

Achtung!

Dies ist eine englischsprachige Internet-Sonderausgabe des Aufsatzes
„St. Nino’s Legend: Vestiges of its various sources“
von Jost Gippert (1997).

Sie sollte nicht zitiert werden. Zitate sind der georgischen Originalausgabe
„წმ. ნინოს ლეგენდა: განსხვავებულ წყაროთა კვალი“
in *Enatmecnierebis Sak’itxebi* 1-2/2006, 104-122 zu entnehmen.

Attention!

This is a special English internet edition of the article
“St. Nino’s Legend: Vestiges of its various sources”
by Jost Gippert (1997).

It should not be quoted as such. For quotations, please refer to the Georgian original edition
“წმ. ნინოს ლეგენდა: განსხვავებულ წყაროთა კვალი”
in *Enatmecnierebis Sak’itxebi* 1-2/2006, 104-122.

Alle Rechte vorbehalten / All rights reserved:

Jost Gippert, Frankfurt 1996-2011

St. Nino's Legend: Vestiges of its various sources

JOST GIPPERT

Summary

The article addresses five questions concerning the content and transmission of St. Nino's legend, viz. a) the name of the Saint, b) the meaning of the word *devt'alari*, c) the occurrence of "Franks" in the legend, d) Iobenal's "Frankish" words, and e) the narrative on Our Lord's coat as appearing in the legend. On the basis of a thorough investigation of adjoining sources (Georgian, Greek, Syriac, and Armenian), new proposals are made as to the solution of these questions.

Mokcevaḡ Kartlisay, the legend about the conversion of Georgia as accomplished by St. Nino at the time of king Mirian, is certainly one of the most outstanding products not only within Georgian tradition but within all-human literary heritage. Although the text of the legend is preserved in but few manuscripts as such¹, it can easily be shown that its contents had been well-known in Georgia by the 11th century at the latest, given that it was extensively used by Leonti Mroveli when he compiled his account of Georgian history², and given that at least two metaphrastic adaptations of the legend were produced in the 12th century³. Nevertheless, there is good reason to believe that *Mokcevaḡ Kartlisay* was not composed as a whole in the shape in which it was handed down to us in manuscript form; instead, we have to acknowledge that it was compiled by an anonymous author using various older sources, some time between the actual dates of the conversion itself (as a *terminus post quem*) and the emergence of the Šatberd codex (S 1141, second half of the 10th century) as the oldest manuscript that contains it (as a *terminus ante quem*)⁴. In the present paper, I intend to discuss some aspects of St. Nino's tradition that might witness to the sources used in the compilation. My investigations into this are based on a computational analysis of the edited text variants and related sources.

¹ Edited manuscripts: A) The Šatberd codex (late 10th century; here: Mokc.A), B) the Čeliši manuscript (14th century; here: Mokc.B); edited in: *Žveli kartuli agiograpiuli literaturis zeglebi / Pamjatniki drevnegruzinskoj agiografičeskoj literatury*, I, ed. I. ABULAŽE, Tbilisi 1963, p. 81 sqq.; the Šatberd version also edited in: *Šatberdis krebuli X sauḡunisa / Šatberdskij sbornik X veka*, ed. B. GIGINEIŠVILI / E. GIUNAŠVILI, Tbilisi 1979, p. 320 sqq. — Two further manuscripts containing parts of the text have recently been found in St. Catherine's monastery on Mount Sinai (N Sin 48 and 50); the latter one has been made available in a facsimile edition by Z. ALEKSIŽE: *Le nouveau manuscrit géorgien sinaïtique N Sin 50. Édition en fac-similé. Introduction par Z.A., traduite du géorgien par J.-P. Mahé*, Louvain 2001 (Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium, 586 / Subsidia, 108).

² This is *Mokceva Mirian mepisa* ("The conversion of King Mirian"; here: L.Mr.), part of the Georgian chronicle, *Kartlis cxovreba*; it was edited by S. QAUXČIŠVILI in: *Kartlis Cxovreba (Istorija Gruzii) I*, Tbilisi 1955, p. 72 sqq.

³ This is A) the adaptation by Arsen Beri (here: Nino-A), edited by C. KURCIKIŽE in: *Žveli kartuli agiograpiuli literaturis zeglebi III*, Tbilisi 1971, p. 7 sqq., B) an anonymous metaphrasis, edited by N. GOGUAŽE ib. p. 52 sqq. (here: Nino-B).

⁴ Cf. note 1 above. The two Sinai manuscripts are dated into the 10th century by Z. ALEKSIŽE as well (*Le nouveau manuscrit ...*, p. 8); there is no indication of their actual date, however.

1. St. Nino's name

Within Georgian tradition, the name of the (female) apostle, the "baptismal font" that converted king Miriam and his people, is unanimously handed down as *Nino*⁵. Although the conversion of Georgia by a woman is mentioned in several other Christian traditions, only Armenian reports a name form that is sufficiently similar to *Nino*, viz. *Nownē*⁶. Both the Latin author *Tyrannius Rufinus*, whose report about the event was based upon oral information rendered to him by a Georgian prince called *Bacurius*, i.e. *Bakur*⁷, and the Greek ecclesiastical historians that used his report only talk about an anonymous missionary who according to them came to Georgia as a captive woman⁸. It is all the more astonishing that in a tradition much farther off, the holy woman appears under another name: In the Arabic and Ethiopic synaxaries and in a Coptic text, she is called *Theognosta*.

After this interesting fact had been published by Oskar Lemm in 1899⁹, the question was raised whether *Theognosta* might have been the actual personal name of the saint, *Nino* or *Nownē* being but an eponym reflecting the Greek *vónvα* "old woman" both in its form and

⁵ Apart from the texts mentioned above, some other old attestations of the name can be found in the *vita* of the Syrian Father Ioane Zedazneli (in: *ჴveli kartuli agiograpiuli ლიტერატურის ჴეგლები I*, Tbilisi 1964, p. 199, 38 [vs. A] / 40 [vs. B]), in the *vita* of Peter the Iberian (in: *ჴveli .. ჴეგლები II*, Tbilisi 1967, p. 215, 27 [vs. A and B]) and in the martyrdom of the holy saints Davit and *Იონსტანტინე* (in: *ჴveli .. ჴეგლები III*, Tbilisi 1971, p. 251, 8). The latter text is especially remarkable in that it explicitly states that the Christian mission in Georgia began at a time before Nino, when the apostle Andrew and Simon from Kanaan came there; for the background of this information cf. J. GIPPERT, *Zur Überlieferungsgeschichte der Kartvelsprachen*, in: *Georgica* 17, 1994, p. 88, n. 21.

⁶ This form is the one met with in Movsēs Xorenac'i who dedicated a whole chapter of his *Patmowfiwn hayoc* to the conversion of the Georgians (*vrac*) by *Nownē* (chap. 86.); a list of other attestations in Armenian sources is given by H. AČAŘYAN, *Hayoc anjnanownneri bařaran, hator D*, Erevan 1948, p. 90 f. For the Armenian version of the Georgian chronicle, *Patmowfiwn vrac*, cf. below.

⁷ Tyrannius Rufinus, *Historia ecclesiastica*, Lib. 1, Cap. X = *Patrologiae Latinae cursus completus* (ed. J.P. MIGNE), vol. 21, 1878, col. 480 B.

⁸ These are, e.g., Socrates scholasticus, *Historia ecclesiastica* (ed. W. BRIGHT, *Socrates' ecclesiastical history*, 2nd ed., Oxford 1893), I, 20,2, which reads *γυνή τις*; Theodoret (of Kyrrhos), *Kirchengeschichte* (hrsg. v. L. PARMENTIER, 2. Aufl., bearb. v. F. SCHEIDWEILER, Berlin 1954), I, 24, 1 (cf. below) has *γυνή δορυάλωτος*. Sozomenos in his ecclesiastical history (*Kirchengeschichte*, hrsg. v. J. BIDEZ, eing. v. G. Chr. HANSEN, Berlin 1960, II, 7,1) speaks about a *Χριστιανή γυνή αἰχμάλωτος*; this need not mean that *Χριστιανή* was her personal name, but it was interpreted as such in the *Martyrologium Romanum* (cf. F. VON LILIENFELD, *Amt und geistliche Vollmacht der heiligen Nino, 'Apostel und Evangelist' von Ostgeorgien, nach den ältesten georgischen Quellen*, in: *Horizonte der Christenheit, Festschrift für Friedrich Heyer zu seinem 85. Geburtstag*, hrsg. v. Michael KOHLBACHER und Markus LESINSKI [= *Oikonomia*, 34], Erlangen 1994, p. 224-249; here: p. 227, n. 14). Rufinus's report seems also to have been used by Michael the Syrian for his chronicle who gives no name in his account of the conversion of the Iberians (book 7, chap. 3 in the edition by J.B. CHABOT, *Chronique de Michel le Syrien*, Paris 1899-1910: vol. 4, p. 132, col. 2, l. 12 f.). — The question whether Rufinus derived his text from Gelasius of Caesarea as was postulated by A. GLAS (*Die Kirchengeschichte des Gelasios von Kaisareia*, Leipzig und Berlin 1914 = *Byzantinisches Archiv*, Ht. 6) or vice versa (cf. P. PEETERS, *Analecta Bollandiana* 50, 1932, 30-32) has no bearing on our topic.

⁹ In: *Bulletin de l'Académie Impériale des Sciences de St.-Pétersbourg / Izvestija Imperatorskoj Akademii nauk*, X/5, 1899, p. 416 sqq.

in its content. This proposal was rejected soon, however, by Ernst von Dobschütz¹⁰ and Paul Peeters¹¹ who argued that the name *Theognosta* as appearing in the "African" tradition might rather be due to a misunderstanding of the Greek phrase (ποδηγέω) εἰς θεογνωσίαν, lit. "to lead into cognition of God", which was often used when speaking about a conversion to Christianity. Dobschütz founded his proposal on the synaxary of the church of Constantinople where the conversion of Georgia is mentioned under the heading Διήγησις περὶ τῶν Ἰβήρων ὅπως ἤλθον εἰς θεογνωσίαν, i.e. "Narrative about the Georgians (and) how they came to the cognition of God". Although this may well have been the immediate source for the entries in the Arabic and Ethiopic synaxaries, there is another possible source for the wording that seems hitherto to have escaped notice, viz. the ecclesiastical history by Theodoretos of Kyrrhos. Just like Rufinus, Theodoretos reports about the conversion of Georgia immediately after speaking about the mission of Frumentios to India. Passing from the one topic to the other, he states (chap. 23,9 - 24,1):

Ἰνδῶν μὲν οὖν ὁ Φρουμέντιος πρὸς θεογνωσίαν ἐγένετο ποδηγός.

Ἰβηρας δὲ κατὰ τὸν αὐτὸν χρόνον γυνὴ δορυάλωτος πρὸς τὴν ἀλήθειαν ἐξενάγησεν.¹²

"For the Indians, Frumentios became the one to lead them **into cognition** of God.

The Iberians, however, were at the same time directed towards truth **by a captive woman.**"

Given that in the printed edition of the text, the words πρὸς θεογνωσίαν appear in a line immediately above the words relating to St. Nino, viz. γυνὴ δορυάλωτος "captive woman", it becomes conceivable that they could easily have been mistaken for a proper name, perhaps being badly arranged as a secondary correction, an interlinear gloss or the like in a manuscript. Having this assumption at hand, we can also account for the fact that according to the Arabic-Ethiopic synaxary, the sphere of "*Theognosta's*" activities was not Iberia but India¹³.

What, then, was the real name of St. Nino? Although the inner-Georgian tradition is unanimous, as I have said before, the difference as against the Armenian form, *Nownē*, is not easy to explain: If the latter had been taken over orally from Georgian speakers, its vocalism would show two divergences that seem to be at least unparalleled as far as the mutual relationship of Armenian and Georgian word forms is concerned. The problem becomes more complex if we consider that the Armenian version of the Georgian chronicle, the *Patmow^fiwn vrac*¹⁴, contains both the "normal" Armenian name form, *Nownē / Nowni*¹⁵, and a form *Ninaw (/ Ninay)*¹⁶ which is the expected adaptation of Georgian *Nino*. One solution of the dilemma could consist in the assumption that within Armenian, there existed a twofold tradition about the saint, one Armenian proper, and one Georgian. Such an

¹⁰ For VON DOBSCHÜTZ's arguments cf. K. KEKELIDSE (ΚΕΚΕΛΙΖΕ), Die Bekehrung Georgiens zum Christentum, Leipzig 1928, p. 47, n. 1.

¹¹ In: *Analecta Bollandiana* 50, 1932, p. 44.

¹² Theodoret, Kirchengeschichte, hrsg. v. L. PARMENTIER, 2. Aufl., bearb. v. F. SCHEIDWEILER, Berlin 1954, p. 74, 17-19.

¹³ For this cf. LEMM, o.c., p. 418.

¹⁴ Ed. by I. ABULAՇԷ: *Kartlis cxovrebis žveli somxuri targmani*, Tbilisi 1953 (here: *Patm.*).

¹⁵ *Nowni*: *Patm.* 74,12; 74,16; 89,1; 90,18; 96,13; 97,16; 99,14; 102,21; 105,21; 109,11; 110,5; 110,11; 111,10; 125,10; 162,14; *Gen. Nowneay*: 91,19; 98,10; 98,13; 100,4; 100,16; 101,3; 107,15; 111,19; 124,2; 130,6; 163,8; 218,2.

¹⁶ *Ninaw*: *Patm.* 114,2; 118,1; 118,17; 121,2; 125,13; 126,5; 163,10; 182,13; *Ninay*: 113,13.

assumption can easily be motivated if we consider that St. Nino was certainly not a Georgian native and so her name need not have been a Georgian one. According to the legend, St. Nino came from Cappadocia and sought her refuge within the Jewish community of Mxeta "because of the Hebrew language" she understood (ენისათჳს ებრაელებრისა: Mokc.A 334,4; ენისათჳს ებრაელთასა: Mokc.B 118,1; ენისათჳს ებრაულისა: L.Mr. 88,1 and 95,1; Nino-A 21,11; ენად ბერძულთი და ებრაულთი: Nino-B 60,6). If we take this information for granted, we can conclude that most probably, her mother tongue was Aramaic-Syriac, and her name was Syriac too. No matter whether this name reflected Greek νόνη lastly, it may have been the basis for several adaptations, and starting from a written form with no vocalization marks, it is just divergences of vocalism that we expect to emerge. This does not mean, of course, that the Georgian form could not reflect an oral tradition; but there are other indications of written Syriac sources we shall have to discuss later on.

2. Iobenal, the *devtalar-i*

According to the legend, St. Nino was of quite noble an origin: Her father *Zabilon* was a converter himself (of the *branžni / prangni*, cf. below), and her mother's brother was *Iobenal*, i.e. Ἰουβενάλιος, the bishop who succeeded in establishing the patriarchate of Jerusalem on the council of Chalcedon (451 AD). This of course has to be considered as a flagrant anachronism of its own if we are to believe that St. Nino lived and worked at the time of Constantine the Great as the legend states; but it is not the only anachronism of its kind as we shall see later on.

Regardless of this, the legend conceals interesting information concerning *Iuvenalios'* ecclesiastical career. It reports that before becoming the patriarch of Jerusalem, he held the office of a *devtalar-i* (or *devtelar-i*). The word which is used in both edited versions of *Mokceyay Kartlisay* as well as Leonti Mroveli's adaptation of the legend¹⁷ but not in the later metaphrastic versions¹⁸, has not yet found a generally accepted interpretation, at least among Western scholars. While in the English tradition as established by Marjory and Oliver Wardrop¹⁹, the term is usually translated as "steward"²⁰, Gertrud Pätsch in her German translation proposed to understand it as denoting an "exorcist", the word *dev(i)* being its first compound member²¹. The latter proposal is highly improbable though: First, the second part of the alleged compound would remain completely unclear, given that a (verbal) root **talar* or the like seems never to have existed; and second, *dev-i* was certainly not the usual term for "devils" or "demons" in any stage of Georgian. As I have tried to show elsewhere²², *dev-i* was used in a religious sense where there was a strong Armenian influence only,

¹⁷ *devtalar-i*: Mokc.A 330,7 / 109,19 ≈ L.Mr. 75,12; Mokc.B 109,19 has *devtelari*. *devtalar-oba*: Mokc.A 329,4 / 106,38 ≈ Mokc.B 106,38 ≈ L.Mr. 72,16. The Sinai ms. N Sin 50 has the spelling *tevtelar-i*, but *devtelaroba-sa* (Le nouveau manuscrit..., p. 113, l. 13-14 and p. 108, l. 6-7).

¹⁸ The corresponding passages would be: Nino-A 11,24 and 13,13; Nino-B 52,21 and 54,9.

¹⁹ *Life of St. Nino* (= *Studia Biblica et Ecclesiastica* 5/1, 1903), p. 7.

²⁰ Cf. also David Marshall Lang, *Lives and legends of the Georgian Saints*, London & Oxford 1976, 20.

²¹ *Die Bekehrung Georgiens Mokceyay Kartlisay (Verfasser unbekannt)*, in: Bedi Kartlisa 33, 1975, 288 sqq.; here: p. 304, n. 2. PÄTSCH's proposal was tentatively upheld by F. VON LILIENFELD, o.c., p. 239, n. 104.

²² Cf. J. GIPPERT, *Iranica Armeno-Iberica: Studien zu den iranischen Lehnwörtern im Armenischen und Georgischen*, Wien 1993, p. 318 and *Daemonica Irano-Caucasica*, in: *Iranian and Indo-European Studies. Memorial Volume of Otakar Klíma*, Praha 1994, p. 53 sqq., esp. p. 86.

remaining a foreign element in Old Georgian. In Armenian, however, an equivalent of *devtalar-i* is not attested and even the *Patmowfiwn vrac*²³ does not know the term²³.

The correct interpretation of the word was in my view found by Ilia Abulaze. In his "Old Georgian lexicon"²⁴, he quotes not a passage from St. Nino's legend (or Leonti Mroveli) when illustrating the lemma *devtalar-i*, *devtalar-i*, but an attestation taken from the Georgian version of the so-called *Limonari*, i.e. the collection of apophthegms by Johannes Moschus (Lim. 23,27). In the text in question (numbered ლ^ზ = 37 in the Georgian version), the word appears several times in an ergative form, written *devtalar-man* or *devtalar-man*²⁵. Collating the Greek *Leimonarion*, we find *σταυροφύλαξ*, lit. "cross guard", as its equivalent²⁶, which does not help very much when trying to establish the actual meaning of *devtalar-i*. In the Arabic version of the text, however, the passage in question contains a word that can well be identified with the Georgian one: It is written as ⟨l-dwtr̄r̄⟩ and has to be read as *al-dawtarār*²⁷. Taking this Arabic equivalent and its consonantism in account, Abulaze was certainly right when he proposed to derive both words from a Greek *δευτεράριος*, a term denoting a "second (man), a successor or deputy of a leader" (მეორე, ე.ი. შემდგომი ანუ მოადგილე მეთაურისა)²⁸.

Even though the Greek *Leimonarion* (in its edited form) does not use *δευτεράριος* in the passage in question, there are several indications that support Abulaze's proposal. First, the Georgian version contains another rare word that reflects a Greek original, in the immediate context. This is *pargalit-i*, the source of which can be seen, with Ilia Abulaze again, in *φραγγελίτης*, "*lictor*", in its turn appearing in the corresponding passage of the Greek text²⁹. Second, the attestations of the Greek *δευτεράριος* that can be adduced from other texts fit well with the function Iobenal, the later patriarch of Jerusalem, may have had when he was younger. The "Thesaurus Linguae Graecae" CD-ROM, an exhaustive collection of Greek texts processed in electronic format, starting with the Homeric epics and ending up by the 6th century AD in its "D" release of 1993³⁰, contains 17 attestations all in all of the word, one from the *Doctrina ad Antiochum ducem* by Athanasius Alexandrinus³¹, the others from the acts of the synods of Constantinople and Jerusalem of 536 AD³². Here, *δευτεράριος* denotes the deputies of abbots throughout as in the following signature which

²³ The corresponding passage would be on p. 75 of the edition.

²⁴ *Žveli kartuli enis leksikoni (masalebi)*, Tbilisi 1973, p. 140.

²⁵ P. 23,27 and p. 24, 6.20.27 in the edition by I. ABULAŽE, Ioane Mosxi, *Limonari / Ioann Mosx, Limonar'*, Tbilisi 1960.

²⁶ *Patrologiae Graecae cursus completus*, ed. J.P. MIGNE, vol. 87/2, col. 2903 sqq. (no. 49).

²⁷ No. 35: p. 16 (Arabic numbering), l. 10 in the edition by R. GVARAMIA, *Al-Bustāni: X saukunis sinuri xelnaçeris mixedvit / Al-Bustān: Po sinajskoj rukopisi X veka*, Tbilisi 1965.

²⁸ Thus in the lexicon within the edition of the Georgian text, p. 149.

²⁹ *Patrologiae Graecae* .. 87/2, col. 2904 D. — Cf. ABULAŽE in the lexicon within the Georgian edition, p. 158.

³⁰ *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae*, produced by the University of California at Irvine, 4th edition (D), 1992-1993 (here: TLG).

³¹ P. 18, 12 in the edition by W. DINDORF, *Athanasii Alexandrini praecepta ad Antiochum*, Leipzig 1857.

³² The TLG uses the edition by E. SCHWARTZ, *Acta consiliorum oecumenicorum*, vol. 3, Berlin 1940 (repr. 1965).

clearly indicates its meaning as the "right hand of the leader"³³:

Ἰωάννης .. πρεσβύτερος καὶ ἡγούμενος μονῆς τοῦ ἁγίου Θωμᾶ ... ὑπέγραψα διὰ Κυρεῶνος πρεσβυτέρου τῆς αὐτῆς μονῆς καὶ δευτεραρίου μου διὰ τὸ ἐμὲ ἀγράμματον εἶναι.

"(I.) John, .. priest and leader of the monastery of St. Thomas .. (have this act) signed by (the hand of) Kyreon, priest of the same monastery and **my deputy**, because of my being illiterate."

Apart from St. Nino's legend, there seems to be no indication that Iobenal who was the bishop of Jerusalem as early as 431 AD, was the deputy of an abbot before. But considering the evidence as listed above there is no reason to doubt that this might have been a temporary stage in his career. On the other hand, his being named a *devtelar-i* in the Georgian text may be taken as an interesting indication of the period when the parts of the legend dealing with him might have been written. Given that δευτεράριος is not used in any acts of councils or synods before the ones from 536 AD, this seems to establish a *terminus post quem* of the Greek word to have become widespread enough to be borrowable into Georgian. The one older occurrence in Athanasius's works can certainly not disapprove this assumption.

3. Zabilon and the "Franks"

Not only Nino's uncle but also her father is depicted as an illustrious man in the legend. But different from Iobenal, he has not been identified as an historical person yet. This again is astonishing since Zabilon³⁴ had to fulfill an important mission according to the text: Sent out by the Roman emperor, he was responsible for a military campaign against a rebellious people whom he finally subdued and baptised. The name of the people in question is attested in two divergent forms in the edited Georgian texts: While they are called *branž-ni* in the Šatberd redaction of *Mokcevey Kartlisay* as well as Leonti Mroveli's adaptation throughout³⁵, the *Patmowfiwn vrac*^c agreeing with *բրաւնջ*³⁶, their name is given as *prang-ni* in the metaphrastic versions³⁷, and also in one attestation within the Čeliši-variant of the legend (Mokc.B 147,17). Another attestation of the "younger" form is the adjective written *prgolad* in Mokc.B 120,23, which can be considered as an abbreviated form of **prangulad* as the parallel in L.Mr. 90,11 shows which has *branžulad*.

Despite their divergences, both forms can be regarded as representing one original name if

³³ P. 49, 38 sqq.; the other attestations: p. 35,18; 36,17; 47,25; 68,9; 129,13; 129,42; 143,15; 145,1; 145,18; 157,18; 158,4; 164,16; 165,1; 172,39; 173,23.

³⁴ The name is written *Zabilovn* in Mokc.A, *Zabilon* in Mokc.B (and the Sinai ms. N Sin. 50), L.Mr. and Nino-B; Nino-A has *Zabilo*. The Šatberd codex uses the first two graphical forms also when speaking about the Biblical patriarch; side-by-side they appear, e.g., in p. 216, l. 13 within St. Hippolytos's text about the benediction of Moses.

³⁵ *branž-*: Mokc.A 329,7; 329,10; 329,11; 329,12; 329,20; 330,9; Mokc.B 107,4; 107,11; 107,13; 107,16; 107,31; 109,23; L.Mr. 73,2; 73,5; 73,5; 73,7; 73,15; 75,15; 90,11; 124,16; 124,19; 125,2; 125,3; 125,7; the adjectives *branžul-* and *branžel-*: Mokc.B 107,4; 107,13; 107,16; 107,31; L.Mr. 90,11. In Mokc.A 347,41 and 348,1 we find *braž-* for which cf. n. ? below.

³⁶ Patm. 74,18; 75,9; 124,8; 124,17; 125,5.

³⁷ Nino-A 11,30; 39,15; Nino-B 53,1.

we accept the assumption, first published by Nikolaj Marr³⁸ and nowadays widely accepted, that they reflect the name of the Germanic tribe of the Franks. In this case, we could see *prang-* as an immediate adaptation of the Greek form of their name, φράγκ-οι, with the normal substitution of Greek φ, pronounced as a spirant, by Georgian (aspirated) *p-*, and with the internal consonant cluster, *-ng-*, showing a voicing which was a regular feature of Middle Greek itself. The phonetic structure of the variant form, *branž-*, however, would presuppose a more complicated way of borrowing, given that within the languages of the *Oriens christianus*, the substitution of a (Greek) *-g-* by a palatal affricate is typical for Arabic only, as Marr (l.c.) underlined.

Nevertheless, the solution remains unsatisfactory for several reasons. Above all, it would be *a priori* surprising to find the tribe of the Franks mentioned in a text that relates to the early 4th century, particularly in a text of Eastern provenance. This could only be accepted if we were to assume another anachronism here. And indeed, if Marr was right again in proposing³⁹ that the battle field mentioned in the episode in the forms (*velsa zeda*) *pitālanisasa* (Mokc.A 107,6 / 329,7) and *poloťianissa* (Mokc.B 107,5, now confirmed by the Sinai ms. N Sin 50 which reads *poloťianissa*⁴⁰) could be identified with the Catalaunian Plains where the Romans are said to have conquered the Huns, this would bring us back into the year 451 AD — the same year as the one we discussed before in connection with Zabilon's brother-in-law, Iobenal. But although Marr's ingenious proposal as to the battle field remains valid as it stands — it presupposes a Syriac medium for the tradition of the name, ܡܠܘܢ = ⟨qtln⟩, misread as ܡܠܢ = ⟨ptln⟩ and later (in the variant represented by the Sinai and the Čeliši mss.) identified with an adjective **poloťian-i* "full of steel" (?)⁴¹ by popular etymology —, we have to account for the fact that a military commander named Zabilon or alike is not mentioned in any other source, neither Eastern nor Western, that deals with the battle in question⁴². And in fact, the Franks were an ally of the Romans in that battle rather than an enemy⁴³.

In view of this dilemma, we are justified to look for another solution. Such a solution is suggested by the Armenian Bible where, astonishingly enough, a word form occurs that is identical in sound with Georgian *prang-i*. The passage in question reads (2. Macc. 5,22)⁴⁴:

Եւ անդ թողոյր վարդապետս խիստս, չարչարել զմնացորդս ե(րուսալ)էմացւոց,
 եւ զփիլիպոս յատգէ փրանդ, բայց ՚ի բարուց խժդժագոյն եւս էր քան զայն որ
 եթող զնա անդ:

Of course, the Philippos mentioned here was not a Frank — a person from the Germanic tribe could hardly have come across the visual range of the Maccabees. The actual offspring of the

³⁸ *Bogi jazyčeskoj Gruzii po drevne-gruzinskim istočnikam*, in: Zapiski Vostočnago Otdelenija Russkago Arxeologičeskago Obščestva 14, 1901, p. 1 sqq. (here: p. 28).

³⁹ *Dejanija trex svjatyx bliznecov mučenikov Spevsipa, Elasispa i Melasispa*, in: Zapiski Vostočnago Otdelenija Imperatorskago Russkago Arxeologičeskago Obščestva 17, 1906, p. 285 sqq. (here: p. 322).

⁴⁰ Le nouveau manuscrit..., p. 108, l. 11-12. There is no indication of an abbreviation whatsoever in this manuscript.

⁴¹ Cp. *poloťik-i* "cuirass" which seems to be derived from the same base; the underlying term must be an Early Middle Iranian equivalent of MPers. *pōlāwad* "steel".

⁴² Cf., e.g., the History of the Franks by Gregorius of Tours, book 2, chap. 7 or the History of the Goths by Isidor, chap. 25.

⁴³ Cf. the History of the Goths by Jordanes, chap. 36.

⁴⁴ Thus the text according to the Bible edition by H. ZOHRAPEAN, Venetik 1805 (repr. ed. C. COX, Delmar / N.Y. 1984).

vardapet can be taken from the text of the Septuagint instead according to which he was a **Phrygian**:

κατέλιπεν δὲ καὶ ἐπιστάτας τοῦ κακοῦν τὸ γένος, ἐν μὲν Ἱεροσολύμοις **Φίλιππον,**
τὸ μὲν γένος Φρύγα, τὸν δὲ τρόπον βαρβαρώτερον ἔχοντα τοῦ καταστήσαντος...

"(Antiokhos IV.) left attendants to maltreat the people: in Jerusalem, to wit,
Philippos, a Phrygian by birth, (a man) having (even) more barbarious manner(s)
than the one who appointed (him) ..."

This raises the question whether the name of the *prang-ni* / *branž-ni* as appearing in St. Nino's legend might as well mean the people of Anatolian Phrygia rather than the Germanic Franks. This would fit well indeed with several aspects of St. Nino's life as reported in the legend. Her parents, we are told, were from a town the name of which is given as *kolase-* (Mokc.A 109,29 / 330,12), *kolaste-* (Mokc.B 109,30 ≈ N Sin. 50, p. 114, l. 7), *kolasta-* (Mokc.A 106,28 / 328,36 ≈ Mokc.B 106,28), *kolastra* (L.Mr. 72,11; 76,2), and *kušalastra* (Sin. N 50, p. 107, l. 14) in the Georgian manuscripts; the Armenian *Patmowt'iwn vrac*^c has *Klastratay* and *Klastata-* (Patm. 75,14 / 76,2). Due to this diversity, the town has not been identified with certainty yet. But according to a likely assumption which was propagated by Fairy von Lilienfeld⁴⁵, it could be Colossai, the town which lodged a Christian community as early as St. Paul's times — and which was situated in Phrygia. Of course it is true that St. Nino's parents are not called Phrygians (or *branžni*, *prangni*) in the legend but Cappadocians⁴⁶; but even if the identification with Colossai is wrong — we might think of the town of Cyzistra instead which might have been located near Caesarea in Cappadocia⁴⁷ — it seems much easier to assume that Zabilon was sent out against the rebelling people of a neighbouring province, from Cappadocia⁴⁸ to Phrygia, than that he might have participated in a battle which took place in today's France.

If we are right, then, in identifying the *branžni* / *prangni* of the legend with the Anatolian people of Phrygia, we have to presuppose that the name of the Phrygians — which should have appeared as *prig-ni* or the like in Old Georgian as far as we can tell from Φρυγία being represented by *prigwa-* in the New Testament (Acts 2,10; 16,6; 18,23) — must have been secondarily influenced and lastly substituted by the name of the Franks in the course of tradition. This cannot be a surprise, given that by the beginning of the 5th century, the latter name begins to become more and more famous even in the East, as an instructive quotation from Procopius shows according to whom it turned into the appellation used for Germanic people in general⁴⁹:

⁴⁵ O.c., p. 238, n. 100.

⁴⁶ *kabadukieli-i* bzw. *kabadukeli-i*: Mokc.A 328,33; 329,6; 329,8; Mokc.B 106,21; 107,7; Nino-A 12,2; Nino-B 52,6; 52,12; L.Mr. 72,8; 73,1; 73,3.

⁴⁷ Cf. W. FELIX, *Byzanz und die islamische Welt im früheren 11. Jahrhundert*, Wien 1981 (= *Byzantina Vindobonensia*, XIV), who identifies Κύζιστρα with today's Yeşilhisar in the map attached to his book (A3). If this be correct, we should have to presuppose a confusion either of the Asomtavruli letters **Ⴀ** = *z* and **Ⴁ** = *l* or of the corresponding Armenian letters, *q* = *z* and *η* = *l*, in the course of tradition leading to *Kolastra* and the like.

⁴⁸ *kabadukia-*: Mokc.A 328,34; Mokc.B 106,24; Nino-A 9,16; 11,11; 13,12; 13,23; 48,29; Nino-B 54,9; 54,14; 82,17; L.Mr. 72,9.

⁴⁹ Lib. 3, 3 in the edition by E. WIRTH, *Procopii Caesariensis opera omnia*, Leipzig 1962-1963; the topic in question are the conflicts between Vandals and (other) Germanic tribes under the Roman emperor Honorius in the beginning of the 5th century.

.. ἐς Γερμανούς τε, οἱ νῦν Φράγγοι καλοῦνται ..

".. and to the Germanic people who are **now** called Franks .."

And it cannot be a surprise either that after the "identification" of the Phrygians with the Franks, the most famous battle field that is connected with the Germanic sphere was introduced into the text too.

4. Iobenal's "Frankish" words

One passage within St. Nino's legend is especially expressive as to the question whether it is the Germanic Franks that are meant when the text speaks about the *branž-ni* / *prang-ni*. In the Šatberd version, the passage runs as follows (Mokc.A 335,17 sqq. / 120,17 sqq.):

მაშინ მოვიკუსენე სიტყუად იგი, რომელი მამცნო იობენალი პატრუაქმან, წმიდამან მამამან ჩემმან, ვითარმელ: "ვითარცა მამაკაცსა სრულსა წარგავლინებ და მიწვენად ხარ ქუეყანასა უცხოთა, ნათესავთა დგეველ, ზეფელ, ნარკადოველ, რომელ არს 'კაცნი ღმრთის მკდომნი, მბრძოლნი და წინა-აღმდგომნი'."

The quotation contains three words that are obviously not Georgian so that they had to be glossed for the Georgian reader. Both the Čeliši variant and the adaptation by Leonti Mroveli are more informative in that they mention the language which the words in question are taken from: This is *branžulad* in the latter, *prgolad* (for **prgulad*) in the former:

და ნათესავთა დარაგეველ ზეფელ ბაკადულ, რომელ არს ბრანჯულად: 'კაცთა ღმრთის მკდომთა'. (L.Mr. 90) —

და ნათესავთა უცხოთა დრგევ[ელ], ზე~ვლ, ბარკადოლ, რომელ არს ფრგოლად: 'კაცნი ღმრთის მკდომნი'. (Mokc.B 120,17 sqq.).

It was Nikolaj Marr again who published a first attempt of explaining the "foreign" words in question⁵⁰. According to him, they could be understood as Syriac, representing the following phrase:

ܠܟ ܠܗܩܒܐ ܠܟ ܐܘܩܠܟ ܠܟ ܠܚܕܘܠܟ

Marr's Russian interpretation of this came quite close indeed to what the Georgian texts give as a "translation":

"противникъ Бога, распнителъ Бога, сынъ убійцы Бога".

Nevertheless, the proposal is not totally convincing. On the one hand, a lot of divergences between Marr's Syriac formula and its presumed graphical representation in Georgian remain that are far from being usual; cp. the following synopsis:

Syriac	<i>dlqwb</i> ʿyl	<i>zqwp</i> ʿyl	<i>brqtwl</i> ʿyl
Georgian A (Mokc.A)	<i>dgevel</i>	<i>zepel</i>	<i>narkadovel</i>
Georgian B (L.Mr.)	<i>daragevl</i>	<i>zepel</i>	<i>bakadul</i>
Georgian C (Mokc.B)	<i>dr̄gev[e]l</i>	<i>ze~vl</i>	<i>barkadol</i>

It is especially the substitution of Syriac *q* by Georgian *g* and of Syriac *t* by Georgian *d* as well as the loss of *q* in the second word that cannot be easily accounted for. On the other hand, the syntax of the Syriac formula itself seems hard, even if we presuppose a "vulgar" dialect of that language as Marr did⁵¹: it starts with a relative particle, *d-*, the antecedent of which (i.e., "people", კაცნი) is missing; depending from this, we first have an adverbial containing the preposition *l-* (for "against", we would expect *lu-qbal* rather than *l̄-qubal*⁵²), then an agent noun (*zāqōb* "crucifier") and lastly, a noun phrase in the *status constructus* (*bar*

⁵⁰ *Bogi* ..., p. 20 f.

⁵¹ ".. особенности, присуція, замѣтимъ, вульгарному сирійскому ...": o.c., p. 21.

⁵² Cf. C. BROCKELMANN, *Syrische Grammatik*, Berlin 1899, p. 28 (§ 59 n. 1).

"son" plus *qātōl*, agent noun "murderer"). The word for "son" as contained in the last item is not motivated by the Georgian "translations" but only by the phonetic appearance of the word form in question, and finally, the word for "God", appearing in all three items of the formula in an unexpected shape, would need further comments.

It seems therefore justifiable to look for another interpretation⁵³. Proceeding from the assumption again that Iobenal did not speak "Frankish" but Aramaic, we arrive at a solution much more simple than Marr's, assuming not an oral but a written way of tradition that led from the Syriac original to Georgian via Armenian. It starts from a Syriac formula **ܕܗܠܝܢ ܒܪܒܝܢܐ**, *dāḡabrē hālen barb(a)rāyē*, meaning "of those barbarian people". When this was transliterated into Armenian, **դ** = *d* and **ր** = *r* as well as **ա** = *b* and **ա** = *k* were confused in the third word and the letter **ո** = *h* was split into two "elements", yielding **ոյ** = *zw*, in the second. In the course of further manuscript tradition, some Armenian letters were confused as well, viz. **ե** = *ē* and **լ** = *l*, **ղ** = *ə* and **ր** = *r*, **ի** = *i* and **ւ** = *w*; this took place either within Armenian or when the unknown words were for the first time transcribed into Georgian. Schematically, the sequence of changes can be illustrated as follows:

a) Syriac original:	"of people ܕܗܠܝܢ <i>dāḡabrē</i>	those ܗܠܝܢ <i>hālen</i>	barbarian" ܒܪܒܝܢܐ <i>barb(a)rāyē</i>
b) misread as:	ܕܗܠܝܢ <i>dāḡabrē</i>	ܕܗܠܝܢ <i>zəwlen</i>	ܒܪܒܝܢܐ <i>barkadōyē</i>
c) first Armenian transliteration:	ԴԳԱՎՐԷ <i>dəgavrē</i>	ՋԼՎԼԷՆ <i>zəvlēn</i>	ԲԱՐԿԱԴՈՒԷ <i>barkadoiē</i>
d) misread / miswritten as:	ԴԳԱՎԼԼ <i>drgavəl</i>	ՋԼՎԷԼՆ <i>zəvēln</i>	ԲԱՐԿԱԴՈՒԼ <i>barkadowl</i>
e) first Georgian transliteration:	ԾԴԱՎԵԼ <i>drgevel</i>	ՆՎԵԼՆ <i>zeveln</i>	ԲԱՐԿԱԴՈՒԼ <i>barkadowl</i>

Apart from its simplicity, this derivation has at least two arguments in its favour: It contains the equivalent of Georgian **კაცნი** "people", and it explains the divergence between the Šatberd text and the other variants with respect to the initial letter of the third word, *n-* vs. *b-*, the *n* having been transferred from the end of the second word. It is important to note, then, that the Sinai ms. N Sin 50 does contain these words too, in a form remarkably close to what has been suggested here (and closer to the Čeliši variant than the Šatberd text); it reads: *natesavta drgevel zevel barkadowl r(ome)l ars brangulad k(a)cni ġ(mr)tis mqdomi*⁵⁴. If the derivation is correct, we should have to presuppose, of course, that the "translations" as given in the Georgian texts must have been "decorated" and extended to a certain degree, the Šatberd variant showing a maximum of items so as to cover the length of the "foreign" phrase. It is noteworthy in this connection that the Armenian *Patmow'iwn vrac*^c agrees with both Leonti Mroveli's text and the Čeliši (and Sinai) version, speaking about *պատերազմողաց ճշմարտին Աստուծոյ*, i.e. "antagonists of the righteous God", briefly (Patm.

⁵³ A preliminary discussion of the following proposal was undertaken during the conference about "Bilingualism in Iranian cultures" in Bamberg / Germany, 1992.

⁵⁴ Le nouveau manuscrit ..., p. 140, ll. 3-5.

84). Unfortunately, the Armenian text contains neither the foreign words nor the name of the language.

Returning to the latter, we have to reconsider the hypothesis that the name given as *branžulad* by Leonti Mroveli might represent not a "Frankish" language but some sort of "Phrygian". As was said above, this would not mean a Phrygian dialect in the proper sense of the word but an Aramaic vernacular spoken in Anatolian Phrygia in Iobenal's lifetime. The testimony of the Sinai manuscript now confirms that the abbreviated spelling contained in the Čeliši variant (*prgolad*) cannot be taken to represent something like **prigulad* (or **prwgulad*?) directly⁵⁵; instead we have to assume now that the *n* was present as early as the first Georgian transcript underlying the witnesses we have at hand, thus indicating that the confusion of Phrygians and Franks cannot have been "achieved" too late within the tradition of the text.

5. Our Lord's coat in St. Nino's legend

It was an investigation undertaken by the young Nikolaj Marr again⁵⁶ which drew the attention of the scholarly world to the fact that St. Nino's legend contains a most remarkable narrative about Our Lord's coat. The variants of the legend agree in telling that a certain Eliož, descendant of a Jewish family of priests, travelled to Jerusalem together with other people from Mcxeta in order to see the Christ. There he became a witness of the crucifixion, and together with some others, he cast lots for the Lord's coat⁵⁷. He was the one to win it, and he took it home to Mcxeta⁵⁸. The Čeliši version alone mentions the fact two times: once within the narrative proper, and once in the short chronicle which precedes the text of St. Nino's legend. Here, three of Eliož's travel companions are listed, viz. *Longinoz Kaniseli*, *Talenav* and *Misael* (Mokc.B 87,23). This information partially agrees with the text as adapted by Leonti Mroveli (L.Mr. 36,20 and 99,7) which names *Longinoz Karsneli* as Eliož's partner; accordingly, also the *Patmowfiwn vrac*^c mentions one *Lownkianos Karsnac'i* as accompanying *Elios* (Patm. 94). Thus the text of the Georgian chronicle seems to hold an intermediate position within a set of divergent traditions as can be shown by the following synopsis (the metaphrastic versions do not give any names)⁵⁹:

St. Nino's legend:

Mokc.A 339: და წარვიდა ელიოზ და ყოველნი ჰურიანი ქართლით
"and Eliož went off, and all Jews from Kartli"

Mokc.B 128: და წარვიდა ელიოზ და ყოველნი ქართველნი
"and Eliož went off, and all Kartvelians (!)"

Georgian chronicle:

L.Mr. 99: და წარვიდა ელიოზ მცხეთელი და ლონგინოზ კარსნელი
"and Eliož from Mcxeta went off and Longinoz from Kars"

⁵⁵ Note that the same ms. has *branž-* alongside *brang-* (Le nouveau manuscrit..., p. 108, l. 10).

⁵⁶ *Xiton Gospoden v knižnyx legendax armjan, gruzin i sirijcev*, in: Al-muzaffariyat: Sbornik statej učeníkov Professora Barona Viktora Romanoviča Rozena ko dnju dvadcatipjatilětija ego pervoj lekcii, Sanktpeterburg 1897, p. 67-96.

⁵⁷ Cf. Jo. 19,23 sq. where the casting of lots is mentioned.

⁵⁸ Mokc.A 339/128; Mokc.B 128 / L.Mr. 99 / Nino A 31 / Nino B 69.

⁵⁹ Nino-A has წარგზავნა მშვიდობით "she (Eliož's sister) sent (him) away in peace" (31,25), Nino-B has only წარვიდა "he went off" (69,19). The Sinai ms. N Sin 50 agrees with the text of the Šatberd version here (Le nouveau manuscrit ..., p. 157, ll. 11f.); the passage from the short chronicle is missing.

- Patm. 94: **Գնաց ընդ նմա եւ Ղունկիանոս Կարսնացի**
 "Together with him also Łu(n)kianos from Kars went (off)"
- Short chronicle:
 Mokc.B 87: "აქეთ წარვიდეს ელიოზ მცხეთ[ე]ლი და ლონგინოზ კანისელი და თალენავ და მისაელ"
 "From here, ElioZ from Mcxeta and Longinoz from K̄anis (!) and Talenav and Misael went off"
- cp. L.Mr. 36: და წარვიდეს აქათ ელიოზ მცხეთელი და ლონგინოზ კარსნელი
 "and from here, ElioZ from Mcxeta and Longinoz from K̄ars went off".

Of the persons mentioned, only the one called *Longinoz* is known from other traditions: He might be the person who according to the apocryphal gospel of Nicodemus (otherwise known as the "Acts of Pilatus"⁶⁰) was the soldier (anonymous in Jo. 19,34) who pierced the Lord's breast with a lance. The two other travellers that are named in the short chronicle, viz. *Talenav* and *Misael*, remain obscure; It is true that *Misael*, later named *Misax*, was one of the three young men who according to the prophet Daniel were saved from the fiery furnace set up by Nebukadnezzar (besides *Anania* / *Sedrax* and *Azaria* / *Abednago*: Dan. 1,7 and 3,16 sqq.), but this does certainly not help *a priori* to identify the *Misael* of the Georgian legend. It is interesting to see, however, that yet another tradition about the Lord's coat exists in Eastern christianity. This was published by N. Marr again who had found it in a manuscript containing an Armenian version of the chronicle compiled by Michael the Syrian⁶¹. According to this legend (an exact model of which seems not to exist in the Syriac chronicle itself), it was two persons again who are named in connection with the coat. The first one is *Ղունկիանոս* who, however, was not from *Kars* but from a town called *Mok̄son* in Galatia. The second one who received but a part of the coat, was an anonymous *լազիկեցի*, i.e. a Laz man, from a town called *Փուղ* which was the capital (*մայրաքաղաքն*, lit. "mother-town") of the *եգերացւոց*⁶².

While it is easy to identify the latter town with *Poti*, the capital of the Megrelians, the actual relationship of this tradition with the Georgian ones remains questionable even after Marr's study. According to him, the legend as used by Michael the Syrian might have been the original one, presupposing that *Mok̄son* was substituted by *Mcxeta*, *Poti* was dismissed at all, and *Longinoz* and the anonymous Laz were changed into two Jewish men named *Longinoz* and *ElioZ*, in an attempt to adapt the tradition to Eastern Georgian interests. Although this seems not to be impossible, certain observations suggest a different solution.

First, the Armenian legend as quoted by Marr is inconsistent in stating explicitly that the coat, seamless as it was, fell in the hands of one soldier only, viz. Longinos, "so as not to be torn" (*վասն չպատարելոյ*); but then the text continues speaking about the Laz who took away "his part of the cloth" (*զիւր մասն հանդերձին*). This alone indicates that the

⁶⁰ Λογγίνος: cap. XVI, p. 262 in the edition by C. TISCHENDORF, *Evangelia apocrypha*, Lipsiae 1853; the name is written ლონგილოზ in the Georgian version of the text (*Nikodemosis apokripuli çignis kartuli versia*, ed. C. KURCIKIZE, Tbilisi 1985, p. 71, 17). The Armenian text (in: T'angaran haykakan hin ew nor dprowt'eanc, B: Ankanon giric nor ktakaranac, Venetik 1898, p. 344, 17) offers a name form that is quite similar to the one we met with in the *Patmowfiwn vrac*, viz. *Ղենկիանոս* = *Lenkianos* (v.l. *Ղինգիանոս* = *Lingianos*).

⁶¹ *Xiton* ..., p. 79 f.

⁶² The report ends with naming king Abgar and his sister who wove the coat, and one messenger called Anania who handed it over to our lord (*Xiton* ..., p. 80). Should he be connected with the Misael from the Georgian short chronicle via the Biblical passages from Daniel?

information about the Laz man from Poti must be additional, not primary.

Second, it is well conceivable that St. Nino's legend contains at least a twofold tradition concerning Biblical coats, both showing, as Fairy von Lilienfeld put it, "an old linkage of Eastern Georgia with Jerusalem"⁶³: Primarily it speaks about the seamless coat of Christ, but sometimes⁶⁴ also about the coat of the prophet Elias⁶⁵. According to Fairy von Lilienfeld, the tradition about the latter cloth might even have emerged in the narrative on the "ephod" of the Biblical father Abiathar⁶⁶ — an hypothesis which suggests itself when considering that the most important one among the Jews St. Nino met in Mcxeta, viz. their high priest⁶⁷, bore just that name.

Having this hypothesis at hand, we may at once wonder whether the *Laz* man and his town *Poti* occurring in the legend as reported by Michael the Syrian might not reflect *Elias* and his *ephod*. Indeed, the name of the town as given in the Armenian text, *Փոլի*, is exactly what we would expect as a transliteration of the Greek term *εφουδ* — except for the initial vowel which would be missing in *Laz*, if from *Elias*, as well.

It is true of course that the prophet's coat is not called an "ephod" in Biblical tradition. The Greek term used for Hebrew *aderet* is *μηλωτή*, i.e. "(coat) from sheep wool"; its equivalent in Syriac is *ma^cprā*, the Armenian text has *ma^skeak*, and the Georgian tradition uses *xalen-i* both in the Bible and in St. Nino's legend. Nevertheless, it may have adopted this denotation in a Jewish environment where a certain (piece of) garment was the characteristic mark of the high priests. In this connection, we may add two further interesting observations.

First, the Syriac term *ma^cprā* which we noted as the equivalent of Georgian *xalen-i* in rendering the Greek *μηλωτή*, adopted a special connotation in Christian ecclesiastics where it became known as the *Maphorion*; its derivation *ma^cprāyā* denoting a special kind of cleric dignitary is most probably the title appearing as *miapor-i* in the Šatberd version of St. Nino's legend (Mokc.A 329 sqq.), *niapor-i* in the Čeliši version (106 sqq.) as Fairy von Lilienfeld proposed⁶⁸. Concerning the word-initial nasals, we may compare the word *nap^cortn* which occurs in the Armenian version of the "6th Instruction" by Aphraates⁶⁹ in the position of Syriac *ma^cprā*⁷⁰ referring to Elias's coat (the Georgian text which is ascribed to St. Hippolytos in the Šatberd codex has *xalen-i* again: 314,25). If Armenian *nap^cortn* reflects the Syriac word immediately, it shows the same development as Georgian *niapor-i* as against (older) *miapor-i* (maybe by influence of Greek *ἀνα^c-⁷¹* or *νεα^c-*). Note that the Sinai ms. N

⁶³ O.c., p. 229 with n. 31.

⁶⁴ Mokc.A 339 and 314 / Mokc.B 128 and 132 / L.Mr. 108 / Patm. 105; the metaphrastic versions do not mention the latter: Nino-A 28, Nino-B 66.

⁶⁵ Cf. 3. Reg. 19,13-19; 4. Reg. 2,8-14. — F. v. LILIENFELD, o.c., p. 229 with n. 31.

⁶⁶ Cf. 1. Reg. 23,6-9; F. v. LILIENFELD, o.c., p. 231, n. 47.

⁶⁷ "პირველი მღვდელი": Mokc.A 346,21 / 144,7.

⁶⁸ O.c., p. 240 with n. 114-116.

⁶⁹ La version arménienne des œuvres d'Aphraate le Syrien, t. II: Démonstrations VI-XII, éd. G. LAFONTAINE, Louvain 1979 (Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium, 405), p. 23, 4.

⁷⁰ The Homilies of Aphraates, The Persian Sage, ed. .. W. WRIGHT, Vol. I: The Syriac Text, London 1869, p. *qkd*, 5.

⁷¹ The connection of *nap^cortn* with Greek *ἀναφορά* as suggested by Hr. AČARJAN in his Armenian root dictionary (Hayeren armatakan bařaran, hator G, Erevan ²1977, 437) would then have to be regarded as secondary.

Sin 50 has *minapor-sa* once⁷² which is some way in-between the Šatberd and the Čeliši variant⁷³.

Second, a further connection between Elias and Abiatar may be established within St. Nino's legend itself. One of the most important persons in this is the high priest's daughter, Sidonia, who is introduced as the teller of five chapters of the legend. In contrast to *Abiatar*, *Sidonia* is not met with as a personal name in the Bible. There is an occurrence of the genitive Σιδωνίας, however, which is normally interpreted as a place name, meaning the region of Σιδων. In the passage in question (3.Reg. 17,9, quoted in Lc. 4,26) it is Elias whom God sends to Σαρεπτα τῆς Σιδωνίας in order to stay with a widow who would care for him. The widow remains anonymous in the Bible; in later tradition, however, it seems that she adopted Σιδωνία as her personal name by a different interpretation of the Biblical passage, as we can see in a philippic "against Jews, pagans and heretics" by John Chrysostomus who writes⁷⁴:

ἀλλὰ τί εἶ; χήρα; καὶ ἡ Σιδωνία, ἣτις Ἡλίαν τὸν προφήτην ὑπεδέξατο, καὶ ἔθρεψεν ἄρτω καὶ ὕδατι ..

"But what (else) are you? A widow? Also Sidonia who received the prophet Elias and nourished him with bread and water (was a widow) .."

Thus it becomes conceivable that the whole set of legends centering around the Jewish community of Mcxeta is dominated by traditions concerning the prophet Elias who might have manifested himself both in the *Laz* from Poti and in the young man from Mcxeta, *Elioz*. Of course we can hardly expect to find out in every case how Biblical allusions of the type discussed here were integrated in the text. But it seems that a lot of the riddles concealed in *Mokcevaŷ Kartlisay* can still be solved.

⁷² Le nouveau manuscrit..., p. 108, ll. 7-8; in p. 114, l. 1; p. 116, l. 9-10; p. 122, l. 12 the ms. agrees with the Čeliši variant in reading *niapor*-.

⁷³ Should the *n* have resulted from a misreading of the [◌] in Syriac *ma[◌]prā*?

⁷⁴ Patrologiae Graecae cursus completus, ed. J.-P. MIGNE, vol. 48, col. 1077.