

Manaz's City: The Narrative of Manzikert in Ancient Armenian Texts

Manaz'ın Şehri: Antik Ermenice Metinlerde Malazgirt Anlatısı

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Öz- Armenia'nın güney bölgelerinde yer alan Malazgirt, antik çağdan ortaçağa kadar uzanan süreçte farklı toplulukların literatürlerinde her zaman önemli bir yere sahip olmuştur. Bu önem, Malazgirt'in coğrafi, siyasi ve dini açılarından çok yönlü oluşu ve tarihsel yürüncesinin kapsamlı bir şekilde çevresini etkilemesiyle ilgilidir. Bölgenin coğrafi analizi, isimlerin etimolojik uzantılarını kapsayarak Ermenice metinlerde başta Taron olmak üzere çeşitli şekillerde Malazgirt'in isimlendirilmesini etkileyen dilsel karmaşıklığı ortaya koymaktadır. Siyasi açıdan Malazgirt'in tarihi, bölgenin feodal yapısı ve Roma ile İran gibi baskın güçler arasındaki güç dengesi üzerinden ilerlemektedir. Güçlü feodal ailelerinin, özellikle de Manawazean ve Mamikonean hanedanlarının yükselişi ve düşüşü Malazgirt'in siyasi manzarasını şekillendirmiştir. Kuşkusuz şehrin önemi sadece siyasi değildir; Malazgirt, Ermeni ve Süryani gelenekleri arasındaki kültürel ve dini etkileşimlerin merkezi olma kimliğini de barındırmaktadır. Armenia'da Hristiyanlığın güneyden kuzeye doğru yayılmasında önemli bir merkez olarak yine bu bölge ortaya çıkmaktadır. Bu nedenle bu çalışmanın amacı, Malazgirt'in sadece siyasi değil aynı zamanda dini önemini de anlamak ve Ermeni Hristiyanlığı ile ilişkisini tartışmaktır.

Anahtar Kelimeler- Malazgirt, Armenia, Manaz, Mamikonean.

Abstract – Manzikert, located in the southern regions of Armenia, has consistently held a significant place in the literature of various communities from ancient times to the medieval period. This importance is attributed to the multidimensional nature of Manzikert from geographical, political, and religious perspectives, as well as its comprehensive influence on the surrounding historical trajectory. The geographical analysis of the region encompasses the etymological extensions of names, revealing the linguistic complexity that has influenced the various ways Manzikert is named in Armenian texts, primarily as Taron. From a political standpoint, the history of Manzikert unfolds through the region's feudal structure and the power balance between dominant forces such as Rome and Iran. The rise and fall of powerful feudal families, especially the Manawazean and Mamikonean dynasties, have shaped the political landscape of Manzikert. Undoubtedly, the significance of the city transcends the political realm; Manzikert embodies a centre for cultural and religious interactions between Armenian and Syriac traditions. This region emerges as a crucial centre for the south-to-north spread of Christianity in Armenia. Therefore, the aim of this study is not only to understand the political importance of Manzikert but also to explore its religious significance and discuss its relationship with Armenian Christianity.

Keywords- Manzikert, Armenia, Manaz, Mamikonean.

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

The article explores the multifaceted significance of Manzikert in the geographic, political, and religious contexts, tracing its influence from antiquity to the medieval period. The region's importance is emphasized through its geographical location, hosting diverse ethnic groups and serving as a strategic nexus amidst Roman and Iranian. Armenians, particularly in the fourth and fifth centuries, played a pivotal role in shaping the intellectual landscape of Manzikert. Topologically, the region is referred to by various names in Armenian texts, with Taron being the most widely used. The study delves into the historical evolution of the region, its division among different Armenian families, and the eventual unification under the name Tawruberan after 591. The narrative is deeply rooted in mythological backgrounds, with the arrival of Armenians in the region traced back to the legendary figure Hayk.

The political landscape of Manzikert is intricately connected to feudal structures, conflicts between dominant powers like Rome and Iran, and the rise and fall of influential Armenian families. The Manawazean family's rule in the region faced challenges from the Orduni, ultimately leading to intervention by the monarchy. The Mamikonean family later dominated Manzikert, leaving a lasting impact on its political and religious trajectory. The article underscores the religious importance of Manzikert, particularly in the context of Christianity's spread in Armenia. The region played a crucial role in the conflicts and transformations of Christianity, with the establishment of the Surb Karapēt

Monastery and its proximity to Syriac culture contributing to its significance. The creation of the Armenian alphabet by Mesrop Mařtoc⁶ in the region further solidifies its role in the religious history of Armenia.

Manzikert's significance is not limited to political or religious aspects alone; it extends to its identity as a centre for cultural interaction between Armenian and Syriac traditions. The article discusses the Syriac-Armenian cultural exchange, highlighting the importance of Manzikert in the eighth-century synod where religious groups sought unity around theological issues. In conclusion, Manzikert emerges as a crucial element in Armenian societal memory, encompassing historical, political, and religious dimensions. Its role as an alternative Christian centre, influenced by political and feudal dynamics, has shaped its portrayal in Armenian literature. The city's association with Syriac culture further enhances its cultural and religious significance, making Manzikert a complex and pivotal part of Armenia's historical narrative.

INTRODUCTION

In terms of geography, Manzikert has played a significant role in nearly every period from antiquity to the present day, making it a frequent subject in the literature of various communities. As the region hosted diverse ethnic groups throughout history, Armenians were notable contributors who shaped the intellectual landscape in the fourth and fifth centuries. Situated in the relatively southern regions of Armenia, Manzikert held importance not only for the Armenian monarchy or feudal but also due to its strategic location amidst Roman, Iranian, and Islamic rule. Within this context, the Armenian literary tradition consistently referenced Manzikert, affirming its significance as a crucial part of Armenia. Contrary to prevailing beliefs, however, the city's importance during late antiquity and the Middle Ages extended beyond mere politics; it was intricately linked to the religious identity of the aristocratic clergy in the newly Christianized Armenian society. Consequently, ancient Armenian texts, grounded in faith, underscored the city's religious journey by initiating the region's history with a mythological narrative. This study's primary objective is to provide a comprehensive narrative of Manzikert through the region, aiming to comprehend the backdrop of the Manzikert imagery in Armenian sources from both political and religious perspectives.

1. Etymological Extensions of Regional Names

Armenia, throughout antiquity, has been a region marked by intricate and intertwined etymological concepts, heavily influenced by both Western and Eastern cultural currents. From place names to personal names, the presence of toponymic and ethnonymic classifications is evident, with a noteworthy prevalence of words of predominantly Iranian origin. This linguistic complexity extends the geography in which Manzikert is located was also affected by this situation, and the region is broadly referred to as Taron [Տարոն], Tarawn [Տարաւն], Tarwberan [Տարաբերան], Tawruberan [Տարուբերան] and Tawroy Beran [Տարոյ Բերան] in Armenian texts.¹ The most widely used name, Taron, first appears in P'awstosi Buzandac'woy Patmut'iwn Hayoc' (Epic Histories, The History of Buzandaran), offering a detailed retrospective account of the fourth century.² The etymology of the word Taron likely traces back to a region on the Syrian border, referred to as Taronitis by Strabo in the second century BC and Tauraunitium by Tacitus.³ Reflecting the feudal structure in Armenia, the region began to emerge in Armenian literature after the fifth century, divided into a general west belonging to the Vahevuni family and east to the Słkuni family, centred on Ołakan Castle. Notably, the region saw dominance at various times by different families like Arřamuni, Paluni, or Mandakuni, eventually unified under the name Tawruberan after 591 in connection with the Roman province of Inner Armenia.⁴ According to Anania řirakac'i, Manzikert, situated within the Apahunik' settlement (gawař), was part of Tawruberan, and like many regions, its name and origin carry a mythological background.⁵ In this context, Movsēs Xorenac'i's notes stand out as a foundational narrative, describing the arrival of Armenians in the region, rooted in descent and infused with mythology.

According to the traditional narrative, Hayk, the progenitor of the Armenians, initially established himself in Anatolia, specifically in the Hark' (Bulanık) region of Taron.⁶ Subsequently, these territories

¹ The naming of the region in the sources of other communities is also related to the name Taron. For example, Tarōn [Ταρών], Taraunon Khōria [Ταραύων Χωρία] in Greek and. Tarūn in Arab. See more, Procopius, *History of the Wars*, tr. Henry B. Dewing, vol. 1, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1914, p. 483; Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *De Administrando Imperio*, eds. Gyula T. Moravcsik and Romilly J. H. Jenkins, Athlone Press, London, 1962, p. 189; *The Geography of Ananias of řirak: (Ařxarhac'oyc'): The Long and the Short Recensions*, tr. Robert H. Hewsen, DR. Ludwig Reichert Verlag, Wiesbaden, 1992, p. 164.

² The biography of Mesrop Mařtoc', *Vark' Mařtoc'i (Life of Mařtoc)* by his pupil Koriwn, although chronologically dated before P'awstosi Buzandac'woy Patmut'iwn Hayoc' (ca. 440) and using the name Taron, does not provide detailed information on Taron, and the region is outside Koriwn's target narrative. See Gabriele Winkler, *Koriwns Biographie des Mesrop Mařtoc'*, Pontificio Istituto Orientale, Roma, 1994, p. 96.

³ Strabo, *Geography*, tr. Horace L. Jones, vol. 5, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1928, p. 325; Tacitus, *Annals: Books 13-16*, tr. John Jackson, vol. 5, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1937, p. 147.

⁴ *The Geography of Ananias of řirak: (Ařxarhac'oyc'): The Long and the Short Recensions*, p. 63; Nicolas Adontz, *Armenia in the Period of Justinian*, tr. Nina G. Garsoian, Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, Lisbon, 1970, p. 179.

⁵ *The Geography of Ananias of řirak: (Ařxarhac'oyc'): The Long and the Short Recensions*, p. 165-166.

⁶ In the Armenian mythological narrative, there is another lineage search linked to Manzikert with a weak claim. Based on the story told by Movsēs Xorenac'i, Adontz suggests that the regional centre of the Urartian king Aram/Arame was Arzařkun, i.e. Manzikert or its vicinity. See Nicolos Adontz, *Histoire d'Arménie*, Publication de l'Union Générale Arménienne de Bienfaisance, Paris, 1946, p. 83.

were inherited by Hayk's descendants, the Manawaz, giving rise to the feudal lineage known as the Manawazeans.⁷ In a linguistic association, the city situated to the east of Hark' came to be referred to as Manazaw, Manawazakert, Manawazkert, and Manazkert, all of which share a common etymological root, formed by combining the name Manawaz with the suffix -kert.⁸ This suffix, influenced by the ancient Iranian language, signifies "to build", thereby giving these names a collective meaning of "the city of Manawaz".⁹

Conversely, the appellation "Manawaz" in Armenian literature is commonly linked to two distinct lineages. Firstly, it is correlated with the renowned name Monobazus, extensively employed within the Aršakid dynasty of Iranian descent. Secondly, there is an association with Menua (Minua, Minoa), the monarch of Urartu.¹⁰ Subsequent literary works have denominated the city based on analogous constructions, incorporating names such as Minyas(?) or Manzikiert(?), as underscored by Constantinus Porphyrogenitus.¹¹

The depiction of Manzikert in classical Armenian texts reflects its evolution as a settlement over time. In the fifth-century text P'awstosi Buzandac'woy Patmut'iwn Hayoc', Manzikert is characterized as a "town/village" [awan/giwł].¹² However, in the later work Patmut'iwn Tann Artsrunec' (History of the Artsruni Family) by T'ovma Artsruni, written towards the end of the ninth century, the term "Manawaz district/land" is employed. In the Patmut'iwn Tarōnoy (History of Taron), the first and only Armenian source specific to Taron, it is described as a "small town/district" [k'alak'agiwł]. Furthermore, in the eleventh-century works of Aristakēs Lastiverc'i and Step'anos Tarōnec'i Asofik, Manzikert is referred to as a "city" [k'alak'].¹³ Hence, Armenian sources affirm the physical growth of Manzikert from ancient to medieval times, evident in the chronologically differentiated definitions.

2. Feudals and Political Structure

Manzikert, like almost every settlement in the region, was influenced by the wars and peace treaties between the two dominant powers of the late ancient period, Rome and Iran, and also by the feudal structure prevalent in Armenia. This region, belonging to the Manawazean family due to its eponymous founder Manawaz, appears in Armenian sources in narratives dating back to at least the fourth century. The most significant information regarding the size or influence of the family is found in a later document, the Zōrnamak, which refers to the military potential of the region.¹⁴ According to this list, the Manawazean family is represented by a contingent of one thousand soldiers in the entire military structure of Armenia. However, despite assumptions of the family having a not insignificant population and power based on this weak claim, it is notable that they did not establish a dominant superiority over their northern rival, the Ordunis, in their conflicts.

Indeed, the ongoing hostilities between the Manawazean family, who held sway in the region in the 330s, and the Ordunis necessitated the intervention of the monarchy. A priest originally from Manzikert, Albianos, was sent to the region to resolve the conflict. However, when this attempt proved futile, King Khosrov III (330-c. 338) and Catholicos Vrt'anēs dispatched Vač'ē, the son of Artawazd from the Mamikonean family, to eliminate both the Manawazean and Orduni families in the region. Upon Vač'ē's arrival, he eradicated all members of both families, allocating the region's lands to the

⁷ Moses Khorenats'i, *History of the Armenians*, tr. Robert W. Thomson, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1978, p. 89.

⁸ V. F. Büchner, "Malāzgerd", in: *Encyclopaedia of Islam, First Edition (1913-1936)*, Brill, 1987, p. 201.

⁹ *Nor Baḡgirk' Haykazeen Lezui*, eds. Gabriēl Awetik'eān, Khach'atur Siwrmēlean and Mkrtich' Awgerean, vol. 1, Ī Tparani Srboyn Ghazaru, Venice, 1836-1837, p. 1093.

¹⁰ Ferdinand Justi, *Iranisches Namenbuch*, N.G. Elwert, Marburg, 1895, p. 189; Heinrich Hübschmann, *Die Altarmenischen Ortsnamen*, Oriental Press, Amsterdam, 1969, p. 450; Tadevos Hakobyan, "Manzikert", in: *Armenian Soviet Encyclopedia*, vol. 7, Armenian Academy of Sciences, Erevan, 1981, p. 210.

¹¹ Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities*, tr. Henry St. J. Thackeray, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1930, p. 47; Constantine Porphyrogenitus, p. 199. Honigmann, on the other hand, calls the city Mināzkird. See Ernst Honigmann, *Die Ostgrenze des Byzantinischen Reiches*, Editions de l'Institut de Philologie et d'Histoire Orientales, Brussel, 1935, p. 96.

¹² *The Epic Histories Attributed to P'awstos Buzand*, tr. Nina G. Garsoïan, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1989, p. 234.

¹³ Aristakēs de Lastivert, *Récit des Malheurs de la Nation Arménienne*, tr. Marius Canard and Haig Bērbērian, Éditions de Byzantion, bd de l'Empereur, 4, Brussel, 1973, p. 75; Thomas Artsruni, *History of the House of Artsruni*, tr. Robert W. Thomson, Wayne State University Press, Detroit, 1985, p. 315; Pseudo-Yovhannēs Mamikonean, *The History of Tarōn*, tr. Levon Avdoyan, Scholars Press, Atlanta, 1993, p. 92; *The Universal History of Step'anos Tarōnec'i*, tr. Tim Greenwood, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2017, p. 141.

¹⁴ Adontz, *Armenia in the Period of Justinian*, p. 193.

bishoprics of Manzikert and Basean.¹⁵ Thus, a new order was established with a shift in political power, and the Manawazean family no longer held a ruling position. This new order did not endure for long before transitioning to the Mamikonean family, one of the most powerful families in Armenia. In 438/9, Taron, like many other regions, came under the protection of the Mamikoneans due to the marriage of Sahakanoyš, the only daughter of the last catholicos of the Grigor family, Sahak, to Hamazasp Mamikonean.¹⁶ This dominion left significant traces in shaping the region's future for centuries, both politically and religiously. The hero of the Battle of Vardanaç (Avarayr) in 451 against the Sasanians was Vardan Mamikonean, leading to the favouring of the Mamikoneans over rival Bagratunis in Armenian historiography until the seventh and eighth centuries.¹⁷ During this period, the Mamikoneans, who were advocates of Christian teachings for the Armenian Church, further elevated the importance of Manzikert by considering it their burial ground.¹⁸ However, the dominant Mamikonean rule in Taron, under Roman protection since 591, came to an end in the mid-ninth century, passing first to the Bagratunis and later to local principalities and the Romans.¹⁹

3. Religious Importance of Manzikert

The location and significance of Manzikert in Armenian sources appear to be more religious than political. While there are several reasons for this, the fundamental point revolves around the religious connections established through the region concerning the formation of Christianity in Armenia. Particularly, the region holds a special place in the spread of Christianity in Armenia and the theological extensions crafted by Armenian literature regarding Christianity. Although the central hub of Christianity in Armenia may seem to be in the north, an alternative in the south has always existed as an influential and significant power centre, at least as much as the north. In contrast to Agat'angelos' account of the Christian mission given to the Aršakids and Grigors, the emergence of alternative Christian supporters in the south, in Taron and shortly thereafter in Manzikert, is not coincidental. Despite Agat'angelos stating that Grigor spread Christianity throughout all of Armenia, it is noteworthy that he does not specifically mention missionary activities in the south, outside of Taron.²⁰

The situation that essentially led to Taron's involvement in the matter was the presence of pagan temples representing the cult of Vahagn, Anahita, and Astlik in the region. Among the eight (?) temples destroyed in Armenia, three of them were located in Aštišat (Yüce-tepe) in Taron, symbolizing the pagan culture.²¹ These temples were seemingly eradicated by Grigor and his followers in the name of Christianity. Furthermore, this region was where the Surb Karapēt Monastery, the first structure associated with Christianity in Armenia, was constructed.²² Consequently, this alone elevated Taron to a privileged position in Armenian Christian history. However, it is important to note that despite indications in the Christian narrative of P'awstosi Buzandac'woy Patmut'iwn Hayoc, who was likely from the Taron region, pointing to Taron as a centre of Christianity, Armenian sources tend to attribute Christianity more to the northern regions.

Taron's significance in terms of Christianity also lies in its proximity to Syriac culture and being a region where Armenian Christianity drew from the Syriac tradition. The importance of this tradition particularly manifested itself vividly in the early fifth century during the creation of the Armenian alphabet. According to Koryun, who wrote one of the first Armenian texts, the Syriac priest Daniel

¹⁵ *The Epic Histories Attributed to P'awstos Buzand*, p. 70; Jean-Pierre Mahé, "Affirmation de l'Arménie Chrétienne (vers 301-590)" in: *Histoire du Peuple Arménien*, ed. Gérard Dédéyan, Privat, Toulouse, 2007, p. 172.

¹⁶ *The History of Lazar P'arpec'i*, tr. Robert W. Thomson, Scholars Press, Atlanta, 1991, p. 73; Moses Khorenats'i, *History of the Armenians*, p. 315.

¹⁷ Levon Avdoyan, "Feudal Histories: Paying Court to the Mamikonians and Bagratids of Tarōn", in: *Armenian Baghesh/Bitlis and Taron/Mush*, ed. Richard Hovannisian, Mazda Publishers, Costa Mesa, 2001, p. 77.

¹⁸ The burial sites of prominent families in Armenia were typically situated in regions with historical significance and were determined based on areas of dominance. For instance, the royal family, the Aršakids, initially chose Angl, later Ani (Kamax), and Bagawan as their burial places. See Agathangelos, *History of the Armenians*, tr. Robert W. Thomson, State University of New York Press, Albany, 1976, p. 325.

¹⁹ Cyril Toumanoff, *Studies in Christian Caucasian History*, Georgetown University Press, Washington, 1963, p. 202.

²⁰ Agathangelos, *History of the Armenians*, p. 347-349; Nina, G. Garsoïan, "Taron: As an Early Christian Armenian Center", in: *Armenian Baghesh/Bitlis and Taron/Mush*, ed. Richard G. Hovannisian, Mazda Publishers, Costa Mesa, 2001, p. 62.

²¹ James R. Russell, *Zoroastrianism in Armenia*, ed. Richard N. Frye, Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, Cambridge, 1987, p. 199.

²² Agathangelos, *History of the Armenians*, p. 353; *The Epic Histories Attributed to P'awstos Buzand*, p. 68-69.

played a role in the creation of the alphabet.²³ Mesrop Maštoc', who gained special prestige in the region due to his birth in Taron, travelled to Edessa and then to Samos (Samosata) with the assistance of Edessa bishop Babilos (Rabbula), where he met with a calligraphy master named Rufinius (Hrōp'anos). Following the traditional narrative, it was in Samos in 405 that Mesrop Maštoc' invented the Armenian alphabet.²⁴

In the historical process, the transformation of Christianity, which had become a significant factor in the interplay of interests between monarchs and feudal lords, into a source of conflict in Taron in the mid-fourth century is notably important. Particularly, the act of poisoning catholicos Nerses I in the village of Xax in Acilisene by King Pap of Armenia in 373, and the subsequent appointment of Sahak I from the lineage of Manzikert-based Aḅbianos as the new spiritual leader, solidified the region's mission.²⁵ Despite the Grigors enjoying considerable respect within Christian communities, King Pap's appointment of a Manzikert-based priest to the position of catholicos elevated the region to one of the religious centres that would span centuries.

The same idea is reflected in the delegation that complained with the Sasanian King Wahrām V in 428, claiming that both King Arsaces IV and Catholicos Sahak I, who were from the Grigor lineage, were pro-Roman. A priest named Surmak from the region was likely part of this delegation. Approximately 20 years later, Elišē, providing a list of bishops who gathered to make a joint decision just before the Battle of Vardanac', includes Manzikert as one of the episcopal centres.²⁶ In 452, the Catholicosate was represented by the Manzikert-based priest Melēt, and in 456, by another Manzikert-based figure, Movses. The affinity of these two priests with Syriac culture and their opposition to Rome pleased the Sasanian court while contributing to the Syriac-Armenian cultural interaction in the region. The most concrete example of this contribution materialized in the church council convened in Manzikert in 726, where the efforts of Syriac and Armenian religious groups seeking unity around common theological issues finally culminated.²⁷ The Council convened at Manzikert in 726 carried significant significance for both Armenians and Syrians. Michael the Syrian provides a comprehensive list of attendees in his Chronicle.²⁸ At the conclusion of the Council, Armenians and Syrians resolved their theological issues and found a common ground. A unity pact was drafted in both Armenian and Syriac, promising mutual commitment.²⁹ However, the Council eventually deviated from its intended purpose and failed to achieve the desired impact. Syrians, like Greeks, did not fully endorse Armenian theology.³⁰ Nevertheless, the idea of an alliance against "heretics" and the attempt to solidify common cultures in Manzikert is noteworthy in highlighting the region's importance.

CONCLUSION

The significance of Manzikert for Armenians is manifold, encompassing its presence in societal memory within a historical context and its role as a crucial alternative centre for Christianity. The region of Taron, driven by a desire to serve as an alternative religious centre due to the feudal structure and political strife within Armenia, and supported by the Mamikoneans, adopting it as a central hub, has

²³ On the other hand, after the year 387 AD, as Syriac influence increased in Armenia, the role of Syriac priest Daniel in the creation of the Armenian alphabet became crucial. See, Karen Sarkissian, *The Council of Chalcedon and the Armenian Church*, SPCK, London, 1965, p. 90; Krzysztof Stopka, *Armenia Christiana Armenian Religious Identity and the Churches of Constantinople and Rome (4th–15th Century)*, Jagiellonian University Press, Krakow, 2016, p. 43.

²⁴ Moses Khorenats'i, *History of the Armenians*, p. 320; See also, Hagop J. Nersoyan, "The Why and When of the Armenian Alphabet", *Journal of the Society for Armenian Studies*, vol. 2, (1985-1986), p. 69.

²⁵ *The Epic Histories Attributed to P'awstos Buzand*, p. 204; Moses Khorenats'i, *History of the Armenians*, p. 299; Thomas Artsruni, *History of the House of Artsrunik*, p. 131; Yovhannēs Drasxanakertc'i, *History of Armenia*, tr. Krikor H. Maksoudian, Scholars Press, Atlanta, 1987, p. 86.

²⁶ Elishē, *History of Vardan and the Armenian War*, tr. Robert W. Thomson, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1982, p. 81.

²⁷ Edward Mathews, *Armenian Commentary on Genesis Attributed to Ephrem the Syrian*, Peeters, Lovanii, 1998, p. xlvii-xlviii; Peter Cowe, "Doctrinal Union or Agreement to Disagree?: Armenians and Syrians at the Synod of Manazkert (726 CE)", in: *Bridging Times and Spaces: Papers in Ancient Near Eastern, Mediterranean and Armenian Studies*, ed. Pavel S. Avetisyan and Yervand H. Grekyan, Archaeopress Archaeology, Oxford, 2017, p. 61.

²⁸ *Chronique de Michel le Syrien, Patriarche Jacobite D'Antioche (1166–1199)*, ed. Jean-Baptiste Chabot, vol. II, Ernest Leroux, Paris, 1899-1905, p. 497-498.

²⁹ Zafer Duygu, "Julyanist Kristolojiye Karşı VIII. Yüzyılda Ermeni ve Ortodoks Süryani Kiliseleri'nin Reaksiyonları", *Yeni Türkiye Yayınları*, 2014, p. 7.

³⁰ Krzysztof Stopka, *Armenia Christiana Armenian Religious Identity and the Churches of Constantinople and Rome (4th–15th Century)*, Jagiellonian University Press, Krakow, 2016, p. 89.

exerted a direct influence on the first five centuries of Armenian literature. This influence, often manifested in pioneering positions in narratives swaying towards subjective interpretations, has rendered Manzikert politically inconsequential for the city while establishing it as a significant episcopal and spiritual centre within the mission of Christianity in the region. Hence, the frequent portrayal in Armenian literature of the Ałbianos lineage from Manzikert disrupting the religious dominance of the Grigor family should be considered in this context.

The relationship between the city and Syriac culture underscores yet another dimension of its significance. Manzikert's position in Armenian Christianity and its cultural golden age has been elevated further through Syriac influence. Although the synod convened in Manzikert in 726 may not have seemingly achieved significant success, it became a clear indicator of the city's value in the eighth century. The fact that the name of the Manzikert bishop ranks second hierarchically within all of Armenia is not coincidental, signifying its prestige as comparable to that of the north. Moreover, the direct appointment of bishops to the city, as opposed to assigning them to aristocrats' palaces or residences, further confirms Manzikert's perceived importance among other congregations. Throughout the medieval period, extending to 1071, the influence of Armenian communities in the city played a determining role in its identity. This aspect, undoubtedly, has been exaggerated in Armenian texts. Although the region's population development did not surpass that of surrounding centres until the tenth century, being situated on the eastern border of the Roman Empire and possessing strategic significance regionally contributed to the growing perception of the city in Armenian texts.

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