to be.

Lastly, one must attempt to comprehend how the Armenian sources perceived Byzantine identity, and their understanding of assimilation. Writing in the early to mid-twelfth century Matthew of Edessa was very liberal in his use of identity indicators for the Byzantines, at some points calling them ‘Roman’, at others ‘Greek’. Andrews argues that there is no discernible difference between these terms, and that the vitriol coming from Matthew at times only reflects his feeling of betrayal towards the Byzantines who were expected to be the guardians of the Armenian people. It is an

---

Andrews, Matt’ēos Uṙhayec’i, 74–75.
oversight on Andrew’s part to ignore the religious dimension of Matthew’s critical
depiction of the Byzantines, and one can see a distinct patter in Matthew’s use of
‘Greek’ when discussing religious affiliation, and the more positive term ‘Roman’
gradually fading from use. Furthermore, the arguments by modern scholars on the
feeling of betrayal that Matthew reveals in his work distorts our understanding of
religiously fuelled identity politics, and hinders our understanding of the previously
positive relationship between Byzantines and Armenians. While betrayal is a
consistent theme in Matthew’s work, it does not provide a stand-alone explanation for
his dislike or mistrust of the Byzantines, whom he saw as a naturally perfidious and
scheming people. Rather, it is through the paradigm of religious conflict and identity
that Matthew saw the difference between the Byzantine and Armenian peoples and
this helps explain the variation in presentation of Byzantines within his text.

The Armenian sources only rarely comment on assimilated Armenians and on
even more rare occasions criticise individuals for having undergone this process,
either themselves or through subsequent generations. Yet it is beyond doubt that
the sources, both Byzantine and Armenian, did not see their identity as monolithic,
nor immune to foreign influence; rather the fluidity of these two identities directly
contributed to the success that brought an Armenian family to dominate the politics
of the Empire for nearly two centuries.

Concepts of identity were undeniably fluid in the eyes of our Armenian sources,
as one would expect when utilising sources from across three centuries in a
comparative framework. Identity indicators such as religion, language, and origin only

---


225 The character of Philaretos Brachamios will be one of the more prolific figures to come under criticism in Chapter Five.
mattered in an individual if they otherwise disturbed the political consensus within the Empire. From our Byzantine sources one can see at first-hand how the ‘ethnic’ background of an individual disappeared after a couple of generations, and a first-generation migrant was able to assimilate into the ruling elite smoothly. Unfortunately, one cannot apply these conclusions to the wider population of migrants, such as those who were forcibly moved by a series of emperors, as we simply do not have the evidence to do so. The social elite whom our sources were interested in documenting, was intent on being considered Roman by their contemporaries, and this was largely based on the concept of Roman ‘customs’, coupled with an observation of Chalcedonian Christianity and command of Byzantine Greek. As argued above, these ‘customs’ revolved around the imperial court: court titles, salary, army commands, administrative and religious offices, and active participation in the politics surrounding the position of emperor.

We have now seen examples from our primary sources where both Byzantines and Armenians contrasted themselves with the ‘foreign’ in their own context. What is clear is that despite some of the religiously charged polemics exchanged by Byzantine and Armenian Churchmen, Armenian migrants were not disadvantaged by their Armenian faith in assimilating into the Byzantine Empire. Rather, as will be argued in full in the following chapter, Armenian migrants, by engaging with the Empire through its institutions and shared political ideology, were willing and successful in assimilating into the Byzantine Empire.

**Conclusion**

This chapter has offered an initial analysis of the available sources for the study of the Byzantine-Armenian relationship, from the ninth through to the end of the eleventh century. Its purpose has been to highlight the accessible and plentiful evidence for this
topic, and the problems and potentialities that these sources offer. This chapter has not, however, advocated that these sources be treated in isolation in terms of different historiographical traditions; rather, the emphasis has been placed on how the sources are rich in detail and even stronger when used in combination. Finally, the Assimilation Model, as outlined in the introduction, and justified through primary evidence in this chapter, will be employed in the next chapter to analyse Armenian assimilation and to demonstrate successful examples of Armenian integration into the Byzantine Empire.
Chapter Two: Assimilation into the Byzantine Empire, 867-1000: The Integration of the Armenians before the Eleventh Century

This Chapter will argue that Armenian assimilation was a successful process in the ninth and tenth centuries, on the basis of the primary evidence available and the three main factors that have been identified from it as an Assimilation Model: i) the area of territorial settlement, ii) the acceptance and adoption of ‘Roman customs’, and iii) the religious conversion/conformity of the migrants. It will approach each of these themes in turn and show how in all three areas Armenians adopted modes of behaviour that were expected for someone to qualify as a Romaios.

The Areas of Territorial Settlement

The territorial settlement of Armenian migrants was one of the most influential factors in fostering the ability for the Armenians to assimilate into the Byzantine Empire during the ninth and tenth centuries. Although by the year 1000 Armenians had been settled throughout the Empire, in this section, it will be argued that geographical differences between the areas of settlements in the west and east were to have a strong influence on the outcome of the mechanics of assimilation. As such, attention will first be drawn to the imperial capital of Constantinople which was to have its own unique strengths in the assimilation process. Here, we have an opportunity to look at several ‘encounters’ between the Byzantine and Armenian, most often in the setting of the imperial court, and to assess what were the motivations for Armenians to settle and assimilate into the Byzantine world. This will then be followed by analysis of the settlements in the western provinces of Thrace and Macedonia, and lastly by turning the focus to the settlements found in the eastern provinces of Sebasteia and Lykandos. The conclusions will suggest that the settlements in the eastern provinces of the
Empire were weaker in terms of assimilation. This does not, however, qualify as ‘alienation’ at this stage. When one views the active participation of Armenians in the army from the eastern provinces, the mechanics of assimilation can clearly still be observed. The army, however, will be addressed fully within its own section below; our immediate task is to turn to our primary source evidence on the existence of Armenian settlement in the imperial capital.

Our primary sources do not reveal the Armenians settling in very large numbers in Constantinople, but we know that they were certainly operating in the politics of the imperial court. It has been argued successfully by other scholars that those who did find their way there tended to be from elite circles, or at the very least made it into the upper echelons of society. For example, the study by Manea Shirinian argued that by the ninth century the Armenian presence in the capital had increased rapidly, though this would have predominantly been from the upper echelons of society, if the cases from the Vita Basilii or Genesios are anything to go by. Shirinian identifies many influential Byzantines in the mid-ninth century as Armenian in origin, such as Photios, John the Grammarian, and Leo the Mathematician, but these claims have been challenged. Charanis claims that ‘It would be preposterous ... to call Photios ... anything but a Greek’. Here we have an immediate problem with the identity labels being used by modern historians, which could be solved by the acknowledgement that Photios was simply a Romaios. More importantly, what Shirinian and Charanis agree on is that the ancestral background of an individual did not make anyone ‘less’ Byzantine, which is of utmost importance for successful assimilation. For example, we

---

are told in the *Vita Basilii* that the Emperor Basil hailed from Macedonia, ‘but traced his origins (γένος) to the nation (ἔθνος) of the Armenians’.229

While there were certainly prominent Byzantines who had Armenian ancestry living in Constantinople in the ninth and tenth centuries, it has been claimed that there was also a wider community. Peter Charanis reports on an Armenian colony in the city during this period, but he provides no relevant evidence to support his assertion. He only references the *Chronicon Paschale* for the presence of Armenian soldiers in the siege of 626, long before the tenth century.230 Nevertheless, there is some evidence for the presence of non-elite Armenians. Those that are mentioned in Constantinople are most often there in the role of soldiers, such as in the riot in 967 by the citizenry of the capital against the Armenians present in the city during the reign of Nikephoros II Phokas.231 This reveals the importance of the Armenians in the Byzantine military, something that will be developed further below. Sometime later in the eleventh century we are told by Michael the Syrian that there was an Armenian church in Constantinople which implies a congregation and an Armenian presence.232 Unfortunately we must take into consideration that the claim has no other backing from either literary or material evidence for its existence. This does not necessarily make it untrue, rather logic dictates that a place of worship must have existed to accommodate the Miaphysite Christian population who visited the city. The claim does however seem to be our only real reference to the possibility of an Armenian diaspora living in Constantinople at this time. Moreover, the numbers of Armenians living throughout the Empire would make it nearly impossible to conclude that Armenians

---

229 *Vita Basilii*, 10-11: τὸ δὲ γένος εἶχεν ἐξ ἀρμενίων ἔθνους.


231 Leo the Deacon, IV.vii, ed. 64, trans. 113; Skylitzes, ed. 275, trans. 264.

did not live in the capital at all. Nevertheless, the main focus when it comes to Constantinople needs to be the evidence of the presence of the elites, for which we have far more information from our literary and material sources.

There are several examples of the settlement of Armenian elites in Constantinople during the ninth and tenth centuries. During the reign of Leo VI (886-912), Manuel, the local dynast of Tekis/Tephrike, ceded his lands in return for patronage in Constantinople. His four sons were given important positions and lands and they appear to have rapidly assimilated into the Byzantine elite, facilitated by their immediate placement in positions of military or administrative importance.233 Another example occurred during the reign of Nikephoros II Phokas when the princes of Taron, Grigor and Bagrat, surrendered their lands in return for estates near Constantinople.234 The brothers were to assimilate smoothly, once again receiving titles and positions within the administration of the Empire. These examples are very instructive. The very fact that our sources do not identify the Armenian nobility as forming a diasporic community within Constantinople suggests that they had speedily and successfully assimilated into their new surroundings. This was arguably facilitated by the immediate placement of Armenians in key governmental or military positions in the Empire, something that will be explored further below. Constantinople thus played an influential role in the integration of both ninth and tenth-century migrants, almost solely for the nobility. We will pick up on the careers of this migrating nobility further below when we look more closely at Armenian interactions with the main institutions of the Empire.

233 DAI, 50, 239; Charanis, Armenians in the Byzantine Empire, 29; further details on the careers of Manuel’s sons will be discussed below. Tekis, or Tephike, was a region in the Upper Euphrates settled extensively by Armenians.
234 Skylitzes, ed. 279, trans. 268; Stephen of Taron, III, VIII, ed. 183, trans. 235. The principality of Taron was the western most area of the Kingdom of Armenia during the medieval period.
Turing now to the second area of settlement, Thrace, Emperor Maurice (582–602) is said to have conducted a vast removal of Armenians there from the eastern frontier upon the acquisition of Armenian territory in 591, though there is some doubt to what extent this was fulfilled.\(^\text{235}\) Constantine V (741–775) oversaw a large transfer of Armenians in his reign, some of whom were Paulician heretics, once again choosing to settle many of them in Macedonia or Thrace.\(^\text{236}\) There were also significant population transfers during the reign of Leo IV (775–780) to the Balkans, as we are told that Armenians and Syrians were removed from the eastern frontier, where they were suffering under attacks from the Abbasid Caliphate, and placed in Thrace.\(^\text{237}\) According to the *Vita Basilii*, Maiktes the grandfather of Basil I:

> When he learned about [an Armenian called] Leo’s origins and heard of the Arsacid community living in Adrianople, he chose a foreign country over his own.\(^\text{238}\)

This example is, however, historically questionable. The *Vita Basilii* was written with the intention to create a more aggrandized history of the Macedonian house, and it is beyond any real doubt that the claimed descent from the ancient dynasty of the Arsacids was entirely fictional. Yet this passage holds a greater significance than Constantine VII’s wish to glorify his grandfather Basil I. It reveals the awareness at the imperial centre that assimilation was a normal and expected process for Armenian migrants.

---


\(^{236}\) Theophanes, ed. 429, trans. 593; Michael the Syrian, *Chronique*, ii, IX.xxiv, 518

\(^{237}\) It should be noted that there is a discrepancy on the details of which groups of people were involved in this transfer. The Syriac edition only mentions Syrians as part of the transfer, while the Armenian edition mentions Armenians and Syrians. Michael the Syrian, *Chronique*, iii, VII.i, 2; *The Chronicle of Michael the Great*, 260, 262; Theophanes, ed. 452, trans. 623; Charanis, *Armenians in the Byzantine Empire*, 15–16.

\(^{238}\) *Vita Basilii*, 3, 17. The episode is also captured by the later compiler of history Skylitzes found: Skylitzes, ed. 116, trans. 117. This will be explored further below.
Further population transfers and resettlement in the western provinces occurred in the reign of Basil I as a result of the emperor finally bringing about the destruction of the Paulician enclave on the upper Euphrates in 871.\textsuperscript{239} While many of the survivors were relocated to Cilicia, some were later deported by John I Tzimiskes to Bulgaria.\textsuperscript{240} Yet another incidence of population transfer occurred in 988 during the reign of Basil II, where Armenians were moved to the Bulgarian frontier in order to provide a buffer with the resurgent power of the Bulgarian Empire under the Tsars Roman I (977-991) and Samuel (997-1014).\textsuperscript{241}

The important element when it comes to the western provinces is the proximity of Constantinople, and the opportunity that it presented to the migrants and their descendants to travel there and improve their social standing was clearly a major force in the assimilation process. The most prominent of these aspirational migrants was Basil I, referred to as the ‘Macedonian’ as a reflection of his birthplace.\textsuperscript{242} In studying Basil’s rise to the throne one can see that his Armenian peasant background did not block advancement, rather it was Basil’s close friendship with Michael III (842-867) that allowed him to rise through the ranks so quickly, contrary to Charanis’ view that the hatred between Greeks and Armenians meant that inter-ethnic friendships were unlikely.\textsuperscript{243} One can recall from above the episode recorded in both the \textit{Vita Basilii} and Skylitzes on the encounter between Basil’s grandfather and an Armenian called Leo who had assimilated into the Byzantine court. Unfortunately, our sources do not comment in any great detail on how the Armenians, who were settled in the west,

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{239} Theophanes Continuatus, 137-159; Nina Garsoïan, \textit{The Paulician Heresy: a study of the origin and development of Paulicianism in Armenia and the Eastern Provinces of the Byzantine Empire} (The Hague: Mouton, 1967), 129.
\item \textsuperscript{240} Anna Komnene, XIV.8, ed. 455, trans. 425.
\item \textsuperscript{241} Stephen of Taron, III, XX, ed. 201, trans. 251.
\item \textsuperscript{243} Charanis, ‘Armenians and Greeks’, 28-29.
\end{itemize}
assimilated. Were one to remove the exception of the Paulicians, who often gained the attention of Byzantine sources for their religious peculiarities, one finds that the majority of Armenians who were resettled on the Bulgarian border and served as a buffer against Bulgarian incursions appear to have quickly lost their Armenian status.\footnote{The Paulicians are noted in the primary accounts of the Second Crusade when they come across the heretical Armenian sect.}

Finally, the eastern provinces of the Empire need to be considered in terms of how significant the territorial settlement of migrants was to the mechanics of assimilation. Throughout the late ninth and tenth centuries there was considerable expansion and settlement on the eastern border. We have already mentioned Manuel of Tekis, who settled in Constantinople, yet other Armenians had similar interactions with the expanding Empire.

Then there was Kourtikios, an Armenian by race, master of Lokana, who frequently sacked and devastated the Roman border regions; he delivered himself, his city and the people under him into the emperor’s hands.\footnote{Skylitzes, ed. 136, trans. 134.}

We are not informed whether lands were offered in recompense for the surrender of Lokana,\footnote{This occurred c.871/2, although the location of Lokana is unknown. Dédéyan states that he received titles, functions and state revenues in exchange, though without primary source evidence: Gérard Dédéyan, ‘Mleh le grand, stratège de Lykandos’, \textit{REArm} 15 (1981), 73-102, at 74, n. 8.} though we do learn that in the following decade Kourtikios was actively serving in the Byzantine army.\footnote{His career will be explored further below: Skylitzes, ed 176, trans. 170.} As to where Kourtikios was settled, we have some clues. First, Kourtikios was to be found fighting on the Bulgarian frontier later during Leo VI’s reign, which would suggest he was removed from the eastern frontier in case he caused disturbances in the proximity of his former territories. Second, we have already seen in 886 that Basil preferred to move potentially troublesome figures to the capital, with Manuel of Tekis being the most similar example. Yet, this practice did not
always result in western settlement. We are informed in the De Thematibus of a certain Ashot ‘the long armed’, who journeyed to the capital to enter the Emperor’s service, bringing with him a certain Melias Magistros.248 Sometime after 896 Melias, or Mleh to use the Armenian,249 returned to the eastern frontier in mysterious circumstances, operating in the same region where twenty years previously Kourtikios had thrown his lot in with the Empire. Melias was arguably independent from the Empire, although working in its interests, leading a group of fellow Armenians on raids against the Arabs around Lykandos.250 Melias’ career was able to raise the area of Lykandos to the level of a theme, and oversaw the settlement of Armenians to provide a buffer on the upper Euphrates. Areas such as Lykandos came to be so dominated by Armenians that later in the tenth century Leo the Deacon recognised the east as Armenian: ‘... when battle broke out on the plain of Lapara (this is on the boundary of Armenian territory) ...’.251

It was Byzantine policy to re-populate the territories with eastern Christians to replace the Muslim population that most often moved with the frontier, normally being offered the choice between conversion and exile. The departure of the Muslim populations of Melitene, Tarsus, and Antioch meant that the Byzantines needed to find a new population to stabilise the frontier, and in accordance with precedent, Armenians and Christian Syrians were utilised for this end.252

Thus, we have been able to demonstrate how groups of Armenians were settled in both the eastern and western parts of the Empire, and it has been suggested that

---

248 A title he would gain later in his career. Ashot ‘the long armed’ was related to the Bagratuni dynasty that ruled from Ani: Constantine Porphyrogennetos, De thematibus, ed. A. Pertusi (Vatican City: Biblioteca apostolica vaticana, 1952), 75; Mark Whittow, The Making of Orthodox Byzantium, 600-1025 (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 1996), 315; Dédéyan, ‘Mleh le grand, stratège de Lykandos’, 75.
249 Also called Malīh in Arabic sources: Dédéyan, ‘Mleh le grand, stratège de Lykandos’, 72.
250 Melias’ career in Lykandos will be explored in detail below.
251 Leo the Deacon, X.vii, ed. 169, trans. 212. n.64. ὅτε κατὰ τὴν Λάπαραν τὸ πεδίον (μεθόριον δὲ τοῦτο τῆς χώρας τῶν Αρμενίων).
252 Leo the Deacon, II.viii, ed. 28, trans. 80; De thematibus, 75-76, 143-146.
Armenians could more successfully assimilate nearer the imperial heartlands and the capital, dropping their Armenian label. As to the Armenian migrants who were used to re-populate the lands in eastern Anatolia and Cilicia during the age of re-conquest, the question remains as to what extent they underwent the process of assimilation. One must therefore turn to our primary evidence to examine levels of assimilation, and this evidence largely comes from Armenian involvement in the great institutions of the Empire: the government and army. The fact that later in the eleventh century, the Armenian elites settled not in Constantinople or Thrace, but on their own estates in the east, was to be a significant reason for their lack of integration.

Acceptance and Adoption of ‘Roman Customs’

A good starting point for this section is the visit of Basil’s grandfather, Maiktes, to Constantinople ‘when Constantine ruled together with his mother Irene’, that is during the 780s and 790s. Maiktes, we are told:

met a compatriot (ὁμογενεῖ) of his named Leo, and recognized from his outward appearance and distinctive apparel that he was no lowly and insignificant person, but rather a noble and prominent man.

We can see that an Armenian (Leo), although recognised as a compatriot by a visiting foreign dignitary (Maiktes), was in actual fact a product of successful assimilation, and therefore considered a Romaios; as explained through the narrative of his ‘distinctive apparel’, which one can assume to be the silk vestments of his rank or even his presence within the imperial court. Yet, the reason for why Maiktes migrated was not simply the result of this chance meeting. Rather we are told that it was from hearing

---

253 For examples of this before the eleventh century see 107-117.
254 A key argument that will be resumed in Chapter Four.
255 Vita Basilii, 3, 16-17, sometime between 780-797.
256 Vita Basilii, 3, 16-17.
of an Armenian community living in the environs of Adrianople, and here we must return to the quotation already given:

When he (Maiktes) learned about Leo’s origins and heard of the Arsacid community living in Adrianople, he chose a foreign country over his own.257 We have another account of this story from Skylitzes, although the details are somewhat confused. Let us give it in full:

... Maiktes, a member of the Arsacid tribe, came into the capital for some reason or other. There he chanced to encounter a fellow tribesman called Leo. They became acquainted with each other and ended up being fast friends. When Leo realised that the other also had the blood of the Arsacides in his veins and was living in Adrianople, he held the stranger’s land in higher esteem than his own...258

These two accounts share some characteristics in that both use the Greek word ὁμογενεῖ to describe the relationship between the two men; i.e. their shared Armenian identity of varying degrees. Confusingly, however, the two published English translations offer different subjects and objects.259 Yet of greater importance was how Maiktes was drawn into migrating to Byzantium through ‘bonds of kinship’ and the marriage to Leo’s daughter. The presence of Armenians already living in the Empire was clearly a pull factor for further Armenians to come and seek their fortune.

This connection through ‘bonds of kinship’ can also be found in an episode involving the young Basil I and a wrestling match, and here we are fortunate to have two independent accounts of the same event, from the Vita Basilii and Genesios’ On

257 Vita Basilii, 3, 17.
258 Skylitzes, ed. 116, trans. 117. The account by Skylitzes is obviously a copy of the information he found in the Vita. It is still prudent to draw comparisons between the two.
259 The Greek in the Vita is at points verbatim in Skylitzes. I would argue that Ševčenko’s translation is finer. Maiktes never enters the accusative (nor Leo leave the accusative) in the passage. L.9-12 all keep Maiktes as the subject.
the reigns of the emperors. Genesios tells us that an Armenian by the name of Constantine was sent during the reign of Theophilos (829-842) by ‘his relatives and the rulers of his native land as a hostage and ambassador’ to Constantinople. In a short amount of time Constantine had started to successfully climb the career ladder within the capital ‘on account of the beauty of his soul and body and his noble disposition in all great affairs’. The Vita tells us that this same Constantine was a patrician, and father to the philosopher and logothete Thomas the patrician, who was well known at the court of Constantine VII, while Genesios tells us more about Constantine’s career. During the attempt to remove the Patriarch John VII Grammatikos (836-843) he is named as ‘the commander of the tagma of the Exkoubitoi’. His career continued with the office of Droungarios of the Arithmos, then that of Patrikios, and finally the Logothetes of the Dromos. Here our accounts begin to diverge in detail. Both Genesios and the Vita tell the story of Basil and his involvement in a wrestling match, though Genesios states the wrestling was hosted by the Caesar Bardas, while the Vita adds that Basil’s opponent was a Bulgarian champion. While Basil was victorious in both accounts, what is more intriguing is the description of Constantine the patrician. In both accounts Constantine comes to the aid of Basil by asking for sawdust (Vita) or straw (Genesios) to be laid upon the ground in which Basil was going to wrestle. The reason behind Constantine’s aid to Basil, we are told by both was their shared Armenian heritage. The Vita says:

... that Constantine the patrician whom we just mentioned, and who was a close friend of Basil (being himself of Armenian descent) ...

While Genesios states:

---

260 See Chapter One: Greek for full discussion on the shared origins of these two sources.
261 Genesios, ed. IV.3, 58, trans. 74.
262 Vita Basili, 12, 49.
263 Genesios, ed. IV.3, 58, trans. 74.
264 Vita Basili, 12, 49. ἅτε καὶ αὐτὸς ἐξ Ἀρμενίων ἐλκὼν τὸ γένος
Constantine was favourably inclined toward him as they were related...

Clearly Basil had some bond with Constantine, though one must side with the *Vita* over Genesios on the relationship between Basil and Constantine. The claim that the two were related was most probably an attempt by Genesios, who may have been the grandson of said Constantine, to claim lineage to the Macedonian house. As such it is more likely that Constantine and Basil were close on the basis of their Armenian heritage. Yet, what these examples reveal is that an individual’s Armenian origins did not prevent assimilation, or even make it as slow as some historians have claimed.

The positions that were given to Constantine the Armenian show that assimilation was in fact a stream-lined process when serving in an official position within the imperial hierarchy.

Both of these case studies provide invaluable commentary on how the imperial court viewed assimilation. From the case of Maiktes it is clear that territorial movement was considered normal practice, abandoning patrimonial lands for new (and better) estates near the imperial centre. Furthermore, Maiktes is clearly identified as a member of the nobility – the only assimilation that the imperial court would be concerned with – and it is tacitly suggested that this was the social class that he would operate in. To Byzantine audiences his career would be self-evident, an office of importance in the military or thematic governance. And yet there was no mention of the religious beliefs held by either Leo nor Maiktes. A clear example that at least in the most immediate instance religious differences did not automatically prevent an Armenian from smooth assimilation into the Empire. In the second case study, we have an Armenian by the name of Constantine who successfully embarked on a career...

---

265 Genesios, ed. IV.26, 78, trans. 97. ἀγχιστείας
266 For further debate on the author of known as Genesios and his lineage to Constantine the Armenian see: Kaldellis, *Genesios*, Translator’s note, 2.
267 Cheynet has previously observed that assimilation may have taken around three generations to complete, see: Cheynet, ‘Les Arméniens de l’Empire’, 67.
of imperial-appointed offices. His Armenian identity (first-generation, according to Genesios) only comes to the fore of the narrative in his interactions with the young Basil I. This was not to diminish his social or hierarchical status, but rather demonstrate the quantity and expectation of Armenian assimilation into the Byzantine Empire to work. Yet, more examples from across the three identified strands are needed to demonstrate the success of Armenian assimilation in the ninth and tenth centuries.

Adoption of Byzantine customs may well have manifested itself in another way. One common theme that repeatedly occurs when examining the careers of the newly arrived Armenian nobility was their penchant for engaging in Byzantine internal strife, and this might be viewed as evidence for the process of assimilation failing to produce *Romaioi*. This is simply not the case. Rather, participation in the internal politics of the Empire reveals how quickly the Armenians had assimilated, sharing characteristics with other Byzantine nobles involved in the politics surrounding who sat on the throne in Constantinople. Therefore, we will now turn and examine exactly what was the Byzantine political ideology that the Armenians subscribed to when migrating into the Empire in the tenth century.

The Byzantine political ideology was the binding formula that held together the various peoples living within the Empire’s borders, and directly influenced the Armenian experience of serving in Byzantium’s army during the Age of Re-conquest. One of the key constructs of this political ideology was loyalty to the emperor and the Roman state which was strongly linked with Christianity, at least in its Orthodox version.\textsuperscript{268} The Roman Emperor held a distinguished position which combined secular and spiritual authority. From the time of Constantine I the emperor was seen to

preside over the earthly kingdom that mirrored the kingdom of heaven and was God’s anointed representative on earth. This unique ideology of governance was supported by the scriptures, specifically Matthew 22:21 ‘Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and unto God the things that are God’s’. While the Roman emperors of late antiquity were the rulers over (largely) all Christians, this ideological concept was still maintained in the territorially smaller state of Byzantium, meaning that in Byzantine eyes, all Christians still owed their secular allegiance to the emperor based in Constantinople. Loyalty to the emperor in practice related only to the office, loyalty to the man (or woman) who occupied the throne was held in less regard as evident from the frequency of revolts, depositions, blindings, and mutilations.

It was this ideology that the Armenians had to come to terms with, so let us turn to some successful examples of assimilation from within the recently settled Armenian nobility in the tenth century and evaluate how they interacted with the Byzantine political ideology. One example that stands out is Ashot Taronites, the son of Grigor, doux of Thessalonica. Ashot still held an Armenian name, though it seems likely that he was born after his father had migrated into the Empire. He is given the name Asotios by Skylitzes: evidence of a possible Hellenization of the name. The details of his career are very useful in the assessment of the mechanics of assimilation. Ashot was captured in 995 by Tsar Samuel of Bulgaria while leading a reconnaissance force and falling into an ambush. This resulted in Grigor rushing to retrieve his son from captivity, and the father perished fighting Samuel’s troops.

---

270 This point is excellently summarized by Haldon who sees it as a contributory factor in the survival of the Empire in the seventh and eighth centuries: Haldon, *Taktika of Leo VI*, 6.
272 Skylitzes, ed. 341, trans. 323.
273 Skylitzes, ed. 341, trans, 323; Stephen of Taron, III, XXXIII, ed.261, trans. 297.
when he was released from captivity by Samuel, so that he could marry Samuel’s daughter, Miroslava. According to Skylitzes this came about when the distressed daughter threatened to kill herself, unless Samuel released Ashot. The newly wedded couple were then dispatched to govern Dyrrachium, where Ashot persuaded his wife to abandon her father and make for Constantinople on some passing Byzantine ships. Upon arrival at the capital, Ashot was given the title of *Magistros* and gave Basil information that the leading citizens of Dyrrachium were willing to deliver the city into the emperor’s hands.²⁷⁴ From this point on we hear nothing further about the career of Ashot, though his descendants were to occupy important roles under the Komnenos dynasty at the end of the eleventh century.²⁷⁵ This rapid series of events, concerning a second generation Armenian migrant, reveals remarkable loyalty towards the Byzantine state and suggests that assimilation could occur far quicker than previous scholars have thought.²⁷⁶

Another example were Ashot’s father, Grigor, and his uncle Bagrat. Both were Taronite princes who in 967/8 exchanged their Armenian lands for estates in and around Constantinople. From the historical record the two brothers do not seem entirely loyal to the Macedonian dynasty, but rather found comradery within the powerful aristocracy that dominated the military commands in the east during the mid-tenth century. It would appear from our sources that the princes fought on the side of Bardas Skleros during his revolt of 976-979 against Basil II, as Stephen of Taron recounts. It is worth giving his account in full:

...Bardas, who was called by surname Skleros, rebelled and reigned as king in the regions of Jahan and Melitene. He was a valiant man and an expert in

---
²⁷⁴ Skylitzes, ed. 342, trans. 324-5.
²⁷⁵ A member of the Taronites family was to marry into the Komnenos family, see: Garsoïan, ‘Armenian Integration’, 95, n. 160.
warfare. He rallied to his side the cavalry force of Armenia which served under the kingship of the Greeks. He divided the kingdom of the Greeks and advanced as far as Bithynia, fighting against king Basil for 4 years. They filled the whole country with rivers of blood.

King Basil assembled the forces of Byzantium and those of Thrace and Macedonia, together with all the western peoples. He sent [them] into battle against the usurper Bardas. Bardas took up arms against him in battle. The Armenian force fought valiantly in this; the sons of the prince of Tarōn, Grigor and Bagarat, and Zap’ranik prince of Mokk’ terrified the forces of Greeks and confused them like a whirling tempest; some were slain by the sword and many were captured. Here the eunuch Petranus was killed, the head of the force. Then, showing compassion and out of mercy on account of their Christian faith, they spared the lives of the survivors.277

This source is not straight forward, as it is not completely clear which side Grigor and Bagrat were fighting on. It would appear that the brothers initially supported the claim of Bardas Skleros: ‘He rallied to his side the cavalry force of Armenia which served under the kingship of the Greeks.’278 Yet one of the brothers appears after the revolt on the side of Basil, Grigor apparently being in command of imperial forces near Trebizond during the revolt of Bardas Phokas in 988/9.279 Grigor was to eventually become doux of Thessalonica, and was placed in charge of the defence of the Balkan frontier by Basil in the light of the resurgence of Bulgaria under Samuel.280 It is becoming increasingly evident that the Taronite brothers were not only successful

---

279 Yahya of Antioch, Patrologia Orientalis 23, 424; For opinion on which brother it was see: Holmes, Basil II, 98 n.69. It would appear that the title Magistros is the indicator for the person being Grigor not Bagrat.
acquiring imperial titles and performing their duties in accordance with these positions, but also participated in the most natural of aristocratic pastimes in Byzantium: civil war.

Our third and final example comes from the beginning of the tenth century with the career of Melias the Great. We have already seen that Melias entered imperial service with his lord Ashot 'the long armed'. Dédéyan believes that the relationship between Melias and Ashot was a feudal one, with Melias performing some military functions.281 In any case, Ashot was killed by the Bulgars at the battle of Bulgarophygon in 896, a particularly heavy defeat for the Byzantines, as their army was at full strength, while Melias was able to escape. Melias returned to the borderlands of the south-eastern frontier and took up arms with fellow Armenian bandits, something towards which Melias was described to have a natural affinity.282 Melias was able to capture, fortify, and hold the city of Lykandos and a short while later founded the city of Tzamandos, which ran against the grain of the defensive policy of Leo VI's reign in the east.283 Later in 913 the region that Melias had been able to carve out for himself was recognised by the imperial centre and raised to the status of a full theme, with Melias as the strategos and gaining the rank of magistros. Previously however, Melias seems to have been caught up with the revolt of Andronikos Doukas in 906/7 and is later found as a refugee with the Emir of Melitene.284 Yet the active participation in a plot does not provide sufficient evidence to suggest that Melias had no desire to operate within the Byzantine order. In fact, the entire coup was founded on an intense rivalry at court level between Andronikos and the eunuch Samonas. The general Eustathios Argyros, another who may have been

281 Dédéyan makes this assumption by the interpretation of the word Θεράπων meaning servant
282 De Thematibus, 75.
283 DAI, 50, 240-41; Dédéyan, 'Mleh le grand', 79.
284 DAI, 50, 238-239: ὁ δὲ Μελίας εἰς τὴν Μελιτηνὴν ἐπὶ πρόσφυγος.
caught up with the conspiracy, was soon recalled from exile and was responsible for setting up Armenian ‘frontier wardens’ on the south-eastern borderlands, of whom most were Armenians exiled for their involvement in the plot of Doukas. And yet they were entrusted with military commands integral to the defence of the Empire. It was through this service that the process of assimilation progressed, further titles being given in reward for the loyalty the Armenians showed the Empire and the Emperor of the Romans.

It has been argued in this section that there are clear examples of Armenian migrants subscribing to the political loyalties that were expected of them once they resided inside the Empire. Despite there being occurrences of disloyalty towards the occupant of the Byzantine throne, it was never disloyalty towards the political entity or institutions of the Empire. Overall, the newly arrived Armenian aristocracy successfully settled into the roles expected of their class and their dominant role within the Byzantine army.

Both a career in the army, and the titles that were held through service, were prominent and effective mechanics of assimilation, and those of Armenian stock came to dominate the high military offices in the ninth and tenth centuries. The aim of this section is to evaluate the most dominant Armenian families, and other selected figures, within the Byzantine aristocracy and assess how the granting of titles, offices, and military positions contributed towards the process of assimilation. There are two distinct groups that will be analysed here. The first are aristocratic families of Armenian stock whose ancestry is not reliably attested to in the primary sources, such

---


286 DAI, 50, 240-241 explicitly notes Melias’ career and loyalty: … διά τιν γνώρισαν αὐτῷ πρὸς τὸν βασιλέα τῶν Ῥωμαίων πίστιν …
as the Skleroi, and the Phokades.\textsuperscript{287} The second group will be those who migrated in the timeframe of this chapter (c.867-1000) and were documented in some form in our narrative accounts, such as the Lekapenoi, and the Kourkouai.\textsuperscript{288} These families are important not simply for rising to the pinnacle of the Anatolian aristocracy, but also for assisting with further assimilation by surrounding themselves with newly arrived Armenians who received prominent positions within the army soon after their arrival.\textsuperscript{289}

The claim of the Skleroi family to be Armenian, despite originating around Sebasteia, is not conclusively proven by our primary sources, though their later affinity with the Iberian magnates on the eastern frontier would insinuate some bond of kinship. The family first appears on the scene in the early ninth century, when a Leon Skleros is recorded as the \textit{strategos} of the Peloponnese for both 805 and 811.\textsuperscript{290} The family’s fortune increased dramatically under the Macedonian dynasty, with a Theodoros Skleros holding the rank of \textit{magistros} and \textit{anthypatos}, while his two sons held military posts in Hellas and the office of \textit{droungarios tou ploimou} respectively.\textsuperscript{291} Despite disappearing from favour during the reign of Leo VI, they may have supported the coup of the Lekapenoi, although this once again is tentative.\textsuperscript{292} It has been suggested that this support eventually resulted in a member of the family holding the office of \textit{domestikos ton scholon}. The replacement of John Kourkouas in 944 was

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{287} W. Seibt, \textit{Die Skleroi} (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1976); Cheynet, ‘Les Phocas’, \textit{Le Traité sur la guerrilla (De velitatione) de l’empereur Nicéphore Phocas}, ed. and trans. G. Dagon and H Mihaescu (Paris, Editions du Centre national de la recherche scientifique, 1986), 289-315. The careers of Bardas Skleros and Bardas Phokas will only be summarised briefly in this chapter. For an in-depth analysis of their revolts against Basil II see Chapter Three.
\item \textsuperscript{288} Although somewhat dated see: Stephen Runciman, \textit{The Emperor Romanus Lecapenus and his reign} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963); Luisa Andriollo, ‘Les Kourkouas (IXe-XIe siècle)’, \textit{Studies in Byzantine Sigillography} 11 (2012), 57-87.
\item \textsuperscript{290} Seibt, \textit{Die Skleroi}, 20, see Table 1, seal 2 and 3.
\item \textsuperscript{291} Seibt, \textit{Die Skleroi}, 23, for the two sons Niketas and Antonios see 24-27.
\item \textsuperscript{292} A man called Pantherios has been identified as a Skleroi, see: Cheynet, ‘Notes arabo-byzantines’, \textit{Mélanges Svoronos} (Rethymnon: Panepistēmio Kretēs, 1986), 145-152, at 145-147.
\end{itemize}
named ‘the patrikios Pantherios’ which leaves some room of interpretation to which military family he belonged. Seibt identifies Pantherios as a Skleroi on the basis of a lead seal that attests ‘Patrikios Pantherios Skleros’, which is most likely the answer to the identification question. Pantherios’ son Bardas had a long career, serving as patrikios and strategos of the frontier theme Kaloudia. A significant achievement earlier in his career was his command of the eastern tagmata that were ordered over to Thrace to counter the Rus’ threat and his defence of Arkadioupolis in 971, which helped cement his position as one of the leading magnates in the army. His career in the years between his victory against the Rus’ and his rebellion against Basil II is largely obscure. Skylitzes insinuates that Bardas was involved in a conspiracy against John I Tzimiskes and nearly lost his eyes for it, and Melias ‘the younger’ is found commanding the eastern armies in 972-973, which suggests that Bardas fell out of favour. This, however, was not for long as Bardas at some point by 976 had resumed command over the eastern armies and posed a significant threat to Basil II. While the Skleroi family were able to last well into the twelfth century, what they represent here is a classic example of the ‘Armenian families’ domination of the military commands in the tenth century. There is no doubt that the Skleroi were assimilated, and their interactions with the other military families, most of whom were of Armenian stock, reveals how being assimilated was nothing more than expected.

293 George the Monk Continuatus, 917, found in: Theophanes Continuatus, Ioannes Cameniata, Symeon Magister, Georgius Monachus, ed. I Bekker, CSHB (Bonn: Weber: 1838).
294 Seibt, Die Skleroi, 27-28: Pantherios was most likely appointed by Romanos I’s sons Stephen and Constantine, yet the family does not seem to suffer with the regime change in 944.
295 Seibt, Die Skleroi, 30.
296 Skylitzes, ed. 287-291, trans. 274-278. For commentary on the pro-Skleros source used by Skylitzes see: Holmes, Basil II, 272-274.
297 Matthew of Edessa, I.16, 26; Tzimiskes seems to have been a nickname of Armenian origin - Chmushkik (Չմուշկիկ) possibly referring to his short stature.
298 The revolts of Basil’s reign will be addressed in full in the following chapter.
The Phokas family held distinct prominence among the Anatolian aristocracy for a substantial length of time, and arguably were the greatest threat to the ruling Macedonian House. In a similar fashion to the Skleroi, the origins of the Phokas family are obscure, for no contemporary source documents their arrival in the Empire, and they most likely commissioned a forged genealogy.\textsuperscript{299} Again like the Skleroi, the frequent use of the \textit{praenomen} ‘Bardas’ indicates a link to the Caucasus region, though this still offers no substantial evidence for their Armenian origin. The first member of the family to arise in our sources was a certain Phokas, a Cappadocian soldier, in 872/873.\textsuperscript{300} His career, as attested by seal evidence, was modest, but only in comparison with what his descendants were to achieve.\textsuperscript{301} His son, given the name Nikephoros the Elder, was the first to compete in the upper echelons of the aristocracy on the eastern frontier, and was included within the \textit{oikeioi} of Basil I.\textsuperscript{302} He was further promoted to the post of \textit{protostrator} and received a palace in the capital.\textsuperscript{303} It has been suggested that after a remarkable career serving as \textit{strategos} of Charsianon, and holding a command in southern Italy, Nikephoros was promoted to the office of \textit{domestikos ton scholon} in 886 and actively involved in campaigns against the Arabs of Tarsus in 894. Nikephoros’ sons, Leo and Bardas (both called the Elder), prospered further under Leo VI, although Leo was to fall from power with his failed coup attempt against Romanos I.\textsuperscript{304} Consequently, Bardas’ career was significantly curtailed, and he only appears in our sources with relatively minor military commands until

\textsuperscript{299} For the dismissal of the claims from Attaleiates that the Phokas family were descended from the Roman Fabii see: Cheynet, ‘Les Phocas’, 289.
\textsuperscript{300} Cheynet, ‘Les Phocas’, 292.
\textsuperscript{301} Seals attest to protospatharios and droungarios of Aigaion Pelagos amongst others, see: Cheynet, ‘Les Phocas’, 292, and n 8-12.
\textsuperscript{302} \textit{Oikeioi} equates to companions. An unusual seal notes that a Phokas held the position \textit{épi tou manglabiou}, a member of the Manglabites corps of imperial bodyguards: Zacos, II, no.276.
\textsuperscript{303} A post in the imperial stables and accompanying the Emperor on horseback: Cheynet, ‘Les Phocas’, 293.
\textsuperscript{304} \textit{George Monachus Continuatus}, 882-889.
Constantine VII overthrew the Lekapenoi in 945, when Bardas was apparently given the office of *domestikos ton scholon* for his loyalty, though most likely for not having tarnished himself by adherence to the previous regime. Bardas’ sons were also brought into the circle of senior officers, Nikephoros, Leo, and Constantine receiving command of Anatolikon, Cappadocia, and Seleucia respectively: the army was thus entirely entrusted to the Phokades. The imperial patronage of the Phokas family in the 940s and 950s helps explain how one of their own, Nikephoros, was able to seize the imperial crown on the premature death of Romanos II who died after only four years in power. Nikephoros, who had succeeded his father Bardas as *domestikos ton scholon*, had built an impressive military resumé during the campaigns across the Taurus mountain range in the late 950s. Nikephoros’ career as a general, and later emperor, is distinctly relevant to Armenian assimilation in the second half of the tenth century.

In the manual on *Skirmishing*, a work commissioned by Nikephoros, though potentially written by his brother Leo, we have specific mention of Armenians and reference to their reputation. We are informed that Armenians, particularly in the east, were exceptionally poor at sentry duty, a task that the author asserts is of the utmost importance, particularly when campaigning in enemy territory. It is hard to hide the clear ‘ethnic’ tensions with this comment on the army, but this does not necessarily diminish the manpower nor the ‘fighting qualities’ that the Armenian soldiers gave to the Byzantine army. If one looks at some actual figures for the

---


307 *Three Byzantine Military Treatises*, 139.


309 Charanis, *Armenians in the Byzantine Empire*, 34.
number of Armenians in the service of the Empire, it is actually surprising as to how
often they were relied on. Chapters 44/45 of the De Ceremoniis provide some figures
for the strength of the Cretan expedition in 949. Interestingly, Armenians constituted
a sizeable cavalry force with 1000 coming from Sebasteia, 500 from Plantanion, and
500 from Prine, although in the event not all these forces sailed.310 Furthermore, from
the ‘Armenian theme’311 of Charpezikion we have figures for the military officers, along
with ordinary soldiers, totalling 705. These include: 25 senior officers, 47
tourmarchai, 205 droungaroi, and 428 soldiers.312 The records for the expedition of
949 also inform us that 800 soldiers from the Thrakesion commuted their service at 4
nomismata each, which money was then used to pay 600 Armenians to stand sentry
over the coastline of the theme.313 It is clear that the Armenians were found throughout
the Byzantine military, and were also sought after for their prowess, why else would
troops from the eastern frontier be summoned for arguably a western campaign?
Throughout the campaigns of the 950s and 960s, Nikephoros relied heavily on both
the Armenian element within his army and the Armenian settlers to consolidate the
conquests in Cilicia. This reliance is captured once again with his preference for using
Armenian soldiers as a garrison in Constantinople.314 In addition, upon ascending the
imperial throne Nikephoros legislated specifically on Armenian settlers in the east, not
only showing how important they were in their role of settling in newly conquered

310 Platana is some 9 miles west of Trebizond while Giaprino is further west near Giresan. Constantine
VII Porphyrogennetos, The Book of Ceremonies (De Ceremoniis), trans. A. Moffatt and M. Tall, 2 vols
(Canberra: Australian Association for Byzantine Studies, 2012), ii, 44, 652, 656.
311 The primary sources start to distinguish from the older and larger ‘Roman’ themes with the new
smaller and more militarily active ‘Armenian’ themes: Haldon, Taktika of Leo VI, 111.
312 Constantine VII Porphyrogennetos, De Ceremoniis, II, 45, 667.
313 Sylloge tacticorum, 35.4-5; John Haldon, ‘Chapters II, 44 and 45 of the Book of Ceremonies:
314 Leo the Deacon, IV.vii, ed. 64, trans. 113; Skylitzes, ed. 275, trans. 264; Garsoian, ‘Armenian
Integration’, 59.
lands, but also revealing certain tensions the Armenian settlers caused for administrative and legal processes.315

Yet, the rise of the Phokas family to the imperial throne must be viewed in the context of the previous family to have reached imperial heights: the Lekapenoi. For the Lekapenoi their Armenian status is certainly not in doubt, while their lowly background further accentuates the importance of the imperial institutions as a mechanic of assimilation. The first member of the Lekapenoi family to be mentioned by the sources was Theophylaktos Abastakos, who was resettled in the late ninth century in Lakape, a region between Melitene and Samosata, Theophylaktos’ career soared after he saved Basil I’s life in Tephrike (Tekis) and was rewarded with lands and a place in the imperial guard.316 The family’s name appeared as a result of where they were settled, and Theophylaktos’ son, Romanos, was to radically change the fortunes of the family. We know very little about Romanos’ background though it may have been as lowly as that of Basil I, although, as noted by one of his modern biographers, ‘he had no pious and literary grandson to give him a romantic history and royal pedigree’.317 It may not be far-fetched to think that had Romanos II lived long enough, such a work would have been produced. Romanos Lekapenos’s career is without doubt one of the more remarkable in the history of Byzantium and is an excellent example of Armenian assimilation into the Byzantine Empire. Despite his father’s imperial patronage, Romanos did not have access to the typical upbringing that was normal for the nobility who in turn dominated military commands. We have already noted above the scathing comments of Constantine VII calling Romanos an

316 Symeon, 262-263; George Monachus, II, 841.
317 Runciman, Romanus Lecapenus, 63.
illiterate fellow.\textsuperscript{318} Romanos is found to be holding the position of \textit{strategos} of the Samian theme in 911 before gaining a promotion to \textit{droungarios tou ploimou} upon the fall of his predecessor Himerios under the reign of Alexander (912).\textsuperscript{319} His coup d’
état in 919 is not of great relevance here, but his patronage of other Armenians, particularly the Kourkouas family, was to bring about a resurgence of assimilated Armenians in military commands.

The Kourkouas family came to dominate the high military offices during the reign of Romanos I and can be viewed in comparison with the later domination of the same offices by the Phokas family post-945. The family had at least eight eminent members between the second half of the ninth and the first half of the twelfth centuries. When one considers the prosopography and sigillographic evidence from the tenth century, the Kourkouas family consistently exercised military and civilian commands on the eastern border. The earliest reference to a Kourkouas holding office was a certain John, found in the chronicle of Symeon, who held the position of \textit{domestikos} of the Hikantoi in c.886, indicating that the Kourkouai were already well established within the Byzantine elite during the early Macedonian dynasty.\textsuperscript{320} John was involved in a plot against Basil I, and was possibly even the ringleader, however, the plot was foiled and John was blinded. This did not diminish the careers of his descendants. Most prominent were the brothers John and Theophilos Kourkouas who held various important offices in the mid-tenth century during the reign of Romanos I, which is attested by seals. A seal dated \textit{ante quem} 927-930 has John as a \textit{patrikios} and holding the office of \textit{domestikos ton scholon}.\textsuperscript{321} At some point after 930, John had gained the rank of \textit{magistros}, possibly as a reward for his military successes involving

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{318} \textit{DAI}, 13, 72-73.
\item \textsuperscript{319} \textit{Theophanes Continuatus}, VI, 377.
\item \textsuperscript{320} Symeon, 269. Skylitzes gives him the name Romanos: Skylitzes, ed. 140, trans. 138.
\item \textsuperscript{321} Andriollo, ‘Les Kourkouas’, 63.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
the eventual capture of Melitene in 934, while Theophilos held the military
governorship of Theodosiopolis, and was strategos of Chaldia and
Mesopotamia. Theophilos’ grandson, John Tzimiskes, was to take the throne later
in the century. Unsurprisingly, the Kourkouai were to diminish in status with the
overthrow of the Lekapenoi. John Kourkouas’ son, Romanos Kourkouas held the
rank of magistros in 963, and was offered the office of domestikos ton scholon in the
west, if he agreed to support Joseph Bringas, the parakoimomenos, against
Nikephoros II Phokas. A seal attesting a Romanos, imperial protospatharios and
strategos of Mesopotamia, may indeed be Romanos Kourkouas. Romanos’ son,
John, appears later in 970 as commander of the army stationed in Macedonia and later
as magistros. His ‘immoderate insolence’, most likely stemming from an alcohol
problem, was noted by Leo the Deacon as the chief cause for the failure to prevent the
Rus’ invasion. John was ultimately to pay with his life for failing to hold the Rus’
threat at the siege of Dorostolon (971), where his first cousin once-removed, Tzimiskes,
was victorious over Svyatoslav. The family reached its peak with the accession of
John I Tzimiskes, but the minor role the family played in the rebellions of Bardas
Phokas and Skleros in the early years of Basil II seems to illustrate their declining
status.

There were other Armenian families of importance who migrated into
Byzantium in the tenth century. The entirety of chapter 43 of the DAI details in full the
delicate political balance in the region highlighting the difficulties faced by Romanos I
in granting titles, gifts, and properties in the capital. The internal factionalism in Taron

---

322 DAI, 45, 212-213.
323 Theophanes Continuatus (Bonn), 428; Skylitzes, ed. 230, trans. 222.
324 See above for the Phokas family who replaced the Kourkouai in 945.
325 Skylitzes, ed. 256, trans. 247.
327 Leo the Deacon, VII.ix, ed. 126, trans. 173-4.
328 Leo the Deacon, IX.v, ed. 148, trans. 192.
resulted in the division of the country upon the death of Tornikios, the sons of the magistros Krikorikios, Pankratios and Asotios taking the country of Apoganem and the Empire gaining the region of Oulnoutin as provided in Tornikios’ will. The DAI suggests that Tornikios’ wife and child moved to Constantinople upon his death, though later in Skylitzes two Tornikioi are identified as Nicholas and Leo. If these two are the sons of Tornikios, it shows once again speedy assimilation, for they rallied to Constantine VII’s cause in overthrowing the Lekapenoi in January 945. This episode has more value, however, than as just another example of assimilation. Here we gain a rare insight into the functions of languages in the diplomatic dealings between Byzantium and the Armenian magnates on the eastern frontier. In this episode the DAI refers to a man called Krinitis, the protospatharios and interpreter. It is the latter function that is of interest here. Krinitis was without doubt an Armenian who was serving the imperial court as a translator and held an appropriate rank within the court. Yet it is worth noting that the ruling senior emperor, Romanos I, was of Armenian peasant stock, and almost certainly had some command of his ancestral tongue. While we have no definitive proof for Romanos’ knowledge of Armenian, his use of an interpreter could indicate that even if he were able to communicate in the Armenian tongue he would never have attempted to do so; for a Roman Emperor could never be seen to conduct diplomatic exercises in any language other than Greek.

We have already seen how certain individuals, like Kourtikios and Melias ‘the great’, prospered in Byzantine service and through their careers assimilated into the

---

329 DAI, XLIII, 194-199.
330 DAI, XLIII, 196-197; Skylitzes, ed. 236, trans. 228. Cheynet identifies Nicholas and Leo as the sons of Tornik, despite the DAI and other sources using the singular παιδίον.
331 It is possible that Krinitis is the same man mentioned later in the DAI serving as the military governor in Peloponnesus: DAI, L, 234-235.
332 For further discussion on bilingualism, particularly in the eastern provinces see: Gilbert Dagron, ‘Formes et fonctions du pluralisme linguistique à Byzance (IXe -XIe siècle)’, TM 12 (1994), 219-240, at 238-9; Garsoian, ‘Armenian Integration’, 102.
Byzantine Empire. Kourtikios’ descendants were highly active in Byzantine political life, a Manuel Kourtikios serving as *strategos* of Kibyrrhaiote for Bardas Skleros and commanding sizeable naval forces in the Aegean.\textsuperscript{333} Melias may have been the grandfather of another Melias who we have seen above holding the office of *domestikos ton scholon* under John I Tzimiskes.\textsuperscript{334} This same Melias is the most likely candidate for the figure painted on the northern wall of the Pigeon House Church at Cavuşin. Such imagery is incredibly insightful for analysing both his career and his religious faith.\textsuperscript{335} Melias’ career is stereotypical for the Byzantine-Armenian aristocrat serving on the eastern frontier. He operated in the highest circles of the officer class, holding the most important position after the Emperor, *domestikos ton scholon*, and was without doubt a fully assimilated Byzantine. Melias was left in command of significant forces in the east by Tzimiskes and subsequently defeated near Amida by the Hamdanids in 973 (his death and association with the Forty Martyrs of Sebasteia was to be commemorated in the Pigeon House Church).\textsuperscript{336} Melias’ appointment was not just a pragmatic choice by Tzimiskes, it represented the ideals behind Tzimiskes’ campaigns against the Muslim world, uniting a wider Christian effort incorporating Byzantines, Armenians, Georgians, and Syrians to fight the Muslim enemy. And it is in the context of religious unity among the various Christian peoples on the eastern frontier that we should turn the focus to assessing how Armenian migrants dealt with the confessional differences between the Imperial and Armenian Churches once they arrived in the Empire.

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{333} Skylitzes, ed. 320, 322, trans. 303, 306.
\textsuperscript{334} This is, however, unlikely. The name Melias was relatively common as noted: Dédéyan, *Mleh*, 78, n.27.
\textsuperscript{336} Yahya, *PO23*, 353-354; Matthew of Edessa, I.16, 26.
\end{footnotesize}
Religious Conversion and Conformity

The imperial Orthodox Church, centred in Constantinople, and the ecumenical patriarchy, has often been seen as the most readily distinguishable form of Byzantine identity throughout the history of Byzantium, and therefore held the potential to be the largest obstacle for Armenian migrants to fully assimilate. This is largely based upon a conservative reading of the primary evidence which often holds polemically-charged insults in the main narrative prose. However, the nature of religious relations in the ninth and tenth centuries between the Byzantines and Armenians should not be misunderstood through the later works of eleventh century historians, but rather approached through a cautious and careful assessment of contemporary evidence which actually suggests a period of co-operation. While both Byzantine and Armenian sources viewed Christianity as an integral part of their respective identities, the claims of modern secondary writers that the Byzantines placed ethno-national attachments on the ‘Greek Church of Constantinople’ describe a development for later than the period under discussion here.337 In the ninth and tenth centuries there were no similar ethnic attachments to the observation of the faith in Byzantium. One could be a Christian and not a Romaios, though in order to be considered a Romaios you had to be Christian. The only possible ethnic attachments to the observation of faith at this time were made by churches not in communion with the imperial church, such as the Syriac and Armenian churches, and the hostilities found in our sources between the Chalcedonian and Miaphysite churches should be viewed as not truly reflective of reality, nor representative of the failure of Armenian migrants to assimilate into the Byzantine Empire.338 This section will have two aims. First, to explain what the

337 This trend of scholarly thought has been discussed above in the Introduction: Identity and Assimilation.
differences between the churches were from late-antiquity through to the late ninth century; and second, to argue that despite localised occurrences of religious hostilities on the eastern borderlands, religious differences were not a significant barrier for Armenians to assimilate in the ninth and tenth centuries.

The Armenian Apostolic Church, to give its full name, follows what is described as a Miaphysite form of Christianity. ‘Miaphysite’ churches, known collectively today as ‘Oriental Orthodoxy’, had split from the main body of the church after the Fourth Ecumenical Council of Chalcedon in 451 A.D., which lends its name to the label of ‘Chalcedonian’ used by our Miaphysite sources to describe the adherents of the Church of Constantinople. It is worth summarising briefly the Christological disagreements between the Chalcedonian and Miaphysite churches, in order to provide the context for the discussion below and in the subsequent chapters. The Miaphysite churches only recognise the acts of the first three ecumenical councils, namely First Nicaea (325), First Constantinople (381), and Ephesus (431). During these three councils the church pronounced the Son to be divine – ‘consubstantial’ with the Father – and that although Christ was divine, as well as human, it was only within one identity. It was at the Fourth Ecumenical Council at Chalcedon in 451 that the definition was revised to state that Christ, while being one person, had two distinct natures: divine \textit{logos} and human \textit{Jesus}. This was criticised by the Miaphysites as too close to the Nestorian teachings that had been deemed heretical at Ephesus (431).

The rejection of the council of Chalcedon was not a single clear-cut action from an Armenian perspective.\textsuperscript{[339]} The exact nature of the conclusion of the council and how it had affected the correct Christological definition were thoroughly debated, not only

between Armenians and Chalcedonians, but between the Chalcedonians and the Miaphysites of Syria and Egypt throughout late antiquity. It is in fact rather surprising to consider that no Armenian representatives were at Chalcedon, or were even given an invitation to participate.\textsuperscript{340} The date of the actual break between the Armenians and the perceived Orthodox doctrine established at Chalcedon has thus been a hotly debated topic. Certain dates have been proposed: (A.D.) 488, 491, 527, and 544, or even later.\textsuperscript{341} It should be noted that many years passed before the Armenians officially denounced Chalcedon, and that there is some debate why it took so long for them to do so. There have been various theories, some interrelated, others not:

i. The Armenians were misled as to what Chalcedon actually stated, or that they were unable to understand the doctrine established at the council.

ii. They were compelled by the (Sassanian) Persians who hoped to drive a wedge between the Roman Empire and the Armenian (ecclesiastical) hierarchy.

iii. Their language was not able to express the Chalcedonian wording on the natures of Christ.

iv. They were victims of false identification of the Chalcedonian doctrine with Nestorianism.\textsuperscript{342}

It is likely that it was a combination of the four factors above that resulted in the Armenians eventually separating from the Chalcedonian Church. But it is not the purpose of this thesis to document the relationship between the two churches from the fifth to the ninth century, as after all the Islamic conquest of Armenia and the creation of Muslim Emirates in the Taurus and Anti-Taurus mountains during the middle of

\textsuperscript{340} Sarkissian, \textit{The Council of Chalcedon}, 4.


\textsuperscript{342} Sarkissian, \textit{The Council of Chalcedon and the Armenian Church}, 20.
the seventh century created a buffer for circa two hundred years between Byzantium and Greater Armenia. We have already seen that the territorial placement of Armenian migrants was a major differential for the process of assimilation and this was no less significant in the context of religion. For example, those Armenians that were settled in the themes of Thrace and Macedonia experienced different religious assimilation by comparison with those that were used to re-populate the regions around Melitene and Tarsus in the tenth century. As such, the rest of this section on religious assimilation in the ninth and tenth centuries will assess how the Armenians adapted to their new religious climate upon arrival in the Empire.

The most commonly identified barrier to successful assimilation is the religious hostility held towards Armenians by Orthodox Byzantines and vice-versa. Garsoïan is of the opinion that the relationship between the two religious groups was fundamentally hostile throughout the intervening period from Chalcedon and the ninth century, despite her previous acknowledgement that the religious polemic of the sources is not truly representative of relations in this period. Bartikyan has gone further and identified a deliberate anti-Miaphysite policy, stating that ‘... the intrigues of Armenian-Chalcedonians have a history of many centuries, and the Byzantine state and church were their instigators’. However, Garsoïan’s point about the polemic does seem to have a great deal to recommend it. For example, the harsh words of the ninth-century nun Kasia are often cited in this context. In a poem she certainly denounces Armenians as deceitful, evil, mad, capricious and slanderous but nowhere does she suggest that they are somehow not true Christians. Kasia was, however,

---

343 For western settlements: Theophanes, ed. I, 429, trans. 593; eastern settlements: Leo the Deacon, II.viii, ed. 28, trans. 80; De thematibus, 75-76, 143-146.
345 Bartikyan, ‘Concerning the Byzantine Aristocratic Family of the Gavras’, 190.
346 Constantine Trypanis, Medieval and Modern Greek Poetry (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1951), 43. One will see in Chapter Four similar comments coming from Attaleiates who held very negative attitudes towards the Armenians.
based in Constantinople. Tensions between Chalcedonian and Miaphysite adherents might have been more strained on the frontier, if the report of the late-tenth century historian Stephen of Taron is to be believed. Talking about David III of Tao, Stephen wrote about the religious animosity between the Chalcedonian and Miaphysite inhabitants on the eastern frontier:

[the Chalcedonian Iberians] harassed the city with the sword and famine. And the church of the [Miaphysite] Armenians outside the circuit wall; which had become a bishop’s residence and monastery – previously it had been an Armenian complex [dedicated] to the Holy Cross and St Gamaliēl – they converted it into stables and billets for the forces of Iberia. The Arabs shouted from the wall, ‘Why are you Christians treating the sanctuary of Christians in that way?’ And the Vrac‘ik‘ replied, ‘We shall be occupying the Armenian church and your mosque in the same way.’ For this reason, the wrath of God was provoked against them.347

Incidents like this, however, are encountered only very rarely and cannot be used as a kind of benchmark for Miaphysite-Chalcedonian relations.348 If one looks to evidence from earlier in the tenth century, certain leading figures in the Apostolic Church seem to have held pro-Chalcedonian tendencies, particularly the Katholikos Yovhannes Draxanakertc‘i, also known as John V the Historian. It is through the comparative use of both the history of Yovhannes and the letters of Patriarch Nicholas I Mystikos that we can glean some evidence of cordial relations between the two churches.349 In fact, it is extraordinary that in a direct exchange of letters between the religious leaders

347 Stephen of Taron, III, XL, ed. 268, trans. 302.
349 There is a division amongst scholars as to whether Yovhannes was pro-Chalcedonian or not. For discussion on the historiographical debates see the introduction: History of Armenia, 4.
of the Byzantine and Armenian churches there is barely a mention of the Christological differences. A letter, preserved in Yovhannes’ *History*, highlights how the political situation in the Caucasus overrode the religious differences that so often dominate the narrative sources.\(^35^0\) It should be noted that the Patriarch Nicholas I Mystikos was acting as part of the regency council for the infant Constantine VII, and this may possibly explain why his focus fell on political issues between the two polities rather than religious discussions. At the head of the letter we can see that Nicholas addresses Yovhannes, ‘To the most holy, God-loving spiritual Father [Yovhannes], Katholikos of Greater Armenia’, highlighting the Byzantine acknowledgement of his position as head of all Christians in the Caucasus.\(^35^1\) The letter from Constantinople also insinuates the Byzantine desire for a Christian alliance against the Muslim enemy, something that can be directly compared to the correspondence between John I Tzimiskes and Ashot III (953-977) in 971.\(^35^2\) One must be cautious, though, in treating this episode as fully representative of this period. Yovhannes’ pro-Chalcedonian tendencies are clear and in a later letter from Nicholas I to the Shahanshah Ashot II the Iron written in 924/25 we are informed that the imperial court had been contacted about ordaining the next Katholikos. Indeed, as Nicholas noted:

> On this matter my Father – I mean Photios ... – spent much pains, partly by letters, partly by dispatch of envoys, although circumstances denied his efforts a successful issue ...\(^35^3\)

What these letters tell us is that the external dealings between Byzantium and Armenia were concerned not solely on the issue of Christian unity, although it was certainly an

\(^{35^0}\) Yovhannes Drasnakertc’i, LIV, 189-197.  
\(^{35^2}\) Matthew of Edessa, I.19, 29-32.  
underlying point, even when not discussed directly. We do not have, however, the expected insults or aggression from either side on the religious differences, and while one must acknowledge the unusual circumstance of Yovhannes holding pro-Chalcedonian tendencies, this does not diminish the underlying statement that this period was one of toleration. One cannot, however, just look at the external relations to understand how Armenians dealt with the religious aspect of assimilation. Instead, one must follow the obscure path provided by our sources for information about the experience of Armenian migrants when they first settled in the Empire.

It has already been discussed how the geographical setting of Armenian migrants was a defining factor in the assimilation process, and this was by no means different in terms of religion. In the west, proximity to the capital and detachment from the roots of their Church probably helped to ensure that the migrants simply merged with the Orthodox majority. The only evidence of an Armenian church existing in Constantinople is from Michael the Syrian, who claims it stood until the time of Alexios I Komnenos (1081-1118) when it was burnt to the ground, but he does not inform us when it was built or where it was situated.354 The complete lack of Church infrastructure for the Armenian migrants who were settled in Macedonia and Thrace would have slowly eroded their independence as a religious unit, and it would not be far-fetched to assume that many were unaware of the differences in Christological doctrine, or Church identity, in the first place, and therefore were unlikely to resist strongly the acceptance of the Orthodox rite. While it is hard to determine the rate of the adoption of the Chalcedonian rite by those migrants that were settled in Thrace, a particularly famous figure for Byzantium rose from the ethnic group in the mid-tenth century in the person of Basil I, the founder of the Macedonian

354 Michael the Syrian, Chronique, iii, XV.vii, 185.
dynasty. Basil showed all the signs of being an active member of the imperial church, with nothing to indicate his Armenian religious heritage. The issue with using the adoption of the Chalcedonian rite as a form of assimilation into the Byzantine state is the lack of viable accounts and examples of this being the case. Our sources are dominated by the actions and events concerning the nobility or upper echelons of society within the capital itself, rather than writings from migrant communities in the provinces. As discussed above, many influential members of the Constantinopolitan elite had Armenian ancestry, but there is no evidence that any of them held to the Miaphysite doctrine of their ancestors. It has previously been observed that the vast majority of the Armenian aristocracy who migrated to Byzantium, whether in the tenth century or in earlier periods, converted to Orthodoxy within the first generations of settling within the Empire.\footnote{Alexander Kazhdan, ‘The Armenians in the Byzantine Ruling Class Predominantly in the Ninth Through Twelfth Centuries’, \textit{Medieval Armenian Culture}, ed. Thomas Samuelian and Michael Stone (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1983), 438–451, at 444; Brouselle, ‘L’intégration des Arméniens’, 50.} This was largely motivated by a desire to increase their social standing through marriage, or to gain access to the higher positions within the Byzantine state, in either the civil or military administration. The willingness of the Armenian elite to ‘convert’ to Byzantine Orthodoxy only supports further the re-evaluation of confessional identity in this period. Rather than viewing it as Miaphysite versus Chalcedonian, it can be argued that the differences were not insurmountable in barring assimilation. Returning to the example of Melias (the younger) who appears in the Pigeon House Church at Cavuşin, Melias was most certainly of Armenian origin, yet his depiction in an Orthodox Church would suggest that he was a Chalcedonian. Matthew of Edessa omits the religious and ethnic details of Melias and his subsequent death, though he designates him as a Roman.\footnote{Matthew of Edessa, I.16, 26–27.} While the absence of polemical language from Matthew in this regard is fascinating, what is more important is that
Melias, someone of Armenian origin, was now fully Roman and probably a Chalcedonian Christian.

The Armenian migrants who were settled in the eastern themes of the Empire were to have a different experience from those of the nobility or migrants who were settled in the west. The Byzantine policy of using Armenians to settle on the depopulated borderlands that had been taken by conquest from local Muslim dynasties brought about an expansion of the Armenian Church into Byzantium. Stephen of Taron informs us of a wave of newly established bishoprics in Byzantine cities in the east:

In the days of lord Xač’ik (973-992), patriarch of Armenia, this people of Armenia spread and extended across the regions of the west, to the extent that he consecrated bishops for it in Antioch of Syria, in Tarsus of Cilicia and in Sulind, and in all these districts.\(^\text{357}\)

Furthermore, Stephen tells us that bishops from Armenia and ‘from the side of the Greeks’ were present at the election of the Katholikos Sarkis in 992.\(^\text{358}\) This would indicate that cordial relations between the Byzantine and Armenian clergy were existing on the eastern frontier, where localised tensions were just that: localised. The pattern of religious tolerance seems to follow that of political comradery, as we have seen with the correspondence between Yovhannes Drasxanakertc‘i and Nicholas I in the early tenth century; and later with John I Tzimiskes and Ashot III.

The reliance on settling eastern Christians in the newly conquered territories, whether they were Syrian or Armenian, suggests that the religious differences were yet again downplayed to achieve wider political goals. There are still, however, examples of religious antagonism occurring between Byzantine churchmen and the Miaphysite

\(^{357}\) Stephen of Taron, III, XXXI, ed. 258, trans. 295; Lang, *Armenia*, 193.

\(^{358}\) Stephen of Taron, III, XXXII, ed. 259, trans. 296.
Eastern Churches. In the reign of Nikephoros II Phokas, the emperor encouraged the Syrian Jacobite Patriarch, John VI Sarigta (965-985), to relocate to northern Mesopotamia in order to escape from the persecution that Miaphysite Christians were suffering under the newly installed Chalcedonian Patriarch of Antioch. This in turn led to a migration of Syrians to the lands around Melitene. We are informed by Michael the Syrian that Nikephoros had promised to come to terms with the Miaphysite Christians, so that they would be free from persecution. Yet we are informed by the same source a little further on that this promise was immediately rescinded and the members of the ecclesiastical hierarchy of the Syrian church were brought to Constantinople and were threatened with imprisonment if they did not accept the Acts of Chalcedon. The Syrian Patriarch and bishops were subsequently thrown in prison for refusing to agree to these terms, and were only released upon the accession of John I Tzimiskes in 969. This, Cowe reckoned, was a ‘means of regularizing and homogenizing [Cappadocia] in order to tie it closely to the centre and reduce the effect of centrifugal forces among the recent immigrants’, which he further argues to have been an intentional policy to reduce a Miaphysite religious group to subservience to the Empire.

Remarkably there were no recorded attempts at this stage to enforce the same policy on the Armenian migrants who had likewise settled in the regions around Melitene, and interestingly there is evidence that some within the Armenian ecclesiastical leadership desired to bring about a reconciliation between the two Churches. The short reign of Vahan I (968-9) was a result of the newly elected Katholikos attempting ‘to foster closer relations and achieve agreement with the

---

359 Michael the Syrian, *Chronique*, iii, XIII.iv, 130.
360 Michael the Syrian, *Chronique*, iii, XIII.iv, 131.
Chalcedonians’; he was promptly forced to flee to Vaspurakan for protection and a successor, Stephen III (969-972), was elected.\textsuperscript{362} There then followed a bitter dispute between the two men, which seems to have divided the Armenian Church, and it is with some relief that Stephen of Taron reports that ‘[Vahan] and [Stephen] died in the same year (972) and disorder was removed from this country of Armenia’.\textsuperscript{363} One cannot ignore the attempts to bring about religious unity by the Byzantines, yet it would be a stretch to exaggerate local tensions, as found in Sebasteia, to argue that the Byzantines were completely intolerant towards eastern Christians living on the frontiers.\textsuperscript{364} Such a policy, had it existed, would have not only alienated large swathes of populations that were relied upon for the security of the Empire, but severely damaged the military capabilities provided by the Armenians.

To categorise all Armenians under the Miaphysite ‘label’ would be a gross error; in fact, a substantial minority of Armenians followed a Chalcedonian Armenian Church. A discussion of this group is essential when dealing with religious assimilation. The group referred to as Armenian Chalcedonians, or sometimes \textit{Cat’/Tzatoi} – following the Chalcedonian rite – had a large following in Taron and Tayk.\textsuperscript{365} Their liturgical language was not Greek, but Armenian, even when residing in monasteries of the imperial church.\textsuperscript{366} Unfortunately there is a distinctly unpleasant trend in modern scholarship to view this group as ‘un-Armenian’, something that is directly lifted from partisan sources originating from times of religious tension. The historian Bartikyan goes further in claiming that the Byzantine government and Church were the main supporters of Armenian Chalcedonians, which encouraged

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{362} Stephen of Taron, III, VIII, ed. 181, trans. 233.
\textsuperscript{363} Stephen of Taron, III, VIII, ed. 182, trans. 234.
\textsuperscript{365} Garsoian, ‘Armenian Integration’, 93.
\textsuperscript{366} Arutjunova-Fidajan, ‘The Ethno-Confessional Self-Awareness of Armenian Chalcedonians’, 347.
\end{footnotesize}
Armenians to abandon the Apostolic Church and be used as Byzantine agents in Armenia.\textsuperscript{367} The origins of the hostilities between Chalcedonian and Miaphysite adherents in the Caucasus can be found in our sources. In the example above, from Stephen of Taron, we find the soldiers of David III of Tao using a Miaphysite church as a stable, an action which confused even the Muslim garrison that they were besieging. The region of Tayk was strongly Chalcedonian in profession, despite its geographical location surrounded by Armenians who were not. The actions of the soldiers, however, are not wholly typical of relations between these two groups. The value of this example is realistically only that it highlights the existence of localised religious tensions. The Armenian Chalcedonians are annoyingly hard to identify in our primary sources. We will see in later chapters how difficult it is to identify whether those of Armenian origin had adopted the Chalcedonian rites, or came from an Armenian-Chalcedonian family. Suffice to say that to claim Armenian-Chalcedonians were a ‘horrible non-phenomenon which emerged under external pressure’, is both misinformed and insensitive to say the least.\textsuperscript{368} One of the key issues here is the use of identity labels by our primary sources. In our Medieval Armenian sources, the Armenian Chalcedonians were often included in the same milieu as their Iberian (Georgian) or Byzantine neighbours.\textsuperscript{369} This difficulty is compounded by both our Byzantine and Georgian sources using their own identity labels which do not obviously correspond with one another, thereby making it extraordinarily difficult to assess the true size and nature of the Armenian Chalcedonian population.

There is one further issue that needs to be discussed regarding the relationship between the Byzantine and Armenian Churches and the categorization of individuals

\textsuperscript{367} Bartikyan, ‘Concerning the Byzantine Aristocratic Family of the Gavras’, 190.
\textsuperscript{368} Arutjunova-Fidajan, ‘The Ethno-Confessional Self-Awareness of Armenian Chalcedonians’, 346.
\textsuperscript{369} Arutjunova-Fidajan, ‘The Ethno-Confessional Self-Awareness of Armenian Chalcedonians’, 346.
in a religious context. Nina Garsoïan has stated that ‘... neither side could be anything but fundamentally hostile to those whom each reciprocally viewed as heretics’, a damning indictment indeed. Yet, this raises the question as to the application of Byzantine law particularly in the context of Armenian assimilation. While in Christological terms the Armenians fell into the Miaphysite definition by the Church in Constantinople, to state that the Armenians were seen by the Byzantines as heretics in a legal framework would be contrary to the evidence at hand. We have seen previously that Nikephoros II Phokas promulgated laws specifically targeting Armenian settlers on the eastern frontier, thereby acknowledging their non-heretical status. In addition, the consistent granting of high offices and titles to Armenians throughout the ninth and tenth centuries overrides any sense of the Armenians being seen as ‘alien’. Indeed, the granting of titles legally made the recipient subject to Roman laws, ignoring the religious and also ethnic differences entirely. One fine example can be found in the career of Eustathios Romaios, a Constantinopolitan judge who ended his career as droungarios tes viglas (chief justice). One such case that Eustathios dealt with was in the matter of inheritance in regard to a man of Georgian origin.\footnote{\textit{Laiou, ‘Institutional Mechanisms of Integrations’ 164.}} In this case the court refused to recognise the ethnic origins of the man, which could possibly entitle him to special treatment under the law, and the reasoning behind this is very relevant to the process of assimilation. As the man in question had held imperial office, and therefore imperial gifts possibly through a salary or stipend that was attached to his position, it was the opinion of the court that this ‘makes it necessary for him to follow the laws of the Romans’.\footnote{\textit{Peira, 14.16 and 54.6 in: Jus graecoromanum, IV, ed. I. and P. Zepos, 8 vols (Athens, 1931), 47, 224; Laiou, ‘Institutional Mechanisms of Integrations’ 164.}} Therefore, if one held Roman titles one was recognized legally under Roman law which is incompatible with the
argument of Garsoïan that Armenians were viewed as heretics. We simply do not have the evidence to support the claim that Armenians were viewed as heretics, after all many held imperial titles whether they lived within the boundaries of the Empire, or outside of it. While hyperbolic rhetoric was used by people on both sides of the divide to describe the other, fundamentally the religious background of an Armenian migrant did not prevent assimilation, and even if it was an issue, it was one that was overlooked on account of the important role the Armenians played in the Byzantine military and government.

It has been argued by Cheynet that it usually took three generations for assimilation to be complete, and yet unfortunately we simply do not have the historical records, or evidence of any kind, to assess the rate of ‘conversion’ for the Armenian migrants from the Christianity of their ancestors to the Christianity they found within the Empire. 372 What we can see, however, is that the religious tensions only rarely flared up at a local level. The evidence that we have on the sheer number of Byzantine-Armenians in imperial service during the eleventh century, and the lack of evidence for those continuing to practise the Armenian liturgy, reveals that many did indeed ‘convert’. But the only thing that can be said with any certainty is that religious differences had no real effect on the ability of Armenians to assimilate in the ninth and tenth centuries: the eleventh century was to be an entirely different scenario.

**Conclusion**

In this chapter, it has been argued that in the period c.867-1000 the Armenians were able successfully to assimilate into the Byzantine Empire. By analysing Armenian assimilation through the pre-established Assimilation Model, one can witness the transformation of Armenian migrants into *Romaioi*. We have been able to illustrate

---

various examples that document the assimilation process in action. The population transfers from the eighth through to the tenth centuries meant that Armenian settlements were placed in different areas, and it was argued that this factor produced varying results in terms of assimilation. Those settled in the west, most specifically in Constantinople, rapidly transformed into Romaioi, as they were closest to the imperial institutions that facilitated interaction with the Byzantine state. Our sources concentrate on the aristocratic interaction with this process, with many examples that they integrated best when involved in the institutions of the Byzantine state: imperial administration and the army. We have traced a number of the main Anatolian families in the late-ninth and tenth centuries, assessing their ‘Armenian background’. Some families, such as the Phokades, had debateable heritage; but many of the families that were to dominate the army commands in the middle and late tenth centuries were almost certainly of Armenian stock. It was surprising to see some occurrences of rapid assimilation: the Taronite princes and brothers Grigor and Bagrat being the prime examples. Nevertheless, the background and career of Basil I helps demonstrate that even the non-elite Armenian migrants eventually assimilated.
Chapter Three: The Byzantine Annexations of Armenia, 1000-1064: Ideology and Opportunism?

This chapter will examine how in the eleventh century the western Armenian kingdoms came to be annexed by Byzantium, the motivation of their rulers to surrender their lands, and those of the Byzantine emperors, primarily Basil II, to acquire them. It will also offer an explanation as to why external relations changed, tracing the way in which internal factionalism within the Byzantine Empire led to its intervening in Caucasia as never before and the factors that dictated where the displaced Armenian rulers were to be settled. The annexations were a direct result of the Byzantine-Georgian conflict that broke out in the final years of Basil’s reign, a conflict that went on to produce unforeseen consequences which ultimately undermined the process of assimilation and produced the alienation of the Armenians in Byzantium. It will be argued that Basil’s reign did not represent that change in itself, but rather gathered the ingredients for the recipe of alienation of the Armenians in the mid-eleventh century.

Primary Sources

The scope of the primary evidence has changed from the previous chapter, with certain sources coming to prominence where others have fallen silent. Strangely from a Byzantine perspective, we have no contemporary history that has come down to us to the present day, and so must rely on Skylitzes. This raises pertinent questions regarding the sources Skylitzes used when writing his Synopsis and it has been supposed that he relied on an unidentified, but debated source for the years 976-1025. Treadgold has argued for the source known as the ‘lost history’ written by Theodore of Sebasteia, who is identified in Skylitzes’ introduction, although this is challenged by Holmes who argues that the evidence is too insubstantial to draw definite
conclusions. Skylitzes’ account returns to relevance in this chapter when his narrative turns to Armenian affairs in the early 1040s. His grasp of detail (and even interest) mirror that of his probable sources Demetrius of Cyzicus and John the Monk of Lydia. One must, however, acknowledge that Skylitzes’ account of Armenian affairs dramatically increases in both length and details from the 1040s onwards and this is most likely down to his use of a biography of Katakalon Kekaumenos who was active in the Byzantine governance of Ani. Thankfully we have a series of adequate sources from the eastern provinces that make up the shortfalls in the Byzantine historical record. From the Armenian tradition we lose Stephen of Taron, although fortunately he continues to the death of David III of Tao in 1002. Stephen’s narrative is resumed almost immediately with Aristakes Lastivertc’i, our most reliable Armenian source for the next two chapters, taking the Armenian narrative up to August 1071. Matthew of Edessa is also writing on this period, but his remoteness from events, at least up until c.1050, make his work less valuable. As this chapter focuses mainly on the events in the Caucasus during Basil’s reign, we are able to access Georgian sources which supplement the historical details we get from their Armenian counterparts. The source known as *The Book of K’art’li* augments our knowledge of Basil’s campaigns against the Kingdom of Georgia during 1020-22, offering a sometimes-balanced account of the motivations behind the key characters Basil II and Giorgi I. There is also further evidence to help our understanding of the apparent Armenian willingness to voluntarily offer their kingdoms upon the death of the reigning monarch; something that will be explored in full below. Our last main account, and arguably the most valuable for studying events on Byzantium’s eastern frontier in the late-tenth and

---

373 Skylitzes, ed. 4, trans. 2; Treadgold, *Middle Byzantine Historians*, 247, for expanded discussion on Theodore of Side and Sebasteia see: 247-258; Holmes, *Basil II*, 96-97.
374 Treadgold suggests that John the Monk may have been the author of Kekaumenos’ biography: *Middle Byzantine Historians*, 263-265; see also: Shepard, ‘Scylitzes on Armenia in the 1040s, and the role of Catacalon Cecaumenos’, *REArm* XI (1975-1976), 269-311.
early-eleventh centuries, is Yahya of Antioch. Here, we are given invaluable details of the actions and motivations of many of the key characters on Byzantium’s eastern frontier.

**Basil II and his image**

Before the annexations are discussed, one last issue arising from the primary sources has to be explored: why Basil II did not come under significant criticism from our Armenian sources despite the fact that it was under his rule that the independence of the western Armenian kingdoms reached their final phase. In fact, Basil, and indeed his brother Constantine VIII, receive constant praise from Armenian sources. A clear example appears in Grigor Narerkac‘i’s History of the Holy Cross at Aparank, the first quarter of which is dedicated to praising the two emperors for their gift of a relic from the True Cross:

> And these two brothers, Basil and Constantine ... were elevated to the magnificent honour (and) glory of the golden (and) ornate imperial throne. And they occupied it with dignity, peace, and tranquillity, extending their own most-trusted progeny, high and marvellous branches stemming from the lordly, royal, and well-rooted tree.\(^{375}\)

One can observe similar positive descriptions in the account of Aristakes of Basil II, and by extension Byzantium, while even the less than favourable account from Matthew of Edessa describes Basil as ‘the saintly Roman emperor’.\(^{376}\)

---


\(^{376}\) Matthew of Edessa, I, 53, 49.
The attitude towards the Byzantines does indeed harden in the writings of Matthew of Edessa and Aristakes as they continue their narratives towards their present day (early twelfth and late eleventh century respectively), but despite the fact that they were writing with the benefit of hindsight, they do not apportion blame to Basil from the seizure of Armenia, when they might have done so. It is fascinating that the later religious issues that came to dominate the Byzantine-Armenian relationship from the mid-eleventh century onwards were not levelled against Basil. In reality the explanation for this is quite simple. Basil continued the era of religious tolerance that had existed in the ninth and tenth centuries.

A revealing episode that demonstrates existing religious tolerance can be found when the Katholikos Peter visited Basil in Trebizond during the winter of 1021. Peter, the spiritual head of the Armenian Church, was in reality a heretic in the eyes of the Byzantines and yet this did not prevent diplomatic dialogue between the two parties. Furthermore, it would be illogical for the Artsruni settlement to have gone ahead had there been pre-existing tensions or intolerance of religious differences, in fact we see an active expansion of Miaphysite religious houses and places of worship in Cappadocia from the mid-1020s onwards. The events leading to the persecution of the Armenian Church by Basil’s successors cannot be projected back upon this period in order to emphasize the fundamental religious differences between the Byzantines and Armenians. Rather, the works of Matthew and Aristakes suggest that the writers themselves saw that the later problem was exactly that: later. Indeed, the antagonism that the Byzantines and Armenians were to develop towards one another later in the

---

378 For evidence and discussion of expansion see below: 183-193.
eleventh century were the product of unforeseen circumstances that arose from the annexation and settlement of the Armenians in the 1020s.

When one observes Basil’s actions in terms of the area of settlement, or even his religious policy, it becomes apparent that he chose to continue the policy of co-operation and tolerance. We will see shortly that during Basil’s campaign against David III of Tao it was reported that the emperor freed the Armenian priests of Sebasteia from the authority of the Greek metropolitan, easing the religious tensions that would create discord in the eastern themes.\textsuperscript{379} In doing so, Basil ensured that the social and religious framework so established mirrored that to which the Armenian migrants had been accustomed in their own lands, something that would potentially aid assimilation as long as the religious differences were not exacerbated by the imperial centre.

The deterioration of Byzantium’s status in our Armenian sources reflects the growing hostility between the Byzantine and Armenian Churches during the mid-eleventh century, which involved series of debates on the differing theologies of the two Churches, and in some cases threats of forced conversions of the Armenians living within the Empire, or even the complete destruction of the Armenian Church.\textsuperscript{380} A full analysis of the relations between the Byzantine and Armenian churches in the eleventh century is found below in Chapter Four, the question here is why the religious differences did not interfere with the diplomatic relations between Byzantium and Armenia at the time of the annexations.

\textsuperscript{379} Stephen of Taron, III, XLIII, ed. 276, trans. 308.
\textsuperscript{380} Aristakes, VI, ed. 43, trans. 32; Matthew of Edessa, II, 57, 133; C. Yarnley, ‘Philaretos – Armenian bandit of Byzantine general?’, \textit{REArm} 9 (1972), 331-354, at 332.
The Context of the Annexations

i. External Relations

The annexations of the Armenian kingdoms in the eleventh century was a seismic event in the history of Byzantine-Armenian relations, although not without precedent. We have seen in the previous chapter that once the Armenians arrived in the Empire they quickly engaged with the process of assimilation and contributed to Byzantine society, most commonly through military service. The strength of the Byzantine-Armenian relationship can be seen in the evidence of friendships existing between Caucasian magnates and their Byzantine counterparts on the other side of the frontier, the comradery of fighting a common Muslim enemy, and a broader sense of shared religion. Our task here is to understand the context of the relationship between the polities of Byzantium and Armenia up until the annexations.

There have been claims that Byzantine policy towards Armenia revolved around the aim to incorporate the Christian realms in Caucasia, as they did not sit comfortably with Byzantine Imperial ideology.\(^{381}\) This is simply not the case. Imperial policy towards Caucasia was driven by local co-operation set against the Islamic powers that had previously dominated the Taurus and Anti-Taurus mountain ranges. It is of great importance to challenge previous views that have seen the period of the Macedonian dynasty as one of ‘the systematic advance ... [of Byzantium’s] eastern frontiers’, which suggests a continuous foreign policy on the eastern frontier for nearly three hundred years, painting Byzantium as a typical expansionist imperialist state.\(^{382}\) Obviously there has been a great deal of revisionism concerning the nature of the Byzantine Empire, and some scholars have specifically tackled the question for the period of re-

\(^{381}\) See Introduction: Secondary Works for Garsoian’s strong-headed view on this point.
\(^{382}\) Ostrogorsky, *A History of the Byzantine State*, 237; similar sentiments can be found with the previous cited work from: Garsoian, ‘The Byzantine Annexations’, 188.
conquest. Yet the study of Byzantine foreign policy, and its trajectory, must be based on solid primary source evidence, and the works of Constantine VII provide a logical starting point.³⁸³ We have already seen that both Basil I and Leo VI oversaw expansion and settlement along a new frontier in the east, Armenians taking the most prominent roles as governors, generals, soldiers, and settlers. It was during the reign of Romanos I, and led by his highly able domestikos ton scholon, John Kourkouas, that strategic areas such as Theodosiopolis and Melitene were permanently seized by the Empire. Both cities had been outposts for Muslim raiding parties to launch into the Anatolian heartland for centuries, and the acquisition of key strongholds was more favoured by imperial policy than the direct occupation of large areas of territory.

One can ascertain that a pragmatic approach to annexation was often taken, although not always guaranteeing successful results. In chapter forty-six of the DAI Constantine records the attempted annexation of Artanuj (Ardanoutzin), when its ruler, Ashot Kiskasis (Asotios), in 923 offered control of the city peacefully, and the episode shares many themes with Basil’s annexations in the eleventh century.³⁸⁴ We are informed that a monk by the name of Agapios of Kyminas was entrusted to treat with Romanos I with regard to the surrender of the Artanuj, with Constantine VII informing us of Agapios’ instructions:

I adjure you, by God and by the power of the honourable and life-giving Cross, to go to Constantinople and tell the emperor to send and take over my city, and have it beneath his dominion.³⁸⁵

³⁸³ Shepard, ‘Constantine VII, Caucasian openings and the road to Aleppo’, 19.
³⁸⁵ DAI, 46, 216-7.
It would seem that internal disputes in Iberia were the cause for Asotios to turn towards surrendering his lands, for unfortunately for the Byzantines those Iberian magnates whom Asotios was in conflict with wrote to the emperor in the following manner:

If your imperial majesty approves this and enters our country, then we put off our servitude to your imperial majesty and make common cause with the Saracens, since we shall have fighting and hostilities with the Romans and shall, perforce, move an army against the city of Ardanoutzin and its country, and against Romania itself.\textsuperscript{386}

Constantine almost notes with glee the reaction from Romanos, one of fear of the potential Iberian-Muslim alliance, and Romanos immediately backtracked from his attempt to take the city. One should nevertheless note that the likelihood of an alliance was more reflective of the time when Constantine was writing, than in the 920s when the episode occurred.\textsuperscript{387} The lessons learnt on this occasion seem to warn against direct annexation, unless it was entirely necessary and had the full support of the neighbouring powers. We have seen that this lesson was not heeded by Basil II when dealing with the annexation of Tao. On that occasion the Iberian princes, Gurgen and Bagrat, attempted to thwart any annexation of Iberian lands, despite the legal claims and treaties that had previously been made.

There are other passages in the works of Constantine VII that resemble potential plans for annexation. In his description on the environs of Lake Van, Constantine states:

\textsuperscript{386} DAI, 46, 220-1.
\textsuperscript{387} DAI, 46, 222-3; Shephard, ‘Constantine VII, Caucasian openings and the road to Aleppo’, 27.
If these three cities, Chliat and Arzes and Perkri, are in the possession of the emperor, a Persian army cannot come out against Romania, because they are between Romania and Armenia, and serve as a barrier and as military halts for armies.388

One must, however, put this statement within its proper context. The specific mention of Byzantine control over three important cities in the region of Vaspurakan highlights the recognition of their strategic value in terms of defence of the Byzantines against Muslims raiders who had plagued the Empire in the previous centuries.389 Those who see this as a ‘future initiative’ for annexation nevertheless fail to recognise the nuances of the statement ‘in possession of the emperor’. The control of key territories through allies, normally local magnates, was common policy in the early to mid-tenth century. This passage highlights the lack of trust between the imperial court and the Artsruni princes who had recently declared themselves ‘Kings of Armenia’ in direct competition with the Bagratids of Ani. Furthermore, Constantine’s comment on the natural defensibility of Armenia is simply a pragmatic observation, and it would be fanciful to read this as an imperially sanctioned annexation of Armenia that future emperors were to heed, and which indeed, was never put into practice.

Even during the reigns of Nikephoros II Phokas and John I Tzimiskes, the Byzantines never made any serious aggressive claims to Armenian or Iberian territories. Rather, the period 963-976 represented a new phase of rapid expansion through aggressive military operations on the south eastern frontier, aiming to eliminate the fractured remnants of Muslim control over the Cilician plain and the environs of Antioch. We have already looked at the correspondence between John I

388 DAI, 44, 204-5.
Tzimiskes and the King of Armenia, Ashot III, a letter that contains a running narrative of the exploits during John’s campaigns and the language used is cordial and relates to the shared Christian glory attained by the defeat of the Muslims in Syria and Palestine.\textsuperscript{390} Bizarrely this particular episode has been portrayed by some as an example of Byzantium threatening Armenian independence, even though Matthew’s account specifically mentions that Tzimiskes was seeking to avenge the defeat of an imperial army under the command of Melias, the \textit{domestikos} of the east, outside the walls of Amida.\textsuperscript{391} Despite the geographical proximity of Tzimiskes’ campaigning to Armenia, the events actually show remarkable levels of comradery between the Byzantines and the Armenians, to the extent that they fought together against the common enemy of the region, the fractured emirates of the Abbasid Empire. At no time does there appear to be a serious contemplation of annexation of Armenia on the part of Byzantium, nor did the Imperial ideology or recognition of foreign princes justify the use of aggressive seizure of Armenian lands. As Jonathan Shepard commented, ‘… Imperial recognition of a prince as “prince of princes” … did not betoken plans for formal annexation. Bestowal or withdrawal of the title served as a bargaining chip …’\textsuperscript{392}; in other words, Byzantine foreign policy considered diplomacy rather than direct military action as its preferred method in its dealings with its eastern Christian neighbours.

One must also recognise how the Byzantine-Armenian relationship, in an external context, constantly transcended the political boundary that existed; as is evident from the blend of ethnic groups cohabiting on either side of the frontier, the


\textsuperscript{391} A city that lies slightly to the east of the ruins from the ancient Armenian capital called Tigranakert, Matthew of Edessa, I, 16, n.4, 288. For further information on Melias see Chapter Two.

\textsuperscript{392} Shephard, ‘Constantine VII, Caucasian openings and the road to Aleppo’, 28.
diplomatic and religious exchanges, and importantly the distribution of imperial titles to neighbouring rulers. As mentioned above, the Armenian King was referred to as ‘our spiritual son’ in official forms of address by the imperial court, while the Taronite princes, Grigor II and his brother Bagrat III were both given the titles Magistros and estates in the Empire in return for the annexation of their inheritance in 967. David III of Tao held the title of Kouropalates, as he was the most prominent Iberian prince, a title which in turn was given to Bagrat of Iberia, while his father Gurgen was accorded the title of Magistros, in order to pacify their ambitions on the frontier after David’s death in 1001. The granting of imperial titles was a significant feature of Byzantine diplomacy, in that it brought powerful neighbouring magnates within the Byzantine sphere of influence. The titles also brought with them an imperial stipend which was valued by foreign rulers, as set out in the DAI. The relationship created by this practice brought Byzantium and Armenia closer together politically, and shows that the concept of the frontier was far looser than it is often interpreted. We will see this traditional tool of Byzantine diplomacy being employed by Basil to consolidate and strengthen imperial claims to territory along the Caucasian frontier.

What will be argued below is that during Basil’s reign the policy towards Caucasus changed. The context surrounding Basil’s direct interference in Caucasus, that being David III of Tao supporting Bardas Phokas in his rebellion, does not support the theory of pre-conceived annexation, rather it seems to be a pragmatic decision to

---

394 Constantine VII Porphyrogennetos, De Ceremoniis, 48, 687.
395 Aristakes, I, ed. 24, trans. 6; indeed if one is to acknowledge the inscription at Ošk’i, David’s title was originally magistros: Eastmond, Royal Imagery in Medieval Georgia, 28; Djobadze, Early Medieval Georgian Monasteries, 108, 117.
396 DAI, 43, 195.
remove the most powerful magnate on Byzantium’s eastern frontier in order to prevent similar situations occurring.

ii. **Tao/Tayk and the Rebellions of Skleros**

In many ways the annexations were a product of their own time, although previous interpretations have interpreted selective primary evidence to show a long-term desire of Byzantium, and the Macedonian dynasty, to bring about the absorption of the Armenian kingdoms. Such historiographical discussion can be found above in the introduction. The most immediately pressing task is to establish a clear chronological history of the annexations, their context, historical causes, and effects on the politics of Caucasia. Once this study is completed, the focus will turn to analysing whether Basil II’s reign represented a dramatic shift in Byzantine policy for both foreign and internal relations with the Armenians. To reiterate, it will be argued that Basil’s reign was not the moment of change, but it represents the period in which the seeds of alienation were sown for the Armenian settlements in the mid-eleventh century.

Strictly speaking, the region of Tao/Tayk is not Armenian but Iberian (or later Georgian). Its people recognised themselves as Iberian, they were Chalcedonian, and spoke/wrote in the Georgian script. The princes of Tao most often held the Byzantine title of *Kouropalates* in recognition of their primacy over the other Iberian potentates and held significant influence over their Iberian and Armenian neighbours alike.398 In many ways the princes of Tao, perhaps reflecting their geographical proximity to Byzantium, were the readiest to accept Byzantine titles and imagery. One can see in the depictions of David III of Tao and his brother Bagrat in the complex at Ošk’i that their crowns are adorned with Byzantine *pendila* which suggests that their political

398 There is some confusion regarding the persistence of this title, see note below on the disagreements in our sources for when David was awarded the title.
authority was now drawn from Constantinople rather than Baghdad. Yet, it was the very fact of Tao’s primacy and closeness in cultural spheres that brought Tao into conflict with Byzantium. For David was to become embroiled in the struggle for power between the Macedonian dynasty ruling in Constantinople and the military officer class whose base of support came from Anatolia. It is therefore necessary to turn our attention briefly to these revolts and assess how David became entangled in the internal politics of Byzantium which would draw Byzantium into direct interference in the Caucasian geo-political scene.

In the previous chapter we traced the rise and eventual dominance of the Byzantine military by a series of families of Armenian origin, who by 963 had come to occupy the imperial throne to ‘protect’ the imperial princes Basil and Constantine. The murder of Nikephoros II Phokas and accession of John I Tzimiskes split the fragile coalition of competing families between the Phokades, supported by such families as the Maleinoi, and the Kourkouai with the Skleroi as close allies of the new emperor. Tzimiskes immediately removed the Phokades from the highest military commands, ending a monopoly that had existed since Constantine VII’s coup against the Lekapenoi in 945. The response was as expected: revolt. Bardas Phokas, a nephew of Nikephoros II, had originally been banished to Amaseia, but secretly made his way to Caesarea where he was able to raise the banner of rebellion. Ultimately Phokas’ struggle was in vain, his support quickly slipped away with bribes and promises from

---

399 Eastmond, Royal Imagery in Medieval Georgia, 21; for Ošk’i see: Wachtang Djobadze, Early Medieval Georgian Monasteries in Historic Tao, Klarrjet’i, and Šavšeti (Stuttgart: Steiner, 1992), 89-131. Detailed description of Byzantine style for the ‘Donor Figures’ see: 116-119.
400 All of the families were tied together through marriage, though some bonds seemed stronger than others.
401 Skylitzes, ed. 284, trans. 271; Leo the Deacon ed. 95-96, trans. 144-145 details the replacement of important officials within the capital.
402 Skylitzes, ed. 291-291, trans. 278-279; Leo the Deacon, ed. 112-113, trans. 162; Caesarea had been the city which first heralded Nikephoros II Phokas as emperor, the city and its environs were the heartlands of the Phokades’ power.
Bardas Skleros on behalf of Tzimiskes, and Phokas himself was eventually tonsured and sent to the island of Chios. The rest of Tzimiskes reign is not strictly relevant here, but upon the emperor’s death it was Bardas Skleros who expected to assume the ‘protection’ of the imperial princes Basil and Constantine.  

Basil the Chamberlain had other plans. Immediately the military commands were re-shuffled again, Bardas Skleros was dismissed from his position as domestikos of the east and demoted to doux of the soldiers in Mesopotamia. His response was just as predictable: revolt. Skleros’ revolt lasted some three years, and the imperial court was forced to recall a general who could match Skleros’ experience and ability: Bardas Phokas. The revolt was finally crushed in March 979 when Phokas defeated Skleros in battle. Importantly, however, David III of Tao is said to have provided a cavalry force for the imperial armies. There are multiple sources attesting David’s military assistance. From the later materials from hagiographical accounts and the book of K’art’li, we find a Georgian man identified as T’ornik, a man who lived in the Great Lavra of the Holy Mountain, who received a request from the imperial court to deliver a message to David III of Tao. T’ornik was sent by the imperial court to David to seek aid and was successful in his task. T’ornik himself was given the command of 12,000 ‘elite cavalry’ and successfully routed Skleros in battle, in return for which David was granted the ‘Upper lands of the Greek empire for him to hold during his lifetime’.

---

403 For further details on Skleros’ career under Tzimiskes see Chapter Two.
404 This Basil was in fact a Lekapenos. Surviving the downfall of this family on account of his eunuch status, Basil was able to gain considerable influence in the court at the expense of his arch-rival Joseph Bringas.
405 Skylitzes, ed. 314, trans. 299.
406 Skylitzes, ed. 326, trans. 309 has Phokas personally requesting aid from David.
407 Skylitzes, ed. 326, trans. 309 has Phokas personally requesting aid from David.
Skleros was to take refuge with the ruler of Iraq, Emir Adud al-Daula, and remained an external threat to Byzantium for nearly a decade. Yet Skleros’ revolt had shifted the power balance in Byzantium, with the Phokades regaining primacy amongst the Anatolian military aristocracy.

One can find the narrative of the years intervening between the end of Skleros’ revolt and the revolts of 986-989 elsewhere, we will skip ahead to the revolt of Phokas. By the time Phokas had raised his standard in 987, Basil II had overthrown Basil the Chamberlain and embarked on a less than spectacular campaign in Bulgaria. Despite aiding the imperial forces in 979, strangely David sided with the rebel forces of Phokas some eight years later, possibly indicating that David assisted Bardas Phokas personally, rather than the Macedonian dynasty, in 979. Apparently David maintained cordial relations with Bardas Phokas from the time when the latter was doux of Chaldia, and so was happy to provide a force that attacked Grigor Taronites, who had been sent to Trebizond on the orders of the emperor. We are informed that the force of David immediately withdrew after they heard of Basil’s victory at the Battle of Chrysopolis, in which the emperor was able to capture Phokas’ brother Nikephoros. The revolt of Phokas was put down a short while later with the imperial victory at Abydos. It is no surprise that Basil turned to deal with those who

Matthew of Edessa, I, 28, 36-7; Stephen of Taron, III, XV, ed. 192, trans. 244. Stephen’s account does not tell us when David received the title, but does acknowledge the territories he gained for assisting Basil during the rebellion of Skleros. Skylitzes makes no reference as to when David became a Kouropalates, while Yahya informs us this may have come about after David agreed to cede his lands to Basil in 990: Yahya of Antioch, PO 23, 429. For debates on ownership of border territories see: Nicholas Adontz, ‘Tornik le moine’, Byzantion 11 (1936), 143-164; Forsyth, 389, n. 47.

Holmes, Basil II, 245-246 offers a minimalistic and readable sweep of events; a far more detailed account can be found in: Forsyth, 370-462.

Leo the Deacon, X.viii ed.171, trans 213; Skylitzes, ed. 330, trans. 313.

Skylitzes, ed. 326, trans. 309; Yahya of Antioch, PO 23, 424-5.

This happened either in early 988 or 989: Leo the Deacon, X.ix, ed. 174, trans. 216, n.88; Skylitzes, ed. 336, trans. 318-9; Yahya of Antioch, PO 23, 425.
had assisted the rebels, particularly one as inconsistent in their support as David of Tao.

It is clear that David’s involvement in the internal affairs of the Empire had worried Basil, and with his focus firmly upon the hostilities with Bulgaria in the west the threat posed by David on the eastern frontier was potentially too great to ignore. It can be suggested that Basil chose to deal with David directly because his troublesome interference with the internal politics of the Empire, which threatened the stability of the eastern frontier, and certainly offended Byzantine political theory that the Emperor should not tolerate such behaviour from an inferior Christian prince. Basil, we are told, sent a force into Tao under the command of the Patrician Djakrous in 990, and according to Yahya’s account:

As to David, king of the Georgians, he asked the emperor Basil pardon and grace, promising him obedience and submission and that after his death his estates would be annexed to his empire because he was very advanced in age.\textsuperscript{413}

Yahya is the only source to report this event in 990, and within a decade of David’s death a new crisis began to brew in the east.\textsuperscript{414} Yet, the details surrounding David’s death also need unpicking, as our primary sources are divided on the method by which he died, and whether there was any foul play. The Armenian chronicler Aristakes, who starts his account with the Kouropalates’ death, claims that David was killed by his azats,\textsuperscript{415} and that ‘[this was] because they had wearied of him, and were interested in promises [made to them] earlier by the emperor’.\textsuperscript{416} Sadly, Aristakes does not expand

\textsuperscript{413} Yahya of Antioch, PO 23, 429.
\textsuperscript{414} Skylitzes, ed. 339, trans. 321-322 offers a confused narrative that muddles the events of 990 with the expedition of Basil in 1000/1. For David’s legacy on the development of royal imagery see: Eastmond, \textit{Royal Imagery in Medieval Georgia}, 20-39.
\textsuperscript{415} ազատ – literal translation is ‘free’ but commonly used to describe the entire Armenian noble class.
\textsuperscript{416} Aristakes, I, ed. 23, trans. 3-4.
on what these promises were, while Matthew of Edessa gives a similar account, but 
emphasises the role of the archbishop of Georgia, Hilarion, as the chief conspirator in 
the murder of David.\textsuperscript{417} The differences in our primary account needs to be addressed.

What were the promises that Basil allegedly made to David’s vassals, and why does 
Matthew accuse the archbishop of Georgia? With regard to the \textit{azats} we are lacking 
specific evidence in this particular instance, but one can look back, or ahead, to 
establish whether there was a trend in the diplomatic interactions between Byzantium 
and Armenia that may have been tempting enough for the \textit{azats} of David to commit 
treason. We have discussed in detail in the previous chapter how certain Armenian 
lords were tempted to voluntarily hand over their lands and receive estates and titles 
within the Empire. For example, the principality of Taron was annexed by Nikephoros 
II Phokas where the emperor ‘raised them (the heirs [Grigor] and [Bagrat] Bagratuni) 
to the rank of patrician and granted them estates which provided good revenues.\textsuperscript{418}

The issuing of Byzantine titles and lands to foreign magnates on the frontier of 
Byzantium was an intrinsic part of Caucasian foreign policy, and one can expect that a 
similar offer had been made to the nobles of Tao. While we do not know the exact terms 
of the deal struck between Basil and David in 990, we can presume that the landed 
aristocracy were aware of what they would gain after the annexation. Stephen of Taron 
does indeed confirm the settlement of the \textit{azats} of Tao on lands inside Byzantium, but 
he does not specify where.\textsuperscript{419} Returning to the implication of the archbishop of 
Georgia, the fact that it appears only in Matthew’s account makes it somewhat 
unlikely, although Yahya gives us important details regarding the treaty of 990 that 
provide an explanation. It would appear that the archbishop of Georgia was sent in

\textsuperscript{417} Matthew of Edessa, I, 33, 39.
\textsuperscript{418} Skylitzes, ed. 279, trans. 268.
\textsuperscript{419} Stephen of Taron, III, XLIII, ed. 278, trans. 310.
990, along with ‘high ranking officers’ to agree to the terms set by Basil, and we are told they were ‘conferred with dignities and overwhelmed with favours’.\(^{420}\) Sadly, the events surrounding David’s death were not recorded in detail by Yahya, but we can see that the association of the archbishop of Georgia with the *azats* of David may well correspond with Aristakes’ account of David’s death. It should be noted that Matthew misdated this event to 985-6, rather than 1000-1, although the question regarding dating issues does not necessarily reduce the historical value of Matthew’s chronicle.\(^{421}\) Moreover his anti-Chalcedonian views may have prompted his explicit inclusion of Hilarion as a conspirator in the plot against David’s life. Interestingly, however, Basil himself was not accused of being involved by any of the sources.\(^{422}\)

In the aftermath of the annexation, in 1001, Basil was faced with opposition from the Iberian magnates on the northern border of Tao. David had no natural heirs and so had previously adopted Bagrat (960-1014), king of Abkhazia, and heir to the kingdom of Iberia as the inheritor to his lands. The settlement of 990, however, had technically removed Bagrat from his inheritance. Bagrat and his father, Gurgen of Iberia (958-1008) met with Basil upon the annexation in 1001, but were unable to prevent the Byzantine incorporation of Tao. As had become a recurring theme in Byzantine foreign policy, Basil bestowed upon Bagrat and Gurgen the titles of *Kouropalates* and *Magistros* respectively.\(^{423}\) This move had an interesting twist; the title of *Magistros* was lower than that of *Kouropalates* in rank within the Byzantine hierarchy, thus Basil chose to give Bagrat, the son, the higher title. The ploy ultimately

\(^{420}\) Yahya of Antioch, *PO* 23, 430.


\(^{422}\) See above for Basil’s portrayal in both Georgian and Armenian sources which is surprisingly positive.

\(^{423}\) Aristakes, I, ed. 24, trans. 4; Stephen of Taron, III, XLIII, ed. 277, trans. 309 and XLIV, ed. 278, trans. 310.
failed to create a division between the two, but it did anger Gurgen to the extent that he attempted an invasion of Tao.\textsuperscript{424} He was frustrated by Nikephoros Ouranos, the recently installed\textit{doux} of Antioch through what would seem to have been negotiations rather than fighting.\textsuperscript{425}

While Basil spent most of the early years of the eleventh century occupied in the west with the subjugation of Bulgaria, events on the eastern border began to challenge the status quo in Caucasia. The fusion of the kingdoms of Abkhazia and Iberia into the unified kingdom of Georgia in 1008 by Bagrat disturbed the balance of power in the region, and upon the accession of Bagrat’s son Giorgi, Byzantine policy on the eastern frontier was forced to change dramatically. According to Aristakes, Bagrat was given land in the region of Tao that was attached to his title of\textit{Kouropalates}. Basil demanded the restoration of the lands to Byzantine control upon Bagrat’s death in 1014, which he saw as his legal right. Basil wrote to Giorgi reminding him to ‘[a]bandon [those territories] which I gave to your father out of the Curopalate’s portion as a gift, and be prince solely over your patrimony’.\textsuperscript{426} Aristakes reports further that ‘[Georgi] did not consent to this; rather, taking pride in his youth, he wrote a contrary reply: “I shall not give anyone even one single House [from the territory] over which my father held sway.”’\textsuperscript{427} At this time Basil was reaching the climax of his campaigns in Bulgaria, the decisive battle of the Kleidion Pass taking place in the same year. The emperor was therefore unable to venture east personally to settle the matter. Our sources are divided on the manner in which Basil responded to the stubbornness of Giorgi. Aristakes claims that Basil sent a force eastwards that was defeated by Giorgi.\textsuperscript{428}

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item[424] Royal Georgian Chronicle, 374, n. 25.
\item[425] Stephen of Taron, III, XLIV, ed. 279, trans. 310-311; Yahya of Antioch, \textit{PO} 23, 460; Holmes, \textit{Basil II}, 481.
\item[426] Aristakes, I, ed. 25, trans, 6
\item[427] Aristakes, I, ed. 25, trans, 6
\item[428] Aristakes, I, ed. 25, trans, 6
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
Skylitzes states that ‘[w]hen George ... broke his treaty with the Romans by invading the frontier regions, the emperor campaigned against him in full force’.\textsuperscript{429} As is common when dealing with Skylitzes, the chronology can be problematic, and it is most likely that he was talking about Basil’s campaign in Iberia during 1021, and has omitted the seven year gap between the two events, whether by choice or ignorance.\textsuperscript{430} In any case, the actions of Giorgi forced Basil into military action on his eastern frontier, at a time when he was unable to give the situation his full attention, and therefore we must now look to his campaign in 1021.

Basil launched his eastern offensive in 1021 with the intention of dealing with his troublesome neighbour and regaining the lands in the region of Tao that Giorgi had been occupying since 1014. According to the account of Aristakes, Basil came eastwards with the intention of settling the dispute peacefully – testifying that ‘he greatly desired that his journey end in peace and that the land remain in a flourishing state’.\textsuperscript{431} The book of K’art’li offers no context for the hostilities between Giorgi and Basil. However, further information is provided by Yahya. He mentions correspondence between Giorgi and al-Hakim, the Fatimid Caliph of Egypt, offering a joint enterprise in making war upon the emperor, which immediately brought about preparations by Basil for a new campaign in Syria, a clear indication of the importance of the frontiers under threat.\textsuperscript{432} Yet it was during his preparations at Philomelion that the Emperor learnt of the death of al-Hakim. Released from the need to reassert Byzantine interests in Syria, Basil turned to the north-eastern frontier and was able to bring about a show of Byzantine power that Giorgi had never expected. The war

\textsuperscript{429} Skylitzes, ed. 366, trans. 346. The book of K’art’li omits any transgression on the part of Giorgi.
\textsuperscript{430} This date is corroborated in both the Georgian and Armenian version of the K’art’li: Royal Georgian Chronicle, 280 (Arm), 281-282 (Geo).
\textsuperscript{431} Aristakes, II, ed. 28-9, trans. 11.
\textsuperscript{432} Yahya, PO47, 461.
between Byzantium and Georgia is neither significant nor relevant for this study, but to put it simply Giorgi was unable to withstand concentrated Byzantine military power and sued for peace in 1022. More significant, however, than Basil’s victory over Giorgi, was how the powers of Caucasia had reacted to the show of force by Byzantium. For it was during Basil’s journey and stay in the east over the winter of 1021/2 that the kingdom of Ani was offered to Byzantium.

**The Subsequent Annexations**

i. **Ani (I): Background and the Treaty of Trebizond**

The annexation of the kingdom of Ani is a long and confusing episode in the narrative history of Byzantium and Armenia, and this is largely a result of the inconsistencies in our sources when used comparatively. So, let us start from what we know with relative certainty. While Basil was wintering in Trebizond during the winter of 1021, after his first year of campaigning against the Georgian King Giorgi, we are informed that he was approached by the Armenian *Katholikos* Peter and we have three different accounts of the meeting from our Armenian sources, Matthew of Edessa and Aristakes, and the Armenian version of the book of K’art’li.433

The sources state that Peter was granted the honour of presiding over the feast of Epiphany. He carried out the blessing of the Holy water in accordance with the Armenian tradition and it resulted in some sort of mirage, whether of fire or rays of light.434 Aristakes tells us in his account that the Byzantine bishops who were present followed the canons of the imperial church; this is an important side note for this is

---

433 A specific reference to the meeting can only be found in the Armenian version, the Georgian simply states: ‘[Basil stayed] in the vicinity of Trebizond. And there passed between them (the Georgians) envoys for peace and friendship’. *Royal Georgian Chronicle*, 282-283.

not the first occasion that Basil had shown religious tolerance while he was present in the east. Matthew goes further in his account, claiming after the meeting:

Basil in turn secretly went to Antioch [...] Going up the Black Mountain to a place called Paghakdziak, he received the Christian baptism from the superior and spiritual leader of the place and henceforth became like an adopted father of the Armenian nation ...435

This event is highly unlikely, although it offers an insight into the Armenian image of Basil not as a conqueror, but a paternal protector of the Armenian peoples.436 Yet, we must try and contextualise why Peter was in Trebizond in the first place. Aristakes states that Yovhannes-Smbat had told Peter to ‘give the emperor a written will so that after my death he shall inherit my city and country’, which Aristakes explains was because he had no royal heir.437 Matthew’s account on the other hand claims that Basil, ... went forth to the East with innumerable forces, demanding Ani and Kars from the Armenian king. [Yovhannes], the son of Gagik [I 989-c.1020], resolved to hand them over since he was a cowardly person.438

We do have some information regarding the annexation of Ani from Skylitzes who does not mention the incident in his work on Basil; instead it appears later in his chapter on Constantine IX Monomachos where he recounts that:

435 Matthew of Edessa, I, 50, 46. Dostourian notes that Paghakdziak was probably a monastery in the Amanus Mountains, Romanos III has an episode involving monks in these monasteries during his reign which will be touched on in Chapter Four: Religious Antagonism.

436 This may be a characteristic example of Matthew utilising the chronicle of Yakob Sanahnee’i which would explain the unusual occurrence of an amicable tone in Matthew’s account when discussing the Byzantines in the early eleventh century. The questions surrounding Basil’s religious convictions and his image in the Armenian chronicles will be expanded upon further below.

437 Aristakes, II, ed. 32, trans. 16. As mentioned previously a point of fact that Bourtnoutian confuses with Senek’erim of Vaspurakan.

438 Matthew of Edessa, I, 50, 46.
When George, the chieftain of the Iberians, raised arms against the Romans, Iovanesikes (Yovhannes), ruler of the country of Ani, fought alongside him. Then when the emperor Basil went into Iberia and fought against George ... Iovanesikes was afraid that the emperor (Basil), enraged by his alliance with George, would do him some severe damage. So he took the keys of the city, deserted to the emperor, surrendered himself voluntarily into his hands and gave him the keys.439

Forced with such conflicting information, we must attempt to ascertain the truth behind these events and determine the background to Yovhannes-Smbat’s decision to grant his kingdom to Basil. The sources offer two explanations. One was that Yovhannes-Smbat had no natural heir and so desired his powerful neighbour to protect his lands after he died. The other was that he had fought in alliance with Giorgi against Basil and so was forced into a similar position as David III of Tao back in 990, when he in turn had made Basil the legal inheritor of his lands upon his death. In this instance, the first option does not seem logical, nor does it accurately reflect the internal situation within the kingdom of Ani. On the death of Gagik I in 1020 a quarrel broke out between his two sons, Yovhannes-Smbat and Ashot IV. Yovhannes was the elder, being described as both ‘wise and very intelligent’ and ‘uneducated’, whereas his brother, Ashot, was seen as ‘courageous, brave and mighty’. 440 The two brothers fought each other for the throne and were eventually brought together by a compromise brokered by the leading families of the kingdom. Yovhannes-Smbat was to be king in Ani only, while Ashot was to rule over the rest of the kingdom.441

440 Matthew of Edessa, I, 9, 22. It should be noted that Matthew’s account of this event is chronologically out of sequence. Aristakes has similar descriptions for the two brothers see: Aristakes, II, ed. 27, trans. 8.
441 Matthew of Edessa, I, 10, 23.
Conversely, Aristakes offers a different narrative in which Giorgi of Georgia plays the leading role in bringing about the compromise, and he adds further context for the internal factionalism within the kingdom.\footnote{Aristakes, II, ed. 27, trans. 9-10.} Giorgi, it appears, was by far the most powerful magnate in Caucasia, possessing the ability to settle disputes in neighbouring kingdoms, while at the same time following through with force, if it were required. Furthermore Giorgi appears to have imprisoned Yovhannes-Smbat for a claim by one of Ashot’s \textit{azats} that his lands had been unjustly held by Yovhannes-Smbat, but the king of Ani was released after Giorgi took three fortresses from the kingdom.\footnote{Aristakes, II, ed. 27, trans. 9-10.} In a further significant episode reported by Aristakes we are told how Ashot travelled to Constantinople in order to receive support in the form of auxiliaries so that he might press his claims to the lands granted to him by the aforementioned treaty. As to who these ‘grandees in the environs [of Ashot’s holdings]’\footnote{Aristakes, II, ed. 27, trans. 10.} were, is hard to guess, but what this example reveals is how willing the Byzantines, and in particular Basil, were to interfere with the internal affairs of the kingdom of Ani even before the annexations. It would appear that these events occurred in 1021 and thus can provide the contextual background to the meeting between the \textit{Katholikos} and Basil in Trebizond that winter. Moreover, it is entirely plausible that Yovhannes-Smbat wished to ensure that his brother would never gain the city of Ani and so made the foresaid agreement out of spite.

In terms of the second factor, the alleged alliance between Yovhannes-Smbat and Giorgi, only Skylitzes refers to this directly. He comments that Yovhannes-Smbat was worried about his alliance and the wrath of Basil who was currently campaigning
against the Georgians.\textsuperscript{445} There are, however, details from Matthew (which are out of chronological order in his work) and Aristakes that can offer an alternative approach. Matthew mentioned Georgian support for Yovhannes in the civil war with his brother Ashot which, as has been mentioned previously, occurred in 1021. Aristakes, whose account is more reliable for the internal events of Armenian in the early eleventh century, does not corroborate Matthew on this point, however. It is entirely plausible that this is the alliance to which Skylitzes was referring, but this still does not seem likely. The comment by Matthew that Yovhannes-Smbat was ‘a cowardly person’ may tip the scales, Yovhannes-Smbat may have been regarded a ‘coward’ for having lost much of his power to his brother, Ashot, and so sought to gain a powerful ally who would help sustain his rule during his lifetime. Yovhannes-Smbat was, after all, according to Skylitzes, ‘honoured with the title of magister and [Basil] appointed him ruler for life of Ani and of the so-called Great Armenia’.\textsuperscript{446} It is almost impossible to be certain of the exact sequence of events here, but it seems unlikely that Yovhannes-Smbat actively campaigned against Basil, as only Skylitzes refers to it. The main point is that there is very little substantial evidence to paint Basil as an aggressive imperialist towards Ani in the primary sources, and, as argued above, it would appear that the move was driven by the internal factionalism within Ani itself. We will return to the eventual annexation of Ani during the reign of Constantine IX Monomachos later.

\textbf{ii. Vaspurakan}

We must now examine how Basil brought about the peaceful annexation of the southern Artsruni kingdom of Vaspurakan, which seems to have occurred in 1019.\textsuperscript{447}

\textsuperscript{445} Despite other occurrences of Iberian-Armenian military co-operation in the late tenth century, there is no reference in the book of K’art’li that Giorgi had assistance from Ani.
\textsuperscript{446} Skylitzes, ed. 435, trans. 409.
\textsuperscript{447} Aristakes places the transfer ‘only two or three years previous’ to the revolt of 1022: Aristakes, III, ed. 34, trans. 19. This date corroborates with Matthew of Edessa. While Yahya of Antioch’s account is
The annexation of Vaspurakan is complicated by the inconsistency in our primary sources, alongside the claim of some secondary works that Vaspurakan was an example of a ‘forced annexation’, like the annexation of Tao. One must analyse the annexation of Vaspurakan in light of previous annexations, but of greater importance is evaluating the reasons, as given by the primary sources, for its ruler, Senek’erim-Yovhannes, to seek a deal with Byzantium, and the internal and external factors behind this decision.

There is extensive debate over the date when the annexation of Vaspurakan actually occurred, and the confusion of the primary sources is reflected in secondary works. An example of this is Garsoïan who believes the date of the offer to Basil by Senek’erim was made in 1016, while also claiming that Byzantine troops from the Balkans had already been sent to Vaspurakan and had reduced the Kingdom to the theme of Vaspurakan.448 A short while later, however, Garsoïan states that Senek’erim moved with his household to Cappadocia in 1021: overall her dates are thoroughly confused, and at points contradictory.449 We also have Cheynet who comments in his notes on Skylitzes that the annexation took place during the winter of 1021-22, while referring to Dostourian’s translation of Matthew of Edessa as evidence.450 This is a misreading, as the translation specifically mentions the year 1018-19, and the events in Matthew’s narrative do not match Cheynet’s claims. To gain the most accurate date of the annexation we must re-visit the primary sources and carefully evaluate the

---

448 This date is hard to justify as Garsoïan does not provide footnotes in her article, though it might arise from the dating variants from the manuscripts: Garsoïan, ‘Byzantine Annexation’, 190; Dostourian mentions the dating issue in his notes where he states that the text gives the year 465, which would make it the year 1016-17, though four variants and the Jerusalem manuscript give 467. The later date Dostourian feels is the more accurate as this corroborates with the arrival of the Seljuks in Armenia, see: Mathew of Edessa, 295, 47, n. 1.
449 Garsoïan, ‘Byzantine Annexation’, 190
450 Skylitzes, trans. 336, n. 211.
information they provide on the reasons behind the annexation and place these reasons within their historical context.

The account by Matthew of Edessa does not place any precise date on the correspondence between the Emperor and Senek’erim, nor the visit by David, son of Senek’erim, to Constantinople to ratify the agreement. We are told, however, that David was honoured by Basil who adopted him as a son.\footnote{Matthew of Edessa, I, 49, 45. This was most likely a spiritual adoption as it occurred in Hagia Sophia. The religious connotations of this will be expanded below.} This would suggest that the agreement could not have taken place in the winter of 1021/2, as Basil was wintering in Trebizond, not in Constantinople. Even though Matthew places the trip of David Artsruni before Basil’s eastern campaign, we cannot rely on Matthew for chronological accuracy. Yahya places the annexation of Vaspurakan in the same period as the Byzantine-Georgian war, but importantly before his account of the revolt of Phokas and Xiphias.\footnote{Yahya, \textit{PO}47, 463.} One cannot ignore Yahya’s high degree of reliability, but perhaps exploring the stated motivations for Senek’erim giving up his kingdom could shed further light as to when the annexation occurred.

Our secondary sources offer some unsubstantiated opinions, Garsoïan’s narrative being that of a willingness by Senek’erim to cede his lands, with the suggestion that Byzantine aggression was a contributing factor. The idea of Basil forcing Senek’erim to give up his hereditary lands is further supported by fellow Armenian Dostourian, who states ‘It is more likely that Basil pressured the Armenian king to give up his lands to Byzantium’.\footnote{Garsoian, ‘Byzantine Annexation’, 190; Matthew of Edessa, I, 49, 46, n.3, at 296.} Furthermore, Cheynet states that ‘[t]he first attacks of the Turks may have unnerved him [Senek’erim], but there was probably a certain amount of pressure from Basil who was campaigning against the Georgians at
that time and wintered over in Trebizond’. These interpretations do not have the support of the primary sources, all of which say that Vaspurakan was given willingly and give reasons beyond that of imperialist expansion for the peaceful annexation of the kingdom. Indeed, Holmes offers a different perspective, arguing that ‘the surrender of the Artsruni lands may have been the culmination of a long, symbiotic diplomatic courtship’, citing the evidence provide by Grigor of Narek and the work of Mahé. Here one can witness close interactions with the Artsruni ruling house and Basil II’s regime, particularly with the transfer of certain relics from Constantinople to the monastery at Aparank. This was achieved by a minor lord by the name of Zapranik from the principality of Mokh, who not only actively engaged in the political upheavals of Basil’s early reign, but after receiving pardon from Basil for supporting Skleros, went on to serve in the military. This closeness, coupled with the Artsruni’s audience with Basil in 1000 highlights the co-operative and fluid relationship that characterized Byzantium’s eastern frontier.

The length of this relationship helps contextualise how a voluntary annexation took place, but the direct causes were undoubtedly brought about by later events. Indeed, our main primary accounts date the origins of Senek’erim’s motivation to seek a voluntary settlement at some point towards the end of the second decade of the eleventh century. Aristakes suggests that Senek’erim, whom he also confusingly calls David, was being harassed by the Persians (Turks) at some point in the late 1010s and so gave his ‘patrimonial inheritance’ to Basil and gained security on new estates away from the frontier. Matthew of Edessa supports this version of events, giving further

454 Skylitzes, trans. 316, n. 211.
455 Holmes, Basil II, 485; Mahé, 555-572.
456 Zapranik became a member of the palace guard, see: Mahé, 557-558, 560, 565-567.
457 Aristakes, III, ed. 34, trans. 19. It is likely that Aristakes is confusing the name David with that of Senek’erim’s son who had an important role to play in the rebellion of 1022.
details of David, the son of Senek’erim, being defeated in battle against the invading Turkomans, stating:

After this Senek’erim resolved to hand over the land of his ancestors to the Greek emperor Basil and in its stead to obtain Sebastia; so he immediately wrote to the emperor.458

Skylitzes’ account is in line with other primary sources, stating that ‘[i]t was because he had been under great pressure from the Hagarenes [Muslims] and was unable to withstand them that he took refuge with the emperor and handed over his own lands’.459 None of these sources imply external pressure from Basil on Senek’erim, and while it is fair to observe that Basil was applying military pressure in Caucasia throughout his conflict with Giorgi, it would appear that Senek’erim had kept out of the conflict, unlike his northern neighbour Yovhannes-Smbat of Ani. It is impossible to place a firm date of Senek’erim’s arrival on his estates in Sebasteia, though we can be sure that it occurred before 1022 when the Artsruni were caught up in the revolt of Nikephoros Phokas and Xiphias.460

iii. The Later Annexations: Edessa and Kars

Before we can embark on a comparative investigation of the initial settlement of the Armenians in the Byzantine Empire during the eleventh century, we need to complete the chronological sweep of external relations between Byzantium and the Armenian kingdoms. The case of Edessa offers us the chance to see whether Basil established a new policy in removing co-operation with local magnates in favour of direct rule, and whether this policy was intentionally continued by his immediate successors.

460 The revolt, and the impact it had on the Armenian settlement in Sebasteia will be explored below.
Basil II died on 20 December 1025, but the Byzantine annexations of Armenian lands did not end with his death. Not only were the treaties which he had made with Yovhannes-Smbat of Ani still legally binding, something which his successor Constantine IX Monomachos would address during his reign, but there were also two further annexations of Armenian territories independent of Basil’s legacy - the city of Edessa and the Kingdom of Kars. As discussed above, Ani had been promised to Basil in 1021 by its ruler Yovhannes for debatable reasons and the annexation in 1045 will be addressed shortly. Therefore, we must now turn to the Byzantine annexation of the city of Edessa, which lies outside of Greater Armenia, but which had a sizeable Armenian population, as reported and exemplified by one of our main primary sources, Matthew of Edessa.

The historical sources for the year 1028 depict a city divided between two competing powers. Aristakes gives us an account of the factionalism within Edessa:

[Salamay], afraid that the chief [men] of the city would not obey him, sent one of his loyal servants to Maneak [George Maniakes], who at that time held sway over the borders of the Byzantine district and resided in the city called Samusat (which they say was built by Sampson). [Salamay] had done this so that [Maniakes] would inform the emperor to give [Salamay] principedom and eternal inheritance in the Byzantines’ land [confirmed] by writ and the royal seal. "And," [Salamay] said, "I shall give him the city, without warfare". When emperor Romanus [III] heard this, he wrote [to Salamay] a document of consent, making him an antipatos patrician, and subsequently exalting him with great and prominent honour.461

461 Aristakes, VII, ed. 44-5, trans. 34-5.
Conversely, both Matthew and Skylitzes paint a different picture of the event. Matthew’s account recognises the character of Salamay, whom Matthew calls Salman, was engaged in the bitter power struggle in Edessa:

> Finally Salman, exhausted by her assaults, sent to Samosata, to the Roman commander Maniaces, also called George. Salman wrote to him and said: ‘If you obtain from the Roman emperor a high position and the command of a district for me, I will deliver Edessa into your hand’.

Skylitzes’ account does not contain information on the exchange of the city for estates in the Empire; rather, it paints Maniakes as acting independently from the emperor Romanos III:

> George Maniakes … the commander of the cities on the Euphrates who resided at Samosata, attempted to take the city of Edessa in Osroene. This city was controlled by Salaman the Turk … bribed with gifts, promises and honours, he surrendered it [Edessa] to Maniakes in the middle of the night.

Here we have three sources that more or less recount the same event and in general agree on the details of the internal situation within Edessa. None of the accounts demonstrate Byzantine aggression; rather, the sources show that Salman (or Salaman) took the initiative in contacting the Byzantines in order to gain estates in the Empire. It is important to recognise that Maniakes was not holding a high-ranking office. His rank of protospatharios, held alongside his office as strategos of the cities on the Euphrates, was certainly not high enough to direct foreign policy at his own

---

462 The woman in question was the widow of Salman’s rival called ‘Utair.
463 Matthew of Edessa, I, 58, 52.
464 Skylitzes, ed. 387, trans. 365.
discretion.⁴⁶⁵ And yet Maniakes proceeded with the occupation of Edessa, and only Psellos informs us that Maniakes was punished for overstepping his authority by a jealous Romanos.⁴⁶⁶ One can certainly spot the similarity in the exchange, i.e. an agreement to annexation in return for estates within Byzantium, however in this case the similarity must be questioned, as Basil’s reasons for his settlement of Armenian princes in Cappadocia was very different from those for that of Salman in Edessa, and it would appear that Salman was settled in Samosata.⁴⁶⁷ In summary, we have an extraordinary situation where direct annexation was achieved without any consultation with the emperor in Constantinople. One thing is for certain, Basil would have been involved, and clearly his successors pursued a different policy.

The final Byzantine annexation of one of the Armenian kingdoms was that of Kars in 1064. Situated to the west of Ani, Kars had been an autonomous kingdom from the time of Ashot III (953-77) who appointed his brother Mushegh to have royal authority over his domains.⁴⁶⁸ At the time of its annexation by Byzantium, the political and military situation of Caucasia had changed dramatically from that during the earlier annexations, as the growing power of the Seljuk Turks started to apply ever-increasing pressure on the borders of Byzantium and the kingdom of Kars. This does place a strain on the relevance of this annexation for our present purposes; however, the context is still required, for the placement of the court of Kars within Cappadocia will need further attention in the following chapter.

It is suspected that the ruler of Kars, Gagik-Abas II (1029-1064), had been under pressure from the Seljuk Sultan; in what manner, our sources are unwilling to

---

⁴⁶⁵ Skylitzes, ed. 387, trans.365; DO 58.106. 3689
⁴⁶⁶ Michael Psellos, ed. ii. 8, trans. 193.
⁴⁶⁷ Matthew of Edessa, I, 58, 53.
⁴⁶⁸ Stephen of Taron, III, VIII, ed. 180, trans. 231.
tell us. We do know from Matthew of Edessa that the Seljuk Sultan had demanded fealty from Gagik-Abas, although he was able to avoid doing this by showing the sultan sycophantic friendship. We are informed that Gagik-Abas ‘abandoned Kars and went over to the Romans. The Emperor Ducas [Constantine X Doukas, 1059-67] gave [Tzamandos, Larissa, Amasia, and Comana] to Gagik, and the Armenian king settled there, together with his noblemen, thus abandoning his ancestral home’.\footnote{Matthew of Edessa, II, 23, 104.} In summary, the annexation of Kars was a minor affair in the broader analysis of the annexation of the Armenian kingdoms and took the form of a peaceful exchange between the two parties. It is not far-fetched to suggest that Gagik-Abas merely followed the precedent set by his fellow Armenian rulers, and it was an attractive alternative in the face of increasing Seljuk activity in the area. While Matthew of Edessa lamented the loss of the Armenian homeland to the Byzantines and subsequently the Turks, he blamed the Armenian kings and nobles as much as the Byzantines for abandoning their ancestral home for comfortable estates in the Empire.

In summary, the voluntary nature of the annexations of the Armenian kingdoms goes against the claims of a pre-conceived agenda of the Macedonian dynasty to subjugate to Christian polities of Caucasia. We have seen that the campaign which drew Basil eastward in 1021 was a result of Georgian aggression and the occupation of lands in Tao that legally belonged to the Empire as a result of David Kouropalates’ will. It was in this context, we are told, that the annexations of Ani and Vaspurakan were brokered. As demonstrated above, there is no substantial evidence of aggressive force being used to persuade either Senek’erim Artsruni or Yovhannes-
Smbat to surrender their patrimonial lands; rather both had their own reasons to seek a deal with the Byzantine emperor, Basil II.

**Unforeseen Consequences**

The annexations of the western Armenian kingdoms by Basil II were to have untold consequences for the Byzantine-Armenian relationship in the later eleventh century. Certain commentators on the subject of the annexations, like George Ostrogorsky, have seen Basil’s annexations in Armenia as part of a triumphant expansion of the Empire, whereas others have argued against this view; with Michael Angold openly criticising Basil for passing his successors a ‘poisoned chalice’ by destroying the buffer states and opening the frontiers of the Empire to new aggressive neighbours.\(^{470}\)

Indeed, this has produced a further response from Catherine Holmes who argues:

> That in the middle of the eleventh century new adversaries appeared and challenged these structures cannot be blamed on those who developed them much earlier for entirely different situations.\(^{471}\)

This formulation is very much applicable to the alienation of the Armenians from the Byzantine Empire in the mid-eleventh century. Basil could not have foreseen the breakdown in the Byzantine-Armenian relationship in his own day, rather he still very much relied on the mechanics of assimilation that had successfully transformed previous Armenian migrants into *Romaioi*. Yet there are two problematic episodes which helped produce the ingredients of the later alienation that had their origins in the decisions made by Basil during his eastern campaigns of 1021-1022. The first of these came from the choice of Basil to settle the Artsruni of Vaspurakan in Cappadocia. The intention of Basil was to counter-act the aristocratic forces that had troubled his

\(^{470}\) Ostrogorsky, 313-314; Angold, *Byzantine Empire*, 34.

\(^{471}\) Holmes, *Basil II*, 539.
rule from the very beginning, which ultimately back-fired with the Artsruni siding with the rebels during the Rebellion of 1022. While the Artsruni were to switch back to Basil’s side at the pivotal moment, the actual outcome was to produce an unforeseen problem: the Artsruni’s personal loyalty to the occupant of the Byzantine throne, not the position in itself. This will have later consequences in the 1040s. The second decision by Basil that was to have unforeseen consequences was the decision to allow Yovhannes-Smbat to retain his throne until his death. Whatever the actual motives were for Yovhannes-Smbat’s submission to Basil in the winter of 1021 it had one crucial element: it was voluntary. This aspect was crucially important for Yovhannes’ heir, Gagik II of Ani, did not wish to give up his patrimonial lands that his uncle had so willingly agreed to some twenty years before. Instead, Gagik witnessed how his lands were claimed by Byzantium, unjustly in the young King’s eyes, and thus sowing the seeds of alienation in Gagik that were to sprout in the following decades. We will look at each of these episodes in turn.

i. The Rebellion of 1022

To understand the first of these episodes, it has to be borne in mind that internal considerations partly dictated Basil’s policy towards Armenia. For example, he most likely decided to settle the Artsruni on crown lands in Cappadocia in order to counter the challenge of the Anatolian aristocracy, and the Phokas family in particular, against the ruling dynasty and its right to rule. James Howard-Johnston suggests that the fractured and constantly competing azats would have been completely familiar within their new social circumstance as they would have experienced similar inter-family

\[472\] This is specifically talking about the military families that had dominated the military command structures in the tenth century, see Chapter Two: Acceptance and Adoption of ‘Roman Customs’ for detailed analysis on the main protagonists. Howard-Johnston, ‘Crown Lands’, 97-98; Whittow, *Making of Orthodox Byzantium*, 379; Holmes, *Basil II*, 518.
competition in their homeland. Basil thus could not foresee the difficulties that were to come and had expected that a similar path of assimilation would await the newly arrived Armenians as it had their forebears.

What Basil had not considered, however, was whether the new arrivals would automatically be loyal to him. A short while after the settlement of Senek’erim and his court in Cappadocia, a member of the Phokas family, called Nikephoros, started a rebellion against Basil, which at the outset the Artsruni appear to have supported, echoing similarities with the intervention of David III of Tao in the rebellion of 987-989. The accounts of the 1022 rebellion differ considerably in content. Skylitzes is remarkably brief and the far stronger account is that of Yahya’s account. Our Armenian sources produced a similar account of events, albeit with different leading figures.

In Aristakes’ account Senek’erim, the exiled king of Vaspurakan, initially took a leading part in the rebellion, but had a sudden change of heart:

But then suddenly, as a person awakening from sleep, or as a mighty man coming to himself after drunkenness, he realized the impropriety of the deed. And because there was no other way of disrupting the wicked union, one day, at an unexpected hour, he took the one whom they had styled king and went away from the army as if to advise him. Suddenly, pulling out his sword he killed [Nikephoros Phokas], beheaded him, gave the head to his servants and had it speedily taken to the emperor.

In the account of Skylitzes the participation of the Artsruni is omitted, and the role of Senek’erim is ascribed to a patrician named Nikephoros Xiphias, who after killing

---

474 Matthew of Edessa’s account follows Aristakes’ version very closely.
475 Aristakes, III, ed. 34, trans. 19.
Phokas was imprisoned and tonsured on the island of Antigonos. This is corroborated by Yahya, who provides the most detailed narrative of the rebellion, and does not identify any of the member of the Artsruni being involved. There is further confusion in Aristakes’ account in that he names Senek’erim as the man who killed Phokas, although it would appear that it was actually Senek’erim’s son, David, who Aristakes was actually referring to, which is corroborated in Matthew of Edessa’s account of the rebellion. In any case, the actions of the Artsruni in apparently ending the rebellion was richly rewarded by a grateful Basil, who granted them further lands and towns of Caesarea, Camndaw, and Khawatanēk.

There is some contention within secondary scholarship as to how these events actually unfolded, much like the previous example of the date at which the Artsruni first approached the Byzantines to offer Vaspurakan in return for estates in Cappadocia. Holmes argues that the granting of lands to the Artsruni was ‘merely a circumstantial reward rather than the prime motive of the Artsrunik migration’, which does not seem chronologically correct, as the migration of the Artsruni and settlement on their original estates occurred before the rebellion. What appears more likely is that the lands the Artsruni controlled were expanded in return for their assistance against Phokas and Xiphias. Yahya reports that in the aftermath of the rebellion:

---

476 Xiphias was a distinguished veteran of the Bulgarian wars. His exemplary service was one acknowledged in the leniency of his punishment for participating in the rebellion, serving out his exile on the island as a monk: Yahya, PO 47, 469; Skylitzes, ed. 366-7, trans. 346.
477 Yahya, PO 47, 463-469.
478 Skylitzes, trans. 346, n.264; Matthew of Edessa, I. 51, 47.
479 Michael the Syrian, 301; Matthew of Edessa, I. 51, 47; Cowe, ‘Armenian Immigration to the Sebastia Region’, 120.
480 At least three years before the revolt in 1022: Holmes, Basil II, 519.
After the murder of Phocas, the emperor had all those who had openly participated in the revolt arrested; he took their wealth; he killed a certain number, blinded some, and imprisoned others.\textsuperscript{481}

If we are to believe the scale of the revolt, the number that were implicated and punished would have been considerable, especially in and around Cappadocia from where many of the supporters of the Phokas family originated. It is perhaps from these confiscations that the Artsruni were entrusted with further territories by Basil, as recorded above by Matthew; either way, the Artsruni were clearly placed in a prominent position in the very region from which the Anatolian families had traditionally sourced their support, and directly owed their position to the emperor.

We now need to consider how the events of 1022 have been interpreted in recent historiography. For James Howard-Johnston it is an example of the divisive nature of Armenian settlement:

[The] cultural divide formed a formidable barrier between the two aristocratic worlds. Reinforced by geographical separation, it was likely, in most circumstances, to prevent a general coalescence of interests.\textsuperscript{482}

That conclusion seems unconvincing since Howard-Johnston appears to be using the benefit of hindsight to determine that a barrier existed between the Armenians and Byzantines in the eastern provinces, but as demonstrated in the previous chapter there is insufficient evidence to suggest that such a barrier did, in fact, exist.

Rather, Howard-Johnston argues that the cultural differences between the Armenians and the existing inhabitants were artificially perpetuated by the capital, as

\textsuperscript{481} Yahya, \textit{PO} 47, 469.

\textsuperscript{482} Howard-Johnston, ‘Crown Lands’, 97.
it prevented any form of alliance between the princely houses and the ‘Powerful’ Anatolian magnates against the imperial centre. And yet we have just seen that the Artsruni initially supported the rebellion of the forces they were intended to counterbalance: not a strong start to this theory. And even if this were indeed the intended policy of Basil, then this would suggest that attempts at assimilation had been abandoned, or to a lesser extent ignored, so as to sustain the cultural divide in the east for the sake of stability. In the final analysis this argument does not engage with the primary source materials that highlight the successful rate of assimilation in the tenth century, nor does it offer a reasonable explanation as to why the process of assimilation should have been so readily abandoned by Basil.\textsuperscript{483} On the contrary, our evidence indicates that Basil was still relying on the mechanics of assimilation to work, otherwise why else would he have placed Senek’erim Artsruni as strategos of Cappadocia?\textsuperscript{484} What this episode in reality shows is how well suited the Armenian nobles were to Byzantine society, and that the expectation to assimilate in due course was held by the Emperor. Much like the other noble houses of Anatolia the Artsruni were willing to play the political game, and most importantly play it well, just as many of the Armenian families that arrived in the ninth and tenth centuries had done before them.\textsuperscript{485} The Artsruni were able to benefit by switching sides at the correct time and were rewarded for it. It is possible that they must have been aware of Basil’s actions towards David III of Tao who backed the wrong man in a rebellion and was forced to hand over his lands upon his death. Furthermore, they could also have learnt of the leniency granted towards the Taronites for having originally supported the revolt of Bardas Skleros, and so took the opportunity to back the emperor when the timing was


\textsuperscript{484} For examination of the status of the Armenian migrants of the eleventh century see Chapter Four.

\textsuperscript{485} See above Chapter Two: The Acceptance and Adoption of ‘Roman Customs’.
right. Basil had made a mistake, but one that would not be revealed until nearly fifteen years after his death. In order to accelerate the loyalty aspect of the assimilation model, that being the acknowledgement of the universality of Rome, her Emperor, and its institutions, Basil created a personal tie of loyalty between himself and the Artsruni. This would be something that his successors could neither replicate nor reciprocate.

Ultimately Basil had brought together internal and external policy to solve a variety of problems, the most important being the realignment of the Anatolian aristocracy with one that would never challenge imperial rule, and in this Basil was able to place the Armenians on crown lands in Cappadocia to neutralise the threat posed by the ‘Powerful’. In terms of the policy’s success, in the short term it appears to have been a near disaster, for the revolt of 1022 in Cappadocia developed to the rear of Basil while he was campaigning against the kingdom of Georgia. Cheynet offers a plausible explanation for the outbreak of this insurrection: with the imposition of Senek’erim as strategos of Cappadocia the aristocracy recognised what Basil was attempting to do, and so tried to dispose of the aging emperor before it was too late. Yet, when one considers that the Artsruni originally joined with the conspirators against Basil, before apparently seeing the errors of their ways, it is unlikely that this was anything but a minor factor. In any case, later events, as will be discussed in the next chapter, reveal that the original alliance between the Crown and the Armenians, which was to diffuse and counter-act the power of the Anatolian magnates, broke down on account of a rising belligerence and persecution by the capital that turned the

486 Cheynet is of the opinion that internal and external policy were indistinguishable from one another in Byzantium. Cheynet, ‘Basil II and Asia Minor’, 105.
487 For full details see below.
488 Cheynet, ‘Basil II and Asia Minor’, 94.
Armenians into a very similar problem to the one they were originally intended to prevent.

While the causes of the revolt of 1022 are indeed interesting it is the results from it that are far more influential for this thesis. For afterwards, the Artsruni held a loyalty to Basil II himself rather than to the Byzantium state. That loyalty would be put under significant stain with Basil’s death and subsequently exacerbated by the actions of his successors that directly weakened the tenuous loyalty structures of the Artsruni to Byzantium. We will return to these difficulties shortly when the issue of loyalty came to a head in 1040. Indeed, it was the response of the imperial centre to the issue of Artsruni loyalty that contributed to their biggest mistake: the placement of Gagik II of Ani as the overlord of the Armenian estates in the east.489

ii. Ani (II)

We have already covered the background and binding treaty that bequeathed the kingdom of Ani to Byzantium in the section above. In this section, there are two aims. First, to construct a summary of events concerning the history of events from when the treaty of Trebizond was agreed (winter 1021) through to the ascension of Gagik II of Ani in 1042. The second aim will be to show that the very nature of the annexation of Ani, in 1042 rather than 1021, was a significant problem. The agreement made in 1021 was (largely) voluntary. Whereas the events and actions committed by the Byzantines in the early 1040s to press their claim to Ani produced a dramatic deterioration in Byzantine-Armenian relations, and ultimately sowed the seeds of Armenian alienation with Gagik II of Ani.

489 See Chapter Four: The Royal Armenians in the Empire.
The Treaty of Trebizond was quite simple in its contents. Yovhannes-Smbat, the king of Ani, agreed to hand over his patrimonial lands to Byzantium upon his death. The reason behind Yovhannes-Smbat’s submission is not entirely clear, but our sources hint at two potential, if not mutual, reasons. First, Yovhannes-Smbat may have allied himself with Giorgi which in turn enraged Basil; but seeing as Basil made no claims at annexing Giorgi’s lands it seems out of place that he insisted on Yovhannes-Smbat’s surrender of Ani. The second reason is linked to the internal conflict between Yovhannes-Smbat and his brother Ashot, both of whom claimed the throne of Ani. Yovhannes-Smbat’s domain was largely limited to the city of Ani itself, while Ashot held the rest of the country. It is more likely, therefore, that in order to gain external assurances against his more powerful brother, Yovhannes-Smbat approached Basil in order to gain Byzantine assurances over his rule, though on the condition that he passed his domain to Byzantium when he died, in direct similarity to the agreement Basil forced David III of Tao to agree to in 989. In any case, the deal was agreed by both parties and the status quo was maintained until the 1040s, by which point the major characters concerned were dead.

During the intervening period from the Treaty of Trebizond through to the ascension of Gagik II we have some information from the Armenian tradition that reports the existence of the treaty after it was made. According to Aristakes, Constantine VIII, the brother of Basil II, decided on his deathbed to renounce the claim to Ani, and asked an Armenian elder by the name of Kiwrakos to

[t]ake this document and give it to the king of Armenia and say, ‘Since that invitation for death which is sent to all mortal beings has also come to me, take
your letter and give your realm to your son, and let your son give it to his sons, for all time!'\textsuperscript{490}

According to Aristakes, Kiwrakos did no such thing, but held onto the document and sold it for ‘much treasure’ to Michael IV. This episode is not found elsewhere and should most likely be discarded as apocryphal, however, this element of betrayal and self-destruction of Armenia is a common theme running through Aristakes’ work. Much like with Basil we have here the Armenian tradition absolving Constantine VIII of any blame over the later Byzantine claim to Ani, rather focusing on the character of Kiwrakos and his ultimate betrayal of his homeland. Nevertheless, we must turn to the events of the early 1040s and assess the motives and characters behind the annexation of Ani.

By the beginning of 1042 both claimants to the throne of Ani were dead. There are many frustrating inaccurate dating of the deaths of Ashot and Yovhannes which gave rise to the enforcement by the Byzantines of the deal made between Basil and Yovhannes. Matthew gives 1039 and 1041 respectively for the deaths of the two brothers, while Aristakes states that they both died in the same year.\textsuperscript{491} In Armenia, however, there were no attempts to fulfil the treaty on the part of the leading lords of Ani with the azats quickly choosing to place Yovhannes-Smbat’s nephew, Gagik II (1042-45), on the throne. These events were not going to be ignored in Constantinople. We are told by Matthew that the Michael launched two successive campaigns into Ani to seize the kingdom, while Aristakes speaks of four successive campaigns, but either

\textsuperscript{490} Aristakes, X, ed. 57, trans. 52-53.
\textsuperscript{491} Matthew of Edessa, I, 70, 63 and 74, 66; Aristakes, ed. 55, trans. 50. Skylitzes account has 1045, but this is identifying the annexation rather than the deaths of Ashot and Yovhannes: Skylitzes, ed. 435, trans. 409.
way they were both eventually defeated outside of Ani by Vahram Pahlavuni. It was to take a new emperor to bring about successful enforcement of the treaty.

Constantine IX Monomachos was selected by the nieces of Basil II, Zoe and Theodora, to become the figurehead of the Macedonian dynasty after the deposition of the unpopular Michael V. Before he was able to turn his attention to the annexation of Ani, he almost immediately had to deal with the rebellion of George Maniakes and the Russian attack on Constantinople in 1043. Yet it would also appear that the kingdom of Ani was in the throes of civil war, the royal court being split between pro-Byzantine and pro-Bagratid factions. Gagik himself expected to maintain the status quo and may not have even been aware what his uncle had agreed in Trebizond nearly two decades beforehand. It is possible that in Gagik’s eyes the division of the kingdom, with Yovhannes ruling in the city of Ani, while Ashot ruled over the rest of the kingdom, had made his predecessor’s treaty invalid, as he did not control the territory that he had offered to Basil in the first place. Skylitzes goes so far as to claim:

As Kakikios (Gagik) was willing to confess himself a Roman subject but not to renounce his father’s lands, the emperor thought war should be declared on him.

Armenian sources have a slightly different perspective on the events from Skylitzes, which could be attributed to access to more reliable information. Aristakes and Matthew of Edessa inform us of a division within the kingdom of Ani itself, between

---

492 Matthew of Edessa, I, 74-76, 66-67; Aristakes X, ed. 58, trans. 55.
493 Skylitzes, ed. 423, trans. 398.
494 For the rebellion of Maniakes see: Skylitzes, ed. 428, trans. 402-403. For the Rus attack on Constantinople see: Skylitzes, ed. 430, trans. 404.
495 Skylitzes, ed. 435, trans. 410, τοῦ δὲ δοῦλου μὲν ἑαυτὸν ἀνομολογοῦντος Ῥωμαίον.
pro-Byzantine and pro-Gagik forces. The leader of the former party was a man named Sargis, whom Aristakes names as the executor of Yovhannes’ will and who was willing to hand over Ani in return for titles and estates in the Empire.\footnote{Aristakes, X, ed. 57-58, trans. 53-54.} The internal division did not last for long, with Gagik capturing Sargis and defeating the Byzantine forces sent to seize Ani. Byzantine policy having thus far failed to acquire Ani, decided to change tack, and our Armenian sources are in agreement, levelling the blame for the annexation on the perfidious noblemen of Ani.\footnote{Matthew of Edessa, I, 84, 71.} Constantine allegedly wrote to Gagik stating ‘I need but to see you, then shall return your kingdom to you and shall write a document giving you your land and city in perpetual inheritance.’\footnote{Aristakes, X, ed. 61, trans. 59.} Gagik consequently went to Constantinople, with the support of his noblemen and the Katholikos Peter, but was immediately placed under house arrest until he agreed to give up his lands in return for estates in Anatolia; after thirty days of resistance Gagik was forced to agree to the terms and began his exile on his new estates.\footnote{Matthew of Edessa, I, 84, 72.}

Clearly the manner in which Byzantium annexed Ani was decisively different to that of the earlier annexations, and this can be explained by two points. Firstly, the internal divisions in Ani did not help settle the matter, and this was a direct result of the previous division of the kingdom between Yovhannes-Smbat and Ashot in 1021.\footnote{See above section – Ani (I).} Secondly, the processes by which the earlier annexations had been conducted by Basil and his predecessors were no longer maintained. As far as we can tell, the earlier annexations had a common current running through: they were consensual. As we will see in the next chapter, it was the behaviour of Gagik in the subsequent decades, and the thoughtless placement of Gagik’s new estates amongst his compatriots who

496 Aristakes, X, ed. 57-58, trans. 53-54.
497 Matthew of Edessa, I, 84, 71.
498 Aristakes, X, ed. 61, trans. 59.
499 Matthew of Edessa, I, 84, 72.
500 See above section – Ani (I).
themselves were having difficulties with the imperial centre, that were the key ingredients for the alienation of the Armenians in the Byzantine Empire. It is from this point that the relationship between the Byzantines and Armenians fundamentally changed. We will return to explore the causes of the alienation and evaluate whether Gagik’s personality was the driving force behind Armenian alienation, or whether other forces were at work.

**Conclusion**

In conclusion, this chapter has argued that in order to understand how the Byzantine-Armenian relationship changed between the tenth and eleventh centuries, from assimilation to alienation, one must understand the context behind, and the history of, the annexations. The direct intervention by Basil in Caucasia in the late-tenth century ultimately laid the groundwork for the later annexations of the western Armenian kingdoms towards the end of his reign. The annexations were in themselves to have unintended consequences, and the repercussions ultimately took the form of alienation. It was argued that the loyalty structures which were put in place by Basil with the Artsruni were to later cause trouble, and very much went against the precedents of successful assimilation. Things were later to come to a head with Gagik’s imprisonment in Constantinople in 1045 which indelibly marked Byzantine-Armenian relations. The annexations of the Armenian kingdoms were certainly a turning point in the Byzantine-Armenian relationship, but the causes of the alienation of the ‘Royal Armenians’ were ultimately the product of the mid-eleventh century, not of Basil II’s own time.
Chapter Four: The Alienation of the Armenians, c.1020-1071.

This chapter will seek to establish the process by which the Armenians, a people who we have seen successfully settling and assimilating in Chapter Two, came to feel alienated within the Byzantine Empire in the mid-eleventh century. While a small section will indeed look at what was going on in Armenia proper, namely through the experiences of Grigor Magistros, the main focus will be on the exiled ‘Royal Armenians’ on their estates in Cappadocia and around Sebasteia. The first task will be to trace the growth of the Armenian settlements in these areas from the 1020s onwards, accompanied by the usual grants of administrative and military titles, representing the imperial institutions which had so successfully been used to bring about Armenian assimilation in the preceding centuries. At some point, certainly by the time of the arrival of Gagik II of Ani in 1045, the Byzantine-Armenian relationship seems to have altered, although it is hard to determine exactly when the change took place. The reasons why it happened are also a matter of debate. Some historians have linked it to a demographic change in Cappadocia and the area around Sebasteia that allowed the Armenians to dominate. Others point to the religious antagonism between the Imperial and Apostolic Churches, which certainly grew at alarming speed in the 1050s. This chapter, however, will argue that the religious tension was not, in itself the cause, although it might have been a contributary factor. Rather it was that the leading Armenians, notably the Artsruni brothers and Gagik II of Ani, held no loyalty to the Empire in which they lived.

Primary sources

To begin, it is worth addressing the change in our primary evidence from the previous chapters. Of the Byzantine sources, our main narrative account, Skylitzes, ends in 1057. We are fortunate it extends this far, and the information Skylitzes includes...
regarding events in Armenia through the 1040s is unusually detailed. This is in large part down to Skylitzes’ focus on the career of Katakalon Kekaumenos.\textsuperscript{501} It has been suggested that Skylitzes drew this information from a biography of Katakalon Kekaumenos, although there is no mention of Kekaumenos in the preface of the Synopsis, which has led some to suggest that John the Monk was either the writer of the biography, or that this was even the pen-name of Kekaumenos himself.\textsuperscript{502} Skylitzes’ work also had a continuation which in all probability was written by the same author as a second edition: it is known to us as Skylitzes Continuatus. Arguably the account is a mere copy of the History of Michael Attaleiates, as such it will be referenced here only when it provides additional information to that of Attaleiates. The History of Attaleiates in itself is our most valuable Byzantine source even though the work consists of broad summaries until the reign of Romanos IV, 1067-1071. His knowledge of military matters, and the geo-political situation on the eastern frontier, make an invaluable source. Even the Armenian sources struggle for continuity. Aristakes’ narrative on episodes concerning the exiled ‘Royal Armenians’ is nowhere near as strong as the information he gives on the events in Armenia proper. In support is Matthew of Edessa, who will now become our main narrative source from the Armenian tradition. We have already discussed in the introduction how Matthew’s perception of the world was skewed by the two prophesies of Yovhannes Kozern, which predicted the end of the world and identified the major characters of the second coming with the arrival of foreign peoples (Latins and Turks).\textsuperscript{503} Yet this does not stop personal polemically charged accusations of failure directed towards both Byzantines

\textsuperscript{501} Kekaumenos, and the events in Armenia will only be touched on lightly in this thesis, namely in a focus on the life and career of Grigor Magistros. For a study of the Byzantine administration of Armenia see: Viada Arutjunova-Fidajan, ‘Some Aspects of the Military-Administrative Districts and of Byzantine Administration in Armenia during the 11th Century’, REArm (1986-87), 309-20.
\textsuperscript{502} Shephard, ‘A Suspected Source of Scylitzes’, 176-179; Treadgold, Middle Byzantine Historians, 263-267.
\textsuperscript{503} See Chapter One: Armenian Sources.
and Armenians in their service, and so we must tread carefully, especially when Matthew becomes our sole source for many of the events concerning the Armenians living in the Empire in the 1050s and 1060s. Of our other eastern sources Yahya of Antioch ends in 1037, which is a great loss for he has been without doubt our most informative and reliable source on eastern events for the century that his work covers. Our Syriac sources portray a wholly negative picture, highlighting the persecution of the Jacobite Church by the Patriarch Constantine Leichoudes (1058-1063); we will witness similar events for the Apostolic Church in the same period, though these are most often secondary in detail and importance. As such, our sources fail to provide a coherent picture of events for much of this period, particularly when attempting to assess the process by which the Armenians became alienated from the Byzantine Empire.

**The Later Annexations and Settlements: Vaspurakan, Ani and Kars.**

The changing ethnic-demographic composition of tenth and eleventh-century Anatolia has sometimes been identified as a cause of separatism after 1071. After all, the very lands given to the Armenians in Cappadocia and Sebasteia were to later to separate themselves from the centre at the time of crisis for Byzantine authority in the east after the civil war between Romanos IV Diogenes and the Doukas faction in Constantinople. The most prominent example of this school of thought is Speros Vryonis who created an artificial line to the west of Cappadocia, supposedly separating the dominant ethnic groups of the ‘Greeks’ and the Armenians.

Certainly, the settlement of the Armenians in the eleventh century did not follow the pattern that had been established in previous centuries. We saw in Chapter

---

504 See Chapter Five.
505 Vryonis. *The Decline of Medieval Hellenism*, 42.
Two that when members of the Armenian nobility migrated into Byzantium they were generally settled nearer Constantinople and were immediately put to use within the main apparatus of state, either the army or administration, sometimes both.\textsuperscript{506} It was particularly in the army that we saw Armenians being entrusted with significant commands, generally on the eastern frontier, where they actively engaged in the expansion of Byzantium’s eastern border throughout the tenth century at the expense of the disparate Muslim Emirates scattered around the Taurus Mountains and northern Syria. Outside of the transferred elite, what can be seen with some certainty is that the average Armenian was settled where the Empire needed them. Settlements in the west, most specifically on the Bulgarian frontiers, were expected to serve as a buffer against an external foe; this policy was repeated in the east with Armenian and Syrian settlements in newly created themes such as Lykandos, Mesopotamia, Cilicia, among many others. The Armenians of the eleventh century were also originally settled with a goal in mind; this was a new policy of Basil II who may have been seeking to undercut the power of the provincial aristocracy that had threatened his reign during the 970s and 980s by balancing the regional powerbases with Armenian settlers loyal to the Macedonian house.\textsuperscript{507} It is with this in mind that one should turn to assess the settlement of the Artsruni and their immediate experience of living inside the Empire.

The first settlement of Armenians in the eleventh century occurred around 1020, when the king of the southern Armenian kingdom of Vaspurakan, Senek’erim Artsruni, offered his lands in exchange for estates further west in the region of Cappadocia. Skylitzes lists the territories offered to Senek’erim as, ‘Sebasteia, Larissa, Cheynet, \textit{Pouvoir et Contestations}, 396 and see above: Chapter Three: The Rebellion of 1022.
Abara and many other domains’, which Aristakes corroborates as ‘Sebasteia and the districts surrounding it’, while Matthew of Edessa mentions ‘Sebasteia with its innumerable surrounding districts’. It is possible that Senek’erim was granted not only the lands around Sebasteia, but also the command of the theme itself, although Skylitzes explicitly claims that Senek’erim was raised to the rank of patrician and made the strategos of Cappadocia, yet even he includes in the territory two cities that were in the theme of Sebasteia. We unfortunately have no seal evidence to confirm this position, although we do know that other Artsruni were granted lands and titles by Basil. Derenik Artsruni, who ruled lands neighbouring Vaspurakan, also handed over his domain of some forty fortresses (if we are to believe Yahya), though we are ignorant what title and position Derenik and his family were given once they arrived inside the Empire. Furthermore, both the Armenian edition of Michael the Syrian and Matthew of Edessa mention the Artsruni gaining possession of Caesarea and Xawatanēk, as most likely a further gift of lands as a result of the Artsruni support for Basil II in the revolt in 1022. It is possible that Senek’erim was transferred to the

---

508 Abara had been the stronghold of the Paulician Karbeas in c.843 and later destroyed by Basil I in 871 with the destruction of the Paulician enclave. Larissa had been a fort attested to the reign of Leo VI. It was to be later given to Gagik-Abas of Kars in 1064. See: Jean-Michel Thierry, ‘Données archéologiques sur les principautés arméniennes de cappadoce orientale au XIe siècle’, REArm 26 (1996-1997), 119-172, at 159-161; Skylitzes, ed. 354-5, trans. 336; Matthew of Edessa, I, 48-49, 44-6; Aristakes III, ed. 34, trans. 19; Michael the Syrian, Chronique, iii, XIII.v, 133.

509 The second city, Larissa, was originally the home of a tourmarches under the control of Sebasteia, as attested by a seal from the ninth century: Nesbitt, Oikonomides and McGeer, Catalogue iv., no. 52.1. It later became the headquarters of its own strategos in the eleventh century, see Cheynet’s commentary in: Skylitzes, trans. 336, n. 212. A seal attests the presence of Aronios, who was the strategos from c.1015: it is possible that he was replaced by the arrival of the Artsruni: Vitalien Laurent, La Collection C. Orghidan: documents de sigillographie byzantine (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1952), no. 231. A certain Pherses Tzotzikios, is the more likely holder of the title, see: Nesbitt, Oikonomides and McGeer, Catalogue, iv, no. 43. 13.

510 The man identified as Ibn al-Dayrani by Yahya has been shown to have been Derenik Artsruni, the nephew of Senek’erim: Yahya of Antioch, PO 47, 463, n.52.

511 Michael the Syrian, iii, XVII.xiii, 301; Matthew of Edessa, I, 51, 47. Gérard Dédéyan, ‘L’immigration arménienne en Cappadoce au XIe siècle’, Byzantion 45:1 (1975), 41-115, at 79, n. 226. The discussions surrounding which characters were involved can be found above, Chapter Three: The Rebellion of 1022. Xawatanēk was situated some 40 km south of Caesarea and later offered by Constantine X to Gagik-Abas of Kars in 1064. Thierry, ‘Données archéologiques sur les principautés arméniennes de cappadoce orientale au XIe siècle’, 163.
command of Cappadocia in the aftermath of the revolt with the intention that an ally to the crown would prevent further uprisings by the Anatolian aristocracy, a view that is corroborated by the actions taken by Basil against the perpetrators of the rebellion. Taking all of these towns and cities into account, Senek’erim and the Artsruni found themselves placed in command of a sizable and strategically important area. Our sources are not consistent on the numbers that followed Senek’erim onto his new territories in Byzantium; he was allegedly followed by some 14,000 followers from Vaspurakan to Cappadocia, although this specificity is solely reported by the anonymous continuator of Thomas Artsruni’s History of the House of Artsrunik.512 Even if we reject this as an exaggerated figure, it is still representative of a sizeable community of Armenians being used as a ‘drop-in’ social group. There is some corroboration from Matthew who mentions a migration that followed Senek’erim to Cappadocia, but he does not specify a number ‘... going forth with his whole household and people’.513 We can glean some commentary on the changing demographics of the eastern themes in the will of Eustathios Boilas, a provincial magnate from Cappadocia. Within it, Boilas lamented that on his journey to his exile in the theme of Iberia he lived ‘among alien nations with strange religion and tongue ...’.514 Thus the demographic change in Sebasteia and Cappadocia is impossible to study without more data, even though there is little doubt that the placement of the Armenians in Cappadocia and Sebasteia was an intentional policy of Basil II.515

513 Matthew of Edessa, I, 49, 45-46.
515 As argued above in Chapter Three, Basil used the Artsruni to alter the power-balance in the very regions that the Skleroi and Phokades had built their own areas of support.
Senek’erim was to die in the mid-1020s although we are not entirely sure of the date. The surviving funerary inscription in Varag, Vaspurakan, which notes his burial in 1029 is most probably wrong. While Matthew places the date of his death in the same year as that of Giorgi I of Georgia, his dating suggests 1025, but 1027 is much more likely. In any case, the estates of the Artsruni were inherited by Senek’erim’s son, David, and it is assumed that he also took up the position of strategos of Sebasteia or Cappadocia, although we are lacking firm confirmation. David’s own death is only mentioned by Matthew who places it in 1035/36, and the Artsruni lands passed onto another son of Senek’erim, Atom Artsruni, the brother of David. We will return to Atom and his brother Abusahl later in the context of the religious diplomacy of the late-1040s, but what is clear is that the Artsruni were entrusted with a significant administrative command over several successive generations. So far there is no evidence of any change from the practice of the assimilation of the Armenians in the ninth and tenth centuries. Despite their religious differences, the Artsruni were immediately installed as imperial functionaries in the provinces and for the next fifteen years were to exist peacefully on their estates in the east, revealing that the original bonds made between Basil and Senek’erim had some strength to them.

The annexation of Ani during the reign of Constantine IX Monomachos brought about another influx of Armenians into the same region that the Artsruni had been living in for more than twenty years. Gagik II of Ani, in return for the forced surrender of his kingdom was given, according to Matthew of Edessa, ‘Kalon-Peghat and Pizu’,

---

518 Matthew of Edessa, I 62, 55.
two towns located near Caesarea, although their exact locations are not known.\textsuperscript{519} This seems a rather meagre exchange for Gagik in return for Ani, but our other sources shed further light on additional territories that were offered in compensation. Aristakes informs us that at first Constantine IX offered Gagik ‘Melitene and its surrounding districts’, but this was refused by the king.\textsuperscript{520} When Ani had finally fallen to the Byzantines in 1045, we are told that the Constantine ordered Gagik to marry the daughter of David, son of Senek’erim, who had left no heir, and so Gagik gained control over the lands previously held by the Artsruni.\textsuperscript{521} Skylitzes offers a different account; he claims that ‘[w]hen [Gagik] came before the emperor he was honoured with the title of \textit{magister}, receiving lucrative estates in Cappadocia, Charsianon and L[y]kandos from then on he led a peaceful and quiet life’.\textsuperscript{522} This new position of Gagik’s deserves further examination.

The first sticking point is the claim that Gagik was chosen by Constantine IX to take command of the lands that had been vacant since David Artsruni’s death in c.1035. The claim by Aristakes that this was because ‘he had left no heir’ is misleading. We have already seen that Atom Artsruni assumed control of the lands in Cappadocia and Sebasteia upon his brother’s death, and it is unclear why Aristakes does not mention this. Aristakes was well aware of Atom Artsruni, as we will see during the discussions surrounding the Armenian \textit{Katholikos} in 1048. It is possible that the settlement of Gagik in the territories of the Artsruni was to preserve the power-balance, as established by Basil II, although it is unlikely that Constantine IX had the

\textsuperscript{519} Matthew of Edessa, I, 84, 72. They are estimated to have been located east of Caesarea, either in Charsianon or Lykandos. Thierry, ‘Données archéologiques sur les principautés arménienes de cappadoce orientale au XIe siècle’, 162. Despite the interpretations of some recent research, we cannot dismiss out of hand the feeling of betrayal behind Gagik’s surrender of Ani: Kaldellis, \textit{Streams of Gold}, 191.

\textsuperscript{520} Aristakes, X, ed. 62, trans. 60.

\textsuperscript{521} Aristakes, X, ed. 63, trans. 61.

\textsuperscript{522} Skylitzes, ed. 437, trans. 411.
same motivations as Basil and we cannot simply expect that the same policy was continued. The second issue is the information provided by Skylitzes that Gagik was given the title of *magistros* and lands slightly to the west of the Artsruni. This is possibly corroborated by Seibt who has identified a seal that may have belonged to Gagik with the title μέγας δούξ Χαρσιανοῦ.\(^{523}\) Seibt seeks to demonstrate that the lead seal dates from 1071/2, arguing that 1071/2 makes the most sense, as the Empire was severely exposed post-Manzikert, so the exceptional nature of some of Gagik’s titles was intended to ensure his support of the emperor. If this were true, then Gagik would potentially have held concurrent positions in Charsianon, Cappadocia, and Sebasteia: an unlikely scenario although not entirely out of the ordinary with many multiple-theme appointments had been made in the preceding one hundred years or so. There is little evidence to suggest that the seal represents the political arrangements of 1045 but, in any case, what we do know is that Gagik was settled in proximity to the Artsruni and was to take for wife David Artsruni’s daughter.

Yet, for some inexplicable reason Gagik was accorded a position of superiority among the Armenians in the east. This is inexplicable for two reasons. First, we are told that Atom Artsruni inherited the lands and titles from David upon the latter’s death, and so ruled over Cappadocia/Sebasteia as the *strategos* appointed by the emperor in Constantinople. It is indeed possible that Constantine IX decided to remove the title from Atom and give it to Gagik in 1045, but this is not explicitly stated from our seal evidence. Second, the political bonds between the Artsruni and the Bagratids was not a forgone conclusion, especially when considering the power-structures existing in Armenia before the annexations. While the Artsruni were allegedly inferior to the Bagratid *Shahanshah* in Ani, the ties of loyalty were loose and

\(^{523}\) Seibt, ‘War Gagik II. von Grossarmenien ca.1072-1073 Μέγας δούξ Χαρσιανοῦ?’, 159-68.
could in no way be expected to continue after the settlements inside the Empire. Unfortunately, we are no closer to understanding how and why Gagik came to be seen as the most prominent of the exiled ‘Royal Armenians’, but as we will witness later Gagik was seen by the Armenians in Cappadocia and Sebasteia as the leading Armenian magnate during the religious controversies in the late-1050s and 1060s. It is no wonder that Gagik’s open insubordination in the 1060s placed a great strain on the Empire’s ability to defend its eastern frontier against the mounting Turkoman raids, as he held the loyalty of the Armenian princes in the east and controlled vast swathes of territory that were vital for the defence of the Empire.\textsuperscript{524} We will return to the influential role of Gagik in the alienation of the Armenians shortly, let us turn to arguably a more prominent example of Armenian interaction with Byzantium in the person of Grigor \textit{Magistros}.

At the same time as the Byzantine annexation of Ani another Armenian prince, Grigor Pahlavuni - later to be known by his Byzantine title \textit{Magistros} – handed over his family’s estates that included the town of Bjni and the fortresses of Kayean and Kaycon.\textsuperscript{525} The Pahlavuni family had been staunch supporters of the Bagratid kings and fought valiantly against Byzantine attempts to seize Ani between the years 1043-45. Vahram Pahlavuni, a possible uncle of Grigor, was one of the main architects of the crowning of Gagik II during the interregnum and urged him not to travel to Constantinople in 1045. His resistance to the Byzantines was ultimately in vain and he is reported to have died before the walls of Dvin battling Michael Iasites, the \textit{katepano} of Iberia.\textsuperscript{526} Grigor, it would seem, was more of a realist in recognizing Byzantine aims

\textsuperscript{524} For authoritative analysis on this topic see: Claude Cahen, ‘La Première penetration turque en Asie Mineure’, \textit{Byzantion} 18 (1948), 5-67. 
\textsuperscript{526} Aristakes, X, ed. 63, trans. 62.
in the Caucasus. In return for his lands, we are told by Aristakes, Grigor received the title of *magistros* and ‘villages and cities in the Mesopotamian borders’. Grigor also received a gold seal and written confirmation of his new lands and the promise of perpetual inheritance for his family, while a seal of Grigor attests his later status as *doux* of both Taron and Vaspurakan, although if we are to take his correspondence into account he may also have been responsible for Mesopotamia. It is clear Grigor was entrusted with the defence of a wide frontier command, something that had become more common in the eleventh century, mirroring earlier Byzantine practices of utilising capable Armenian nobles to rule over a ‘hot’ frontier. We will return later to explore Grigor’s career in both terms of his service as a general, but also as a literary figure who straddled the Byzantine-Armenian cultural milieu.

The final Armenian kingdom to be annexed by Byzantium was Kars which resulted in the movement of its king Gagik-Abas to estates in the vicinity of Cappadocia in 1064. We are informed by Matthew of Edessa that Gagik-Abas ‘abandoned Kars and went over to the Romans. The Emperor Ducas (Constantine X Doukas, 1059-1067) gave [Tzamandos, Larissa, Amaseia, and Comana] to Gagik-Abas, and the Armenian king duly settled there, together with his noblemen, thus abandoning his ancestral home’. Interestingly, the lands given to Gagik-Abas were in two distinct regions. Tzamandos and Larissa were technically within the lands held by Gagik of Ani, while Amaseia and Comana (Pontica) were north of Sebasteia, in the area that had previously been given to the Artsruni. We unfortunately know very little of Gagik-

---

527 Aristakes, X, ed. 62, trans. 60.
529 Note the similarities with the series of commands that Gagik II of Ani may have been entrusted with by the early 1070s. See above: 187. For development of larger commands on the eastern frontier in the late-tenth and eleventh centuries see: Holmes, *Basil II*, 313-367.
530 Matthew of Edessa, II, 23, 104.
531 Tzamandos was situated in the theme of Lykandos. It later became the partial residence of the two *Katholikoi* Grigor II and Parsegh of Cilicia. Note that Comana Pontica is different to Comana in
Abas or the settlement of his household in Byzantium. His exchange of lands for estates in the east reveals how the precedent set by Basil II some forty years before was still favoured by the imperial administration, though the usual career path was not offered to him with the commands and titles from which previous migrations had benefitted. It does raise questions as to how the ruling elite in Constantinople viewed the Armenian-dominated territories in Cappadocia and Sebasteia, particularly at a time of rising religious tensions and Gagik of Ani’s loyalty to the Byzantine state. It may even suggest that the imperial centre was so detached from the eastern provinces that they were barely aware of the rising resentment of the ‘Royal Armenians’ towards Byzantium as an entity.

To conclude, there is little reason to think that the Byzantine grants of territory to the ‘Royal Armenians’ were in themselves were problematic. As argued in Chapter Two, the settlement of Armenians in the de-populated frontier zones during the age of re-conquest had yielded positive results. What is clear, however, is that the geographical nature of the settlements may well have been a contributory factor. The distance between the eastern provinces and the centre in this period would aid the disintegration of Byzantine-Armenian relations and exacerbate the fissures in the assimilation process. This, coupled with the political and religious mishandling of the Armenian princes after the settlement of Gagik II of Ani in Cappadocia, exacerbated the Byzantine-Armenian relationship, leading to the later separatism of the 1070s and 1080s.

Religious Antagonism

In Chapter One it was observed that religion was one of the contributing factors in the assimilation process, although not as strong a factor as some historians have attempted to make it seem. It has also been identified as an explanation for the alienation of the Armenians from the Byzantine Empire. Gérard Dédéyan focuses almost exclusively on religion to explain Armenian separatism in this period, while Garsoïan views the Miaphysite nature of the Armenian inhabitants in the east as a driving factor behind the Armenian choice of ‘a path divergent from that of Byzantium’. This focus on religious antagonism does originate in the primary sources themselves, which often describe the differences between the Byzantines and Armenians through religious identity indicators. Yet, one cannot whole-heartedly summarise the Byzantine-Armenian relationship as one dominated by religious issues. We have seen that other factors contributed to the fluctuating cordiality in the relationship, and how in earlier centuries the religious differences had not been as pronounced when assimilation took place. Therefore, this section will attempt to offer a re-evaluation of the increasingly hostile relationship that developed between Constantinople and the Apostolic Church in the mid-eleventh century and argue that the alienation of the Armenians from the Byzantine Empire was not driven predominantly by religious factors.

The information provided for us by our sources forms an extraordinary tangled web of assertions and apocryphal stories that on occasion contradict one another, while others can be refuted by closer examination. For example, Romanos IV Diogenes was accused by Michael the Syrian of burning down an Armenian church in Kars and threatening to force all Armenians to convert to Orthodoxy. This event is highly

---

doubtful as we have no confirmation from our other primary sources that Romanos ever ventured near Kars on his campaigns, or that this threat was ever made. The threat of re-baptising is another constant theme in our primary sources; we saw previously how Romanos III had pressed Armenian monks of the Black Mountain into his army, while under Constantine X Doukas we are informed that forced baptism was often threatened against the religious communities on the eastern frontier. Such was the extent of the threat of religious persecution that Michael the Syrian, in his account on the failings at Manzikert, claimed that:

The Armenian troops, whom they wanted to force to adopt their heresy, were the first to turn their backs and flee the battle.

This information runs contrary to the accounts of Armenian bravery at the battle found in more contemporary accounts, and additionally the actions of the Armenian-dominated forces that supported Romanos IV in the civil war of 1072. What is clear is that the focus on religious differences between the Byzantines and Armenians has been used to simplify the overall issues that challenged the Byzantine-Armenian relationship. While it has previously been suggested by some historians that the religious controversy between Constantinople and Armenia had deeper political and cultural roots that were ‘cloaked in religious robes’, this has been a minority viewpoint. The majority of scholars who have focused on the eleventh century have seized on the religious tensions between the Byzantines and Armenians, and have

---

533 Michael the Syrian, *The Chronicle of Michael the Great*, 292; this event is not corroborated by the Syriac version; as Garsoian notes this is also highly dubious as the cathedral of Kars was made of stone (consecrated in 937) and is still standing: Garsoian, ‘Armenian Integration’, 77, n. 97.
534 Matthew of Edessa, II, 30, 110; with possible extension of this policy into the Komnenian era see: Garsoian, ‘Armenian Integration’, 72-73.
viewed the differences as the underlying cause behind the hostilities between the two groups that flared up in the middle of the century. It is undeniable that the Byzantines began to apply substantial pressure on the Armenian Church to bring about a union between the two confessions, and the previous era of toleration was at an end: it will be the purpose of this section to identify when and how this came about, alongside its overall significance.

It is certain that the Armenians who were settled in Cappadocia and Sebasteia in the eleventh century had access to the institutional structures of the Armenian Apostolic Church. We have already seen that in the tenth century the Apostolic Church had begun to establish new bishoprics throughout the Byzantine east a development made possible by the waning power of the Muslim emirates that had dominated the region beforehand, alongside the settlement of Armenians in these very regions to provide a buffer zone. It appears that upon arriving on their new estates the ‘Royal Armenians’ wasted no time in founding and sponsoring new religious houses. The monastery of the Holy Cross was founded by Senek’erim/David Artsruni between the years 1025-1030 in the theme of Sebasteia, and housed the Cross of Varag that came with the Artsruni migration.\(^{537}\) While two other convents of St. John and St. Theodore respectively have been identified and dated to the times of the Artsruni settlement. The foundation and construction of a convent to St. Gregory the Illuminator, situated some 16km north-west of Tephrike, has been attributed to a prince called Kiwrel (Cyril) who migrated into the region with the Artsruni, demonstrating that the foundation and patronage of religious houses was not simply the domain of the royal houses that settled in Cappadocia.\(^{538}\) We are also told by Matthew that Gagik II

\(^{537}\) Thierry, ‘Données archéologiques sur les principautés armèniennes de cappadoce orientale au XIe siècle’, 124-129.
\(^{538}\) Thierry, ‘Données archéologiques sur les principautés armèniennes de cappadoce orientale au XIe siècle’, 135-139.
founded a monastery in the settlement of Pizu, one of the original areas that was offered to the King by Constantine IX. Gagik was later buried in the very same monastery after his murder at the hands of Byzantine ‘agents’. It is clear that the settlement of the ‘Royal Armenians’ brought about a further expansion of Armenian church infrastructure in the lands in which they were given to govern.

While we have no real data to analyse the rates of conversion from Miaphysite to Chalcedonian religious beliefs, we saw in the ninth and tenth centuries that conversion did occur, with either second or third-generation migrants adopting Chalcedonian Christianity. It is clear that the underlying factor in the production of different results between the tenth and the eleventh centuries was the geographical area of Armenian settlement for the nobility. The ‘Royal Armenians’ were simply not exposed to the mechanics of assimilation long enough for conversion to take hold. Furthermore, they were placed within the Byzantine-Armenian borderlands that facilitated a continuation of their social and religious norms and thus had access to no driving forces to encourage the Armenian settlers to detach from their hereditary forms of identity.

Yet none of this truly mattered. The waning strength of the mechanics of assimilation did not necessarily lead to alienation. Rather, what we can witness was the catalyst, or ingredient, that encouraged the change in the relationship: religious persecution. During the initial stages of Armenian settlement in the eleventh century we do not find examples of imperially sanctioned efforts to challenge the growth of the Armenian Church. The heavy-handed approach of the Byzantines during the reign

---

539 Matthew of Edessa, II, 46, 124.
540 Matthew of Edessa, II, 74, 145.
541 The allegations against Romanos III and his drafting of monks into military service cannot truly be viewed as imperially sanctioned persecution.
of Constantine X Doukas against the independence of the Armenian Church was to place a significant strain on the relationship between the Byzantines and the Armenians on the eastern frontier, particularly the ‘Royal Armenians’. We will explore the most prominent episode of this strain shortly, and it will be argued that it was still fundamentally Gagik’s personality and his actions after the theological debates that were to have a more profound effect on driving the alienation of the Armenians in the Byzantine Empire.

Some scholars have taken the view that Byzantium, through its foreign and settlement policies, sought the reduction of the independent Churches of Eastern Orthodoxy which challenged Byzantine doctrine. This model, as stated by Cowe, offers the earlier experience of Syrian settlements in the tenth century as an example and has been argued to have developed in three distinct phases:

i. – The encouragement of Syrian migrants to settle in the remote borderlands that upon the re-conquests of the ninth/tenth centuries needed repopulating after the expulsion of the Muslim inhabitants.

ii - Advocating the relocation of the seat of spiritual power within Byzantine lands, generally in the previously designated territories that the migrants had settled.

iii - Then neutralising the seat of power, generally reducing a patriarch to the rank of an Archbishop and subordinate to Constantinople and integrating the ethnic-religious community fully into the Byzantine church vis-à-vis
completing the assimilation process and removing problematic obstacles that obstruct acculturation, in most cases a national/ethnic church.\textsuperscript{542} 

Cowe believes that this was an intentional policy on the part of the Byzantines to reduce Miaphysite religious groups to subservience to the Empire, and he suggests that this was also used to tackle the religious identity of the Armenians.\textsuperscript{543} This, Cowe asserts, was a ‘means of regularizing and homogenizing [Cappadocia] in order to tie it closely to the centre and reduce the effect of centrifugal forces among the recent immigrants’.\textsuperscript{544} This rather sceptical viewpoint is not without merit. The imprisonment of the Syrian Patriarch between 966 and 969 has strong similarities with the later imprisonment of the Katholikos Peter and his successor Khachik; both were brought about by an invitation to discuss the theological disputes between the Miaphysite and Chalcedonian beliefs. Interestingly the actions of the imperial centre towards the Syrians followed a very similar pattern to those towards the Armenians, but the theory of planned sub-ordination of an ethno-religious group on the part of the Byzantines by encouraging them to settle within the Empire seems ultimately unconvincing, particularly when considering that Basil II had chosen the Artsruni to bring closer central control of Cappadocia through an alliance between the crown and the Artsruni, despite their religious differences.\textsuperscript{545} 

One can certainly see a similar progression of events in the case of the Armenian settlements in the tenth and eleventh centuries, migrants being used to either repopulate areas around Melitene or Tarsus. Yet it is the ‘second phase’ that poses

\textsuperscript{542} Cowe, ‘Armenian Immigration to the Sebastia Region’, 113.  
\textsuperscript{543} Cowe, ‘Armenian Immigration to the Sebastia Region’, 112-115.  
\textsuperscript{544} Cowe, ‘Armenian Immigration to the Sebastia Region’, 112.  
\textsuperscript{545} Similar logic has been employed to suggest that Basil II annexed the Armenian kingdoms because of a long-standing foreign policy sought out by the Macedonian emperors. See Chapter Three for arguments against this theory.
certain problems in the comparison with the Armenian migrations, as there were no attempts by the Byzantine to relocate the seat of the Katholikos before the eleventh century, and with regards to the migrations towards the middle of the next century, it was not until 1049-50 that the Katholikos Peter was settled in the city of Sebasteia, in the very lands controlled by the Artsruni. The Byzantines certainly prevented the Katholikos Peter from returning to Ani, despite his previous pro-Byzantine tendencies, as they were fearful that he would be used as a figurehead for rebellion against Byzantine control. He was thus kept in Constantinople for several years before being released into the custody of the Artsruni. This aligns with the ‘second phase’ of Cowe’s model in that although there was a difference; the Armenian princely houses held political sway over the lands in which the Katholikos was settled, in contrast to the migrant Syrian Jacobites in the preceding century. There are also further questions surround Cowe’s ‘third phase’. We are told by our Armenian sources that the Byzantines desired the wealth of the Apostolic Church, particularly that which had been hoarded by the Katholikos Peter, and this accords with the later claim by Aristakes that the Byzantines wished to impose taxes on the Apostolic Church during the reign of Khachik. Yet we must analyse the events of the ‘imprisonment’ of Peter and the subsequent events concerning Peter’s successors in the seat of St. Gregory in an attempt to understand whether Byzantine motives were driven by financial desire or by attempted religious assimilation.

Peter was summoned to Constantinople by Constantine IX Monomachos in 1049. Our Armenian sources inform us that he was kept in great comfort and honoured by the emperor and patriarch, but he was in reality held prisoner in the capital for four

---

546 Matthew of Edessa, I, 93, 77-78; Aristakes, 14, ed. 82, trans. 89-90.
547 Aristakes, 14, ed. 82, trans. 89.
548 See below for discussion on the particular episode.
Eventually he was released into the custody of Atom Artsruni and settled near Sebasteia. Here we must return to a previous point. The protection of the Katholikos, the spiritual leader of all Miaphysite Armenians, was not granted to Gagik II of Ani, but to Atom Artsruni who arguably was of lesser standing than the exiled Shahanshah. There are two plausible explanations. The first is that Peter’s actions during the Byzantine attempt to seize Ani by force, and his personal responsibility for handing over Ani, may have caused significant friction between the Katholikos and Gagik. The second, and less likely one, is that Atom was seen as more representative of Armenian interests in the Empire, and that Peter preferred to settle nearer to the Artsruni rather than to the hot-tempered Gagik. Arguably, however, there is a third option and one that is quintessentially Byzantine in character. Providing secular protection to the head of the Apostolic Church held high status, and by granting the responsibility to Atom rather than Gagik would sow discord between the two factions. This does not necessarily mean that the ploy worked, but similar practices of ‘divide and conquer’ (‘control’ may be more accurate) are recorded in the granting of titles to Caucasian magnates in the tenth century.

Peter died in 1058; the new Katholikos Khachik (1058-1065) was summoned to Constantinople in late 1059, and here we see the tone of our Armenian sources change. Both Aristakes and Matthew viewed the actions of the new emperor Constantine X Doukas as a deliberate attempt to seize the treasures of the Armenian Church and force the Armenian clergy to accept the Chalcedonian rite. Matthew in fact names the year 1059 as the year when ‘... the Romans contrived to war against the

549 Aristakes, XIV, ed. 82, trans. 89; Matthew of Edessa, I, 93, 77-8.
550 Aristakes, XIV, ed. 83, trans. 90-1; Matthew of Edessa, I, 93, 77-8.
551 Constantine X Doukas ascended to the throne in late 1059, so this has to be the earliest date from which Khachik was summoned to the capital.
552 Aristakes, XIV, ed. 82, trans. 89-90; Matthew of Edessa, II, 14, 97.
Armenians in another way; they began to criticize their religious beliefs’. So can we set 1059 as the changing point in religious toleration in the Byzantine Empire? First, we need to acknowledge the issues surrounding the consistency of Matthew’s dating, although in the second part of his chronicle he improves dramatically from the first. Second, by taking this date of 1059 at face value would require disregarding previous localised incidents between Byzantine and Armenian clergy, whether through theological debates or small-scale persecutions such as in Sebasteia in 987 A.D., or the events surrounding Romanos III and his attempt to press-gang Armenian monks into his army. Despite these examples of localised incidents, one can argue that there was no serious attempt by the Byzantine government to interfere with the Armenian Church on a large scale basis before this date, and it becomes increasingly apparent that the year 1059 was when direct interference with the Apostolic Church from the imperial centre began. One should question why our primary sources did not see the imprisonment of the Katholikos Peter in 1049 as the beginning of a centralised persecution of the Armenian Church. It would appear that Constantine IX Monomachos had no appetite for attacking the Armenians in matters of faith, nor bringing about a union; clearly his main concern was ensuring that Peter would not cause further trouble with the new Byzantine administration over Ani. The courtesy shown towards Peter during his confinement and the peaceful release of the Katholikos into the custody of the Artsruni princes possibly demonstrate that in fact there was no desire yet to challenge the Armenian faith.

Khachik’s imprisonment was a significant event in Byzantine-Armenian relations. It signified the beginning of Byzantine attempts to enforce a Church union.

553 Matthew of Edessa, II, 13, 96.
555 Aristakes, VI, ed. 43, trans. 32. The location of this monastery seems to be somewhere in the Taurus Mountains, though the exact location is matter of debate.
with the Armenians and more importantly resulted in the political fallout from Gagik of Ani and the sons of Senek’erim, Atom and Abusahl Artsruni, all of whom travelled to Constantinople to obtain the release of the Katholikos. The significance of this event cannot be over-stated as it fed into the historiographical narrative of Armenian history. The imprisonment of the Katholikos, and its wider implications for the representation of Byzantium as an oppressive and persecuting power, produced the narrative structure of self-defence in defiance of political sensitivities. Despite this traditional narrative of Armenian persecution at the hands of a foreign power, it would be prudent to analyse this episode through the lens of our primary sources and see whether the accusations by the Armenian writers have credibility. Was it, indeed, the intent of Constantine X Doukas to destroy the Apostolic Church and subjugate it to Byzantine control, with a hidden agenda of gaining access to the wealth of the Church?

As we have no Byzantine sources reporting the events surrounding Khachik’s imprisonment, we must rely on our Armenian sources which claim that the actions taken by Constantine X and his court were solely designed for the seizure of the wealth of the Armenian Church. It is important to remember that the sources were authored by Armenian clerics, and their polemical language must be read in this light. Matthew mentions that the wealth held by the previous Katholikos, Peter, was an ‘immense treasure of gold and silver’ which is borne out by Aristakes who described Peter as being ‘a great lover of treasure’.556 This, both sources insinuate, was a major cause for the change in the tone of Byzantine and Armenian ecclesiastical relations, although Matthew was convinced that the underlying motive was ‘to compel the Armenians to adhere to the impious faith as set forth at Chalcedon’.557 In comparison, Aristakes

556 Matthew of Edessa, II, 14, 97; Aristakes, XIV, ed. 82, trans. 90.
557 Matthew of Edessa, II, 14, 97; it is possible that Matthew was confusing this episode, largely revolving around the issue of money, with that of 1065 where theological differences were the main concern.
elaborates further that the Byzantines intended to place the Apostolic Church under taxation, which was refused by the *Katholikos* Khachik, namely as it would surrender the independence of the Armenian Church to the Byzantine state. So why did the Byzantines seek to gain access to the Church’s wealth? The notion of placing the Armenian Church under taxation is an interesting one, and what it clearly shows is the effect of the expansion of Armenian bishoprics in the eastern provinces over the preceding century and the growing wealth of the Church in the east. It is likely that to place the revenues of the lands held by the Apostolic Church under taxation would have yielded substantial receipts for the imperial treasury. In any case, it seems that Khachik refused to offer any concessions that would allow the Apostolic Church to be taxed, and was eventually released, though we do not know precisely how this came about. Like his predecessor Peter, Khachik was allowed to settle in the Armenian lands in Cappadocia, once again securing the seat of the *Katholikos* within the confines of the Empire, and he died in 1065.

The death of Khachik provided the Byzantines with another opportunity to force the Armenian ecclesiastical leadership to the negotiating table with the aim to bring about a union of the two churches. Khachik’s successor was chosen with relative speed by a meeting of the Armenian princes and they chose as the new *Katholikos* Vahram Pahlavuni (1066-1105), son of Grigor *Magistros*, an interesting man in his own right, and one whom we shall discuss further below. Vahram took the name Gregory and is praised by Matthew of Edessa for his intellect and virtue.\footnote{Matthew of Edessa, II, 25-6, 106-7.} Gregory was not, however, summoned to Constantinople. Rather, Constantine X Doukas
invited the Artsruni princes to the capital to discuss the possibility of Church union and attempted to use political pressure to yield results.

In Constantinople Atom and Abusahl Artsruni, we are told by Matthew, were commanded to ‘receive baptism according to the Roman faith’; although it is unclear whether this was a threat, forced conversion, or a summary of the dialogue on matters of faith between the two parties by our source. They intriguingly refused to do so, stating that they could do nothing without their lord’s permission: Gagik II of Ani. It has already been mentioned above that there is serious doubt as to whether this relationship existed, or whether it was an excuse in order to grant the two brothers more time to wriggle out of the demand from Constantine. It must be remembered that the Artsruni brothers were in fact from a rival royal family to Gagik, who was a Bagratid, and the acknowledgement of the Shahanshah in Ani was simply a formality. Or, this instead reflects Gagik’s new role within the Armenian community in Cappadocia; he had after all married the daughter of the deceased David Artsruni, the eldest son of Senek’erim, and received a significant proportion of the Arstruni’s’ estates as a dowry. Whatever the case, this appeal to Gagik speaks volumes on the autonomy the Armenians felt that they had within their lands in Cappadocia, as it was to their Armenian lord, not the Emperor, to whom they felt they owed their allegiance.

We are told by Matthew that the Artsruni brothers brought with them to Constantinople a vardapet called James K’arap’nets’i who was ‘erudite in the knowledge of the Holy scriptures’, and was able to debate well with the objections the Byzantines had towards the Armenian faith. We are told specifically that ‘concerning the two natures in Christ, he inclined a bit to the Roman position’, but

---

559 Matthew of Edessa, II, 30, 110.
560 Matthew of Edessa, II, 30, 110.
James had ‘raised many objections in reference to various points in the Roman faith’. Consequently, Constantine and the vardapet James agreed to produce a document of reunion between the two faiths, something that the Byzantines were very keen to achieve. However, James did not have the authority to produce a document of reconciliation, and it is here that we start to understand the Byzantine attempt towards the subjugation of the Armenian Apostolic Church, which had stood in their way beforehand. It is then, we are told, that Gagik of Ani arrived at the capital and tore in two the document that James had authored. We are told by Matthew that Gagik angrily declared: ‘This man is only a monk, besides which there are many in Armenia who will neither accept nor conform to such a document as this; moreover, we do not consider him to be one of our accomplished vardapets’. Gagik then chastised James in the presence of the emperor, and declared that he would write a ‘discourse to the Romans concerning the faith of the Armenian nation’. Matthew included a copy of the entire document in his history, although there is little evidence to support that either this occurred or the information contained in his history was genuine. Much as in the work of Stephen of Taron, the inclusion of religious arguments that highlighted the strength and independence of the Armenian Apostolic Church was bread and butter to historians from the Medieval Armenian historiographical tradition. Allegedly the reaction from the emperor and his court was positive, and Constantine purportedly ‘came to have a very friendly and receptive attitude towards our princes, bestowing many gifts on Gagik, Atom, and Abusahl, as well as on the noblemen of Armenia’. The historicity of this episode is questionable, as are many of the episodes around which Matthew structures larger political/religious discussions. What it does

---

561 Matthew of Edessa, II, 30, 110.
562 Matthew of Edessa, II, 30, 111.
563 Matthew of Edessa, II, 30, 111.
564 Matthew of Edessa, II, 42, 121.
demonstrate, however, was that serious attempts were made by the Byzantines to bring about a union/subjugation of the Apostolic Church, and the Armenians were forced to defend it from the attacks of the imperial centre.

It is in the conclusion to this episode that Matthew does not offer a logical structure for subsequent events. The positivity that is portrayed in the departure of the Armenian princes from the capital does not correlate with the actions of Gagik and his compatriots towards central authority over the next decade, let alone the immediately following years. It appears, upon closer inspection, that Matthew’s commentary on how the attitude of the Byzantines had changed so suddenly is in fact mere flattery towards Gagik, rather than reflecting the truth. This is further substantiated in the following passage where Matthew tells the infamous tale of Gagik and the metropolitan of Caesarea. From this passage we are told that Gagik was ‘quite irritated at the Greeks’, presumably from having to regularly defend the Armenian faith. Additionally, ‘he commanded Armenian troops to violate the distinguished Roman ladies ... wishing to outrage the Greeks by such behaviour’. Even more intriguing is Matthew’s statement that ‘Gagik had no intention of ever again returning to Constantinople, rather he was resolved to go to the Persian sultan Alp Arslan and try to regain control of the royal throne of Armenia’. Furthermore, his blatant murder of the metropolitan of Caesarea, seizing his sizeable wealth, and his subsequent refusal to heed the summons from the capital spells out flagrant insubordination to his imperial overlords.

One must attempt to answer why, upon his return from Constantinople, Gagik changed his public behaviour so abruptly. Firstly, we are informed by Matthew that

---

565 Matthew of Edessa, II, 43, 121-2.
566 Matthew of Edessa, II, 43, 121-2.
567 Matthew of Edessa, II, 43, 123.
relations had in fact been normalised with the intervention of Gagik in the theological debates, which were an attempt to bring about a union. Gagik had originally refuted the document of reconciliation drawn up by the *vardapet* James and yet despite the positive reception from the Emperor and the imperial court of Gagik’s own discourse, there is no further mention of this aim being fulfilled. It is possible that in contrast to what Matthew reported, relations had not been repaired in the slightest; rather, it was a small reversal for the Church in Constantinople forcing it to re-group in order to strike again later at the Armenian Church in wake of the discourse from Gagik. This in turn would make sense of the comment that Gagik was ‘already quite irritated at the Greeks’, as he was growing frustrated with the persistence of the Imperial Church’s attempts to force a union, and threats of forced baptism.\(^{568}\) We are next told that Gagik had a ‘deep hatred for the Greek metropolitan [of Caesarea]’, not only for having the ‘audacity’ for naming his dog ‘Armen’ but also, in the words of Matthew, being ‘an evil-minded schismatic and abominable heretic’.\(^{569}\) So here we are given two reasons why Gagik disliked the Byzantine bishop of Caesarea, one because of insult to the Armenian people by the naming of the dog Armen, and also because of the bishop’s religious beliefs. Matthew is weak on the details for the religious antagonism between the bishop and Gagik, stating a little further on: ‘[the metropolitan] brought much affliction upon the Armenians when he heard that the emperor had the intention of forcibly baptizing the princes of Armenia in the Roman faith’.\(^{570}\) Yet, before moving on to the death of the bishop at Gagik’s hand, Matthew includes an insightful clue as to what had changed in Gagik. Matthew states that Gagik was not previously able to tackle the bishop ‘... because the king lived among the Romans, he was not able to do

\(^{568}\) Matthew of Edessa, II, 43, 121.

\(^{569}\) Arguably this is the use by Matthew of standardized polemical language when used in describing the religious animosity of his own day: Matthew of Edessa, II, 43, 121.

\(^{570}\) Matthew of Edessa, II, 43, 122.
anything about [his hatred].'\textsuperscript{571} So to Matthew, it was after Gagik’s return from Constantinople that he no longer considered himself to be living within the Byzantine Empire, and he could do as he liked. There is further evidence of this mind-set from Gagik in his decision to entice a reaction from the metropolitan by commanding his Armenian troops to harass ‘distinguished Roman ladies’, which was explained by Matthew as his ‘wish to outrage the Greeks with such behaviour’.\textsuperscript{572} Yet, according to Matthew the religious discussions in Constantinople ended cordially, so something other than the religious strains between the Armenians and Byzantines had to have triggered Gagik.

The apocryphal story of Gagik and the metropolitan of Caesarea deserves to be told in full, not for its historical accuracy which is highly dubious, but as a literary device from Matthew to symbolize Byzantine-Armenian relations at this time. The story goes that Gagik decided upon his return from Constantinople to stop at the residence of the metropolitan, with an underlying desire to take vengeance on the bishop for his previous slights and actions against the Armenian people. The Metropolitan Mark answered the request for Gagik to lodge with him positively, providing ‘a magnificent banquet in [Gagik’s] honour. At the banquet itself Gagik provoked Mark by asking after his dog, which greatly embarrassed the bishop, according to Matthew, as he was aware of the insult he had given by its naming. The excuse from Mark was that the dog ‘... was soldier-like; that is why we call him Armen’. To which Gagik responded; ‘We shall now see who is soldier-like, Armen or Roman’. At which point the bishop was bundled into a sack with the dog and Gagik had his attendants beat the dog until he mauled the bishop to death. Afterwards the residence

\textsuperscript{571} Matthew of Edessa, II, 43, 121. 
\textsuperscript{572} Matthew of Edessa, II, 43, 122.
of the Metropolitan was ransacked and Gagik return to his residence, never to heed the summons of the Byzantines again. While Matthew certainly saw this episode from a religious viewpoint, the context of where this story is placed in his chronicle, during the account of Gagik’s return journey from Constantinople after theological discussions with Constantine X Doukas, the actions are clearly driven by Gagik’s personal relationship with key imperial figures in the east, and his own volatile attachment to the Byzantine Empire.

It is beyond doubt that religious tensions between the Byzantines and the Armenians had increased in the period after Basil’s death when the era of toleration that Basil’s reign encompassed had passed. Both the debates of the 1060s and the imprisonment of both the Katholikoi Peter and Khachik amplified the gulf between the two parties. Yet, we need to expand the analysis to see whether we can witness the change in attitudes beyond localised incidents. It must be emphasised that imperial and Church policy were not the same thing, and often we find that imperial policy for the eastern provinces was a balance between tolerance and attempts to impose state homogeneity, the most prominent examples of which can be found with Basil’s policy towards the frontiers during his reign. Obviously the ethno-religious character of the Byzantine army in the east was very diverse a significant proportion of the rank and file would have comprised of Miaphysite Christians in Byzantine eyes, necessitating the impartiality of the state in order to maintain order and morale within the army, while with regard to the integration (inter-marriage) of the aristocracy we

---

573 The full story of this peculiar episode can be found at: Matthew of Edessa, II, 43, 121-23; see also; Christopher MacEvitt, ‘The King, the Bishop, and the Dog who killed him: Canine Cultural Encounters and Medieval Armenian Identity’, Old Worlds, New Worlds: European Cultural Encounters, c.1100 – c.1750, ed. L. Bailey, L. Diggelman, and K. Phillips (Turnhout: Brepols, 2009), 31-51.
find many examples of either nobles of Armenian stock practising Chalcedonian Christianity.\textsuperscript{575} Michael Taronites, a descendant of the Taronite princes who migrated in the mid-tenth century, married Maria Komnene and in order to marry into the imperial family, it is certain that he observed the Orthodoxy of the Imperial Church.\textsuperscript{576} Another example is that of Philaretos Brachamios in the late eleventh century, who was certainly a follower of the Chalcedonian rite, which is understandable, as his family had been present within the Empire for several generations before him.\textsuperscript{577} Yet, there were non-Chalcedonian members of the aristocracy pursuing successful careers throughout this period, with Ablgharib Artsruni, governor of Tarsus, who was certainly Miaphysite in confession. In fact, there is evidence from a colophon written at the turn of the twelfth century which comments how Ablgharib built ‘temples of prayer ... for there are many who, in the midst of the Greeks, follow the worship of our Armenian race ...’, yet it is also mentioned how ‘he remained faithful to the Greeks’.\textsuperscript{578} Another example comes with Grigor Magistros, who was unashamedly Armenian in faith and made no apparent attempt to convert to improve his career prospects.

While the vast majority of the migrant group of the eleventh century retained their faith in the Armenian Church, there is little difference in how this affected assimilation, particularly as we have seen Armenians successfully crossing this hurdle in the ninth and tenth centuries. Armenians were still entering imperial service by the usual means; titles and military commands were granted despite religious beliefs. One has to acknowledge the case of Gagik-Abas II of Kars, the exiled king who was not given

\textsuperscript{575} Dagron, ‘Minorités ethniques et religieuses’, 200. There is a further issue with Byzantine perceptions of the Miaphysite Christians. The label of ‘heretic’ seems too strong as used by Garsoian, clearly toleration was the only way of control: Garsoian, ‘Armenian Integration’, 68.
\textsuperscript{576} Anna Komnene, IX, 6, ed. 272, trans. 250; Garsoian, ‘Armenian Integration’, 95; Kazhdan, ‘The Armenians in the Byzantine Ruling Class’, 446.
\textsuperscript{577} Matthew of Edessa, II, 60, 137; Garsoian, ‘Armenian Integration’, 66, n. 59.
\textsuperscript{578} Colophon translated and included in: Garsoian, \textit{Armenian Integration}, 86, n. 131 and 57, n. 14.
a position within the administration of the Empire after he settled in the 1060s, though
the suggestion that this provides evidence of a change in the policy of containment
from the imperial centre to the growing issue of Armenian dominance on the eastern
border, is hard to prove, especially through the sole prism of religious division.579

It is hard to pin-point accurately when and why the previous status-quo of co-
existence stopped, and belligerence and intolerance began to rise. We witnessed the
peculiarities of the image of Basil II in our Armenian sources, even though he arguably
was the chief architect of the Byzantine annexation of the western Armenian
kingdoms.580 In hindsight it would appear that Basil’s tolerance was a high-water mark
for the Byzantine-Armenian relationship, or so our sources would have us believe. Yet,
Basil’s successors did not exhibit the same tolerance towards the newly arrived
Armenian migrants in the sphere of religion, and as we will see this only helped lay the
foundations for the alienation of the Armenians from the Byzantine Empire. That
alienation cannot be explained simply through a study of religious animosity, rather it
is through a closer study of the actions of Gagik and the other ‘Royal Armenians’, and
their lack of loyalty to the Byzantine state, that we can understand the full context of
Armenian alienation.

The Royal Armenians in the Empire
We have already seen in Chapter Two that upon arrival in Byzantium Armenian
migrants were most often found operating within certain institutions of the state,
especially in the army. It has been argued in previous chapters that the adoption of
Roman customs was integral for successful assimilation and these customs were
defined as ‘a subconscious yet simultaneously active belief, support, and loyalty in the

universality of Rome, her Emperor, her Church, and above all the sanctity of the Empire and its institutions'. Here, our goal is to assess whether the ‘Royal Armenians’ of the eleventh century underwent similar experiences and expectations. To be precise, the most important contributary issue for Armenian alienation in the eleventh was the weakening of the Armenian loyalty to the Byzantine state and emperor. In Chapter Three, we saw how the Artsruni were challenged in their loyalty towards the Byzantine Emperor, Basil II, in the revolt of 1022, although participation in Byzantine civil wars did not constitute ‘disloyalty’ in any real form. Rather, the unintended consequences of the problematic loyalty structures forged between the crown and the Artsruni were to drive their alienation. We have also discussed in the previous chapter how the events that brought Gagik II of Ani into the Empire fundamentally weakened any possibility of assimilating the exiled king. Our sources hints at two particular factors that drove Gagik’s alienation into what would eventually become separatism: first his personal issues with the Byzantines, as a result of political and religious issues that he had to contend with from 1045-1071, which added to the second factor, his desire to regain his lost kingdom that had now come under the domination of the Seljuk Turks after the sack of Ani in 1064.

So when did the Byzantine-Armenian relationship enter the alienation phase? It would be pointless, and most certainly presumptuous, to place a date on when the mechanics of assimilation stopped working, if we do not have specific primary evidence to aid us, though the description by Garsoian as the years after Basil’s death as ‘the most repressive period’ seems a little too generic. At least some sort of relationship between the Armenians and Byzantines seems to have continued up to

581 See above Chapter One: The Assimilation Model.
582 Matthew of Edessa, II, 43, 122.
Manzikert, and as we will see below in Chapter Five, some of these relationships were maintained for several years after. One can say with some certainty that the alienation took root with the arrival of Gagik II of Ani in 1045, although the events concerning the Artsruni in 1040 would suggest that similar sentiments of resentment must have existed among the Armenian elites from the beginning of the decade. This fractious relationship was intensified by the religious conflict, although by conflict we really only mean idle threats and frank discussions. We have no evidence of any actual attempts by the imperial centre to impose Chalcedonian practice on the Armenians living in the eastern themes. Despite the later actions of Gagik towards the Byzantines living in the areas of Armenian settlement - one thinks to the tragic figure of the Metropolitan Mark of Caesarea - imperial authority had not completely disappeared.

i) The ‘Rebellion’ of 1040

The Artsruni were settled during the reign of Basil II and were immediately installed into a high positions within the provincial aristocracy, with Senek’erim being given the title of strategos of the theme of Cappadocia, which in turn was inherited by his son David, and his nephew also gaining undocumented titles. We have already seen that the settlement of the Artsruni in Cappadocia may have been a deliberate ploy by Basil to re-balance the power structures in the region that had so often challenged the security of his rule. It is entirely probable that the revolt of 1022 may have resulted from some resentment from the Anatolian aristocracy at the settlement of the Artsruni in the area, although our narrative accounts do not offer a reliable chronological record of the events. In any case the loyalty of the Artsruni was strained significantly by the rebellion; we know that David, son of Senek’erim, ‘did not wish to break the pact with

584 Skylitzes, ed. 354-5; trans, 336.
585 Cheynet, Pouvoir et Contestations, 396.
Basil’, and so brought about the end of the rebellion.\textsuperscript{586} The Artsruni seem to have been rewarded for their efforts with an extension of the lands under their control, and if subsequent events tell us anything, a renewal of friendship between Basil and the southern Armenian royal family. This begs the question as to whether the loyalty of the Artsruni was simply based on a personal connection with Basil, which would explain why the emperor’s successors were never able to achieve a similar relationship. We should turn to other examples from the successors of Basil and assess whether the loyalty to the emperor and Byzantine state suffered because the relationship was not maintained at the level that the Armenian princes had experienced when they first arrived.

Basil had ensured that by maintaining the Armenians prince in the status they had held in their own country they would be able to adjust to their new surroundings with relative ease.\textsuperscript{587} Yet, some fifteen years after Basil’s death, in 1040, we are informed of a rebellion by the Artsruni princes, Atom and Abusahl. It is worth presenting Matthew’s account in full for this pertinent episode:\textsuperscript{588}

In this same year a certain wicked and evil prince from the noblemen of Senek’erim went to the Greek emperor and severely denounced Atom and Abusahl, the sons of Senek’erim, saying: ‘They are intent on rebelling against you and thus causing you annoyance and trouble.’ The emperor Michael (IV 1034-1041), having heard this, believed these falsely spoken words. He sent his acolyth to Sebastia with fifteen thousand men to bring them to him so that they might not escape, and the acolyth\textsuperscript{589} reached the city of Sebastia with his troops.

\textsuperscript{586} Matthew of Edessa, I, 51, 47.
\textsuperscript{587} Garsoian, ‘Armenian Integration’, 66.
\textsuperscript{588} This is the only source that mentions this episode.
\textsuperscript{589} ἀκόλουθος - The captain of the Varangian Guard.
When the sons of Senek'erim heard this, they became stupefied and at the same
time frightened. They saw that the prudence of the acolyth was not equal to
their's and thus were afraid to go with him.

Then prince Shapuh⁵⁹⁰ said to Atom and Abusahl: ‘Do you wish me to scatter
the Roman forces throughout the fields?’ As he said this, he put seven coats of
mail one on top of the other and struck them with his sword, breaking off pieces
of the iron mail. The sons of the Armenian king said: ‘Let it not be this way,
rather we will go with those summoning us.’ They gave many gifts to the Roman
general and went with him to Constantinople. Upon entering the city, they went
weeping to the tomb of the emperor Basil and threw the paper containing the
oath given to them on it. Then they said: ‘You have brought us to the country of
the Romans, and they threaten us with death. O our father, vindicate us before
our accusers!’ The emperor Michael, hearing such wisdom, marvelled greatly
and ordered the denouncer done away with.⁵⁹¹

These two sections from Matthew are rich in detail on the relationship between the
Armenians and the Macedonian house; the latter clearly being viewed as the protectors
of the Artsruni settlement by the Armenians themselves. We are first told that ‘a
wicked and evil prince from the noblemen of Senek’erim’ informed Michael IV that
Atom and Abusahl were intent on rebelling.⁵⁹² We will never know precisely who this
unnamed prince was, though we can offer a series of suggestions. First, an Armenian
azat of the Artsruni who relocated in 1021. Second, one of the extended family of the

---
⁵⁹⁰ Shapuh was a general who had served the Artsruni in Vaspurakan and migrated with the ruling
house in c.1020. He appears in Matthew’s account of the first encounter with the Turkomans in
⁵⁹¹ Matthew of Edessa, I, 72-73, 65.
⁵⁹² Information on this rebellion is relatively scant, although presumed to have occurred: Garsoïan,
‘Armenian Integration’, 115.
Artsruni, perhaps in some way related to Derenik who was given unspecified lands and titles. Third, a member of the Anatolian aristocracy who lived in Cappadocia driven by jealousy and subservient to the Artsruni who held the position of strategos. Obviously, we must be cautious when attempting to identify certain characters, and the account of Matthew offers no further clues as to the identity of the accuser. It is entirely possible that the informer identified as a ‘prince of Senek’erim’ was in actual fact a member of the Anatolian aristocracy attempting to subvert the powerbase of the Artsruni by accusing them of rebellion, though this is only really supported by the reaction of the Artsruni themselves.

The characters and actions of Atom and Abusahl Artsruni in the two extracts from Matthew offers us some space to evaluate the mechanics of assimilation and its effectiveness on the Artsruni settlement. First, we can see that the two brothers were clearly alarmed at the military force despatched against them and were willing to heed the summons to Constantinople in order to clear their name. The description of the visit to Basil’s tomb, while most likely apocryphal, lends weight to the argument that the original alliance between the Artsruni and the Macedonian house was either disintegrating or no longer recognised at the centre. The reasoning behind the accusations, however, is harder to pin down. The claim by Matthew that the accusation came from a nobleman of Senek’erim does not seem rational. Matthew explicitly identifies prince Shapuh as a defender of Armenian interests but does not offer any further description of the accuser. Shapuh’s background further calls into question the reliability of the information provided by Matthew. Shapuh had migrated with the Artsruni in c.1020 and would have come from the same stock as the unnamed nobleman of Senek’erim. What is more likely is that Matthew mistakenly identified the accuser as a member of Senek’erim’s Armenian nobility, rather than a Byzantine noble
living in Cappadocia resentful of the patronage the Artsruni had gained at his expense. It is from this perspective that the entire episode gains some reasonable context for the origins of the accusations, although we are left with little else to go on. One must also consider whether Matthew presented this entire episode as a literary device to demonstrate the Armenian infighting that had been prophesised by Yovhannes Kozern. We have already seen, although happening a few years after these events, that the court at Ani was divided against itself in the face of Byzantine opposition after the death of Yovhannes-Smbat and Ashot in 1040/41. Either way, despite the issues surrounding the finer details, Matthew's account of the tensions in 1040 may help explain why Gagik II of Ani was entrusted with the leadership of the Armenian lands in Cappadocia and Sebasteia in 1045.

ii) Grigor Magistros

Before we continue to study arguably the most difficult character of this chapter, Gagik, we should pause to investigate the experience of Grigor Magistros, the most prominent Armenian noble of his generation, and his role in Byzantium. We have previously seen that he descended from the Pahlavuni, a proud Armenian family, and had offered his ancestral lands in 1045, apparently on realising that the Constantine IX was not going to give up the Byzantine aspirations towards the annexation of Ani. Grigor's career also offers us a chance to view through literary evidence the experience of an Armenian operating in the Byzantine Empire in the mid-eleventh century. First, we need to determine what exactly Grigor's position was when he arrived in the Empire. What is clear is that he was directly inserted as a member of the senior officer class and entrusted with the maintenance of imperial authority on the north-eastern frontier, a considerable responsibility. The chronology of his career is problematic. We have seen that Grigor was awarded 'villages and cities in the Mesopotamian borders',
along with the title of *magistros*. So far, there is no mention of an official position within the hierarchy of the military commands on the north-eastern frontier. Despite claims made by some, there is no explicit evidence to suggest Grigor held the position of *Doux* of Mesopotamia, and certainly not under the original agreement he made with Constantine IX. Later, in 1048, Grigor was actively participating in the campaigns of Kekaumenos against Turkish incursions. Aristakes informs us of the Byzantine force numbering some 60,000:

Its heads were Kamenas (Kekaumenos), which translates "fire," who held sway over Armenia, and Aharon (Aaron), son of Bulghar, who held the Vaspurakan region, and Grigor, the mighty prince of Armenia, who held the dignity of *magister*.

Here, once again, we lack any statement as to what position Grigor held in this campaign. While our seal evidence tells us that Grigor held the office of *doux* for both Taron and Vaspurakan concurrently, it is impossible that he held the latter position in 1048, for this position was then definitively held by aforementioned Aaron. Nevertheless, Grigor was an active imperial agent defending Byzantium’s authority in the Caucasus and shows all the signs of having followed a similar career path to the Armenians of the previous century.

More important, however, is the character and background of Grigor which presents us with other opportunities to examine the Byzantine-Armenian relationship, namely through the shared cultural tradition that transcended the eastern frontier.

---

593 Aristakes, X, ed. 62, trans. 60.
595 Aristakes, XIII, ed. 80, trans. 87. For an extensive investigation into the events in Armenia during 1048 and the sources for it see: Shepard, ‘Scylitzes on Armenia’, 269-311.
596 Aaron is later named as the *doux* of Mesopotamia in 1059, which corresponds with the death of Grigor (had he ever held the office). See: Lemerle, ‘Le testament d’Eustathios Boilas (Avril 1059)’, 39.
Grigor had spent a great deal of time among the educated elite of Constantinople, never sharing their religion, but holding the same passion for the literature of antiquity, some of which he translated into his native Armenian.\textsuperscript{597} Grigor’s connection to Byzantium was therefore complicated. He had witnessed blundering Byzantine aggression in the seizure of Ani, but also recognised his technical foe as an old friend he had known for his entire life. In the words of Weller, ‘He could not simply reject Byzantine imperial ideology and culture any more than he could simply adopt it by virtue of its Hellenism.’\textsuperscript{598} So how do we categorize Grigor \textit{Magistros}? Arguably Grigor was an Armenian, by origin and religion, but also an active participant in the imperial institutions like so many Armenians before him. One cannot support the claim by Yarnley that Grigor sought most of all to ‘be a member of the Holy Kingdom of the Romans, because the Byzantines were heirs of the culture which meant most to him’.\textsuperscript{599} Grigor engaged with the entity of Byzantium in ways in which the ‘Royal Armenians’ did not, actively engaging with its cultural inheritance from antiquity, while at the same time holding high offices on the Byzantine frontier. He held onto his religious convictions to his death, though this is not drastically different to examples of first-generation migrants in the ninth and tenth centuries. It may be possible, however, that it was the attachment of faith, and the subsequent careers of his children within the Apostolic Church, that enshrined the Armenian identity of the Pahlavuni. Despite Grigor’s active engagement with some of the most fundamental aspects of the imperial institutions his children were to more heavily participate in the Armenian, rather than the Byzantine world, after Grigor’s death in 1059. Although, one must

\textsuperscript{597} Weller, \textit{Imagining pre-Modern Imperialism}, 159.
\textsuperscript{598} The term Hellenism is problematic here. The Byzantine historiographical tradition would recognise no such term, but the point still stands that the educational heritage that was preserved in the classics was something that Grigor would have had a close relationship with: Weller, 161.
acknowledge that Grigor’s legacy lead to the Pahlavuni engaging with both the Byzantine and Armenian world in the early twelfth century. While it would be unwise to use the Pahlavuni as an example of the assimilation process breaking down, it certainly highlights the differences between the experiences of those Armenians who migrated in the tenth and the eleventh centuries.

iii) Gagik II of Ani

One must now turn to arguably the most significant Armenian character on the eastern frontier, certainly, in terms of the alienation of the Armenians from the Byzantine Empire. The arrival and placement of Gagik II of Ani on the lands of the Artsruni did not quite have the outcome desired by Skylitzes: ‘... from then on he led a peaceful and quiet life’, quite the opposite in fact. Gagik never ingratiated himself with the Byzantine state, and barely shared in the experiences that his forbears had in the ninth and tenth centuries. Despite the placement of Gagik in a region now dominated by both Armenian settlers and nobility, we hear nothing of his contribution to the army or the defence of the Empire itself. We have already touched on the doubt surrounding what titles Gagik was given, though we can confirm with some certainty that Gagik married the daughter of David Artsruni and held a prominent position within the leadership of this diasporic community. The marriage, we are told was ‘... by the emperor's order, Gagik married the daughter of Dewitt’, son of Senek'erim, and ruled that sector, since when Dewitt' died he had left no other heir.' This explanation by Aristakes runs contrary to the information we are given by Matthew, who specifically states that Atom Artsruni, the next eldest son of Senek’erim, held what is described as

600 Skylitzes, ed. 437, trans. 411.
601 David Artsruni seems to have died in c.1035/6, he was clearly not alive at the time of the rebellion of 1040 as highlighted above: Matthew of Edessa, I, 62, 55.
602 Aristakes, ed. 63, trans. 61.
'hereditary sovereignty'. We have yet again hit an obstacle. Aristakes is certain that Gagik now held the command of the Armenians in Cappadocia and Sebasteia, while Matthew’s information regarding Atom Artsruni suggests that this could not have been the case. We can, however, explore later events that offer us details that our primary sources do not directly record. In 1065, the Artsruni brothers were summoned to the court of Constantine X Doukas to defend the Armenian faith and potentially bring about the much sought-after union of the two forms of Christianity. Matthew paints the scene as one of discomfort for the Artsruni brothers who were unwilling to concede to Constantine’s demands concerning the Armenian faith. As an excuse why they could not conform, they said they had to seek the permission of their king:

We are unable to do anything without Gagik, son of Ashot, for he is a brave man and our king and son-in-law; send for and summon him here, for if we do anything without him, he will burn us to death when we return to our lands. The context for this unusual claim originates in the tenth century when the Artsruni family directly challenged the authority of the Bagratuni king of Ani and his claim to be king over all of Armenia. While the division in royal authority was certainly real, the king in Ani still held the title of Shahanshah, King of Kings, a position that therefore reflected the political landscape of the Medieval Armenian Kingdoms. This position is further substantiated by the words of Gagik himself, as recorded by Matthew of Edessa: ‘I am a king and a son of the kings of Armenia, and all Armenians obey my commands’. Yet, it still does not explain why Atom and Abusahl Artsruni

---

603 Matthew of Edessa, I, 62, 55.
604 Matthew of Edessa, II, 30, 110.
606 Matthew of Edessa, II, 30, 111.
would have seen Gagik as their overlord, as they came from a technically rival house, and Atom had inherited the leadership from David Artsruni in c.1035/6. One can suspect that this claim was not in fact true, whether it was an error in Matthew’s account, or the brothers were making an excuse to get out of a sticky situation. It is entirely possible that Gagik assumed the command as strategos of Cappadocia from the Artsruni by the order of Constantine IX; after all, Byzantine offices were not hereditary by right, but at the will of the patronage of the Emperor. Nevertheless Matthew’s account describes how Gagik travelled to Constantinople to defend the Armenian faith, as he was after all ‘... brilliant in philosophical debates and invincible in answering questions put to him’, alongside Gagik’s humble assessment of his own abilities:

I am well versed in the Old and New Testaments, and all Armenians are witnesses to the truth of my words, for they regard me as equal to the vardapets.\textsuperscript{607}

Gagik had clearly become the de facto leader of the Armenians in Cappadocia and Sebasteia by 1065, although we are unsure of the technicalities of such authority. While one could argue that even in the 1060s the Armenians were still co-operating with the Byzantine state and emperor by complying with the summons, what we actually witness is how the arrival of Gagik of Ani had disturbed the previous loyalty structures, i.e. the Armenians looked to him, rather than the Emperor, as the authoritative figurehead.

\textsuperscript{607} Matthew of Edessa, II, 30, 110-111.
The First Steps to Separatism

By the mid-1060s, the exiled Armenian royal houses were experiencing the alienating policies of the imperial centre and started to look independently for their own protection. Gagik was said to have corresponded with the Seljuk Sultan requesting the return of the land around Ani. We do not know whether he ever received a response, although his continued residence in Cappadocia is a possible indication. There is a similar incident involving the Armenian princes in negotiating a separate truce with an emir called Ktrich who apparently had wanted to secretly rebel against the Seljuk Sultan Alp Arslan. This is an unusual episode, as the Armenian princes had treated with a rebellious emir, and more importantly a foreign magnate, as if they were their own state and they had powers, rather than deferring to the emperor and his court in Constantinople for judgements on foreign diplomacy. Once again this is not definitive proof that the Armenian princes on the eastern frontier were abandoning the Empire entirely, but their behaviour was unprecedented and provides the context for how they were to respond to the crumbling authority of Byzantium after Manzikert.

Moving ahead to the reign of Romanos IV Diogenes (1068-1071) and his eastern campaign into Armenia in 1071 to counter the Turkish threat, the Armenian princes seem to have still been in communication and actively involved in advising Romanos on his plan of action. Matthew of Edessa tells us that when Romanos had reached Sebasteia in the early summer of 1071, he was greeted with great pomp by the brothers Atom and Abusahl Artsruni. However, we are also informed that the tensions

---

608 Matthew, II, 43, 122.
609 The translator of Matthew, Ara Dostourian, notes that the original Turkish name cannot be ascertained and so it has been left in the nearest Armenian form, Nikephoros Bryennios calls Ktrich’ Chrysoskoulos, see: 318, 54, n. 1.
610 Matthew of Edessa, II, 54, 129.
611 Matthew of Edessa, II, 57, 132.
between the Byzantines and the Armenians had risen to a hostile level, as Matthew continues:

At this time the Romans made slanderous remarks against the inhabitants of Sebastia and against all of the Armenians in general, denouncing them before the emperor saying: ‘If at any time the emir Ktrich’ strikes at us, the Armenians surely will slaughter us more vehemently than the Turks’.\footnote{Matthew of Edessa, II, 57, 132.}

This narrative is very similar to what can be found in the history of Michael Attaleiates who reports that after the sack of Ikonion by the Turkomans in 1069:

[t]he emperor waited in Kelesine to receive the survivors within the camp, so that they might not be caught wandering about in small groups in the wilderness and be killed by the Armenians.\footnote{Attaleiates, 18.17, 247.}

These two statements from different primary sources indicate that the Byzantine-Armenian relationship was starting to come under serious strain both a local and wider level. Conversely, Matthew’s narrative still indicates an element of co-operation between the Armenian princes and the emperor. Despite being told that Romanos believed the allegations that were levelled against the Armenians in Sebasteia, and the subsequent pillaging of the city by Roman troops along with the snubbing of Atom and Abusahl, the emperor still maintained a relationship with Gagik of Ani. As Matthew recounts:

At that time the illustrious Roman magnates [as well as] the Shahanshah Gagik and the emir Ktrich’, said to the emperor Diogenes: ‘Do not listen to the deceitful words spoken by those belonging to your nations, because all their
words are false; for all those Armenians who have survived the combats with the Turks are your auxiliaries’.\textsuperscript{614}

Romanos is reported to have yielded to the advice he was given, although he apparently still threatened ‘to do away with the Armenian faith on his return [from Persia]’, yet further proof of the religiously charged polemic dominating our understanding of Byzantine-Armenian relations.\textsuperscript{615} We can still see that the issue of religion is at the forefront of the hostilities between the Byzantines and Armenians within our primary sources. We must consider, however, that Matthew was writing in the early twelfth century, and was a monk in Edessa, so his priority would have naturally been towards matters of faith in terms of hostilities, all of which he may have embellished somewhat. Attaleiates, however, does corroborate Matthew’s views on the religious convictions of the Armenians:

For it seemed that such a large uprising of the foreign nations and the slaughter of those who live under Roman authority could be attributed only to His anger against the heretics, that is the Armenians dwelling in Iberia, Mesopotamia, and as far as Lykandos and Melitene.\textsuperscript{616}

It is clear that the animosity between the Byzantines and the Armenians was linked with the religious differences between the two groups, and this in turn was a directly contributing factor to the alienation of the Armenians. Yet, their correspondence with Diogenes, even as late as 1071, indicates that the Armenian separation from the Byzantine state had not entirely come to fruition. What is becoming abundantly clear

\textsuperscript{614} Matthew of Edessa, II, 57, 133.
\textsuperscript{615} Matthew of Edessa, II, 57, 133.
\textsuperscript{616} Attaleiates, 16.7, 177.
was that their actions after the strategic defeat at the Battle of Manzikert instigated a new era for the Byzantine-Armenian relationship.\textsuperscript{617}

The narrative of Manzikert and other military campaigns in the period in our primary sources, offer us a different perspective from the dominant accounts on the subject of the ‘Royal Armenians’. It is important to attempt to understand how Armenians below the class of the nobility felt about their attachment with Byzantium, and the most prominent examples one can find come from the Byzantine armies in the east with their Armenian. It has often been wrongly assumed, by both primary accounts and secondary works, that the annexation of the Armenian kingdoms in the eleventh century led to the dismantling of the native military forces, such as the dissolution of the Armenian militia of Ani by Constantine IX Monomachos, and that this brought about resentment from the exiled Armenians within the Empire.\textsuperscript{618} In fact, we are informed by Skylitzes that the troops were absorbed into the regular army, continuing the previous policy of recruiting Armenians into the army, with many serving loyally for decades afterwards.\textsuperscript{619} There are certainly examples of issues with the loyalty of some Armenian troops during the campaigns of Romanos IV Diogenes, such as the siege and sack of Hierapolis in Syria during the summer of 1068. The historian Michael Attaleiates informs us that:

\[\ldots\text{the Armenian infantry, who had been ordered to spend the night before the moat as a protective screen, planned to defect and refused to obey their officers.}\textsuperscript{620}\]

\textsuperscript{617} The choice of ‘strategic’ has been carefully chosen to avoid comparison with Friendly’s interpretation of the battle. See first line of introduction: Friendly, \textit{The Dreadful Day}, 17.
\textsuperscript{618} Garsoian, ‘Armenian Integration’, 62.
\textsuperscript{619} Skylitzes, ed. 437, trans. 411.
\textsuperscript{620} Attaleiates, 17.12, 207.
Yet, such isolated incidents are not entirely reflective of the level of loyalty that the Armenian soldiers displayed towards the Byzantines in general. One can find many examples where Armenian soldiers fought with distinction and became prominent supporters of Romanos IV Diogenes during his civil war with the Doukas faction in Constantinople after the defeat and the emperor’s release from captivity following the battle of Manzikert. Not only were Armenians settled in Hierapolis after the capture of the city by Romanos, but in addition an Armenian commander was placed in charge of the garrison, arrangements that sit awkwardly with the previously assumed Armenian disloyalty.\footnote{Attaleiates, 17.15, 213.} In another instance Romanos had instructed Armenian forces in the vicinity of Seleukeia to attack Turkoman raiders as they passed through the mountains, reinforcing the reliance on the Armenian element within the army for the defence of the Empire.\footnote{Attaleiates, 18.19, 249.} Furthermore, during Romanos’ final eastern campaign in the environs of Lake Van, the Armenian troops that were at the emperor’s disposal were charged with breaching the wall outside of the citadel in Manzikert, which they achieved with great success.\footnote{Attaleiates, 20.14, 277.} The accusations of mass Armenian defections before and during the battle of Manzikert only appear in Michael the Syrian.\footnote{Michael the Syrian, Chronique, iii, XV.iii, 169; Vryonis, Decline of Medieval Hellenism, 103.} Even in our Byzantine sources we can find specific mention of the level of dedication of the Armenian soldiers at Manzikert for the Empire.\footnote{Aristakes, ed. 139, trans. 169.} So while tensions between the Armenian princes and the imperial centre were certainly rising, they were not apparently widespread across the entire Armenian population living within the Empire, least of all within the institution of the Empire that so many Armenians found themselves – the army. We will return to the Armenians and the army in the next chapter, where it will be argued that their dominance facilitated the creation of
independent Armenian principalities in the region in the wake of the disintegration of Byzantine influence on the eastern frontier.
Conclusion

To conclude, it is clear that the assimilation process that was analysed for the late-ninth and tenth centuries was no longer producing the same results for those Armenians that had been settled in the eleventh century. By the 1060s the Byzantine-Armenian relationship was under significant strain, with many of the ‘Royal Armenians’ no longer feeling attached to the Empire in which they lived. One can see from the actions of the Armenians, headed by Gagik of Ani, that the attempts to enforce religious uniformity resulted in resentment. Yet, the religious issues cannot be used as the sole explanation for why assimilation broke down into alienation, particularly in the 1060s. Rather it comes back to the broader definition of ‘Roman customs’ and how the Armenians, from the 1040s onwards, were no longer interacting with the Empire through such institutions as governance or the army which ultimately strained their loyalty to the imperial centre with the position of emperor at its heart. In the end, it was the defeat at Manzikert that produced the conditions for Armenian separatism from Byzantium, but without the alienation experienced by the ‘Royal Armenians’ in the middle decades of the eleventh century the breakdown of the Byzantine-Armenian relationship would not have reached the levels of separatism that one witnesses in the 1070s and 1080s. This process will be the focal point in the following chapter.
Chapter Five: Separatism, 1071-1098

The main aim of this chapter is to explain how the Byzantine-Armenian relationship arrived at its final destination: separatism. The actions and events concerning the Apostolic Church, the ‘Royal Armenians’ of Cappadocia, the Armenians in the army, and Byzantine-Armenian imperial agents will all need to be addressed. It will be argued that the most important aspect of the Byzantine-Armenian relationship that broke down was the disappearance of the Armenian loyalty towards the Byzantine State, her emperor, and its institutions; the concepts that had otherwise attached previous generations of Armenian migrants to the Empire.

By the mid-1060s it had become clear that the Armenians living on the eastern frontier, particularly in the four neighbouring themes of Cappadocia, Sebastia, Charsianon, and Lykandos, had become alienated from the Byzantine Empire. It was further argued that this disillusionment was to sow the seeds of separatism among the Armenian princes, led by Gagik II of Ani, who was the most prominent in his disenchantment with the Empire. The collapse of Byzantine authority on the north-eastern frontier in the early 1070s has already been expertly researched, and there is little doubt that the ‘Royal Armenians’ came under significant pressure from the raiding Turkomans who were to begin establishing their own emirates to the north of the Taurus Mountains.626 Our immediate task therefore, is to identify the characteristics of the wider Armenian community on the eastern frontier in the summer of 1071, where their loyalties lay, and the strength of Byzantine authority over the region.

---

626 For thorough analysis of this crucial period see: Alexander Beihammer, Byzantium and the Emergence of Muslim-Turkish Anatolia, ca. 1040-1130 (London: Taylor & Francis Group, 2017), ch. 5, 198-243; Kaldellis, Streams of Gold, 248-70.
Primary Sources

Before we can resume our discussion of the Armenians living on the eastern frontier and their prospects in the immediate aftermath of Romanos IV’s defeat near Lake Van, we need to briefly discuss the changes in our primary source evidence. From the Byzantine perspective we must now rely heavily on the *History* of Michael Attaleiates up to 1079, the first year of Nikephoros III Botaneiates’ reign. Skylitzes’ first edition of the *Synopsis* finishes in 1057, although his second edition (Skylitzes Continuatus) brings the narrative up to 1079, highlighting how heavily Skylitzes relied on the *History* as his main source.627 This particular source will only be referenced when Skylitzes offers us information that we do not otherwise gain from Attaleiates. For the rest of the period we are reliant on the works of Nikephoros Bryennios and Anna Komnene. Bryennios’ account of the events in Anatolia offers a different perspective than that of Attaleiates, particularly when concerning the ‘achievements’ of Botaneiates whom Attaleiates does not hesitate to flatter. Yet Bryennios’ account only adds a couple of years to the end of Attaleiates’ *History* finishing in 1081. It is the *Alexiad* of Anna that we must use to cover the events up till 1100. There are issues with the reliability of Anna’s factual details, largely in part to her distance from the events and her aim to distance Alexios from the responsibility for the collapse of imperial authority in the east. In summary, our Byzantine sources offer us only limited information for the events unfolding in the east and do not tell the full story of the collapse of imperial authority in the region. Turning to our Armenian narrative sources we are now left solely with Matthew of Edessa. Aristakes’ account ends with Manzikert: a great loss, for his account of the eleventh century has largely been the litmus test for Matthew’s errors. We are entirely reliant on Matthew for his account of

627 For discussions as to why Skylitzes finished his first edition in 1057, see: Treadgold, *Middle Byzantine Historians*, 331-332.
the fracturing of the leadership of the Apostolic Church and have already seen in Chapter One that Matthew interpreted the internal strife and discord within the Church as part of the divine plan for the Armenian people. Despite the polemical language Matthew uses in condemning the sins and divisions of the Armenians as a whole, his belief in their eventual redemption through God’s mercy was unwavering. It is in this period that we find Matthew describing events with more vigour and verve, with a greater grasp on the recent history for the Armenian inhabitants in the region. The arrival of the Latins, alongside the attempted preservation of Armenian rule in Cilicia and along the Upper Euphrates, will be major focal points in this chapter. Additionally, we are assisted by the chronology produced by Samuel of Ani, although he offers only a vague narrative of the events in this period.

Michael the Syrian’s chronicle offers limited information on this obscure period, and it is to our Latin and Muslim sources that we must turn to fill in the gaps. While the Latin narrative accounts of the First Crusade are only relevant for the period 1096-1098, our Muslim sources help us reconstruct the chronology of the 1080s and 1090s, particularly concerning the Turkic settlements of eastern Anatolia in the heartlands of where the ‘Royal Armenians’ had been settled earlier in the century. The Seljuk historiographical tradition is largely focused on the origins and history of the Turkic peoples, providing only limited and inaccurate details of the penetration of the Byzantine frontier in the eleventh century.628 The most informative universal chronicles from the broader Muslim historiographical tradition come from Ibn al-Athîr and Sîbt b. al-Jawzî, both writing in the thirteenth century.629 Both of these chronicles are inconsistent in their information on the eastern frontier in the late-

628 Beihammer, 33; for broader discussion on the earliest texts from the Seljuk tradition see: Peacock, *Early Seljuk History*, 6-12.
eleventh century, although they do on occasion offer valuable additions, particularly when used in combination with our other sources. In summary, our primary sources describe a disparate and confusing world for the Armenians on Byzantium’s eastern frontier in the aftermath of Manzikert, and it is a constant struggle to construct a flowing narrative account of this era. Yet we are able, through this patchwork of sources from varying historiographical traditions, to trace the disintegration of Byzantine influence over the Armenians in the east, and the manifold ways in which separatism manifested itself in the lordships from Cilicia to northern Syria.

**Romanos IV, Manzikert and the Islamic World**

The Battle of Manzikert in August 1071, for all the doubts over the strategic and military losses in the battle itself, was without question the most significant event for the geo-political status quo on the eastern frontier since the campaigns of John I Tzimiskes. The very importance of Manzikert is reflected in both our Byzantine and Muslim sources, although both historiographical groups undoubtedly paint the battle as a watershed with the benefit of hindsight. We are informed by our sources that Romanos was freed by his captor Alp-Arslan, the victorious Sultan of the Seljuk Empire, who had treated the defeated emperor with all the respect that his rank warranted, gaining praise from Attaleiates: ‘Even if the Turks do not have a law of loving one’s enemy, he unconsciously carried out this divine law through his naturally virtuous disposition’.\(^{630}\) In the wake of the defeat and capture of Romanos IV at Manzikert the prominent Doukas faction in Constantinople saw their chance to the regain the throne from a man they had always seen as a usurper.\(^{631}\) Romanos received news of his deposition when he arrived in the Armeniakon theme, which complicated

---

\(^{630}\) Attaleiates, 20.26, 301.

\(^{631}\) Andronikos Doukas, the nephew of Constantine X, had commanded the rear-guard at Manzikert and abandoned the field contributing to the heavy defeat: Attaleiates, 20.23, 293.
the delicate diplomatic position in the east quite considerably.\textsuperscript{632} Romanos had been forced to agree to certain conditions to obtain his release of the details of which we have several competing accounts. Ibn al-Athīr speaks of 1,500,000 dinars for ransom, an expectation of a levy on Byzantine forces at the Sultan’s request, and the release of prisoners held by the Empire.\textsuperscript{633} Zahir al-Din Nishapuri largely reports the same details with some additional information:

[Romanos agreed to] commit a thousand dinars to the private treasury each day, that he would send this tax on two occasions in the course of each year, that, in time of need when the call for help came, he would send as aid ten thousand experienced horsemen, and that he would release every Muslim prisoner in the Byzantine Empire.\textsuperscript{634}

The treaty was ignored by the regime in Constantinople; indeed Skylitzes claimed that the failure of the Doukas regime brought about a change from Turkish raiding to that of conquering; either way, their main concern was to bring the deposed emperor to heel and prevent him from mustering substantial support from his allies in the east.\textsuperscript{635} Here, the Doukas faction ultimately failed. Romanos fell back to Cappadocia and summoned troops loyal to his cause for the coming fight with the imperial forces sent from Constantinople under the command of Andronikos Doukas.\textsuperscript{636} Many of these were Armenians in the military hierarchy who owed their positions to the patronage of Romanos, and this too is confirmed by our Muslim sources.\textsuperscript{637} Indeed, according to

\textsuperscript{632} Attaleiates, 21.3, 307.
\textsuperscript{633} Ibn al-Athır, 170. Attaleiates mentions conversations regarding marriage between the respective families which was almost unheard of for a Byzantine prince/princess, particularly with a potential conversion to Islam by a member of the imperial family: Attaleiates, XX, 26, 301.
\textsuperscript{635} Skylitzes Continuatus, 156-157. The failure of the Byzantines to uphold their end of the treaty is seen by our Muslim sources as the decisive factor that led to Alp-Arslan ordering his emirs to invade and settle on Byzantine territory: Beihammer, 201-202.
\textsuperscript{636} Attaleiates, 21.8, 315.
\textsuperscript{637} Ibn al-Athır, 172.
the account by the historian Sibt ibn al-Jawzi, after Romanos had paid part of the tribute to Alp-Arslan he came into conflict with the regime of Michael VII Doukas and was eventually imprisoned and blinded by ‘Sinakharib, the king of the Armenians’. Furthermore, the Armenian king was purported to have brought over many of the forces that had supported Romanos and began terrorizing various nearby localities such as Konya and Melitene, even going so far as to promise to support the Sultan. Now let us deconstruct the various claims that are made here and compare them with what we know from elsewhere. First, that ‘Sinakharib’ (Senek’erim) died in c.1027 means this cannot be the Artsruni king, or even his son David (who was mistakenly identified as Senek’erim by Aristakes), who died c.1035. It is possible that the Armenian king identified in the sources was in fact Gagik II of Ani and we have seen in the previous chapter that it is remotely possible that Gagik had contacted Alp-Arslan regarding the control over Ani (we will explore the career of Gagik post-1071 below). Second, the Armenian opposition towards Romanos IV is not corroborated by our wider non-Muslim sources. Rather, an extensive study on the roles and careers of various Byzantine-Armenians highlights the natural affinity many had with Romanos IV, especially with their most recent experiences in the campaigns of Romanos from 1067-1071.

One of the most important Byzantine-Armenian commanders in the east in the aftermath of Manzikert was Chatatourios, described by Attaleiates as ‘a noble man who had in the past given much proof of his valour’, holding the title of doux of Antioch and responsible for the troublesome south-eastern frontier while Romanos led his army east into Armenia in 1071. It is probable that Matthew of Edessa is describing the very same person when he states: ‘[a] certain brave Armenian soldier called the vestis,

---

638 Sibt ibn al-Jawzi; Beihammer, 201.
639 Attaleiates, 18.19, 249.
who was the d[ou]x of Antioch’.\textsuperscript{640} It must be noted that Matthew could be confused, as the date he gives for this event is 1065-66, when Nikephoros Botaneiates was holding the position, but it is more likely a dating error than misidentification. Despite the loss and deposition of Romanos IV Diogenes, Chatatourios came to support his patron, highlighting the strength of personal loyalties during bouts of civil war.\textsuperscript{641} The imperial court attempted to contact Chatatourios and ordered him to attack Romanos; this was to be a serious misjudgement on their part, for Chatatourios had no desire to see the emperor to whom he owed his position deposed, and so he combined his forces with those of Romanos and fought against the imperial army commanded by Andronikos Doukas in Cilicia in 1072.\textsuperscript{642} Attaleiates reports that Chatatourios was captured in battle, and hints at his death:

\begin{quote}
He was brought before the general naked and wretched both on account of his present condition and the harm that he was about to suffer.\textsuperscript{643}
\end{quote}

Although Psellos reported that after Chatatourios’ capture:

\begin{quote}
... clothes and equipment were provided for him, and, though he was kept prisoner, no constraint was put upon him, as befitted a brave leader.\textsuperscript{644}
\end{quote}

We are not told with any certainty by Attaleiates or Psellos what became of Chatatourios, or who was sent to replace him in his position as doux of Antioch and must turn elsewhere for information.

\textsuperscript{640} Matthew of Edessa, II, 27, 108.
\textsuperscript{641} Cf. with the personal relationship between Bardas Phokas and David of Tao (see Chapter Three, above).
\textsuperscript{642} Beihammer refers to an element of separatism under Chatatourios during the civil strife between Romanos IV and the Doukas. This is arguably premature. While Chatatorios supported Romanos over the new regime in Constantinople, allying oneself with a ‘deposed’ emperor was far more common practice within the Byzantine political landscape than is generally assumed. It can certainly be argued that a precedent was set for those that survived the conflict, i.e. Philaretos: Beihammer, 285.
\textsuperscript{643} Attaleiates, 21.8, 317.
\textsuperscript{644} Psellos, ed. ii. 358, trans. 364.
Yet before we can do so there is a more important figure to assess, who like Chatatourios was employed in the army and actively participated in the campaigns of Romanos IV: Philaretos Brachamios. During 1071 Philaretos was not operating in the highest echelons of the military hierarchy out on the eastern frontier, although he was entrusted with moderate responsibilities by Romanos. His absence at Manzikert is not hard to explain and later claims that he wished to take advantage of an imperial defeat does not stand up to scrutiny. Romanos had twice previously campaigned against the Emirate of Aleppo (in 1068 and 1069 respectively), campaigns in which Philaretos most certainly took part, and it is in this sphere of conflict that Philaretos can be thought to have remained while Romanos passed north on his way to Manzikert in the summer of 1071. It is in the aftermath of Manzikert that Philaretos’ loyalties began to take shape, for there is no evidence that he attempted to assist Chatatourios in his support for Romanos. This is certainly unusual, as the hierarchical military command must have placed Chatatourios above Philaretos, the latter holding no formal Byzantine title at this point. It is entirely plausible that he had been entrusted with maintaining the frontier to protect Chatatourios’ rear as he advanced into Cilicia. Some secondary sources, like Treadgold, have argued that Philaretos held command over most, if not all, of the eastern tagmata from 1072 onwards, with the title of domestikos which he received in 1078 reflecting the troops under his command, though this is more of an assumption than actual reliance on primary evidence. In the aftermath of the defeat of Romanos IV’s forces in Cilicia in 1072 it would appear that Philaretos was able to assume command over a substantial body of troops in a region that had suddenly become a political vacuum. While it is impossible to know the numbers now

645 On the development of the position through late tenth to mid-eleventh century of doux/katepano of Antioch see: Holmes, Basil II, 330-360; Philaretos’ first formal title comes later in 1078.
under Philaretos’ command, Matthew of Edessa claims that they were around twenty-thousand. So without doubt Philaretos was able to dominate the immediate geographical area of northern Syria and Cilicia after the collapse of imperial authority in c.1072. Despite Romanos’ surrender and death through blinding in 1072, his lieutenants in the east began to pursue policies of separatism from the central authority, not necessarily out of loyalty to the memory of a beloved emperor, nor through loyalty to their Armenian brethren, but more likely by virtue of the opportunities that arose in the wake of the disintegration of imperial authority in the east. There are some serious questions surrounding the extent of the loyalty of various Byzantine-Armenian characters in the region, the most important of whom was Philaretos. Some historians have argued that his rebellion in the 1070s represented a refusal to accept the political revolution in Constantinople in the autumn of 1071, while others believe that in fact he was nothing but an opportunist warlord who saw his chance to break away from an imperial servitude that he resented. We will return to focus on the career of Philaretos below, but it is with some certainty that we can view the geo-political situation on the south-western frontier as fluid at best.

The last vestiges of Byzantine authority on the eastern frontier in the 1070s was undoubtedly centred on the city of Antioch and focused in the authority commanded by either the Doux or Katepano who represented the Emperor’s interests. It appears that the holder of this position changed with increasing regularity from Romanos IV’s fall from power through to the capture of Antioch by Philaretos Brachamios in 1078, reflecting the fragile political situation at the Byzantine court. One can see through the constant changes and political tussling over the position of doux that Antioch was seen as the fundamental strategic centre of Byzantine interests in the region, and therefore

647 Matthew of Edessa, II, 60, 137.
one must spend time analysing how Antioch was governed, and by whom. While the Doukas family still held sway in Constantinople in the 1060s we are informed that a certain eunuch by the name of Nikephoros was appointed *doux* of Antioch by Constantine X Doukas, most likely holding the position between c.1063-1067. Nikephoros’ fall from power in Antioch was sudden, according to our primary sources, with an imperial decree reaching the city that caused him to be imprisoned for murder on the orders of the Empress Eudokia acting in sole authority. Attaleiates does not inform us of his successor, though we can gain the information from an earlier episode in his history. Nikephoros Botaneiates (the future emperor Nikephoros III 1078-81) was mentioned as a possible suitor to marry the Empress Eudokia upon the death of Constantine X Doukas in 1067:

But there was a debate over who the right man was for the times and for this dignity, since Botaneiates was away governing Antioch. It is not unreasonable to assume that it was Botaneiates that was sent to Antioch to dispose of Nikephoros the eunuch, and who assumed the role of *doux* of Antioch. The details of Botaneiates’ tenure is uncertain and the appointments between Botaneiates (1068) and 1069 are rather ambiguous.

The chronology of appointments from the death of Chatatourios in 1072 are hard to piece together. Nikephoros Bryennios informs us that Isaac Komnenos was sent to replace the *magistros* Katakalon, who had been serving as *doux* of Antioch since the death of his father, Joseph Tarchaniotes. Joseph seems to have held the position after the death of Chatatourios in 1072, though the date of his own death is

---

648 Attaleiates, 22.2, 329, n. 231, 604; Nikephoros Bryennios, II, 1, 142.
649 Attaleiates, 22.3, 329-331.
650 Attaleiates, 16.13, 185.
652 Bryennios, II, 28, 200
not accurately known. Isaac ruled in Antioch from 1074-8, so one can presume that Joseph’s son, Katakalon, ruled for a year or less. It would appear that the next appointee was Vasak Pahlavuni, the son of Grigor Magistros, and brother to Katholikos Gregory II. Vasak was an intriguing choice and one which may offer some insight into the decision-making of the imperial court. The date of Vasak’s term of office is a matter of debate, but what we can infer from his appointment was the awareness of the centre of the main threat to Byzantine authority: Philaretos. Vasak came from the Pahlavuni princely house, and it is surprising that such an appointment was made to represent the Emperor’s interests in the region. It was hoped by the imperial court that Vasak, possibly working with Ablgharib Artsruni, would be able to limit the power of Philaretos and his growing lordship, forming an alliance of resistance alongside his brother the Katholikos. Bryennios documents the rising fear of the imperial court of the growing power of Philaretos, with Bryennios specifically describing Philaretos’ actions as a revolt indicating that from the perspective of the imperial court his actions were harming imperial authority around Antioch. In any case, the ploy did not yield the results that Constantinople hoped for; Vasak was killed by ‘the perfidious Romans’ (according to Matthew), while the Doukas faction was to be overthrown a few months later by Nikephoros III Botaneiates. If we are to believe Matthew, Philaretos was to justify his capture of Antioch by seeking to avenge the murder of Vasak, but we will never truly know whether this was an attempt by Philaretos to present himself as the defender of Armenian interests in the region.

---

653 Bryennios, II, 28, n. 6, 7, 201; V. Laurent, ‘La chronologie des gouverneurs d’Antioche sous la seconde domination byzantine’, 249-50.
654 Vitalien Laurent dated Vasak’s tenure to 1078, based on the Armenian year 527, which he claims Matthew stated. However, the year actually stated by Matthew was 525, which Dostourian puts at 1076-77: Matthew of Edessa, II, 66, 141; Vardan, ‘The Historical Compilation of Vardan Arewelc’i’, 104.
656 Matthew of Edessa, II, 66, 141.
657 Matthew of Edessa, II, 66, 141.
is with little doubt that we can view Philaretos’ actions as a way of entrenching his position as the dominant warlord amongst the fractured Armenian polities. Clearly the position and control of Antioch underpinned central authority in the east, and the continuous appointments to the post of doux illustrates the perceived value of the city for the Byzantines. The loss of Antioch to Philaretos was a damaging blow to Byzantine claims of authority in the area, and in reality, brought on the end of Byzantine control in the region. It is no wonder that control of the city was to become such a contentious issue between Bohemond and Alexios in 1098, as both surely knew that it could be used to create an independent lordship around the Euphrates frontier. We will resume our analysis of the various Armenian lords and princes in the aftermath of Manzikert shortly, but we must briefly return to examine the Turkoman incursions into Anatolia and provide the context for the external pressures that the ‘Royal Armenians’ were to face in the years immediately after Manzikert.

Many previous works have struggled to paint a coherent and reliable narrative of the decade from Manzikert to the accession of Alexios I Komnenos largely as a result of the inward-focus of Byzantine sources on the events that plagued the Empire internally. We have already addressed the changing perspective of Michael Attaleiates’ History, wherein Attaleiates treats the westward encroachment of the Turks as a matter of only secondary concern. From the Muslim perspective we are no better off for clarity. We have already seen that despite later Muslim accounts of the significance of Manzikert, and the actions of Alp-Arslan, there is little evidence to suggest that a general order was given for Turkic settlement in north-eastern Anatolia. We can glimpse the later Seljuk perspective from the twelfth-century source of Zahir al-Din Nishapuri for the first Turkoman principalities founded in the immediate aftermath of

---

658 Krallis, Michael Attaleiates, 126-134.
the battle. According to Nishapuri, Romanos immediately abandoned any effort to keep his part, instead of the treaty allegedly taking ‘the road to rebellion and sedition’.\textsuperscript{659} It was noted in particular that Romanos did not want to fulfil the financial obligations of the tribute and this was the chief cause of Alp-Arslan’s command:

\begin{quote}
The amirs are to penetrate deeply into the dominions of Byzantium and as far as every territory which they seize and obtain is concerned, let each one, along with his relations and children have it, and let no one besides him have access to it or control over it.\textsuperscript{660}
\end{quote}

This later attempt to legitimise the creation of semi-independent lordships across Anatolia must be understood within the geographical context of these Turkic settlements and the twelfth century. Unlike their kin who settled in western Anatolia, or even in Syria, those who settled on the old Byzantine north-eastern frontier never truly abandoned their nomadic ways, nor saw themselves as direct subjects of ruling Seljuk Sultans either in Iraq, or from Iconium in Rum.\textsuperscript{661} Yet the emirates, as listed by Nishapuri, that were founded in the aftermath of Manzikert did not all come into existence immediately in 1071. Rather, the process by which the north-eastern borderlands, and western Anatolia for that matter, fell into Turkic hands was a more convoluted and drawn out process. Detailed information of Turkic settlement in north-eastern Anatolia only becomes available a decade later in the mid-1080s. It is entirely possible that the Armenian holdings to the north of the Taurus Mountains offered significant resistance to the various raiding Turkic bands; as we will see later, our sources only document the dispersion of Armenians towards Cilicia with the death of Gagik II. But without solid primary evidence we are very much at a loss for a full

\textsuperscript{659} Zahir al-Din Nishapuri, 52.
\textsuperscript{660} Zahir al-Din Nishapuri, 53.
\textsuperscript{661} Beihammer, 201-202.
explanation of the replacement of the Armenian bloc in Sebasteia and Cappadocia with that of disparate Turkic emirates in the 1070s and 1080s.

**The Separatism of the Armenian Lords**

We have already seen that within seven years of Manzikert Byzantine authority on the south-eastern frontier had all but disappeared; in its stead came a series of Armenian lordships that represented the fractured loyalties and political structures in the region. This section will look at the Armenians in two groups. The first will be the ‘Royal Armenians’, living on their estates which stretched over the four themes of Cappadocia, Charsianon, Sebasteia, and Lykandos, whose fate seems to have been tied closely to Gagik of Ani, and sadly much of the information regarding the migration southwards after Gagik’s death is lost. The second group were those Armenians operating as imperial agents, serving the Byzantine state as governors or generals along the south-eastern sector of the frontier. These particular Armenians were not in any way a single identifiable group, they all had varying degrees of Byzantine authority in their official positions and some were firmly established in the Empire, others recent arrivals. Arguably they could be divided into two sub-groups for examination: the Armenians in Cilicia, in contrast to those on the Euphrates frontier. Yet, I argue that they should be treated together to provide the full breadth of the Byzantine-Armenian relationship at the end of the eleventh century.

i) **The ‘Royal Armenians’**

We last left the ‘Royal Armenians’ dwelling on their estates among the eastern themes. They were shown to have played only a minor role in the campaigns of Romanos IV and were possibly subject to the emperor’s ire on account of rumours circulating of Armenian attacks on Byzantines in the region. The lack of contribution to the campaigns of 1071 resulted in large part from the alienation of the ‘Royal Armenians’
from the Empire, as was most obviously demonstrated by the behaviour of Gagik II of Ani. Gagik had not only murdered the metropolitan of Caesarea in cold blood, but also contacted Alp-Arslan regarding the rule of Ani and Greater Armenia in general, a clear indicator that all was not well. Unfortunately, our information on the actions and conditions of the Armenian estates are severely limited. What we do know with some certainty was that the Danishmend emirate was established c.1084, under an emir called Tanushman taking control of ‘Sebasteia, Caesarea, and other regions.’

Clearly by 1084 the Armenian estates were no longer intact, so what happened to the ‘Royal Armenians’?

In part, they became more active on the local political scene, and our primary evidence starts to document a web of marriage alliances between the various Armenian lords in the region. The daughter of Gagik II married a certain Ablgharib Artsruni, while it is plausible that the daughter of Gagik-Abas was to marry a relatively unknown Armenian soldier called Gabriel. Ablgharib seems to have been a member of the Artsruni house, though we cannot say for certain as to how he was related to the senior line of Senek’erim and his descendants. Ablgharib was a rising star in the region, having recently been given the governorship of Tarsus and Mamistra by Michael VII in 1072, although the claim that this was to counter the rising power of Philaretos is debatable.

The use of marriage alliances had certainly strengthened Gagik’s position in the east; and we have already seen how Gagik had been able to slot seamlessly into

---

662 Michael the Syrian, iii, XV.iv, 173; Beihammer, 203.
664 Matthew of Edessa, II, 74, 144; Les Sceaux Byzantins de La Collection Henri Seyrig, eds. J.-C. Cheynet, C. Morrisson, and W. Seibt (Paris: Bibliothèque nationale, 1991), No. 40, 43-44. It was claimed by Boase that he received the position under Constantine IX in 1042, though no primary evidence was cited, and this would be an extraordinarily long tenure as governor which leads to the conclusion that this is untrue: Boase, The Cilian Kingdom, 2; Yarnley, ‘Philaretos’, 333; see Garsoian, Armenian Integration, 57, n. 14 for issues on Ablgharib’s installation date. John Pryor and Michael Jeffreys, ‘Alexios, Bohemond, and Byzantium’s Euphrates Frontier: A Tale of Two Cretans’, Crusades 11 (2012), 31-86, at 68.
the Armenian community in 1045 by marrying David Artsruni’s daughter. It is not far-fetched, therefore, to see these attempts by Gagik as a tried and tested method to bring about some unity among the desperate Armenian lords in the region during the early 1070s.

Yet, the marriage alliances may have indeed been Gagik’s downfall. According to the thirteenth century account of Vardan the situation was far more complicated:

Now the lord of Ani, Gagik, who went to Constantinople, was greatly importuned by Zoe, Theodore’s sister, to become a Roman, marry her, and rule over the Greeks. But he did not agree. He made his younger son son-in-law to [Ablgharib], son of Xacik, one of the princes of Vaspurakan, who controlled Missis, Adana, Paparon, and Lambron. But [Ablgharib] hated [Gagik’s son] and put him in prison. When his father heard of this, he went to extricate him; but on his return to his lodging the Romans strangled him. So the foul [Ablgharib] killed his son-in-law with poison.

Vardan’s history, we must remember, was a compilation from the thirteenth century, and we have other sources that document this event. Gagik, we are told by Matthew, was seized by Byzantine forces at the fortress of Kizistra in the Taurus Mountains, under the command of three brothers, ‘sons of Mandale’. Despite a show of force by the Armenian forces of Gagik, and the presence of the Artsruni brothers Atom and Abusahl along with Gagik-Abas II of Kars, they were unable to obtain the king’s

---

665 For the continuing practice of marriage alliances between Armenians and the participants of the First Crusade see: Hodgson, ‘Conflict and Cohabitation’.
666 See above for Seibt’s identification of a seal belonging to Gagik which named him as strategos of Charsianon.
667 This seems to be referring to Gagik’s journey during the reign of Constantine X Doukas, and therefore is most likely apocryphal.
668 Matthew offers a different lineage: Matthew II, 74, 144.
670 Matthew of Edessa, II, 74, 144; n. 4, 323; The same men are cited by Frankopan as evidence of Byzantine resistance to the invading Turks: Frankopan, The First Crusade, 43.
release. This is the last direct reference to the Artsruni brothers. Their fate after the death of Gagik would have been a similar experience to the migration of many Armenians into the Taurus Mountains, as Turkish emirates gradually seized control of the regions around Sebastia and Caesarea. We are told briefly by Samuel of Ani that upon Gagik’s death, ‘[t]he other Armenian princes, terrified, fled and dispersed’. These Armenians fled south to Cilicia in particular, and cautiously observed the larger Armenian lords jostle for position. Gagik was strangled, and his body hung from the ramparts of Kizistra, an event that would become very important in legitimizing later Rubenid rule of Cilicia. Opinion on the role of Philaretos in the death of Gagik of Ani is split in both our primary and secondary sources. Our evidence comes from Matthew of Edessa, who is polemical in his description of Philaretos, and clearly blames him for the death of the Armenian king:

Then the wicked Philaretos sent to them and said ‘Why are you afraid of doing anything violent to a King? You will gain nothing by letting him go or by keeping him’.

The information on the exact date of the death of Gagik is scant, causing historians to have widely differing years when it occurred. Matthew of Edessa has it in the year 1079-80, while Vardan does not explicitly date the event. Gagik’s death heralded the end of the ruling Bagratid house, and the traditional secular forms of Armenian authority were broken. It is difficult to establish which faction brought around Gagik’s

---

671 Matthew of Edessa, II, 74, 145.
672 More on this development across the south-eastern frontier can be found in: Ager, 273-276.
675 Matthew of Edessa II, 74, 145, who dates the king’s death to 528/1079-80; for an earlier date, see Samuel of Ani, 449. For range of dates from secondary sources see Yarnley, ‘Philaretos’, 337-338; Boase, The Cilician Kingdom, 3; Dédéyan, Les arméniens, I, 375–376; Pryor and Jeffreys, 67.
death, and Armenian infighting certainly played its part. Ultimately, however, Gagik died at the hand of Byzantine agents, though it was undoubtedly favourable to the Armenian warlords living to the south of the Tauros mountains. Furthermore, Gagik’s murder may have also brought about the collapse of the estates of the ‘Royal Armenians’ to the north. It is suspected that many of the minor nobles had settled with the Artsruni, Bagratids, or Gagik of Kars, began to migrate south into defensive areas in the Taurus Mountains, although our source evidence is limited at best.\textsuperscript{676} We are told by Vardan that Ruben, the founder of the Rubenid dynasty that came to create Armenian Cilicia, had been one of the nobles of King Gagik, though this is one of the rare occurrences of detail relating to the family’s history before the settlement in the Taurus Mountains. This is corroborated by Samuel of Ani who mentions ‘Prince Rhouben, a relative of Gagic and master of the fort of Cositar, having learned of the death of the king, went to Cilicia and took up residence in the city of Colmesol.’\textsuperscript{677} The death of Gagik was a significant event for the Armenians of the east, yet it appears that despite the outpouring of grief in our sources, many of the other Armenian lords went about their business in building separate lordships in the region.

In the previous chapter it was shown that the Armenian princes living in Cappadocia and Sebasteia were not directly involved in the Manzikert campaign, although Armenian troops played a significant role in the battle. It was demonstrated that Gagik apparently refused to answer the summons of the emperor since his involvement in the death of the metropolitan of Caesarea, although Matthew’s account seems confused, as Gagik appears to have been at a gathering of the Armenian princes with Romanos at Sebasteia.\textsuperscript{678} What effect this lack of contribution from the

\textsuperscript{676} Pryor and Jeffreys, 68; Beihammer, 290
\textsuperscript{677} Samuel of Ani, 453.
\textsuperscript{678} Matthew of Edessa, II, 43, 123; II, 57, 133.
Armenians had on the success of the Manzikert campaign is not of concern here, though it is clear that loyalty towards the Byzantine state and emperor was no longer evident from the Armenian princes who dominated the political landscape around Sebasteia and Cappadocia. Nevertheless, the Armenian princes were able to maintain some integrity of their lands, fending off Turkic occupation, despite the sack of Sebasteia and Caesarea in 1059 and 1067 respectively. Up to the death of Gagik at the end of the 1070s the Armenians maintained a distant relationship with Constantinople, and the relations between Gagik and imperial agents in the east were complicated, to say the least. It would not be far-fetched to link Gagik’s distrust of imperial agents in the east with the events he experienced in Constantinople in 1065. Gagik’s murder at the hands of the Byzantines offers at least some reflection on the nature of relations between the two. It is beyond doubt that the imperial centre had little control over the situation in the east and had other issues to deal with closer to home, such as the Pechenegs in the Balkans and rebellious Frankish warlords in Anatolia. The suspicion surrounding Ablgharib of Tarsus and Philaretos over their role in Gagik’s murder further illustrates the isolation of Gagik and the Armenians to the north of the Taurus Mountains from their neighbours to the south, and it is not unreasonable therefore to assume that Gagik viewed himself as independent from Byzantium in every way. Some secondary sources maintain that Gagik was put to death on Byzantine orders, even citing Matthew as evidence, although no such reference occurs in Matthew’s account, he only stipulates that he died at the hands of the Romans who controlled the fortress of Kizistra. In fact the assumptions by other works do go so far as to conclude that the death of Gagik was the final blow to

679 Attaleiates, 16.4, 173; Matthew of Edessa, II, 12, 94-96.
680 See Chapter Four: Religious Antagonism
681 Yarnley, ‘Philaretos’, 337.
682 Yarnley, ‘Philaretos’, 337.
Armenian independence, whereas this example from Matthew shows explicitly that he did not hold this view:

This is how the Armenian kingdom, as represented by the Bagratid dynasty, came to an end.683

Obviously, Matthew was well aware of the events in his lifetime such as the rising power of the Rubenid dynasty in Cilicia which in Matthew’s adulthood maintained quasi-independence from the resurgent Byzantium under the Komnenian dynasty, and this is evident in Matthew’s language. While Gagik’s death was an important setback to Armenian unity in the north, the king was not the sole embodiment of Armenian separatism, as the actions of the Rubenids, and Philaretos and his lieutenants were to show in the coming decades.

ii) The ‘Imperial Agents’: Philaretos Brachamios and others.

The death of Gagik did not directly spell a period of dramatic change for the Byzantine-Armenians living on the south-eastern frontier. In fact, the seeds of separatism had already produced a variety of quasi-independent Armenian lordships in Cilicia and around the upper Euphrates, most holding little attachment to the exiled king. The most prominent of these lordships was ruled by Philaretos Brachamios, a former commander in the Byzantine army who took full advantage of the political vacuum that developed after 1072 to forge his own domain. The details we can gain from our primary sources on the foundations of Philaretos’ lordship is both vague and sparse, such as the narrative from Attaleiates:

Assembling a multitude of Armenians and men of different origins, [Philaretos] created for himself a battle-worthy force and had resisted the previous

683 Matthew of Edessa, II, 74, 144-145.
emperor’s (Michael VII) attempts to subdue him, arranging matters for himself as he saw fit ...\textsuperscript{684}

There is little doubt over how Philaretos was perceived by the regime of Michael VII Doukas; he had been a loyal lieutenant of Romanos IV and now was a rebel.\textsuperscript{685} The sentiment was most likely mutual, as Philaretos never seems to have recognised the authority of Michael VII, nor his court and its appointments. Yet, there are still questions surrounding the level of support that Philaretos offered Romanos in his conflict with the Doukas faction; what our evidence seems to suggest is that he withdrew to the environs of Marash where he began to consolidate his own power base.\textsuperscript{686} Through the early 1070s there is little evidence to suggest that Philaretos sought any legitimacy from the new regime in Constantinople. Instead he seems to have focused on consolidating and then expanding his authority over the Byzantine-Armenian lords who held control over several important urban centres, such as Melitene, Lykandos and Tarsus, yet Philaretos was not the only potentate in the region accumulating power.\textsuperscript{687} We have seen above that Ablgharib Artsruni had been appointed the governor of Tarsus and Mamistra in 1072 by the regime of Michael VII, although he, too, was to pay little attention to the tribulations of the imperial court. In fact, Ablgharib began to sponsor other Armenian lords in Cilicia, such as Oshin, a member of the Hetumid family. The origin and identity of Oshin are difficult to establish but worth exploration. It is distinctly possible that the figures identified by the names of Oshin/Ursinus/Aspietes, three names given by our primary sources, are actually all the same individual. Indeed, they were all described as Armenian in some form, were active warlords who survived in the Taurus Mountains, and participated in

\textsuperscript{684} Attaleiates, 35.10, 549.
\textsuperscript{685} This is most prominent in Anna Komnene’s account: Alexiad, VI, 9, ed. 186, trans. 169.
\textsuperscript{686} Matthew of Edessa, II, 60, 137.
\textsuperscript{687} Dédéyan, Les Arméniens, I, 32.
the affairs of the region for some time. Nevertheless, the individual called Oshin seems to have emigrated into Cilicia in 1072, abandoning his ancestral lands in eastern Armenian ‘Mairiats-Dchourk, near Gantzac’, as noted by Samuel of Ani, which means that he came from outside of the Byzantine-Armenian circle that dominated the geopolitical landscape in this timeframe. Upon arriving in Cilicia Oshin either established the fortress of Lampron or was given it by Ablgharib to rule over; we cannot say for certain which is true, either is possible. Samuel of Ani’s account has Oshin taking the land from the Saracens, thus associating him with the heroic deeds of the legendary Armenian figure David of Sassoun. Yet, as noted by Der Nersessian, the Armenian sources closer to Oshin and the Hetumids describe him as a faithful servant of Ablgharib who was given Lampron to guard on behalf of Ablgharib. Either way, Oshin was to embody one of the many minor Armenian lords active in the region whose descendants were to become major players in the foundation of Armenian Cilicia in the twelfth century. Yet, neither Oshin nor Ablgharib were able to challenge Philaretos’ primacy amongst the Armenians throughout the mid-1070s, despite some claims of a possible conflict between Ablgharib and Philaretos in 1078. While the two warlords certainly represented two different camps within the wider Armenian community, the claims by certain commentators who claim Ablgharib represented the ‘Doukas Faction’, while Philaretos represented the ‘Diogenes Faction’ is far-fetched. The two may have been rivals at one time, but the claim that they were

---

688 He is referred to as Ursinus in Albert of Aachen: XI. 40, 816-817, and Ralph of Caen: XL, 63, but translated by Edgington to Oshin. J. Laurent argues that these three individuals were different people while MacEvitt finds the similarities between Oshin and Ursinus convincing. See: J. Laurent, ‘Arméniens de Cilicie: Aspiétès, Oshin, Ursinus’, Études d’histoire arménienne (Louvain, Éditions Peeters, 1971), 51-60; MacEvitt, Rough Tolerance, 57.
689 Samuel of Ani, 453.
690 Der Nersessian points to colophons for valuable information: Garegin I Hovsepian, Colophons of Manuscripts (Antilias: 1951), col. 542, 552; these valuable resources are expanded in full: Dédéyan, Les arméniens, I, 311.
691 Dédéyan, Les arméniens, I, 318.
somehow representative of two competing Byzantine interests is not borne out by our evidence. Indeed, while it is true that Ablgharib held a series of Byzantine titles and controlled several former ‘imperial cities’ in the 1070s, there is little evidence that Ablgharib, or for that matter Philaretos, were acting on behalf of the emperor or with Byzantine resources.

Yet we must try to construct an accurate timeline of the various Byzantine titles Philaretos was given and evaluate what this tells us about the Byzantine-Armenian relationship as a whole. The account of Attaleiates only refers to Philaretos as a soldier at this point, calling him στρατιωτικής in his narrative, with Skylitzes Continuatus offering στρατηγός αὐτοκράτωρ. Yet the lead seal evidence that most likely dates to before Michael VII came to the throne has Philaretos holding at certain points the positions of taxiarches and then protopatarios and topoteretes of the tagmata from Cappadocia, and Cheynet has suggested that at this point in his career he may have met Romanos IV before he became emperor. From 1068 his career of office-holding increased exponentially as he acquired the dignities of magistros, doux, kouropalates, and domestikos ton scholon (of the east). One cannot be entirely reliant on the accuracy of the seal dating; indeed, many of the more senior titles are only reported in our literary sources at a much later date. It is clear that Philaretos owed his original position of power to the patronage of Romanos IV, serving directly under the emperor in 1069, and it is possible that in 1070 he received the rank of

---

692 For claims of Byzantine authority still existing see: Pryor and Jeffreys, 38. While for the opposite view see: Beihammer, 286, n. 125.
693 An excellent overview of the seal evidence has been completed by Ioanna Koltsida-Makre: ‘Philaretos Brachamios, portrait of a Byzantine official’, TM 21/1 (2017), 325-332.
694 Attaleiates, 35.10, 549; Skylitzes Continuatus, 136; Anna’s portrayal of Philaretos’ loyalty towards Romanos seems misplaced, or at least ill-informed; see: Anna Komnene, VI, 9, ed. 186, trans. 169; Pryor and Jeffreys, 38.
696 Cheynet, La société byzantine, II, 393-396.
The title of doux (one must ignore the claim by Anna Komnene that Philaretos received the office of domestikos from Romanos which was a much later promotion). In Attaleiates’ account, Philaretos is only associated with the title of kouropalates after he declared his submission and loyalty to the Emperor Nikephoros III Botaneiates in 1078 and the office of doux was most likely a reflection of Philaretos’ control of Antioch. The image of Philaretos as a loyal and respectful lieutenant of the new emperor is nothing more than fanciful. Philaretos was to receive the highest of dignities as his career peaked, holding the ranks of protokoropalates, sebastos, then protosebastos, which were followed by his promotion in offices through to the domestikos of the east. These titles do indeed highlight an element of Byzantine interaction with the Armenian lordships on the eastern frontier, but they do not in any way change the character of Philaretos’ loyalties and actions. Rather, the titles granted to Philaretos reveal only that the imperial court wanted to appear active in the region. It does not in any way reflect Byzantine control over these individuals or the region itself, especially after Antioch fell to Philaretos in 1078. Byzantine influence had become a mere shadow of its former self.

So how was Philaretos able to expand his control over the region of Cilicia and northern Syria at the expense of Byzantine governors still present in certain cities during the 1070s? Attaleiates states that Philaretos was able to bring ‘imperial cities under his power’, although sadly does not specify which cities and when this occurred, and it is unlikely that he was able to immediately seize the aforementioned important cities on the south-eastern frontier. Whatever Philaretos’ official title was before

---

697 Skylitzes Continuatus, 136-137.
698 Attaleiates, 35.10, 549-551.
699 For full breakdown of seals see: Pryor and Jeffreys, 83 and Cheynet, La société byzantine, II, 391-405.
700 Pryor and Jeffreys, 38.
701 Attaleiates, 35.10, 549; Yarnley, ‘Philaretos’, 337.
Manzikert, there is no doubt that his power and influence came through his military command, whether merited or not.\footnote{See: Attaleiates, 18.12, 241, for where Philaretos seems to have failed in his task set by the Emperor in defence against the Turks.} Indeed, his preference for having the icon of Saint Theodore, the patron saint of the eastern armies, reinforces the relationship Philaretos had with the military.\footnote{Koltsida-Makre, 327.} Yet the authority he wielded in the early 1070s is hard to re-construct, certainly in comparison with the other Byzantine-Armenian imperial agents in the area such as Ablgharib Artsruni in Tarsus. Matthew of Edessa noted Philaretos’ first base of operations was a town called Msher (Marash), which is to the south-east of Melitene; this could also be the area in which he was stationed by Romanos IV for the purpose of defeating Turkic raids.\footnote{Matthew of Edessa, II, 60, 137; Attaleiates, 18.12, 241.} So it would seem that at first Philaretos was willing to use his imperial authority to rally the support of his immediate neighbours to his cause, though it is highly doubtful that he was acting to protect the integrity of the Empire in the region, as suggested by Michael the Syrian.

Indeed, the case of Edessa, and how it came under the sway of Philaretos, helps us better understand the motives behind the expansion of the lordship. Let us look at Matthew’s account in full:

In this period (1077/78) Basil,\footnote{This is Basil Apokapes, the executor to Eustathios Boilas’ will, and former Byzantine general. Alexios Savvides, ‘The Armenian-Georgian-Byzantine family of Apocapes/Abukab in the 11th c.’, Δίπτυχα 5 (1991), 96-104.} the son of Abukab\footnote{Known more commonly as Apokapes.} [who was] formerly the tent keeper of David the Kouropalates, at the behest of Philaretos collected a cavalry force and went against the city of Edessa. For six months he harassed the city with many assaults. In this same year Basil repaired the ramparts of the fortress-town of Romanopolis which the Roman emperor Romanus had built. After this he once again harassed the city of Edessa. Then the townspeople
became stirred up against their dux, who was called Leon and who was the brother of Dawatanos, and so this Leon fled and took refuge in the upper citadel. In the meantime the dux's proximus took refuge in the Church of the Holy Theotokos, entering the sanctuary and tightly holding on to the edges of the altar. However, the townspeople entered the church and savagely killed the proximus right in front of the altar of God. So on that very day Edessa was delivered into the hands of Basil, the son of Abukab; he was a benevolent and pious man, compassionate towards orphans and widows, and a benefactor and conciliator of people. Basil's father Abukab had formerly resided in Edessa and during his time had built up and organized the city and its surrounding territory.  

Matthew clearly suggests that Basil was sent on the orders of Philaretos to bring the city under his control, and with a small force Basil was able to gain the support of the townspeople to overthrow the doux Leon, an official who had some relationship with Byzantium. There is little evidence the origins of this Basil. He is said to have been the son of the former tent keeper of David III of Tao, putting him at best in late middle age, which may also suggest he was of Iberian stock and therefore Chalcedonian in practice, although the absence of polemic insults from Matthew is intriguing. The actions of Basil, on behalf of Philaretos, highlight how far the level of imperial authority had diminished in the region; so much so that Philaretos had no need to fear reprisals from Constantinople for annexing territory that was held by an imperially appointed official. Basil gains high praise from Matthew as ‘a benevolent and pious man’ and it is in all probability that Matthew had oral testimony to rely on for Basil’s

707 Mathew of Edessa, II, 71, 142-143.
reputation. The relationship between Basil and Philaretos is hard to judge, but we can gain further insight from the information given surrounding his death and succession in 1083/84. Basil’s successor was a man named Sarkis, apparently elected by the assembled population in the cathedral of the city, holding the title of *doux*; it is more likely that this had become the customary title of the ruler of the city, rather than representing a direct appointment from Constantinople at this juncture.\(^{709}\) After six months the aristocracy launched a coup led by a man named by Matthew as Ishkhan.\(^{710}\) The aristocratic party offered control of the city to Philaretos, who readily accepted, and had all those involved in the struggle blinded, with Matthew recounting the gruesome demise of the leaders and imprisonment of many of the leading men of the city in Philaretos’ capital of Marash.\(^{711}\) The one thing that the aristocratic rebellion can tell us is that Sarkis did not see Edessa as any sort of ‘fief’ from Philaretos, and so questions arise over the nature of the previous relationship between Philaretos and Basil. While we do not have firm evidence to give us any accurate detail, it would appear more than likely that Philaretos did not have the military capabilities to rule over his lordship by another force, especially on the eastern fringes of his lands on the Euphrates. The fact that Ishkhan handed the command of the city over to Philaretos in 1083/84 tells us with some certainty that Philaretos did not control the city directly, or indirectly through a vassal. In any case, Philaretos’ rule over Edessa did not last for long, as his lordship was being squeezed by the various Turkic factions both from Syria and Anatolia; something that we will return to shortly.

In general terms we can see that by ignoring Byzantine authority during the reign of Michael VII Doukas and gaining the support of the local Armenian and Syrian

---

710 The translation of ‘Ishkhan’ (Իշխան) is ‘prince’; therefore this could actually be a generic reference to an aristocratic uprising rather than an individual with an unusual name.
711 Matthew of Edessa, II, 77, 147.
aristocracy, whether through alliance or force, Philaretos’ lordship arose from a geopolitical vacuum that now occupied the old south-western frontier.\textsuperscript{712} Philaretos’ success was not down to greatness, nor exceptional military ability: his underlying strength was his ability to harness the support of the most populous identifiable group in the region, the Armenians. We have already seen that Armenians had been used to repopulate cities that were retaken by the Byzantines during the age of re-conquest. This policy was still in force during the campaigns of Romanos IV. For example, in 1068 during Romanos’ first campaign to the east the emperor besieged and captured the town of Hierapolis in Syria, an important strategic foothold located to the north-east of Aleppo. We are informed that the town was placed under the governorship of an Armenian called Pharasmanios Apokapes, and designated to be a new Armenian settlement.\textsuperscript{713} Philaretos was to exploit these very Armenians who had only recently been settled in the region by using both Byzantine and Armenian concepts to enhance his legitimacy in the region. From the Byzantine perspective, Philaretos allied himself with various remnants of imperial officers and agents, eventually holding prominent Byzantine titles that only really served to legitimize his rule, while from the Armenian perspective, Philaretos’ main aim was to present himself as the guardian of Armenian interests, specifically the secular protector of the Armenian \textit{Katholikos}. These two constructs were masterfully adapted to the needs of Philaretos, and by 1080 he was at the peak of his powers. The lordship he had created now stretched across a sizeable area in northern Syria and Cilicia, occupying major strongholds and holding its own against neighbouring foreign entities.

Arguably, Philaretos’ lordship could only last as long as the various powers around him were distracted elsewhere, and by the early 1080s the Muslim powers

\textsuperscript{712} Michael the Syrian, \textit{Chronique}, iii, XV.iv, 173.
\textsuperscript{713} Attaleiates, 17.15, 211-213.
converged on his principality. The main Muslim threat to Philaretos’ domain was the lordship of Sulayman b. Qutlumush, based between Nicaea and Iconium. Sulayman was a Turkic warlord who had successfully and pragmatically involved himself in Byzantine internal affairs throughout the 1070s. While at first operating as an ally providing auxiliary forces to Nikephoros III, by 1081 the new emperor Alexios I Komnenos was forced to agree to a treaty with Sulayman, the first of its kind enshrining Byzantine recognition of a Turkic entity existing within the confines of the Empire. After the treaty, we hear no more from any source on Sulayman’s activities until November 1084 when he departed from his base in Bithynia for his campaign into Cilicia towards Antioch, this, incidentally, being the first mention of Sulayman in most Muslim chronicles. It is with great difficulty that one can reconstruct the genuine motivation for Sulayman’s intervention in Cilicia and northern Syria, as the perception of our Muslim accounts that depict Sulayman as exerting his authority as a loyal subject of Malik-Shah most likely represents later political thought. Sulayman appears to have already started campaigning in Cilicia in 1082/83, capturing Tarsus (possibly from Oshin of Lambron) and other towns:

Sulayman b. Qutlumush conquered Nīqīyā, which is a town on the coast and resembles Antākiya, as well as places in its vicinity, such as Tarsus, Adhana, Massisa (Mamistra), and ‘Aynzarba (Anazarbos).

The capture of these settlements is also recorded in the chronicles of al-‘Azīmī and Michael the Syrian, the former dating the events to 1083/84 and the latter attributing

---

714 Beihammer, 226-231; Frankopan, 46-47.
715 Ibn al-Athir, 217-218; Beihammer, 231.
716 Beihammer, 231.
717 The chronicler only mentions ‘Romans’ as the controlling party of Tarsus: Sībīt ibn al-Jawzi, Mir’at, 217, 229 taken from Beihammer, 291. The same chronicle reports that a maternal uncle of Sulayman conquered Melitene in 1084, although it is highly unlikely this actually occurred as Gabriel of Melitene preserved his rule up until the arrival of the First Crusade.
the conquests to Malik-Shah’s Syrian campaign.\textsuperscript{718} Yet, the claim by certain authorities that Sulayman was recovering former imperial territories on behalf of Byzantium are extraordinarily far-fetched. As we have seen, neither Ablgharib, nor Oshin, held any distinct loyalty to Byzantium in the 1070s, let alone nearly a decade later. Turning to the capture of Antioch itself, both our Byzantine and Muslim sources indicate an element of factionalism within the ruling elites in Philaretos’ lordship. The Muslim accounts talk of Philaretos imprisoning his son in Antioch, and so when Philaretos ventured to Edessa to take control of the city in late 1084, the unnamed son contacted Sulayman inviting him to take the city. The Byzantine account of Anna documents the dismay at Philaretos’ apparent conversion to Islam in order to hold his lands as a fief of Malik-Shah. Like the Muslim sources, Anna’s account has Philaretos’ son as the main agent who brings about the intervention of Sulayman, and despite local resistance in Antioch itself, Philaretos’ rule over Antioch was brought to an end.\textsuperscript{719}

Philaretos’ relationship with his Muslim neighbours was as complex as his relationship with Byzantium. One example of this relationship was his interaction with the governor of Mosul, Sharaf al-Dawla Muslim ibn Quraysh, who held power in neighbouring Aleppo. According to our Muslim sources, Philaretos had been paying tribute to Sharad al-Dawla, although we do not know when this practice began.\textsuperscript{720} Ibn al-Athîr’s account only relays this information when Sharad al-Dawla demanded the same tribute from the new ruler of Antioch, Sulayman. What the nature of this tribute signifies is that by the end of Philaretos’ career he owed his position more to the neighbouring Muslim powers than he did to Byzantium. In any case, Philaretos’ control was faltering, and with the fall of Antioch in 1084, Philaretos attempted to

\textsuperscript{718} Michael the Syrian, Chronique, iii, XV.vi, 179; Beihammer, 302, n. 160.
\textsuperscript{719} Anna Komnene, VI, 9, ed. 186–187, trans. 198-199.
preserve what was left of his lordship by paying direct homage to the Seljuk Sultan Malik-Shah. This did not end well for Philaretos, for apparently the Sultan dismissed Philaretos from his court when he learned of the capture of Antioch and Edessa.\textsuperscript{721} Edessa does not seem to have fallen to external force, but rather to another coup by the factions inside the city. We are told that when Philaretos journeyed to Malik-Shah’s court to pay homage, he left ‘an illustrious Roman official’, an unnamed eunuch bearing the title of \textit{parakoimomenos}. Although Matthew of Edessa’s account is full of praise for the eunuch’s character, his opinion was not shared universally, and one of Philaretos’ officers named Parsama murdered the eunuch while at prayers and assumed control of the city.\textsuperscript{722} It is this event that, Matthew suggests, brought about the final destruction of Philaretos, who is said to have converted to Islam in an attempt to hold onto a mere fraction of his lordship. This desperate gamble may ultimately have failed, as Michael the Syrian recounts: ‘He went to Maras[h], where he died. It is said that before dying he was again a Christian.’\textsuperscript{723} As for Edessa, Malik-Shah was to send the emir Buzan to conquer the city which he accomplished after a three-month siege.\textsuperscript{724}

The exploits of Philaretos Brachamios clearly accelerated the disintegration of Byzantine authority in the 1070s. Although some commentators see 1078 as the year that he returned to the imperial fold, Philaretos’ actions up until the mid-1080s offer little evidence that he was operating as a Byzantine agent on the old south-eastern frontier. Indeed, Philaretos was nothing more than a separatist warlord who engaged with both the Byzantine and Muslim political structures to prolong his lordship. In the end he failed, and his territory was carved up by the expanding Turkic warlords in

\textsuperscript{721} Matthew of Edessa, II, 85, 152-53.
\textsuperscript{722} Matthew of Edessa, II, 85, 152-153.
\textsuperscript{723} Michael the Syrian, iii, XV.iv, 173.
\textsuperscript{724} Matthew of Edessa, II, 87-88, 154.
northern Syria and Anatolia respectively. Yet before any conclusions can be reached on the state of the Byzantine-Armenian relationship it is necessary to assess how several other Armenian lords in the area maintained their autonomy up until the arrival of the First Crusade. The focus will fall on three particular areas: Melitene, Kesoun, and Edessa with their respective lords Gabriel, Kogh Vasil, and T’oros, all of whom interacted closely with the first crusaders and had a prior relationship with the Byzantine Empire.

**The Armenian Church**

A significant factor in the developments in Asia Minor in this period was the situation of the Armenian Church. We have seen consistently through our primary evidence that the Armenian ecclesiastical writers placed great emphasis on the religious aspect of their identity, seeing it as the guiding principle of being an Armenian, particularly when surrounded by either Chalcedonian or Muslim powers that potentially threatened the existence of the Apostolic Church. It is thus surprising that in this period of fractured political unity among the Armenians the great ‘vehicle’ of identity did not play a more prominent part in holding the Armenian communities together. In fact, to view adherence to the Apostolic Church as ‘a vehicle of ethnic cohesion’, or certainly the over-emphasis placed by certain commentators on these aspects, has clouded our understanding.\(^\text{725}\) In this section then, a new perspective will be offered. It will be argued that it is no coincidence that at the very same time as the fracturing of political unity occurred for the Armenian lords in the region, they suffered a division in ecclesiastical leadership, several \textit{co-Katholikoi} existing at the same time. This was

\(^{725}\) Beihammer, 294; Dédéyan, \textit{Les Armeniens}, II, 1059.
partially brought about by the need for legitimacy of many of the lords – particularly Philaretos – but also by the personal choices of the *Katholikos* Gregory II.\(^{726}\)

In the mid-eleventh century we saw that religious tensions and threats of forced conversion fuelled the alienation of the Armenians from the Byzantine Empire, and this was evident in two particular areas. First, the geographical proximity of the lands granted to the exiled princes in Cappadocia and Sebasteia allowed the continuation of Armenian religious practices and the expansion of the Armenian Church through the formation of new bishoprics in various urban centres, and the foundation of new religious houses by the exiled 'Royal Armenians' on their estates. Second, the intent of the imperial centre to bring about religious assimilation and union in the 1050s and 1060s created considerable animosity between the two groups, although the extent to which this was a dominant factor is highly questionable.\(^{727}\) We have already seen that it has often been claimed that the main division between the Byzantines and the Armenians, i.e. ‘the vehicle of separatism’, was religious conflict, but again one cannot condone the application of this simplistic characterisation of the Byzantine-Armenian relationship in the period 1071-1098. Indeed the complexities can be seen in the case of Philaretos Brachamios, where we will survey and analyse the interactions between Armenians of different confessions: between those who followed the Apostolic Church, and those who had converted to the Chalcedonian Church of Constantinople. This, too, will reveal that the differences were not as drastic as they have been made out to be; this involves challenging the religiously-charged polemical language of our primary sources, most of which were authored by churchmen who saw the actions through a strongly religious lens.

---

\(^{726}\) It must also be noted that not all of the Armenian lords followed the Apostolic Church, and that there is little evidence of religious discord between the varying princes in the period where they were battling for survival.

\(^{727}\) This traditional viewpoint can be found here: J. Laurent, ‘Les origines médiévales de la question arménienne’, *REArm* 1 (1920), 35-54; Charanis, ‘Armenians and Greeks’, 26-27. See n. 1, 2.
The leadership of the Armenian Apostolic Church, headed by the Katholikos, underwent significant strain in this period as competing political powers attempted to control the Church by having the Katholikos reside within their lands. The death of Gagik II of Ani ended the Bagratid line of Kings and left the Armenians in need of a new figurehead. It would be natural to assume that the fiercely independent Church of the Armenians would be able to provide such a figure; the political actions of the competing powers on the eastern frontier, however, prevented this from becoming reality. While by the turn of the twelfth century the Katholicate started to resemble something like a hereditary monarchy, the fragmentation of ecclesiastical authority in the preceding decades effectively made unity under the heir of St. Gregory nigh impossible.

The Katholikos Gregory II, whose pontificate officially stretched from 1066-1105, was a member of the Pahlavuni family, and son of Grigor Magistros. It was to be Gregory who threw the leadership of the Armenian Church into confusion at the time it was most needed, for he decided in 1070 to take up the monastic calling for a solitary life dedicated to prayer. Gregory, with his secretary George, planned to journey to Rome and then through the Egyptian desert. He informed a meeting of the secular Armenian powers of his decision, and despite their protestations Gregory was resolved to leave the patriarchal see. Interestingly, the election of the Katholikos was decided by the secular, not ecclesiastical, powers. This was true of the election of Gregory in 1066, when he was encouraged to stand by Gagik of Ani. Matthew informs us that Gregory said directly to Gagik:

728 I have chosen to maintain the name ‘Gregory’ for ecclesiastical figures as they have commonly been referred to as the occupants to the chair of St. Gregory the Illuminator, the patron saint of the Apostolic Church. The connection between the Apostolic Church and the Pahlavuni family was one of the many reasons why Grigor’s descendants did not play a role in twelfth-century Byzantium. Matthew of Edessa, II, 26, 107.
729 Matthew of Edessa, II, 52, 127-128.
730 Matthew of Edessa, II, 26, 107.
Appoint anyone you wish as catholicos, but do not hinder me from the road of righteousness.\textsuperscript{731}

Gagik and the princes then decided to go behind Gregory’s back and asked George, the secretary of the Katholikos, to take the patriarchal see, to which George readily agreed. This was to begin a fractious relationship between Gregory and George, which Matthew describes as a deep hostility, which was to resurface roughly three years later.\textsuperscript{732} The influence of the secular powers over the leadership of the church was related to the importance of religious affiliation to Armenian identity. Yet, as we will see, the death of Gagik and the shattering of the political leadership of the Armenian community in the east was to provide a change in protocol for the selection of the Katholikos.

Gregory seems to have never departed on his trip to Rome, and despite his express desire for the pursuit of an ascetic life in 1072/3, we are told by Matthew that he successfully deposed George, who ‘deeply hurt, went to the city of Tarsus, where he died’.\textsuperscript{733} Gregory went to live in a place called Mutarasun, near Kesoun to the south-west of Melitene.\textsuperscript{734} In this instance, it would appear that the secular Armenian powers were not called upon to adjudicate in the dispute between the two Katholikoi. Matthew saw them both as Katholikos, which would indicate that the appointment of George as his replacement forced Gregory to stay and dispute this decision. We sadly have no further information on how Gregory was able to regain the position he had renounced, but one can speculate that his noble heritage and precedence helped in his recovery of his seat. What is strangest of all is that Gregory in this instance rejected the possibility

\textsuperscript{731} Matthew of Edessa, II, 52, 128.
\textsuperscript{732} Matthew of Edessa. II, 52, 128.
\textsuperscript{733} Matthew of Edessa, II, 59, 137.
\textsuperscript{734} Matthew of Edessa, II, 59, n.2, 331.
of two sharing the patriarchal see, and yet his actions only a short while later seem to reveal a change of heart.

As Philaretos started to expand and consolidate the lands around his base at Marash, his quest for legitimacy became more prominent in his dealings with the Armenian Church. Despite Gagik II still ruling to the north of the Taurus Mountains, Philaretos demanded that Gregory reside somewhere in his lands, though, Matthew does not specify exactly where. Gregory refused the summons, but replied to Philaretos:

I authorize you to put his lordship Sargis, the nephew of his lordship Peter [1019-58], on the patriarchal see.735

This was a very unusual instruction in the light of the opposition that Gregory had previously voiced to the appointment of George in 1070, and that he was now willing to offer an alternative candidate to meet the demands of Philaretos. It appears that Gregory did not view this as his resignation from the patriarchal see, something that Yarnley accepts at face value, as his actions over the coming years were still those of the leader of the Armenian Church.736 Furthermore, we see that Gregory saw it as his right to suggest fellow co-Katholikos, and not to seek approval from the secular body that had put his predecessor and himself on the patriarchal throne. In the case of Sargis, Philaretos, we are told, summoned ‘an assembly of bishops, abbots, and monks’ to come together in order to confirm Sargis’ appointment.737 Here we have a divergence from the protocol observed in the confirmations of Khachik and Gregory, in the election of a new Katholikos. It is unlikely that Philaretos felt strongly about this, as is suggested, not only by his strong-armed actions towards the Church, but also

735 Matthew of Edessa, II, 62, 139.
737 Yarnley, ‘Philaretos’, 341.
the confessional differences he had with the Apostolic Church, as we are informed that Philaretos ‘professed the Roman faith’ i.e. a Chalcedonian.\textsuperscript{738} In any case Philaretos had been able to achieve control over an Armenian religious leader, something he presumed would bring about the loyalty of his numerous Armenian subjects. Yet Sargis’ pontificate was not to last long, for he died possibly only a year after his elevation to the seat of St. Gregory. Matthew tells us that Philaretos nominated as his successor a man called Theodore Alakhosik.\textsuperscript{739} Theodore dwelt in the town of Honi where Sargis had previously resided, but as a result of the fluidity of the political landscape, Honi was captured by a Turkic Emir, whose name is only given in Armenian – Polchtachi according to Matthew and ‘Bouldadji according to Yarnley.\textsuperscript{740} Philaretos wrote to Theodore asking him to settle in Marash, the \textit{de facto} capital of Philaretos’ domain, but Theodore was unable to leave because of his new Turkish masters. Philaretos was unperturbed and resolved to create yet another \textit{Katholikos} whom he could control. At first he turned to the archbishop of the monastery of the Holy Icon of the Virgin Mary, a man named John, who refused the offer, so instead a man by the name of Paul, the superior of the monastery of the Holy Cross of Varag, was consecrated by an assembly of bishops and abbots.\textsuperscript{741} Matthew viewed these events as solely motivated by the ‘iniquitous and malicious behaviour’ of Philaretos, which despite the emotive language used is largely accurate, based upon the precedent set by Philaretos in the consecration of Sargis two years before. This event has two particular points of interest. First, Gregory II was not consulted for his approval, though this could be explained by Gregory’s residence in Egypt at the time. Second, it shows that Philaretos took the religious recognition of his rule seriously, for he was positioning

\textsuperscript{738} Matthew of Edessa, II, 60, 137.
\textsuperscript{739} Matthew of Edessa, II, 70, 142.
\textsuperscript{740} Matthew of Edessa, II, 70, 142; Yarnley, ‘Philaretos’, 342.
\textsuperscript{741} Matthew of Edessa, II, 82, 150.
himself as the defender and leader of the Armenians in the east, and in order to
maintain the loyalty of his subjects he needed control of a Katholikos to legitimate his
rule.

We are also informed that Gregory II went to Armenia and consecrated his
nephew Barsegh as bishop of Ani, an important position in the old royal capital.742
Here we encounter a disjointed and confusing narrative provided by Matthew, who
suggests that Barsegh was to claim the patriarchal see in Armenia in 1081/2 with the
support of the Armenian king of Lori, Gurgen-Kvirike II (1048-1089). Gregory, on the
other hand, finally departed on his planned journey, visiting Rome and eventually
Egypt where he was to establish his patriarchal residence. After some time, sadly not
specified by Matthew, he consecrated his nephew, also called Gregory (Gregory III,
1113-1166), as Katholikos and returned to Armenia. Matthew seems here, to have been
confused with what exactly Gregory II had bestowed upon his nephew. It would seem
that he actually nominated Gregory III as a successor to the patriarchal see, rather
than creating yet another Katholikos that could potentially undermine his authority or
split the leadership of the Armenian Church even further.

It is clear that the leadership of the Armenian Church had fragmented on an
unprecedented scale, with even Matthew lamenting on the dissension within his own
Church:

... the holy see was not governed according to the will of God or individual merit
or even free election, but according to the principles of violence, power politics,
and manipulation of high offices.743

Matthew clearly saw the actions of Philaretos as exceptionally damaging in the division
of the Kathlicate, but the seeds of this development were first sown with the

742 Matthew of Edessa, II, 62, 140.
743 Matthew of Edessa, II, 83, 150.
transferral of the *Katholikos* Peter I to the lands of the Artsruni princes in Sebasteia in 1049. The Armenian patriarchal see remained in geographical proximity to the exiled King Gagik II of Ani for protection from the Byzantines who had attempted to subordinate the Armenian Church to Constantinople. Peter’s immediate successors in turn were selected and remained attached to the Armenian population that was now dominant in Cappadocia and Sebasteia. The relationship between the exiled princely houses of Armenia and the *Katholikos* grew closer, and as mentioned before, the secular powers held sway over the election process to the seat of St. Gregory. Matthew’s last reference to the secular influence over the position of *Katholikos* comes in 1070 with the attempted resignation of Gregory II, and it was the body of secular princes who created the first division in the highest office of the Church. Despite Matthew garbling his narrative, it is clear that Gregory never accepted the decision on his replacement, and here one can witness a resurgence of the Church handling the appointment of *Katholikos* directly, or more accurately, Gregory intentionally consecrating successors personally. Consequently, the rising power of Philaretos and his desire to exercise control over the *Katholikos* seriously harmed the leadership of the Armenian Church, with Gregory allowing others to share in the office of *Katholikos*. This was further compounded by the fluctuating borders of Philaretos’ domain that in turn created yet more *Katholikoi*. Matthew’s account can, however, be misleading. Parsegh of Ani and Gregory III of Egypt respectively should be seen as designated successors, rather than *co-Katholikoi* to Gregory II.⁷⁴⁴ Matthew claims that Gregory’s see was divided in four; Vahram (Gregory III) in Egypt, Theodore in Honi,

---

Parsegh in Ani, and Paul in Marash, yet all of these were acknowledged/appointed by Gregory, therefore the fault for any division lay with Gregory.\textsuperscript{745}

The division of ecclesiastical leadership as seen here is remarkably similar to the fractured geo-political scenario that many Armenians were living through on the south-eastern frontier in the 1070s and 1080s. While the Church did not provide the vehicle of separatism for the Armenians, it certainly played an important role in the varying claims for legitimacy from the Armenian lordships in the region. We will see that in the aftermath of Philaretos’ fall many of his lieutenants who held onto local power bases continued to tussle over the role of the Church’s guardian. But one must not forget that although the Armenian Church was an integral part of Medieval Armenian identity, not all the major players were Miaphysite in belief. For example, the lord Oshin of Lampron has been identified as Orthodox in faith by secondary sources, although this in reality highlights how the mistaken merging of him with other warlords in the region has led to the wrong conclusion. Oshin came from the heart of eastern Armenia, and there is no primary evidence to suggest that he was anything but Miaphysite. The religious beliefs held by Philaretos’ former lieutenants, as we will see shortly, have been a major point of discussion. Even when considering the religious confession of Armenians like Oshin, Gabriel, or Ablgharib there seems to be no direct link between religious antagonism and the destruction of the Byzantine-Armenian relationship. It is clear, after all, that the religious preferences of the Byzantine-Armenian lords did not shape their ultimate goal – survival.

\textsuperscript{745} Matthew of Edessa, II, 83, 150–51. Matthew claims later in the passage that the Armenian nation in fact had six \textit{katholikoi} – two in Egypt and four in Armenia, but does not quantify how an extra two were included in his count from the previously mentioned split of four.
From Philaretos to the First Crusade (1086-1098)

The collapse of Philaretos Brachamios’ lordship in c.1086 heralded a new period for the Armenians living in Cilicia and northern Syria. Unlike Gagik’s death during the decade before, Philaretos’ fall from power shattered the remnants of any unity within the Armenian communities. The period from 1086 to 1098 was a turbulent time; having lost secure leadership in both the secular and ecclesiastical spheres the Armenian lords had to tread a careful line on the geo-political scene. The reason why no new Armenian lord had taken the places of Philaretos is quite simple: the surrounding Turkic powers, under the suzerainty of Malik-Shah, were now more able to interfere with regional politics than they had been during the previous decade. And yet, after Malik-Shah’s death in 1092 Turkic unity was as fragile as that of the Armenians, something that in many ways allowed the various Armenian lordships to last until to the advent of the First Crusade. In this respect, Philaretos’ career was to cast a long shadow, as many of his former lieutenants scratched out an existence either as independent or Seljuk-approved rulers in forts and cities across the region. It is in this section that we will try and trace the various individuals and assess their relationship with the Byzantine Empire. Many of these Armenian lords had served under Philaretos in some capacity. Gabriel of Melitene had been installed as governor of the city by Philaretos and was able to continue to rule the area independently from 1085/6 up to the establishment of the Latin states in Antioch and Edessa. Basil the Crafty (Kogh Vasil) held Kesoun, although there are questions as to whether he seized


747 Michael the Syrian, Chronique, iii, XV.vi, 179; Matthew of Edessa, II, 108, 163. This is Matthew’s first reference to Gabriel, which is strangely late in his chronology despite the length of his rule in Melitene.
the city before or after Philaretos’ death.\textsuperscript{748} He, too, was able to hold onto his lordship until his death in 1112.\textsuperscript{749} The situation in Edessa was a little more complicated. By the mid-1090s an Armenian by the name of T’oros had established himself as the leading magnate in the city. There were some, however, who had not served under Philaretos, such warlords as Oshin and Rupen. Consequentially, what these various Armenians lords offer us is a chance to comparatively assess the extent of Byzantine influence in the region and how they engaged with their former imperial overlords. Let us take a look at each of these men in turn.

We know very little about Gabriel of Melitene’s origins, despite his prominent role in the foundation of the royal family of Jerusalem when he arranged for his daughter Morphia to marry Baldwin of Bourcq, who not only succeeded his uncle as the second Count of Edessa, but later became king of Jerusalem in 1118.\textsuperscript{750} But it is his career before the First Crusade that we are most interested in. We are informed by Michael the Syrian that Gabriel had been placed in command of Melitene by Philaretos and continued his rule over the city after the death of his former master.\textsuperscript{751} Our sources tell us that Gabriel sought to protect his domain by sending his wife to the Caliph in Baghdad to gain an edict ensuring his position in the new geo-political climate. Michael the Syrian neatly summarises the collapse of Byzantine authority in the region:

\begin{quote}
We know very little about Gabriel of Melitene’s origins, despite his prominent role in the foundation of the royal family of Jerusalem when he arranged for his daughter Morphia to marry Baldwin of Bourcq, who not only succeeded his uncle as the second Count of Edessa, but later became king of Jerusalem in 1118. But it is his career before the First Crusade that we are most interested in. We are informed by Michael the Syrian that Gabriel had been placed in command of Melitene by Philaretos and continued his rule over the city after the death of his former master. Our sources tell us that Gabriel sought to protect his domain by sending his wife to the Caliph in Baghdad to gain an edict ensuring his position in the new geo-political climate. Michael the Syrian neatly summarises the collapse of Byzantine authority in the region:
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{748} Michael the Syrian, \textit{Chronique}, iii, XV.viii, 187; while Matthew first notes Basil in his chronology during 1102: Matthew of Edessa, III, 14, 192; MacEvitt, \textit{The Crusades and the Christian World of the East}, 42; Jacob Ghazarian, \textit{The Armenian Kingdom in Cilicia during the Crusades: The Integration of Cilician Armenians with the Latins, 1080-1393} (Richmond: Curzon Press, 2000), 46-47.

\textsuperscript{749} Matthew of Edessa, III, 57, 211.

\textsuperscript{750} MacEvitt, \textit{The Crusades and the Christian World of the East}, 76.

When Philardus died, Gabriel reigned [in Melitene]; and when he saw that the Turks had defeated the Greeks he sent his wife to Baghdad, and she brought him from the caliph of Taiyaye, an edict which granted him the principality of Melitene.\textsuperscript{752} While we do not have confirmation whether this was successful, the fact that he held his position in 1097 indicates some sort of agreement had been made. The mission led by Gabriel’s wife is extremely important for measuring the extent of Byzantine authority in the region and Gabriel’s own political loyalties. We know from seal evidence that Gabriel held the title of δοὺξ σεβαστός, while also being recognised as protokouropalates which certainly shows that the distribution of Byzantine court titles was still continuing in the east, but cannot be used to assert loyalty to Byzantium on Gabriel’s part.\textsuperscript{753} Rather, what we witness here is similar to the final years of Philaretos’ rule, Gabriel seeking legitimacy from the two major powers in the region, the Seljuk court in Baghdad and the Byzantine court in Constantinople. The acceptance of Byzantine titles in fact tells us far more about what the court of Alexios was trying to achieve, than informing us regarding Gabriel’s political loyalties. As we will see with other Armenian magnates in the region, the distribution of titles was seen as part and parcel of Byzantine political posturing, but it does not illustrate the continuity of Byzantine influence in the region beyond that of a mere façade.

Yet, from our sources we gain a picture of Gabriel being the most ‘Byzantine’ of the Armenian lords in the region, not only for his previous career in the Byzantine army and, as holder of Byzantine titles, but also for his religious confession. Michael the Syrian saw Gabriel as a Greek, but unfortunately does not clarify which identity

\textsuperscript{752} Michael the Syrian, \textit{Chronique}, iii, XV.vi, 179.  
indicators he was using in such an identification. Our other sources shed some light on this. Albert of Aachen saw Gabriel as primarily Armenian, while William of Tyre described him as ‘Armenian by birth, language, and habit, but Greek in faith’. When one considers Gabriel’s daughter, Morphia, she, too, was identified as an Armenian, but also practiced the Chalcedonian rite, thereby suggesting that her father had either partly assimilated, or was a second/third-generation migrant whose parents or grandparents had adopted the Chalcedonian rite. What we have here is a clear lack of uniformity from our primary sources in identifying certain characteristics of Gabriel. What our sources do agree on is that Gabriel belonged to the Byzantine-Armenian society that had existed before its collapse in the 1070s. Yet none describe Gabriel as operating as a Byzantine agent in the region by the time of the arrival of the First Crusade. In reality, Gabriel was just one of many quasi-independent Armenian lords in the region, carefully playing the major powers off against each other, in order to preserve his control of his lordship that consisted of Melitene and its immediate environs. What his career before the arrival of the First Crusade shows us is that he was no longer attached the Byzantine Empire, acting as independently as possible in the volatile geo-political climate of the late 1090s.

We left Edessa in the hands of the Turkish warlord Buzan who ruled over the city until his death in 1094/5, falling in battle against Sultan Tutush of Damascus. We are told by Matthew that ‘[w]hen the sultan arrived in Edessa, he appointed the

---


755 For various events concerning Buzan and events in the wider Islamic world see: Matthew of Edessa, II, 96 (campaigns in Anatolia), 103 (plot against Ismail), 104 (death), 157-161; Ibn al-Athir, 274.
Roman official T'oros, the son of Het'um, as the city's commander', while Ibn al-Athīr records that ‘[a] Greek, called the curopalates, was there, who ‘farmed’ the town for Buzan’.\textsuperscript{758} In any event, T'oros’ take-over and rule of Edessa were an oddity in a Turkish-dominated political scene. Indeed, most of our information on T'oros of Edessa comes from the account of Matthew who must have been able to tap into the oral testimony of his fellow citizens who witnessed the events at first-hand. While it would appear at first glance that T'oros’ name should be a useful indicator as to his identity, T'oros is simply the Armenian of Theodoros, by which name he is referred to in Michael the Syrian’s account.\textsuperscript{759} From what we know of his background, T'oros had previously ruled over Melitene, before moving onto Edessa and was married to another daughter of Gabriel of Melitene, who, as discussed above, was most likely of the Chalcedonian confession.\textsuperscript{760} Yet, T'oros’ religious affiliation is not mentioned by Matthew, and this silence offers reasonable doubt that T'oros was Chalcedonian. One can observe the polemical language utilised by Matthew to describe Armenians who followed the Chalcedonian confession, namely Philaretos, and his silence on the matter carries some weight. Fulcher of Chartres regarded T'oros as a Greek, but Latin perceptions of identity in the east were understandably unreliable, as they had only recently encountered the inhabitants of the region. The reference to being Greek may nevertheless be an indication of his Chalcedonian beliefs.\textsuperscript{761}

\textsuperscript{758} Matthew of Edessa, II, 104, 161; Ibn al-Athīr, 280.  
\textsuperscript{759} Michael the Syrian, Chronique, iii, XV.vi, 179.  
\textsuperscript{760} Michael the Syrian, Chronique, iii, XV.iv, 173-174.  
Yet with regard to his political affiliations we have both written and physical evidence that sheds light on his loyalties towards the Byzantine Empire.\textsuperscript{762} The first mention of T’oros in Matthew’s account refers to him as a Roman official.\textsuperscript{763} Furthermore, Matthew consistently refers to T’oros as the \textit{Kouropalates} of Edessa, indicating that he had some official recognition from the Byzantine court for his position in the east.\textsuperscript{764} The inscription on the Harran gate at least offers some support to how T’oros wanted his rule to be seen: that being on behalf of the Byzantine Emperor. Unfortunately, the inscription in its present form is badly damaged, but thanks to the work of a nineteenth-century German scholar, von Gaertringen, we have an almost complete transcription.\textsuperscript{765} The date of the inscription 6602 A.M. which equates to 1093/4, offers perhaps an indication that T’oros was linking his rule directly to that of Alexios, the named Roman Emperor in the inscription. Yet, to use the inscription to argue that Byzantine authority was still a reality in the region by the late 1090s is far-fetched. T’oros was just the product of the tumultuous internal politics of Edessa, which, as assessed above, had a frequent turn-over of leader in the preceding decade. His claim to being appointed by the Emperor in Constantinople, at this time Alexios I Komnenos, was merely an attempt to seek legitimisation by the nearest Christian power. One must not forget that T’oros also sought legitimacy from the far greater threat to his rule in Edessa, the various Turkic powers in the vicinity. We can see that on his last known seal the titles of \textit{Kouropalates} and \textit{amēr} appear in tandem, signifying the delicate balancing act that T’oros was performing to hold onto the city.\textsuperscript{766} Any pro-Byzantine feelings T’oros may have held it did not help him when a better

\textsuperscript{763} Matthew of Edessa, II, 104, 161.
\textsuperscript{764} For example see: Matthew of Edessa, II, 105, 162; for tenuous use of a similar term in our Muslim sources see: Ibn al-Athir, 280, n.158.
\textsuperscript{765} See Appendix II for full inscription.
\textsuperscript{766} Cheynet, \textit{Sceaux de La Collection Zacos}, 67-68.
option presented itself to the people of Edessa; T’oros was murdered by the populace of the city shortly after adopting Baldwin of Boulogne as his heir.\textsuperscript{767} Despite some comments by secondary works, the overthrow of T’oros does not seem to have represented an Armenian-led anti-Byzantine coup, nor does the claim that ‘all our sources’ depict that T’oros was hated hold up to scrutiny.\textsuperscript{768} At least the account from Matthew’s perspective considers T’oros a capable governor, and his death as a result of intrigue and acceptance of Frankish rule does not sit well with Matthew.\textsuperscript{769} In any case, to view T’oros as an active Byzantine agent holding Edessa on behalf of the Empire is far-fetched. In fact, our primary evidence explicitly tells us that T’oros was acting in accordance with the other minor Armenian lords in the region, holding legitimacy from the major powers in the region, but ultimately separate from them.

Turning now to the opposite end of the spectrum, the career of the Armenian lord Kogh Vasil (or Basil the Robber) came to represent the most ‘Armenian’ of all the independent lordships that were formed after the collapse of Philaretos’ domain. One can see that Kogh Vasil was far more independent from Byzantium than Gabriel of Melitene and T’oros, eventually even holding the prestigious responsibility of the secular guardian of the Armenian \textit{Katholikos}. Indeed, our main source of information on Kogh Vasil comes from Matthew of Edessa. Matthew resided in Kesoun, the capital of Kogh Vasil’s domain shortly after the death of the Armenian lord and speaks highly of him, often commenting on the reputation Kogh Vasil had established in his domain. Unlike Gabriel, there is no dispute over Kogh Vasil’s Armenian identity.\textsuperscript{770} In religious terms one can see how he came to be the main protector of the \textit{Katholikos} Gregory II,

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{767} Matthew of Edessa, II, 117-118, 168-170.
\item \textsuperscript{768} Pryor and Jeffreys, 70, n.158.
\item \textsuperscript{769} Matthew of Edessa, II, 117, 169. The chronicle of Michael the Syrian simply reports T’oros’ death, Michael the Syrian, \textit{Chronique}, iv, XV.viii, 187; Albert of Aachen, III, 19-24, 168-177.
\item \textsuperscript{770} Matthew’s first mention of Kogh Vasil is very clear on this point: Matthew of Edessa, III, 14, 192.
\end{itemize}
but also Gregory’s successors.\footnote{Matthew of Edessa, III, 25, 196.} Kogh Vasil’s adherence to the Apostolic Church has been noted by some secondary commentators as the underlying strength of his rule and support from the surrounding Armenian populace.\footnote{Dédéyan, \textit{Les arméniens}, II, 1057-1060.}

It is beyond doubt that Kogh Vasil was one of the individuals who can firmly be placed in the separatist camp for not accepting the authority of Byzantines, Franks, or Turks. He did indeed hold a Byzantine title, as seal evidence suggests, that of σεβαστός, but this does little more than highlight the Byzantines attempts to still appear relevant to the local lordships in the region.\footnote{This seal can be found in the Khoury collection in the Antioch Museum, see: Pryor and Jeffreys, 82; MacEvitt, \textit{The Crusades and the Christian World of the East}, 84; Garsoian, \textit{Armenian Integration}, 123, n. 250.} Matthew sadly does not inform us of Kogh Vasil’s origins, but his death in 1112 places him in a similar generation to that of Gabriel and T’oros, thereby suggesting his early career was under Philaretos which is confirmed by Michael the Syrian:

At that time there were Armenians who had occupied certain places since the time of Philardus. One of them was Kogh-Basil, who occupied Kaisum and Ra’ban.\footnote{Michael the Syrian, \textit{Chronique}, iv, XV.viii, 187.}

Clearly Kogh Vasil had little desire to interact with his former masters, but with our main information coming from his interactions with the Franks of the northern Latin states in Syria and their hostilities with the surrounding Turks, we can gain no true understanding of how Kogh Vasil felt towards Byzantium. From his actions, Kogh Vasil demonstrated no real desire to return under the imperial yoke, and like other surrounding Armenian lords he sought to retain dominion over his lordship centred on Kesoun. Indeed, the mourning of his death by his former subjects, as described by
Matthew, reveals the fundamentally Armenian character of his rule despite his previous relationship with Byzantium:

Around this prince were united remnants of the Armenian army, members of the Bagratid and Pahlavid families, sons of the kings of Armenia, and finally all those of Pahlavid lineage, together with the military aristocracy of Armenia all these remained with Vasil and were highly respected and honoured by him. Moreover, the Armenian patriarchal see was transferred to Vasil's territory for this Armenian prince had gained control of many areas through his bravery and strength. Thus all the monks, bishops, abbots, and vardapets gathered around him and were very well treated by him.775

In summary, the major Armenian lords in the region all had similar characteristics, not explicitly expressed through religious or political affiliation, but rather, their will to retain dominion over their lands that they had obtained by either gaining them from Philaretos before his downfall, or by performing a political balancing act between the powerful Muslim forces in the region.

It was into this world that the First Crusade entered when it descended onto the Cilician plain and into northern Syria, finding a people ready and waiting for the dramatic changes of the coming years. As Ralph of Caen summed up the situation:

... at this time the Turks ruled, the Greeks obeyed, and the Armenians protected their liberty in the difficult conditions provided by their mountains.776

As the participants of the First Crusade arrived on the eastern marches of Anatolia in September 1097, the army split in two. The larger force crossed the Taurus Mountains along the eastern route to the north of Marash, where previously the Byzantine-

775 Matthew of Edessa, III, 211.
Armenian separatist Philaretos Brachamios had held sway,\textsuperscript{777} while a smaller splinter force, led by Tancred and Baldwin of Boulogne took the more immediate route on the western side of the mountain range through the pass known as the Cilician Gates, entering the plains of Cilicia around 14 September 1097.\textsuperscript{778} On the road to Antioch both sections of the crusading army were met and assisted by Armenians across the various towns and cities of the Cilician plain and the southerly foothills of the Taurus Mountains.\textsuperscript{779} In February 1098, Baldwin arrived in Edessa and shortly afterwards the people of the city murdered T’oros and invited Baldwin to be their ruler instead.\textsuperscript{780} According to some sources it was an Armenian who betrayed Antioch to the crusaders in June the same year.\textsuperscript{781} Thus to some extent the crusaders inherited from the Armenians the Byzantine cities of which they had been the guardians since the collapse of imperial rule some fifteen years before.

**Conclusion**

This chapter has argued that in order to understand why and how the Armenians were scattered through Cilicia and northern Syria at the time of the arrival of the First Crusade one must review the complex relationship between Byzantium and the Armenians in the final decades of the eleventh century. The most prominent careers of Armenian lords have been analysed, many of whom had held commands within the Byzantine army at around the time of Manzikert in August 1071. We have seen that despite attempts by the Byzantines to hold onto their influence in the region they were

\textsuperscript{777} In Hermenirorum intrauerunt terram – they entered the Armenian lands: *Gesta Francorum*, IV, xi, 25.

\textsuperscript{778} *Albert of Aachen*, III, 3, 141; *Gesta Francorum*, IV, x, 24


\textsuperscript{780} Fulcher of Chartres, ed. 213-214, trans. 91; Matthew of Edessa, II, 118, 168-9.

largely ignored by a succession of Armenian lords who now operated at a more local level, protecting their lordships and engaging in regional diplomacy with other Armenians. The ‘Royal Armenians’ did not last particularly long, as the increasingly damaging Turkoman raids took their toll on their estates in Cappadocia and Sebasteia. We lack any substantial detail concerning the speed and destruction that was wrought on the communities north of the Taurus Mountains, but Gagik’s death, and the attachment placed by the later Rubenids on their historical connection to the exiled King, demonstrates that Gagik was never truly part of Byzantium and always seen as an Armenian.

Over the course of the 1070s we witnessed the collapse of Byzantine authority on the eastern frontier and this can be accredited to two key factors. The first was the lack of attention paid to the eastern frontier by the centre which removed any possibility of shoring up the crumbling imperial authority in the region. The second revolved around the key figures in both political and military capacities pursuing an independent policy from Byzantium, a mixture of sheer survival and pursuit of a separatist agenda. The death of Gagik Bagratuni was certainly a catalyst for change in the Armenian loyalty towards the Byzantines, but the rise of the Rubenids did not provide a replacement for this lost allegiance. The fragmented political landscape nearly twenty years later reveals that the Armenian people were leaderless, divided amongst each other with remnants of imperial officials and opportunist warlords creating a series of petty lordships throughout the region.

While many of the Armenians operating though the period 1071–1098 could be seen as Byzantine-Armenians, many of them did not hold their attachment to the Byzantine Empire with much consideration as Byzantine authority broke down in the region. In the words of one recent commentator: ‘These were former Roman officials
of Armenian origin creating a post-imperial future for the region’.\footnote{Kaldellis, Streams of Gold, 268.} Yet, this has not stopped far-fetched attempts to see the interactions of these Armenian lords with that of the First Crusade as genuine efforts to reconnect with Byzantium.\footnote{A proponenet of this view is can be found in: Frankopan The Call from the East.} Indeed, while some of the Armenian lords did accept titles and were seen as Byzantine agents by contemporary commentators (usually Byzantine), the Armenians were now separated from the Empire, operating in a very different world. This was a world where the scattered lords had to settle or graft out some sort of independence from the dominant Turkic powers that surrounded their strongholds. It was to the bewilderment of the participants of the First Crusade that they found a people so willing to assist and supply their enterprise. Yet it is not hard to see in hindsight that in comparison to the lacklustre efforts of the Byzantines in the 1070s and 1080s, the participants of the First Crusade were actively expanding the borders of Christendom back to near the status of pre-1071. Without doubt, the greatest contribution of the First Crusade to the Armenians of Cilicia and northern Syria was an opportunity to rebuild a new Armenian state. Yet, this time they were to be truly sundered from the imperium that was Byzantium, the Empire their illustrious ancestors had indelibly marked.
Conclusions

This thesis has analysed the initial success and subsequent failure of Armenian assimilation into the Byzantine Empire from the rise of the Macedonian dynasty until the arrival of the First Crusade. The necessity for a new approach to this question has been demonstrated by an extensive evaluation of the secondary literature on the Byzantine-Armenian relationship which can be found in the introduction. It was argued that previous studies of Armenians in the Byzantine Empire have been hindered by a variety of pre-conceived notions on the subject of identity, thereby obstructing a clear analysis on how the Armenians themselves assimilated, and what processes were undertaken in order to become Romeioi. It was therefore imperative for a new understanding of the mechanics of assimilation to be established in order to conduct a wider study of the Byzantine-Armenian relationship over the chosen chronological period. Fundamentally, it was argued that the change in the Byzantine-Armenian relationship from the ninth and tenth centuries through to the end of the eleventh can be characterized in four distinct, but ultimately linked, phases: Assimilation, Annexation, Alienation, and Separatism. Before the thesis could begin the investigation properly it was necessary to produce a definitive understanding of what was meant by assimilation, and this was done through the development of a model:

i) The area of territorial settlement

ii) The acceptance and adoption of ‘Roman customs’

iii) The religious conversion/conformity of the migrants

This model was subsequently supported with primary sources evidence at the end of Chapter One: The sources and their problems. It has now come to the point where

784 See Chapter One: The Assimilation Model.
some conclusions are needed on why the Byzantine-Armenian relationship underwent the four phases as identified above, and why these changes occurred. The concluding remarks will be structured through the order of chapters.

The main argument of Chapter Two was to showcase the assimilation phase of the Byzantine-Armenian relationship. The chapter demonstrated how Armenians, before the eleventh century, engaged with the mechanics of assimilation as defined by the ‘Assimilation Model’ at the end of Chapter One. It was noted that our primary evidence restricts the study of assimilation to members of the nobility, as it was this particular social group that garnered the most interest from our narrative sources. Initially, the discussion focused on certain passages from the literary circle originating from the court of Constantine VII Porphyrogennetos. In looking at the territorial placement of Armenian migrants it was shown that the geographical area in which they were settled was to have an impact on the speed and effectiveness of their assimilation. Thus, those placed nearer Constantinople were able to adapt efficiently to their new surroundings, while those settled in the east held onto their Armenian identity for longer. In bringing together a wide variety of sources one could trace the Armenians origins of many of the great aristocratic Byzantine families and the worlds they operated in. For many of the Armenians this was predominantly service in the army or imperial governance.\(^{785}\) In showing the relative ease, and huge success, these institutions had in assimilating Armenians, it was also argued that the religious divide between the Byzantines and Armenians was not represented fairly in our sources. It can clearly be observed that the ninth and tenth centuries were periods of religious toleration and peace between the two Christian denominations, with only occasional

\(^{785}\) See Chapter Two: Acceptance and Adoption of ‘Roman Customs’.
flashpoints of antagonism, most at local-level. Furthermore, we do not have substantial evidence to suggest that difference in the religious practices in any way barred Armenian assimilation. It is certainly true that as assimilation progressed, many of the assimilated Armenians had adopted the Chalcedonian rite, but it is impossible to analyse the level or rate of this ‘conversion’ without adequate primary evidence. In summary, our sources suggest that a large number of Armenians were able to assimilate into the Byzantine Empire and produced many of the dominant personalities on the Byzantine political scene through the late-ninth and tenth centuries.

The focus in Chapter Three moved away from the direct evaluation of the mechanics of assimilation and argued that in order to fully understand the transition of the Byzantine-Armenian relationship from assimilation to alienation, it was imperative to fully comprehend the events and long-term effects of the annexations of the western Armenian kingdoms during the reign of Basil II. The chapter had two main aims. The first was to outline the context of the annexations with a discussion of Byzantine foreign-policy in the tenth century, which directly led onto the explanation of why Basil was forced to directly intervene in the area during the first half of his reign. This was then followed by analysing the causes behind the annexation of Vaspurakan, and the treaty of Trebizond, that brought about the settlement of the Artsruni in Cappadocia and the agreement to bequeath the kingdom of Ani to the Empire respectively. The second aim was to outline the unforeseen consequences of these annexations and how these laid the foundation of later alienation. One must expand on these a little.

---

786 See Chapter Two: Religious Conversion and Conformity
787 See Chapter Three: Unforeseen Circumstances.
The contextualisation of Byzantine foreign-policy during the tenth century is necessary in order to produce a coherent understanding of Basil’s direct intervention in Caucasia during his reign; one which seemed to go against previous policies of frontier co-operation between the Empire and the local magnates that his predecessors had maintained. It was seen that rather than repeating the older view that Basil was motivated by expansion, he was in fact concerned, and primarily motivated by the internal factionalism that had risen during the early years of his reign and very nearly brought about the end of the ruling dynasty of the Macedonians. Basil’s minority had been dominated by Nikephoros II Phokas and John I Tzimiskes, while his grandfather Constantine VII Porphyrogennetos had spent the greater part of his reign sharing power with Romanos I Lekapenos. Furthermore, Basil’s early reign had been convulsed by two major civil wars, the risings of Bardas Skleros and later Bardas Phokas, both of which were serious threats to the ruling house. The assistance provided by David III of Tao in the revolt of Bardas Phokas had shown Basil the rising independent powers that were operating on the frontier and ones that could unduly influence the internal politics of the Empire. It was this action by David that forced the pragmatic Basil to insist on inheriting David’s lands upon the latter’s death, providing the later issues that once again forced Basil to interfere with the polities of western Caucasia.

The second task of the chapter was to argue how the annexations towards the end of Basil’s reign were to ultimately sow the seeds of alienation of the Armenians in the mid-eleventh century as a result of two unforeseen consequences. First, it was seen that Basil was forced to return east in 1021 with the rising belligerence of the Georgian Kingdoms that now dominated much of Byzantium’s north-eastern border. Seeking to enforce imperial rights on occupied lands in the region of Tao/Tayk, Basil marched
into the region in force. Despite claims that it was Basil’s intention all along to subjugate the western Caucasian polities to Constantinople, our sources are in near-complete agreement that the principal aim of his north-eastern campaign was the neutralisation of Georgia. It was during Basil’s stay at his winter quarters in Trebizond that a deal was struck between Basil and Yovhannes-Smbat on the status of the kingdom of Ani. Yovhannes-Smbat sought Byzantine recognition of his title as Shahanshah and in return he would bequeath his kingdom to the Empire upon his death. While certain voices saw this as a result of external pressure our sources actually tell us how it was internal factionalism within the kingdom of Ani itself that brought about Yovhannes-Smbat’s offer. Yet neither Basil, nor Yovhannes-Smbat, could ever have foreseen the problems that undermined the Byzantine claim to Ani in the early 1040s. The enforcement of the treaty, and the feelings of betrayal held by its exiled-king, Gagik II, were to fester on the sprawling Armenian estates in Cappadocia and Sebasteia. The second unforeseen consequence was to be the result of the settlement of the Artsruni in Cappadocia, which was originally intended to dilute the power-base of the military officer class that had so often threatened Basil’s reign. This almost immediately backfired when the Armenian settlers got caught up with the Revolt of 1022. While the Armenian narrative accounts depict the Artsruni as agents of the emperor who internally brought down the revolt, from other historiographical traditions this does not seem to be so clear. In any case, the aftermath of the revolt meant that the Artsruni held a stronger loyalty to Basil II himself rather than to the Byzantium state. This bond actually weakened the mechanics of assimilation, and meant that even fifteen years after the emperor’s death, the Artsruni held more to the memory of Basil, than loyalty to the position of emperor and the Empire itself. In summary, the annexations of the Armenian kingdoms created the conditions for the later alienation, but it is important to re-emphasise that the alienation of the
Armenians was the product of the mid-eleventh century that had its origins in the 1020s.

In Chapter Four the main aim was to argue how the alienation of the Armenians came about. Three factors were identified as driving the feelings of alienation: the settlement of the Armenians on lands nearer their ancestral homeland, the religious animosity that occasionally flared up into heated theological debates, and the failure of the adoption of ‘Roman customs’ by the newly settled Armenians. Let us take a look at each of these in turn.

It was argued that the settlement of the exiled Armenian princely houses in Cappadocia and Sebasteia created issues that could not have been foreseen by Basil who was responsible for the original settlement of the Artsruni. The subsequent settlements of Ani and Kars, in precisely the same region, created a large demographic of Armenians who were not responding to the mechanisms of assimilation in the same manner as their compatriots had in the preceding decades: previously the Armenians had been scattered throughout the Empire, often used to re-populate buffer zones on frontiers such as the Balkans. The estates that were given to the Armenians were too close to the Armenian homeland, meaning that many did not have to adapt to their new surroundings, whether that was religiously or linguistically. Nor were the Armenians motivated to pursue careers within the imperial institutions, preferring to remain with their compatriots on their estates, continuing very much the same existence they had lived back in Armenia.

The most common theme of animosity between Byzantines and Armenians has been through the religious differences between their official churches. While this did indeed have some effect on the growing resentment of the Armenians living within the
Empire, it was neither the sole, nor the most prominent factor, that drove alienation. It has been assessed in depth how the Byzantines attempted to bring about uniformity amongst its eastern subjects through religious conformity, with some particularly difficult episodes revolving around imprisonment of the Armenian Katholikos and attempts at religious debate to bring about a statement of union. But all of this animosity would have been of only minor concern without the main bonding agent of alienation: the weakness of the adoption of ‘Roman customs’.

We saw with the conclusion of Chapter Three that the two unforeseen consequences of the annexations revolved around the failure of the Armenian migrants to adopt the loyalty structures enshrined in the definition of ‘Roman customs’. The ‘Rebellion of 1040’ opened the fissures in the Byzantine-Artsruni relationship, exposing the inherent weakness in the personal loyalty between Basil and the exiled dynasty. This was further exacerbated with the coercive annexation of Ani and the settlement of Gagik in the very same region as the Artsruni. Viewed by Armenian historians, both medieval and modern, the forced exile of the Armenian king has been characterised as either ‘treacherous coercion’,788 or ‘deceived by enemies both at home and abroad’.789 Gagik never pretended to be a Byzantine, nor does he ever seem to have held any feelings of loyalty to the Byzantine state. The failure of the imperial centre to engage with the Armenians and encourage them to pursue careers within the great institutions of state, namely the army, further propelled the force of alienation. This is why during the episodes of religious discussions between the Armenians and the Byzantines that the imperial centre had an inherent flaw in trying to control their Armenian subjects in Cappadocia and Sebasteia: they were first and

788 Matthew of Edessa, I, 84, n. 5, at 304.
789 Der Nersessian, The Armenians, 39.
foremost loyal to Gagik, rather than to the Emperor. Gagik’s staunch defence of the Armenian faith was in many ways an act of defiance against those who had taken his kingdom away from him, and one can see that after the discussions in Constantinople in 1065 Gagik pursued a policy of separatism within his territories in Cappadocia and Sebasteia.\footnote{See Chapter Four: The First Steps to Separatism.} While indeed the ‘Royal Armenians’ had mostly disappeared within a century of the collapse of the Byzantine eastern frontier after Manzikert, their actions showcase the weakening position of Byzantium with its subjects, and the attachment to the royal exiles was held dearly by the next generation of Armenian rulers in Cilicia and northern Syria.

In Chapter Five the focus was to explain how the alienation phase, as observed in the previous chapter, developed into the separatism that came to define the Byzantine-Armenian relationship in the post-Manzikert world. First, the analysis concentrated on the fallout from the Battle of Manzikert in 1071 from both a Byzantine and Islamic perspective. From the two historiographical traditions we gain a very murky picture of events in eastern Anatolia, namely as a result of the sources being written from both geographical and temporal distances. The first section attempted to trace the residues of Byzantine influence in the region, while also explaining why the Turkic penetrations across Anatolia did not have initial success across the Taurus Mountains and onto the Cilician plain.

The answer to this limited success was two-fold. The Islamic world entered another phase of internal weakness with the death of Alp Arslan in 1072 that allowed Armenian warlords to expand and consolidate the various Armenian lordships in the region. Surprisingly, this force of unity did not come from the ‘Royal Armenians’, with
Gagik II failing in his attempts to become the rallying point for Armenian separatism, instead we witness his murder at the hands of semi-independent imperial agents in the region. Ironically, it was to be the death of Gagik that paved the way for the supremacy of Philaretos Brachamios, although even Philaretos was not able to unite all of the surrounding Armenian lordships to his side. Eventually, the pressure from the surrounding Turkic warlords led to the complete destruction of Philaretos’ lands, but not before several Armenian warlords were able to entrench themselves in various cities and forts in the surrounding area.

There remain some questions over the strength of the religious bond that many Armenians shared, and why this too failed to produce some element of cohesion among the various Armenians lords. The simple answer to this is two-fold. First, many of the Armenian warlords in the region did not follow the Apostolic confession. Whether this was because of elements of assimilation taking hold, or that some were Armenian-Chalcedonians, the result is the same, religion could not unite all of the lords in the region. The second was the Apostolic Church itself was incredibly divided. This can largely be validated by the fracturing of the ecclesiastical leadership under Katholikos Gregory II, who in many ways was its main architect. At the same time as the leadership enshrined in the royal lineage of the Bagratuni was destroyed, the ecclesiastical leadership of the Apostolic Church was fractured, in many ways mimicking the political geography. While our source, Matthew of Edessa, firmly places the blame for this disunity on the ‘perfidious Romans’ or the ‘anti-Christ’ Philaretos, the actions of Gregory II seems to have been the catalyst.

The fall of Philaretos’ lordship did not spell the end of Armenian rule in the region, for some of the surviving lieutenants of Philaretos such as Gabriel of Melitene, T’oros of Edessa, and Kogh Vasil, were all able to hang onto their localised powerbases.
Some certainly held their position with the permission of the Seljuk court, but after Malik-Shah’s death in 1092 there was not central authority in which these Armenian lords could engage with. Nevertheless, despite small residues of Byzantine authority existing in the region through the form of imperial titles and seals, none of these warlords attempted to re-integrate into the Byzantine Empire when the First Crusade liberated many of the Armenian settlements from Turkic garrisons. On this point, most of all, can one finally understand in context as to why the Armenians were so willing to assist the Franks of the First Crusade during their passage through Armenian lands.
Appendix I: Map

ARmenian Settlements in the Byzantine East in the tenth and eleventh centuries.
Appendix II: The Harran Gate

The Greek Transcription on the Harran Gate\textsuperscript{791}:

(1) \textit{Ἀλέξιος ἑσώθη ἢ Ῥωμαϊκή ἐξουσία}

(2) \textit{διὰ τὴν μακαριοτάτην περίπτωσιν}

(3) \textit{πρωτοσεβάστω τῷ Σεβαστοῦ κ(α)ὶ Αὐτοκράτορος τοῦ ...}

(4) [...]\textit{ην Χρι(σ)τιανοὺς μέχρι τῆς δευρί [ἔ]κ τῆς τῶν Τούρκων ἐπικρατείας}

\textit{βασιλ(έως) Ῥωμαί[ων] ...}


Dating:

χβ', [iv] δ. β’. The Greek numerals state 6602 Anno Mundi. To get the Anno Domini date one must minus 5509 from the total, which equals 1093. The indiction, which is stated after the year, corrects the cyclical anomalies of the months to the year 1094 A.D.\textsuperscript{792}

\textsuperscript{791} Transcription of von Gaertringen provided by Saunders, ‘The Greek Inscription on the Harran Gate’, 302.

\textsuperscript{792} Anno Mundi starts 1 September so the inscription can be dated to early to mid-1094.
Bibliography

Primary Sources:


*Bryennios, Nikephoros* *Material for History*, ed. and trans. P. Gautier, CFHB 9 (Brussels: Byzantion, 1975).


**Secondary Sources:**


Adontz, Nicholas. ‘Tornik le moine’, *Byzantion* 11 (1936), 143-164.


**Angold, Michael.** ‘Byzantine “Nationalism” and the Nicaean Empire’, *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 1 (1975), 49-70.

**Angold, Michael.** “The Byzantine state on the eve of the Battle of Manzikert”, in *Byzantinische Forschungen* 16 (1991), 9-34.


**Angold, Michael.** ‘Autobiography and Identity: the case of the later Roman Empire’, *Byzantinoslavica* 60 (1999), 36-59.


**Arnakis, George.** ‘Byzantium and Greece. A review article à propos of Romilly Jenkins, Byzantium and Byzantinism’, *Balkan Studies*, 4 (1963), 379-400.


Garsoïan, Nina. ‘The problem of Armenian Integration into the Byzantine Empire’, *Studies on the Internal Diaspora of the Byzantine Empire*, ed. H. Ahrweiler and A.


Paparrigopoulos, Constantinos Ἱστορία τοῦ Ἐλληνικοῦ Ἑθνούς ἀπὸ τῶν ἀρχαïτάτων χρόνων μέχρι τῶν καθ' ἡμᾶς (Athens, 1886).


Stouraitis, Ioannis. ‘Reinventing Roman Ethnicity in High and Late Medieval Byzantium’, Medieval Worlds 5 (2017), 70-94.


