FROM KᶜUSTI KAPKOH TO AL-ĠARBĪ:
SASANIAN ANTECEDENTS, THE SECTARIAN MILIEU, AND
THE CREATION OF AN ISLAMIC FRONTIER IN ARMĪNIYA

by

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ABSTRACT

Although Arab incursions into Armenia began in the 640s, it wasn't until after the Marwānid reforms that Arabs established direct rule over the region and created the province Armīniya. This dissertation considers Armīniya and the caliphal North (comprising Armenia, Caucasian Albania, Eastern Georgia, Azerbaijan, and parts of Northern Mesopotamia) from c. 700 to 862. During this brief period, an Arab governor presided over Dabīl, struck coins in Armīniya, collected taxes, and imposed Islamic law. Importantly, Islamic sources project Armīniya as a province of the Islamic world rather than as a tributary state. This ends with the dissolution of ᶜAbbāsid power after the death of al-Mutawakkil and, in Armenia, the rise of the Bagratids at the end of the ninth century.

In particular, this dissertation forwards three main arguments about the Arab period in Armīniya. First, Armīniya was important primarily as a frontier between the Caliphate, Byzantium, and Ḫazaria. The frontier was only partially defined by the military realities of the borderland and was instead primarily conceptual, built by the literary production of difference. Second, the Arab conceptualization of Armīniya was largely dependent upon the legacy of Sasanian control. Arabs considered the Caliphate to be the heir of the Persian Empire, so they were particularly interested in the region's Sasanian past. This determined not only how Arabs and Persians described Armīniya, but also how they ruled the land and its Christian population. Third, information about the Sasanian era was not transmitted via Arab-Armenian dialog, but rather among the Christians, Jews, and Muslims in the Near East. Specifically, the role of Syriac-

speaking Christians in the development of Islamic traditions about Armīniya cannot be overstated.

This dissertation discusses the importance of the province from the perspective of Arabic sources and Islamic historiography; although it employs Armenian, Greek, and Syriac sources, it is primarily concerned with the perspective from the center (Damascus and Baghdad).

Chapter 1: Introduction

"I am the son of Kisrā and my father is Marwān and Qayṣar is my grandfather and my grandfather is Khāqān."

Yazīd b. al-Walīd (r. 744)[1]

The history of the Arab incursions into Armenia in the seventh century is notoriously confused.[2] Historical sources describe the first Arab armies arriving in the North sometime between 636 and 642. By 652, Arabs and Armenians signed a peace treaty, preserved in the *History* attributed to Sebēos. This marks the beginning of an era, as some of the Armenian *naxarar* houses allied themselves with the Arab armies and turned towards the Islamic world instead of Christian Byzantium. Over the following century, we see more examples of Armenian attempts to step farther away from Byzantine hegemony.

However, it wasn't until after the Marwānid reforms of the late seventh century that the Arab presence in Armīniya increased. Arab governors arrived in Dabīl (Arm: Dwin), gathered taxes, minted coins, oversaw the administration of the province, imposed Islamic law over the Muslim population, and eventually encouraged the immigration of Arab tribes into Armīniya. Throughout both the Umayyad and early ᶜAbbāsid periods, Armīniya played an important role in the politics of caliphal succession. Furthermore, many of the Arab governors of Armīniya rose to

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[1] See انا ابن كسرى وابي مروان وقيصرجدى وجدى خاقان. al-Masᶜūdī, *Murūǧ,* qtd. and trans. Grabar (1954), 185 qtd. also Bosworth (1973), 53: relying on al-Ṭabarī and Muḥammad b. Ḥabīb al-Baġdādī, cites this as "I am the descendent of the Persian Emperor, my forefather was Marwān, and both the Emperor of Byzantium and the Khāqān of the Turks were my ancestors." See also Fowden (1993), 145: "I am the son of Khusrau; my father is Marwan. One grandfather is a Caesar; the other a khagan," citing al-Ṭabarī.

[2] Canard, Cahen & Deny (1986): "The history of the conquest of Armenia by the Arabs still presents in its details many uncertainties and obscurities, for the information found in the Arab, Armenian, and Greek sources is often contradictory."

higher positions in the caliphal administration, such as Marwān b. Muḥammad and Hārūn al-Rašīd, both of whom held the post of governor of Armīniya before becoming caliph.

Throughout the period of Arab control of Armīniya, the political situation and the relationship between Armenians and Arabs varied considerably. Typically, Armenian attempts at reasserting independence erupted in periods of caliphal decline and *fitna*s, usually followed by Arab expeditions to reclaim the province. The most notorious of these was the highly destructive campaign of Buġā during the caliphate of al-Mutawakkil. This marked the beginning of decline of the Arab period in Armīniya, as the local Armenian houses regained considerable power in the years immediately following the murder of al-Mutawakkil in 861. In this respect, Armīniya is comparable to many other provinces of the Caliphate, as ᶜAbbāsid central authority dissolved by the early 860s:

> The Islamic world in 861 still had a palpable sense of its own unity, which it projected squarely onto the figure of its caliph. But now, literally overnight, the humiliation or murder of its caliph became thinkable, and before long it would be unremarkable. And as the ruler proved vulnerable and fragile, so too did the empire. In 861 the ᶜAbbāsids still controlled most of Iraq, Syria, the Byzantine frontier district in Anatolia (the Thughūr), Egypt, Arabia, and Iran, even if they had to share some of their authority with local dynastic rulers such as the Ṭāhirids and Dulafids. But over the next few years, as internal struggles raged at the empire's heart, the provinces were largely left to fend for themselves…[3]

The Caliphate saw a number of drastic developments over the 860s. The Ṣaffārids defeated the Ṭāhirids and took control over Afghanistan and Sīstān; by 876, Yaᶜqūb b. al-Layṯ and his army reached within fifty miles of Baghdad itself. Aḥmad b. Ṭūlūn arrived in Egypt in 868 and soon thereafter gained the provinces of Syria, Palestine, and some of Northern Mesopotamia. Further west, the Aġlabids, who controlled Ifrīqiya from the early ninth century, supported a strong building agenda in the mid ninth century. The rise of independent dynasties in Armīniya, the

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[3] Bonner (2010), 306.

Bagratids and the Arcruni, fit well into the pattern of power shifts in the rest of the Islamic world as the central Caliphate crumbled in the second half of the ninth century.

The current study considers Armīniya as an Arab province, from its creation circa 700 to al-Mustaᶜīn's recognition of Ašot Bagratuni as prince of Armenia (*Išxan Hayocᶜ*) in 862. This date is particularly important not only to mark the rise of the Bagratids, who claimed kingship in 885, but also because it signals the end of Armenian collusion with Arab goals for the province. As we will see, Arab and Persian authors stressed Armīniya's Sasanian legacy, purposefully downplaying the Byzantine claims to the land. Armenians, for the most part, tended to corroborate this anti-Greek bent in Islamic literature, as we see that the Arab period was particularly important in the development of anti-Chalcedonian doctrine in Armenia and Albania. In 862, however, the Council of Širakawan reopened discussions between the Greek and Armenian Churches, effectively reigniting the possibility of Armenian–Byzantine alliance that had been largely impossible for over a century and a half.

This chapter will serve as an introduction to the main arguments of this dissertation and to its methodology, particularly regarding the use of Arabic sources. It will also introduce the individual chapters, briefly explaining the main topics and conclusions of each section.

1.1 Main Arguments

In the following chapters, I argue that certain themes recur in the study of Arab Armīniya, particularly: (1) the importance of the frontier between Islam, Byzantium, and Ḫazaria; (2) the legacy of the Sasanian period in Armenia;[4] and (3) the role of the sectarian milieu in the dissemination of traditions and literature relating to Armīniya. Each of these themes ties

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[4] The Greeks and the Persians first partitioned Armenia in 387: the Sasanians only controlled the eastern provinces of Armenia, though they gained and subsequently lost large portions of Armenian land in the 610 – 627 wars. However, the Arabic sources do not draw a distinction between Eastern and Western Armenia.

specifically to issues of continuity and change in early Islamic history, as well as the legitimacy of Arab claims to the Northern provinces of the Caliphate.

1.1.1 The Northern Frontier

The terms *dār al-Islām* and *dār al-ḥarb*, indicating a distinction between the lands in which Islamic law was or was not administered, first appear in the eighth-century. At least officially, these two entities were diametrically opposed and indefinitely at war. The dichotomization of the world into two groups, to a large extent a juridical and literary division, was mirrored in ninth- and tenth-century geographical texts, which described the Caliphate as *mamlakat al-Islām* (the kingdom of Islam) or simply Islam, compared to the unnamed "Other."

Between Islam and the "Other" there existed a line of marches, the *ṯuġūr* (border outposts). *Ṯuġūr*, the plural of *ṯaġr*, literally means, a "'gap, breach, opening', a term used for points of entry between the Dār al-Islām and the Dār al-Ḥarb beyond it."[5] Qudāma, despite the fact that he does not contextualize the *ṯuġūr* in the juridical context of *dār al-Islām* and *dār al-ḥarb*, describes the *ṯuġūr* as follows: "Islam is surrounded on all sides and directions by nations and peoples who are hostile to it, some of them near to and others far away from its imperial capital…it behooves the Muslims to be most wary and on their guard against the Romans [Byzantines], from among all the ranks of their adversaries."[6]

The *ṯuġūr* were both entire districts and specific towns, and the enumeration of the *ṯuġūr* in various Islamic geographical texts was relatively consistent. The commonly-referenced *ṯuġūr* in the North were Tiflīs (Tblisi), Bāb al-Abwāb (Derbent), and Qālīqalā (Erzurum). The Northern frontier cities were, at least in the Umayyad period, frequent sites of military exchange

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[5] Bosworth (2012).

[6] Qudāma, qtd. Bonner and Hagen (2010), 479.

between the Arab–Armenian armies and the Ḫazars. However, Qālīqalā only rarely saw armed skirmishes, as the caliphal excursions against the Byzantines usually occurred closer to the Syrian marches. In fact, especially by the early ᶜAbbāsid period, but even in the period of Arab invasions and under the Umayyads, we see examples of the movement of people and goods across both borders.

This dissertation will argue that the Armenian *ṯuġūr* were particularly important as conceptual boundaries. Instead of organizing the discussion around perpetual war or the division between *dār al-Islām* and *dār al-ḥarb*, I will argue that the borders of the Islamic world were fortified by the development of literary traditions which described these particular caliphal territories as non-Byzantine and as relevant to the Islamic world as a whole. In other words, the Armenian *ṯuġūr* were important because they formed a conceptual boundary between *mamlakat al-Islām* (the Caliphate) and the Other. This related less to the military situation at the time, and more to the literary production of difference in the early Islamic world.

Armīniya therefore became an important province, as the bulwark against Byzantium and Ḫazaria. Arab and Persian authors described Armīniya as part of Islam, despite the recognition that its population was Christian. Furthermore, Arab and Persian authors related traditions about Armīniya and its history that made it relevant to the Islamic world, as part of an attempt to bolster the claims of caliphal legitimacy despite the historic ties among Armenia, Georgia, Albania, and Byzantium.

1.1.2   Sasanian Legacy

The question of the Sasanian legacy is absolutely fundamental in understanding both the Armenian response to Arab control and the Arab conceptualization of Armīniya. A stress on

Sasanian motifs recurs not only in Arabic, but also in Armenian sources. This common theme does not necessarily imply that Arabs and Armenians were working in tandem to process and to respond to the political and military upheavals of the seventh century, but it does suggest that the experiences of the Sasanian era were universally recognized as an important element in medieval Armīniya.

For decades, N. Garsoïan has been urging scholars to reconsider the importance of the Sasanian period for medieval Armenian history. The philological advances of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries specifically stressed the importance of Iranian–Armenian relations, a fact long recognized in the works of most Armenologists:

> Although linguists may have taken the lead in tracing this influence, scholars in all disciplines, particularly historians and theologians, have unearthed multiple parallels and connections between the two cultures. The penetrating studies by Garsoïan and Russell over the past four decades have proved to be particularly influential, to the extent that no scholar today would seriously contemplate studying early mediaeval Armenia without acknowledging its Iranian heritage.[7]

At the same time, scholarly interest in medieval Armenia tends to focus on the religious, political, and social ties between Armenians and their coreligionists, the Greeks. Although scholars have acknowledged the importance of Garsoïan and Russell's works, until recently very few have embraced the project of in-depth study of the significance of the Sasanian legacy in medieval Armenian history.

The historiographical importance of the Sasanian period can hardly be contested: Armenian historical writing was initiated as an expression of cultural and religious independence from Sasanian Persia. Iconic works such as Ełišē's *Vasn Vardanay ew Hayoc^c paterazmin* [Concerning Vardan and the war of the Armenians] and Łazar P^carpec^ci's *Hayoc^c Patmut^c iwn*

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[7] Greenwood (2008), 1.

[History of Armenia] deal specifically with the role of Armenian–Persian exchange and relations. B. Martin-Hisard remarks that:

> La première littérature historiographique est née, dans la seconde moitié du Ve siècle, dans le prolongement de la violente répression par les Perses d'une grande révolte arménienne qui aurait éclaté en 451. Dès lors et durablement se sont imposées dans cette littérature l'équation Arménien = chrétien et l'idée qu'une guerre contre des non-chrétiens avait une dimension de guerre sainte et créait des martyrs de la foi, à l'image des Maccabées bibliques. Ce modèle legué par l'époque sassanide s'applique à l'époque arabe.[8]

The connection between the Sasanian and the Islamic realms was, in fact, manifested in concrete examples of similar policy and expectations. In Chapter 4 we will see Armenian comments directly comparing Sasanian and Arab rule; we should view these as a response to both (1) historiographical trends and (2) perceived similarities of governance between the two powers. In fact, it is difficult to argue that the comparison sprang only from the concept of Christian holy war against the oppressive rule of non-Christian neighbors, given the close ties between Sasanian and Islamic practices of government and their demands upon the Armenian Christians. On the one hand we must understand that from the Armenian perspective, there was very little difference between Persian Zoroastrian rulers to the East and Persian/Arab Muslim rulers to the South and East. On the other hand, we cannot belittle the very real similarities between the two powers simply because they tap into a trope of religious expectation within Armenian historiography.

The Sasanian period is likewise inarguably extremely important for the formation of early Caliphate, though these studies tend to focus on Syria and Iran instead of Armenia or Georgia. Studies have focused on several aspects of pre-Islamic Persian influence on the general development of early Islamic art, administration, and literature. As M. Morony notes,

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[8] Martin-Hisard (1997), 78.

The significance of Sāsānid history lies in providing an example of a late antique state and society that broadens the understanding of that period, in the development of monarchic and religious institutions, and the formation of religious communities, that created precedents for religious groups as political minorities. The Sāsānids left a legacy of royal absolutism and bureaucratic administration, and Sāsānid motifs continued in the art and architecture of the Islamic period and spread to the east and west.[9]

Furthermore, many of these studies have also endeavored to balance Byzantine and Arab elements with recurring aspects of Sasanian legacy in Islamic civilization, drawing a constructive if at times indistinct comparison between coexisting traditions. We are left with the general assumption that Islamic civilization benefited from a multitude of Near Eastern experiences, most obviously and quantifiably Byzantine, Sasanian, and pagan Arab, which it amalgamated and processed in light of the expectations of the new Muslim community.[10] The Sasanian legacy, therefore, is merely one component out of many, but remains an important aspect of the Arab conceptualization of the role of the Caliphate in both the past and future of the Near East.

Sasanian elements have been recognized as important elements in early Islamic art, notably in pottery, architecture, seals, and coinage. R. Ettinghausen, for example, framed the question of Sasanian influence in Islamic art by situating it in the context of dialogue with Byzantium. He explains that "the basic Byzantine and Sasanian elements co-exist here [at Ḫirbat al-Mafǧar] as 'equal but separate' entities; there seems to be no true intermingling of the two strains, only a skillful coordination."[11] The appearance of Sasanian elements in Umayyad art in

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[9] Morony (2012).

[10] This is taken up in a number of scholarly venues, including Tor (2012), 145: "Scholars have long acknowledged that the pre-Islamic Iranian past heavily influenced not only its Iranian heirs, who continued to treasure the memory of ancient glory, nor just the Arabs who conquered the Sasanian Empire and the lands within its cultural and mercantile orbit, but the entire Islamic empire and civilization that were built in the centuries following the conquest. Other civilizations of Antiquity influenced the Muslims as well; yet the Muslims did not absorb all elements indiscriminately and equally from all, but absorbed only certain very specific and limited aspects from each."

[11] Ettinghausen (1972), 63.

an ex-Byzantine territory is not, he argues, surprising. He explains this in reference to the Muslims' failed attempts to take Constantinople and Byzantine lands in Europe, leaving them with Iran as a more fecund possibility for expressing themes of Islamic rule. Here again, we see that Islamic adoption of Sasanian motifs is therefore a deliberate attempt at restructuring the question of legitimacy and rule in the Near East, tapping into Persian concepts of authority and the benefiting from the artistic norms of the Sasanian past.

Furthermore, Ettinghausen remarks that "This shift [towards Sasanian motifs] went beyond a mere political reorientation and seems to have affected the whole mental outlook of the caliphs." In relation to this, he cites Grabar's brief study of the six kings of Qusayr ᶜAmra. Here Grabar argues against Herzfeld's assertion that depiction of the kings of Qusayr ᶜAmra is "an Umayyad copy of the Sasanian representation of representation of the 'Kings of the Earth,' as there was one, described by Yāqūt, near Kermanshāh."[12] Instead, he links the kings to a passage in al-Masᶜūdī's *Murūǧ*, which puts words into the mouth of Yazīd b. al-Walīd: "I am the son of Kisrā and my father is Marwān and Qayṣar is my grandfather and my grandfather is Khāqān."[13] Whereas the Byzantines constructed a "spiritual" (πνευματικός) family of rulers with the Emperor at the head, the Sasanian example instead promoted a much more tangible, real relation between the kings of the earth and their "king of kings." The paintings therefore demonstrate not only the Umayyad appropriation of a Sasanian motif, but also their preference for defining universal kingship according to the Persian, instead of the Greek, tradition: "it seems possible to explain the Qusayr ᶜAmrah painting of the six rulers as the result of an attempt by an

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[12] Grabar (1954), 185.

[13] Al-Masᶜūdī, *Murūǧ*, qtd. and trans. Grabar (1954), 185: انا ابن كسرى وابي مروان وقيصرجدى وجدى خاقان

Umayyad to adapt the Sasanian artistic theme of the 'Kings of the Earth,' gathered to pay homage to their overlord, to the concept of the 'Family of Kings.'"[14]

Scholars have long recognized the Sasanian influence in early Islamic perception of kingship, as well as more concrete examples of administrative processes. Early Islamic governance relied on the scribes and officials already in place in the Byzantine and Sasanian regimes. It also adapted specific Sasanian policies regulating the interaction between the state and the individual. For example, while Byzantine policies insisted upon the primacy of the imperial Church, going so far as to prohibit the development of dissident expressions of Christianity, the "accommodation achieved by the Sasanian regime towards the members of non-Magian religious groups in Iraq foreshadowed the way Muslims dealt with their non-Muslim subjects."[15]

Lastly, early Islamic literature demonstrates the importance of the Sasanian legacy as source-material for Arab and Persian Muslim authors, as well as for their enthusiasm for producing certain types of literature. Sasanian sources were available to early Muslim authors and some literary traditions, especially the *X*ʷ*adāy-nāmag,* are commonly believed to have passed from Sasanian to the Islamic milieux via translations into Arabic or New Persian. Several authors writing in Arabic in the ninth and tenth centuries likely had access to other Sasanian documents. D. Gutas's work, however, takes the study of Sasanian elements in the Islamic literary tradition even farther. He argues that the famous ʿAbbāsid translation movement, which provided caliphal support for the translation of Greek texts into Arabic, was modeled on similar

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[14] Grabar (1954), 187.

[15] Morony (1984), 4.

projects under the Sasanian rulers, who had sought to gather the knowledge of all civilizations in order to highlight their own authority as the King of Kings.

Thus literary production, like the artistic productions at Qusayr ᶜAmra and Ḫirbat al-Mafǧar, can be construed as caliphal attempts to tap into Sasanian methods of legitimization and to demonstrate the sustained importance of Sasanian imperial ideology. Al-Manṣūr, for example, benefitted from the Sasanian models of government and policies:

> To a larger or lesser extent, strong elements of Sasanian culture ranging from the religious to the secular survived among these peoples [living in the former Sasanian realm] and their elite occupied prominent positions in the ᶜAbbasid administration…The Sasanian culture carried by these elite had two components of immense significance to al-Manṣūr in helping him to consolidate the ᶜAbbasid cause: Zoroastrian imperial ideology and political astrology. Fused together, they formed the cornerstone of al-Manṣūr's ᶜAbbasid dynastic ideology.[16]

It may seem counterintuitive that the production of Greek works in Arabic should indicate the modeling of caliphal concerns and legitimacy in accordance with example of the Sasanians. However, this could be explained and justified by denying the innovation of Greek philosophers who, after all, only regurgitated the ancient Persian sciences that they stole during the invasions of Alexander: "*any* Greek book is by definition part of the Zoroastrian cannon since it was Alexander's pillage of Iran that caused these books to be known to the Greeks; and hence its translation and study would mean recovering the ancient Persian knowledge."[17]

The influence of the Sasanian period is clearly visible in early Islamic civilization in two senses. First, we see that some aspects of Sasanian culture and governance were absorbed into Islamic civilization. This is a question of continuity, as society was slow to change even after the

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[16] Gutas (1998), 34.

[17] Gutas (1998), 43.

introduction of Islam and Arabic on a scale otherwise unknown in the pre-Islamic Near East.[18]

We also see that some early Muslims championed the Persian element in Islamic civilization, thereby encouraging the conscious adoption and adaptation of Sasanian elements into administration, society, art, and so on. In this respect, we must remember that many of the primary works, indispensable for this study, were in fact penned by Persians, even if they wrote in Arabic. Ethnic and linguistic identity did not fade with the rise of Islam; even if the *shuᶜūbiyya* movement was not clearly visible until the ninth and tenth centuries, it built upon the experience of earlier Persian converts to Islam.

The lingering imprint of Sasanian elements in administration, law, and art is evident for both the Armenian and the early Muslim communities of the eighth and ninth centuries. For both communities, we see this in two distinct ways: the perception of continuity from the Sasanian to Islamic governance, and the concrete examples of similar policies. One main goal of this study is to consider the intersect between the Armenian and Arab interest in the Sasanian past. Both Armenians and Arabs understood Arab rule in Armīniya as a continuation or extension of Sasanian patterns, albeit with new and innovative approaches due to the historical circumstances of the time (specifically, the role of the frontier with the Greeks and the Ḫazars). Traces of Byzantine, Arab, and Islamic governance remain, but at times seem marginalized in comparison to the Sasanian/Persian elements.

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[18] Robinson (2010), 214: "'What, then did the Arabs do with the regions they conquered?', an archaeologist asks: 'For the most part, they seem to have left them alone.' This is what the evidence says, and it is what sense dictates: why emulate the traditions of the Byzantine and Sasanian states when God had delivered victory over them to austere monotheists, and when there already were people in place to do the job well? Precisely the same conservatism that led the early caliphs to leave indigenous Greek- and Persian-speaking and writing bureaucrats in place in the provinces acted as a brake upon administration innovation at the empire's centre."

1.1.3 The Sectarian Milieu

As M. Morony points out, continuity from Late Antiquity to the Islamic period has frequently been perceived as a question of influence or borrowing. This perspective tends towards the reduction of complex historical circumstances to monist assumptions about a supposed lack of Arab ingenuity or innovation. Morony also clarifies that continuity is not a question of pure adoption of the norms of pre-Islamic civilization: "…[C]reative adaptation (but then by whom?) is a better explanation than cultural 'borrowing.' Even very real external 'influences' have different degrees of effectiveness on people of different backgrounds and interests. Questions of continuity and change have thus become a matter of cultural interaction."[19] Morony further argues that a discussion of continuity and cultural transmission, in and of itself, is inadequate. The real issue is to determine *why* we see patterns of continuity: what caused the pattern of "cultural osmosis" and which circumstances prompted change?

I have argued here that continuity from the Sasanian period in Armīniya was a tool for expressing political legitimacy in the face of Byzantine claims to the province. This rationale also accounts for some aspects of change visible in the Arab period, as well. For example, Arab governors initiated a policy of demographic change by introducing Arab tribes into Armīniya. This policy was enacted specifically to bolster the Arab–Byzantine frontier, as we see in the settlement patterns of the Arab immigrants. Arab governance was not merely a reincarnation of Sasanian antecedents, but the conscientious adaptation of a number of policies with a very specific goal in mind.

Part of the difficulty facing Arab rule in Armīniya involved the long-standing political ties between the Greeks and the Armenians. Furthermore, despite the increasing discord between the Greek and Armenian Churches in this period, Armenians nevertheless claimed a clear

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[19] Morony (1984), 6 – 7.

heritage of close literary and ecclesiastical relations with Byzantium. If we accept Morony's explanation that continuity and change are a measure of cultural interaction, then we must inevitably ask: cultural interaction between *whom*? For in the the case of Armīniya, sustaining Sasanian norms was not a question of Arab-Armenian dialogue.

By the eleventh century there is clear evidence of literary exchange between Arabs and Armenians. However, Ter-Łewondyan argued correctly that there is no evidence to suggest literary exchange between Muslim Arabs and Armenian Christians during the Arab period in Armīniya.[20] It seems likely that some sort of literary exchange existed, since we know that there were close ties between Arabs and Armenians in Armīniya. This is evidenced by accounts of intermarriage, descriptions of Armīniya in Arabic geographical texts, and the epigraphic record. At the same time, there is an apparent disconnect between Arab traditions about Armīniya and the Armenian literary tradition itself, as we will see in Chapter 7.

J. Wansbrough's *Sectarian Milieu* (1977) can add to the question of cultural interaction in several ways. This work is famously frustrating. As M. Cook claims, "…this volume is allusive, elliptical and disorienting; it tends to hint at historical complexities and depths in the author's views, and to deflect and dismiss the issues it raises rather than resolve them."[21] S. Humphreys summarizes that

> It is perhaps tempting to think of him [Wansbrough] as one of those scholars whose premises and conclusions are drastically wrongheaded, but whose argument is brilliant and filled with intriguing perspectives. To be sure, it is often difficult to say just what his arguments are, for he affects a ferociously opaque style which bristles with unexplained technical terms in many languages, obscure allusions, and Teutonic grammar.[22]

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[20] Canard (1979).

[21] Cook (1980), 180.

[22] Humphreys (1991), 80 – 81.

Indeed, there are several aspects of Wansbrough's method and conclusions, such as the reliance on literary analysis and the dismissal of "minority historiography," that simply cannot be adopted in the current study. There are three main points that deserve review here.

First, Wansbrough argues about the methodology and goals of modern historical studies relating to early Islamic history. He distrusts those historians who claim to be able to reconstruct an adequate chronology from the extant sources. For example, he argues that historians such as Ibn Isḥāq and al-Wāqidī included competing dates because their interest in chronology was marginal and "in the work of the latter it appears to be a matter of tidiness/completeness rather than accuracy."[23] I do not share his pessimism about the historical details in early Islamic literature, for I believe that these sources contain a kernel of truth: competing dates indicate historical discussion and can at times cue the modern reader into the concerns of the medieval historians.

Wansbrough makes a good point about the value of debate on specific details of chronology. If we forgo our insistence on explaining "what really happened" in a chronological narrative of the period, we free ourselves from the tedious debates about minutiae, such as when Arab armies first reached Armīniya, or which governors ruled the province in any particular year. It is not so much that these topics are inconsequential, but rather that they have little to offer for the study of important trends of this period, in and of themselves. Accordingly, if we abandon our vain pursuit of what we would like to find, and what we think is important in Arab Armīniya, we find ourselves instead in possession of a corpus of materials that demonstrate the concerns of the ᶜAbbāsid élite. It is a far more fruitful pursuit for us to question what the sources

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[23] Wansbrough (1978), 36.

actually do reveal, rather than to wish that these sources answered precise questions about such

matters as chronology—which, of course, they do not.

Second, Wansbrough discusses the importance of *Heilsgeschichte* for historical

production in the early Islamic Near East:

> It might, however, be thought that in the Middle East of late antiquity the only
> available medium of historical description was the language of salvation history.
> Every incident of *histoire événementielle* was reported as the expression of a
> theodicy. Historical reconstruction based upon such reports is probably fruitless.[24]

Certainly, some trends visible in historical works of the early Islamic period are informed by

religious expectations of the monotheist communities in the Near East. The shared characteristics

among the various denominations of Christianity, Judaism, and Islam ensure that some themes

resonate for various populations, even for the same reasons. For example, Armenian and Syriac

literature demonstrate a common response to the emergence of Islam: it is there as punishment

for Christian sin.

In many ways an overreliance on this argument about salvation history is problematic, as

it can serve to deny or to marginalize interconfessional dialogue. If similarities between Syrian

and Armenian responses to the rise of Islam are attributed not to dialogue, but to the shared

expectations of the monotheist and apocalyptic perspective, this greatly reduces the possible

lines of inquiry. Where does this assertion lead? What avenues are left for historians to add

nuance to the study of the development of religious traditions in different groups? Is it even

possible to suggest that the relationship between Armenian and Syrian Christians was

inconsequential? Instead, it seems more constructive to acknowledge the dialogue between the

different religious groups in the Near East, while at the same time recognizing that some ideas

are resonant among various groups due to their shared monotheist expectations about history.

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[24] Wansbrough (1978), 118.

Thirdly, Wansbrough's most useful addition to this study is his expectation that the formulation of Islam was "the response to interconfessional (Judeo-Christian) polemic," or the sectarian milieu.[25] His goal here is to bolster the discussion of the midrashic character of early Islamic source material. This point is important because it relates the ideas of cultural interaction, religious developments, and continuity. For instance, one of Wansbrough's examples is the placement of the *qibla*:

> Like the search for scriptural testimonia and the charge of scriptural falsification, the *qibla* controversy reflects a *topos* much older than the history of the Muslim community. Its appearance here is not unexpected: the direction (compass point) in which prayer was performed was not merely a ritual nicety but a sectarian emblem, a token of separatism and, for example, a matter of acute contention in the Ebionite community.[26]

This highlights innovation in Islamic doctrine—the deliberate refusal of continuity—as a marker of interconfessional dialogue. Wansbrough continues with comparisons to the Islamic perception of prophets such as Abraham, Jesus, and Solomon, as well as a number of similar examples.

It is this aspect of Wansbrough's work that is most useful here. The many groups of Jews, Christians, and Muslims in the Near East in the early Islamic period developed in contact and in contradistinction with one another. The transmission of ideas from one religious or linguistic group to another cannot be equated with a lack of ingenuity or an expression of power: this is not the story of the strong influencing the weak, or the wise passing on ideas to the impressionable. It is not useful to trace the developments in Islamic thought or history to the "real" source by creating hierarchical stemma designed to explain the ways in which Muslims incorrectly or partially passed on Christian or Jewish traditions. Instead, the adoption and adaptation of ideas

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[25] Wansbrough (1978), 161.

[26] Wansbrough (1978), 42.

itself indicated the agency of authorship. Specifically, the choices of Muslim authors and compilers to avoid or engage certain topics are indicators of religious dialogue.

Armīniya had deep-rooted historical and religious ties to Byzantium, which likely played a large role in the transmission of Armenian literature in the Near East in the eighth and ninth centuries despite the Chalcedonian schism. When I began this study, I expected to find that Armenian-Arab dialogue informed the development of Arab perceptions of Armīniya and the North, in accordance with R. Bulliet's findings in *Islam: the View from the Edge* (1994). In this work, Bulliet argues that Islamic orthodoxy was not developed in the center and then exported to the frontiers of the Islamic world, but rather that the population of the far-off Ḫurāsānian frontier played a formative role in the development of Islam. I expected to see that the Arab perceptions of Armīniya were similarly formed by the events and ideas imported from the Armenian frontier.

However, Bulliet is dealing with a later period, when the centralized government had already ceded to a more fractionalized society, where the populations of the frontier were in several ways stronger than those in the traditional centers of the Islamic world. For the early period, before the dissolution of unity in the ᶜAbbāsid Caliphate, the perception of the frontier was an important element in the formulation of state rhetoric. Elites, first in Damascus and then in Baghdad and Samarra, had a vested interest in describing the frontiers of the realm in a way that differentiated Islam from its neighbors. The long history of collusion between Greeks and Armenians, in addition to the perception of the religious ties of Christendom, made it unlikely for Arab Muslims to show any ties to Armenian Christian traditions and literature.

Instead, like their Sasanian predecessors, the élites of the ᶜAbbāsid period turned to the Syriac and Persian sources to visualize and describe the importance of Armīniya. This not only supported the claim of continuity from the Sasanian realm, it also denied the importance of

Byzantine position in Armenia. It is not a question of the *lack* of dialogue between Arabs and Armenians, but rather the deliberate adaptation of non-Armenian traditions due to the confessional implications of accepting Armenian accounts. Like the example of the *qibla,* the development of Islamic thought actually requires interconfessional dialogue, as choices in adoption and adaptation of Jewish and Christian themes as *īsrā'īliyyāt* reveal knowledge of the broad historical and religious importance of different topoi.

These three themes—the frontier, Sasanian legacy, and the sectarian milieu—are closely related, as each turns on the response of the various religious, linguistic, and ethnic groups to issues of continuity and change in the early Islamic period.

1.2 Methodology

The significance of the argument of this dissertation is not limited to themes and conclusions about Arab-Armenian relations, but also involves methodological concerns. Recent scholarship has prioritized Armenian sources, using the material in Arabic to bolster the Armenian narrative, rather than looking at trends and themes visible in the corpus of Islamic literature. This informs the types of sources that are prioritized, the questions asked, and the way in which historical data are deemed significant.

The history of the Arab period in Armīniya requires consideration of a variety of sources and cannot be studied without the close examination of Arabic histories and geographies. To do so would be to extend the conceptual framework of Crone and Cook's *Hagarism* (1977), which sought to reconstruct early Islamic history without the use of Arabic sources. This work, as S.

Humphreys tidily commented, is a wonderful experiment in "what if."[27] What if the debates on the authenticity of early Islamic documents were taken to their logical conclusion? What if none of the Arabic sources can speak to the realities of the Umayyad period? Despite the inherent usefulness of *Hagarism* in pointing out the historiographical trends of Christian responses to the rise of Islam, the conclusion is clear: we cannot respond to challenges of the Arabic sources by repudiating them completely. Writing the history of Armīniya based only on Armenian sources provides a study of Armenian historiography, not of Near Eastern history.

The heyday of Islamic source criticism, marked not only by *Hagarism,* but also by the work of Goldziher, Wellhausen and Schacht and their detailed examinations of the *isnād,* was followed by decades of debate aiming to ascertain reliable methods by which scholars could determine an authentic "kernel of truth" in the Arabic sources and then wade through the layers of ͨAbbāsid-era redaction. The historian J. Howard-Johnston, in particular, embraced the conclusions of 1970s source criticism: "But it is now the contention of a majority of the Islamicists studying the earliest phase of Islamic history that much of the material preserved in extant texts consists of historical traditions deformed out of all recognition in the course of oral transmission across several generations." Citing the "anecdotal" nature of the *futūḥ* narratives and *aḫbār*, he concludes that

> Hence the latter-day historian should not expect more than a highly distorted view
> of both the general and the particular in Arab accounts of the conquests…The
> historian determined to try to grasp something of what happened to change the
> late antique world out of all recognition in the seventh century cannot start from
> the Islamic sources any more than from the Syrian and Byzantine. A start has to
> be made elsewhere, in the fourth of the Near East's historical traditions, that of
> Armenia.[28]

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[27] Humphreys (1991), 81. To support his claim, we need only refer to the introduction of Crone's later publication, *Slaves on Horses: the Evolution of the Islamic Polity* (2003), 3 – 17.

[28] Howard-Johnston (1999), II 237. In his later work, *Witnesses to a World Crisis: Historians and Histories of the Middle East in the Seventh Century* (2010), Howard-Johnston does in fact consider Arabic sources, mainly "to see

Howard-Johnston acknowledges that "these conclusions may strike the non-Islamicist as too extreme in their pessimism." However, he does not recognize that they may similarly strike the "Islamicist" as "too extreme," as a result of taking Schacht and Cook more seriously than has an entire wave of later scholars who have argued in favor of the usefulness of Arabic sources. After all, there has been a concerted effort among generations of Orientalists and historians of the Islamic world to make sense of the layers of transmission and to recognize the deficiencies in the extant source material, while still making use of the exhaustive traditions that have remained preserved, from the later ᶜAbbāsid period onward.

It is noteworthy that since the death of A. Ter-Łewondyan, historians of Armenia (not historians of Islam) have dominated the study of Arab Armīniya. In general, this situation has led to the prioritizing of Armenian sources, as scholars use the Arabic texts only to bolster the historical outline provided by Sebēos, Łewond, and other medieval Armenian authors. Without taking into account the Arabic sources in their own right, as a valuable corpus of material and not merely as a supplement to the Armenian histories, it is impossible to see the broad lines of argument in this dissertation. Arabic chronicles and geographical treatises preserve a different dimension of Armenian history, telling a story that demonstrates different concerns and interests than those visible in Armenian sources.

If we forgo the usual attempt to create a chronological narrative and instead focus on recurrent *ideas*, the startling importance of Anūširwān and the Sasanian period for early Arabic descriptions of Armīniya are difficult to contextualize and all too easy to marginalize: after all, they have no historical bearing on any particular event of this specific period. The chronological narratives tend to forefront concrete data in an attempt to ferret out some vision of historical

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how many of the gaps [left by Greek and Armenian narratives] they can fill in" (355). Still, he takes *Hagarism* as a starting point to the discussion of the seventh-century Near East, see p. x.

"reality": data such as tax records and lists of governors are allowed primacy over the less quantifiable elements in the Arabic stories. In this way, the relation among the Syriac, Arabic, and Persian sources in defining the importance of Armīniya (mostly with reference to the Alexander legends) is easily overlooked because it does not convey readily quantifiable data or coincide with any assertions in Armenian sources. M. Canard was one of the few historians of Islam who worked on the Arab period in Armīniya over the past century, and even he disregarded some of this material. In his reworking of J. Laurent's *L'Arménie entre Byzance et l'Islam,* Canard translated most of the Arabic texts that refer to early Armīniya. However, he sidestepped information about Gog and Magog, which I see as central to caliphal claims on the North (see Chapter 7), claiming that these are "choses qui ne concernent pas l'Arménie."[29]

The close evaluation of Arabic sources is, I believe, absolutely necessary for consideration of the Arab period in Armīniya. Of course, we must then contend with Greenwood's argument that juxtaposing sources from one historiographical tradition onto another, plucking a sentence out of a history in one language and directly comparing it to texts in another language, is problematic.[30] This is admittedly true, and a valuable warning to heed the circumstances of the compilation of any given text, as well as the agency of the author.

Yet, this sort of endeavor is necessary whenever we work across literary traditions, as well as within a single historiographical tradition. For example, Greenwood's more recent article "A Corpus of Early Medieval Armenian Inscriptions" (2004), compares the Arabic inscriptions in Armīniya to those in Armenian and discovers that one of the Arabic inscriptions is dated by *hiğra,* the presiding Arab governor, and the name (presumably) of a local Armenian leader.

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[29] Laurent/Canard (1980), 510.

[30] Greenwood (2000).

Greenwood notes that this is not conventional in Arabic inscriptions in the Near East, and goes on to argue that this "Arabic inscription appears to be reflecting Armenian practice," a strong indication of close relations between Arabs and Armenians.

> The startling conclusion is that these [Arabic] inscriptions represent a fusion of Arabic and Armenian elements. On the one hand, their language is Arabic, they employ *hijra* dates, and at least two of them invoke Allah; on the other, the synchronism and the scope of the intercession both sit very comfortably within the Armenian tradition.[31]

Greenwood's method here is noteworthy in two related respects. First, he is versed in Armenian inscriptions and has worked collaboratively with R. Hoyland to discover the significance of Arabic inscriptions in Armīniya. Such collaborative work promises to add considerable dimension to the study of Arab Armīniya. Second, we see here that Arabic and Armenian sources cannot be considered in individual vacuums. Armenian sources, whether textual or epigraphic, are better understood in relation to the vocabulary of Near Eastern history as a whole.

We stand to gain a deeper understanding of Near Eastern history through a comparative study of extant evidence, as we cannot argue that all *topoi*, expressions, references, and ideas belonged within clear-cut ethnic, linguistic, or religious boundaries. This admittedly leaves the modern scholar with an insurmountable amount of data and the impossible task of becoming intimately familiar with Armenian, Greek, Syriac, Arabic, and Persian historical sources, epigraphy, numismatics, sigillography, codicology, architecture, archaeology, and numerous other disciplines, not to mention Islamic, Armenian, medieval Christian, Sasanian, and Byzantine historiography. This brings us back to the logical conclusion that collaborative work is the most likely solution to the problems presented by the extant sources.

This study does not attempt to disprove the previous renditions of the Arab period in Armīniya. Rather, it attempts to reconfigure the question by considering the concerns evident in

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[31] Greenwood (2004), 77.

the Arabic sources, mainly the legacy of the Sasanian period and the nature of the frontier, and contextualizing these in the light of Islamic historiography. The goal is to establish the trends within the Arabic sources and to place Armīniya within the broader context of the Caliphate, among its many Christian and Muslim neighbors. This does not imply that the Armenian sources must be relegated to secondary status or ignored; rather, the parameters of the study are determined by the perceptions evident in the Arabic sources. This work does not attempt to produce a balanced and comprehensive account of "what really happened" in Arab Armīniya. It is, instead, an attempt to respond to a set question about the themes and usefulness of Arabic source material.

1.3 Trajectory of the Argument: Chapter Abstracts

This section serves as in introduction to the main arguments of each chapter. Chapters 2, 3, and 4 treat issues of administration, including geography and leadership. Chapters 5 and 6 deal specifically with the Armenian Church under the Caliphate. Both relate specifically to the two main themes: (1) Sasanian legacy and (2) the sectarian milieu. The next two chapters (7 and 8) focus on the sectarian milieu by identifying instances of dialogue among the many peoples of the Near East, across linguistic, religious, political, and ethnic divides, and by discussing themes and *topoi* common to the Near Eastern experience.

Chapter 2, "the Northern *ṯuġūr* and the Definition of the Islamic world," suggests that Arab and Persian historians and geographers understood Armīniya to be part of *dār al-Islām* or, more correctly, *mamlakat al-Islām*. The former, pulled from juridical texts, is an eighth-century designation to define Islam as opposed to its neighbor, *dār al-ḥarb*. Geographers of the ninth and tenth centuries refer to this Islamic *oikoumenē* as *mamlakat al-Islām,* or merely Islam. This

chapter reviews the extant data on the nature of the frontier, arguing that the lines between Islam and the "Other" (Byzantium and Ḫazaria) were porous and allowed for the movement of people, ideas, and goods across political borders. The importance of the frontier therefore stems from its ideological, or conceptual, importance, rather than solely from its role as a barrier against the non-Islamic world. This conceptual frontier sustained claims for political legitimacy: Arabic sources prioritize Sasanian legacy and at times neglect Byzantine elements of the history of Armīniya. Since the Caliphate was construed as the heir to the Sasanian realm, this is a deliberate attempt to sustain their joint claim over the province vis-à-vis Greek claims. However, the "Islamization" of the province occurred mainly in the literary milieu: despite the influx of Arabs and production of mosques in Armīniya, its Islamic character remained defined by stories and traditions that linked the province to the early Muslim community in Arabic and Persian sources.

Chapter 3, "Historical and Administrative Geography," continues with the examination of geographical sources. A quick review of the main administrative provinces (Greater and Lesser Armenia; Interior and Exterior Armenia; Armenia, Iberia, and Albania; and the quadripartite division of Armenia) reveals that Greeks, Armenians, and Arabs may have used many of the same names, but that their definition of each region differed significantly. This chapter therefore suggests that these were literary vestiges that did not translate into the actual administration of the Arab period. In particular, the division of the province according to ethnicity (Armenia, Albania, and Iberia) is difficult to surmount, given its primacy in contemporaneous Armenian accounts. However, this division dates back to the Christianization of Armenia, Georgia, and Albania and therefore retains its significance for the Armenian audience as a marker of the ecclesiastical primacy of the Armenian Church over its neighbors. Arabic sources, meanwhile, consistently describe the area following a division of Armīniya, al-Rān, and Aḏarbayǧān. This

administrative model, which supposes the incorporation of Armīniya into a much larger province that also included parts of Northern Mesopotamia such as al-Mawṣil, is not evidenced in Byzantine sources, but stems rather from the Sasanian period. The Sasanian administration grouped the province of the North as Kᶜusti Kapkoh or kust-ī Ādūrbādagān, which survived in Arabic sources as al-Ǧarbī (from the Syriac *garbāyā,* meaning "north"). There is evidence that al-Ǧarbī was actually important to the administration of the Caliphate, and not merely as a literary memory of the Sasanian period. This evidence includes lists of Arab governors appointed over multiple territories in the North, and numismatic evidence linking mint production across provincial borders.

Chapter 4, "Local Authority and Attempts at Centralization," questions the importance of the Sasanian legacy to the actual administration of Armīniya. First, it reviews the positions of power in the province (*marzpan/ostikan, Išxan Hayocᶜ,* and *naxarar*s) and highlights the ways in which power relations in Arab Armīniya demonstrate continuity from the Sasanian period. It also compares the policies enacted by the Greeks, Persians, and Arabs to exert the authority of the center over local powers, concluding that there were ties between Sasanian and Arab practices. Although Islamic governance was clearly an amalgamation of Sasanian, Byzantine, and Arab practices, this chapter highlights points of continuity between the Arab period, the Sasanian legacy, and the circumstances of the tumultuous seventh century. Finally, this chapter considers the local political and social ties among Armīniya, Northern Mesopotamia, and Northern Syria, signaling the grouping of these three provinces as yet another marker of continuity from the pre-Islamic period.

Chapter 5, "Perceived Threats to the Armenian Church," covers Armenian responses to Islam, the continued threat of Chalcedonianism, and the heretical sects popular in Armīniya in

the Arab period (the Paulicians and the Tᶜondrakians). Specifically, this chapter argues that Armenians showed little interest in engaging Islam as a religious threat to the Armenian Church. In fact, the Armenian response to Islam aligns with details found in Greek and Syriac literature, suggesting both interreligious dialogue and concerns that transcend denominational boundaries. On the other hand, however, Armenian sources demonstrate a sustained concern about the threat of Chalcedonianism in Armenia: this interest covers the efforts of the Greeks to spread their doctrine, the Georgian–Armenian schism, rocky relations with the Albanian Church, and the solidarity with the Syriac Church. At the same time, Armenians are concerned about establishing the primacy of the Armenian Church *vis-à-vis* heretical movements such as the Paulicians and the Tᶜondrakians. Paulicianism also brought to the fore the anti-Greek biases in Armenia, the relationship to Persian religious traditions, and the alliance with Arabs against the Greeks. These two main concerns demonstrate that the preoccupations of the religious establishment in Armenia remained unchanged despite the arrival of Muslim Arabs, and that there was considerable dialogue between Armenians and their neighbors (specifically, Syriac-speaking Christians) about religious concerns.

Chapter 6, "Caliphal Policy towards the Armenian Church," contends that caliphal policy supported the Armenian Church as the arbiter of the local Christian population by modeling Arab rule on Sasanian antecedents. This includes the preferential treatment of the Church as an alternative to Chalcedonianism and the guarantee of religious freedom. This chapter reviews some of the Arab abuses of the Church as found in Armenian sources (especially the burning of the churches at Naxĵiwan and Xram) and concludes that these were mainly political in nature and not aimed at religious persecution. Furthermore, if we consider the details of martyrologies from this period (Dawitᶜ Dwinecᶜi, Vahan Gołtᶜnecᶜi, and Abo of Tiflīs), we see that these too cannot

be heralded as examples of persecution of Christians, since these executions took place because the individuals in question had transgressed Islamic law. In other words, they were not killed because they were Christians, but because they had converted from Islam. Apostasy is punishable by death in Islam, as it was in the Sasanian realms before Islam. Therefore, the Armenian martyrologies of the Arab period can be directly compared to the Syriac martyrologies of the Sasanian period, such as Magundat and Mihrmahgušnasp. Finally, this chapter very briefly reviews the issue of conversion to Islam in the Arab period, mainly to highlight the difficulties in constructing any concrete study on this topic. However, we also see that some models of conversion are sustained from the Sasanian period, as well.

Chapter 7, "Islamic Armīniya and the Alexander Legends," examines the dissemination of Alexander legends concerning Armīniya by identifying four main topics of interest in Arabic accounts of Armīniya: the barrier against Gog and Magog, the Rock of Moses, the Land of Darkness, and al-Qāf. The examination of these four episodes demonstrates that Arabic sources are clearly closer in detail to Syriac literature, Sasanian traditions, and even Jewish beliefs than to Armenian and Greek versions of the Alexander legends. This is one marker of the lack of literary exchange between Arabs and Armenians in this early period. The chapter then deals with two issues in interpreting the data. First, there is no need to demonstrate Arabic traditions as misinformed versions or distortions of the Christian sources, as this would negate the agency of Arab and Persian authors. Instead, it is more useful to consider their adoption and adaptation of certain details of Near Eastern lore as a discursive attempt to situate their own claims to the history and lands of the Near East. Second, the chapter considers the Islamic reconceptualization of Alexander as a claim to political legitimacy. By reviewing the caliphal expeditions to the wall of Gog and Magog, we see that the Alexander legends were integral to the claims of caliphal

legitimacy, of the inability of the Byzantines to rule, and of continuity from the Sasanian to the Arab periods.

Chapter 8, "Interconfessional Translations and the Sectarian Milieu," recognizes that by the eleventh century there were clear ties between Arabic and Armenian literature. However, this is not substantiated for the Arab period (eighth and ninth centuries). This chapter reviews three examples of possible Arab–Armenian literary exchange (the Arabic translation of Agatʿangełos, the correspondence between ʿUmar II and Leo III in Łewond, and Nonnus' *Commentary on the Gospel of John*) and determines that there is no evidence here for any bilateral exchange between Arab Muslims and Armenian Christians. While Łewond's correspondence demonstrates that Arab Muslims were in dialogue with the Christian population of the Near East, there is no indication of Armenian involvement in this except via Greek intermediaries. These examples suggest instead that Armenian and Greek literatures were still closely linked in this period, but that Syriac literature also played an important role in the formulation of Armenian Christian history and thought.

Chapter 9 is the Conclusion. It reorganizes some of the conclusions from each chapter to support each of the three main claims in the dissertation: (1) the role of the frontier; (2) the importance of Sasanian legacy; and (3) the sectarian milieu. It also reviews six main assumptions about Arab Armīniya that have been challenged in the course of the work and identifies three more that need further consideration.

Finally, Chapter 10 is an account of the sources used throughout the dissertation (in Arabic and Armenian from the eighth to the tenth centuries). It explains why I accept tenth-century sources, and what (very broadly) constitutes reliability in Arabic and Armenian sources

for this period. In particular, it argues for the reliability of Arabic sources, despite the fact that many authors have recently sidelined Islamic literature as unreliable.

Chapter 2: The Northern *ṯuġūr* and the Definition of the Islamic World

Qus, the king of Armīniya, was an Armenian man. He consolidated his rule and then he died. There ruled after him a woman whose name was Qālī. She built a city and named it Qālī Qālah, which means the beneficence of Qālī. And she drew her own portrait on one of the gates of the city. The Arabs arabized Qālī Qālah and so they say Qālīqalā.

<div align="right">Yāqūt [32]</div>

The location of the *ṯuġūr* of the North, most frequently specified as Qālīqalā, Tiflīs, and Bāb al-Abwāb, demonstrates that Armīniya fell squarely into the Islamic world, standing as a barrier against the Byzantine and Ḫazar realms. Modern scholars have shown some reluctance to consider Armīniya as part of the Islamic world: it was an unusual province in that Arabic and Islam never established permanent roots there. However, in the Umayyad period especially there was little to differentiate the province from the more central lands of the Caliphate. The expansion of both Islam and Arabic to local communities of the Near East was a slow process and Armīniya was certainly not alone in its adherence to Christianity or regional customs.

Armīniya was not only part of the Islamic world; as a *ṯaġr,* it helped define the geographical contours of Islam. The northern frontier, inherited largely from the Sasanian period, was not necessarily a barrier to movement or a land of perpetual warfare. The lines of trade and communication between the Caliphate and Byzantium or the northern Caucasus were more readily open than the stark demarcation between *dār al-Islām* and *dār al-ḥarb* might suggest. On

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[32] Yāqūt, IV 299: ملك أرمينية قُس, وهو رجل من أهل أرمينية, فاجتمع له ملكه ثم مات فملكتهم بعده امرأة وكانت تسمى قالي فبنت مدينة وسمتها قالي قاله ومعناه إحسان قالي وصوّرت نفسها على باب من أبوابها فعرّب العرب قالي قاله فقالوا قاليقلا.

the other hand, this border was most importantly a conceptual, or ideological, frontier. In other words, the accumulation of religiously and politically charged rhetoric created a frontier between the major powers (the Caliphate, Byzantium, and the North) that may not have mirrored the politico-military reality of life in the border zones. The goal of this chapter is (1) to demonstrate Armīniya's status as part of Islamic world (*mamlakat al-Islām* or *dār al-Islām*); (2) to consider the nature of the frontier; and (3) to question the processes by which Armīniya became part of the Islamic world in Arabic histories and geographies.

2.1 Armenia and *mamlakat al-Islām*

Armenia, it is frequently argued, was ethnically, politically, and religiously different from the Caliphate and as such constituted a zone between two worlds. It was both a geographical and a cultural buffer between the Christian Greeks and the Islamic east. This theory cannot possibly withstand closer examination, as it assumes that the Caliphate itself was ethnically, politically and religiously uniform, a political monolith with an enduring and unchanging nemesis.

In actuality, the distinction between *dār al-Islām* and *dār al-ḥarb* cannot be delineated by ethnicity and does not rest solely on simplistic parameters of religious convictions. If this were the case, there would have been no need for considerable discussion on the place of Christians, Jews, and Zoroastrians (People of the Book, or *ḏimma*) in society. Many of the lands considered to be part of *dār al-Islām* in the early Islamic period had majority or at the very least substantial Christian or Zoroastrian populations. The unifying factors were political allegiance with a caliphal representative governor, economic subservience through taxation, and juridical

uniformity upholding the supremacy of Islamic law; it was "the whole territory in which the law of Islam prevails."[33]

2.1.1 *Dār al-Islām*, *Mamlakat al-Islām*, and Islam as a Geographical Identifier

The idea of a dichotomization between Islam and non-Islam in some ways mirrors the Sasanian definition between *ērān* and *anērān*. The terms *ērān* and *anērān* can be broadly compared to *dār al-Islām* and *dār al-ḥarb*, despite several differences, for two primary reasons. First, the term *ērān* (Aryan) has a clear ethnic designation, whereas *dār al-Islām* is intended to prioritize religious difference and makes no assumption whatsoever about the ethnic composition of the Caliphate. However, *ērān* and *anērān* may also be interpreted to refer specifically to religious belief, rather than solely to ethnicity. *Anērān* may be translated as either "non-Iranian" or "unworthy." The terms

> serve to isolate "us," those who, according to the notions of the authors, hold the correct faith, from the "others," those whose faith is improper and who cannot be counted among the true believers…It [the distinction between *ērān* and *anērān*] applies apparently to both a religious distinction and to an ethnic difference. The ethnic division alludes presumably to two groups, one of which may have been defined as sharing a common ancestry, perhaps also using a common language, as against another that does not share these characteristics (and may be assumed to derive from diverse origins). At the same time, this opposition is associated with a distinction of religious faith and practice.[34]

The lack of an ethnic element in the definition of *dār al-Islām* is a significant difference between the two concepts, but it is mitigated by the general *Weltanshauung* of the polarity of the world.

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[33] Abel (1986).

[34] Shaked (2008), 106. See also Shaked (2008), 109 – 111: "The contrast between *ērān* and *an-ērān* seems to have been based initially on ethnic, rather than on religious considerations. But even in purely ethnic terms it is not easy to draw the line. Are the Armenians considered part of the notion of Iran? Are adherents of Mazdaism in Babylonia, in the western regions of Sasanian Iran, considered Iranian?...We have seen how difficult it is to establish a clear line of division between Iranians and non-Iranians in the theological thinking of the Sasanian period, and that the term 'non-Iranian' becomes synonymous with people of Bad Religion. The purely religious distinctions are just as blurred."

Furthermore, just as there were non-Muslims living under Islam, so too were there non-Aryans living in *ērān*: these terms indicate merely the identity of the ruling élite from the imperial perspective. The difference between the terms is also easier to dismiss given that the definition of *anērān* varies according to the speaker and the period.[35]

Second, and perhaps more importantly, the ideological underpinning of the Islamic perception of place and expectations of politico-religious leaders may mirror some later descriptions of *ērān* and *anērān*. The term *dār al-Islām* dates from the eighth century and specifically relates to juridical conceptualization of place, notably with the concept of continuous *ǧihād*: "Here, as the vocabulary indicates, the two Abodes are in a permanent condition of war. Since the only legitimate sovereign is God, and the only legitimate political system is Islam, the various rulers within the Abode of War have no legitimacy, and their rule is mere oppression and tyranny."[36] This condescension for rulers of the "Other" is also found in Sasanian texts, which posited true authority only for Persian rulers.[37]

Although Armīniya retained quasi-independent status throughout the early period of Arab incursions, by the early eighth century there was a more organized attempt at direct rule, as an Arab governor was stationed in Dabīl.[38] This is precisely the time when the terms *dār al-Islām* and *dār al-ḥarb* emerged out of a juridical discussion, after the dynamism of the conquest period

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[35] Shaked (2008), 112: "For the kings, especially the early Sasanian kings, it denoted chiefly inhabitants of countries outside those recognized as the Iranian lands. For the theologians, especially in the later period, it denoted primarily someone who is alien from the religious point of view."

[36] Bonner and Hagen (2010), 475.

[37] Silverstein and Bernheimer (2012), 6: "…Iranian geographical texts—which are realistic enough to accept the existence of *an-Ērān*—demonstrate the contempt with which the territorial claims of Iran's rivals were viewed."

[38] Interestingly, Inalcik (1986) uses Armīniya as an example of a forerunner of *dār al-ᶜahd,* given the fact that Muᶜawiya accepted tribute from Tᶜēodoros Ṛštuni. However, this pertains specifically to the seventh century, before the *ostikanate*.

calmed and the frontiers became a more permanent fixture.[39] This dichotomization of the world

was a juridical distinction intended to stress the unity of the Muslim community (*umma*) and to

provide legitimization to the caliph, both as a political leader over the entirety of the conquered

lands, and as a military commander capable of waging *ǧihād* against territories outside his

domain.[40]

While this stress on *ǧihād* may be a specifically Islamic characteristic, the Sasanian

concept of *ērān* and *anērān,* at least by the time of the composition of *Šahrestānīha ī Ērānšahr,*

was decidedly founded on imperial expectations and formulated by expansionist ideology. T.

Daryaee, while noting the difference in territory between the inscriptions from the third century

and the *Šahrestānīha ī Ērānšahr,* concludes that

> …during the late Sasanian period a conceptual worldview had developed which
> was based on the imperialistic policies beginning with Kawād I to the time of
> Husraw II. This is the time when the Sasanian Empire reached its furthest limits
> and exerted its influence beyond the traditional borders of the Sasanian empire.
> Consequently, the concept of *Ērān-šahr* in our text was an imperialistic notion of
> what *Ērān-šahr* was territorily.[41]

Furthermore, the expectation of universal rule, or rather that the Sasanian *šah* or the Muslim

caliph had valid claims to legitimacy as opposed to the rulers of *anērān* or *dār al-ḥarb*, was

certainly shared.

There are significant differences between *dār al-Islām / dār al-ḥarb* and *ērān / anērān,*

including the definition based on the application of religious law, the role of ethnicity, and the

religious expectation of *ǧihād*. However, there are also very broad similarities, such as the purely

political definition of Empire by religious terminology despite the presence of significant

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[39] Mottahedeh and al-Sayyid (2001), 28.

[40] See Donner (1991), 51.

[41] Daryaee (2002), 4.

religious minorities, the expectation of universal rule, and the expansionist aspect of state policy. The next step in furthering the comparison is the extension of the definition of both *ērān* and Islam.

The bulk of historical data available to us about Islamic perception of place was produced by geographers, not jurists. The terms *dār al-Islām* and *dār al-ḥarb* are actually quite rare in early ᶜAbbāsid geographical treatises. Instead, the idea of a unified Islam recurs as a geographical distinction in the work of geographers such as al-Iṣṭaḫrī and Qudāma as the "kingdom of Islam" (*mamlakat al-Islām*), or in al-Muqaddasī's text simply as "Islam" in an attempt to idealize the fractionalized reality of the ᶜAbbāsid Caliphate.[42] This idea is not necessarily divorced from the concept of *ǧihād,* as the geographers mention *muǧāhid*s and the campaigns of the caliphs against the non-Islamic world, usually with approval and admiration. However, if we use this distinction between *dār al-Islām* and *dār al-ḥarb* in this sense, we encounter all sorts of problems, since it is, in a sense, anachronistic, and reflects an entirely different genre of literary production. This is the recurrent practice in modern scholarship.

In fact, the more frequent use of *mamlakat al-Islām* or simply Islam (as a geographical and political entity) may more fairly represent some degree of similarity between the caliphal and Sasanian terms used in the dichotomization of the world: *mamlakat al-Islām* ("the kingdom of Islam," instead of *dār al-Islām*) and *Ērānšahr* ("the domain of the Iranians,"[43] instead of *ērān*) seem to refer more frequently to political, rather than ethnic or religious, distinctions. Although both terms suggest a clear distinction between Empire and "Other," neither implies an antithesis

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[42] Bonner (2010), 359: "Both Qudāma and al-Iṣṭakhrī describe the late or post-caliphate world as *mamlakat al-islām,* 'the realm of Islam'. In their books this is an enormous space traversed by itineraries, trade routes, religious and cultural affinities, frontiers, shared administrative practices and other affiliations. The realm of Islam is thus an idealized, intensely networked geographical and political entity which, strictly speaking, happens to lack a head." See Miquel (1967), I 77 no. 3; Antrim (2012), 83.

[43] Daryaee (2008), 1.

or any sort of generalization about the peoples living beyond the imperial borders. In other words, there is little interest in finding an equivalent to *dār al-ḥarb* or *anērān* in ideological terms: the lands beyond the imperial borders were merely identified as "Other."

2.1.2 Armīniya and the Islamic World

There is a long history of academic endeavors to determine the relationship between Armenia and *ērān*, despite the appearance of Armenia in Sasanian inscriptions, which explicitly list it as a province of *Ērānšahr*. Šapur I's inscription, dated to the third century, reads:

> Ich, der Mazdā-verehrende 'Gott' Šābuhr, der König der Könige von Ērān und Nicht-Ērān, dessen Geschlecht von den Göttern (ist), Sohn des Mazdā-verehrenden 'Gottes' Ardašīr, des Königs der Könige von Ēran, dessen Geschlecht von den Göttern (ist), Enkel des 'Gottes' Pāag, des Königs, bin Herr von Ērānšahr, und besitze | die Länder Persis, Parthien, Xūzestān, Mēšān, Asūrestān, Nōdširagān (= Adiabene), Arbāyestān, Aserbeidschan, Armenien, Wiruzān (= Iberien), Sīgān, Albanien, Balāsagān, bis hin zum Kaukasus und (zum) Alanen-Tor, und die ganze Elburzkette, Medien, Gurgān (= Hyrkanien), Marw, Harēw, | und ganz Abaršahr, Kirman, Sagestān, Tūrān, Makrān, Pārdān, Hindestān, Kušānšahr bis vor Pešāwar (?) und bis nach Kāšɣar (?), Sogdien und Taškent, und von jenseits des Meeres das Land Mazūn (= ⁽Omān).[44]

Again, it may be possible to question whether there is a substantial difference between *ērān* and *Ērānšahr*. However, it is generally accepted that Armenia was indeed considered part of *Ērānšahr*.

This same concern is repeated in the Islamic period: was Armīniya considered part of *dār al-Islām*? Given the question of historical genre (juridical or geographical), it makes more sense to cast the issue as the inclusion of Armīniya in *mamlakat al-Islām* or, broadly, in the Islamic world. At times this is problematic, since many of the authors cited below (Brauer, Bosworth, Sublet, etc.) do not make a clear distinction between the two.

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[44] See Huyse (1999), I 22 – 24, §1 – 3, see also Daryaee (2008), 3 – 4

Armīniya, from the perspective of the Arab and Persian geographers of the ᶜAbbāsid period, was most definitely part of the Islamic world. The anonymous author of *Hudūd al-ᶜālam* comments that "these places are the most pleasant in *dār-i Islām*."[45] Al-Muqaddasī similarly makes three succinct comments: "It is a region that belongs to Islam,"[46] "it is a glory to Islam,"[47] and "the mountain al-Ḥāriṯ [Ararat] is high over Islam."[48] Ibn Ḥawqal begins his chapter with the comment that Armīniya, al-Rān, and Aḏarbayǧān extend "up until the end of Islam."[49] After all, the location of the *ṯuǧūr*—traditionally defined as outposts between *dār al-Islām* and *dār al-ḥarb*— (Qālīqalā and Tiflīs / Bāb al-Abwāb) signifies that Armīniya fell squarely into the Islamic world, creating the boundary between Byzantium / Ḥazaria and the Caliphate.

There are two additional passages that may contribute to the discussion in a much more tentative manner. First, Ibn Ḫurradāḏbih writes:

> The direction of prayer [*qibla*] for the people of each country. The direction of prayer for the people of Armīniya, Aḏarbayǧān, Baghdad, Wāsiṭ, Kūfa, al-Madāᶜin, Baṣra, Ḥulwān, al-Dīnawar, Nihāwand, Hamaḏān, Iṣbahān, al-Rayy, Ṭabaristān and Ḫurasān in their entirety, and the lands of the Ḫazars and Qašmīr of India, is toward the wall of the Kaᶜba that has a door, along a line from the northern to the middle of the eastern pole. As for Tibet and the countries of the Turks, China and al-Manṣūra, they follow the middle of the east by eight degrees [and they pray to the spot] close to the Black Stone. And as for the direction of prayer of the people of al-Yaman, their prayers are towards the right [or Yamanī?] corner and their faces are toward the faces of the people of Armīniya when they pray. And as for the direction of prayer of the people of al-Maǧrib, Ifrīqiya, Egypt, Syria, Northern Mesopotamia and the middle of the east, their prayers are towards the Syrian corner and their faces when they pray are toward the faces of

[45] *Hudud al-ᶜālam,* 157: این جایهاست بسیار نعمت ترین ناحیتهاست اندر اسلام

[46] Al-Muqaddasī, 373: هو اقليم للاسلام

[47] Al-Muqaddasī, 373: وهو للاسلام فخر

[48] Al-Muqaddasī, 373: جبل الحارث متعال على الاسلام

[49] Ibn Ḥawqal, 331: فلنرجع الى حدّ بلد الروم غرباً فَنَصِفُ ما صاقبها الى آخر الاسلام فى حدّ المشرق, والذى أبتدئ به ارمينية والران واذربيجان

the people of al-Manṣūra when they pray. And these are the directions of prayer of the people and the directions that they pray towards.[50]

This passage clearly states, first of all, that there are people in Armīniya who pray toward Mecca.

The interesting thing about this passage, however, is that it highlights the unity of the Islamic polity: people in every land are turning together, as a community (*umma*), toward the *qibla*, Mecca. It provides a picture of unity, an ideal of community that transcends provincial borders.

Similarly, a passage from Ibn al-Faqīh may provide another tentative supporting argument:

> On the authority of Kaᶜb, he said: he informed us that: we found in the books that indeed the entire land will be destroyed forty years before Syria. And so Mecca will be destroyed by Abyssinia, Madina by famine, Baṣra by flooding, and Kūfa by neglect. Al-Ğibāl will be destroyed with lightening and earthquakes, Ḫurāsān with varieties of torments. And the Daylamiyya and Ṭabariyya will vanquish al-Rayy. As for Armīniya and Aḏarbayğān, these two will perish by the hooves of warhorses and with lightening and earthquakes. And they will encounter violence to such an extent that even the others will not encounter. And as for Ḥulwān, it will perish with the death of a cross-eyed woman and its people will become monkeys and swine. We ask God for health. As for Kūfa, indeed, a man who is called ᶜAnbasa from Banū Sufyān will proceed there and destroy it….As for Siğistān, winds will rage against them on dark days, violence and destruction will wipe them out. As for Kirmān, Iṣbahān and Fārs, a shout will reach them and the destruction of most of them will be locusts and power. [51]

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[50] Ibn Ḫurradāḏbih, 5: قبلة اهل كل بلد فقبلة اهل ارمينية واذربيجان وبغداد وواسط والكوفة والمدائن والبصرة وحلوان والدينور ونهاوند وهمذان واصبهان والري وطبرستان وخراسان كلها وبلاد الخزر وقشمير الهند الى حائط الكعبة الذي فيه بابها وهو من القطب الشمالي عن يساره الى وسط المشرق واما التبت وبلاد الترك والصين والمنصورة فخلف وسط المشرق بالثانية اجزاء لقرب قبلتهم من الحجر الاسود واما قبلة اهل اليمن فصلاتهم الى الركن اليماني ووجوههم الى وجوه اهل ارمينية اذا صلوا واما قبلة اهل المغرب وافريقية ومصر والشام والجزيرة فوسط المغرب وصلاتهم الى الركن الشامى ووجوههم اذا صلوا الى وجوه اهل المنصورة اذا صلوا فهذه قبل القوم والنحو الذى يصلون اليه

[51] Ibn al-Faqīh, 257 – 8: وعن كعب قال انّا نجد في الكتب ان الارض كلّها لتُخْرَبُ قبل الشام باربعين سنة فمكّة تخرّبها الحبشة والمدينة الجوع والبصرة الغرق والكوفة الترّك والجبال تُخْرب بالصواعق والرواجف وخراسان باصناف العذاب والرئُ يغلب عليها الديلمية والطبرية واما ارمينية وآذربيجان فيهلكان بسنابك الخيل من الجيوش وبالصواعف والرواجف ويلقون من الشدّة ما لا يلقاه غيرهم واما حلوان فتهلك بهلاك زَوْراءَ ويصبح اهلها قردة وخنازير نسال الله العافية واما الكوفة فانه يصير اليها رجل يقال له عَنْبسة من بنى ابي سفيان فيخرّبها وياخذ جارية شابَّة ورجلا صالحا من آل عليّ جميعا فيقتلهما ويجعل العيدان في ادبار هما ويصلبهما ويقول هذه فاطمة وهذا عليّ ثم يخرج رجل من جُهَينة يقال له ناجِيَة فيدخل مصر فويل لاهل مصر منه ولا يدخل بيت المقَدَّس بمنعه الله بحوله وقوَّته وويل لاهل دمشق وافريقية واما سجستان فرياح تعصف عليهم ايّاما مُظْلمةً شدَّة مع هدَّ تأتيهم واما كرمان واصبهان وفارس فصَيْحة تأتيهم واكثر خرابها الجراد والسلطان وخراب السند من قبل الهند وخراب خراسان من قبل التبت وخراب التبت من قبل الصين وخراب الشام من قبل الملحمة الكبيرة.

Again, the inclusion of Armīniya in an account describing the entirety of the Islamic world provides a tacit claim that it is included, just like the more central lands of the Caliphate.

Furthermore, al-Iṣṭaḫrī's maps "and the accompanying text concern themselves with the Islamic world only. This is a deliberate restriction but is not explained."[52] The other authors of the Balḫī school, of course, tend to follow al-Iṣṭaḫrī's lead. There are exceptions to this rule, as Ibn Ḥawqal also includes short passages on the Ḫazars, Turks,[53] and Interior Armīniya, while al-Iṣṭaḫrī discusses the Ḫazars. However, the very inclusion of Armīniya in the geographical treatises of the Balḫī school is itself a strong statement. Al-Muqaddasī, for example, specifies the parameters of his science: "We only mention the kingdom of Islam [*mamlakat al-Islām*] and do not speak of the kingdoms of the unbelievers because we did not enter them and do not see any usefulness [interest?] in mentioning them, though we did remark upon the places in them that belong to the Muslims."[54] This interest in only the Islamic world is not restricted to the Balḫī geographers, as the Iraqi school also tended towards the description of Islam.[55]

There are three main reasons for this. (1) Much of the geographical literature was compiled for governmental use by scribes in the service of the caliph.[56] This explains not only

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[52] Hopkins (1990), 314. See also Heck (2002), 97: "These [Balḫī] authors make only cursory reference to non-Islamic lands, largely confined to introductory comments, while identifying Mecca and the Arabian peninsula as the proper center of Islamic geography."

[53] Miquel (1986).

[54] Al-Muqaddasī, 9: ولم نذكر الا مملكة الاسلام حسب ولم نتكلم ممالك الكفار لانها لم ندخلها ولم نر فائدة فى ذكرها بلى قد ذكرنا مواضع المسلمين منها. See Heck (2002), 94: "While the discipline [of geography] was heavily influenced at first by the translation of Indian, Persian and finally Greek geographical and astronomical literature, it became distinctly Islamic during the late third/ninth century and through the fourth/tenth centuries as a result of the experience of Muslims, individually and collectively: voyage, trade and, above all, the administration of a far-flung empire. The geography of al-Muqaddasī (d. late fourth/tenth century), who limited his range to lands where the Islamic religion was represented and Muslims held the reins of power, can be taken as the climax of this trend towards a conception of geography defined by a distinctly Islamic point of view."

[55] Heck (2002), 97.

[56] See Qudāma, 185: فاما غير ذلك من امر الطرق ومواضع السكك والمسالك الى جميع النواحى فانا لم نذكره ولا غنى بصاحب هذا الديوان ان يكون معه منه ما لا يحتاج في الرجوع فيه الى غيره وما ان سأله عنه الخليفة وقت الحاجة الى سخوصه وانفاذ جيش يهمُّه امره وغير ذلك مما تدعو

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the authors' access to certain sources, such as detailed accounts of taxes paid as *ḫarāǧ* from each individual province, but also their interest in recording such details: these works were intended as administrative guides to keep the caliph informed, using the most current data about his realm. (2) These authors also had a vested interest in extolling the breadth of Islam and the extent of caliphal control. (3) Other geographical texts were compiled as travel guides, as indicated by specific data supplied for itineraries and the choice of information provided (for example, the specific location of the principal mosque in any given city, but not that of the churches). The practical uses for books of geography thus indicate that most of the effort spent on them had to do with the realities of the Islamic polity; Armīniya's inclusion is therefore informative.

This same principle, according to which literary interest indicates status as *dār al-Islām* or *dār al-ḥarb,* translates into prosopography as well as geography. J. Sublet constructed a theory suggesting that the use of particular *nisba*s demonstrates the identity of cities as Islamic or otherwise. If a Muslim traveled within the Islamic world, he acquired the *nisba* of the city that he visited; however, if he ventured beyond the borders of *dār al-Islām,* he was not known by the *nisba*s of *dār al-ḥarb.* So, for example, a *muǧāhid* might travel via Baghdad to Byzantine territory and, upon his return, be known as al-Baġdādī, but not al-Rūmī.[57] Sublet remarks that "ainsi le 'nom de relation' vient-il témoigner de l'étendue de l'empire de l'Islam":[58] biographers

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الضرورة الى علم الطرق بين وُجِد عتيدا عنده ومضبوطا قِبَله ولم يحتاج الى تكلُف عمله والمسئلة عنه فينبغى ان نكون الآن نأخذ فى ذكر ذلك وتعديده باسماء المواضع وذكر المنازل وعدد الاميال والفراسخ وغيره من وصف حال المنزل فى مائه وخشونته وسهولته او عمارته او ما سوى ذلك من حاله

[57] Sublet (1991), 168 – 169: "Un guerrier qui va combattre les Byzantins (Rûm) ne s'appellera pas : al-Rûmî à son retour. Un voyageur qui va jusqu'en Chine ou en Inde ne portera qu'exceptionnellement les noms : al-Ṣînî (le Chinois) ou al-Hindî (l'Indien), et dans ce cas le biographie s'emploie à jusitifier cet usa… " ; Sublet (1986) : "It is also to the *dār al-Islām* that the nisbas refer which are acquired by indiviuals on the basis of geographical names. It may in fact be stated that the names listed by the biographers do not contains [sic] nisbas formed on the basis of the names of places which do not belong to the *dār al-Islām…* But if he leaves the *dār al-Islām,* to travel for example to Cina (al-Ṣīn), India (Bilād al-Hind) or to Asia Minor (al-Rūm), countries which belong to the *dār al-ḥarb,* he will not bear the nisbas al-Ṣīnī, al-Hindī or al-Rūmī except in cases where these are employed as nicknames…"

[58] Sublet (1991), 171.

use the *nisba* to claim territory for the Caliphate by portraying the breadth of *mamlakat al-Islām* in the same way that individual scholars accumulated *nisba*s to convey their own personal achievements in touring the entirety of Islam.[59]

The *nisba* Armīnī, at least according to al-Samᶜānī, offers some nuance, since this is described as *bilād al-Rūm*: that is, within Byzantine control.[60] This likely reflects either (1) the difference between Interior Armīniya (Bagratid lands) and Exterior Armīniya (caliphal territory) and/or (2) a later perception of Armīniya. Furthermore, it is likely that the *nisba* Armīnī was actually only employed in reference to Christian Armenians. However, the biographers present each individual city of Armīniya as part of the Caliphate and list their respective *nisba*s: al-Našawī, al-Dabīlī, al-Bābī, al-Tiflisī, al-Qālī, and al-Barḏᶜī are each described only in direct relation to caliphal provinces such as Aḏarbayǧān or Northern Mesopotamia (specifically, Diyār Bakr).[61]

However, further proof of Armīniya's inclusion in the Islamic world can be extrapolated from Armenian historical sources, in addition to than from Arabic ones. These suggest that Islamic law was enforced in Armīniya under the Marwānids, as evidenced by the martyrologies relevant to this period. Furthermore, there was a concerted effort to define Armenian canon law in the eighth century, an endeavor that can be interpreted in view of the judicial autonomy afforded to *ahl al-ḏimma* under Islamic law. We will return to these issues in Chapter 6.

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[59] Sublet (1991), 173.

[60] Al-Samᶜānī, I 83: هذه النسبة الى ارمينية وهي من بلاد الروم ويضرب بحسنها وطيب هوائها وكثرة مائها وشجرها المثل منها ابو عبد الله عيسى بن مالك بن بشر الارميني اصله من ارمينية ان شاء الله قال ابو سعيد بن يونس الصدفي: قدم ابو عبد الله الارميني مصر وكتب بها (الحديث) وسافر الى and Ibn al-Aṯīr, I 35: هذه النسبة الى أرمينية وهي من بلاد القيروان وكتب بها وكتبت عنه نسخة من حديث شجرة بن عيسى سمعها بالمغرب الروم منها ابو عبد الله عيسى بن مالك بن بشر الارميني سافر الى مصر والغرب

[61] Al-Našawī: al-Samᶜānī, IV 421 and Ibn al-Aṯīr, III 225; al-Dabīlī: al-Samᶜānī, II 219 – 220 [no entry on Armenian Dabīl in Ibn al-Aṯīr]; al-Bābī: al-Samᶜānī, I 170 – 171 and Ibn al-Aṯīr, I 81; al-Tiflisī: al-Samᶜānī, I 340 – 341 and Ibn al-Aṯīr, I 178; al-Qālī: al-Samᶜānī, IV 14 – 15 and Ibn al-Aṯīr, II 237; and al-Barḏᶜī: al-Samᶜānī, I 219 – 220 [no entry in Ibn al-Aṯīr].

2.2 The Nature of the Frontier

The early Caliphate inherited not only administrative models from Sasanian examples, but also the borders themselves. While Bāb al-Lān is commonly cited as the northern border of the Sasanian realm, modern Erzurum represented the border between Byzantium and both the Sasanian Empire[62] and the Caliphate.

Arab geographers commonly refer to Kavat I and, even more frequently, Anūširwān and their roles in fortifying the borders of the Empire. Ibn Ḫurradāḏbih, for example, claims that both these Sasanian emperors razed cities in the border zone, only to rebuild them stronger and more impenetrable.[63] The rebuilding of deserted or destroyed marches is a common trope in frontier theory and is repeated in the Islamic period.

However, the idea of a militarized, fortified border is not consistently borne out in the sources, which suggest that the frontier was open at least intermittently to considerable movement of populations and goods. A closer look at the terms *ḥudūd* and *ṯuġūr* may help to define the nature of the divide between Islam and the Other, traditionally identified as *dār al-Islām* and *dār al-ḥarb*, as well as the division of provinces within the Caliphate. Subsequently, a consideration of the nature of the frontier—as barrier or bridge—will demonstrate the enduring importance of the Sasanian past for the recasting of the border areas under Islam.

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[62] See Shapira (2000), 144: "The river Frāt (Euphrates): its source is from the border of Byzantium, it passes Asūrestān (Mesopotamia) and pours into Diglat (Tigris), and its priority / its being Euphrates is that they produce food on the land." See p. 146 no. 15: *Frādīh* is a pun on the name Euphrates.

[63] See Ter-Łewondyan (1961b), 70.

2.2.1 *Ḥudūd* and *Ṯuġūr*

Accounting for the choice of vocabulary (*ḥadd* or *ṯaġr*) in descriptions of Armīniya may be an impossible or fruitless task, since each geographer divides the land differently, both internally and externally. The term *ḥadd* may be defined as a "hindrance, impediment, limit, boundary, [or] frontier."[64] It can refer to any type of geographical entity: a country, a city, Islam as a whole. R. Brauer adds that "both texts and cartographic representation thus concur in implying a concept of boundaries *within* the broad confines of the Islamic Empire that is not that of a sharp transition from one political entity to the next, but rather a gradual interpenetration of the adjoining communities."[65] We should therefore expect the *ḥudūd* to be somewhat malleable, but employed exclusively as internal boundaries in the Caliphate.

The only direct mention of the *ḥudūd* as an indefinite borderland comes from *Hudūd al-ᶜālam,* where it states that Arrān, Armīniya, and Aḏarbayğān "…are adjacent to each other. Their country-sides enter into each other."[66] This is consistent with Abū al-Fidā''s comment that Arrān, Armīniya, and Aḏarbayğān cannot be divided.

Brauer's hypothesis that the term *ḥadd* is only used to designate internal boundaries does not withstand scrutiny, as least in the case of the geographies of Armīniya. The following is a compilation of the most commonly-mentioned *ḥudūd:*

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[64] Carra de Vaux (1986). See Lane, I 525 : "*A bar, an obstruction, a partition,* or *a separation,* (Ṣ, A, Mgh, L, Mṣb, *Ḳ,) between two things,* (Ṣ, A, L, Ḳ,) or *between two places,* (Mgh,) [or *between two persons,*] *to prevent their commixture,* or *confusion, or the encroachment of one upon the other:* (L:)an inf. n. used as a subst.: (Mgh:) pl. حُدُودٌ. (L). *A limit,* or *boundary,* of a land or territory: pl. as above. (L). The *end, extremity* or *utmost point,* of a thing: (Ṣ, L, Ḳ:) pl. as above. (L.)" See Ibn Manẓūr, III 140: الحد الفصل بين الشيئين لئلا يختلط احدهما بالاخر او لئلا يتعدى احدهما على الاخر وجمعه حدود. وفصل ما بين كل شيئين حد بينهما. ومنتهى كل شئ حده: ومنه احد حدود الارضين وحدود الحرم وفي الحديث في صفة القرآن: لكل حرف حد ولكل حد مطلع: قتل اراد لكل منتهى نهاية. ومنتهى كل شئ حده.

[65] Brauer (1995), 13.

[66] Minorsky (1937), 142. Cf: *Hudūd al-ᶜālam*, 157 – 8: سه ناحیتست بیکرپیوسته وسوادهاءیشان بیکدیگر اندر شده

- Al-Iṣṭaḫrī: "of the east," "of Islam," of the Rūm, Northern Mesopotamia, Iraq, between the Armenians and al-Lān, Bagratid lands, Ğanza, Bākū, Šamkūr, "the *ḥadd* of Arrān is from Bāb al-Abwāb to Tiflīs," of Aḏarbayğān, Arrān, and Armīniya.[67]
- Ibn al-Faqīh: Armenian *ḥadd* from Barḏᶜa to Bāb al-Abwāb, Rūm, Sarīr, al-Laks, between al-Lān and Ḫazars.[68]
- Al-Muqaddasī: Muġkan, Šabaran, Zanğān.[69]
- Ibn Ḥawqal: Rūm, Northern Mesopotamia, al-Lān, between Interior and Exterior Armīniya, Ğanza, Šamkūr, Bāb al-Abwāb.[70]
- *Hudūd al-ᶜālam*: Rūm, Ḫazars, Sarīr, Northern Mesopotamia, Iraq, between Armīniya, Aḏarbayğān, and Arrān, Šakkī.[71]
- Al-Idrīsī: Mayāfāriqīn (between Armīniya and Northern Mesopotamia), Bāb al-Abwāb, Ğanza, Šamkūr.[72]
- Abū al-Fidāʾ: Byzantium, Northern Mesopotamia, Iraq, Daylam, Barḏᶜa, Arrān, Zanğān.[73]

Some of Brauer's arguments hold true within this sample of texts: the *ḥudūd* can be cities or larger areas and can definitely function as internal borders. There is, however, also a *ḥadd* mentioned between Interior and Exterior Armīniya, though we will see that these two toponyms referred to parts of Armīniya that were both outside and inside the confines of the Caliphate. Also, it is not possible to reconcile Brauer's definition of the term *ḥadd – ḥudūd* in conjunction with the borders of the Ḫazars, Rūm, Sarīr, al-Lān, and al-Laks. *Ḥadd* here seems to have a much

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[67] Al-Iṣṭaḫrī, 180: "of the east," "of Islam," of Rūm, Mesopotamia, Iraq; 181: btw Armenians and al-Lān; 188: Bagratid land, Mesopotamia; 189: Ğanza/Šamkūr; 190: the *ḥadd* of Arrān is from Bāb al-Abwāb to Tiflīs, the *ḥudūd* of Azerbayğān, Arrān, and Armīniya are listed.

[68] Ibn al-Faqīh, 286: Armenian *ḥadd* from Barḏᶜa to Bāb al-Abwāb, Rūm, Sarīr, al-Laks; 295: between al-Lān and Ḫazars.

[69] Al-Muqaddasī, 376: Muġkan, Šabaran; 378: Zanğān.

[70] Ibn Ḥawqal, 331: Rūm, Mesopotamia, al-Lān; 343: between Interior and Exterior Armīniya; 345: Ğanza, Šamkūr; 347: Bāb al-Abwāb.

[71] *Hudūd al-ᶜālam*, 158: Rūm, Ḫazars, Sarīr, Mesopotamia, Iraq; 162: between Armīniya, Aḏarbayğān, and Arrān, Šakkī.

[72] Al-Idrīsī, 825: Armīniya and al-Ğazīra; 829: Bāb al-Abwāb; 830: Ğanza, Šamkūr.

[73] Abū al-Fidāʾ, 386–87.

broader meaning, tied to the idea of border in general. It does not appear to be limited merely to internal borders.

The term *ṯaġr*, on the other hand, is much more specific. It literally refers to the gap between one's front teeth and, by extension, any open space or gap. The term also gained a much more specific definition, referring to the "points of entry between Dār al-Islām and Dār al-Ḥarb beyond it. It is more specifically used in the plural for the lines of fortifications protecting the gaps along such frontiers as that in south-eastern Anatolia between the Arabs and Byzantines…"[74] According to Yāqūt, a *ṯaġr* is "every place that is near to the land of the enemy."[75]

Thus Brauer's observations on the term *ṯaġr* seem more accurate:

the earliest usage of the term referred to the region just in front of the armies facing the Christian enemy. Presently, the singular came to be used primarily to designate specific localities in a more stable frontier zone, fortified places that served as residence and staging points for warriors engaged in carrying the *jihād*—the Holy War—to adjacent enemy Lands beyond the confines of *Dār al-Islām*.[76]

There is a more restricted number of *ṯuġūr* listed in Islamic geographical works. In short:

- Al-Iṣṭaḫrī: Qālīqalā and Tiflīs
- Al-Muqaddasī: the region of Armīniya, Aḏarbayǧān, and Arrān as a whole
- Ibn Ḥawqal: Qālīqalā, Tiflīs, Northern Mesopotamia
- *Hudūd al-ᶜālam:* Malāzkirt, Tiflīs

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[74] Latham (1986). See also Lane, I 338 – 9: *A frontier-way of access to a country*, [in the CK, قُرُوح is erroneously put for فُرُوح, the word occurring in its place in MSS. Of the Ḳ and in the Ṣ,] *such as is a place of fear*; (Ṣ, Ḳ;) as also ثَغْرُورٌ: (Ḳ:) the *part* of a country *from which the invasion of the enemy is feared;* so that it is like a gap in a wall, from which one fears the invasion of the robber: (Mṣb:) *a place from,* or *through, which one fears the enemy's coming, in a mountain or fortress:* (T, TA:) the *frontier of a hostile country:* (Ḳ:) *a place that is the boundary between the countries of the Muslims and the unbelievers:* (IAth, TA:) pl. ثُغُور. See Ibn Manẓūr, IV 103: وهذه مدينة فيها ثغر وثلم والثغر ما يلى دار الحرب. والثغر موضع المخافة من فروج البلدان. وفى الحديث قفل فلما مر الاجل قفل اهل ذلك الثغر: قال الثغر الموضع الذى يكون حداً فاصلاً بين بلاد المسلمين والكفار وهو موضع المخافة من اطراف البلاد.

[75] Yāqūt (1995) II 79: كل موضع قريب من ارض العدو يسمى ثغراً

[76] Brauer (1995), 14.

- Al-Idrīsī: Balḫab, Qālīqalā, Northern Mesopotamia, al-Rūm
- Yāqūt: the region of Arrān
- Abū al-Fidāʾ: Qālīqalā

The interesting points about these entries are (1) the relative conformity of belief, with Qālīqalā and Tiflīs predominating as the most significant *ṯuġūr* of the caliphal North; and (2) the tendency of the authors to describe these cities with explicit reference to military campaigns. This implies a certain assumption about the nature of the frontier as a barrier against the Other (*dār al-ḥarb*) and a site of prolonged warfare.

For example, *Hudūd al-ᶜālam* mentions two *ṯuġūr*: Malāzkird and Tiflīs. Malāzkerd is "against the Rūm. The people are warlike and the place pleasant."[77] Tiflīs is situated "against the infidels."[78] Al-Muqaddasī describes Tiflīs as well-fortified,[79] but not a *ṯaġr*. Al-Muqaddasī's use of the word *ṯaġr* stretches to include the entire region of Armīniya, Aḏarbayǧān, and Arrān, and is also only used when linked to the idea of confrontation between Islam and foreign territories. He writes that the region "is a glory to both Islam and to raiders," that it is "a great *ṯaġr*" where "the Rūm come against the Muslims."[80] Ibn Ḥawqal gives a few examples of *ṯuġūr* and specifically links them to war: Tiflīs is "a great *ṯaġr*, with many enemies from every direction."[81] Similarly, Qāliqalā "was a great *ṯaġr* belonging to the people of Aḏarbayǧān, al-Ǧibāl, al-Rayy and what is attached to it, in the middle of the country of the Rūm."[82] He also mentions raiders

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[77] Minorsky (1937), 143. *Hudūd al-ᶜālam,* 160: ملازگرد ثغريست برروى روميان ومردمانى جنگى وجايى باعمت

[78] Minorsky (1937), 144. *Hudūd al-ᶜālam,* 162: تفليس ثغريست بر روى كافران

[79] Al-Muqaddasī, 375.

[80] Al-Muqaddasī, 373: وهو اقليم للاسلام وعلى المسلمين من الروم and وهو مع هذا ثغر جليل واقليم نبيل and وهو للاسلام فخر وللغازين

[81] Ibn Ḥawqal, 340: وهي ثغرجليل كثير الاعداء من كل جهة

[82] Ibn Ḥawqal, 343: وكانت قاليقلا في وسط بلد الروم ثغرا عظيما لاهل اذربيجان والجبال والرى وما والاها

and *muğāhid*s on their way to Rūm territory.[83] Al-Iṣṭaḫrī mentions the *ṯaġr* of Tiflīs four times, explaining in one case that "it is one of the great, important *ṯuġūr* because there are many enemies that surround it."[84] As for Qāliqalā, al-Iṣṭaḫrī writes that "the *ṯaġr* that is adjacent to the Romans from Armenia is Qāliqalā and the people of Aḏarbayğān raid against it."[85]

The term *ṯaġr – ṯuġūr*, at least as it appears in the geographical material relating to Armīniya, thus tends to refer to either an entire territory on the edges of Islam or, more frequently, to specific towns that are almost always specifically linked to war, raiding, or *ğihād*. This idea of warfare extending outside of the boundaries of Islam is the pivotal aspect of the definition, as there are plenty of cities and towns listed in the geographical works as *ḥudūd* that are strongly fortified, but still do not graduate to the status of *ṯaġr*.[86]

2.2.2 The Frontier as "Barrier or Bridge?"[87]

While the *ḥudūd* appear much more fluid and permeable in the Arabic accounts, the *ṯuġūr* are far more consistently defined as bastions of military might, designed for both defensive and offensive roles in protecting and expanding the Islamic polity. However, the nature of the *ṯuġūr* is defined differently according to historical exchanges between Islam and the Other.

Both Greek and Arab authors, including Eutychius, Theophanes, Agapius of Manbiğ, al-Wāqidī, al-Balāḏurī, and others, have described the *ṯuġūr* as barriers, intended to prevent

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[83] Ibn Ḥawqal, 353: ومن امد الى حران على الطريق الذي تسلكه الغزاة والمجاهدون الى شمشاط وعلى سميساط الى ملطية نحو خمسة ايام

[84] Al-Iṣṭaḫrī, 185: وهي احد الثغور الجليلة العظيمة لانها كثيرة الاعداء الذين قد حفوا بها

[85] Al- Iṣṭaḫrī, 188: والثغر الذي يلى الروم من ارمينية قاليقلا واليها يغزو اهل اذربيجان

[86] Cf: *Hudūd al-ᶜālam,* 162.

[87] Kaegi (1986).

movement of both armies and the general populace between the two great powers.[88] However,

these examples seem to be uncommon, temporary, and restricted to specific locations. For

instance, Theophanes's chronicle reads as follows:

> In this year [636/7] John (whose surname was Kataias) the governor of Osrhoene
> came to Iad at Chalcis. He arranged to give Iad 100,000 nomismata per year not
> to cross the Euphrates either in peace or in war until the Roman had given up as
> much gold as he could. On these terms John went back to Edessa, raised the
> annual tribute, and sent it to Iad. When Herakleios heard this he judged John
> culpable, as he had done it without imperial authorization. He recalled him and
> condemned him to exile, in his place dispatching a general, Ptolemaios.[89]

Similarly we see Łewond's comment:

> And after this, his son Mahmet Mahdi succeeded his reign. And he was nobler
> than his father with better qualities. He opened all of the doors of the treasuries
> that the wicked Abdla kept shut and he distributed rewards to his troops. He also
> opened the borders of the regions to allow merchants to sell and to fulfill the
> needs of people who were lacking things.[90]

These are merely two out of several examples of how the borders were closed or opened

depending on local or regional political circumstances. It seems that the borders were frequently

open, as their closing provoked complaint.[91] Furthermore, an Armenian text composed soon after

the Arab conquest describes the border: "from Karin to the ditch separating the land of the

Armenians from the land of the Greeks—100 miles, from there to Kolonia—90."[92] The image of

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[88] Kaegi (1986).

[89] Turtledove (1982), 39 – 40; Theophanes, I 340. See also Kaegi (1996), 88 and Kaegi (1986).

[90] Łewond, 187 – 188: Եւ յետ այսորիկ յաջորդէ զիշխանութիւն նորա Մահմետ Մահդի որդի նորա: Եւ սա էր ազնուական քան զհայր իւր եւ լաւագոյն բարուք: Երբաց զամենայն տունս զանձուց զորս աղխեալ պահէր ամբարիշտն Աբդլա, եւ բաշխեաց պարգեւս զօրաց իւրոց: Համարձակեաց եւ զղրունս մարզից հանել զվաճառականսն ի վաճառսն իրեանց ն լնուլ զպէտս կարօտելոց:

[91] Dasxuranc‘i, 145: Արդ՝ իբրն տեսին նախարարքն Պարսից զայն ես բեկումն մեծ, որ եղև զօրացն Պարսից, սկսան քրթմնջել ընդ միմեանս ն ասեն...մինչ յէ որ պնդեալ, կապեալ կայցեն կիրճք ճանապարհաց՝ յարգելուլ զշահս վաճառաց կողմանց կողմանց.

[92] Greenwood (2008), 144.

a ditch does not exactly suggest a militarized frontier and the passage is a travel itinerary designed specifically for someone crossing into Byzantine territory. The *t̲uġūr* maintained their significance not because they restricted movement of people and goods from one land to its neighbor, but rather because of the ideological distinction between Islam and the Other and the concurrent merit attached to conducting *ğihād*, a symbol at least of the continuing efforts to expand the Caliphate.

A. Eger has approached this question with a broad, multifaceted definition of the frontier, insisting upon the necessity of construing it as the product of multiple layers of representation. His approach is particularly noteworthy in that it marries historical research with archeological and art historical data and endeavors to bridge the "disciplinary frontier" in frontier studies. His dissertation mentions that frontier societies may show more in common with each other than with their own metropolitan societies or hinterlands, as local traditions and resources dictate development.

> …though categories of evidence may suggest ethno-religious frontier societies, to the archaeologist, the frontier as an identifiable regional space is imperceptible. The *thughūr* becomes an imagined frontier composed of religious/political ideologies. Stripped of its ideology, archaeology can show a 'real' region of continuity, ecological subsistence, and local economy. However, frontiers— whether real or imagined—all have historical relevance.[93]

This helps to explain the seeming paradox that the frontier can simultaneously act as both a barrier and a bridge. The Byzantine and Ḫazar frontiers in the caliphal North were described according to both paradigms. However, it is the conceptual frontier that is most relevant here, as it demonstrates the tendency to turn toward Sasanian or at least anti-Byzantine themes when describing the specific outposts listed in Arabic and Persian geographies.

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[93] Eger (2008), 419.

2.2.2.1 Qālīqalā: "So the Arabs arabized Qālī Qālah"[94]

The borders between Byzantium and the Sasanian Empire were hardly fixed; the concept of a buffer state is much more relevant for the pre-Islamic period than it is for the period of Umayyad and ᶜAbbāsid rule. With the rise of the Caliphate and the inclusion of Arab tribes and Armīniya into the Islamic world, the political situation was altered.[95] From the perspective of the Arab geographers, the frontier is quite clearly and specifically defined: the only place consistently labeled as an Armenian *ṯaġr* against the Greeks is Qālīqalā.

There are comparatively few accounts about Qālīqalā (Arm: Karin) during the Arab period in Armenian and Arabic sources, most of which (especially Sebēos and al-Balāḏurī) present the city as a locus of military skirmishes between the Greeks and the Arabs during the initial period of incursions (640s–700). However, from the eighth century on, warfare in the vicinity of the city features only rarely in histories: during the 775 Armenian rebellion against the Caliphate and the Greek offensive during al-Muᶜtaṣim's reign (833–842).[96] It seems incongruent that the city should be heralded only twice as an actual site of hostility in chronicles, while it is so frequently singled out as a *ṯaġr* in geographical literature. Its prestige is likely related to its strategic position in close contact with Byzantium, its status as a pre-Islamic provincial capital,[97] and its history from the initial period of Arab incursions, rather than as a locus of any extended military campaign against the Greeks in the Arab period.

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[94] Yāqūt (1995), IV 299.

[95] Kaegi (1996), 86: Kaegi seems far more certain about this fact for the case of the Arab tribes, rather than Armenia itself. He also discusses the "blurring" of the frontiers at great length, an idea that may have more pertinence for the entirety of Byzantine – Arab frontier than for Armenia.

[96] Ter-Łewondyan (1971), 67.

[97] Thopdschian (1904a), 56 – 57.

In fact, the geographical literature supports the view that the border was quite open, as it comments specifically on trade routes linking Byzantium and the Caliphate via Armīniya. The bridge between the two polities was Trebizond: "And they have an entry into the land of al-Rūm known as Aṭarābazunda, which is a city in which the traders from the lands of Islam meet and from which they enter into the land of al-Rūm in order to trade."[98] H. Manandyan links the importance of Qālīqalā to the trade routes emanating from Trebizond, considering the former a main thoroughfare for trade from Byzantium through the Mediterranean and into the ʿAbbāsid world.[99]

Again, despite the open borders, Arab geographers make efforts to present Qālīqalā from the perspective of the East: in Yāqūt's brief entry on the city, he makes no mention of the Greeks, merely stating that the city was once controlled by Armenian royalty and that afterwards "Armīniya remained in the hands of the Persians from the days of Anūširwān until the coming of Islām."[100]

Furthermore, Arab geographers consistently relay an altered version of an earlier tradition about the city's name. On the one hand, the name قاليقالا (Qālīqālā) may be a distortion of the Syriac ܩܠܝܢܩܠܐ (Qalinqalā), which itself is a corruption of the Armenian name, կարին քաղաքը (Karin kʿałakʿə).[101] However, this fails to explain Arab traditions about the city's name that we see in al-Balāḏurī, Ibn al-Aṯīr, al-Qazwīnī, Ibn al-Faqīh, and Yāqūt:

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[98] Ibn Ḥawqal, 344: ولهم مدخل الى بلد الروم يعرف باطرابزندة وهي مدينة يجتمع فيها التجار من بلد الاسلام فيدخلون منها الى بلد الروم للتجارة See also al-Iṣṭaḫrī, 188: ولهم مدخل الى بلد الروم يعرف بطرابزندة وهي مدينة يجتمع فيها التجار من بلد الاسلام فيدخلون منها الى بلد الروم للتجارة فما وقع من دبابيج وبزيون وثياب الروم الى تلك النواحى فمن طرابزندة

[99] Manandyan (1965), 132 – 133.

[100] Yāqūt (1995), IV 299: ولم تزل أرمينية في أيدي الفرس منذ أيام أنوشروان حتى جاء الاسلام

[101] Ter-Łewondyan (1971), 66. This form is also attested in the work of Michael the Syrian as Qaliniqala (ܩܠܝܢܩܠܐ). Ghazarian (1904), 211: the *Chronicle of Zuqnīn* has Qalinqalā (ܩܠܝܢܩܠܐ), while Bar Hebraeus spells it Qalnqalā (ܩܠܢܩܠܐ).

Qus, an Armenian man, ruled over Armīniya. He consolidated his rule and then died. There ruled after him a woman whose name was Qālī. She built a city and named it Qālī Qālah, which means the beneficence of Qālī. And she drew her own portrait on one of the gates of the city. The Arabs arabized Qālī Qālah and so they say Qālīqalā.[102]

"Beneficence" here refers to the Greek καλή, transliterated into Arabic as قالي. A. Ter-

Łewondyan traces the Greek name back to a church near the city, relying on an Armenian text

extant today only in Greek translation from c. 700:

> Au temps de celui-ci [Aršak Aršakuni], l'Arménie fut partagée. C'est alors qu'on construisit Théodosiopolis, qui était auparavant un village, appelé Kalè Arkhè. En effet, quand le grand apôtre Barthélemy se rendit en Parthie, il baptisa dans l'Euphrate le neveu du roi de Perse et trois milles personnes avec lui. Puis il fonda sur place l'église nommée d'après la très Sainte Mère de Dieu et il nomma Kalè Arkhè « Beau Début », [take out the guillemets] le village qui était en ce lieu. Théodose le Grand, ayant considéré l'endroit et l'eau qui s'y trouvait, les jugea agréables et fonda une cité illustre dont il changea le nom en Théodosiopolis.[103]

G. Garitte, the editor of this work, does not see a direct link between the Greek name and

the Arabic Qālīqalā and considers the similarity between καλὴ ἀρχὴ and قاليقالا to be

"fortuitous."[104] However, the Arabic texts specifically translate the word قالي (καλή) as احسان,

demonstrating that the Arabic name must have been derived directly from this tradition or at very

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[102] Ibn al-Faqīh, 292: ومعنى ذلك احسان قالى وقاليقلا امرأة بنت مدينة قاليقلا فنُسبت اليها قاليقلا مدينة See also: Al-Qazwinī, 551: And Yāqūt (1995), IV 299: بارمينية تنسب الى امرأة اسمها قالي, فكانّه قال قالي بَنَتْ, كما دارابجرد, وصَوَّرَتْ صورة نفسها على باب المدينة. ملك أرمينية قُس, وهو رجل من أهل أرمينية, فاختمع له ملكه ثم مات فملكّتهم بعده امرأة وكانت تسمى قالي فبنت مدينة وسمتها قالي قاله ومعناه إحسان قالوا: وقد كانت أمور الروم تستب في بعض 122 Al-Balāḏurī, قالي وصوّرت نفسها على باب من أبوابها فعرّب العرب قالي قاله فقالوا قاليقلا. الأزمنة وصاروا كملوك الطوائف فملك أرمنياقس رجل منهم, ثم مات فملكتها بعده امرأته وكانت تسمى قالي فبنت مدينة قاليقلا وسمتها قاليقاله, ومعنى ذلك احسان قالى, قال وصورت على باب من ابواب وأعربت العرب قاليقاله فقالوا قاليقلا.

[103] *Narratio* trans. Mahé (1995), 430. See Bartᶜikyan for Armenian translation, qtd. in Ter-Łewondyan (1971), 63. See *Narratio,* 27 lines 4 – 9.

[104] *Narratio,* 67 : "La ressemblance de Καλὴ avec le début du nom arabe de Théodosiopolis *qālīqalā* ne peut être que fortuite." and "Le nom du village primitif, Καλὴ Ἀρχή, n'est attesté, que nous sachions, nulle part ailleurs que dans notre texte inédit, et nous ne devinons pas à quoi il a pu correspondre en arménien…les correspondants arméniens de καλός et d'ἀρχή ne semblent pas usités dans ce qui est connu de la toponymie arménienne…Il n'est pas probable que les mots Καλὴ Ἀρχή proviennent d'une traduction fautive de l'arménien, car ils cadrent bien avec le contexte."

least in relation to the Greek name. The Arabs clearly retained some vestige of this story. However, they do not remember the details of the baptism or the church and they specifically assign a new, profane meaning to the engraved image of the Virgin Mary on the parapets of the city. Not only does this demonstrate that the Arabic accounts divorce the Christian meaning from the city name and artwork,[105] it may also serve as an example of the way in which Byzantine historical traditions were not recorded as faithfully as Sasanian ones in the early Islamic era.[106]

2.2.2.2 Tiflīs and Bāb al-Abwāb: "beyond which there is no Islām"[107]

The examples of Tiflīs and Bāb al-Abwāb contribute a very different perspective to the history of the *ṯuġūr*. While relations between the Caliphate and Byzantium were constantly in flux depending on a number of factors, the Ḫazars remained an enduring enemy in memory if not in fact. Despite very successful campaigns against the Ḫazars—for example, under Maslama b. ᶜAbd al-Malik in 731 and Marwān b. Muḥammad in 737—the general tenor of both the Armenian and Arabic sources demonstrates an embedded fear that long outlasted the military might of the far North.

There are two commonly repeated examples of an attempt to create a barrier at Bāb al-Abwāb: (1) the fortification of the port and (2) Anūširwān's wall, a much-celebrated Sasanian motif. Ibn al-Faqīh describes the northern frontier as a line of fortifications extending from Bāb al-Abwāb to Bāb al-Lān, clearly meant as a substantial barrier to movement;[108] al-Balāḏurī

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[105] Ter-Łewondyan (1971), 66.

[106] Donner (1998), 198 and Noth (1997), 39.

[107] Minorsky (1955), 35 / Abū Dulaf, 6: وسرت من هناك في بلد الارمن حتى انتهيت الى تفليس وهي مدينة لا اسلام وراءها

[108] Ibn al-Faqīh, 288.

attributes this specifically to the efforts of Anūširwān.[109] Still, similar to the situation along the

Byzantine front, we see that the status of the border depended greatly on the policy of individual

rulers and the political and military circumstances at any given time. So, for example, the

Chronicle of Zuqnīn mentions that Maslama attempted to create a barrier between the Ḫazars and

the Islamic world, but to no avail:

> After he [Maslama] had rebuilt it [Bāb al-Abwāb][110] he made a treaty under an
> oath by God with the Turks that no one of them should cross over the boundary of
> his neighbor, and then he left. But the Turks, not knowing God nor understanding
> that they were his creatures, nor realizing that there was a God in Heaven, did not
> abide by his treaty, but despised God and rejected his word. Scornfully, they
> crossed over and committed numerous evils in the whole land extending beyond
> their boundaries.[111]

Despite the extensive defenses, Arabic and Armenian sources detail frequent threats to

the Caliphate from the Ḫazars. Anūširwān's walls, a symbol of the impregnability of the

Sasanian Empire and by extension the Caliphate, were in fact ephemeral.

We soon have both textual and numismatic evidence of a Fur Road leading from the

Caliphate to Eastern Europe via Ḫazar territory, signifying considerable movement across the

border. Mušełyan proposes three trade routes from the Islamic world to Eastern Europe: (1) from

the central lands of the caliphate to the Volga, then on to either the Baltic region or further west;

(2) from Iran northward via Bāb al-Abwāb; and (3) from southeastern Iran heading north via

Northern Mesopotamia and Armīniya.[112]

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[109] Al-Balāḏurī, 120 – 121.

[110] Harrak (1999), 159 no. 1 equates ܬܪܥܐ ܕܩܣܦܝܐ ܐܘܟܝܬ ܐܠܐܢ, αἱ Κασπίας πύλαι, and باب اللان and translates them all as "Caspian (or Iberian) Gates…in reference to the passes of Derbend on the Caspian Sea." He seems to be confusing باب اللان with باب الابواب. Al-Ṭabarī, at least, has Maslama repairing Bāb al-Abwāb in 114 *hiǧrī*.

[111] *Chronicle of Zuqnīn*, trans. Harrak (1999), 159. See *Chronicle of Zuqnīn*, 25.

[112] Mušełyan (1978 – 1979), 151 – 152 ; Noonan (1984), 151 – 152, 158 – 159.

There are also considerable data from the written sources concerning relations between the Ḫazars and the Islamic world, which indicate that the border was quite permeable. There are multiple examples of Ḫazars living in the Islamic world and, vice versa, Muslims in Ḫazaria.[113] The most famous examples, however, are political exchanges. An arranged marriage was attempted between al-Faḍl b. Yaḥyā al-Barmakī and the daughter of a *ḫāqān*.[114] Much better-documented is the marriage of the daughter of a *ḫāqān* and the Arab governor of Armīniya, Yazīd b. Usayd b. Ẓāfir al-Sulamī. Accounts of this arranged marriage appear in both Arabic (al-Ṭabarī, al-Balāḏurī) and Armenian (Łewond) sources. Al-Manṣūr ordered the marriage with the goal of maintaining the borders:

> And al-Manṣūr wrote to him [Yazīd b. Usayd b. Zāfir al-Sulamī]: the land of Armīniya will not be in order or at peace except with a marriage arrangement with the Ḫazars. And it is my own opinion that the people should arrange a marriage in order that the country may progress. If not, I fear for you and for all of your officials because of the Ḫazars. For indeed if they desire and if they gather, they conquer. And so pay attention and do not disobey my order and work towards a marriage agreement with the Ḫazars.[115]

There are also several famous examples of political expeditions to Ḫazar territory, including Aḥmad b. Faḍlān's journey under orders of al-Muqtadir and Sallām al-Tarǧumān's expedition with the blessing of al-Wāṯiq.[116]

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[113] Wasserstein (2007), 376 – 7.

[114] See Barthold (1986).

[115] Ibn Aᶜṯam, 392 – 393: وكتب اليه المنصور: اما بعد فان بلاد ارمينية لا تستقيم ولا تصلح الا بمصاهرة الخزر, والراي عندي ان تصاهر القوم حتى تستقيم البلاد, والا فاني خائف عليك وعلى جميع عمالك من الخزر, فانهم اذا ارادوا واجتمعوا غلبوا, فانظر ولا تخالف امري واجتهد في مصاهرة الخزر.   See also Czegledy (1960), 79 and Noonan (1984). It is tempting to compare this marriage, as a diplomatic tool, to the stalling technique of Anūširwān, who used a marriage proposal to the daughter of a *ḫāqān* as a ruse to dupe the Ḫazars, allowing for the time necessary to build his famous wall. See al-Qazwinī, 507.

[116] Ibn Rustih, 149 and Ibn Ḫurradāḏbih, 162–70.

The northern *ṯaġr* quickly became an anachronism, as the area is reassigned as *dār al-*
ᶜahd. The *ṯuġūr*—both against Byzantium and against the Ḫazars—maintained relevance because

of the prestige associated with *ǧihād.* For the case of the Ḫazar frontier, the memory of the

prolonged and nearly incessant warfare of the Sasanian and Umayyad periods morphed into

myth fueled by apocalyptic fear, as evidenced by the fact that the far North became equated with

the prison of the fearsome Gog and Magog.[117] Although Islamic tradition usually places Gog and

Magog in the extreme East, these accounts instead transpose the prison to the far North, as we

will see in Chapter 7. This inconsistency is indicative of Islamic apocalyptic sentiment that rose

specifically in reaction to the political events of the Umayyad period and is inextricably tied with

the Islamization of Armīniya. Once historical contacts between Ḫazaria and Islam increase

during the ᶜAbbāsid period and the barrier of Gog and Magog moves farther afield, the frontier

was maintained in part by religious differentiation, as Arab authors took notice account of the

conversion of the Ḫazars to Judaism.

Arabic accounts of the northern *ṯuġūr* are defined by (1) warfare tinged with apocalyptic

expectations and (2) Sasanian motifs, especially the activities of Anūširwān. As on the Byzantine

frontier, there was little or no restriction of movement between the Islamic world and Ḫazaria for

much of the Arab period.

The politico-military frontier changed according to the ruling élite, allowing trade and movement

of populations to continue across boundaries into both Byzantium and Ḫazaria. What is more

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[117] See Miquel (1975), 498 – 511, but especially 504: "Ainsi le Mur recule-t-il, aux limites du monde, une vision qui était, déjà un peu celle du Caucase…Si, pour l'Islam, le Turc peut être périlleux ou secourable, il n'en est pas de même pour son frère légendaire de l'autre côté : l'apparition de Gog et Magog est bien le signe du cataclysme." And 508 – 509 : "L'éloignement vers le Nord accentue, chez Gog et Magog, des traits qui se dessinaient déjà chez les Turcs, les Bulgares ou les Slaves : corps trapu, crâne chauve, visage large, laideur, sauvagerie, maladresse et stupidité."

compelling is the development of a conceptual frontier, a delineation designated to bolster claims

to ownership and legitimacy, that has everything to do with lines on a map and nothing to do

with the lived reality of borderland society; it relates instead to the hearts, minds, and

imagination of the population living both near to and far from the *ṯuġūr*.[118]

Despite (or perhaps even because of) the porous borders between Armīniya and both

Byzantium and Ḫazaria, reference to *ǧihād* and the assumption of Sasanian models of

administration demonstrate an attempt at legitimization of the province from the perspective of

the Caliphate by providing an Islamic identity for the Christian, previously Byzantine Western

Armīniya. This process of Islamization was necessary, given the importance of the North for

both the defensive and offensive policies of the Umayyads and the early ʿAbbāsids.

2.3 Muslim Presence in Armīniya and Relevance of Armīniya to Islam

It is not feasible to ascertain precisely how "Muslim" Armīniya became, or whether this process

of Islamization occurred only in the literary arena of the sectarian milieu outside Armīniya or

whether it also occurred on the ground with the production of mosques and Islamic networks of

knowledge. The Arab geographers occasionally listed towns while remarking that Muslims

inhabited them. They also enumerated mosques in specific cities.

Some geographers—al-Muqaddasī more than the others—offer a few tantalizing

comments about the Muslim community in Armīniya. For example, al-Muqaddasī claims that the

Muslims there are Sunnī,[119] mostly Ḥanbalī, except in Dabīl and a few nearby cities, where they

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[118] See Eger (2008), 23 – 4: "…the frontier can be composed of multiple superimposed frontiers, each of which constitutes a valid perspective. These include: a) the military and administrative frontier, b) the religious and ideological frontier, c) frontiers of society, economy, and settlement." See Eger (2005).

[119] Al-Muqaddasī, 373.

are Ḥanafī.[120] He decries the preacher in Ardabīl for not being a *faqīh*.[121] A few geographers, including al-Muqaddasī, Ibn Ḥawqal, and Yāqūt, mention *ḥadīṯ* learning and the names of specific Muslim scholars in Armenia.[122] For instance, Ibn Ḥawqal describes the people of Tiflīs in the following manner: "they are people of pure *sunna* according to the old schools of law (*maḏāhib*), who place importance on the science of *ḥadīṯ* and esteem those who study it."[123] However, al-Muqaddasī furnishes a critique of the scientific standards prevalent in Armīniya by describing a disputation about Islamic law that he undertook there with Abū ᶜAmr al-Ḥuwā'ī, who had studied under the Ḫurasānī scholar Abū Naṣr b. Sahl. After commenting on his disagreements, al-Muqaddasī concludes: "they do not speak about ᶜilm al-kalām and they do not take sides."[124]

Even if, like al-Idrīsī or Ibn Ḫurradāḏbih, the Arab geographers do not discuss Muslims living in Armīniya, they do explain the caliphal North through the lens of Islamic history, ensuring that it is depicted in a way that exemplifies its importance to the Islamic narrative.

In her recent publication about the discourse of place in the Islamic geographical tradition, Z. Antrim has suggested an extremely tenuous link between Mecca and Armīniya, specifically in traditions found in the works of al-Azraqī and Ibn Rustih. Abraham and Ishmael discovered the location intended for the construction of the Kaᶜba only with aid from the divine presence, al-Sakīna, which came south from either Syria or Armenia. When the Qurayš rebuilt

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[120] Al-Muqaddasī, 378 – 9: ومذاهبهم مستقيمة الا ان اهل الحديث حنابلة والغالب بدبيل مذهب ابي حنيفة رحه ويوجدون بعض المدن بلا غلبة

[121] Al-Muqaddasī, 378.

[122] Al-Muqaddasī, 379. Ibn Ḥawqal, 340: (account of Tiflīs) وهم اهل سنة محضة على المذاهب القديمة يكبرون علم الحديث; Yāqūt, I 161: وقد نسب بهذه النسبة قوم من اهل العلم

[123] Ibn Ḥawqal, 240: وهم أهل سُنَّةٍ محضةٍ على المذاهب القديمة يكبّرون علم الحديث ويعظّمون أهله...

[124] Al-Muqaddasī, 379: واما علم الكلام فلا يقولون به ولا يتشيعون

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the structure centuries later, they made use of materials from a scuttled Greek ship (*safina*).
Antrim considers these details evidence of connectivity and continuity both from Abraham to
Muḥammad and from Christianity (Greeks, Syrians, and Armenians) to Islam: "The use of the
term *safina* and its association with the Christian north echoes that of the mystical *Sakīna* from
Armenia that helped Abraham mark out the sight for the Kaʿba and represents Mecca as a place
of convergence and mutual aid between those who worship the God of Abraham."[125]

Furthermore, and more directly relevant to the importance of Armīniya, the Prophet was
said to have specific knowledge about the appearance of Alexander's wall.[126] This knowledge is
explained by a tradition that claims the Prophet actually visited Gog and Magog and the wall,
thereby allowing Armīniya the same claim to prophetic visitation as Jerusalem. Ibn Ḥaǧar and al-
Ṭabarānī preserve *ḥadīṯ* in which the Prophet claims to have visited Alexander's wall during his
Night Journey, though they dismiss the account as a fabrication.[127] However, al-Ṭabarī accepts
the controversial account. The Prophet relates:

> Behind them [Ǧabalqa and Ǧabarsa] there are three nations: Mansak, Tāfīl, and
> Tārīs, and before them are Yāǧūǧ and Maǧūǧ. Gabriel took me to them during my
> night journey from the Sacred Mosque to the Farthest Mosque. I called on Yāǧūǧ
> and Maǧūǧ to worship God, but they refused to listen to me.[128]

Ǧabalqā and Ǧabarsā are the legendary inhabited cities on the edge of the world, to the east and
west respectively.[129] Interestingly, al-Ṭabarī specifically links them to the Syriac tradition by

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[125] Antrim (2012), 46.

[126] Al-Ṭabarī, *Ǧāmiʿ al-Bayān*, XVI 23: حدثنا بشر قال: ثنا يزيد قال: ثنا سعيد عن قتادة قال: ذكر لنا أن رجلا قال: يا نبى الله قد رأيت سد
يأجوج ومأجوج قال: انْعَتْهُ لى قال: كأنه السبرد المحبر طريقة سوداء وطريقة حمراء. قال: قد رأيته.
Note that Ibn Ḥaǧar, VII 195 offers the same *ḥadīṯ*, different *sanad*.

[127] Van Donzel & Schmidt (2009), 86.

[128] Al-Ṭabarī, trans. Rosenthal (1989), 238. See Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīḫ*, I 57: ومن ورائهم ثلاث امم: منسك وتافيل وتاريس ومن دونهم
يأجوج ومأجوج. وان جبرائل عليه السلام انطلق بي اليهم ليلة اسري بي من المسجد الحرام الى المسجد الاقصى فدعوت يأجوج ومأجوج الى عبادة الله
عز وجل فابوا ان يجيبوني.

[129] Doufikar-Aerts (2010), 183 – 185.

providing the Syriac names for the two cities.[130] Thus the Prophet traced the Qurʾānic account of Alexander's journey: the farthest east, the farthest west, then on to the land of Gog and Magog.

The interesting point about these marginalized traditions is that importance is determined by connectivity: despite the unusual nature of both traditions (the *Sakīna* from Armenia and the Prophet's visit to the North), they very tenuously link Armīniya to two of the most celebrated prophets of Islam, Abraham and Muḥammad, and subsequently to two of the most central cities in religious cosmography, Mecca and Jerusalem.

The conquest narratives help make this fragile link between the Prophet and Armīniya more concrete, as several Companions of the Prophet, such as Salmān Ibn Rabīᶜa al-Bāhilī[131] and Ṣafwān b. al-Muᶜaṭṭal al-Sulamī, were directly involved with the invasions in the North.[132] Al-Sulamī was martyred during the conquest period and his tomb is described as part of Fourth Armīniya. At a later date, there are hints about another site of visitation north of Tiflīs: Abū Dulaf tried to reach a cave, the importance of which is not elaborated, but he was impeded because of military circumstances at the time.[133] Furthermore, al-Qazwīnī preserves a fascinating account about Muslim pilgrimage to a mosque near Bāb al-Abwāb, in which the sword of Maslama b. ᶜAbd al-Malik reportedly rested in the *miḥrāb*.[134] While we have extremely little

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[130] Al-Ṭabarī, trans. Rosenthal (1989), 237. See no. 457: "The Arabic names of the legendary cities are listed in Yāqūt, *Muᶜjam*, II, 2f. A historic Jābalq near Iṣfahān occurs in Ṭabarī…The Aramaic names appear to admit of no plausible Aramaic explanation, except for the final –ā imitating the Aramaic definite article." See al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīḫ*, I 57: اسم التي بالمشرق بالسريانية مرقيسيا وبالعربية جابلق واسم التي بالمغرب بالسريانية برجيسيا وبالعربية جابرس The subsequent notes mark on the authority of Ibn ᶜAbbās that Ǧabalq is home to the people of ᶜĀd; Ǧabars, the people of Ṯamūd.

[131] Ibn al-Faqīh, 286 and again 294, where ᶜUṯmān himself plays a part in the story; Yāqūt, I 160.

[132] Ibn al-Faqīh, 287; Ibn Ḫurradāḏbih, 123 – 4; Yāqūt, I 160.

[133] Abū Dulaf, 6: واردت ان امضى الى مغار الطيس (الطيش؟) لانظر اليه فلم يمكن ذلك لسبب قطع (*الطريق) عنه وانكفيت الى الفرض

[134] Al-Qazwīnī, 508 – 509: لا يزوره الناس وخارج المدينة تل عليه مسجد في محرابه سيف يقولون: انه سيف مسلمة ابن عبد الملك بن مروان. يزوره الا في ثياب بيض فمن قصده في ثياب مصبوغة جاءت الامطار والرياح وكاد يهلك ما حول التل. وعليه حفاظ بمنعون من يذهب اليه بالثياب المصبوغة.

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information about Umayyad and early ᶜAbbāsid attachment to the land, these accounts at least demonstrate that later ᶜAbbāsid-era authors linked the importance of Armīniya and the North to events of the conquest and Umayyad eras.

For the most part, as these small details suggest, the Islamization of Armīniya took place in the literary realm. There remains very little evidence about mosques in Armīniya. The Arab geographers mention their presence and occasionally their location, but none of these edifices have survived. The mosque of Dabīl, the earliest Arab capital in Armīniya, is only recognizable by architectural ruins. After the departure of the catholicos from the city, this building was converted into a mosque, having been previously the patriarchal palace. This is demonstrated by (1) the introduction of columns to create a multi-arcade space and (2) traces of a Qur'ānic inscription in gypsum, presumably marking the *miḥrāb*.[135] However, the evidence from Dabīl is extremely unusual. The city was destroyed by two successive earthquakes at the end of the ninth century, which severely decreased the population of city, inhibited the reuse of such communal buildings, and thus ensured their survival.

T. Greenwood has interpreted the discovery of eighth-century Arabic inscriptions on the churches of Zwartᶜnocᶜ and Aruč as possible indicators of Muslim control over Armenian churches: "The carving of Arabic inscriptions onto prominent Armenian churches in the second half of the eighth century raises a number of intriguing questions about the ownership or control of these principal ecclesiastical centers as well as Arab administration and settlement."[136] The relevant inscriptions read as follows:

(1) three inscriptions at Zwartᶜnocᶜ, originally visible from the interior of the church:

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[135] Kᶜalantᶜarian (1996), 77.

[136] Greenwood (2004), 41 – 42.

...الله

...God

... في الليل ...

…in the night…

...ضريحة ولا...

…tomb and not…

[ا]صله... وكتب في سنة اربع وخم[سين]
ومائة

…his origin…and [this was written] in the year 154…

في ولاية يزيد بن جرد بن ابرهم بن قرم غفر...

under the governorship of Yazīd b. Ibrahīm b. Qaram, may [God] pardon [him]

...لا

no…

كتب الياس [العباس؟] بن عيسى الوداكي غفر الله

Ilyās [al-ᶜAbbās?] b. ᶜIsā al-Waddākī, may God pardon

له وامة اهله ليس ...اياه ولا [العدوية؟ العدو؟]

him and all of his family, not…and not …

... مامور... في ال...

…officer…in the…

كتب في سنة... واحد مائة

This was written in the year one hundred…and one.

بسم الله الرحمن [ال]رحيم

In the name of God, the Merciful, the Beneficient.

محمد بن عبد الله

Muḥammad b. ᶜAbd Allāh

بن حمد

b. Ḥamad.
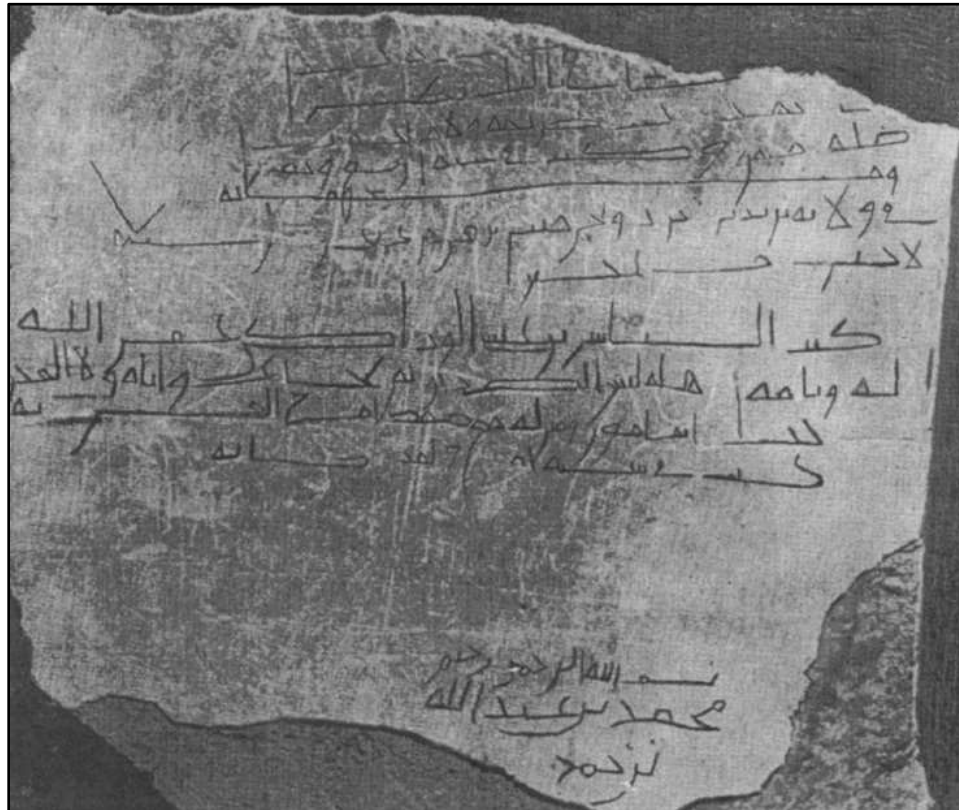
Image 1: Arabic Inscription at Zwartᶜnocᶜ [137]

(2) one inscription at Aruč, visible from the exterior:

كتب الحسين بن محمد بن
عيسى العلساني [القلساني, الفلساني, الغلساني]
سنة ... مائة
...

Al-Ḥusayn b. Muḥammad b. ʿĪsā al-ʿAlsānī
in the year…one hundred
…
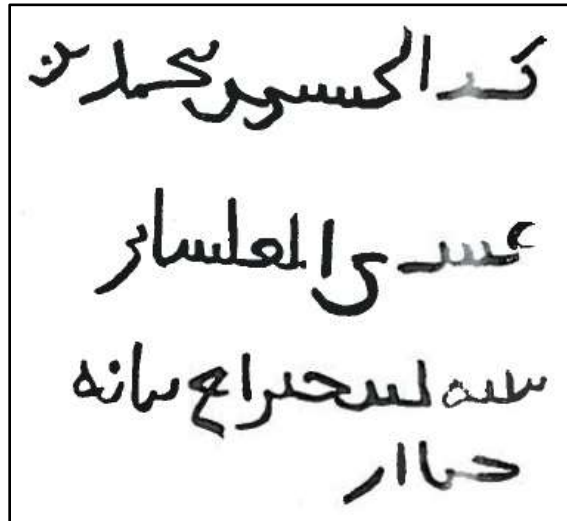
Image 2: Arabic Inscription at Aruč.[138]

The presence of Arabic inscriptions on Armenian churches cannot by itself indicate Arab possession of religious sites, though it would certainly fit with Muslim practice elsewhere in the Near East where churches were partitioned between Muslims and Christians as in, famously, the church of St. John in Damascus. However, without textual or archeological evidence, it is not possible to expound on the Muslim use of Armenian churches.

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[137] I'd like to thank Prof. Alexander Knysh for reviewing this with me and Prof. Stefan Heidemann for suggesting the reading of b. Ibrahīm. Greenwood (2004), 88 – 89 and pl. 19; Xačʿatryan (1987), 47 – 48 and pl. 6.

[138] I'd like to thank Alexander Knysh for reviewing this with me. Both Hoyland and Xačʿatryan read this as سنة سبعين ومائة, though it seems just as likely to be تسعين as سبعين. Xačʿatryan's reading of the last line as هجرية seems unlikely. Xačʿatryan (1987), 47 and pl. 4; Greenwood (2004), 89.

Despite the little evidence we have about Muslim Armīniya, it would also not be possible to read Arabic and Persian accounts and to emerge with the perception that Armīniya was a bastion of Christianity. Al-Muqaddasī, Ibn Ḥawqal, Ibn al-Faqīh, al-Qazwīnī, and al-Iṣṭaḫrī, among others, state that the majority of the population of Armīniya is Christian.[139] However, the general impression from the Arabic and Persian accounts is that Christian life in Armīniya is irrelevant to the Muslim inhabitants, visitors, or traders: noteworthy at times, but not imposing the duty of any sustained confessional polemic.[140]

2.4   Conclusion

The importance of Armīniya to the Islamic world therefore rests in its role as a *ṯaġr,* a border between Islam and the "Other." However, this role was not restricted to, or even primarily defined as, a military character. In fact, the borders between Islam and the "Other" were penetrable and were not consistently sites of prolonged warfare. Rather, the importance of the *ṯuġūr* is mainly conceptual, as authors in the centers of the Islamic world imbued the region with meaning that created a clear difference between Islam on the one hand and Byzantium and Ḫazaria on the other. A significant portion of this effort included the elaboration of an Islamic identity for the province, frequently by referring to its Sasanian past. This was largely a literary endeavor and cannot necessarily be traced to the Muslim communities actually living in Armīniya.

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[139] Al-Muqaddasī, 374; Ibn al-Faqīh, 343; Al-Iṣṭaḫrī,188; al-Qazwīnī, 495.

[140] As an example, see Ĵanpᶜoladyan (1974), 52 concerning an artisan's trademark on a glass vessel, stamped "made by ᶜAlī b. ᶜAbd Allāh: "Neither the Arabic inscription, nor the name of the glassmaker should confound the investigators of such a multinational town as Dvin. In that town, where Greeks, Arabs, and other Arabic-speaking people who lived side by side with the Armenians and where, according to the testimony of the contemporaries, no one was stirred by the fact that the Christian church and the Moslem mosque stood side by side, the name of the master glassmaker Ali, son of Abdallah, written in Arabic, shouldn't astonish us."

The significance of the frontier- both militarily and ideologically- will resurface throughout this dissertation. Most importantly, as we will see, the Sasanian legacy in the North will dictate how Arabs identify the importance of Armīniya and their approach towards regional governance. The recurrence of Sasanian motifs in Arabic literature and the subsequent sidelining of Byzantine claims will not only confirm the consequence of the conceptual frontier, but will also account for the literary development of Armenian and Arabic sources along very different trajectories.

Chapter 3: Historical and Administrative Geography

"These places are the most pleasant in *dār-i Islām*."

Anonymous author of *Hudūd al-ᶜālam* [141]

Because of its importance as a frontier outpost (*t̲a̲ġr*), Armīniya was subjected to concerted effort at Islamization, though not (as we will see in Chapter 6) through any organized effort at conversion of its local Christian population. Rather, the Arab and Persian geographers, while remarking that the local populations were mainly Christian, took care to describe the province as relevant to Qur'ānic narrative, Islamic doctrine, and caliphal history. Part of this effort included adopting Persian rather than Greek historical traditions and models of administration, as Islamic historians construed the Caliphate as the unambiguous successor to the Sasanian Empire.[142] Another aspect of this process was the downplaying of the Byzantine presence in the region.[143] The extensive Islamic geographical tradition[144] provides considerable detail about the lingering importance of Sasanian administration on caliphal policy towards Armīniya.

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[141] *Hudūd al-ᶜālam,* 157: این جایهاست بسیار نعمت ترین ناحیتهاست اندر اسلام

[142] Donner (1998), 198: On the question of why Islamic histories ignore Greek/Roman data in favor of Sasanian accounts: "There were several factors that help explain why Iranian material became especially prominent in Islamic historiography of the third century AH and later. One was a desire on the part of the Umayyads and ᶜAbbāsids to benefit from the administrative experience and practices of earlier empires, particularly the Sasanians. A second was the desire to link the caliphate with the old Iranian concept of sacral, universal kingship."

[143] This will come up many times, but as an example, see Canard/Deny/Cahen (1986): "There is, in the Arab historians, no mention at all of the fact that Armenia, after the first Arab invasion which occurred in the reign of ᶜUmar, had been subjected anew to Byzantine domination, nor of the events which unfolded themselves in the land during the period before the accession of Muᶜāwiya."

[144] The geographers cited below wrote in Arabic, with only one exception: the anonymous author of *Hudūd al-ᶜālam*. Still, many of them were ethnic Persians: Ibn Rustih, al-Iṣṭaḵrī, Ibn H̲urradāḏbih. Given the prominence of Sāsānian motifs, it would be reasonable to suggest that Persian authors may have preferred such history/traditions

This chapter reviews the various administrative models known in Armenia under Byzantine, Sasanian, and Arab rule. It argues that Arabs may have adopted certain toponyms from the Greeks and the Armenians, but that they turned instead to Sasanian administrative pagadigms as models. This conclusion requires that we reconsider the frequent assertion that Arab Armīniya consisted of Armenia, Iberia, and Albania and that we instead place it into a broader province of the caliphal North, al-Ǧarbī.

3.1   Geographical and Administrative Definitions of Armīniya

Given the intrinsic importance of the *ṭuġūr*, it would be reasonable to assume that there was consensus over what lands the province included. Unfortunately, however, this was far from the case. Whereas Armenia may have constituted a vast, diverse territory in the minds of some scholars, others offered more narrow definitions of the same toponym.

The term Armīniya will here refer specifically to the Arab province and to Arab descriptions of the land. The term Armenia, on the other hand, has at once a more general and a more constrained definition: it is "historic" Armenia. Armīniya refers to both the Arab province Armīniya and historic Armenia in Arabic: in the rare occurrence when authors felt the need to differentiate between the caliphal province and historic Armenia, they referred to the later as "the land of the Armenians" (*bilād al-Arman*),[145] fittingly an exact translation of the Armenian *Ašxarh Hayoc͑*.

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over Greek material. However, it is worth noting that this is a general trend of the Islamic authors as a whole, not necessarily reflecting the ethnicity of the individual authors. See Miquel (1967), 399: "Ces quelques divergences mises à part, on constatera que la culture géographique, fût-elle exprimée en arabe ou en persan, reste à cette époque rigoureusement la même, puisée aux mêmes sources, exprimée dans les mêmes formes et, pour tout dire, tributaire des mêmes schèmes de pensée. "

[145] Ter-Łewondyan (1961b), 65.

An enumeration of the geographers' divisions of the land will reveal that they did not share a universal conceptualization of Armīniya. The choices inherent in the different definitions of Armīniya may hint toward the sources that each individual geographer deployed. This admittedly raises the question of whether it is even valid to discuss the concept of the frontier of Armīniya, given the fact that any possible conclusion will necessarily be based on a multiplicity of definitions juxtaposed somewhat artificially. Still, it is possible to associate certain geographical delineations with specific periods before and during early Islamic governance over Armīniya.

The Arab geographers conceptualize Armīniya according to five main methods, four of them inherited from pre-existing Byzantine or Armenian geography. These are: (1) a twofold definition of Greater and Lesser Armīniya; (2) a twofold definition of Interior and Exterior Armīniya; (3) a threefold division of Armīniya, Ǧurzān, and al-Rān; and (4) a fourfold division of Armīniya I, II, III, and IV. Only one of these Arab geographical divisions is unknown to Byzantine geographical writers: the threefold definition of Armīniya, Aḏarbayǧān, and al-Rān.

Although the Arabs inherited a multitude of names and geographical designations from the Greco-Roman period, they rarely applied these to the same territories as their predecessors did. The inherited Greek *names* indicate merely a literary memory of a historical period, a vestige of the past that does not easily translate into the actual administration of the province. The frequent assertion that Arab Armīniya was an amalgam of Armīniya, Ǧurzān, and al-Rān accordingly needs to be reassessed. Though it is possible that this model reflects the local administration of the province, Islamic geographical texts suggest that it is instead the Sasanian geographical unit (Armīniya, Aḏarbayǧān, and al-Rān) that best reveals how Armīniya became integrated into the Islamic realm (*mamlakat al-Islām*).

The following pages will present these divisions very briefly. They do not aspire to present a full account of each geographical model, but rather briefly sketch these divisions in order to establish that even though the Islamic geographical tradition echoed some of the broad outlines of Byzantine and Armenian norms, it actually turned instead to Sasanian administrative paradigms.

3.1.1   Greater and Lesser Armīniya

The term Greater Armenia (*Armenia Magna*) originally designated the bulk of Armenia east of the Euphrates, including lakes Van, Sevan, and Urmia and extending west not quite as far as Melitene, while Lesser Armenia (*Armenia Minor*) was a small territory situated directly between Cappadocia and Greater Armenia, south of the Pontos.[146] Following the reforms of Maurice in 591 the Byzantine province Greater Armenia became analogous to the Armenian *Barjr Hayk^c* (Upper Armenia), redefining the toponym as a small territory centered around Justinianopolis and Trebizond.[147]

Širakac^ci's seventh-century definition of Greater Armenia (*Mec Hayk^c*) is far more expansive than the post-Maurice Greek territory, corresponding instead to the post-Justinianic Byzantine definition of the term. The long recension of his *Ašxarhac^coyc^c* [Geography] reads:

> Greater Armenia has fifteen provinces around it, which are as follows. The first province is Upper Armenia, that is [the region of] the city Karin. The second province is Fourth Armenia. The third is Ałjnik^c along the Tigris river. The fourth is Taruberan, which is Taron. The fifth is Mogk^c, which is next to Asorestan. The sixth province—Kōrčēk^c. The seventh province—Persarmenia which is near Atrpatakan. The eighth province—Vaspurakan, which is to the north-west of it [of the previous, i.e.: Persarmenia]. The ninth province—Siwnik^c, which is next to

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[146] Garsoïan (1989), 472.

[147] Garsoïan (1989), 70: Եւ որ ի Մեծ Հայոց մասն ինչ մնացեալ էր ի ձերս Հոռոմոց կողմանց անտի ի Բասենոյ մինչև ի սահմանս Ասորեստանի Մեծ Հայք զնա կոչէ:

Araxes. The tenth province—Arjax, which lies close to it. The eleventh province—P^caytakaran with the [homonymous] city, which is near the shore of the Caspian, at the delta[148] of the Araxes. The twelfth province is that of the Utians, which is near Albania and the river Kur. The thirteenth province—Gugark^c, which is near Iberia. The fourteenth province—Tayk^c, which is near Eger. The fifteenth province—Ararat, in the middle of them [all].[149]

The short recension of this work offers a similar description for Greater Armenia.[150]

However, Širakac^ci's work is anything but copious regarding Lesser Armenia. This toponym occurs twice in the long recension: (1) Širakac^ci conflates Cilicia and Cappadocia into a single geographical unit, called Lesser Armenia;[151] and (2) he also uses the term to refer to an area in Albania "east of Melitene."[152]

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[148] Both Hewsen (1992), 59 and Soukry (1881), 40 render this as "west of," but the city Paytakaran is actually to the east of the Araxes. One may assume that in this particular place, մուտ refers to its basic meaning, "entrance." See Abrahamyan & Petrosyan (1979), 291.

[149] Širakac^ci [Soukry], 29: Ունին Մեծ Հայք շուրջ զիւրեւ զաւառս հնգետասան, որք են այսք: Առաջին աշխարհ Բարձր Հայք, այսինքն Կարնոյ քաղաք. Երկրորդ աշխարհի՝ Չորրորդ Հայք. Երրորդ՝ Աղձնիք առ Տիգրիս գետով. Չորրորդ՝ Տարուբերան որ է Տարոն. Հինգերորդ՝ Մոգք որ առ Ասորեստանեալ. Վեցերորդ աշխարհի՝ Կորճէք. Եօթներորդ աշխարհի՝ Պարսկահայք, որ առ Ատրպատականիք. Ութերորդ աշխարհի՝ Վասպուրական, որ ըստ մտից հիւսիսոյ նորա է. Իններորդ աշխարհի Սիւնիք՝ որ առ Երասխաւ, տասներորդ՝ Արձախ, որ յերի նորա կայ. Մետասաներորդ աշխարհի՝ Փայտակարան քաղաքով որ առ եգերն Կասբից ի մուտս Երասխայ. Երկոտասաներորդ աշխարհի՝ Ուտեացոց, որ առ Աղուանիք եւ Կուր գետով. Երեքտասաներորդ աշխարհի՝ Գուզարք՝ որ առ Վիրօք. Չորեքտասաներորդ աշխարհի՝ Տայք, որ առ Եգեր. Հնգետասաներորդ աշխարհի՝ Արարատ, ի մէջ նոցա:

[150] Širakac^ci [Abrahamyan], 348: Քսան եւ եւթներորդ՝ Մեծ Հայք են, յելից կալով Կապադովկիոյ եւ Փոքր Հայոց, առ Եփրատ գետով, մերձ Տաւրոս լեառն, որ բաժանէ զնա ի Միջագետաց: Եւ ի հարաւոյ սահմանի Ասորեստանիւ եւ դառնայ առ Ատրպատականիւ ընդ Մարս մինչեւ ի մուտս Երասխայ եւ Կասբից ծով. Իսկ ըստ հարաւոյ առ երի կալով Աղուանից եւ Վրաց եւ Եգեր մինչեւ ցնոյն դարձուածք Եփրատայ ի հարաւակոյս: Եւ ունին Հայք լերունս անուանիս եւ գետս մեծամեծս եւ մանունս. Եւ ծովակս երիս: Եւ ունի Մեծ Հայք փոքր աշխարհս հնգետասան, որ են այտոքիկ. Բարձր Հայք, այսինքն Կարնոյ կողմն, Չորրորդ Հայք, այսինքն Աղձնիք, Տուրուբերանք, Մոկք, Կորճայք, Պարսկահայք, Վասպուրական, Սիւնիք, Արցախ, Փայտակարան, Ուտիացիք, Գուզարք, Տայք, Այրարատ:

[151] Širakac^ci [Soukry], 35: speaking of Mt. Amanus: որ բաժանէ ըստ հիւսիսոյ զԿիլիկիա եւ զԿապադովկիա, այսինքն, զՓոքր Հայս՝ յԱսորոց

[152] Širakac^ci [Soukry], 30: (speaking of Armenia IV): Եւ երթալով զմտիք՝ ելանէ ի սահմանս Փոքր Հայոց, յելից Մելտինէ. See below, under "Fourth Armenia" for full translation and citation of this passage.

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The Arabs inherited these terms, but applied them to very different territories. Compare, for example, Širakacᶜi's *mec* and *pokᶜr Haykᶜ* above to Yāqūt's *Armīniya al-kubrā* and *al-ṣuġrā*:

> And it is said: There are two Armīniyas, the Greater [*al-kubrā*] and the Lesser [*al-ṣuġrā*], and their borders are from Barḏᶜa to Bāb al-Abwāb, and from the other direction to the country of the Rūm, the Caucasian mountains and the Lord of the Throne [*ṣāḥib al-Sarīr*]. And it is said: Greater Armīniya is Ḫilāṭ and its surrounding area and Lesser Armīniya is Tiflīs and its surrounding area.[153]

The primary difference is, of course, that the Romans and Byzantines did not consider Armenia extending as far east or north as the Arabs did, although Širakacᶜi's designation of Albania as another Lesser Armenia raises the possibility of dividing the two lands definitively. Yāqūt, on the other hand, defined Armīniya as having a much larger territory, which notably conflated Ğurzān and Armīniya but excluded al-Rān (hence the border from Barḏᶜa to Bāb al-Abwāb).

One of the earliest Islamic geographers, Ibn Ḫurradāḏbih, may have garnered information about Greater Armenia not from the Byzantine or Armenian geographical traditions, but rather from the Persian; he refers to the king of Greater Armenia as *buzurk Arminiyān šah* (بزرك ارمنيان شاه), which leads Ter-Łewondyan to contemplate the possibility of a Pahlavi source for Arab knowledge of this administrative model.[154] Ter-Łewondyan further suggests that this division of Greater and Lesser Armenia can be directly compared to the Arab understanding of Interior and Exterior Armenia.[155]

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[153] Yāqūt, 160: وقيل: هما ارمينيتان الكبرى والصغرى, وحدهما من بردعة الى باب الابواب, ومن الجهة الاخرى الى بلاد الروم وجبل القبق وصاحب السرير. وقيل: ارمينية الكبرى خلاط ونواحيها وارمينية الصغرى تفليس و نواحيها

[154] Ter-Łewondyan (1961), 62.

[155] Ter-Łewondyan (1961), 65 – 66.

3.1.2 Interior and Exterior Armenia

The toponym Interior Armenia is of Byzantine origin. There does not seem to have been a corresponding Exterior Armenia in the Byzantine period, although the term Interior Armenia was used to designate the area to the immediate north of Lake Van, around the city of Manazkert.[156] Garsoïan, in agreement with Adontz, notes that the name Inner Armenia is in fact used synonymously with the reduced province of Greater Armenia (Armenian: Upper Armenia, *Barjr Hayk^c*) before the reforms of Justinian. This term gained new significance after the land gains and the reforms of Maurice in 591 and, for a very short span, referred to the area around Erzurum and Kars.[157]

The term Interior Armenia is not found in Širakac^ci's *Ašxarhac^coyc^c*,[158] but it does appear in Drasxanakertc^ci's tenth-century history: Maurice renamed "the region of Tayk^c with its borders, Armenia Profunda and the region of the city of Dwin, Interior Armenia."[159] This is quite similar to the Arab use of the term, but Arab geographers adopt the term along with an Exterior Armenia.

The most extensive description of Interior and Exterior Armīniya in Arabic sources is found in Ibn Ḥawqal's geography. He writes:

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[156] Hewsen (2001), 90 and 101.

[157] Garsoïan (1989), 473; Adontz (1970). 39. See also Hübschmann (1904), 226 – 7, qtd. Procopius, speaking of Armenia IV: magnam Armeniam, quae interior dicebatur. Adontz (1970), 39 also cites Justinian's *Novella*: τὴν μὲν ἐνδοτάτην.

[158] Hakobyan (2007), 96: Širakac^ci instead calls this area Barjr Hayk^c.

[159] Hübschmann (1904), 232 n. 2, does not mention the Byzantine definition of Interior Armenia, relying only on Drasxanakertc^ci: "Danach wäre Taikh lateinisch *Armenia profunda*, die Gegend von Dvin *Armenia interior* genannt worden. Anders Gelzer, nach welchem Taikh: *Armenia interior* [arm. *nerk^csagoyn*], Dvin aber *Armenia inferior* [arm. *storin*] geheißen hätte. Die Gegend von Dvin ist hier das Land westlich von Dvin, da Dvin selbst persisch geblieben war." He suggests the link to Abū al-Fidā', but does not comment on the comparison. See Drasxanakertc^ci, 70 for the reforms of Maurice: իսկ զկողմանս Տայոց սահմանօք իւրովք հանդերձ՝ Խորագոյն Հայք, և զկողմն Դուին քաղաքի՝ Ներքսագոյն Հայք.

There are two Armīniyas, the first of which is known as the Interior and the other as the Exterior. In some of the Exterior there are cities belonging to the Muslims and Muslims continue to govern it. The Armenians paid tribute over it in another time. It belongs to the kings of Islam and includes Arğīš, Manāzğirt and Ḫilāṭ. Its borders (ḥudūd) are clear: its border (ḥadd) from the east reaches to Barḏᶜa and from the west up to Northern Mesopotamia and from the south up to Aḏarbayğān and from the north up to environs of the Rūm near Qālīqalā. Qālīqalā was in the middle of [the land of] the Rūm, a great ṯaġr belonging to Aḏarbayğān, al-Ğibāl, al-Rayy and neighboring lands. It is a city of the Interior. It has already been presented that there are two Armīniyas: the Interior is Dabīl, Našawā, Qālīqalā, and the neighboring areas to the north, whereas the Exterior is Barkrī, Ḫilāṭ, Arğīš, Wasṭān, al-Zawazān, and the plains, fortresses, surrounding areas and district between those.[160]

Later, Ibn Ḥawqal also adds that "the road from Barḏᶜa to Dabīl is in Armenian [land] and all these villages that are inside it are the cities of the kingdom of Sinbāṭ b. Ašūṭ al-Armanī that Yūsuf b. Abī al-Sāğ captured from him in treachery and injustice, in disaccord with God and His messenger."[161]

A. Ter-Łewondyan claims that Ibn Ḥawqal is the only Arab geographer to mention this distinction between Interior and Exterior Armīniya.[162] However, Ibn Ḥawqal's division is in fact also preserved in the work of al-Idrīsī.[163] Al-Idrīsī proclaims that Dabīl is "the most wondrous

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[160] Ibn Ḥawqal, 343: وهما ارمينيتان فإحداها تعرف بالداخلة والأخرى بالخارجة وفى بعض الخارجة مدن للمسلمين وفى أيديهم لم يزل يليها المسلمون وقد قوطع عليها الأرمن فى غير وقت وهى لملوك الإسلام كارجيش ومنازجرد وخلاط وحدودها ظاهرة فحها من المشرق الى برذعه ومن المغرب الى الجزيرة ومن الجنوب الى اذربيجان ومن الشمال الى نواحى بلد الروم من جهة قاليقلا وكانت قاليقلا فى وسط بلد الروم ثغرًا عظيمًا لأهل اذربيجان والجبال والري وما والاها وهي مدينة الداخلة وقد تقدم أنهما ارمينيتان فالداخلة دبيل ونشوى وقليقلا وما والى ذلك من الشمال والخارجة بركرى وخلاط وارجيش ووسطان والزوزان وما بين ذلك من البقاع والقلاع والنواحى والاعمال
See also: Canard, Cahen & Deny.

[161] Ibn Ḥawqal, 350: والطريق من برذعة الى دبيل فى الأرمن وجميع هذه القرى التى فى ضمنها والمدن مملكة سنباط بن اشوط الارمنى التى قبضها عنه يوسف ابن أبى الساج غدرًا منه وظلمًا وخلافًا لله تعالى ولرسوله صلى الله عليه
Al-Iṣṭaḫrī's version, 194, reads very similarly, but omits mention to Ibn Ābī al-Sāğ: والطريق من برذعة الى دبيل في الارمن وهذه القرى كلها مملكة سنباط بن اشوط

[162] Ter-Łewondyan (1976c), 99: "We find this toponym in Arab literature only in the work of Ibn Ḥawḳal."

[163] Al-Idrīsī, 824: ومدينة دبيل أكبر قطرا من مدينة أردبيل وهي أجل بلدة بأرض أرمينية الداخلة وهي قصبتها وبها دار الإمارة دون بلاد جميع أرمينية...وأرمينية أرمينيتان إحداها أرمينية الداخلة والثانية أرمينية الخارجة فالداخلة منها دبيل ونشوى وقالي قلا وأهر وورزقاق وما والاها والخارجة منها هي مثل بركري وخلاط وأرجيش ووسطان والزوزان وما بين ذلك من القلاع والنواحي والأعمال.
See also passing mention al-Idrīsī, 830: وكذلك نهر الرس كبير جدا يخرج من نواحي أرمينية الداخلة من قالي قلا فيمر بأران

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city in Interior Armīniya"[164] and later explains that "the river al-Rass is very large and flows from the vicinity of Interior Armīniya from Qālīqalā."[165] His delineation between Interior and Exterior Armīniya is clearly based on Ibn Ḥawqal's account, though he does not replicate it verbatim.[166]

Ibn Ḥawqal's Interior Armīniya thus designated an area similar to, but not identical with, the former Byzantine province. A. Ter-Łewondyan suggests that Ibn Ḥawqal adopted the Byzantine name in order to designate the area under the authority of the Bagratid Kingdom. Here Ter-Łewondyan relies partially on the fact that Ibn Ḥawqal treated Interior Armenia (Banū Sinbāṭ) as a separate entity in his tax reports.[167] This hypothesis receives support from the fact that the anonymous author of *Hudūd al-ᶜālam* excludes Vaspurakan (including Ani, Lori and Kars) as well as western Iberia from his work, because these areas were held by local rulers and were not considered part of the Caliphate.[168]

Furthermore, there is a passage in the geography of Abū al-Fidā' that reads: "from the east, Armīniya borders on the land of the Armenians [*bilād al-Arman*]."[169] A modern editor's note attempts to make sense of a seemingly disjointed comment: "on lit الارمن dans les deux manuscrits, et dans le traité d'Ibn Haucal; la vraie leçon paraît être الروم."[170] While a transcription error may indeed account for the confusing phrase, it is more likely that the answer lies in Ibn

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[164] Al-Idrīsī, 824: ومدينة دبيل...أجل بلدة بأرض أرمينية الداخلة

[165] Al-Idrīsī, 830: نهر الرس كبير جدا يخرج من نواحي أرمينية الداخلة من قالي قلا

[166] Al-Idrīsī, 824: وأرمينية أرمينيتان إحداهما أرمينية الداخلة والثانية أرمينية الخارجة فالداخلة منها دبيل ونشوى وقالي قلا وأهر وورزقاق وما والاها والخارجة منها هي مثل بركري وخلاط وأرجيش ووسطان والزوزان وما بين ذلك من القلاع والنواحي والأعمال

[167] Ter- Łewondyan (1976c), 99 and Ibn Ḥawqal, 354: وواقف بنى سنباط عن نواحيهم من ارمينية الداخلة على فى الف الف درهم...

[168] Hewsen (2001), 112.

[169] Abū al-Fidāʾ, 387: ويحد ارمينية من جهة الغرب بلاد الارمن

[170] Abū al-Fidā', 387, no. 2.

Ḥawqal's delineation of borders: "Armīniya" is a Muslim land (Exterior Armīniya) and "the land of the Armenians" lies under Bagratid control (Interior Armīniya). This is consistent with the wording of Ibn Ḥawqal's comment mentioned earlier: "the road from Barḏaᶜa to Dabīl is in Armenian [land] and all these villages that are inside it are the cities of the kingdom of Sinbāṭ b. Ašūṭ al-Armanī."[171]

3.1.3 Armenia, Iberia, and Albania

Yāqūt does not mention Ibn Ḥawqal's twofold division of Armenia, but rather jumps from the Greater and Lesser Armīniyas to the enigmatic statement: "And it is said: There are three Armīniyas…"[172] It is not readily evident what Yāqūt meant by this, but it is possible that he was referring to Ǧurzān and al-Rān as kingdoms within Armīniya. Al-Yaᶜqūbī is the only Arab author to describe this grouping. He writes: "The districts of Armīniya are Arrān, Ǧurzān, Našawā, Ḫilāṭ, Dabīl, Sirāǧ, Ṣuġdabīl, Bāǧunays, Arǧīš, Sīsaǧān, and the city Bāb al-Abwāb."[173]

Although al-Yaᶜqūbī's geography is not completely extant, we can extrapolate an even more developed account of his conceptualization of Armīniya from fragments preserved in the works of other geographers. Al-Yaᶜqūbī portrays the three Armīniyas as identical to the quadripartite division of Armenia after combining together Armenia III and IV.[174] Abū al-Fidā' relates: "Aḥmad b. Abī Yaᶜqūb said that Armīniya is divided into three parts. The first part includes Qālīqalā, Ḫilāṭ, Šimšāṭ and whatever is between them; the second part, Ḫuzrān

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[171] Ibn Ḥawqal, 350.

[172] Yāqūt, 160: وقيل: ثلاث ارمينيات

[173] Al-Yaᶜqūbī (*Kitāb al-Buldān*), 106: كور ارمينية أرَّن وجُرْزان ونَشْوَى وخلاط ودُبيل وسِرَاج وصُغْدَبِيل وباجُنَيْس وأرْجِيش وسِيسَجَان ومدينة الباب والابواب.

[174] Canard, Cahen, & Deny (1986).

[Ğurzān], Tiflīs, and the city of Bāb al-Lān and everything in between them; the third part includes Barḏaᶜa, which is a city of al-Rān, Baylaqān and Bāb al-Abwāb."[175]

Al-Yaᶜqūbī's threefold division is unique among Arab geographers. It is based on an ethnic division (Albania, Iberia, and Armenia) and is consistent with the Armenian identification of the area from the earliest period of the Christianization of the region that persists throughout the Arab period without modification.[176] Sebēos notes that in his pact with Muᶜāwiya, Tᶜēodoros Ṛštuni spoke on behalf of "Armenia, Iberia, Albania, and Siwnikᶜ, up to the Caucasus and the Čoray Pass."[177] He further claims that Albania and Siwnikᶜ were "formerly joined with Atrpatakan in geography, until the kingdom of the Persians fell and the Ismaelites ruled. Then they were conquered and combined with Armenia."[178] From that point onward, the Armīniya, Ğurzān, and al-Rān paradigm becomes ubiquitous. For example, Łewond groups the three provinces together in a description of the second *fitna*[179] and Dasxurancᶜi describes the administration of the three lands as a single unit.

Though there is comparatively little information available in Georgian sources, it is possible to glean references in them to this administrative unit (Armenia, Iberia, and Albania). While the *Book of Kᶜartᶜli* twice links Armenia, Kᶜartᶜli, and Heretᶜi (comparable, perhaps, to

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[175] Al-Yaᶜqūbī, 364 and Abū al-Fidā', 387: قال احمد بن ابي يعقوب وارمينية على ثلثة اقسام القسم الاول يشتمل على قاليقلا وخلاط وشمشاط وما بين ذلك والقسم الثاني على خزران (جرزان) وتفليس ومدينة باب اللان وما بين ذلك والقسم الثالث يشتمل على بردعة وهي مدينة الران وعلى البيلقان وباب الابواب.

[176] Ter-Łewondyan (1976c), 11.

[177] Ter- Łewondyan (1958), 75. Qtd Sebēos: զՀայս և զՎիրս և զԱղուանս և զՍիւնիս մինչև զԿապկոհ և զՊահակն Ճորայ

[178] Sebēos, 175: որք լծեալ էին յառաջագոյն յաշխարհագիրն Ատրպատականի, մինչև բարձաւ թագաւորութիւնն Պարսից և տիրեաց Իմայելացին, նոքա անդրէն նուաճեալ միաբանեցան ընդ Հայոց

[179]Łewond, 200: Յետ սորա կացեալ Ահարոն՝ որդի Մահմետի, ազատ ել արձակապաէր: Եւ սա յաւուրս իշխանութեանն ունէր հակառակորդ գեղբայր իւր Ովբեդլա, եւ վասն հակառակութեանն որ ընդ միմեանս բաժանէր եւ տայր եղբօր իւրում զԱտրպատական եւ զՀայս հանդերձ Վրօք եւ Աղվանիւք:

Yāqūt's Greater and Lesser Armīniyas?), it also reads: "Then Humen, son of Xalil [Muḥammad b. Ḥālid], came again as amir; he governed all the territory even more wilfully: Armenia, Kᶜartᶜli, and Ran."[180] This same unit (Armenia, Kᶜartᶜli, and Ran) is also found in *The History of King Vatᶜang Gorgasali*.[181] These enumerations at least clarify the historical reality that western Georgia never came under the rule of the Caliphate.

Despite Sebēos's assertion, this grouping was thus not an Arab innovation. Hewsen notes that the formation of a single Christian province including Armenia, Iberia, and Albania seems to refer to the much older administrative grouping of the three regions as a single province, Kᶜusti Kapkoh, under Sasanian rule.[182] This is a problematic statement, given that Kᶜusti Kapkoh includes not only Armenia, Iberia, and Albania, but also Azerbaijan. We must look instead to the Arsacid period for the history of this association.

The most explicit textual evidence to support the geographical unit including Armenia, Iberia, and Albania (that is, without Azerbaijan) comes from a pre-Islamic source, namely a sixth-century Syriac chronicle translated from Greek:

> And besides these there are also in this northern region five believing peoples, and their bishops are twenty-four, and their Catholic lives in Dᶜwin, the chief city of Persian Armenia. The name of their Catholic was Gregory, a righteous and distinguished man. Further Gurzan, a country in Armenia, and its language is like Greek; and they have a Christian prince, who is subject to the king of Persia. Further the country of Arran in the country of Armenia, with a language of its own, a believing and baptized people; and it has a prince subject to the king of Persia.[183]

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[180] Thomson (1996), 262. This is the only specific reference to an administrative grouping of the three. For the Armenia, Kᶜartᶜli, and Heretᶜi combination, see 258, 259.

[181] Thomson (1996), 245: "Now at that time the lands of Kᶜartᶜli, Armenia and Ran had been devastated, and there were no dwellings nor food at all for men or beasts." These references are not replicated in the Armenian version.

[182] Hewsen (1992), 33.

[183] Ps. Zacharias Rhetor, trans. Hamilton & Brooks (1899), 327 – 8. See Ps. Zacharias Rhetor, II 214; see also Adontz (1970), 171.

The practice of uniting Armenia, Iberia, and Albania dates back to the conversion narratives and such descriptions are quite common. What is new here is that the argument rests on an idealized supranational Christian solidarity that forged a unified province out of the three Caucasian lands. In fact, if we look at Armenian historical sources concerning the period of partition, these frequently emphasize the imagined unity of the three Christian countries. Łazar Pᶜarpecᶜi, for example, often refers to the three provinces as a single unit. This is a statement of religious solidarity, and not of administrative reality. Following the Council of Dwin (601), this unity was paramount to the Armenian claim of ecclesiastical primacy: not only are the three united as one, but Georgia and Albania have a subordinate role within the greater power of Armenia.

As an administrative model, this threefold division actually has comparatively little support in the Arabic sources, despite its frequent appearance in modern works on Armīniya. For the Arab period (as we will see below), the notion of Caucasia includes Aḏarbayǧan and is not an area neatly unified by religious belief. In fact, Ter-Łewondyan even notes that the inclusion of Aḏarbayǧan in the administrative unit was a deliberate policy of "either the Umayyads or the ᶜAbbāsids" to counteract the religious unity of the Christian nations.[184]

The Armīniya, Ǧurzān, and al-Rān combination, while it receives specific support only in al-Yᶜaqūbī's description, does reappear in another guise in the works of three other geographers from the Islamic world: Ibn Ḫurradāḏbih, Ibn al-Faqīh, and Yāqūt. These three authors do indeed use the word Armīniya to describe the same territory (Armenia, Iberia, and Albania), but they do this by dividing the area into four distinct territories rather than three, adopting the familiar quadripartite schema from the Romano-Byzantine example.

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[184] Ter-Łewondyan (1958), 75. Even this argument is somewhat suspect, actually. When was Aḏarbayǧān "Islamized"? On the other hand, when was it decided that Armīniya was not in the process of being "Islamized"?

3.1.4   The Fourfold Division of Armenia

The quadripartite division of Armenia is the most confusing historically, since the toponyms

shifted depending on the period in question and its political realities. The concept of a fourfold

division of Armenia is clearly inherited from Roman and Byzantine administration, but the

definition of each of the four Armenias did not remain fixed even then.[185] Justinian repositioned

the Armenian provinces in 536, at a time when the area between Lake Van and Lake Sevan

(Persarmenia), Albania, and Iberia fell under the jurisdiction of the Sasanian Empire.[186] Maurice

introduced extensive changes with the acquisition of new territory from the Persians in 591.

Furthermore, the Armenian appellation for each territory was not necessarily synonymous with

the Byzantine norms. Hewsen's chart, reproduced below, is a particularly useful guide to the

bewilderingly frequent changes in nomenclature:[187]

Date	Romano/Byzantine Name	Armenian Name	Region
387 – 536	First Armenia	First Armenia	Caesarea
	Second Armenia	Third Armenia	Melitene
	First Cappadocia	Second Armenia	Sebastia
	Inner Armenia	Upper Armenia	Theodosiopolis
536 – 591	Second Armenia	First Armenia	Sebastia
	Third Armenia	Third Armenia	Melitene
	Fourth Armenia	Fourth Armenia	Sophene
	First Armenia	Second Armenia	Caesarea
591 – c. 640	Second Armenia	Second Armenia	Sebastia
	First Armenia	First Armenia	Melitene
	Fourth Armenia	Fourth Armenia	Sophene
	Cappadocia	Third Armenia	Caesarea

Table 1: Hewsen's Chart of the 4 Armenias

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[185] Canard, Cahen, & Deny (1986).

[186] Hewsen (2001), 86.

[187] Hewsen (1992), 25.

Although this chart is a useful start, I do not think that every aspect of it correctly represents the evidence from extant sources. For example, pre-Justinianic Armenia I actually had its capital at Sebastia according to Greek sources. I will attempt to point out possible alterations to the chart as these arise.

The short discussion that follows is not intended to provide a comprehensive history of each province, but rather a brief sketch meant only to illustrate that the Roman and Greek provinces have little or no relation to the homonymous Arab provinces of later date. When the Arabs finally entered the arena in the seventh century, they introduced entirely new provinces with well-established toponyms; or else, as M. Ghazarian suggests, they described the antiquated Byzantine quadripartite division in various ways.[188]

3.1.4.1 Armenia Prima

Armenia I was enlarged under Justinian's reforms to include both the original province Armenia I (around Sebastia)[189] and also Inner Armenia. This placed the province immediately south of the Black Sea with its center at Tzoumina (near modern-day Erzincan), including Trebizond and extending as far as Theodosiopolis in the east and New Caesarea in the west. When Maurice restructured the themes in 591, Justinian's Armenia III was renamed Armenia I.[190] According to

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[188] Ghazarian (1904), 155: "Die arabischen Historiker und Geographen stellen die Verhältnisse in Armenien vor der arabischen Eroberung anders dar."

[189] Hieroclis, 37 for pre-Justinianic Armenia I: Ἐπαρχία Ἀρμενίας ᾱ, ὑπὸ ἡγεμόνα πόλεις ε. Σεβάστια. Νικόπολις. Κολόνια. Σατάλα. Σεβαστούπολις. Honigmann identifies these cities as follows: "Gavras, à 3 km. à l'Est de Sivas. Pürk près d'Endires. Şebin-Karahisar. Sadak (Sadağ). Sulu Saray (Çiftlik)." Garsoïan (1989), 472 notes that the original Armenia I was created under Theodosius I with its capital at Sebaste, which was later moved to Satala. Note that this is clearly an issue with Hewsen's chart, which claims that Caesarea is the capital of pre-Justinian Armenia I. See also Grousset (1984), 239; Garsoïan (2004), 105; Hakobyan (2007), 100 – 101.

[190] Garsoïan (1989), 473; Garsoïan (2004), 109.

Drasxanakertc^ci, post-Justinianic Armenia I was based in Sebastia, while post-Maurice Armenia I was centered around Melitene.[191]

The longer recension of Širakac^ci's geography mentions that Armenia I was once Armenia II, outlining the province as follows:

> The land of Second Armenia, which is now called First Armenia, lies east of Cilicia close to the mountain Taurus, near the mountain Amanos, which separates it [Second Armenia] from Komagen of Syria up until the Euphrates. It has other mountains, Igon and Basilikon[192] and Kṛormandon; rivers, the abovementioned Piṛamis and Paṛatis and Kawkawa and Kaṛomosos; and two passes entering into Syria.[193]

The Arab province of Armīniya I is clearly unrelated to the Romano-Byzantine and Armenian provinces. There are three accounts that mention Armīniya I: "First Armīniya: al-Sīsaǧān, Arrān, Tiflīs, Barḏ^ca, Baylaqān, Qabala and Širwān."[194]

3.1.4.2 Armenia Secunda

Pre-Justinianic Armenia II was centered at Melitene,[195] while post-Justinianic Armenia II bordered the Euphrates on the east and had its capital at Sebastia. It included some of the

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[191] Drasxanakertc'i, 70; Ghazarian (1904), 207; Grousset (1984), 252.

[192] Soukry (1881), Eremyan, Abrahamyan & Petrosyan (1979), and Hewsen (1992) all have Zigon, as if the q is part of the name of the mountain instead of the accusative marker. All of them (except Soukry) take Zigon Basilicon as being a single mountain. The short recension doesn't give the names of the mountains, but it does say that there are three mountains and four rivers (so Zigon and Basilicon have to be different mountains). Širakac^ci [Abrahamyan], 347.

[193] Širakac^ci [Soukry], 24: Աշխարհի Երկրորդ Հայք, որ արդ կոչին Առաջին Հայք, յելից կալով Կիլիկիոյ առ Տաւրոս լերամբ յերի Ամանոս լերին, որ բաժանէ ընդ նա եւ ընդ կոմագենի Ասորւոց մինչեւ ցԵփրատ: Ունի եւ այլ լերինս. զԻզոն եւ զԲասիլիկոն եւ զԿրորմանդոն. Եւ զետ զնոյն զՊիրամիս եւ զՊառատիս եւ զԿաւկաւա եւ զԿառմոսոս, եւ դրունս երկու ելանելոյ Ասորւոց:

[194] وارمينية :286-7 Ibn al-Faqīh; ارمينية الاولى: السيسجان واران وتفليس وبرذعة والبيلقان وقبلة وشروان. Ibn Ḫurradāḏbih, 122: وقيل اربعة, فالاولى: :387 ,Yāqūt, 160 and Abū al-Fidā'; الاولى هي السيسجان واران وتفليس ...ومن ارمينية الاولى البيلقان وقبلة وشروان بيلقان وقبلة وشروان وما انضم اليهاعد منها

[195] Hieroclis, 37 for pre-Justinian Armenia II: Ἐπαρχία Ἀρμενίας β, ὑπὸ ἡγεμόνα πόλεις ς. Μελιτινή. Ἄρκα. Ἀράβισος. Κοκουσός. Κομάνα. Ἀραραθία. Honigmann identifies these cities as follows: "Malatya. Arga. Efsus

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previous (pre-Justinian) province of Armenia I and a small amount of territory immediately to the west.[196] This remained unchanged throughout Maurice's reforms.[197]

The Arabs understood Armenia II as consisting of Iberia. According to Yāqūt, copying nearly verbatim from Ibn al-Faqīḥ and/or Ibn Ḫurradāḏbih, "It is said: There are four [Armīniyas]…and the Second: Ǧurzān, Ṣuġdabīl, Bāb Fayrūz Qubāḏ and al-Lakz."[198] Note that Tiflīs, traditionally considered part of Iberia, is assigned instead to Albania and therefore falls into Armīniya I; Ter-Łewondyan contends that this is "merely a misunderstanding."[199]

3.1.4.3 Armenia Tertia

Justinian renamed the pre-sixth century Armenia II as Armenia III, meaning that this new province stretched approximately from Caesarea to its capital at Melitene.[200] It is, however, unclear how the province fared under the reforms initiated by Maurice. Garsoïan notes that following 591 "Armenia III consisted of Justinianic Armenia I plus new territories including most of Arsacid Ayrarat and Turuberan."[201] Many modern scholars, on the other hand, claim that

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(Yarpuz). Göksun. Şahr. Aziziye (Pınarbaşı)." See also Garsoïan (1989), 472: Armenia II was originally created under Theodosius I, centered in Melitene. See Hakobyan (2007), 98.

[196] Garsoïan (1989), 473. However, note the passage in Drasxanakertcᶜi in the next note. See also Grousset (1984), 239; Garsoïan (2004), 105; Hakobyan (2007), 101.

[197] Though Drasxanakertcᶜi, 71 claims that this shift (that is, when Armenia I became Armenia II) happened during the reforms of Maurice: և նախ զԱրմենիին զայն, որ Առաջին Հայքն անուանիւր՝ Երկրորդ Հայք զնա Մորիկ կոչեաց, յորում մայրաքաղաք է Սևաստիայ: See also Grousset (1984), 252; Garsoïan (2004), 109; Ghazarian (1904), 207.

[198] Yāqūt, 160 and Abū al-Fidā', 387: والثانية... وقيل اربعة See also: Ibn Ḫurradāḏbih, والثانية جرزان وصغدبيل وباب فيروز قباذ واللكز And Ibn al-Faqīh, 286-7: ارمينية الثانية جرزان وصغدبيل وباب فيروز قباذ واللكز.:221 وارمينية الثانية جرزان وصغدبيل وباب فيروز قباذ واللكز

[199] Ter-Łewondyan (1961b), 68.

[200] Garsoïan (1989), 473; Grousset (1984), 239; Garsoïan (2004), 106; Hakobyan (2007), 101.

[201] Garsoïan (1989), 473.

under Maurice "Third Armenia, with its capital still at Melitene, became *First* Armenia and the term Third Armenia inexplicably fell out of use."[202] The Arabs, therefore, arrived at a time when Armenia III did not exist.

R. Hewsen presents an explanation for the appearance of Third Armenia in the short recension of Širakacᶜi's geography in an effort to bolster his theory that Širakacᶜi lived in post-Maurice, pre-Arab Armenia (that is, between 591 and the 640s):

> The Third Armenia, which did not exist during this period, can be explained when we realize that to an Armenian author who knew of the existence of Fourth Armenia and of how the enumeration of Romano-Byzantine Armenias had changed over the centuries, it would be only natural to seek a Third Armenia to complete the list and, knowing that it might be somewhere near First and Second Armenia, what would be more reasonable than to place it at the first logical place in the text?[203]

However, it is somewhat perplexing that, as Hewsen apparently suggests, an Armenian author would need to invent an entire province. Wouldn't Širakacᶜi, educated by a Byzantine tutor and one of the most astute scholars of his age, familiar with every single canton in Armenia, be aware of the Byzantine provinces and of the existence (or nonexistence) of Armenia III?

Hewsen reads the relevant sentence as follows: "The twentieth [division of Asia] is First Armenia which is east of First Cappadocia and borders Third (*sic*) Armenia. It is bounded on the east by the Euphrates. It has Mount Argaeus, the River Halys and other smaller ones."[204] Širakacᶜi's text is, admittedly, confusing. However, the passage reads as follows in

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[202] Hewsen (1992), 19. This is corroborated by Grousset (1984), 252 – 3: "La 'Troisième Arménie' qui était jusque-là formée de Mélitène et des villes de l'Anti-Taurus (Arabissos, Comana, Cocusos) disparut, et fut remplacée par une 'Grande Arménie' qui comprenait la vallée du haut Euphrate." See Garsoïan (2004), 109 : "the term Armenia III disappeared altogether from the new administrative roster," a shift in her opinion as previously published as cited above.

[203] Hewsen (1992), 25.

[204] Hewsen (1992), 54A.

Abrahamyan's edition: "First Armenia lies east of First Cappadocia, close to Second Armenia. And on the east its border lies on the Euphrates. And it has the mountain Argēos, the river Alis and other small [rivers]."[205] According to Abrahamyan's version, based on the oldest and most complete manuscripts of the short recension, Širakacᶜi does not even discuss Third Armenia.

However, as Hewsen himself notes,[206] Drasxanakertcᶜi clearly states that there was in fact an Armenia III after the reforms of Maurice: "The Emperor Maurice very presumptuously made changes to those names…He called Cappadocia, with its capital at Caesarea and which was previously named Second Armenia, Third Armenia…" [207]

In any case, for our purposes the final resolution to this question is irrelevant: the Arab understanding of Armenia III has no relation to any possible rendition of Armenia III and coincides instead with the previously Persian territories:[208] "Third Armenia is al-Busfuraǧān, Dabīl, Sirāǧ Ṭayr, Baǧriwān and al-Našawā."[209]

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[205] Širakacᶜi [Abrahamyan], 347: Առաջին Հայք են, յելից կալով Կապադովկիոյ, առ երի երկրորդ Հայոց: Եւ սահմանի յելից Եփրատու. եւ լեառն ունի Արգէոս, եւ գետ զԱլիս, եւ այլ մանունս:

[206] Hewsen (1992), 25.

[207] Drasxanakertcᶜi, 70: Ապա կայսերն Մօրկայ ձեռներիցութեամբ իմն փոփոխումն արարեալ անուանց աշխարհացն այնոցիկ...Իսկ զԿապադովկիայ, յորում մայրաքաղաքն ի Կեսարիայ՝ եւ Երկրորդ Հայք նախ անուանիւր, կոչէ զնա Երրորդ Հայք եւ առնէ զնա Եպարքի: See Ghazarian (1904), 207: "von hier [Melitene] bis zu den Grenzen von Sophene."

[208] Ter-Łewondyan (1958), 75 and Ter-Łewondyan (1976d), 165.

[209] Ibn al-Faqīh, 286 – 7: والثالث البسفرجان ودبيل وسراج طير وبغروان والنشوى See Yāqūt, 160 and Abū al-Fidāʾ, 387: والثالث الثالثة البسفرجان ودبيل وسراج طير وبغروان والنشوى

3.1.4.4 Armenia Quarta

Post-Justinianic Armenia IV nearly bordered the Euphrates on the north and included the area as far south as Amida, with its capital at Martyropolis (Mayyafāriqīn),[210] which became the province of Mesopotamia after the reforms introduced under Maurice.[211] The post-591 Armenia IV included the lands recently won from Persarmenia.[212]

The long recension of Širakacᶜi's geography describes Armenia IV as follows:

Fourth Armenia, which is the area of Copᶜkᶜ, near Upper Armenia [Barjr Haykᶜ], with the city of Meltinē (Melitene) along its borders to the west and to the south—Mesopotamia, and to the east, Tarōn. It has eight districts. Xorjayn, northeast, through which the other river Gayl flows close to Kołoberd. Haštēnkᶜ, from which the sources of the Tigris river spring. To the east of Xorjayn, is the district Pałnatun, along with the homonymous fortress. And facing it to the south, the district of Balaxovit. To the west of them, Copᶜkᶜ. And the district of Anjitᶜ, to the south, in which are Covkᶜ and Horē fortress. And to the west of them is the district of Dēgik, in which are the fortresses Kṛni, Kᶜrwik and Sok, across from which to the south is the district of Gawrēg, through which flows the Aracani, adjoining to the Eurphrates at the city of Lusatᶜaṛič. And going west, it reaches the borders of Lesser Armenia, to the west of Meltinē [Melitene]. And then the Kawkas adjoins with it, coming from the west of the mountain, which is called Igon Vasitᶜēon.[213]

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[210] Hakobyan (2007), 101; Ghazarian (1904), 207 has Drasxanakertcᶜi define Armenia IV as "von Sophene bis zu der Märtyrerstadt (Martyropolis = Majāfāriqīn) und Ałdsniq."

[211] See Hübschmann (1904), 227, qtd Procopius: See Grousset (1984), 239; Garsoïan (2004), 106 for post-Justinian Armenia IV.

[212] Garsoïan (2004), 109. Grousset (1984), 253 explains that this means "Dadima, Kitharizon, and Shimshat."

[213] Širakacᶜi [Soukry], 30: Չորրորդ Հայք, որ է Ծոփաց կողմն, յերի բարձր Հայոց, Մելտինէ քաղաքաւ սահմանի ըստ մտից, եւ ըստ հարաւոյ՝ Միջագետովք, եւ ըստ ելից Տարօնով: Ունի գաւառս ութ. զԽորձայն՝ յելից հիւսիսոյ, ընդ որ իջանէ միւս Գայլ գետ առ Կողրբերդովն. զՀաշտէնս, յորմէ բղխեն աղբիւրք Տիգրիս գետոյ. Իսկ ի մտից Խորձայնոյ՝ է Պաղնատուն գաւառ, հանդէպ հոմանում բերդով. Եւ հանդէպ նորա ի հարաւ՝ Բալախովիտ գաւառ. Եւ ի մտից նոցա Ծոփք, եւ Անձիթ գաւառ՝ ի հարաւ, յորում Ծովք եւ Հոռէ բերդ. Եւ ի մտից նոցա Դէգիկ գաւառ, յորում բերդք Կռնի եւ Քրւիկ եւ Սոկ, որոց հանդէպ ի հարաւ է Գաւրէգ գաւառ, ընդ որս եկեալ Արածանի խառնի յԵփրատ ի քաղաքն Լուսաթառիճ, եւ երթալով զմտիչք՝ ելանէ ի սահմանս Փոքր Հայոց, յելից Մելտինէ. Եւ ապա խառնի ի նա Կաւկաս, զալով ի մտից կուսէ ի լեռնէն որ կոչի Ջիգոն Վասիթէոն.

This passage describes Armenia IV between 536 and 591.[214]

The Arab Armenia IV is comparable to the homonymous post-Maurice Byzantine province:[215] "and from the Fourth [there are]: Šimšāṭ, Qālīqalā, Arğīš and Bāǧunays."[216] The Arab province reaches further east than Širakacᶜi's account, including Arğīš, which is part of Turuberan, but the bulk of the province remains the same.

Although the Arabs inherited the quadripartite model of Armenia from the Greco-Roman period, they assigned these toponyms to their own provinces with minimal reference to the previous administration. That this received quadripartite division was not a particularly precise administrative practice is obvious: al-Balāḏurī describes the four Armīniyas twice, but the two passages are quite different.[217]

Again, the above discussion is intended merely as a brief overview. However, it is clear that the memory of the Roman and Byzantine toponyms lingered long past their administrative use and that accordingly these easily-defined models could, in actuality, have become blurred. Others will work through the texts to decipher the variances between the different administrative

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[214] Grousset (1984), 239: "La nouvelle du 8 mars 536 rattacha à l'administration directe de cette Quatrième Arménie les anciennes satrapies arméniennes de Sophène (Dzophq Chahounotz ou Petit Dzophq), d'Antzitène (Hantzith), de Balabitène (Balahovit, région de Balou), d'Asthianène (Hachtéanq) et de Sophanène (Dzophq Medz ou Grand Dzophq), à quoi il faut certainement joindre une partie au moins de la Khortzène."

[215] Ter-Łewondyan (1958), 75 and Ter-Łewondyan (1976d), 165.

[216] Yāqūt, 160 and Abū al-Fidāʾ, 387: ...وباجنيس وارجيش وقاليقلا شمشاط :الرابعة فمن. See also Ibn al-Faqīh, 286 – 7: وارمينية الرابعة: شمشاط وخلاط وقاليقلا وارجيش وباجنيس and Ibn Ḫurradāḏbih, 221: وباجنيس وارجيش وقاليقلا شمشاط الرابعة ارمينية.

[217] Mušełyan (1978 – 1979), 131 – 132 no. 12; Ter-Łewondyan (1961b), 70 – 71. Al-Balāḏurī, 120: بن محمد حدثني اسماعيل من ساكني بردذعة وغيره عن ابي براء عنبسة بن بحر الارمني وحدثني محمد بن بشر القالي عن اشياخه وبرمك بن عبد الله الديلي ومحمد بن المخيس الخلاطي وغيرهم عن قوم من اهل العلم بامور ارمينية سقت حديثهم ورددت من بعضه على بعض قالوا: كانت شمشاط وقاليقلا وخلاط وارجيش وباجنيس تدعى ارمينية الرابعة: وكانت كورة البسفرجان ودبيل وسراج طير وبغروند تدعى ارمينية الثالثة وكانت جرزان تدعى ارمينية الثانية وكانت السيسجان واران تدعى ارمينية الاولى ويقال كانت شمشاط وحدها ارمينية الرابعة وكانت قاليقلا وخلاط وارجيش وباجنيس تدعى ارمينية الثالثة وسراج طير وبغروند ودبيل والبسفرجان تدعى ارمينية الثانية وسيسجان واراد وتفليس تدعى ارمينية الاولى وكانت جرزان واران في ايدي الخزر وسابر ارمينية في ايدي الروم يتولاها صاحب ارمنياقس
Ghazarian (1904), 155 interprets one of al-Balāḏurī's explanations as referring to the divisions in Armīniya before the arrival of the Arabs.

models and the bewildering variety and juxtaposition of toponyms. For now, I may conclude that the administrative model that is most fitting for the current study is in fact absent from Greek geographical traditions and traces its origins instead to Sasanian precedents.

3.1.5   Al-Riḥāb: Armīniya, Aḏarbayǧān, and al-Rān

It has become commonplace to introduce Armenian geography under the Arabs with the threefold division among Armīniya, Ǧurzān, and al-Rān. It was indisputably more common, however, for Arab geographers to divide a broader region into three sections. Most Islamic geographers, including al-Iṣṭaḫrī, Ibn Ḥawqal, al-Muqaddasī, the anonymous author of *Hudūd al-ᶜālam,* al-Idrīsī,[218] and Abū al-Fidā',[219] describe Armīniya as a single part of a larger whole, as they incorporate it, together with al-Rān and Aḏarbayǧān, into an independent unit.

"As for Armīniya, al-Rān and Aḏarbayǧān: we place them in a single map and we make them into a single region."[220] Al-Muqaddasī calls this area al-Riḥāb, noting "…we made this region into three districts, the first of which by the [Caspian] Sea is al-Rān, then Armīniya, then Aḏarbayǧan."[221] Ibn Ḥawqal merely lists the three districts as his chapter heading without offering a toponym for the area. He opens his chapter with the specification:

> Armīniya, Aḏarbayǧān, and al-Rān: and that which surrounds it to from the east
> are [the regions of] al-Ǧibāl and Daylam and to the east is the Ḫazar Sea; and that
> which surrounds it to the west are the borders (ḥudūd) of the Armenians and al-
> Lān and parts of the borders (ḥudūd) of Northern Mesopotamia; and that which

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[218] He does not explicitly say this, but lumps them together in his description of this clime.

[219] Abū al-Fidā', 386:   لما فرغ من بلاد الروم انتقل الى ذكر ارمينية واران واذربيجان وهذه ثلثة اقاليم عظيمة قد جمعها ارباب هذا الفن في الذكر
والتصوير لتداخل بعضها بالبعض وتعسر افرادها بالذكر

[220] Al-Iṣṭaḫrī, 180:   فاما ارمينية والران واذربيخان فانا جمعناها في صورة واحدة وجعلناها اقليما واحدا

[221] Al-Muqaddasī, 374:   وقد جعلنا هدا الاقليم ثلاث كور اولها من قبل البحيرة الران ثم ارمينية ثم اذربيجان. The name al-Riḥāb crops up infrequently in Arabic literature. Yāqūt includes a small entry: هذا الرحاب هي ناحية باذربيجان ودربند واكثر ارمينية كلها يشتملها
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surrounds it from the direction of the north are al-Lān and the Caucasian mountains; and that which surrounds it from the south are the borders (ḥudūd) of Iraq and part of the borders (ḥudūd) of Northern Mesopotamia.[222]

In fact, the linking of Armīniya, Aḏarbayǧān, and al-Rān became so ubiquitous that Abū al-Fidā' comments: "these are three great regions that the masters of this art [geography] joined together in descriptions and depictions as they overlap with one another, so that it becomes difficult to mention any single one of them."[223] The only explicit explanation for such a grouping is provided in Ibn Ḥawqal's text:

> I have made them into a single region because they are the kingdom of a single person based on what I have witnessed during my own lifetime and on the reports that were passed on about it to those who came before me. For example, Ibn Abī al-Sāǧ and his servant Mufliḥ and Daysan b. Šāḏalawayh and al-Marzuban b. Muhammad, known as al-Sallar and above all, al-Faḍl b. Yaḥyā and ‘Abd Allāh b. Mālik al-Ḫuzāᶜī and others.[224]

He considers the area to be within the purview of the lord (ṣāḥib) of Aḏarbayǧan.[225]

Al-Iṣṭaḫrī defines the province of al-Rān as follows: "The border (ḥadd) of al-Rān is from Bāb al-Abwāb to Tiflīs up to the vicinity of the river al-Rass, a place known as Ḥaǧīrān."[226] Al-Muqaddasī explains that "as for al-Rān, it is about one-third of the region…its capital is Barḏᶜa and among its towns are Tiflīs, al-Qalᶜa, Ḫunān, Šamkūr, Ǧanza, Bardīǧ, al-Šamāḫiya, Širwān,

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[222] Ibn Ḥawqal, 221: ارمينية واذربيخان والران: والذي يحيط به مما يلى المشرق فالجبال والديلم وغربى بحر الخزر والذي يحيط به مما يلى المغرب حدود الارمن واللان وشئ من حدود الجزيرة والذي يحيط به من جهة الشمال فاللان وجبال القبق والذي يحيط به من الجنوب حدود العراق وشئ من حدود الجزيرة.

[223] Abu al-Fidā', 386: وهذه ثلثة اقاليم عظيمة قد جمعها ارباب هذا الفن فى الذكر والتصوير لتداخل بعضها بالبعض وتعسر افرادها بالذكر

[224] Ibn Ḥawqal, 221: قد جعلتها إقليمًا واحدًا لأنها مملكة إنسان واحد فيما شاهدته سائر عمرى وما نقلت الأخبار به لمن تقدمنى كابن أبى الساج ومفلح غلامه وديسم ابن شاذلويه والمرزبان بن محمد المعروف بالسلار انفًا وسالفًا لمثل الفضل ابن يحيى وعبد الله بن مالك الخزاعى وغيرهما

[225] Ibn Ḥawqal, 347: وهى مملكة تحت يد صاحب اذربيجان

[226] Al-Iṣṭaḫrī, 190: وحد الران من باب الابواب الى تفليس الى قرب نهر الرس مكان يعرف بحجيران. The footnote suggests, following Abū al-Fidā', that حجيران is a corrupted form of نخجوان. Yāqūt does note that Naḫǧiwān is contested territory between al-Rān and Aḏarbayǧān.

Bākūh, al-Šābarān, Bāb al-Abwāb, al-Abḫān, Qabala, Šakkī, Malāzkird, Tablā."[227] Ibn Ḥawqal's description seems comparable, as he lists the largest towns as Bardaᶜa, Tiflīs, and Bāb al-Abwāb, and also mentions other minor towns, such as Baylaqān, Warṯān, Šamaḫa, Šabarān, Bardiğ, Qabala, Šamkūr, and Ğanğa.

However, some small hints of al-Yaᶜqūbī's division remain even in the work of Ibn al-Faqīh. He writes that "Arrān is the foremost kingdom in Armīniya,"[228] stating forthright that al-Rān is subsumed as part of Armīniya. This may be a remnant of historical memory, preserving the fact that Armenia controlled Albania in the pre-Islamic period just as Širakacᶜi's aforementioned text indicated.

"The border (ḥadd) of Aḏarbayğān is al-Ğabal until it reaches al-Ṭarm up to the border (ḥadd) of Zanğān to al-Dīnawar. Then it circles around until Ḥulwān and Šahrazūr until it reaches the vicinity of the Tigris, after which it circuits to the borders (ḥudūd) of Armīniya."[229]

Al-Muqaddasī notes that "as for Aḏarbayğān…its seat of government, which is the capital of the region, is Ardabīl…and among is towns are Rasba, Tabrīz, Jābirwān, Ḫunağ, al-Miyāniğ, al-Sarāa, Barwā, Warṯān, Mūqān, Mīmaḏ, Barzand."[230] Ibn Ḥawqal lists the largest cities of Aḏarbayğān as Ardabīl and Urmiya, though he also mentions Tabrīz, Barzand, Baylaqān, Warṯān, Salmās, al-Miyāniğ, Marand, and Ḫuwī.[231] The inclusion of Warṯān and

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[227] Al-Muqaddasī, 374: فاما الران فانها تكون نحو الثلث من الاقليم...قصبتها بردذعة ومن مدنها تفليس خنان شمكور جنزة برديج الشماخية القلعة شروان باكوه الشابران باب الابواب الابخان قبلة شكى ملازكرد تبلا

[228] Ibn al-Faqīh, 291: اران اول مملكة بارمينية

[229] Al-Iṣṭaḫrī, 190: واذربيجان حدها الجبل حتى ينتهى الى ظهر الطرم الى هد زنجان الى ظهر الدينور ثم يدور الى ظهر حلوان وشهرزور حتى ينتهى الى قرب دجلة ثم يطوف على حدود ارمينية

[230] Al-Muqaddasī, 375: واما اذربيجان...قصبتها وهي مصر الاقليم اردبيل...ومن مدنها رسبة تبريز جابروان خونج الميانج السراة بروى ورثان موقان ميمذ برزند.

[231] Ibn Ḥawqal, 336.

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Baylaqān is somewhat surprising in that Ibn Ḥawqal later lists both border towns as belonging to al-Rān.

"And they have a border up to Bard͟ʿa and they have a border up to al-Ǧazīra and they have a border up to Ad͟arbayǧān. The frontier (t͟aǧr) that is adjacent to the Rūm from Armīniya is Qāliqalā and the people of Ad͟arbayǧān, al-Ǧibāl, al-Rayy and that which is near it raid against it." Al-Iṣṭaḫrī lists "al-Našawā, Barkarī, Ḫilāṭ, Manāzkird, Badlīs, Qāliqalā, Arzan, Miyāfāriqīn and Sirāǧ" as the towns of Armīniya.[232]

Al-Muqaddasī mentions that, "as for Armīniya, it is a beautiful district…its capital is Dabīl, and among its towns are Bidlīs, Ḫilāṭ, Arǧīš, Barkrī, Ḫuwī, Salamās, Urmiya, Daḫarraqān, Marāǧa, Ahrᶜ, Marand, Sanǧān, Qālīqalā, Qandariya, Qalᶜat Yūnus, Nūrīn."[233] It is interesting that al-Muqaddasī does not list al-Našawā in this enumeration, or anywhere else in his account of the area, considering that Ibn Ḥawqal mentions Dabīl and al-Našawā as the most important cities in Armīniya.

There exists accordingly a clear divide: Armenian sources mainly maintain the Armenia, Albania, and Georgia paradigm, while the Islamic texts much more frequently discuss Armīniya, al-Rān, and Ad͟arbayǧān. There are exceptions: Łewond briefly mentions that Hārūn al-Rashīd combined the governorship of Albania, Armenia, Iberia, and Azerbaijan,[234] and the martyrology of Vahan Gołt͟ᶜnecᶜi mentions a governor of the North.[235] However, these are comparatively infrequent comments. Ter-Łewondyan attempts to reconcile the Armīniya, Ǧurzān, and al-Rān

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[232] Al-Iṣṭaḫrī, 188.

[233] Al-Muqaddasī, 374: واما ارمينية فانها كورة جليلة...قصبتها دبيل ومن مدنها بدليس خلاط ارجيش بركرى خوى سلماس ارمية داخرقان مراغة اهرء مرند سنجان قاليقلا قندرية قلعة يونس نورين.

[234] Łewond, 200: Յետ սորա կացեալ Ահարոն՝ որդի Մահմետի, ազատ եւ արձակասէր: Եւ սա յաւուրս իշխանութեանն ունէր հակառակորդ գերբայր իւր Ովբեդլա, եւ վասն հակառակութեանն որ ընդ միմեանս բաժանէր եւ տայր եղբօր իւրում զԱտրպատական եւ զՀայս հանդերձ Վռող եւ Աղուանիք:

[235] Gatteyrias (1880), 30.

paradigm with the more common description of Armīniya, Aḏarbayğān, and al-Rān by suggesting that Armīniya did in fact include Ğurzān and al-Rān, but that it was then combined with Aḏarbayğān as a viceroyalty during the Umayyad period in order to strengthen the border against both the Byzantines and the Ḫazars.[236] This is certainly a feasible and convenient response, given the assumption that the Armīniya, Ğurzān, and al-Rān grouping is more prevalent in local (Armenian and Georgian) sources, the authors of which would presumably have had a stronger grasp of the everyday administration of the province. By the same reasoning, it is apt that the only Arabic source to corroborate the Armīniya, Ğurzān, and al-Rān grouping hails from a geographer who actually lived there, namely, al-Yaᶜqūbī. The majority of the Arab geographers, however, were more concerned with fitting Armīniya into the Islamic milieu.

Still, there remain some inconsistencies. Why did the Balḫī geographers distinguish al-Rān as a separate land if it was already considered part of Armīniya? Similarly, Balḫī geographers do not in fact define Ğurzān as part of Armīniya. According to their schema, eastern Georgia, while certainly grouped with al-Rān, Armīniya, and Aḏarbayğān, does not fall easily into a single subdivision of the any one of the provinces. Tiflīs, the only city consistently considered to be part of Ğurzān in the other administrative paradigms, is described as a town in al-Rān.

3.2   Arab Memory of a Sasanian Past

A brief overview of the bulk of Arabic geographical sources on Armīniya suggests that the association of the three neighboring territories (Armīniya, Aḏarbayğān, and al-Rān) as a single unit was in fact the norm. If we review the Arabic sources on the other toponyms—Greater and

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[236] Ter-Łewondyan (1976b), 161.

Lesser Armīniya, Interior and Exterior Armīniya, Armīniya I, II, III, and IV—we discover that

these surface relatively infrequently in comparison to the much more common description of al-

Riḥāb (Armīniya, Aḏarbayğān, and al-Rān). This, along with the fact that the Arabic toponyms

do not in fact coincide with Roman, Byzantine or Armenian use, hints at the lingering

importance of Sasanian geographical models as opposed to the Greek.

3.2.1 Kᶜusti Kapkoh / Kust-ī Ādūrbādagān

Armenian, Pahlavi, and Arabic sources describe the Sasanian administrative model as a

quadripartite division of *kust*s, including the *kust* of *ādūrbādagān*. The only surviving Sasanian

geographical work, *Šahrestānīha ī Ērānšahr,* clearly saw heavy redactions in the ᶜAbbāsid

period, as it reads: "In the direction of Ādūrbādagān [*kust ādūrbādagān*], the city of Ganzag was

built by Frāsyiak, the son of Tūr. The city of Āmol was built by the heretic who is full of death.

Zoroaster, the son of Spitāmān was from that city. The city of Baghdad was built by Abū Jaᶜfar

whom they call Abū Dawānīq."[237] In this text the definition of *kust-ī ādūrbādagān* is hardly

prolific, but a comparable province also appears in Širakacᶜi's geography, notably dated to the

same period:

> The land of the Persians is divided into four in this manner: *Kᶜusti Xorasan,*[238]
> which is a region to the west…*Kᶜusti Nmṛoĵ,* which is the region of the meridian,
> which is the south… *Kᶜusti Xorasan,* which is a region to the east… *Kᶜusti
> Kapkoh,* which is the region of the Caucasian mountains, in which are thirteen
> lands: Atrpatakan; Armn, which is Armenia; Varĵan, which is Iberia; Ṛan, which
> is Albania; Balasakan; Sisakan; Aṛê; Gezan; Šančan; Dlmunk'; Dmbawand;
> Taprəstan; Ṛwan; Aml…[239]

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[237] Daryaee (2002), 21.

[238] Soukry (1881), 53 notes that this is a mistake, but doesn't offer the correction. Marquart (1901), 16 – 19: This should read *Kᶜusti Xoraban.*

[239] Širakacᶜi [Soukry], 40: Պարսից աշխարհ ընդ չորս բաժանի այսպէս. Քուստի Խորասան, որ է կողմ արեւմտեայ...Քուստի Նմռոջ, որ է կողմն միջօրեայ որ է հարաւ... Քուստի Խորասան, որ է կողմ

This passage, as R. Gyselen and T. Greenwood both point out, is clearly dependent upon a Sasanian source, as Širakac͑i feels the need to offer an Armenian translation for Pahlavi toponyms (Armn, Ran, and Varĵan)[240] and uses the Pahlavi words *k͑ust* and *kapkoh*.[241]

Whether *K͑usti Kapkoh* of the *Ašxarhac͑oyc͑* is directly comparable to *kust-ī ādūrbādagān* of *Šahrestānīha ī Ērānšahr* is both ambiguous and irrelevant. In fact, Ph. Gignoux goes as far as to suggest that the entire schema of administrative organization by the four cardinal directions is nothing but a literary trope signifying the universality of imperial rule that reaches as far back as the Assyrian Empire.[242] This view has fallen out of favor, most significantly with R. Gyselen's publication of seals belonging to Sasanian officials of each of the provinces, such as these examples from *kust-i Ādūrbādagān*:[243]

արեւելից...Քուստի Կապկոհ, որ է կողմն Կաւկասու լերանց, յորում են աշխարհի երեքտասան. Ատրապատական, Արմն (որ է) Հայք, Վարջան՝ որ է Վիրք, Ռան՝ որ է Աղուանք, Բալասական, Սիսական, Առէ, Գեզան, Շանձան, Դլմունք, Դմբաւանդ, Տապրրստան, Ռւան, Ամլ...

[240] Greenwood (2002), 339.

[241] Gyselen (2000), 214 – 215; for use of Kapkoh in Armenian, see Hübschmann (1908), 45.

[242] Gignoux (1984), 4.

[243] Gyselen (2000). Note, however, that the second seal treats Armenia as separate from *kust-ī Ādurbādakān*. Since the seals do not explicitly define the province, they cannot be definitive proof of the veracity of the *Šahrestānīha ī Ērānšahr* or *Ašxarhac͑oyc͑*. However, Gyselen (2001) collects a number of seals from *spāhbed*s of each *kust*. For the north, see 4a (p. 44) and 4b (p. 45).

Ce sceau (19) comporte une légende écrite sur deux lignes. Bien que la première ligne ne soit pas très lisible (20), la deuxième mentionne très clairement le titre du spāhbed : 'yl'n kwsty ZY 'twlp'tk'n sp'hpty, c'est-à-dire ērān kust ī Ādurbādagān spāhbed.

Au centre :
un croissant
(bἰl'c'h'y
W 'lmny
'm'lkl
une étoile

Sur le pourtour commençant à 1h : shtly
ZY mwd'n W kwsty ZY 'tw[ll]p'tkn

c'est-à-dire : (b ou y?)āzāhā / ud ārmen / āmārgar / shahr ī mudān ud kust ī ādur-bādagān, « Āmārgar de (B?)āzāhā, d'Arménie, du shahr ī Mudān et du kust ī Ādurbādagān ».

Image 3: Sasanian Seals from *kust-i Ādūrbādagān*.

Furthermore, the fourfold division of the Sasanian Empire has been used to explain the appearance of four crescents on Sasanian coins, particularly those of Anūširwān:[244]

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[244] Morony (1984), 40.

Image 4: Sasanian coins with 4 stars[245]

On the face of it, this isn't a particularly convincing interpretation unless we consider that the Sasanian text *Bundahišn* named four stars, one to guard each of the four regions: Tištar over the East; Sataves, the West; Vanand, the South; and Haptōring, the North.[246] The stars evident on Anūširwān's coins *do* indicate the universality of Sasanian rule, but also attest the four-fold division of Empire.

In any case, historians of the Islamic era considered this a true rendition of Sasanian administration. Moreover, there are some indications that the grouping of many provinces into a single entity did occur in the Arab period. For our present purposes the actual Sasanian

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[245] Schindel (2009), plate 9.

[246] Adontz (1970), 169: "There is no doubt in this case that these cosmological concepts of the Persians were a direct reflection of the administrative divisions of Persia, of its division into four commands."

administrative delineations are not as relevant as the Islamic *perceptions* of the land and its
history.[247]

3.2.2 Al-Ǧarbī / al-Ǧabal / al-Ǧadī

The quadripartite division of the Sasanian Empire is a common feature in Arabic histories. Al-
Ṭabarī specifically states that at the start of the reign of Anūširwān there was already a "governor
(*fāḏūsbān*) of Aḏarbayǧān, Armīniya and its domains, Danbāwand, Ṭabaristān and its
domains."[248] According to this account, Anūširwān's innovation was merely to appoint four
military commanders (*iṣbahaḏ*s), one to each province: "And the king divided this state and
among four *iṣbahaḏ*s, among them is the *iṣbahaḏ* of the east, which is Ḫurāsān and its environs;
the *iṣbahaḏ* of *al-maġrib*; the *iṣbahaḏ* of Nīmrūz, which is al-Yaman; and the *iṣbahaḏ* of
Aḏarbayǧān and its environs, which is the land of the Ḫazars and its environs."[249]

 Ibn Ḫurradāḏbih provides a name and definition for al-Ṭabarī's region of "Aḏarbayǧān
and its environs":

> Al-Ǧarbī is a land of the north, a quarter of the kingdom. And the *iṣbahabaḏ* of
> the north during the epoch of the Persians was called Aḏarbāḏakān *iṣbahabaḏ*.
> And in this region were Armīniya, Aḏarbayǧān, al-Rayy, Damāwand…
> Ṭabaristān, al-Rūyān, Amul, Sārya, al-Lāriz, al-Širiz, Ṭamīs, Dihistān, al-Kalār,

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[247] Gignoux (1984), 1: "…pour faire l'histoire de la période sasanide, il faudrait abandonner la méthode
généralement pratiquée jusqu'ici, qui consiste à utiliser les sources arabes et classiques en priorité, car elles sont
évidemment les plus abondantes, et à ne s'appuyer qu'occasionnellement sur les sources iraniennes."

[248] Al-Ṭabarī (2002), II 98: اذوسبان اذربیجان وارمینیة وحیزها ودنباوند وطبرستان وحیزها

[249] Al-Ṭabarī (2002), II 99: ففرق كسرى هذه الولاية والمرتبة بين اربعة اصبهذين منهم اصبهذ المشرق وهو خراسان وما والاها واصبهذ
المغرب واصبهذ نيمروز وهي بلاد اليمن واصبهذ اذربيجان وما والاها وهي بلاد الخزر وما والاها ;see also al-Masʿūdī (1861), II 156 –
وخعل اصبهبديين اربعةً الاول بجراسان والثانى بالمغرب والثالث ببلاد الجنوب والرابع ببلاد الشمال هم اصحاب تدبير الملك كل واحد منهم قد ;157:
see also al-Ṯaʿālibī, 609: افرد بتدبير جزء من اجزاء المملكة وكل واحد منهم صاحب ربع منها قسم مملكته ارباعاً فالربع الاول خراسان وما
يتصل بها من طخارستان وزابلستان وسجستان والربع الثانى كور الجبل وهي الرى وهمذان ونهاوند والدينور وقوميسين واصبهان وقم وقاشان وابهر
وزنجان وارمينية وآذربيجان وجرجان وطبرستان والربع الثالث فارس وكرمان والربع الرابع العراق الى اليمن وحدود الشام واطراف الروم
وولى كلاً من قواده ومرازبته ما يستحقه منها

Ǧilān, Badšwārǧar… and in this country are al-Babr, al-Ṭaylsān, al-Ḫazar, al-Lān, al-Ṣaqālib, and al-Abar.[250]

The perception of the Sasanian province al-Ǧarbī or al-Ǧabal is recurrent in Arabic histories and, to a lesser extent, geographies. To these few observations gleaned from al-Ṭabarī, al-Masʿūdī, al-Ṯaʿālibī, Ibn al-Ḫurradāḏbih and al-Iṣṭaḫrī mentioned above, we must add the works of al-Yaʿqūbī, al-Dīnawarī and Yāqūt and, additionally, compare all these statements to similar statements in Armenian histories.[251]

De Goeje suggests that the name al-Ǧarbī is etymologically related to the Syriac ܓܪܒܝܐ (garbāyā, north) or the Arabic الجربية (northward wind);[252] the Arabic الجربية, however, is likely also a loanword from the Syriac.[253] The correlation between the Caucasus and "the North" stems both from Greek geographical models and biblical exegesis;[254] and is a *topos* visible in Armenian (Koriwn, *Primary History of Armenia*, Agatʿangełos, Xorenacʿi, Sebēos), Albanian (Dasxurancʿi), Georgian (*the Conversion of Kʿartʿli, Life of Nino, Primary History of Kʿartʿli, The Life of the Kings*) and Greek (Herodotus) literature.[255]

However, S. Rapp has recently suggested that this "North" was appropriated and recast during the Sasanian period: it still designated the Caucasus, but from the vantage point of Iran. "There are instances in Iranian literature when authors avoided the term *abāxtar*, "the North,"

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[250] Ibn Ḫurradāḏbih, 118: والجَرْبيُّ بلاد الشمال ربع المملكة وكان اصبهبذ الشمال على عهد الفرس يسمّى اذرباذكان اصبهبذ وفى هذا الحيّز ارمينية وآذربيجان والرَيُّ ودُماوَنْد...طبرستان والرُّويان وآمُل وسارِيَة واللّارِز والشِّرِّز وطَميس ودِهِسْتان والكَلَار وجِلان وبَدَشْوارْجَر... وفي هذا السقع البَبْر والطَّيْلُسان والخزر واللان والصقالب والأَبَر.

[251] See Ibn Ḫurradāḏbih (Fr), 90 for citations of al-Yaʿqūbī and Yāqūt and Gignoux (1984), 7 no. 30 for al-Dīnawarī. The passage from Širakacʿi quoted above is the most comprehensive discussion of the province in Armenian literature that I am familiar with. Adontz (1970), 434 no. 6 cites a relevant passage from Sebēos.

[252] Ibn Ḫurradāḏbih (Fr), 90.

[253] Sokoloff (2009), 255.

[254] Thomson (1976), 471 – 472.

[255] Rapp (unpublished draft).

and instead replaced it with the toponym Ādurbādagān."[256] *Abāxtar* was instead 'la région des démons,' in reality, the Scythians and the Sarmatians."[257] So too would Armīniya become "the North" for the new centers of power in Damascus and Baghdad. The acceptance of the term al-Ǧarbī to indicate "the North" demonstrates not only that the Arabs inherited Sasanian perceptions about Armīniya, but also that Christian tradition continued to influence Islamic perspective long after the original Syriac meaning of the term had been forgotten and corrupted into the more familiar al-Ǧabal.

3.2.3   Echoes of Sasanian Geographical Models in Early Islamic Administration

With the fall of the Sasanian Empire, the fourfold administration of Empire was not entirely abandoned, but rather reworked to reflect the needs of the administration that emerged from the Islamic conquests of the seventh century.[258] Al- Ǧarbī is clearly a more extensive region than any single caliphal province. However, there is some evidence, beyond even the direct mention in al-Iṣṭaḫrī, Ibn Ḥawqal, al-Muqaddasī, the anonymous author of *Hudūd al-ᶜālam,* al-Idrīsī, and Ābū al-Fidā', that this schema was more than a simple geographical designation and that it was actually incorporated into the administration of the Caliphate. First, we see that a long series of

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[256] Rapp (unpublished draft). See Gyselen (2000), 214: "le Nord n'est pas indiqué par le terme approprié *abâxtar*. Le Nord étant considéré comme la région des démons, l'auteur a évité de nommer et l'a remplacé par le mot *Âdurbâdagân* qui correspond à une des provinces septentrionales de l'empire sassanide." ; Gyselen (2001), 12 – 13 ; Daryaee (2008) : "The usual Middle Persian term for the northern direction, *abāxtar,* is in this text replaced by the province name *ādurbādagān*, because the Zoroastrian association of the north with the abode of evil would be evoked by use of *abāxtar* (Tafażżoli, 1989-90, p. 333; 1997-98, p. 266; Cereti, 2001, p. 203)."

[257] Adontz (1970), 167.

[258] The survival of the "North" was not echoed in the "West": Morony (1982), 1 and Morony (1984), 125 – 164 concludes that Sasanian administrative geography did not have a demonstrable effect on the early Islamic province of Iraq.

governors from the Umayyad and early ᶜAbbāsid periods were appointed over both Armīniya and Aḏarbayǧān. This list includes but is not limited to the following:[259]

Muḥammad b. Marwān	693 – 709
Maslama b. ᶜAbd al-Malik	709 – 705, 725 – 729, 731 – 732
al-Ǧarraḥ b. ᶜAbd Allāh al-Ḥakamī	722 – 723
Marwān b. Muḥammad	732 – 744
Abū Ǧaᶜfar	750 – 754
Mahdī	760 – 775
Hārūn	780 – 786
Yazīd b. Mazyad al-Šaybanī	787 – 788
ᶜUbaydallāh b. al-Mahdī	788 – 791
Faḍl b. Yaḥyā b. Ḫālid	792 – 795
Muḥammad al-Amīn	796 – 809
Ṭāhir b. Muḥammad al-Sanᶜanī	813
ᶜĪsā b. Muḥammad	820 – 823
ᶜAlī b. Sadaka	825
al-ᶜAbbās b. al-Maʾmūn	832 – 834
al-Afšīn Ḥaydār b. Qawus	835 – 840
Abū ᶜAbd Allāh al-Mutaǧ b-illāh	849 – 862
ᶜAlī b. Yaḥyā al-Armanī	862 – 863
al-ᶜAbbās b. al-Mustaᶜin	863 – 865
ᶜAbd Allāh al-Mutaǧ	866 – 867
Ǧaᶜfar al-Mufawwid	875 – 883

Several of the governors listed above controlled not only Armīniya and Aḏarbayǧān, but also (most commonly) Northern Mesopotamia and (occasionally) an even more expansive swath of territory that included Persia. Similarly, even though many governors of Armīniya were simultaneously governors of Aḏarbayǧān, there remain examples where the two lands were administered separately. Ter-Łewondyan suggests that this is because Aḏarbayǧān was conquered by force, while he considers Armīniya "a partially independent state" because of the arrangements stipulated in the treaty between Muᶜāwiya and Tᶜēodoros Ṛštuni.[260]

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[259] This list was compiled from Ter-Łewondyan (1958), 75 –76, Ter-Łewondyan (1976d), and Ter-Łewondyan (1977).

[260] Ter-Łewondyan (1976d), 163. Given Noth's assessment, I am hesitant to rely too heavily on the *ṣulḥan/ᶜanwatan* divide or to suggest that it had direct and substantial effect on administration.

N. Nicol reviews a list of governors from the early ᶜAbbāsid period and takes issue with V. Minorsky's assertion that Aḏarbayğān was "usually" under the jurisdiction of the same governor as Armīniya and Arrān, claiming that "the careful study of the historical sources has revealed that, for the period of this study, the combined administration of Azerbaijan with Armenia and Arran occurred less often than Minorsky's statement would appear to purport."[261] Nicol came to this conclusion for a number of reasons: (1) he generally preferred chronicles over geographical works, rarely or never citing some pivotal sources in his chapter about Armīniya; (2) he did not make use of most of Ter-Łewondyan's work, since it is written mainly in Armenian; and (3) his study is focused on a restricted period. However, even if we consider only the period included in his study and compare it to the governors of a combined Armīniya, Arrān, and Aḏarbayğān whom we find in Ter-Łewondyan's work, we see that the provinces were governed collectively during 60 of the 84 years in question. Minorsky's statement is accordingly correct.

Beyond the close study of governors, the best way to understand the the administrative grouping of al-Ğarbī is to review the numismatic evidence. The intermittent minting patterns of coinage from Armīniya are only comprehensible if the term refers, in fact, to a broader geographical unit. M. Bates discusses an administrative unit for the "North" (presumably al-Ğarbī) in which there was a single mint producing dirhams that moved about in accordance with the location of the governor. Bates produces the following chart, along with the number of extant finds for each mint by year:[262]

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[261] Nichol (1979), 122 no. 7. For Minorsky's comment, which was based on al-Muqaddasī, a source that Nicol does not cite in this chapter, see Minorsky (1986). See also Ghazarian (1904), 193 – 4: "Im Verlauf der arabischen Herrschaft bildete Armenien nicht immer eine Statthalterschaft für sich, sondern es war häufig der Bestandteil einer grösseren, welche Adherbeijān und Mesopotamien (Djezīra), zuweilen auch Mausil umfasste."

[262] Bates (1989), 92.

A. H.	Mint Attested	A. H.	Mint Attested	A. H.	Mint Attested
78	Armīniya	95	al-Ǧazīra	116	
79			Armīniya	117	al-Bāb
80	Ḥarrān	96	Armīniya	118	al-Bāb
81	Armīniya	97	Armīniya	119	al-Bāb
82	Armīniya	98	Armīniya	120	al-Bāb
	Ḥarrān	99	Armīniya	121	al-Bāb
	al-Mawṣil	100	Armīniya	122	al-Bāb
83	al-Mawṣil	101	Armīniya	123	al-Bāb
84	Dabīl	102	Armīniya	124	al-Bāb
85	Dabīl	103	Armīniya	125	al-Bāb
	Tiflīs	104	Armīniya	126	al-Bāb
86	Dabīl	105	Armīniya	127	al-Ǧazīra
87	Ḥarrān		Aḏarbayǧān	128	al-Ǧazīra
88	Ḥarrān	106	Aḏarbayǧān		al-Bāb
89	Ḥarrān		Armīniya	129	al-Ǧazīra
	Arrān	107	Armīniya	130	al-Ǧazīra
90	Arrān	108	Armīniya	131	al-Ǧazīra
91	Arrān	109	Armīniya		al-Bāb
92	Armīniya	110	Armīniya	132	al-Ǧazīra
	al-Ǧanza	111			
93	al-Bāb	112			
94	al-Ǧanza	113			
	Armīniya	114	al-Bāb		
	al-Ǧazīra	115	al-Bāb		

Table 2: Bates's Study of Minting Patterns

He suggests that these coins were all struck in a single mint, which moved around according to the needs of the governor. The years for which multiple mints are attested indicate that the governor's seat was transferred and that the administrative center was accordingly in two places during the same year. Bates then continues with another table, in which he compares the attested mint locations to the location of the governor according to the written record. He determines that the production of coins at any particular mint is dependent upon the presence of

the governor. This theory allows Bates to conjecture about lacunae in the written sources, in

accordance with his assumption that the mint locations indicate the location of the governor.

More importantly for the current discussion, Bates is able to generalize that Umayyad

administration of Armīniya went through a number of phases: (1) the governor remained in the

south (al-Ǧazīra, al-Mawṣil) during the conquest period; (2) then he moved to Armīniya to lead

the campaigns in the North; (3) finally, during the warfare of the last years of the Umayyad

period, the governor remained in the more secure lands of the south (Northern Mesopotamia).[263]

This shift to the south and the resulting ties between Armīniya and Northern Mesopotamia

throughout the Arab period are the most convenient explanation for the choice of toponym, given

the Syriac etymology for al-Ǧarbī.[264]

There are two significant exceptions to Bates's theory: (1) he ties the mints of Hārūnābād

/ al-Hārūniyya, Maᶜdin Bāǧunays, and al-Muḥammadiyya to the Bāǧunays / Apahunikᶜ mine;

presumably these remain stationary due to the local discovery of silver;[265] and (2) the coins

minted in al-Bāb in 93 show stylistic and epigraphic inconsistencies for Northern coins, bearing

more resemblance to the output of the mint of al-Wāsiṭ, and possibly being the result of a

separate minting operation performed in spite of the governor's absence.[266] These exceptions are

immaterial to the usefulness of Bates's theory: he demonstrates convincingly that coins produced

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[263] Bates (1989), 102.

[264] The pull south may also explain an interesting marginalia noted by Palmer (1993), 205 no. 510. His text describes Muḥammad b. Marwān as the governor of Mesopotamia, noting that Armīniya was betrayed into his hands in A.G. 1002. The note remarks: "Armenia is used here to denote the region of Akhlat and of Mayperqat, the mountains of Sanason (i.e. Sason or Sasun) and Arzanene {Syr. ᵓRZWN} and all of the cities of that region." This definition of Armīniya is much farther to the south than usual for Arabic, Persian, or Armenian geographies. See also Chapter 4, including the quote from Procopius.

[265] Bates (2011).

[266] Spellberg (1988).

at the mints Armīniya, Arrān, al-Ǧazīra, and Aḏarbayǧān are all very likely directly linked. This provides numismatic support for the implementation of a proto-Sasanian administrative model in the early Islamic period.

3.3   Conclusion

It is evident that the geographical traditions in Armenian, Greek, and Arabic offer a dizzying array of details, the minutiae of which can be overwhelming. Making use of this material can be complicated, especially given the variety of sources used for each geographical work and, importantly, the questionable possibility of singling out "correct" representations of the administrative paradigm for any particular period. However, this chapter has attempted to outline a few important trends visible in the extant data.

First, Armenian, Greek, and Arabic toponyms for administrative provinces cannot indicate direct continuity, since the names each refer to different territories. Second, the frequently-cited definition of Arab Armīniya as Armenia, Iberia, and Albania must be reassessed, as it is highly uncommon in the Arabic geographies. Instead, in order to understand Arab conceptualization and governance of the North, we must consider the paradigm most often cited in Islamic geography, namely, Armīniya, al-Rān, and Aḏarbayǧān. This is likely a remnant of the Sasanian geographical unit called *kust-ī ādūrbādagān* or *kᶜusti Kapkoh*. This isn't merely a literary endeavor, as Islamic administration of the province (including the posting of Arab governors and the minting of coins) clearly indicates the implementation of policy based on older Sasanian geographical norms. This is just one of many indicators of the importance of Sasanian antecedents in the formulation of a caliphal North.

Chapter 4: Local Authority and Attempts at Centralization

He began to wax haughty [lit: "he began to lift horns," see translation of Tᶜovma below] in his impiety; by his roaring he blew winds to the four corners of the earth; he made those who believed in Christ to appear as his enemies and opponents; and he tormented and oppressed them by his turbulent conduct. Since confusion and the shedding of blood were dear to him, therefore he was agitated within himself: 'On whom shall I pour out my poisonous bitterness, and where shall I loose my multitude of arrows?' In his great folly, like a ferocious wild beast he attacked the land of the Greeks.

Ełišē [267]

He "began to lift his horns in impiety, to roar and butt at the four corners of the earth, to oppress and torment those who wished for a peaceful life; for confusion and the spilling of blood were very dear to him. He was in continuous irresolution and agitation: on whom or on which regions to pour out the bitterness of his mortal poison, or where to loose and shoot out the multitude of arrows in the quiver of his evil and craft mind. In his great folly, smitten by passion and with cancerous mien, raging like a wild beast, he began to attack Armenia.

Tᶜovma Arcruni [268]

There are three ways in which the legacy of Sasanian past is clearly visible in the history of

Armīniya during the Umayyad and early ᶜAbbāsid periods. First, the Arabs maintained that they

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[267]Ełišē, trans. Thomson (1982), 61; Ełišē, 12 and 14: Եւ ըսկրսաւ եղջիւր ածել անօրէնութեամբ, գոռոզանայր, և գոռալով հողմն հանէր ընդ չորս կողմանս երկրի. և թշնամի և հակառակորդ երևեցուցանէր իւր զհաւատացեալսս ի Քրիստոս, և նեղեալ տագնապէր անխադաղաւստ կենօք: Քանզի յոյժ սիրելի էր նմա խռովութիւն և արիւնհեղութիւն, վասն այնորիկ յանձն իւր տարաբերէր, եթէ յո՞ թափեցից զղառնութիւն թիւնաւոր, կամ ն՞ւր բացատրեցից զբազմութիւն նետիցն: Եւ առ յոյժ յիմարութեան իբրև զզազան կատաղի յարձակեցաւ ի վերայ աշխարհին Յունաց. Note that this edition is slightly different from the one cited by Muyldermans, who uses the version produced in Venice in 1893 (p. 12 – 13). The divergences are negligible.

[268] Tᶜovma Arcruni, trans. Thomson (1985), 47 and 173; Tᶜovma Arcruni, 170: և սկսաւ եղջիւր ածել անօրէնութեամբ և գոռալով ոգորէր ընդ չորս կողմանս երկրին և նեղեալ տագնապէր զխաղաղասէրս կենօք, քանզի կարի սիրելի էր նմա խռովութիւն և արիւնհեղութիւն. և հանապազ յանձն իւր տարակուսանօք տարուբերէր, թէ յո՞վ և կամ յո՞յր կողմանս թափիցէ զղառնութիւն մահաբեր թունից իւրոց, և կամ ն՞ւր վատնիցէ ցանիցէ թափիցէ զբազմութիւն նետից ի կապարճից խորհրդանոցին, չարին հնարիմացութեան: Եւ առ յոյժ յիմարութեանն հարեալ ցանկութեամբ, խլրդենի դիմօք, իբրև զզազան մի կատաղեալ՝ սկսաւ յարձակել ի վերայ աշխարհիս Հայոց. Note that this edition is slightly different from the one cited by Muyldermans, who uses the version produced in Constantinople in 1852 (p. 118). The divergences are negligible.

had wrested Armīniya directly from the Persians. Their discussion of the history of the province centers on Persian rulers such as Anūširwān and Kawāt, without significant recognition of the Greek or Armenian leadership in and before the seventh century. Second, the Arabs adopted Sasanian policies and rhetoric and adapted them to fit the circumstances of eighth- and ninth-century Armīniya. Finally, Armenian literature demonstrates a sustained comparison between Persian and Arab rule, indicating that Armenians framed their perceptions of caliphal control within the memory of Sasanian governance. We saw evidence of the first of these mechanisms, the Sasanian period as a trope in Arabic literature about Armīniya, in Chapter 2. The study of local authority and the relationship between the center and the ruling elites in Armīniya requires instead a focus on the other two: Arab adaptation of Sasanian policies and Armenian perceptions of Arab rule.

J. Muyldermans presented the passages from Ełišē and Tᶜovma Arcruni quoted above as evidence of "un procédé hagiographique" in Armenian historiography, an enduring process by which Christians responded to persecution of the faith in a uniform way.[269] The passages demonstrate remarkable similarity, though Ełišē is describing Yazdkert II (438 – 457), while Tᶜovma Arcruni is bemoaning the fate of the Armenians under al-Mutawakkil (847 – 861); it is undeniable that Tᶜovma was using Ełišē's work as a model for his own. While Muyldermans was concerned only with trends in hagiography, we may extend in order to tentatively address other important issues.

This comparison demonstrates the entrenched nature of the corpus of historical works composed in medieval Armenia. Understanding of these texts is predicated upon the ability of the historian to perceive the references to the Bible and, in this case, earlier histories that the medieval reader would presumably recognize. Second, far more work is necessary to

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[269] Muyldermans (1926).

contextualize Armenian reaction to non-Christian powers, especially claims of persecution. The frequent lamentations over the state of Armenia under foreign occupation are sometimes accepted at face value; we should endeavor to balance the rhetorical aspects of medieval Armenian historiography. There were undoubtedly episodes of violence and persecution, and this material is unlikely to survive in Arabic accounts. Łewond's text, for example, is replete with complaints about the Arab occupation: some of these may in fact be accurate, but at the same time the influence of religiously charged and biblically inspired rhetoric must be accounted for.

Finally, and most importantly for present purposes, these two passages demonstrate the way in which perceptions of power, whether that of local governors or universal monarchs, varied little in the transition from the Sasanian Empire to the Caliphate. Although there were substantial changes introduced over several centuries, as neither the Sasanian nor the Islamic government remained static with set, invariable policies, there are some similarities that demonstrate a sustained continuity between the two periods. This is demonstrated not only in the brief passage discussed in Muyldermans's article, but also by the general tendency of Tᶜovma to turn to Ełišē's depiction of the Sasanian period in his attempt to describe the Arab period; R. Thomson notes that

> …there are many occasions when Thomas depicts his Muslims or contemporary Armenians with imagery taken directly from Ełishē. This occurs too frequently to be coincidental. And since Ełishē was well known to Thomas's readers, the effect is deliberate. The question, however, remains whether Ełishē had merely provided a convenient framework in which to place the attitude of Armenians to their new Muslim overlords; or whether, by reminding his readers of Vardan and the heroic Armenian struggle, Thomas was holding up a model of conduct also relevant to his own day.[270]

Thomson's discussion offers numerous additional examples of passages similar to the description of Yazdgert / al-Mutawakkil; these tend to revolve around specific politico-military

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[270] Thomson (1985), 46.

personalities (Yazdkert, al-Mutawakkil, Buġā, Žirak) and the disunity of the *naxarar*s. Although "[t]he historical circumstances—the parallels and differences between the two powers to the southeast who dominated Armenia before and after the seventh century—are not" the focus of Thomson's remarks,[271] they are at the very heart of this current discussion.

The relationship between Sasanian and caliphal governance can hardly be refuted.[272] Whether to claim legitimacy as heirs to the great Persian Empire or to fashion a model for their own administration, Arabs frequently adopted and adapted the bureaucracy and rhetoric developed in pre-Islamic Sasanian territories. The most constructive study of Sasanian influence on early Islamic provincial administration is undoubtedly M. Morony's *Iraq after the Muslim Conquest* (1984). Morony's study stresses the composite nature of early Islamic governance, insisting that caliphal policy drew upon the examples provided by a number of their neighbors and antecedents—Byzantine, Sasanian, and pagan Arab—all while incorporating new practices in line with the expectations of Islam, at the time a fledgling religion. He furthermore determines that the elements of Sasanian practice that continued to survive, either reinterpreted or adopted wholesale into Arab governing theory and practice, followed two types: (1) the influence of local powers struggling to retain primacy despite the change, and (2) the conscientious adoption of Sasanian or Persian models in an attempt either to foster some sense of legitimacy for the new government or to forefront the greatness of Persian history. In the case of Iraq, the latter trend is most obviously associated with Ziyād b. Abīhī.

The experience in Armīniya is substantially different in both respects. First, we cannot consider reflections of Sasanian models of governance solely as a matter of continuity, for this would neglect the tumultuous seventh century, during which Byzantium controlled a

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[271] Thomson (1985), 46.

[272] See, for example, Bosworth (1973).

considerable portion of Armenian territory. Second, Armīniya lacked a leader comparable to Ziyād b. Abīhī, able to champion the maintenance of the status quo or to promulgate Arab versions of Sasanian governance. Morony's work is useful, but it cannot provide a model for discussing Sasanian influence on the Arab administration of Armīniya. Armīniya and Iraq were in very different positions: one was a frontier province, while the other was the very center of government for both Sasanians and ᶜAbbāsids. Accordingly, much of the aulic titulature associated with Iraq cannot be found in Armīniya.

That said, the general inertia of great political systems and the determination of local powers to retain their primacy ensured that, at least at some level, governmental policies were slow to change even in the wake of the Arab incursions. Here we will try to demonstrate points of both continuity and innovation in Arab governance by examining (1) the mainstays of local power, such as the *marzpan/ostikan,* the *Išxan Hayoc^c,* and the *naxarar*s; (2) the centralizing policies of the Byzantines, Sasanians, and Arabs vis-à-vis the *naxarar* system; and (3) the enduring importance of political, cultural, and economic ties to Northern Syria and Mesopotamia.

4.1 Local Governance and Titulature

4.1.1   Ostikan

The position of *ostikan*, the Arab governor of Armīniya, has long occupied a premier place in the historiography of this period. It has become a somewhat consuming topic, as scholar after scholar attempts to account for every scrap of extant literary and numismatic evidence about the incumbents. Thus today we have numerous lists, each purporting to add some detail to the work

of earlier generations: J. H. Petermann's *De Ostikanis Arabicis Armeniae Gubernatoribus* (1840), M. Ghazarian's *Armenien unter der arabischen Herrschaft bis zur Entstehung des Bagratidenreiches* (1904), R. Vasmer's *Chonologie der arabischen Statthalter von Armenien unter den Abbasiden, von as-Saffach bis zur Krönung Aschots I, 750 – 887* (1931), and H. Nalbandyan's "Arabacᶜi ostikannerə Hayastanum" [Arab ostikans in Armenia] (1956). Although many more authors attempt to improve the list, the more useful modern publications include Ter-Łewondyan's "Arminiayi ostikanneri žamanakagrutᶜyunə" [The Chronology of Ostikans of Arminiya] (1977) and the addendum in A. Vardanyan's *Islamic Coins Struck in Historic Armenia* (2011).

However, the recurrent problem is that these lists do little to contextualize the information. It is an enticing project to try to unravel the inconsistencies in the data provided by texts and coins; presumably there is a "right answer" that one should be able to uncover with close study of the sources. However, the significance of each individual find is doubtful. Why does it matter when Ḫuzayma b. Ḫāzim became governor of Armīniya? In some extraordinary cases, the tenure of an individual can help determine the dating for specific events, such as Ḫazar raids. However, the precise dates of each governor's reign cannot always be particularly useful information, unless they relate to broader historical questions or are utilized to ascertain an expedient methodology by which future scholars could approach the inconsistencies in the extant sources. The lists of *ostikan*s have thus far not sparked interest in this sort of endeavor and can therefore, for our purposes here, be set aside.

It is the position of *ostikan* itself, rather than any individual incumbent, that provides a more valuable study. The word *ostikan*, etymologically, seems tailor-made to demonstrate continuity from the Sasanian period. *Ostikan* is a Pahlavi word meaning "faithful, trustworthy;

that is, someone who is close to the king."[273] Although it was used in fifth-century biblical

translations to render ἐπίσκοπος or ἐπιστάτης, Sebēos uses the word to mean "those who are

close to the Sasanian monarch": Mušeł Mamikonian was the *ostikan* of Xosrov Parviz.[274] Sebēos

also uses the term with the implication of governorship, but only for the Sasanian period.[275]

This identification of the position as a remnant of Sasanian governance is tempting, but

ultimately too weak. Most modern authors, including R. Grousset, E. Redgate, G. Bournoutian,

N. Garsoïan, and J.-P. Mahé[276] follow M. Č͑amč͑yan[277] and define the *ostikan* as the Arab

governor of Armīniya. The problem with this identification is not its veracity, but rather the fact

that it is anachronistically provided by later historians. Both M. Ghazarian and A. Ter-

Łewondyan point out that the word *ostikan* is never used to mean "Arab governor" in the works

of the historians who would be most familiar with the Arab period: Łewond, T͑ovma Arcruni, or

Dasxuranc͑i. It isn't until the tenth century, in Drasxanakertc͑i's history, that we see the word

used as it is today.[278]

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[273] Ter-Łewdonyan (1962), 247. This is from Hübschmann (1908), 216: "the faithful, steadfast, treu, zuverlässig."

[274] Ter-Łewdonyan (1962), 246. For the translation from Greek, see also Hübschmann (1908), 215.

[275] Sebēos, 115: Արդ՝ նախ միաբանեալ հնազանդեցան ի ծառայութիւն, և մատուցին զաւրավարին և իշխանացն պատարագս մեծամեծս, և խնդրեալ ոստիկանս արս հաւատարիմս՝ նստուցին առ իւրեանց առ ի պահպանութիւն քաղաքին: Եւ յետ անցանելոյ ամսոց, մինչ միաբանեալ ամենայն ռամիկ կաճառացն մանկունք քաղաքին սպանին զոստիկան թագաւորին Պարսից և ինքեանք ապստամբեալք ի բաց կացին ի ծառայութենէ նորա:

[276] Grousset (1984), 308; Redgate (1998), 170; Bournoutian (2003), 74; Garsoïan in R. Hovannisian (2004), 126; Mahé (1997), 64.

[277] Ter-Łewdonyan (1962), 243.

[278] Ghazarian (1904), 194: "Die Statthalter werden von den arabischen Historikern عامل oder وال, von den Armenien aber Iškhan (Fürst), Hramanatar (Befehlshaber) Werakazu (Aufseher od. Verwalter) genannt. Der Titel Ostikan kommt erst im 10. Jahrhundert, bei Johan Katholikos vor; den älteren Historikern, Ghevond und Thoma Artsruni, ist er in diesem Sinne nicht bekannt." See also Ter-Łewdonyan (1962), 244; Hübschmann (1908), 215 – 216.

In fact, early Armenian historians use several words to refer to the Arab governor: *hramanatar* (commander), *zōrawar* (general), *zōraglux* (commander, lit: head of the forces), *verakac^cu* (overseer, governor), *mec hazarapet* (great chiliarch), *išxan* (prince), *marzpan*, *hawatarim* (trustworthy), *karcec^ceal marzpan* (so-called *marzpan*).[279] Several of these are directly inherited from the Sasanian period and therefore might be used as evidence of some sort of continuity; however, these titles cannot substantiate the idea of a deliberate policy to fashion Arab governance after Sasanian antecedents. After all, the words used for the Arab governors in Arabic do not echo the Pahlavi: *ṣāḥib, wālī, ^cāmil,* or *amīr*. At most, the continued use of words such as *marzpan* can merely indicate that to the local Armenians there was little difference in the role of the foreign governor or that the conditions of rule in Armīniya seemed to remain more or less intact.[280]

The sign of continuity therefore can only be ascertained in the comparison of the role of the *marzpan* and the so-called *marzpan* (the *ostikan*). *Marzpan*s were appointed by the Sasanian monarch over each of the provinces. In the case of Armenia, this position is equivalent to that of the frontier governor, the *bedaxš*. Christensen sees the position of *marzpan* as an overseer over both the civil and military leaders: "les marzbāns semblaient avoir eu, souvent, un caractère plus militaire que civil, l'administration civile étant en grande partie, sous le régime de la centralisation plus accentuée de la période sassanide, aux mains de fonctionnaires subalternes en ce qui concerne les petits territoires (des *shahrīghs,* des *dēhīghs*)."[281]

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[279] Ter-Łewdonyan (1962), 243 – 244; Ghazarian (1904), 194.

[280] See Thomson (1985), 186 no. 2: "As with *hazarapet*, Thomas is using an old term anachronistically—but deliberately—in order to recall his model, Ełišē." I think this could be expanded to suggest not only that T^covma was referring to Ełišē, but also that Armenian authors compared Sāsānian and caliphal governors. After all, T^covma isn't the only Armenian author to refer to the Arab governor as *marzpan* and not everyone mirrors the language choices on Ełišē's example.

[281] Christensen (1936), 133.

Persian inscriptions and seals do not frequently reference the role of *marzpan*: the only inscription with this word dates from the seventh or eighth century, though its related term for "frontier" (*mrz*) is much more common.[282] Most scholars turn instead to the later Arabic histories for information on the position. According to al-Mas^cūdī, there were four Sasanian *marzpan*s: one for each of the four cardinal directions;[283] however, the traditional understanding of the role of *marzpan* is a provincial governor.[284] As we have seen, the Arab governor over Armīniya only sometimes held control over the rest of al-Ǧarbī. As such, governance under the Arabs could be understood as a continuation of Sasanian practice by either definition of the term *marzpan*.

Al-Mas^cūdī's conceptualization also equates the roles of *marzpan* and *spāhbadh*,[285] adding a decidedly military definition to the position of governor. This is repeated in the works of al-Bal^camī, al-Balāḏurī, al-Ṭabarī, al-Dinawārī, Bar Penkaye, Ełišē, and Movsēs Xorenac^ci, as well as the martyrology of Dawit^c Dwinec^ci.[286] The military aspect of the office is necessitated by the nature of the frontier: "on conçoit bien en effet que des régions-frontières, où les problèmes de sécurité sont primordiaux, soient gouvernées par des militaires."[287] The

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[282] Gignoux (1984), 11.

[283] Al-Mas^cūdī, *Tanbīh,* 104: فاما المرزبان فهو صاحب الثغر لان المرز هو الثغر بلغتهم وبان القيم وكانت المرازبة اربعة للمشرق والمغرب والشمال والجنوب كل واحد على ربع المملكة

[284] Al-Ya^cqūbī, *Tārīḫ,* 202 – 203: وكانت تسمى العزيم منهم الاصبهبذ ومعناه الرئيس الذي دونه الفادوسبان ومعناه دافع الاعداء وبسمى رئيس البلد المرزبان ويسمى رئيس الكور الشهريج

[285] Christensen (1936), 366.

[286] Gignoux (1984), 20 – 25; Ter-Łewondyan (1966), 188 = Ter-Łewondyan (1964), 95.

[287] Gignoux (1984), 12. See also p. 13 – 14 : Here Gignoux presents a Pahlavi text referencing the *marzpan*: "Le roi des rois fut émerveillé, il dit au page : 'Va tuer les lions' et le page s'en alla et tua les lions. Alors il (le roi) ordonna de faire du page le *marzbān* d'une grande région (ou ville)." He sees the link between bravery and the office of *marzpan* as a possible indicator that military prowess was a requisite to attain the position.

administration of quotidian affairs was—for both the Sasanian and the Arab governor—immaterial in comparison to the maintenance of the borders against Byzantium and the North.

The Sasanian post (*marzpan*) may have also entailed some fiscal responsibilities, though this is uncertain, given sigillographic and epigraphic evidence for the separate office of *āmārgar*.[288] Arabic sources occasionally attribute responsibility over the regional treasury and tax collecting to the Sasanian *marzpan*.[289] However, Arabic and Armenian sources refer to a tax collector (*ᶜāmil al-ḫarāǧ*) in the Arab period as well: a different individual from the *marzpan*. Presumably the confusion lies in the governors' responsibilities of overseeing those holding lesser posts in the region entrusted to him. The governors must have enforced the collection of the taxes, as failure to collect or send revenues on to Ctesiphon or Damascus/Baghdad constituted rebellion and the governors' primary purpose was to maintain the borders.[290] However, in neither case was the primary role of the Sasanian or Arab *marzpan* the collection of taxes.

The Sasanian and Arab governors also shared similar status: being responsible for one of the most significant frontiers of the state (either before or after the Islamic conquest), the governors were appointed from the royal family in times of particular stress. For example, Yazdkert I named his own son as governor over Armenia. This doesn't seem to have been

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[288] Gyselen (2000). The inscriptions found in Darband also mention the *āmārgar,* see Gignoux (1991).

[289] Gignoux (1984), 19. He supports this with two statements in al-Balāḏurī: (1) عن وسأله مرو مرزبان ماهويه بمحاسبة وامر ; and a passage in al-Dīnawārī: جمع ذلك يزدجرد رأى ولما الاموال (2) and خراجها جباية واليه مرزبانها وبها أرِّبيجان مدينة وهي ;أردبيل عليهم وكتب وخزائنه امواله بيوت عليهم فقسم مرازبته عظماء اليه

[290] Ghazarian (1904), 194 : "Zu dem Wirkungskries des Statthalters von Armenien gehörte : das Land in Gehorsam zu halten, gegen die nördlichen Völker einerseits und die Byzantiner andrerseits, später auch gegen die Rebellen in Adherbeidjān und Arrān Kriege zu führen." Thopdschian (1904a), 53: "Die Hauptaufgaben eines Marzpans waren, die Grenzen gegen die Griechen und kaukasischen Völker zu schützen und die armenischen Satrapen im Zaume zu halten."

common, but it is noteworthy given the Marwānid tendency to appoint either the heir apparent or a close relative to the post of governor over Armīniya.[291]

One primary difference between the marzpanate and the ostikanate is the fact that Armenians were named *marzpan*s under the Sasanians, such as Vahan Mamikonian, appointed in 485. The elevation of an Armenian to the office of *marzpan* was, however, unusual: Kawat II's appointment of Varaztiroc[c] as *marzpan* "broke with the convention…that Armenians should not hold the highest administrative office in their own country."[292]

Unlike the offices of *sparapet* and *sahmanakal*, which were frequently held by Armenian *naxarar*s, the governors of the caliphal province of Armīniya were always Arabs. At first glance, this seems to imply a level of autonomy allowed to Armenia under the Sasanian[293] that was never actualized under Arab governance. However, the elevation of an Armenian *marzpan* was not a constant or even common occurrence in pre-Islamic Armenia, as the Sasanian government sporadically attempted to reassert some modicum of control over the provinces and instigated intermittent but broad policies of centralization. Furthermore, this variance is not as significant as might be assumed, given the position of *Išxan Hayoc[c]*.

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[291] Nicol (1979), 121: "Regarding the ethnic background of the 51 different governors appointed to Armenia during the early ᶜAbbāsid period, it is interesting to note that only seven were princes of the ᶜAbbāsid family who were in office a total of 12 years [out of the 83 years in his study], and two of these (Manṣūr and Hārūn al-Rashīd) were later caliphs. It will be remembered that approximately half of the governors of Baṣrah and Kūfah during this same period were ᶜAbbāsids." Note, however, that al-Baṣra and al-Kūfa were more centrally located than Armīniya; despite being an important *ṯaġr,* it was on the periphery of the Islamic world. Perhaps comparison with other provinces would be more apt.

[292] Greenwood (2004), 71.

[293] Grousset (1984), 229: "…le roi Valâch, achevant l'évolution commence, nomma Vahan Mamikonian *marzbân* d'Arménie (485). L'autonomie arménienne était ainsi pratiquement reconnue par la cour sassanide, en même temps qu'était consacrée l'hégémonie de la maison mamikonienne sur le reste de la féodalité haïkane."

4.1.2   *Išxan Hayoc[c]*

Išxan is also assumed to be a loan word from Pahlavi.[294] The term is used loosely, and can refer to a number of people—Arab, Armenian, or Greek. However, the title *Išxan Hayoc[c],* prince of Armenia (or, prince of the Armenians) was created by the Byzantine authorities in the sixth century. It was designed specifically to counter the power of the *marzpan* and *sparapet* by presenting a new leader, legitimized by the might of Byzantium. The *Išxan Hayoc[c]* held the title of *curopalates*[295] and was referred to by the titles "patrician" (Greek: *patrikios*; Armenian: *patrik*; Arabic: *baṭrīq*; Syriac: *badrig*)[296] and, later, prince of princes (Greek: *arxōn tōn arxontōn*; rendered into Arabic as patrician of patricians, *baṭrīq al-baṭāriqa*)[297] or "prince" (king?) of Armenia (*ho arxōn tēs Armenias*).[298]

During the period of Arab invasions, including over half a century when Armīniya was considered *dār al-[c]ahd* and persisted as a relatively autonomous state, the *Išxan Hayoc[c]* ruled the region of Armenia proper (not the extended definition of Armīniya as discussed in Chapter 3) in

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[294] Benveniste (1929), 8: "Bien que Hübschmann n'ait pas mentionné *išxan* parmi les emprunts iraniens, on peut présumer que, comme tant d'autres titres, celui-ci appartient au vocabulaire arsacide de la féodalité…*Išxan* suppose ir. *xšāna, qui évoque sogd. *'γš'wm *axšāvan* « roi » qu'on lit plusieurs fois dans la version sogdienne de l'inscription de Kara-Balgassun…, et aussi en sogdien chrétien où il rend βασιλεύς."

[295] Ter-Łewondyan (1966), 185 = Ter-Łewondyan (1964), 121; Garsoïan (2004), 126. See Sebēos, 133: Իսկ թագաւորն [Heraclius] առնէ ըստ խնդրոյ իշխանացն զնա [Dawit[c] Saharuni] իշխան ի վերայ ամենայն աշխարհացն, և տայ նմա պատիւ կիւրապաղատութեանն, և հաստատէ զնա ի ծառայութին իւր. See Sebēos, 175 : Եւ արար արքայ Կոստանդին զՄամիկոնէից տէր զՀամազասպ՝ կիւրապաղատ, և ետ նմա զահոյս արծաթիս և զիշխանութինն աշխարհին Հայոց, և պատիւս այլոց իշխանացն, և զանձս զաւրացն:

[296] See Ter-Łewondyan (1966), 188 = Ter-Łewondyan (1964), 123. See Theophanes, 366. Turtledove, 64 translates πατρίκιος as "prince," but in Armenian there seems to be a distinction between պատրիկ (patrician) and իշխան (prince); see also Turtledove, 44: he translates πατρίκιος as "patrician" (Theophanes, 344: ὁ τῶν Ἀρμενίων πατρίκιος is rendered as "the patrician of the Armenians"). See also Michael the Syrian, III 3.

[297] Ter-Łewondyan (1966), 195 = Ter-Łewondyan (1964), 129. Ghazarian (1904), 185. بطريق is used to refer to the *nahapet,* for example al-Balāḏurī.

[298] Narratio, 341. Michael the Syrian, V 516.

the absence of a Sasanian *marzpan*. Following the Arab incursions and the Arab-Armenian peace of 652, Arabs and Greeks contended to appoint their own clients as *Išxan Hayoc^c*. There is epigraphic evidence for Byzantine attempts to elevate Artavazd Kamsarakan as *Išxan Hayoc^c* even after the arrival of an Arab governor and the creation of a caliphal province controlled directly from Damascus.[299]

However, once Armīniya becomes an Arab province in the eighth century, the authority of the *Išxan Hayoc^c* extends to the entirety of the caliphal province. The title that remains throughout the Arab period is first and foremost the Armenian *Išxan Hayoc^c,* but it also is replaced by the terms more familiar from the Sasanian period. So, for example, the inscription on the church of Aruč and Łewond both name Grigor Mamikonian *Išxan Hayoc^c,* but the martyrology of Dawit^c Dwinec^ci instead names him *marzpan* and *sparapet*.[300] This is not meant to imply that Greek titulature suddenly vanished from Armenia, especially given the Arabic transliteration of the Greek *patrikios* or Armenian *patrik* to *baṭrīq*; rather, this is merely a single example of how the use of Sasanian titles was part of a larger process of de-Byzantizing the land. This continues into the later period, as Asołik uses the term *marzpan* to refer to the *Išxan Hayoc^c*.[301]

The *Išxan Hayoc^c* was responsible for maintaining the peace among the *naxarar* houses and between *naxarar*s and Arabs. He was expected to keep the population in line with caliphal rule and to avert revolts. He was also in charge of supplying the caliphal representative with cavalry, which is why the roles of both *Išxan Hayoc^c* and *sparapet* were frequently assigned to a

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[299] Greenwood (2004), 75.

[300] Ter-Łewondyan (1966), 188 = Ter-Łewondyan (1964), 124.

[301] Ter-Łewondyan (1969b), 241.

single individual. In this way, we cannot compare the lack of Armenian governors under the

Arabs to the autonomy afforded Armenia during the Sasanian period, since the position of *Išxan*

Hayoc^c effectively preserved the nature of the Armenian administrative structure:

> Lors de la domination arabe, l'Arménie n'a pas perdu son autonomie interne et
> son administration n'a jamais été désorganisée, mais, tout en faisant partie de la
> province d'"Arminia" du califat, elle a conservé sa personnalité administrative et
> politique. À cette époque, c'était le prince d'Arménie qui gouvernait l'Arménie,
> bien que sous l'autorité de l'ostikan d'Arminia, était, en réalité l'administrateur
> des affaires du pays.[302]

Despite the fact that the position of *Išxan Hayoc^c* was originally created by the Byzantines, in

some ways this policy was also reminiscent of Sasanian control. B. Martin-Hisard notes that

Arab policy continued the Persian practice of assigning a single prince to control the various

Georgian nobles, but that the Arabs veered from Persian practice by installing another family

instead of the royal Chosroid family : "…le califat, poursuivant en cela la politique sassanide,

continua à choisir dans l'aristocratie des eristavs un 'prince' garant la soumission de tous et que

Dzhuansher désigne sous le nom 'mtavar du Kartli' ou de 'mtavar des eristavs.'"[303] This is not

only reminiscent of the Armenian post of *Išxan Hayoc^c,* but also indicative of the Arab policy of

balancing provincial politics by showing or denying favor to powerful families.

4.1.3   *Naxarar*s

Although the *marzpan* and the *Išxan Hayoc^c* were pivotal positions in local governance, they

represented the imperial center and the authority of a foreign power: appointed by and supported

from Ctesiphon, Damascus, Baghdad, and Constantinople, these were cogs in the imperial

administration. The mainstay of local power remained in prevailing *naxarar* houses, each of

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[302] Ter-Łewondyan (1966), 200 = Ter-Łewondyan (1964), 133.

[303] Martin-Hisard (1982a), 108 – 109.

which had a *nahapet* or patriarch sitting at its head. The words *naxarar* and *nahapet*, like *išxan,*

ostikan, and *sparapet*, have a Pahlavi origin: *naxust,* which accounts for both the *nax* and *nah*

prefixes, means "first."[304]

The *naxarar*s controlled the administration of daily affairs within their lands, the tax

collection, the maintenance of the cavalry, and even matters regarding ecclesiastical succession.

There is no reason to doubt that the system survived the Arab conquest and the first years of the

Caliphate undisturbed.[305] Their duties to Empire—the provision of cavalry and taxes—were

repaid by protection from Byzantium and the peoples of the Northern Caucasus.

Even more than the *Išxan Hayoc^c,* the *naxarar*s represent a measure of autonomy allowed

to Armenia, possibly even at odds with the representatives of the center. By the end of the fifth

century, Armenians had gained the right to bypass the *marzpan* and to address the Sasanian

monarch directly. R. Grousset thought this greatly to the detriment to the position of *marzpan*, a

"privilège précieux qui les faisait pratiquement échapper à la juridiction du *marzbân* perse."[306]

However, we must remember that the priorities of the *marzpan*s were not focused on matters of

daily administration or even on balancing the ambitions of the *naxarar* houses, but rather on

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[304] Hübschmann (1908), 200. See also Meillet (1922), 3; Benveniste (1929), 5–7; Laurent/Canard (1980), 112, no. 59; Grousset (1984), 287-88.

[305] Adontz (1970), 165 – 166: "Although modified in some of its aspects, this system survived in Armenia until the fall of the Bagratids, and its final destruction came only with the Mongol invasions." However, Ter-Łewondyan (1974), 20 points out that this assumption is indicative of trends in early twentieth-century European scholarship (Laurent, Ghazarian, Leo), and that the Soviet authors (Samvelyan, Eremyan) had less conviction. Martin-Hisard (1997), 78 – 79: "L'établissement de la domination arabe n'a pas au début profondément change ce système…Les grandes familles ne perdirent dans l'ensemble rien de leurs droits ancestraux et on est surtout frappé.à partir de ce moment, par l'acuité de leurs rivalités qu'explique en partie la nouvelle coexistence, sur le territoire arménien réunifié par la conquête arabe, de familles et de regions jusqu'alors séparées par la frontière byzantino-perse."

[306] Grousset (1984), 227. There is occasionally a modicum of truth to this: consider, for example, the fate of Tačat Anjewac^ci, who was appointed as *išxan* directly by the order of Hārūn al-Rašīd despite the discontent of the Arab governor, ^cU_tmān. ^cU_tmān then sent Tačat to fight the Ḫazars, where he conveniently died. Hārūn rightly considered this an act of disobedience on ^cU_tmān's part and removed him from his position. This episode demonstrates that the governor may have indeed been jealously guarding his power in Armīniya. However, the general tenor of the sources indicates that the governors were not involved or interested in administration of the province.

military maintenance of the frontier. As such, the privilege actually allowed the *marzpan* to function as he was meant to do, while allowing the concerns of the *naxarar*s to be aired in Ctesiphon instead of Dwin.

This practice continued during the Arab period, as we have examples of both *naxarar*s and clergy making requests and appeals directly to the caliph. There are occasional references to *naxarar*s bypassing the Arab governors in Armīniya, such as Ašot Bagratuni's visit to Marwān despite the presence of an Arab governor, Isḥāq b. Muslim, in Dabīl.[307] Similarly, Vasak Arcruni, as we will see later, had direct recourse to the caliph to complain about Ašot.

4.2   Governmental Policy towards the Naxarar Houses

The Sasanians, Byzantines, and Arabs all faced a deeply rooted system of hierarchical power in Armenia, which resisted the centrifugal forces of centralized government. By the time of the Arab conquest a few methods were used for dealing with the powerful *naxarar* houses in times of unrest: (1) forced emigration from their ancestral seats of power; (2) complete elimination of the more powerful houses; (3) encouraging disunity among the houses; and (4) holding hostages to ensure the cooperation of the *naxarar* families.

This first policy, forced emigration, is famously associated with Byzantine rule and was never espoused by the Sasanian, Umayyad, or ᶜAbbāsid governments, each of which tried a number of approaches to induce the independent *naxarar*s to recognize their rule. Grousset claims that, "A l'égard des féodaux arméniens, la Cour de Ctésiphon, à l'inverse de celle de Constantinople, n'avait pas une politique uniforme."[308] This seems somewhat oversimplified for

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[307] Łewond. Ter-Łewondyan (1966), 198 argues that this was a unique case and that Armenians only had recourse to the caliph specifically to air complaints against the Arab governor.

[308] Grousset (1984), 261.

the sake of clarity: after all, the Greeks attempted a number of strategies that curtailed the power

of the *naxarar*s, from forced conversion to Chalcedonianism to restructuring the provinces under

Greek leadership; in addition, there are a few mentions of Armenian hostages in Constantinople.

Still, generally speaking Arab policy was closer to Sasanian than to Byzantine antecedents.

As we will see, there were two methods of controlling the *naxarar*s that were

comparatively innovative in the Arab period. A. Ter-Łewondyan argues that "[f]rom the very

beginning, the pan-Muslim ᶜAbbāsid Caliphate used radical means to weaken the power of the

Armenian *naxarar*s."[309] He suggests that the main policies of ᶜAbbāsid governance included

demographic changes, a policy that restructured Armīniya in a way unknown in the Byzanto-

Sasanian period, and overtaxation.

4.2.1   Forced Emigration of *Naxarar*s from Armenia

The displacement of *naxarar* houses from Armenia and their resettlement is usually associated

with Byzantine policy, most famously under Maurice.[310] This is based on Sebēos's witness:

> At that time the king of the Greeks, Mawrik, ordered that a letter of complaint be
> written to the king of the Persians concerning the princes of all the Armenians and
> their troops. "They are a hard and disobedient nation," he said, "they are between
> us and cause trouble. But come," he said, "I will gather mine and assemble them
> in Tᶜrakē [Thrace] and you gather yours and order to take [them] to the east. For if
> they die, our enemies die; if they kill, they kill our enemies. And we shall be in
> peace. For if they are in their land, it will not be restful for us." The two agreed.

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[309] Ter-Łewondyan (1976a), 21.

[310] Ghazarian (1904), 152: "Der Kaiser Maurikius stellte sich die Aufgabe, das armenische Land seiner angestammten Herren zu berauben und dadurch jeder Veranlassung zu aufrührerischen Bewegungen den Grund zu nehmen. Den passenden Vorwand dazu gaben die stetigen Vorstösse der Avaren an der nördlichen Grenze des byzantinischen Reiches. Unter diesem Vorwand wurden unter seiner Regierung zahlreiche armenische Fürsten mit ihren Truppen an die Donau gegen die Avaren geschickt." See also Thopdschian (1904a), 54. Ter-Łewondyan (1976a), 19 doesn't consider this policy to be directed against the unity of the *naxarar*s, but rather (presumably) as a way to solve disturbance on the other Byzantine frontier: "the aim of this policy was neither the weakening of the Armenian elements in Greater Armenia nor the settlement there of any foreign groups."

The king began to give the order that they should gather everyone and assemble them in Tᶜrakē. He strongly urged that the command be carried out. And they [the Armenians] began to flee from that region and to go into the service of the Persians, especially those whose land was under his authority. And so he received them all with great honor and he gave them considerably more gifts than the [Byzantine] king. Especially when he saw their flight from the [Byzantine] king, he wanted to win them over to him with even greater satisfaction.[311]

Charanis notes that the practice of resettling minority populations for military, economic, and cultural reasons was common in both the Roman and Byzantine Empires.[312] Regarding the Armenian example, Charanis disagrees with Grousset's assertion that Justinian resettled large Armenian communities, but he does acknowledge that Tiberius transferred 10,000 Armenians to Cyprus and that Maurice "aimed at nothing less than the removal of all Armenians from their homeland."[313] The policy of resettlement was not aimed solely at the Armenian population, and continued in Byzantium well after the rise of Islām. As Mattᶜēos Uṛhayecᶜi later claimed, the Byzantines "dispersed the most courageous children of Armenia…Their most constant care was to scatter from the Orient all that there was of courageous men and valiant generals of Armenian origin."[314]

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[311] Sebēos, 86–87: Յայնմ ժամանակի թագաւորն Յունաց Մաւրիկ հրամայէ գրել առ թագաւորն Պարսից զիր ամբաստանութեան վասն իշխանացն ամենայն Հայաստանեայց և զայրաց իւրեանց: «Ազգ մի խոտոր և անհնազանդ են, ասէ, կան ի միջի մերում և պղտորեն: Բայց ե՛կ, ասէ, ես զիմս ժողովեմ և ի Թրակէ գումարեմ. և դու զքո ժողովէ և հրամայէ յՄրնելս տանել: Զի եթէ մեռանին՝ թշնամիք մեռանին. և եթէ սպանանեն՝ զթշնամիս սպանանեն. և մեք կեցցուք խաղաղութեամբ: Զի եթէ դոքա յերկրի իւրեանց լինիցին՝ մեզ հանգչել ոչ լինի»: Միաբանեցան երկոքին: Եւ սկսաւ կայսրն հրաման տալ, զի ժողովեցեն զամենեսեան և ի Թրակէ գումարեցեն. և ստատիկ տագնապէր՝ հրամանն կատարէր: Եւ սկսան փախչել ի կողմանէն յայնմանէ և զալ ի ծառայութիւն Պարսից, մանաւանդ որոց երկիրն ընդ նորա իշխանութեամբ էր: Իսկ նա զամենեսեան ընդունէր մեծարանաւք և մեծամեծ պարգեւս քան զկայսր պարգեւէր նոցա. մանաւանդ իբր տեսանէր ըզփախուստ նոցա ի կայսերէն՝ նա առաւել մեծապէս սիրով կամէր զամենեսեան կորզել առ ինքն: See also Sebēos, 105: Եւ հրաման ելանէ ի կայսերէ. «Երեսուն հազար հեծեալ վզենակալ է, ասէ, իմ ի վերայ աշխարհին Հայոց: Արդ՝ ԼՌ երդաւոր ժողովեցին ինձ անտի և նստուցին ի Թիրակացոց աշխարհին»:

[312] Charanis (1961), 141.

[313] Charanis (1961), 141 – 142.

[314] Charanis (1961), 147.

This policy understandably did not gain much popularity and met with uprisings[315] and defection to the Sasanian lands. The Sasanian, according to Sebēos, offered the Armenians an alternative to Byzantine misrule. They themselves did not engage in similar policies, though Ełišē does at times discuss the banishment of noblemen by Persian command. Although we hear of *naxarar*s in the service of the Sasanian Empire in the East, these were honored servants of the state and were allowed to return to their homeland. The famous case of Smbat Bagratuni, who gained high positions over Media and Ḫurāsān before returning to his ancestral land, confirms this.

Caliphal policy also never encouraged the emigration of *naxarar*s from their ancestral homelands. In fact, there are multiple examples of attempts by Arab governors and generals to impede emigration from Armīniya[316] or to invite emigrants back to their homes.[317] On the one hand, this could simply be an attempt to deny allies to Byzantium, as most were fleeing westward; however, it is also likely that these barriers to movement were intended to maintain the productivity of the land. Without people, Armīniya would become a far less lucrative province.

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[315] Sebēos, 92: Ապա դարձեալ սկսան միաբանել մնացեալ նախարարքն Հայոց, և ինդրէին ի բաց կալ ի ծառայութենէն Յունաց թագաւորին և նստուցանել իրեանց թագաւոր, զի մի՛ և նոցա հասցէ մեռանել ի կողմանս Թրակացւոց, այլ կեալ և մեռանել ի վերայ աշխարհին իրեանց:

[316] Ibn Ḥawqal, 245: وكانت بنو اميّة وبنو العباس قد اقرُّوهم على سكناهم ويقبضون الرسوم عليهم من جباياتهم Also, there are many examples of Armenians being stopped en route out of the country, see Grousset (1984), 310 and 338; Ter-Łewondyan (1976a).

[317] Perhaps the most famous example of this is Łewond's account of the refugees in Poti who returned to Armenia, see Chapter 6.

4.2.2 Elimination of the *Naxarar* Houses

The Greeks attempted to empty the land of *naxarar*s by transporting them to far-off borders of the Byzantine Empire; there are two examples to show that Persians and the Arabs may have each attempted to eliminate the entrenched political system by killing the main members of the *naxarar* houses. This extreme policy was, quite obviously, not systematically carried out, as we see in the perpetuation of the *naxarar* class not only throughout the Sasanian period but also long past the period of caliphal dominion in Armīniya.

Sebēos remarks: "For he [Hormizd IV] eliminated all of the *naxarar*s and chiefs and the native houses from the land of the Persians. He killed the great *sparapet,* Parthian and Persian [Pahlaw], who was descended from the condemned Anak."[318] Hormizd's policy was not aimed at Armenian *naxarar*s, but rather at the powerful Parthian families that threatened the centralized Persian-controlled Sasanian Empire.[319] Given their historic ties to the Parthian families, it would make sense that Armenian *naxarar*s were included in Hormizd's indictment; however, Sebēos specifies that he killed the *naxarar*s "from the land of the *Persians.*" Despite the status of Armenia as a Sasanian province, its historic ties to Parthian families, and Armenian involvement at the Sasanian court, it is not considered Persian land, at least in Armenian histories. The situation under the early Caliphate was, of course, markedly different. P. Pourshariati is able to contextualize the elimination of the Sasanian noble houses by casting it into the political

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[318] Sebēos, 73: Քանզի երկարձ սա զամենայն նախարարս և զնախինս և զտունս բնակագոյնս յաշխարհէն Պարսից: Սպան սա զասպարապետն մեծ, զպարթևն և զպահլաւն, որ էր ի զաւակէ Անակայ մահապարտի. Զոր առեալ դայեկաց ի հինէ անտի Խոսրովայ արքայի Հայոց՝ փախուցին ի դուռն արքունի իւրեանց՝ ի կողմանս Պարսից:

[319] Pourshariati (2006), 118. "Both Ṭabarī and Ibn Balkhī relate that Hormozd IV removed the nobles from his court and killed '13,600 [!] men from the religious classes and from those of good family and noble birth.' It is Firdowsī, however, who actually provides us with substantive information on some of the leading members of the nobility decimated by Hormozd IV."

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situation at the time, when Persian power was far less centralized than it is usually depicted today in what Pourshariati calls "Christensenian theory."

There are a few accusatory statements in Armenian texts, specifically in Łewond's work, indicating that such a policy was implemented in Arab Armīniya; however, this case does not reflect circumstances similar to those of the Sasanian regime, being the product of wholly different historical conditions. Łewond's testimony, as we will see in Chapter 5, relates this policy specifically to the fires of Naxčᶜawan and Xram, a direct retaliatory response to Armenian uprising against the Caliphate. He also specifies that this order came directly from the caliph al-Walīd: "In the first year of his reign, he conspired to empty the house of naxarars along with their cavalry from this land of Armenia, because of the hatred that they had for Smbat, the *kiwrapałat*. For he said that they were always an obstacle and a hindrance to our rule."[320] After the fires, Łewond laments that "by killing them all, they made the land heirless of *naxarar*s."[321] Asołik's statement starts off nearly verbatim with Łewond's account, as he is presumably working with a copy at his disposal.[322]

It is impossible to ascertain the truth without further data, but there are a few indicators to suggest the possibility that the Arabs' goal was never to eliminate all *naxarar*s. Łewond is the

[320] Łewond, 54: Սա յառաջնում ամի իշխանութեան իւրոյ խորհեցաւ բառնալ յաշխարհէս Հայոց զտոհմ նախարարաց նոցին հեծելովք վասն քինուն զոր ունէին առ Սմբատայ կիւրապաղատի. Զի ասէր եթէ միշտ խոչ եւ զայթակղութիւն լինելոց են իշխանութեանս մերոյ:

[321] Łewond, 58: Զնոսա զամենեսեան բարձեալ ի կենացˈ անժառանգ առնէին զաշխարհս ի նախարարաց:

[322] Asołik, 124: Սա յառաջնում ամի իշխանութեան իւրոյ խորհեցաւ բառնալ յաշխարհէս զազգատոհմունդն Հայոց. և հրամայէ Մահմետի զօրավարին զայս առնել: Եւ նա հրամայէ Կասմայ ումեմն, որ էր հրամանատար ի կողմանս Նախճաւան քաղաքին՝ կոչել առ ինքն զնախարարսն Հայոց նոցին հեծելովք, իբրև թէ ի հանդիսի անցուցանել և առնուլ հռոգ յարքունուստ: Եւ նոքա ըստ օրինակի պարզմտութեան իւրեանց վաղվաղակի ժողովին անդ: Եւ հրամայեցին յերկուս բաժանել զնոսա, զոմանս յեկեղեցին Նախճաւանայ, և զկէսն յեկեղեցին Խրամայ. և հրով վառեալ զեկեղեցիսն՝ այնպէս այրեցին զամենեսեան ի ՃՁԳ թուականին. և զգլխաւոր նախարարսն զփայտէ կախեալ դատապարտէին:

only author to make such a claim, though others cite his statement as truth; but whereas the Sasanian example was immortalized in Armenian, Arabic, and Persian literature, there are no other authors to claim any sort of Umayyad conspiracy against the *naxarar*s. Łewond's account may merely reflect the perception of local survivors lamenting the deaths of formidable men. This possibility is supported by (1) accounts of the fires in Arabic, Syriac, and Greek literature (see Chapter 5) and (2) the fact that Łewond also attributes a similar policy to a governor of Armīniya under ᶜAbd al-Malik. Not only was the same policy attempted under a different caliph, but it was implemented by a governor without direct recourse to Damascus.[323]

First and foremost, however, is the fact that the *naxarar* houses were depleted during the period of Arab rule. Some of the most powerful houses never regained primacy after defeat at the hands of the Arabs, while others were subsumed as lesser branches under the hegemony of a few significant houses. After all, Adontz is able to list a considerable number of *naxarar* houses at the time of Justinian, but by the time of the rise of the Bagratids and the Arab emirates in Armīniya, the Arcruni family is the only other Armenian house strong enough to claim kingship. It is reasonable to suggest that onlookers would assume the reduction of the *naxarar* houses to be intentional, though in reality it could have been the result of any of the remaining policies discussed below in conjunction with the violent response to the nearly generational Armenian rebellion against the Caliphate.

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[323] Łewond, 43: Եւ իբրեւ զնաց Մահմետ զօրավարն յԱսորիս՝ եթող յաշխարհիս Հայոց իշխան փոխանակ իւր յԻսմայելացւոցն: Որոյ խորհուրդ վատ ի մէջ առեալ բառնալ զագատախումբ տոհմն յաշխարհէս Հայոց հանդերձ նոցին հեծելովք:

4.2.3 Encouraging Disunity

It was far more expedient to deal with the ruling local powers by discouraging harmony among the houses or the formation of a unified Armenian front. The *naxarar* families, trained by both tradition and geography, were accustomed to independent rule and were not always able to overcome their differences to join forces against a common foe.[324] Playing one house against the other allowed the central powers to profit from the natural fissures in the Armenian socio-political hierarchy. There was no understanding of modern nationalism in Armenia during this period: *naxarar*s jealously guarded their independence from one another, joining forces only when their individual houses faced specific threats. The unit of loyalty was regionally defined around the *naxarar* family, not the more abstract idea of an Armenian nation or even the Church.[325] The decentralized nature of Armenian society, coupled with troublesome inheritance traditions that tended to support fractionalization, meant that the most pragmatic approach for both the Sasanians and the Arabs was to alternate their support for different families.

The unity among *naxarar* houses, cast in strongly religious terms, is a main theme in Ełišē's history. He repeatedly calls the agreement of the nobles fighting against the Sasanians a covenant (*uxt*) and frequently defines the unifying factor as the Church. This is at odds with both J. Laurent and N. Adontz's depictions of the *naxarar* system, which forefront the primacy of the

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[324] Thopdschian (1904a), 50.

[325] Laurent/Canard (1980), 101: "Pour ces Arméniens, depuis si longtemps maîtres de leurs domaines, le véritable patriotisme n'existait pas, les idées d'état, de patrie, de nation, leur étaient étrangères ; ils ne connaissaient en fait d'indépendance politique que l'idée de liberté individuelle : la patrie, pour eux, c'étaient leur principautés, c'est pour elles qu'ils sacrifiaient leurs biens et leurs vies ; leur patriotisme était local et tout aussi divisé que leur pays. Entre eux le lien national n'était jamais politique ; il n'existait que par les mœurs, la langue et la religion qui n'ont jamais suffi à faire seuls une nation. Dans ces conditions, les grands de l'Arménie ne s'étaient jamais entendus pour soutenir à fond la cause commune ; ils n'en saisissaient pas l'importance et ils ne se donnaient à la défense générale que dans la mesure étroite de leur intérêt propre, tel qu'ils le comprenaient."

socio-political hierarchy even above adherence to religious beliefs or loyalty to the Church.[326] This seeming contradiction is explained by Ełišē's own rhetorical devices: Vasak, the traitor *par excellence* in early Armenian history, is depicted as an apostate in order to cement the black and white image of Christian Armenians led by Vardan Mamikonian fighting against non-Christian waywardness. However, in reality the lines could not have been quite so clearly drawn. After all, even in Ełišē's account Vasak is surrounded by priests and continuously claims that the practice of Christianity would be safeguarded at the conclusion of the war. It therefore seems possible to discuss the war of 451 as an example of discord between houses, rather than an unambiguous battle between the Armenian Christians and the Persian Zoroastrians together with their Armenian apostate allies.

Ełišē's history is replete with complaints that the Sasanians took advantage of the decentralized *naxarar* system to gain the upper hand: "By slander he pitted the nobility against each other, and caused dissention in every family. He did this in the hope of breaking their unity…"[327] Specifically, he "began to give precedence to the junior over the senior, to the unworthy over the honorable, to the ignorant over the knowledgeable, to the cowards over the brave. Why should I enumerate the details? All the unworthy he promoted and all the worthy he

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[326] Adontz (1970), 166: "It is well known how often religion is mentioned as the outstanding factor in the history of Armenia. Some scholars have even been willing to reconstruct the entire historical life of Armenia on this basis. This approach, inherited from our ancestors, is one of the most hackneyed ones in Armenian historiography, and it originated in the period following the disappearance of the *naxarar* pattern in the country. It is correct insofar as it reflects the situation of a later period; it is incorrect when archaized and applied to earlier times as well. As long as the *naxarar* system functioned in Armenia, the Church was important only insofar as it adapted itself to the *naxarar* pattern."

[327] Ełišē, trans. Thomson (1982), 76; Garsoïan (2004), 99. Ełišē, 46: զնախարարեանն բանսարկութեամբ արկ ընդ միմեանս, և յամենայն տան արար խռովութիւն: Եւ զայդ՝ ամենայն առնէր՝ թերևս զմիաբանութիւնն քակեսցէ.

demoted, until he had split father and son from each other."[328] This type of accusation surfaces frequently in Ełišē's work.

This disunity, so advantageous to Persians and Arabs alike, was unsurprisingly also explicitly attested concerning the Arab period in Tᶜovma Arcruni's history:[329]

> In this way, the unity of our land was destroyed little by little and men each thought evil of his friend and brother. And they sent letters and envoys, kept secret from one another, to the king. But among themselves they spread words of slander and no one, not even a single pair, remained in agreement. And they made their enemies very happy with the destruction of their unity.[330]

Tᶜovma specifically claims that the tax collector Apusētᶜ intended "by some deceitful trickery they might be able to dispossess them of each of their principalities. However, when he [Apusētᶜ] realized the indissoluble unity of the mutual pact between Ashot and Bagarat, he in no way revealed the wicked plans that they were plotting against them [the Armenians], but merely indicated that the reason for his coming concerned taxes and other administrative matters."[331] The unity of the *naxarar* families is consistently upheld as the only possibility to thwart the designs of the center. However, this unity was in fact fleeting at best. Soon after discussing this

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[328] Ełišē, trans. Thomson (1982), 70. Ełišē, 32: սկսաւ այնուհետև յառաջ կոչել զկրսերս յաւագաց և զանարգս ի պատուականաց և զգշետս ի գիտնոց և զանարիս ի քաջ արանց, և զի՞ մի մի թուիցեմ, այլ զամենայն զանարժանսն յառաջ մատուցանէր և զամենայն զարժանաւորսն յետս տանէր. Մինչև զհայր և զորդի թակէր ի միմեանց:

[329] Laurent/Canard (1980), 102.

[330] Tᶜovma Arcruni, 194: Այսպէս տակաւին ի բազումս քայքայեալ լինէր միաբանութիւն աշխարհիս, և իւրաքանչիւր ոք այլ զրնկերէ և զեղբօրէ իւրմէ ի չարիս խոկային: Եւ թուղթս և դեսպանս առ թագաւորն յղէին ծածուկս ի միմեանց. այլ և ընդ միմեանս արկանէին բանս քսութեան, և ոչ ոք մնայր զէթ երկու ի միասին. և յոյժ ուրախ առնէին զթշնամիսն ի քակել միաբանութեան իրերաց:

[331] Tᶜovma Arcruni, trans. Thomson (1985), 174 – 175. Tᶜovma, 170 and 172: Բայց նոքա ի մտի եղեալ էին, թերևս պատիր խաբէութեամբ կարասցեն բառնալ զնոսա յիւրաքանչիւր տերութենէ: Իսկ իբրև ծանուցաւ նմա անլոյծ միաբանութիւն ուխտի ընդ միմեանս Աշոտոյ և Բագարատայ՝ ոչ ինչ յայտնեաց զխորհուրդդ չարութեանն, զոր խորհեալ էին ի վերայ նոցա. Բայց միայն զհարկաց և զայլ հոգաբարձութենէ ծանուցանէր զպատճառ զալստեանն:

"mutual pact" among the Armenian *naxarar*s, Vasak Arcruni stood before the caliph with a list of accusations against Ašot.[332]

The caliphal representatives may have explicitly harnessed disunity and distrust by favoring one family over another. A specific example of this approach is the fate of the Mamikonian house, which never effectively recovered from its losses sustained during the Arab period. The Umayyads banished Grigor and Dawit[c] Mamikonian to Yemen, and eventually cut off Dawit[c]'s hands and feet before killing him. However, they promoted Ašot Bagratuni, who was alone among the *naxarar*s in hesitating during the rebellion of 750. Despite the fact that the Mamikonians had earned the distinction of being the fifth most important *naxarar* house in the Sasanian period, they tended to side with the Greeks, whereas the Bagratids usually supported the Persians. This general tendency continued into the Arab period. Consequently, the Mamikonians never recovered from Bagrewand, while the Bagratids rose to unexpected glory.

4.2.4   Hostages

Another strategy to keep the *naxarar*s in line with the expectations of the central government was the collection of hostages. While stories surface about prisoners of war in both periods, it is specifically the hostages taken, in times of peace or war, which lend a certain amount of control over the actions of the *naxarar*s.

Evidence of hostages taken under Sasanian hegemony is sketchy at best. H. Thopdschian discusses a passage in Sebēos as a suggestion that certain *naxarar*s were taken hostage to ensure the peacefulness of their relatives in Armenia. Sebēos relates:

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[332] T[c]ovma Arcruni, trans. Thomson (1985), 180.

At that time, messengers arrived with an official order to call them in their entirety [the *naxarar*s and troops in Persarmenia] to the royal court…And they arrived in Asorestan at the place of the royal court and they went before the king. Then he received them with joy, and with great pomp he exalted them with great honors. And he ordered to keep the greatest of *išxan*s at the royal court, to distribute to them salaries from the royal treasury, to give each his own house, and to call [them] to the royal supper every day. And he gave the order for their troops to remain in the area of Spahan, and to sustain them readily, entirely obligingly.[333]

Ełišē and Łazar Pᶜarpecᶜi instead tend to discuss priests and clergy as hostages, rather than *naxarar*s, although Pᶜarpecᶜi also includes *naxarar*s in Yazdkert's procession against the Kushans. However, Stepᶜannos Ôrbelean, admittedly a late source, explains the actions of the traitor Vasak by referring to his sons held hostage in Sasanian custody.[334] Additionally, Hovhan Mamikonian remembers the story of Armenians under Smbat, the son of Vahan Mamikonian, taking the wife and son of Vaxtang (the brother of the Sasanian emperor) hostage and demanding recompense for the cost of Persian army's advance through Armenia.[335]

Sebēos also discusses the significance of hostages to the activities of *naxarar*s during the period of the Arab incursions. For example, when Hamazasp Mamikonian allied himself with

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[333] Sebēos, 94: Յայնժամ եկին հասին պէշասպիկք հրովարտակաւք կոչել զնոսա միաբանութեամբ ի դուռն արքունի: Եւ այտքիկ են նախարարք և զաւրք, որ զնացին միաբանութեամբ հանդերձ իւրաքանչիւր զնդովք և դրաւշու ի դուռն թագաւորին Պարսից Խոսրովու, յամի վեցերորդի թագաւորութեան նորա. Առաջին՝ Գագիկ Մամիկոնեան որդի Մանուելի. երկրորդն՝ Պապ Բագրատունի որդի Աշոտայ ասպետի. երրորդն՝ Խոսրով Վահնունեաց տէր. չորրորդն՝ Վարդան Արծրունի. հինգերորդն՝ Մամակ Մամիկոնեան. վեցերորդն՝ Ստեփանոս Սիւնի. եւթներորդն՝ Կոտիտ Ամատունեաց տէր, և այլք ընդ նոսա ի նախարարաց: Եւ հասեալ նոցա յԱսորեստան ի տեղի արքունական տանն և յանդիման եղեն թագաւորին: Իսկ նա խնդութեամբ ընկալաւ զնոսա, և երևելի շքեղութեամբ մեծացոյց պատուովք. և զմեծամեծ իշխանսն հրամայէ պահել ի դրանն արքունի, կարգել նոցա ռոճիկս յարքունուստ՝ տալ ի տունս իւրաքանչիւր, և կոչել յամենայն աւուր յրնթրիս արքունի: Եւ զաւրաց նոցա հրաման տայր նստել ի Սպահան աշխարհի, և դարմանել զնոսա սիրով և ամենայն կամակարութեամբ:

[334] Stepᶜanos Orbelean, 101: Ընդ որ խոժոռեալ Վասակայ՝ վարաներ ի մեծի տրտմութեան, մի՝ զի բոց ծնողութեանն չեռոյց զփորոտիս նորա վասն որդւոցն որ կային անդ ի պատանդի. և խելացնորեալ ափշեցուցին զնա:

[335] Hovhan Mamikonean, 36 – 37.

Emperor Constans, the caliph had 1,775 hostages killed; this stayed the hand of Mušeł Mamikonian, since four of his sons were held hostage.[336] Łewond also mentions hostages twice: (1) Grigor Mamikonian and Smbat Bagratuni were taken hostage under Muᶜāwiya as a sign of the tributary status of Armīniya;[337] and (2) immediately before his death, al-Walīd released the sons of Smbat. Dasxurancᶜi specifically states the reasons for taking hostages: "And in this way the Arabs stormed against the regions of the North and East and they tormented the lords of the [noble] houses to hand over places of refuge and to take hostage their children and wives, so that they wouldn't rebel against them."[338]

Hostages were gathered from Armīniya in the Umayyad period, as well. Al-Balāḏurī links the collection of hostages to the burning of the churches of Naxčᶜawan and Xram, again with express purpose of subduing rebellion.[339]

The importance of hostages is also confirmed by Tᶜovma Arcruni, who claims that "the caliph with his counselors and all the Babylonian magnates irrevocably decided to remove the princes of Armenia from each one's property, so that their inheritance would become 'ours'."[340]

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[336] Sebēos, 175: Յայնժամ եւտես արքայն Իսմայելի, եթէ ի բաց կացին Հայք ի ծառայութենէ նոցա, զամենայն զպատանդսն, զոր տարեալ էին յերկրէն, ոզիս իբրն ՌՉՀԷ, սատակեցին զամենեսեան ի սուր սուսերի. և մնացորդքն սակաւք, թուով իբրն ԻԲ, որք ոչ դեպկեցան ի տեղւոյն, այն միայն ապրեցան: Իսկ Մուշեղ Մամիկոնէից տեր, վասն զի էին նորա չորս որդիք ի պատանդի առ Իսմայելացւոցն, վասն այնորիկ ոչ կարաց ի բաց կալ ի ծառայութենէ նոցա:

[337] Łewond, 33.

[338] Dasxurancᶜi, 180: Եւ այսպէս տաճիկք յարձակեցան ի կողմանս հիւսիսոյ և արևելից, և վտանգէին զտեարս տոհմից տալ ի ձեռս զտեղիս ապաւինութեան և պատանդս առնուլ զզաւակս և զկանայս` չապստամբելոյ ի նոցանէն:

[339] Al-Balāḏurī, 126: ولما كانت فتنة ابن الزبير انتفضت أرمينية وخالف أحرارها وأتباعهم فلما ولي محمد بن مروان من قبل أخيه عبد الملك أرمينية حاربهم فظفر بهم فقتل وسبى وغلب على البلاد, ثم وعد من بقي منهم أن يعرض لهم في الشرف فاجتمعوا لذلك في كنائس من عمل خلاط خوفهم Note that is copied فأغلقها عليهم ووكل بأبوابها ثم خوفهم, وفي تلك الغزاة سبيت أم يزيد بن أسيد من السيسجان وكانت بنت بطريقها وهي سنة الحريق؛ وذلك أن محمد بن مروان بعد هزيمة القوم بعث زياد بن حرقهم; compare to Ḫalīfa, 184: mistakenly and should read الجراح مولى عثمان بن عفان وهبيرة بن الأعرج الحضرمي, فحرقهم في كنائسهم وبيعهم وقراهم, وكان الحريق بالنَّشَوَى والبُسْفُرْجان.

[340] Tᶜovma Arcruni, trans. Thomson (1985), 182 – 183.

This approach sounds very similar to Sebēos's comment about deporting the *naxarar*s from Armenia. However, these *naxarar*s were taken to Sāmarrā', not resettled on another *t̲aǵr*, even though some of their followers, the common people, were dispersed through the Caliphate as laborers. Similarly, the captive *naxarar*s taken during Buǵā's campaign were delivered directly to the caliph in chains. This is perhaps another type of captive: these are prisoners being punished for disobedience to the state, rather than hostages held to ensure the cooperation of their families.

4.2.5   Overtaxation

Caliphal taxation policies in Armīniya were arguably the main source of Armenian frustration with Arab rule. As we saw earlier, Ter-Łewondyan even suggests that the heavy-handed tactics were designed specifically to keep the *naxarar*s in line with the expectations of the central government. Armenian historians frequently lamented the economic state of the land due to heavy taxation. Tax collectors, primary symbols of imperial power, were always the first casualties of unrest in the province. In fact, the discontent fostered by overtaxation is one of the primary themes in the national epic, Sasuncͨi Dawitͨ.

The terms of the treaty between Muͨāwiya and Tͨēodoros in 652 allowed for the collection of a very modest tax. The relevant passage in Sebēos is actually quite contentious: it claims that Arabs will not collect taxes for three years, after which Muͨāwiya agreed that Armenians would be allowed to pay "as much as you want."[341] M. Jinbashian points out that we should approach that comment skeptically, as hardly consistent with the concept of tributary

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[341] Sebēos: և ոչ առնում ի ձէնջ սակ զերեամ մի. ապա յայնժամ տաջիք երդմամբ, որչափի և դուք կամիջիք:

status. Instead, he suggests that Muᶜāwiya would not have signed a document written in Armenian and that we can assume that the original treaty was in Arabic. Assuming that the Armenian version therefore belies unfamiliarity with Arabic (?), Jinbashian reconstructs the passage as follows:

لا آخذ منكم خراجاً لمدة ثلاث سنوات بعدئذ تدفعون العفو بمقتضى صلحكم

and translates this as: "I will not take from you tribute for three years; then you shall pay according to your treaty the surplus." His rationale for this reconstruction rests upon *ḥadīṯ* that prohibit the taxation of the people beyond their capacity, and the *futūḥ* narratives for Iṣfahān and Ǧurǧān that stipulate taxation "according to their ability." Sebēos's translation of the treaty therefore merely misreads the Arabic term ᶜ*afw*, or surplus, and should therefore read "as much as you are able."[342] This, of course, assumes that the Arabic of the *futūḥ* narratives can be directly compared to Sebēos's seventh-century text.

The Arabic conquest narratives preserve some concept of tributary taxation: (1) al-Ṭabarī's treaty between Surāqa b. ᶜAmr and Šahrbarāz, the governor of Bāb al-Abwāb, on behalf of all Armenians promised freedom from taxation to those who served the Arab military and the payment of *ǧizya* to those who refused;[343] (2) al-Ṭabarī's treaty between Bukayr b. ᶜAbd Allāh and the people of Mūqān required the payment of *ǧizya*, a dinar for every adult;[344] (3) al-

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[342] Jinbashian (1977 – 1978).

[343] Al-Ṭabarī: هذا ما أعطى سُراقة بن عُمْرو عامل أمير المؤمنين عُمر بن الخطاب شهربراز وسكان أرمينية من الأمان, أعطاهم أمانا لأنفسهم وأموالهم وملتهم ألا يضاروا ولا ينتقضوا, وعلى أهل أرمينية والأبواب, الطراء منهم والتناء ومنحولهم فدخل معهم أن ينفروا لكل غارة, وينفذوا لكل أمر ناب أو لم يَنُب رآه الوالي صلاحاً, على أن توضع الجزاء عمن أجاب إلى ذلك إلا الحشر, والحشر عِوَضٌ من جزائهم ومن استُغني عنه منهم وقعد فعليه مثل ما على أهل أَذْربيجان من الجزاء والدلالة والنُزُل يوماً كاملاً, فإن حشروا وضع ذلك عنهم, وإن تركوا أخذوا به. شهد عبد الرحمان بن ربيعة, وسلمان بن ربيعة, وبكير بن عبد الله. وكتب مَرْضيّ بن مقرّن وشهد.

[344] Al-Ṭabarī, qtd. Ghazarian (1904), 158: هذا ما اعطى بكير بن عبد الله اهل موقان من جبال القبج الامان على اموالهم وانفسهم وملّتهم وسرائعهم على الجزية دينار عن كل حالم او قيمته والنصح ودلالة المسلم ونزل يومه وليلته ولهم الامان ما اقرّوا ونصحوا وعلينا الوفاء والله المستعان

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Balāḏurī and Yāqūt's treaty between Ḥabīb b. Maslama and the "Christians, Magis, and Jews of Dabīl" stipulated an unspecified amount of *ǧizya* and *ḫarāǧ*;[345] and (4) al-Balāḏurī and al-Ṭabarī's treaties between Ḥabīb b. Maslama and the people of Tiflīs require *ǧizya* in the amount of a dinar per household.[346]

However, the circumstances of post-conquest (seventh-century) Armenia were different from the caliphal province of Armīniya, as tax collectors emerged only after the tributary status of the province had shifted to direct control under an Arab governor. The only extant treaty between Armenians and Arabs purporting to be from the Umayyad period is between al-Ǧarrāḥ b. ʿAbd Allāh al-Ḥakamī and the people of Tiflīs, preserved in al-Balāḏurī's *Futūḥ al-Buldān* [Conquests of the Lands]. This treaty claims to uphold the agreement between Ḥabīb b. Maslama and the people of Tiflīs, while promising to retain the taxes at one hundred *dirham*s per annum on the vineyards and mills in the surrounding areas.[347]

فان تركوا ذلك واستبان منهم غِشّ فلا امان لهم الا ان يسلموا الغَشَشَة برُمَّتهم والا فهم متمالئون شهد الشَمّاخ بن ضَرار والرُسَارِس بن جُنادِب و حَمَلَة بن جُوَيّة وكتب سنة 21.

345 qtd. Ghazarian (1904), 162: هذا كتاب من حبيب بن مسلمة لنصارى اهل دبيل ومجوسها ويهودها شاهدهم وغائبهم انّى آمنتكم على انفسكم واموالكم وكنائسكم وبيعكم وسور مدينتكم فانتم آمنون وعلينا الوفاء لكم بالعهد ما وفيتم وادّيتم الجزية والخراج شهد الله وكفى به شهيداً وختم حبيب بن مسلمة.

346 Al-Balāḏurī qtd. Ghazarian (1904), 164: هذا كتاب من حبيب بن مسلمة لاهل طفليس من منجليس من جرزان القرمز بالامان على انفسهم وبيعهم وصوامعهم وصلواتهم ودينهم على اقرار بالصغار والجزية على كل اهل بيت دينار وليس لكم ان تجمعوا بين اهل البيوتات تخفيفاً للجزية ولا لئل ان نفرّق بينهم استكثاراً منها ولنا نصيحتكم وضِلعكم على اعداء الله ورسوله صلعم وقرى المسلم الحتاج ليلة بالمعروف من حلال طعام اهل الكتاب لئل وان انقُطع برجل من المسلمين عندكم فعليكم اداؤه الى ادنى فئة من المؤمنين الا ان يحال دونهم وان انبتم واقمتم الصلاة فاخواننا في الدين والا فالجزية عليكم وان عرض للمسلمين شغل عنكم فقهركم عدوّكم عدوّكم فغير ماخوذين بذلك ولا هو ناقض عهدكم هذا لكم وهذا عليكم شهد الله وملائكته وكفى بالله شهيداً

هذا كتاب من حبيب بن مسلمة لأهل تفليس من جرزان أرض And al-Ṭabarī qtd. Ghazarian (1904), 166: الهرمز, بالأمان على أنفسكم وأموالكم وصوامعكم وبيعكم وصلواتكم, على الإقرار بصغار الجزية, على كل أهل بيت دينار واف, ولنا نصحكم ونصركم على عدو الله وعدونا, وقرى المجتاز ليلة من حلال طعام أهل الكتاب وحلال شرابهم, وهداية الطريق في غير ما يُضَرّ فيه بأحد منكم. فإن أسلمتم وأقمتم الصلاة وآتيتم الزكاة, فإخواننا في الدين وموالينا, ومن تولى عن الله ورسوله وكتبه وحزبه فقد آذناكم بحرب على سواء إن الله لا يحب الخائنين. شهد عبد الرحمان بن خالد, والحجّاج, وعياض. وكتب رباح, وأشهد الله وملائكته والذين آمنوا وكفى بالله شهيداً.

347 Al-Balāḏurī, 124 – 5: وكتب الجراح بن عبد الله الحكمي لاهل تفليس كتاباً نسخته. بسم الله الرحمان الرحيم: هذا كتاب من الجراح بن عبد الله لاهل تفليس من رستاق منجليس من كورة جرزان اله اتوني بكتاب امان لهم من حبيب بن مسلمة على الاقرار بصغار الجزية وانه صالحهم على ارضين لهم وكروم وارحاء يقال لها واري, وسابينا من رستاق منجليس وعن طعام وديدونا من رستاق قحويط من جرزان على ان يؤدوا عن هده الارحاء والكروم في كل سنة مائة درهم بلا ثانية فانفذت لهم امانهم وصلحهم وامرت الايراد عليهم فمن قرئ عليه كتابي فلا يتعد ذلك فيهم ان شاء الله وكتب.

These treaties must be handled with some skepticism due to the historiographical debates about *topoi* in *futūḥ* literature, as well as the problematic assumption that seventh-century documents can reflect the historical reality of the later Arab period, when agents of the Caliphate assumed direct control over the province. Beyond these treaties, we see disjointed, sporadic comments about taxation in the Arabic sources: for example, Ibn al-Faqīh claims that taxes reached 2,033,985 *dirham*s per annum, while Ibn Ḫurradāḏbih records taxation at 4,000,000 *dirham*s. For the ꜥAbbāsid period, Ibn Ḫaldūn counts Armenian taxation at 13,000,000 *dirham*s; Ḫalīfa, 12,000,000; and Ibn Ḥawqal, 10,000,000. Additionally, Armenians paid the ꜥAbbāsids taxes in kind: Ibn Ḫaldūn and al-Ǧahšiyārī both preserve lists of goods sent as tribute, including fish, cloth, falcons, mules, and carpets.[348]

V. Nercessian and S. Melikꜥ-Baxšyan, both relying on H. Zoryan's "Arabneri harkayin kꜥałakꜥakanutꜥyunə avatakan Hayanstanum" [the taxation policy of the Arabs in feudal Armenia] (1927) and H. Nalbandyan's "Arabneri harkayin kꜥałakꜥakanutꜥyunə Hayastanum" [the taxation policy of the Arabs in Armenia] (1956), divide the taxation policies of the Arabs in Armīniya as follows: (1) the period of incursions up to the treaty between Tꜥēodoros and Muꜥāwiya; (2) Muꜥāwiya to ꜥAbd al-Malik; (3) ꜥAbd al-Malik to Ḥišām; (4) Ḥišām to the fall of the Umayyads; and (5) the early ꜥAbbāsid era. They claim that the Arabs were lax in their taxation policies because the Caliphate needed to avoid confrontation with the independent *naxarar*s and to ensure Armenian aid in maintaining the frontier. This situation changed immediately following the Marwānid reforms, as Samuēl Anecꜥi attests: the Arabs "took from each household four dirhams, three modii of sifted wheat, one hempen rope and one gauntlet. For priests, however, as

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[348] Ter-Łewondyan (1969a) = Ter-Łewondyan (1976e); Laurent/Canard (1980), 668 – 670; Nercessian (1988), 28 – 31.

from the *azat*s and the knights, it was ordered to levy no taxes."[349] Taxation became increasingly

heavy from the start of the Marwānid period until the dissolution of the ᶜAbbāsid Caliphate and

specific caliphs, such as Ḥišām, were known for their implementation of harsh policies.

It seems, therefore, that there exists no concrete evidence for direct relation between

taxation policies in the Sasanian and Sufyanid periods, since Arab control and taxation were so

relaxed during the seventh century, up to the period of Marwānid reform. Furthermore, there is

little evidence to argue that overtaxation was a deliberate policy to curb the power of the

*naxarar*s. It is possible that the Arabs did indeed increase taxation as they took over other

provinces, in line with M. Morony's argument that taxation increased in Iraq following the

transition from Sasanian to caliphal rule. Such an assertion is problematic in the case of

Armīniya, however, due to a lack of specific data about (1) the definition of Armīniya in the

Arabic accounts of tax collections; (2) the specific intake during the Sasanian period; and (3) the

discrepencies between different accounts of taxation during the Arab period. Again, the seventh

century of non-Sasanian, non-Arab rule in Armīniya makes it difficult to fashion direct

comparisons between the two periods as a question of continuity.

However, for purposes of this specific argument, it suffices to mention that this enmity

and perceived distrust of Arab rule as a result of taxation demonstrate a certain level of stability

from the Sasanian period. For example, Łewond decries Arab taxation at the start of the ᶜAbbāsid

period by complaining that the al-Manṣūr collected taxes even from the dead. The Arab governor

"caused destitution of impoverishment to the point of demanding taxes even from the dead. He

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[349] Nercessian (1988), 27; Melikᶜ-Baxšyan (1968), 147. Qtd. Samuēl Anecᶜi. 82: յամենայն տանէ առեալ Դ դրամ և Գ մոթ խորբալ՝ և ձիատոպրակ մի՝ և պարան մի մագէ՝ և ձեռնարար մի։ իսկ ի քահանայից՝ և յազատաց՝ և ի հեծելոց՝ ոչ հրամայեաց առնուլ զհարկն։

endangered the priests and officials of the sacred altar, abusing them with tortures and beating them with iron rods for them to declare the names of the dead and their families."[350]

This assertion is similar to an episode in Movsēs Xorenacᶜi's history. Xorenacᶜi claims that Bahram V appointed a Syrian prelate named Samuēl over Armenia in 432 and complains that "il adopta les habitudes de rapacité de Berquicho et meme les surpassa, extorquant les revenus des évêques morts ou vivants."[351] Of course, the incident demonstrates inconsistencies with Łewond's assertions about the ᶜAbbāsid period, but there are also certain similarities: (1) frustration with taxation policies; (2) overtaxation characterized by taxing the dead; and (3) the harassment of priests in particular. We cannot assume from this comparison that taxes were as harsh in the Arab period as under Sasanian rule, or that there was any sort of sustained continuity in taxation policies of the two empires. Rather, this demonstrates that the taxation policies of the Caliphate could be described in accordance with the Sasanian-era taxes. From the perspective of their Armenian subjects, the Persians and the Arabs espoused similar tactics in their demand for revenue.

Moving away from Armenian perception of Sasanian and Arab taxation, we see yet another aspect of Islamic emulation of Sasanian taxation policies: the use of clay or lead seals. There was a comparable practice in the Byzantine Empire, but this applied only to the poor and

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[350] Łewond, 158 – 9: Եւ տիրէ ընդ նորա Աբդլա, եւ առաքէ զեղբայր իւր զմիս Աբդլա շրջիլ ընդ ամենայն աշխարհս իւրոյ իշխանութեան: Որ նախ՝ ելեալ յաշխարհս Հայոց, բազում վշտոք եւ նեղութեամբք վտանգէր զամենեսին, և հասուցանէր ի չքաւորութիւն տնանկութեան մինչեւ պահանջել հարկս եւ ի մեռելոցն: Զամենայն բազմութիւն որբոցն եւ այրեաց չարալլուկ տառապեցուցանէր. Վտանգէր զքահանայս եւ զպաշտoնեայս աստուածային խորանին խոշտանգանoք եւ քրոք այպանութեան եւ զանիք ի յայտ ածել զանուանս վախճանելoցն եւ զրնտանիս նoցուն:

[351] Grousset (1984), 186.

to official envoys, who wore the seals as a form of official identification.[352] However, under the Sasanian state, taxpayers may have been expected to wear seals around their necks in a symbol of subservience. "The sealing of taxpayers thus was a form of degradation symbolizing the mortgage of their freedom to the state until the entire amount levied had been paid."[353] This practice continued under Islamic rule in Egypt and Iraq.[354] P. Soucek published the following examples of surviving tax seals from ᶜAbbāsid Egypt: [355]
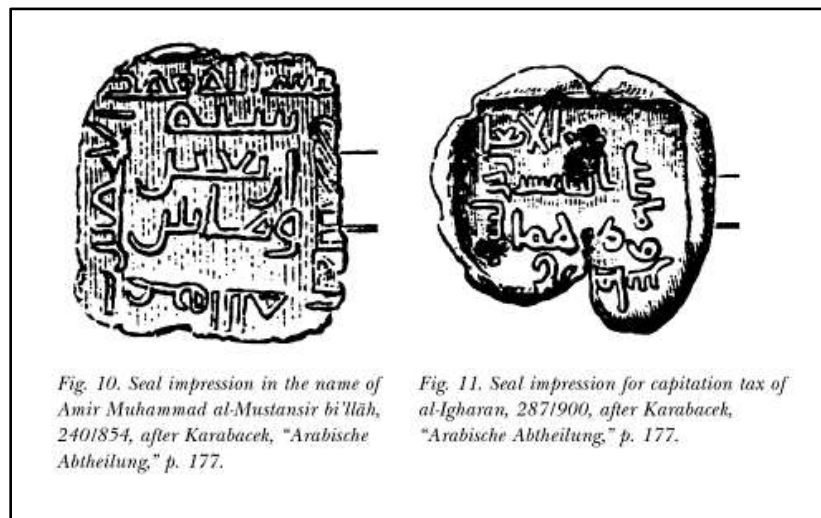
Fig. 10. Seal impression in the name of Amir Muhammad al-Mustansir bi'llāh, 240/854, after Karabacek, "Arabische Abtheilung," p. 177.

Fig. 11. Seal impression for capitation tax of al-Igharan, 287/900, after Karabacek, "Arabische Abtheilung," p. 177.

Image 5: ᶜAbbāsid tax seals from Egypt

Kᶜalantᶜaryan has demonstrated that the seals from the Sasanian period found in Armenia resemble those from the Arab period and argues that they "were directly connected with taxation",[356] though he did not produce tax seals comparable to the Egyptian examples above.

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[352] Soucek (2002) and Robinson (2005), 406–07.

[353] Morony (1984), 112.

[354] Soucek (2002), 252253; Morony (1984), 123.

[355] Soucek (2002), 252–53.

[356] Kᶜalantᶜaryan (1982), 62.

We have only literary evidence that the Arab taxcollectors also embraced this practice. Łewond claims that (1) during al-Manṣūr's rule taxpayers were required to wear lead seals around their necks[357] and that (2) in the time of Sulaymān b. Yazīd, Ibn Dokē charged Armenians for the lead seals, exacerbating the hardship of taxation for the local population.[358]

C. Robinson, however, argues that

> …although neck-sealing in general had a pre-Islamic tradition that was as long as it is unattractive, the practice of neck-sealing for the purpose of levying taxes on subject populations was apparently unprecedented in the pre-Islamic Near East… unlike the *technology* of sealing in general or the conventions of élite document sealing, both of which can be explained in terms of more or less simple continuity, neck-sealing for taxing purposes cannot.[359]

His analysis of the sources suggests that sealing is the remnant of a Persian tradition to keep track of prisoners and slaves. In this vein, we read in the *Chronicle of Zuqnīn* that Mūsā b. Muṣᶜab "appointed another agent to brand and stamp people on their neck like slaves."[360] Neck-sealing for taxation, therefore, is an Islamic adaptation of a preexisting practice designed to symbolize the subjugation of local popuations to caliphal rule.

Incidently, Robinson's argument corresponds well with M. Levy-Rubin's assessment of Sasanian antecedents for Islamic laws concerning *ḏimma*, specifically *ġiyār* or "distinguishing

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[357] Łewond, 159: Խոշտանգէր եւ զրնակիչս աշխարհիս բրնագոյն եւ դառն հարկապահանջութեամբ առնուլ ըստ գլխոյ բագում զուզէս արծաթոյ, եւ դնել կնիք կապարեայ յամենեցուն պարանոցս:

[358] Łewond, 201 – 202: Իսկ իբրեւ այն ի գլուխ ելանէր՝ վաղվաղակի այլ վտանգ չարեաց խորամանկեր որդին սատանայի, եւ տայր կնիք կապարեայ դնել յամենեցուն պարանոցսն. եւ առ մի մի կնիք պահանշեր զբագում զուզայս մինչն հասանել մարդկան ի յետին տնանկութիւն յանհակլկեր նեզութեանցն առ ի չարաշուք դահճէն:

[359] Robinson (2005), 405.

[360] Robinson (2005), 412. See Harrak, 236 no. 1: "Narrationes variae 336:3-5 [263]: In Amida, time of Mūsā son of Muṣᶜab. According to this source the tokens placed around the necks of people were meant to 'crush them, mock them, and insult them'."

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[357] Łewond, 159: Խոշտանգէր եւ զրնակիչս աշխարհիս բրնագոյն եւ դառն հարկապահանջութեամբ առնուլ ըստ գլխոյ բագում զուզէս արծաթոյ, եւ դնել կնիք կապարեայ յամենեցուն պարանոցս:

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[359] Robinson (2005), 405.

[360] Robinson (2005), 412. See Harrak, 236 no. 1: "Narrationes variae 336:3-5 [263]: In Amida, time of Mūsā son of Muṣᶜab. According to this source the tokens placed around the necks of people were meant to 'crush them, mock them, and insult them'."

marks." The Arab expectation that societal divisions be clearly visible is an inheritance of Sasanian cultural norms.[361] Here we see that Arab adaptation of Sasanian legacy was not simply a question of influence, but rather an innovative response to the needs and goals of the Muslim community and the Islamic state. The same may be said of the policy of Arabization of Armīniya.

4.2.6   Arabization of Armenia

The final, and possibly most effective, way to deal with the power of the *naxarar* families during the Arab period was quite innovative. While the Sasanians tried intermittently to Persianize Armenia, the Arab effort at wholesale reinvention of the local nobility involved the importation of Arab tribes into the area. This type of demographic shift was familiar from earlier periods, though not from Byzantine or Sasanian rule; the Arsacids gained power in part by the importation of Parthian families, such as the Kamsarakan and the Mamikonians, to support their claims to power.[362]

The effort to populate Armīniya with Arab tribes is, however, relatively unusual given that neither the Byzantines nor the Sasanians ever attempted any such program. It was the result of a number of factors, including:

(1) the importance of the area as a *ṯaġr* and thus the need to strengthen its connection to the center. The Caliphate required a certain number of troops in the area to defend the

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[361] Levy-Rubin (2011), 167: "The concept of *ghiyār* or "distinguishing marks" was in fact an established principle in Persian society, where "a visible and general *distinction*" had to be made between men of noble birth and common people with regard to horses, clothes, ornaments, houses and gardens, women and servants, drinking-places, sitting- and standing-places. The Muslims had therefore adopted concepts, values, and status symbols from Sasanian society, and used them as a means of establishing their own superiority."

[362] Laurent/Canard (1980), 101.

borders and to quell rebellion. The proximity of the Byzantine front explains why so many Arabs were settled in the west, around Lake Van and Qālīqalā; similarly, Arab tribes moved into Arrān to lend strength to the *ṯaġr* against the Ḥazars.[363]

(2) The weak backing available *in sito* for the Arab governor. This policy seems to have been initiated by the governors, not the caliphs, and the Arab immigrants tended to be from the same tribe as the governor.[364]

(3) The value of additional land provided to Arab tribes.[365]

(4) Caliphal interest in maintaining the economic profit of the province. [366]

By far the most valuable study on the movement of Arab tribes into Armenia is Ter-Łewondyan's *Arab Emirates in Bagratid Armenia* (1976). He links the demographic shift to (1) the emigration of *naxarar*s to Byzantine territory, despite Arab attempts to keep them in Armenia; (2) the need to keep the Armenian *naxarar*s in line, especially after the rebellions in 750 and 774–75; as well as (3) the importance of sustaining the frontier. However, it is worth noting that his examples of Armenian attempts at emigration are from the Umayyad period (early eighth century), despite the fact that he argues that "the current of [Arab] migrations began in the reign of Hārūn al-Rashīd (A.D. 786 – 809)."[367] This, combined with the fact that the Arabs at this time were clearly attempting to discourage emigration, hints that the impetus for Arab settlement was most importantly the maintenance of the frontier.

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[363] Ter-Łewondyan (1976c), 25 and 29; Nicol (1979), 85.

[364] Nicol (1979), 85.

[365] Nicol (1979), 86.

[366] Nicol (1979), 86.

[367] Ter-Łewondyan (1976c), 31.

Hārūn al-Rašīd's involvement is confirmed in al-Yaᶜqūbī's history, where it is noted that

Yamanīs were the majority in Armīniya before the ostikanate of Yūsuf b. Rāšid al-Sulamī:

> Rashīd appointed (as *ostikan*) Yūsuf b. Rāshid al-Sulamī in place of Khuzayma b. Khāzim. He transplanted a mass of Nizārīs to this land, and (until then) the Yemenites had formed a majority in Armīniya, but in the days of Yūsuf, the Nizārīs increased in number. Then he (Hārūn al-Rashīd) named Yazīd b. Mazyad b. Zā'ida al-Shaybānī, and he brought from every side so many of the Rabīᶜa that they now form a majority, and he controlled the land so strictly that no one dared move in it. After him came ᶜAbd al-Kabīr b. ᶜAbd al-Ḥamīd who was from the house of Zayd b. al-Khaṭṭāb al-ᶜAdawī, whose home was Ḥarrān. He came with a multitude of men from the Diyār Muḍar, stayed only four months and left.[368]

Several Arab governors of Armīniya held the *nisba* al-Sulamī, indicating their belonging to the

Sulaym tribe, a subgroup of the Muḍar tribe: Yazīd b. Usayd (752 – 754, 759 – 770, 775 – 780),

Yūsuf b. Rāšid (787), Ḫālid b. Yazīd b. Usayd (794), Aḥmad b. Yazīd b. Usayd (796 – 797),

ᶜAbd Allāh b. Aḥmad b. Yazīd (825 – 826, 829).[369] The Sulaym family was directly linked to the

wars against Byzantium: one of the earliest conquerors of Armīniya was Ṣafwān b. al-Muᶜaṭṭal

al-Sulamī and Yaqẓān b. ᶜAbd al-ᶜAᶜlā al-Sulamī fought in campaigns against the Greeks.[370]

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[368] Al-Yaᶜqūbī (*Ṭārīḫ*), trans. Ter-Łewondyan (1976c), 31 with the omission of a repetitive "now" (a typo). It also corrects Rashīd to Rāshid, Khazim to Khāzim, Zaᶜīda to Zā'ida, al-Khaṭṭāb to al-Khaṭṭāb, Rabᶜīa to Rabīᶜa, and al-Adawī to al-ᶜAdawī. Presumably these are simply evidence of the difficulty of translating a text from Armenian to English without recourse to the original Arabic. However, this passage is also incorrectly cited in 158 no. 66. He lists Yaᶜḳūbī, 515 and his works cited only includes BGA volume VII (*Kitāb al-Buldān*), whereas this quote is actually from al-Yaᶜqūbī's history. The citation is correct for de Goeje's edition of this work, except that it continues onto p. 516. See also Laurent/Canard, 481. Al-Yaᶜqūbī (*Ṭārīḫ*), II 299: ثم ولّى الرشيد يوسف بن راشد السلميّ مكان خزيمة بن خازم, فنقل الى بلد جماعة من النزاريّة, وكان الغالب على أرمينية اليمانيّة, فكثرت النزاريّة في أيام يوسف, ثمّ ولّى يزيد بن مزيد بن زائدة الشيبانيّ, فنقل اليها ربيعة من كل ناحية حتى هم اليوم الغالبون عليها, وضبط البلد أشدّ ضبطٍ حتى لم يكن بهّ أحد يتحرّك, ثم ولّى عبد الكبير بن عبد الحميد من ولْد زيد بن الخطاب العدويّ, وكان منزله حرّان, فصار إليها في جماعة من أهل ديار مضر, ولم يقم إلّا أربعة أشهر حتى صرف.

[369] Ter-Łewondyan (1976c), 30.

[370] Ter-Łewondyan (1976c), 30. Note that Ter-Łewondyan's text reads "The son of this ᶜAbd-Allāh, Yaẓkān al-Sulamī, participated in the Byzantine was and was wounded in the battle fought before Zibaṭra (Sozopetra)." However, this is an incorrect reading of his name. Ter-Łewondyan cites al-Balāḏurī, which reads Yaqẓān b. ᶜAbd al-ᶜAᶜlā, not Yaẓkān b. ᶜAbd Allāh. Al-Balāḏurī, 119: وقدم وثد طاغية الروم في سنة عشر ومائتين يسال الصلح فلم يجبه اليه وكتب الى عمال الثغور فساحوا في بلاد الروم فأكثروا فيها القتل ودوخوها وظفروا ظفراً حسناً الا أن يقظان بن عبد الأعلى بن أحمد بن يزيد بن أسيد السلمي أصيب...

Arabs had lived and traded in and around Armenia before the rise of Islam, but the tribal constistuents of the Arab population in Northern Mesopotamia changed during the early days of the Islamic conquest period: Taġlibīs in Mawṣil (Diyār Rabīᶜa), Bakr in Amida (Diyār Bakr), Qays in Syrian Mesopotamia (Diyār Muḍar). The introduction of Arab tribes from neighboring lands into Armīniya did not entail as large a breach of tradition as might be assumed: the Arabs tended to assimilate to Armenian life, even marrying into *naxarar* families.[371] The movement of Arab tribes into Armīniya, linked to the choice of Arab governor, demonstrates not only that the governors' families and tribes were concretely linked to stories of bravery on the frontier (i.e. the Sulaym clan), but also that there were direct and significant links between the Arab ruling families in Armīniya and Mesopotamia (i.e. the Šaybānī clan). Thus the Arabization of Armīniya was actually a major factor in its Syriacization.[372]

4.3   The Syrian / Mesopotamian Element

In other chapters of this dissertation, we see three main patterns emerge: (1) the defining aspect of the *ṯaġr* against Byzantium and the Ḫazars in the Arb conceptualizaion of the province, in which (2) Sasanian antecedents in the formation of Arab Armīniya (both geographically and ideologically) are pivotal; and, finally (3) the sectarian milieu, most especially relations between Armenians, Syriac-speaking Christians, Persians, and Arabs, played a formative role in passing on information about the Sasanian era.

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[371] Ter-Łewondyan (1976c), 46: "The lands in which the Arab tribes had settled had already entered into the phase of feudal development for some centuries, consequently the Arabs of necessity not only influenced, but to a greater degree, were themselves influenced by the institutions of the conquered lands." This should be considered in light of Greenwood's findings about the similarities of eighth-century Arabic inscriptions in Armīniya and their Armenian counterparts. See Greenwood (2004), 77.

[372] I am using Grousset's term here ("syriacisation"), not necessarily in the way that he intended it, but in an extended definition to mean not only the Syriac-speaking Christians, but with the population of Mesopotamia and Northern Syria as a whole.

Thus far this chapter has attempted to demonstrate that the perception and responsibilities of local authority are an adaptive response to the Sasanian administrative norms in pre-Islamic Armīniya. Despite the introduction of new policies, caliphal administration also shows some measure of similarity to Sasanian strategies in dealing with local powers. The final point, the importance of the sectarian milieu, is more elusive. After all, much of the information about authority in Armīniya is very specific to this province: the *Išxan Hayoc^c* and the *naxarar*s are not directly comparable to the political situation in other provinces, such as Northern Mesopotamia.

There are no neat indicators that Arab involvement with the *naxarar*s was informed by discussion with Syrians or Persians; however, it is eminently clear that there existed close ties between the ruling élites in Armīniya and both Mesopotamia and Northern Syria throughout both the Sasanian and the Arab periods. This relationship helps explain the dissimilarity between Arab and Armenian conceptualization of Armīniya, the simultaneous rapprochement of Armenians with the Jacobite Church, and the familiarity of Islamic geographers, historians, and exegetes with trends in Syriac literature concerning Armenia.

In the Sasanian, Byzantine, and Arab periods, geographers were unable to demarcate the southern borders of Armenia clearly and uniformly. Procopius mentioned that "some" call Armenia "the land as far as the city of Amida."[373] Since some southern Armenian territories, such as Ałjnik^c and Korčayk^c, were incorporated into the Arab province of Mesopotamia, Ter-Łewondyan concludes that "the conquest of Upper Mesopotamia in fact marked the beginning of the conquest of Greater Armenia itself."[374] This ambiguous distinction between Armīniya and Northern Mesopotamia is maintained even into the later Arab period, as Ibn Ḥawqal notes

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[373] Dewing (1914), 151 – 153. Procopius, I 150 – 153.

[374] Ter-Łewondyan (1976c), 25.

similar hesitancy in defining the borders: "Most of the ꜥulamā in the borders (ḥudūd) of the regions see Miyāfāriqīn as part of Armīniya, but a few consider it part of the province of al-Ğazīra. It is to the east of the Tigris, two stages from it: for that reason, it is reckoned in Armīniya."[375]

This lack of a distinct border between Armīniya and Mesopotamia is also visible in the marginalia of a Syriac manuscript. This describes the governorship of Muḥammad b. Marwān in Mesopotamia, noting that Armīniya was betrayed into his hands in A.G. 1002. The note remarks: "Armenia is used here to denote the region of Akhlat and of Mayperqat, the mountains of Sanason (i.e. Sason or Sasun) and Arzanene {Syr. ꜥRZWN} and all of the cities of that region."[376]

4.3.1 Armenian ties to Asorestan in the Sasanian Period

There were certainly close ties between Armenia, Northern Syria, and Mesopotamia in the Sasanian period, as has been evidenced by the relationship between the Armenian and Syriac Churches. Armenian churches began to adopt some elements of Syrian architecture,[377] possibly as a result of traveling architects or artisans reaching between these provinces. As an example, C. Maranci has argued that the architecture of cathedral of Zwartꜥnocꜥ is directly comparable to other Syro-Mesopotamian aisled tetraconche churches of the fifth and sixth centuries, including

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[375] Ibn Ḥawqal, 344: أكثر العلماء بحدود النواحى يرون أنّ ميافارقين من ارمينية وقوم يعدّونها من أعمال الجزيرة وهي من شرقىّ دجلة وعلى مرحلتين منها فلذلك تحسب من ارمينية.

[376] Palmer (1993), 205 no. 510.

[377] Macler (1920), despite the promising title ("L'Architecture arménienne dans ses rapports avec l'art syrien"), is not particularly helpful for our period. Kalantaryan (1996), 66 notes that "Les relations architecturales arméno-syriennes n'ont jamais encore fait l'objet d'une étude spéciale. La seule exception est l'article consacré à cette question par A. L. JACOBSON (1976, 192 – 206)."

those at Bostra, Rusafa, Seleucia-Pieria, Apamea, and Amida.[378] K[c]alant[c]aryan contends that trade between the provinces was brisk, based on the discovery of glass vessels from Northern Syria or Mesopotamia and seals with presumably Syriac inscriptions dating from the late Sasanian period, which were discovered in Dwin.[379]

Furthermore, in his effort to create an Armenian alphabet, Mesrop Maštoc[c] visited Edessa, a location that would subsequently become "an ideal destination for Armenian scholars to translate a substantial body of literature into Armenian" from the fifth through the seventh centuries.[380]

Additionally, Sebēos frequently notes that the *naxarar*s traveled to Asorestan. We saw above the passage in which the *naxarar* hostages went to Asorestan; shortly thereafter, Sebēos confirms that *išxan*s of the Armenian *naxarar*s were in Asorestan with the Persian king.[381] The connection of the *naxarar*s to Asorestan is quite clearly the result of their relation to the Sasanian court.

While the significance of the Persian element in medieval Armenian political and cultural life has been underestimated at times, recent studies—most notably those contributed by N. Garsoïan, J. Russell, and S. Rapp—have endeavored to demonstrate Armenian engagement with the Sasanian world through art historical and literary analysis.[382] N. Garsoïan describes the cultural relationship between Armenia and the Sasanian realm by comparing pre-Islamic Persian

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[378] Maranci (forthcoming).

[379] K[c]alant[c]aryan (1982) , 67 and (1996). 107.

[380] Greenwood (2008),

[381] Sebēos, 95: Եւ թագաւորին չու արարեալ յԱսորեստան՝ հասանէր ի բուն կայեանս իւրոյ արքունականս, և իշխանք նախարարացն Հայոց ընդ նմա:

[382] Garsoïan (1997); Garsoïan (1994); Rapp (forthcoming).

material culture to contemporary Armenian texts, isolating themes and specific markers of cultural familiarity between the two societies. For example, she compares a Sasanian sculpture (see below) to the written evidence available from the *Epic Histories* of P^cawstos Buzand: "Le roi Pap, la coupe de joie à la main, était étendu sur la gauche s'appuyant sur son coude et tenant la coupe d'or à la main, tandis que sa main droite reposait sur la garde du poignard attaché à sa cuisse droite."[383]

Image 6 : Sasanian sculpture

This is just one of many examples that Garsoïan produces to support the direct link between Armenian literature and Persian art.

This connection between Armenia and Asorestan was officially, if rarely, recognized in Byzantine governance with Heraclius' elevation of Dawit^c Sahaṛuni to the position of *sparapet*

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[383] Garsoïan (1997), 20.

Hayoc^c ew Asorwoc^c [sparapet of the Armenian and Syrians], The inscription at Mren, dated between January 638 and February 641, reads:

1. [---] ՈՐԴԻ ՀԵՐԱԿՂԻ ԲԱՐԵՅԱՂԹՈՂ ԹԱԳԱԻՈՐԻ ՅԻՇԽԱՆՈՒԹԵ[ԱՆ] [---] [Ա]ՄԵՆԱԳՈՎ ՊԱՏՐԿԻ ԿՈՒՐԱՊԱՂԱ[Տ]Ի [Ե]Ի ՄՊԱՐԱ[ՊԵ]

2. [ՏԻ ՀԱՅ]ՈՑ ԵԻ ԱՍՈՐԻՈՑ ԵԻ ՅԵՊԻՍԿՈՊՈՍՈՒԹԵԱՆ[.] ՍՐ[.]Ա [---][ԹԵ]ՈՎՓԻՂՈՍԻ ԵԻ Ի ՏԱՆՈՒՏԵՐՈՒԹԵԱՆ ՆԵՐՍԵ[ՀԻ]

3. [ՇԻՐԱ]ԿԱՅ ԵԻ ԱՇԱՐՈՒՆԵԱՅ ՏԵԱՌՆ ՇԻՆԵՅԱԻ ՍՈՒՐԲ ԵԿԵՂԵՅ[-ԻՍ ԵԻ ԲԱՐԵԽԱԻՍ]ՈՒԹԻՒՆ ԿԱՄՍԱՐԱԿԱՆԵԱՅ ԵԻ ՄՐԵՆՈՅ ԵԻ ԱՍԵՐ[...]

    [---] of the victorious king Heraclius, in the office of prince [---] of the all-praiseworthy *patrik, kourapałat,* and *sparapet* [of Armenia] and Syria and in the office of bishop of [---] [T^ce]ovp^ciłos and in the office of *tanutēr* of Nerseh lord of [Šira]k and Ašarunik^c, this holy church was built [for the intercession] of the Kamsarakank^c and Mren and Aser[…][384]

Image 7: The Inscription at Mren

4.3.2 Mesopotamia, Northern Syria, and Armīniya in the Arab Period

There is evidence that the economic and religious ties between Northern Syria, Mesopotamia, and Armīniya continued during the Arab period. The project of union with the Jacobite Church and important figures such as Nonnus of Nisibis will be briefly discussed in Chapter 5. The *Chronicle of Zuqnīn* attests to the close relationship between the two provinces: as famine

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[384] Greenwood (2004), photo on p. 83, transcription on p. 83. See also p. 72: "The extension of this authority beyond the boundaries of Armenia into Syria is unprecedented. It implies that Heraclius was prepared to make remarkable concessions in his efforts to forge an effective opposition to the Arab invasions after the fall of Syria, one in which Armenian military resources had a leading role to play."

overtook Armenia, refugees poured into Northern Syria in search of sustenance.[385] *Fulūs* and seals from Northern Syria discovered in Dabīl demonstrate that the local economies were closely linked.[386] Diyār Bakr had especially close ties with Armīniya, as Amida was located along trade routes that traversed Armīniya; the city even had a gate called *bāb al-arman*.[387]

As Ter-Łewdonyan notes, "Upper Mesopotamia, or al-<u>D</u>jazira (*sic*), 'the Island,' as the Arabs called it, played a decisive rôle in the development of Armenian political life in the Arab period."[388] The political relation between the two provinces is demonstrated by the links between the Arab rulers in each province, most especially by the appointment of Šaybānī amīrs as governors over Armīniya. The Šaybānī were a subgroup of the Bakr tribe that ruled over and gave its name to Diyār Bakr. Several members of this family served as governor in Armīniya: Yazīd b. Mazyad b. Za'ida (787 – 801), Muḥammad b. Yazīd b. Mazyad (802 – 803), Asad b. Yazīd b. Mazyad (809 – 811), Ḫālid b. Yazīd b. Mazyad (813 – 845), Muḥammad b. Ḫālid b. Yazīd (845 – 878). Even the idea of separating these provinces during this period is problematic, given that they were ruled by the same family. Interestingly, in the Bagratid period, the descendents of the Šaybān, the Šarvān-Šahs, dropped their claims to Arab lineage, choosing instead to claim legitimacy based on the tribe's ties to Sasanian glory.[389] This indicates that the region's Persian past retained its significance long after the Arab period in Armīniya.

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[385] Harrak, 188.

[386] Mušełyan (1983).

[387] Ter-Łewondyan (1976c), 27.

[388] Ter-Łewondyan (1976c), 25.

[389] Bosworth (1973), 60.

4.4   Conclusion

The introduction of Arab tribes into Armīniya was a new tactic for dealing with local powers,

dictated by the need to maintain the frontiers. M. Morony contends that early Arab governance in

the Near East was an innovative mix of pre-existing Byzantine and Sasanian administrative

norms and the developing theories of governance based on Islamic beliefs and pre-Islamic

Arabian politics. To a large extent, Morony's conclusions about Islamic rule in Iraq hold true for

the study of Armīniya, despite the fact that these two provinces were in remarkably different

positions *vis-à-vis* the center: it is possible to ascertain various strains of influence in dealing

with local authorities in Armīniya. This includes the vestiges of Greek governance in the North,

such as the position of *Išxan Hayoc^c,* and newly-introduced policies that reflect specific

circumstances of Arab rule, such as the importation of Arab tribes.

There are several markers of sustained continuity with the norms of the Sasanian period,

including (1) the local administrative positions, especially the *marzpan*; (2) the relative

autonomy of the *naxarar*s, first under Armenian *marzpan*s, and then with the position of the

Išxan Hayoc^c; (3) some similar policies for dealing with the local *naxarar*s; and (4) the close

relationship between the ruling élites in Armīniya and Mesopotamia. These concrete examples of

Arab adaptation of Sasanian policies and norms of governance must be seen in light of Armenian

perceptions of Arab rule as reminiscent of the Persian period: here we may include the

similarities between T^covma Arcruni and Ełišē, as well as other examples of literary borrowing

between Armenian historians, such as "taxing the dead." In addition, we can refer to the

recurrent trope of Sasanian elements in Arabic literature about Armīniya from Chapter 2, the

maintenance of Sasanian administrative models from Chapter 3, and Arab policies towards the

Armenian Church, as we will see in Chapter 6. These points work together to demonstrate that

the memory of the Sasanian period reverberated Arab conceptualization of Armīniya during the Umayyad and early ᶜAbbāsid periods. This does not imply that Byzantine rule was inconsequential or that Arab governance was fully dependent upon Sasanian antecedents. Rather, this demonstrates that the Sasanian element played an integral role in the formulation of Umayyad and early ᶜAbbāsid conceptualization of the North.

Chapter 5: Perceived threats to the Armenian Church

"Je ne passerai pas l'Azat pour aller manger du pain cuit au four et boire de l'eau chaude."

Movsēs Ełiawardec^ci, Catholicos of Armenia (574 – 604) [390]

The status of Armīniya as a _t̠aġr_ between Christian Byzantium and the Caliphate required that

Arab and Persian authors of the ^cAbbāsid period discuss the province as relevant to the Islamic

world. The ensuing process of Islamization of Armīniya was, as we saw in Chapter 2, mainly a

literary process and did not include any concerted effort to convert the local Christian

populations. In fact, caliphal policy, drawing on Sasanian antecedents, favored the Armenian

Church as an alternative to Chalcedonianism, which was strongly associated with the Byzantine

state. Armenian sources demonstrate a sustained hostility against heresies (notably Greek

Christianity and Paulicianism) during this period, which expressed itself in part as a

rapprochement with the Syriac Church, but they rarely engage Islam as a religious threat.

Tensions between Christians and Muslims in Armīniya tended to be linked to political issues or

taxation policies, rather than religious discrimination or forced conversions.

This chapter reevaluates the threats to the Armenian Church during the Arab period as

outlined in the Armenian sources by outlining (1) Armenian responses to Islam; (2) the

continued threat of Chalcedonianism; and (3) the heretical sects (Paulicians and T^condrakians)

wide-spread in Armīniya at this time. It argues that Armenian works demonstrate a sustained

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[390] Zekiyan (1987), 164; _Narratio_, 40.

preoccupation with challenges stemming from the pre-Islamic period, such as Chalcedonianism and heresy, but little fear of Islam as a religious threat.

5.1   Armenian Responses to Islam

Many Armenian sources lament the position of the Church during the Arab period. Still, the fact remains that Armīniya was one of the few provinces of the Caliphate ultimately remain Christian. Although relations between the Armenian Apostolic Church and the Caliphate were frequently strained and stories of martyrs and forced conversions to Islam do exist, there was rarely, if ever, a concerted attempt by the Muslim administration to persecute the Church during the Arab period.

The lamentations about the state of the Church could in some ways be understood on the basis of the general historiographical position: Armenian authors were Christian clergy, who expected history to unfold in a particular way. They frequently struggle to explain how and why the military defeat by Muslims of a Christian country could possibly agree with a biblical understanding of the flow of history. For Sebēos and Łewond, the only acceptable explanation was that the triumph of Islam fit into God's plan.[391] The earliest Armenian responses to Islam did not consider it a religious threat. Instead, Armenians struggled with the religious implications of the political defeat of Christendom. The triumph of Islam was therefore depicted as the will of God, either because it fulfilled biblical prophecy or because it was punishment for the sins of the Christians.

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[391] Cf: Greenwood (2002), 376 and Mahé (1992), 132.

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Nearly every work on Armenian historiography places special weight on the role of religion in shaping the perspective and interpretations of medieval authors. The Bible not only influenced the style of historical writing, it also furnished Armenians with a reason to transcribe history: namely, to immortalize the history of a Christian nation in the same way as the Bible recorded the history of the Chosen People of Israel. When Armenia came under the rule of a Muslim power, the historians struggled to rationalize their loss and to speculate on the legitimacy of Islamic power in view of their understanding of biblical prophecy.[392]

Łewond mentions the fulfillment of prophecy from the book of Amos; Sebēos from Jeremiah and Daniel; and Tᶜovma Arcruni from Jeremiah, Isaiah and Zephaniah. The most illustrative example is the association of the spread of Islam with the fourth beast of Daniel. Sebēos lists the beasts: (1) Byzantium; (2) Sasanian; (3) Gog and Magog. "This fourth [beast] rose from the south and is the kingdom of the Ishmaelites. Like the archangel explained: "The fourth beast will be a fourth kingdom, which will be greater than all of the kingdoms and it will eat the entire earth."[393]

This example offers a plausible explanation for the success of Islamic expansion and also acts as a harbinger for the eschaton. The fourth beast was traditionally associated with Byzantium, as is evidenced by Ps. Methodius; however, Sebēos's interpretation caught on and

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[392] Mahé (1992), 134.

[393] Sebēos, 142: «Իսկ գազանն չորրորդ ահեղ և զարմանալի, և ժանիք նորա երկաթիք, և մագիլք նորա պղնձիք. Ուտէր և մանրէր և զմնացուածան առ ոտն կոտորէր»: Այս չորս, յարուցեալ ի Հարաւոյ կողմանէ՝ Իսմայելեան թագաւորութիւնն. Որպէս հրեշտակապետն մեկնեաց, եթէ «Գազանն չորրորդ թագաւորութիւն չորրորդ կացցէ, որ առաւել իցէ քան զամենայն թագաւորութիւնս, և կերիցէ զամենայն երկիր»: «Եւ Ժ եղջիւրք՝ Ժ թագաւորք յարիցեն, և զկնի նորա յարիցէ այլ՝ որ առաւել է չարեաւք քան զամենայն առաջինսն»: Cf: Sebēos, 161 – 162.

appears again in the Syriac Edessene fragment of Ps. Methodius and the Armenian *Vision of Enoch*.[394]

We also see from examples in the Armenian sources that Islam was considered a divine response to the sins of the Christians. For example, Dasxuranc^ci describes the expeditions under Buġā by claiming that "at the end of the year 300 of the Armenian Era, the believing princes of the Armenians and the Albanians began paying amends for their sins."[395] Similarly, Łewond sees the Arab incursions as the result of Christian sin: "Since then the Lord woke the spirit of evil men in order to avenge through them against the Christians, who sinned before the Lord our God."[396] The attribution of Islamic success to Christian sin is common, most notably in Syriac sources such as Ps. Methodius, John bar Penkaye, and the *Khuzistan Chronicle*.[397] Military defeat due to moral failure is a common enough trope from the pre-Islamic period, as well.[398]

These sources consider military defeat or victory to be dependent upon the involvement of God. The Armenian sources are frequently quite certain that Armenian forces are aided by divine intervention. Łewond states that "as we heard from the enemies, they had among their [Armenian] fighters a heavenly multitude, which appeared to the enemies as corporeal form."[399]

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[394] Hoyland (2007), 534.

[395] Dasxuranc^ci, 332. Speaking of the campaigns under Buġā in 852/3: Եւ ի լնուլն երրորդ հարիւր թուոյ Հայոց՝ լցան սահմանեալ մեղացն տուգանք հաւատացեալ իշխանացն Հայոց և Աղուանից

[396] Łewond, 20: յայնմհետէ զարթոյց Տէր զհոգի արանց չարաց զի առնէ նոքօք զվրէժխնդրութիւն յազգէն Քրիստոնէից, որք մեղաքն առաջի Տեառն Աստուծոյ մերոյ:

[397] Hoyland (2007), 534. See also Reinink (2003), 167.

[398] See Heraclius' speech to the Persians, in Sebēos, 122: Կարող է Աստուած, եթէ կամի, ցամաքեցուցանել զսա առաջի ձեր. Բայց զգուշ լերուք՝ զուցէ ոչ հաճեցի Աստուած և խնդրեսցէ ի ձէնջ զվրէժ անդունդք ծովուս: Քանզի ոչ եթէ վասն աստուածպաշտութեան ձերոյ ետ ձեզ յաղթութիւն, այլ վասն մերոյ անաւրէնութեան. Մեղք մեր արարին զայս, և ոչ թէ քաջութիւն ձեր:

[399] Łewond, 183: Զի որպէս ուսաք ի նոյն ինքն ի թշնամեացն, ունէին, ասէ, ընդ ինքեանս մարտակից զհրեշտակականն բազմութիւնս որ մարմնական տեսլեամբ երևեալ թշնամեացն ; for a similar passage, see

Many Armenian accounts echo the same perception that their forces are beneficiaries of divine assistance.

Ironically, divine aid also came to the Arabs.[400] This principle is clearly explained in Łewond's text: "He [the Byzantine emperor] said [to the caliph]: one cannot triumph by one's self; rather, [victory comes] to whomever God grants it. For God can give your forces to my forces as food....But you do what you've promised to do. And whatever is the pleasure and will of God, let it be done."[401] Furthermore, Łewond relates the story that Maslama b. ʿAbd al-Malik, after his failed attempt to take Constantinople, put up his weapons in resignation with the comment "I couldn't fight God!"[402] Divine aid in combat was the implication of highly charged political rhetoric of both the Byzantine and the Sasanian governments.

Tʿovma Arcruni, 232 and 234: Բայց ոչ միայն քաջք Հայոց նահատակեցան ի մեծ պատերազմին այլ և անմարմին զօրք երկնաւորք մարտակից եղեն զնդին Հայոց. Զի մինչ ընդխռնեցաւ պատերազմն և դեմ առ դեմ ճակատեին՝ յանկարծակի այր մի ի նմանութիւն լուսոյ եկն եկաց ի մեջ ռազմի ճակատուն, արկեալ զիւրն պատմուճան լուսակիցն փայլեալ իբրն զարուսեակ, և յաջոյ ձեռինն ունէր սուսեր, և ի ճախոյն՝ բուրուառ լի խնկով՝ և ինքն կայր հեծեալ ի վերայ սպիտակ ձիոյ, և զանէր զծուխն ընդդեմ թշնամեացն, և քաղցր, որ արկանէր զծուխն զերեսօք նոցա. և ի սաստկանալ ծխոյն զօրանային զունդքն Հայոց, և ի նուազելն փոքր մի ոգի առնուին ի թշնամեացն:

[400] Łewond, 33: Եւ յայնմհետէ լքաւ սիրտ արքային Յունաց. Զի գիտաց թէ՝ ի Տեառնէ է խոտորումն իշխանութեան նորա. Եւ ոչ եւս յաւել ելանել ի վերայ Իսմայելի:

[401] Łewond, 190: ոչ է, ասէ, զյաղթութիւն մարդկան ստանալ անձամբ. այլ որոց պարգեւէ Աստուած. քանզի կարող է Աստուած տալ զգօրսդ քո կերակուր զօրաց իմոց ըստ առակի մանանխոյն զոր յղեցեր: Այլ դու զոր ինչ խոստացար առնել՝ արասցես, եւ որ ինչ հաճոյք են կամաց Աստուծոյ՝ կատարեսցին: The section omitted in the translation above (the mustard seeds), refers to the caliph's comparison of his innumerable troops to seeds. Łazar Pʿarpecʿi, 294: Եւ դարձեալ զամենայադգ օգնութիւնն Աստուծոյ յիշելով՝ ասէին, թէ «Ոչ է յաղթութիւն ի բազումս եւ ի սակաւս, այլ ի վերին կշռողութեան ձեռնն...»

[402] Łewond. 143: Իսկ նորա ամօթով մեծաւ կորագլուխ եղեալ յանդիման լիներ, եւ ի նոցանէ բազում կշտամբանօք կշտամբէր. Եւ ոչ ինչ աւելի պատասխանի առնէր, բայց զայն եւ եթ ասէ «ոչ կարէի ընդ Աստուծոյ կռուել»: Եւ լետ այսորիկ գնաց ի տուն իւր, և ոչ արկ սուր ընդ մէջ իւր մինչեւ գօր մահուան իւրոյ:

In Armenian histories a shift takes place between the seventh and the tenth centuries: Islām became transformed from "a command…from on high"[403] to a demonic possession.[404] Interestingly, Tᶜovma Arcruni's diatribe against Muḥammad and Islam is the most polemical and accusatory, but also the best informed. Living in the tenth century, Arcruni likely not only knew Muslims personally, but was also particularly well-versed in Islamic histories. Thomson has shown that Tᶜovma's *Patmutᶜiwn Arcruneacᶜ Tan* [History of the Arcruni House] was the first Christian source to mention details that were well-established in Islamic texts: (1) the name of the Prophet's uncle; (2) ᶜAlī's support for the early career of Muḥammad; and (3) the pact with the Jews of Madina.[405] It is not surprising that Armenians had a more detailed definition of Islam, as we see in Arcruni, Dasxurancᶜi, Samuēl Anecᶜi and others, from the tenth century on. These later authors are also familiar with trends in Greek and Syriac literature: they were the first Armenian authors to include information about the legend of Baḥīra, the infamous story about how Muḥammad studied under the tutelage of a heretical Christian.[406]

This shift was the result of a crisis brought about by the tumultuous seventh century. It had profound effects on the development of Armenian historiography. J.-P. Mahé traces

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[403] Sebēos, 135: յայնմ ժամանակ այր ոմն ի նոցունց իսկ յորդւոցն Իսմայելի. Որում անուն էր Մահմէտ, թանգար, որպէս ի հրամանէն Աստուծոյ երեւեալ նոցա քարոզ՝ ճշմարտութեանն ճանապարհի, զԱբրահամեանն ուսուցանէր նոցա ճանաչել զԱստուած. մանաւանդ զի հմուտ և տեղեակ ևս էր Մովսիսական պատմութեանն: Արդ՝ զի ի վերուստ էր հրամանն՝ ի միոջէ հրամանէ ժողովէին ամենեքեան ի միաբանութիւն ալրինացս: Dasxurancᶜi, 176: Ցետ այտորիկ ճակատ առ ճակատ պատերազմ խմբեալ. և եղև բեկումն չար ի տեառնէ Պարսից զօրուն ի լրման ժամանակի նոցա. և վերնառաք հրամանն երթայր կործանէր զթագաւորութիւն նոցա:

[404] Tᶜovma Arcruni, 160: և նա տրտմեալ գնաց ի տուն իւր, քանզի հանապազ ստիպէր ի դիւէ անտի, թերևս թոյլ տալովն Աստուծոյ, զոր համարէր ի հրեշտակէ զանկանելն ի մտաց: Եւ բազումք ի նոցանէ հաւանեցան նմա՝ պատգամաւոր Աստուծոյ ասել:

[405] Thomson (1986), 837 – 838. Thomson also mentions the accusation that Salmān al-Fārisī wrote the Qurᶜān, claiming that this story "was an important feature of the Muslim tradition found as early as Ibn Isḥaq." He cites the EI1 article on Salmān al-Fārisī, but this article and Ibn Isḥaq's work don't support the claim. According to Islamic tradition, Salmān attempted the first translation of the Qurᶜān into Persian.

[406] Thomson (1979/1980).

Armenian responses to Islam, noting that Armenian antagonism was directly dependent upon the political realities of caliphal control of Armīniya.[407] Unfortunately, this does not account for the highly charged rhetoric in Łewond, whose history was purportedly drafted during the zenith of Arab-Armenian collusion yet still demonstrates a certain enmity that brings it closer in tone to Tᶜovma Arcruni than to Sebēos. Despite his anti-Greek and pro-ᶜAbbāsid stance, Łewond's work still preserves an extremely negative account of the experience of the Armenian Church under the Arabs. We may most easily fit Łewond's history into Mahé's argument if we consider it as the product of the ninth century, as T. Greenwood has suggested,[408] instead of the more traditionally accepted attribution to the eighth century.

Interestingly, there are several correlations between Armenian responses to Islam and the reactions of Syriac- and Greek-speaking Christians also living through the Arab conquests. There are three likely explanations for this: (1) Armenians are familiar with Syriac and Greek literature responding to Islam; (2) there was an open discussion among Armenian, Greek, and Syriac-speaking Christians; and/or (3) Christian groups responded to the same stimulus in comparable ways, due to their common monotheist expectations of historical events.

Greeks and Syrians began writing polemics against Islam by the early eighth century and continued throughout the centuries.[409] Armenian polemicists, however, are rare: Łewond includes the correspondence between ᶜUmar II and Leo, but we will see in Chapter 8 that this demonstrates little about Armenian – Arab relations and more about Armenian – Greek literary

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[407] Mahé (1992), 134 – 136.

[408] Greenwood (2012).

[409] Reinink (1993).

exchange. The next great polemicist is Grigor Tat{c}ewac{c}i (d. 1411).[410] Armenian historians saw Islam as a political threat rather than a menace to the Church. In fact, the sources point to other considerable dangers facing the Church during the period of Arab domination.

5.2   The Main Threats to the Armenian Church during the Arab Period

While Łewond's text preserves the sole Armenian polemical response to Islam, Armenian historians frequently fixate on other perceived threats to the Armenian Church. In 719 the Armenian catholicos Yovhannēs Awjnec{c}i convened a Council at Dwin and subsequently produced a *Kanonagirk{c} Hayoc{c}* [Book of Armenian Canon Law]. His goal was not to refute Islam,[411] but rather to ensure the unity of the Armenian Church as the arbiter of the Christian *ḏimma* in Armīniya:

> For I perceive increasing irregularities in greater number and in grave matters, not only among the laity but even more among members of orders and prelates of churches. We arrived at the one way of truth, with one tongue, by the preaching of one man; and now we follow many tracks and many turns, and we perform in immeasurably diverse ways and in forms different to each other, both in our conduct and our praises directed to God: whilst we suffer the same injuries which were spoken of in ancient history, namely we fight among ourselves, man with his brother, man with his neighbor, city against city and canton against canton. In regard to the earthly occupations and the exchange of commodities we are on speaking terms and treat with one another, and when we are gathered before the God of peace to implore His peace, we are alarmed and disquieted, and like strangers and men of alien speech we suffer and put up with one another, as though one were a barbarian before him and others were barbarian to the rest.[412]

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[410] Thomson (1986), 829: "But Armenians were slow to develop any coherent understanding of the nature of Islam as a religion. Not until Gregory of Tat'ev in the fourteenth century was any elaborate and detailed discussion of the beliefs and rituals of Muslims attempted." See also Thomson (1979 – 1980), 884 for similar statements.

[411] See Thomson (1986), 831: "The catholicos John of Ojun (717 – 728) may be referring to the Muslims in *Canon 28*; here he exhorts the Christian Armenians not to flinch at martyrdom by the heathen *(het'anosac')* for worshipping the cross. But as so often with theologians, it is the enemies long dead who are the most in mind. For in his treaty against the Paulicians the 'heathens' are the ancient pagans, not the Muslims; and John is still concerned with the 'obscene' practices of the Mazdaeans."

[412] Yovhannēs Awjnec{c}i, trans. Jinbashian (2000), 172 – 172. Yovhannēs Awjnec{c}i, *Atenabanut{c}iwn*, 14 – 17 for Latin translation and original Armenian: Քանզի տեսանեմ ի յոլովագոյն և ի ծանր իրս անկարգութի՝

Awjnec^ci's main concerns were the Chalcedonians and the Paulicians.

The canons established by Sion Bawonac^ci at the subsequent Synod of Partaw (768) notably address issues raised by the Arab presence in Armīniya, if only in a marginal way. Specifically, A. Mardirossian identifies Canons 11 and 22 as referring to Muslims. The former prohibits intermarriage with Pagans, whereas the latter deals with eating impure foods while in captivity and "les femmes qui auront été souillées contre leur volonté par les païens (հեթանոս)."[413] On the one hand, the canons of Partaw are updating Armenian concerns, specifically about sexual relations between Armenian Christians and "pagans" (read: Muslims). On the other hand, concerns about marriage recur in the other canons of Partaw, as well as in Awjnec^ci's *Kanonagirk^c*. Here we see the adaptation of earlier concerns to the realities of the eighth century. In no way can these few veiled references to Armenian comportment under Arab sovereignty constitute a concerted response to Islam. In fact, it is noteworthy that the Synod did

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բազմացեալ , ոչ միայն ի ժողովրդականս, այլ առաւել յուխտի մանկունս, և յառաջնորդս եկեղեցեաց: Որբ մին լեզու՝ ի ձեռն միոյ քարոջի ի մի էլաք ճշմարտութեան ճանապարհի. և արդ բազմահետք և բաշմաշաւիղք եղաք, յանչափաբար և զանազան և այլածեսն առնելոյ՝ թէ զվարս և եթէ զխառնակութիւնս որ առ ա՜ծ. մինչ գրեթէ զնոյն կրել զվնասս ըստ հնոյ պատմութեանն՝ պատերազմել մեզ այր ընդ եղբօր, և այր ընդ ընկերի, քաղաք ընդ քաղաքի և օրէնք ընդ օրէնս: Երկրական զբօսանօքն վաճառացն տուրնառութեամբք խսսակիցք և հասուակիցք իրերաց լինելով, և առ խաղաղութեանն ա՜ծ ժողովեալք՝ զխաղաղութիւնս խնդրել խուճապիմք և խռովիմք: Եւ իբրեւ այլազգիք և այլալեզուք՝ տանիմք և բերեմք զմիմեանս, լինելով առ նմա խուժ, և այլք այլոց խուժ:

[413] Mardirossian (2000), 118. See Canon 11 on p. 124: "Que les prêtres ordonnent aux hommes, aux femmes et à leurs filles de ne pas contracter d'union avec les païens, car il ne s'agit pas là d'un marriage mais d'un concubinage (խառնակութիւն) impie et sale. Quelle part commune y a-t-il en effet entre le croyant et l'incroyant? Car [cette union] est pire que l'adultère, et ce qui est plus abominable que l'adultère est une faute contre nature." See Canon 22 on p. 126: "Ceux qui ont été emmenés en captivité par les impies et qui, contre leur volonté, du fait de la faim (առ քաղցի) ou par nécessité, ont mangé de la viande impure et souillée, lorsque Dieu les aura ramenés chez eux, qu'ils fassent penitence pendant un an avec un Coeur fervent, des larmes, des jeûnes et des prières en dehors de l'église; et si quelqu'un agit ainsi par erreur (սխալանք), il participera à la communion mais il jeûnera complètement le vendredi et le mercredi. Ce même canon s'appliquera pour les femmes qui auront été souillées contre leur volonté par les païens (հեթանոս)."

not produce a more detailed response to the challenges of Muslim rule, such as martyrdom, conversion, and so on.

This split concern between the Paulicians and Chalcedonians was inherited from the period immediately before the Arab conquests, as Dasxuranc͎i preserves correspondence between the Armenian Catholicos Yovhannēs II and the Albanian Catholicos Tēr Abas with the same general message:

> Therefore we say in faith and praise: Holy God, holy and powerful, holy, and immortal, who wert crucified for us, have mercy upon us. Those who did not confess thus were cursed by the holy fathers, just as we curse all the ancient and modern heretics: namely, Paul of Samosata, Mani, Marcian, the filthy Nestorius, Theodoret, the evil and vain Council of Chalcedon, and the Jewish letter of Leo which impudently presumed to attribute two natures and two persons to the one Christ God and to assert that the Holy Virgin did not give birth to God, but to a mere man like ourselves, a temple of the Word of God.[414]

5.2.1 Chalcedonianism

Armenian sources from the Arab period, lacking criticism of Islam, imply that the most ominous threat facing the Armenian Church was not Islam, but rather the spread of Chalcedonianism. Their complaints can be distinguished among four groups: (1) Byzantine attempts to force the conversion of Armenia; (2) the Georgian–Armenian schism; (3) relations between the Armenian and Albanian Churches; and finally, (4) perceived solidarity of the Armenian and Syriac Churches. Each of these topics has been the focus of generations of scholars. Our purpose here is

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[414] Dasxuranc͎i, trans. Dowsett (1961), 74. See Dasxuranc͎i, 124 – 125: Այսպէս հաւատամք և երկրպագեմք և փառաւորելով ասեմք. «Սուրբ Աստուած, սուրբ և հզօր. սուրբ և անմահ, որ խաչեցար վասն մեր, ողորմեա մեզ»: Իսկ զոչ այսպէս խոստովանողասն նզովեցին սուրբ հարքն, նմանապէս և մեք նզովեմք զհին զամենեսեան եղեալ հերձուածողասն և զնորա՝ զԱրիոս, զՊուղոս Սամոսատցի, զՄանի և զՄարկիոն, զպիղծն Նեստոր և զԹէողորիտոս, և զանտի չար ժողովն Քաղկեդոնի, և զհրեական տոմարն Ղևոնի, որ լրբաբար յանդգնեցան ասել երկու բնութիւնս և երկու դէմս ի վերայ միոյ Քրիստոսի Աստուծոյ, և եթէ սուրբ կոյսն ոչ ծնաւ Աստուած, այլ՝ մարդ սոսկ ըստ մեզ և լոյ տաճար բանին Աստուծոյ:

merely to establish that Armenian authors did not turn away from the trajectory that remained established after the Byzantine attempts to impose Chalcedonianism in the late sixth century. Despite the arrival of the Arabs, Armenians remained preoccupied by the Greek threat, instead of the more imminent danger of Islam.

5.2.1.1 Byzantine attempts to impose Chalcedonianism

The Greeks frequently attempted to impose Chalcedonian doctrine upon the Armenians, at times by means of military expeditions headed by the emperor himself. Most medieval Armenian authors are preoccupied by Greek efforts, from the late sixth century throughout the early Arab period, to spread the Chalcedonian doctrine in Armenia. Awjnec[c]i included two canons dealing with Chalcedonian practices in his *Kanonagirk[c]*:

> It is fitting to present the bread unleavened and the wine unmixed on the sacred altar according to the tradition entrusted by Saint Gregory unto us and not to bow down to the traditions of other Christian people; for the holy Illuminator brought this tradition from him who fulfilled the Laws [i.e., Jesus Christ].[415]

> It is necessary and befitting to subjoin the 'who was crucified' three times according to the trifold repetition of the trisagion, and not to abbreviate it nor be found lacking in the grace of the cross of Christ.[416]

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[415] Yovhannēs Awjnec[c]i, trans. Jinbashian (2000), 173. See Yovhannēs Awjnec[c]i, *Kanonagirk[c] Hayoc[c],* 519: Արժան է զհացն անխմոր եւ զգինին անապակ հանել ի սուրբ տեղանն ըստ աւանդելոյ մեզ սրբոյն Գրիգորի եւ չխոնարհել յայլ ազգաց քրիստոնէից յաւանդութիւնս. զի սուրբ Լուսաւորիչն յարինակաանէն բերեալ զայս առաքելաբար հրամա—ան ետ կատարել իւրց վիճակելոցն, որպէս եւ զաղն աւրինութեան յազապացն զենմունս խառնել եւ ըստ կարգի Ղեւտացւոցն ազգաւ սեպհականել զեկեղեցւոյ շնորհ. Եւ մեզ ի նմին պարտ է յարամնալ եւ չթողուլ ի բաց, եւ չառնել նորաձեւս ինչ:

[416] Yovhannēs Awjnec[c]i, trans. Jinbashian (2000), 174. See Yovhannēs Awjnec[c]i, *Kanonagirk[c] Hayoc[c],* 524: Պարտ եւ արժան է զխաչեցարն երիցս անգամ զհետ բերել, ընդ երիցս անգամ կրկնելոյ սրբասացութեանն, եւ մի նուազեցուցանել եւ նուազ գտանիլ ի շնորհաց խաչին Քրիստոսի: See also Dasxuranc[c]i, 342 – 3: Տէր Աբաս, որ ի սկզբանն թուականիս Հայոց փոխեաց զաթոռ հայրապետութեանն ի Չորայ ի Պարտաւ` կացեալ ամս ԽԴ յեպիսկոպոսութեանն Մեծիրանց կոչեցեալ: Առ սովաւ կալան սովորութիւն գրել ի պատրուակ թղթի` Աղուանից, Լփնաց, եւ Չորայ կաթողիկոսի: Եւ առ սա գրեցին ի ժողովըն Դունայ` ասել մի բնութիւն աստուածութեան եւ մարդկութեան, եւ յաւելուլ ի սուրբ Աստուած` «անմահ եւ խաչեցար»: Զի նոցա ուսեալ ի խնդրոյն Պրոկղի Կոստանդնուպօլի հայրապետին, որ երկերիւր սուրբ հարքն յԵփեսոսի ժողովըն տպաւորեցին ի սուրբ երրորդութիւնն. եւ յետոյ ի Տիմոթէոսէ

Additionally, one of Awjnec^c^i's letters, entitled "Against those who corrupt the holy mysteries with leaven and water," is preserved in *Girk^c^ T^c^lt^c^oc^c^* [the Book of Letters].[417]

Sebēos also remarks on the policies of Maurice in the late sixth century:

> Another command came once again from the king [emperor] to preach the council of Chalcedon in all of the churches of the land of Armenia and to unite with his forces through communion. But the Armenian clergymen ran off, fleeing to a foreign land. And many ignored the command, stayed in place, and remained unmoved. And many [others], persuaded by vanity, united by taking communion [with the Greeks].[418]

Despite the fact that Sebēos includes only a page on the doctrines of Islam, he devotes nearly twenty pages to correspondence between the emperor Constans and the Armenian catholicos Nersēs, outlining the Armenian justification for rejecting Chalcedon. He even presents Byzantine ambitions as the direct result of satanic manipulation "to fight God."[419] Furthermore,

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Ադեքսանդրու հայրապետէն և ի Պետրոսէ Անտիոքացւոյն զալստեանն առ Անաստաս կայսրն ընդ ձեռն Յակոբայ Միջագետաց եպիսկոպոսի, որք զնոյն սահմանեցին ուղղափառացն «անմահ որ խաչեցար» ասել, որպէս և է իսկ։ Զայս ոչ էր սահմանեալ ասել Աբաս հայրապետոն, զի չէր լեալ սովորութիւն և ոչ հերձուածք կային յաշխարհիս, թէ պէտք իմն լինէր քննութեան այտորիկ։ Ապա՝ յետոյ առ Եզրիլ կաթողիկոսիւ զնաց Ստեփաննոս Գարմնայ եպիսկոպոս առ նա և հաղորդեցաւ ընդ նմա. և Գարմնան և Արցախ ընկալան զալանդութիւնս զայս, զոր այժմ ամենեքեան ունիմք։

[417] *Girk^c^ T^c^lt^c^oc^c^*, 234 – 238.

[418] Sebēos, 91: Հրաման ելանէ դարձեալ ի կայսերէն վերստին այլ՝ քարոզել զզժողովն Քաղկեդոնի յամենայն եկեղեցիս Հայաստան երկրի, և միաւորել հաղորդութեամբ ընդ զաւր իւր։ Իսկ մանկունք ուխտի եկեղեցւոյն Հայոց փախստական զնացեալ յատտար երկիր վարէին։ Եւ բազմաց առ ոչինչ համարեալ զհրամանն՝ զտեղի կալան և անշարժ մնացին։ Եւ բազումք հաւանեալ փառասիրութեամբ հաղորդեալ միաւորեցան աւրինաւք։

[419] Sebēos, 147 – 148: Այլ ոչ դադարեաց վիշապն այն ապստամբ, այլ թէ և աստուածամարտ լինել կամեցաւ յիւրոց խորամանկութենէ. այլ երկներ յարուցանել հալածանս ի վերայ եկեղեցւոյն Հայաստանեայց աշխարհին։ Քանզի յամս Կոստանդինայ թագաւորի թոռին Երակլի արկ ի գործ զխորամանկութիւն իւրոյ չարութեանն, արքանեակս իր կալաւ զզաւրս Յունաց որ ի Հայաստան աշխարհին։ Քանզի ոչ երբէք ընդունէին Հայք զժողովն ի հաղորդութիւն մարմնոյ և արեան տեառն։ Եւ արդ՝ զրեն նոքա ամբաստանութիւն առ թագաւորն Յունաց Կոստանդին և հայրապետոն, թէ «Իբրև զանաւրէնս համարեալ եմք յաշխարհիս յայսմիկ։ Քանզի անարգանս համարին Քրիստոսի Աստուծոյ զժողովն Քաղկեդոնի և զտումարն Լևոնի, և նզովեն զնոսա»։ Յայնժամ հրաման ետ թագաւորն հայրապետաւն հանդերձ, և զրեն հրովարտակ առ Հայս, զի միաբանութիւն հաւատոյ արասցեն ընդ Հոռոմի, զի մի խոտեցեն զժողովն և զտումարն զայն։

Sebēos describes the catholicos Nersēs as deceitful, in that he concealed his Chalcedonian inclination until he reached a position of power: "But he concealed the poison of disgust in his heart and planned to convert Armenia to the council of Chalcedon."[420] Despite the fact that antipathy for Chalcedon is not a consistent feature of Sebēos's work, echoing the oscillation of the Armenians in regard to Chalcedonianism and the polyvocal nature of this particular text,[421] it is still a recurrent theme.

Drasxanakertcᶜi is also particularly troubled by the Chalcedonian threat, explaining at great length the deceit of the Greeks, who worked to mislead and to delude the Armenian people away from the true orthodoxy. He is particularly aggravated by the argument between the patriarch Ezr and Yovhan Mayragomecᶜi, and by the patriarch Nersēs's union with the Byzantine emperor. In both cases, the patriarchs failed to uphold Armenian Christianity as they jumped at the bidding of the Greek emperors.[422]

5.2.1.2 The Georgian–Armenian Schism

The decision to break the union between the Georgian and Armenian Churches was reached in 607 at the Council of Dwin. However, like most ecumenical decisions, it took considerably longer for the effects of the rupture to spread among the populace. In other words, the schism

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[420] Sebēos, 167: Բայց ի սրտի իւրում ծածկեալ ունէր զթիւնս դառնութեան, և խորհէր հաւանեցուցանել զՀայս Քաղկեդոնի ժողովոյն...

[421] Greenwood (2002), 367–69 for pro-Chalcedonian tendencies in Sebēos, including: (1) Sebēos' criticism of the treaty with Muᶜawiya and subsequent comments on the character of Tᶜēodoros Ṙštuni; and (2) "the List of Catholicoi ignored or at least downplayed instances of antagonism or disagreement between the Armenian and Greek Churches"; and (3) an attempt to "emphasize a common doctrinal and historical inheritance with the Greek Church rather than stressing the differences of ritual or liturgical practice."

[422] Drasxanakertcᶜi, 80 – 83 for Ezr and Mayragomecᶜi and 88 – 91 for Nersēs.

retained its relevance well past the seventh century and into the Arab period. The two Churches had been in communion ever since the Christianization of Georgia, though the level of their solidarity has been fiercely debated. It has been well established that the Armenians vacillated between accepting and anathemizing Chalcedon depending on the strength of the Armenian Church vis-à-vis Byzantium and the Sasanians, at very least until the Synod of Dwin in 555 and arguably even later. Despite the Georgians' claim that they consistently remained faithful to Chalcedonian doctrine, modern Georgian scholars have affirmed the Monophysite tendencies of the Georgian Church in the fifth and sixth centuries.[423]

Uxtanēs's work of history demonstrates his obsession with the Chalcedonian threat. His book is divided into three parts, two of which are specifically devoted to the rise of Chalcedonian doctrine in the Caucasus. The third book, *Mkrtut^c iwn azgin aynmik Cadn koč^c ec^c eal* [the Baptism of the nation known as Cad], is lost. However, the Cad, identified as Xorenac^c i's Cawdeac^c ik^c and Ełišē's Cawdek^c, lived in the north of Armenia and converted to Chalcedonianism in the early ninth century, as evidenced by Mxit^c ar Ayrivanec^c i.[424]

Uxtanēs's second book, *Patmut^c iwn bažanman Vrac^c i Hayoc^c* [The history of the separation of the Georgians from the Armenians], relying heavily on the *Girk^c T^c łt^c oc^c* [the Book of Letters], preserves a number of letters purportedly from the sixth and seventh centuries, with Uxtanēs's commentary. The Armenian position holds that the Georgian Church, despite its historical and ecclesiastical subservience to the Armenian Church, was lured into the Chalcedonian heresy. Uxtanēs believed that the Georgians had been deceived by the powers of Satan and by a Persian Nestorian who "concealed within himself the leavened [= sectarian]

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[423] Zekiyan (1987), 160–161.

[424] Arzoumanian (1985), 34–35 and Brosset (1870), xii.

loathing which he has from the old and acid [= corrupted] evil of Chalcedon, which came to him from Jewish mixture."[425] Interestingly, this Persian was from H̱uǧastān; Ter-Minasyan has demonstrated from evidence in thte *Girk^c t^clt^coc^c* that H̱uǧastānī Nestorians were known for their Paulician tendencies.[426]

Uxtanēs repeatedly lauds the unity of the Armenians and Georgians in maintaining the faith of their fathers by accepting only the Councils of Nicaea, Constantinople, and Ephesus. He also mentions the ordination of Georgian priests, including that of Kiwron, the architect of the Georgian rebellion against the Armenian hierarchy. Uxtanēs stresses the historical unity but also and above all, the elevated position of the Armenian Church as *prima inter pares* among the Caucasian Churches.

Uxtanēs, Dasxuranc^ci, and *Girk^c t^clt^coc^c* all mention the final step, taken at Dwin in 608:

> Because of the aforementioned, the rules of our doctors, which they decided with regard to the Greeks, shall also apply down the roots. If they do not turn back to the truth, we have ordered the same also regarding the Georgians: never communicate with them, not in prayers, not in mealtime, not in drinking, not in friendship, not in fostering, not in praying while going to the Cross, and not in receiving them in our churches. Also [they ordered people] to refrain altogether from marriages [with the Georgians] and only to buy or sell [with them].[427]

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[425] Uxtanēs, II 20: Իսկ դու արզեց արկեր ճանապարհաց նոցա զայդ ամենայն՝ ոչ զնալ ի ճանապարհս Տեառն ուղիղ՝ ընդ որ զնացին հարքն մեր. և զխուժիկդ զայդ ապականիչ ընկեցեր ի մէջ, զի էր լինքն խմոր դառնութեան ծածկեալ՝ զոր ունէր ի հնմէն և ի քացախուտ չարութենէն Քաղկեդոնի ի Հրէական զանկուածոյն ի նա հասեալ:

[426] Arzoumanian (1985), 139 no. 15.

[427] Uxtanēs, II, 132: Վասնորոյ և զլարաջագոյն սահման վարդապետացն մերոց, զոր ի վերայ Հոռոմին հատին, և կացցին միՆչն ցբուն, թէ ոչ դարձցին ի ճշմարիտն, մեք զնոյն և ի վերայ Վրաց հրամայեցաք, ամենևին մի հաղորդել ընդ նոսա. մի լաղօթս՝ մի ի կերակուրս, մի լըմպելիս, մի ի բարեկամութիւնս, մի ի դայեակութիւնս, մի աղօթեմք երթալով ի Խաչն, և մի ի մեր եկեղեցիս զնոսա ընդունել. այլն ամուսնութեամբ ամենևին հեռանալ. բայց միայն զնել ինչ և կամ զնղ..... The same passage is preserved in *Girk^c t^clt^coc^c*, 194, but it continues: բայց միայն զնել ինչ և կամ զնղ տալ որպէս Հրէից: նոյն հրաման և վասն Աղուանին անշարժ կացէք, զի պատկարեալ դարձցին ի թիւր ճանապարհէն: It is also preserved, with some alterations in Dasxuranc^ci, 270, where he specifies that "the cross" they visit is Mc^cxit^cay.

Uxtanēs lived under Arab rule at a time when the rate of conversions to Islam was high, but he does not once mention Islam or Arabs. His only concern is the maintenance of Armenian primacy over the Georgian and Albanian Churches and the denial of Chalcedonian doctrine.

5.2.1.3 Relations with the Albanian Church

Rather unsurprisingly, Dasxuranc^ci offers considerable information about the threat of Chalcedonianism in Albania, which eventually led the Armenians to tighten their grip over this neighboring Church. Dasxuranc^ci's posits a story of unwavering historical ties between the two Churches from the first moment of conversion: "Uṙnayr, our king, requested that Saint Grigor perform the holy ordination for him [Grigoris] to be bishop of his land. With this canon, the lands of the Armenians and the Albanians have been concordant in brotherhood with an indissoluble pact, up until today."[428] Even though his pro-Armenian stance is beyond dispute, given that he even composed his history in Armenian, rather than Albanian, his account nevertheless preserves the separatist tensions within Albania, tending toward rupture with the Armenians.

Dasxuranc^ci records a late sixth-century correspondence between the Armenian catholicos Yovhannēs and the Albanian catholicos Tēr Abas, promising that Armenian clergy will be dispatched to help maintain orthodoxy among the Albanians. This alliance resulted in the expulsion of the Chalcedonians from Albania:

> Sowing this confused tumult, the vain and empty heretical confusion of the
> council of Chalcedon spread to the ends of the world. Their false teaching grew

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[428] Dasxuranc^ci, 15: Ուռնայր՝ արքայն մեր խնդրեաց ի սրբոյն Գրիգորէ նորին սուրբ ձեռնադրութեամբն լինել եպիսկոպոս աշխարհին իւրոյ: Որբ և այսու կանոնիւ կացին աշխարհս Հայոց և Աղուանից համակամ եղբայրութեամբ և անբակ ուխտիւ մինչ ցայսօր:

stronger due to the pardon of God. And staining the souls of many people with compliant obedience, they entered the perpetual darkness of destruction. It arrived and took root in this land of Albania. At the same time, the Lord Abas, *kat͑ołikos* of the Albanians, made his own investigation with his bishops…And along with them, he expelled the detestable scholars of this sect from Albania.[429]

The Albanians, according to Dasxuranc͑i, were not tempted to break away from the Armenians:[430] Thereafter Dasxuranc͑i describes the Council of Chalcedon as "world-destroying."

Dasxuranc͑i also recognized that the Chalcedonian doctrine was in fact spreading in Albania and atributed its appearance to the deceitful actions of the catholicos Nersēs at the turn of the eighth century. Even after the Albanians forced the catholicos to anathematize the Chalcedonians, he lay in hiding until he could achieve his devious goals through treachery. The Albanians then turned to Ełia, Catholicos of Armenia, to restrain Nersēs. Interestingly, the Armenians in turn address the Umayyad caliph ͑Abd al-Malik:

> To the conqueror of the world, Abdla *amirmomn* [͑Abd al-Malik, amīr al-mu᾽minīn]. From Ełia, chief bishop of the Armenians. By almighty God, we hold vassal lands obedient to your authority. We and the Albanians practice one faith, the divinity of Christ. And now, the *kat͑ołikos* of the Albanians sitting in Partaw is plotting with the king of the Greeks. He proclaims him in prayers and compels countries to enter into [the same] faith and into unity with him. Now you know, and so do not be negligent about this, for a noble woman is his co-conspirator.

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[429] Dasxuranc͑i, 126: Զայս շփոթ աղմկի սփռեալ տարածեցաւ ընդ ոլորտս երկրի ի ժողովուրն Քաղկեդոնի ի սնոտի և ունայն չարափառաց պղտորմանէն: Որ ի ներքէն Աստուծոյ զօրացաւ սուտ վարդապետութիւն նոցա, և դիւրալուր ունկընդրութեամբն ներկեալ բազմաց ազանց հոգիքն᾽ մշտնջենաւոր խաւարի կորստեան մատնեցան: Եհաս որոմնաբոյս արմատս այս յաշխարհս Աղուանից: Ի նոյն ժամանակս տեառն Աբասայ Աղուանից կաթողիկոսի յոյզ քննութեան առնելով իւրովք եպիսկոպոսօք, որ վերագոյնդ կան ի գրի, նոքօք հանդերձ հալածեաց ի տանէ Աղուանից զպիղծ վարդապետս աղանդոյն այսորիկ….

[430] Dasxuranc͑i, 270: Իսկ Աղուանք ոչ քակտեցան յուղղափառութենէ և ի միաբանութենէ Հայոց: See also Dasxuranc͑i, 266 – 267: Ընդ այն իսկ ժամանակս, որ դեռ ևս վարէր զհայրապետութիւնն Աղուանից տէր Ուխտանէս և զկնի նորա᾽ Եղիազար, և խռովութին և հերձուած բազում ի կողմանս կողմանս զիտնաւորաց և տգիտաց լինէր, մարտ և մրցումն Յունաց և Հայոց: Note that Dowsett (1961), 171 has "between the Greeks and the Armenians," meaning that his ms. has replaced Յունաց with Յունաց, which makes a lot more sense in this context. However, the passage comes immediately after an account of Armenian relations with the Huns.

Order that those who sin against God's will be punished by your great authority, according to what is fitting for their deeds.[431]

ᶜAbd al-Malik responded favorably to the Armenians:

> To Ełia, man of God, *ĵatᶜlik* of the Armenian people. I read the letter of faithfulness and I gratefully send to you my faithful servant with many troops. As for the rebellions of the Albanians from our authority, we are ordering them to effectuate orthodoxy according to your religion. And this servant of ours will deliver this, our punishment, before you in Partaw. Once Nersēs and the woman, his coconspirator, have been thrown into iron chains, he will be led to the royal court in shame, for I will make examples of them for all rebels to see.[432]

Dasxurancᶜi's letter from Ełia to the caliph suggests that the matter is at once religious and political: (1) the Albanian patriarch arrived to an agreement with the Byzantine Emperor, and (2) the Albanians mention the Emperor in their prayers. In other words, he is not solely concerned with Chalcedonian belief, but also with political treason. ᶜAbd al-Malik responds that the Albanians are rebels against "our" authority and will be treated as traitors. This also emerges from the other extant source concerning the correspondence. Drasxanakertᶜi's letter from Ełia is addressed to ᶜUmar II, a common figure of piety in both Armenian and Arabic sources, instead of ᶜAbd al-Malik. The patriarch writes to the caliph:

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[431] Dasxurancᶜi, 295 – 296: Տիեզերակալ Աբդլայի ամիրմոմնոյ. յԵղիայէ՝ Հայոց եպիսկոպոսապետէ: Յամենակալէն Աստուծոյ ունիմք զզառայական աշխարհս հնազանդ ձերոյ տերութեանդ. և մեք և Աղուանք զմի հաւատ պաշտել ունիմք զՔրիստոսի աստուածութեանն: Իսկ այժմ որ Աղուանիցն է կաթողիկոս նստեալ ի Պարտաս, խորհուրդ արարեալ ընդ կայսրն Յունաց՝ զնա քարոզէ յաղօթս և զաշխարհս ստիպէ, զի ի հաւատ և ի միաբանութիւն նմա եկեսցեն: Արդ՝ գիտութիւն ձեզ լիցի, և մի անփոյթ արասջիք վասն այդորիկ. Զի կին մի մեծատուն խորհրդակից է նորա, զորս պատուհասակոծ հրամայեսջիք առնել մեծ իշխանութեամբ ձերով՝ ըստ արժանի իւրեանց գործող, զոր առ Աստուած կամեցան մեղանչել:

[432] Dasxurancᶜi, 296: Զառնդ Աստուծոյ զԵղիայի զԱրմենեան ազգի չաթլկին կարդացի զգիր մտերմութեան, և ի շնորհս քեզ առաքեցի զծառայ իմ հաւատարիմ բազում զօրօք: Եւ վասն ապստամբացն Աղուանից ի մերմէ տերութենէս հրամայեալ եմք ըստ քո կրոնից առնել առ նոսա ուղղութիւնս, և զմեր պատուհասդ քո առաջի ի Պարտաւ արասցէ ծառայդ մեր. զՆերսէս և զկինն համախոհ նմին ի շղթայս երկաթիս հարեալ՝ անարգանօք ածցէ ի դուռն արքունի, զի ի տեսիլ ամենայն ապստամբացն նշաւակս զնոսա արարից:

There is here in our land a bishop, and also a woman along with the bishop, who are acting against the vassalage to your authority, and they do not join with us, who always remember your name when we say our prayers. Rather, they pronounce the [name of] the king of the Romans and are plotting to return our land to him. If you do not hurry to separate them from us, they will soon break away and hand over to the Romans regarding their taxes and all affairs.[433]

The Armenians, according to Drasxanakertc‘i, mentioned the caliph's name in their prayers. The idea that anti-Chalcedonian doctrine would help to pull Arminiya eastward, away from Byzantium, was not merely a foundation of caliphal religious policy; it was a direct inheritance from the Sasanian era, when the Persian Emperor feared that the Armenians, because of their religious ties to the Greeks, "will want to serve them as well, and there will be not a small amount of suspicion in this land of the Aryans as a result."[434]

Meanwhile, the debate over Chalcedonian doctrine in Albania continued. The catholicos Ełia called another council in Partaw around 704, with the goal of eradicating heresy from Albania. The foremost concern was, of course, Chalcedonianism. A list of signatories was "written in the *diwan* of Abdlmelk‘, *amirmomn* [‘Abd al-Malik, *amīr al-mu'minīn*]. If any of them were found believing in two natures of Christ, he might be destroyed by the sword or imprisoned. In this way there was peace for all of the churches in Albania."[435] Thereafter, Dasxuranc‘i preserves multiple examples of Albanian catholicoi acting to denounce

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[433] Drasxanakertc‘i. 102: Ապա մեծն Եղիա զիմաստութիուն և զրնդարձակութիւն սրտի ի գործ արկեալ՝ գրէ թուղթ առ ամիրապետն Իսմայէլեան Ումար, զեկուցանելով նմա, թէ զոյ աստ յաշխարհիս մերում եպիսկոպոս մի և նոյնգունակ տիկին մի զուգակից ընդ եպիսկոպոսին, որք ի բաց բերեալ են ի հնազանդութենէ մեծի տերութեանդ ձերոյ և ոչ միաբանին ընդ մեզ, որ միշտ զանուն քո յիշատակեալ քարոզեմք յաղօթս մեր. այլ զթագաւորն Հոռոմոց քարոզեն, ի նա զաշխարիս մեր հնարին դարձուցանել: Եթէ ոչ աճապարեցես բառնալ զնոսա ի միջոյ աստի մերմէ, ընդհուպ իսկ հատուածեալ ի Հոռոմս ձեռնատուր լինին ի սակս հարկաց և յամենայն մասունս գործոց:

[434] Łazar P‘arpec‘i, 96: զուգէ որում օրինագն են հաստատուն՝ նոցին և ծառայութիւն առնել ցանկան, և լինի ոչ փոքր կասկած Արեաց աշխարհիս յիրացն յայնցանէ:

[435] Dasxuranc‘i, 305: Այսք ամենեքեան որ գրեցան ի դիւանին Աբդլմելքի ամիրմոմնոյ սակս այսորիկ, եթէ ոք ի սոցանէ գտանիցի երկաբնակ եղեալ՝ սրով և գերութեամբ սպառեցցի: Այսպէս եղև խաղաղութիւն ամենայն եկեղեցեացս Աղուանից:

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Chalcedonianism, the details of which are less significant than the general tenor: (1) the Albanian historian clearly sees Chalcedonianism as a much more important threat to the religious interests of his homeland than Islam; (2) he subsequently goes to great lengths to explain the Albanian–Armenian ecclesiastical union; and (3) the caliphal authorities demonstrate a vested interest in preserving Armenian orthodoxy and in diminishing the hold of Chalcedonian movements. Though he devotes many chapters to diatribes against Chalcedonianism, Dasxuranc^ci's concerns about Islam would barely fill a paragraph. Furthermore, it is clear that the concern about Chalcedonianism in Albania was the result of historical circumstances predating the Arab conquest, confirming the continuity in religious concerns in the Near East, despite the introduction of Islam.

5.2.1.4 Solidarity with the Syriac Church

One result of the anti-Chalcedonian movement, including the perceived treachery of the Georgians and the fierce contest for control over the Albanians, was a rapprochement with the other neighboring Church. This was a slow process, given the inherent distrust ever since the Sasanian emperor Bahrām V had twice installed a Nestorian preacher as catholicos of Armenia, as part of a policy of "Syriacization" of the Armenian Church. This had constituted an attempt to engender a common Christianity within the Sasanian Empire, as well as to establish the primacy of Persian cultural norms.[436] The result had been a pair of synods denouncing Nestorianism in 432 and 435. However, the Jacobite Church was closer in doctrine to the Armenian Church and had long-standing ties with it.

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[436] Grousset (1984), 184: "En donnant à l'Arménie un patriarche syriaque, la cour de Ctésiphon la rattachait à la seule forme de christianisme qui fût tolérée en Iran, à celle, en tout cas, qui représentait le culte de la chrétienté iranienne. Rattacher l'Église arménienne aux communautés syriaques de Babylonie, d'Assyrie et de Susiane, c'était encore travailler à l'iranisation de l'Arménie."

The Syriac (Jacobite) and Armenian Churches were natural allies against Chalcedonianism: when Babgēn Ot[c]msec[c]i laid out the Armenian rationale for denying the authority of the council at the Council of Dwin in 506, he referred to a clergyman of the Syriac Church, Simeon of Beth Aršam.[437] Furthermore, Syriac-speaking Christians were involved in the Synod of Dwin in 555.[438] Sebēos also refers to a Persian synod, convened circa 610, at which the Armenian and Syriac Churches affirmed a union of faith.[439] These Churches had been connected from the earliest days of the Christianization of the Near East; however, ties between them grew stronger during the last century of Sasanian rule.

Michael the Syrian suggests that the union between Armenia and Syria was a historical reality, just set aside in the aftermath of Chalcedon: "Les habitants de la montagne de Sasoun dissent qu'ils ont la foi de Grégorius le Parthe, que tiennent les Arméniens. Bien que notre foi et la leur ne soit qu'une, soit à cause de la négligence qui gâte les choses, ni eux ni nous, ne nous sommes préoccupés, après le schisme de Chalcédoine, de savoir quelle était la divergence entre nous."[440] The differences between Syriac and Armenian Christianity are presented as the efforts of Julianist deceit, which sowed distrust and a false belief that the two doctrines were incompatible.

Yovhannēs Awjnec[c]i and the Jacobite Patriarch Athanasius organized the Council of Manazkert in 726. The two sides grappled with the disagreements and concluded with more eagerness to affect a union than with any actual conformity of belief.

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[437] Mahé (1993), 460.

[438] Meyendorff (1989), 282 – 283. Mahé (1993), 461.

[439] Mahé (1993), 464. See Anastas, II 116.

[440] Chabot, II 492; Mīchael the Syrian, 457.

Le catholicos qui était plus versé dans les Écritures et voulait arriver à l'union était très empressé… Dès lors on usa de prudence dans cette affaire, et les Syriens aussi bien que les Arméniens se conduisirent avec modération à l'égard des opinions qui n'était pas parfaites quant à la doctrine, et, se départissant un peu de la rigueur manifeste qui peut-être en aurait fait retourner plusieurs en arrière, ils définirent sous l'anathème ce qui, sans nuire à la vérité, éloignait la doctrine perverse des hérétiques.[441]

Chabot correctly identifies the "hérétiques" as Chalcedonians, arguing that the Syriac and Armenian Churches found Chalcedonianism more problematic than any doctrinal difference between them that might interfer with their union.[442] However, Jinbashian interprets this union as evidence of Christian solidarity in the face of an aggressive Islam,[443] citing as his sole evidence a confusing passage in the text of this same *Chronicle*, which states: "On convint de se render à Arzôn; mais les Arméniens en furent empêchés par leur général." He suggests that this general is the Arab governor of Armīniya,[444] dismissing Chabot's identification of Smbat Bagratuni[445] because he would not have been powerful enough to exert influence over the catholicos. But, of course, the passage does not in fact support any suggestion that Smbat was able to outflank Yovhannēs Awjnecᶜi; in fact, he *failed* to halt the council, thus supporting Jinbashian's suggestion that the *naxarar*s were not in a position to impede Church affairs. Besides, Smbat Bagratuni was famously described as a diophysite. Ter-Łewondyan demonstrates some doubt

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[441] Chabot, II 494.

[442] Chabot II 495 no. 8: "En résumé, on se mit d'accord pour repousser la doctrine du concile de Chalcédoine, sans insister sur les divergences entre celles des Syriens et des Arméniens."

[443] Jinbashian (2000), 182: the union was "an attempt to weather the impending storm of the rising power of Islam and the fanaticism generated because of it. Probably this is why the Armenian and Syrian Churches needed to become 'allies'." See also 181: "the two Churches needed to unite to be able to face the new threat of Islam."

[444] Interestingly, Mahé (1993) takes the same position without explanation, though he is also working with Michael the Syrian.

[445] Chabot, II 493 no. 8: Smbat is described as a dyophysite in Stepᶜanos Orbelean's *History of Siwnikᶜ*. See also Dasxurancᶜi, 320 – 321: Յայսոսիկ ժամանակս Ստեփաննոս Սիւնեցի տիովք դեռ ևս մանուկ զալով՝ կիրթ և յարաւարժ ի խոկումն գրոց եղեալ, հանդիպի նմա հակաճառել Սմբատայ ասպետի Հայոց երկաբնակի առն,,,Իսկ երկաբնակն այն Սմբատ գրէ առ թագաւորն Հոռոմոց...

about the comments to this effect in Step͏ᶜannos Orbelean and Dasxuranc͏ᶜi's works, but offers the suggestion that Smbat may have picked up Chalcedonian leanings while he was a refugee in Byzantium.[446]

Jinbashian's argument that Arabs feared an alliance of the Armenian and Syriac Churches, a united Christian front designed to threaten Islam, is simply not supported by extant sources, nor is it in line with Umayyad policy towards the Church, or even Jinbashian's own arguments about caliphal religious policies in Armīniya. It is far more fitting to see the union in the context of reports of a recurring menace from the Chalcedonian Greeks, especially in the light of the anxiety frequently expressed in Armenian sources that we have just examined. After all, Asołik, the *Girk͏ᶜ T͏ᶜlt͏ᶜoc͏ᶜ*, Samuel Anec͏ᶜi, Vardan Arewelc͏ᶜi, Grigor Tat͏ᶜewac͏ᶜi and Mxit͏ᶜar Ayrivanec͏ᶜi all claim that the Council was convened to deal with the Chalcedonian threat.[447]

The rising tide of Armenian and Syriac ecclesiastical cooperation becomes visible at the precise moment when the Arabs are also formulating a non-Greek identity for Armīniya. As the Armenians turn away from the Byzantophile tendencies in their own Church, they become more aware of the non-Greek elements in the Armenian Church,[448] most notably those introduced during the early days of Christianization via Syrian proselytizers. This is evidenced not only by the alliance with the Syriac Church, but also by some of the pro-Syrian trends visible in heretical movements in Armenia at the time.[449] Similarly, the non-Chalcedonian practices that preoccupied the Armenian historians, namely the addition of "who was crucified" to the

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[446] Ter-Łewondyan (1966), 189 = (1964), 125.

[447] Jinbashian (2000), 180 no. 62.

[448] Mahé (1993), 458: "…autour de l'affirmation 'de l'unique nature de Christ' s'élabore une position dogmatique cohérente solidement ancrée dans la tradition antérieure et — ce qui n'est ni nouveau, ni contradictoire — fortement influencée par les docteurs syriens…"

[449] Consider Garsoïan (1967), 220 – 230.

trisagion, was an example of the heritage of the early Armenian Church, as it was pulled directly from the Syriac liturgy.[450] Furthermore, there is possible supporting evidence of the rise of Syrian-influenced Armenian Christian thought in a seventh-century document against iconoclasm.[451] Individually, each of these matters is rather small and inconsequential, but together they speak of a general shift or rapprochement with Syriac Christianity. This trend appears through the entirety of the Arab period, as we see in the arrival of Nonnus to convince Ašot Msaker of the fallacies of Abū Qurra's Chalcedonianism,[452] as we will see in Chapter 8.

5.2.2   Paulicians and T^condrakians

There has been considerable debate over the last century about the doctrines and history of the Paulician and T^condrakian sects in Armenia. For our purposes here, these specific heresiographical arguments are irrelevant; instead, we need only recognize that Armenian historians and clergy defined the unorthodox Christians as the most imminent threat to the Church after Chalcedonianism and that this concern marked a strong continuity from the pre-Islamic period.

Paulicians are attested in Armenian territory from the sixth century onward.[453] Yovhannēs Awjnec^ci remarked that

> The remnant of the old Messalianism Paylakēnut^cean reprimanded by the
> kat^cołikos Nersēs was not brought to reason after his death. They withdrew and

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[450] Zekiyan (1987), 168. See Janeras (1967), 479 – 480 and 497 – 499.

[451] Der Nersessian (1944), 77. The source of the argument is found in Syriac and Latin sources, but not Greek. While certainly not conclusive, it is interesting in the light of the general trend towards Syrian Christianity.

[452] Muyldermans (1927), 115 – 117.

[453] Nersessian (1988), 17. Note that Garsoïan (1967), 82 – 83 pushes this back to the fifth century by identifying մծղնէ as a reference to Paulicians. See Runciman (1947), 28 no. 1 for counterpoint.

hid in a certain locality of our country. They were joined by some iconoclasts denounced by the Albanian katᶜołikos and, until they found support in the precursors of an AntiChrist, they were afraid and feared the true and glorious religion of the Christians. But when they had the presumption to think that they had arrived at something important and new, in their treachery, they came bounding out of their lair and dared to penetrate into the interior of the country and inhabited regions.[454]

Because the majority of extant information about the Paulicians has been preserved in polemical works, it is difficult to ascertain much about their doctrine. To obscure the matter further, there were considerable differences between Paulician doctrine in Armenia and that of their coreligionists in Byzantium. The most commonly repeated charges against the heretics include: (1) iconoclasm;[455] (2) adoptionism; and (3) rejection of Orthodox sacraments and hierarchy. Additionally, Paulicians are frequently accused of Docetism and dualism, though this seems to have been restricted to the Greek branches.

Beginning in the early ninth century,[456] Paulicians disappear from Armenian texts and another heresy, the Tᶜondrakian, surfaces. N. Garsoïan suggests that the Paulicians and the Tᶜondrakians were actually the same group; she bases this on the similarity in doctrine, identical complaints about Paulicians in the works of Yovhannēs Awjnecᶜi and against Tᶜondrakians by Nersēs Šnorhali, and a troubling passage in Grigor Magistros that conflates the two groups.[457]

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[454] Awjnec'i, trans. Nersessian (1988), 19.

[455] This is one of the most common charges against the heresies. However, it is contested in modern scholarship: See Der Nersessian (1944), 73 no. 63, qtd Grégoire: "Le paulicianisme primitif (668 – 872) semble ne pas avoir été iconoclaste. Le silence absolut gardé par Pierre (de Sicile) sur la question des images prouve au contraire qu'en principe, et sans doube en pratique, les Pauliciens ne rejetaient pas les images."

[456] The dating of the origin of the Tᶜondrakecᶜi sect is confused. Grigor Magistros and Mxitᶜar Ayrivancᶜi place its origins in the beginning of the ninth century, while Drasxanakercᶜi thinks it dates from the late ninth. See Nersessian (1988), 37 and Garsoïan (1967), 140 – 143.

[457] Garsoïan (1967), 139. Referring to the Tᶜondrakecᶜi, Grigor Magistros writes "Here you see the Paulicians, who got their poison from Paul of Samosata." See Garsoïan (1967), 139 no. 117: աւադիկ Պօղիկեանք, որք ի Պօղուէ Սամոստացոյ դեղեալ... Garsoïan continues: "On two other occasions we hear from Gregory that the Tᶜondrakecᶜi had been condemned in the writings of 'Lord John'," whom she convincingly argues is Awjnec'i.

However, V. Nersessian presents several difficulties in Garsoïan's argument and suggests that the similarities between the two are linked by ideology and impetus, but cannot be definitively joined as a single group.[458] A definitive decision on the relationship between the Paulicians and the T^{c}ondrakians is far from imminent; instead, it seems most prudent to espouse Garsoïan's qualification of the T^{c}ondrakian movement as "new Paulicianism," accepting continuation but not necessarily assimilation with the previous sect.

5.2.2.1 The Preoccupation of the Armenian Church

The *Kanonagirk^c*, produced in 719, is a particularly useful example of the Armenian reaction to Islam: it specifies the legal status of a number of societal, economic, and political challenges facing Christians and the Church in Armenia during the Arab period. It is concerned with the application of Armenian law, including intermarriage and the growth of heretical sects. It does not attempt to engage Islam as a religion, but rather clarifies the supreme authority of the Armenian Church to dictate legal processes—a process which, by extension, demonstrates the considerable autonomy allowed to *ahl al-ḏimma* under Islam. Awjnec^{c}i's concern is not the rise of Islam or the conversion of Armenians, but rather establishing the rights of Christians within the confines of Islamic law and the role of the Armenian Church as the arbiter for the Christian population of Armīniya.

One of Awjnec^{c}i's main concerns is the rise of heresy in Armenia: "It is not befitting at all to be indifferent and to commune with heretics, but rather to turn away from them with disgust and not to share with them in spiritual altars and material [lit. physical] tables, so that

However, keep in mind that Garsoïan herself even mentions that "Gregory Magistros is not always an entirely reliable source" (158).

[458] Nersessian (1988), 42.

they should be ashamed and should desire to join with those who teach orthodoxy."[459] According

to Awjnec[c]i, the most perfidious heretics are the Paulicians:

> No one ought to be found in the places of the most wicked sect of obscene men
> who are called Paulicians, nor to adhere to them nor to speak to them nor to
> exchange visits with them; but one ought to retreat from them in every way, to
> curse them and pursue them with hatred. For they are the sons of Satan, fuel for
> the eternal fires and alienated from the love of the Creator's will. And if anyone
> joins them and makes friends with them, he is to be punished and visited with
> severe penalties until he repents and is confirmed in the Faith. If, however, he is
> caught as a relapsed heretic, we order him to be forthwith excommunicated and
> cast out as a pest from the Church of Christ, lest "the root of bitterness spread and
> germinate and through it many be lost."[460]

Though historians in the later medieval period pick up and continue this bitter diatribe

against Paulicians and T[c]ondrakians,[461] references in works from the Arab period are far more

oblique. Bart[c]ikyan argues that when Łewond mentions "sons of sinfulness," he is actually

referring to the Paulicians.[462] This passage may in fact demonstrate not only the concerns about

the military might of the Paulicians, but also the tendency to relate Christian heretical sects to

Arabs and Islam in general. N. Garsoïan's translation rendered the word *aylazgi* as "foreigner" in

the above passage. However, R.W. Thomson has repeatedly shown that "Armenians do not use

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[459] Yovhannēs Awjnec[c]i, trans. Jinbashian (2000), 174. See qtd Yovhannēs Awjnec[c]i,*Kanonagirk[c] Hayoc[c]* , 533: Ոչ է պարտ ամենելին անխտիր լինել եւ հաղորդութիւնս առնել ընդ հերձուածողաց, այլ խորշել ի նոցանէ, եւ ոչ հաւասարէ ընդ նոսա ի հոգեկան եւ ի մարմնական սեղանս, զի պատկառեցին եւ փափագեցին միաբանել ընդ ուղղափառութեան աւանդիչս:

[460] Runciman (1947), 32. See also Jinbashian (2000), 174 or Garsoïan (1967), 135.

[461] Consider, for example, Nersessian (1988), 61 qtd. Grigor Magistros about the leader of the T[c]ondrakians: "This evil beast of prey, this bloodthirsty, sodomitic, whoring, lustful, frenzied, loathsome Smbat…Smbat the false-cleric, that has shaken the foundation of the apostles…that Smbat, who (just as dogs and wolves) began to teach all the sum of evil."

[462] Garsoïan (1967), 136: Եւ ամենայն որդիք յանցանաց երթեալք խառնէին ի զունդ ապստամբութեանն, որք ոչ ճանաչէին զերկիւղն Աստուծոյ եւ ոչ զահ իշխանաց եւ ոչ զպատիւ ծերոց, այլ իբրև ալլազգի եւ օտարացեալ՝ ասպատակ սփռեալ զերէին զեղբարս և զազգակիցս իւրեանց, եւ բազում աւարառութիւնս առնէին, խոշտանգանաւ եւ զանիրք տանջանս ածեալ ի վերայ եղբարց իւրեանց:

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the term 'Muslim', or any direct Armenian rendering of that Arabic word." In fact, he mentions *aylazgi* is the "most common" appellation for Muslims in Armenian works.[463]

5.2.2.2 The relation between Islam and the Paulicians / Tᶜondrakians

Arab support for the Paulicians

Armenian, Greek, and Latin sources from the eleventh century on explicitly link Paulicians with Islam.[464] The Patriarch Tarasius, for example, noted during the Second Council at Nicaea that the Paulicians "imitated Jews and Saracens, pagans and Samaritans, and above all Manicheans and Phantasiasts."[465]

An Armenian source calls Paulicianism *kᶜałertᶜakan* (bloodthirsty) and traces the birth of the heresy to a woman named Šētᶜi. Bartᶜikyan used this passage to situate the birthplace of the Paulician heresy along the banks of the river Šitᶜitᶜma[466] based on Širakacᶜi's seventh-century geography: "It [the province Ałjnikᶜ] has 10 districts: Npᶜṛet, Ałjn, across which flows the river Kᶜałirtᶜ, which the *Tačikkᶜ* [Arabs] call Šitᶜma, that is: bloodthirsty…"[467] The link between

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[463] Thomson (2000), 47.

[464] Among many possible examples, consider: Garsoïan (1967), 33 no. 38: "By the eleventh century when the *Digenes Akrites* was composed, the memory of the Paulician leaders was very confused. Chrysocheir (Χρυσόβεργος) had become the grandfather of Digener and Karbeas (Καρόης) his great uncle. Both of these characters are significantly presented as Muslims." Also consider Garsoïan (1967), 15: a Latin *Anonymous History* of the First Crusade places Paulicians with Muslims, not heretics. "In the East the Publicani are numbered by the chroniclers among the heathen Muslims rather than among the Christian sectarians…"

[465] Garsoïan (1967), 200.

[466] Garsoïan (1967), 130.

[467] Anania Širakacᶜi, 30: Ունի գաւառս տասն. զՆփռետ, զԱղձն, ընդ որոց մէջն իջանէ գետն Քաղիրթ, զոր Շիթմա կոչեն Տաճիկք, այսինքն՝ արիւնարբու. The form Šitᶜma is found in the long recension, while Šitᶜitᶜma is in the short. Hewsen (1992), 162 no. 51 changes this to *Šāṭī dam* (شاطي دم) and translates as "River of Blood." Hewsen (1992), 216 also quotes Marquart incorrectly, but the river actually mentioned on Marquart (1901), 142 and

Paulicians and Muslims was fostered because of the common reference to an Arab leader K^{c}ałart^c, a contemporary of Muḥammad: Samuēl Anec^{c}i discussed "the chief of the race of Ismael whose first name is Kałart^c, as Scripture relates: 'The sweet-lipped people shall sate their swords with blood' (Sirach, 12.16 ff, with a pun on *kałc^{c}r*)."[468] This citation is later copied in Mxit^{c}ar Anec^{c}i and Vardan Arewelc^{c}i. Furthermore, the Armenian version of *The Martyrdom of King Arč'il II* and *The Book of K^{c}art^{c}li* both use the word K^{c}ałart^{c}ian to refer to Arabs.[469]

In reality, the charges of collusion between the Paulicians / T^{c}ondrakians and the Muslims are likely explained by their military alliance against Byzantium. As we saw above, Yovhannēs Awjnec^{c}i noted that "they found support in the precursors of an AntiChrist." He also specifies that "being deceivers, they found a weapon for their evil [to] kill the souls of lovers of Christ [in] being allies of the circumcised tyrants."[470] After all, Islam provided an ideal refuge from Greek power, including freedom to indulge in non-Chalcedonian heresy. Furthermore, the Paulicians posed a serious threat to Byzantium, a fact certainly not lost on the Arabs. However, with the rise of iconoclasm under the Isaurian Emperors, the Paulicians were welcomed back into Byzantium.

Later, sometime in the ninth century, Byzantine Paulicianism adopted a docetic bent and thus alienated its former allies.[471] While large numbers of Paulicians moved to Arab lands in the

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161 no. 62: where Marquart locates the river in both Yāqūt and al-Mas^{c}ūdī. Yāqūt calls the river Sātīdamā (ساتيدما) and clarifies: سمي بذلك لانه ليس من يوم الا ويسفك فيه دم

[468] Thomson (1986), 842. See Samuel Anec^{c}i, 78.

[469] Thomson (1996), 250: "No one can set down in writing the calamities of the Christians that they endured from the Saracens, who for a time were also called K^{c}ałart^{c}ians; as divine scripture says: 'The tongues of K^{c}ałart^c will be drunk from the blood of the innocent.' For K^{c}ałart^c was the source of that nation's growing powerful; he was chief of a few of the surrounding Ishmaelites." See also 256 and 238 n.64 and Garsoïan (1967), 130.

[470] Garsoïan (1967), 135: Այլ և խորամանկեալ գտին չարութեան իրեանց զէն խողխողիչ քրիստոսասիրաց անձանց, դաշնակից լինելով բնակալաց կրճատելցն:

[471] Garsoïan (1967), 183 – 4.

ninth century,[472] their political and military usefulness had passed. It has been argued that Paulicians who lived in close proximity to Arab-held territories tended to adopt Islam "because Islam is a non-sacramental religion,"[473] though it stands to reason that the Islamic stance on iconoclasm was also a selling point.

Paulicians, Tᶜondrakians and the Ḫurramiyya

It may ostensibly be argued that the rise of Paulicianism constitutes an example of the enduring ties between Armenia and Byzantium. However, Garsoïan has convincingly established that the sect took considerably different vectors both historically and theologically: Armenian Paulicianism developed quite independently from Greek. In fact, the rise of Paulician / Tᶜondrakian heresy has in the past been linked to lasting ties of pre-Islamic Persia and, more importantly, to the Ḫurramiyya.

There are a few references to Persian influence on the development of Tᶜondrakian doctrine. Al-Masᶜūdī remarks: "They are between the *maḏhab*s of the Christians and the Magi. They are dualists, glorifying and worshipping light."[474] Al-Masᶜūdī's allusion to the Magi is repeated in Armenian accounts about Smbat, the leader of the Tᶜondrakians. Grigor Magistros lists Mĵusik as one of Smbat's teachers, which has alternatively been deciphered as an Armenian transliteration of the Persian word *magi* or as a corruption of the Armenian name Mrĵunik.[475]

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[472] Garsoïan (1967), 128.

[473] Nersoyan & Nersessian (1993), 108.

[474] Al-Masᶜūdī, *Kitāb al-Tanbīh,* 151 : والبيالقة وهو مذهب الذي احدثه بولس الشمشاطي وهو من اول بطاركة انطاكية واصحاب الكراسي بها متوسطا بين مذاهب النصارى والمجوس واصحاب الاثنين من تعظيم سائر الانوار وعبادتها مراتيها وغير ذلك

[475] Nersessian (1988), 46. See also Garsoïan (1967), 142.

It is clear that contemporary authors considered the heretics to be dualist and, specifically, directly influenced by pre-Islamic Persian religious movements. Awjnec͚i, for example, identifies the Paulicians as *mcłnē*, "filthy." While this is the common appellation for Paulicians, it has also been interpreted as an Armenian calque of Messelianism and heralded as a direct reference to the fact that the Paulicians were considered to hold dualist beliefs, thus labeling the Paulicians as the heirs of the Gnostics.[476] This accusation cannot be substantiated, as it is impossible to verify if Paulician doctrine in Armenia was, in fact, dualist. Garsoïan argues that it was not. The Persian element in Paulician and T͚ondrakian doctrine may therefore be the product of polemical rhetoric rather than any sort of concrete influence. In other words, the frequent association of Paulicianism with Manicheans or Phantasiasts[477] may be a testament to the lingering effects of heresiographical conservatism more than any concrete "influence."

However, the apex of the heretical movement in Armenia coincides neatly with the revolt of Bābak, suggesting a tie between the Paulicians / T͚ondrakians and the Ḫurramiyya. There are in fact several similarities between the heresies: for example, the accusation that mortal man has corrupted religion.[478] However, the nature of the extant sources, biased with recurrent topoi,[479] does not permit any in-depth discussion of the heretical beliefs. The most verifiable connection

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[476] Mardirossian (2004), 443: "…Yovhannēs Awjnec'i assimile les pauliciens aux *mcłnē*. Cela signifie que dans l'esprit du catholicos, les pauliciens représentent en quelque sorte les héritiers des *Gnostikoi* des IVe – Ve siècles…" His note qualifies : "Cela ne prouve toutefois aucunement que les pauliciens adhéraient aux doctrines dualistes des *Gnostikoi*. " See Runciman (1947), 28 no. 1 : "The Armenian word մծղնեութիւն, used in this context, is translated in Armenian dictionaries (e.g. Aucher or Miskgian) as Immunditia or filthiness, but it clearly is the word Messalianism and is to be interpreted here in that theological sense."

[477] On Phantasiasts in the sixth century, see Meyendorff (1992).

[478] See Sadighi (1938), 270.

[479] Any work on the Paulicians, the T͚ondrakec'i and the Ḫurramiyya necessarily highlights the inability to decipher specific dogma with any amount of certainty. However, there are demonstrable similarities in the ways authors describe the sects. The charge of dualism is one example. The charge of sexual promiscuity is another. See Madelung (1986).

between the sects is not direct influence on doctrinal matters, or even the common inheritance of

dualist doctrine, but rather the ambiguous nature of the religious/social/political/economic revolt

against the reigning élite. V. Nersessian takes a Wansborough-esque approach to the matter:

> There is support in the sources for the supposition that the T^{c}ondrakec^{c}is, the Khurramites, and the Paulicians and the many affiliations between them on the basis of doctrine and ideology are to be explained not on the basis of direct succession or continuity, but by the politic-socio-economic conditions which gave rise to similar movements, creating in some cases not only internal ideological affiliation but also external relationship.[480]

Garsoïan suggests that rather than seeking a Persian or Greek antecedent for

Paulicianism, we instead consider the history of the Armenian Church and particularly its

relationship with Syriac Christianity. She argues that the adoptionist bent of Armenian Paulician

doctrine was a facet of Syrian proselytizing in the early phases of Christianization of Armenia,

but that it was designated as heresy once Byzantine Christianity became more prevalent and a

more uniform Armenian doctrine coalesced.[481] This argument helpfully circumvents some of the

more problematic implications about a direct link between Paulicianism and the Ḫurramiyya.

5.3   Conclusion

In the end, the Chalcedonian and heretical (Paulician and T^{c}ondrakian) threats to the Armenian

Church were very similar. They both escalated doctrinal and political tensions from the sixth and

seventh centuries, carrying the concerns of earlier generations into the Arab period. They both

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[480] Nersessian (1988), 42.

[481] Garsoïan (1967), 233: "In any case, the origin of the Paulician doctrine is not to be sought in Byzantine lands. Its Adoptionist tendencies are all too evident, and these were characteristic of early Oriental and particularly Armenian Christianity…It seems evident that in Armenia, Paulicianism, far from being a foreign importation, was simply the original Christianity received from Syria. It remained in the main stream of the Armenian Church until the Hellenizing reforms of the fourth and fifth centuries relegated it to the level of heresy. Thereafter, benefiting from the divided political status of Armenia in the early Middle Ages, and reinforced by such heretical groups as the Ałovanian Iconoclasts and Syro-Persian Nestorians, Paulicianism survived in the East, probably with the support of Persian and eventually Muslim authorities."

showed a growing influence of the Syrian elements in the Church and a general leaning towards

the Sasanian world, both in opposition to the Greeks. When the Arabs arrived, Armenians did not

necessarily consider Islam to constitute a religious challenge, but the threat of the Byzantine

world remained. Whereas the Greeks were more determined to force confessional unity upon

Christendom, the Armenians were generally allocated more religious freedom under the

Sasanians[482] and, later, the Arabs.

The continued Chalcedonian debate and the historic ties between Christians in the Near

East (especially Armenians and Syriac-speaking Christians) will play an important role in the

remainder of this dissertation. Chalcedonianism acts as the primary indicator of the conceptual

frontier between Islam and Byzantium.

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[482] Thopdschian (1904a), 56: "Ja, sie fülten sich sogar unter den Persern in religiöser Hinsicht viel freier als unter den Griechen, die um jeden Preis den Armeniern die Beschlüsse des chalcedonischen Konzils aufdrängen wollten, deren Plan aber hier wie in Syrien scheiterte."

Chapter 6: Caliphal Policy towards the Armenian Apostolic Church

May each man hold his own belief. And may the Armenians not be tormented. They are all our servants, may they serve us with their bodies; and as for their souls, He knows about judging souls.

Xosrov[483]

Caliphal policy towards Armenian Christianity ensured the continued relevance of the preoccupations of the sixth and seventh centuries by modeling Islamic rule on Sasanian antecedents. Despite the occasional abuses against the Church enacted by certain governors, official caliphal policy mirrored Sasanian antecedents and recognized the legitimacy of the Armenian Church as adjudicator of the local population. This is a noticeable trend even in the most polemical documents against Islamic rule in Armīniya, such as martyrologies.

This chapter will consider (1) the caliphal policy towards *ḏimma* in Armīniya; (2) the abuses against the Church in the Arab period; (3) martyrdom and the rise of hagiography; and (4) Armenian conversion to Islam. It will argue that the "Islamic" character of Armīniya was not tied to the religion of its inhabitants, but rather created in the literary realm (as we saw in Chapter 2). Instead, Arab rule required the implementation of Islamic law and, following Sasanian practices, the acceptance of non-Chalcedonian Christianity. The concerns of the Caliphate were linked to the claims of legitimacy in the North vis-à-vis both Armenian rebellions and Byzantine attempts to assert control over the province.

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[483] Sebēos, 149: Մինչև հրաման տալ Կաւատայ արքայի և որդւոյ նորին Խոսրովու, եթէ «Իւրաքանչիւր ոք զիւր հաւատս կալցէ, և զՀայս նեղել ոք մի իշխեսցէ. Ամենեքին մեր ծառայք են, մարմնով մեզ ծառայեսցեն, իսկ վասն հոգւոցն, որ զհոգիսն դատէ՝ նա գիտէ:»

6.1 Āl al-d̲imma and Caliphal Policy in Armīniya

There are indications that the Armenian Church fared quite well under Islam. First of all, the Church was able to convene a number of synods under Arab rule, most of which dealt with heresies and challenges to the established Church rather than with responding to oppressive foreign rule or strict restrictions on Christian practice. Second, there are several accounts of building activities, indicating that the Church was not only permitted to construct new edifices, but that it had the capital to do so. "Le bien-être étant général, on s'était mis à bâtir beaucoup et à vivre dans le luxe. Les Grands arméniens avaient notamment multiplié au IX siècle les édifices religieux…Ils avaient alors élevé l'église du Sauveur à Muš en Taron, plus de quarante églises ou couvents en Siounie, et nombre d'autres dans la province d'Ayrarat." [484]

Caliphal religious policy towards Armīniya demonstrates continuity between the late Sasanian and early Islamic periods. First, the protected status of *ahl al-d̲imma* or *ahl al-kitāb* conforms to the antecedents left from the Sasanian regime: Sasanian policy prescribed that Christians would be non-Chalcedonian[485] and that religious communities would be judged autonomously according to their own law.[486] The shift to the Islamic period saw a continuation of these policies.[487]

Both Arabic and Armenian sources preserve numerous agreements between Armenians and the conquering Muslim armies that characteristically guarantee the freedom of religion in

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[484] Laurent & Canard (1980), 81.

[485] Meyendorff (1992), 31.

[486] Hoyland (2007), 15.

[487] See Mahé (1997), 61: "Au début du VIIe siècle, Khousrô Abharvêz reprend une politique analogue de soutien au monophysisme. Son exemple sera suivi par les Arabes après la chute de l'empire sassanide en 651. "

exchange for political obedience and the payment of taxes. There are two particularly famous contracts between the Armenians and the Arabs preserved in Armenian sources: (1) between Tᶜēodoros Ṛštuni and Muᶜāwiya as preserved in Sebēos and (2) between the Armenians and Muḥammad b. Marwān, as mentioned by Łewond. Later Armenian sources, such as Samuēl Anecᶜi, Mxitᶜar Anecᶜi, and Kirakos Ganjakecᶜi, even project these agreements retroactively to the time of the Prophet himself, presumably to lend them legitimacy.[488] Arabic sources preserve a further five: (1) between Surāqa b. ᶜAmr and Šahrbarāz, the governor of Bāb al-Abwāb, on behalf of all Armenians as found in al-Ṭabarī's history; (2) between Bukayr b. ᶜAbd Allāh and the people of Mūqān as preserved in al-Ṭabarī's work; (3) between Ḥabīb b. Maslama and the "Christians, Magis and Jews of Dabīl," recorded by al-Balāḏurī and Yāqūt; (4) two divergent treaties between Ḥabīb b. Maslama and the people of Tiflīs found in al-Balāḏurī and al-Ṭabarī; and, finally (5) a single Umayyad-era contract between al-Ǧarrāḥ b. ᶜAbd Allāh al-Ḥakamī and Dabīl, mentioned by al-Balāḏurī. Every single one of these treaties, Armenian and Arabic, promise freedom of religion and the safety of churches and places of worship in exchange for submitting to a tax and (sometimes) providing military aid for the defense of the frontier. This conforms not only to the expectations of Islamic law, but also to the state of affairs from the late Sasanian period, when Armenians had earned considerable leeway despite their refusal to adopt Zoroastrianism.

Sasanian policy afforded preferential treatment to the Armenian Church, specifically ruling against Chalcedonianism. Sebēos preserves an account about a disputation in which Christians of various denominations presented themselves to Kawat and Xosrov, who commanded: "May each man hold his own belief. And may the Armenians not be tormented.

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[488] Thomson (1986), 142.

They are all our servants, may they serve us with their bodies; and as for their souls, He knows about judging souls."[489] Thus Armenian Christianity was apparently protected against government discrimination during the late Sasanian period. This was specifically linked to its anti-Chalcedonian nature, as Xosrov is said to adjudicate: "The orders of three kings [Constantine, Theodosius I, and Theodosius II] seem to be more correct than a single one [Marcian]."[490] This Persian synod secured Armenian control over the Albanian Church and affected a union between the Armenian and Syriac Churches,[491] in both cases demonstrating continuity between late Sasanian and early Islamic approach to the Armenian Church.

Sebēos remarks upon the law enacted by Xosrov II Parvez: "May no one from among the impious dare to turn to Christianity, and may no one from among the Christians turn to impiety. Rather, let them keep the laws of their ancestors. And whoever does not want to hold to the religion of his ancestors, but instead wants to rebel from the laws of his ancestors, will die."[492] Sasanian policy supported capital punishment for conversion, in the same manner as Islamic law: thus the martyrs under the Sasanians, who were Zoroastrians converted to Christianity, must be directly compared to the martyrs of the Arab period, converts from Islam to Christianity.

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[489] Sebēos, 149: Մինչև հրաման տալ Կաւատայ արքայի և որդւոյ նորին Խոսրովու, եթէ «Իւրաքանչիւր ոք զիւր հաւատս կալցի, և զՀայս նեղել ոք մի իշխեսցէ. Ամենեքին մեր ծառայք են, մարմնով մեզ ծառայեսցեն, իսկ վասն հոգւոցն, որ զհոգիսն դատի՝ նա գիտէ:»

[490] Sebēos, 150: Պատասխանի ետ թագաւորն և ասէ «Երից թագաւորաց հրամանքն ճշմարիտ ռւի լինել՝ քան միոյն»:

[491] Mahé (1993), 463 – 465.

[492] Sebēos, 85: Եւ հրաման ետ, ասէ «Մի ոք յանաւրինաց իշխեսցէ դառնալ ի քրիստոնէութիւն, և մի ոք ի քրիստոնէից դարձցի յանաւրինութիւն, այլ իւրաքանչիւր ոք յիւր հայրենի յաւրէնս պինդ կացցէ: Եւ որ ոչն կամիցի ունել զհայրենի դէն, այլ ապստամբեալ ի բաց կացցէ յիւր հայրենի աւրինացն՝ մեռցի»: This conforms to the agreements in Łazar Pᶜarpecᶜi following the cessation of hostilities between the Armenians and Sāsānians in 451.

Martyrologies therefore do not merely illustrate the application of Islamic law in Armīniya; they also preserve an account of the continuity of religious policy towards Christianity in Armīniya.

6.2 Abuse of the Church during the Arab Period

By the end of the Sasanian period, the position of the Armenian Church was rising, as Christianity made headway in the Empire and Zoroastrianism began to wane.[493] The Church was also assigned a special position during Arab rule, but it does not follow that it enjoyed the consistent good-will of the Islamic state and its apparatus through the length and breadth of the empire. Although the general tenor of the relationship was tolerant, there were numerous examples of violence and looting perpetrated against Armenian churches and clergy. Łewond's history includes a number of diatribes against the Arab treatment of the Armenian Church. He laments:

> Now who could suffer the insupportable evil that befell them without weeping?
> For the holy Church darkened without its decorated pulpit and the sound of divine
> glorification was quieted… And in short, the Lord's altar was divested of its
> splendor. How Christ suffered! How did he permit the sinners to slander against
> those who glorify Him and allow them such bitter deaths?[494]

This passage, one of several similar lamentations about the state of the Church soon after the Arab incursions, also demonstrates another tendency prevalent in Armenian accounts of this period: the attempted reconciliation between the loss of political sovereignty and the divine protection expected as a Christian people. Further, the lamentation about the state of Armenia

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[493] Frye (2004), 273.

[494] Łewond, 42 – 43: Արդ ո՞վ ոք առանց արտասուաց բերիցէ զանհնարին աղտրն որ ժամանեաց նոցա. Զի սուրբ եկեղեցին խքնացեալ ի բարեզարդութենէ բեմին եւ լռեալ ձայն աստուածային փառատրութեանն…Եւ միանգամայն ասել՝ ամենայն բարեվայելչութիւն խորանին Տեառն դադարկացեալ: Ով Քրիստոսի երկայնմտութեանն. Զիարդ արդեօք ներեաց անօրինացն զրպարտութեան աձել ի վերայ փառաւորչացն իրոց զղառնութիւն մահուն այնորիկ.

under the Arabs is frequently expressed in biblical rhetoric, allowing for an adaptation of Old Testament elegies to suit the Armenian experience.[495]

Some of the grievances about Arab treatment of the Church and clergy are reactions to the turbulent times, rather than a specific complaint against Arab rule. For example, Sebēos wrote, "this rebellious dragon didn't stop, but wanted to become repugnant to God out of its own malice. It conceived of persecution over the churches of the lands of Armenia."[496] However, these complaints were directed at Byzantine, rather than Arab forces: since Armenia was a convenient middle ground between the two powers, much of the destruction was not actually the result of a concerted effort to oppress the Church.

Complaints increased in times when taxation was more severe, for example during the reign of al-Manṣūr:

> And in addition to this are the debasing of the patriarchs, the derision of the bishops, the whipping and tortures of the priests, the deportation and destruction of the princes and the *naxarar*s, which the generals of our land were not able to endure.[497]

The overall position of the Church vis-à-vis the Arab rulers was in fact amicable, but relations could quickly deteriorate because of the policies of certain governors or the caliph himself. So, for example, we saw in Chapter 5 that ᶜAbd al-Malik was keen to support the agenda of the Church since it dovetailed with his own claim to political legitimacy in Albania. Yet Łewond preserves the story of Ibn Dokē, the governor of Dabīl, who threatened clergy until they offered

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[495] Consider Gatteyrias (1880) : "Aussi les lamentations de Jérémie sur les malheurs des mères sont venues s'appliquer véritablement à nous." See also Greenwood (2012).

[496] Sebēos, 147: Այլ դադարեաց վիշապն այն ապստամբ, այլ թէ և աստուածամարդ լինել կամեցաւ լիւրոց խորամանկութենէ. Այլ երկներ յարուցանել հալածանս ի վերայ եկեղեցեացն Հայաստանեայց աշխարհին:

[497] Łewond, 168: Եւ ևս առ այսոքիւք արհամարհութիւնք հայրապետաց, այպանութիւնք եպիսկոպոսաց, ջան եւ խոշտանգանք քահանայից, իշխանաց եւ նախարարաց քարշանք եւ քայքայութիւնք, որում ոչ կարացեալ հանդուրժել զօրագլուխք աշխարհիս

him the valuable vestments of their church.[498] In this account, it is clear that Ibn Dokē is acting solely out of personal greed. This story fits in with the anti-ʿAbbāsid bias visible in most Armenian histories, but also provides an example of how Arab governors set their own agendas. Ibn Dokē's actions, in other words, cannot be used to speculate on the relations between the Armenian Church and the Caliphate without consideration of broader patterns.[499]

The most infamous story of abuse against the Church is the burning of the churches of Naxĵiwan and Xram in 704/5. This story is preserved in a number of Armenian, Arabic, Greek, and Syriac historical works. The Armenians rebelled against the caliphate during the second *fitna* and enlisted the help of the Byzantine army. Upon the defeat of the Armenian–Greek force, the Arabs gathered either 400 or 800 people[500] in the Church of St. Grigor, which they then burned to the ground.

> In his [the patriarch Ełia's] time, Abdlmēlēkᶜ was the main amir of the Ismaelites, after 85 years according to their dating. Then his forces that were in Armenia lit a fire among us, Satan having blown his anger into them. And then they gathered everyone, the *azat*s and the cavalry troops, into one place by false deception, vain hopes, and joy-bringing promises, and they recorded their names in the divan, as if to distribute yearly wages to them. And then taking their weapons away from them, they threw them into the church in the city of Naxčᶜawan. And closing the doors from the back with bricks, they fortified the exits of the place. But learning of the treachery, they cried out, making the songs of the children in the fire [Daniel 2]. Then the evil executioners destroyed the roof of the church and lit it with fire. They raised the flame higher than Babylon through incendiary material. And in that way, the ceiling of the wooden church burned and the bricks fell, sending fire from above, streaming fire mixed with smoke. And it struck them all, killing them. And their ceaseless thanksgiving continued until their last breaths expired. Then the vindictive foreigners [*aylazgik*ᶜ], safe from fear of the brave

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[498] Łewond, 203 – 204.

[499] Jinbashian (2000), 221. Mahé (1993), 474: "Il n'était donc pas encore question d'affrontements religieux ni de polémique doctrinale, mais les premiers heurts entre les deux religions devaient se produire en raison de cas individuels, de rencontres fortuites et personnelles."

[500] Vardan claims 800; Łewond, 400. Grousset (1984), 313 fixes this : there were 800 in Naxĵiwan and 400 in Xram.

forces, captured the remaining families of those who were burned and brought them to Dwin. And from there they were sent to Damascus.[501]

There is little information about the martyrs, except that some were *azat*s, while others were *naxarar*s and that all of them were there to collect payment from the *diwān*. The killings, while likely an excessive measure, should be construed as militarily or politically motivated, rather than religious persecution.[502] After all, Łewond says clearly that this was a political act designed to decrease the power and presence of the *naxarar* families, in an effort to maintain a stronger grasp on the wayward province.[503]

Theophanes does not even mention a church, stating that "Muhammad's campaign against them killed many. Once he had resubjected Armenia to the Saracens, he gathered the

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[501] Drasxanakertcʻi, 100: Յաւուրս յայսմիկ էր ամիրապետ Իսմայէլեան Աբդլմէլէք յետ Ձէ թուականին իւրեանց: Իսկ ապա զօրք նորա որ ի Հայք՝ հուր ի մեզ վառեցին, սատանայ ի նոսա փչելով զբարկութիւնն. և ապա ստահամբառ դաւողութեամբ սնոտի յուսով և խնդացուցանող բարի խոստմամբք զամենեսեան ի մի վայր զումարէին զազատս և զհեծելազօր զունդս, և զանուանն նոցա ի դիւանն մատուցանէին իբր թէ բաշխել նոցա զղահեկանաց տարնորն: Եւ ապա զպատերազմական զէնսն ի նոցանէ ի բաց առեալ՝ ի տաճարն Աստուծոյ զնոսա արկանէին ի Նախշաւան քաղաքի. և զդուրսն յետ կոյս փակեալ աղիսով՝ ի բաց պնդեալ ունէին զելիցն վայրս: Իսկ նոցա իմացեալ զդաւաճանութիւնն՝ զմանկանցն զգայնն որ ի հնցին, երզս առեալ զոշէին: Իսկ չար դահճացն զվերնայարկս եկեղեցւոյն բակեալ և լուցեալ հրով՝ առաւել քան զԲաբիլոնին ի վեր զբոցն բարձրացուցանէին այրեցողական նիւթովն: Եւ այնպէս ապա հրդեհակէզ եղեալ առասպաղ փայտակերտ եկեղեցւոյն՝ և հրացեալ կղմինդրն ի վերուստ ի վայր հոսեալ միախառն հրովն, վախճան մահու առհասարակ ի վերայ ամենեցուն նոցա աձէր. և նոցա անդադար զոհաբանութիւն ի սպառել ոգւոցն կացեալ դադարէր: Իսկ վրիժագործ ալլազգիքն յապահովս կացեալք յերկիւղէ քաջացն զօրաց և զմնացեալ ընտանիս հրակիզելոցն զերի առեալ աձէին՝ ի Դուին քաղաք. և անտի յուղարկեալ տանէին ի Դամասկոս:

[502] Laurent & Canard (1980), 97 – 8 read Łewond's account as a military attack. See also Jinbashian (2000), 152 – 153.

[503] Łewond, 54: Սա յառաջնում ամի իշխանութեան իւրոյ խորհեցաւ բառնալ յաշխարհէս Հայոց զստոմ նախարարաց նոցին հեծելովք վասն քինուն զոր ունէին առ Սմբատայ կիւրապաղատի. Զի ասեր եթէ միշտ խոչ եւ զայթակղութիւն լինելոցեն իշխանութեանս մերոյ:

Armenian grandees together and burned them alive."[504] Further, the Arabic account of the event

explains the event as a reaction to the Armenian rebellion:[505]

> When the *fitna* of Ibn al-Zubayr took place, Armīniya rebelled and its nobles and
> their followers broke away. And when Muḥammad b. Marwān was made
> governor of Armīniya on the authority of his brother ᶜAbd al-Malik, he battled
> them and conquered them. And he killed and imprisoned and vanquished the
> country. Then he promised those who survived that he would demonstrate honor
> towards them. And for that reason they gathered in churches in the region of Ḫilāṭ
> and he locked them and put guards at their doors and burned them [the nobles].[506]

Ḫalīfa's account says that the authorities "burned them in their churches and in their villages,"[507]

supporting the contention that Christianity itself was not the main target of the foray. The church

may have merely been the convenient location to gather political dissidents "in their villages."

Thus the most horrific martyrdom story that emerged from the period of Arab rule in

Armīniya was actually a *political* act inspired by the Armenian rebellion against the Caliphate.

There is no indication that this was an example of religious persecution beyond the fact that the

victims were killed in a church. The Church was itself a political actor; not every action against it

can be qualified as religious intolerance. The Armenian rendition of the event utilizes strong

religious overtones to demarcate the difference between Armenians and Arabs in order to

illustrate that the differences between the two sides ran deep: any warrior who died fighting

Muslims was therefore dubbed a martyr, just as those fighting Zoroastrians were martyrs of the

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[504] Turtledove (1982), 70. Theophanes, 372.

[506] Al-Balāḏurī. 126: لما كانت فتنة ابن الزبير انتقضت أرمينية وخالف احرارها وأتباعهم فلما ولي محمد بن مروان من قبل اخيه عبد الملك
ارمينية حاربهم فظفر بهم فقتل وسبي وغلب على البلاد ثم وعد من بقي منهم ان يعرض لهم من الشرف فاجتمعوا لذلك في كنائس من عمل خلاط فاغلقها
عليهم ووكل بابوابها ثم خوفهم
Hoyland (2007), 374 makes the observation that خوفهم should in fact read حرقهم. This is substantiated by the text of
Ḫalīfa, which provides the correct reading.

[507] Ḫalīfa, 183 – 184: فحدثني ابو خالد بن سعيد عن ابي براء النميري قال: زحفت الروم الى ارمينية الى محمد بن مروان فهزمهم الله وهي سنة
الحريق وذلك ان محمد بن مروان بعد هزيمة القوم بعث زياد بن الجراح مولى عثمان بن عفان وهبيرة بن الاعرج الحضرمي فحرقهم في كنائسهم
وبيعهم وقراهم وكان الحريق بالنشوى والبسفرجان

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Sasanian period. It does not necessarily signify that their deaths were the result of anti-Christian politics perpetrated by the Caliphate.

6.3 Martyrdom and the Rise of Hagiography

Although it is not clear that the Arab governors ever advanced a broad anti-Christian policy during this period, there still remains considerable evidence about the persecution of individuals. This information, not surprisingly, is mostly found in the Christian sources and is not consistently corroborated by Arabic or Persian accounts. Martyrdom was a prevalent concern in Armenian historical sources. However, a closer examination reveals that even many of the martyrdom stories cannot be heralded as proof of anti-Christian policies during the Arab period.

The story of martyrdom that most sparked the emotions and the imagination of medieval Armenian authors was the story of Dawit^c Dwinec^{c}i. Drasnxanakertc^{c}i explains that Dawit^c was a Persian born with the name Surhan who was baptized by the catholicos Anastas (660–67). Although the dating is confused, Drasxanakertc^{c}i's version then has Dawit^c martyred during the governorship of ^{c}Abd Allāh:

> But Dawit^c, who was from a Persian house and from royal lineage, came here to the great prince Grigor, requesting that he give him Christian confirmation. And receiving him with joy, he ordered the kat^{c}ołikos Anastas to give him the confirmation of holy baptism. And since his name was formerly Surhan, the great prince, receiving him from the water of the holy baptistery, named him Dawit^c after his father. And he gave him a place to live in the village Jag in the province of Kotayk^c. Years later in Dwin he received the crown of martyrdom.[508]

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[508] Drasxanakertc^{c}i. 94: Բայց Դաւիթ, որ էր ի պարսիկ տոհմէ յազգէ թագաւորաց՝ աստանօր եկեալ առ իշխանն մեծ Գրիգոր՝ խնդրէ առ ի նմանէ տալ իւր զքրիստոսական դրոշմն, զոր և խնդութեամբ իսկ զնա ընկալեալ՝ հրամայէ կաթողիկոսին Անաստասայ տալ նմա զկնիք մկրտութեանն սրբոյ: Եւ վասն զի

This Abdəllah seized the neophyte Dawitᶜ, whom we mentioned earlier, and tortured him for his belief in Christ with terrible beatings and with bonds and imprisonment. He lured him to fall into his abyss of perdition. Since the holy old man did not believe and bravely rose against [this], he nailed him to a wooden [cross]. And shooting an arrow through the heart of the holy man, he committed his soul to Christ. The bishops and priests took him and buried his body near the martyrium of Saint Hizbuzit.[509]

There are two versions of a longer recension of this passion, one in Ališan's *Hayapatum* (1901) and the other in Aucher's *Liakatar varkᶜ ew vkayabanutᶜiwnkᶜ srbocᶜ* (1810–15), and an English translation by R. W. Thomson in Hoyland's *Seeing Islam as Others Saw It* (2007). The only significant difference between the two versions is that the long recension calls Dawitᶜ a *tačik* instead of a Persian, adding that "he came to Armenia with the armies of the *Tajiks*." This leads R. Hoyland to suggest that the reason Dawitᶜ was martyred is because he was actually an Arab Muslim who apostatized.[510] This brings the story in line with the expectations of Islamic law.

Furthermore, Dawitᶜ converted during the caliphate of Muᶜāwiya, c. 665, but was not martyred until the centralization program of ᶜAbd al-Malik took effect: once Armīniya was construed as part of the Islamic world, rather than merely a tributary province, it became necessary to demonstrate the effectiveness and primacy of Islamic law in the province. However, despite his martyrdom, even the Armenian sources admit that Dawitᶜ was openly celebrated as a Christian martyr: his remains were preserved in a martyrium, the cross on which he was

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յառաջագուն Սուրհան անուանիր. ապա Իշխանն մեծ՝ ընկալեալ զնա ի ջրոյ սուրբ աւազանին, Դաւիթ զնա յորջորջէ յանուն հօր իւրոյ. և տպյ բնակութիւն նմա զգիւղն Ճաց ի նախանզին Կոտայից, որ զկնի ամաց իսկ ի Դվին քաղաքի ընկալաւ զմարտիրոսական պսակն:

[509] Drasxanakertcᶜi, 96 and 98. Այս Աբդըլլահ զնորահաւատն Դաւիթ, որ յառաջագոյն յիշատակեցաւ առ ի մէնջ՝ ընբռնեալ չարաչար հարուածովք և կապանօք և բանդի զնա խոշտանգէր վասն առ ի Քրիստոս հաւատոցն, լիւր կորստական խորխորատն զնա հրապուրէր արկանել. Որում ոչ հաւանեալ և քաջապէս ընդդէմ վառեալ սուրբ ծերունին՝ ի փայտի զնա բևեռակապ պնդէր, և նետաձիգ ի սիրտ սրբոյն արարեալ՝ ի Քրիստոս զհոգին աւանդէր: Զոր տարեալ եպիսկոպոսաց և քահանայից՝ հանգուցին զմարմին նորա մերձ ի վկայարան սրբոյն Յիզտբուզտի:

[510] Hoyland (2007), 371.

martyred was displayed at the church in Dabīl, the lance was considered a relic, and he was buried according to Armenian tradition.[511] It is therefore not possible to use the examples of Dawitᶜ to argue that the Arabs engaged in persecution of Christians.[512]

The second most famous case of Armenian martyrdom during the Arab period is Vahan Gołtᶜnacᶜi. Again, his death is best understood as a byproduct of charged religious discourse in Armīniya and the application of Islamic law. When the church was burned in Naxĵiwan in 701, the children and wives of the rebels, in accordance with Islamic law, were considered hostages to the conquering force. They were brought to Damascus, where Vahan was raised as a Muslim by the name of Wahhāb. He was considered an erudite scholar, "profondément versé dans les récits fabuleux des Arabes,"[513] and was trained to work for the caliphal administration.

Vahan returned to Armenia and converted back to Christianity. He wandered around Armenia looking for protection and heading towards Byzantium, and then Georgia. No one would harbor him, knowing that his actions entailed death not only for himself, but for anyone who dared aid him. He lived as an ascetic for six years before deciding to become a martyr. He therefore decided to travel to the caliph and to attempt to convert the leader of the Islamic world to Christianity. He presented himself at the caliphal court in Ruṣāfa, denied all the attempts of independent observers to halt his passage, and subsequently refused to convert back to Islam. Vahan was then put to death in 737.

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[511] Jinbashian (2000), 131.

[512] See Grousset (1984), 308: "Les Arabes, jusque-là si tolérants, se laissaient maintenant aller à une véritable persécution religieuse. Le 31 mars 693, l'*ostikan* ou préfet arabe ʿAbdallah fit crucifier à Dwin un néophyte de race persane nommé Sourhan, originaire du Khorassan, baptisé sous le nom de Davith et qui est depuis inscrit au martyrologe arménien."

[513] Gatteyrias (1880), 195.

Still, it is difficult to sustain an argument of religious intolerance with the example of Vahan's martyrdom. The Christians were allowed to visit him during his imprisonment and followed Vahan *en masse* to witness his execution, dividing his clothes as relics after the fact. The Christians then constructed a chapel to house his body, which the hagiographer claims to have visited. From the perspective of Islamic law, apostasy was punishable by death; Vahan pushed for the martyrdom, literally seeking it as he traveled from Armenia to the caliphal court. However, Christians who did not transgress the precepts of Islamic law were allowed considerable leniency. The monasteries described are particularly wealthy, Christians were not prevented from venerating icons, and Vahan was provided a Christian burial.[514] Vahan was killed because he transgressed as a Muslim, not because he lived as a Christian. "Le martyre de Vahan Gołt'nac'i, ancien converti à l'Islam revenu au christianisme et exécuté à Damas en 737, ne constitue pas, au moins du point du vue musulman, une mesure de persécution contre les chrétiens."[515]

Although there are many more examples of martyrdom in this period, no other story caught the imagination as did Saint Abo, the patron saint of Tiflīs. Abo was an Arab, born and raised as a Muslim in Baghdad. At the age of seventeen he traveled to Tiflīs, where he learned about Christianity. Seeking a safe haven before converting, he quickly left for Ḫazaria in order to escape punishment for apostasy. Upon his return, the prince warns Abo: "Geh nicht von hier aus dem Lande, denn das Land Kharthi haben die Araber besetzt; du bist geboren Araber, und sie werden dich in deinem Christentum nicht unter sich lassen..."[516] Abo's response taps into a familiar trope: Christianity is the difference between the light of knowledge and the darkness of

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[514] Jinbashian (2000), 198.

[515] Mahé (1993), 487.

[516] Schultze (1905), 25.

ignorance. This is only the first of many attempts to sway Abo into fleeing his martyrdom, each of which the hero resolutely dismisses.

Abo was martyred in 786, five years after his conversion and three years after his return to Georgia from the North. The perpetrators, knowing the Christian traditions concerning relics, burned the body away from the city for three reasons: to discourage the growth of a local cult, to frighten Christians into accepting Islam, and to dissuade other Muslims from converting. Regardless, masses of Christians flocked to the site with candles and incense, collecting the dirt to preserve as relics.[517] This story, again, does not suggest that the Arab authorities were concerned with Christianity *per se,* but rather with the precepts of Islamic law. In fact, in this case it was rather the sentiments of the local Muslims that required the martyr's death: Abo was arrested and released and it was only the outrage of the locals that led the *amīr* to re-arrest him and put him to death.

These three stories are the most famous examples of martyrdom from the Arab period in the caliphal North, though certainly not the only cases. There are several valuable lessons in examining them together. First, the stories of martyrdoms gained much popularity specifically due to their usefulness in discouraging apostasy from Christianity by portraying the Islamic regime as particularly vicious.[518] This implies that they must be read not only in clear recognition of their polemical intent, but also as proof that the situation at the time must have warranted concern in Christian quarters. In other words, martyrologies only serve their purpose if there are

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[517] Schultze (1905), 21 – 41. This practice was known in the Sasanian period, as well. See Łazar Pᶜarpecᶜi, 208: և հրամայէր սպանանել անդէն և անհետ առնել զմարմին սրբոյն, յաղագս չզտանելոյ ուրուք ի քրիստոնէից, ի պատիւ տանելոյ զոսկերս նորա:

[518] Hoyland (2007), 347.

Christians turning to Islam, hence the common motif of martyrs forgoing specific (usually worldly) advantages that they would receive upon accepting Islam.

Second, it must be noted that Dawit[c], Vahan, and Abo's stories are all indicative of inter-confessional hagiographical trends, certain details of which must be interpreted in direct comparison to the Greek and Syriac martyrologies of the Sasanian period such as Magundat/Anastasius and Mihrmahgušnasp/George.[519] Hagiographical literature demonstrates remarkable continuity during the transfer from Sasanian to Islamic rule: these martyrs are all converts to Christianity, which was against the religious law of the reigning power (Zoroastrians converting to Christianity during the Sasanian regime; Muslims converting under Islam). They stayed alive and active after their conversion for a number of years, frequently taking a Christian name. They all went forth embracing martyrdom, dismissing chances to escape persecution and encountering other Christians to whom they preached. They were offered and they rejected earthly rewards for renouncing Christianity. Martyrology is in this respect a very conservative genre, preserving trends that in this case support the argument for continuity between the Sasanian and Islamic periods.[520]

Finally, there was no attempt to restrict Christian dedicatory practices. Despite the existence of numerous martyrologies, Christian practice and belief were protected by the dicta of Islamic law. There were no attempts to force the general population to convert, but there is some evidence that the government permitted the building of *martyria*, the gathering of large crowds to commemorate the martyrs, and the veneration of relics. In these cases, the preservation of Islam was the primary goal, not the persecution of Christianity.

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[519] See Anastas, 40 – 91; for Mihramgušnasp, see Reinink (1999) and Rist (1996).

[520] Lassner (2012), 240: "One would be right to suspect that there is more hagiography than history in these Christian responses to Islam." He explains that Christian hagiography took as its models the stories of early Christian martyrs in Rome.

6.4 Conversion to Islam

Łewond, Dasxuranc^ci, and Drasxanakertc^ci are the main sources for Armenian conversion to Islam, though they only provide a few stories each. There is no way to quantify conversions by prosopographical materials (à la R. Bulliet) or poll tax data (à la D. C. Dennett). We are left with a few anecdotal stories from the Armenian sources. It is certain that, despite the lack of information in extant sources, Armenians did in fact convert to Islam, and likely in considerable numbers; otherwise, the Armenian sources would not have been as impassioned about the subject. The martyrologies discussed above were retained as useful stories specifically because they inspired the masses and encouraged Christians to resist the lure of conversion.

During the caliphate of al-Hādī (785 – 6), a number of *naxarar*s were imprisoned under the governor Xasm (who, problematically, was only in Armenia in 787). They asked how they could attain freedom and a sympathetic bystander told them: "There is no way possible for you to escape his clutches, but if you agree to convert to our faith and believe in the sayings of our prophet, then you will escape from the trap death."[521] While some suffered bloody martyrdom, at least one apostatized. Łewond describes his fate (eternal damnation) as a counterbalance to the tortures suffered by the martyrs, juxtaposing the courage of those who faced death to the weakness of those who converted to save themselves.

Dasxuranc^ci also relates stories to compare the bravery of the martyrs to the cowardice of those who accepted Islam to avoid persecution. For example, the governor ^cAbd al-^cAzīz attempted to convert two brothers, Manuk and Mardazat. One was martyred and his relics became objects of veneration, while the other apostatized and regretted his decision for the rest

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[521] Łewond, 196: ոչ իւիք հնար զոյ ձեզ ապրել ի ձեռաց նորա բայց եթէ յանձին կալջիք դառնալ ի հաւատոն մեր եւ հաւանել ձայնի մարգարէին մերոյ, եւ ապա զերծջիք ի դաւոչ մահուանէն:

of his life.[522] Drasxanakertc̔i's main concern about conversion relates specifically to the campaigns of Buġā. He tells several stories of martyrs who withstood the persuasions of the Arabs and who were finally put to death for refusing to convert (about 150 martyrs in all). However, he does mention that the rigors of martyrdom were too much for some, who converted to spare their lives and henceforth lived in shame.[523]

Armenian historiography does not easily allow for voluntary conversion to Islam.[524] Each of these stories is therefore included in order to offset the valor of the martyrs, not to remark upon the people who are accepting Islam. It is reasonable to suggest that there were considerably more (and voluntary) conversions to Islam, but the Armenian sources are silent on this topic. This was a conscious decision: as T̔ovma Arcruni writes about an apostate, he concludes, "lest I expatiate too long on his shameful error—wicked, selfish, unrepentant, and without scruple—let us eject him from the annals of the princes, since he did not hate the lawless one like the shameless one."[525]

There is no definitive way to quantify conversion to Islam in Armīniya, although there are two possible avenues of research: (1) consider non-Armenian sources, which only refer to

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[522] Dasxuranc̔i, 319.

[523] Drasxanakertc̔i, 120 – 125 and 128 – 137.

[524] See Mahé (1997), 60: "Quiconque refuse d'adhérer à cette confession n'a plus le droit de se dire arménien. Il est moralement et juridiquement privé de sa nationalité." He attributes this tendency to the tenth and eleventh centuries, though it stands to reason that this could be projected back. Mahé is presumably basing this date on the comment by T̔ovma Arcruni seen above , but we also don't hear of Armenian Muslims in the works of earlier historians.

[525] T̔ovma Arcruni, qtd. in Thomson (1985), 224. Thomson notes that the Sasanian king was called the "lawless one," a title then passed on to the caliph. See T̔ovma Arcruni, 248: և զի մի երկայնեալ որ ինչ վասն սորա ապիրատ և ինքնակամ և անգիտ և անխիղճ առանց պատկառանաց մոլորութիւն սորա լի անամօթութեամբ՝ ի բաց դիցուք զսա ի միջոյ լիշատակի նախարարացն, զի ոչ եթէ ատեաց զանoրէնն իբրև զանամoթն:

Armenian conversion much later than the Arab period[526] and (2) comb through Armenian histories with the intention of extrapolating as much as possible from the scanty information available. While Łewond, Dasxurancᶜi, and Tᶜovma Arcruni all preserve snippets suggesting that conversion was forced upon Armenians by threat of martyrdom, most of the stories are linked to specific military campaigns. Their value, like the burning of the church of Naxĵiwan, is suspended between evidence of religious persecution and the realities of political circumstances in the eighth and ninth centuries. The Arabs very likely encouraged conversion, though there is no evidence to support any sort of broad policy on the matter.

A comprehensive study of Armenian conversion to Islam is unlikely ever to be feasible. For present purposes, it suffices to note that many of these conversion stories echo episodes from Sasanian history: a valiant hero is defeated by the Persians (read: Arabs), then offered a chance to convert to Zoroastrianism (Islam) in a show of loyalty to the state. This was frequently the only choice allowed to those accused of rebellion either under the Sasanians or the early caliphate. Łazar Pᶜarpecᶜi's work preserves a similar ultimatum: if a perceived traitor converts, he has proved his faithfulness to the state and may be allowed to live unencumbered or even with vaunted status.[527]

6.5   Conclusion

Caliphal "policy" is certainly not a clear-cut issue, as norms and expectations of the center and the local authorities likely changed considerably depending on historical circumstances. The relationship between Muselims and Christians in Armīniya depended in large part upon the

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[526] The Muslim Armenians of Sewerak, see Mattᶜēos Uṙhayecᶜi, Bar Hebraeus, Michael the Syrian.

[527] Łazar Pᶜarpecᶜi, 232: Թէ հաւանին արեգական և կրակի երկիր պագանել, և զմեր օրէնս յանձն առնուն պաշտել՝ նոցա զմահապարտութիւնն թողում, և զագատորեարսն զոր կապեալ է՝ արձակեմ ի Հայս, և զիւրաքանչիւր ուրուք զտանուտէրութիւն տամ և զգահ և զպատիւ:

position of the local rulers, who may or may not have upheld the interests of Damascus and Baghdad consistently. Broadly speaking, though, the Arabs made little concerted attempt to persecute Christianity in Armīniya, even though the tenors of such stories (the burning of the churches of Naxǰiwan and Xram, the martyrdom of Dawitᶜ Dwinecᶜi, Abo of Tiflīs, and Vahan Gołtᶜnacᶜi) are available in Armenian sources. However, there are a few markers to show similarity between the Islamic and the Sasanian treatment of Armenian Christians and a measure of continuity for the Armenian population under both Persian and Arab control. These include: the protected status of non-Chalcedonian Christians, the juridical autonomy of the Christian community, freedom of religion in exchange for taxes, the death penalty for converts from Islam to Christianity, the development of martyrology, and the pressure to convert to prove political loyalty. Again, though the question of continuity from the Sasanian period is particularly significant in this way, we also see traces of interconfessional dialogue, especially literary relations between Armenians and Syrian Christians.

Chapter 7: Islamic Armīniya and the Alexander Legends

He looked at the mountain which encircled the whole world | The great boundary which God had established from everlasting.

Mēmrā dᶜal Aleksandrōs bar Pilipūs [528]

Arab perception of Armīniya as a *t̲aġr* against the Byzantines and Ḫazars required not only that the province not only be conquered by Muslim armies and home to Muslim settlers, but that it should also be relevant to the Islamic world in a more profound manner. Thus we find not only descriptions of mosques and Islamic shrines in Armīniya, but also stories and traditions that link Armīniya to the Qurʾānic narrative and Prophetic tradition. Geographers, exegetes, and historians of the Islamic world described Armīniya as relevant to both caliphal history and the apocalyptic future of the *umma*.

This Islamic identity can be illustrated by examining (1) the instances where Qurʾānic episodes are explicitly linked to Armīniya in Arabic geographies and histories and (2) the references to Armīniya found in *tafsīr*. Surprisingly, each instance refers specifically to legends concerning Alexander the Great. Furthermore, a close examination of the details relevant to these disparate comments in Arabic literature demonstrates that these legends were not transmitted directly from Arab – Armenian dialog; rather, this process was completed in dialogue with the Christians and Jews of the Near East, most significantly with Syriac-speaking Christians.

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[528] *Mēmrā,* trans. Budge (1889), 178; *Mēmrā,* 62. See Reinink (1983), 76: The three recensions are all nearly identical. Recension I reads: "Er blickte auf das Gebirge, das die ganze Welt umkriest, die grosse Ganze, die Gott festgesetzt hatte von alters her."

7.1 The Corpus of Alexander Legends concerning Armīniya

The sacralization of Armīniya required the internalization and domestication of earlier Christian beliefs, most especially those related to Alexander the Great, as *īsrā'īliyyāt*. Legendary sites and histories, familiar to Jewish and Greek, Armenian, Georgian and Syrian Christian discourse, surface in the Islamic milieu in a new manner. The Islamic reconceptualization of the North and associated legends are mitigated through Syriac and/or Persian literature as opposed to the Greek or, by extension, the local Armenian or Georgian sources.

Since the publication of T. Nöldeke's *Beiträge zur Geschichte des Alexanderromans*, the influence of Syriac traditions about Alexander on the development of Islamic thought has been readily accepted. Nöldeke proposed that Ḥunayn Ibn Isḥāq created an Arabic rendition of Ps. Callisthenes in the ninth century from a Syriac original, itself based upon a Pahlavi translation. The Pahlavi text, in turn, was a translation from the Greek recension δ, no copy of which is extant today.[529] The Islamic conceptualization of Alexander was developed in dialogue not only with the Syriac Ps. Callisthenes, but also with other Syriac texts, most notably (1) Ps. Methodius; (2) *Taš'itā d'Aleksandrōs* [the History of Alexander]; (3) Ps. Dionysius' *Chronicle*; (3) *Neṣḥānā d'Aleksandrōs* [the Adventure of Alexander]; (4) *Mēmrā dᶜal Aleksandrōs bar Pilipūs* [the Sermon about Alexander, son of Philip]; and (5) an apocalyptic poem by Ephrem Syrus. It is the fourth of these, the *Mēmrā* (Reinick's *Alexanderlied),* which most frequently corresponds to details in the Islamic sources. The *Mēmrā,* while traditionally attributed to Jacob of Serug (d. 521), shows evidence dating it instead to the seventh century, after the arrival of the Muslim

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[529] Wolohojian (1969), 2 claims that an Arabic version from the eleventh century was also part of the α recension, but this is not borne out in Doufikar-Aerts's exhaustive study.

armies in the Near East,[530] and can therefore be heralded as evidence of concurrent development of the Alexander story in Syriac and Islamic literature.

Early Armenian references to Alexander, however, are firmly based in the Greek Ps. Callisthenes tradition. The Armenian version of the text—based on Greek recension α — represents an entirely different branch from the Syriac. The Armenian recension has long been considered particularly faithful to the Greek original, representing perhaps the most complete version of recension α available to modern scholarship.[531] Its influence has been traced through the works of Movsēs Xorenacᶜi, Tᶜovma Arcruni, Mxitᶜar Goš, Yovhannēs Drasxanakertcᶜi, and Nersēs Šnorhali.[532]

Divergences in the different branches can help identify constituents in the development of Near Eastern *topoi*. Although there is evidence of early contact between Arabs and Armenians, for the most part Islamic traditions about Alexander and Armīniya develop in relation to either Persian or Syriac rather than local or Greek sources. For our purposes here, an in-depth analysis of the vast material available on the Alexander romance is unnecessary, for our goal is much more narrowly defined. First, Armīniya was understood as particularly relevant to the Islamic world, mainly due to the traditions about Alexander. Second, these traditions were not the result of a simple binary relationship whereby Islam absorbed and adapted local traditions. The Islamic understanding of Alexander developed in dialogue with Syriac and possibly Persian literature, as well as Armenian and Georgian traditions, which stands as evidence of both the polyvocal conversations between Islam and Christianity and the enduring relevancy of Sasanian antecedents to the relationship between Armīniya and the caliphate.

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[530] Reinink (2003), 155 – 158.

[531] Zacher (1867).

[532] Wolohojian (1969), 9 – 14, ctd. H. Tašean (1892).

In particular, there are four details that link the Islamic understanding of Alexander to the province of Armīniya: (1) the location and identity of Gog and Magog; (2) the Land of Darkness and the biblical North; (3) the rock of Moses and the virtues of patience; and (4) al-Qāf.

7.1.1 Gog and Magog: Location and Identity

> Verily We established his power on Earth, and We gave him the ways and the means to all ends. One (such) way he followed, until, when he reached the setting of the sun, he found it set in a spring of murky water: Near it he found a people: We said: "Oh Zul-Qarnain! (thou hast authority,) either to punish them, or treat them with kindness." He said: "Whoever doth wrong, him shall we punish; then shall he be sent back to his Lord; and He will punish him with a punishment unheard-of (before). But whoever believes, and works righteousness,-- he shall have a goodly reward, and easy will be his task as We order it by our command. Then followed he (another) way, until, when he came to the rising of the sun, he found it rising on a people for whom We had provided no covering protection against the sun. (He left them) as they were: We completely understood what was before him. Then followed he (another) way, until, when he reached (a tract) between two mountains, he found, beneath them, a people who scarcely understood a word. They said: "O Zul-qarnain! The Gog and Magog (people) do great mischief on the earth: shall we then render thee tribute in order that thou mightiest erect a barrier between us and them?" He said: "(The power) in which my Lord has established me is better (than tribute): Help me therefore with strength (and labour): I will erect a strong barrier between you and them. Bring me blocks of iron." At length, when he had filled up the space between the two steep mountain-sides, He said, "Blow (with your bellows)." Then, when he had made it (red) as fire, he said: "Bring me, that I may pour over it, molten lead." Thus were they made powerless to scale it or to dig through it. He said: "This is a mercy from my Lord. But when the promise of my Lord comes to pass, He will make it into dust; and the promise of my Lord is true." On that day, We shall leave them to surge like waves on one another: the trumpet will be blown, and We shall collect them all together.[533]
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> - Qur'an 18: 84 – 99

Certain details about traditions related to Gog and Magog indicate direct links between Syriac and Islamic traditions. For example, the very names are similar in Syriac and Arabic:

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[533] Abdullah Yusuf Ali Translation.

though al-Ṭabarī links a Qurʾānic exegesis to the root, Yāǧūǧ wa Māǧūǧ (without the hamza) is etymologically related to the Syriac Ajūj wa Majūj.[534] There are also multiple specific descriptive details about the wall of Gog and Magog,[535] its key with twelve teeth,[536] and the eschatological roles assigned to them that demonstrate parallels between the Syriac and Islamic traditions, but not the Greek or Armenian.

The Armenian version of Ps. Callisthenes makes no mention of Gog and Magog; although Alexander travels to Armenia and through the Caspian Gates, there is no mention of any type of construction. By the tenth century, Dasxurancʿi refers to a barrier built by Alexander in order to secure the land from the attacks of the Huns.[537] Even if this is a reference to the famed enclosure, the reference is late and indicative of a completely different literary and religio-social milieu, one in which Armenian familiarity with not merely Muslims and Arabs, but also with the Islamic literary tradition is much more developed.

The first explicit reference to Alexander's enclosure of Gog and Magog in Armenian does not surface until the twelfth century, when it appears nearly simultaneously in the works of Ps. Epiphanius and Vanakan vardapet, as well as Vardan Arewelcʿi's translation of Michael the Syrian. By the fourteenth century, Stepʿannos Ōrbelean preserves some part of Ps. Methodius

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[534] Van Donzel & Schmidt (2009), 97 – 98. Qtd al-Ṭabarī: "both names are non-Arabic, but some say that they are rather Arabic, the distinction lying in their etymology. The derivation of the names from the verb madja comes from God Himself: 'And We shall leave them on that day surging against each other' [Koran XVIII: 99]." Van Donzel & Schmidt (2009), 19 no. 10, interestingly suggests that the epithet "Two-Horned" was first applied to Alexander in the *Neṣḥānā d'Aleksandrōs*, meaning that this name was also introduced to Arabs via a Syriac intermediary. This seems impossible to verify, cf: Anderson (1927).

[535] Van Donzel & Schmidt (2009), 175 – 181.

[536] Zadeh (2011), 108 – 110.

[537] Van Donzel & Schmidt (2009), 38: "He [Mesrop] even brought Christianity to the Hephthalites (Huns), whom 'Alexander imprisoned and settled in the Caucasus'. Thomas Artsruni, another historian of the same period, reports how the Armenians tried to resist Islam when the Arabs occupied the country. He expresses his fear for forced conversions in an apocalyptic vision of the 'gate of divine wrath'. Artsruni, however, understands the gate symbolical as a punishment for unfaithfulness."

and claims to be working from an eighth century translation of the work.[538] Again, this is late

enough to allow for considerable doubt concerning its relevance for the earlier period. Without

substantial advances in the history of Ps. Methodius in Armenian, it is not possible to trace the

development of Islamic exegesis referencing Armīniya to cross-cultural dialogue between

Armenians and Arabs.

Georgian sources, while perhaps more promising in some respects, present another set of

historiographical difficulties. On the one hand, there is some consensus that Georgian historical

works relied partially on Syriac sources, including Ps. Methodius, Ps. Callisthenes, the *Cave of

Treasures,* and possibly even *Neṣḥānā d'Aleksandrōs,* as well as later works, such as *The Book

of the Bee.*[539] There are few references to Alexander's barrier from an early period, but there is

reference to the idea of the "children of Magog" in the North.[540]

Syriac sources, however, firmly locate the wall to the North. The Syriac *Neṣḥānā

d'Aleksandrōs* does not envision Alexander as the engineer of the wall, describing the mountains

themselves with reference to Old Testament genealogy as God's protection from the descendants

of Gog and Magog.[541]

The *Mēmrā dᶜal d'Aleksandrōs* follows the same general thread of conversation between

Alexander and the old men, but concludes that Alexander felt the need to build a wall to secure

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[538] See Ervine (2000). Van Donzel & Schmidt (2009), 41: "…the Armenians probably did not explicitly articulate Alexander's gate in the Caucasus before the 12th century."

[539] Van Donzel & Schmidt (2009), 44; Rapp (2003), 125 – 129; Lerner (2001).

[540] Schultze (1905), 23: "Aber Nerse kam auf seiner Flucht aus seinem Lande in das Land des Nordens, wo der Aufenthalt und Lagerplatz der Söhne Magogs ist, welches die Chasarnen sind, wilde Männer mit schrecklichen Gesichtern..."

[541] *Neṣḥānā,* trans. Budge (1889), 150. *Neṣḥānā,* 262 – 263.

God's boundary, effectively to plug "a narrow pass which had been constructed by God."[542] The

Mēmrā describes the process in considerable detail, firmly placing the structure in the North:

"King Alexander made haste and made the door against the north [*garbāyā*], and against the

spoilers and the children of Magôg."[543]

A fragmentary Syriac apocalyptic text related to Ps. Methodius contains the most specific

reference to the placement of the barrier:

> Then the gates of Armenia will be opened, and the descendants of Gog and
> Magog shall issue forth: they were twenty-four tribes, with twenty-four languages.
> When King Alexander saw these people eating the reptiles of the earth and all
> sorts of polluted things, including human flesh, eating the dead and every kind of
> unclean thing, performing magic rites and all kinds of evil deeds, he gathered
> them together, took them to the interior of these mountains, and confined them
> there. He then besought God that the mountains should come together, which
> came to pass, leaving a gateway [only] twenty cubits wide between the mountains.
> This gateway he closed up…[544]

The importance of this text is far from conclusive, since it has been dated anywhere from the

seventh century A.D. to the seventh century A.H. For the present purposes, however, the date of

composition is not particularly vital. After all, the important aspect of this text is that it verifies

the conversation between Syriac-speaking Christians and Arab/Persian Muslims; it is not

intended to suggest any sort of inheritance, which would require chronological primacy be

provided to Syriac texts to demonstrate the reliance of Islamic texts on their Christian

counterparts. The relevant point here is instead that Syriac and Islamic texts clearly coincide,

implying considerable dialogue that helps shape perceptions about Armīniya; Armenian,

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[542] *Mēmrā,* trans. Budge (1889), 178. See also Reinink (1983), 76 – 77 and *Mēmrā,* 62 – 63.

[543] *Mēmrā,* trans. Budge (1889), 184. See also Reinink (1983), 96: Recension 1 reads: "König Alexander beeilte sich mit dem Bau des Tores | gegen den Norden wegen der Räuber und der Magogiten"; *Mēmrā,* 78.This section is missing from Recension II. Reinink (1983), 96: Recension III reads: "König Alexander beeilte sich mit der Errichtung des Tores | gegen den Norden wegen der Räuber, [der] Gogiten und Magogiten."; *Mēmrā,* 79.

[544] Palmer (1993), 246.

Georgian, and Greek sources, however, do not demonstrate this level of interaction with the fledgling perceptions of Islamic Armīniya.

The Islamic tradition about the location of Alexander's wall is certainly not uniform. Eventually, the wall will be placed far away, in the steppes of Central Asia or, alternatively, in Siberia or Spain. The enclosure represents the edge of the civilized world; as Armīniya became more familiar to Muslims, they (like the local Armenians and the Georgians) were simply required to come to terms with the nonexistence of the barrier in the immediate vicinity and therefore pushed it farther and farther afield.

The Qur'ānic passage demonstrates some similarities with Syriac Christian beliefs; however, the Qur'ān is considerably vague about details, including the precise location. It is therefore the prerogative of exegetes and, by extension, Muslim scholars in general, to determine the particulars—an endeavor that they undertook in conversation with the Christian world, adopting and adapting Christian traditions as *isrā'īliyyāt*.

Ibn al-Faqīh places the description of the wall under the heading of Armīniya, but explains that it is two months travel from the Ḫazars.[545] Al-Ṭabarī and al-Bayḍāwī's exegeses on Q18: 93 – 96 demonstrate the uncertainty about the location of the wall: "in Armenia, in Azerbaijan, or in the most eastern part of the land of the Turks; but the two mountains perhaps are also to be found between Armenia and Azerbaijan or in the farthest North." Similarly, al-Rāzī is uncertain: it is "in the north, between Armenia and Azerbaijan, or they should be looked for in the degree of latitude of the Turks."[546] The shift to the East can be considered in two ways. First, it may be

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[545] Ibn al-Faqīh, 298 – 301.

[546] Van Donzel & Schmidt (2009), 81 – 82.

indicative of the stress caused by the rise in power of the Turkish faction in Sāmarrā'.[547]

Alternatively, it may be related to a reading of Ps. Methodius's apocalypse or the *Cave of Treasures*, both of which mention Alexander's voyage in a place called "the Fire of the Sun" or the location of the rising sun,[548] as is mentioned in Q18:90. This was familiar to the Arab world, as is substantiated by the verse of Imru' al-Qays:

> And he built a barrier where the sun rises
> Against Gog and Magog among the mountains.[549]

However, the Qur'ānic passage claims that ḏū al-Qarnayn circuited the entire world: from the land where the sun sets to the land where the sun rises and then "he followed (another) way" to the barrier, implying that the location of the barrier cannot be equated with either the extreme West or East. Throughout early Islamic history there were multiple attempts to reach the famous barrier built by ḏū al-Qarnayn, each of which at least began (if not always ended) in Armīniya. Al-Ṭabarānī, Yāqūt, and Ibn Kaṯīr all mention an expedition ordered by ʿUmar set out to see Alexander's wall and arrived at Bāb al-Abwāb. Subsequently, during the caliphate of al-Wāṯiq, Sallām al-Tarǧumān set out from Sāmarrā' and, having passed through Armīniya and met with the governor, proceeded on to Alexander's gate.

A separate point of controversy, linked to the location of Alexander's wall and similarly indicative of the cross-cultural development of traditions about Armīniya, is the identity of Gog

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[547] Van Donzel & Schmidt (2009), 82.

[548] Ps. Methodius, trans. Martinez (1985), I 132: "He conquered many places [and cities], and went about all over the land. He came to the East, and went as far as the sea which is called 'the Sun's fire,' where he saw unclean people of hideous appearance, the sons of Japeth." See Ps. Methodius, 69. See also Ps. Methodius, trans. Martinez (1985), I 129: "In the future, however, they will come out and devastate the earth, and rule over it. They will seize the countryside, the fords, and the entrances to the cultivated land, from Egypt to Kūsh, from the Eurphrates to India, and from the Tigris to the sea which is called 'the Sun's Fire,' and to the kingdom of Yōnṭōn, son of Noah; and in the North as far as the Great Rome, and to the great sea of Pontos." See Ps. Methodius, 65 – 66: However, Alexander's gate is still considered to be in the North, see Ps. Methodius, 134 in English, 71 in Syriac.

[549] Imru' al-Qays, qtd. and trans. Zadeh (2011), 98: وَسَدَّ بِحَيْثُ تَرقَى الشَّمْسُ سَدّاً   إِيأْجُوجَ وَمَأْجُوجَ الْجِبَالا

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and Magog. Jewish and Christian treatment of this question is informed by Biblical references,

particularly Ezekiel 38 and 39:

- Ezekiel 38: 1 – 6 (NIV): The word of the LORD came to me: "Son of man, set your face against Gog, of the land of Magog, the chief prince of Meshek and Tubal; prophesy against him and say: 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: I am against you, Gog, chief prince of Meshek and Tubal. I will turn you around, put hooks in your jaws and bring you out with your whole army—your horses, your horsemen fully armed, and a great horde with large and small shields, all of them brandishing their swords. Persia, Cush and Put will be with them, all with shields and helmets, also Gomer with all its troops, and Beth Togarmah from the far north with all its troops— the many nations with you.
- Ezekiel 38: 15 – 16 (NIV): You will come from your place in the far north, you and many nations with you, all of them riding on horses, a great horde, a mighty army. You will advance against my people Israel like a cloud that covers the land. In days to come, Gog, I will bring you against my land, so that the nations may know me when I am proved holy through you before their eyes.
- Ezekiel 39: 1 – 2 (NIV): Son of man, prophesy against Gog and say: 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: I am against you, Gog, chief prince of Meshek and Tubal. I will turn you around and drag you along. I will bring you from the far north and send you against the mountains of Israel.

These references must be considered in the light of Old Testament concern about an

unnamed "foe from the north," alternatively interpreted as the Scythians, Babylonians, an

eschatological force, or a completely unknowable entity:[550]

- Jeremiah 1: 14 – 15 (NIV): The LORD said to me, "From the north disaster will be poured out on all who live in the land. I am about to summon all the peoples of the northern kingdoms," declares the LORD. "Their kings will come and set up their thrones in the entrance of the gates of Jerusalem; they will come against all her surrounding walls and against all the towns of Judah.
- Jeremiah 4: 6 (NIV): Raise the signal to go to Zion! Flee for safety without delay! For I am bringing disaster from the north, even terrible destruction.
- Jeremiah 6:1 (NIV): Flee for safety, people of Benjamin! Flee from Jerusalem! Sound the trumpet in Tekoa! Raise the signal over Beth Hakkerem! For disaster looms out of the north, even terrible destruction.
- Jeremiah 6:22 (NIV): This is what the LORD says: "Look, an army is coming from the land of the north; a great nation is being stirred up from the ends of the earth.

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[550] Reimer (1989).

Jeremiah 51: 27 specifically designates the kingdom of Ararat as a northern constituent

against this foe: "Lift up a banner in the land! Blow the trumpet among the nations! Prepare the

nations for battle against her; summon against her these kingdoms: Ararat, Minni and Ashkenaz.

Appoint a commander against her; send up horses like a swarm of locusts." If "der Norden ist die

Brutstätte und der Ausgangspunkt der Unheilsmächte,"[551] what does that say about nations such

as Gog and Magog, already established as inhabitants of the North?

The identification of Gog and Magog has long been a question of determining the

greatest fears and enemies of the urban population; they manifest as tropes across many religious

and literary boundaries of the Near East. Josephus determined that the Scythians were Gog and

Magog; after the Huns invaded the south in the fourth century, they inherited the appellation. By

the Umayyad period, the Ḫazars had achieved notoriety from nearly incessant warfare and were

easily portrayed as the heirs of Gog and Magog. In fact, the Ḫazar threat is bemoaned long after

relations between the Caliphate and its northern neighbors calmed. The charge is not merely a

question of direct inheritance, but rather the persistent relevance of a rather Ḫaldūnian concept:

the Ḫazars had become archetypes for "pastoralist highlanders and nomadic invaders" poised

against the "sedentary populations" of the Near East.[552]

A quick review of identifications of Gog and Magog will not only substantiate the

argument that early Islamic tradition placed the wall at the northern edge of Armīniya; it will

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[551] Reimer (1989).

[552] Rapp (unpublished draft). See also Zadeh (2011), 76: "One widely circulated tale related by Qazwīnī, in his encyclopedia of natural wonders, details how Anūshirwān, after building the bulwark along Darband against the Turks and the Khazars, sat on the top of it wondering if indeed his wall would stand the test of time. He then fell asleep, whereupon he had a vision of a creature (*sākin min sukkān*) from the Caspian Sea. The creature recounted that God had informed him that while all other such fortifications would not withstand the vicissitudes of time, Anūshirwān's wall would last forever. Various elements from this anecdote clearly relate to Dhū 'l-Qarnayn's rampart, and are perhaps indicative of an older Sāsānian parallel to the wall of Gog and Magog, suggesting a broader historical motif of bottling up nomadic tribes against incursions at the edge of civilization."

also suggest that the Islamic identification of Gog and Magog was, again, more in line with

Syriac examples than Armenian. First, in both Syriac and Islamic works, there is a demonstrable

attempt to push the traditions about Gog and Magog farther afield, due to their familiarity with

the peoples of the Caucasus. For example, al-Muqaddasī specifies that people claim that Gog and

Magog live in Georgia, but that he, an accomplished geographer with a more informed opinion,

knows that a considerable distance separates them from the Armenian frontier.[553] The

identification of Gog and Magog in Islamic texts is commonly restricted to the generalization

that they are "Turks," a designation too vague to offer a conclusive reading, as it is utilized for

peoples from Ḫazaria to Ḫurasān.

Al-Qazwīnī, Ibn Ḥağar, and Abū Hurayra specify the genealogy of Gog and Magog in

conformity with Genesis 10: 1 – 3.[554] Al-Masʿūdī also identifies the same patrimony and links it

to the North:

> The Franks, Slavs, [Nūkbard?], Spanish, Gog and Magog, Turks, Ḫazar, Bulgars,
> Allans, Galicians, and the others we mentioned from al-ğadī, which is the North:[555]
> there is no difference between specialists in disputation [*ahl al-baḥt*] and the view of the
> poets that all of those peoples we mentioned are the descendents of Yāfit b. Nūḥ, the
> youngest of the sons of Nūḥ.[556]

Yāqūt leaves some distance, claiming "some of them think that Gog and Magog are the

Ḫazar."[557]

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[553] Zadeh (2011), 145. He working from al-Muqaddasī, 46: قال قوم سد ياجوج وماجوج خلف الاندلس وقال اخرون هو درب خزران
compared to his stance, based on the account of Ibn Ḫurradāḏbih, 362: ويقع سد ياجوج وماجوج من; وياجوج وماجوج هم الخزر
See also al- Muqaddasī's own judgment, 365: وهذا يردّ قول من زعم انه بالاندلس ورائها على نحو من شهرين.

[554] Van Donzel & Schmidt (2009), 82 – 84, 68 – 70.

[555] This edition has الجدي, one of the words De Goeje suggests is a corruption for الجربي.

[556] Al-Masʿūdī, *Murūğ*, II 5: الافرنجة والصقالبة والنوكبرد والاشبان ويأجوج ومأجوج والترك والخزر والبرجان واللان والجلالقة وغير ذلك
ممن ذكرنا ممن حل الجدي, وهو الشمال, لا خلاف بين أهل البحث والنظر من الشرعيين ان جميع من ذكرنا من هؤلاء الامم من ولد يافث بن نوح وهو
الاصغر من ولد نوح.

[557] Yāqūt, II 369: وقد ذهب بعضهم الى أن يأجوج ومأجوج هم الخزر

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Early Syriac, Georgian, and Latin sources identify Gog and Magog as the Ḫazars, either directly or by suggesting immediate descent. Armenian identification of Gog and Magog, however, does not conform to this pattern. Sebēos considers Gog and Magog to represent the third beast of Daniel: "He is speaking of the kingdoms of the North, Gog and Magog, and their two friends..."[558] He does not specify the association with the Ḫazars. Both Tᶜovma Arcruni and Drasxanakertcᶜi instead identify Gog and Magog as Celts and Galatians, presumably a vestige of Greek influence since this is attested in Eusebius's work. These are, of course, late references, but they substantiate the argument that Armenian concepts about the identity of Gog and Magog were at least in flux.

7.1.2   The Land of Darkness and the Biblical North

The domestication of the dark North in Islamic thought, less prominent than in local Christian sources, is inextricable from the Alexander legends of Gog and Magog. There are references to the darkness of the North in the Islamic stories of Gog and Magog, most famously Ibn Ḫurradāḏbih and al-Idrīsī relate that Sallām al-Tarǧumān, in search of the wall of Gog and Magog, started his journey through Armīniya. After leaving Tiflīs, the company transverses a "black, fetid land."

By the later period, descriptions of the Land of Darkness are embellished in the accounts of Arab historians: the angel Rafā'īl informs Alexander about the Water of Life in the Land of Darkness, Alexander provides a gem to illuminate al-Ḫiḍr's search for the fountain, a bird

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[558] Sebēos. 142: զՀիւսիսային ասէ զԹագաւորութիւն, Գոգ և Մագոգ, և երկու ընկերք նոցին, որոց տուաւ իշխանութիւն թոչել զաւրութեամբ ի ժամանակի իւրում ի կողմանս հիւսիսոյ: To this might be added Dasxurancᶜi, 232: Յայնմ ժամանակ զօրավարի և մեծի իշխանին Հոնաց՝ Ալփ Իլիթուերու առեալ զբազմութիւն զօրաց իւրոց, և որ ուստեք ուստեք եկեալ էին առ նա յախխուժաջենեան յաշխարհէն Գովգայ.

questions Alexander about mortality, the angel Serāfīl leads Alexander out of the Land of

Darkness and gives him a Wonderstone, and the company collects rocks from the ground which

turn out to be precious jewels. For the most part, F. Doufikar-Aerts is able to trace these

innovations in the Arabic legends of Alexander to an attempt to Islamize the content: the bird

asks questions about Islamic doctrine and mimics Q18:99, the passages are attributed to an

illustrious family member of the Prophet (ʿAlī Ibn Abī Ṭālib), and al-Ḫiḍr prostrates himself in

prayer fifty times at the Water of Life.[559] The Wonderstone, an element also found in the

Talmud, is evidence of a discussion between Islam and Judaism at a later date, well outside of

our period.

The Islamic conceptualization of this ominous land, clearly described as wondrous and

yet wholly incompatible with humanity, is consistent with many references to the Land of

Darkness in Syriac sources. The mountain barrier and Water of Life are both found in the Land

of Darkness in the *Mēmrā.* Alexander is portrayed as heedlessly stubborn in his quest to enter the

land, despite warnings of its inhospitable nature. It is described as "the land in which there is no

light"[560] and anyone who ventures into it does not return:

> Everyone who hears the mention of it flees that he may not enter therein
> Some men, in their audacity, dared to enter therein,
> And they went and perished and unto this day have not returned and come forth.[561]

Armenian sources, on the other hand, do not tell of such an ominous land, although there

are echoes of the dark North in local (Armenian and Georgian) histories. Georgian sources

frequently refer to the Caucasus as the "North" or the "northern mountains":

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[559] Doufikar-Aerts (2010), 172 – 173.

[560] *Mēmrā,* trans. Budge (1898), 171.

[561] *Mēmrā,* trans. Budge (1898), 170 – 171.

It happened that God mercifully looked upon this forgotten Northern land of Caucasia, the highland of Somxit𝑐i, whose mountains are covered with clouds and whose fields—with the fog of error and ignorance. And this Northern land was [deprived] of the Sun and the truth of the advent of God's acceptance, and it was rightfully called Northern. It is not because it lacked the sunlight then or lacks it now. Every man living under Heaven sees it and it illuminates all. And although it deprives several lands of heat, it sheds its light on all places. It is not for this reason that the land was called Northern; but it was because so many years had passed, and so many people, from Noah and Eber and Abraham…[L]ater there came to our land the priest of truth, Nino, our queen, as the dawn glows from the darkness and forms a rainbow, after which the great ruler of the day arises.[562]

Armenian historians, including Koriwn, Agat𝑐angełos, Xorenac𝑐i, Sebēos, the anonymous author of the *Primary History of Armenia*, and Dasxuranc𝑐i, similarly refer to Armenia and the Caucasus as the North.[563] However, in contradistinction to the "dark North" of Syriac and Islamic sources, the concept of darkness in Armenian sources,[564] following cues from both the Old and the New Testament[565] and Greek literature,[566] is linked to religious conviction instead of the depiction of the physical characteristics of the land itself: while pagan Armenia festered in

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[562] Lerner (2004), 82 - 83. See Rapp (forthcoming), 120 – 122.

[563] Rapp (unpublished draft). Note, however, Thomson (2006), 82 no. 93: depending on context, "the North" can refer to (1) Armenia; (2) the area to the north of the Caucasus; or (3) "*between* Babylon and Ararad." See also Thomson (1976), 472 §175 no. 1.

[564] There are examples of the dark North in early Georgian literature, see Lerner (2004), 178: The *Conversion of K𝑐art𝑐li* mentions "Go to the darkness of the north, to those mountains of Kedar." Lerner argues that the Biblical Kedar is used to refer to K𝑐art𝑐li in this text. See Lerner (2004), 82 – 83: he links the Georgian word *chirdilo,* which means both "dark" and "north" to the Semitic root k-d-r.

[565] Thomson (1976), 114 – 115 references Col. 1: 13 – 14 (NIV): "For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins" and I Thess 5: 5 (NIV): "You are all children of the light and children of the day. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness." See also Thomson (1976), 231 references I Pet. 2: 9 (NIV): "But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light." Thomson (1976), 235 references Isaiah 60: 1 - 2 (NIV): Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD rises upon you. See, darkness covers the earth and thick darkness is over the peoples, but the LORD rises upon you and his glory appears over you. Nations will come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn." And Ezekiel 34:12 (NIV): "As a shepherd looks after his scattered flock when he is with them, so will I look after my sheep. I will rescue them from all the places where they were scattered on a day of clouds and darkness." See Thomson (1976), 283 references John 1: 4 – 5 (NIV): "In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it."

[566] Anastase, 49.

darkness, Christian Armenia flourishes in the light:[567] "Behold the light which filled the land is the preaching of the gospel, which also fills the northern region."[568]

S. Rapp suggests that the description of the Caucasus as the North, while originating in biblical imagery, may have been domesticated into Sasanian cosmography with Ctesiphon replacing Assyria as the point of reference.[569] While this would ease the shift into the Islamic period, as Armīniya is as much "the North" to those in Baghdad as to their antecedents in Ctesiphon, the Islamic conception of the North is at least partially inherited directly from Christian tradition in Syriac rather than Sasanian cosmography. The first clue to this process is the toponym al-Ǧarbī, which is a direct transliteration of the Syriac word for North (*garbāyā*), used in Arabic to refer to the Sasanian province including Armīniya. Ter-Łewondyan argues that the term must have been introduced via a Persian intermediary, as Ibn Ḫurradāḏbih refers to Aḏarbayǧān by its Persian name, Aḏarbādakān (اذربادكان), in his description of al-Ǧarbī.[570] This adds weight to Rapp's theory, but it is admittedly inconclusive.

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[567] Among many such examples, consider Thomson (1976), 23: martyrs "arose like luminaries to scatter the mist of darkness from this land of Armenia"; Thomson (1976), 337: "From earliest times we were lost, enveloped in the ignorance of sin, wrapped in mist and fog, rendered stupid, unable to see, understand or discern the sun of righteousness; therefore we were blinded and immersed in darkness. But when the sweetness and benevolence of God our creator appeared to admonish and illuminate us his creatures, he shot the rays of his living light into our hearts and vivified our mortality by sending his holy and beloved martyrs to these regions"; Thomson (2006), 244: St. Gregory retired "after illuminating the whole of Armenia with the light of divine knowledge, banishing the darkness of idolatry and filling all regions with bishops and teachers…"; Thomson (2006), 246: "From the eastern regions of our land he arose for us as a true dawn, a heavenly sun and spiritual ray, an escape from the profound evil of idolatry…";

[568] Agatʿangełos, trans. Thomson (1976), 283. See 282: Աւասիկ լոյս զի ելից զկսայրս՝ այս քարոզութիւն Աւետարանին է, որ և զկողմն հիւսիսոյ լնու:

[569] Rapp (unpublished draft): "The Syro-Palestinian explanation prevails in scholarship but could "the North" at least in part proceed from a conceptualization of the known world in which Iran was the epicenter?...Paralleling the Semitic inclusion of Caucasia within the Northern land of darkness, the Avestan tradition imagined the North as a dark and cold realm and the abode of demons. There are instances in Iranian literature when authors avoided the term *abāxtar,* "the North," and instead replaced it with the toponym Ādurbādagān."

[570] Ter-Łewondyan (1961b), 66. See Heck (2002), 115: Ibn Ḫurradāḏbih's "reliance on Sasanian administrative sources and terminology can be said to indicate something of the administrative corps' identification with the

7.1.3   The Rock of Moses and the Virtues of Patience

Alexander's journey into the Land of Darkness forefronts the impetuous nature of humanity,

standing as an example of mortal aspirations to know, understand, or become the immortal. The

lesson is, of course, that immortality is incompatible with the human experience and that wisdom

entails the very acceptance of this fact. This lesson is conveyed in the Qur'ān:

> Behold, Moses said to his attendant, "I will not give up until I reach the junction
> of the two seas or (until) I spend years and years in travel." But when they
> reached the Junction, they forgot about their Fish, which took its course through
> the sea (straight) as in a tunnel. When they had passed on (some distance), Moses
> said to his attendant: "Bring us our early meal; truly we have suffered much
> fatigue at this (stage of) our journey." He replied: "Sawest thou (what happened)
> when we betook ourselves to the rock? I did indeed forget (about) the Fish: none
> but Satan made me forget to tell (you) about it: it took its course through the sea
> in a marvelous way!" Moses said: "That was what we were seeking after:" So
> they went back on their footsteps, following (the path they had come).[571]

Qur'an 18: 60 – 64

The Qur'ānic narrative tells tantalizing details referring to a fish that escaped from its fate

as Moses' dinner "in a marvelous way," following which Moses meets an unnamed servant of

God (traditionally identified as al-Ḥiḍr). The servant asks Moses for patience, claiming that the

prophet will not comprehend his actions, but the Qur'ān is clear that the servant has knowledge

directly from a divine source, as he was instructed by God himself. Moses follows the servant on

a short trip: first, the servant sinks a boat, then he kills an innocent young man, and finally he

rebuilds a wall in a village of inhospitable people without demanding payment. The story intends

to demonstrate to Moses (and the reader) the unfathomable will of God and the virtues of

patience when circumstances do not seem to favor those who are upright or believers. The

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Sasanian past…The use of Persian terminology should be understood to reflect a prevailing opinion among state
secretaries that Islam had inherited and built upon a Sasanian past."

[571] Abdullah Yusuf Ali Translation.

servant explains his actions: the boat belonged to a poor fisherman and its repairs saved it from being seized by a king, so the poor man did not lose his livelihood; the young man was not worthy of his believing parents and was destined to cause them considerable grief, while the parents would have a more worthy second son; and the wall preserved the treasure of two orphan boys from the village, which the servant wished to safeguard because the boys' father had been just.

Exegetes do not come to a consensus about the location of this story. Al-Bayḍawī and al-Ṭabarī both explain that "the junction of the two seas" is "the place where the Persian Ocean unites with the Roman Sea, to the east," meaning the Suez; others, including al-Zamaḫšarī and an alternate suggestion in al-Ṭabarī, point instead to Tangiers, the meeting of the Mediterranean and the Pacific. Wensinck interprets this shift as a demonstration of how definition of the extreme West was contextualized by knowledge of geography.[572]

Geographers of the Islamic world, however, are quite consistent that these episodes—both the escape of the fish and the subsequent morality lesson—took place in the North, between the Mediterranean and the Caspian. Al-Muqaddasī mentions that, "people say that the Rock of Moses is in Širwān; they say that the sea is the Caspian, the village is Baġarwān and the killing of the youth occurred in a place near the village of Ḫazarān."[573] Ibn Ḫurradāḏbih and Ibn al-Faqīh both write that, "the Rock is the rock of Širwān and the sea is the Sea of Ǧīlān, and the town is Baġrawān."[574] Yāqūt only mentions the Rock of Moses in passing, while describing

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[572] Wensinck (1986).

[573] al-Muqaddasī, 46: وقال قوم صخرة موسى بشروان والبحر بحيرة طبرستان والقرية باجروان وقتل الغلام بقرية خزران

[574] Ibn al-Faqīh, 287: وفي قصة موسى ارايت اذ اوينا الى الصخرة قال الصخرة صخرة شروان والبحر بحر جيلان والقرية باجروان. Ibn Ḫurradāḏbih, 123 : وفي قصص موسى عليه السلام ارايت اذ اوينا الى الصخرة فاني نسيت الحوت الذي حي والصخرة صخرة شروان والبحر بحر جيلان والقرية قرية باجروان حتى اذا لقيا غلاما فقتله في قرية خيزان

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Širwān, "in which there is the Rock of Moses, may peace be upon him, which is close to the Source of Life."[575]

The correlation between this Qur'ānic passage, Syriac literature, and Sasanian antecedents is, characteristically, highly contested. The debate centers around the episode of the fish and Christian legends about Alexander. The exegesis of this passage was far from uniform, with some early exegetes trying to interpret the significance of the "marvelous" escape of the wily fish without clear consensus on what precisely had taken place. Some early commentaries relate "marvelous" to the fact that the fish escaped dry land. It isn't until the eleventh century that the tale reaches some semblance of canonic form, interestingly in Persian sources, that is similar in most respects to the Christian Alexander legends: the fish, caught and killed for dinner, came back to life and swam away.[576]

The passage in the *Mēmrā d‘al Aleksandrōs* refers to Alexander, who travels through the Land of Darkness in an attempt to gain immortality from the Water of Life:

> And when the cook came to water he alighted and began to wash
> The salt fish; and it did not come to life in his hand as had been said.
> Finally he came to a fountain in which was the water of life,
> And he drew near to wash the fish in the water, and it came to life and escaped.[577]

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[575] Yāqūt, I 160: فافتتحها الفرس وضمّوها الى ملك شروان التي فيها صخرة موسى, عليه السلام, التي بقرب عين الحيوان.

[576] Wheeler (1998b), 198 – 199: "It seems that by the twelfth century and possibly as early as the eleventh, based on the evidence of the Persian recensions of the Alexander stories, commentators understood Q 18: 60 – 65 to be an allusion to the Alexander stories."

[577] *Mēmrā,* trans. Budge (1889), 173 – 174. See Reinink (1983), 56: Recension I reads: „Und wenn der Bäcker zu einem Wasser kam, began er zu waschen | den gesalzenen Fisch, aber nicht wurde er lebendig in seiner Hand, wie er gesagt hatte. | Darauf kam er zur Quelle, in der das lebenspendende Wasser war. | Und er näherte sich (ihr), um den Fisch in dem Wasser zu waschen, und er wurde lebendig und entwischte." See *Mēmrā,* 48. Recensions II and III are very similar and add two verses to this passage. See Reinink (1983), 56: Recension II reads: „Und wenn der Koch zu einem Wasser kam, begann er zu waschen | den gesalzenen Fisch, aber nicht wurde er lebendig in seiner Hand, wie er gesagt hatte. | Und überall, wo er bemerkte, dass es (dort) Wasser gab, tat er das, | aber der Fisch wurde nicht lebendig in diesen Gewässern, da sie nicht lebenspendend waren. | Und darauf kam er zur Quelle, in der das lebenspendende Wasser war. | Und er näherte sich (ihr), um den Fisch in dem Wasser zu waschen, und er wurde lebendig und entwischte." See *Mēmrā,* 48.

The cook, afraid of the ramifications of losing the dinner of the world's greatest conqueror, jumped in after the fish and gained immortal life; Alexander, who was subsequently unable to find the water and thus escape his own mortality, went on to build the barrier against Gog and Magog.

The story as it exists in Syriac is at least partially informed both by the Greek Ps. Callisthenes (β), which contains a shortened version of the fish episode and the search for the Water of Life. The fish and the Water of Life do not appear in recension α and are therefore completely absent from the Armenian translation or subsequent legends. However, there exist multiple divergences between β and the Syriac, including the cook's immortality.[578] B. Wheeler suggests the following stemma for the legend of the Water of Life:[579]

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┌─────────────────┐           ┌──────────────────┐  ┌──────────────────┐
│  Ṣᶜab traditions │           │ Greek recension β│  │ Babylonian Talmud│
└────────┬────────┘           └─────────┬────────┘  └─────────┬────────┘
         │                              │                     │
         ▼                              ▼                     ▼
┌─────────────────┐  ┌──────────────────┐  ┌──────────────────────────┐
│   Ibn Hishām     │  │  Qurᶜān 18: 60 – │  │     Jacob of Serugh's    │
└────────┬────────┘  └─────────┬────────┘  └─────────┬────────────────┘
         │                     │                     │
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┌───────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│                       Qurᶜān Commentaries                           │
└────────────┬──────────────────────────────────────┬────────────────┘
             │                                       │
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┌───────────────────────┐               ┌───────────────────────┐
│  Ethiopic Alexander   │               │   Persian Alexander   │
└───────────────────────┘               └───────────────────────┘
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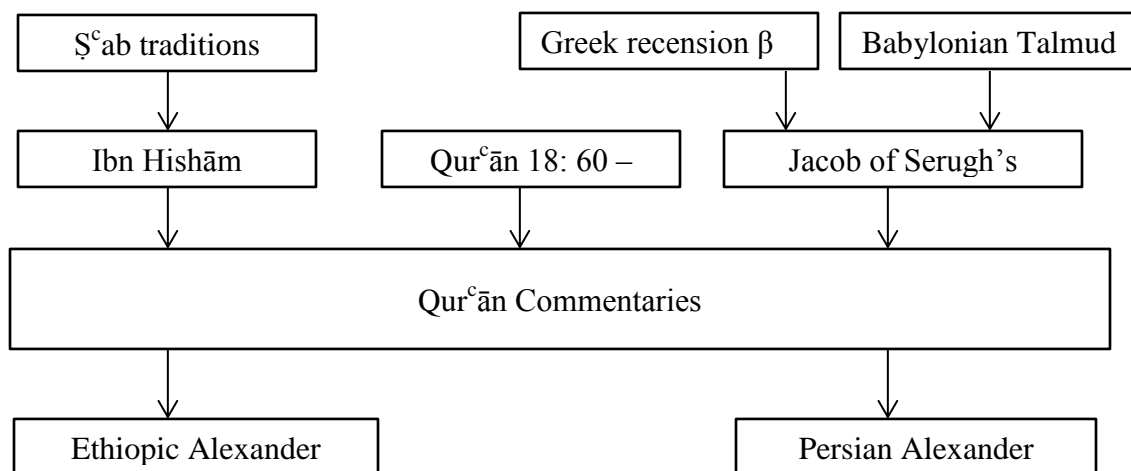
Table 3: Wheeler's Stemma for the Water of Life Legend

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[578] See Bergson (1965), 131 – 134.

[579] Wheeler (1998b), 203.

Wheeler's schema postulates that the Syriac tradition drew upon not only the Greek, but also an episode from the Babylonian Talmud, according to which Alexander questioned the elders of the South:

> He said to them: I want to go to the country of Africa. They said to him: You cannot get there, because the Mountains of Darkness are in the Way. He said to them: That will not stop me from going… As he was journeying he sat by a well and began to eat. He had with him some salted fish, and as they were being washed they gave off a sweet odour. He said: This shows that this well comes from the Garden of Eden. Some say that he took some of the water and washed his face with it; others say that he went alongside of it until he came to the door of the Garden of Eden.[580]

This passage was, however, already considered and rejected as a source for the Syriac tradition by Nöldeke in 1890.[581] Subsequently, Friedländer, though disagreeing with some of Nöldeke's conclusions, concurred with his argument that the Syriac version is not indebted to the Talmud.[582] He notes specific places of divergence between the Talmud and the Syriac traditions, as well as the pagan tones to the later and the lack of evidence of the Water of Life legend in the Jewish tradition. Although the story in the Talmud is clearly linked to the Christian stories about Alexander, direct inheritance cannot be substantiated. The details diverge so entirely from the Syriac versions that it is difficult to argue substantial interplay between the two stories, despite their common subject.

The subsequent passage in the Qur'ān, featuring Moses, shocked and angered by the deeds of al-Ḫiḍr due to the fact that he cannot understand the will of God, is closer to details in Jewish literature, specifically a midrashic tale relating the journey of Rabbi Joshua ben Levi (in a

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[580] Babylonian Talmud, Tamīd 32a -b .

[581] Nöldeke (1890), 25: "Die syrische Erzählung ist viel vollständiger, der heidnische Character macht die Entlehnung aus einer jüdischen Quelle fast undenkbar, die Geschichte hat nichts specifisch jüdisches... "

[582] Friedländer (1913), 46: "Zunächst sind die Differenzen zwischen der Darstellung des Talmuds und der des Pseudo-kallisthenes doch zu zahlreich und charakteristisch, als daß die eine als eine Entlehnung aus der anderen aufgefaßt werden könnte."

similar role as Moses) and the prophet Elijah (al-Ḫiḍr). The basic premises of both stories are similar: Ben Levi meets the Prophet Elijah and follows him for a few days, promising not to question his actions. They meet a poor man with nothing but a single cow, which Elijah kills. They then come across a rich man, who does not offer them food or drink and yet Elijah fixes his wall. They enter a synagogue full of rude people and Elijah makes them all rulers. Finally, the pair is offered hospitality by a poor couple and Elijah prays for one of them to become a ruler. At the end of the story, Elijah explains his actions: he kills the cow to save the life of the man's wife, who was destined to die that day; he fixes the rude man's wall because there was treasure under it that the man did not deserve; and Elijah then remarks that a land full of rulers only perpetrated chaos, while a land with only one ruler was a much more promising reward for the poor man.[583]

Although many scholars such as Wensinck[584] have argued that the Qur'ānic episode was informed by the *midrash*, Wheeler counters "that the Jewish legend of Joshua and Elijah has more in common with these [Qur'anic] commentaries than with the Qur'an itself, suggesting that the Jewish story is linked to Q 18:65-82 through the medium of the commentaries." In other words, the Qur'ān and *tafsīr* are the sources of the Jewish story, rather than *vice versa*.[585] Given the fact that this *midrash* does not appear until the eleventh century, his thesis is convincing. However, the specific arguments are not substantial here: it only serves as a reminder of the fluidity of religious distinctions in the Near East, that there existed a conversation between the Abrahamic faiths that led to a multifaceted development of similar plotlines. An echo of this

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[583] Jellinek, *Bet ha-Midrasch*, V 133-5.

[584] Wensinck (1986).

[585] Wheeler (1998a).

Jewish – Muslim dialogue is attested later in a version of al-Niẓāmī, which again links both

Elijah and al-Ḫiḍr to the Water of Life.[586]

There are also broad similarities between the Alexander/Moses[587] story and pre-Islamic

Iranian traditions, notably the Epic of Gilgamesh: both stories include a hero in search of

immortality, who discovers the route via the Land of Darkness (compare "the meeting place of

the two seas" to "the mouth of the waters") in search of the Water of Life. Neither Alexander nor

Gilgamesh attain immortality, though both question a wise man (Utnapishtim/al-Ḫiḍr) and

emerge from the ordeal with the recognition of the limits of the human experience. Although

Wheeler makes an effort to distance the two stories due to inconsistency in the details, the broad

strokes demonstrate a few ideas current in the Near East before the rise of Islam and

subsequently reworked in all literary traditions: Jewish, Christian, and Muslim.

For the present purposes, it suffices to conclude that: (1) although exegesis did not

present a uniform understanding of the Qur'ānic passage, there were currents in early Islamic

thought that, like the Syriac Alexander legends, located the Water of Life in Armīniya; (2) the

development of the Water of Life story demonstrates both the multifaceted nature of the Islamic

tradition, which allows for multiple and divergent renditions of the same stories, even within the

same work; and (3) traditions about Armīniya and the North were subject to a dialogue between

Muslims, remnants of pre-Islamic Iranian legends, Syriac literature, and Jewish tradition.

However, there is no evidence of Armenian or Greek involvement in this dialogue.

Understanding of this particular Qur'ānic episode demonstrates the way in which the identity of

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[586] Wensinck (1986).

[587] For an interesting comparison between Moses and Alexander in Jewish, Christian thought, see Wheeler (1998b), 211 – 213.

Armīniya was linked to the Qurʾānic narrative, divorced from Hellenic tradition, and determined

by the sectarian milieu *outside* of Armīniya itself.

7.1.4   Al-Qāf

The final aspect of Islamic identity of Armīniya skirts around the same issue as several points

already raised: the concept of the extremities of the earth. There are two common descriptors

applied to the North in Arabic and Persian literature: (1) mountainous and (2) linguistically

diverse. The two ideas are specifically linked, as al-Masʿūdī dubs the Caucasus "a mountain of

languages" (*ǧabal al-alsun*).[588] The linguistic diversity of the North is vaunted in geographical

works.[589] For example, Ibn al-Faqīh remarks that, "in the Caucasian mountains, there are

seventy-two languages and no one knows the language of his companion, except through a

translator."[590]

Interestingly, the geographers account for the languages commonly spoken in and around

Armīniya without any difficulty, despite the insistence that there are too many to fathom.[591]

There is a certain disconnect between the assertion that neighbors cannot understand one another

due to the number of languages abounding in the North and the matter-of-fact report of the

languages current in Armīniya.

To a limited extent, the idea of extreme linguistic diversity might refer to the northern

Caucasus: despite the tendancy to collapse the many peoples of the North into a single foe (the

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[588] Zadeh, 75.

[589] Al-Masʿūdī, *Murūǧ*, I 198: وفي هذا الجبل اثنتان وسبعون أمة, كل أمة لها ملك ولسان بخلاف لغة غيرها;

[590] Ibn al-Faqīh, 295 : وجبل القبق فيه اثنان وسبعون لسانا كل انسان لا يعرف لغة صاحبه الا بترجمان ; Yāqūt, 306: قال ابن الفقيه: وجبل القبق فيه اثنان وسبعون لسانا لا يعرف كل انسان لغة صاحبه الا بترجمان.

[591] Ibn Ḥawqal, 348-9: فاما لسان اهل اذربيجان واكثر اهل ارمينة فالفارسية تجمعهم والعربية بينهم مستعملة...ويفصح بها من التجار وارباب الضياع ولطوائف من في الاطراف من ارمينية وما شاكلها السنة اخر يتكلمون بها كالارمينية مع اهل دبيل ونشوى ونواحيهما ويتكلم اهل برذعة بالرانية. Al-Muqaddasī, 378: وبارمينية يتكلمون بالارمينية و بالران بالرانية وفارسيتهم مفهومة تقارب الخراسانية في حروف.

Ḫazars), Arab historians demonstrate knowledge about ethnic diversity beyond caliphal borders. However, the geographers frequently mention linguistic diversity within Armīniya itself. Al-Muqaddasī, for example, claims that there are seventy languages spoken in Aḏarbayǧān alone. This disconnect may in fact stem from the Qurʾān, rather than lived experience: "Then followed he [ḏū al-Qarnayn] (another) way, until, when he reached (a tract) between two mountains, he found, beneath them, a people who scarcely understood a word."[592] Interestingly, exists a similar concept in the Old Testament fear of the enemy from the North, as Jeremiah specifies that the enemy will be incomprehensible to Israel: "People of Israel,' declares the LORD, 'I am bringing a distant nation against you—an ancient and enduring nation, a people whose language you do not know, whose speech you do not understand.'"[593]

However, the most profound implication of the descriptions of Armīniya is the attribution of the Caucasus as al-Qāf, the legendary primordial chain of mountains that surrounds the entirety of the inhabited land and thus marks the edge of the world. Armīniya was the frontier, past which "there is no Islam." In the early Islamic period a certain patina was created for the province that allowed the edge of Islam to become the edge of the entire world, despite the fact that locals (Arab, Armenian, and Georgian alike) obviously knew that the world continued to the North. However, in popular imagination, al-Qāf was the end, such that a witch cursing her husband's estate could exclaim to her lover: "If you wish me to transport all the stones of those walls, so solidly built, beyond the Caucasus, and out of the bounds of the habitable world, speak but the word, and all shall undergo a change;"[594] or a princess could threaten, "I could instantly cause your capital to be transported to the middle of the ocean, nay beyond mount Caucasus."[595]

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[592] Abdullah Yusuf Ali Translation. 18:93.

[593] Jeremiah 5:15 (NIV).

There are some reservations about the designation of al-Qāf as the Caucasus. Yāqūt, for example, claims that al-Qāf is Alburz.[596] M. Streck suggests that this refers to the Iranian belief that the famed ring of mountains encircled Iran, rather than the entire world, and that Yāqūt understood the Alburz mountains as a chain between Iran and the North.[597] B. Munkácsí argues that the expression "belt of the world" referred to the Urals, though he ends with the suggestion that the legend tapped into a common motif, meaning that popular belief created similar myths for both chains of mountains.[598] Exact definitions of al-Qāf may in fact be counter-intuitive: surrounding the entire world, it should be visible at every edge of civilization.[599]

However, al-Qāf became associated with the Alexander story and therefore with the Caucasus. For example, al-Tawḥīdī considers a vainglorious comment: "Send me to Qāf, past the Byzantines, to the wall, to Gog and Magog, to a place that ḏū al-Qarnayn did not reach and al-Ḫiḍr didn't know."[600] Similarly, there is a trend in later histories to claim that Alexander's trip into the Land of Darkness intruded upon the realm of the angels. Alexander is made to speak to the angel "whose arms encircle the mountain (Qāf), which encloses the world's oceans." The angel explains the meaning of the name ḏū al-Qarnayn to indicate that Alexander reached the

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[594] Forster, Galland & Smirke (1802), 107.

[595] Forster, Galland & Smirke (1802), 204.

[596] Yāqūt, IV 298.

[597] Streck (1986).

[598] Munkácsí (1900), 239.

[599] See al-ʿUmarī in Hopkins & Levtzion (2000), 254: "All mountains are branches of the range which encircles most of the inhabited world. It is called jabal al-Qāf, and is the mother of mountains, for they all stem from it. It is in some places continuous, in others interrupted. Like a circle, it has, to be precise, no recognizable beginning, since the ends of a circular ring cannot be identified. And though the circularity of the Jabal al-Qāf is not that of a sphere, yet it is a bounding circularity, or almost so."

[600] Al-Tawḥīdī, iv 158: ابعثوا بي الى قاف وخلف الروم الى السد والى ياجوج وماجوج الى موضع لم يبلغه ذو القرنين ولم يعرفه الخضر. Van Donzel & Schmidt (2009), 123 offers a different translation of this passage, offering "to [what lies] behind the rampart" for وخلف الروم.

ends of the earth.[601] This positively links al-Qāf with Alexander's wall and the Water of Life.

Furthermore, al-Balaᶜmī records a *ḥadīṯ* transmitted on the authority of the Prophet himself that al-Qāf is located past the Land of Darkness.[602]

The connection between the Land of Darkness and al-Qāf is shared with Syriac literature, which references to the mountains near the Land of Darkness:

> The old men say, "Look, my lord the king, and see a wonder,
> This mountain which God has set as a great boundary [between Gog/Magog and civilization]."
> King Alexander the son of Philip said,
> "How far is the extent of this mountain?"
> The old men say: "Beyond India it extends its appearance."
> The king said, "How far does this side come?"
> The old men say, "Unto all the ends of the earth." [603]

Further:

> He looked and the mountain which encircled the whole world,
> The great boundary which God had established from everlasting."[604]

The *Mēmrā* therefore features both the mountain that encircles the inhabited world and the idea of a mountain boundary as the "end of the earth." Similarly, the Persian expression *āz Qāf tā Qāf*, from Qāf to Qāf, signifies "von einem Ende der Welt zum andern," or "from east to

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[601] Doufikar-Aerts (2000), 178 – 179.

[602] Al-Balᶜamī, trans. Zotenberg (1958), 33: "Le prophète dit: Dieu a créé la montagne de Qàf tout autour de la terre…Aucun homme ne peut y arriver, parce qu'il faudrait pour cela passer quatre mois dans les ténèbres. Il n'y a dans cette montagne ni soleil, ni lune, ni étoiles…"

[603] *Mēmrā,* trans. Budge (1889), 177. See Reinink (1983), 70 – 71: The three recensions are all similar. Recension I reads: "Die Ältesten sprachen: 'Schauen Sie, Herr König, und sehen Sie das Wunder, dieses Gebirge, das Gott als eine grosse Grenze fastgesetzt wurde.' König Alexander, des Philipp Sohn, sprach: 'Wie weit erstreckt sich dieses Gebirge?' Die Ältesten sprachen: 'so weit man sehen kann erstreckt es sich über Indien hinaus.' Der König sprach: 'Und diese Seite, bis wohin reicht sie?'Die Ältesten sprachen: 'Bis zu allen Enden der Erde.'" See *Mēmrā,* 58.

[604] *Mēmrā,* trans. Budge (1889), 178. See Reinink (1983), 76: The three recensions are all nearly identical. Recension I reads: "Er blickte auf das Gebirge, das die ganze Welt umkriest, die grosse Ganze, die Gott festgesetzt hatte von alters her." See *Mēmrā,* 62.

west."[605] This is consistent with the elements in the Qur'ānic version of ḏū al-Qarnayn's journey, which described his journey from the rising of the sun to the setting of the sun. The name ḏū al-Qarnayn has even been interpreted as a reference to the fact that Alexander traveled the entire breadth of the earth.

This review of these four main stories—Gog and Magog, the dark North, the Water of Life, and al-Qāf—demonstrates not only the construction of meaning for the Islamic province of Armīniya, but also the polyvocal nature of the discussion, which tended to polarize into two groups: Arabic, Persian, and Syriac on the one hand and Greek and Armenian on the other. To a large extent, the importance of Armīniya was determined outside of the province with clear intention to divorce the land from Christian Byzantium and thus reinforce the conceptual boundary between the Islamic world and the Other.

7.2   From Orientalism to the Sectarian Milieu

The story of Alexander the Great has preoccupied scholars of the Near East, Jewish, Christian, and Muslim alike. The end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries saw an enormous increase in publications about Alexander the Great, mostly appearing out of German academia and usually firmly based in Greek and Hebrew literature. The sheer quantity of production is both extraordinary and daunting. Some of the main publications include J. Zacher, *Pseudo-Callesthenes, Forschungen zur Kritik und Geschichte der ältesten Aufzeichnung der Alexandersage* (1867); Römheld, "Beiträge zur Geschichte und Kritik der Alexandersage" (1873); T. Nöldeke, "Beiträge zur Geschichte des Alexanderromans" (1890); O. Von Lemm, *Der Alexanderroman bei den Kopten* (1903); C. Hunnius, *Das syrische Alexanderlied* (1904); and F.

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[605] Munkácsí (1900), 236 – 7.

Pfister, *Der Alexanderroman des Archipresbyters Leo* (1913). While much of this work related specifically to the Greek and Latin recensions, there was also considerable scholarly output in Armenian and European languages about the Armenian Ps. Callisthenes, including R. T^creanc^c, *Patmut^ciwn ałek^csandri makedonac^cwoy* (1842); A. Baumgartner, "Über das Buch 'die Chrie" (1886); J. Gildemeister, "Pseudocallisthenes bei Moses Von Khoren" (1886); H. Dašian, *Usumnasirut^ciwnk^c stoyn Kalist^ceneay varuc^c Ałek^csandri* (1892); M. Tcheraz, "La légende d'Alexandre le Grand chez les Arméniens" (1901); W. Deimann, *Abfassungszeit und Verfasser des griechischen Alexanderromanes* (1914).

The modern scholar inherits not only this huge breadth of knowledge, but also some Orientalist concepts that have lingered far longer than necessary. In many instances, Western scholars of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and even up to the present have attempted to understand both the location of the barrier of Gog and Magog and the Water of Life/Virtues of Patience legends by examining the minutiae of each recension with the goal of ascertaining an accurate stemma to clarify the relationship between the different Alexander traditions. Part of this effort even included translating the Armenian recension into Greek in an attempt to recreate the archetype, the original α*.[606]

This preoccupation subsequently acts as a type of modern Baḥīra legend: if there are some similarities between Islam and Christianity, these must be explained by historical precedence that prioritizes Christian supremacy by right of primogeniture. Discrepancies are therefore dismissed as corruptions, with the explanation that the Muslim scholars were confused or misinformed, or that they didn't understand what they were saying. European authors approached the Islamic tradition with the goal of understanding precisely how Muslims

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[606] Raabe (1896).

misunderstood the matter, or to illuminate the fantastical through the rigorous application of rational consideration.

For example, Orientalist scholars felt compelled to learn precisely why Muslim authors would describe the fabulous wall of Gog and Magog by rationally accounting for the details of a nonexistent structure. For over a century, the enduring myth has been that these authors were describing the Great Wall of China, which they could not comprehend as anything but Alexander's wall. However, the Great Wall did not exist in anything like its current state until the fifteenth or sixteenth century and could not have been the stimulus for Islamic interest in or discovery of the wall.[607] There has been considerable effort recently to untangle the Orientalist presumptions while still benefitting from the vast reservoirs of knowledge produced in nineteenth and twentieth century Europe. T. Zadeh does an admirable job of unraveling the tide of publications beginning with M. J. de Goeje's "De Muur van Gog en Magog" (1888) and concludes that the Great Wall theory was a figment of the Orientalist imagination, which has persisted even until today.[608] A similar effort at revision is needed for the notion that Muslims located Gog and Magog in Armīniya because they conflated Alexander's and Anuširwān's walls.

Similarly, B. Wheeler presents two articles: one about the Water of Life episode, the other about the conversation between Moses and al-Ḫiḍr. He convincingly argues that there is little interest in the Orientalist works in contextualizing the legends or in attempting to uncover some mark of the agency of the authors or compilers. This alone is a serious historiographical problem, but it is further complicated by the ramifications of religious expectations. Wheeler's

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[607] Zadeh (2011), 158: "It is this last point, namely the anachronistic configuration of the Great Wall of China as an ancient barrier stretching for thousands of miles, which is, perhaps, most problematic. The Great Wall of China, as it is known today, did not exist before the middle of the Ming dynasty (1368 – 1644). Prior to the Ming fortifications, a series of walls and ramparts were erected under different dynasties for ever-changing purposes, but these fortifications did not represent a continuous line of demarcation, with a unified history or purpose."

[608] Zadeh (2011), 148 – 177.

articles are indicative of an increased interaction of Western and Muslim scholars, as he tiptoes

around the idea of the createdness of the Qur'ān. While his arguments against the Orientalist

agenda are reasonable, his work consistently attempts to discredit any sort of "influence" on the

Qur'ān, which indicates that he does not view the Qur'ān as a piece of literature steeped in a long

tradition of Near Eastern *topoi*.

This balancing game is unnecessary. By rejecting the simplistic idea of "influence" or

"inheritance," we make it more feasible to historize of the Islamic tradition and its literary

neighbors. Wansbrough's *Sectarian Milieu* lends itself to the question of transmission, given that

comparable legends circulated among Jews, Christians and Muslims of Mesopotamia, though

some aspects of his theory are difficult to navigate. Zadeh considers the similarities between

Syriac descriptions of Alexander's wall and Ibn Ḫurradāḏbih's account of Sallām's barrier:

> It would be tempting to argue that Sallām's account is drawn directly from the
> Christian Syriac tradition…Yet these lines of argumentation that seek to establish
> origins often only obfuscate a historical record that was neither linear nor
> reductive, but polyvalent and multidimensional. Rather than a direct line of
> influence, it seems more probable that the account of the wall and its key of
> twelve teeth was already part of the broader absorption of the legend, shaped both
> orally and textually.[609]

The most productive response to this dilemma is thus to reject the search for an original

archetype or a single explanation of individual divergences, and instead to reconsider Jewish,

Christian, and Islamic Alexander legends as a single, though adaptable corpus demonstrating

trends across and within confessional lines. Islamic traditions concerning Armīniya—about the

wall of Gog and Magog, the Land of Darkness, the Water of Life, and the mountain barrier of the

world—show marked similarities with Syriac Christian belief, as shown above. However, this

does not preclude dialogue with Greeks, Copts, Persians, Armenians, and Jews. In other words, it

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[609] Zadeh (2011), 109 – 110.

makes better sense to chart the relationship between individual works as a Venn diagram, rather than as a hierarchical stemma.

Islamic sources define the importance of Armīniya in large part because of the stories about Alexander; yet, Armenian sources show little similarity to the Islamic traditions despite the fact that Armenians were in contact with Muslims from the earliest days of the conquest period onward. There are a few markers that may demonstrate correspondence, or rather overlap with the entire body of Near Eastern *topoi*. Consider, for example, the inscriptions on the wall of Gog and Magog or the expression "where the sun sets" as the limits of geographical knowledge. However, the bulk of material demonstrates instead that Armenian and Arabic/Persian Alexander legends are markedly different, meaning that the Islamic contestations about the importance of Armīniya are *not* formed solely by the adoption and adaptation of local traditions as the Arab conquests spread into the North. The Islamic identity that was constructed for Armīniya was informed mainly by dialogue among Muslims, Syrian Christians, pre-Islamic Iranian traditions (presumably remembered by Persian Muslims), and Jews.

The implications of this argument are formidable, given the close relationship between Armīniya and the Islamic world before the rise of the Bagratids. The answer may lie in the content of the traditions: the Alexander legends in Armenian were, as mentioned, generally faithful to the original Greek, and the Armenian translation of Ps. Callisthenes was indicative of a markedly Hellenophile period in Armenian literary history. Given the tendency in the works of Islamic history and geography to de-Byzantize and "Sasanize" Armenian history, it is not surprising that Ps. Callisthenes, as a representative piece of the close relationship between Greeks and Armenians, should be avoided. This suggestion does not mean to suggest full awareness of differences between the Alexander traditions in Armīniya in contradistinction to the

Syriac versions; rather, it postulates that Islamic historians, exegetes, and geographers rightly

considered Armenian literary traditions to be Hellenist and preferred alternatives to them, while

the Syriac and Persian versions offered continuity with the religious discussions of the Sasanian

period.

7.3   The Islamization of Alexander

The argument remains counterintuitive at first glance: if Islamic traditions about Armīniya grew

out of discourse with Syriac Christianity and pre-Islamic Persian antecedents, consciously

avoiding the Greek (and therefore Armenian/Georgian) traditions about the North, why would so

much revolve around the person of Alexander? Alexander was after all Greek, certainly not

Muslim, and the traditions about him circulating in the Near East were either pagan or stridently

Christianized. His realm was even construed as a precursor to the Christian Empire destined to

comprise the entire world. Arabs grappled with Alexander's non-Muslim identity, suggesting

alternative identities for the Qur'ānic *ḏū al-Qarnayn.* Imru' al-Qays, Ḥassān b. Ṯābit, Ibn Ḥišām

and Našwān b. Saᶜīd al-Ḥimyarī claim that the term refers either to the Ḥimyarī Ṣaᶜd b. Ḏī

Marāṯid or the Laḫmid Munḏir al-Akbar b. Mā' al-Samā'.[610] Meanwhile, al-Dīnawarī and al-

Firdowsī offer a Persian lineage for Alexander and present him as the heir of the Kayanid

Dārāb.[611]

        "At play within these debates is the question of ownership. Early Muslims undoubtedly

wondered why a pagan Greek ruler, who was lionized in Byzantine propaganda as a Christian

hero, would appear in the Qur'ān. Rejecting Greek origins was one means of avoiding the

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[610] See Watt (1986) and Zadeh (2011), 97 – 98.

[611] Zadeh (2011), 112.

problem. Absorbing and appropriating them was another."[612] Thus this debate about the identity

of ḏū al-Qarnayn in the Qur'ān gives way to the appropriation of Alexander as a Muslim figure,

in much the same way that Anūširwān is posthumously converted to Islam.[613] In fact, Islamic

histories not only present Alexander as a ḥanīf, but even debate whether he was in fact a

prophet.[614] Furthermore, Alexander's success is depicted as directly dependent upon his

assumption of Persian knowledge and leadership.[615]

The Islamization of Alexander and associated traditions does not affect merely the

development of historical and exegetical production; it also makes clear claims about caliphal

hegemony. The involvement of Armīniya in these legends signifies that their adoption in Islamic

traditions is a political statement regarding the legitimacy of Arab rule and, by extension, the

threat of Byzantine claims to the land. The Alexander legends contain descriptive accounts of

ᶜağā'ib: the marvelous and strange places of the world, worthy of awe and reflection. The

discussion of wondrous places was a notable aspect of Islamic geography, intended to showcase

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[612] Zadeh (2011), 98.

[613] Ibn al-Faqīh, 289 – 290: The depiction of Anūširwān shows many similarities to that of Alexander. First, he is a pre-Islamic person who acts like a Muslim: حمد الله واثنى عليه وقال يا ربّ الارباب الهمتنى سدَّ هذا الثغر وتمع العدوّ فلك الحمد فاحسنْ Second, he builds an eternal wall by the order of God: واقبل الطالع نحو الفند حتى علاه مثوبتى ورُدَّ غربتى الى وطنى ثم ركع وسجد ثم قال ايُها الملك انا ساكن من سكان هذا البحر وقد رايت هذا الثغر مسدودا سبع مرّات وخرابا سبع مرّات واوحى الله جلَّ وعزَّ الينا معاشر سكّان البحر ان ملكا عصره عصرته صورتك وصورته صورتك يبعثه الله لسدّ هذا الثغر فيسدُّه الى الابد وانت ذلك الملك فاحسن الله مثوبتك وعلى البرّ معونتك واطال مدّتك Third, he is made to show interest in the site of Alexander's wall: ولمّا فرغ وسكَّن يومَ الفزع الاكبر روعتك ثم غاص فى البحر انوشروان من الفند الذى فى البحر سألَ عن ذلك البحر فقيل ايُها الملك هذا البحر يسمَّى بكردبيل وهو ثلثمائة فرسخ فى مثله وبيننا وبين بَيْضاء الخَزَر مسيرة اربعة اشهر على هذا الساحل ومن بيضاء الخزر الى السدّ الذى سدّه أسْفَنْدِيار بالحديد مسيرة شهرين, قال انوشروان لا بُدَّ من الوقوف عليه. Finally, he founded many cities along his path. Ibn al-Faqīh specifies that this information was obtained from Persian histories (اخبار الفرس).

[614] Watt (1986). See also Stoneman (2003), 20: "Alexander receives tasks from the angels; his commission is to convert the world to Islam and to preach the *tawhid* (the doctrine of One God). It is undoubtedly the case that in these long works Alexander functions as a prophet of God. His roles as a great conqueror, as a philosopher, as a builder and a ruler, are all subsumed in this religious mission, and his great achievement is indissolubly related to his understanding of, his submission to, the dictates of God and the angels—his recognition that he cannot achieve eternal life."

[615] Stoneman (2003), 49, qtd. Ibn Ḫaldūn: "The intellectual sciences are said to have come to the Greeks from the Persians, (at the time) when Alexander killed Darius and gained control of the Achaemenid empire. At that time, he appropriated the books and sciences of the Persians."

caliphal jurisdiction over the entire breadth of the world, beyond mundane matters of governance.[616]

A good example of the political ramifications of the Islamic reconceptualization of the Alexander legend is the record of official caliphal envoys to Alexander's wall. The first expedition sent to the wall was assembled by the Sasanian governor of Bāb al-Abwāb, Šahrbarāz. He converted during the Arab conquests and, while he sat conferring with ᶜAbd al-Raḥmān Ibn Rabīᶜa in 643, his envoy returned after two years' absence. Al-Ṭabarī recounts the conversation: the envoy had traveled north until they reached the two mountains with the pass walled off. They had encountered a deep chasm immediately before the wall, into which they threw some of their finest goods. A falcon dove in to retrieve the offerings and returned with precious gems. Upon hearing this recitation, the Arab conquerors at Bāb al-Abwāb identified the Qur'ānic locale (with certin details -the gems- partially pulled from the Ps. Callisthenes tradition).[617]

The tale serves two primary purposes. First, it is relayed on the sole authority of a famous participant in the Arab conquests, ᶜAmr b. Maᶜdī Karib al-Zubaydī, suggesting the heroic triumph of an imagined Qur'ānic locale in a similar manner to the more material capture of the Near East. Second, the relation between this envoy and that of Sallām al-Tarǧumān, even described together in some Arabic books of history, indicates continuity between the Sasanian and Islamic regimes in terms of both religious interest and political legitimacy in the

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[616] Zadeh (2011), 48.

[617] Al-Ṭabarī, V 32.

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Caucasus,[618] symbolized by the person of Šahrbarāz: a Sasanian governor of Armīniya who accepts Islam.

The second envoy to set out for Alexander's wall was summoned by Muᶜāwiya, who dispatched the men with a note to the Ḫazar ḫāqān requesting passage beyond his kingdom to Alexander's wall.[619] The third envoy is the subject of the most famous account in Islamic histories and geographies: the journey of Sallām al-Tarǧumān under the orders of al-Wāṯiq recounted for the first time in Ibn Ḫurradāḏbih.

All three of these envoys to the wall comment on caliphal legitimacy by portraying the extent of the realm and likening the caliph to Alexander:

> With power you acquired regions of the world,
>   as though you were following Khidr's trail.[620]

Since one of the main purposes of geographical material was to describe and circumscribe the boundaries of imperial control, the inclusion of Alexander's wall implied that the Caliphate reached the ends of the earth. Perhaps more importantly, the final envoy can be compared to al-Wāṯiq's other envoy, whom he sent into Byzantine territory to examine the Cave of the Sleepers mentioned in Q18: 25 – 26. The two envoys (to Alexander's wall and to the Cave of the Sleepers) are directly related: (1) the stories behind both expeditions stem from the same *sūra* in the Qur'ān; (2) Ibn Ḫurradāḏbih describes both envoys; (3) both episodes were possibly "inspired by the Caliph al-Wathiq's wish to put an end to misuses of the Koran, by his Muᶜtazilism, and by the question whether or not the Koran is created,"[621] and (4) Eastern Syriac

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[618] Zadeh (2011), 79 makes the argument for political continuity: "The tale of Shahrbarāz's envoy speaks to a continuity between Sāsānian power in the region and the advent of Islam."

[619] Al-Bakrī, I 455.

[620] Ibn al-Faqīh, qtd. and trans. in Zadeh (2011), 82 and 234 no. 74: تَنَاوَلْتَ أَطْرَافَ الْبِلَادِ بِقُدْرةٍ ‏ كَأَنَّكَ فِيها تَبْتَغِي أَثَرَ الْخِضْرِ

[621] Van Donzel & Schmidt (2009), 208.

Christians and Muslims link the Cave of the Sleepers to Alexander's wall, even attributing a treatise on the Sleepers to Jacob of Serug.[622]

Al-Wāṯiq's envoy to the Cave famously uncovers the fraud perpetrated by the Greeks: not only were the bodies of the Sleepers fake, but the guard was duplicitous and tried to kill the Muslims to preserve this secret.[623] Thus the text forms the basis for an argument for the de-Byzantinization and Islamization of the story of the Cave and also presents the Greeks as unworthy of religious and political sovereignty, ruling only through ruse.[624] These three envoys to Alexander's wall therefore work together to vaunt the reach of the caliph over both the mundane lands of the Caliphate and the imagined realm of Qur'ānic locales, while simultaneously denying the Byzantine claim to either religious truth or political legitimacy, while supporting the claim of the Caliphate as successors to the Sasanian regime.

7.4   Conclusion

Although I expected to find that the Islamic conceptualization of Armīniya was in large part shaped by Arab–Armenian dialogue, the evidence from the pre-Bagratid period does not support this conclusion. Instead, most discussions that link Armīniya to the Qur'ān revolve nearly exclusively around the Alexander legends. The details indicate considerable dialogue between the literary traditions in Arabic, Persian, and Syriac, as well as Jewish, Christian, and Muslim interchange, whereas the Armenian version of the Alexander story is closely tied to the Greek and does not share many of the features of the Islamic tradition.

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[622] Van Donzel & Schmidt (2009), 198 – 199.

[623] Ibn Ḫurradāḏbih, 106 – 107.

[624] Zadeh (2011), 37.

This lack of correspondence certainly cannot imply that there was little or no cultural or social exchange between Armenians and Arabs, but it does raise the question of why there is so little evidence for literary exchange until the tenth or eleventh centuries. Relying on the broad ideas suggested in Wansbrough's work, I suggest that there was a clear effort to distance the Islamic tradition from trends visible in Greek literature. This effort included the creation of a Persian or proto-Muslim personality for Alexander, and can also help us to explain why the Arabs preferred Syriac over the (Hellenistic) Armenian rendition of the Alexander legends. This conclusion requires the rejection of Orientalist claims about a supposed Muslim misunderstanding about the "correct" or "original" story, and instead supports the idea that Muslim authors were actively and consciously redacting elements in Jewish and Syriac Christian literature.

This conclusion also relies on the acceptance of a conceptual frontier that polarizes Greek and Arabic traditions, such that the divergence between the Armenian and Islamic versions of the Alexander legends signifies the Arab rejection of Hellenistic literature. As we saw in Chapter 2, Islamic histories tend to ignore data from the Greeks in favor of Sasanian accounts. At the same time, the interrelation of the various ethnic, linguistic, and religious groups of the Near East, all redacting similar accounts in different veins, is clearly visible.

Chapter 8: Interconfessional Translations and the Sectarian Milieu

"Prove all things; hold fast that which is good."

1 Thessalonians 5:21 (KJV)

The perception that Arabs and Armenians were not alone in a bilateral discussion or literary exchange finds some support in the lack of evidence of direct citation across linguistic boundaries and the lack of translations to or from Armenian and Arabic datable to this era. By the eleventh century, we see such markers of interaction: Grigor Magistros' poetry resembles the Arabic *qaṣīda* and his writings demonstrate familiarity with the work of al-Mutanabbī.[625] For the early Arab period, however, evidence for literary exchange of this kind is largely missing.[626] It makes sense that the close contact between Armenians and Arabs would have engendered some sort of discussion, just as it is logical to assume that the literary exchange of the eleventh century did not blossom overnight. At the same time, however, there is a limit to what we can surmise in this context: the Alexander legends that we considered in Chapter 7 provide an example of the way that Arabic and Armenian literatures followed very different trajectories.

There is no concrete evidence of familiarity on the part of Armenians with Arabic literature, or of Arab knowledge of Armenian sources during the Arab period (700–862), with the possible exceptions of the Arabic translations of Agatʿangełos' *Patmutʿiwn Hayocʿ* [History of the Armenians], the polemical letters between ʿUmar II and Leo III preserved in Łewond's *Aršawankʿ arabacʿ i Hays* [Arab Incursions into Armenia], and the Armenian translation of

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[625] Cowe (2004), 294 – 295.

[626] Some suggest that there Armenians had access to histories in Arabic, though. See Greenwood (2012).

Nonnus of Nisibis' *Commentary on the Gospel of John*. Like the history of Ps. Callisthenes, these texts demonstrate some overlap between Armenian and Arabic literatures from an early date, but they tend on the whole to prove instead that literary transmission at this time was interconfessional and polyvocal.

8.1   The *Patmutᶜiwn Hayocᶜ* of Agatᶜangełos

The number of renditions, translations, and published works on the *Patmutᶜiwn Hayocᶜ* of Agatᶜangełos is dizzying. Ter-Łewondyan's work provides the best introduction to the Arabic versions of the text. He published the text of *Ar* as *Agatᶜangełosi arabakan nor xmbagrutᶜyunə* [the new Arabic recension of Agatᶜangełos] in 1968 and also wrote six articles in Armenian concerning the *History* of Agatᶜangełos, four of which dealt exclusively with the Arabic translations:

(1) "Agatᶜangełosi norahayt araberen hamaṛotumə" [the newly-discovered Arabic abridgement of Agatᶜangełos] (1961), which after a short introduction translates the fourteenth-century Arabic text (*Var*) published by Garitte in 1952;

(2) "Agatᶜangełosi patmutᶜyan norahayt arabakan xmbagrutᶜunə" [the newly discovered Arabic rendition of Agatᶜangełos's History] (1968), which discusses the details marking Sin. ar. 395 (*Ar*) as a translation from Greek, as opposed to the original Armenian;

(3) "Agatᶜangełosi arabakan xmbagrutᶜyan norahayt ambołĵakan bnagirə" [the entire manuscript of the newly-discovered Arabic rendition of Agatᶜangełos] (1973) includes both a facsimile of the Arabic manuscript of *Var* and a translation into Eastern Armenian;

(4) "Agatᶜangełosi xmbagrutᶜyunneri harcᶜə əst Xorenacᶜu tvyalneri" [the question of renditions of Agatᶜangełos according to the data of Xorenacᶜi] (1975);

(5) "Agatᶜangełosi patmutᶜyan Anton Bonukkii mšakumə ev nra araberen hamaṛot

tᶜargmanutᶜyunə" [Anton Bonukki's adaptation of the history of Agatᶜangełos and its abridged

Arabic translation] (1976); and finally,

(6) "Agatᶜangełos" (1976), a general introduction to the literary and historical value of the text

with reference to the various translations and manuscript history.

8.1.1   Renditions and Dating

For the sake of simplicity, I will refer to the translations according to Thomson's summary of the

relevant sigla:

Aa	the Armenian text of the 1909 Tiflis edition. [Garitte's AaT, comparable to the Venice edition, AaV].
Ag	the Greek text published by Lafontaine.
Ar	the Arabic text in *Sinai* 395, as published by Ter-Ḷevondyan.
Vg	the Greek text in *Escorial* gr. XIII 6, as published by Garitte.
Vo	the Greek text in *Ochrid* 4, as described by Garitte.
Va	the Arabic text in *Sinai* 460, as published by Marr and translated by Garitte.
Var	the Arabic text in *Sinai* 455, as published by Ter-Ḷevondyan.
Vk	the Karshuni version, as published by Van Esbroeck.[627]

The A cycle refers to translations of Agatᶜangełos' *History*: Agathange arménien (*Aa*),

Agathange grec (*Ag*), etc. The V cycle is a series of abridgements penned independently of the A

cycle, coined as the Life of St. Gregory; Garitte shortened "Vie arabe" to *Va.* In addition to these

listed above, there exist abridged versions of the A cycle in Latin (12 – 13th century), Amharic

(14 – 15th century), and at least two partial Georgian renderings (the earliest from the 11th

century). Each of these harken back to the Greek rather than the Armenian original; the

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[627] Thomson (1976), xxiii.

Ethiopian version relies on the Arabic, itself a rendition of the Greek,[628] and the later (14th century) Arabic was translated via a lost Coptic rendition.[629]

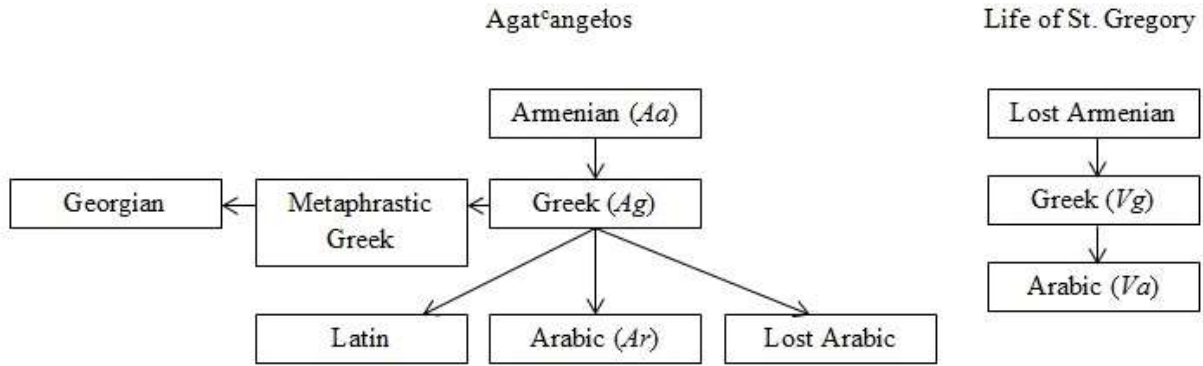Ter-Łewondyan produces the following schema:[630]

Table 4: Ter-Łewondyan's Schema for the transmission of Agatᶜangełos's *History.*

Of the three Arabic renditions, two fall possibly within our early timeframe: *Ar* and *Va.* *Var*, however, is later[631] and therefore can be set aside for the current purposes. Of our two texts, one (*Ar*) is reliant upon the Armenian version (*Aa*), though produced via the Greek (*Ag*). The second, part of the V cycle, is "independent of the final Armenian version (*Aa*)."[632] However, N.

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[628] Ter-Łewondyan (1976a), 30 – 1; Thomson (1976), xxii.

[629] Garitte (1952), 52

[630] Ter-Ghewondyan (1968a), 20 (in Armenian) and 112 (in Russian). I have added the sigla according to Thomson's chart. Note that the reference of *Va* as a translation of either *Vo* or *Vg* is based on Garitte and Van Esbroeck (1971), 17. However, Thomson (1970) argues that the passage of Grigor's teaching in *Vo* is dependent upon *Va* and not *vice versa.*

[631] Thomson (1976) claims 12 – 13th centuries; Ter-Łewondyan (1961a) claims 14th century; Garitte (1952), 52.

[632] Thomson (1976), xxiii.

Marr hypothesized that the V cycle, despite its independence from *Aa,* stemmed from a now-lost Armenian V original.[633] Either way, *Va* is also clearly a translation from Greek.

Thomson dates *Ar* to between the ninth and tenth centuries.[634] Ter-Łewondyan, who published the transcription and several pages of facsimiles of the manuscript Sin. ar. 395, notes that the colophon marks this manuscript as Christian and dates it to 6837 of the Creation, corresponding to 1328/9 CE.[635] Ter-Łewondyan ascertains that the original translation was completed as early as the ninth or tenth century, though possibly as late as the twelfth:

> Bien que l'Agathange arabe soit daté de 1328/9, il faut croire qu'il fut traduit plus tôt. On ne peut déterminer le temps de la traduction arabe qu'à l'appui des données linguistiques de notre manuscrit. Les altérations des noms propres attestent que l'Agathange arabe fut recopié plusieurs fois. Le nom Αλβῖνος qui devrait être en arabe الفينوس est transformé en امينيوس, altération due aux copies successives. La langue de l'Agathange arabe nous permet de situer approximativement la date de la traduction entre les IXᵉ – Xᵉ siècles et le XIIᵉ. Le traducteur est évidement arabe, qui prend beaucoup de mots grecs pour des noms propres.[636]

Its inclusion here is admittedly contestable; the likelihood of *Ar* being specifically pre-Bagratid is low, but not impossible.

V. Marr's study of the V cycle concluded that the Armenian version, now lost, was composed in Taykᶜ, a region forming the borderland between Armenia and Georgia that leaned towards Chalcedonianism, and that it was subsequently translated into Greek.[637] The manuscript of *Va,* on parchment in New ᶜAbbāsid bookhand ("Kufic script with elements of Nasḫ"), lacks

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[633] Ter-Ghewondyan (1976a), 31 – 32

[634] Thomson (1976), xxii.

[635] Ter-Ghewondyan (1968a) [Arabic section], 124: the colophon reads: غفر الله لمن كتب ولمن قرأ وسامح بما يجد من الغلط والنقص والسبح لله دائما وعلينا رحمته امين وذلك بتاريخ سنة ستة الاف وثمانمائة وسبعة وثلثين لابونا ادم احسن الله العاقبة وذلك بدير طور سينا المقدس وهو برسم كنيسة السيدة.

[636] Ter-Łewondyan (1968a), 119.

[637] Ter-Łewondyan (1961a), 27.

both the beginning and the end. N. Marr, who published the work in Arabic in 1905 with a Russian translation, concluded that it dates from the seventh or eighth century; N. Adontz believes it to be from the late sixth or early seventh; C. Toumanoff states that it must have been translated at or after the end of the eighth.[638] Ter-Łewondyan claims merely that it is "not later than the tenth century."[639] Though we do not know if it was produced at Sinai, it is reasonable to suggest that the copyist was Christian, as it was preserved as a single section within a martyrology.

8.1.2   Content: the Formation of a National Church

The *History* ascribed to Agatᶜangełos was written in the fifth century and outlines the story of the conversion of Armenia. Written in Armenian, the author displays knowledge of early Christian texts in Greek and Syriac. The history tells of the missionizing efforts of St. Grigor Lusaworičᶜ: the tortures he endured under the Armenian king Trdat and his eventual role saving the life of the king and gaining the necessary influence to legalize Christianity, destroy pagan altars, and spread the new religion to the people of Armenia, Georgia, Abḫazia, and Albania. The *History* also includes an account of early Christian martyrs of Armenia, Hṛipᶜsimē, Gayanē, and a number of nuns fleeing from the commands of Diocletian and then Trdat. Grigor later ordered the construction of churches in memory of these holy women in the vicinity of Ējmiacin.

Ter-Łewondyan produces the following table, which allows for the quick comparison of the content of some of the main renditions of Agatᶜangełos:[640]

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[638] Toumanoff (1947), 376.

[639] Ter-Ghewondyan (1973), 209.

[640] Ter-Łewondyan (1976a), 35 (and 111 in Russian).

	A			V	
	Aa (1909)	*Ag* (1887)	*Ar*	*Vg* (1946)	*Va* (1905)
Introduction	1 - 17	1			?
Artašir's Rebellion		2 - 9a			?
Xorsrov and Trdat	18 - 47	9b – 21	1 – 30		?
S. Gregory's Martyrdom	48 - 136	22 – 58	31 - 113	1 – 29	1 – 9
Hṛipsime's Martyrdom	137 - 210	59 – 88	114 - 181	30 – 50	10 – 37
Vision of S. Gregory	211 - 258	89 – 127	182 - 275	51 – 92	38 – 85
	716 - 776				
Doctrine	259 - 715				
Wife of St. Gregory				93 – 97	
Conversion of Armenia	777 - 891	128 – 170	276 - 364	98 – 198	86 – 187
Conclusion	892 - 900	171 – 172		199	188

Table 5: Ter-Łewondyan's Chart of Contents of Agatᶜangełos's *History*

Some of the differences between the various recensions are easily explained. Thomson categorizes the Introduction of *Aa*, which is absent from all translations except the truncated version in *Ag,* as "long and exceedingly torturous" and "well-nigh impossible to translate at all closely."[641]

Meanwhile, Ter-Łewondyan comments that the section on Grigor's teaching (*vardapetutᶜiwn,* rendered in Greek as *didaskalia*), which occupies nearly half of *Aa,* is absent in all translations of the work, A or V cycle;[642] this is largely true, but oversimplified: while *Aa* devotes 456 pages to the teaching, according to Thomson's rendition, and the rest of the *A* cycle omits it, *Vg* includes 7 pages; *Vo,* 2; *Va,* 7; and *Vk,* 35.[643] This abridgement is more difficult to explain. R. Thomson published a detailed study of the teaching, outlining its main tenets and possible sources. He concludes that the author was particularly familiar with early Christian works, such as those by Cyril of Jerusalem and John Chrysostom: "There is no doubt that our

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[641] Thomson (1976), xxiv.

[642] Ter- Łewondyan (1968), 119. Van Esbroeck (1971), 15.

[643] Thomson (1976), liii.

author was personally acquainted with Greek, and with little question Syriac also, witness the wide range of borrowed material which has been reworked in his own fashion. Such extensive knowledge of Greek and Syriac literature in an Armenian author of the fifth century is neither surprising nor unusual."[644] He categorizes the interests of Agat°angełos as reflecting Christian interests before the Council of Ephesus. Despite its length, the Teaching was intended for purposes specific to Armenian Christian history: it was designed to demonstrate the ties between Grigor and Maštoc° and was therefore modeled after Koriwn's work.[645] Translated and divorced from its placement in traditional Armenian historiography, the relation of the Teaching to the rest of the history is uncertain and likely easier to detach. We can therefore hypothesize that the translations of Agat°angełos had a specific goal in mind beyond the faithful replication of an early Christian work.

The inclusion of the Sasanian episode (Artašir's rebellion) may also be problematic, as we should expect to see such information in the Arabic rendition: although it is only included in the Greek version *Ag*, this text was pulled from a seventh-century Pahlavi source entitled *Kārnāmak-i-Artashīr-i-Papākān,* translated into Greek via an Armenian intermediary.[646] Since we cannot determine with certainty when this episode was added to the Greek Agat°angełos, its omission from *Ar* is inconclusive. Its interest to Arab Muslims would be clear, but it is unlikely that this relevance would be noticed by the Christian copyists.

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[644] Thomson (1970), 35.

[645] Thomson (1970), 36 – 37.

[646] Thomson (1976), xxvii.

8.1.3 Significance: the Question of Chalcedonian Redactions

Agatᶜangełos was a particularly interesting choice of a text to translate. It is, quite clearly, one of the most iconic histories of Armenia and one of the most referenced sources on the Christianization of Armenia, Georgia, and Albania. However, one of the primary emphases of the *History* was "Armenian ecclesiastical independence from both the Greek and the Syriac churches."[647] This is due in large part to the Vision of St. Grigor, which is exceedingly important since it provides justification for the independence of the Armenian Church and supports the perception of Grigor as a national leader.[648]

Grigor described his vision: a man "in the form of light" descended from heaven and called him by name in a "thunderous voice." In this vision, Grigor saw the city of Vałaršapat, with the cathedrals dedicated to Hṙipᶜsimē and Gayanē. The man claimed that these "holy martyrs who were martyred here have made a road for these Northern regions, since they have gone up and made paths for others."[649] The creation of the center of the Armenian see was therefore constructed by none other than divine command, complete with a concurrent earthquake and thunderous noises, and on the authority of Armenian martyrs rather than dependent upon Greek or Syriac missionaries. This episode is extant in all translations of the work, whether A or V cycle.[650]

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[647] Ter-Łewondyan (1976a), 28

[648] Thomson (1970), 36: "It is also clear that the *History* is designed to glorify the site of the national cathedral at Vałaršapat, to link Gregory with the place of the martyr's shrines, although the center of Armenian Christianity in Gregory's own day was in the West at Aštišat. By means of the famous vision (§731 – 755) divine authority for the building of the main cathedral and the two churches of St. Rhipsimē and St. Gaianē was obtained; consequently, the site of the cathedral was later named Ējmiacin ('the Only-begotten descended'). It is no coincidence that the only fixed dates in the *History* are the martyrdom of Rhipsimē and Gregory's vision. The *History*, therefore, must be subsequent to the establishment of Vałaršapat as the see of the Armenian Patriarchate in the early fifth century. Its purpose was to give this see a divine foundation." See Peeters (1942), 117.

[649] Thomson (1976), 282 – 283: Զի սուրբ վկայքս այս որ աստ վկայեցին՝ հիւսիսական կողմանցս ճանապարհ գործեցին. Զի ինքեանք ելին և այլոց շաւիղս ուղղեցին:

It is unlikely that we can uncover explicit information about the stance of the redactors: whether the copyists and translators are Chalcedonian or anti-Chalcedonian, the content of all recensions preserves at least some mark of the past ties between the Greek and the Armenian Churches: Grigor is consecrated as bishop in Cappadocia in all variants except for *Vk,* which claims he traveled to Rome (though note that the name of the bishop is still given as Leontius, the bishop of Caesarea).[651] According to *Aa,* Grigor returned with a letter reading "[a]nd may the testimony between our two regions remain firm, that the gift of your new high priestly rank from us may remain immovably in our church of Caesarea, when has been prepared for you the ordination of salvation."[652] However, *Vg* and *Va* do not include such strong statements of ecclesiastical unity with the Greeks,[653] which at least opens the discussion about a possible anti-Chalcedonian (or at least independent Armenian) bent inherent in the V cycle.

V. Marr actually argues the opposite: that *Va* represents a Chalcedonian version of the Armenian conversion narrative because

> (a) its text was found in the Orthodox Monastery on Mt. Sinai; (b) the pagination of the MS, which contains it, is in Georgian; (c) Armenians are represented in it as one in religion with the Georgians, the Lazi, and the Albanians, though after the seventh century, which constitutes the *terminus a quo* of the redaction, this was not so; and (d) in the vision of St. Gregory, described in it, Marr sees an allusion to the anti-Chalcedonite schism.[654]

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[650] Garitte (1946), 341.

[651] Van Esbroeck (1971), 75 – 76: فهولا ارسلهم طرداد الملك لايطاليا مع مار غريغوريوس وكتب معهم رسالة "للاونطيوس بطرك رومية, "سلاما see 76 no. 244: "Permutation par rapport à l'Agathange et aux parallèles où le voyage de Rome se fait auprès de l'empereur Constantin, et celui de Césarée auprès de son évêque Léonce. Des raisons de politique religieuse motivent un tel renversement."

[652] Thomson (1976), 363 § 826: Եւ հաստատեալ կացցէ վկայութիւն ի մէջ երկոցունց կողմանցս, զի պարգեւաբաշխութիւն նորոգ քահանայապետութեանդ ձերոյդ նահանգիդ առ ի մէնջ՝ կացցէ անշարժ յեկեղեցւոջս Կեսարու, ուստի եւ հանդերձեցաւ ձեզ պատրաստեալ՝ փրկութեան ձեռնադրութիւն:

[653] Thomson (1976), 492 §826 no. 1; Garitte (Narratio), 56 – 57.

[654] Toumanoff (1947), 379.

G. Garitte responds to Marr's argument in detail. He dismisses the first two claims: Marr claims that the A cycle is anti-Chalcedonian, while the V cycle is Chalcedonian, but both the V and A cycle were found in Orthodox institutions. If one accepts Marr's assertion that the discovery of V at St. Catherine's indicates its Chalcedonian bent, so too must one accept that the A cycle is also Chalcedonian. Garitte dismisses the argument about Georgian pagination due to the fact that the work was in translation, while the other editions of the V cycle do not have similar markers of Chalcedonian copyists.

As for the question of ecclesiastical unity with the Georgians, Albanians, and Abḫazians, Marr argues that the appearance of this passage in *Va* indicates its Chalcedonian nature, since it is in the interest of the redactor to stress the religious unity of the four peoples. While the passage explicitly discussing Grigor's mission to the other Caucasian lands is missing from *Vg,* there is evidence that this was a mistake in this particular manuscript; additionally, the kings of Georgia, Albania, and Abḫazia are in fact mentioned in *Vg,* as are priests sent to the three lands on Grigor's order.[655]

This passage is curiously missing from the A cycle, which claims only that Grigor spread Christianity to the entirety of Armenia. This must at least allow for consideration of the definition of Armenia, especially given the evidence of Ps. Zacharias Rhetor as mentioned in Chapter 3: in the sixth century, Albania, Georgia, and Abḫazia may have been considered to be part of Armenia. It seems possible that the fifth century assertion in *Aa* that Grigor brought Christianity to all of Armenia assumes the concurrent inclusion of the neighboring peoples. After all, *Aa* is quite specific about the borders of Armenia, including areas that may traditionally be ascribed to its neighbors:

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[655] Garitte (1946), 311 – 312, 320 – 321.

Thus throughout the whole land of Armenia, from end to end, he extended the labor of preaching the gospel. From the city of Satala to the land of the Khaḷtik[c] [Chaldia], to Kaḷarjik[c] [Cholarzene], to the very borders of the Messagetae, to the gate of the Alans, to the borders of the Kaspk[c], to P[c]aytakaran, the city of the Armenian kingdom; from the city of Amida to the city of Nisibis he passed along the borders of Syria, the land of Nor-Shirakan and Korduk, to the secure land of the Medes, to the house of the prince of Mahk[c]r-Tun, to Azerbaijan—he spread his gospel-preaching.[656]

It is possible, however vague, that by extending the borders of Armenia to include the Allan Gate, the Kaspk[c] (Κασπῖται, near Derbent),[657] and P[c]aytakaran, the author implies lands of Georgia and Albania when discussing Armenia. After all, the A cycle has Grigor traveling as far as Azerbaijan to the east and Derbent and Allan Gate to the North.

Regardless, Garitte dismisses Marr's assertion that the inclusion of Georgians, Albanians, and Abḫazians by name in the V cycle indicates its Chalcedonian nature. A non-Chalcedonian Armenian would have just as much reason to stress this passage, due to its implications about Armenian ecclesiastical authority over its neighboring Churches.[658] However, Van Esbroeck later points out that this concern about Armenian mission efforts in neighboring lands is visible in the eighth century Georgian text of Leonti Mroveli, which is the source of Xorenac[c]i's statements on Saint Nino.[659]

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[656] Agat[c]angełos, trans. Thomson (1976), 376 – 377: Եւ այսպէս ընդ ամենայն երկիրն Հայոց, ի ծագաց մինչև ի ծագս, ձգտէր տարածանէր զմշակութիւն քարոզութեանն և աւետարանութեանն. Ի Սատաղացւոց քաղաքէն մինչև առ աշխարհաւն Խաղտեաց, մինչև առ Կաղարջօք, մինչ ի սպառ ի սահմանս Մասքթաց, մինչև ի դրունս Աղանաց, մինչ ի սահմանս Կասպից, ի Փայտակարան քաղաք արքայութեանն Հայոց. և յԱմդացւոց քաղաքէն մինչև առ Մըծբին քաղաքաւ, քերէր առ սահմանօքն Ասորւոց առ նոր Շիրական երկրաւն, և առ Կորդուօք մինչև յամուր աշխարհին Մարաց: մինչև առ տամրն Մահքր-Տան իշխանին, մինչև յԱտրպատական ձգտէր տարածանէր զաւետարանութիւնն իւր:

[657] Thomson (1976), 455, §19 no 10.

[658] Garitte (1946), 342.

[659] Van Esbroeck (1971), 17 – 18.

Marr's final argument, that passages from Grigor's vision as it's preserved in *Va* contain Chalcedonian bias, is equally dismissed: Garitte suggests that these few mentions might in fact add to the argument of pro-Chalcedonianism if there was some other proof to bolster it. Since *Aa* and *Ag* preserve similar remarks despite Marr's categorization of the A cycle as anti-Chalcedonian in nature, the Vision cannot by itself provide sufficient evidence for Marr's argument.[660]

C. Toumanoff also takes issue with V. Marr's assertion that *Va* was Chalcedonian, claiming that this statement is dependent upon Marr's assumption that it was penned in Tayk^c.[661] The provenance of the V cycle depends upon the study of the list of toponyms found in the text. Marr considers the terms ايباكليرتين ,سوسبارتين ,قوانيتين, قرذلت, and مانيارط to demonstrate a remnant of the text's Georgian origin in that they preserve a vestige of the Georgian endings –et^ci / -it^ci: "Ces toponymes sont formés du suffixe –*at* ou -*aṭ*, représentant le géorgien –*et^c* or –*it^c*; ils possésaient déjà ce suffixe dans l'original grec, car plusieurs d'entre eux étant munis de la terminaison ـين- -*yn*, qui est celle de l'accusatif grec en –ην, montrant qu'ils sont transcrits fidèlement du grec."[662] However, Garitte counters this argument, as well: he refers back to *Vg*, which Marr did not have access to, and clarifies that some of the Arabic toponyms are clearly distorted: (1) ايباكليرتين corresponds to ἐπὶ Ἐκλετζενήν and should therefore read ابياكلتزنين; (2) سوسبارتين is Σουσπέρτιν (Συσπῖτις); (3) قوانيتين is Καρανῖτιν (Καρηνῖτις) and should read قرانيتين; (4) قرذلت is Κορδούνων; and (5) مانيارط is Μανιάρατ: the final –t is unusual, but cannot be a remnant of the Georgian because of the Armenian translation: Մանեայ այրք (the toponymic

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[660] Garitte (1946), 342 – 343.

[661] Toumanoff (1947), 380.

[662] Garitte (1947), 347 qtd Marr (1905).

suffix would not be added to the noun *ayrkᶜ*). Garitte therefore asserts that the Arabic toponyms cannot reliably recreate any trace of Georgian and subsequently that Marr's argument for a Georgian-Armenian origin of the V cycle is based upon flimsy guesswork.[663]

Thomson's study of Agatᶜangełos suggests that the V cycle in its entirety is "deliberately aimed at presenting a different interpretation of—or attitude towards—the dominant tradition in Armenian."[664] He pinpoints a few passages of interest for the question of Chalcedonianism: (1) Grigor's lineage is omitted from *Vg* and *Va,* but he is identified as a Cappadocian in *Vg* only: "This claim was presumably motivated by a Greek Christian who wished to emphasise the connection between Cappadocia—notably the metropolitan see of Cappadocia—and Armenia."[665] Although this is not explicit in any of the other recensions, both *Vg* and *Va* are more detailed than any *A* version in their account of Grigor's travels from Cappadocia to Armenia.[666] (2) In the abridged version of *Va* Vision of Grigor, Marr considers "the wolves who lead others to their own view" a reference to Chalcedonian concern about disinformation. Thomson refutes this based on the lack of evidence: "the phrase in question could as well refer to backsliding—as the Armenian clearly does—as to differing Christological views and cannot bear the precise interpretation that Marr would read into it."[667]

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[663] Garitte (1946), :347 – 348: "il suffit de mettre l'argument en forme pour se rendre compte du peu de chances qu'il a d'être pris au sérieux par les gens de bon sens. Mais il n'est pas nécessaire de s'étendre sur l'inconsistance du raisonnement, car les faits eux-mêmes sur lesquels il se fond sont purement imaginaires. Il faut avoir une bien robuste confiance dans son étoile pour oser baser la moindre construction sur des noms propres obscurs trouvés dans un texte arabe qui est attesté par un seul manuscrit. L'original grec, que nous restitue Vg, exclut décisivement, et ce n'est pas merveille, l'interprétation de Marr."

[664] Thomson (1976), xxiii.

[665] Thomson (1976), xxix.

[666] Thomson (1976), 438 no. 24.

[667] Thomson (1976), lvii; Garitte, 338 – 350.

Thomson, Toumanoff, and Garitte thus each present a detailed rebuttal against Marr's specific arguments; however, Garitte concluded his discussion with the recognition of the likelihood of Chalcedonian influence in the V cycle despite the lack of definitive proof.[668] This is clearly not a fixed conclusion: Ter-Łewondyan argues that the A cycle is hellenophile, while the V cycle demonstrates the tendencies of the Armenians to ally with the Syriac Church.[669] The categorization of the only extant Karšūni recension as a V cycle supports Ter-Łewondyan's conclusion, though he is quick to follow up with the assertion that the bulk of the subject material remains unchanged between the two cycles. The anti-Chalcedonian bent of the V cycle is supported by later documents, such as the tenth or eleventh century Coptic text that demonstrates familiarity with the V texts, but is explicit in its confessional statements against the Greek Church.[670]

Given the existence of two Arabic renditions possibly dated to the Arab period, one belonging to the A cycle and the other to the V cycle, it is unlikely that a strong Chalcedonian or anti-Chalcedonian sentiment played a major role in the decision of which text to translate. However, the Arabic versions of Agatᶜangełos do demonstrate that Chalcedonianism, or rather more importantly the Greek claims of ecclesiastical supremacy over the Armenians, was a particularly important question during this period presumably because of their inherent usefulness in sustaining claims of political legitimacy. Another important implication of the

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[668] Garitte (1946), 344 – 345: "Il faut conclure que l'origine 'chalcedonienne' de la recension V n'est pas prouvée avec certitude; elle n'a en sa faveur qu'une certain probabilité. On peut présumer que le rédacteur était orthodoxe, parce qu'il a au moins conservé intacts, s'il n'a pas façonné lui-même, des passages d'une 'hellénophilie' évidente, et aussi parce que, la recension d'Agathange ayant traditionnellement droit de cité chez les Arméniens grégoriens, il est vraisemblable que la rédaction concurrente se soit adressée aux Arméniens restés en communion avec l'Église byzantine."

[669] Ter-Łewondyan (1976a), 32.

[670] Van Esbroeck (1971), 17.

popularity of this group of texts is the interrelation of various Christian denominations within the Islamic world.

8.1.4 Armenian Literature in the Christian Communities in the Near East

All the extant Arabic translations of Agatᶜangełos are housed in St. Catherine's in the Sinai. The manuscript of *Ar* includes a colophon that marks the copyist as a Christian and specifies the Sinai as its place of production. *Va* must also be considered a Christian copy, due to its placement in a book of Christian martyrology: the story was not considered a history of the Armenian nation so much as an account of Christian martyrs.

We have incontrovertible evidence that Armenians visited the Sinai on pilgrimage during the early Islamic period. M. Stone published two particularly interesting inscriptions:

(1) H Arm 15 reads:

պա] ՀՆ ՋԱՅ[ս	wa]tch thi[s
]Ա – ՈՐ ԱՍՏ	]A- which here
Թհ]ՅԱ	the year of] the A(rmenians) 301 [= 852 C.E.]

Image 8: Armenian Inscription in the Sinai, 852 CE.

Stone cited O. Yeganian to interpret this as "This period, when I was here, is the year 301 of the Armenians." He also confirms that the paleography is congruent with the stated date.[671]

(2) H Arm 66 reads as follows:

] - - Վ Ղ Ե Ն ՄՆԱ - Մ [   ] - - V Ł E N remain – M [
] – Գ Ո Վ Ի [] ՎԱՁԳԵՆ [ ] – [   ] – is praised] Vazgen [ ] – [
      ՄՈՎՍԵՍԻԿ   Movsēsik

Image 9: Armenian Inscription in the Sinai, ninth century.

Inscribed over the Armenian, which Stone claims is "probably of the eighth century," are a few letters in Arabic that resemble اللص. M. Sharon dates the Arabic script to the ninth century or earlier.[672]

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[671] Stone (1982), 109 and pl. L.

[672] Stone (1982), 153 and plate CII.

Other inscriptions of interest include a number of names: (1) S Arm 11: "Varazdux[t]" (a woman's name) from the seventh century;[673] (2) S Arm 17: "Vasak" from the seventh – eighth centuries;[674] (3) H Arm 11: "Aharovn" from the eighth century;[675] (4) H Arm 24: "Vasak" from the seventh – eighth centuries "at the latest";[676] (5) H Arm 34: "I Ep^crim and T^cat^canoyš," dated between the seventh and ninth centuries, paleographically comparable to seventh century inscriptions and the 867 Aruč inscription;[677] (6) H Arm 44: "I Yoh an / I H O I W M A R G Ē," from the eighth century;[678] (7) H Arm 55: "Ezekiēł / Yovhannēs / Čučut ---6" from the eighth or ninth centuries, comparable to the 783 Uxtatur inscription;[679] (8) H Arm 64: "Ē Ł / Vanik, rem-/ember," from the seventh century;[680] (9) H Arm 67: "Yakovb / sinner" from "prior to the ninth century";[681] and (10) "Mos/es I circumvented," from the eighth or ninth centuries.[682]

These inscriptions demonstrate an Armenian presence in Sinai during the early Arab period. Of M. Stone's inscriptions, most (73) were undatable, twelve are from the seventh to ninth centuries, five are post-ninth century, thirteen date from the tenth or eleventh centuries, six from the "tenth century or later," two from the twelfth or thirteenth century, and one from the fourteenth or fifteenth century. Although we cannot make any conclusions about the relationship

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[673] Stone (1982), 75 and plate XI.

[674] Stone (1982), 79 and plate XV.

[675] Stone (1982), 106 and plate XLVI.

[676] Stone (1982), 116 – 117 and plate LX.

[677] Stone (1982), 125 – 126 and plate LXXIV.

[678] Stone (1982), 134 – 135 and plate LXXVIII.

[679] Stone (1982), 143 and plate XC.

[680] Stone (1982), 150 – 152 and plate C.

[681] Stone (1982), 154 and plate CIII.

[682] Stone (1982), 157 and plate CVII.

between the number of pilgrims and the remaining inscriptions, the fact remains that many of the datable inscriptions are from the early Islamic period, indicating at the very least the popularity of pilgrimage to Sinai for Armenian Christians.

We can surmise, therefore, that interest in translating an Armenian work into Arabic stemmed from interaction between the Arabic-speaking Christians present at Sinai and the Armenian pilgrims. However, its translation via a Greek intermediary is more difficult to explain. The translator, as Ter-Łewondyan points out, had a shaky grasp of Greek and was likely a native Arabic speaker. St. Catherine's is a Greek Orthodox institution, so that two-thirds of the manuscripts housed in it are Greek, while Armenian manuscripts account for relatively little of the collection. Greek manuscripts were likely simply much more available than Armenian ones. However, no copies of the Greek text have survived in the Sinai collection. It may simply have been that Armenian was not well-known at that time.

The translations of Agatᶜangełos only support the conclusion of an interfaith (or at least interdenominational) conversation among the various ethnic groups in the Near East; their transmission via the Greek intermediaries perpetuates the argument that there was no significant bilateral Arab – Armenian interchange at this early period. The only markers of literary exchange are also common to Syriac or Greek sources and instead support the importance of the sectarian milieu in the transmission of ideas and conventions, not specific works. Furthermore, the suggestion that Armenian literature was understood as hellenophile can hardly be disputed given the apparent familiarity of Arabic-speaking Christians only with Greek renditions of Armenian works. The later familiarity of Armenians with Arabic literature is clearly through relations with Islamic world and cannot be fairly compared to the Christian Arabic translation of Agatᶜangełos.

Interestingly, the frequently-cited transmission of Greek texts into Arabic via Syriac translations in the ᶜAbbāsid period is unlikely to have any direct connection to the *History* of Agatᶜangełos, as neither the A nor V cycles indicate a Syriac intermediary. Nevertheless, there is evidence that Syriac-speaking Christians were involved in the transmission and dissemination of the corpus through the Near East, demonstrating the universality of interest in the texts. The Karšūni translation of Agatᶜangełos, *Vk*, is comparatively late to be of interest for the early period: it was copied in 1732 – 1733 from a Syriac manuscript dated 1178 from Dēr az-Zaᶜafarān.[683] The text is dependent upon an Arabic version of the V cycle, but shows knowledge not only of the A cycle, but also of other Armenian texts such as Xorenacᶜi. Interestingly, *Vk* completely omits the Vision of Grigor, despite its relevance to the argument for an independent Armenian Church, but adds an aspect to the argument that is missing from other recensions of Agatᶜangełos: the Armenian claim to an apostolic seat by the missionary activity and martyrdom of Thaddeus.[684]

Perhaps more important for the current study is the Syriac document written in 714 and known as the "Notice of George, Bishop of the Arabs." This piece contains a chapter about Grigor, which Garitte published both in Syriac and in Latin translation. He demonstrates that *Vo* directly cites this early text, supporting the claim of the involvement of Syriac-speaking Christians in the dissemination of the Agatᶜangełos corpus despite the lack of an early translation extant in Syriac. In fact, it is clear from the text that the author is working from an even earlier Syriac text, as he expresses doubt about the amount of time Grigor spent in the pit by suggesting

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[683] Van Esbroeck (1971), 13.

[684] Van Esbroeck (1971), 22 – 23: كان في ارمينية ملكا يدعى سنطروغ ابن اخت ابجر الرها الذى كتب رسالة المسيح. ويقولوا عليه بانه من قبيلة داوود الملك والنبي ومن هاهنا يقولون بان جميع ملوك الارمن هم من نسل داوود وفي ايام هذا سنطروغ الملك اتى لبى الذى تكنى الذى هو ادى وكرز لهم كلمة الايمان فقبله سنطروغ ابن اخت ابجر الملك فلما سمعوا ملوك ارمينيا اجتمعوا واتوا لعنده وقالوا له: "لا يليق لك بان تترك الهة ابايك" فهو صنع ارادتهم ورجع لطغيانه القديم واما ادى فاصعدوه الى علوا وقتلوه هناك وقبر من اناسا مومنين.

that the his source was miscopied and had transcribed 3 (ܓ) years as 13 (ܝܓ) years: such a

mistake would be unlikely if the author was working with a Greek or Armenian text.[685] This

positively identifies versions of the Agatᶜangełos cycle penned in Armenian, Greek, Syriac, and

Arabic during and/or before our period, indicating not only that the Christian communities had

close relations and interests, but also that there was some measure of continuity between pre- and

post-Islamic interconfessional dynamics.

8.2   Łewond and the Correspondence between ᶜUmar and Leo

The transmission of Agatᶜangełos's *Patmutᶜiwn* is not an entirely unique phenomenon, as it is

quite similar to the history of the polemical letters between the Umayyad caliph ᶜUmar II and the

Byzantine Emperor Leo III: (1) both sets of texts include multiple manuscripts and renditions in

Armenian, Greek, Arabic, and Latin; (2) both have spurred considerable academic response as to

their date, authenticity, and significance; and (3) both groups of texts demonstrate the

interrelation of the various literatures of the Near East, independent of denominational

boundaries.

There are multiple references to these letters in Christian literatures of the Near East from

the ninth and tenth centuries. Theophanes (d. 818),[686] Agapius (d. 942),[687] and Tᶜovma Arcruni

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[685] Garitte (1946), 421 and 409.

[686] Turtledove, 91: "And he ['Umar II] also sent a doctrinal letter to the Emperor Leo, thinking to persuade him to apostasize." Recorded under the year 6210 (September, 717 – August, 718). Qtd also in Hoyland (2007), 490: "He (ᶜUmar) wrote for Leo the king a letter summoning him therein to Islam and, moreover, disputed with him about his religion. Leo made him reply in which he tore apart his argument and made clear to him the unsoundness of his statement, and elucidated to him the light of Christianity by proofs from the revealed books and by comparison from the insights and inclinations of the Qur'an."

[687] Agapius, qtd in Gero (1973), 45: وكتب الى لاون الملك كتابا يدعوه فيه الى الاسلام ثم جادله في دينه فاجابه لاون جوابا قطع فيه حجته Agapius :490 ,(2007) Hoyland واوضح له فساد قوله وبين له نور النصرانية بحجج من الكتب المنزلة ومقاييس من العقول ونوازع من القران. and Theophanes may be working from the same source here.

(late 9th – early 10th century)[688] each mention that such correspondence took place, but do not record specific information about the content. We have six texts that purport to preserve this correspondence:

(1) An anonymous letter from Leo to ᶜUmar: *Min Aliyūn malik al-Rūm ilā ᶜUmar ibn ᶜAbd al-ᶜAzīz, amīr al-muᶜminīn,* dated to the mid or late eighth century. This was written in Arabic, likely by a Melkite clergyman, and preserved in ninth-century manuscript in Saint Catherine's at Sinai.[689]

(2) An anonymous Arabic text with half of ᶜUmar's letter to Leo preserved in a late ninth- or early tenth-century manuscript produced in Syria and currently held in the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Art in Istanbul;[690]

(3 and 4) Two sixteenth-century Aljamiado translations of a ninth century Arabic text preserving the other half of ᶜUmar's letter, entitled *Karta de ᶜUmar ibn ᶜAbd al-ᶜAzīz rey de los Kᵉreyentes a Lyon rey de los Kⁱristiʸanos deskᵉreyentes* and kept in the Biblioteca Nacional in Madrid (ms. 4944, fols 84v – 101v and ms. 5302). About ten paragraphs of these late Aljamiado versions and the previously mentioned 9 – 10th century Arabic overlap, which demonstrates that they not only hail from the same document, but the later copies are a faithful rendition of the early Arabic. The

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[688] T'ovma Arcruni, 166 – 8: Ումառ որդի Աբդլազիզա ամս գ: Սա ազնուագոյն եղեալ քան զամենեսին. Գրէ թուղթ հաւատոց առ Ղեոն կայսր Յունաց, և ընկալեալ ի նմանէ պատասխանիս՝ բագում ինչ ի Կուրանէ անտի իւրեանց արտաքս ընկէց զյոյժ առասպելագոյնն, քանզի ստուգապէս ծանեաւ զզօրութիւնն. Թէպէտ և ոչ համարձակեաց զամենայն բառնալ, այլ յոյժ պատկառանօք ամաչեցեալ՝ լքալ ի ստութենէ անտի, որ յանդիմանեցաւ ի թղթոյ կայսերն, և ի ձեռն այսորիկ ցուցաներ բարեմտութիւն մեծ առ ազգս քրիստոնէից:

[689] Swanson (2009), 377: "Nothing is known of the actual author of an Arabic text purporting to be a letter of the Byzantine Emperor Leo III (r. 717 – 41) to the Umayyad caliph ᶜUmar ibn ᶜAbd al-ᶜAzīz (r. 717 – 20), other than what can be gathered from the context of the text itself and the manuscript in which it is fragmentarily preserved (Sinai ar. NF pap. 14). These lead us to think of a Melkite monk or cleric of the mid-8th century, possibly of Palestine or Sinai, who had some Christian biblical and theological formation as well as some familiarity with Islamic vocabulary."

[690] Gaudeul ; Roggema (2009), 382 and 384; Sourdel (1966).

isnād provided for these documents (possibly from the abovementioned 9 – 10th century Arabic manuscript, which is missing the opening section) are considered reliable and date the document to the late eighth century;[691]

(5) A sixteenth century Latin translation of Leo's letter, likely from a Greek original;[692] and

(6) Łewond's abridged letter from ʿUmar and the extended letter from Leo, which is clearly a response to the Arabic and Aljamiado letters of ʿUmar.[693]

8.2.1 Dating

Łewond's letter from Leo has engendered considerable discussion. Gero argued that it was originally written in Armenian and inserted into Łewond's history in the eleventh or twelfth century,[694] though the text of the letter itself claims to have been written in Greek[695] in the middle of the eighth century.[696] Due in large part to his conclusions, scholars have typically placed the correspondence in Łewond anywhere from the eighth to the tenth century or even later.[697]

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[691] Gaudeul (1984), 123; Roggema (2009), 381 – 5; See Cardaillac (1972) for the Aljamiado text. On the reliability of the *isnād* in the Aljamiao text, see Hoyland (2007), 493 – 494; Sourdel (1966).

[692] Note, however, Gero's argument that the Latin text was in fact a translation from a Melkite (Arabic) source, 46 and 153 – 171. See Hoyland (2007), 498: the Armenian and Latin are both likely working off of the same text in Greek.

[693] Gaudeul; Roggema (2009), 382 – 3.

[694] Gero (1973), 153 – 171. Whereas Hildebrand Beck argues that they were inserted earlier, in the ninth or tenth century, cf: Jeffery (1944), 273 no. 11.

[695] Łewond, 88: մեր Յունացս is included in a list of Christian languages.

[696] Łewond, 86: և ժամանակ երևման դորա որպէս դուրդ ասէք՝ հարիւր ամ փոքր ինչ աւելի կամ պակաս: One hundred years, more or less, after the *hiğra* means that the author of the letter claims to be writing in 722.

[697] Newman (1993), 62.

R. Hoyland has convincingly argued against each of Gero's arguments and concludes that

the letters were indeed included in Łewond's original text, which dates back to the eighth,[698] or

possibly the ninth,[699] century. Gero, for example, argues that a reviser of Łewond modeled the

correspondence after Tᶜovma Arcruni and Asołik. However, Hoyland points out that the

influence is probably *vice versa* since Asołik specifically mentions Łewond as his source.[700] The

two later histories have very different methods, content, and tone from Łewond's. There are no

concrete data to demonstrate that Łewond's passage relies on either historian or, indeed, that the

correspondence is a later addition to his history. Furthermore, Meyendorff points out that the

general apathy towards the presence of icons in the Church demonstrates that Leo's response

must in fact be from the early eighth century.[701]

The dialogical format and the existence of a ninth-century Arabic manuscript of ᶜUmar's

letter, complete with *isnād* bringing it back to the late eighth century, at the very least add weight

to the conclusion that the Armenian version of Leo and ᶜUmar's letters dates to the early

ᶜAbbāsid period. After all, Łewond's letter from Leo is clearly a response to this document in

Arabic, as it answers the questions posed in the Arabic/Aljamiado texts, uses the same biblical

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[698] Hoyland (2007), 494.

[699] Greenwood (2012).

[700] Hoyland (2007), 492: "Stephen Asołik of Taron, *Universal History*, 1.1 (tr. Dulaurier, 4), says he uses 'the history of Łewond the priest who informs us about the invasions of the Arabs and the woes which their tyranny visited upon Armenian,' one cannot infer from this, as does Gero (*Byzantine Iconoclasm…Leo,* 137), 'that Stephen could use Łewond's work for local events in Armenia only.'" His response to the charge that "the narrative framework of the correspondence is taken from the tenth-century historian Thomas Artsruni," Hoyland (2007), 491 responds with the review of Łewond's conventions in narrative style and is unable to confirm this. He notes that Tᶜovma Arcruni does not specifically name Łewond as his source, but it is still a possibility since he doesn't consistently identify his sources.

[701] Meyendorff (1964), 127 qtd. in Hoyland (2007), 498 – 499: "[t]he text clearly reflects a state of mind which was predominant at the court of Constantinople in the years which preceded the iconoclastic decree of 726…for neither the iconoclasts nor the orthodox were capable, at a later date, of adopting towards the images so detached an attitude."

passages, and even cites it directly.[702] ᶜUmar's letter in Arabic circulated the Islamic (and Christian) world as early as the eighth or ninth century, which confirms the possibility that Łewond's response from Leo may be authentic to the original text.

8.2.2   Content and its Significance: Sources of Armenian Knowledge of Islam

Łewond's letters allow us to imagine Islam as Armenians understood it in the early ᶜAbbāsid period. In fact, the letter begins with the statement: "We want to learn the significance of your opinions, for we have been instructed by regarding this: 'Examine everything, but accept what is good.'"[703] And without a doubt, the author of Leo's letter was indeed familiar with Islamic orthodoxy. He mentions a number of aspects of Muslim doctrine and orthopraxy, including (1) the humanity of Muḥammad;[704] (2) basic information about Islamic law, including laws about divorce,[705] witnesses,[706] and impurities;[707] (3) general knowledge of the Qur'ān, including some paraphrasing[708] and the confusion between Mary the sister of Aaron and Mary the mother of Christ;[709] (4) detailed information about the *ḥağğ*, such as the stoning of the devil (*ramy al-*

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[702] Gaudeul (1984), 123.

[703] Łewond, 69: Այլ եւ զձերոց կարծեացդ զօրութիւն այժմիկ նորոգ կամիմք ուսանիլ. Այլ առ ի յԱստուծոյ եւ վասն այսորիկ խրատեալք «զամենայն ինչ քննեցէք. Իսկ զբարին ընկալարուք»:

[704] Łewond, 81: Բայց զքոյ Մահմետն չգիտիցե՞ս արդեօք մարդ

[705] Łewond, 121.

[706] Łewond, 103: Եւ ու՞ր է իւր իսկ օրինադրին քո հրամանն առանց երկուց վկայից ոչ հաստատել:

[707] Łewond, 115 mentions women's menstrual periods and human excrement as impure in Islamic belief and suggests that they are not impure because they serve a purpose.

[708] Łewond, 121: Compare to Qur'ān 2:223. Cf: Jeffery (1944), 324 no. 79.

[709] Łewond, 104: Զքո օրինադրին զահագին ստութիւնն մոռացար արդեօք. Թէ եւ գիտես իսկ ոչ զՄարիամ՝զԱմրամայ դուստրն, զԱհարոնի քոյրն, նա է մայր Տեառն մերոյ: This, of course, refers to the famous confusion in Qur'ān 66:12, which mistakenly calls Mary the mother of Christ the daughter of ᶜImrān.

ǧamarāt), running [between Safa and Marwa] (*sa^cy*), sacrifice and shaving the head;[710] (5) the belief that Jesus was not crucified;[711] (6) an Islamic understanding of heaven;[712] (7) Friday as a day of prayer;[713] and (8) circumcision.[714] This information is generally correct, though delivered in an unflattering tone. It may seem possible, though unverifiable, that the author of the letters gleaned this information from everyday interactions with his Muslim neighbors.

Some authors have suggested that the proliferation of texts, Muslim and Christian in a variety of languages, indicates that there was considerable discussion among various religious groups.[715] This is certainly true, but it cannot substantiate the argument for Armenian involvement in this discussion. After all, the Armenian version has been translated from Greek and therefore cannot contribute to the discussion of Armenian knowledge of Islam or contact with Muslims. It is therefore possible that even factual information about Islam was actually gleaned from Christian sources. For example, John of Damascus wrote about the *ḥaǧǧ,* and the

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[710] Łewond, 120: այլ միայն զողաբար խաբէութեամբ՝ ի կարուստ հոգւոց ձերոց պատրեն զձեզ: կամ քարին զոր ռքունն կոչեցեր, զոր ոչ զիստես եթէ ընդեր երկրպագեալ համբուրես, եւ դիւական կոտորածին, յորմէ զազանք եւ թոչունք զարշին եւ միոտանի վազեցեն. և քարաձգութեանն և փախստեանն եւ զզլուփ դերձնլոյն և այլոց ամօթալեաց, զորս գործենն: See also Łewond, 105, where he discusses the *qibla*.

[711] Łewond, 109: Իսկ զկենարար մահուանէն որ լուեալ եւս ես ասելով ոչ ումեք կարող զալ ի մարդկանէ սպանանել զնա: Եւ եթէ տոսկ մարդ է ըստ քո կարծեացդ, զի՞նչ անհաւատ է մեռանել մարդոյ:

[712] Łewond, 125. This focuses on the sensual nature of heaven, which the letters describe with a certain amount of contempt. The description of heaven could have been interpolated from interaction with Muslims, but it is notably a main theme in Greek polemics against Islam. As such, despite the fact that the information is not incorrect, it is not possible to consider it proof that Armenians had direct knowledge of Islam. Cf: Thomson (1986), 838.

[713] Łewond, 113: Դու զուրբաթ օր ժողովոյ կարգեցեր՝ զպատճառ և ոչ մի իրաւանց զիտելով:

[714] Łewond, 112: քանզի ի հնումն հրամայեաց Աստուած թլփատել զամենայն արու յաւուր ութերորդի. Իսկ դուք ոչ զարս, այլ եւ զկանայս, յորում եւ իցէ հասակի՝ ամօթալեօք խայտառակէք: Cf: Jeffery (1944), 317 no. 69 notes that the concept of female circumcision is extant in early Arabic literature, including in the *musnad* of Ibn Hanbal and the *Thousand and One Nights*. However, he also remarks that this charge is found in Greek literature.

[715] Roggema (2009), 376: "The correspondence forms a rare case of a polemical exchange exceeding two letters, and underscores the fact that apologetic and polemical arguments were not only developed within the respective communities but also through direct acquaintance with the critical views of members of the other religion."

Islamic understanding of heaven was a frequent theme in Greek polemics.[716] Furthermore, Łewond comments on female circumcision—a topic rarely present in Arabic histories and literature, but mentioned in Greek polemics.[717]

In addition to the aforementioned information, the author also reports several details that have not been accepted in mainstream Islam, including (1) a list of Islamic sects that have not been definitively identified;[718] (2) the charge that Salmān al-Fārisī, ʿAlī and ʿUmar wrote the Qurʾān;[719] and (3) the belief that al-Ḥaǧǧāǧ fundamentally changed the Qurʾān and destroyed all other copies.[720] This last assertion demonstrates the author's familiarity with other Christian literatures, as it is borrowed from al-Kindī's polemic.[721]

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[716] Thomson (1986), 838 – 9.

[717] Thomson (1986), 842.

[718] Łewond, 86. I consider this list as part of the inaccurate information because the sects have not all been positively identified, nor are the beliefs ascribed to them necessarily factual. For example, Jeffery (1944), 296 no. 46, identifies the *Jahdi* as Ǧāhiẓites. Despite the fact that Jeffery himself admits that al-Ǧāhiẓ was not guilty of the charges listed in the letter ("that he denied the existence of God and the resurrection"), this ascription has been heralded as proof that the letter must be a later fabrication inasmuch as al-Ǧāhiẓ died in 869, long after the purported authors of the letters. However, this idea has been challenged recently, cf: Hoyland (2007), 494. Newman (1993), 49 argues that the author may have been referring to the Yazīdī: "The *Jahdi*, of whom it is said that in the text that they do not believe in God or the resurrection, may refer to the Yazidis, who worship the Malak Ta'us and believe in the transmigration of souls… Indeed the paradox of the Yazidis being Kurdish and their scriptures being written in Arabic, would seem to indicate that they were heretical Muslims and not Nestorians or Persian Zoroastrians as some assume."

[719] Łewond, 83: Գիտեմ՝ ընդ ճշմարտութիւն մերս Քրիստոնէիցս նեղիս եւ կամիս զի ստութեանդ քոյ ընկեր գտանէիր թէ ասէաք թէ գրեալ իջոյց զայդ Աստուած յերկնից որպէս դու վասն Փուրկանիդ քոյ ասես. Թէպէտեւ չեմք անտեղեակ թէ եւ քոյդ Օմար եւ Աբու-Թուռաբ եւ Սաղման պարսիկք գրեցին. Եւ դուք ստելով համբաւէք թէ՝ յերկնից իջոյց Աստուած: This is a curious charge, stemming likely from the fact that Salmān was known for *translating* the Qurʾān into Persian. Thomson (1986), 38, states: "Unique to Thomas [Arcruni] among early Christian critics of Islam is the attribution of the Qur'an to a Persian called Salman. This, however, was an important feature of the Muslim tradition found as early as Ibn Ishaq." He cites G. Levi Della Vida's article "Salmān al-Fārīsī" in EI1, which says nothing of the sort. Ibn Isḥāq, as far as I can find, made no such assertion and this is not a Muslim belief.

[720] Łewond, 88: Բայց դուք սովոր էք առնել զայսպիսիս, մանաւանդ Հաջաջն այն որ ի կողմանս Պարսից առ ի ձէնջ ազգապետ կացեալ, ժողովեաց զամենայն հին գրեանն ձեր եւ այլ ըստ սիորժակացն գրեաց եւ բաշխեաց ընդ ամենայն ազգն ձեր:

[721] Jeffery (1944), 331. See also: 298 no. 48.

Łewond does not receive his information solely from personal interaction with Muslims: we see this not only in his occasional inaccuracies, but also his specific word choices or, more frequently, his transliteration of foreign words. The spelling of the sects of Islam and the transliteration of the word *rukn* show that he is likely not working directly from an Arabic source or Arab informants, but relying rather on a Greek intermediary document. Although the quotations from Scripture are based on the Armenian Bible,[722] the text of the letter itself mentions the Septuagint names for several Biblical books and refers to the Pentateuch by its Greek name (*nomos*).[723] This suggests that the original letter was penned in Greek.

   S. Griffith argues that Greek and Latin polemics preserve inaccurate portraits of Islam, due to the fact that the authors did not have extended contact with Muslims. In comparison, polemics written in Syriac and Arabic were more informed and respectful.[724] In general, Armenian polemics seem to fall between these groups.[725] Gaudeul argues that Łewond "probably never lived in a Muslim country, but he has met Muslims and he has had access to written information about Islam," whereas the Latin version of Leo's letter is far more fanciful.[726] Christian polemical literature has a history of transcending borders between peoples (and even

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[722] Hoyland (2007), 493: Refuting Gero's argument that the correspondence was originally penned in Armenian: "But his only positive argument is that the Armenian Vulgate rather than the Septuagint has been used for scriptural citations, which is a common practice among translations." He notes Chahnazarian's use of the French Bible and Jeffery's English citations in the two main modern translations of the correspondence.

[723] Łewond, 120: օրքունն. Cf: Jeffery (1944), 331; Hoyland (2007), 492.

[724] Griffith (1980), 131: "There was personal contact between Muslims and Christians within *dār al-Islām*. Christians were familiar with the *Qurʾān*, and with Muslim traditions. Whlie they were the adversaries of the Muslims in the religious controversies, there was none of the personal isolation, at least in the first Abbasid century, of the sort that must have been a factor in provoking so many of the hostile fantasies that are found in the polemical works of Christians in other lands, who wrote in Greek or Latin, often depicting Muhammad as demon possessed, an agent of the anti-Christ, or as personally morally deprived."

[725] This is a problematic generalization, given that Łewond is working with a Greek original. Therefore, Griffith's statement is perhaps too simplified to prove useful in this case, unless Łewond somehow altered the Greek original. Still, the idea is interesting.

[726] Gaudeul (1984), 115.

between monotheistic religions), of inheriting early Christian rhetoric, and of following common literary tropes.[727] In this way, Armenian polemics against Islam may reveal more about the interrelated nature of the various communities of Christians in the Islamic world than about actual interactions between Muslims and Christians.

First of all, the main topics of contention listed in Łewond's letters are familiar: (1) the Trinity; (2) the accusation of selective reading of Scripture; (3) the various interpretations of the verses concerning the Paraclete and the two riders; and (4) veneration of relics and images. The very same issues are broached by most Christian apologists.[728] In fact, the manner of discussion is also quite uniform: most early ⁽Abbāsid polemics are staged as a correspondence or a live debate, usually between high ranking or eminent religious or political leaders. Similar to the ⁽Umar - Leo pairing, we also see the Jacobite patriarch John I and an anonymous Arab amīr; Abraham, a monk from Beth Hale and an Arab nobleman; the patriarch Timothy and the caliph al-Mahdi; and a "disputation between a Saracen and a Christian" attributed to John of Damascus.[729] "All of the apologetical literature that has survived from the first ⁽Abbāsid century, be it Muslim or Christian, in Syriac or Arabic, is dialogical in form…All of them, by convention, are addressed to an inquirer, either by name or merely in rhetorical style, in the introduction to the treatise."[730]

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[727] Though note that these trends in Christian polemics are clearly differentiated from Islamic polemics, cf: Griffith (1979), 79 – 80: "To state it quite simply, they [Muslim apologists] are not grounded in any Greek philosophical system, but in the *Qur'ān.* There is a system of thought that inspires their understanding of the *Qur⁽ān,* analogous to the role of the Neoplatonic philosophical synthesis in the Christian interpretation of the Bible. It is what we would perhaps call the hermeneutics of the Arabic grammatical tradition."

[728] Griffith (1979), 64. Cf: S. Griffith (1980).

[729] See Hoyland (2007), 489.

[730] Griffith (1980), 116.

Direct borrowing did indeed occur as we see in the translation of certain works, including the correspondence between Leo and ꜥUmar. Central themes were likely adopted and restated as polemic literature spread throughout the Near East. The authors were certainly familiar with various works, even allowing for translation between Greek, Armenian, Arabic, Syriac, and (eventually) Latin. However, the similarities may also stem from the fact that these communities, despite their differences, lived in a common environment with shared experiences and expectations.

Wansbrough argues that the erudite scholar must accept the notion that history (be it polemical, apocalyptic or heresiographical) is to be read in its Aristotelian sense: as a form of literature. He claims that Islamic history necessitates study from a cross-confessional perspective and must be understood through comparison with the historical output of neighboring communities. This is not a question of borrowing or influence, but rather the concurrent development of multiple strands of history based on the proximity of the authors and the universality of monotheist assumptions. In short, the sectarian milieu may account for the similarities: Christians in the Near East, sharing the same set of religious expectations and enduring the same historical experiences, respond to the rise of Islām in similar manner. We may therefore consider Łewond's letters, and the flowering of Christian polemics in general, as indicative of major historical trends that supersede any of the specific arguments between Leo and ꜥUmar.

8.3   The *Commentary on the Gospel of John*

The third and final extant translation between Arabic and Armenian in the early Islamic period

similarly cannot support the claim of literary relations between Arab Muslims and Armenian

Christians. Like the translations of Agatᶜangełos and Łewond's correspondence between ᶜUmar

II and Leo III, the Armenian translation of Nonnus of Nisibis's *Commentary on the Gospel of*

John instead demonstrates the continued relevance of Chalcedonianism and the close

relationship between Armenians and other Christians in the Near East. The early ᶜAbbāsid

religio-political milieu was merely a backdrop to the developments interconfessional Christian

dialogue.

8.3.1   The Background

In the mid to late ninth century, Armīniya became an important battleground in theological

debates between the Melkites and Jacobites. In 236 / 850, the Jacobite Ḥabīb b. Ḫidma Abū

Rā'iṭa wrote a treatise against the Chalcedonians living under Islam, *Radd ᶜalā al-Malakiyya*

[Response to the Melkites]; at least two of his letters were addressed specifically to an Armenian

audience and intended to denounce Melkite practices and beliefs.[731]

S. Griffith has published extensively on the relationship between various Christian groups

living in the Islamic world and their interaction with the Muslim authorities: while the writings

of Melkites like John of Damascus demonstrate the enduring importance of Greek heritage in the

Chalcedonian community in the Near East, we also see theologians such as Abū Qurra, whose

"Arabophone" tendencies and Syrian roots separate them from imperial theology.[732] Similarly,

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[731] Griffith (2001), 50 – 51.

[732] Griffith (2001), 16.

the Jacobites in the ᶜAbbāsid were engaging in Christological debates in Arabic. The Jacobite Abū Rāʾiṭa al-Takrītī, whose *nisba* signifies that he lived in al-Ǧazīra, wrote extensively in Arabic to refute the various claims of Melkites and Nestorians.

Around 815, Abū Qurra, the famous bishop of Ḥarrān from 805 to 812, visited Armīniya and gained favor among the Bagratids. The *Išxan Hayocᶜ* Ašot Bagratuni Msaker then wrote to Abū Rāʾiṭa to request the presentation of a counter argument. In 817, Abū Rāʾiṭa sent Nonnus of Nisibis to the Bagratid court in Armīniya. There, Nonnus engaged Abū Qurra in a theological debate and defeated him, thus solidifying the historic ties between the Jacobite and Armenian Churches and further damaging the Chalcedonian cause among Armenians. Nonnus's position was similar to most Christian theologians in the Near East in that he, like Abū Rāʾiṭa and Abū Qurra, was forced to defend the tenets of his faith to other Christians perhaps even more than to Muslims. "Monophysite lui-même, il fut en contact direct avec des chalcédoniens, des nestoriens, des julianistes et des musulmans, et constamment il eut à préciser et à défendre ses idées."[733]

In Georgian (Chalcedonian) sources, Abū Qurra emerges victorious, but Armenian sources consistently note Nonnus as the unambiguous champion.[734] Nonnus's success notably precipitated Bagarat Bagratuni's request for more information from the Jacobite camp in the form of a commentary on the Gospel of John, which may be the final indicator of translation efforts between Arabic and Armenian in the early ᶜAbbāsid (pre-Bagratid) period.

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[733] Van Roey (1948), vii.

[734] Mariès (1920 – 1921), 286; Van Roey (1948),

8.3.2 Dating, Composition, and Translation of the Text

The *Commentary on the Gospel of John*, produced by Nonnus of Nisibis at the request of Ašot

Bagratuni, is available today in its Armenian translation edited by Č͑rak͑ean as *Nanayi asorwoy*

vardapeti Meknut͑iwn Yovhannu Awetaranin. Several scholars have attempted to date this text:

A. Van Roey argues that it was composed between 855 and 886;[735] Mariès, 835 – 847.[736]

Perhaps the most important section of this *Commentary* is in fact the prologue, which N.

Akinian argues was penned by Nonnus himself.[737] The prologue begins by setting out some of

the main Christological concerns in Armenia at that time, which were the main motives for the

Commentary:

> Un certain homme, un archidiacre du nom de Nana, très versé et très instruit dans
> les lettres syriaques, possédant toutes les vertus, chaste de moeurs, pur de tout ce
> qui a trait aux voluptés charnelles, avait reçu abondamment de l'Esprit-Saint la
> grâce d'enseigner la foi orthodoxe concernant le Christ. Il avait convaincu aussi
> un certain hérétique, un homme éloquent et philosophe, qui enseignait jadis des
> doctrines perverses un divisant en deux l'unité indivisible qui existe dans le Christ
> après l'union sans séparation ni confusion; l'ayant défait, il l'avait chassé de la
> terre arménienne et avait raffermi la vieille confession orthodoxe au sujet du
> Christ, *laquelle* proclame *qu'Il est* une *nature, issue* de deux natures, *que* les
> choses divines *sont dans le Christ* de par *sa* nature, les humbles, au contraire, de
> pas *son* acceptation volontaire.[738]

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[735] Van Roey (1948), 9.

[736] Mariès (1920 – 1921), 274.

[737] This seems unlikely. See Van Roey (1948), 9: "Il est évident que, dans sa forme actuelle, le prologue est de la main du traducteur arménien. Qu'il soit inspiré de la préface dans laquelle Nonnus présentait son œuvre à Bagarat et qu'il en ait emprunté même des passages, c'est une hypothèse plausible mais impossible à contrôler, étant donné que cette préface n'est pas conservé."

[738] Nonnus of Nisibis, trans. Van Roey (1948), 6. *Commentary,* 5: Քանզի այր ոմն սարկաւագապետ զոյով՝ Նանայ անուանեալ, յոյժ հմուտ և վարժ ասորի դպրութեան. Ստացալ բոլորիցն առաքինութեան, պարկեշտ վարուք, մաքուր առ ամենայն մարմնական հեշտութիւնս, աղբիւրաբար ընկալեալ զշնորհս վարդապետութեան ի Հոգւոյն սրբոյ՝ ուղղափառ հաւատոյն որ ի Քրիստոս. որ և յանդիմանեալ զոմն երետիկոս, զայր պերճաբան և իմաստասէր, վանեալ հալածական առնել յաշխարհէս հայաստանեաց. որ երբեմն խոտորնակս ուսուցանէր, յերկուս բարձանելով զՔրիստոսի զանբաժանելի միաւորութիւնն, որ յետ անբաժ և անշփոթ միաւորութեանն: Եւ հաստատէ վերստին զնոյն ուղղափառ որ ի Քրիստոս դաւանութիւնն, մի յերկուս բնութեանց խոստովանել. Զաստուածականն՝ բնութեամբ, իսկ զնուաստականն՝ կամաւոր յանձնառութեամբ:

Here we see that the primary concern of the author is Christological in nature, aimed at interconfessional Christian polemics and primarily revolving around the acceptance of Chalcedonian doctrine in the Near East in general and Armīniya in particular.

It is the story of the *Commentary*—its transmission of Christian thought and its use of Arabic as a *lingua franca* of Armenian- and Syriac-speaking Christians that makes this text particularly important. The prologue of the Commentary outlines the process:

> Se preoccupant de ceci, *Nana* prit aussitôt sur lui un labeur non minime, accompagné de veilles et de prières, en parcourant dans un voyage de trois ans les déserts de la Mesopotamie, où il espérait trouver les écrits des docteurs orthodoxes. Et après avoir trouvé, sous la conduit de la Providence celeste, ce qu'il cherchait, il composa sous une forme brêve, en excerptant beaucoup *d'écrits,* méthodiquement, verset par verset, traduisant du syriaque en arabe, le commentaire du saint Évangile de Jean.[739]

The volume then fell to Smbat Bagratuni, who ordered its translation from Arabic to Armenian. After Smbat's arrest, the transcript passed to Mariam Bagratuni of Siwnikᶜ, who again ordered its translation.

The extent of Armenian fluency in Arabic cannot be determined by this text alone. It seems highly likely that many Armenians were bilingual and conversant in Arabic (as we saw with the comments in Arabic geographical texts in Chapter 7), but this document cannot add much to substantiate this hypothesis. First of all, each time the manuscript came into the possession of a high-ranking Armenian, s/he immediately ordered its translation into Armenian.

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[739] Nonnus of Nisibis, trans. Van Roey (1948), 6 – 7; see also Mariès (1920 – 1921), 275, Bundy (1980), 124. *Commentary,* 6: Որոյ փոյթ ի մտի եղեալ՝ վաղվաղակի ի ձեռն ուժգին պահոց և աղաւթից, չան ոչ թոքր յանձին բերէ՝ շրջագայութեամբ երից ամաց, յածեալ ընդ անապատս յերկրին Միջագետաց, ուր և յուսայր իսկ զզիւտ գրոյ ուղղափառ վարդապետտացն. և հանդիպեալ խնդրոյն առաջնորդութեամբ վերին խնամոցն, շարադրէ համառաւտաբար ի բազմաց հաւաբելով՝ մի ըստ միոջէ ոճով զմեկնութիւն յոհաննեան սրբոյ աւետարանին, փոխաբերելով յասորի լեզուոյն ի հագարական լեզու:

Č^crak^cean and Mariès argue that Bagarat Bagratuni spoke Arabic fluently,[740] but the necessity of

the translation demonstrates that the intended audience was in fact versed in Armenian, not

Arabic. "Tout cela montre bien et le contexte de discussions théologiques entre les communautés

– et ces discussions dépassent les frontières linguistiques – et le rôle de la langue véhiculaire déjà

joué par l'arabe. L'arabe toutefois, compris des princes, ne l'était pas par toute la population

arménienne de l'époque, et cela vaut aussi pour la Géorgie."[741]

Second, the translator comments specifically on his lack of ability to produce the

translation,[742] even though this comment most likely intended to stress the translator's humility

rather than his ineptitude. Since there is no extant version of the Arabic, it is not possible to

suggest if the Armenian translation constitutes a faithful rendition of the Arabic. Akinian argues

that there is evidence of the translator's interference with the text, as he "mixed his own work

with that of Nonnus." The Armenian, he argues, was an abridged and redacted text, which

certainly does not support the concept of fluency between Armenian and Arabic.[743] The

Armenian version of Abū Qurra's name, Epikuṛa (Եպիկուռայ), is likely a reflection of the

Arabic genitive (ابي قرة), but this is a later development and can only point to Armenian – Arab

exchange in the later period.

However, the interesting point is the use of Arabic as an intermediary for the Jacobite and

Armenian Christians, plus the enduring relevance of anti-Chalcedonian interpretations of

Christian thought:

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[740] Mariès (1920 – 1921), 275.

[741] Outtier (1996), 59 – 60.

[742] Nonnus of Nisibis, trans. Van Roey (1948), 7: "En ce temps le livre précieux tomba par hazard entre les mains de Ter Smbat Bagratouni, qui le reçut avec une grande joie *et* ordonna aussitôt de le traduire de l'arabe en arménien, sans égard aucun pour mon impuissance." See Bundy (1980), 133.

[743] Akinian (1922), 419 – 420; Van Roey (1948), 32; Bundy (1980), 133.

The commentary of Nonnus on the Gospel of John is a direct result of the confrontation of Chalcedonians and Jacobites before the rulers of Armenia with the ecclesiastical orientation and loyalty of the entire nation at stake. The main thrusts of that debate were, according to the information contained in the translator's prologue, the nature of the union of the two natures, human and divine, in the incarnation and the question of whether or not the human aspect and possible attendant weaknesses affected the character or quality of Christ's divinity.[744]

8.3.3   Significance of the Text

On the one hand, the fact that the extant Armenian translation of the commentary was originally in Syriac and translated via the Arabic may indicate the rapprochement of Armenian Christians with the Jacobites in the Islamic world, turning further from the Hellenophile world and imperial Christianity. However, this is itself oversimplified. There remain two of Abū Qurra's treatises against Armenian Christianity. The first, a letter composed in Arabic and addressed to "those practicing heresy in Armenia," was translated into Greek. The second, extant today only in Arabic, criticizes certain practices of the Armenian Church. "These had all been very traditional topics of controversy between the Chalcedonians and the Armenians. What is noteworthy in the present context is that they still function as community dividers in the Islamic period, when the case is being made in Arabic."[745] In short, we cannot divorce the Greek tradition from the conversation based solely on the apparent preference for Arabic in this period.

This contextualization of the Nonnus's *Commentary on the Gospel of John* makes it clear that the issues of the pre-Islamic period continued to be the primary concern among the Christians of the Near East: the cultural influence of the Arabs and the rise of Islam may have changed the tenor of the debate, but we still cannot speak about significant interaction between Armenian Christians and Arab Muslims.

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[744] Bundy (1980), 126.

[745] Griffith (2001), 40.

8.4   Conclusion

All three of these texts stand as testimony to the literary and ideological ties between Armenia
and its neighbors—Christian and Muslim. They are a product of interaction between Greeks,
Syrians, Armenians, and Arabs and a sign of how political and religious transformations brought
on by the rise of the ᶜAbbāsids changed the Near East as a whole. These transformations must be
understood in the light of the common reference to themes of continuity within the communities
of the Near East: from Christian to Muslim majority and from Sasanian/Byzantine to Arab rule.
There are two main benefits of examining these three texts together.

First, these three texts demonstrate that the evidence of Armenian-Arabic literary
exchange does not reflect any sort of Armenian engagement with Islam or with the Muslim
population in the Near East. Instead, we see that the Armenian-, Greek-, Syriac-, and Arabic-
speaking Christian populations in the Islamic world were continuously engaged in discussions
about the definition of orthodoxy and orthopraxy. These debates, as S. Griffith's multiple
publications have shown, were in large part scripted in response to the position of the various
Christian communities within the Islamic world and were undertaken in dialogue with the
confessional norms of Islamic doctrine. The eventual acceptance of Arabic as a Christian *lingua
franca*, as well as the adoption of some Islamic terms specific to *ᶜilm al-kalām*,[746] indicate
Christian awareness and engagement in a broader sphere of religious discourse. Although there is

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[746] Swanson (2009), 378, on *Min Aliyūn malik al-Rūm ilā ᶜUmar ibn ᶜAbd al-ᶜAzīz, amīr al-mu'minīn,* the Arabic
text that Łewond's text purportedly is responding to: "The anonymous author is not unaware of Islamic vocabulary
and doctrine. He writes, he says, in order to answer his correspondent's questions about *al-Masīḥ, ᶜĪsā ibn Maryam,*
using the qur'ānic name for Jesus; concerning Adam, he says that God 'made him the vicegerent over his creation'
(*istakhlafahu ᶜalā khalqihi*), with an allusion to the qur'ānic witness to Adam as God's *khalīfa* or vicegerent on earth
(Q2:30); speaking of the incarnation, he refers to 'your Book' and gives a somewhat modified rendering of the
qur'ānic description of Jesus as Go's 'Word that he sent to Mary and a Spirit from him' (Q4:171); and in comparing
Christ's authority with that of others sent by God, he mentions not just 'prophets' but displays his knowledge of
qur'ānic prophetology with the phrase 'prophets and apostles who were calling the people to God' (*al-anbiyā' wa-l-
rusūl allādhīna kānū yadᶜūna l-nās ilā llāh*)."

little evidence to suggest that this was an active endeavor on the part of Armenian Christians, the confessional debates likely stemmed from the religious and political milieu of the early ᶜAbbāsid Caliphate (the translation movement, the *miḥna*, the rise in conversions, etc).[747] This therefore serves to reiterate the fact that the events of the early ᶜAbbāsid era cannot be considered in isolation according to independent fields of Islamic history, Syriac literature, or Armenian religion; these texts represent the historical reality of ethnic, religious, and linguistic interconnection and dialogue among the various groups in the Near East.

Furthermore, these three texts – the translations of Agatᶜangełos, the variations of ᶜUmar and Leo's letters, and the *Commentary on the Gospel of John* – demonstrate that the concerns of the Christian community, while likely reworded based on the imminence of Islam, remain fixed on Chalcedonian doctrine and on self-expression in doctrinal disputes. This may have indeed been the result of Islamic hegemony, as Christian communities struggled to define their existence based on their independence from the imperial Church. However, it serves as yet another marker of continuity between the Sasanian and early Islamic periods: Chalcedonianism remained the primary concern of Christians in the Near East long after the arrival of Islam.

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[747] Gutas (1998); Lassner (2012), 241: "Conversion and, related to that, apologetic discourse might have been occasioned by a general mood of tolerance and intellectual curiosity that crossed confessional lines, circumstances that made it safer to explore and respond with interest to the Islamic milieu that had taken root in former Christian soil."

Chapter 9: Conclusion

This dissertation has not attempted to present a sustained, univocal history of the Arab period in Armīniya. Instead, it considers the Arabic sources about the province and outlines the main interests of the ᶜAbbāsid élite, while exploring the contributions of modern scholars in Islamic history, such as J. Wansborough and M. Morony. Three main themes have recurred. First, Armīniya was important primarily as a frontier between the Caliphate, Byzantium, and Ḫazaria. This was not necessarily restricted to the military realities of the borderland, but was instead primarily conceptual and built by the literary production of difference. Second, the Arab conceptualization of Armīniya was to a large extent dependent upon the legacy of Sasanian control. Arabs considered the Caliphate to be the heir of the Persian kingdom, so they were particularly interested in the region's Sasanian past. Third, information about the Sasanian era was not transmitted via Arab-Armenian dialog, but rather among the Christians, Jews, and Muslims in the Near East. Specifically, the role of Syriac-speaking Christians in the development of Islamic traditions about Armīniya cannot be overstated.

This chapter will briefly recap the main supporting evidence for the three main arguments, then introduce other arguments raised throughout the dissertation and identify areas for further research.

9.1 The Frontier

The importance of the *ṯuġūr* in the caliphal North is visible from the sustained interest in *ǧihād*, enemies, and raids reported in literature about Armīniya, Arrān, and Aḏarbayǧān. This is tied to both the defensive and offensive policies of the Caliphate. Some aspects of Arab policy,

particularly the emigration of Arab tribes into Armīniya, are the result of the province's strategic military importance.

At the same time, it is not likely that the concept of a strongly militarized boundary can be sustained for the entire period of this study. The border was instead porous and allowed for the exchange of people, ideas, and goods between the Caliphate, Byzantium, and Ḫazaria. It is instead the region's conceptual frontiers that are particularly engaging. The border was not only military, but also religious (dividing Chalcedonianism from Islam) and literary (consider, for example, the description of al-Qāf). The maintenance of the frontier therefore involved not only *muğāhid*s, but also scholars engaged in the description of difference. Accordingly, there was an effort to "Islamize" Armīniya by providing a non-Greek identity for the former Byzantine province and by introducing links between Armīniya, the Qur'ān, and the early Muslim community. This conceptual boundary therefore benefited from the early Islamic interest in Sasanian legacy.

9.2 Sasanian Legacy

The study of the Sasanian period stands to add to the discussion of both the military and the conceptual frontiers. The location and description of the caliphal frontiers are informed largely from Arab memory of Sasanian antecedents (for example, Anuširwān's walls).

To some extent, the interest in the Sasanian period is a measure the continuiation of certain policies during and after the transition into the Arab period. We saw the survival of the administrative paradigm of Kᶜusti Kapkoh and the maintenance of the basic political situation (the prominence of the *naxarar* houses, the *marzpan / ostikan*). The political tools and expectations of the Persians and the Arabs are also directly comparable, including governmental

methods promoting centralization (pitting one house against another) and Arab adaptation of Sasanian policies (such as neck sealing). Furthermore, Arab approach to the Armenian Church is directly related to the status quo of the Sasanian period: Armenians were granted freedom of religion, there was a preference for non-Chalcedonian forms of Christianity, apostates from the state religion were subject to the death penalty, and conversion to the state religion was considered to be proof of political loyalty.

Part of the Sasanian legacy includes the transmission of ideas between Persia, Armenia, and Mesopotamia. There are concrete political ties between the three regions both before and after the rise of Islam, as well as ties between the religious developments among the peoples of these provinces. For example, the comparison of Gilgamesh and the Rock of Moses story, the continued relevance of dualism in Armenian heresies, and the relationship of the Ḫurramiyya and Paulicians / Tᶜondrakecᶜi indicate that some literary and religious concepts were interregional. This extends, as well, to the relationship between the Armenian and Syriac Churches, as their rapprochement indicates not only the close ties between Syria, Northern Mesopotamia, and Armenia, but also demonstrates a definite level of continuity between the Sasanian and Islamic periods in the North.

9.3 Sectarian Milieu

Arab-Armenian dialogue does not adequately explain some of the main themes in Arab conceptualization of the North. Instead, we see a continuing interaction between the various ethnic, linguistic, and religious groups in the Near East. Muslims, Christians, and Jews were engaged in the development and transmission of ideas across linguistic divides. So, for example, texts such as Agatᶜangełos, religious polemics (Łewond), and the Alexander legends demonstrate

the polyvocal nature of communication in the early Islamic period. Concepts and histories passed on from the pre-Islamic period, like the governmental policies, were selectively adopted and adapted to suit the needs of the early Muslim community. So, for example, taking hostages and the practice of neck sealing demonstrate the agency of Arab governors in responding to the demands of ruling the province in that they engage in past practices with new goals. We also see this sort of selective adaptation of pre-Islamic norms in the literary milieu, such as Armenian responses to Islam and the acceptance of *īsrāʾīliyyāt* (transmission of Ps. Callisthenes).

Interestingly, the involvement of Syriac-speaking Christians is the most constant feature in this dialogue. This is likely due to the historical, political, social, and economic ties between Armenia, Syria, and Mesopotamia, on the one hand, and the prominence of Syriac-speaking Christians in both the Sasanian and early Islamic Empires. Ties between the Armenians and Syriac-speaking Christians in the early Islamic period are mainly religious and literary, though there is also evidence of social and economic relations. The historical sources, however, focus on religious issues, such as the solidarity between the Armenian and Jacobite Churches, the Syrian elements of Armenian heretical movements, and similar responses to Islam (as punishment for Christian sins and as fulfillment of prophecy). The connections between Armenian and Syriac literature is typically related to religion, as well, specifically as it pertains to Chalcedonianism: this includes Syriac texts in the Agatʿangełos corpus (*Vk* and the "Notice of George, Bishop of the Arabs") and the *Commentary on the Gospel of John*, for example. The relationship between Syriac-speaking Christians and Muslims, on the other hand, are literary instead of religious: the role of Syriac-speaking scribes in the ʿAbbāsid translation movement, the use of the word al-Ǧarbī to refer to the North, the reference to Marqīsīyā and Barjīsīyā in al-Ṭabarī's description of

Muḥammad's visit to Gog and Magog, as well as the close relationship between the *Mēmrā dᶜal Aleksandrōs* and the Islamic legends about Alexander.

9.4 Other Arguments about Arab Armīniya

Throughout this dissertation, I have attempted to draw attention to several issues concerning Arab Armīniya that deserve reconsideration. First, I argue that Armīniya was part of the Islamic world, despite the fact that the population was neither Arab, nor Muslim (Chapter 2). Armīniya was not merely a tributary state after the Marwānid reforms and Arabs perceived it as a province of the Islamic Empire. Second, I sideline the commonly accepted administrative paradigm combining Armenia, Iberia, and Albania, due to the fact that it rarely surfaces in Arabic sources. Instead, I focus mainly on the significance of grouping Armīniya, Arrān, and Adarbayğān together because it is much more common in Arabic geographies (Chapter 3).

Third, the most famous Armenian martyrologies presented for this period discuss the consequences of breaking Islamic law, not punishments for being Christian. We do not have evidence to support the idea of systematic religious persecution. Instead, churches were built, synods held, and Christians revered saints and martyrs. Although there are instances of religious tensions and the occasional forced conversion, usually as a means of escaping punishment for a political crime, generalizations about Muslim brutality against Christians needs to be assessed on a case-by-case basis (Chapter 5).

Fourth, and related to the previous point, there seems to be a common belief that the Arab period was particularly dismal for Armenians, as it stands in stark contrast to the "golden age" of medieval Armenia under the Bagratids. This is commonly linked to Armenian independence. The Arabs imposed taxes, sent commanders to oversee the administration of the province, and at

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times expected military aid. This is similar to the expectations of the Sasanians and Byzantines. The survival and primacy of the *naxarar* system under the Arabs ensured that local power, the true political mainstay in Armenia, remained relatively unchanged (Chapter 4). This is likely colored by the destructive campaigns of Buġā at the end of the Arab period.

Fifth, there was considerable cultural contact between Arabs and Armenians in Armīniya. By the tenth and eleventh centuries, it is clear that this cultural exchange extends to the literary realm. While it would be reasonable to suggest that dialogue began from the earliest days of Arab occupation of Armīniya, this cannot be fully substantiated with extant evidence. Instead, the texts demonstrate the interconnection of various Christian groups in the Near East and provide very little evidence for dialogue between Armenian Christians and Arab or Persian Muslims (Chapters 7 and 8).

Lastly, recent scholarship has embraced the conclusion that Arabic sources are less trustworthy than the Armenian. This has led to the marginalization of Arabic sources and the preference for Armenian sources. I have argued here that the Armenian sources, with the obvious exception of Łewond, are not particularly forthcoming about the Arab period, except about the history of the Church and catholicoi. Furthermore, the nature of transmission, the element of nostalgia in ᶜAbbāsid geographies, and the life experiences of several Arab and Persian authors (including personal familiarity with Armīniya and official posts with access to caliphal archives) indicate that we should not be quick to dismiss the Arabic sources (Chapter 10).

In addition, there are three other avenues of potential future research. First, we should consider the level of violence during Arab period in Armīniya based on its position as a caliphal province and *ṯaġr*. There were several instances of Armenian rebellion against the Caliphate and subsequent reprisals. In fact, other provinces in the early ᶜAbbāsid period had nearly annual

uprisings; in comparison, Arminiya seems remarkably peaceful. The conflicts, notably the burning of the churches in 704, the rebellion of 774, and the infamous campaigns of Buġā, demonstrate that unrest was cyclical or generational, not continuous. Instead of relying on the impression of violent control over the province, it will likely prove useful to consider a comparative approach by, for example, consulting works such as P. Cobb's *White Banners: Contention in ᶜAbbasid Syria, 750 – 880* (2001).

Second, there is a general understanding that the Umayyad period was much better for the Armenians than the ᶜAbbāsid. While this indeed reflects the general anti-ᶜAbbāsid tendencies in Armenian sources, I suggest that we cannot easily consider the Umayyad period as particularly easy or advantageous for the Armenians. This generalization about the Umayyads is based on the assumption that Muᶜawiya and Tᶜēodoros's pact governed Arab-Armenian relations for the entire period. However, as a result of ᶜAbd al-Malik's centralizing reforms, Armīniya was directly controlled by agents of the Caliphate from the late seventh or early eighth century and many details of this treaty were not retained following the Marwānid reforms. Major concerns about taxation, political upheaval against the Caliphate, and examples of suppression of Armenian discontent, including the burning of the churches in Xram and Naxĵewan, all begin in the Marwānid period, not the ᶜAbbāsid. We see Armenian references to the reforms of the weights and measures and the earliest extant Marwānid reform coin was minted in Armīniya: these details point to the idea that the caliphal attempts at centralization were felt in province by the beginning of the eighth century. It was this struggle to centralize power in the center and to assert control over the semi-independent borderlands that weighed on Armenians, not the transition from Umayyad to ᶜAbbāsid rule.

Finally, one of the overarching themes of this dissertation deserves further research: measuring continuity and change in the shift from Late Antiquity to Islam in Armīniya. The seventh century makes it particularly difficult to argue for continuity between the pre-Islamic and the Islamic periods. This suggests that the caliphal adoption of Sasanian elements in governance and the Armenian perception of continuity between the Sasanian and Arab periods are deliberate, rather than solely the response to actual continuity on the ground. There are other markers of continuity that don't tie directly to the Sasanian state, such as the Byzantine position of *Išxan Hayoc*[c], Chalcedonian and Paulician threats, and the tendency towards conservatism in historiography, hagiography, and hersiography. The most obvious answer to this is that the Sasanian element was a single (primary?) marker of continuity in the province, but historical reality ensured the continued relevance of the recent Byzantine past.

Chapter 10: Resources

The successful study of the Arab period in Armīniya requires the use of a variety of sources. We must determine which sources are particularly useful and how to ascertain which data are reliable. This section provides a very brief introduction to the sources on Arab Armīniya available in Arabic and Armenian and also attempts to justify my own acceptance of certain sources. It covers (1) sources for the Sasanian period; (2) eighth- and ninth-century sources; (3) tenth-century sources; and (4) later works from the eleventh and twelfth centuries.

10.1 A Short Note on Sources for the Sasanian Period

Armenian sources have long been recognized for their useful information on the Sasanian period. These include works such as *Buzandaran patmut^{c}iwnik^c* [Epic Histories], Xorenac^{c}i's *Patmut^{c}iwn Hayoc^c* [History of Armenia], Ełišē's *Vasn Vardanay ew Hayoc^c paterazmin* [Concerning Vardan and the war of the Armenians], Łazar P^{c}arpec^{c}i's *Hayoc^c Patmut^{c}iwn* [History of the Armenians], the *Girk^c T^{c}łt^{c}oc^c* [Book of Letters], and the many treatises attributed to Anania Širakac^{c}i, most notably his *Ašxarhac^{c}oyc^c* [Geography]. Additionally, some of the later histories such as Sebēos' *Patmut^{c}iwn* [History] and Dasxuranc^{c}i's *Patmut^{c}iwn ałwanic^c ašxarhi* [The History of the Land of Albania] are also useful sources for the Sasanian period. The reliability of Armenian sources on the Sasanian period has already been the focus of a number of useful articles, including T. Greenwood's "Sasanian Reflections in Armenian Sources" (2008) and Ph. Gignoux's "Pour une évaluation de la contribution des sources arméniennes à l'histoire sassanide" (1985 – 8).

All the extant Arabic sources, on the other hand, are extremely late, which signals a serious problem about their reliability for the pre-Islamic period. These include the works of

tenth- and early eleventh-century authors such as al-Masᶜūdī, al-Ṯaᶜālibī, and al-Ṭabarī. Their reliability depends on the strength of their sources. Al-Masᶜūdī, for example, had recourse to Arabic translations of both Greek and Pahlavi works.[748] However, it is unclear if the nature of Arabic sources on the Sasanian period is particularly significant for the current study. The issue of continuity balances on the precipice between perception and historical reality. There are two types of continuity: sustained similarity between the circumstances of the Sasanian and Arab periods and the deliberate replication of Sasanian norms according to the Arab perception of the past. If Arabs were modeling their governance after Sasanian antecedents, their perception of the Persian Empire may matter more than historical reality. In this way, the attestations of these historians living several centuries after the fall of the Sasanian Empire may yet be useful for the current study.

10.2 Eighth- and Ninth-Century Works

A frequent complaint about Arabic sources is that they demonstrate the redactive tendencies of ᶜAbbāsid scholarship. This does not indicate that they necessarily present a warped image of Umayyad events, but that the reader should keep in mind the interests and concerns of the compiler. This is, arguably, true of any historical source, regardless of language. Furthermore, even if these sources do demonstrate the interests of ᶜAbbāsid scholars, this is not necessarily problematic for the current study. After all, the bulk of the Arab period in Armīniya (112 out of 162 years) actually falls within the ᶜAbbāsid period. This study may therefore deal mainly with the ᶜAbbāsid understanding of Umayyad and ᶜAbbāsid Armīniya.

Furthermore, there are actually more extant contemporaneous sources in Arabic than in Armenian. These include:

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[748] Pellat (2012).

(1)   Abū al-Qāsim ꜤUbayd Allāh Ibn H̱urradāḏbih was born in either 205/820 or 211/825 in H̱urāsān, but lived in Baghdad. He served as the director of the post (*ṣāḥib al-barīd wa al-ḫabar*), first in al-Ǧibāl then subsequently in Baghdad and Sāmarrāʾ; this was an administrative position designed to collect data on the Islamic world. His post served not only as a source for his knowledge, but also allowed Ibn H̱urradāḏbih the opportunity for close contact with the caliph, al-MuꜤtamid (r. 870 – 892). The date of composition of his famous *Kitāb al-Masālik wa al-Mamālik* [The Book of Roads and Kingdoms] is contested, but his literary interest in Iranian concepts and language is well-attested. Ibn H̱urradāḏbih died in 300/911.[749]

(2)   Abū al-Ḥasan Aḥmad b. Yaḥyā b. Ǧābir al-Balāḏurī likely died around 892, but his date of birth is unknown. He was a translator of Persian texts into Arabic, and is therefore assumed to have been Persian himself. He lived mainly in Baghdad, where he was particularly close to the caliphs al-Mutawakkil and al-MustaꜤīn, but traveled throughout the central Islamic world in the ninth century. His *Futūḥ al-Buldān* [Conquests of the Lands] is one of the most cited sources on the Arab conquests of the Near East. This is organized by province, including Syria, Northern Mesopotamia, Armīniya, Egypt, Maġrib, Iraq, and Persia.

Al-Balāḏurī's reliability has frequently been called into question. F. Rosenthal and C. Becker conclude with the following ambiguous statement:

> It is not correct to say that he always gives the original texts, which later writers embellished and expanded; it may be with much more truth presumed, from the agreement of essential portions of his works with later more detailed works, that al-Balādhurī abridged the material at his disposal in a number of cases, though he often remained faithful to his sources.[750]

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[749] Hadj-Sadok (2012).

[750] Becker & Rosenthal (2012).

It stands to reason, therefore, that al-Balāḏurī's text is useful, but that further examination may be needed to determine which passages are "faithful to his sources" and which have been altered or expanded. In this effort, we have recourse to studies such as A. Noth's *The Early Arabic Historical Tradition* (1994), which endeavors to distinguish primary and secondary themes in the *futūḥ* literature.

(3)   Abū ᶜAmr Ḫalīfa b. Ḫayyāṭ b. Abī Hubayra al-Layṯī al-ᶜUṣfurī was likely born in Baṣra and died c. 240/854 around the age of 80. His *Tārīḫ* [History] was believed lost for centuries, until its surprising discovery in Morocco in 1966. This exists in a single manuscript, copied in al-Andalus in 477/1084. Although the work discusses the birth of the Muḥammad, it focuses mainly on the period from the *hiǧra* to 232/846:

> The importance of the work lies not only in the fact that it is the oldest complete Islamic survey of events which has reached us, but also in the materials it contains and the way in which it was written. The author gives special attention to the Umayyad Caliphate of Damascus and to Muslim foreign affairs, in particular to the extension of the Islamic Empire. He usually narrates each event from two points of view, local and official… This book is a very important document for the study of Islamic administration in its early years, as the author, at the end of his account of each Caliph's reign, enumerates all the statesmen, generals and senior officials who held office under him.[751]

Ḫalīfa's history is important for the history of Armīniya, since it is a contemporaneous work, but it rarely mentions the province and therefore serves mainly to corroborate the information in other histories.

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[751] Zakkar (2012).

(4)   Aḥmad b. Abū Yaᶜqūb b. Ǧaᶜfar b. Wahb b. Wādiḥ, known as al-Yaᶜqūbī, was born in the

3rd/9th century in Baghdad, but he lived in Armīniya when he was young. He is therefore a

personal witness of events in the region in the ninth century. He died sometime in the early tenth

century, likely after 292/905. His short *Ṭāriḥ* [History] exists in two parts: the first reviews pre-

Islamic history, while the second covers from the lifetime of Muḥammad to the ᶜAbbāsid caliph

al-Muᶜtamid (279/892). This is organized according to caliphal reign. Al-Yaᶜqūbī's second book,

Kitāb al-Buldān [Book of the Countries], was completed in 278/891 and drew upon his personal

knowledge of the Islamic world, including Armīniya, as well as his familiarity with ᶜAbbāsid

administration.

Al-Yaᶜqūbī famously hints at his preference for Shiᶜism, displaying distrust of the

Umayyads especially. His treatment of the ᶜAbbāsids, however, is not consistent with this

preference: while he hints at disrespect for the ᶜAbbāsids, he does not tend towards overt

criticism of them. This tension between an implied dislike of the ᶜAbbāsids and evident

acceptance of their rule is likely the result of his source material. "Though al-Yaᶜḳūbī does not

give *isnād*s for his accounts, some of his information comes from ᶜAbbāsid family sources (he

himself was a *mawlā* of the ᶜAbbāsid family); but it also comes from the ᶜAlids (in particular,

through Ḏjaᶜfar b. Muḥammad, the sixth imām)."[752]

In comparison, the only Armenian works dated to the Arab period in Armīniya are:

(1)   Yovhannēs Awjnecᶜi, known as John the Philosopher, was catholicos of the Armenian

Church from 717 to 728. He is famous for his canonization of Armenian Church law and his

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[752] Zaman (2012).

stance against heresy. His works, including most famously *Kanonagirk^c Hayoc^c* [Book of Armenian Canon Law], but also *Atenabanut^c iwn* [Oration], are immensely valuable for the study of Armenian Church history, but offer little to the historian of the Islamic world. They demonstrate the religious concerns of the early Arab period, but Awjnec^c i's primary interest is to formulate an Armenian response to Chalcedonianism and Paulicianism.

(2)   Łewond is clearly the most important source for the Arab period in Armīniya. His *Aršawank^c arabac^c i Hays* [Arab Invasions into Armenia] is traditionally dated to the eighth century, though it is also possible that it was not penned until the ninth: the usually-accepted dating is based upon identification of the sponsor, Šapeh Bagratuni. This could refer to one of two people of the same name: (1) the brother of Ašot Msaker ("the Carnivore"), who died in 775, or (2) the author of the lost *History*. Little is known about Łewond. His history covers the period from 632 to 788.[753] T. Greenwood has identified the following sources for Łewond's *History:* (1) a list of caliphs, including the name and length of rule of each caliph; (2) Sebēos' *History* on the Arab incursions, despite the divergent details between the two texts; and (3) histories for the Bagratid, Mamikonian, and Arcruni families.[754]

10.3 Tenth-Century Works

The fact that many Arabic works concerning the history of the Arab period in Armīniya were composed in the tenth century is not necessarily very problematic. These works need to be considered on an individual basis, taking into account their sources and general coverage of the

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[753] Greenwood (2012), 6 – 24.

[754] Greenwood (2012), 24 – 48.

period. Furthermore, it is unrealistic to expect any particular source to be wholly reliable: it is the task of the historian to decide which data are intrinsically believable and why.

I do not think that the extant information about the late Umayyad period necessarily demonstrates sustained bias beyond what is typically found in any historical source. We have been looking at the issue of continuity between the Sasanian and Arab periods, but this theme can also hold true for the shift from the Marwānid to the ᶜAbbāsid periods (see Chapter 9). This opens the door to the issue of nostalgia in Arabic sources from the ᶜAbbāsid period.

Z. Antrim's study of geographical material produced in Arabic in the tenth and eleventh centuries demonstrates that ᶜAbbāsid authors were in fact more likely to describe the world as it was during the zenith of ᶜAbbāsid power before the death of al-Mutawakkil. So, for example, al-Ḫaṭīb al-Baġdādī 's description of his hometown for the most part cannot reflect the realities of his day, but rather project the city back to its glory days before the dissolution of the ᶜAbbāsid Caliphate:

> To describe the diminished city would also be to diminish the image of Abbasid power that is so clearly projected in the introduction to *Ta'rīkh Baghdād*, from the foundation narrative stressing al-Manṣūr's inspiration and foresight to the topographical sections emphasizing the capaciousness of Baghdad's built environment and its ability, both physical and symbolic, to unite the Islamic world under Abbasid suzerainty.[755]

This clearly holds true for the study of Armīniya in particular. Not only do we see descriptions of the booming town of Dabīl long after its destruction by two consecutive earthquakes, but we also find explanations of Armīniya's role in the Islamic world in works written after the rise of local dynasties (Bagratid and Arcruni families) and the dissolution of the unity of the Islamic world.

Along similar lines, we cannot overlook the significance of transmission in the Arabic historical tradition. After all, al-Muqaddasī's descriptions of the *Ḥaram al-šarīf* in Jerusalem

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[755] Antrim (2012), 75.

mirror those of Ibn al-Faqīh, down to the specifics about jars of oil present, while Ibn Rustih uses

al-Azraqī's account in his description of Makka. This, Antrim argues, is "evidence of the

pervasive intertextuality of the discourse of place, as well as the wide acceptance of, even

preference for, a citational approach to knowledge production, or at least presentation and

dissemination, in this period."[756] In other words, because of the nature of the transmission of

knowledge in the early Islamic world and the nostalgia for the heyday of ᶜAbbāsid power, we can

expect traces of early ᶜAbbāsid traditions even in works produced in the tenth and eleventh

centuries.

The majority of the extant Arabic sources from the tenth century are the works of Persian

and Arabic geographers:

(1)   Abū al-Farağ Qudāma b. Ǧaᶜfar al-Kātib al-Baġdādī was born around 260 AH (873 –

874) and died as late as 337 (948). He was a Christian convert to Islām, who worked in the

ᶜAbbāsid adminstration and therefore had access to official records, including details about

taxation and provincial administration. According to de Goeje, he wrote his *Kitāb al-Ḫarāğ*

[Book of the Ḫarāğ] between 316 and 320.[757]

(2)   Abū ᶜAlī Aḥmad b. ᶜUmar al-Isfahānī Ibn Rustih wrote his *Kitāb al-āᶜlāq al-nafīsa* [Book

of Precious Records] sometime in the early tenth century, as he claims to have visited Madīna in

290/903. He was Persian, born in Isfahan, and wrote not only about the Islamic world, but also

about Byzantium, the Rūs, the Alans, the Turks, and even Anglo-Saxon England. Ibn Rustih's

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[756] Antrim (2012), 72.

[757] Bonebakker (2012).

information on the routes through the Islamic world indicate that he had a copy of Ibn Ḫurradāḏbih in his possession, but Ibn Rustih's work is far broader in detail and, at least in one case, dependent on eye-witness reports.[758]

(3)   The anonymous *Hudūd al-ᶜālam* is the only work relevant to Armīniya written in Persian in the tenth century. It was written in Guzgān in 372/982–83. Although the author never traveled personally and does not enumerate his sources, it is likely that he worked with a copy of Ibn Ḫurradāḏbih's geography. Most of the book is devoted to the description of the eastern Islamic world, but it also covers the peoples beyond the borders of Islām, including the Byzantines, Russians and Turks.[759]

The remaining Arab and Persian geographers from the tenth century belong to the so-called Balḫī school. Abū Zayd Aḥmad b. Sahl al-Balḫī lived in Ḫurāsān from 236/850 to 322/934, where he possibly held an administrative position under the Sāmānids. His *Ṣuwar al-Aqālīm* [Depiction of the climes] or *Taqwīm al-Buldān* [Organization of the lands] is no longer extant, though it is believed to have had considerable influence on the following tenth-century geographers:[760]

(4)   Abū Isḥāq Ibrāhīm b. Muḥammad al-Fārisī al-Kurǧī al-Iṣṭaḫrī likely lived in Iṣṭaḫr and Iraq and wrote his *Kitāb al-masālik wal-mamālik.* [Book of the routes and the kingdoms] in the

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[758] Bosworth (1997).

[759] Bosworth (2004).

[760] Dunlop (2012).

middle of the tenth century. This is a particularly Iranocentric geography, with its definition of the climes according to the Persian tradition of *kešwar*s, and its decided preference for the Iranian world.

(5)   Muḥammad Abū al-Qāsim Ibn Ḥawqal wrote his *Kitāb Ṣurat al-ᶜArḍ* [The Book of the Configuration of the Earth] or *Al-Masālik wa al-Mamālik* [The Roads and the Kingdoms] in the later part of the tenth century. Ibn Ḥawqal was born in Northern Mesopotamia and travelled throughout the Islamic world, recording his personal observations about different lands, including Armīniya. He met al-Iṣṭaḫrī and famously indicated his decision to correct some of the comments in his predecessor's geography, building upon it to include references to peoples on the edge of the Islamic world. His work went through at least three phases of redaction within his lifetime, with the last recension dated to around 378/988.[761]

(6)   Abū Bakr Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Hamaḏānī, known as Ibn al-Faqīh, wrote his *Muḫtaṣar Kitāb al-Buldān* [Concise Book of the Countries] during the reign of al-Muᶜtaḍid (r. 892 – 902), in the first few years of the tenth century. He was a Persian, presumably from Hamaḏān, and his homeland claims the largest percentage of his work in comparison to other provinces.[762]

(7)   Šams al-Dīn Abī ᶜAbd Allāh Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. Abī Bakr al-Muqaddasī is famous for his insistence on personal travel experience and his critique of others in the Balḫī school,

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[761] Miquel (2012). = 1986. Fix this…

[762] Massé (2012).

particularly Ibn al-Faqīh. Al-Muqaddasī was born sometime before 945 and lived until the end of the tenth century, completing his geographical work in 375/985. Born in Jerusalem, he divided the Islamic world along broad ethnic lines, separating Arab lands (Maġrib, Egypt, Arabia, Syria, Iraq, and Mesopotamia) from the non-Arabs (al-Riḥāb, which included Armīniya, Daylam, Ǧibāl, Ḫuzistān, Kirmān, and al-Sind).[763] Al-Muqaddasī and Ibn Ḥawqal represent an Arabization of the field, as most of the other geographers at this time were Persians writing in Arabic.

Beyond these geographical treatises, several historical works were also produced in Arabic in the tenth century. The most useful of these for the current study are:

(1)   Abū al-Ḥasan ᶜAlī b. al-Ḥusayn b. ᶜAlī al-Masᶜūdī was born in Baghdad sometime before 280/893. He traveled throughout the Islamic world, visiting Armīniya in 320/932. His *Murūǧ al-ḏahab wa-maᶜādin al-ǧawhar* [Meadows of Gold and Mines of Gems] went through several redactions, the last of which dates to 345/956. It is divided into two main parts: (1) two-fifths of the work records the history of pre-Islamic peoples, including the Byzantines, Sasanians, Arabs, Indians, etc. and (2) the rest details the history of Islam and rarely discusses non-Islamic countries or peoples. Although al-Masᶜūdī is credited for several other books, his *Kitāb al-Tanbīh wa al-Išrāf* [The Book of Indication and General View] is most relevant here. He finished this shorter work in 344-5/955-6 only a few years before his death, detailing issues of geography and Islamic history.

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[763] Miquel (2012), al-Muqaddasi…

(2)   Abū Ǧ°afar Muḥammad b. Ǧarīr b. Yazīd al-Ṭabarī is undoubtedly the most famous

°Abbāsid-era historian, also known for his *tafsīr*. He was born in 224-25/839 in Ṭabaristān. He

traveled throughout the Near East (Palestine, Syria, Egypt, and Iraq) in search of knowledge. He

never took an official administrative post, devoting himself instead to his scholarship. He died in

Baghdad in 310/923. His most cited work, *Tārīḫ al-Rusul wa al-Mulūk* [History of Prophets and

Kings], famously preserves some of the earliest material on Islamic history available today.

> The great virtues of his History and Commentary are that they form the most
> extensive of extant early works of Islamic scholarship and that they preserve for
> us the greatest array of citations from lost sources. They thus furnish modern
> scholarship with the richest and most detailed sources for the political history of
> the early caliphate, above all for the history of the eastern and central lands of
> the Dār al-Islām during the first centuries of the Hiḏjra, and also for the early
> stages of the development and subsequent variety and vitality of Islam as a
> religious institution and corpus of legal knowledge and practice.[764]

Furthermore, al-Ṭabarī's practice of recording conflicting strands of the same traditions ensured

that the debates and concerns of the historians of his day were preserved, making the question of

reliability a little less obscure. His history therefore does not tell a single rendition of events of

early Islamic communities. "His aim was, rather, to present the evidence for the course of the

early Islamic history of the lands between Egypt and the far eastern fringes of the Iranian world

so that others could evaluate it in a more critical fashion should they so wish."[765]

Reviewing the tenth-century sources in Arabic, we therefore see that (1) geographical

works tended towards nostalgia and recorded the situation of the peak of °Abbāsid power; (2)

some of these authors, including al-Mas°ūdī and Ibn Ḥawqal, visited Armīniya and had personal

knowledge of the province; (3) others were employed in administrative posts, presumably with

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[764] Bosworth (2012) al-Tabari,

[765] Bosworth (2012) al-Tabari.

access to government archives; (4) al-Mas‘ūdī and al-Ṭabarī, at least, clearly had access to other sources, including translations of Greek and Pahlavi texts; and (5) the inclusion of conflicting reports in Arabic works actually argue for their reliability, as these preserve examples of historical claims about specific issues of note from the pre-‘Abbāsid period. I therefore tend to accept the reliability of Arabic sources from the tenth century, depending of course on the specific information culled from each source, the reliability of each individual author, and his presentation of the material.

The Armenian sources, on the other hand, may actually demonstrate *more* historiographical difficulties than the Arabic ones.

(1)	Specifically, the work of T‘ovma Arcruni presents a challenge for historians of the Arab period. T‘ovma was a member of the Arcruni family. His ignorance of the rise of Gagik Arcruni in 908 indicates the *terminus ante quem* of his history.[766] T‘ovma is quite descriptive and, as we saw in Chapter 5, he includes details unknown in earlier Armenian histories.[767]

There are three main reasons why I find this work particularly challenging, despite the fact that it was composed soon after the dissolution of the Caliphate. First, T‘ovma's chronology is uneven. When he begins his section on Islam, he devotes several pages to the lifetime of Muḥammad. However, he then breezes through the rest of Islamic history up to the caliphate of al-Mutawakkil. He lists most (not all) of the Umayyad and early ‘Abbāsid caliphs and the lengths of their reign, commenting only briefly on the *fitna* between ‘Abd al-Malik and Ibn al-Zubayr, the burning of the churches at Naxĵiwan and Xram, the correspondence between ‘Umar II and Leo III, and the discrimination against the Church under Yazīd II. In other words, T‘ovma lists

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[766] Greenwood (2010).

[767] Thomson (1986), 837 – 838.

the rulers and a few details borrowed from Łewond over a page or two, and then moves on. His main concern is with the reign of al-Mutawakkil (r. 847–61) and in particular, the expeditions of Buġā. He can offer nothing of note for the bulk of the period, while his concern with a particularly bloody series of episodes at the end of our period sets the tone for the rest of the work.

Second, T^covma has in mind an agenda for the Armenian people, in response to the horrific experience of Buġā's expeditions. As we saw in Chapter 4, T^covma consciously imitates the rhetoric found in Ełišē: Thomson notes that this may be a deliberate attempt to mobilize the Armenian population against the Arabs, modeled after the famous revolt led by Vardan Mamikonian against the Persians. T^covma's veiled call to arms against the Caliphate fits into the political chaos after al-Mutawakkil's death, given the severely weakened state of the ^cAbbasid Caliphate at that time.

Finally, T^covma's work, as already mentioned, includes information that sets it apart from earlier works. Whereas Sebēos and Łewond clearly do not have many details about Islam and Muḥammad, T^covma demonstrates that he is the product of a different period in Arab–Armenian literary exchange. His work is notably the missing link between the early responses to Islam as outlined in Chapter 5 and the evidence of literary exchange from the eleventh century, briefly mentioned in Chapter 8. T^covma's work indicates the start of an exchange between Arabic and Armenian literature that will quickly expand.

T^covma's *Patmut^ciwn Arcrunyac^ctan* [History of the Arcruni House] therefore has little value for the present study, being mainly a response to Buġā containing no additional information for the rest of the Arab period.

(2)   Drasxanakerc^ci, also known as John Catholicos or John the Historian, was probably born in the 850s, likely in the region of Ayrarat. He was catholicos from 897 or 898 to 924. He claims to have been elderly when he began his work, and the last event he includes dates to 923 or 924. Although the date of his death is contested, it is likely that he died soon after the completion of his work, either in 924 or 925, possibly as late as 931.[768]

Maksoudian argues for Drasxanakertc^ci's reliability based on (1) his use of lost sources, such as Šapuh Bagratuni; (2) the corroboration of certain details in Drasxanakertc^ci's text in Arabic and Greek sources; (3) the author's role as catholicos, which guaranteed his lack of bias and of favoritism toward any specific house; (4) the intended audience's positions of power and learning, which assured that Drasxanakertc^ci recorded the data correctly; and (5) Drasxanakertc^ci's habit of marking instances where his sources are unreliable.[769] While this makes him a valuable source for the ninth and tenth centuries, it still does not significantly support its reliability for the eighth and early ninth. After all, Drasxanakertc^ci's views towards the Byzantines demonstrate a very different tone from that of the earlier Armenian sources, such as Łewond.

Here we need to determine Drasxanakertc^ci's reliability on the basis of specific information offered for the Arab period. Drasxanakertc^ci in fact offers very little for the study of this period: "Yovhannēs speaks very little about major political issues, and if he does, his information is essentially marginal."[770] Instead, he offers information on the catholicoi of the period, a topic that is presumably much closer to his interests and for which he likely had highly

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[768] Maksoudian (1987), 7 – 22.

[769] Maksoudian (1987), 46 – 49.

[770] Maksoudian (1987), 28.

reliable sources. Drasxanakertc^ci's reliability, therefore, depends upon the subject and sources of his discussion.

(3)   Movsēs Dasxuranc^ci, also known as Movsēs Kałankatwac^ci, wrote *Patmut^ciwn ałwanic^c ašxarhi* [The History of the Land of Albania] between 897/898 and 1000. It is likely that the work was compiled sometime between 899 and 914, and was subsequently updated at the end of the tenth century.[771] *Patmut^ciwn ałwanic^c ašxarhi* is divided into three parts: (1) the first begins with Noah and the Flood and comes down to the fifth century; (2) the second part deals mainly with the seventh century, including the fall of the Sasanian realm, the Albanian prince Juanshēr, and the Arab incursions; and (3) finally, the third section cuts back to the early seventh century before discussing the rise of Islam and proceeding through the tenth century.

> Greenwood argues that
>
> …there is a tension between the overall thematic drive of the History of Ałuank^c and the original perspective of several underlying sources. This tension supports the proposition that the compiler did not rewrite the material available to him but chose to paste together passages derived from his underlying sources without amendment. His editorial approach produced internal contradiction.[772]

On the one hand, Movsēs's editorial choices reflect the concerns of the tenth century; however, his work retains data from earlier sources, presented intact and offering valuable insight to the Arab period.

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[771] Greenwood (2012), 114.

[772] Greenwood (2010), 87.

10.4 Eleventh, Twelfth, and Thirteenth-Century Works

I have attempted to restrict my list of commonly-used sources to works dating to the tenth

century at the latest. This may in fact be problematic, as other historians (notably Ibn al-Aṯīr and

Asołik) are commonly cited as authorities on the Arab period in Armīniya. While recognizing

the likelihood that their histories do indeed include reliable data, I make an effort here to avoid

relying heavily on them. After all, the historical circumstances of the eleventh century (the

Byzantine resurgence and the arrival of Turkish nomads in Anatolia) drastically change the

power structures of the Near East, perhaps even more than the dissolution of ᶜAbbāsid Caliphate.

Ideally, future studies will consider the reliability and relevance of histories penned in the

eleventh century and later. However, until a more dependable method allows us to ascertain the

kernel of truth in later sources, I suggest that we instead devote more attention to the earlier

materials.

This does not mean that I have completely ignored histories written after the tenth

century, but rather than I have tried whenever possible not to base my arguments on them. So,

for example, I have frequently mentioned comments in Yāqūt's *Muᶜǧam al-Buldān*

[Encyclopedia of the Lands], composed in the thirteenth century. However, this material is

pulled directly from earlier geographies and I cite it, wherever possible, with corresponding

citations from Yāqūt's sources, including, most often, Ibn al-Faqīh, and sometimes Ibn

Ḫurradāḏbih.

The most important historians and geographers from the later period whose works

preserve significant details about the Arab period in Arminiya include:

(1)   Stepᶜanos Tarōnecᶜi, known as Asołik ("the story teller") wrote his *Patmutᶜiwn*

tiezerakan [Universal History] sometime in the eleventh century.

(2)   Abū ᶜAbd Allāh Muḥammad al-Idrīsī (c. 493/1100 – c. 560/1165) wrote *Nuzhat al-*

Muštāq fī iḫtirāq al-āfāq [Pleasant Journeys in Far Away Lands], also known as *Tabula*

Rogeriana, in 548/1154.

(3)   Šihāb al-Dīn Abī ᶜAbd Allāh Yāqūt b. ᶜAbd Allāh al-Ḥamawī ah-Rūmī al-Baġdādī (574

or 575/1179 – 626/1229) wrote *Muᶜǧam al-Buldān* [Encyclopedia of the Lands] between

615/1218 or 1219 and 625/1228.

(4)   ᶜIzz al-Dīn Abī al-Ḥasan ᶜAlī b. Muḥammad b. Muḥammad b. al-Aṯīr (555/1160 –

630/1233) produced not only his famous *al-Kāmil fī al-tā'rīḫ*, but also a biographical dictionary

called *al-Lubāb fī Tahḏīb al-Ansāb*.

(5)   Vardan Arewelcᶜi (c. 1198 – 1271) wrote *Hawakᶜumn patmutᶜean* [Collection of History]

and *Ašxarhacᶜoycᶜ* [Geography].

(6)   ᶜImād al-Dīn Ismāᶜīl b. al-Malik al-Afḍal Nūr al-Dīn ᶜAlī b. Ǧamāl al-Dīn Muḥammad b.

Muḥammad b. ᶜUmar, known as Abū al-Fidā' (672/1273 – 732/1331), finished his *Taqwīm al-*

Buldān [Sketch of the Countries] in 721/1321.

A review of the material available in Arabic and Armenian from the eighth to the tenth

centuries does not establish clearly that the Armenian sources are preferable or more reliable

than the Arabic ones. In fact, with the obvious exception of Łewond, most of the Armenian sources are not particularly forthcoming about the Arab period in particular. Meanwhile, some Arab authors from the same three centuries visited Armīniya and/or held official positions in the ꜥAbbāsid administration, allowing access to government data and archives. Both sets of historical sources demonstrate idiosyncrasies that need to be assessed on a case by case basis.

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