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### THE BYZANTINE EMPIRE IN THE KINGDOM OF GEORGIA’S FOREIGN POLICY IN THE 11th CENTURY\*

Ayşe Beyza ERCAN\*\*

\* Araştırma Makalesi / *Research Article*

\*\* Öğr. Görevlisi Dr,  
Ardahan Üniversitesi, Ardahan İnsani  
Bilimler ve Edebiyat Fakültesi, Tarih  
Bölümü, Ardahan/TÜRKİYE  
✉ aysebeyzaercan@ardahan.edu.tr  
**ORCID:** 0000-0003-0464-2716

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**Abstract:** The end of the 10th century and the early 11th century marked an important beginning for the political affairs of the Kingdom of Georgia. At the beginning of the 11th century, the unification of the Kingdom of Georgia and the Kingdom of Abkhazia by the Bagrationi Dynasty made Georgia an important player in its region after a long time. The completion of this political formation was initiated by Bagrad III and took place towards the end of the 10th century. In this period, the Caucasus occupied an important place in Byzantine foreign policy. The influence of the Byzantine Empire on Georgia, as a knock-on effect, influenced the South Caucasus in general. In the first half of the 11th century, the Byzantine Empire was an important vector in Georgian foreign policy but it was the Turks, who influenced Georgian foreign policy fundamentally in the second half of the same century. In domestic politics, Georgia was busy in recovering its order and resolving disputes created by its feudal lords. Liparit, a member of the Georgian aristocrat Bagvashi family, received support from the Byzantine Empire in order to gain power in the Kingdom of Georgia. The Byzantine Empire’s policy of dominating Transcaucasia was facilitated by Liparit’s ambitions and his cooperation with the Empire. In the light of a wide range of sources, this article is an attempt to examine relations between the Kingdom of Georgia and the Byzantine Empire in the context of the policies of Bagrat IV and Liparit. This period in history is significant because Alp-Arslan’s military campaigns towards Georgia came after this political epoch of Transcaucasia.

### 11. YÜZYIL’DA GÜRCİSTAN DIŞ POLİTİKASINDA BİZANS İMPARATORLUĞU

**Öz:** X. yüzyılın sonu ve XI. yüzyılın başlangıcı Gürcistan Krallığı’nın siyasi hayatı için önemli bir başlangıçtır. Bu yüzyılın başlarında Gürcistan Krallığı ve Abhaz Krallığı’nın Bagrationi Hanedanlığı tarafından birleştirilmesi Gürcistan’ı uzun bir süreden sonra kendi bölgesinde iç ve dış politikada aktif hale getirmiştir. III. Bagrat’ın başlatmış olduğu bu siyasi oluşumun tamamlanması XI. yüzyılın sonlarına doğru gerçekleşmiştir. Bu dönemde Bizans dış politikasında Kafkasya önemli bir rol üstlenmektedir. Bizans’ın Gürcistan üzerindeki etkisi ise siyasi ve sosyal anlamda

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Gürcistan başta olmak üzere Ermenistan ve Güney Kafkasya bölgesini birçok yönden etkilemiştir. Bahsi geçen yüzyılın ilk yarısında Gürcü Krallığının dış politikasında Bizans, ikinci yarısında ise Türkler aktif rol almışlardır. İç politika da ise Gürcistan, yıkılan düzeni toparlamak ve feodal beylerin ortaya çıkarttığı karışıklıkları çözmekle uğraşmıştır. Gürcü Aristokrat ailelerinden biri olan Bagvashi ailesinin mensupların-

dan Liparit Gürcistan Krallığı üzerinde hakimiyet kurabilmek için Bizans'tan yardım almıştır. Bizans'ın Transkafkasya siyasetinde aktif rol almak istemesi Liparit ve faaliyetleri sayesinde kolaylaşmıştır. Bu makalede, kaynaklar ışığında Alp Arslan'ın Gürcistan üzerine yapacağı akınlardan önceki Gürcistan Krallığı ve Bizans İmparatorluğu'nun ilişkileri ağırlıklı olarak IV. Bagrat ve Liparit bağlamında incelenecektir.

The rulers of the Kingdom of Georgia historically aimed at unifying separate Georgian lands. There was a united Georgian state called Kartli (Iberia) at the end of the 4th century B.C. This was because the aggressor powers of the region, which were the Sasanian Iranians, the Byzantine Empire, the Arab Caliphate; and the domestic separatist groups did not exist at the time. The political landscape of the time was in favour of the Georgian Kingdom in the region. The Georgians resisted against the Arab and Byzantine forces and in the meantime, the dispersed Georgian lands were in the process of unification. Following the unification of small parts of the land, the “united Western Georgian state – Kingdom of “Abkhazs”, also Southern Georgian (T’ao-Klarjeti), Kartvelian (Georgian) and Eastern Georgian – Kakheti and Hereti Kingdoms and Principalities” came into existence in the region. The 970s comprised a crucial period in the stabilisation of the Georgian lands in a single political entity as a kingdom. In this period, the circumstances were matured for Georgia to be ruled under the rule of a single king. The political elite of Georgia in this period was contemplating on the idea of uniting the dispersed Georgian lands.<sup>1</sup>

The strengthening of Byzantine-Georgian relations began in the period of David Kuropolat, who was honoured with the title “great” by the Byzantine Empire. When Bardas Skleros rebellion erupted in Anatolia against Basil II, Basil II sent a letter to Georgian commander Tornikes, who was reclusive in Mountain Athos, asking help from David Kuropolat in suppressing the rebellion. The rebellion was suppressed by 12000 Georgian soldiers under the command of Tornikes. This event strengthened the friendship in Georgian-Byzantine relations.<sup>2</sup> In the early 11th century, Bagrat III, leader of Shida Kartli and Western Georgia, ruled Georgia between the years 975 and 1014. With the death of his father Gurgen in 1008<sup>3</sup>, who was the king of Iberia, and the death of T’ao-Klaerjeti region’s ruler David, Bagrat III became the first king in succeeding to unite Abkhazia and Kartli-Iberia under his rule.<sup>4</sup>

Kutaisi was the capital city of the United Kingdom of Georgia.<sup>5</sup> Between 1008 and 1010, following a series of battles, Bagrat III captured Kakheti and Hereti. In 1010, Bagrat III imprisoned Sumbath and Gurgen, who were his cousins and the kings of Klarjeti, and seized their realm as well. Thus, Bagrat III united the most of Georgia except Tbilisi and Lower Kartli, which were still under the rule of Muslim emirs. The Byzantine Empire was another important actor of Georgian foreign policy of this period. The feudal lords were blatant in acting against the unification of Georgia because it would mean a limitation of their rights and restrictions on their autonomy. Bagrat III was fierce against the feudal lords and disapproved their confrontation against the unification. The Byzantine Empire was not a supporter of a united Georgia and this could mean a series of battles in the future.<sup>6</sup> Although Bagrat III attempted to achieve political unity in his country, he died in 1014 without achieving his ambition. The

<sup>1</sup> Lordkipanidze, 2002: 64-65.

<sup>2</sup> Brosset: 2003: 254-255. Bayram, 2015: 448-449, Silogava ve Shengelia, 2007: 72-73.

<sup>3</sup> Lordkipanidze, 1987: 47-48.

<sup>4</sup> Suny, 1994: 33.

<sup>5</sup> Lordkipanidze, 2002: 67.

<sup>6</sup> Silogava ve Shengelia, 2007: 74.

Anonymous Georgian Chronicle informs that, after 36 years of his reign, he passed away in T'ao on a Friday.<sup>7</sup>

After Bagrat III passed away, his son Giorgi I (1014-1027) was sworn in and took over the power. Although Bagrat III laid the foundations of the United Kingdom of Abkhaz-Kartvel,<sup>8</sup> further steps had to be taken for its completion. This process would last until the end of the 11th century. In the 11th century, the Georgian relations with the Byzantine Empire carried the utmost importance. In order to counter-balance the Arab Caliphate, the Byzantine Empire supported the Christian states in Transcaucasia. The balance of power changed in favour of the Arab Caliphate because the Byzantine Empire was weakened. Though, the Byzantine Empire managed to maintain its power domestically and externally to some extent and pursued an active foreign policy towards Georgia and Armenia.<sup>9</sup>

After the Byzantine Emperor Basil II solved the problems within and outside of his country, he turned his direction to the East, to Iberia, to take advantage of the death of King David of Iberia in the early years of the 11th century.<sup>10</sup> The plan of Basil II in the conquering of Georgia coincides with the period of Giorgi I. Giorgi I was aware of the Byzantine Empire's imperial plans and negotiated with the Egyptian sultan Al-Khakim to ally against the Byzantine Empire. The Egyptian Fatimids were the Byzantine Empire's sworn enemies in the East at the time. This put Basil II in a difficult situation, and he refrained from invading Georgia. But as soon as Al-Khakim, the ally of the Georgian king, died, Basil II moved his troops into Georgia in 1021.<sup>11</sup>

The Turkish invasions, which began to be seen in the same period, occurred as a result of the change in the Byzantine Empire's policy in the region. The Byzantine Empire used to use the Christian states in the Caucasus as counter-balance objects against the Arabs and Iranians until this period, but from this period on it tried to eliminate its former allies after the decline of the political powers in the Middle East. Basil II entered Georgia in 1021 and caused substantial destruction in the country for two years, as well as capturing the T'ao (Oltu-Tortum) region.<sup>12</sup> Likewise, during these battles, a large part of the Pasinler region, especially the Okomi region (today's Üğümü, northeast of Pasinler), was destroyed during the campaigns of Basil II against Giorgi I.<sup>13</sup> When the Basil II returned to his hometown after the conquest of Ani in his eastern expedition, he wrote a letter to Giorgi I and asked him to come under his rule. Giorgi I rejected this offer and Basil II gathered his army and marched on Georgia. In this first encounter, Liparit's brothers Rat and Zolat bravely fought against the Byzantine army. However, Rat was killed after his horse was stuck in a swamp and upon this incident, the Georgian army was defeated. Basil II stayed in this region for three months to convince the Georgians for his proposals. Afterwards, he went to Trebizond and spent the winter there. He tried to persuade the Georgians for a while, and then he marched on Giorgi I again and the two armies clashed in front of the Tsionis Castle. Giorgi I fled and took refuge in the castle, and then accepted the subjecthood of Basil II and gave his son Bagrat as a hostage.<sup>14</sup> Aside from the result that Giorgi I lost of his three-year-old son Bagrat, we can list the other losses of the Georgians as follows:<sup>15</sup>

1. The castles of the aznavours
2. Fourteen different castles previously given by Basil II

<sup>7</sup> *Mat'iane Kartlisa (The Chronicle of Kartli)*, 2014: 151.

<sup>8</sup> Gamakharja ve Akhaladze, 2016: 12.

<sup>9</sup> Lordkipanidze, 1987: 56, Silogava ve Shengelia, 2007: 75.

<sup>10</sup> Subaşı, 2013: 705.

<sup>11</sup> Lordkipanidze, 1987: 60.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid. Tellioğlu, 2019: 89.

<sup>13</sup> Peacock, 2017: 158.

<sup>14</sup> Başkumandan Simbat Vekayinamesi, 1946:19-20.

<sup>15</sup> *Mat'iane Kartlisa (The Chronicle of Kartli)*, 2014: 153. For information see: Honigmann, 1970: 164-165.

3. The lands owned by David Kuropalati in T'ao, Basiani, K'ola-Art'aani and Javakheti.<sup>16</sup> However, Giorgi II gave some churches, villages and surrounding lands to Giorgi I.

According to Mat'iane Kartlisa, the Georgian chronicle of this period, Basil II promised Giorgi I that he would take care of his son for three years and then bring him back to him. As promised, after three years, Basil II sent Bagrat IV back to his father.<sup>17</sup> Basil II ensured the migration of a considerable number of Armenians to Anatolia and achieved its dominance in Azerbaijan and the Caucasus.<sup>18</sup>

When Giorgi I died in 1027, he left two sons, Demetre and Bagrat, as well as two daughters. However, as Bagrat IV was an older child, he inherited the throne.<sup>19</sup> Bagrat IV, the 9-year-old son of Giorgi's first wife, Mariam Artsruni (Mariam of Vaspurakan), became the new heir to the throne. When Bagrat IV ascended the throne, he was declared the king of the upper and lower countries<sup>20</sup>, namely Kartli and the Kingdom of Georgia. However, when he was sworn in, he encountered resistance against him, as happened to many Georgian kings before him.<sup>21</sup> Vaçe Gariçis-Dze, one of the aznavours of T'ao, went to Byzantine Empire together with Ioane, bishop of Bana<sup>22</sup>, located in the north-east of Oltu, and a large group of other aznavours of the country. These men, some of them owning fortresses and castles, were in a rebellion against Bagrat IV. These people joined Constantinos, who was the brother and successor of Basil II.<sup>23</sup> The struggle for the Georgian lands and the ambitions of the Byzantine Empire remained intact in this period. Emperor Constantine sent a large army to Georgia. This army devastated the same Georgian lands which were also invaded by Basil II and besieged the fortress of Kldekari. Liparit Bagvashi, the "eristavi" of Kldekari, confronted the offensive, but the feudal lords, Chanchahki Paleli and Arjevan Ololisidze, surrendered the fortresses of Garkloba and Tserpti in Shavsheti and Klarjeti to the Byzantine Empire. In this ordeal, Sabba who was the bishop of Tbeti, built a fortress and mobilised the patriot people to fight the Byzantines. In this fortress, he was joined by Ezra, Bishop of Anchi, and by the Shavsheti aznavours.<sup>24</sup> Later, the bishop Saba Mtbevari (the bishop of the Tibetan Church) captured the entire region of Şavşat and voluntarily accepted the rule of Bagrat IV. In 1028, he successfully defended his castle against the attacks of the Byzantine armies. Şavşat, which had been occupied by the Byzantine Empire some time ago, again came under the rule of Bagrat IV. This loyalty of the bishop Saba to Bagrat IV earned him the title of "eristavi".<sup>25</sup>

Meanwhile, Aristakes informs that the Byzantine emperor sent a governor called Nikit to Georgia. It is noted by Aristakes that in the next year, a Byzantine commander named Simon came to the East with a large number of soldiers, but when they arrived in Georgia, they received the news of the emperor's death and therefore did not attempt to be involved in any military activity in the region. When the soldiers under the command of Simon received the news of the death of their emperor, they returned to Constantinople.<sup>26</sup> In fact, after the death of Basil II in 1025, who was involved in all political affairs in Iberia since the beginning of the 11th century and followed an expansionist policy, the power of Byzantine Empire in the region

<sup>16</sup> David Kurapalati was the king of T'ao and from the Georgian Bagrationi Dynasty. For more information, see: Lordkipanidze, 1987: 56-57.

<sup>17</sup> Mat'iane Kartlisa (*The Chronicle of Kartli*), 2014: 153.

<sup>18</sup> Ocak, 2002: 255.

<sup>19</sup> Bakradze, 1880: 7.

<sup>20</sup> For the geographical regions called the upper and lower countries, see: Honigmann, 1970: 160.

The example of these kings of Georgia is "King Tamara". The Georgian historiography calls Tamara a king, not queen. For more information, see: Büyükcınar, 2017.

<sup>22</sup> Honigmann, 1970: 160.

<sup>23</sup> Brosset, 2003: 273.

<sup>24</sup> Lordkipanidze, 1987: 61.

<sup>25</sup> Subaşı, 2013: 710-711.

<sup>26</sup> *Aristakes Lastivertc'i's History*, trans. Robert Bedrosian, open sources (<https://archive.org/details/AristakesLastivertsisHistory/page/n3/mode/2up>), p.30. Accessed: 30.08.2020.

gradually began to lose its influence. After the death of Basil II, the political conflicts existing in Iberia and Kartli came to light;<sup>27</sup> Georgia would experience struggles for the throne first and then exposed to Turkish invasions.

After the death of Basil II, Romanos ascended the throne and remained in power between 1028 and 1034. The most important political figure in Georgian-Byzantine relations of this period was Queen Mariam Artsruni. Queen Mariam managed to be an influential political figure in the relations with the Byzantine Empire by ruling the Kingdom on behalf of Bagrat IV between 1027 and 1037. Mariam had impressive diplomatic skills and was fluent in Greek, Georgian and Armenian. Mariam formed alliances with the feudal lords like Liparit IV Baghvash of Kldekari and Trialeti.<sup>28</sup> According to the Byzantine sources<sup>29</sup>, there is no verification on that Mariam came to Constantinople, but the Georgian chronicle informs that Mariam came to Constantinople and appeared before the Byzantine emperor. After the emperor accepted and welcomed his good wishes, a treaty of alliance and friendship was agreed with the queen. The Byzantine emperor gave the title of "Kuropolat"<sup>30</sup> to her son Bagrat IV and Queen Helen as his wife. Following this, Mariam returned to T'ao with his son Bagrat IV after his new title and held a wedding for him there.<sup>31</sup>

This visit of the queen of Iberia in 1032 established a kinship bond between the Byzantine Empire and the Kingdom of Georgia. Furthermore, this alliance over marriage would be an important factor in the establishment of the Trebizond Empire a century later.<sup>32</sup> After Queen Helen died in Kutaisi, Bagrat IV married Queen Borena, the daughter of the king of Ossetia.<sup>33</sup> This marriage enabled Bagrat IV to use the Ossetian army actively on his side. It was common for North Caucasus societies to use their indigenous military forces during this period, especially Ossetian soldiers.<sup>34</sup> In 1033, a struggle for the throne erupted in the Kingdom of Georgia, though the information available on this conflict is very limited. However, it can be noted that Prince Demetre in Anakofia, who was the son of the second wife Giorgi I, was wanted to be enthroned by the aznavours against Bagrat IV. However, since Mariam and the "tavadis"<sup>35</sup> of Bagrat IV did not support Demetre's ascension to the throne, the aznavours could not take any further action to support Demetre. Thereupon, Demetre took refuge in the Byzantine Empire. When Demetre took refuge in the Byzantine Empire, he also gave Anakofia to the Byzantine Empire.<sup>36</sup>

The relationship of the Bagvashi family, one of the Georgian aristocratic families, with the Byzantine Empire is one of the issues to be noted here. Because the Byzantine Empire could not interfere in Georgia's internal affairs without the support of the Bagvashi family.<sup>37</sup> Apart

<sup>27</sup> Subaşı, 2013: 725.

<sup>28</sup> Rayfield, 2012: 76-77.

<sup>29</sup> see: Giorgi I fell ill and died. His widow (Mariam Arstruni) sent a wife to Bagrat (Pankratios) and a delegation with gifts to the emperor and requested a peace treaty. The emperor accepted the delegation, sent Helen, his brother Basil's daughter, to Abkhazia as a bride. "He raised Pankratios the bridegroom to the dignity of kouropalates." John Skylitzes, 2011: 356-357.

<sup>30</sup> The title of "kuropolat" evidently carried international prestige, because Byzantine emperors granted it also to European rulers, while, in the twelfth century, to their brothers as well. Although this title entailed no privileges, it signified Byzantine recognition of the hereditary rights of the Georgian kings to T'ao and Klarjeti. see: Lordkipanidze, 1987: 57.

<sup>31</sup> Brosset, 2003: 275-276.

<sup>32</sup> Keçiş, 2013: 20.

<sup>33</sup> Brosset, 2003: 276.

<sup>34</sup> Saqartvelos Istoriis Narkvevbi Tomi III Chamokalibebuli Feodalizm Xana Saqartvelo XI-XV Saukuneebshi, 1979: 181.

<sup>35</sup> "Etymologically tavadi is derived from tavi, meaning "the head". Tavi at the same time is the formative of "self". It is thus the Reflexive Pronoun; with this meaning tavadi represents the instrumental case and denotes "by himself"; tavadi then means "one who stands by himself"; who stands out; who is conspicuous. For more information, see: Allen, 1971: 246-247.

<sup>36</sup> Brosset, 2003: 276.

<sup>37</sup> Lordkipanidze, 1987: 57.

from that, Liparit IV, also known as *Kldekari ve Trialeti eristavisi Liparit*, who was once the most important supporter of the Bagrat IV and also his greatest enemy later, was a member of the Bagvashi family. It should be noted that the Bagvashi family was also referred to as Liparites in the sources. Liparit, who had an important place in the Georgian monarchy after 1033, advised Bagrat IV to conquer Tbilisi, something which resulted in the besiege of the city later. However, due to several events during the siege and capture of the city, Bagrat IV became suspicious of Liparit and the people of Kahet.<sup>38</sup> Following his suspicion, Bagrat IV entered the land of Kakheti with his army and captured the important feudal lords in the region. While these events were taking place, Liparit would forecast what was coming to him and as a counter-move, he brought Demetre from the Byzantine Empire to make him the king. The army that came with Demetre from the Byzantine Empire against Bagrat IV, Liparit and some aznavours of the region entered Kartli and captured a castle in Ateni. Since the eristavis in Ateni were loyal to Bagrat IV, the allied forces dispersed and when the winter came, the Byzantine soldiers wanted to return. Thereupon, Liparit had to make peace with Bagrat IV. In exchange for this peace, Bagrat IV made Liparit the eristavi of Kartli. The Byzantine army returned by taking Demetre with them.<sup>39</sup> After the summer months passed, Liparit took action again and captured Ani and the eristavi of Ardanuji and the eristavi of Atskuer, Abuser. Thereon, when Bagrat IV came to Javakheti from Tbilisi, he was joined by the Georgian subsidiary forces. Bagrat IV heard that some of his forces took the side of Liparit while he was besieging Fokani, and then he went to Kartli over Şavşat during the winter. Learning that Bagrat IV was leaving the region, Liparit brought Bagrat's brother Demetre from the Byzantine Empire back again to use him against Bagrat IV. Following this turn of events, the Kingdom was divided into two again. Some of the elite in the Kingdom aligned with Demetre. Since Bagrat IV held Liparit's son Ivane as a hostage, Liparit returned Abuser and the castle of Bagrat IV in order to save his son. Meanwhile, in addition to the people of Kahet, the Armenian King David and Liparit formed a strong alliance. Bagrat IV, on the other hand, lost a battle against Liparit in the Sasiret forest, though his army numbered up to 7000 men, and strengthened by the support of 3000 Varengs.<sup>40</sup>

In the meantime, his brother Demetre, who was used as leverage against Bagrat IV, died. Bagrat IV feared that he could lose his kingdom following his retreat, he sought to conclude an agreement with Liparit. Having several cavalries with him, he went to meet Liparit but was rejected. Following this rejection, Bagrat IV headed to Abkhazia. Soon afterwards, Sula, the eristavi of Kalmaksi, and Grigol, the eristavi of Artanuji, along with the other Mesxian nobles united in support of Bagrat IV. Liparit also gathered his own army, including the Kaxs, Armenians and Greeks. Bagrat was in Arqis-c'ixe and Liparit with his army also went there for a battle. After the battle between the two armies, Liparit came out victorious and Bagrat IV had to retreat.<sup>41</sup>

Shortly after these events, the eristavi of Kalmakh<sup>42</sup> Sula and the eristavi of Artanuji Grigor agreed on an alliance. Other Meskhети eristavis agreed to summon Bagrat IV. Bagrat IV took action with his army and united with the eristavis. Liparit heard about this alliance against him, gathered his soldiers and swiftly came to the region with the subsidiary forces of the Byzantine and Armenians. The two armies clashed, and the army of Liparit endorsed by the Byzantine Empire was victorious again, on top of which they forced Bagrat IV to flee. The eristavi of Kalmakh, Sula, was captured, tortured and tied to the gallows for the surrender of his region, Kalmakh. Despite this, Sula refused to hand over his territory. Likewise, Grigol, the son of Abuser, was threatened with death in his surrender of Ardanuji, and he submitted.

<sup>38</sup> For information see: Brosset, 2003: 278-279.

<sup>39</sup> Brosset, 2003: 279.

<sup>40</sup> *Mat'iane Kartlisa (The Chronicle of Kartli)*, 2014: 156-157. See: Thomson, 1996: 293. For more information see: Özkan, 2015: 525-543.

<sup>41</sup> Thomson, 1996: 292-294. *Mat'iane Kartlisa (The Chronicle of Kartli)*, 2014: 156-157, Allen, 1971: 89-90.

<sup>42</sup> For more information, see: Toumanoff, 1963: 490-491.

Liparit gained a significant influence eventually and captured the upper Kartli region.<sup>43</sup> Although it is not included in the Anonymous History of Georgia, as far as we see from Skylitzes and Vardan, while the struggle was going on, the Byzantine emperor Mihail<sup>44</sup> asked Liparit and Bagrat IV to make peace. At the request of the emperor, these two powerful leaders came together for peace. According to the agreement, the administration of Abkhazia and the whole of Iberia was given to Bagrat IV, and Liparit took over the administration of the Meskheta region, where the Ardanuji and Şavşat eristavi administrations were affiliated.<sup>45</sup>

As can be seen in the first half of the 11th century, the political atmosphere in Transcaucasia was tense due to the imperial policies of the Byzantine Empire. As before, the Byzantine Empire chose Transcaucasia as a target for its expansionist policies.<sup>46</sup> After all, it was a fact that the Byzantine Empire increased its political influence in the Caucasus. The best example of this could be given as the use of the Byzantine model, not the Abbasid model like the previous Georgian rulers, on the coins minted by Bagrat IV. Again, the biggest problem of the Byzantine Empire during this period was its other Christian neighbours, who tended to support the opposition candidates for the imperial throne.<sup>47</sup>

The events between Liparit, Demetre and Bagrat IV were a matter of concern for the Byzantine Empire. In the second half of the 11th century, Emperor Constantine, who ascended to the Byzantine throne for years between 1042 and 1055, was loyal to the foreign policy of Basil II, one of his predecessor, and aimed to protect the borders and to stop the rapidly coming Turkmen raids to the region. Therefore, in 1045, he sent an army under the command of the Georgian Prince Liparit to the region. In combatting this, Tughril Beg sent an army under the command of Kutalmish against the Byzantine army advancing towards Divin under the command of Liparit. The two armies fought in front of the Ganja city walls and the Byzantine army was severely defeated.<sup>48</sup> The purpose of this military campaign of the Byzantine Empire was to conquer Ani. The reason for this was to weaken the Muslim Shaddadids, their biggest rivals on Ani.

It can be said that the newly-established Seljukian state initially respected the Byzantine Empire for its ancient history. Furthermore, the main aim of the Seljukians was to conquer the Islamic states, especially Egypt in the meantime. For this reason, having peace with the Byzantine Empire until the 1040s was suitable for the interests of the Seljukians. However, due to the change in the political landscape over time, Hasan was assigned to conquer Azerbaijan together with Tughril Beg's brother Chaghri Beg, and Davud's son Yakutî. His initial raids were towards Vaspurakan, a Byzantine territory. The Vaspurakan judge, Aaron, was sure that he could not confront the raids alone and asked reinforcement from Katakalon Kekomanos, the governor of Byzantine Empire to Georgia. Prince Hasan and many Seljukian soldiers died in the Byzantine-Seljukian encounter in 1048. This was the first attempt of the Seljukians to enter Anatolia and it failed. However, Sultan Tughril assigned his brother İbrahim Inal, whom he appointed as the governor of Azerbaijan, to the expeditions towards the Byzantine territories together with Kutalmish to take revenge of Prince Hasan. Even though the Byzantine army under the command of Liparit confronted Ibrahim Inal, who entered the Byzantine lands in 1047/1048, the Byzantine side again suffered a severe defeat. Although the Byzantine general Katakalon Kekomanos offered peace, it was rejected and the Byzantine army retreated to Pasinler (Basean). Erzurum, Kars and Ani were taken by the Seljukians. Furthermore, it is clear that Vaspurakan and the Georgian governor, who realized that they could not resist the Seljukian forces while the Turkish invasions were continuing rapidly over Anatolia, asked the

<sup>43</sup> Brosset, 2003: 283.

<sup>44</sup> Müverrih Vardan, 1937: 173.

<sup>45</sup> John Skylitzes, 2011: 421.

<sup>46</sup> Hüseyinof, 1968: 62.

<sup>47</sup> Peacock, 2017: p. 155. For these coins see annex.1.

<sup>48</sup> Ocak, 2002: 255.

Byzantine Empire for help again. The Byzantine emperor declared that all Georgian and Abkhaz forces should help Liparit. The number of Byzantine army increased to 33,000 after the 18,000 of well-trained Georgian forces joined the Byzantine army. The Seljukian army under the command of İbrahim Inal and the Byzantine army, including Georgian forces, clashed in the Battle of Kaputru on 18 September 1049.<sup>49</sup> Katakalon commanded the right arm of the Byzantine army and Aaron commanded the left arm, and Liparit together with his forces were in the centre. The Seljukian army was commanded by İbrahim Inal and Kutalmish. Although Katakalon made a sudden move and planned to catch the Seljukian army by surprise, Liparit did not want to start the war, as the Saturdays were considered ominous by the Georgians.<sup>50</sup> The Seljukian army, on the other hand, took advantage of the situation and attacked suddenly at night. Thanks to this sudden raid of the Seljukians, an arrow thrown by the Turkish armies entered the mouth of Liparit's nephew and came out of his neck, and Liparit started attacking back. The united Byzantine army was defeated in this battle. Liparit was captured by the Seljukian soldiers.<sup>51</sup>

According to Abu Abdullah Muhammad al-Azîmî, Bagrat IV sent the Byzantine Emperor Constantine's daughter and wife to the Georgians as hostages. In 1049/1050, Tughril Beg sent the captive Liparit back to Emperor Constantine together with his ambassador Sherif Nâsır Bin İsmail. The Byzantine ruler was very pleased with this and sent off the ambassador with many gifts.<sup>52</sup> It should also be noted that Liparit received admiration while staying with Tughril Beg in Rey for two years. However, after the Byzantine Empire demanded Liparit back by paying a ransom, Tughril Beg refused this offer and released Liparit without having anything in return. The Battle of Kaputru was the first serious encounter between the Seljukians and the Byzantine Empire. For the Seljukians, it was not to make a permanent conquest; it was only for revenge. The real importance of the Battle is that it was the first major victory of the Seljukian armies against the united Byzantine forces. With this victory, it was understood that the Byzantine army, which was thought to be indestructible, could be defeated.<sup>53</sup>

Liparit came to Ani after being released by the Turks. Bagrat IV, after receiving this news, went to Javakheti over Kartli to march against him. Liparit went back to his former ally, the Byzantine homeland, and met with the emperor. The emperor honoured him by assigning important duties and sent him back to his homeland by presenting gifts.<sup>54</sup> According to Vardan, Liparit came to Georgia from the Byzantine Empire with an army and after taking Bagrat IV hostage, he sent him to the Byzantine emperor and eventually became the only ruler of the whole of Georgia.<sup>55</sup> The period including the end of 1050s and the beginning of 1060s, the royal administration of Georgia became successful in both domestic and foreign policy. Knowing the increasing interests of the Seljukians towards Anatolia and the Caucasus, the Byzantine Empire had to strike a deal with Georgia for an alliance. This was because, for the Byzantines, a powerful Christian state in the Caucasus would be instrumental in encountering the raids of the Seljukians. At this point, it is clear that the Byzantine Empire planned to back Bagrat IV instead of Liparit Bagvash. This choice stemmed from the more politically promising posture of Bagrat

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<sup>49</sup> For more information on the Battle of Kaputru, see: Subaşı, 2010: 247-270.

<sup>50</sup> Urfalı Mateos, *Vakayi- Nâmesi (952-1336) ve Papaz Grigor'un Zeyli (1136-162)*, 2000: 89.

<sup>51</sup> Köymen, 2004: 245-247. Minorsky, 1953: 60-62.

<sup>52</sup> *Azîmî Tarihi Selçuklular Dönemiyle İlgili Bölümler (H.430-538 =1038/39-1143/44)*, 2006: 10-11.

<sup>53</sup> Köymen, 2004: 247. Urfalı Meteos, p. 89-90.

<sup>54</sup> Subaşı, 2013: 713.

<sup>55</sup> Müverrih Vardan, 1937: 175.



IV in comparison with Liparit and the Byzantines freed Bagrat after long years of imprisonment. According to the Georgian historiography, Giorgi Mtatsmindeli<sup>56</sup> had an important influence in the escape of the Bagrat IV from Byzantine captivity.<sup>57</sup> Liparit was also a gifted commander as he was the main ally of the Byzantine Empire in the Caucasus. Liparit commanded the Byzantine armies in the Caucasus in 1048 before he was captured by Alp-Arslan and then released. Nevertheless, the political conditions of the time favoured Bagrat IV for the Byzantine Empire. Bagrat IV personally went to see the Byzantine emperor in 1054. After this meeting, the Byzantine emperor granted Bagrat IV nobility but detained him in Constantinople for three years. During his detainment, Liparit declared Bagrat's son Giorgi the new king and made himself the regent of the Kingdom of Georgia. At a later time, the feudal lords of Liparit rebelled against him and hand him over to the king in 1059. Liparit was obliged to live in a monastery and thus the crown remained free of political struggle.<sup>58</sup> By the year 1059, the rulers of the Meskhети region and the eristavi of Kalmakh Sula, who were not satisfied with the rule of Liparit, detained Liparit with his son in order to end his rule. Sula took Liparit and his son Ivane to Kalmakh. Bagrat IV was also informed about the action. Bagrat IV wanted them to be brought to Ahal-Kalak. Sula presented Liparit and his son along with the regions of Ardauji, Kuel, Uflis-Tzihe and Tbilisi owned by Liparit to Bagrat IV. In this way, the Meskhети region and Ardauji surroundings were again captured by Bagrat IV. Liparit surrendered his son Ivane to the king by wearing a priest's dress, and then his army and all his wealth were allocated by Bagrat IV. Liparit was released since he promised that he would not take any action against Bagrat IV from that time on. After a short while, Ivane fled to the Byzantine Empire and stayed there for a few years. However, he later made peace with Bagrat IV and returned to the Kartli region. According to the Georgian Anonymous History, Liparit died in Constantinople in one of the years between 1062 and 1064. After settling the problems of Liparit and the Byzantine alliance, the Kingdom of Georgia had a wealthy and prosperous period for a short time under the leadership of Bagrat IV.<sup>59</sup> However, this period of peace did not last long and the Seljukian armies under the command of Alp-Arslan started their raids on this region sometime later.

As can be understood from the sources on this topic, there is no information on that the Georgian administration fought the Seljukians in favour of the Byzantines after the campaigns in 1064 and 1068. Although we know of the Georgians who joined Romanos Diogene's army before the 1071 Manzikert Battle, we do not have any information that these Georgians fought against the Seljukian armies. As far as it can be seen from the sources, this was the case because of the cordial diplomatic relations between Alp-Arslan and Bagrat IV. After the first expedition of Alp-Arslan's armies to Georgia, the Georgian administration, including Bagrat IV, became wary towards the Seljukians and did not want a third expedition to be organized against their country. In this way, after the Battle of Manzikert, although most of Armenia, Shirvan and Anatolia were conquered by the Seljukians, Georgia was able to maintain its independence.<sup>60</sup> It should be noted that one anonymous Georgian historian says that "all Turks in the world came to Georgia" for the Turks who started to come to this region en masse.<sup>61</sup> This comment of the historian gives hints about the Georgian political affairs in the second half of the 11th century. According to the Georgian Anonymous History, Bagrat IV died on 24 November 1072, one year after the Manzikert victory. The Georgian Anonymous History also

<sup>56</sup> Giorgi Mtatsmindeli (Mtac'mideli); known also as St. Giorgi Mtatsmindeli, was a theologian who lived between 1009 and 1065. He served in the Monastery of Hahuli in the T'ao region. Having lived in the Byzantine Empire for five years, he was an important religious figure in Byzantine-Georgian relations. See: Brosset, 2003: 296-301. Bayram, 2015: 448. Chkhartishvili, 2015: 401-409.

<sup>57</sup> Mosiashvili, 2019: 66-67.

<sup>58</sup> Toumanoff, 1966: 622.

<sup>59</sup> Brosset, 2003: 285-287.

<sup>60</sup> Mosiashvili, 2017: 300-312.

<sup>61</sup> Thomson, 1996: 323. Peacock, 2017: 99.

states that Alp-Arslan was also killed in his headquarters at the same time and that both rulers were unaware of each other's death.<sup>62</sup>

### Conclusion

The Georgian-Abkhaz Kingdom was united with the political moves of Bagrat III at the end of the 10th century and the beginning of the 11th century. However, this new political trend created a long-lasting change for Georgian society. This change would be completed by the end of the 11th century. For the 11th century Byzantine Empire, the Georgian and Armenian Kingdoms were important actors in the South Caucasus. Because what marked this period was that the Byzantine Empire needed strong allies in the East. The United Kingdom of Georgia and the Kingdom of Armenia were capable of meeting the needs of the Byzantine Empire due to their religious kinship. In this period, although the Georgian-Byzantine alliance was able to stop the Turkish invasions coming to the region gradually, they could not succeed this from the 1060s on. The reason behind this failure was the domination of the Bagvashi family over the Georgian Kingdom. Liparit, from the Bagvashi family, managed to become the most important actor of Byzantine-Georgian relations in the 11th century. However, Liparit's ambition to rule over the Georgian Kingdom caused the kingdom substantial instability. This political conflict between Liparit and Bagrat IV came to the advantage of the Byzantine Empire several times. However, the Turkmen raids, which started to be seen from 1030 on, prevented the Georgian Kingdom from pursuing a balanced politics. Since the Turkmen raids coming from the East would damage the influence of the Byzantine Empire in the region, various steps were taken to worsen the relations between Liparit and Bagrat IV repeatedly. It is clear that the Byzantine Empire, who sought to keep cordial relations with its Christian neighbours in the East, had to change the course of its alliance in the region after the Seljuk Turks started to be seen in Transcaucasia.

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<sup>62</sup> Brosset, 2003: 295.

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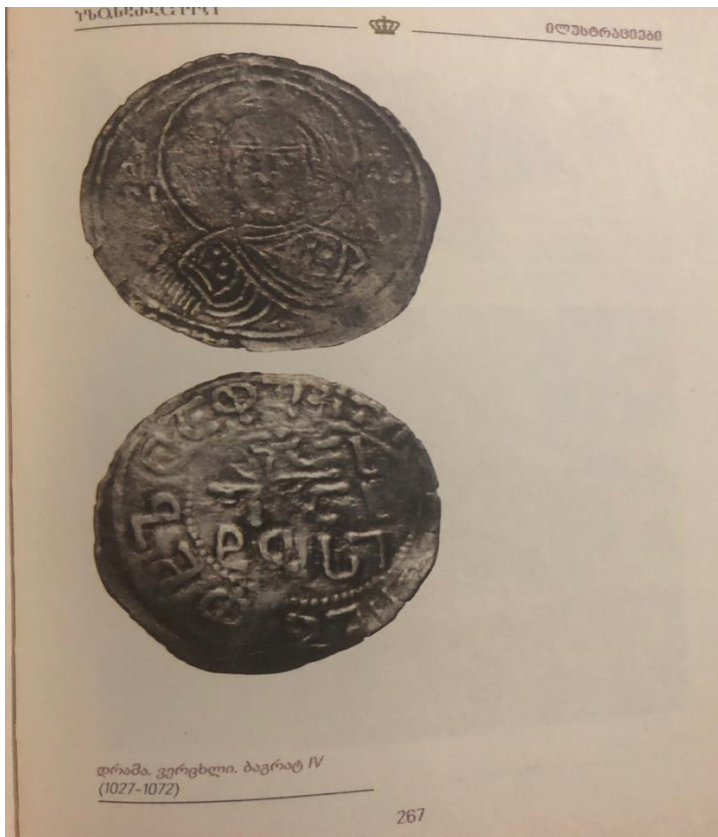
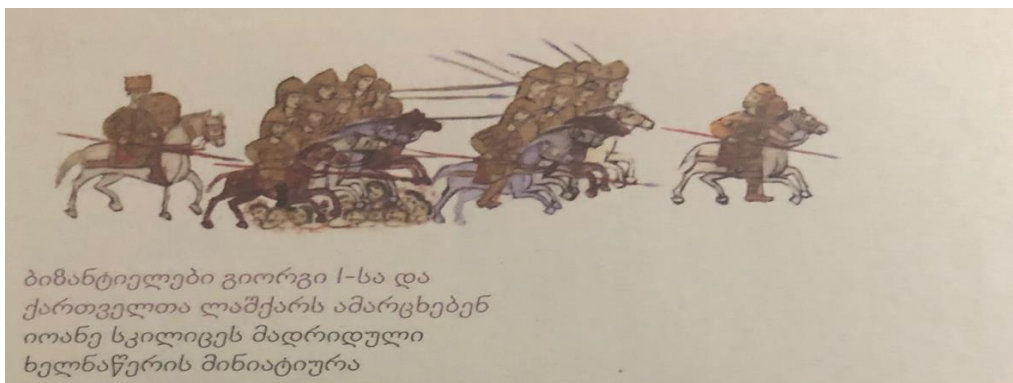
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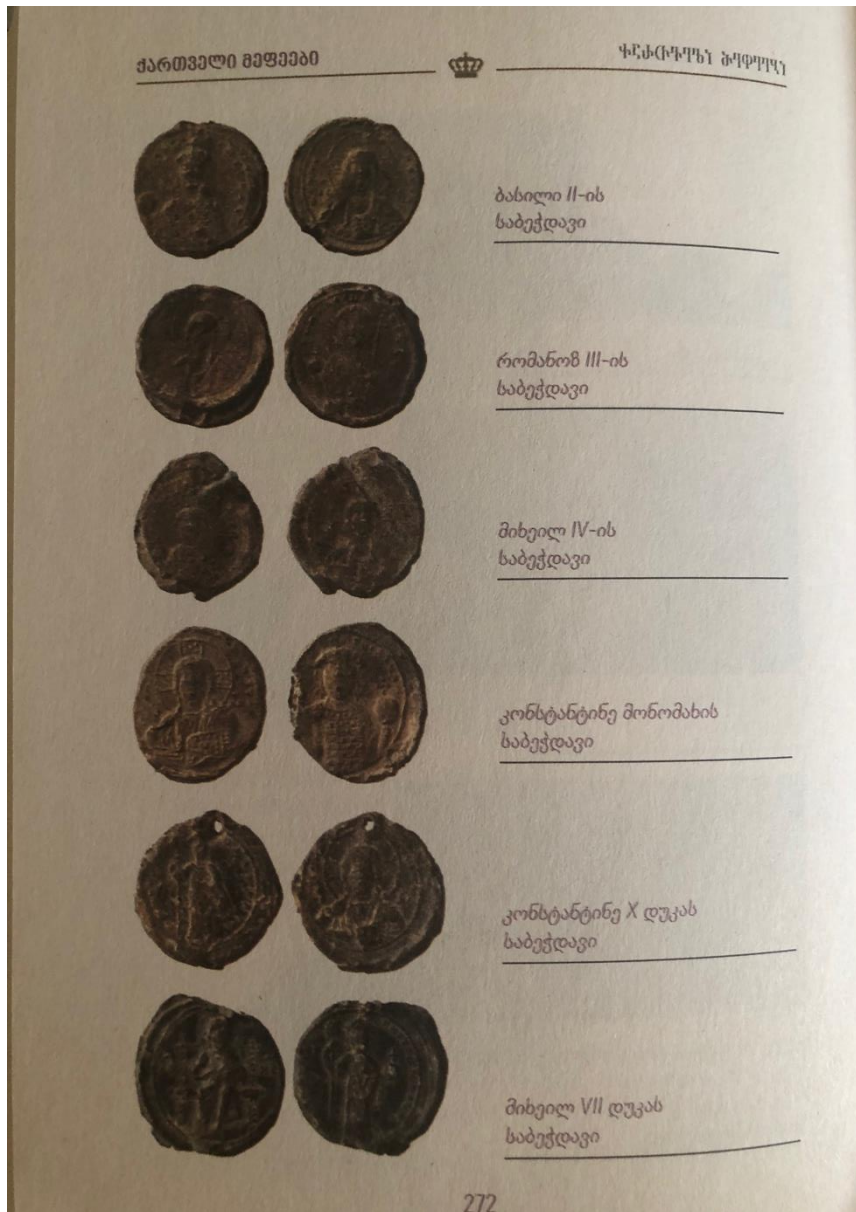
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**Annex.1.**<sup>63</sup>**Annex.2.**<sup>64</sup>

<sup>63</sup> A silver coin, which was minted during the Bagrat IV period (1027-1072) and indicates the Byzantine influence. See: Samushia, 2018: 267.

<sup>64</sup> A miniature showing the battle between Giorgi I and the Byzantine armies. See: Samushia, *Ibid*, 268.

Annex.3.<sup>65</sup>

<sup>65</sup> The seals belonging to the Byzantine emperors who dominated Georgia in the 11th century. From top to bottom respectively: Seal of Basil II, Seal of Romanos III, Seal of Mikhail IV, Seal of Constantinos IX, Seal of Constantinos X, Seal of Constantinos Dukas X, Seal of Mikhail Dukas VII. See: Samushia, 2018: 273.