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The Glory of Feebleness
The Martyrological Paradigm in Georgian Political Theology

> *For thine is the kingdom, and the power,*
> *and the glory, for ever.*
> (Matthew 6:13)

> *Thine, O Lord is the greatness, and the power,*
> *and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for*
> *all that is in the heaven and in the earth is thine;*
> *thine is the kingdom, O Lord, and thou art exalted*
> *as head above all.*
> (1 Chronicles 29:11)

A monument to Saint Georgia was erected on Freedom Square in Tbilisi on 23 November 2006. The unveiling of this monument on Tbilisi's central square, which differing times bore the names Paskevich-Yerevanskij[1] and Lenin Square, among others, was a symbolic step. In modern political mythology Saint George, who replaced Paskevich and Lenin (the Russian and Soviet imperial representatives), is not only Georgia's guardian saint but an allegory of Georgia who, in this mythological narrative, fights against the dragon personifying the imperial legacy and the enemy of freedom. However, the symbolism of the monument does not celebrate a victory over evil, but makes a promise of a future victory. In the fight against evil he brings an eschatological idea to modern political contexts and vice versa (he projects modern political contexts onto eschatology). In spite of the secular interpretation, Saint George's monument represents a variation on the basic paradigm of Georgian political theology. In my article I shall speak on this very paradigm.

Georgian historiography has recently become interested in political theology.[2] The comparative political theology of eastern Christendom is almost unresearched.[3] For this reason I am unable in the present article to discuss this issue exhaustively. My aim is to sketch out the basic aspects of medieval Georgian political theology.[4]

The influential Georgian historian Ivane Javakhishvili expressed a view in 1916 concerning the origin of Old Georgian literature in hagiography and martyrology.[5] Ivane Javakhishvili, in spite of his immeasurable achievements

in Georgian historiography, was still a historian of the positivist school and was less interested the world view aspects of Old Georgian historiography. What follows from the origins in hagiography of Georgian historiography and martyrology? In the first place such a genealogy, as Ivane Javakhishvili himself says, leaves a certain narrative mark on historical literature. In this article I shall attempt to describe a hagiographical narrative model and its connection with Georgian political theology, first and foremost in the context of historical and political legitimation.

My thesis is that medieval Georgian political theology, just as its secular transformation in the nineteenth century or its updating in the twenty-first, was a response to a traditionally weak Georgian statehood.[6] And for this reason the choice of the ambivalent martyrological paradigm, in the same way as the orientation towards the biblical model of the reigns of David and Solomon, is latently anti-imperialistic but capable of being made manifest, which turns the weakness of the state into the virtue of the martyr, and by this brings about its idealization.

The Semantics of 'Kartlis Cxovreba'[7]

The 'religio-historical' term 'cxovrebaj' or 'cxovreba', which was used 'in Old Georgian historical writing as a name denoting works in the field of civil history', acted the part of one basic argument for Ivane Javakhishvili's theory of the origin of historical literature in hagiography.[8] In actual fact, the term 'cxovreba' is synonymous with 'history'. The use of this term implies conceptualizing the country's history[9] from a Christian viewpoint. According to the German philosopher Karl Löwith, the eschatological picture of the world, which investigates the history of both man and mankind from the viewpoint of their ultimate aim and ultimate salvation, is opposed to classical cyclical concepts of time. The conceptualizing of history as a global, universal and future-focussed process begins along with Christianity, which inherited such a concept of time from the Old Testament.[10]

In the context of the eschatological concept of history, salvation means not only the salvation of individuals, but of the group. The economy of salvation is closely linked to the concept of the 'chosen people'. Clearly, the problem of the chosen people is not limited to the context of Kartli. In 'Kartlis Cxovreba' the missing links in the chain of the legitimation of this choice are provided by means of overt or covert references to Saint Paul. It is the Pauline universalization of Christianity that becomes the basis of the legitimation of this 'chosenness' for Christian peoples, as well as for medieval Georgian his-

torians (in this case, it is not the Georgian people as such who are chosen, but the Georgian people as a Christian people). The name of the Apostle Paul (whose importance to medieval Georgian political theology is difficult to overestimate) is one covert axis of the subject matter of the 'Conversion of Kartli'. It is Paul who initiates the 'founding and legitimation' of the theme of the 'new chosen people' (the Christians).[11] The legitimation strategy of the medieval Georgian chroniclers in this case is an appeal by the Apostle Paul to Saint Nino: In her sleep Saint Nino sees a man 'in a vision' who is 'of middle stature and with hair of moderate length. He gave a sealed book to St Nino and said: 'Take this to [Mtskheta] to the king of the pagans.'' (CKN: 86, trans. Thomson: 95) 'The Conversion of Kartli by Nino' does not name this figure, but the following arguments permit me to suppose that it was Saint Paul who sends Saint Nino to enlighten Georgia. The Apostle Paul is the only apostle whom 'The Conversion of Georgia' and 'The Life of the Kings of Kartli' name directly. The early hagiography of the Apostle Paul depicts him as a short, bent, balding person.[12] The letter written 'in Latin' and sealed 'by Jesus' is a collection of quotations that, on the one hand, support the conversion of heathens, and on the other, the apostolic potential of women.[13] Two factors are significant for my argumentation: Every 'saying', with the exception of the second, is a Gospel quotation. The second 'saying' is a quotation from the Epistle of the Apostle Paul to the Galatians (3: 28). Although the third 'saying' is a quotation from the Gospel of Matthew (28: 19), the influence of his universalist ideas on the Gospel texts is not entirely ruled out, since all four Gospels were written after the Apostle Paul's Epistle. But what is even more interesting for the argumentation is that 'ten sayings were written, as on the first tablets of stone.' (CK: 116). The text of the 'Conversion' sends us directly to Exodus (20-32), where Moses receives the Ten Commandments from God. Interpretation of the Apostle Paul's Epistles allows the German philosopher and sociologist of religion, Jacob Taubes, to draw a parallel between Moses and the Apostle Paul since one and the same problem unites both of them, namely, 'founding a new chosen people' ('Gründung eines Gottesvolkes'),[14] a task that Moses declined when he convinced God not to destroy the chosen people after they had fallen into sin (worshipping a golden calf). Paul on the contrary knows that he has been entrusted with a first and unique ('erstmalig und einmalig') task: the 'transfiguration' of the chosen people since the chosen people did not receive the Messiah.[15] Thus converted Gentiles become the chosen people instead of the Jews.[16] Deeming the Georgians as a chosen people is a result of the conversion of Kartli. The specific linking of being chosen and sacredness (which has a strong political context) is not so much — nor solely — on a genetic level (all Christian people are chosen) but

on a topographical one, with the help of Kartlian land which great temporal and heavenly glory awaits following the adoption of Christianity.[17]

The story of Christ's tunic, which the 'Mtskheta Jews' Elioz Mtskheteli and Longinoz Karsneli had brought to Mtskheta, directly links Kartli to the time and space of salvation history ('Heilsgeschichte'). From the viewpoint of time, for the medieval Georgian historian the conversion of Kartli from then on was promised, Kartli from then on was linked to salvation history: 'Blessed are you, Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the living God. For from the first you were pleased to save us from the devil and from the place of darkness. Therefore you brought this holy robe of yours from the holy city of Jerusalem from the Hebrews who did not recognize your divinity, and you bestowed it upon us from foreign nations.' (CKN: 118, trans. Thomson: 131-2).

In the 'Conversion' we several times encounter the possibility of the spread of the topographicalized category of sacredness to a whole country. In these passages the text consciously plays with highly significant words and phrases. It is this topographical aspect that is expressed by Sidonia—the daughter of Abiatar, a Christianized Jewish rabbi—whom Saint Nino had converted to Christianity: 'Here is her burial place, where human tongues do not cease to praise God, above it is that place, like the place of Jacob, with a visible ladder towering towards the sky, henceforth and forever inexhaustible glory and praise.' (CK: 340). In another quotation Sidonia interprets Saint Nino's vision thus: 'Your vision is this: that this place with its garden will through you become a garden to the glorification of God, to whom is the glory now and forever and ever, Amen.' (CK: 337). In this case the text plays with the two meanings of the word 'samotkhe', which can mean either 'paradise' or 'garden'. But the Shatberdi manuscript of 'The Conversion of Kartli' gives us a more direct interpretation of this excerpt: 'and she was thanking God because this is a sign of their [the devils'—Z.A.] ruin, and of the redemption of Kartli and of the glory of this place' (CK: 344). We can understand 'this place' in the broader meaning of all of Kartli. The possibilities of such a play on meanings is confirmed by yet another excerpt from 'The Conversion of Kartli by Nino': Saint Nino gives thanks to 'God, for this is the sign of their destruction and of the salvation of Kartli and the glory of this place.' (CKN: 113, trans. Thomson: 126). We may understand the phrase 'the glory of this place' as being the glory of Kartli. The mention of Jacob's Ladder in the context of Kartli confirms such an understanding to us. In Genesis (28: 12-16) Jacob sees a ladder which unites the sky and the earth, and on which angels 'ascending and descending on it'. God appeared to Jacob on this ladder:

> *And behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it.*

> *And, behold, the Lord stood above it, and said, I am the Lord God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed; And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of.[18]*

The medieval Georgian chroniclers use the chosen people and the holy land in both their Old and New Testament meanings, metaphorically they transfer the land promised to Jacob to Kartli and they fit Kartli (with the help of the Saviour's tunic) into a special topography of sacredness. Such allusions, although never explicitly expressed, were quite transparent and must have been well known to the medieval reader.

The text of 'The Conversion of Georgia', which the text of 'The Life of Vakhtang Gorgasali' echoes, in actual fact explains to us the dual perspective of the programme intention of the whole work: 'The Life of Kartli' in this case has the meaning not only of history but of the final point and goal of this history, the salvation of Kartli. The phrase 'the glory of this place' has several meanings and does not mean only celestial glory (which is a synonym of salvation), but also earthly glory which, for its part, is directly linked to the Christian faith. 'The Conversion of Kartli' directly links the promise of earthly glory to the adoption of Christianity and by this, in actual fact, it shares the Old Testament model of being chosen, which not only connected with the 'new people' (Christians as opposed to Jews), but also to the topographical space of Kartli which, for its part, could be transformed into a 'sacral space' in the space of political theology.

If indeed we attempt the reconstruction of a model of history from the works of medieval Georgian historiography (which, with some variation, is characteristic of all Christian people) from the very beginning (that is to say, from the time of the barbarians who reigned in Kartli before the arrival of Alexander the Great) until the end (that is to say, until the paradisal state which had been promised to Saint Nino), we may surmise that it is possible in the context of Georgian political theology to project the paradisal state onto the political context of paradise, which actually does occur in the vitas of David the Builder and of Tamar. The next part of my paper is devoted to this issue.

Celestial Glory and Earthly Glory

The conception of Georgian political theology extends between the poles of celestial and earthly glory. The conception of heavenly glory is depicted in the lives and martyrdom of the Christian saints. Temporal, that is to say, earthly glory is linked to collective or cultural memory.[19] One of the clearest expressions of earthly glory is the Greek concept of 'kleos áphthitos' ('everlasting glory').[20] 'Kleos', earthly glory, 'is a specific form of social identity',[21] which exists in the form of history (oral traditions, song) and is opposed to 'sacral immortality' or, to translate it into Christian categories, heavenly glory. Heroic actions acquire their own characteristic permanency in legends and achieve a substitute immorality. Man 'becomes a hero, because he cannot become a god. In his nature the hero remains like other men, but culture bestows on him a value; he does not survive, but he is remembered... he becomes godlike in status and immortal in the memory.'[22] Such a concept of earthly immortality in the form of 'temporal glory' continues to exist in Christian culture but, as in classical times, it is in opposition to heavenly glory: the 'sacral immortality' of saints and martyrs. Yuri Lotman considers that two models of glory existed in the Middle Ages: the 'Christian-ecclesiastical' and the 'feudal-knightly'. The first was constructed on a strong demarcation between celestial and worldly glory. What was relevant here was not the characteristic 'glory / ignominy', 'renown / obscurity', 'praise / scorn', but 'eternity / decay'.[23] However, in our context, in the space of political theology it is the possibility of interference between these two categories that is interesting. The space of political theology makes transparent the border separating celestial from earthly glory and provides the means to transfer the category of celestial glory into political space (and vice versa) without negating the difference between them. (It is on such a transfer that the political model is constructed: the idea of Christ as heavenly emperor, for example, is based on such a transfer.)

Medieval historiography, when narrating political history and its characters, has to deal with the difference, or even the aporia, between celestial and earthly glory. 'The Life of Vakhtang Gorgasali' by medieval Georgian historians provides us with an interesting example of resolving this problem. Before I move on to discussing this work, I must mention that general semantic field which unites the secular and spiritual spaces of the saint (martyr and citizen) and of the hero (of political history) in the context of political theology. In this context it is important to use political terminology regarding the Christian saints and figures, who are known as 'militia Christi' or the warriors of Christ.[24] From the beginning of early Christianity, military rhetoric was

used to indicate the spiritual battle against evil. The Apostle Paul called not all Christians, but the apostles and missionaries, 'soldiers',[25] but this metaphor was later used in a broader context to include the monastic movement and, besides this, it implied the whole Church hierarchy. The Christian warrior is a special 'peaceful' warrior, who does not fight his enemies, but joyfully receives death from them, although in courageous death Christian warriors are better than others.[26] For our context (of heroism and holiness) there is a significant link between the concept of the peaceful militia of Christ and the cult of the warrior saint, which is connected to the persecution of Christians in the Roman army, especially intense in the times of Valerian (253-260) and Diocletian (284-305), more correctly, the symbolic transformation of the portrayal of the martyred warrior.[27] From then on the paradigm of the warrior saint is linked to the soldiers of the Roman Empire that did not recognize the cult of emperor and martyrs, and later they became the patron saints of the soldiers. The hagiographical versions of the martyrdom of the warrior saints are composed according to one and the same thematic scheme: A noble Christian warrior declares his refusal to worship pagan gods, openly acknowledges his Christianity (the Greek word 'martyros' and its Georgian equivalent 'motsame' both mean 'witness') and is martyred by the pagan ruler. This scheme underlies the composition of the martyrological stories of St Theodore and St George. Later, in iconographic space, the martyrdoms of Saints Theodore and George are transformed into triumphs: A small portion of the icons depict scenes of the martyrdom of the warrior saints, while the majority portray scenes of the warrior saints' victory over the dragon.[28] The transformation of the Christian martyr into the victor shows us directly the change in the attitude of Christianity towards military affairs. In this sphere, the polyvalent semantics of victory lean towards 'temporal glory', since it is no longer implied that heavenly glory is meek endurance of martyrdom, but a 'direct' victory over evil. In spite of the fact that Saint George is covered in heavenly glory (according to legend Christ raises him into Heaven, which in itself is an interesting case of the Christian translation of classical apotheosis), he may emerge as an agent who creates a general space between heavenly and temporal glory. 'The Life of King David' describes the Battle of Didgori (1121) thus:

> *At the first encounter he routed their army and put it to flight; for the hand of the One on High assisted him, and strength from heaven protected him, and the holy martyr [George], clearly and in sight of all, guided him and with his own arm destroyed all the impious heathen who fell upon him. The ignorant infidels later admitted it, and told us of that miracle of the chiefmartyr [George] — by what means he destroyed those famous warriors of Arabia, and how adroitly and*

> *carefully he pursued those fleeing and destroyed them, with whose*
> *corpses the fields, mountains, and valleys were filled (LD: 341, trans.*
> *Thomson: 333).*

In actual fact, 'The Life of David, King of Kings' offers us its own version of a narrative explication of the icon of Saint George. In the historian's eye the appearance of Saint George at the Battle of Didgori gives it the status of a fight against evil, while on the other hand it transfers the metaphysical understanding of evil to political space.[29] Such polyvalent symbolism of victory and the warrior saint (between the martyr and the victor) is characteristic of medieval Georgian historiography. Mirian, the first Christian king of Kartli, says in his last words to his son that 'in the name of Christ death' will seem to him 'life', by which he will win 'life that passes not away'. He later instructs his son to destroy idols and 'with the guidance of the honourable cross' to overcome enemies. (CKN: 129-30, trans. Thomson: 145).

The symbol of the (Holy) Cross is central to medieval Georgian historical literature. The use of the Cross as a military symbol dates from the Emperor Constantine. According to legend, before the Battle of the Milvian Bridge (312), Constantine saw the Cross with the legend 'In hoc signo victor eris' ('In this sign you shall conquer'). It would appear that the Cross itself embellished the Emperor's banner (the Labarum).[30] Political theology in both Byzantium and in 'Kartlis Cxovreba' retransmits the depiction of the invisible enemy of the Christian citizen, of the militia of Christ to the visible political enemies of Christendom. The warrior of Christ, who in the beginning was a metaphor, becomes a political reality that legitimates the war against the 'unbelievers'. In the same way the Cross is a symbol which legitimates royal rule. In the (improvised) ritual of the crowning of a king Mirian first hangs the royal crown on a cross, then takes it off and places this crown on his son Bakar. Thus Bakar receives not only genealogical but also sacral legitimation. Later, victory by the power of the Cross becomes a particular topos in medieval Georgian historiography.[31]

Thus, the historical narration introduces a hagiographical model of victory over the enemy by faith and transfers this model into the political context. At the same time, this victory acquires the dual semantics of celestial and temporal glory. This is particularly striking in the Life of Vakhtang Gorgasali, which is an illustration of the synthesis of Christianity and politics. The Life of Vakhtang Gorgasali is a kind of amalgam of historical narrative, hagiographical text and Persian-style heroic legend.[32] It was Vakhtang Gorgasali (whom Stephen Rapp calls 'imagined Vakhtang' because of the legendary features of his life),[33] who executed Mirian's testament with complete ambivalence. In this case the extent to which it is a reconstruction of historical facts

is of less interest than the narrative strategy of the text and its dual modelling in hagiographical and legendary paradigms. According to 'The Life of Vakhtang Gorgasali' Vakhtang is successful not due to his strength, but due to God's assistance. 'Not through my own strength did I overcome [Tarkhan], but through the strength of my creator.' (LVG: 154, trans. Thomson: 169). The following extract is especially interesting for an understanding of the political theology of 'The Life of Vakhtang Gorgasali'. Vakhtang sees Saint Nino in a dream who leads him to the emperor of Byzantium and says to him:

> *"Now come before the king and receive your gift." He went to the king, they embraced each other, and he placed him by his throne and sat him beside him. He gave him a ring from his hand in which was a very bright gem, and the emperor said: "If you wish that I give you a crown, promise the one who stands above me that you will fight his enemies, then you will receive a crown from him." [Vakhtang] looked and saw a cross, in the arms of which was a crown. The sight of the cross caused him even more terror, because its awe was very fearsome, so he kept silent... The emperor stretched out his hand, took the crown from the cross, and placed the crown on [Vakhtang's] head... They began to withdraw when the bishop cried out... "You will receive the crown of martyrdom" (LVG: 167-68, trans. Thomson: 185).*

The 'King of Heaven' appeared to Vakhtang in the form of a Cross, and Vakhtang received dual legitimation as king: from the King of Heaven and from the emperor of Byzantium. On the other hand, a martyr's crown is foretold for Vakhtang. The ambivalence of the crown as a symbol of royal power and earthly glory on the one hand and of the martyr's crown as a symbol of celestial glory on the other, is an expression of the dual semantics of victory, which unites the poles of temporal and heavenly glory and which in the same way is represented in the ritual of crowning as king and in King Mirian's testament. In the possibility of this inversion is the same logic which underlies the inversion between the martyr and the victor in the iconography of Saint George. The words of the Byzantine emperor perhaps serve us as a key to the ambivalence of the crown: 'If you wish that I give you a crown, promise the one who stands above me that you will fight his enemies, then you will receive a crown from him.' (LVG: 167, trans. Thomson: 185). The legitimation of the crowning of kings for the medieval Georgian historian lies in the struggle to glorify the Cross, this time in political space, the result of which could be either celestial or earthly glory. 'The Life of Vakhtang Gorgasali' presents Vakhtang as one of the warriors of Christ, whose activities are directed towards the realization of the programme in Vakhtang's vision, which unfolds in the following episode. Vakhtang is campaigning in India together with the

Persian king. During this campaign, during a duel with the king of Sind, he leads a dialogue in which the king of Sind cites 'realpolitik' arguments and tries to persuade him that sooner or later the Persian king will campaign against him, but Vakhtang answers from the position of the 'history of salvation'. In Vakhtang's opinion, the king of the Sinds cannot see Vakhtang's real motive because he 'do[es] not know the life of the spirit'. Vakhtang's real aim is to save Christians and Jerusalem. 'I did not make my entrance into this country for the sake of the glory of the world, nor to serve the Persian king, but in order to serve the God without beginning, the consubstantial trinity, the creator of all things, for the sake of eternal and unending glory hereafter. For by my coming here, first I delivered Jerusalem, the holy city.' (LVG: 191, trans. Thomson: 208-9). By agreeing to campaign in India, says Vakhtang, he was serving God since Jerusalem and Georgia were spared a war with Persia. The central motive of worshipping the Cross and 'Almighty God' is saving (freeing) the holy city of Jerusalem: In this case the Georgian historian uses the same logic that the crusaders' political theology is based on.[34]

Vakhtang's historian, who actualizes the ambivalence of victor-martyr, subjugates temporal glory to heavenly and leans towards a more hagiographical than legendary paradigm. The subsequent war with the Persians is from the viewpoint of the 'imagined' Vakhtang a religious war: 'Know that they do not wage war on us for the sake of imposing tribute, but to make us abandon Christ' which also defines the model of his life: 'Death for the name of Christ is better than my life, in order that we may obtain the kingdom promised for those of whom it was said: "Whoever loses his life for my sake shall find it."' (LVG: 201, trans. Thomson: 220). The 'legitimation' of defeat and of failure in political space, which Catholicos Peter voices, is based on the paradigm of Job: 'For your wisdom knows that the Enemy our tempter contests with God for us, as for Job. For God permits those who hate him to perish, but those who love him to become divine. Become as God advises you; although you will not die, we shall die.' (LVG: 201, trans. Thomson: 220). The death of the martyred king is based on the model of 'imitatio Christi': by his death a king saves his people and his country. The cult of the martyred king is born during the life of Vakhtang Gorgasali, who was unknown in Byzantium, but enjoyed popularity in the 'Byzantine Commonwealth'.[35] 'The earth trembled from the sound of their weeping and lamentation. The faithful people envied the king because he had died for Christ's sake.' (LVG: 204, trans. Thomson: 223). The following phrase of Catholicos Peter gives us an opportunity to use the image of martyr in respect not of King Vakhtang, but of Kartli: 'Not only Kartli will be delivered over to corruption, but also Jerusalem, which is the parent of all the children of light.' (LVG: 201, trans. Thomson: 220). On

the one hand Kartli, from a topographic viewpoint, is part of sacral space and shares the fate of Jerusalem, while on the other hand, it becomes possible to transfer to Kartli the trials of Job and martyrdom for the faith, in the same way as this happened in the case of sacral topography.

A gallery of ideal monarchs opens in 'Kartlis Cxovreba' with 'The Life of Vakhtang Gorgasali': Vakhtang — David — Tamar. Vakhtang is one of the central points of reference for historians of the subsequent period, which underlines the legacy of the concept of political theology for the texts of the 'Kartlis Cxovreba' collection. But we should also note the differences: The political component is entirely subservient to the theological in 'The Life of Vakhtang Gorgasali'. If the latter is not totally ignored on the scale of celestial and earthly glory, it however totally submits to the former. In spite of the fact that in the ambivalent idea of the warrior saint the hypostases of martyr and victor are united, the signs of the martyr however are greater in number and for this particular reason Vakhtang's portrait acquires traits that are more hagiographical.

In spite of the fact that in the same way as 'The Life of Vakhtang Gorgasali', the later texts of 'Kartlis Cxovreba'— 'The Life of David, King of Kings', 'The Life of Tamar, King of Kings' and 'The Histories and Eulogies of the Sovereigns'— also subordinate temporal to heavenly glory, David's historian refers to secular activity using the term 'lower acting' which is replaced by 'heavenly rule' after David's death, we can still attempt a reconstruction of the medieval concept of temporal glory. How is temporal glory expressed in 'Kartlis Cxovreba'?

In his testament, Vakhtang Gorgasali addresses 'all the nobles': 'You, inhabitants of [Kartli], remember my good deeds, because first from my house you received eternal light, and I honoured you my kin with temporal glory. Do not despise our house, nor abandon the friendship of the Greeks'. (HVG: 203, trans. Thomson: 222-3). To put it in other words, the inhabitants of Kartli received Christianity from Vakhtang's family, and Vakhtang himself brought them temporal glory. The word 'glory', the first definition of which in Sulkhan-Saba's dictionary is 'speaking gratefully of all God's holiness and of the Gospels and of brave deeds', in an earthly context means 'receiving mercy and wealth and *'mlevanoba'* ('happiness because of assistance from heaven or from kings')'.[36]

How did the authors of 'Kartlis Cxovreba' imagine help from Heaven? The king, according to 'Kartlis Cxovreba' is crowned by God's grace and reigns by God's grace (this, for example, is the Byzantine formula of the imperial powers. The king's reigning by the grace of God is depicted in 'Kartlis Cxovreba' in the ritual of receiving the royal crown from the Holy Cross,

which, as we saw when discussing Vakhtang Gorgasali's vision, is a symbol of Christ. The ritual of the crowning, which we meet in 'The Life of Vakhtang Gorgasali' and in 'The Life of the Kings of Kartli' and which does not correspond to an authentic ritual of crowning a king, is in reality a metaphoric expression of a formula which we meet in 'The Life of Tamar, King of Kings': 'Christ, my only God, eternal king of the heavens and the earth! To You we commit this kingdom, which You have entrusted to me, and this people, redeemed by Your precious blood, and these my children, whom You have given to me, and then my soul.' (LT: 145). The piety of the king is a prerequisite of God's mercy, which is expressed by the formula of fear of God. 'This fear of the Lord David [the Builder] himself had acquired from his youth, and it grew with his maturity; and in its time it produced such fruits by which his life was doubly adorned, by which he embellished his actions, by which he adorned his worldly needs and directed his spiritual work' (LD: 347, trans. Thomson: 339) and Tamar, according to her historian, 'She had the beginning of all good things: fear of God and sincerity in serving Him — only thus did she attain what no one else ever did.' (LT: 147).

The king's piety implies a political aspect. David built many churches and monasteries 'not only in his own realm but also those of Greece, of the Holy Mountain, of Bulgaria, of Syria and Cyprus, of the Black Mountain, and of Palestine... of Jerusalem... and even more than this', he also defended and spread Christianity over eastern Christendom in its entirety.

> In addition to these, how many churches did he build, how many bridges over violent rivers, how many roads difficult of passage did he pave with stone, how many churches profaned by the heathen did he purify as houses of God, how many pagan peoples did he lead to become sons of holy baptism and receive for Christ! He expended the most effort for this, that he might win the whole world away from the devil and consecrate them to God; whereby he acquired the grace of apostleship like Paul and like the great Constantine (LD: 352 ff., trans. Thomson: 343–5).

The semantics of the king's piety bring him closer to the spheres of celestial and earthly glory to the extent that he transfers the idea of divine justness to the political context which, for its part, gives the possibility of comparing God and king. In 'The Life of David, King of Kings' David embodies divine justice. In the words of David's historian, 'like God [David] judged rightly his flock' (LD: 352, trans. Thomson: 343), and David's kingdom is described as a kingdom of justness and legality: 'No one who lived in a village or in a city, no warrior, nor anyone of rank or maturity dared to follow a crooked path. For all men kept to good order, everyone (obeyed) the law, ev-

eryone (observed) honour, and even all the debauched took care. Fear was on all, and they followed the paths of piety and peace.' (LD: 356, trans. Thomson: 346). The description of Tamar's kingdom is analogous, in which 'like the sun, spreading its rays over all, she treated everyone with equal respect. Thus thanks to the mercy by which everything is provided, she moved God to mercy, thus gaining time, and thus strengthening friends, not something found by lies and injustice.' (LT: 147-8). David's historian compares him to God: 'These great deeds, only possible from God, he carried out with such ease as no one else could so easily accomplish. Therefore great fear and awe of him was noised to the ends of the world, and all inhabitants of the earth were terrified.' (LD: 355, trans. Thomson: 346), and Tamar is known directly as 'a fourth moulded from the Trinity' (HSE: 3).

Thus, as we have seen, earthly glory is not a goal, but an outcome, the result of God's mercy, the collateral for which is the king's piety based on the hagiographical paradigm.[37]

As we have seen, in 'The Life of David, King of Kings', 'The Life of Tamar, King of Kings' and 'The Histories and Eulogies of the Sovereigns', and also in 'The Life of Vakhtang Gorgasali', earthly glory is subordinated to the concept of celestial glory, but in later texts this concept is explained more concretely: On the one hand earthly glory is a projection onto a political context of heaven, a reflection of celestial glory which is represented in the idea of a just reign and, on the other, it has a concrete symbolic and material expression: David's historian has something to say in this connection: about 'such manifestations of compassion from God on high... the royal lands which God granted him, the cities and the fortresses' (LD: 335, trans. Thomson: 326), and it is said of Tamar that 'in keeping all God's commandments she received God's mercy, and God blessed her life and increased her fruit... God brightened her days with uprightness and her times with peace.' (LT: 150).

In the same way we meet in 'The Life of David, King of Kings' the external political equivalent of the concept of earthly glory: This is the state programme which, in the opinion of David's historian, David the Builder implemented thanks to God's mercy: 'For he made the sultan tributary to himself and the king of the Greeks like a member of his household. He overthrew the heathen and destroyed the barbarians; he made subjects of kings and slaves of rulers. The Arabs he put to flight the Ismaelites he plundered, and the Persians he ground to dust; their leaders he reduced to peasants. I shall explain succinctly: those who earlier were kings, giants, champions, long since renowned, valiant and strong, famous for various deeds — all these he so subjected that they were like animals in comparison.' (LD 351-2, trans. Thomson: 342-3).

In Georgian political theology the idea of God's mercy follows the biblical paradigm and is expressed in the idea of the rule of a just king, who defeats enemies and lives in peace with his neighbours. According to the biblical paradigm of the chosen, God's mercy is expressed in blessed increase (cf. 'The Life of Tamar, King of Kings: 159) which, incidentally, could mean an increase of earthly goodness. The concept of temporal glory in 'Kartlis Cxovreba' is manifest on two levels: For all Christian kingdoms a more or less general ideological level expressed in the idea of the king's divinity, which creates heaven on this earth, and on a more concrete political level, which is expressed in the programme of the Kingdom of Georgia. In the third part I shall address this aspect, especially in connection with its external political legitimation, which, in my opinion, was formulated as a covert polemic against the Byzantine imperial idea in particular, and against the imperial idea in general.

The Strategy for Foreign Policy Legitimation

I shall begin this part with the foreign policy 'positioning' of the idealized kingdom of David and Tamar by the medieval Georgian chroniclers. Medieval Georgian political theology depicts the king as a warrior saint who embodies the concepts of truth and justness. At the same time the figure of the holy knight, just as in the case of Saint George (see above), gives us an opportunity to actualize various hypostases of the martyr and the victor or, for example, in the case of Vakhtang Gorgasali, it manages to offer us both of these. 'Kartlis Cxovreba' begins the actualization of the hypostasis of the victorious king with 'The Life of David, King of Kings'. 'The Histories and Eulogies of the Sovereigns' directly compares George III and Saint George, the former being 'truly a recipient of the achievements and crown of the martyrs, similarly to his own namesake George: if this invincible warrior had overcome one dragon, that one had overcome many, many kinds of asp and adder'. (HES: 7-8).

As we have seen, there occurs a transfer of the metaphysical categories of good and evil to the political context. But while the use of Christian symbolism does not raise problems in confrontations with Muslim (non-Christian) opponents, the use of Christian symbolism becomes all the more significant in the case of conflicts with Christian, mainly Orthodox, countries (with Byzantium from the eleventh to the thirteenth centuries, and with Russia in the nineteenth century). The very possibility of Christian figures and symbols in confrontations with Christian countries implies a whole range of se-

mantic transpositions, and should be reviewed more thoroughly as it requires particular interpretation.

A trace of latent anti-Byzantinism can be felt in the process of Georgia's emancipation from Byzantium in the eleventh century (especially after the Byzantines' defeat at the Battle of Manzikert in 1071 and the weakening of the Empire's positions in the East). The word 'anti-Byzantinism' does not accurately convey the essence of the problem that, following the formation of the Kingdom of Georgia in 1008 (with the unification of the kingdoms of Kartli and Apkhazia), lies in the attempt to obtain greater political independence and to expand the kingdom at the expense of the north-eastern Byzantine territories and, beginning with David the Builder, in political and in some cases cultural rivalry with Byzantium in the East.[38] For example, 'The Histories and Eulogies of the Sovereigns' calls the Byzantine emperor (Manuel I Komnenos) 'King of all the West and of Greece', at a time when Georgia was localized in the East (HES: 17). Of course, we must examine this rivalry from the perspective of the orientation of Kartli towards Byzantium from the seventh century onwards. (This is when the split occurs between the Georgian and Armenian Churches, as a consequence of which Kartli chooses Calcedonism.) Medieval Georgia in the eleventh to thirteenth centuries is a state in the 'Byzantine Commonwealth' (Obolensky) which acknowledges the primacy of the Byzantine emperor. It is against this background that I shall examine several examples of the struggle for pre-eminence.

Anti-Byzantinism is directly manifested in a rare text in 'Kartlis Cxovreba', 'The History and Tale of the Bagrationis' by Sumbat Davitis-dze. In this case the strategy of the text is built on the idea of the Byzantine emperor as a heathen. At the time of the war between Bagrat IV and Constantine VIII, the death of Constantine is explained as the wrath of God: 'But when the East was worryingly plagued by troubles, the fury swiftly caught up with the lawless King Constantine and likewise with the ungodly Julian, because of the mercilessness against our King Bagrat, because of the destruction of his hereditary lands.' (HTB: 387). Representing Constantine as an unbeliever gives Sumbat the opportunity to portray the Georgians as martyrs for the Faith. 'And like faithful and true holy martyrs they lay down their lives, and they sacrificed themselves for earthly lords, and they shed their blood like the word of the Apostles, and they grew stronger.' (HTB: 387). It is in this context that we can examine the interpretation of the iconography of Saint George that is offered by Giorgi Maisuradze, who considers that in Georgia there is a widespread iconographic type in which Saint George slays the Emperor Diocletian and not a dragon. He presents a political and theological commentary on the policy of the Georgian Kings George I and Bagrat

VI directed against the Byzantine Emperors Basil II (976-1025) and Constantine VIII (1025-8).[39] It is the representation of the Byzantine emperor as an unbeliever that gives the possibility of extending the symbols of Christian political theology to him.

Rejection of titles of the Byzantine court and changes in coins minted in Georgia at the end of the eleventh century are signs of escaping from the Byzantine tradition.[40] We can regard the replacement of Georgian coins from the period of George I and Bagrat VI, on the obverse of which the Theotokos of Vlakhern was depicted, by new types in David the Builder's period depicting for the first time a Georgian king in Byzantine royal robes and with the inscription 'God, glorify David King of the Apkhaz, Georgians, Rans, Kakhs and Armenians'[41] as an indicator of escaping from Byzantine influence. A type of coin is also known on the obverse of which there is an Arabic inscription 'David, King of Kings, submitting to the Messiah',[42] which we meet on Georgian coins up to the end of Rusudan's reign (1245). (In the cases of Tamar and Rusudan the formula 'Sword of the Messiah' is replaced by the formula 'Worshipper of the Messiah'.) The formula 'Sword of the Messiah', which originates in biblical apocalyptica but it is used in the Gospel of John, indicates to us in the first place divine justness, although it has strong political implications.[43] Both the spread of the true faith, and the punishment of those who deny, it are functions of the Sword of the Messiah, which in the Georgian context are directly linked to the war against the 'unbelievers'. The king's sword, as one of the attributes of the ritual of crowning as king, is brought in to the altar behind the iconostasis where it receives its power from the Cross.[44] This aspect also figures in the symbolism of the 'Sword of the Messiah' as, in actual fact, a verbalized formulation of one element of the ritual of crowning as king. The foreign policy context of the 'Sword of the Messiah' formula unknown in Byzantium, just like the Arabic of the inscription, indicate to us changes in political conception: Attention is shifting to the East from the viewpoint that the East (the direct Muslim surroundings) becomes the addressee of the 'despatched' coins.[45] We can readily discuss Georgian coins from the middle of David the Builder's reign to the end of that of Rusudan in the very context of foreign policy positioning: By the polemical formulation 'Sword of the Messiah' Georgian kings attempt to dispute the Byzantine Empire's function (at least in the East) as defender of the true apostolic Faith. (Demonstrative support of the religious centres of Eastern Christendom has the same context, and 'The Life of David, King of Kings' calls David the Builder the second Paul and Constantine in the context of the liberation of Christian lands.) For David's legacy it is his cultural and religious policies (to use modern terminology) that become the corner-

stone of foreign policy legitimation, which is represented on the coins. Thus we meet on copper coins minted in Tamar's name the Arabic inscription 'Queen of Queens, Beauty of the Earth and of the Faith Tamar, Daughter of George, Worshipper of the Messiah', and on the reverse of improper copper coins minted in 1187 and 1210 we read the inscription 'Exalted Queen, Beauty of the World and of the Faith, Tamar Daughter of George, Worshipper of the Messiah, May God Augment her Victories'. Around this is written in Arabic: 'May God Augment her Glory, Increase her Reputation and Strengthen her Well-being'.[46] We read the inscription on a coin of George IV Lasha 'King of Kings, Beauty of the Earth and of the Faith, George, Son of Tamar, Sword of the Messiah',[47] and on the reverse of a copper coin of Rusudan from 1227 the inscription 'Queen of Kings and Queens, Glory of the Earth, of the Kingdom and of the Faith, Rusudan, Daughter of Tamar, Worshipper of the Messiah. God Augments her Victory', and on the reverse of a silver coin minted in 1230 we read the Arabic inscription 'Queen of Queens, Glory of the Earth and of the Faith Rusudan, Daughter of Tamar, Worshipper of the Messiah'.[48] (The Saviour is depicted on the obverse.)

It is to Tamar that her historian, Basil Ezosmodzghvari, gives first place in the defence of the Faith, although it is to be noted that this happens shortly before the capture of Constantinople by the Latins (1204), that is to say, when Byzantine foreign policy influence was extremely circumscribed. The Byzantine Emperor Alexios III Angelos (1195-1203), whom the Georgian Chronicle calls Angar—the commentary emphasizes this is not a question of the corruption of the surname, but of Alexios III's mercenariness ('angareba' in Georgian)—confiscated from monks 'from the Black Mountains, from Antioch and the island of Cyprus, also from the Holy Mountain and from many other places... 'a considerable quantity of gold' that had been donated by Tamar 'to be divided among all the monasteries'. 'When Queen Tamar learned of this she sent more in its place to the holy fathers and thus further shamed the devil'. (LT: 142). Thus we once again meet a depiction opposing the faith of the Byzantine emperor. Nor is it so insignificant that the chronicler explains the founding by Alexius I Comnenus (1204-22) of Trebizond by this very fact:

> *And she was angry with the Greek king, and sent a small number
> [of soldiers] from across the Likhi, and they took from them Lazi-
> ca, Trebizond, Limni, Samsun, Sinop, Kerasunt, Kitiori, Amastri-
> da, Araklia and all the area of Peblagonia and Pontus, and gave
> them to her relative Alexius Comnenus, the son of Andronikos, who
> was himself then with Queen Tamar, having taken refuge with her.
> (LT: 142).*

Here, analogously to Sumbat Davitis-dze's chronicle, Basil Ezos-modzghvari explains the Latins' capture of Constantinople by the 'paganism' of the emperor. When the fugitive Alexius III Angelos hides at his in-law, the King of Bulgaria, the latter presents him with a huge amount of gold and says to him: ' "Behold, Alexius, that which you desire; take this gold instead of any kind of food or drink, since for this you have ruined the Christian royal house, and undone the power of the Greeks." And thus that pitiful man died of hunger, deprived of God's assistance.' (LT: 143).

What impeded Georgian political theology in debating with Byzantium not only the defence the Faith but also political pre-eminence? Georgian political theology is characterized by a latent anti-imperial stance for the several reasons listed below. If we examine the themes of the founding of the Kingdom of Kartli, then we shall notice a general paradigm:

1. The founding of the first, mythical kingdom of Kartli by the Kartvelians' eponymous Kartlos is connected with the uprising by the sons of Targamos (the common ancestor of the Caucasian peoples, according to 'The Life of the Kings of Kartli') against King Nebrot of Babylon under the leadership of the Armenians' mythical eponymous Haos.

2. The founding of the first kingdom of Iberia is linked to the uprising by Parnavaz, Kartlos's descendant and heir to the Mtskheta leadership, against Azon, a ruler appointed by Alexander the Great.

One main structural element of the theme is breaking free from a universal empire: from Babylon in the first case and from Alexander the Great's in the second ('now with the help of the creator let us become slave to no one', LKK: 6, trans. Thomson: 6). Confrontation with an empire having greater political strength is a main element of the structuring of a historical theme, which leaves a certain mark on subsequent interpretation of the idea of Kartlian statehood.

Dimitry Obolensky's argument is significant for the period of interest to us. Obolensky says when interpreting from a political and theological standpoint the war between the Bulgarian King Symeon and Byzantium:

> *Political thought, at least in Eastern Europe, was dominated by the idea of the one universal empire, whose centre was in Constantinople. This empire was, by definition, a unique and all-embracing institution. And so, Symeon, impelled by restless ambition, convinced of the innate superiority of all things Byzantine, and well grounded as he was in East Roman political philosophy, was driven to the only course of action he could logically adopt: to try and make himself master of enlarged Byzantine Empire, which would include Bulgaria. To*

> *achieve this he needed to capture Constantinople and to seat himself*
> *on the imperial throne.[49]*

The ambitions of the Georgian kings after the fall of Constantinople, however, did not extend so far. Instead we meet in Georgian historical literature a trace of a more or less covert polemic against the imperial idea. The lack of imperial ambitions at the very peak of the strength of the Georgian state, in my opinion, requires more detailed examination and explanation.

We come across an odd passage In 'The Life of David, King of Kings'. When David's historian compares David the Builder to Alexander the Great he says: 'Except with an army of Georgians Alexander would not have attained such a good result. So if David had controlled the kingdom of the Persians or the force of the Greeks and Romans, or of other great realms, then you would have seen his accomplishments superior to those of other famous men.' HD: 359, trans. Thomson: 349). The author of 'The Histories and Eulogies of the Sovereigns' expresses a similar opinion when he says of Tamar that 'no country was worthy of a monarch the like of her, Georgia least of all'. (HES: 112).

We may set out the implicit formula which both David's and Tamar's histories contain so as to resolve the imperial/anti-imperial aporia: These kings were so just and exemplary that they would have deserved to rule the whole world, but the biblical imperative, which leaves its mark on the thinking of the medieval Georgian chroniclers and their orientation towards the biblical model, comes into confrontation with the imperial idea which is presented as a more negative than ideal model.

The extracts cited above are interesting not solely and not to the extent of their idealization of David and Tamar but, in my opinion, first and foremost in that they contain an implicit formula of ideal Georgian statehood, which is based on a covert polemic against the Byzantine imperial model. In the context of such an interpretation, the following extract from Basil Ezosmodzghvari's work 'The Life of Tamar, King of Kings' is significant. At the time of the crowning of Tamar as monarch, for Tamar 'they put in place the happy throne of Vakhtang, the throne of David, which was earlier prepared for the moon by Sabaoth Elohim, King of Kings, to rule from sea to sea and from the river to the end of the earth.' (LT: 115). The key to the interpretation of this extract is a pointer to Psalm 72, 'for Solomon':

> *In his days shall the righteous flourish; and abundance of peace so long*
> *as the moon endureth.*
> *He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto*
> *the ends of the earth.*

They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before him; and his enemies shall lick the dust.

The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents: the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts.

Yea, all kings shall fall down before him: all nations shall serve him.

For he shall deliver the needy when he crieth; the poor also, and him that hath no helper.

He shall spare the poor and needy, and shall save the souls of the needy.

He shall redeem their soul from deceit and violence: and precious shall their blood be in his sight.

And he shall live, and to him shall be given of the gold of Sheba: prayer also shall be made for him continually; and daily shall he be praised.

There shall be an handful of corn in the earth upon the top of the mountains; the fruit thereof shall shake like Lebanon: and they of the city shall flourish like grass of the earth.

His name shall endure for ever: his name shall be continued as long as the sun: and men shall be blessed in him: all nations shall call him blessed. (Psalms 72: 7–17)

This pointer is significant from several viewpoints. Firstly, it is actualizing the dynastic myth of the Bagrationis, who consider the biblical King David as their ancestor. Secondly and even more significant is that fact that it contains a programme for ideal statehood against which Tamar's reign can be evaluated. And thirdly, this extract implicitly compares Tamar's kingdom to neighbouring Byzantium. This interpretation is supported by Basil Ezosmodzghvari's summing up of Tamar's reign, in which a comparison of Tamar with the biblical King Solomon, whom the historian brings in at the beginning of his work, has already been 'realized historically' (from a philological viewpoint, which should be discussed separately, the historian throughout the whole of his work draws complex parallels between David and Solomon and David the Builder and Tamar). However the comparison of Tamar with Solomon extends the image of Solomon and embellishes it, which permit us to examine more widely the context of the polemic against the Byzantine and the imperial model in general. Tamar

did not strive to remain without neighbours; neither did she join house to house, nor land to another's land, but her old estate was sufficient so that they did not think her unjust and grabbing. As the heavenly court had judged her just, she did not fear to threaten her neighbours, but mostly she defended them from those who were threatening them, and did terrible things to their enemies. She cast leach-like

> *insatiability far away, not poisoning fruit nor doing bad deeds. She sat as judge between herself and neighbouring monarchs, not allowing fighting, nor throwing off the yoke of mutual oppression, and she gave them her example, and for this she became a second Solomon among monarchs. (LT: 148).*

A pointer to the Prophet Isaiah's book creates a polemical space from the viewpoint of an anti-imperial rhetoric:

> *And now go to; I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard: I will take away the hedge thereof, and it shall be eaten up; and break down the wall thereof, and it shall be trodden down:*
>
> *And I will lay it waste: it shall not be pruned, nor digged; but there shall come up briers and thorns: I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it.*
>
> *For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant: and he looked for judgment, but behold oppression; for righteousness, but behold a cry.*
>
> *Woe unto them that join house to house, that lay field to field, till there be no place, that they may be placed alone in the midst of the earth! (Isaiah 5:5–8).*

The picture of a people buried in pointlessness and grabbing can also be a political pointer to the fall of Constantinople: Let us recall the extract cited above concerning the punishment of the Byzantine Emperor Alexius III Angelos, whom the chronicler calls Angar, and who to a certain extent amounts to a background for Tamar's reign. Sulkhan-Saba Orbeliani's dictionary defines the word 'angari' as 'amassing unjustly',[50] which gives us a way to transfer this formula to a political context. Thus the unification of another's 'house' could have been explained as a negative act opposed to the image of a just king. Accordingly, Georgian political theology distinguishes between lands given to the king by God's mercy and lands conquered 'mercenarily' (amassed unjustly) with their negative connotations.

The fact that the ideal of a just and law-abiding king was covertly at variance with the Byzantine political model can be explained by historical and also ideological reasons. On the historical level, the ideal model of the Georgian Kingdom could be a response to a political conception of creating buffer zones and vassal stated around Georgia, however the ideological context is much more interesting. In the context of an ideal monarchy, medieval Georgian literature is orientated not to the imperial model, but to the biblical model of David and Solomon and in this way actualizes the contexts of a chosen people and a holy land. It goes without saying that an orientation towards the biblical model already implies not only a polemic against the Ro-

man imperial model (which the Byzantine Empire continues), but against the imperial model in general.[51] Thus the model of Georgian statehood that we can reconstruct from medieval Georgian historiography, rules out the idea of empire, but puts in first place the defence of the Faith which, for its part, is represented in the idea of the warrior saint. All the same, the covert polemic against the imperial idea was not based on Byzantine political theology, but on a Georgian perception of Byzantium at a particular stage in its development on the one hand, and on a Georgian reading of the Old and New Testaments that differed from the Byzantine and, accordingly, an idiosyncratic interpretation of biblical notions on the other.[52] A comparison of Orthodox political theologies raises a whole range of questions, which have for the moment to remain unanswered. What is the role of models of 'Roman' and 'biblical' statehood in the political theologies of Byzantium and other Christian countries? This question is solved in differing countries at differing times and in differing ways.[53] The idea of a chosen people and a holy land is quite poorly presented in Byzantium. The biblical model is more or less restricted by the actualization of the paradigm of a 'second Jerusalem', which creates a greater amalgam of two models (and the paradigm of two cities) in the conception of a single Christian (universal) empire, which in an ideal conception should be an earthly reflection of a heavenly kingdom. (The conception itself of a heavenly kingdom could be explained in differing ways according to the context.) In Russia, for example, the idea of a second Jerusalem coexists for quite a long time with the idea of a third Rome and thus created differing themes of conceptualizing and developing statehood.[54] Thus we may discuss political theology as a dynamic apparatus, which can be used for both internal and external policy polemics. Political theology contains a model of the future (from which arises the significance of eschatological models) which, in a retrospective analysis, is explained from the standpoint of a certain historical context, and which may be corrected according to historical reality.

Notes:

1. After Count Ivan Paskevich-Yerevanskij, the Russian general who captured Yerevan.
2. Only a few studies on this topic are available: Aleksandre Tvaradze, 'Georgia and the Caucasus on the Basis of Historiographic and Cartograph-

ic Material in Twelfth- to Sixteenth-Century European Sources', Tbilisi, 2004 (Chapter 1) (In Georgian); and Giorgi Maisuradze, 'Der heilige Georg — ein Held christlicher politischer Theologie'. In 'Märtyrer', Munich: Sigrid Weigel, 2007, pp. 95-99. The following books were published after this article was written and, unfortunately, I have not been able to take them into account: Lela Pataridze, 'Political and Cultural Identities in the Fourth- to Eighth-Century Georgian Unity: The World of "Kartlis Cxovreba"', Tbilisi, 2009; Zurab Kiknadze, 'On the Path to the Christianization of Georgia: Human Beings and Sacred Objects, Tbilisi, 2009; and Mariam Chkhartishvili, 'The Georgian ethnie in the era of religious conversion', Tbilisi, 2009 (All in Georgian).

3. Dimitri Obolensky, 'The Byzantine Commonwealth: Eastern Europe 500-1453, New York and Washington, 1971. Unfortunately almost no attention is paid to Georgia or Armenia, and the concentration is entirely on the Slavic world.

4. Unfortunately, such interesting topics remain outside the scope of this article as the dynastic mythology of the Bagrationi dynasty; a comparison of the crowning rituals of Georgian and Byzantine kings and emperors; and an analysis from a political theology perspective of the uniting at the time of David the Builder of secular and spiritual powers in the 'post' of Royal Chancellor and *Chqondideli*, which should be discussed separately. A complex analysis, besides the historical literature, requires analysis and comparative study of secular and ecclesiastic literature.

5. Ivane Javakhishvili, 'The aim of history, sources and methods then and now', Book 1, 'Old Georgian historical writing'. In Ivane Javakhishvili, 'Works in Twelve Volumes', Vol. 8, p. 26 ff.

6. I use the concept of 'political theology' from the standpoint of the legitimation of political actions with the help of theological categories. See Heinrich Meier, 'Was ist Politische Theologie?', Carl Friedrich von Siemens Stiftung, 2006.

7. The following texts and publications have been used in this article: Leonti Mroveli, 'The Life of the Kings of Kartli' (abbreviated 'LKK') and 'The Conversion of Kartli by Nino' (abbreviated 'CKN'); 'The Life of Vakhtang Gorgasali' (abbreviated 'LVG'), attributed to Juansher; 'The Chronicle of Kartli' (abbreviated 'CK', anonymous); 'The Life of David, King of Kings' (abbreviated 'LD'); Sumbat Davitis-dze, 'The Life and Tale of the Bagrationis' (abbreviated 'LTB'). In Simon Qaukhchishvili (pub.), 'Kartlis Cxovreba' ('The Life of Kartli'), Vol. 1, Tbilisi, 1955. Basil Ezosmodzghvari, 'The Life of Tamar, King of Kings' (abbreviated 'LT'); 'The Histories and Eulogies of the Sovereigns' (abbreviated 'HES', anonymous)'. In Simon Qaukhch-

ishvili (pub.), 'Kartlis Cxovreba' ('The Life of Kartli'), Vol. 2, Tbilisi, 1959. 'The Conversion of Kartli' (abbreviated 'CK'). In I. Abuladze [et al.] (ed.), 'Old Georgian Hagiographical Literary Texts', Tbilisi, 1963 (hereinafter identified by the name and pagination of the text as in this edition). Several English translations of Georgian citations are from Robert W. Thomson, 'Rewriting Caucasian History: The Medieval Adaptation of the Georgian Chronicles', Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996. These are indentified by 'Thomson' followed by pagination details.

8. Javakhishvili, p. 27.

9. For the establishment of the concept of 'Georgia' see Stephen H. Rapp, Jr., 'Studies in Medieval Georgian Historiography: Early Texts and Eurasian Contexts', Louvain, 2003, pp. 413-440.

10. Karl Löwith, 'Weltgeschichte und Heilsgeschehen. Die theologischen Voraussetzungen der Geschichtsphilosophie'. In 'Sämtliche Schriften', Vol. 2, 1983, p. 16. In this context the desire of the first Georgian chroniclers to record the history of their own country in the context of world history becomes understandable. The majority of the extant manuscripts of 'Kartlis Cxovreba' begin with a 'foreword' of world history (Genesis, etc.), and the Georgian chroniclers trace the origins of the Georgians to Noah's son, Japheth. However this contextualization is not limited to biblical descent. Thus LKK links the birth of the first Georgian kingdom to Alexander the Great's mythical campaign, and it regards King Mirian (284-361) as descended from Nimrod.

11. Jacob Taubes, 'Die Politische Theologie des Paulus', Munich, 2003, p. 42.

12. For a detailed iconography of the Apostle Paul, see 'Lexicon der christlichen Ikonographie', Vol. 8, Rome, Freiburg, Basel and Vienna, 1976, p. 130 ff.

13. The ten sayings are: '1. Wherever this gospel shall be preached, there this woman will be spoken of. 2. There is no male or female, but you are all one. 3. Go and teach all the heathen, and baptize them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. 4. The light will shine over the heathen to glorify your people Israel. 4. Wherever this gospel of the kingdom (of heaven) shall be preached, there too (this) will be spoken of in the whole world. 5. Whoever shall hear you and receive you, has received me; and whoever shall receive me, will receive the one who sent me. 7. For Mary greatly loved the Lord, because she continuously heard his true word. 8. Do not fear those who destroy your bodies but are not able to destroy your soul. 9. Jesus said to Mary Magdalene: Go, woman, and announce to my sisters and brothers. 10. Wherever you preach, (let it be) in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.' (CKN: 86-7, trans. Thomson: 96).

14. Taubes, p. 58.

15. Taubes, p. 59.
16. But, for Taubes, Paul is 'the apostle of the Jews to the Gentiles', the creation in the economy of salvation of a new chosen people (from the Gentiles) happens so as to provoke jealousy among the Jewish chosen people (Taubes, p. 54). Jacob Taubes was pointing out that baptized Jews and Judeo-Christians played a particular role in the spread of early Christianity. The Jewish community of Mtskheta—which, according to the chroniclers, has existed since the time of Nebuchadnezzar—acts in the conversion of Kartli together with Saint Nino. Abiatar, a rabbi converted by Nino, whom CKN and CK call the new Paul, and who mentions himself as related to the Apostle Paul since both are descendants of Benjamin, together with his daughters are characters in the foreground of the conversion of Kartli and to a great extent are its narrators. In CK Abiatar says that from the outset he was surprised at Paul and Stephen, until he realized the gist of their actions which, in Abiatar's words, lay in conversion. The argumentation that supports conversion (unlike Paul's argumentation) is more direct, but in principle it repeats the Judeo-Christian community's argument about the wrath of God: 'Have we then erred in the death of Jesus of Nazareth? For we see that when previously our fathers sinned against God and totally forgot him, he gave them up to a cruel ruler and captivity. But when they turned and cried out he quickly saved them from tribulation. We know from Scripture (that this occurred) seven times. But now, since our fathers laid hand on the son of a woman who was a stranger and killed him, God has removed the hand of his mercy from us and divided our kingdom. He has separated us from his holy temple, and has completely ignored our nation. Since that time 300 and more years have passed during which he has not heard our request nor given us consolation, which makes us think that perchance such providence was from heaven.' (CKN: 96, trans. Thomson: 104-5).
17. It is interesting in itself that Kartli's link with the history of salvation is realized with the help of the Mtskheta Jewish community. The history of the Jewish community in Georgia is an issue for separate research. In my opinion, putting the Jewish community in the foreground in 'Kartlis Cxovreba' is, among other things, linked to the general biblical orientation of the collection.
18. The metaphor of Jacob's Ladder is not exhausted by the Old Testament and points us in the direction of the Gospel of John (1: 51): 'And he saith unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man.'
19. Yuri Lotman, 'Selected Articles', 3 vols., Vol. 1, Tallin, 1992, p. 124 (In Russian)

20. Gregory Nagy, 'The Best of the Achaeans: Concepts of the Hero in Archaic Greek Poetry', Baltimore and London, 1979, p. 184.

21. James M. Redfield, 'Nature and Culture in the Iliad', Chicago and London,1975, p. 34.

22. Redfield, p. 101.

23. Lotman, p. 121.

24. For a detailed discussion of this issue see Adolf Harnack, 'Militia Christi. Die christliche Religion und der Soldatenstand in den ersten drei Jahrhunderten', Tubingen, 1905.

25. Harnack, p. 14.

26. Harnack, p. 21.

27. Christopher Walter, 'The Warrior Saints in Byzantine Art and Tradition', Aldershot (UK), 2003.

28. Maisuradze, 'Der Heilige Georg', p. 97.

29. See Tvaradze, p. 43, for analogies with the political theology of the crusaders.

30. Hans Belting, 'Bild und Kult: Eine Geschichte des Bildes vor dem Zeitalter der Kunst', Munich, 2000, p. 124.

31. See Tvaradze for the use of Christian symbols for military purposes.

32. Rapp, pp. 207-13.

33. Rapp, p. 214.

34. Tvaradze, p. 32.

35. Obolensky, pp. 308-13.

36. Sulkhan-Saba Orbeliani, 'Georgian Dictionary', Vol. 1, 1966, pp. 220 and 492. (In Georgian)

37. In this context it is particularly important to describe the death of the king. The chronicler describes the death of David the Builder on 24 January (8 February) 1125 as God's mercy after the fulfilment of all his desires: 'Thus at a good and appropriate time God summoned the one who loved him and longed for his eternal kingdom and his presence... For during the winter, a time of peace and quiet for the whole kingdom, not only outside the frontiers but also inside his realms, at the (place) previously chosen by himself for rest and sleep, as if in sweet slumber he slept with his fathers. This itself is sufficient to make known his special belonging to God.' (LD: 362, 361, trans. Thomson, pp. 352, 351). Similarly, Tamar, 'She spent her days joyfully', 'in twenty-three years she concluded all aspects of her valiant reign' and left her heirs 'beautiful, desirable and laudable, with regal looks, full of intelligence, adorned with wisdom, and full of virtue' (LT: 149-50). In Georgian political theology a just king dies having settled all his earthly matters (having implemented his state programme), the kingdom itself, which re-

mains with the just king's descendants, is described as a kingdom of peace, justness and legality.

38. LKK and LVG are texts with an unambiguous Byzantine orientation. LKK speaks of the (political) legitimation of Georgia's Christianity by the Eastern Roman Empire: King Mirian, who adopts Christianity, sends messengers to the Emperor Constantine who returns to Mirian his hostage son Bakar, sending him together with the messengers and valuable gifts to Mtskheta, while offering Mirian peace and brotherliness. (In this form the chronicler reacts to the change in the political orientation of Kartli from Iran to Byzantium.) LVG continues this tendency. The priest Peter, whom Vakhtang takes with him to the war against the 'Greeks', calls the Greeks 'God's people because of His promise', and the war with the Greeks a struggle 'against the sons of God', and Vakhtang himself calls on the Kartlian nobles not to abandon the friendship of the Greeks. The dependence of the Georgian kingdom and principalities on Byzantium is expressed in the same way in the title of Kuropalates, which was borne by Georgian feudal lords from the sixth century up to 888, and subsequently by kings up to the end of the eleventh century. CK, which narrates the capture of Tbilisi in 627 by the Emperor Heraclius (610-47) together with the Khazars and the defeat of the feudal lord Stepanoz, explains this by the latter's connection with the Persians. In some Georgian sources a latent anti-Byzantine trace is apparent, although in this case the Georgian chroniclers are faced with the problems of legitimation.

39. Maisuradze, 'Der heilige Georg', p. 97.

40. Coins in themselves are an indicator of political legitimation. It is in coins that the legitimation of the conception of Byzantine emperors as 'Christ's deputies' is expressed. Beginning with Justinian II (685-95; 705-11) an image of Christ replaces the portrait of the emperor on the obverse of the coins. The emperor is emphasizing that the highest sovereignty belongs to the heavenly Lord, and the legend 'victoria augustorum' replaces the legend 'rex regnatum' (M. Restle, 'Kunst und byzantinische Münzprägung von Justinian I. bis zum Bilderstreit', Athens, 1964, p. 12; Belting, p. 157). According to Breckenridge, 'the emperor, standing before his master, appears to men both as the image of the Divine Pambasileus on earth, and the apostle of the true Faith, of orthodoxy itself'. (James Duglas Breckenridge, 'The Numismatic Iconography of Justinian', New York, 1959, p. 19, as cited in Belting , p. 157.) In the view of some academics, putting the portrait of Christ on the obverse was a propaganda step that represented a reaction against Arab coins, which mentioned Caliph Abd al-Malik as 'Allah's deputy' and 'defender of believers' (Belting p. 158).

41. Davit Kapanadze, 'Georgian Numismatics', Tbilisi, 1966, p. 63.

42. Reconstruction by David Kapanadze. Kapanadze, p. 70.

43. Cornelia Bennema, 'The Sword of the Messiah and the Concept of Liberation in the Fourth Gospel', Biblica 86 (2005), pp. 35-58. In the same context Ioane Shavteli's 'Abdulmesia' requires a separate discussion, something which is beyond the scope of this article.

44. Ivane Javakhishvili, 'A History of Georgian Law'. In id., 'Works', Vol. 7, Tbilisi, 1984, p. 153. (In Georgian)

45. Kapanadze, p. 72.

46. Evgeny Pakhomov, 'The Coins of Georgia', Tbilisi, 1970, p. 94. (In Russian); T. Lomouri, 'Money in the Era of Shota Rustaveli'. In 'The Material Culture of the Era of Shota Rustaveli', Tbilisi, 1938. (In Georgian)

47. Pakhomov, p. 96.

48. Pakhomov, p. 105. T. Barnaveli, 'Figurative Marks on Georgian Coins from the High Middle Ages', Matsne, History, Archaeology, Ethnography and Art Series (1974) 3. (In Georgian)

49. Obolensky, p. 105.

50. Orbeliani, s.v. 'angari', p. 53.

51. For a detailed discussion of the relationship between the biblical kingdom of Israel and the Roman Empire see Jan Assmann, 'Herrschaft und Heil: Politische Theologie in Ägypten, Israel und Europa', Munich, 2000. In our context p. 46 ff. are especially interesting.

52. See O. Treitinger, 'Die Oströmische Kaiser- und Reichsidee nach ihrer Gestaltung im höfischen Zeremoniell', Darmstadt' 1969. F. Dvornik, 'Early Christian and Byzantine Political Philosophy', Washington, 1966. H. Hunger (ed.), 'Das Byzantinische Herrscherbild', Darmstadt, 1975.

53. Anthony Smith directly links the British imperial idea to the biblical paradigm of a chosen people, although he does not adduce solid arguments in support of his hypothesis. Anthony D. Smyth, 'Chosen Peoples', Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003, p. 48. See R. S. Sugirharajah, 'The Bible and Empire: Postcolonial Explorations', Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005, pp. 60-98. In confirming this hypothesis, in my opinion, the sole example would be the legitimation of the imperial idea by the idea of a chosen people, since the principle of the universality of empire is implicitly opposed to the national principle. In any case, answering this question would be possible only after a comparison of political ideologies and models of empire.

54. Daniel B. Rowland, 'Moscow — The Third Rome or the New Israel', Russian Review, Vol. 55, No. 4 (Oct., 1996), pp. 591-614. Paul Bushkovitch, 'The Formation of a National Consciousness in Early Modern Russia', Harvard Ukrainian Studies, Vol. 10 Nos. 3-4 (Dec., 1986), pp. 355-76.

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